

Nineteenth Congress

Dec. 5, 1825-Mar. 3, 1827

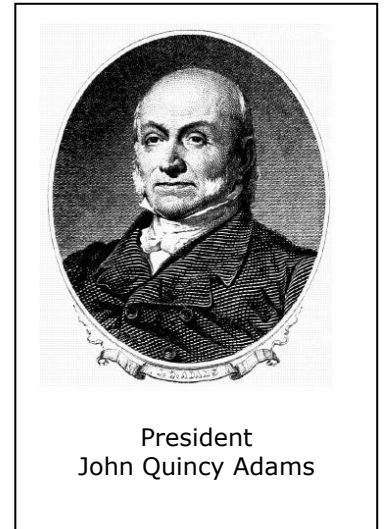
Administration of John Quincy Adams

Historical Background.....	1
War or Peace?	3
Economic Trends and Conditions.....	4
Major Treaties.....	5
Landmark U.S. Supreme Court Decisions.....	6
1825 Events	6
1826 Events.....	7
Major Acts.....	8

Historical Background

The 1824 election was one of the most eventful in the history of the fledgling republic, testing the constitutional processes and controls governing succession. Leading up to this election, the Democratic Republicans had become the sole national party contesting the election, with four candidates in the 1824 election alone. Two of these were members of President James Monroe’s cabinet: Secretary of the Treasury William H. Crawford, and Secretary of State John Quincy Adams—with General Andrew Jackson and Speaker of the House Henry Clay rounding out the quartet. With none garnering the required majority of electoral votes, the question moved to a contingent election in the House of Representatives, as dictated by the Twelfth Amendment to the Constitution. Per the requirements of the Twelfth Amendment, only the top three vote getters were considered in the contingent election, which left Jackson, who garnered 41%, Adams with 31%, and Crawford with 11%. Though House Speaker Clay was left out of the election, his influence among fellow House members proved decisive. Clay had a deep antipathy toward Andrew Jackson and found Adams’s policy positions far more in tune with his own and he therefore threw his support behind Monroe’s Secretary of State, allowing him to win 13 states, and the Presidency, in the first ballot.

The 19th Congress was in session during the first two years of President John Quincy Adams’s term in office, and Adams presented an ambitious agenda in the State of the Union addresses delivered on Dec. 6, 1825 and Dec. 5, 1826. Among the items discussed included the first phase of an effort to increase and improve the country’s infrastructure through “internal improvements.” These improvements were a continuation of the recommendations made by President James Monroe and finally instituted by Adams, who said it was the duty of Government to improve “the conditions of those over whom it is established.” The first phase consisted of having the Army Corps of



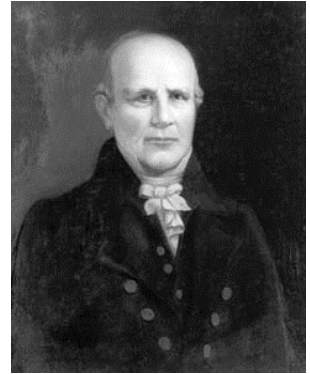
House	Senate
Majority Party: Adams (109)	Majority Party: Jacksonian (26 seats)
Minority Party: Jacksonian (104 seats)	Minority Party: Adams (22 seats)
Other Parties: None	Other Parties: None
Speaker of the House: John W Taylor	President Pro Tempore: Nathaniel Macon

Engineers (the use of military officers reduced the cost, thereby making the program palatable to Congress) conduct surveys around the country at both military installations and civilian communities to determine where improvements might be deemed of national importance to facilitate commerce, military purposes, or for the transport of mail. The projects for which surveys were conducted included the “practicability” of a canal from the Chesapeake Bay to the Ohio River, a national road from Washington to New Orleans, roads in the territories of Florida, Arkansas and Michigan, a road from Missouri to Mexico, and continuation of the Cumberland Road (connecting Cumberland, Md. with Vandalia, Ill., it was the first major highway built by the Federal government).

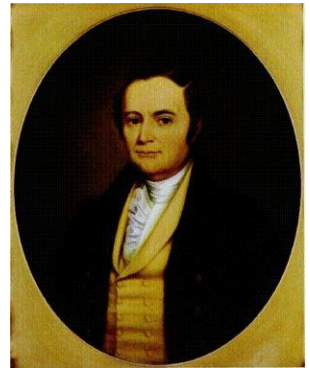
While Adams believed constructing and improving infrastructure to be “among the most important means of improvement,” he considered knowledge to be “among the first, perhaps the very first instrument for the improvement of the condition of men.” He cited recommendations to Congress by President George Washington for the establishment of “seminaries of learning,” including a national university and a military academy. Connected to the establishment of a university, or separate from it, Adams urged the creation of an astronomical observatory within the United States that would open the night sky of the Western Hemisphere to scientific observation. He believed the lack of an observatory within the U.S. cut the country off from the rest of the world when it came to astronomical discoveries. In addition, he urged Congress to fund expeditions to areas of the continent “imperfectly explored” to conduct research and thereby increase the knowledge of the land. “Our coasts, along many degrees of latitude upon the shores of the Pacific Ocean, through much visited by our spirited commercial navigators, have been barely visited by our public ships,” said Adams, who cited recent discoveries made within the United States, but which were funded by the Governments of Britain and France. “It would be honorable to our country if the sequel of the same experiments should be countenanced by the patronage of our Government,” he said.

According to Adams the improvements in infrastructure and education were essential to meet the needs of the country that had more than doubled in population within 30 years. By 1820 the population had increased from 4 million to about 10 million. Such an increase provided evidence “of the prosperous and happy condition” afforded U.S. citizens.

In addition, the United States was not the only nation within the western hemisphere experiencing growth. Adams stated, “within the last ten years, a new family of nations, in our own hemisphere, has arisen [...]” Interaction with those nations had been ongoing, and that included an invitation from Venezuelan statesman and military leader Simon Bolivar to the U.S. to send representatives to the Panama Conference of 1826. A coalition in the Senate opposed U.S. attendance mainly on the grounds that U.S. participation broke with traditions of independence and neutrality, while Senators from southern States feared that because slavery had been abolished in many Latin American countries there would be an attack on U.S. slaver interests by Latin American delegates. Ultimately, the Senate approved the mission and dispatched two delegates, but neither ever arrived. Richard Anderson died in route, and John Sergeant only made it as far as Mexico.



President Pro Tempore
Nathaniel Macon



Speaker of the House
John W. Taylor

Sources:

Adams, John Quincy. [*Message from the President of the United States to Both Houses of Congress at the Commencement of the First Session of the Nineteenth Congress*](#). House, Dec. 6, 1825. 19th Congress, 1st Session, H. Doc. 19-1/1 (Pr6.1/1:825). ProQuest Congressional, 131 H.doc.1/1

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Dell, Christopher and Stephen W. Stathis. [*Major Acts of Congress and Treaties Approved by the Senate, 1789-1980*](#). Government Division (CRS), Sept. 1, 1982. 97th Congress, 2nd Session, 82-156 GOV. ProQuest Congressional, CRS-1982-GOV-0005

War or Peace?

Naval Power

During the 1825 State of the Union address, Adams reported the country was experiencing “a period of profound peace,” and that the general “organization and discipline of the Army” was “effective and satisfactory.” However, he also reported that a policy of withholding some pay from the troops until their discharge should be instituted to “counteract the prevalence of desertion” from the Army which had been occurring. In addition, Adams said there was a need to increase horsemanship training because more than a single corps of cavalry was needed should there be a “sudden eruption of a war.” He also proposed establishing an artillery school at Fortress Monroe, Virginia, and added that establishing such a school might require a “legislative provision” by Congress. Adams also reiterated the need for militias, citing a study conducted by Army and militia officers which had found the militia system to be in a “defective condition.” With this information he urged funding for more training of the militias, specifically in cavalry tactics and in the use of field artillery.

During this period, the U.S. Navy had three main theaters of operation: the Mediterranean Sea, the Pacific Ocean along the coast of South America, and the West Indies. In addition, Navy cruisers had been sent to patrol specific waters, including those off the African coast where the traffic of slaves occurred, off the coast of British North America at Labrador, and the Hudson Bay’s fishing waters. Adams gave protecting U.S. shipping as the justification for those naval deployments saying the cost of maintaining a naval force in the Mediterranean “is a necessary substitute for the humiliating alternative of paying tribute for the security of our commerce” as had previously been demanded by the four Barbary states of North Africa (Morocco, and the Ottoman provinces of Algiers, Tripoli and Tunis) in the late 18th and early 19th centuries. Without protection, the Barbary states sized U.S. merchant ships and either held the crews for ransom or sold them into slavery. In addition, war between the Greeks and the Ottoman Turks had resulted in privateer attacks on U.S. merchant vessels. While Adams considered the attacks isolated incidents, he cited them as further reason the Navy needed to patrol those waters.

Protecting merchant vessels navigating the Pacific Ocean off the coast of South America is the reason for keeping “a like force on the coast of Peru and Chili” where a war had been occurring. The war had extended into the ocean where navies “not always under the control of their own Governments” have created “blockades unjustifiable upon any acknowledged principles of international law,” he said. Therefore, the U.S. Navy needed to be there to protect U.S. merchant ships. In addition, naval patrols of the waters around the West Indies was needed to suppress the African slave trade and to halt piracy; goals the Navy had attained, but which needed constant vigilance in order to be maintained. “Not even a temporary suspension or relaxation from assiduity can be indulged on that station without re-producing piracy and murder in all their horrors,” Adams said. However, despite its successes, the Navy needed to undergo a reorganization, as well as establish a navy yard in Florida and a “naval school of instruction, corresponding with the Military Academy at West Point,” Adams said.

In addition to the war in Peru and Chili, hostilities were occurring between the Republic of Buenos Ayres and Brazil, and the Brazilian Navy had instituted blockades that had damaged trade with the United States, according to Adams. Those blockades were resisted by the U.S. Navy, but injuries were sustained by U.S. merchant vessels. However, Adams was confident the Brazilian government would make restitution for those damages.

Sources:

Adams, John Quincy. [*Message from the President of the United States to Both Houses of Congress at the Commencement of the First Session of the Nineteenth Congress*](#). House, Dec. 6, 1825. 19th Congress, 1st Session, H. Doc. 19-1/1 (Pr6.1/1:825). ProQuest Congressional, 131 H.doc.1/1

Adams, John Quincy. [*Message from the President of the United States to Both Houses of Congress at the Commencement of the Second Session of the Nineteenth Congress*](#). House, Dec. 5, 1826. 19th Congress, 2nd Session, H. Doc. 19-2/1 (Pr6.1/1:826). ProQuest Congressional, 148 H.doc.2/1

Economic Trends and Conditions

During 1826 the United States continued to experience an economic decline, which Adams blamed on “unfruitful” growing seasons, “decaying conditions of manufacturers,” commercial speculation, and trade regulations imposed by foreign governments. During the 1826 State of the Union address, Adams did not call the economic decline a depression, but he did describe a similar decline that occurred from 1819 to 1822 as an economic depression. Yet he expressed optimism about the economy saying, “we have no cause to apprehend a depression comparable to that of the former period.”

The United States’ financial situation was a major feature of the 1825 and 1826 State of the Union addresses. During the 1825 State of the Union address, Adams said the “flourishing state” of the U.S. finances, was an indication of the country’s prosperity. A year later, in 1826, Adams said a decline in trade—because of the policies of some foreign governments—contributed to economic decline, and thereby was a factor in the decline of

Government revenues for 1826. "Reduced importation from abroad is necessarily succeeded by a reduced return to the Treasury at home. The net revenue of the present year will not equal that of the last," he said. According to Adams, the United States began 1825 with a surplus of nearly \$2 million, and revenues for that year were about \$22 million, with expenditures totaling about \$17 million. In 1826 the U.S. started the year with a surplus of \$5.2 million, and revenues for that year were about \$20.3 million, with expenditures totaling about \$19.4 million, leaving a surplus total of \$6.4 million.

While 1826 recorded a decline in trade, during 1825 Adams reported that the U.S.' policy on "commercial intercourse with other nations" had been "of the most liberal character," and the U.S. had "abstained" from prohibiting products, and had not imposed taxes upon exports, according to Adams. In addition, whenever the U.S. "favored" its own shipping, it did so "to countervail similar favor and exclusions granted by the nations with whom we have been engaged in traffic." A state of free trade had been achieved in 1815 with Great Britain, France (with certain conditions), the Netherlands, the Hanseatic Cities, Prussia, Sardinia, Sweden, the Duke of Oldenburg and Russia, and Congress reconfirmed the 1815 agreement on Jan. 8, 1824. However, in 1826, Adams reported that Great Britain had interdicted U.S. trade with Britain's colonies in the West Indies in an effort to achieve a "monopoly" on trade with those colonies. Great Britain refused to negotiate with the United States on that issue, therefore, the U.S. had no alternative "than that of regulating, or interdicting altogether, the trade on their part."

Sources:

Adams, John Quincy. [*Message from the President of the United States to Both Houses of Congress at the Commencement of the First Session of the Nineteenth Congress*](#). House, Dec. 6, 1825. 19th Congress, 1st Session, H. Doc. 19-1/1 (Pr6.1/1:825). ProQuest Congressional, 131 H.doc.1/1

Adams, John Quincy. [*Message from the President of the United States to Both Houses of Congress at the Commencement of the Second Session of the Nineteenth Congress*](#). House, Dec. 5, 1826. 19th Congress, 2nd Session, H. Doc. 19-2/1 (Pr6.1/1:826). ProQuest Congressional, 148 H.doc.2/1

Rush, Richard. [*Letter from the Secretary of the Treasury, enclosing his annual report on the state of the finances of the United States*](#). Department of Treasury, Dec. 22, 1825. 19th Congress, 1st Session, S. Doc. 6. (T1.1:825) ProQuest Congressional, 125 S.doc.6

Rush, Richard. [*Letter from the Secretary of the Treasury, transmitting the annual report on the state of the finances*](#). Department of Treasury, Dec. 12, 1826. 19th Congress, 2nd Session, S. Doc. 3 (T1.1:826). ProQuest Congressional, 145 S.doc.3

Major Treaties

Treaty of Indian Springs. Provided that the Creek tribe cede their land in Georgia to the United States. Concluded February 12, 1825. Approved by Senate March 7, 1825. ([7 Stat. 237](#))

Treaty of Prairie du Chien. Provided for the reduction of inter-tribal conflict between the Sioux Tribe and the Chippewa, Sac and Fox, Menominee,

Ioway, Winnebago and Anishinaabeg tribes; established boundaries for each tribe for residing and hunting purposes; allowed for additional councils to be conducted in the following year. Concluded August 19, 1825. Approved by Senate February 6, 1826. ([7 Stat. 272](#))

Sources:

[“Treaty with the Sioux and Chippewas, Sace and Foxes, Menonionies, Iowas, Sioux, Winnebagoes, and a portion of the Ottawas, Chippewas, and Pottawatimies. Aug. 19, 1825.”](#) (7 Stat. 272; Aug. 19, 1825). ProQuest Congressional

[“Treaty with the Creeks. Feb. 12, 1825.”](#) (7 Stat. 237; Feb. 12, 1825). ProQuest Congressional

Landmark U.S. Supreme Court Decisions

The Antelope, the first case the Supreme Court heard that was connected to slavery, and in it held that for a court to recognize a claim for property, the claimant must provide proof of such claim to the satisfaction of that court. In making its ruling, the Supreme Court dismissed a claim by the privateer John Smith for the slave ship *Antelope* that was registered to Spain and which Smith claimed as a prize of war. In addition to determining the ownership of the ship, the court ruled on a claim filed by the Vice Consuls of Spain and Portugal for custody of about 93 slaves being transported by the *Antelope*, and another 183 slaves that Smith removed from a ship registered to Portugal. The Court’s ruling resulted in 120 of the former slaves being sent to Liberia as free people, and about 30 remaining in slavery, 23 U.S. 66 (1825)

Source:

Costello. George A. and Johnny H. Killian. [Constitution of the United States of America. Analysis and Interpretation](#). CRS, Library of Congress, Jan. 1, 1996. 103rd Congress, 1st Session, S. Doc. 103-6 (Y1.1/3:103-6). ProQuest Congressional, 14152 S.doc.6

1825 Events

- **Jan. 10:** Indianapolis becomes the capital of Indiana
- **Jan. 19:** Ezra Daggett and his nephew Thomas Kensett are awarded a U.S. patent for preserving food in “vessels of tin” (tin cans)
- **Jan. 27:** [The U.S. Congress establishes an Indian Territory in what is present-day Oklahoma, clearing the way for the forced relocation of Native Americans living east of the Mississippi River](#)
- **Feb. 9:** [After no presidential candidate receives a majority of electoral votes, the United States House of Representatives elects John Quincy Adams as President of the United States](#)
- **Feb. 12:** [The Lower Creek Council signs the Treaty of Indian Springs ceding a large amount of Creek territory in Georgia to the United States Government](#)
- **Feb. 22:** [Great Britain and Russia establish the Alaska-Canada boundary](#)

- **Mar. 4:** John Quincy Adams takes the oath of office becoming the sixth U.S. President
- **June 3:** [The Kaw Nation \(or Kansa Nation\) cedes its territory \(in what is now Kansas\) to the United States](#)
- **June 22:** The British Parliament abolishes feudalism and the seigneurial system in British North America
- **Aug. 6:** Bolivia gains independence from Peru
- **Aug. 25:** Uruguay declares independence from Brazil
- **Aug. 19:** The Treaty of Prairie du Chien is signed by the United States and representatives of the Sioux, Sac and Fox, Menominee, Ioway, Winnebago and Anishinaabeg tribes
- **Aug. 29:** Portugal recognizes the independence of Brazil
- **Oct. 26:** The Erie Canal opens connecting the Hudson River with Lake Erie
- **Nov. 7:** [The Treaty of St. Louis is signed by the United States and delegates from the Shawnee Nation, which results in 1,400 Missouri Shawnees being forcibly relocated from Missouri to Kansas](#)
- **Nov. 12:** The Cherokee Nation designates New Echota in northeast Georgia as its capital
- **Dec. 26:** The Decembrist uprising in Russia against Tsar Nicholas I begins

1826 Events

- **Feb. 13:** The American Temperance Society forms in Boston
- **Feb. 24:** The First Burmese War ends with the signing of the Treaty of Yandaboo
- **Mar. 4:** A charter is granted to the Granite Railway of Quincy, Mass. placing it among the first U.S. rail lines
- **Mar. 14:** The General Congress of South American States assembles at Panama
- **Apr. 1:** [Samuel Morey is issued the first U.S. patent for an internal-combustion engine, which he calls a "gas or vapour engine"](#)
- **Apr. 10:** *Greek War of Independence* - After a year's siege by Turkish forces, the 10,500 inhabitants of the Greek town Messolonghi, a major rebel stronghold, begin to flee the town, but most do not escape
- **June 15:** Ottoman Sultan Mahmud II abolishes the elite corps of infantry soldiers known as the "Janissary," executing thousands for treason to make way for a more modern army
- **June 20:** Great Britain and Siam sign a trade/peace treaty
- **July 4:** [Former Presidents Thomas Jefferson and John Adams both die](#)
- **July 30:** Javanese Prince Diponegoro, a leading member of Java's aristocracy who had cooperated with the Dutch, leads a rebellion against the Dutch
- **Aug. 19:** The Canada Company is chartered to colonize Upper Canada (Ontario)
- **Sep. 3:** The USS Vincennes leaves New York to become the first United States warship to circumnavigate globe

- **Nov. 15:** The Dutch achieve a monopoly on the opium trade in Java and Madura
- **Nov. 27:** John Walker invents the friction match in England
- **Dec. 16:** Benjamin W. Edwards rides into Mexican controlled Nacogdoches, Texas and declares himself ruler of the Republic of Fredonia

Sources:

Adams, John Quincy. [*Day of mourning for deaths of Thomas Jefferson and John Adams.*](#) Unnumbered Executive Orders. July 11, 1826. 19th Congress, 2nd Session. ProQuest Congressional, 1826-20-1

Adams, John Quincy. [*Message from the President of the United States, transmitting a copy of a treaty with the Creek Nation of Indians, concluded 24th January last \[...\].*](#) U.S. Congress, Apr. 25, 1826. 19th Congress, 1st Session, H.doc.165. ProQuest Congressional, 139 H.doc.165

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Clark, William, and John Quincy Adams. [*Treaties with the Osage, Kansas, and Shawnee Tribes.*](#) Department of Indian Affairs, Dec. 14, 1825. 19th Congress, 1st Session. Ind.aff.224. ProQuest Congressional, ASP08 Ind.aff.224

["Election of President: Register of Debates."](#) Register of Debate, 18th Congress, 2nd Session, (Feb. 9, 1825) Vol. 1, p. 525-527. ProQuest Congressional, RD-1825-0209

Ellsworth, Henry L. [*Digest of patents issued by U.S., from 1790 to Jan. 1, 1839 \[...\].*](#) Department of State, Jan. 1, 1840. 26th Congress, 1st Session (S1.2:P27/2). ProQuest Congressional, S102-56.1

Reese, David A. [*Correspondence on the subject of the emigration of Indians, between the 30th November, 1831, and 27th December, 1833, \[...\].*](#) Senate, Jan. 1, 1832. 23rd Congress, 1st Session, S. Doc. 512. ProQuest Congressional, 246 S.doc.512

["\[Treaties with the Osage, Kansas, and Shawnee Indians.\]"](#) Dec. 14, 1825. 19th Congress, 1st Session. ProQuest Congressional, SED-19-1-1

Major Acts

Appropriation for Mission to the Congress of Panama. Appropriated \$18,000 for two envoys extraordinary and ministers plenipotentiary to attend the Panama Conference of 1826. Approved May 4, 1826. ([4 Stat. 158, Chap. 33](#))

Source:

Dell, Christopher and Stephen W. Stathis. [*Major Acts of Congress and Treaties Approved by the Senate, 1789-1980.*](#) Government Division (CRS), Sept. 1, 1982. 97th Congress, 2nd Session, 82-156 GOV. ProQuest Congressional, CRS-1982-GOV-0005

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