Main Idea Despite some tensions between different sections the nation enjoyed an “era of good feelings” after the War of 1812.

Setting the Scene In Charleston, a cook named Abigail Jones put her advertisement in the newspaper early. Turtle meat would be available for sale on July 4 only. When Americans celebrated the Fourth of July in the early 1800s, turtle soup was one of the two most popular holiday foods.

What was the other? For a hot summer holiday like the Fourth, Americans loved the rare treat of ice cream. In Boston, a Mr. Shindles advertised “iced creams, of the best quality” in four flavors. At Vauxhall Gardens in Charleston, sellers warned people to come early, before all the ice cream was eaten.

After the War of 1812, Fourth of July celebrations became more popular than ever. Americans were proud of their country. They were especially proud that the nation was growing rapidly. Improved transportation allowed the opening of new lands to settlers. New industries were appearing. In Congress, a new generation of political leaders sought to direct this expansion.

An Era of Good Feelings

In 1816, the Republican candidate for President, James Monroe, easily defeated the Federalist, Senator Rufus King of New York. The election showed how seriously the Federalist party had declined in popularity. Many Federalists had joined the Republican party and voted for Monroe.

Monroe was the last Revolutionary War officer to become President. He was almost 60 years old when he took office, and he still followed the fashions of the late 1700s. He wore a powdered wig at a time when young men were wearing their hair loose. While other Americans wore long trousers, he still wore breeches and long stockings.
Americans were fond of his old-fashioned ways. In 1817, he made a goodwill tour of the country. In Boston, crowds cheered Monroe enthusiastically. Boston newspapers expressed surprise at this warm welcome for a Republican from Virginia. After all, Boston had long been a Federalist stronghold.

Monroe hoped to create a new sense of national unity. One newspaper wrote that the United States was entering an Era of Good Feelings. By the time Monroe ran for a second term in 1820, no candidate opposed him. The Federalist party had disappeared.

Three Sectional Leaders

While conflict between political parties declined, disputes between different sections of the nation sharpened. In Congress, three ambitious young men took center stage. All three would play key roles in Congress for more than 30 years, as well as serving in other offices. Each represented a different section of the country.

Calhoun of the South  John C. Calhoun spoke for the South. He had grown up on a frontier farm in South Carolina. Calhoun’s immense energy and striking features earned him the nickname “young Hercules.” He was slim and handsome, with deep-set eyes and a high forehead. His way of speaking was so intense that it sometimes made people uncomfortable to be in his presence.

Calhoun had supported the War of 1812. Like many southerners, he was a firm defender of slavery. In general, he opposed policies that would strengthen the power of the federal government.

Webster of the North  Daniel Webster of New Hampshire was perhaps the most skillful public speaker of his time. With eyes flashing and shoulders thrown back, Webster was an impressive sight when he stood up to speak in Congress. An observer described him as a “great cannon loaded to the lips.”

Like many New Englanders, Webster had opposed the War of 1812. He even refused to vote for taxes to pay for the war effort. After the war, he wanted the federal government to take a larger role in building the nation’s economy. Unlike Calhoun, Webster thought that slavery was evil.

Clay of the West  Henry Clay spoke for the West. You have already met Clay as a leader of the War Hawks, who pushed for war against Britain in 1812.

Clay was born in Virginia but moved to Kentucky when he was 20. As a young lawyer, he was once fined for brawling with an opponent. Usually, however, he charmed both friends and rivals. Supporters called him “Gallant Harry of the West.” Like Webster, Clay strongly favored a more active role for the central government in promoting the country’s growth.

Helping American Businesses Grow

After the War of 1812, leaders like Calhoun, Webster, and Clay had to deal with serious economic issues. Despite the nation’s great physical growth and the soaring spirits of its people, the United States...
Monitor Your Reading
Check to see if you understand the relationship between the money supply and the Bank of the United States.

Cheapened Money
Without a national bank, the states began issuing money, like this five-dollar bank note issued by the state of Massachusetts. With so much money being issued, the value of the money declined.

Viewing History

Protection From Foreign Competition Another economic problem facing the nation was foreign competition, especially from Britain. In the early 1800s, the Embargo Act and then the War of 1812 kept most British goods out of the United States. In response, ambitious American business leaders like Francis Cabot Lowell established their own mills and factories. As a result, American industry grew quickly until 1815.

A Flood of British Goods With the end of the War of 1812, British goods again poured into the United States. Because the British had a head start in industrializing, they could make and sell goods more cheaply than Americans could. Most British factory buildings and machines were older and had already been paid for. In contrast, Americans still had to pay for their new factory buildings.

Sometimes, British manufacturers sold cloth in the United States for less than it cost to make. British manufacturers hoped to put American rivals out of business. Then, the British planned to raise prices.

Congress Passes a Protective Tariff The British plan caused dozens of New England businesses to fail. Angry owners asked Congress to place a protective tariff on all goods imported from Europe. As you have read, the purpose of a protective tariff is to protect a country's industries from foreign competition.
Congress responded by passing the Tariff of 1816. It greatly raised tariffs on imports. This increase made imported goods far more expensive than similar American-made goods. Higher tariffs led to angry protests from southerners. Southerners had built few factories. As a result, they did not benefit from the tariff. Also, southerners bought many British goods. The new tariff drove up the price of British-made goods. Southerners complained that the tariff made northern manufacturers rich at the expense of the South.

**Clay’s American System**

The bitter dispute over tariffs reflected the growth of sectionalism. Sectionalism is loyalty to one’s state or section rather than to the nation as a whole. Americans identified themselves as southerners, northerners, or westerners. In Congress, representatives from different sections often clashed.

Henry Clay wanted to promote economic growth for all sections. His program, known as the American System, called for high tariffs on imports, which would help northern factories. With wealth from industry, Clay believed, northerners would have the money to buy farm products from the West and the South. High tariffs would also reduce American dependence on foreign goods.

Clay also urged Congress to use money from tariffs to build roads, bridges, and canals. A better transportation system, he believed, would make it easier and cheaper for farmers in the West and the South to ship goods to city markets.

In 1816, Congress passed a protective tariff to help American factory owners.
Clay’s American System never fully went into effect. While tariffs remained high, Congress spent little on internal improvements—improvements for roads, bridges, and canals. Southerners in particular disliked Clay’s plan. The South had many fine rivers on which to transport goods. Many southerners opposed paying for roads and canals that brought them no direct benefits.

The Supreme Court Expands Federal Power

Under Chief Justice John Marshall, the Supreme Court strengthened the power of the federal government to promote economic growth. After Congress chartered the second Bank of the United States, Maryland tried to tax the Bank in order to drive it out of the state. James McCulloch, the Bank cashier, refused to pay the tax.

In the case of *McCulloch v. Maryland* (1819), the Court ruled that states had no right to interfere with federal institutions within their borders. The ruling strengthened federal power. It also allowed the Bank of the United States to continue, which helped the economy to expand.

In another case, *Gibbons v. Ogden* (1824), the Supreme Court upheld the power of the federal government to regulate trade between states. The Court struck down a New York law that tried to control steamboat travel between New York and New Jersey. The Court ruled that a state could regulate trade only within its own borders. Only the federal government had the power to regulate interstate commerce, or trade between different states. This decision helped the national economy by making it easier for the government to regulate trade.

**Assessment Questions**

**Recall**

1. **Define** (a) sectionalism

(b) internal improvements

(c) interstate commerce
2. Explain the views of Calhoun, Webster, and Clay as representatives of the South, North, and West on the issues of the War of 1812, protective tariffs, federal power, and slavery.

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3. How did protective tariffs help American industry after the War of 1812?

4. Why did many southerners oppose Clay's American System?

5. How did the Supreme Court ruling in *Gibbons v. Ogden* give the federal government more power?

... in *McCulloch v. Maryland*?