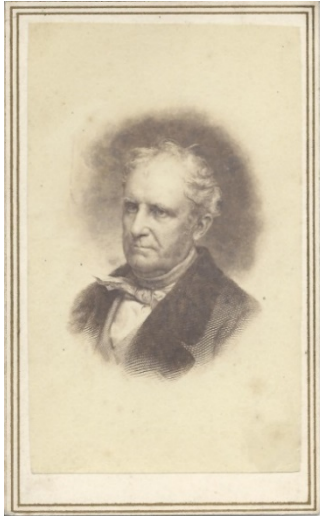


Chapter 52 – Pressure Continues On The Eastern Tribes To Abandon Their Households

Time: Mar 1825

Adams Wishes For Fair Treatment Of The Native American Tribes



James Fennimore Cooper's Novels
Portray "Noble Savage" Indians

Like all Presidents before him, JQ Adams struggles over how best to deal with America's native tribes.

He clearly agrees with conventional wisdom that Indians are a "lesser race" than their European counterparts, and recognizes the intense pressure from frontiersmen to grab their land and turn it over to white settlers.

Yet, like his predecessors in office, he is hesitant to act.

Moral qualms play a role here. After all, the tribes have occupied the continent for generations before the white man arrived, and uprooting them by force smacks of injustice.

But the hesitancy seemed to run deeper than that.

The answer may lie in the Enlightenment writing of the Frenchman, Henri Rousseau, familiar fare for many early presidents. Rousseau touts the vision of what he calls the "noble savage," uncorrupted by the greed and ruthlessness of modern society. These are truly free men, not slaves, living independently off the land, governed by the communal will of their tribe – all virtues that resonate with the American spirit.

Nothing is so gentle as man in his primitive state, when placed by nature at an equal distance from the stupidity of brutes and the fatal enlightenment of civil man.

This image of the "noble savage" is also reinforced at the time by the author, James Fennimore Cooper, who stands alongside Washington Irving as the nation's first popular story-teller. While Irving's tales poke fun at the Dutch knickerbockers of New York, Cooper's fame rests on the adventures of the frontiersman, Natty Bumppo, and his loyal Mohican companions, Chingachgook and Uncas.

These two are neither fully civilized nor Christian, but they do exhibit native intelligence, personal courage, and intense loyalty for their American friend – all traits that suggest a "capacity for growth" almost never accorded the fully beaten down Africans.

In turn, this seems to prompt the early Presidents not to enslave the Indians, but to reform them – to help them realize their potential under the guiding wing of a benevolent “Great White Father.”

Monroe’s 1817 Inaugural Address captures the obligations he feels America owes its first inhabitants:

With the Indian tribes it is our duty to cultivate friendly relations and to act with kindness and liberality...

Equally proper is it to persevere in our efforts to extend to them the advantages of civilization.

Adams’s 1825 speech reinforces the same theme in his wish to...

Extend equal protection to all the great interests of the nation (and) promote the civilization of the Indian tribes.

But it will not take long for the new President to discover that all the high-minded talk of “civilizing the noble savages” counts for little against the growing demands of speculators and settlers intent on driving the Indians off their historical homelands.

Time: 1825-1827

Georgia Forces Adams’s Hand In Support Of “Indian Removal”

The day before Adams takes office, the Treaty of Indian Springs is approved by the Senate. The terms have supposedly been worked out between chiefs of the Creek and Cherokee tribes in Georgia and two U.S. Commissioners – with the Indians ceding their lands in Georgia and Alabama in exchange for equal acreage in the west and a cash bonus of \$400,000. September 1, 1826 is set as the deadline for the tribes to move west.

But the deal is fraudulent, top to bottom, the work of only one Creek leader, John McIntosh, and Georgian officials eager to line their own pockets. When McIntosh is murdered by rival chiefs for his betrayals, the matter comes to Adams’s attention.

The President’s response is indecisive.

Even though he has signed the Treaty, he is troubled by the reports of fraud, and orders a halt to state land surveys scheduled to start sixteen months hence. This triggers a violent response from Governor George Troup of Georgia, who threatens to defy the President and begin the survey at once. At this point General Edmund Gaines is dispatched to investigate further. He sides with the Indians and reports that Troup is a “madman.” In turn, Adams signals Troup that U.S. military forces are to be used against any attempt by the state to enter the lands.

After Troup backs off, Adams tells the Creeks that Congress is unlikely to deny the original Treaty unless it can be replaced with a new one involving a land trade. The tribes meet and offer an option, but Adams tells them their proposed boundaries are unacceptable. Adams turns to his Cabinet in search of a solution.

Secretary of War Barbour argues for gradual diffusion of the Indians rather than any mass exodus, in hopes of seeing them assimilated into white civilization. Clay finds this impractical, saying that the Indians, like the Africans, are an inferior race, and will never be successfully integrated.

Senator Howell Cobb of Georgia, a rising southern spokesperson, tells Adams that his delegation will be forced to side with Jackson unless he acts immediately to enforce the original treaty. In characteristic fashion, Adams fires back at Cobb:

We could not do so without gross injustice. As to Georgia being driven to support General Jackson, I feel little care or concern for that.

After more pressure from Adams, the Creeks agree on January 24, 1826, to the Treaty of Washington, which fails its critics on two counts. First, it cedes more, but not all of their Georgia lands; second it sets a precedent whereby the U.S. officially recognizes the Indian tribes as “sovereign nations.”

Adams forwards the new Treaty to the Senate, but Governor Troup says that he plans to start surveying the land immediately, on the grounds that...

Georgia is sovereign on her own soil.

Clay urges Adams to send federal troops in to force Troup’s hand, but the President opts to push the Creeks once again to surrender more territory. And they do. On November 13, 1827 they cede their remaining land in Georgia in exchange for another \$42,000 and a promise that the government will protect them as they move west -- a promise ignored when the time comes.

Not only has Adams alienated Georgians and looked weak throughout the negotiations, he also concludes, in hindsight that he has violated his own ethical standards along the way.

These (treaties) are crying sins for which we are answerable, and before a higher jurisdiction.

While unknowable, it may be that his sense of failure over treatment of the Indians will lead on to his often heroic stances later in life on behalf of the African slaves.

Sidebar: The Founding Fathers Pass Away

The Simultaneous Deaths Of Adams and Jefferson



In Memory Of The Founders

One other event that marks Adams's term is the 50th anniversary celebration of independence from Britain.

As flag waving, parades and memorial speeches play out in local town squares across the nation, an eerie coincidence forever defines the moment, for all Americans, but especially for JQ Adams.

In Quincy, Massachusetts, his 90 year old father, John, lies dying. In the early morn, he is awakened momentarily by a memorial cannonade. When told that it is the Fourth, he replies: "It is a great day. It is a good day." Then he lapses. In the late afternoon his mind wanders back to the past and a reassuring thought: "Thomas Jefferson survives." A pause, and he is dead around 6:20PM.

But, ironically, so is Thomas Jefferson, at 83 years of age. As if by sheer will, he too struggles toward the Memorial Day. In the evening of July 3 he asserts a last wish, "this is the Fourth of July." When told that the day is indeed approaching, he

fades back into sleep. He wakes briefly around 4AM on the Fourth, then succumbs in the early afternoon, around 1:00PM.

The second and third presidents, dead on the same day, the day of the bold Declaration, of the grave risk giving way to the prospect of a glorious reward, now a half century in the past.

The two have shared a love-hate relationship over the entire time.

Adams plays the role of the squat New England Yankee, working his own farm in Quincy, horrified by slavery, constantly pinching pennies to end up with a \$100,000 estate at his demise, forever speaking his mind in plain language that lacks in diplomacy. It is he who coerces Jefferson into drafting the Declaration on the grounds that he is "ten times the better writer."

Jefferson is the tall, rail-thin Southerner, master of his Monticello plantation run by slaves, a congenital spendthrift whose inheritance will be \$100,000 in debts, forever the quiet, often sneaky politician, but also the one truest author of America's hopes and ideals. From the beginning he sees in Adams the "colossus of America's independence" with the bulldog tenacity needed to make his elegant phrases come to life in practice.

Throughout their lives, both are certain they are right in their lifestyles and convictions.

Adams knows the nation needs a strong central government run by the best people to keep it safe and promote prosperity. Jefferson is sure that local governments are better equipped to solve problems and that concentrated federal power will ultimately cost the people their freedom.

Eventually their political differences lead to a painful falling out.

But this ends in 1812 when their mutual friend, Dr. Benjamin Rush, prompts a rapprochement in the form of a short New Year's day letter sent by Adams to Jefferson. It will be one of the 380 notes the two will exchange from then on, reflecting on the country's past and future.

They are both amazed and pleased by what they have proven together – the many promises of government by the people and for the people.

Both, however, also sense that something is being lost in America, that the once strong bonds of Union may be fraying in the face of sectional differences. In a moment of nostalgia, Adams recalls the spirit of 1776:

I look back with rapture on those golden days when Virginia and Massachusetts lived and acted together like a band of brothers.

Jefferson is laid to rest at 5PM, the day after his death, in a simple ceremony at Monticello. No invitations are sent out, but friends are allowed to visit his grave. According to his wishes, a headstone in the shape of an obelisk spells out the three things he wishes to be remembered for.

*Here was buried
Thomas Jefferson
Author of the Declaration of American Independence
of the Statute of Virginia for religious freedom
& Father of the University of Virginia*

Adams's funeral is held in Quincy on July 7, with some 4,000 spectators on hand. It is marked by canon salutes and a procession from Adams's home to the First Congregational Church that includes dignitaries from Congressman Daniel Webster to John Kirkland, head of Harvard College, to Governor Levi Lincoln,. Three weeks later Webster eulogizes both Adams and Jefferson at Faneuil Hall in Boston.

Their fame, indeed, is safe. Although no sculptured marble, should rise to their memory, nor engraved stone bear record of their deeds, yet will their remembrance...remain; for which American Liberty it rose, and with American Liberty Only can it perish.

Their deaths in 1826 narrow the list of survivors from the revolutionary period. The two Pinckneys are gone. Luther Martin, Rufus King and John Jay will follow soon. When Charles Carroll dies in 1832 all signers of the Declaration will have passed – and less than five years later, the voices of the remaining founders are silenced.

Founders Who Live On Past 1820

1820+	Deaths	At Age
Charles Pinckney	Oct 29, 1824	67
CC Pinckney	Aug 16, 1825	79
William Eustis	Feb 6, 1825	71
John Adams	July 4, 1826	90
Thomas Jefferson	July 4, 1826	83
Luther Martin	July 8, 1826	78
Rufus King	April 29, 1827	72
John Jay	May 17, 1829	83
James Monroe	July 4, 1831	73
Charles Carroll III	Nov 14, 1832	95
John Randolph	May 24, 1833	59
William Johnson	Aug 4, 1834	62
Nathaniel Dane	Feb 15, 1835	82
John Marshall	July 6, 1835	79
James Madison	June 28, 1836	85
Aaron Burr	Sept 14, 1836	80

It will now be left to the next generation to continue to advance America along the paths laid out by the founders.