

Chapter 46 - James Monroe's Second Term

Time: November-December 1820

Monroe Wins Re-Election Unopposed

The economic depression that continues to plague the country in 1820 would seem to offer the Federalists an opportunity to revive their political fortunes, but it is beyond saving, for multiple reasons.

Perhaps foremost is the absence of a strong and well known leader in the mold of Washington, Hamilton and John Adams. DeWitt Clinton, who ran well against Madison in 1812, has returned to his roots as a Democratic-Republican, and is serving as Governor of New York. Senator Rufus King, has lost the last two races by large margins, and is now 65 years old. Meanwhile, the most logical Federalist contender, 53 year old John Quincy Adams, has been drummed out of the party for his support of Jefferson's 1807 Embargo, and is serving as Monroe's Secretary of State.

In addition to lacking a credible presidential candidate, the Federalists are without a platform that resonates at the national level. Most people regard them as the party of wealthy New Englanders, touting the narrow wishes of the shipping and mercantile industries, out of touch with the rest of the country. Still others have never forgiven them for their "treasonous threat," at the 1814 Hartford Convention, to secede from the Union.

The result is that Monroe in 1820, like Washington in 1792, runs essentially unopposed in the election. The voter turn-out is only 107,000, about the same as in 1816. The President wins every state in the Union, and all but one electoral vote. The lone hold-out is an elector from New Hampshire who regards Monroe as a failure, and casts his vote for John Quincy Adams.

Results Of The 1820 Presidential Election

Candidates	State	Party	Pop Vote	Tot EV	South	Border	North	West
James Monroe	Va	Dem-Rep	87,343	229	75	27	107	20
Anti-Monroe	--	Federalist	17,465	0				
DeWitt Clinton	NY	Independent	1,893	0				
John Quincy Adams		Dem-Rep	---	1			1	
Total			106,701	230	75	27	108	20
Needed To Win				116				

Note: South (Virginia, NC, SC, Georgia, TN, Ala, Miss, La), Border (Delaware, Maryland, Ky), North (NH, Mass, NY, NJ, Penn, RI, Conn, Vt, Maine), West (Ohio, Indiana, IL) Total # electors voting = 230; must get more than half to win = 116.

The Federalists do continue to slate candidates for Congress, but their influence outside of New England remains trivial.

Results Of Congressional Elections

House	1817	1819	1821
Democratic-Republicans	146	160	155
Federalist	39	26	32
Senate			
Democratic-Republicans	25	37	37
Federalist	13	9	9
Vacant			2
Congress#	15 th	16 th	17 th
President	Mad	Mon	Mon

Time: March 5, 1821

Monroe's Second Inaugural Address

Since March 4, 1821 falls on the Sabbath, Monroe delays his inauguration until Monday the fifth. His speech is lengthy and mixes praise for the nation's progress since independence along with his priorities for his second term.

He begins with foreign policy, recalling the second war with Britain, and the nation's need for a strong military to avoid similar costly conflicts in the future.

Just before the commencement of the last term the United States had concluded a war with a very powerful nation...Provision was (then) made for the construction of fortifications at proper points through the whole extent of our coast and...augmentation of our naval force...It need scarcely be remarked that these measures have not been resorted to in a spirit of hostility to other powers They have been dictated by a love of peace, of economy, and an earnest desire to save the lives of our fellow-citizens from that destruction and our country from that devastation which are inseparable from war when it finds us unprepared for it. It is believed, and experience has shown, that such a preparation is the best expedient that can be resorted to prevent war.

The conduct of the Government in what relates to foreign powers is always an object of the highest importance to the nation. Its agriculture, commerce, manufactures, fisheries, revenue, in short, its peace, may all be affected by it. Attention is therefore due to this subject.

Relations with Spain seem to be progressing well. For the moment, the United States will remain neutral in regard to Spain's ongoing wars with its South American colonies. The recent acquisition of Florida was important to America's future, and signals the opportunity for ongoing friendly relations.

The war between Spain and the colonies in South America, which had commenced many years before, was then the only conflict that remained unsettled. Our attitude has therefore been that of neutrality between them, which has been maintained by the Government with the strictest impartiality. Should the war be continued, the United States, regarding its occurrences, will always have it in their power to adopt such measures respecting it as their honor and interest may require. Great confidence is entertained that the late treaty with Spain, which has been ratified by both the parties, and the ratifications whereof have been exchanged, has placed the relations of the two countries on a basis of permanent friendship.

But to the acquisition of Florida too much importance cannot be attached. It secures to the United States a territory ...whose importance is...of the highest interests of the Union. It opens to several of the neighboring States a free passage to the ocean...by several rivers...It secures us against all future annoyance from powerful Indian tribes. It gives us several excellent harbors in the Gulf of Mexico for ships of war of the largest size. It covers the Mississippi and other great waters within our extended limits, and thereby enables the United States to afford complete protection to the vast and very valuable productions of our whole Western country...

The outlook for commercial relations with Britain and France are also favorable.

By a treaty...on the 20th of October, 1818, the convention regulating the commerce between the United States and Great Britain...was revived and continued for the term of ten years from the time of its expiration. The negotiation with France for the regulation of the commercial relations...will be pursued on the part of the United States...with an earnest desire that it may terminate in an arrangement satisfactory to both parties.

On the budgetary front, the message is mixed. Some progress has been made on paying down the public debt, without overburdening taxes – but government revenues have fallen and more bonds have been issued to cover expenditures.

The situation of the United States in regard to...resources...revenue, and the facility with which it is raised affords a most gratifying spectacle. The payment of nearly \$67,000,000 of the public debt, with the great progress made in measures of defense and in other improvements of various kinds since the late war, are conclusive proofs of this extraordinary prosperity, especially when...these expenditures have been defrayed without a...direct tax and... in a manner not to be felt.

Under the present depression of prices, affecting all the productions of the country... revenue has considerably diminished, the effect of which has been to compel Congress...to resort to loans or internal taxes to supply the deficiency. On the presumption that this depression and the deficiency in the revenue arising from it would be temporary, loans were authorized for the demands of the last and present year.

I am satisfied that internal duties and excises, with corresponding imposts on foreign articles of the same kind, would, without imposing any serious burdens on the people,

enhance the price of produce, promote our manufactures, and augment the revenue, at the same time that they made it more secure and permanent.

After turning once again to fair treatment of the Indian tribes, and expressing concerns about renewed conflicts in Europe, he zeroes in on his optimism around America’s future.

If we turn our attention, fellow-citizens...to our country...we have every reason to anticipate the happiest results In this great nation there is but one order, that of the people, . By steadily pursuing this course in this spirit there is every reason to believe that our system will soon attain...such a degree of order and harmony as to command the admiration and respect of the civilized world.

Twenty-five years ago the river Mississippi was shut up and our Western brethren had no outlet for their commerce The United States now enjoy the complete and uninterrupted sovereignty over the whole territory from St. Croix to the Sabine. New States, settled from among ourselves in this and in other parts, have been admitted into our Union in equal participation in the national sovereignty with the original States. We now, fellow-citizens, comprise within our limits the dimensions and faculties of a great power under a Government possessing all the energies of any government ever known to the Old World, with an utter incapacity to oppress the people.

With full confidence and with a firm reliance on the protection of Almighty God, I shall forthwith commence the duties of the high trust to which you have called me.

Time: March 4, 1821 – March 4, 1825

Overview Of Monroe’s Second Term



James Monroe (1758-1831)

All cabinet members in place at the end of Monroe’s first term remain in place through the second, except for one turn-over in the Navy post.

James Monroe Cabinet In 1821

Position	Name	Home State
Vice-President	Daniel Tompkins	New York
Secretary of State	J Quincy Adams	Massachusetts
Secretary of Treasury	William Crawford	Georgia
Secretary of War	John C. Calhoun	South Carolina
Secretary of the Navy	Smith Thompson	New York
Attorney General	William Wirt	Virginia

The focus of the second term turns out to be foreign policy.

The stage for this is set early in 1821 when Alexander I of Russia asserts a claim to vast acreage in the Pacific northwest, including what becomes the Oregon Territory.

Then comes pressure from King Ferdinand VII of Spain, demanding that the United States refrain from recognizing new governments in his break-away colonies across South America.

Monroe eventually sees both these acts as affronts to America's growing power in the world, and in need of a firm response. Secretary of State John Quincy Adams promotes this stance, and completes careful diplomacy with Britain and France to head off any thoughts they might have of aligning with either Spain or Russia.

The final word on foreign intrusions comes in Monroe's annual speech to Congress on December 2, 1823. As a lifelong military man, the President places national security ahead of all other duties, and decides that the time has come to end further attempts by foreigners to impose their wills within the hemisphere.

In years ahead, this "hands-off" policy becomes known as the "Monroe Doctrine," and it set the stage for America to achieve hegemony over North America.

As the President's second term plays out, intense jockeying is under way to find his successor in office. Three men in particular – John Quincy Adams, William Crawford and Andrew Jackson – will vie for the office, in an election that will, for the second time, end up decided in the House of Representatives.



Monroe's Final Tomb – Hollywood Cemetery, Richmond

James Monroe is 66 years old when he retires to his Highland plantation, which has expanded to some 3,500 acres and is worked by 30-40 slaves. But his final six years will not be happy ones. Like Jefferson and Madison, his personal finances are in a shambles, only he lacks their inherited wealth to fend off ruin. He repeatedly petitions government officials for "reimbursement" of expenses incurred during his public service, but to no avail.

He is forced to sell Highland Plantation in 1825 and move 125 miles north to Oak Hill plantation, inherited from his uncle, Judge Jones. His wife dies in September of 1830, another terrible blow.

After having lived with the partner of your youth, in so many vicissitudes of life, so long together, and afforded each other comforts which no other person on earth could do...to have her snatched from us, is an affliction which none but those who feel it, can justly estimate.

Monroe lives but ten months from his wife's passing. He is forced to sell Oak Hill, and is taken in, virtually destitute, by his younger daughter in New York city. He dies there of heart failure on July 4, 1831.

Key Events: Monroe's Second Term

1821	
June 21	Waterford Academy For Young Ladies opens in Waterford, NY
Aug 10	Missouri admitted to the Union as 24 th state
Sept 4	Czar Alexander I of Russia claims all of North America north of 51 st parallel
	Republic of Liberia opened by American Colonization Society
1822	
Mar 30	East and West Florida joined, with Andrew Jackson as territorial governor
May 30	Slave rebellion plot of Denmark Vessey foiled; 35 blacks hanged.
June 19	US recognizes Bolivar's Republic of Gran Columbia
July 20	Tennessee state legislature declares support for Andrew Jackson for 1824 presidential race
July 24	US protests Russian claims to Oregon territory region
Oct 27	270 mile stretch of Erie Canal opened
Nov 18	Kentucky state legislature says it will support Henry Clay for the 1824 nomination
Dec 12	The US recognizes Mexican independence from Spain under emperor, Augustin de Iturbide
1823	
Jan 27	The US recognizes Chile and Argentina as independent nations
Feb 18	Iturbide confirms land grant from Mexico to Moses and Stephen Austin in Tejas province
July 17	JQ Adams informs Russia that it will resist any further foreign colonization in the Americas
Aug 20	Britain supports US resistance to Russian claims in the Oregon Territory region
Oct 9	France declares it will not support Spanish efforts to regain colonies in South America
Dec 2	The "Monroe Doctrine" announced in the President's annual speech to Congress
1824	
Feb 14	66 House members nominate Treasury Secretary William Crawford for the 1824 nomination
Feb 15	Boston politicians advance the candidacy of JQ Adams for the nomination
Feb	Explorer Jed Smith opens "South Pass" (Wyoming) through Rocky Mountains
Mar 2	In <i>Gibbons v Ogden</i> , Supreme Court says Fed trumps states on interstate commerce issues
Mar 31	Speaker Henry Clay supports protectionist Tariff of 1824 and need for infrastructure upgrades
April 17	Russia signs treaty with US renouncing claims south of 54'40", including the Oregon Territory
May 22	Congress supports Clay's Tariff of 1824 bill

May 26	The US recognizes Brazil's independence
Jun 17	The Bureau of Indian Affairs is established
Oct 5	The Renssalaer School Of Theoretical And Practical Science opens
Dec 1	The 1824 presidential election ends with no candidate getting an electoral college majority
--	Benjamin Lundy moves publishing of <i>Genius of Universal Emancipation</i> newspaper to Baltimore
1825	
Jan 3	The utopian New Harmony community opens in Indiana
Feb 9	JQ Adams is elected President when Clay supports him over Jackson in a House vote