

Sectionalism During the Era of Good Feelings

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Tariffs

National bank

Internal improvements

Slavery

Missouri Compromise

- Slave states could not switch to free states without upsetting the balance of free/slave states
- Tensions between north and south/free and slave
- Balance could only last so long

Thesis:

During the Era of Good Feelings, sectionalism was sparked by slavery disagreements, tariffs, and other national issues, and played a huge role in the period by dividing the Union and eventually leading to a civil war.

The Liberator, Inaugural Editorial by William Lloyd Garrison. 1 January 1831

During my recent tour for the purpose of exciting the minds of the people by a series of discourses on the subject of slavery, every place that I visited gave fresh evidence of the fact, that a greater revolution in public sentiment was to be effected in the free States -- and particularly in New-England -- than at the South. I found contempt more bitter, opposition more active, detraction more relentless, prejudice more stubborn, and apathy more frozen, than among slave-owners themselves. Of course, there were individual exceptions to the contrary. This state of things afflicted, but did not dishearten me. I determined, at every hazard, to lift up the standard of emancipation in the eyes of the nation, within sight of Bunker Hill and in the birthplace of liberty. That standard is now unfurled; and long may it float, unhurt by the spoliations of time or the missiles of a desperate foe -- yea, till every chain be broken, and every bondman set free! Let Southern oppressors tremble -- let their secret abettors tremble -- let their Northern apologists tremble -- let all the enemies of the persecuted blacks tremble.

John C. Calhoun, A Disquisition on Government, 1849

The reason is, that inequality of condition, while it is a necessary consequence of liberty, is, at the same time, indispensable to progress. In order to understand why this is so, it is necessary to bear in mind, that the main spring to progress is, the desire of individuals to better their condition; and that the strongest impulse which can be given to it is, to leave individuals free to exert themselves in the manner they may deem best for that purpose, as far at least as it can be done consistently with the ends for which government is ordained — and to secure to all the fruits of their exertions. Now, as individuals differ greatly from each other, in intelligence, sagacity, energy, perseverance, skill, habit of industry and economy, physical power, position and opportunity — the necessary effect of leaving all free to exert themselves to better their condition, must be a corresponding inequality between those who may possess these qualities and advantages in a high degree, and those who may be deficient in them. The only means by which this result can be prevented are, either to impose such restrictions on the exertions of those who may possess them in a high degree, as will place them on a level with those who do not; or to deprive them of the fruits of their exertions.

James Monroe. Washington, March 5, 1821

Volume II Page: 91(Extract) "Under the present depression of prices, affecting all the productions of the country and every branch of industry, proceeding from causes explained on a former occasion, the revenue has considerably diminished, the effect of which has been to compel Congress either to abandon these great measures of defense or 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.

Anxious to relieve my fellow-citizens in 1817 from every burthen which could be dispensed with, and the State of the Treasury permitting it, I recommended the repeal of the internal taxes, knowing that such relief was then peculiarly necessary in consequence of the great exertions made in the late war. I made that recommendation under a pledge that should the public exigencies require a recurrence to them at any time while I remained in this trust, I would with equal promptitude perform the duty which would then be alike incumbent on me.

Necessary and Proper Clause

A passage in Article I of the U.S. Constitution that states: "Congress shall have power... to make all laws which shall be necessary and proper for carrying into execution the ... powers vested by this Constitution in the government of the United States." This provision was a repeated subject of debate among jurists in the early decades of the nation. Some argued that it meant no law could be passed unless it was legitimized by a power articulated elsewhere in the Constitution. Others argued that it granted Congress power to make laws in areas not explicitly mentioned by the Constitution.

Part of the Transcript of McCulloch v. Maryland (1819)

In the case now to be determined, the defendant, a sovereign State, denies the obligation of a law enacted by the legislature of the Union, and the plaintiff, on his part, contests the validity of an act which has been passed by the legislature of that State. The constitution of our country, in its most interesting and vital parts, is to be considered; the conflicting powers of the government of the Union and of its members, as marked in that constitution, are to be discussed; and an opinion given, which may essentially influence the great operations of the government. No tribunal can approach such a question without a deep sense of its importance, and of the awful responsibility involved in its decision. But it must be decided peacefully, or remain a source of hostile legislation, perhaps of hostility of a still more serious nature; and if it is to be so decided, by this tribunal alone can the decision be made. On the Supreme Court of the United States has the constitution of our country devolved this important duty.

The first question made in the cause is, has Congress power to incorporate a bank?

It has been truly said that this can scarcely be considered as an open question, entirely unprejudiced by the former proceedings of the nation respecting it. The principle now contested was introduced at a very early period of our history, has been recognized by many successive legislatures, and has been acted upon by the judicial department, in cases of peculiar delicacy, as a law of undoubted obligation. . . .

The power now contested was exercised by the first Congress elected under the present constitution. The bill for incorporating the bank of the United States did not steal upon an unsuspecting legislature, and pass unobserved. Its principle was completely understood, and was opposed with equal zeal and ability. After being resisted, first in the fair and open field of debate, and afterwards in the executive cabinet, with as much persevering talent as any measure has ever experienced, and being supported by arguments which convinced minds as pure and as intelligent as this country can boast, it became a law. The original act was permitted to expire; but a short experience of the embarrassments to which the refusal to revive it exposed the government, convinced those who were most prejudiced against the measure of its necessity, and induced the passage of the present law. It would require no ordinary share of intrepidity to assert that a measure adopted under these circumstances was a bold and plain usurpation, to which the constitution gave no countenance.

John C. Calhoun, *Speech on the Tariff Bill*. Washington D.C., 1816

The basis of our republic is too broad, and its structure too strong, to be shaken by them. Its extension and organization will be found to afford effectual security against their operation~ but let it be deeply impressed on the heart of this House and country, that, while they guarded against the old, they exposed us to a new and terrible danger-disunion. This single word comprehended almost the sum of our political dangers; and against it we ought to be perpetually guarded.

Source: Quote by Andrew Jackson, before he became president, regarding the Missouri Compromise.

"The Missouri question so called, has agitated the public mind, and that I sincerely regret and never excepted, but that now I see, will be the entering wedge to separate the union. It is even more wicked, it will excite those who is the subject of discussion to insurrection and massacre. It is a question of political ascendancy, and power, and the Eastern interests are determined to succeed regardless of the consequences, the constitution or our national happiness. They will find the southern and western states equally resolved to support their constitutional rights I hope I may not live to see the evils that must grow out of this wicked design of demagogues, who talk about humanity, but whose sole object is self aggrandizement regardless of the happiness of the nation."

Source: Excerpt from a speech by Representative Charles Pinckney of South Carolina to uphold slavery. (1820)

"Have the Northern states any idea of the value of our slaves? At least, sir, six hundred millions of dollars. If we lose them, the value of the lands they cultivate will be diminished in all cases one half, and in many they will become wholly useless. And an annual income of at least forty millions of dollars will be lost to your citizens, the loss of which will not alone be felt by the non-slaveholding states, but by the whole Union. For to whom, at present, do the Eastern states, most particularly, and the Eastern and Northern, generally, look for the employment of their shipping, in transporting our bulky and valuable products [cotton], and bringing us the manufactures and merchandises of Europe?

Another thing, in case of these losses being brought on us, and our being forced into a division of the Union, what becomes of your public debt? Who are to pay this, and how will it be paid? In a pecuniary view of this subject, therefore, it must ever be the policy of the Eastern and Northern states to continue connected with us. But, sir, there is an infinitely greater call upon them, and this is the call of justice, of affection, and humanity. Reposing at a great distance, in safety, in the full enjoyment of all their federal and state rights, can they, with indifference, or ought they, to risk, in the remotest degree, the consequences which this measure may produce? These may be the division of this Union and a civil war. Knowing that whatever is said here must get into the public prints, I am unwilling, for obvious reasons, to go into the description of the horrors which such a war must produce, and ardently pray that none of us may ever live to witness such an event."

Missouri Compromise. March 6, 1820.

Slavery, &c.
forever prohibited in the territory north of 36 deg. 30 minutes north latitude, except in Missouri.

Proviso: fugitives may be reclaimed.

SEC. 8. *And be it further enacted*, That in all that territory ceded by France to the United States, under the name of Louisiana, which lies north of thirty-six degrees and thirty minutes north latitude, not included within the limits of the state, contemplated by this act, slavery and involuntary servitude, otherwise than in the punishment of crimes, whereof the parties shall have been duly convicted, shall be, and is hereby, forever prohibited: *Provided always*, That any person escaping into the same, from whom labour or service is lawfully claimed, in any state or territory of the United States, such fugitive may be lawfully reclaimed and conveyed to the person claiming his or her labour or service as aforesaid.

APPROVED. March 6, 1820.