

# Nationalism at Center Stage

## MAIN IDEA

Nationalism exerted a strong influence in the courts, foreign affairs, and westward expansion in the early 1800s.

## WHY IT MATTERS NOW

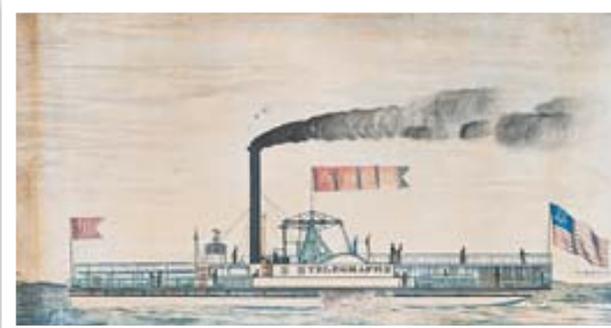
Nationalism continues to affect such decisions as whether or not we should involve the country in foreign conflicts and what limits can be placed on business, communications, and other trade.

## Terms & Names

- *McCulloch v. Maryland*
- John Quincy Adams
- nationalism
- Adams-Onís Treaty
- Monroe Doctrine
- Missouri Compromise

## One American's Story

In 1807 Robert Fulton's boat, the *Clermont*, propelled by a steam engine, cruised the 150 miles up the Hudson River from New York City to Albany in 32 hours. This successful demonstration marked the beginning of the steamboat era. Another one of Fulton's boats was so luxurious that it had a wood-paneled dining room and private bedrooms. Fulton posted regulations on his opulent steamboats.



### A PERSONAL VOICE ROBERT FULTON

“As the steamboat has been fitted up in an elegant style, order is necessary to keep it so; gentlemen will therefore please to observe cleanliness, and a reasonable attention not to injure the furniture; for this purpose no one must sit on a table under the penalty of half a dollar each time, and every breakage of tables, chairs, sofas, or windows, tearing of curtains, or injury of any kind must be paid for before leaving the boat.”

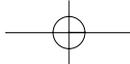
—quoted in *Steamboats Come True: American Inventors in Action*

▲ Like Fulton's *Clermont*, the *Telegraph* was a 19th-century steamboat.

Steamboats carried freight as well as passengers, and this new method of transportation spread quickly to the Ohio and Mississippi rivers. For the next 20 years, the steamboat was one factor that helped to unite the economic life of the North and the South. It thus contributed to the growing national spirit.

## The Supreme Court Boosts National Power

In 1808, Robert Fulton and Robert Livingston received a charter from the New York legislature that gave them the exclusive right to run steamboats on rivers in that state. They profited from this state charter, which granted them a



monopoly (exclusive legal control of a commercial activity), by charging steamboat operators for licenses to operate on various stretches of river.

One of these operators was Aaron Ogden. Ogden was licensed by Fulton and Livingston under the laws of New York State to run his steamship line between New York and New Jersey. Ogden believed that he was the only operator legally entitled to run a steamboat service on that stretch of the Hudson. Then Thomas Gibbons began to run a similar service in the same area, claiming that he was entitled to do so according to federal law. Ogden took Gibbons to court to stop him. However, in 1824 the Supreme Court ruled that interstate commerce could be regulated only by the federal government. In other words, Ogden's "exclusive" right granted by New York was not legal, since the route crossed state lines.

More important, by clarifying that Congress had authority over interstate commerce, the *Gibbons v. Ogden* decision helped to ensure that the federal government has the power to regulate just about everything that crosses state lines. In modern life, that authority means everything from air traffic to television and radio waves to interstate cellular communications. In addition, this decision led to future rulings favoring competition over monopolies. In this way, nationalism exerted a strong influence on the legal system.

### STRENGTHENING GOVERNMENT ECONOMIC CONTROL

In *McCulloch v. Maryland* (1819), as in *Gibbons v. Ogden*, Chief Justice John Marshall had also guided the Supreme Court to a ruling that strengthened the federal government's control over the economy. The Court's ruling also supported the national government over the state governments.

Maryland had levied a heavy tax on the local branch of the Bank of the United States, hoping to make it fail. Marshall declared that if this were allowed, states would in effect be overturning laws passed by Congress. The Chief Justice denied the right of Maryland to tax the Bank, stating that "the power to tax is the power to destroy." He declared the Bank of the United States constitutional.

**LIMITING STATE POWERS** Under Chief Justice Marshall, the Supreme Court made several rulings that blocked state interference in business and commerce—even when this meant overturning state law. In *Fletcher v. Peck* (1810), for example, the Court nullified a Georgia law that had violated individuals' constitutional right to enter into contracts. In the *Dartmouth College*

*v. Woodward* (1819) decision, the Court declared that the state of New Hampshire could not revise the original charter it had granted to the college's trustees in colonial times. A charter was a contract, the Court said, and the Constitution did not permit states to interfere with contracts. **A**

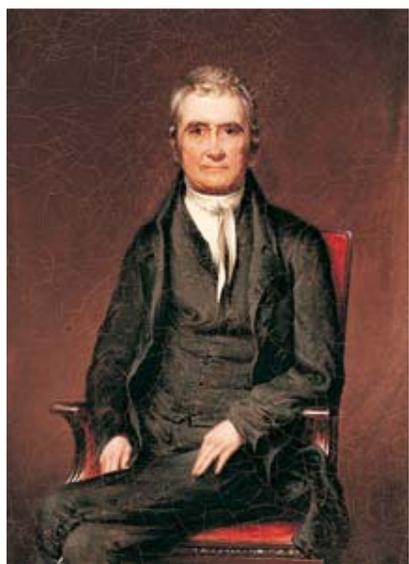
## Nationalism Shapes Foreign Policy

Chief Justice Marshall guided the Supreme Court to decisions that increased the power of the federal government over the state government. At the same time, Secretary of State **John Quincy Adams** established foreign policy guided by **nationalism**—the belief that national interests should be placed ahead of regional concerns or the interests of other countries.

**TERRITORY AND BOUNDARIES** Working under President James Monroe, Adams prioritized the security of the nation and expansion of its territory. To further these interests, Adams worked out a treaty with Great Britain to reduce the Great Lakes fleets of both countries to only a few military vessels. The Rush-Bagot

### Background

See *monopoly* on page R43 in the Economics Handbook.

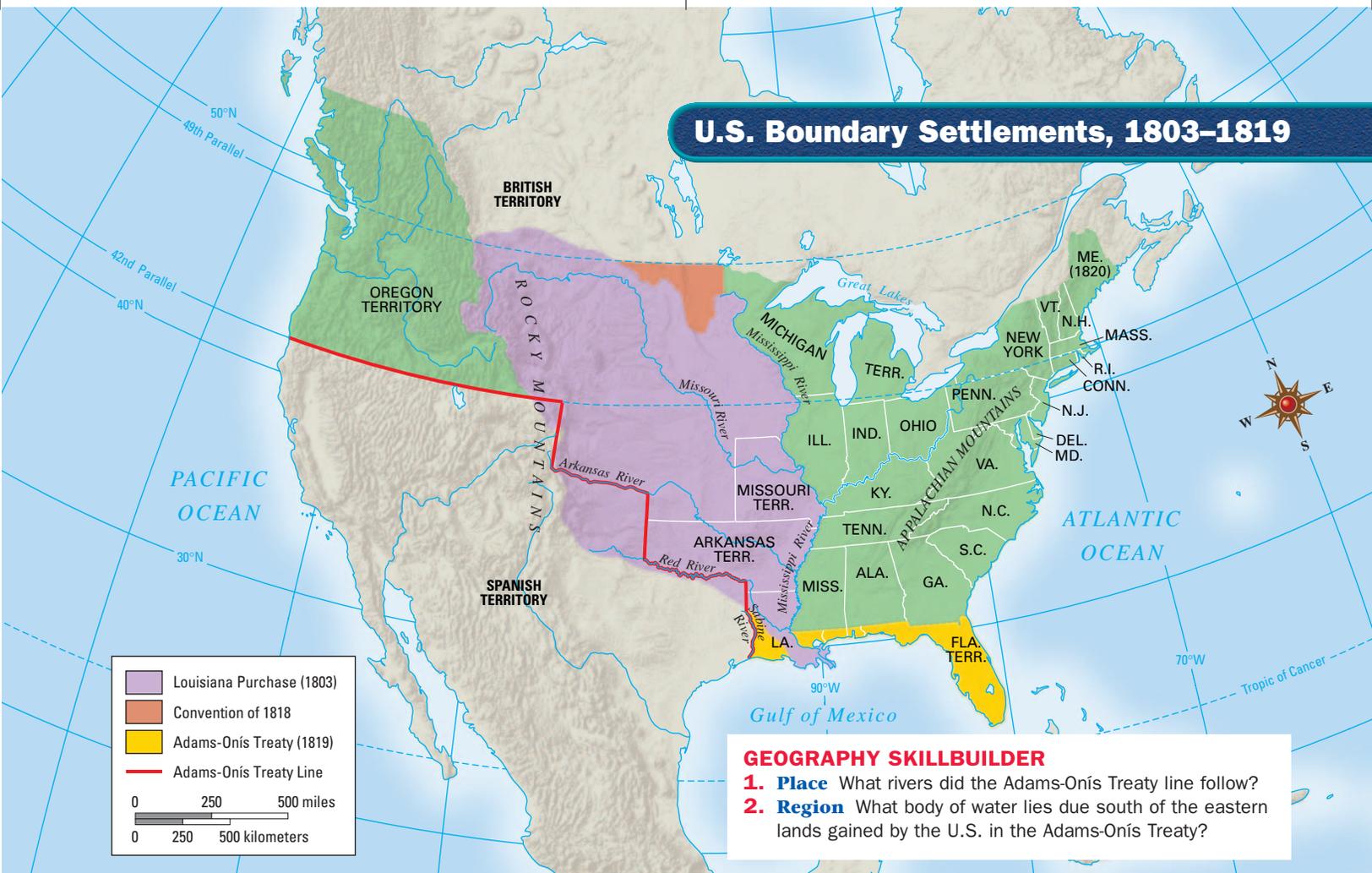


▲ **John Marshall** was appointed Chief Justice of the Supreme Court in 1801 by Federalist President John Adams.

### MAIN IDEA

#### Summarizing

**A** In what ways did the Supreme Court boost federal power?



Treaty (1817) eventually led the United States and Canada to completely demilitarize their common border. Adams also arranged the Convention of 1818, which fixed the U.S. border at the 49th parallel up to the Rocky Mountains. Finally, he reached a compromise with Britain to jointly occupy the Oregon Territory, the territory west of the Rockies, for ten years.

There remained one outstanding piece of business. Most Americans assumed that Spanish Florida would eventually become part of the United States. In 1819, too weak to police its New World territories, Spain ceded Florida to the United States in the **Adams-Onís Treaty** and gave up its claims to the Oregon Territory.

**THE MONROE DOCTRINE** After Spain and Portugal defeated Napoleon in 1815, these European powers wanted to reclaim their former colonies in Latin America. Meanwhile, the Russians, who had been in Alaska since 1784, were establishing trading posts in what is now California.

With Spain and Portugal trying to move back into their old colonial areas, and with Russia pushing in from the northwest, the United States knew it had to do something. Many Americans were interested in acquiring northern Mexico and the Spanish colony of Cuba. Moreover, the Russian action posed a threat to American trade with China, which brought huge profits.

Hence, in his 1823 message to Congress, President Monroe warned all outside powers not to interfere with affairs in the Western Hemisphere. They should not attempt to create new colonies, he said, or try to overthrow the newly independent republics in the hemisphere. The United States would consider such action “dangerous to our peace and safety.” At the same time, the United States would not involve itself in European affairs or interfere with existing colonies in the Western Hemisphere. These principles became known as the **Monroe Doctrine**. **B**

**MAIN IDEA**

**Synthesizing**

**B** How did the foreign policies of John Quincy Adams and James Monroe serve national interests?



## Nationalism Pushes America West

While Presidents Adams and Monroe established policies that expanded U.S. territory, American settlers pushed into the Northwest Territory (present-day Ohio, Indiana, Illinois, Wisconsin, and Michigan), felling forests, turning lush prairies into farms and waterfronts into city centers.

**EXPANSION TO THE WEST** While some settlers went west to escape debts or even the law, most pushed westward in search of economic gain—for land was not only plentiful and fertile but cheap. There were also social gains to be made. For example, one could change occupations more easily on the frontier. Jim Beckwourth (1798–1867), the son of a white man and an African-American woman, ventured westward with a fur-trading expedition in 1823. He lived among the Crow, who gave him the name “Bloody Arm” because of his skill as a fighter. Later he served as an Army scout. In California in 1850, he decided to settle down and become a rancher, yet this was not the last of his occupations.

### A PERSONAL VOICE JIM BECKWOURTH

“In the spring of 1852 I established myself in Beckwourth Valley, and finally found myself transformed into a hotel-keeper and chief of a trading-post. My house is considered the emigrant’s landing-place, as it is the first ranch he arrives at in the golden state, and is the only house between this point and Salt Lake. Here is a valley two hundred and forty miles in circumference, containing some of the choicest land in the world.”

—quoted in *The Life and Adventures of James P. Beckwourth*



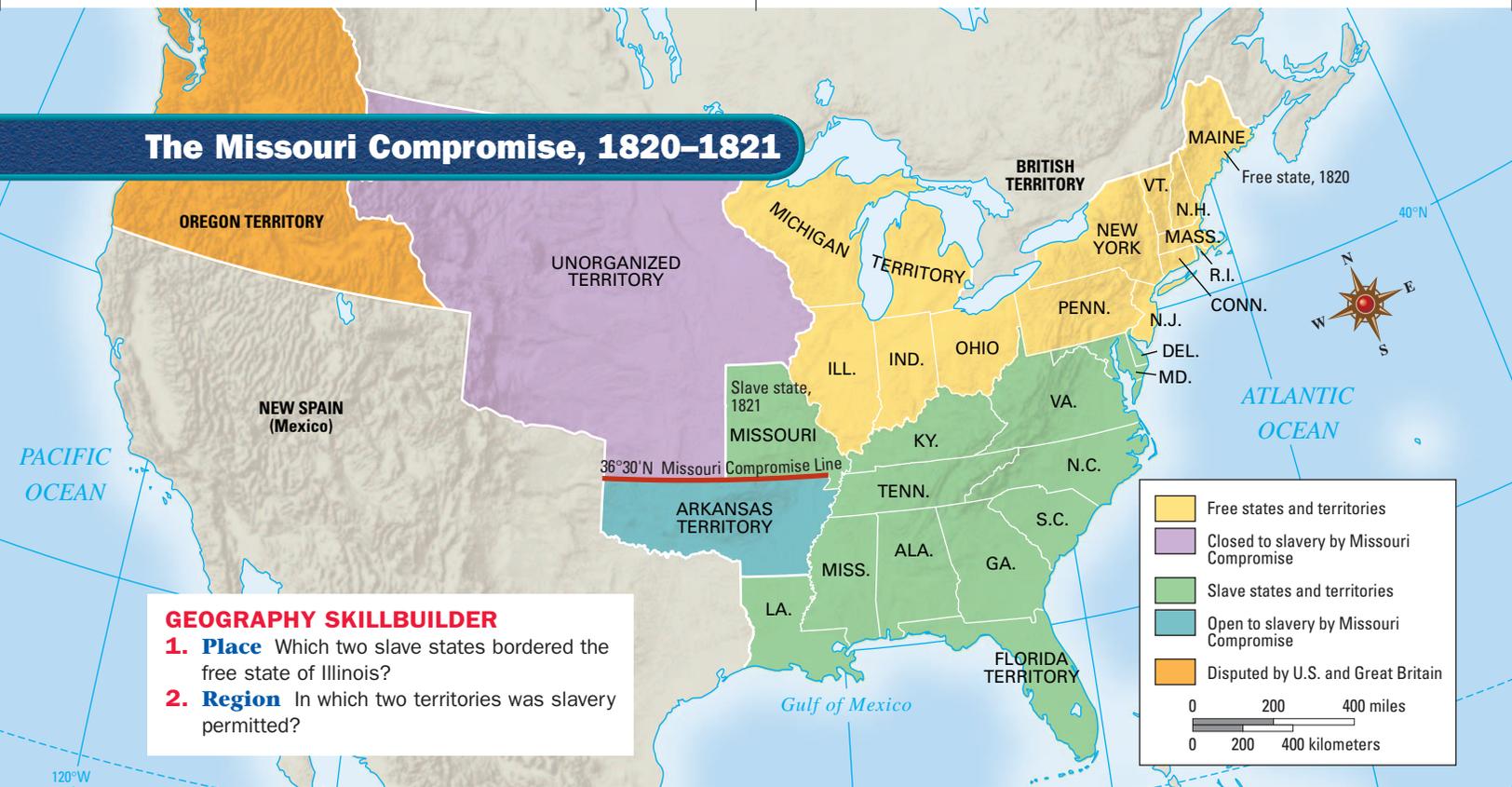
Jim Beckwourth

**THE MISSOURI COMPROMISE** When a territory’s population reached about 60,000, the people of the territory could petition the Union for admission, draft a state constitution, elect representatives, and become part of the United States, once Congress approved. In 1819, however, when settlers in Missouri requested admission into the Union, conflict arose. In Missouri, the new spirit of nationalism was challenged by an issue that had previously confronted the framers of the Constitution. That issue was the question of slavery.

Until 1818, the United States had consisted of ten free and ten slave states. The government admitted Illinois as the eleventh free state in 1818. Southerners then expected that Missouri would become the eleventh slave state, thereby maintaining the balance between free states and slave states in Congress. However, New York Congressman James Tallmadge amended the Missouri statehood bill to require Missouri to gradually free its slaves, a bill that passed the House. Southerners, perceiving a threat to their power, blocked the bill’s passage in the Senate. As arguments raged, Alabama was then admitted to the Union as a slave state. With 11 free to 11 slave states, Missouri’s status became crucial to the delicate balance.

The slaveholding states claimed that Northerners were trying to end slavery. Northerners accused Southerners of plotting to extend the institution into new territories. Hostilities became so intense that at times people on both sides even mentioned civil war and the end of the Union. Indeed, the issues that came to light during these debates foreshadowed the war to come. “We have the wolf by the ears,” wrote the aging Thomas Jefferson of this crisis, “and we can neither hold him, nor safely let him go.”

Under the leadership of Henry Clay, however, Congress managed to temporarily resolve the crisis with a series of agreements collectively called the **Missouri Compromise**. Maine was admitted as a free state and Missouri as a slave state, thus preserving the sectional balance in the Senate. The rest of the Louisiana Territory was split into two spheres of interest, one for slaveholders and one for free settlers. The dividing line was set at 36° 30′ north latitude. South



## The Missouri Compromise, 1820–1821

### GEOGRAPHY SKILLBUILDER

- Place** Which two slave states bordered the free state of Illinois?
- Region** In which two territories was slavery permitted?

of the line, slavery was legal. North of the line—except in Missouri—slavery was banned. Thomas Jefferson was among those who feared for the Union’s future after the Missouri Compromise. His words would prove prophetic.

### A PERSONAL VOICE THOMAS JEFFERSON

“This momentous question, like a firebell in the night, awakened and filled me with terror. I considered it at once as the knell of the Union. It is hushed, indeed, for the moment. But this is a reprieve only, not a final sentence.”

—letter to John Holmes, April 22, 1820

President Monroe signed the Missouri Compromise in 1820. For a generation, the problem of slavery in federal territories seemed settled.



## ASSESSMENT

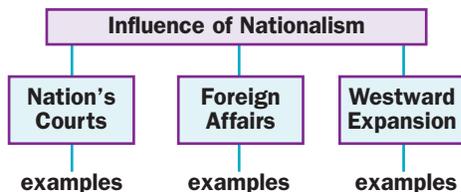
**1. TERMS & NAMES** For each term or name, write a sentence explaining its significance.

- *McCulloch v. Maryland*
- nationalism
- Monroe Doctrine
- John Quincy Adams
- Adams-Onís Treaty
- Missouri Compromise

### MAIN IDEA

#### 2. TAKING NOTES

In a diagram like the one shown, write historical examples that illustrate the influence of nationalism.



### CRITICAL THINKING

#### 3. HYPOTHESIZING

What short- and long-term goals might President Monroe have had in mind when he formulated the Monroe Doctrine in 1823? Support your answer. **Think About:**

- European nations’ presence in the Western Hemisphere
- the influence of nationalism on foreign policy
- the nation’s westward expansion

#### 4. SYNTHESIZING

What agreements did Congress reach that are regarded collectively as the Missouri Compromise? Why were they important at the time?

#### 5. EVALUATING

From what you know about the Missouri Compromise and the controversy that preceded it, do you think the new spirit of nationalism in the United States was strong or fragile? Support your opinion.