

A Basic History of the United States
VOLUME THREE



THE SECTIONS and
the CIVIL WAR
1826-1877

by
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Chapter 1

Introduction

The Civil War and Reconstruction were primal events in the history of the United States and the most dramatic and pronounced ones in the 19th century. They were events of the order, say, of the French Revolution for the history of France, or, more broadly, of western Europe. Historian Charles A. Beard has referred to the Civil War and its aftermath as “The Second American Revolution.”¹ But in fact it was not a revolution in the most basic sense, though it contained a rebellion, and to compare it to the American Revolution understates the extent of the disruption involved. In a large and important sense the American revolution did not profoundly disrupt the continuity of American development greatly. On the contrary, it was the continuation of a movement toward more complete self-government in America and toward limited government that had been underway for a long time. True, there was the break from England, the rejection of monarchy, internal divisions between Patriots and Loyalists, and the charting of an independent course in the world by the United States. But the way had been prepared for these developments and they somehow fit into and are readily absorbed into American history.

Not so, however, the Civil War and Reconstruction; they constitute a major break in the continuity of American history. They could hardly be absorbed into the frame of what preceded them nor what came after. They do not fit within the framework of the Constitution of the United States. There was, and is, no provision in the Constitution for taking military action against any state or combination of them. Nor, for that matter, was there any provision for the withdrawal of a state from the union. The union was voluntarily composed of states and peoples who had come in by action of appropriate majorities. A prolonged and violent civil war would have been sufficiently difficult to overcome and absorb, but there was much more than that, too. It was not a war among groups or organizations spread throughout the country. Rather, it was a war of one section or region of the country against other sections or regions. The split was geographical, not by class, order, or grouping of peoples. A remnant of the former union made war against a new and much smaller union. This set the stage for the harshness of the treatment of the South during the Reconstruction.

Even so, it is possible that the war could have somehow been absorbed into the stream of American history, probably as an unfortunate, regrettable, and abominable episode which was an aberration from it. That was made much more difficult itself, however, by the fact that Union armies pursued it

more and more as a total war in the last two years of the fighting rather than the more limited and restrained wars of the past. But the difficulties of fitting these events into American history were compounded greatly by Reconstruction. The vengeful behavior of Congress, the disfranchisement of many Southern whites, the penalties laid upon the wealth and resources of the South, and the prolonged evasion of constitutional restraints were too much to take in and absorb.

Undoubtedly, the impact of these events was felt much more directly and with greater force in the South than elsewhere. And the memory and resentment lingered on there long after the desire for revenge or retribution, or the memory of the animosities had died out or at least were in a state of remission—elsewhere. Eighty years after the onset of the Civil War, a Southerner would write:

The Civil War and Reconstruction represent in their primary aspect an attempt on the part of the Yankee to achieve by force what he had failed to achieve by political means: first, a free hand in the nation for the thievish aims of the tariff gang, and secondly, and far more fundamentally, the satisfaction of the instinctive urge of men in the mass to put down whatever differs from themselves—the will to make over the South in the prevailing American image and to sweep it into the main current of the nation.

To that end, he set himself to destroy the Southern world. . . . And the land was stripped and bled white—made, indeed, a frontier once more. . . .²

The South did not absorb the Civil War and Reconstruction into its history, not, at least, in the version the reconstructionists would impose, not for the better part of a hundred years anyway. That, however, belongs to a later part of American history.

There is, however, an aspect of the Civil War and Reconstruction that needs to be noted here for later reference. There is a sense in which the Civil War and Reconstruction were a foretaste of what has been writ large in the 20th century, not especially in the United States but for the whole world. Total war is one aspect of it, but totalitarianism is its more comprehensive term, and it is animated by what may be described in a paraphrase of Cash as the urge of men to put down whatever differs from themselves and to make them over according to some pattern. These patterns are best known as ideologies in the 20th century.

The Civil War and Reconstruction, then, loom large in the history of the 19th century. Moreover, they are primal events toward which much that happened in the preceding decades points, leads, and in some measure conditions. None of this is to be ignored or downplayed. Neither, however, should these events, however momentous their character, be permitted to

overshadow others which bear no particular relation to them. It is possible, for example, that two books published in 1859—*Critique of Political Economy* by Karl Marx and *Origin of the Species* by Charles Darwin—were of much greater long-range importance to Western Civilization than what followed the attack by the Confederacy on Fort Sumter in 1861. Or, to take a different tack, the invention of the sewing machine, or for that matter, the typewriter, surely were of great importance for the future of America. Andrew Jackson's campaign for the presidency between 1825–1828 was a major shift in American politics. In short, it would be to misconstrue history to focus on any particular development to the exclusion of others.

Actually, the period of the 1820s through the 1860s is an especially rich period in the social, economic, intellectual, and cultural life of the American people. Americans had extricated themselves from the political connections with Europe and they were in the process of becoming self-consciously American, however much they might still retain dependence upon Europe. In architecture, it was the era both of the log cabin and of a Greek revival in public buildings and mansions. (Houses that are often described as colonial in origin are more apt to be Greek revival of the first half of the 19th century than remains of the 18th.) Andrew Jackson was born in a log cabin but built a fine example of the Greek revival mansion, "The Hermitage," outside Nashville. American writers began to develop an American literature, with peculiarly American themes, and began, too, the development of local and regional themes. It was an age of oratory, Greek perhaps in inspiration but very American in its articulation. Great religious revivals swept over America, and religion freed from state control was attuned to the American scene in a proliferation of denominations and sects.

It was above all an era of romanticism, born in Europe it may be, but flowering in America in accord with its own clime. The belief in the supremacy of reason of the preceding age yielded ground to a new emphasis upon feeling, emotion, insight, intuition, and the wonders of the peculiar, the unique, and the individual. Poetry, which had become almost like prose, was freed from much of its bondage and emerged as a specialized art form for the romantics. But romanticism had a hundred facets, and it would be an error to place undue emphasis upon its literary and artistic side. It did include not only New England Transcendentalism and the Medieval revival in the South with the emphasis upon courtly graces and a class structure but also the placing of women upon a pedestal, so to speak, romantic love, the stark contrast between good and evil, the veneration of heroes such as Andrew Jackson, David Crockett, and Sam Houston (and ultimately Robert E. Lee), the love for the tall tale, oratorical flights in speeches, and dramatic religious conversions. Romantics exalted the imagination, and men conceived all sorts of reforms and had visions of utopias.

Nor is it less important to be aware that the mastery of government over the lives of the people had been very nearly broken in America, and after the

break from England the bent of the people was to make it a servant. But whether they could achieve the latter, or whether or not it might not hold perils unguessed, for a time government had been restrained and a goodly portion of the population was free. What did Americans make of this large measure of freedom to pursue their own ends? The answer to this question entails the opening up of the West, the clearing of forests, the development of inventions, and the hundreds of ways a growing population made its living and produced wealth. The great story of this period is that of the family farm, of self-employment, of the devices men hit upon to cooperate with one another to achieve their ends, and how people pursued and attained a measure of economic independence. It is true there was chattel slavery over much of the South, and the factory was making its appearance in the North, but the main current of this age was of men managing their own affairs on farms and with small businesses.

In short, there are a goodly number of themes worthy of attention and study during this period of American history. They are themes rich in meaning without reference to the Civil War and Reconstruction. That is not to say that most of them do not have some bearing in one way or another, for they do. For example, it would be difficult to account for the coming of the Civil War without the abolition movement, which was spawned out of the reform ferment which was romantic in its animus. Nor would the excesses of Reconstruction have been likely to occur to the extent that they did without the reformist zeal to make over the South. Rather, it is to say that the people who lived then and the themes by which their lives may be partially comprehended had existence and meaning both within and outside the framework of Civil War and Reconstruction.

Chapter 2

The Rise of Sectionalism

. . . The tendency of universal suffrage is to jeopardize the rights of property and the principles of liberty. There is a constant tendency . . . in the poor to covet a share in the plunder of the rich . . . ; in the indolent and profligate to cast the whole burthens of society upon the industrious and virtuous; and there is a tendency in ambitious and wicked men to inflame these combustible materials.

—Chancellor James Kent, 1821

. . . The great object of . . . government is the improvement of the condition of those who are parties to the social compact. . . . For the fulfillment of those duties governments are invested with power, and to the attainment of the end—the progressive improvement of the condition of the governed—the exercise of delegated powers is a . . . sacred and indispensable [duty]. . . .

—John Quincy Adams, 1825

The Senate and House of Representatives of South Carolina . . . do . . . solemnly PROTEST against the system of protecting duties, lately adopted by the federal government . . . , because South Carolina . . . is, and must ever continue to be, wholly dependent upon agriculture and commerce, not only for her prosperity, but for her very existence as a state. . . .

—Protest against the Tariff, 1828

Chronology

- 1803—Admission of Ohio to Union.
- 1812—Admission of Louisiana to Union.
- 1816—Admission of Indiana to Union.
- 1817—Admission of Mississippi to Union.
- 1818—Admission of Illinois to Union.
- 1819—Admission of Alabama to Union.
- 1820—Admission of Maine to Union.

1821—Admission of Missouri to Union.

1824—Presidential election.

1825—Adams elected by the House of Representatives.

1826—Panama Congress for Latin America.

1828—Passage of “Tariff of Abominations.”

The main division in English America during the colonial period was into colonies, and during the first several decades of the United States it was the states. These were the primary political units and centers of attachments and loyalties. What regionalism or sectionalism there was before the 19th century was occasional, temporary, and informal. True, historians have often divided the region east of the Appalachians into three areas: New England, the Middle Colonies or States, and the South. This division, however, is more for convenience than anything else, with the possible exception of New England. New England did have a homogenous population during the colonial period and the early years of the Republic. There was a New England Confederation for a brief period; the colonies were Calvinist in religious background; and Britain did make a short-lived effort to unite them administratively.

But the main tendency in America up until 1789 was centrifugal, not centripetal. That is, new colonies (or states) tended to be formed in territory originally claimed by older colonies, to spin off from rather than move toward or join them. That was true from the very beginning, when Virginia's grant, or at least Virginia, virtually encompassed English America. Thereafter, new grants were made and new settlements formed from the territory claimed by England. So, colonies multiplied in America: several spun off Massachusetts, for example. There were what might be called central or dominant colonies: Massachusetts, the Penn colonies, and Virginia, as well as South Carolina, perhaps. But there were maverick colonies, so to speak, which did not clearly fit into any configuration. Rhode Island was in New England geographically, but rarely spiritually or politically. It was not clear just where New York fit, if anywhere, and until after the break from England much the same could be said for Georgia. The main tendency throughout the colonial period, however, was for colonies to spin off on their own and to assume a political independence of the others.

This tendency was brought to a virtual halt in the 1780s. The Constitution required that for a new state to be formed within the bounds of an old one the established state must give its approval. Some states had given up their western claims, or agreed to do so in the future, to secure ratification of the Articles of Confederation, and after the ratification of the Constitution, Southern states allowed such new territories and states to be formed as Tennessee and Alabama. Vermont cut away from New York to become a separate state in 1791, but New York's claim had long been disputed. But

after these old claims had been disposed of the tendency to spin off ended, except where states had not yet been formed in western lands.

With the Declaration of Independence, the colonies became states, and assumed most of the powers and attributes of independent countries. However, from the outset there was supposed to be a union, and very shortly a confederation was formed of all the states. Though the Articles of Confederation referred to a "perpetual union," a much more likely outcome was that it was occasioned by the revolt and that once the danger was past the confederation would break up. There were many signs that this was taking place in the 1780s. The states paid little heed to the requests and decisions of Congress, and Congress lacked the independence or power to enforce its will. By 1787, such government of the union as existed was virtually at a standstill, and many observers believed that it must be either replaced or the union was at an end. It was replaced, of course, by a government with enlarged powers, and this made for a much firmer union.

It is doubtful that if the confederation had broken up in the 1780s it would have been replaced by regional or sectional confederacies. The point is that sectionalism had not developed as yet in the country. The most clear-cut division in the Constitutional Convention was not between sections but between the large and small states. There was not even a self-conscious Southern section in 1787. Virginia probably voted much more often with Pennsylvania than with South Carolina, for example. The Maryland delegation had difficulty enough agreeing among themselves, much less with anyone else. As for the Middle and New England states, they hardly comprised a self-conscious North, and jealousies among their inhabitants were much more common than were regional attachments.

The first self-conscious section to develop under the Constitution was New England. The particular occasion for its rise was the dominance of the Jeffersonian Republicans and the Napoleonic wars. New England was the seat of the strength of the Federalist Party, was the most conservative region in its religious affinities, and its inhabitants (or leaders) were most apt to be appalled by the ideas of the French Revolution. It is worth noting, too, that in the early 19th century, New England states were not increasing in population as were many other states. Their minority status in the union was impressed strongly upon them by the decline of the Federalist Party. Sectional feeling reached a peak in New England as the Jeffersonians made efforts to thwart British control over shipping during the Napoleonic wars. It was not so much that New Englanders were pro-British as that they were anti-French. The Federalists resented their own impotence, too, and the dominance of a Virginia dynasty. In any case, this New England sectionalism reached a peak during the War of 1812 and had its swan song at the Hartford Convention in 1814.

As it turned out, political parties were the great instrument for dispersing any sectional fervor, so long as no self-conscious section held a deciding

majority of the population. It looked at first as if parties might be the focus and instrument of sectionalism. Certainly, the Federalist Party was central to New England sectionalism. But the more it became a New England party the more it declined in national influence. The way the population was distributed over the country, no sectional party had any chance to elect a national candidate. That is not to say that a section could not dominate a party, but that is another story. At any rate, the Jeffersonian Republicans were a national party from the outset, had a considerable following in New England from the outset, and by 1820 had absorbed most Federalists and some of their programs.

Actually, however, states, not sections, were the main divisions in the union in the early years of the Republic. Neither regions nor sections have any constitutional standing or power in the United States. The Jeffersonians tended eventually to unify the nation by defending the states and their position of a strict construction of the Constitution. A strict construction tends to leave the states to the exercise of the preponderance of the power of government and to reduce any occasion for sectional contests. On the contrary, sectionalism is aided and abetted by the use of the national power extensively either for or against some region. That is, people within a section may attempt to use the national government for their ends, prevent its use for something they oppose, or do both. In that case, sections become both important and potentially divisive.

Sectionalism did begin to become a factor in the 1820s and succeeding years. The main issues were the use of government power. And these issues did arise over differences between the sections.

Regional Differences and Changes

The differences which gave rise to sectionalism were not primarily geographical. They certainly were not topographical. There were not great land or water barriers separating North and South. The Potomac is the boundary between Virginia and Maryland, but not between North and South. Nor is there any other body of water or mountain range that significantly separates North from South. The great topographical divider was the Appalachians, and separates East from West, not North from South.

Actually, there were two different basic divisions in the country in the 1820s. One basis of division was political; the other was geographic or topographical. As noted, the topographical division was between East and West, and the line dividing them was the crest of the Appalachians. Actually, this great mountain chain not only divides regions of the country but also several states. Pennsylvania is divided almost in half by the Alleghenies, a part of the Appalachians. Upstate New York is divided from New York City and environs by the mountains, as is Virginia from West

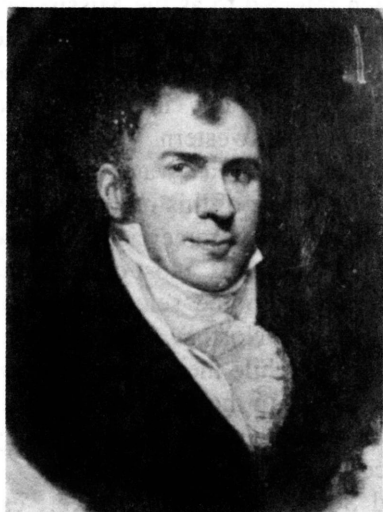
Virginia (then, simply western Virginia). Only from northern Georgia southward is East no longer divided from West by the mountains.

The West was much more part of a natural geographic unit than was the East. It belongs to a vast area which is often referred to as the Mississippi Basin, the northern portion of which extends from the Appalachians to the Rockies. It comprises that region drained by the Mississippi River into the Gulf of Mexico, extending from western Pennsylvania in the East to Montana in the West in the north and from southwestern Virginia and eastern Tennessee to Colorado in the south. So far as water traffic is concerned, the natural seaport for virtually the whole of this region is New Orleans. Thus, in the 1820s it appeared that a major commercial tie of the region that lies to the north is with the south. By contrast, most of the older states in the East had their own natural outlets to the sea: at Boston, Newport, New York, Philadelphia, Baltimore, Norfolk, Wilmington, Charleston, Savannah, and so on. So it was that while there were no great land barriers separating the North from the South in the East, neither was there any great river flowing through them linking them together. They were, however, linked by ports on the ocean.

The basic divisions between North and South were *political*, i.e., established by political authorities. Looking at it this way, there were four sections in the United States in the 1820s. Except for Missouri and a portion of Louisiana, all the states were at that time east of the Mississippi. The sections, excluding the relatively small settled region beyond the Mississippi, consisted of the Northeast, the Southeast, the Old Northwest, and the Old Southwest. The Northeast was divided from the Southeast by the Mason and Dixon Line. This is a line surveyed in the 1760s by the English astronomers Charles Mason and Jeremiah Dixon and is the boundary between Pennsylvania and Maryland. In the debates which led to the Missouri Compromise in 1820, the Mason and Dixon Line was referred to as the dividing line between slave and free states, and after that it came to be thought of as the division between the Northeast and Southeast (or, more loosely, the North and the South). *Slavery* was the difference focused upon, but whether or not a state abolished slavery had been determined politically by the states after the break from England.

The division between the Old Northwest and Old Southwest had been determined much earlier by the Continental Congress. The Northwest Ordinance had divided the territory west of the Appalachians at the Ohio River and had prohibited slavery north of that line. The Missouri Compromise extended the line west of the Mississippi at about the same latitude at which the Ohio empties into the Mississippi, excepting for Missouri, where slavery was to be permitted. Thus, it should be clear that the basic sectional lines were politically determined.

One of the major changes in the early 19th century was the rapid flow of population westward. It became rapid into some areas in the 1790s, when



Courtesy Independence National Historical Park

Robert Fulton (1765–1815)

Fulton was an engineer, inventor, and entrepreneur. He is best known for devising a method of propelling a boat by steam—inventing the steamboat. Fulton was born in Pennsylvania, apprenticed a jeweller, but went to England to study painting. While there, he met James Watt, became interested in engineering, and began to tinker with inventions. Among the preliminary devices he exhibited in Paris was a submarine. When he returned to the United States, he built the *Clermont* with the aid of Robert Livingston, and put it into operation on the Hudson river in 1807. Among his other inventions were a steam powered warship and machines for spinning flax, for making ropes, and for sawing and polishing marble. He had a remarkable flair for seeing the possibilities in machines for performing work and other tasks.

Kentucky and Tennessee were admitted as states in the union, followed by Ohio in 1803. But the westward movement became a surge after the War of 1812. Organized Indian resistance to settlers was virtually ended east of the Mississippi during that war. Also, the invention of the cotton gin brought short staple cotton into its own as a fabric. By 1820, the population of Ohio exceeded that of Massachusetts, and by 1830 Tennessee was more populous than the Bay State. Many New Englanders moved westward into upstate New York in the early years of the century, and New York had passed Virginia to become the most populous state in the union by 1820. The population of Alabama increased from about 9,000 in 1810 to 309,000 by 1830. Indiana was more populous than Connecticut by 1830.

Probably, the single most important invention commercially in the early years of the Republic, except possibly for the cotton gin, was that of the steamboat. Robert Fulton made a successful steamboat in 1807 and began regular boat service on the Hudson very shortly thereafter. The steamboat opened up new vistas for river transport, especially for the Midwest and upper South west of the mountains. River transport on the Mississippi and its tributaries had been mostly a one-way affair before the invention of the steamboat. Boats or rafts could be floated down the rivers, but once they had

reached New Orleans or some other port, that was the end of the line. There was no way to propel a loaded raft up the river. Steamboats, however, could go both ways; thus, whatever the shortcomings of travel on these rivers, a way had been found to transport heavy goods to a seaport.

It took no great foresight by 1825 to see what probably loomed ahead in the future development of America. Population had already surged westward to claim the fertile farmlands of the Mississippi valley. They would be the center of agricultural production in the future. New Orleans would be the major port of the future and probably the largest city in America, dwarfing New York, Philadelphia, Baltimore, and Boston. Even the goods from western New York and Pennsylvania might well flow to the sea by way of New Orleans. The focal point of the commerce of much of America would be in the South. Nor was it improbable that if the commercial lines ran Midwest to South and back again many other ties would be formed. Agricultural America might well absorb much of the commerce of the Northeast and be remote from the manufactures that were developing there.

It did not happen, of course, not on anything like the scale that might have taken place. A great deal of energy, however, went into preventing it from occurring. Much of the history of the middle of the 19th century can be told in terms of a large and determined effort to shift the lines of commerce from the Mississippi toward the Northeast. It is the story of the building of roads, canals, and railroads to be told later, and of the political activities that underlay much of this. The point here is that sectionalism was shaped in considerable measure from the political effort of the Northeast to survive and maintain its dominant role in the union.

There were other regional differences, of course, some of which fueled sectionalism. There were economic differences, some of them attributable to differences in climate, soil, and other geographical factors. For example, textile manufacturing in a factory setting developed for the first time in New England. This was connected with the facts that machinery was turned with water wheels at the time, and that the hilly country in parts of New England provided the rapid streams for force to turn the wheels. Or again, the making of iron was extensive in Pennsylvania because the various ores and materials were available there.

The South remained the major center of the growing of staple crops for export for much of the 19th century as it had been in the 18th century. Tobacco continued to be a major export crop, though competition from many other places made it no longer so profitable to produce. Most of the tobacco was produced in the upper South, and Tennessee and Kentucky now became major tobacco producers as well as the older states. Rice was a major staple crop in South Carolina, and when Louisiana came into the United States, sugar from sugar cane became an important staple. Indigo lost its significance once the break from England ended the subsidy for growing it.

Cotton, as well as rice and sugar cane, illustrates the importance of geography to the crops grown. Tobacco could be produced throughout much of the United States, and it was widely grown. Connecticut was an important tobacco producing state, for example. (Commercially, however, different climates and soils were better suited to growing tobacco used for some purposes than others.) Rice, on the other hand, could only be grown commercially on the marsh lands near the sea, mainly in South Carolina and Georgia. Sugar cane thrived in the climate of southern Louisiana, but requires much too long a growing season to do well very far north. Short staple cotton, the main variety grown after the invention of the cotton gin, does best in the dryer uplands where there is a long hot summer and a long growing season. It could be grown profitably from eastern Virginia (warmed by the winds from the Gulf stream) southward to middle Georgia and thence westward. Cotton became quickly from 1820 onward the most important export staple of the United States as the British demand for it seemed insatiable. In 1792, approximately 2,000 bales of cotton were produced. With the introduction of the gin, it increased rapidly thereafter: by 1800 156,000 bales were produced; by 1810, 340,000; in 1820, 606,000; in 1830, 976,000 bales. In 1830, 596,000 bales were exported to Great Britain, and nearly 90 per cent of the crop was exported to some foreign country. In 1821, South Carolina ranked first among the states in cotton production, Georgia second, and Alabama third. Virtually all the cotton was grown in the South, and the center of cotton growing moved westward over the years.

Slavery was not equally important in the growing of all these staples. Rice and sugar cane were grown commercially almost exclusively on large plantations. The initial expenses in growing rice were too large for small farmers, and it was widely believed, or claimed, that only the Blacks could endure the toil of working it. The milling of sugar cane involved large capital expenses which gave large planters the advantage in this undertaking. On the other hand, cotton and tobacco could be, and were, grown equally well on plantations and on small farms. Indeed, the small family farm had many advantages in tobacco farming because of the delicacy of the plant and the tobacco leaves and the need for intensive cultivation and care. Cotton, too, required intensive care and work, but except for the small plants, there was little that was delicate about it.

Other sections of the country focused on different crops, products, and commercial activities. The Midwest early became the major grain producing portion of the country. More corn than any other crop was grown there, but the most important commercial crop was wheat. New Englanders turned extensively toward manufacturing in the 1820s and afterward. New York had become the most populous state, and New York City had both the largest population and was the most important shipping center in the 1820s. Both New York and Pennsylvania had diverse economies with extensive

farming, shipping, and manufactures. But neither the Midwest nor the Northeast, either separately or together, produced as much for export as did the South. Compilations indicate that cotton exports represented nearly 40 per cent of the value of goods exported between 1816–1820. Wheat and flour (mostly Northeast and Midwest in origin) accounted for about 16 per cent; tobacco 15 per cent; manufactured goods 7 per cent; lumber 5 per cent, and rice 4 per cent.

The diversity of goods produced and the differences from region to region need not have produced conflict. After all, the regions complemented one another by their different products and could contribute to the general prosperity. Northerners could engage in shipping and trade while Southerners concentrated on producing staple crops primarily for export. In his Farewell Address, George Washington had pictured how all this might work for the mutual benefit of all: “The *North*,” he said, “in an unrestrained intercourse with the *South* . . . , finds . . . great additional resources of maritime and commercial enterprise. . . . The *South*, in the same intercourse, benefiting by the same agency of the *North*, sees its agriculture grow and its commerce expand. . . . The *East*, in a like intercourse with the *West*, already finds . . . a valuable vent for the commodities which it brings from abroad or manufactures at home. The *West* derives from the *East* supplies requisite to its growth and comfort, and . . . the secure enjoyment of indispensable *outlets* for its own productions. . . .” In short, trade is a mutually beneficial undertaking.

That can be changed, however, when one region or another attempts to use government for its benefit to the disadvantage of another region. Political jockeying, the enactment of legislation for the supposed benefit of one region at the expense of another, can give rise to sectional jealousies and rivalries. This is what Washington and Madison referred to as factions, and they thought them dangerous to the stability of a republic. They are often referred to nowadays as special interest groups, but that does not so well describe what may be their sectional or regional character. Madison believed that factions are unavoidable, but he hoped the great expanse and diversity of the country might keep them from controlling the government for their own particular ends. That, however, did not always happen, and in the 1820s the contests for political power contributed to the beginning of the rise of sectionalism.

The Election of 1824

The political unity forged by the Jeffersonian Republicans began to break up in the early 1820s. For one thing, the growing western states, particularly Kentucky and Tennessee, wanted to make certain they were not shut off from the highest offices in the land. The practice had developed of nominating presidential candidates by party *caucus* in Congress. With the

disappearance of the Federalist Party, this meant the nomination of one candidate by Congress, in effect. If the man nominated were then regularly elected, Congress would have assumed the position of choosing the President. The General Assembly of Tennessee lodged a formal protest against the caucus method of nomination in 1823. It declared "that the practice of congressional nominations is a violation of the spirit of the Constitution of the United States."³ The Constitution, the protest pointed out, had separated the powers and vested election in an electoral college, none of whose members could be members of Congress at the same time.

For another thing, a movement was well underway in state after state to have the electors of the President and Vice-President popularly elected. This was part of a broader movement toward the expansion of the suffrage and giving voters a more direct role in government. By 1828, only 2 states still chose their electors by state legislatures. Clearly, if there was to be a choice by the voters, there must be other candidates than those nominated by a congressional caucus.

At any rate, the caucus system did not survive the election in 1824. It was already so unpopular that most members of Congress did not attend the caucus that was held. Those who did—the "rump"—nominated William H. Crawford of Georgia as candidate. Crawford was Monroe's Secretary of the Treasury, a vigorous defender of the powers of the states, more of a Jeffersonian than not. Unfortunately, he was struck down by a paralytic stroke and was incapacitated for much of the campaign. In any case, other men with larger following became candidates, nominated either by state legislatures or at mass meetings in various places. John Quincy Adams of Massachusetts became New England's candidate, in effect. Andrew Jackson of Tennessee and Henry Clay were the candidates from the west. John C. Calhoun of South Carolina intended to run for President, but after surveying the situation he decided to run for Vice-President instead.

Jackson was probably the best known and certainly the most popular of these candidates. Although he had been active in politics, was in the Senate at the time, his fame was as an Indian fighter, as the victor at the Battle of New Orleans, and for his exploits in Florida. His political ideas were not generally known at this time, if he had any distinctive ones, and he did not feel called upon to take any strong positions. Adams was next in line for the presidency, or so it might be supposed, since he had served prominently as Secretary of State during the two terms of Monroe. But he did not receive the caucus nomination, and his following was mostly in New England. Only Clay had a recognizable program, one which called for a larger role of the federal government in the development of an American economy. It was called the "American System," and the idea was to promote manufactures and agriculture with a protective tariff and to have the federal government play a much larger role in road and canal building.

No candidate received a majority in the vote in the electoral college.

John Randolph of Roanoke
(1773–1833)

Randolph was descended from leading Virginia families—the Randolphs and Blands—and was himself a planter, slaveholder, and owner of a vast estate. In his day, he was one of the most famous orators in the country, at a time when oratorical ability was highly prized. He was educated at Princeton, Columbia, and William and Mary. He served in the House of Representatives for many years and for a short period in the Senate. Randolph might have been a great national leader, and he did serve effectively for a good many years as head of the House Ways and Means Committee. His views were in many ways similar to those of Jefferson and Jackson, though narrower and less flexible. He was a defender of state sovereignty, opposed to extending the power of the federal government, and a defender of slavery (though he freed his own by his will). But he was not a party man, drifted away from Jefferson and openly opposed Jackson in the last year of his life, and followed his own standards rather than those of others. Although he was a man of great learning and strong beliefs, historians are more apt to quote him for his wit than for his wisdom.

Jackson led with 90 votes; Adams got 84, Crawford 41, and Clay 37. The Jackson vote ranged from Pennsylvania to South Carolina and Illinois to Louisiana, was national in character, though concentrated in the South and West. Adams took New England, Clay a part of the West, and Crawford two states in the South. The election had to be decided in the House of Representatives, where the vote was by states. Clay was out of the election, having come in fourth, and Crawford could not be seriously considered because of his physical condition; thus, the choice was between Jackson and Adams. Clay threw his support to Adams, who won in the House vote.

When Adams later appointed Clay as his Secretary of State, Jackson's followers charged that a "corrupt bargain" had been made between the two. John Randolph of Virginia declared that Adams and Clay were "the Puritan and the blackleg." Clay challenged Randolph to a duel for slurring his

name, but both survived the fray without injury. The main point, however, is that there was much ill feeling about the outcome of the election. The Tennessee legislature promptly renominated Andrew Jackson for President for the election that was nearly four years away, and the race began anew before the old one was hardly over.

The Adams Administration

John Quincy Adams, as had his father before him, came to the highest office in the midst of a struggle for political leadership. The younger Adams, unlike his father, had the additional handicap of coming in second in the electoral vote. Worse still, perhaps, his support was regional, not nationwide. Adams had a good mind, had long experience in government, and was a master of foreign diplomacy. But he had neither the charm, attractiveness, nor popularity to overcome these difficulties. Beyond that, he had a vision of using the federal government in ways that tended to divide rather than unite the country. It would arouse sectional feelings and contests, and did to some extent. Consequently, his administration made little impact on the country, and his was largely a caretaker government between Monroe and Jackson. He succeeded mainly in dividing the Republican Party further and giving impetus to the development of two distinct parties once again.

Ironically, the House had managed to elect a President whose experience and successes had been in the field of foreign relations at just that juncture when, for the first time since the founding of the Republic, foreign relations were least pressing. No longer were European powers a significant menace on American frontiers. The one major area where there might have been some likelihood of diplomatic successes was with the newly independent Latin American countries. But whatever the possibilities, the Adams administration did not succeed in its main effort in this direction.

Simon Bolivar called a meeting of Latin American countries at a Panama Congress in 1826. He invited Great Britain to send a delegation but not the United States. Mexico and Colombia, however, extended an invitation to the United States, and Adams accepted. Bolivar apparently hoped that the Panama Congress would adopt a plan for united or common action by the newly formed republics. There was strong opposition in the Senate both to Adams' failure to get approval at the outset from that body as well as opposition to sending a delegation. In consequence, the mission was so delayed before the Senate finally approved it that the Panama Congress had adjourned before it arrived in Panama. If the United States had managed to have a delegation there, it might have made no difference. British long term policy had shifted away from colonialism toward free trade; they were mainly interested in opening up and dominating markets in Latin America, thus keeping any other foreign power out. They were much more successful in Latin American diplomacy in the ensuing years than the United States,