

President	James Monroe
Chronological Order	5
Life Span	1758-1831
Home State	Virginia
Elected	1816, 1820



Political Party	Republican (Democratic-Republican)
Vice President	Daniel D. Tompkins
First Lady	Elizabeth Kortright Monroe
Children	2 daughters, 1 son
Physical Attributes	6' tall, broad shoulders, solidly built, brown hair, blue-gray eyes
Undergraduate Education	College of William & Mary
Military Service	Lieutenant Colonel in the Continental Army
Profession	Attorney, Planter
Other Political Offices	Delegate to Confederation Congress, Minister to France, Minister to Great Britain, Governor, U.S. Senator, Secretary of State, Secretary of War

Nickname The Last Founding Father

Family Lineage Scottish, Welsh

Religious Affiliation Anglican (Episcopalian)

Biographical Notes 1. James Monroe had a gift for friendship. He was courteous, open – never arrogant or condescending – honest, trustworthy, and loyal. He was close personal friends with very different sorts of men: John Marshall, Marquis de Lafayette, Thomas Jefferson, James Madison, John Quincy Adams, and Andrew Jackson. Over the years, Monroe formed friendships with politicians from all the different parts of America, keeping in touch by updating them with interesting personal letters.

2. Monroe grew up the eldest son of five children on a small farm in Westmoreland County, Virginia, by a little stream ("Monroe Creek") that fed into the Potomac River just above its intersection with the Chesapeake Bay. His family was not wealthy, like Madison's, but his uncle Joseph Jones was a well-respected attorney and a member of the House of Burgesses.

Monroe's mother died when he was fourteen, and his father died when he was sixteen. Fortunately, his uncle, Joseph Jones, who had no children, stepped in to hold the family together. He gave James' older sister the funds to raise the three younger boys and assumed personal guardianship of James, his godson. Jones took sixteen-year-old James to Williamsburg in 1774 and enrolled him in the College of William & Mary. He also took James to the House of Burgesses and introduced him to the colony's most celebrated political figures, including George Washington, Patrick Henry, and Monroe's future mentor – Thomas Jefferson. Monroe left William & Mary in 1776 to join the Continental Army.

3. One of the great coincidences of American history is that eleven-year-old James Monroe and fourteen-year-old John Marshall, future Supreme Court Chief Justice, attended the same tiny school in Westmoreland County. The two boys became lifelong friends. They went to the same college and bunked together as officers at Valley Forge. They both became attorneys, then members of Congress, diplomats to Europe, and secretaries of state. They differed in that Monroe was a Republican, and Marshall was a Federalist. Chief Justice John Marshall administered the oath of office at Monroe's inauguration as America's fifth president.

4. Monroe was a genuine Revolutionary War hero. He joined the Third Virginia Regiment of the Continental Army as a lieutenant in 1776 at age eighteen. At the Battle of Harlem Heights in New York City, his regiment forced the British to turn and run for the first time in the war. At the Battle of Trenton, he and his men were

the first to cross the Delaware River and led the attack on the town. They caught the Hessians by surprise and captured two cannons pointed at the American troops. Monroe was shot; the bullet tore through his chest and lodged in his shoulder, severing an artery. Fortunately, a nearby American doctor quickly seized a clamp and closed off the artery, which saved Monroe's life. After the Battle of Trenton, General George Washington cited Monroe for bravery and promoted him to captain.

In late 1777, he was promoted to major and became an aide-de-camp to Brigadier General William Alexander (a.k.a. Lord Stirling). At this time, Monroe met Marquis de Lafayette, who had just arrived from France to volunteer his services as a general in the Continental Army. When Washington's army settled in for the brutal winter at Valley Forge, many high-ranking officers – including Lord Stirling – returned home. But Monroe refused to leave his men. He and John Marshall spent the winter in a small log hut.

Monroe was again a hero at the Battle of Monmouth in New Jersey. British General Lord Cornwallis was planning a massive strike against Washington's troops, and it was crucial that the Americans know where the attack would occur. Lord Stirling put Monroe in charge of a small group of men who captured British sentries and crept to within 400 yards of the British front line. Monroe saw where the attack would be and sent a message back to Washington. Monroe's information allowed the Americans to repel the attack by Cornwallis successfully.

5. Shortly after arriving in America, Lafayette was wounded in a skirmish near the Brandywine River, about twenty miles south of Philadelphia. After a surgeon dressed the Frenchman's wounds, Monroe used a makeshift litter to take Lafayette to a nearby church. Monroe spent the night there with him, and the two men formed a friendship that lasted the rest of their lives. Monroe's Revolutionary War experiences – fighting alongside French soldiers against the British – turned him into a supporter of France and a skeptic towards Great Britain.

6. In 1780, Monroe retired from the army and began the study of law under Virginia Governor Thomas Jefferson. Jefferson took an immediate liking to Monroe and treated him like a younger brother. They had a lot in common: both grew up on farms and loved to ride, hunt, and fish; both had fathers who died young; both went to the College of William & Mary; both enjoyed foreign languages. (Monroe spoke French; Jefferson spoke French, Spanish, and Italian, and was learning German.)

Jefferson prepared his law students well. Instead of having them perform mundane tasks like running errands or copying documents, he trained them for the courtroom by having them analyze his old cases and argue them against each other. He also taught them political philosophy, in case they wanted to enter public service.

Monroe was admitted to the bar and elected to the Virginia legislature in 1782.

7. In 1783, Monroe and Jefferson were each elected to a three-year term in the Confederation Congress held in the nation's temporary capital, Annapolis, Maryland. The two men lived in a house rented by Jefferson and were virtually inseparable. Jefferson introduced Monroe to his powerful friends, and Monroe acquired the social graces and debating skills that the capital required. Also, when Monroe arrived, his French was rudimentary, but his conversations with Jefferson's French cook helped him to become fluent.

When Jefferson left for France in 1784, he suggested that Monroe become friends with James Madison. In describing Monroe to Madison, Jefferson said, "The scrupulousness of his honor will make you safe in the most confidential communications. A better man cannot be." During Jefferson's stay in France, Monroe and Madison remained in close touch except for one brief interval.

8. In the Confederation Congress, Monroe's chief areas of interest were policies involving the lands of the West and foreign policy. His most important contribution was his role as the chairman of the committee that developed the Northwest Ordinance of 1787. In 1784, Thomas Jefferson drafted the Land Ordinance of 1784, which dealt with the governance of the territory east of the Mississippi River and north of the Ohio River. The ordinance established that the territory did not belong to the states currently claiming parts of it (e.g., Virginia and Massachusetts) but instead belonged to the United States as a whole. The ordinance specified that the territory be broken up into several parts that would each be admitted as a new state when it had enough population. Monroe's committee set the population limit and determined that each state would have a temporary government comprised of a governor and a council chosen by Congress. The ordinance was still pending when Monroe's term ended in 1786, but it passed in 1787. The states created in this manner were Ohio, Indiana, Illinois, Michigan, Wisconsin, and Minnesota.

His second significant contribution was his role in the Jay-Gardoqui negotiations. In the summer of 1785, Don Diego Gardoqui, the first Spanish minister to the United States, arrived in New York bearing instructions to secure American acquiescence to closing the Mississippi River. Congress, following suggestions made by a committee chaired by Monroe, granted John Jay the power to negotiate with Gardoqui subject to two

conditions: (a) free navigation of the Mississippi, and (b) the territorial rights of the U.S. must be guaranteed.

Jay struck a deal with Gardoqui whereby the U.S. would "forbear" the navigation of the Mississippi for thirty years in exchange for substantial trade concessions from Spain. Monroe was furious at Jay's concession regarding the Mississippi. When Jay petitioned Congress to get his instructions altered to fit the deal he made, Monroe made sure that did not happen.

9. In 1786, Monroe married Elizabeth Kortright, a petite (5' tall), stunningly beautiful, superbly educated New Yorker. In an era in which most political wives stayed at home, she and Monroe became inseparable; she even traveled with him to France during the Reign of Terror of the French Revolution. Her beauty, elegant dress, and remarkable poise made her a favorite of the French, who called her "La Belle Americaine."

James and Elizabeth moved to Fredericksburg, Virginia, when his term in the Confederation Congress was up. Monroe established a law practice there and was elected to the Virginia House of Delegates in 1787.

10. In 1788, Monroe was elected a representative to the Virginia Ratifying Convention, which would determine his state's response to the newly proposed United States Constitution. At first, he sided with Washington and Madison in supporting ratification, but eventually, he sided with his uncle, Joseph Jones, in voting against it. His reasons for opposing the Constitution were the absence of a bill of rights, the federal government's powers to tax the people directly without their consent, the Electoral College system for electing the president, and failure to fix an exact quorum for the Senate's action on treaties. Monroe wanted these deficiencies addressed with amendments passed before ratification. The Virginia Ratifying Convention disagreed; it voted for ratification with a set of suggested amendments.

11. In 1788, Patrick Henry, still smarting from his defeat by James Madison at the Virginia Ratifying Convention, made efforts to ensure that Madison was elected to neither the U.S. Senate nor the U.S. House of Representatives. Henry had many allies in the state legislature, which chose the senator from Virginia, and they denied Madison a place in the Senate.

As far as the House is concerned, Henry took two steps to oppose Madison. First, he gerrymandered Madison's home congressional district into a hatchet-shaped region that included several strongly Anti-Federalist counties. Second, he made sure that the new district contained James Monroe's home county of Spotsylvania. Since Monroe had already decided to run for the House, this ensured that the two friends would have to run against each other. During the campaign, Madison advocated adding a bill of rights to the Constitution as a set of amendments, which won over many undecided voters. He defeated Monroe 1,308 votes to 972 and quickly became a leader in the House. Even though they ran against each other, the two men remained good friends.

12. Monroe was a U.S. Senator from 1790 to 1793. He became the leader of the Republican Party in the Senate, just as Madison was the leader of the party in the House.

In 1793, Monroe purchased one thousand acres of land adjacent to Monticello to be closer to Jefferson. James and Elizabeth called the new home Highland. They took up permanent residence there in 1799 and lived there for twenty-five years.

13. Great Britain and France were at war in 1793, and George Washington issued the Neutrality Proclamation, which declared America's intention to remain at peace with both countries. However, neither Britain nor France was willing to respect the rights of neutrals to trade with the enemy. Both nations seized every ship they could filled with cargo bound for enemy ports and imprisoned or impressed the crews.

In response, Washington decided to appoint new ministers to each country to explain America's neutrality and gain the cooperation of each nation. In 1794, he sent Monroe, a Francophile Republican, to Paris and John Jay, an Anglophile Federalist, to London. In his instructions to Monroe, Secretary of State Edmund Randolph, a Republican, told Monroe: "You go, Sir, to France to strengthen our friendship with that country.... You will let it be seen, that in case of war, with any nation on earth, we shall consider France as our first and natural ally. ... To remove all jealousy with regards to Mr. Jay's mission to London, you may say, that he is positively forbidden to weaken the engagements between this country and France."

Monroe executed his task perfectly; France agreed to a treaty of amity and commerce with the United States. But in the meantime, Jay negotiated a treaty with Great Britain that completely undercut Monroe. The French took one look at the Jay Treaty and declared that the alliance between the United States and France was null and void. They ordered French ships to seize all American vessels and cargoes bound to and from England and to imprison captured crew and passengers.

At this time, Timothy Pickering, a rabid Federalist, replaced Edmund Randolph as secretary of state. Pickering worked to rid the government of Republicans and Monroe in particular. George Washington recalled Monroe in September 1797.

14. In 1795, while Monroe was Minister to France, his good friend Marquis de Lafayette was in exile because his politics were out of favor at the time. In addition, Lafayette's wife, Adrienne, was in prison awaiting the guillotine. Monroe wanted to free Adrienne but could not risk his diplomatic status by appealing himself; he needed an envoy. Elizabeth Monroe insisted upon being that envoy. She rode in a fancy coach through angry Parisian mobs to the notorious Plessis Prison and brought wine and food to Adrienne. Word of Elizabeth's daring adventure spread rapidly throughout Paris, and shortly after, James successfully negotiated with the French government for Adrienne's release from prison. She went straight to Monroe's house.

Six days later, Lafayette's fourteen-year-old son – George Washington Lafayette – came out of hiding and appeared on Monroe's doorstep. Monroe issued him an American passport under a different name and put him on an American ship to go live with his godfather, George Washington, in Virginia.

15. When Monroe returned to the United States, he published a 407-page book that defended his actions as Minister to France. Republicans – especially Jefferson – thought it was masterly. Federalists criticized it harshly. George Washington did not comment on it publically, but he covered the margins of his copy with derogatory comments.

16. From 1797 to 1799, Monroe worked closely with Jefferson and Madison to manage the affairs of the Republican Party. Since Highland was adjacent to Monticello and Montpelier was only thirty miles away, they handled party business at casual meetings at each other's homes. For example, in 1798, when Jefferson drafted the Kentucky Resolutions, and Madison drafted the Virginia Resolutions, the three men met once at Monticello and once at Highland to discuss how to roll them out to the public.

17. Monroe was governor of Virginia for three consecutive one-year terms, from 1799 to 1802. He was an excellent governor and expanded the powers of the office. He stepped down because he was term-limited.

18. On Saturday, August 30, 1800, a planter raced into Governor Monroe's office with word that a slave blacksmith named Gabriel on Thomas Prosser's plantation six miles outside Richmond had organized a rebellion with his brothers and slaves in five surrounding counties. The rebels planned to march to Richmond, capture Monroe and other prominent citizens, and hold them hostage until they were given money and a ship to escape the United States.

Luckily for Monroe, a torrential rainstorm flooded the Prosser plantation on the first day of Gabriel's Rebellion and prevented the rebel leaders from meeting to coordinate their activities. This delay gave Monroe time to call out the Virginia militia. With ruthless efficiency, the militiamen raided slave quarters on a dozen plantations over the next two days, smashing down doors and walls, leveling slave shacks, and uncovering large caches of weapons and gunpowder. By Monday evening, militiamen had captured twenty slaves, including Gabriel.

By October 7, Gabriel and twenty-seven others were condemned to death by hanging for their roles in the rebellion. As a warning to slaves who might want to rebel in the future, Gabriel's hangman used the noose to lift him up into the air and left him writhing in agony as he choked instead of letting him drop to a quick death with the snap of his neck.

19. Late in 1802, President Jefferson discovered that Spain had ceded the Louisiana Territory to France. Jefferson immediately recognized this as a threat to the United States, primarily because France now controlled New Orleans, through which the produce of three-eighths of the country passed. To solve this problem, the president decided to try to purchase New Orleans.

To accomplish this, Jefferson appointed Monroe Envoy Extraordinary to France to work with the American Minister to France, Robert R. Livingston, towards making the purchase. He chose Monroe because he (a) knew Jefferson so well he could speak authoritatively on his behalf, (b) was familiar with the New Orleans problem (from his experience with the Jay-Gardoqui negotiations), and (c) was someone the French knew and trusted.

Jefferson sent Monroe to France with instructions to purchase New Orleans and as much of the Floridas as possible for no more than \$10 million. But, in the meantime, Napoleon decided to sell the entire Louisiana Territory. As a result, Monroe and Livingston were able to sign a treaty whereby the United States purchased the whole Louisiana Territory (530 million acres of land) for the bargain price of \$15 million.

The purchase was the best real estate transaction in American history. The land cost less than three cents per acre when the going rate in America was \$2 per acre, and the deal secured the free navigation of the Mississippi River. Also, it procured the cotton fields of Arkansas and Louisiana, the future oil fields of Oklahoma, the future copper mines of Montana and the Dakotas, the future silver and gold mines of Colorado, and the future wheat and cornfields of Kansas, Nebraska, and Iowa.

20. Monroe was appointed Minister to Great Britain in 1803. At the time, the British were at war with the French, and since Napoleon's army was dominant on land, Great Britain's primary war goal was a naval blockade of the European coast to starve out France. Hence, the British Royal Navy needed to maintain its superiority over its French counterpart. However, the Royal Navy's desertion rate was high, and the enlistment rate was low because of the extremely harsh discipline imposed on British seamen. The Royal Navy solved its manpower problem by stopping American ships, taking sailors from the ships, and forcing them to serve on British ships under the guise that they were British deserters. (Some were, but most were not.) This "impressment" practice was convenient because the American sailors spoke English and could readily serve on British ships.

British harassment of American ships and the impressment of American seamen were significant points of contention between the two countries. Monroe was tasked with persuading the British to discontinue these practices. In particular, impressment infuriated President Jefferson and Secretary of State Madison. When Monroe failed to reach an agreement, Jefferson sent Marylander William Pinckney to London to help Monroe negotiate with the British. The British made some concessions on seizing ships and goods but believed that they could not afford to abandon impressment and that offending the Americans was a much lesser evil than losing to Napoleon. Hence, the Monroe-Pinckney Treaty (1806) with Great Britain did not address impressment, which caused Jefferson to reject the treaty and refuse to submit it to the Senate for ratification. The rejection embarrassed Monroe and caused a strain in his relationship with Madison, who was his supervisor on the issue. Monroe returned home in 1807.

21. In April 1811, Madison appointed Monroe as secretary of state. Madison hoped that Monroe, an experienced diplomat, would improve upon the performance of the previous secretary of state, Robert Smith. Upon taking office, Monroe hoped to negotiate treaties with the British and French to end the attacks on American merchant ships. While the French agreed to reduce the attacks and release seized American ships, the British were less receptive to Monroe's demands. Monroe had long worked for peace with the British, but he came to favor war with Great Britain, joining with "war hawks" such as Speaker of the House Henry Clay. With the support of Monroe and Clay, Madison asked Congress to declare war upon the British, and Congress complied on June 18, 1812, thus beginning the War of 1812.

When the British burned the U.S. Capitol and the White House on August 24, 1814, Madison removed John Armstrong as Secretary of War and turned to Monroe for help, appointing him Secretary of War on September 27. Monroe resigned as Secretary of State on October 1, 1814, but no successor was ever selected, and thus, from October 1814 to February 28, 1815, Monroe effectively held both Cabinet posts. Now in command of the war effort, Monroe ordered General Andrew Jackson to defend against a likely attack on New Orleans by the British, and he asked the governors of nearby states to send their militias to reinforce Jackson. Months after Monroe took office as Secretary of War, the war ended with the signing of the Treaty of Ghent. The treaty resulted in a return to the status quo ante bellum, and many outstanding issues between the United States and Britain remained. But Americans celebrated the end of the war as a great victory, partly due to the news of the treaty reaching the United States shortly after Andrew Jackson's victory in the Battle of New Orleans.

22. In 1816, Monroe's chief rival for the Republican presidential nomination was Secretary of the Treasury William H. Crawford of Georgia. However, Crawford, who was only forty-four years old, realized that if he ran against Monroe, he would not get a position in Monroe's cabinet and would not get his support for president in 1824. So, Crawford decided he could wait eight years, and Monroe was nominated. In stepping aside, Crawford considered the future president indebted to him and constantly reminded Monroe of his sacrifice on his behalf.

The Federalist Party was very weak in 1816. It was weakened by its lack of support for the War of 1812, which was now popular because of the successful Treaty of Ghent and Andrew Jackson's resounding victory at the Battle of New Orleans. The Federalist Party was also marginalized because the Republican Party had incorporated some key Federalist principles, having reconciled itself to a national bank, a protective tariff, and a limited set of internal improvements by the end of the Madison administration. In addition, the defeat and exile of Napoleon in Europe removed the fear of Revolutionary France, which had been an important wellspring of Federalist feeling in the United States.

In the election of 1816, Monroe won every state except Massachusetts, Connecticut, and Delaware. He easily defeated Federalist Rufus King, 183 to 34 electoral votes. Soon after, the Federalist Party ceased to exist. As a result, Monroe's first term is often referred to as the Era of Good Feelings because it lacked the bitter partisanship of the previous twenty-five years.

23. Monroe selected first-class men for his cabinet and achieved a reasonable geographical balance. He

chose Secretary of State John Quincy Adams (MA), Secretary of the Treasury William H. Crawford (GA), Secretary of War John C. Calhoun (SC), Attorney General William Wirt (MD), and Secretary of the Navy Benjamin W. Crowninshield (MA). Adams, Crawford, and Calhoun served in their respective posts during all eight years of Monroe's presidency. Speaker of the House Henry Clay resented not being named secretary of state and refused to attend Monroe's inauguration.

Monroe and Adams worked well together: the president determined the broad outlines of America's foreign policy and left the tactical considerations to Adams. Monroe gave Adams more independence than previous secretaries of state. In particular, he insisted that foreign diplomats take up all public business with Adams before he got involved. This approach contrasted with the practices of Jefferson and Madison, who felt free to discuss official business directly and privately with foreign diplomats when they were president.

Monroe held frequent cabinet meetings and, far more than his predecessors, operated by consensus within his cabinet. He did not meet primarily to solicit advice (he often had already made up his mind on the issue at hand) but more often to hammer out an agreement and secure everyone's commitment to the preferred course of action. He did this, in part, because his "Big Three" – Adams, Crawford, and Calhoun – each had followers in Congress who could help get things done.

Shortly after Monroe's death, Calhoun summarized what it was like to work with him:

Tho' not brilliant, few men were his equals in wisdom, firmness, and devotion to the country. He had a wonderful intellectual patience; and could above all men, that I ever knew, when called upon to decide an important point, hold the subject immovably fixed under his attention, until he had mastered it in all its relations. It was mainly to this admirable quality that he owed his highly accurate judgment. I have known many much more rapid in reaching a conclusion, but few with a certainty so unerring.

24. Monroe embarked on a tour to New England the summer after his inauguration, just as George Washington did during his first year in office. One reason for the tour was to inspect coastal and frontier fortifications, but, more importantly, Monroe sought to build up goodwill in the Federalist stronghold.

On his way north, Monroe stopped in Trenton, New Jersey, to visit the site where he had fallen wounded and almost died in service to his country. Hundreds of Revolutionary War veterans lined the street and saluted him as he approached. He stopped to shake each hand, and as he did, the men described their service:

"Brandywine, Sir."

"Monmouth, Sir."

Monroe was so moved that he was at a loss for words.

In Boston, Monroe went to a celebratory dinner hosted by the governor. To his astonishment, the cheering guests included former Federalist President John Adams and former Federalist Secretary of State Timothy Pickering. It was Pickering who had recalled Monroe from Paris without cause and provoked his bitter resignation letter as Minister to France. The president even had a pleasant visit with Josiah Quincy, the rabid Federalist who bitterly opposed the Louisiana Purchase and the War of 1812. After meeting Monroe, Abigail Adams – a savvy judge of people – declared that all who met him were captivated by his "agreeable affability ... unassuming manners .. [and] his polite attentions to all orders and ranks."

The editor of the Concord, New Hampshire, *Patriot* spoke for many when he described Monroe's visit to his town:

In a humble village like our own, the republican simplicity of Mr. Monroe ... was just such as the yeomanry of New Hampshire had anticipated – it was precisely what they wanted. To see the man whom the people have exalted shaking cordially by the hand the war-worn veteran ... to see him converse freely with others in the humblest walks of life, attending to all the little concerns of individuals – to see him noting all those small circumstances which are calculated to give consequence to a humble village – was a spectacle truly grateful and pleasing to all hearts ... The red rose and white were both literally and mentally united – party considerations were buried.

25. In 1817, an epidemic of revolutions broke out in South America, and Spain took troops away from Florida to fight the rebels. The absence of Spanish soldiers allowed Indians from Florida to execute raids into Georgia and then scurry back to safety across the border to Florida. Monroe authorized General Andrew Jackson to stop these raids and pursue the Indians across the border if necessary. Monroe did not authorize Jackson to attack Spanish forts inside Florida, but his message forbidding this action never reached Jackson.

Jackson, being Jackson, stormed across the Florida border, hanged two Indian chiefs, executed two British subjects for assisting the Indians, captured two Spanish forts, and deposed the Spanish governor. All the members of Monroe's cabinet, with one exception, felt that Jackson had exceeded his authority and had committed war on Spain without a declaration of war from Congress.

The one exception was John Quincy Adams, who argued that Jackson's actions were "justified by the necessity of the case and by the misconduct of the Spanish commanding officers in Florida." John Quincy insisted that Jackson "was authorized to cross the Spanish line in pursuit of the Indian enemy" and that the Constitution authorized the president to wage "defensive acts of hostility" without congressional approval. Adams' argument won over Monroe.

26. Secretary of State John Quincy Adams gave Spain an ultimatum after Jackson's raid into Florida: either protect Georgia from Indian attacks or cede West and East Florida to the United States. In the 1819 Adams-Onís Treaty (a.k.a. the Transcontinental Treaty), Spain did the latter in exchange for the U.S. renouncing its claims to parts of Texas and agreeing to pay \$5 million to settle the claims of American citizens against Spain. The treaty defined the southern boundary of the Louisiana Purchase, i.e., the boundary between the United States and Spanish-held territory. The boundary was specified to be: the Sabine, Red, and Arkansas Rivers, then north to the 42nd line of latitude, then west to the Pacific Ocean. This boundary meant that the Spanish renounced their claims to parts of the Pacific Northwest, and the U.S. no longer claimed parts of Texas as part of the Louisiana Purchase.

Since the American claims to parts of Texas were rather specious, the treaty's terms were more beneficial to the United States than to Spain. The treaty gratified Monroe because he had wanted Florida to be part of the United States ever since his days negotiating the Louisiana Purchase.

27. Adams negotiated the Treaty of 1818 with Great Britain, an agreement that dealt primarily with three issues. First, Great Britain gave the United States fishing privileges off Newfoundland and Labrador. Second, the boundary between the United States and Canada was specified as the forty-nine-degree line of latitude from the Rocky Mountains to the Lake of the Woods in Minnesota. Third, the two countries agreed to a ten-year joint occupation of the Oregon Country without the surrender of rights or claims by either nation. Eventually, more and more American settlers came to the southern half of the region via the Oregon Trail, and the British population there did not increase much. Consequently, that part of the Oregon Country became predominantly occupied by Americans, a fact codified by the Oregon Treaty (1846) with Great Britain, which awarded it to the United States. The land gained by the U.S. in the Oregon Treaty corresponds to the current-day states of Oregon, Washington, Idaho, and parts of Montana and Wyoming. The land gained by the British corresponds to the southern half of the current-day Canadian province of British Columbia.

The Monroe administration also negotiated the Russo-American Treaty of 1824, in which the Russian Empire retracted its claims to the Oregon Country. The agreement set the limit of Russian sovereignty on the Pacific coast of North America at the 54°40' line of latitude (the present-day southern tip of the Alaska Panhandle).

28. As the United States grew, many Americans advocated a system of "internal improvements," such as the building of interstate roads and canals, to help the country develop. Federal assistance for such projects evolved slowly and haphazardly — the product of contentious congressional factions and an executive branch generally concerned with avoiding unconstitutional federal intrusions into state affairs. Monroe believed that the young nation needed an improved infrastructure, including a transportation network, to grow and thrive economically but did not think that the Constitution authorized Congress to build, maintain, and operate a national transportation system. Monroe repeatedly urged Congress to pass an amendment allowing Congress the power to finance internal improvements. However, Congress never acted on his proposal, in part because many congressmen believed that the Constitution did, in fact, authorize the federal financing of internal improvements. In 1822, Congress passed a bill authorizing the collection of tolls on the Cumberland Road, using the tolls to finance road repairs. Adhering to his stated position regarding internal improvements, Monroe vetoed the bill.

The U.S. Constitution's Commerce Clause gives the federal government the power to regulate interstate commerce. In 1824, the Supreme Court ruled in *Gibbons v. Ogden* that the power to regulate interstate commerce includes the power to regulate navigation. Shortly thereafter, Congress passed two important laws that marked the beginning of the federal government's continuous involvement in internal improvements. The General Survey Act authorized the president to have surveys made of routes for roads and canals "of national importance, in a commercial or military point of view, or necessary for the transportation of public mail." The president assigned responsibility for the surveys to the Army Corps of Engineers. The second act, passed a month later, appropriated \$75,000 to improve navigation on the Ohio and Mississippi rivers by removing sandbars, snags, and other obstacles. Subsequently, the act was amended to include other rivers, such as the Missouri.

29. In 1819, Missouri's petition to enter the Union as a slave state threatened the free/slave state balance in

the Senate, and senators and congressmen hotly debated the issue. Monroe felt that if slavery were banned in Missouri, Southern states would contemplate leaving the Union, and if it was not prohibited and no other adjustments were made, Northern antislavery advocates might band together to form a new political party. To avoid these consequences, he supported the Missouri Compromise, which specified that (a) Missouri entered the Union as a slave state, (b) Maine entered the Union as a free state, and (c) slavery was prohibited in the Louisiana Territory north of the 36°30' line of latitude (parallel to the southern border of Missouri). Monroe signed it into law in 1820.

30. Monroe ran unopposed for president in 1820. Of the 235 electoral votes, Monroe got 231, with three abstentions and one vote for John Quincy Adams by an elector whose motivation remains obscure.

31. By 1822, some Latin American countries formerly ruled by Spain (e.g., Mexico, Colombia, Chile, Peru, and Buenos Aires) had revolted and declared themselves independent republics. This upset Europe's Holy Alliance of absolute monarchs (Russia, Prussia, and Austria) and King Louis XVIII of France, and the four nations threatened to send troops to recapture the new republics for the Spanish king. Things were complicated further when British Foreign Minister George Canning suggested that the United States join Great Britain in instructing the four European powers to keep their hands off the Latin American republics.

Most of Monroe's closest advisors, even ex-presidents Jefferson and Madison, recommended that he accept Canning's proposal. But Adams said no because he saw the "catch." Since the British Navy was much more powerful than America's, the United States would be the junior partner in the relationship, and Great Britain would have the moral authority to call the shots in the Western Hemisphere. Adams said the United States would look like a tiny "cockboat in the wake of the British man-of-war."

Monroe agreed with Adams and decided to make a clear statement of America's position in his 1823 State of the Union Address. The central tenet of the statement, which became known as the Monroe Doctrine, was taken verbatim from Adams' draft of the foreign policy section of the speech: "The American continents, by the free and independent condition which they have assumed and maintain, are henceforth not to be considered as subjects for future colonization by any European powers."

The Monroe Doctrine, coupled with the threat of intervention by the British Navy, dissuaded the Holy Alliance from attempting to recapture Spain's former colonies. John Quincy Adams had read the international tea leaves perfectly. No one knew Europe better than he did. In particular, he felt confident that his old friend Czar Alexander I of Russia would refuse to support an armed intervention in the Americas by the Holy Alliance.

32. Monroe was deeply sympathetic to the American Colonization Society (ACS), an organization dedicated to establishing an African colony where freed slaves could settle. With help from the Monroe administration, the ACS bought land in Africa and established the Republic of Liberia. Between 1822 and 1861, more than 15,000 freed and free-born African Americans and 3,198 Afro-Caribbeans relocated to Liberia. Gradually developing an Americo-Liberian identity, the settlers carried their culture and traditions with them while colonizing the indigenous population. Led by the Americo-Liberians, Liberia declared its independence in 1847, making it the first modern African republic. Its capital and largest city is Monrovia, named in honor of James Monroe. Liberia's official language is English, and its current population is 5.5 million.

33. During Monroe's second term, factions started to develop within the Republican Party because Clay, Adams, Crawford, Calhoun, and Jackson all wanted to be elected president in 1824. As Speaker of the House, Clay drew attention to himself by making things difficult for Monroe's legislative agenda. Crawford's backers attacked administration policies because Adams and Calhoun supported those policies. Monroe did not endorse a presidential candidate in 1824, which miffed Crawford because the Georgian had withdrawn from the 1816 presidential race to give Monroe the nomination.

34. Monroe was the final member of the Virginia Dynasty of presidents: Washington, Jefferson, Madison, and Monroe. They each served two terms, and John Adams of Massachusetts served only one. Hence, a Virginian was president for thirty-two of the first thirty-six years of the United States' constitutional form of government. The four men lived within a circle of radius sixty miles centered about Fredricksburg, Virginia.

The careers of the four men were intertwined. Jefferson served as Washington's secretary of state; Madison served as Jefferson's secretary of state; and Monroe served as Madison's secretary of state. Jefferson, Madison, and Monroe were neighbors in Virginia, close personal friends, and political allies. And Washington was a father figure to the three younger men.

35. Since Monroe served (a) heroically as an officer in the Continental Army during the Revolutionary War, (b) in the Confederation Congress, and (c) as a diplomat in the Washington and Jefferson administrations, he

is considered by many to be a Founding Father. Consequently, he is the last Founding Father to be president, and one of his nicknames is "The Last Founding Father."

36. In the famous painting "Washington Crossing the Delaware" by Emanuel Leutze, Monroe is pictured right behind Washington, holding the American flag. The painting is idealized because Monroe crossed earlier in a different boat.

37. James and Elizabeth moved to a farm, which they called Oak Hill, in Loudon County, Virginia, about thirty-five miles west of Washington after his presidency. After Elizabeth died in 1830, James put Oak Hill up for sale and went to live with his youngest daughter's family in New York City. He died on July 4 – just like John Adams and Thomas Jefferson – in 1831.

See the next page for a list of references.

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