

# Sectionalism & National Growth



Furtraders Descending the Missouri by George Caleb Bingham

---

## I. Sectional Specialization following War of 1812 (Era of Good Feelings)

### A. Industrialization of the Northeast

1) Factory system expanded quickly after Embargo Act and War of 1812 cut off competition from England. Factors assisting expansion:

- a) Water power from streams and rivers
- b) Capital accumulated by merchants and shipbuilders
- c) Plentiful labor supply
- d) Poor agricultural conditions
- e) Lowell (or Waltham ) system brought girls to factories for a few years. No permanent working class. Strike in 1834 to protest 25% wage cut

2) New England became center of textile mills, while Pennsylvania led in production of iron.

3) Inventions

- a) Oliver Evans completely mechanized a flour mill
- b) Eli Whitney
  - i) Cotton gin to remove seeds from fiber
  - ii) Interchangeable parts in production of rifles

4) Goals of Northeast section

- a) protective tariffs
- b) high-priced public lands to keep workers from migrating
- c) federally built internal improvements to expand home markets

## B. Plantation agriculture of South

- 1) Cotton gin's invention increased productivity (in 10 years production increased 800%)
- 2) Removal of Indians from Southeastern US allowed expansion
- 3) Success of cotton led to one-crop economy
- 4) Goals of Southern section
  - a) low tariffs to encourage exchange with England
  - b) no internal improvements
  - c) public lands available for sale in large chunks

## C. Diversified farming in the West

- 1) Small farms slowly gave way to specialized farms:
  - a) Wheat in northern plains
  - b) Corn and livestock in Ohio Valley
  - c) Tobacco in Kentucky
- 2) Improved transportation allowed for marketing of surpluses
- 3) Goals of the Western section
  - a) low-priced public lands to encourage settlement
  - b) protective tariffs to stimulate growth of a home market
  - c) federally built internal improvements

## II. Improvements in Transportation

### A. Demands were created for better roads and canals:

- 1) Northeast needed Southern cotton, western food

- 2) South and West needed manufactured goods

- 3) South needed food from the West

B. Many turnpikes (toll roads) built by private companies from 1800-1825. Most famous: Cumberland Road which allowed wagon traffic from the seaboard and the Ohio River.

C. Canal Era(1825-35)--need for cheaper, faster freight transportation

- 1) Erie Canal--350 miles and 88 locks--linked New York City (eventually) with New Orleans. Paid for itself in 7 years.

- 2) Numerous other canals were constructed by private companies.

D. Steamboat traffic along the Hudson, Mississippi and Ohio Rivers became extensive in the 1820s and 30s.

- 1) New York City to Albany--150 miles in 32 hours

- 2) Stimulated agricultural economy of West by providing better access to markets at lower cost.

### III. Missouri Compromise (1820)

A. Missouri, populated mainly by Southerners, applied for statehood in 1819.

B. Northern states opposed adding a new slave state to the Union, which would upset the balance of 11 free and 11 slaves in the Senate

C. Compromise reached which stated

- 1) Missouri would enter Union as slave state

- 2) Maine would enter as free state

- 3) Line drawn at 36 °30' with slavery banned in the portion of the Louisiana Purchase north of that line.

### IV. Monroe Doctrine (1823)

A. Statement of foreign policy, not a treaty or law

B. Problems leading to development of doctrine

- 1) Recognition of Latin American republics

- 2) European interference (Metternich's principle of intervention)

### C. Elements of doctrine

- 1) Western hemisphere not open to colonization by any European power
- 2) U.S. would not intervene in European wars

D. Impact of doctrine not immediate, but it signalled America's emergence as a power strong enough to prevent European meddling in western hemisphere's affairs

---

Please cite this source when appropriate:

Feldmeth, Greg D. "Sectionalism & National Growth," *U.S. History Resources*  
<<http://www.polytechnic.org/faculty/gfeldmeth/lec.sect.html> (Revised 28 June 2004).