

Chapter 10: Monroe and John Quincy Adams

1. President Monroe

Florida

In 1817, Seminoles striking from Spanish Florida attacked settlers along the Georgia border. President James Monroe sent the hero of New Orleans, General Andrew Jackson, to stop the raids. Jackson pushed the Seminoles out of Georgia and then began an invasion of Florida. Along the way, he executed two British citizens for encouraging the Seminoles to attack Americans. Both Britain and Spain protested Jackson's actions.

President Monroe sent Secretary of State John Quincy Adams, son of former president John Adams, to make a deal with Spain. In the Adams-Onís Treaty (1819), Spain gave Florida to the United States. In return, the federal government agreed to take over the \$5 million debt Spain owed to American citizens. Also, the United States agreed to give up its claim to Spanish Texas, an area that the United States claimed was a part of the Louisiana Purchase.

Monroe Doctrine

While the United States was a growing power in North America, the once great Spanish empire had lost most of its colonies to revolutions by 1825. Fearing revolts in their own colonies around the globe, Europe wanted to help Spain regain its New World empire. Both President Monroe and Secretary of State John Quincy Adams feared conflict might erupt between the United States and Europe.

In a message to Congress in December 1823, President Monroe made

four points about European and American relations:

1. The United States would stay out of European issues.
2. The United States would not interfere with any current European colonies in the New World.
3. Europe could not start any new colonies the New World.
4. Europe could not interfere with any New World countries.

This policy became known as the Monroe Doctrine. The Monroe Doctrine became the foundation of American foreign policy for nearly 200 years.

2. President J.Q. Adams

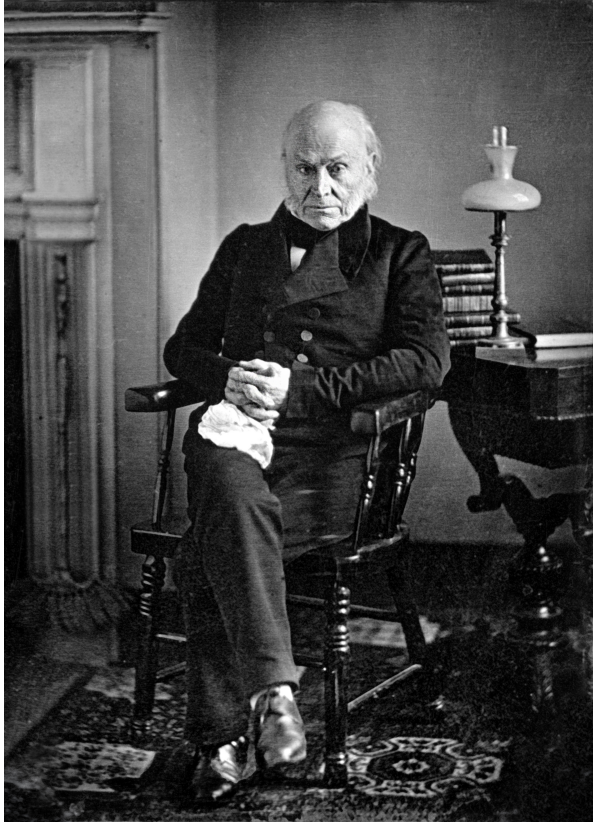
Election of 1824

In 1824, four people ran for president. After the votes were counted, Andrew Jackson got the most votes and John Q. Adams got the second most votes, but no one received a majority or over fifty percent of the votes that was required to win. So the House of Representatives chose John Quincy Adams to be president. Jackson was furious because he got the most votes and he thought the House should have picked him. He said Adams made a "corrupt bargain" for the presidency. Although not true, many people believed Jackson.

Failure

Adams entered office with many goals. He wanted to build roads, observatories, and universities. He supported protection of Native American land to avoid future conflicts and wanted to create a strong army and navy to protect American interests. He got nothing accomplished.

Adams was one of the smartest men to ever become president. However, he was arrogant, difficult to work with, humorless, and had a cold personality. Adams failed as president.



John Q. Adams was the first president to be photographed although it was after he left office. This photo was taken circa 1843 at his home in Massachusetts. He was about 75 years old. Source: Haas, Philip. *John Quincy Adams*. c. 1843. Daguerreotype. Library of Congress.

Representative Adams

Adams served only one term as president like his father before him. However, John Quincy Adams found himself winning a seat in the House of Representatives in 1830, the only former president to serve in the House. In the House, Adams had some of his greatest achievements.

Between 1831 and 1844, Congress introduced the “gag rule” that prevented

any discussions or votes about ending slavery. Adams fought against this and in 1844, had it removed so that the issue of slavery could be challenged in the Congress.

In 1841, Adams successfully argued before the Supreme Court that captured Africans who rebelled on the slave ship *Amistad* should be allowed to remain free in America or return to their homes in Africa. His arguments in the defense of the Africans earned him the nickname “old man eloquent.”

Unable to advance technology as president, Adams as a representative in the House did succeed in getting Congress to approve the building of the Smithsonian Institution—a museum of American history.

Although an expansionist, someone who wanted the United States to grow in size, Adams opposed the war with Mexico. He collapsed on the floor of the House while giving a speech against the Mexican War. Adams died in Washington D.C. two days later on February 23, 1848.