

Nationalism and Sectionalism

What You Will Learn...

Main Ideas

1. Growing nationalism led to improvements in the nation's transportation systems.
2. The Missouri Compromise settled an important regional conflict.
3. The outcome of the election of 1824 led to controversy.

The Big Idea

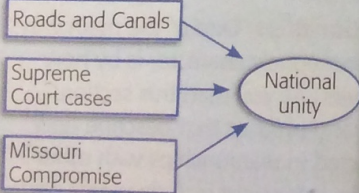
A rising sense of national unity allowed some regional differences to be set aside and national interests to be served.

Key Terms and People

nationalism, p. 302
 Henry Clay, p. 302
 American System, p. 302
 Cumberland Road, p. 303
 Erie Canal, p. 303
 Era of Good Feelings, p. 303
 sectionalism, p. 304
 Missouri Compromise, p. 305
 John Quincy Adams, p. 305

TAKING NOTES

As you read, take notes on how each of the following contributed to national unity.



If YOU were there...

You live near the western end of the newly completed Erie Canal in New York State in 1831. In fact, your older brothers helped build the canal. Every day you watch as mules pull the canal boats along the still water of the canal. Sometimes the boats carry passengers traveling from city to city. You have never been far from your home, and you are curious about their journey.

What would you like to ask the travelers on the canal boat?

BUILDING BACKGROUND Peace, prosperity, and a growing country gave Americans a sense of national unity. In practical terms, building roads and canals also helped unify the nation. They made travel easier, linking people from different regions of the country. Nevertheless, some regional conflicts continued.

Growing Nationalism

Pleased by successful negotiations with foreign powers, Americans enjoyed a rising sense of nationalism. **Nationalism** is feelings of pride and loyalty to a nation. This new national unity found a strong supporter in U.S. Representative **Henry Clay** from Kentucky.

Clay believed that a strong national economy would promote national feeling and reduce regional conflicts. He developed a plan that came to be known as the **American System**—a series of measures intended to make the United States economically self-sufficient. To build the economy, he pushed for a national bank that would provide a single currency, making interstate trade easier. Clay wanted the money from a protective tariff to be used to improve roads and canals. These internal improvements would unite the country.

Some members of Congress believed that the Constitution did not permit the federal government to spend money on internal improvements. Clay argued that the possible gains for the country justified federal action.

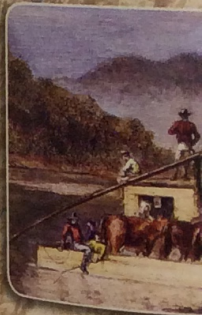
Roads and

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Roads and Canals

In the early 1800s most roads in the United States were made of dirt, making travel difficult. British actress Frances Kemble described one New York road she had struggled along during a visit in the 1830s.

“The wickedest road, I do think, the cruellest, hard-heartedest road, that ever [a] wheel rumbled upon.”

—Frances Anne (Kemble) Butler, *Journal*

To improve the nation’s roads, Congress agreed with Clay and invested in road building. The **Cumberland Road** was the first road built by the federal government. It ran from Cumberland, Maryland, to Wheeling, a town on the Ohio River in present-day West Virginia. Construction began in 1815. Workers had to cut a 66-foot-wide band, sometimes through forest, to make way for the road. Then they had to use shovels and pickaxes to dig a 12- to 18-inch roadbed, which they filled with crushed stone. All of the work had to be done without the benefit of today’s bulldozers and steamrollers.

By 1818 the road reached Wheeling. By 1833 the National Road, as the expansion was called, stretched to Columbus, Ohio. By 1850 it reached all the way to Illinois.

Meanwhile, Americans tried to make water transportation easier by building canals. One of the largest projects was the **Erie Canal**, which ran from Albany to Buffalo, New York.

Construction of the canal began in 1817 and was completed in 1825. Using shovels, British, German, and Irish immigrants dug the entire canal by hand. The canal cost millions of dollars, but it proved to be worth the expense. The Erie Canal allowed goods and people to move between towns on Lake Erie and New York City and the east coast. Its success served as an **incentive** for a canal-building boom across the country.

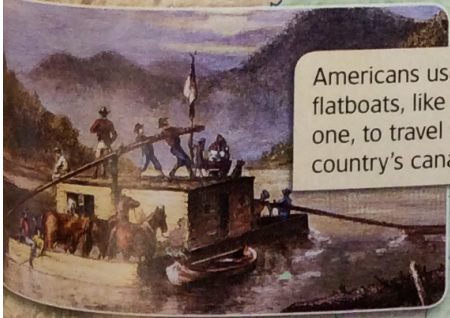
Era of Good Feelings

From 1815 to 1825 the United States enjoyed the **Era of Good Feelings**, an era of peace, pride, and progress. The phrase was coined

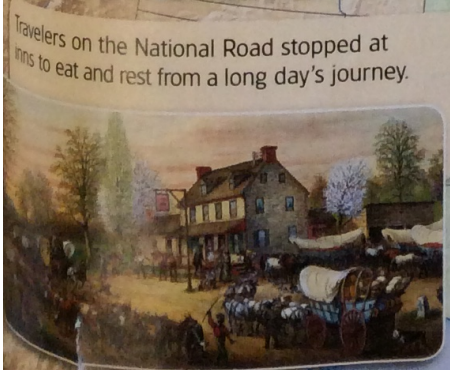
ACADEMIC VOCABULARY

incentive
something that leads people to follow a certain course of action

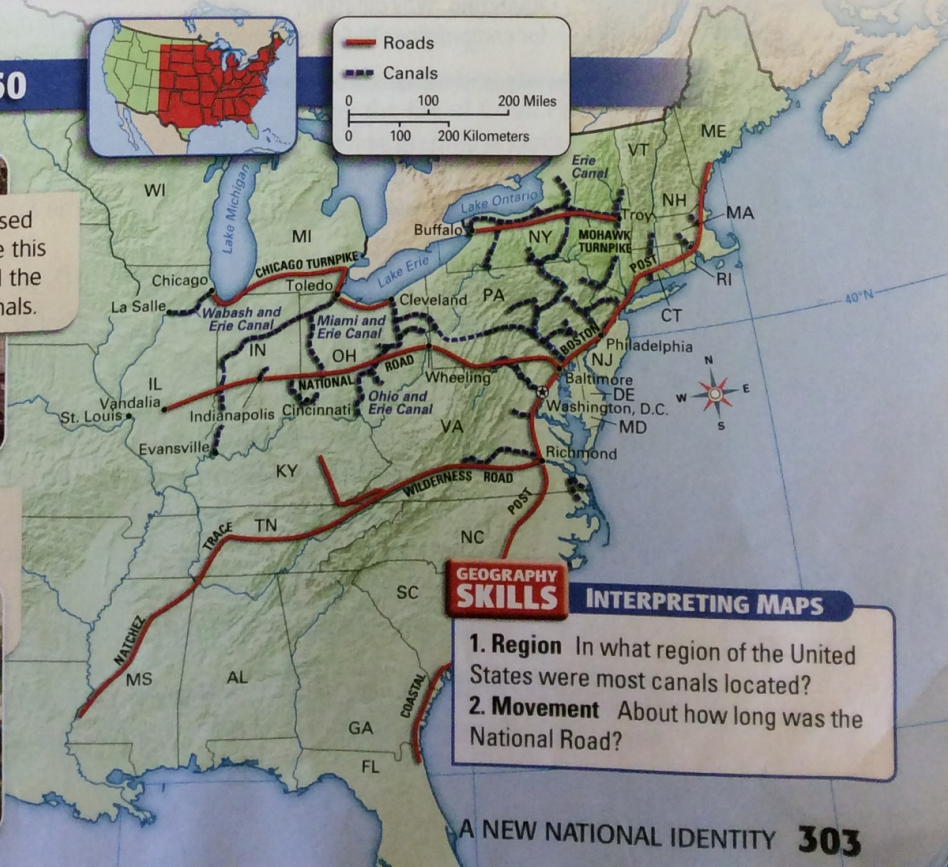
U.S. Roads and Canals, 1850



Americans used flatboats, like this one, to travel the country’s canals.



Travelers on the National Road stopped at inns to eat and rest from a long day’s journey.



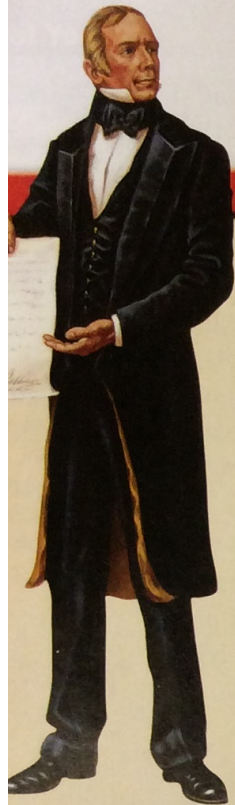
GEOGRAPHY SKILLS INTERPRETING MAPS

- 1. Region** In what region of the United States were most canals located?
- 2. Movement** About how long was the National Road?

The Missouri Compromise, 1820

The Missouri Compromise banned slavery in the region north of 36° 30' N.

- Free state
- Free territory
- Slave state
- Slave territory



BIOGRAPHY

Henry Clay

1777–1852

Known as the silver-tongued Kentuckian, Henry Clay was a gifted speaker. He became involved in local politics early in his life, and by age 29 he was appointed to the U.S. Senate. Throughout his career in the Senate, he was dedicated to preserving the Union. The Missouri Compromise and a later agreement, the Compromise of 1850, helped to ease sectional tensions, at least temporarily.

Analyzing Why did Henry Clay work for compromises between regions?



GEOGRAPHY SKILLS

INTERPRETING MAPS

1. **Region** In which part of the country was slavery permitted?
2. **Human-Environment Interaction** Why did leaders choose 36° 30' as the compromise line?

Missouri Compromise

Even during the Era of Good Feelings, disagreements between the different regions—known as **sectionalism**—threatened the Union. One such disagreement arose in 1819 when Congress considered Missouri's application to enter the Union as a slave state. At the time, the Union had 11 free states and 11 slave states. Adding a new slave state would have tipped the balance in the Senate in favor of the South.

To protect the power of the free states, the House passed a special amendment. It declared that the United States would accept Missouri as a slave state, but importing enslaved Africans into Missouri would be illegal. The amendment also set free the children of Missouri slaves. Southern politicians angrily opposed this plan.

North Carolina senator Nathaniel Macon wanted to continue adding slave states. "Why depart from the good old way, which has kept us in quiet, peace, and harmony?" he asked. Eventually, the Senate rejected the amendment. Missouri was still not a state.

by a Boston editor in 1817 during James Monroe's visit to New England early in his presidency.

The emphasis on national unity was strengthened by two Supreme Court case decisions that reinforced the power of the federal government. In the 1819 case *McCulloch v. Maryland*, the Court asserted the implied powers of Congress in allowing for the creation of a national bank. In the 1824 case *Gibbons v. Ogden*, the Court said that the states could not interfere with the power of Congress to regulate interstate commerce.

READING CHECK **Drawing Inferences** How did new roads and canals affect the economy?

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READING CHECK

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Section

Reviewing

1. a. **Describe** Good Fe
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