Madison, Madbury, Monroe, Quincy

Another of the great constitutional architects was a man by the name of James Madison. He was a Democrat -Republican, and so agreed with Jefferson that government needed to be limited, but he had worked with Alexander Hamilton and John Jay to write the federalists papers in order to garner support necessary to ratify the constitution, most likely because he was a primary author of the constitution, and is therefore frequently called the Father of the Constitution. The fact that such a conservative member of the anti-federalist party was able to be elected demonstrated just how weakened the Democrat-Republicans were by the disasters of Jefferson's second term. Nonetheless, he was truly a Jeffersonian, and would work to continue much of his mentor's agenda.

During Jefferson's first term in office was the issue of last minute appointments. A primary power of the Executive branch is that the president has the right to appoint members of the judiciary. By appointing judges, the executive has a small ability to check the power of the courts. Years earlier, John Adams had appointed several judges at the last minute before Thomas Jefferson took office in order to prolong federalist friendly ideals in the national government. In response, Jefferson immediately set to work trying to reverse many of those appointments. One of them was a man by the name of Marbury. Jefferson immediately ordered his Secretary of State to stop delivering the remaining notices of appointments. The acting Secretary, a man by the name of Levi, complied. The remaining appointments were never delivered.

Marbury knew he had been appointed, so he sued the government, claiming that the appointment had been legitimately made and confirmed, and therefore the Jefferson Administration was obligated to complete the appointment despite the fact that Marbury was hated since he was a firm Federalist. He sued the State Department that was now under the leadership of the permanent Secretary who had been sworn in: James Madison.

The case ended up before the Supreme Court as Marbury v Madison. The decision was written by the Chief Justice...a man who had a short time before served as Adams' acting Secretary of State, and who had been responsible for delivering as many of the appointments just like Marbury's. One of the major concerns was that if the complaint was held up in court, then basically the Judicial Branch would have a way to force the Executive Branch to do something, which would destroy the balance of power between the branches of the government. Overall, the court decided that while the Jefferson administration did not have the right to withhold the appointment, and Marbury had the right to sue under the Judiciary Act of 1789, it also made a final ruling that changed the nature of American law. The court argued that the Judiciary Act of 1789 gave the court some unconstitutional powers, like the ability to force the government to give Marbury his appointment. Therefore, the Act was partially unconstitutional and could not be enforced. While this effectively denied Marbury his appointment, it also established the greatest power of the Judicial Branch: the right to review laws and dismiss them if they are decided to be unconstitutional. This was a much greater power, termed Judicial Review.

Aside from this famous case, President Madison would become famous for his role in two other events. First, he helped prevent the renewal of the charter (the contract giving it permission to exist) for the National Bank. The Bank was supposed to print, borrow and loan money for the government and by doing so provide funds for the government to work smoothly. Madison and Jefferson thought that such a bank would become a way to transfer money and power from the states and give it to greedy individuals with friends in the federal government. They thought it was a threat to the republic. When the charter expired during Madison's first term, so did the Bank of the United States.

This was unfortunate, because Madison would soon learn the importance of having a national bank. As the Napoleonic Wars intensified, the British navy worked to shut down all trade with France. This led to increasing conflict with American merchant ships at sea, especially when American sailors were forcibly removed from American ships and forced to join the British navy. Treating this as a national insult, the next set of elections in 1812 brought a wave of belligerent officials into office, and shortly thereafter formal War was declared, not long after the Louisiana Territory was admitted as a state.

The resulting War of 1812 was a bit of a mixed bag. Canada was as yet still a British possession, but the Americans assumed that Canada would be willing to rise and join them if given the opportunity, and further would be easy prey to an invasion by U.S. forces. Alas, the opposite was true, and soon the Fort that would become Chicago was abandoned and Detroit was surrendered. By 1813, British Naval and Army forces moved south to attack and invade across the Great Lakes. On Lake Erie, an American fleet led by Commodore Perry encountered British ships: confident of victory, he signaled "We have met the enemy and they are ours." By the end of the battle, his words would prove prophetic, as he destroyed British naval forces in the Great Lakes. This led to the British abandoning Detroit and their Native allies to recapture and destruction.

Things were going reasonably well on the high seas as well. The British Navy was reputed to be the best in the world, but the new American frigates such as the U.S.S. Constitution were so well made and sailed that tales were spreading that sometimes cannon shot that would punch through the sides of lesser ships simply bounced off the thick timbers made of American white oak, leading to the nickname "Old Ironsides." Several unexpected victories had been won, but the sad fact was the Americans did not have enough ships to protect their Atlantic coast. British ships landed troops largely at will, attacking and burning as they pleased. In August of 1914, a British army landed and attacked Washington D.C., forcing the government to flee and leading President Madison to take command of the retreating U.S. army for the second and last time since President Washington had commanded the forces to put down the Whisky Rebellion. The capital was looted, and many public buildings were set on fire, including the White House. (These buildings likely would have burned down if a huge storm had not assaulted the city, putting out the fires.)

A major problem for the war was how exactly the U.S. was to pay for it. Despite the lack of funds, when a proposal to re-establish a national bank to issue bonds and loans to pay for the war emerged, Madison vetoed the legislation against the advice of his Secretary of the Treasury.

The war had dragged on, with successes for both sides. Overall, though, the cost of the lost trade between the nations exceeded any value gained. At the City of Ghent in Belgium, diplomats from the nations forged a new peace treaty. By the time this news had crossed the oceans and been approved by Congress and Parliament, another major battle was about to be fought. An American army under the leadership of General Andrew Jackson had fortified the city of New Orleans, and a British force dispatched before news of peace negotiations had reached them was on its way. This would be the most lopsided battle of the war. While Jackson's men crouched behind fortified walls, the British marched across open ground in their attack in the first weeks of 1815.

During the entire New Orleans campaign, the Americans would report 333 casualties, compared to 2459 British casualties. It was this military success that would launch General Jackson to political fame. Two months later in February, the treaty arrived in the U.S. and was ratified. The War of 1812 was over, at substantial cost, but the days of British intervention with natives in America were at an end, honor had been upheld, and peace had been reestablished.

Following the war, the economy improved and westward expansion accelerated. Soon, the former Indian territory of Indiana was admitted as a state in 1816, and Madison's second term would draw to a close. The only other major event of his administration would be the passage of a new charter to create the Second National Bank of the United States. The war had taught Madison a valuable lesson about the necessity for a central bank. He would be followed by yet another Democrat-Republican: James Monroe, the last of the founding fathers to serve as president. He would serve two terms, overseeing the continued westward expansion and the addition of five states, one each year starting in 1817 with Mississippi, Illinois, Alabama, Maine, and ending in 1821 with Missouri. Like all of his presidential predecessors with the exception of John Adams, he was a slaveholder, and in many ways his term would signify the major problem the U.S. would confront over the next half-century.

By this time, slavery had become the divisive issue for the nation. The North was largely anti-slave, and the South remained largely pro-slave. When Missouri applied to be accepted as a state that allowed slavery, it was rejected due to the votes of Senators from northern non-slave states. For the next two years, the argument raged. An original compromise to allow Missouri into the union as a slave state with a timetable to eliminate slavery in the state's future was also rejected. Part of the worry was, neither side was willing to allow a new state into the union that would have senators and representatives that were willing to vote for the opposition. The final compromise was this: Missouri would be allowed to enter as a slave state if Maine was also admitted as a free state, thereby maintaining the balance of power in the house and senate. Furthermore, all future states north of latitude 36/30' N were to be admitted as free states, while southern states would be admitted as slave states. The hope was that if equal numbers of northern free and southern slave states joined the Union in the future, then the balance of power would be maintained. This was the Missouri Compromise, a bad bargain that was still the best deal possible. It would keep the peace for the next several decades.

Monroe's other contributions were somewhat minor: he blocked legislation to provide federal funding for a road leading westward, because he believed that such projects should be funded by states. To rather more effect, he ordered the hero of New Orleans to pursue raiding Seminole Indians over the Florida border into Spanish Territory. This was pretty much an illegal action, but it was so popularly supported than neither General Jackson nor President Monroe experienced negative effects. In a way, America had crossed an important line: it was so persuaded that its destiny lay in the west that it was willing and even happy to break treaties and laws in pursuit of dominion over the remainder of the Continent. As a natural outgrowth of the certainty of America's destiny as the ruler of North America and leader among republics, Monroe issued the eponymous Monroe Doctrine. By the 1820's, most of central and south Americas were in the grip of revolt as new nations emerged after throwing off colonial rule. With the agreement of Britain, Monroe announced that the United States would not interfere in European wars, essentially creating a policy of isolation. At the same time, though, he assured the world that any interference in the affairs of any nation anywhere on the American continents would be interpreted as an act of war.

When Monroe left office, he was replaced by the last of the Democrat-Republicans, the famed diplomat and congressman (as well as the son of the second president and a strong abolitionist) John Quincy Adams. Unfortunately, his anti-slavery views and the diminished power of the Democrat-Republican party meant that this venerable man would be opposed at almost every turn by foes in Congress, and as such would accomplish little of note during his single turn. With the end of the Quincy Adams presidency, the First Party system came to an end. The days of the Federalists and Jeffersonians were over, and our nation was no longer young. A whole new era was about to begin.

Answer the following questions using CARs format.

1. Explain Madison's political background and beliefs.

2. Describe the Marbury vs. Madison case, and explain its importance.

3. Explain the causes and effects of the War of 1812.

4. Explain Madison's relationship and opinions regarding the U.S. National Bank.

5. Explain the causes and effects of the Missouri Compromise.

6. Explain the purpose of the Monroe Doctrine.