

High School Lesson Plan:
James Monroe Museum



The Era of Good Feelings

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Standards of Learning: Virginia and U.S. History

Skills

VUS.1 The student will demonstrate skills for historical and geographical analysis and responsible citizenship, including the ability to:

- a) identify, analyze, and interpret primary and secondary source documents, records, and data, including artifacts, diaries, letters, photographs, journals, newspapers, historical accounts, and art, to increase understanding of events and life in the United States;
- b) evaluate the authenticity, authority, and credibility of sources;
- c) formulate historical questions and defend findings, based on inquiry and interpretation;
- d) develop perspectives of time and place, including the construction of maps and various timelines of events, periods, and personalities in American history;
- e) communicate findings orally and in analytical essays or comprehensive papers;
- f) develop skills in discussion, debate, and persuasive writing with respect to enduring issues and determine how divergent viewpoints have been addressed and reconciled.

VUS.6 The student will demonstrate knowledge of the major events from the last decade of the eighteenth century through the first half of the nineteenth century by:

- b) identifying the economic, political, and geographic factors that led to territorial expansion and its impact on the American Indians;
- e) describing the cultural, economic, and political issues that divided the nation, including tariffs, slavery, the abolitionist and women's suffrage movements, and the role of the states in the Union.

Objectives:

- Students will understand the term "Era of Good Feelings" and why it is applied to Monroe's presidency.
- Students will think critically about the name "Era of Good Feelings" and analyze whether or not the title is accurate.
- Students will be able to identify and interpret a primary source document to understand the Panic of 1819.

Background

Political

- The **Federalist Party** dissolved, marking the end of the two parties until after Monroe's presidency. He ran for re-election unopposed.
- Monroe appointed Cabinet members of differing views in an attempt to ease tensions.
- Monroe toured the states during his presidency.
- America made the transition to a two party system at the end of Monroe's second term.
- New states were admitted to the Union during Monroe's presidency: Mississippi in 1817, Illinois in 1818, Alabama in 1819, Maine in 1820, and Missouri in 1821.
- **Rush-Bagot Treaty of 1817**: demilitarized the Great Lakes and Lake Champlain, indicating improved relations between the U.S. and Great Britain after the War of 1812.

Social

- 1818: A group of Seminole Indians attack American soldiers and their families in Georgia. Andrew Jackson invades and captures Pensacola in reaction, without presidential authority from Monroe. Monroe returns Florida to the Spanish, but with a warning that Spain must control the Indian population there or cede Florida to the United States.
- 1819: Spain cedes Florida to the United States in the **Adams-Otis Treaty**.
- 1820: **The Missouri Compromise** temporarily addresses the slavery question by drawing a regional line making Northern states free and allowing slavery in the Southern states. Maine is admitted as a free state and Missouri as a slave state.

Economic

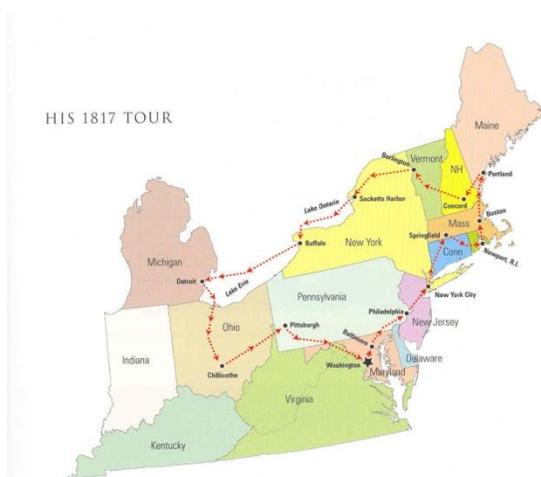
- **The Panic of 1819** was the United States' first major economic crisis, characterized by bank failure, foreclosures, unemployment and a drop in manufacturing and agriculture production.
- Factors contributing to the Panic of 1819 include: inflation caused by debt following the War of 1812, the inability of many Americans to pay debt on their homes, as well as the negative effects from international affairs like the Embargo Act and the recovery of Europe following the Napoleonic Wars.
- The **Second Bank of the United States** was founded in 1816. The favorable political environment of the Era of Good Feelings aided in the establishment of the bank and other new federal initiatives and institutions.

Pre-Visit:

Students should be familiar with the basic political and economic history of the early Republic, including the Federalist Party and the issues surrounding the creation of a national bank.

On-Location Activity

1. Students will divide into two groups. The first group will tour the museum while the second completes the activity, then the two will switch.
2. Students will watch <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cwvHtkCusHo> for an introduction to Monroe's presidency.
3. Students will tour the "Era of Good Feelings" gallery to learn about Monroe's terms as president. Students will view the painting depicting Monroe's tour of the Northern states.



- What mood does the painting depict?
 - Why do you think Monroe chose to tour these states and what effect do you think the tour had?
4. Student will view the peace medal presented to Native American tribes during Monroe's presidency (JM76.127) and the Pawnee beaded purse presented to Mrs. Monroe (JM76.306.) Students will discuss the relations between the U.S. government and Native Americans during this time.
 - What do the peace medal and purse indicate about the relations between the United States and Native Americans at the time?

(Note: If students are divided into two groups, groups will switch at this point.)

5. Students will read the Second Inaugural Address and discuss the Panic of 1819:

Second Inaugural Address

Washington, March 5, 1821

"Under the present depression of prices, affecting all the productions of the country and every branch of industry, proceeding from causes explained on a former occasion, the revenue has considerably diminished, the effect of which has been to compel Congress either to abandon these great measures of defense or to resort to loans or internal taxes to supply the deficiency. On the presumption that this depression and the deficiency in the revenue arising from it would be temporary, loans were authorized for the demands of the last and present year.

"Anxious to relieve my fellow-citizens in 1817 from every burthen which could be dispensed with, and the State of the Treasury permitting it, I recommended the repeal of the internal taxes, knowing that such relief was then peculiarly necessary in consequence of the great exertions made in the late war. I made that recommendation under a pledge that should the public exigencies require a recurrence to them at any time while I remained in this trust, I would with equal promptitude perform the duty which would then be alike incumbent on me.

"By the experiment now making it will be seen by the next session of Congress whether the revenue shall have been so augmented as to be adequate to all these necessary purposes. Should the deficiency still continue, and especially should it be probable that it would be permanent, the course to be pursued appears to me to be obvious. I am satisfied that under certain circumstances loans may be resorted to with great advantage. I am equally well satisfied as a general rule, that the demands of the current year, especially in time of peace, should be provided for by the revenue of that year."

JAMES MONROE

- What factors does Monroe site for the cause of the economic crisis?
- What is Monroe's attitude regarding the potential for an economic recovery?
- What measures does he recommend to improve the economy?

- Considering Monroe's presidency, how do you think this message would have been received?
- What was Monroe trying to accomplish with this speech? How does this impact the way you read the document?

6. Students will review in the courtyard or introductory room by listing aspects of Monroe's presidency that were either congruent or contradictory to the name "Era of Good Feelings."
 - What about Monroe's presidency was harmonious?
 - One political party (end of Federalists)
 - Period of economic prosperity before the Panic of 1819
 - Growth of the United States (new states added)
 - What factors might make Monroe's presidency *not* an Era of Good Feelings?
 - The Panic of 1819
 - Slavery (Missouri Compromise)
 - Native American relations

Post-Visit Enrichment Activity:

Students will participate in a debate. One side will argue reasons for the title "Era of Good Feelings" to be applied to Monroe's presidency; the other will argue that the name is misleading.

Visiting the James Monroe Museum and Memorial Library

For more information about visiting the museum or organizing a class field trip, please call:

Phone: (540) 654-1043

Or email _____ .

Hours:

The museum is open from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Monday through Saturday and from 1 to 5 p.m. on Sunday. During the months of December, January and February, the museum closes at 4 p.m. daily.

Directions:

The James Monroe Museum and Memorial Library is located in historic downtown Fredericksburg, Virginia, only one hour's drive from Washington, D.C. or Richmond, Virginia.

From Interstate 95, take exit 130A to Route 3 East. Follow Business Route 3 past the University of Mary Washington. Continue on Business Route 3 (William Street) to Charles Street. Turn right on Charles Street. The museum is housed in a one-story brick building on the right. On-street parking is available.