

# American history (1815-1820)

[History](#), [American History](#)



Economic development is shaped by a nation's political leaders, the external forces and the natural courses of history. The United States of America was under the leadership of ten presidents from 1815-1850. This started with the 4th US president James Madison who, through the Congress, declared war with Britain in 1812. There was economic depression as a normal consequence of war. But the young nation bounced back and it was during the presidency of John Quincy Adams that the war of 1812 was declared successful. There was an upsurge of nationalism.

There were successive waves of economic and social change that swept across the nation. Adams called his idea the American System, where canals, roads, railroads and expansion were at the forefront of his economic model. This stimulated interregional trade and sparked an unprecedented development of towns and cities. He was defeated by Andrew Jackson in the elections of 1828. Jackson destroyed the Bank of the United States, a well established private bank that handled the money of the federal government, as it was run by his political enemies.

There was bank war and federal deposits were removed from this bank. The leadership that followed was that of Martin Van Buren, William Henry Harrison and John Tyler from 1837- 1845. It was faced with problems inherited from Jackson's presidency as well as problems related to rapid increase in population. The Panic of 1837 resulted from the abrupt closure of a large number of American banks which plunged the US into the first major economic depression or severe economic downturn. Sale and settlement of public lands also became a major focus of the federal government.

It was the leadership of James Polk that showed positive trends as he had these as achievements at the end of his term in 1849: 1) reduced tariffs on imports; 2) re-established independent US treasury; 3) settled dispute with Great Britain over the control of Oregon Country; and, 4) acquired California for the US. It was also during his term that Texas, Florida, Iowa and Wisconsin became states. The American nation also reached the shores of the Pacific Ocean at the end of his term.

The presidency of Zachary Taylor from 1849-1850 (as he died after, not completing his term) was marked with the discovery of gold in California which was America's first "gold rush". Vice-President Millard Fillmore took over the presidency and he made sure that the issue of slavery on the newly-acquired lands of the Southwest would not tear the nation apart. 2  
ReferencesGoogle, Ancient Lights Educational Media. America's Era of Expansion and Reform, 1817-1860, <http://www.writingco.com/pdf/FH617VTG.pdf> Google, Wikipedia, en. [wikipedia.org/wiki/President\\_of\\_the\\_United\\_States](http://wikipedia.org/wiki/President_of_the_United_States)