

LESSON THREE

∞ *John Quincy Adams in the Netherlands* ∞ *April–September 1814*

Sources:

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Adams, John Quincy. John Quincy Adams diary 29, 1 August 1813–31 May 1816, page 93 [electronic edition]. *The Diaries of John Quincy Adams: A Digital Collection*. Boston, Mass.: Massachusetts Historical Society, 2004. <http://www.masshist.org/jqadiaries>

The Diary of John Quincy Adams: 1794–1845 American Diplomacy, and Political, Social, and Intellectual Life from Washington to Polk. Edited by Allan Nevins. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1951.

Memoirs of John Quincy Adams: Comprising Portions of His Diary from 1795–1848. Volume II. Edited by Charles Francis Adams. Philadelphia: J.B. Lippincott & Co, 1874.

Memoirs of John Quincy Adams: Comprising Portions of His Diary from 1795–1848. Volume III. Edited by Charles Francis Adams. Philadelphia: J.B. Lippincott & Co, 1874.

The Writings of John Quincy Adams. Volume V. Edited by Worthington C. Ford. New York: Macmillan Company, 1915.

∞The Treaty of Ghent∞

John Quincy Adams began his diplomatic career early, at the age of thirteen when he set off from France to Russia, accompanying Francis Dana the new American minister to Prussia, whom he served as private secretary and interpreter. He would turn fourteen during this journey eastward. Officially, John Quincy would take up his diplomatic duties in 1794 when President George Washington appointed him American minister to the Netherlands, the same position first held by his father in the decade before.

One of the United States' premier foreign diplomats, John Quincy was named successively as minister to Portugal, Prussia, and Russia. It was after his return to Russia, with his wife and a young son of his own, that John Quincy was tapped by President Madison to negotiate a peace treaty with Great Britain to end the War of 1812.

The negotiations were originally to be held in the city of Gottenburg, but before John Quincy arrived the negotiations were moved to the city of Ghent in the Netherlands. Adams joined Henry Clay, Albert Gallatin, Jonathan Russell, and James Bayard. Even though Adams was the senior diplomat of the group, he struggled with the different personalities to mold a treaty that all could sign and the Senate would ratify.

John Quincy began his diary after his first trip to Europe. The diary was with him throughout his diplomatic career, his presidency, and his many years as a member of the House of Representatives from Massachusetts. In the end he wrote more than 15,000 pages. The six months of travel and negotiation for Ghent are excerpted here to show the protracted peace process itself, as well as John Quincy's own personal record of the time. The final entry is not from his diary (though it is referenced there) but a letter to his mother acknowledging the peace that was just penned.

1814

John Quincy Adams diary entry, April 1, 1814

The Diary of John Quincy Adams: 1794–1845, p. 116–117

Available online at the Massachusetts Historical Society website: <http://www.masshist.org/jqadiaries/>

April 1.—Mr. Nathaniel H. Strong this morning brought me dispatches from the Secretary of State—one addressed to Mr. Bayard and myself, the other to me alone; letters from Mr. Gallatin and Mr. Bayard, at Amsterdam, and one from Mr. Bourne, enclosing one from Mr. Beasley. The dispatch to Mr. Bayard and me, of which Mr. Bayard retained the original and enclosed to me a copy, directs us both to repair, immediately upon the receipt of it, to Gottenburg, there to enter upon a negotiation of peace with England, conformably to a proposal made by the British Government and accepted by that of the United States. Mr. Monroe intimates that there will be other American Commissioners; but his letter is dated 8th January, before the nominations were made. Mr. Henry Clay and Mr. Jonathan Russell were the persons ultimately appointed. Mr. Gallatin is not in the commission. Mr. Monroe directs me to leave the affairs of the United States here, in my absence, in the charge of Mr. Harris.

Review Questions

1. What new task does the Secretary of State assign to John Quincy?
2. Where is John Quincy being asked to go?
3. At this point, who is to serve on the commission with John Quincy?

Critical Thinking Questions

1. Based on the date of this entry and your outside knowledge, why are the United States and England negotiating peace?

Blog Prompt

Begin making daily entries in your blog. Unless otherwise directed, you may write about anything that happens on a particular day, events, news, snippets of conversation, et cetera.

John Quincy Adams diary entry, April 2, 1814

The Diary of John Quincy Adams: 1794–1845, p. 117

Available online at the Massachusetts Historical Society website: <http://www.masshist.org/jqadiaries/>

April 2.—I called upon Lord Walpole at one o'clock, the hour he had appointed, told him the order I had received to go to Gottenburg, and asked him if he could inform me whether commissioners on the part of Great Britain has been appointed. He said he could not; that he had received no dispatches from his Government of later date than 24th December. There are now twenty-two mails from England due. But, he said, by his last accounts from Stockholm, of the 23rd March, he learnt that some of the mails were landed; they might be expected every day. He had heard from private letters that George Hammond had been appointed, but there must be others; he did not know who.

Review Questions

1. Who is Lord Walpole?

Critical Thinking Questions

1. Why does John Quincy want to know who the British commissioners are?
2. What can you glean about the speed of communications in the early 19th century? How does this compare to that of John Quincy's father, John Adams?

John Quincy Adams diary entry, April 11, 1814

Excerpted from *The Diary of John Quincy Adams: 1794–1845*, p. 117

Available online at the Massachusetts Historical Society website: <http://www.masshist.org/jqadiaries/>

April 11.—At twelve o'clock I went with Mr. Smith to the Winter Palace, and attended the Te Deum for Marshal Blücher's victory, and the taking of Rheims par assault; and the Cercle Diplomatique afterwards held by the Empress-mother. It had been preceded by the mass, which we did not attend....

Critical Thinking Questions

1. Where is John Quincy stationed at this time?
2. In what war was Marshal Blücher's victory?

John Quincy Adams diary entry, April 23, 1814

The Diary of John Quincy Adams: 1794–1845, p. 117–118

Available online at the Massachusetts Historical Society website: <http://www.masshist.org/jqadiaries/>

April 23.— [...] We soon after met Count Litta, who told us there was this morning an estafette from the King of Würtemberg, further confirming the taking of Paris. It was a good, a great, and a happy piece of news; for everything had passed quietly, and the greatest of all was the declaration by the Emperor Alexander, alone, but speaking in the name of all the allies. This was very proper, because he was the one in whom the greatest confidence was to be placed. The courier was still expected, but at Berlin they had already had their firing of cannon and their illuminations. It was Count Schwerin that had carried the news there. Mr. Bardaxi told me his news from Spain, brought by a courier to him yesterday. It was the same Count Romanzoff had told me. Mr. Bardaxi said that Bonaparte's system was too violent; it could not stand. He had committed two great faults—the war with Spain, and the war with Russia. He had ruined Spain. But Spain would be indebted to him for her liberty and her happiness. Without him Spain would never have been free; and now within ten years Spain would astonish the world by the wisdom of her institutions. I thought these opinions all sufficiently correct, excepting the last.

Review Questions

1. What city is captured according to Count Litta?
2. What two faults had Napoleon Bonaparte committed?
3. What prediction does John Quincy make about Spain?

Critical Thinking Questions

1. Why would so much confidence be placed in Emperor Alexander of Russia by the allies fighting Napoleon?

John Quincy Adams diary entry, April 27, 1814

The Diary of John Quincy Adams: 1794–1845, p. 118

Available online at the Massachusetts Historical Society website: <http://www.masshist.org/jqadiaries/>

April 27.—I was employed the whole day in packing up and preparing for my departure. Mr. Smith attended the Te Deum for Paris. I did not attend it, being the rule of etiquette not to appear in the presence of the Empress after having taken leave. The notice for the last preceding Te Deum was not even sent me. I supposed this one was sent for Mr. Smith. I was likewise so busy with my preparations that I could not conveniently spare the time. I went out, however, in the evening, to see the illuminations, which were universal, and some of them splendid. The most brilliant of all were those at the fortress. It was very cold, and the wind blew so strong that all the designs of illumination were baffled in the execution; for before any one of them was completely lighted, half the lamps were blown out. In many places where expensive preparations has been made they totally failed.

Review Questions

1. What is a “Te Deum” and why is one performed for Paris?
2. Why does John Quincy Adams not attend the Te Deum?

Critical Thinking Questions

1. Why are they celebrating in Russia?

John Quincy Adams diary entry, April 28, 1814

The Diary of John Quincy Adams: 1794–1845, p. 118–119

Available online at the Massachusetts Historical Society website: <http://www.masshist.org/jqadiaries/>

April 28.—I had finally fixed upon this day for my departure on the journey to Gottenburg, and was employed from the time of my rising until half-past one P.M. in finishing my preparations. I had visits during the morning from Mr. Hurd, Mr. Norman, and Mr. Montréal; the last of whom informed me that a courier had this morning arrived from the Emperor with the news that Napoleon Bonaparte, on having the decree of the French Senate notified to him, declaring that he was cashiered, had immediately abdicated the throne, and thus that the war is at an end. With this prospect of a general peace in Europe I commenced my journey to contribute, if possible, to the restoration of peace to my own country. The weight of the trust committed, though but in part, to me, the difficulties, to all human appearance insuperable, which forbid the hope of success, the universal gloom of the

prospect before me, would depress a mind of more sanguine complexion than mine. On the providence of God alone is my reliance. The prayer for light and vigilance, and presence of mind and fortitude and resignation, in fine, for strength proportioned to my trial, is incessant upon my heart. The welfare of my family and country, with the interests of humanity, are staked upon the event. To Heaven alone it must be committed.

(Table is dated to April 28, 1814, and is viewable in *The Diaries of John Quincy Adams*. “John Quincy Adams diary 29, 1 August 1813 – 31 May 1816, Page 93”). Excerpted.

Stages	Time of Arrival	Departure
From St. Petersburg.....	28 th April, 1:30 P.M.
To Strelna.....	3:30 P.M.	4:30 “
Kipene.....	6.45 “	7:30 “
Koskova.....	9.30 “	10:15 “
Czerkovitz.....	29th April, 1.15 A.M.	2:00 A.M.
Opolie.....	5.00 “	5:30 “
Jamburg.....	7.00 “	7:45 “
Narva.....	10.35 “	11:30 “
Waiwara.....	2:45 P.M.	3:45 P.M.
Chudleigh.....	5:30 “	6:15 “
Jeva.....	7:30 “	8:00 “
Wargle.....	10:15 “	30th April, 6:00 A.M.
Hohenkreutz.....	8:30 A.M.	9:00 “
Pedrous.....	12:30 P.M.	1:00 P.M.
Loop.....	3:45 “	4:50 “
Kahal.....	7:15 P.M.	8:00 “
Jegelicht.....	1st May, 1:00 A.M.	8:00 A.M.
Reval.....	11:00 A.M.	

Review Questions

1. What news does John Quincy learn of Napoleon?
2. How does John Quincy feel about the task that lay before him?
3. To whom does John Quincy look for success in the negotiations?
4. How long does it take John Quincy to travel the first stage of his journey?

Critical Thinking Questions

1. Why might peace in Europe facilitate peace between Britain and the United States?
2. Why might John Quincy keep this chart?

John Quincy Adams diary entry, June 1, 1814

Excerpted from *Memoirs of John Quincy Adams*, vol. II, p. 638

Available online at the Massachusetts Historical Society website: <http://www.masshist.org/jqadiaries/>

June 1.—

[...] The English mail of 13th May arrived this day. Mr. Russell had a letter from Mr. Beasley of that date, informing him that the British Government had appointed three Commissioners to meet those of the United States—Admiral Lord Gambier, Mr. Adams, a lawyer, and Mr. Goulburn, a Secretary in the Colonial Department; that the British Government would probably propose in form the removal of the seat of negotiations from Gottenburg to Holland, and that it was to be decided the day after he wrote. I made, however, a draft of a letter to Lord Castlereagh, notifying our appointment, and our readiness to meet the British Commissioners at Gottenburg; which Mr. Russell, after making some alteration in it, signed, and which I am to take on to Gottenburg to be forwarded, if the removal to Holland has not been finally agreed upon [...]

Review Questions

1. Who are the British commissioners?
2. To where do the British propose moving the peace negotiations (rather than holding them in Gottenburg)?

Critical Thinking Questions

1. Why might the British want to move the peace negotiations?

John Quincy Adams diary entry, June 24, 1814

Excerpted from *The Diary of John Quincy Adams: 1794–1845*, p. 119

Available online at the Massachusetts Historical Society website: <http://www.masshist.org/jqadiaries/>

June 24.—St. John's Day, and the day of our arrival at Ghent. We came down to the ferry about nine in the morning, and were obliged to wait there an hour and a half before we could cross it. We saw several ships of the line on the river, with the white flag, and thirteen large ships on the stocks—eight of the line, and five frigates, all of which are to be demolished and half of the materials to be delivered up to the English. At the "Tête de Flandre," where we landed, there was a dispute between the postmaster and some collecting-officers, which of them should not receive our money for the turnpikes. The postmaster was at last obliged to receive it. We came through St. Nicholas and Lokeren to Ghent, where we arrived at four in the afternoon, and took lodgings at the Hôtel des Pays-Bas, on the Place d'Armes, the best public-house in the city. I dined in my chamber alone, Mr. Russell having been the whole day quite unwell. [...] The distance from Antwerp here is six and one-half posts—about thirty English miles; the road a perfect level, and well-paved; the country is a continual garden.

Review Questions

1. How many days does it take John Quincy Adams to reach Ghent?
2. How far is Ghent from Antwerp?

Critical Thinking Questions

1. How difficult was it to travel in Europe during the nineteenth century?
2. How might travel difficulties affect the negotiations?

John Quincy Adams diary entry, June 30, 1814

The Diary of John Quincy Adams: 1794–1845, p. 120

Available online at the Massachusetts Historical Society website: <http://www.masshist.org/jqadiaries/>

June 30.—At eleven o'clock this morning the American Commissioners now here had a meeting at my chamber. Mr. Bayard, Mr. Clay, and Mr. Russell attended it. The conversation was desultory, and came only to the result of determining to send the *John Adams* home as soon as may be convenient; and writing to Mr. Beasley, to obtain a passport for her from the British Admiralty. We agreed also to order two English newspapers to be sent to us, and several other articles of necessity. We proposed to have regular meetings, and to keep a journal of our proceedings, when we shall all be assembled. We received information that Mr. Gallatin had arrived in Paris.

Review Questions

1. Who are the five American peace commissioners?

Critical Thinking Questions

1. Why would an American ship like the *John Adams* need a passport from the British Admiralty?
2. Why would the American delegation want to receive two different English newspapers regularly?

John Quincy Adams diary entry, July 9, 1814

The Diary of John Quincy Adams: 1794–1845, p. 121

Available online at the Massachusetts Historical Society website: <http://www.masshist.org/jqadiaries/>

July 9.—The American Ministers had this day a meeting in my chamber, from twelve o'clock noon until four. All the members were present, and we had a general conversation upon a variety of objects relating to our own situation here, and to our present mission. We agreed to have in future daily meetings, and to meet again in my chamber at twelve o'clock on Monday. I proposed the question whether we should make an official communication to the British Government of our being here, waiting for their Commissioners. This was not agreed to; but it was determined that a letter to our own Government should be written, to inform the Secretary of State that we are

here, and transmit copies of the correspondence relating to the removal of the seat of negotiation from Gottenburg to Ghent.

Review Questions

1. What two things do the American commissioners agree to do first?
2. To what can the commissioners not agree?

Critical Thinking Questions

1. How might it have been difficult for five Americans to reach consensus in these negotiations?

John Quincy Adams diary entry, July 18, 1814

The Diary of John Quincy Adams: 1794–1845, p. 121

Available online at the Massachusetts Historical Society website: <http://www.masshist.org/jqadiaries/>

July 18.—I had promised Mr. Meulemeester to call upon him about two o'clock this afternoon, to go with him and see the public library belonging to the city; but, as the mission had its ordinary meeting at noon, with which we were occupied until nearly four o'clock, I could not go. I proposed that we should deliberate upon the subjects mentioned in our instructions, and endeavor to prepare something upon the principal points referred to in them, to have it ready upon the arrival of the British Commissioners. I instanced the article concerning impressment, and mentioned the difficulty which there would be in attempting to draw it up. Some essays to that end were made by Mr. Bayard and Mr. Gallatin. It was found we had not here a set of the laws and treaties of the United States, without which we cannot proceed. Mr. Bayard has, however, a set on board the *Neptune*, at Antwerp.

Review Questions

1. What major issue is to be discussed with the British commissioners?
2. What does the commission need to complete its work?

Critical Thinking Questions

1. What does impressment have to do with the war between the British and the Americans?

John Quincy Adams diary entry, August 7, 1814

Excerpted from *The Diary of John Quincy Adams: 1794–1845*, p. 121–122

Available online at the Massachusetts Historical Society website: <http://www.masshist.org/jqadiaries/>

Aug. 7.—The British Commissioners arrived last evening, and are lodged at the Hôtel du Lion d'Or. Mr. Baker, the Secretary to the Commission, called this morning, first upon Colonel Milligan, who lodges at the Hôtel des Pays-Bas, and where Mr. Baker supposed we were yet lodged. He afterwards came and called on Mr. Bayard, and notified to him the arrival of the British Commissioners, with a proposal from them that we should meet them to-morrow at one o'clock, afternoon, at their lodgings, an exchange our full powers, and arrange the mode of proceeding between us for the

future. Mr. Bayard received the notification, which he agreed to communicate to his colleagues, and promised that we would send an answer this evening [...]

Review Questions

1. What is it that the British commissioners first propose upon arriving in Ghent?

Critical Thinking Questions

1. Why might the Americans reject the British proposal?

John Quincy Adams diary entry, August 8, 1814

The Diary of John Quincy Adams: 1794–1845, p. 122–123

Available online at the Massachusetts Historical Society website: <http://www.masshist.org/jqadiaries/>

Aug. 8.—We had a meeting of the mission at noon, in which we had some deliberation concerning the manner in which it would be proper to proceed with the British Commissioners. At one o'clock we went, accompanied by Mr. Hughes, to the Hôtel des Pays-Bas, and found the British Commissioners already there. They are James, Lord Gambier, Henry Goulburn, Esquire, a member of Parliament and Under-Secretary of State, and William Adams, Esquire, a Doctor of Civil Laws. The Secretary to the Commission is Anthony St. John Baker. Mr. Russell was absent, not having yet returned from Dunkirk. After the first ordinary civilities had passed, we produced, on both sides, the originals and copies of our full powers. The copies, attested by the Secretary of each Commission respectively, were exchanged. Lord Gambier then addressed us, with assurances on the part of the British Government of their sincere and earnest desire that this negotiation might terminate in a successful issue, and the ardent hope of the British Commissioners that we might all have the satisfaction of restoring the blessings of peace to our respective countries.

This I answered by making similar assurances on our part...Mr. Goulburn, the second British Commissioner, then replied. He renewed the professions of the sincere desire of the British Government for peace, and added the most explicit declaration that nothing that had occurred since the first proposal for this negotiation would have the slightest effect on the disposition of Great Britain with regard to the terms upon which the pacification might be concluded. He proceeded to say that the British Government thought it would be most conducive to this end to discard all retrospective considerations with regard to anything that had taken place, and had instructed them in relation to certain points which they supposed would naturally arise for discussion upon this negotiation. These points he was charged by his colleagues to state; with a request to be informed whether they were such as by our instructions we were authorized to discuss, and that we would also on our part state any other points upon which we also might be instructed to propose for discussion. Those which he was directed to present were—1. The forcible seizure of mariners on board American merchant vessels, and, connected with that subject, the claim of the King of Great Britain to the allegiance of all the native-born subjects of Great Britain. 2. The including of the Indian allies of Great Britain; and, for the purpose of obtaining a permanent pacification, the drawing of a boundary line for the Indians;

and it was necessary to observe that on both parts of this point Great Britain considered them as a *sine qua non* to the conclusion of a treaty. 3. The partial revision of the boundary line between the United States and the British possessions in North America—upon which, on a question asked by Mr. Bayard, he explained that in such revision Great Britain did not contemplate an acquisition of territory.

Review Questions

1. What do the American and British commissions agree upon before beginning their negotiations?
2. What issues are the Americans instructed to negotiate with the British?

Critical Thinking Questions

1. Both commissions are under instruction by their respective governments. With this in mind, how much freedom might the commissions have to carry out these negotiations?

John Quincy Adams diary entry, August 9, 1814

Excerpted from *The Diary of John Quincy Adams: 1794–1845*, p. 123–125

Available online at the Massachusetts Historical Society website: <http://www.masshist.org/jqadiaries/>

Aug. 9.— The British Commissioners came at eleven; and, in the name of the mission, I stated that we were instructed upon the first and third points presented by them, and that on the second and fourth points we were not. I then proceeded to state the points proposed on our part. 1. A definition of blockade, and, as far as may be mutually agreed, of other neutral and belligerent rights. 2. Certain claims of indemnity to individuals for captures and seizures preceding and subsequent to the war. 3. I added that we were instructed upon a variety of other points which might with propriety be subjects for discussion, either upon a negotiation for peace or upon that of a treaty of commerce, which, in the event of a propitious termination of this negotiation, we were also authorized to conclude; that in order to simplify and facilitate as much as possible the great object of peace, we had discarded every point which did not more peculiarly belong to that and was not immediately relevant to it...

Mr. Gallatin said that so far as respected the including of the Indians in the peace, the United States would have neither interest nor wish to continue the war with the Indians when that with Great Britain should be terminated; that Commissioners had already been appointed to treat of peace with the Indians, and very probably the peace might already be made. He said that the policy of the United States towards the Indians was the most liberal of that pursued by any nation; that our laws interdicted the purchase of lands from them by any individual, and that every precaution was used to prevent the frauds upon them which had heretofore been practised by others. He stated that this proposition to give them a distinct boundary, different from the boundary already existing, and by a treaty between the United States and Great Britain, was not only new, it was unexampled. No such treaty had been made by Great Britain, either before or since the American Revolution, and no

such treaty had, to his knowledge, ever been made by any other European power
[...]

Mr. Bayard asked what was understood by Great Britain to be the effect and operation of the boundary line proposed. Was it to restrict the United States from making treaties with them hereafter as heretofore? from purchasing their lands, for instance? Was it to restrict the Indians from selling their lands? Was it to alter the condition of the Indians, such as it has hitherto existed?

Mr. Goulburn answered that it was intended as a barrier between the British possessions and the territories of the United States; that it was not to restrict the Indians from selling their lands, although it would restrict the United States from purchasing them.

Review Questions

1. In addition to the peace treaty, what does John Quincy Adams propose to the British?
2. What role do the American Indians play in these negotiations?
3. Why is it important to the British that they establish a boundary line for the American Indians?

Critical Thinking Questions

1. Why might this boundary be problematic for the Americans?

John Quincy Adams diary entry, August 19, 1814

Excerpted from *The Diary of John Quincy Adams: 1794–1845*, p. 126–129

Available online at the Massachusetts Historical Society website: <http://www.masshist.org/jqadiaries/>

Aug. 19.—Mr. Baker had been here from the British Commissioners, requesting a conference at their house at three o'clock. We went as requested. On taking their seats at the table, Mr. Goulburn had a dispatch from their Government before him, which, he informed us, was the answer to that which they had sent by their messenger. He proceeded to state its contents. The British Government expressed some surprise that we had not been instructed on the points of an Indian pacification, and boundary, as it might naturally have been expected that Great Britain could not consent to make a peace and leave her allies at the mercy of a more powerful enemy. She might therefore justly have supposed that the American Government would have furnished us with instructions to agree to an article on this subject; but the least she can demand is, that the American Commissioners should sign a provisional article, subject to the ratification of their Government, so that if it should be ratified the treaty should take effect, and if not, that it should be null and void. And we were desired to understand that if unfortunately the conferences should be suspended by our refusal to agree to such an article, Great Britain would not consider herself bound, upon a renewal of negotiations, to abide by the terms which she now offers. As we had requested to be explicitly informed of the views and intentions of Great Britain in proposing this article, we were to know that the Indian territories were to be interposed as a barrier between the British Dominions and the United States, to prevent them from being

conterminous to each other, and that neither Great Britain nor the United States should acquire by any purchase any of these Indian lands. For the line Great Britain was willing to take the treaty of Greenville for the basis, with such modifications as might be agreed upon. With respect to the other boundary line, that of the British territories, Great Britain still adhered to the principle of asking for no conquests. But as Great Britain, on the side of Canada, was the weaker of the two nations. and had no designs of conquest there, and as it had been stated that the United States had, on their part, had the design of conquering Canada, it was required by Great Britain that the United States would stipulate to have no naval force upon the Lakes, from Ontario to Superior; and neither to build any forts in future, nor to preserve those already built upon their borders. It would also be necessary for Great Britain to obtain a communication between the provinces of New Brunswick and Canada, a mere road from Halifax to Quebec, which would take off a small corner of the province of Maine. These propositions must be considered as proofs of the moderation of Great Britain, since she might have demanded a cession of all the borders of the Lakes, to herself. She would also require a continuance of the right of navigating the Mississippi, as secured to her by the former treaties.

Mr. Gallatin asked what was proposed to be done with the inhabitants, citizens of the United States, already settled beyond the line of the Treaty of Greenville—the Territories of Michigan, of Illinois, and part of the State of Ohio, amounting perhaps to one hundred thousand, many of whom had been settled there with their ancestors one hundred years.

Mr. Goulburn said that their case had not been considered by the British Government; that it might be a foundation for the United States to claim a particular modification of the line, and if that should not be agreed to they might remove.

Dr. Adams said that undoubtedly they must shift for themselves.

Mr. Bayard asked whether the proposition respecting the Indian pacification and boundary was still presented as a *sine qua non*; to which they answered that undoubtedly it was [...]

Mr. Gallatin asked whether, in requiring us to keep no naval force on the Lakes and no forts on their shores, they intended to reserve the right of keeping them there themselves. They said they certainly did [...]

In general, their tone was more peremptory and their language more overbearing than at former conferences. Their deportment this day was peculiarly offensive to Mr. Bayard. Mr. Clay has an inconceivable idea, that they will finish by receding from the ground they have taken.

Review Questions

1. Why is the British government surprised that the American commission is not instructed on Indian pacification and a boundary?
2. How does Canada specifically enter into the negotiations between Britain and the United States?
3. What role does the Mississippi River play in the negotiations?

Critical Thinking Questions

1. What do the British mean that Indian pacification is a *sine qua non*?
2. What does Henry Clay mean that the British will “finish by receding from the ground they have taken?”

John Quincy Adams diary entry, September 1, 1814

Excerpted from *The Diary of John Quincy Adams: 1794–1845*, p. 130–133

Available online at the Massachusetts Historical Society website: <http://www.masshist.org/jqadiaries/>

Sept. 1.— [...] Mr. Goulburn told me that after having prepared their note in reply to ours, from the great importance of the subject, they had thought best to transmit it to their Government for approbation before they sent it to us. [...] I told him I hoped his Government would reconsider some parts of their former propositions before they sent their final instructions. He did not think it probable, and I found the more I conversed with him the more the violence and bitterness of his passion against the United States disclosed itself. His great point in support of the Indian boundary was its necessity for the security of Canada. He said that the United States had manifested the intention and the determination of conquering Canada; that “expecting us,” he believed it was the astonishment of the whole world that Canada had not been conquered at the very outset of the war; that nothing had saved it but the excellent dispositions and military arrangements of the Governor who commanded there; that in order to guard against the same thing in future, it was necessary to make a barrier against our settlements, upon which neither party should encroach; that the Indians were but a secondary object, but that as being the allies of Great Britain she must include them, as she made peace with other powers, including Portugal as her ally; that the proposition that we should stipulate not to arm upon the Lakes was made with the same purpose—the security of Canada. He could not see that there was anything humiliating in it; that the United States could never be in any danger of invasion from Canada, the disproportion of force was too great. But Canada must always be in the most imminent danger of invasion from the United States, unless she was guarded by some such stipulation as they now demanded; that it could be nothing to the United States, to agree not to arm upon the Lakes, since they never had actually done it before the present war. Why should they object to disarming there, where they had never before had a gun floating?

I answered that the conquest of Canada had never been an object of the war on the part of the United States; that Canada had been invaded by us in consequence of the war, as they themselves had invaded many parts of the United States—it was an effect, and not a cause, of the war; that the American Government never had declared the intention of conquering Canada...

He insisted that the Indians must be considered as independent nations, and that we ourselves made treaties with them and acknowledged boundaries of their territories.

I said that, wherever they would form settlements and cultivate lands, their possessions were undoubtedly to be respected, and always were respected by the United States; that some of them had become civilized in a considerable degree—the

Cherokees, for example, who had permanent habitations, and a state of property like our own. But the greater part of the Indians could never be prevailed upon to adopt this mode of life; their habits and attachments and prejudices were so averse to any settlement, that they could not reconcile themselves to any other condition than that of wandering hunters. It was impossible for such people ever to be said to have possessions. Their only right upon land was a right to use it as hunting-grounds, and when those lands where they hunted became necessary or convenient for the purposes of settlement, the system adopted by the United States was, by amicable arrangement with them, to compensate them for renouncing the right of hunting upon them, and for removing to remoter regions better suited to their purposes and mode of life. This system of the United States was an improvement upon the former practice of all European nations, including the British. The original settlers of New England had set the first example of liberality towards the Indians, which was afterwards followed by the founder of Pennsylvania. Between it and taking the lands for nothing, or exterminating the Indians who had used them, there was no alternative. To condemn vast regions of territory to perpetual barrenness and solitude that a few hundred savages might find wild beasts to hunt upon it, was a species of game law that a nation descended from the Britons would never endure. It was incompatible with the moral as with the physical nature of things. If Great Britain meant to preclude forever the people of the United States from settling and cultivating those territories, she must not think of doing it by treaty. She must formally undertake, and accomplish, their utter extermination. If the Government of the United States should ever submit to such a stipulation, which I hoped they would not, all its force, and that of Great Britain combined with it, would not suffice to carry it long into execution. It was opposing a feather to a torrent. The population of the United States in 1810 passed seven millions; at this hour it undoubtedly passed eight. As it continued to increase in such proportions, was it in human experience, or in human power, to check its progress by a bond of paper purporting to exclude posterity from the natural means of subsistence which they would derive from the cultivation of the soil? Such a treaty, instead of closing the old sources of discussion, would only open new ones. A war thus finished would immediately be followed by another, and Great Britain would ultimately find that she must substitute the project of exterminating the whole American people for that of opposing against them her barrier of savages

“What!” said Mr. Goulburn, “is it, then, in the inevitable nature of things that the United States must conquer Canada?”

“No.”

“But what security, then, can Great Britain have for her possession of it?”

“If Great Britain does not think a liberal and amicable course of policy towards America would be the best security, as it certainly would, she must rely upon her general strength, upon the superiority of her power in other parts of her relations with America, upon the power which she has upon another element, to indemnify herself, by sudden impression upon American interests, more defenceless against her superiority, and in their amount far more valuable, than Canada ever was or ever will be.”

Review Questions

1. What argument does John Quincy Adams make against the idea that the United States coveted Canada?
2. According to John Quincy Adams, in what way is American Indian policy better than that of the European powers?
3. According to John Quincy Adams, why would the peace treaty fail if it included the Indian boundary?
4. How is Britain to protect Canada if not by an Indian boundary?

Critical Thinking Questions

1. Why might the British be convinced that the United States intends to conquer Canada?
2. In what way does John Quincy Adams's interpretation of American Indian policy seem overly positive and optimistic?

Blog Prompt

How might an Indian boundary and protection in this peace treaty have changed what happened to the Indians two decades later? Cite a modern example of a state within a state? Is it successful?

John Quincy Adams diary entry, September 6, 1814

Memoirs of John Quincy Adams, vol. III, p. 31–32

Available online at the Massachusetts Historical Society website: <http://www.masshist.org/jqadiaries/>

Sept. 6.—We had our usual meeting of the mission, from two to four o'clock. We concluded to send our note to the British Commissioners, requesting a passport for the *Herald* to take out our dispatches, and passports for a number of American citizens to go as passengers in her. Mr. Hughes took my draft of the note to copy and send.

Mr. Gallatin produced his analysis of the last note from the British Commissioners, and his minutes of the points to be noticed in answering it. We discussed them, and it was agreed that Mr. Gallatin should draft an answer conformably to his minutes, to be presented at our meeting to-morrow.

Mr. Bayard manifested symptoms of inclining to concessions on the points proposed by the British Commissioners, and which we have rejected. He proposed offering to the British Commissioners for the Indians a "statu quo ante bellum," or a declaration that we do not consider the Treaty of Greenville as abrogated.

Mr. Clay and myself were for admitting no stipulations about the Indians in a treaty with England.

Mr. Gallatin proposed to offer at least to refer to our Government a stipulation for disarming both sides on the Lakes. I objected our positive instructions, and produced them. I proposed to take the grounds that the very employment of Indians by Great Britain was contrary to the laws of war, and that she had a sufficient pledge for the security of Canada from sudden invasion by the mass of our floating commerce, upon which, by her superiority at sea, she could always lay as suddenly her hand.

It was agreed to take this last point as I proposed, but not the other. Mr. Bayard was absent during great part of the meeting. Mr. Gallatin suggested the idea that after the rupture of the negotiation our Government might keep Ministers in Europe, always empowered to resume it whenever there might be an opportunity.

Review Questions

1. What disagreement develops between John Quincy Adams, Clay, and Bayard?
2. Why did John Quincy Adams not support the idea of disarming both sides in the Great Lakes?

Critical Thinking Questions

1. What evidence is there that the American commissioners are becoming pessimistic about the negotiations?

John Quincy Adams diary entry, September 15, 1814

Excerpted from *Memoirs of John Quincy Adams*, vol. III, p. 35–36

Available online at the Massachusetts Historical Society website: <http://www.masshist.org/jqadiaries/>

Sept. 15.—

[...] Before dinner, Lord Gambier asked me if I should return immediately to St. Petersburg. I said, “Yes; that is, if you send us away.”... He replied with assurances how deeply he lamented it, and with a hope that we should one day be friends again—which I assured him I wished with equal ardor. [...]

Mr. Goulburn told Mr. Clay that they had dispatched our last note to England on the same day they had received it, and expected the answer next Monday or Tuesday. He had no doubt it would terminate our business, and said we must fight it out [...]

Critical Thinking Questions

1. Why might the British government terminate the negotiations at this point?

John Quincy Adams diary entry, September 20, 1814

Excerpted from *The Diary of John Quincy Adams: 1794–1845*, p. 134–135

Available online at the Massachusetts Historical Society website: <http://www.masshist.org/jqadiaries/>

Sept. 20.—I was closing my copy of four pages, when the third note from the British Plenipotentiaries was brought to me, together with some late English newspapers that they had sent us. After reading the note, and the two proclamations of General Hull and General Smyth, enclosed with it, I took them immediately in to Mr. Gallatin. They were shortly after read by our other colleagues, and we had, at one o’clock, a meeting of the mission. The British note is overbearing and insulting in its tone, like the two former ones; but it abandons a great part of the *sine qua non*, adhering at the same time inflexibly to the remainder. The effect of these notes upon

us when they first come is to deject us all. We so fondly cling to the vain hope of peace, that every new proof of its impossibility operates upon us as a disappointment. We had a desultory and general conversation upon this note, in which I thought both Mr. Gallatin and Mr. Bayard showed symptoms of despondency. In discussing with them I cannot always restrain the irritability of my temper. Mr. Bayard meets it with more of accommodation than heretofore, and sometimes with more compliance than I expect. Mr. Gallatin, having more pliability of character and more playfulness of disposition, throws off my heat with a joke. Mr. Clay and Mr. Russell are perfectly firm themselves, but sometimes partake of the staggers of the two other gentlemen.

Mr. Gallatin said this day that the *sine qua non* now presented—that the Indians should be positively included in the peace, and placed in the state they were in before the war—would undoubtedly be rejected by our Government if it was now presented to them, but that it was a bad point for us to break off the negotiation upon; that the difficulty of carrying on the war might compel us to admit the principle a last, for now the British had so committed themselves with regard to the Indians that it was impossible for them further to retreat.

Mr. Bayard was of the same opinion, and recurred to the fundamental idea of breaking off upon some point which shall unite our own people in support of the war.

In this sentiment we all concur. But, as its tendency is to produce compliance with the British claims, it is necessary to guard against its leading us in that career too far. I said it was not more clear to me that the British would not finally abandon their present *sine qua non*, than it had been that they would adhere to their first; that if the point of the Indians was a bad point to break upon, I was very sure we should never find a good one. If that would not unite our people, it was a hopeless pursuit.

Mr. Gallatin repeated, with a very earnest look, that it was a bad point to break upon [...]

Review Questions

1. What new proposal do the British make regarding the American Indians?
2. What does Mr. Bayard suggest will happen if the negotiations are broken off?

Critical Thinking Questions

1. What evidence is there that the negotiations might continue?

John Quincy Adams diary entry, September 25, 1814

The Diary of John Quincy Adams: 1794–1845, p. 136–137

Available online at the Massachusetts Historical Society website: <http://www.masshist.org/jqadiaries/>

Sept. 25.—We met at one o'clock, and sat until past five, debating the new draft of our answer to the British note. I had proposed to leave out a large part of Mr. Gallatin's draft, but he insisted upon retaining most of what he had written, and it was retained. In this debate I had continued evidence of two things. One, that if any one member objects to anything I have written, all the rest support him in it, and I

never can get it through. The other, that if I object to anything written by Mr. Gallatin, unless he voluntarily abandons it every other member supports him, and my objection is utterly unavailing. They supported him thus this day in a paragraph respecting Florida, directly in the face of our instructions, which I produced and read. I was reduced to the necessity of declaring that I would not sign the paper with the paragraph as he had drawn it. He objected to mine because it said that the proceedings of the American Government could be completely justified with regard to Florida. Gallatin said he did not think they could; that he had opposed for a whole year what had been done, before he could succeed in stopping the course they had taken. Mr. Bayard said that he was very much committed on the subject of Florida, too; and Mr. Clay, though he thought the Government perfectly justifiable, did not perceive any necessity for saying so. Mr. Russell was of the same opinion. I had no alternative but to say I would not sign the paper with the paragraph as Mr. Gallatin had written it; for that pointedly said that we would not discuss the subject of Florida with the British Plenipotentiaries, though our instructions had expressly authorized us to bring it before them. Mr. Gallatin finally consented himself to take my paragraph with an alteration.

On the other hand, in repelling an insolent charge of the British Plenipotentiaries against the Government of the United States, of a system of perpetual encroachment upon the Indians under the pretence of purchases, I had taken the ground of the moral and religious duty of a nation to settle, cultivate, and improve their territory—a principle perfectly recognized by the laws of nations, and, in my own opinion, the only solid and unanswerable defence against the charge in the British note. Gallatin saw and admitted the weight of the argument, but was afraid of ridicule. Bayard, too, since he has been reading Vattel, agreed in the argument, and was willing to say it was a duty. But the terms God, and Providence, and Heaven, Mr. Clay thought were canting, and Russell laughed at them. I was obliged to give them up, and with them what I thought the best argument we had. My proposal of the amnesty passed more smoothly, and almost without alteration.

Review Questions

1. In what way does John Quincy Adams feel powerless as a member of the commission?
2. How does he finally make his point?

Critical Thinking Questions

1. For nineteenth-century Americans, what did it mean to “settle, cultivate, and improve their territory”?

John Quincy Adams diary entry, October 12, 1814

Excerpted from *The Diary of John Quincy Adams, 1794–1845*, p. 138–139

Available online at the Massachusetts Historical Society website: <http://www.masshist.org/jqadiaries/>

Oct. 12.—I made a draft of an answer to the last note from the British Plenipotentiaries, but had not finished it when the time of our meeting came. At the meeting, Mr. Gallatin produced his draft, and I read parts of mine. They differed much in the tone of the composition. The tone of all the British notes is arrogant,

overbearing, and offensive. The tone of ours is neither so bold nor so spirited as I think it should be. It is too much on the defensive, and too excessive in the caution to say nothing irritating. I have seldom been able to prevail upon my colleagues to insert anything in the style of retort upon the harsh and reproachful matter which we receive. And they are now so resolved to make the present note short, that they appeared to reject everything I had written, and even much of Mr. Gallatin's draft. We agree to accept the article offered to us as an ultimatum. Mr. Gallatin's idea is to adopt it, as perfectly conformable to the views we ourselves had previously taken of the subject. Mine is to consider and represent it as a very great concession, made for the sake of securing the peace. But in this opinion I am alone. I also strongly urged the expediency of avowing as the sentiment of our Government that the cession of Canada would be for the interest of Great Britain as well as the United States. I had drawn up a paragraph upon the subject conformable to our instructions. My colleagues would not adopt it [...]

Review Questions

1. What is the tone of the British commissioners' notes according to John Quincy Adams?
2. What is John Quincy Adams's concern about the Americans' tone in their notes?

Critical Thinking Questions

1. How might tone affect the peace negotiations between Great Britain and the United States?

Blog Prompt

Write a plea for a cause you believe in using three different tones. How do these tones differ? What might be the reaction of those who read them?

John Quincy Adams diary entry, October 14, 1814

The Diary of John Quincy Adams: 1794 – 1845, p. 139

Available online at the Massachusetts Historical Society website: <http://www.masshist.org/jqadiaries/>

Oct. 14.—The British Ministers sent us the *Times* of the 10th and 11th, containing the official accounts of the taking of Machias and other towns in Passamaquoddy Bay, and the destruction of the frigate *Adams* by the expedition from Halifax, under Sir T. C. Sherbrooke, together with the failure of our attempt to take Michillimackinac, and the taking of Plattsburg by the British Canadian Army. At noon we met in Mr. Clay's chamber and signed our answer to the fourth note from the British Plenipotentiaries, which Mr. Hughes immediately took to them. Mr. Clay, who was determined to foresee no public misfortune in our affairs, bears them with less temper, now they have come, than any of us. He rails at commerce and the people of Massachusetts, and tells what wonders the people of Kentucky would do if they should be attacked.

Review Questions

1. What is happening in the United States while the negotiations are ongoing?

Critical Thinking Questions

1. Why might the British commissioners send these particular news items to the Americans?
2. What does Henry Clay reveal about the American commission?

John Quincy Adams diary entry, October 18, 1814*The Diary of John Quincy Adams, 1794–1845*, p. 139–140Available online at the Massachusetts Historical Society website: <http://www.masshist.org/jqadiaries/>

Oct. 18.—I had some conversation with Mr. Russell, who read me a letter he was writing to Mr. Crawford, and who now told me he was much dissatisfied with our last note to the British Plenipotentiaries. I reminded him that I had not only declared myself dissatisfied with it, but had offered another draft, and of a totally different character. I asked him why he had not supported me. He said he had expected Mr. Clay would have been the most stubborn of us all upon the point relative to the Indians, and, finding him give way, and being himself the youngest member of the mission, and being from a State that cared nothing about Indian affairs, he had not thought it was his business to be more stiff about it than others. I told him of the long conversation I had with Bayard, and how powerfully Bayard had operated upon me in it. I added that he had previously had a similar conversation with Clay, and I believed had worked still more forcibly upon him. Russell said that Bayard always talked about keeping a high tone, but when it came to the point he was always on the conceding side.

Review Questions

1. Why does Mr. Russell not make his views known about the Indian boundary?

Critical Thinking Questions

1. In what ways was the American peace commission a mirror of the American government?

John Quincy Adams diary entry, October 29, 1814*The Diary of John Quincy Adams, 1794–1845*, p. 140–141Available online at the Massachusetts Historical Society website: <http://www.masshist.org/jqadiaries/>

Oct. 29.—At two o'clock we had a meeting of the mission. Mr. Russell was not present. We had some further desultory conversation concerning the drawing up a project of a treaty. Mr. Gallatin had made some minutes, upon which we had much loose conversation. I urged the propriety of making out at once the project in the form of a treaty, both for the sake of saving time and of being fully prepared to deliver it immediately to the British Plenipotentiaries whenever they shall consent to the exchange of projects. This was at last agreed to. Mr. Gallatin undertook to draw up the articles respecting the boundaries and Indians, and I promised to prepare those respecting impressment, blockade, and indemnities.

Review Questions

1. On what project does the commission agree?
2. Which articles does John Quincy Adams agree to write?
3. Which articles does Gallatin propose to write?

John Quincy Adams diary entry, October 30, 1814

The Diary of John Quincy Adams, 1794–1845, p. 141

Available online at the Massachusetts Historical Society website: <http://www.masshist.org/jqadiaries/>

Oct. 30.—I began making a draft for the project of a treaty. Mr. Gallatin was employed in the same manner. At two o'clock we had a meeting of the mission, but Mr. Clay was not present until the meeting was over, and Mr. Russell not at all. We looked over the articles drawn by Mr. Gallatin and myself, which being unfinished, we agreed to meet every day, at two o'clock, until the whole project shall be prepared. Mr. Gallatin proposes to renew the two articles of the Treaty of Paris of 1783, the stipulation for our right to fish, and dry and cure fish, within the waters of the British jurisdiction, and the right of the British to navigate the Mississippi. To this last article, however, Mr. Clay makes strong objections. He is willing to leave the matter of the fisheries as a nest-egg for another war, but to make the peace without saying anything about it; which, after the notice the British have given us, will be in fact an abandonment of our right. Mr. Clay considers this fishery as an object of trifling amount; and that a renewal of the right of the British to navigate the Mississippi would be giving them a privilege far more important than that we should secure in return. And as he finds, as yet, no member of the mission but himself taking this ground, he grows earnest in defence of it.

Review Questions

1. Why is the Treaty of Paris of 1783 important and what does Mr. Gallatin propose to use it for in the new treaty?
2. What is Mr. Clay's objection?

Critical Thinking Questions

1. Why might Mr. Clay have held the opinion that he did?

John Quincy Adams diary entry, November 1, 1814

Memoirs of John Quincy Adams, vol. III, p. 62–63

Available online at the Massachusetts Historical Society website: <http://www.masshist.org/jqadiaries/>

Nov. 1.—I copied the note yesterday received from the British Plenipotentiaries. Mr. Gallatin brought me a copy of the paper referred to in our instructions, and which I had been yesterday unable to find. At two o'clock we had the meeting of the mission, and further considered the note yesterday received. Mr. Clay and Mr.

Russell were for replying that we would proceed no further unless the British Plenipotentiaries would explicitly agree to our proposed basis of a mutual restoration of territory taken during the war. It was, however, determined to give in reply a statement of all our points. A second question then arose, whether the statement should be at large in a note, or in the formal draft of a treaty. We finally concluded upon the latter, and the articles drawn by Mr. Gallatin and myself were taken by Mr. Russell to be examined by him, and successively by the other gentlemen. There was some further conversation upon the subject of the fisheries, and navigation of the Mississippi.

Mr. Clay renewed his objections against any article allowing the latter to the British. He made it a question whether we could agree to such an article, on the principle that, since Louisiana had become a State, it was a part of her sovereignty which the United States could not grant, and that in the law of Congress authorizing Louisiana to form a Constitution, he had thought it necessary, on the same principle, to introduce a section reserving the right of the people of Kentucky to navigate the river.

Mr. Gallatin answered that the formation of Louisiana into a State was subject to this privilege of the British, which had been stipulated in the Treaties of 1783 and 1794.

Mr. Clay replied that if they had been released from it by the war, he saw no reason for renewing it upon them by treaty now. He considered it as a privilege much too important to be conceded for the mere liberty of drying fish upon a desert. We were possessed of no facts to show us the value of this—he did not know what it was worth; but the Mississippi was destined to form a most important part of the interests of the American Union. Every day was developing more and more its importance. The British could have no more right to the navigation of it than to that of any other river exclusively within our jurisdiction—not so much as we have to navigate the St. Lawrence. I have hitherto taken no part in this discussion, and wish to postpone it as long as possible.

Review Questions

1. On what point must the British commissioners agree before the Americans would continue negotiations?
2. What new arguments does Mr. Clay give for denying the British the right to navigate the Mississippi?

Critical Thinking Questions

1. Why might John Quincy Adams wish to stay out of the argument with Mr. Clay about the Mississippi?

John Quincy Adams diary entry, November 10, 1814

Excerpted from *The Diary of John Quincy Adams, 1794–1845*, p. 142–145

Available online at the Massachusetts Historical Society website: <http://www.masshist.org/jqadiaries/>

Nov. 10, VI. 30—A second day belated. On examining the drafts for the note with the amendments of Messrs. Clay, Bayard, and Russell, I found more than three-fourths of what I had written erased. There was only one paragraph to which I attached importance, but that was struck out with the rest. It was the proposal to conclude the peace on the footing of the state before the war, applied to all the subjects of dispute between the two countries, leaving all the rest for the future and pacific negotiation. I abandoned everything else that was objected to in my draft, but wrote over that paragraph again, to propose its insertion in the note. I had gone through my examination of the papers at breakfast-time, and Mr. Gallatin took them. At eleven o'clock we had the meeting of the mission. Everything in the note, as amended, was agreed to without difficulty, excepting my proposed paragraph. Mr. Clay objected strongly against it, because we are forbidden by our instructions from renewing the article of the Treaty of 1794, allowing the British to trade with our Indians. Mr. Gallatin, who strenuously supported my proposition, thought it did not necessarily include the renewal of that article of the Treaty of 1794, because it only offers the state before the war with regard to the objects in dispute. The Indian trade never had been in dispute. He admitted, however, that if the British government should accept the principle and purpose the renewal of the treaties, we could not after this offer refuse it.

I stated in candor that I considered my proposal as going that full length; that I was aware it would be a departure from our instructions as prepared in April, 1813. But the Government, for the purpose of obtaining peace, had revoked our instructions of that date upon a point much more important in its estimation, the very object of the war; and I have no doubt would have revoked them in the other point, had it occurred to them that they would prove an obstacle to the conclusion of peace. I felt so sure that they would now gladly take the state before the war as the general basis of the peace, that I was prepared to take on me the responsibility of trespassing upon their instructions thus far. Not only so, but I would at this moment cheerfully give my life for a peace on this basis. If peace was possible, it would be on no other. I had, indeed, no hope that the proposal would be accepted. But on the rupture it would make the strongest case possible in our favor, for the world both in Europe and America. It would put the continuance of the war entirely at the door of England, and force out her objects in continuing it...

Mr. Clay finally said that he would agree to the insertion of my proposal in the note, but reserving to himself the right of refusing to sign the treaty if the offer should be accepted and the principle extended beyond his approbation. [...]

Review Questions

1. What proposal does John Quincy Adams make in the negotiations?
2. Why does Mr. Clay object?

Critical Thinking Questions

1. Why is John Quincy Adams so willing to abandon the instruction given the commissioners by the American government?

John Quincy Adams diary entry, November 27, 1814

The Diary of John Quincy Adams, 1794–1845, p. 144

Available online at the Massachusetts Historical Society website: <http://www.masshist.org/jqadiaries/>

Nov. 27.—About eleven in the morning, Mr. Gallatin came into my chamber, with a note received from the British Plenipotentiaries. They have sent us back with this note the project of a treaty which we had sent them, with marginal notes and alterations proposed by them. They have rejected all the articles we had proposed on impressments, blockade, indemnities, amnesty, and Indians. They have definitively abandoned the Indian boundary, the exclusive military possession of the Lakes, and the *uti possidetis*; but with a protestation that they will not be bound to adhere to these terms hereafter, if the peace should not be made now. Within an hour after receiving these papers we had a meeting of the mission at my chamber, when the note and the alterations to our project proposed by the British Plenipotentiaries were read, and we had some desultory conversation upon the subject. All the difficulties to the conclusion of a peace appear to be now so nearly removed, that my colleagues all considered it as certain. I think it myself probable. But unless we take it precisely as it is now offered, to which I strongly incline, I distrust so much the intentions of the British Government, that I still consider the conclusion as doubtful and precarious.

Review Questions

1. Which articles of the peace treaty do the British reject?
2. What concessions have the British made?

Critical Thinking Questions

1. Why do the American commissioners think peace is certain at this time?
2. How and why did John Quincy Adams disagree with the other commissioners?

John Quincy Adams diary entry, November 28, 1814

Excerpted from *Memoirs of John Quincy Adams*, vol. III, p. 71–75

Available online at the Massachusetts Historical Society website: <http://www.masshist.org/jqadiaries/>

Nov. 28.—At eleven o'clock we met, and continued in session until past four, when we adjourned to meet again at eleven to-morrow morning. Our principal discussion was on an article proposed by the British Government as a substitute for the eighth of our project. And they have added a clause securing to them the navigation of the Mississippi, and access to it with their goods and merchandise through our territories.

To this part of the article Mr. Clay positively objected. Mr. Gallatin proposed to agree to it, proposing an article to secure our right of fishing and curing fish within the British jurisdiction. Mr. Clay lost his temper, as he generally does whenever this right of the British to navigate the Mississippi is discussed. He was utterly averse to admitting it as an equivalent for a stipulation securing the contested part of the fisheries. He said the more he heard of this the more convinced he was that it was of little or no value. He should be glad to get it if he could, but he was sure the British

would not ultimately grant it. That the navigation of the Mississippi, on the other hand, was an object of immense importance, and he could see no sort of reason for granting it as an equivalent for the fisheries. Mr. Gallatin said that the fisheries were of great importance in the sentiment of the eastern section of the Union; that if we should sign a peace without securing them to the full extent in which they were enjoyed before the war, and especially if we should abandon any part of the territory, it would give a handle to the party there, now pushing for a separation from the Union and for a New England Confederacy, to say that the interests of New England were sacrificed, and to pretend that by a separate confederacy they could obtain what is refused to us.

Mr. Clay said that there was no use in attempting to conciliate people who never would be conciliated; that it was too much the practice of our Government to sacrifice the interests of its best friends for those of its bitterest enemies; that there might be a party for separation at some future day in the Western States, too.

I observed to him that he was now speaking under the impulse of passion, and that on such occasions I would wish not to answer anything; that assuredly the Government would be reproached, and the greatest advantage would be taken by the party opposed to it, if any of the rights of the Eastern States should be sacrificed by the peace; that the loss of any part of the fisheries would be subject of triumph and exultation, both to the enemy and to those among us who had been opposed to the war; that if I should consent to give up even Moose Island, where there was a town which had been for many years regularly represented in the Legislature of the State of Massachusetts, I should be ashamed to show my face among my countrymen; that as to the British right of navigating the Mississippi, I considered it as nothing, considered as a grant from us. It was secured to them by the Peace of 1783, they had enjoyed it at the commencement of the war, it had never been injurious in the slightest degree to our own people, and it appeared to me that the British claim to it was just and equitable. The boundary fixed by the Peace of 1783 was a line due west from the Lake of the Woods to the Mississippi, and the navigation of the river was stipulated for both nations. It has been since that time discovered that a line due west from the Lake of the Woods will not touch the Mississippi, but goes north of it. The boundary, therefore, is annulled by the fact. Two things were contemplated by both parties in that compact—one, that the line should run west from the Lake of the Woods; the other, that it should touch the Mississippi. In attempting now to supply the defect, we ask for the line due west, and the British ask for the shortest line to the Mississippi. Both demands stand upon the same grounds—the intention of both parties at the Peace of 1783. If we grant the British demand, they touch the river and have a clear right to its navigation. If they grant our demand, they do not touch the river; but in conceding the territory they have a fair and substantial motive for reserving the right of navigating the river. I was not aware of any solid answer to this argument. I believed the right to this navigation to be a very useless thing to the British, especially after they have abandoned all presence to any territorial possessions upon the river, but the national pride and honor were interested in it. The Government could not make a peace which would abandon it. They had the same reason for insisting upon it that we had for insisting on the fisheries and the entire restoration of territory [...]

Review Questions

1. What article do the British commissioners add to the treaty?
2. According to Mr. Gallatin, why are the fisheries so important to New England and what might happen if they are denied the right to fish and cure fish?
3. What are the arguments presented by John Quincy Adams for maintaining the rights to fish and cure fish in British territorial waters?
4. What are John Quincy Adams's arguments for granting the British the right to navigate the Mississippi?

Critical Thinking Questions

1. Why is Mr. Clay willing to abandon New England's claims to the fisheries for the sake of denying the right of the British to navigate the Mississippi?

John Quincy Adams diary entry, December 2, 1814

The Diary of John Quincy Adams, 1794–1845, p. 147–148

Available online at the Massachusetts Historical Society website: <http://www.masshist.org/jqadiaries/>

Dec. 2.—When we received, last Sunday, the note from the British Plenipotentiaries, with their proposals and alterations of our project, it became probable that we should ultimately sign a treaty of peace. Mr. Russell then proposed that we should henceforth keep the state of the negotiation exclusively to ourselves, and communicate the papers to no person whatsoever, excepting our Secretary, Mr. Hughes. This was agreed by us all. Nevertheless, Mr. Bentzon went off the next morning for London, and Mr. Howland for Havre. Bentzon called upon me about eight o'clock of the morning of his departure, and was as inquisitive about the state of the negotiation as he could indirectly be. With Mr. Gallatin he was more direct in his enquiries. Bentzon's father-in-law, John Jacob Astor, of New York, had before the war made a settlement at the mouth of Columbia River, on the Pacific Ocean. A British ship-of-war, the *Raccoon*, has, during the war, broken it up. Bentzon stated to Mr. Gallatin that Astor had a ship at Canton, in China; that if peace should be made, the instant it is signed Astor intends to dispatch an order from England, without waiting for the ratification in America, to the ship at Canton to proceed immediately to Columbia River and renew the settlement there before the British will have time to anticipate him. Bentzon supposed that there was a public interest connected with this project, important enough to induce us to communicate to him the state of the negotiations and the prospects of peace. Mr. Gallatin observed to him that he must in that case communicate his proposals in writing, and we would deliberate upon them. Bentzon drew up a paper, and gave it to Mr. Gallatin, with liberty to show it to me, and perhaps to Messrs. Bayard and Clay, but not to Mr. Russell. Of course we could neither deliberate upon it nor give Mr. Bentzon the information he desired.

Review Questions

1. Why is John Jacob Astor interested in the peace settlement?

Critical Thinking Questions

1. Why are the American commissioners set on keeping the treaty a secret?

John Quincy Adams diary entry, December 11, 1814

Excerpted from *The Diary of John Quincy Adams: 1794–1845*, p. 148–149

Available online at the Massachusetts Historical Society website: <http://www.masshist.org/jqadiaries/>

Dec. 11.—The meeting was in my chamber, and it was near noon before we were all assembled. The questions were resumed. What should be done with the present British proposals, and in what manner; whether by another conference or by a written note?...

Mr. Gallatin said it was an extraordinary thing that the question of peace or war now depended solely upon two points, in which the people of the State of Massachusetts alone were interested—Moose Island, and the fisheries within British jurisdiction.

I said that was the very perfidious character of the British propositions. They wished to give us the appearance of having sacrificed the interests of the Eastern section of the Union to those of the Western, to enable the disaffected in Massachusetts to say, the Government of the United States has given up *our* territory and *our* fisheries merely to deprive the British of their right to navigate the Mississippi.

Mr. Russell said it was peculiarly unfortunate that the interests thus contested were those of a disaffected part of the country.

Mr. Clay said that he would do nothing to satisfy disaffection and treason; he would not yield anything for the sake of them.

“But,” said I, “you would not give disaffection and treason the right to say to the people that their interests had been sacrificed?”

He said, No. But he was for a war three years longer. He had no doubt but three years more of war would make us a warlike people, and that then we should come out of the war with honor. Whereas at present, even upon the best terms we could possibly obtain, we shall have only a half-formed army, and half retrieve our military reputation [...].

I said the principle was the great thing which we could not concede; it was directly in the face of our instructions. We could not agree to it, and I was for saying so, positively, at once. Mr. Bayard said that there was *nothing* left in dispute but the principle. I did not think so.

“Mr. Clay,” said I, “supposing Moose Island belonged to Kentucky and had been for many years represented as a district in your Legislature, would you give it up as nothing? Mr. Bayard, if it belonged to Delaware, would you?” Bayard laughed, and said Delaware could not afford to give up territory.

Mr. Gallatin said it made no difference to what State it belonged, it was to be defended precisely in the same manner, whether to one or to another.

It was agreed positively to object to the British proposals on both points—the first, as inconsistent with the admitted basis of the status ante bellum; and the second, as unnecessary, contrary to our instructions, and a new demand, since we had been told that they had brought forward *all* their demands.

Review Questions

1. What argument ultimately prevails upon the American commissioners to defend New England's rights?

John Quincy Adams diary entry, December 22, 1814

Excerpted from *Memoirs of John Quincy Adams*, vol. III, p. 119–122

Available online at the Massachusetts Historical Society website: <http://www.masshist.org/jqadiaries/>

Dec. 22.—After returning home, I walked round the Coupure, and, as I was coming back, met in the street Mr. Bayard, who told me that the answer from the British Plenipotentiaries to our last note had been received; that it accepted our proposal to say nothing in the treaty about the fisheries or the navigation of the Mississippi, and, indeed, placed the remaining points of controversy at our own disposal. As soon as I came into my chamber, Mr. Gallatin brought me the note. It agrees to be silent upon the navigation of the Mississippi and the fisheries, and to strike out the whole of the eighth article, marking the boundary from the Lake of the Woods westward. They also refer again to their declaration of the 8th of August, that Great Britain would not hereafter grant the liberty of fishing, and drying and curing fish, within the exclusive British jurisdiction, without an equivalent. They accepted our proposed paragraph respecting the islands in Passamaquoddy Bay, with the exception of a clause for their restitution if the contested title to them should not be settled within a limited time. Instead of which, they gave a declaration that no unnecessary delay of the settlement should be interposed by Great Britain [...]

Gallatin and Bayard, who appeared not to know where it was that Clay's shoe pinched him, were astonished at what they heard, and Gallatin showed some impatience at what he thought mere unseasonable trifling. He said, at last, that he had no objection to Mr. Clay's amusing himself on that way as long as he thought proper, but as soon as he should choose to be serious, he (Gallatin) would propose that Mr. Hughes should be requested to call this evening upon the British Plenipotentiaries and ask a conference with them for to-morrow. Clay was still taking time, and Mr. Russell called for the vote. He put the question himself—I suppose to avoid voting himself. Mr. Bayard, Mr. Gallatin, and myself voted to ask for the conference, and Clay voted against it.

Review Questions

1. What solution do the British and the Americans find for the dispute regarding the Mississippi and the fisheries?

Critical Thinking Questions

1. What guiding principle leads to the solution of the Mississippi and fisheries question?
2. What does Mr. Russell reveal about himself by calling for a vote on holding a conference with the British?

John Quincy Adams diary entry, December 23, 1814

Excerpted from *Memoirs of John Quincy Adams*, vol. III, p. 122–126

Available online at the Massachusetts Historical Society website: <http://www.masshist.org/jqadiaries/>

Dec. 23.—

[...] We met before twelve, and agreed upon the manner of opening the conference. The British Plenipotentiaries came at the appointed time, and when we were seated, I informed them that we had determined to accept the proposals contained in the note we had yesterday received from them; that we had asked for the conference to make the final arrangements for the conclusion of the treaty, and should be ready to sign it whenever it would be agreeable to them. Lord Gambier expressed his satisfaction that the negotiation had been brought to this favorable result, and we proceeded to make the definitive amendments for completing the treaty [...]

The conference was of about three hours, and terminated by an agreement that we should meet at three o'clock to-morrow afternoon, at the house of the British Plenipotentiaries, for the purpose of signing and sealing the six copies of the treaty—three copies to be made by us, to be delivered to them, and three by them, to be delivered to us [...]

Critical Thinking Questions

1. Why are the Americans and the British able to come to an agreement on a peace treaty?

John Quincy Adams diary entry, December 24, 1814

Excerpted from *Memoirs of John Quincy Adams*, vol. III, p. 126–127

Available online at the Massachusetts Historical Society website: <http://www.masshist.org/jqadiaries/>

*Dec. 24—*I wrote letters to the Secretary of State and to my mother, to be prepared for Mr. Hughes, and took my last letter to the Secretary of State to Mr. Smith, for a duplicate to be made. Engaged much of the morning in preparing the copies of papers to be transmitted by Mr. Hughes. Mr. Clay was not ready with his copy of the treaty at three o'clock, and Mr. Hughes called upon the British Plenipotentiaries to postpone the meeting until four. At that hour we went to their house, and after settling the protocol of yesterday's conference, Mr. Baker read one of the British copies of the treaty; Mr. Gallatin and myself had the two other copies before us, comparing them as he read. Lord Gambier, Mr. Goulburn, and Dr. Adams had our three copies, comparing them in like manner. There was a variation between the copies merely verbal, which arose from the writing at full length, on both sides,

the dates, which in the drafts were in arithmetical figures. All our copies had the Treaty of Peace of seventeen hundred and eighty-three. All the British copies had it one thousand seven hundred and eighty-three. There was the same difference in the date of the signature of this treaty. It was not thought necessary to alter either of them. A few mistakes in the copies were rectified, and then the six copies were signed and sealed by the three British and the five American Plenipotentiaries. Lord Gambier delivered to me the three British copies, and I delivered to him the three American copies, of the treaty, which he said he hoped would be permanent; and I told him I hoped it would be the last treaty of peace between Great Britain and the United States. We left them at half-past six o'clock. [...]

Review Questions

1. What is the final task for the two peace commissions before signing the treaties?

Critical Thinking Questions

1. What is left to do before the peace becomes official?
2. In what way is John Quincy Adams's hope fulfilled?

John Quincy Adams to Abigail Adams, December 24, 1814

The Writings of John Quincy Adams, vol. V, p. 247–248

Ghent, 24 December, 1814

MY DEAR AND HONOURED MOTHER,

A Treaty of peace between the United States and Great Britain has this day been signed by the British and American plenipotentiaries at this place. It is to be dispatched tomorrow by Mr. Hughes, the Secretary of the American mission, who is to sail in the *Transit* from Bordeaux. I have not time to write a single private letter excepting this; but I request you to inform my brother that I have received his Letter of the 2nd October brought by Mr. William Wyer to France. I was much disappointed in not receiving either by him, or by the *Ajax*, the second Dutch vessel arrived from Boston, any letter from you. I have none later than that of 1 May.

You know doubtless that heretofore the President intended in case of peace to send me to England. If the Treaty should be ratified, I am uncertain whether he will still retain the same intention or not. I have requested to be recalled at all events from the mission to Russia. I shall proceed from this place in a few days to Paris, to be there in readiness, to receive the President's orders, and I shall write immediately to my wife, requesting her to come and join me there. If we go to England I beg you to send my sons George and John there to me. After the peace there can be no want of good opportunities for them, and I wish them to embark at the most favourable season for a safe passage. If any other person should be sent to England, I intend to return soon as possible to America and shall hope before midsummer to see once more my beloved parents.

Of the peace which we have at length concluded it is for our government, our country and the world to judge, It is not such as under more propitious circumstances might have been expected, and to be fairly estimated must be compared not with our desires, but with what the situation of the parties and of the world at and during the negotiation made attainable. We have abandoned no essential right, and if we have left everything open for future controversy, we have at least secured to our own country the power at her own option to extinguish the war. I remain etc.

John Quincy Adams

Review Questions

1. Where does John Quincy Adams want to be posted next by the President?
2. What does he desire of his mother should he receive this post?
3. What does he propose should he not receive the post?
4. Why does John Quincy Adams think that this peace is a good one?

Critical Thinking Questions

1. In what way could the post sought by John Quincy Adams also be his crowning achievement as an American ambassador?