

Supreme Court Cases of the Era of Good Feelings



The Marshall Court 1801-1835



Major Goals

- ▶ Increase the powers of the National Government
- ▶ Diminish the powers of the states
- ▶ Perpetuate the Federalist principle of centralization
- ▶ Property rights of the individual need to be protected from government interference

Cases Expanding the authority of the Supreme Court

- ▶ Marbury vs. Madison – Judicial Review
- ▶ Martin vs. Hunter's Lease – Court's right to overrule a state court
- ▶ Cohens s. Virginia – State courts must submit to federal jurisdiction
- ▶ Cherokee vs. Georgia & Worchester vs. Georgia – should have worked, but Jackson refuses to act on their decision

Cases expanding the powers of Congress

- ▶ *McCullough vs. Maryland* – Charter a bank, states cannot tax federal government. Necessary & Proper set up Elastic Clause
- ▶ *Gibbons vs. Ogden* – control interstate commerce

Cases weakening the authority of States

- ▶ Fletcher vs. Peck – state laws invalid when they conflict with Constitution
- ▶ Dartmouth vs. Woodward – protected private charter from state takeover
- ▶ Martin vs. Mott – denied states the right to withhold militia from service

Fletcher Vs. Peck

- ▶ **Issue** – Land Claims at Yazoo River. 1795 Georgia state legislature's sale of land in the Yazoo River country (in what is now Mississippi) to private speculators in return for bribes. Voters rejected most of the incumbents in the next election, and the next legislature, reacting to the public outcry, repealed the law and voided transactions made under it.
- ▶ **Outcome** – Original contract upheld
- ▶ **Significance** - It was the first case in which the Supreme Court ruled a state law unconstitutional.

Dartmouth vs. Woodward

- ▶ Issue – State making Private College Public
- ▶ Outcome – Allowed to stay private
- ▶ Significance - limited the power of the States to interfere with private charters

McCulloch vs. Maryland

- ▶ **Issue** - The state of Maryland had attempted to impede operation of a branch of the Second Bank of the United States by imposing a tax on all notes of banks not chartered in Maryland
- ▶ **Outcome** - The Court invoked the Necessary-and-Proper Clause in the Constitution, which allowed the Federal government to pass laws not expressly provided for in the Constitution's list of express powers as long as those laws are in useful furtherance of the express powers. No tax, bank can exist
- ▶ **Significance** - This fundamental case established the following two principles:
 - that the Constitution grants to Congress implied powers for implementing the Constitution's express powers, in order to create a functional national government, and
 - that state action may not impede valid constitutional exercises of power by the Federal government.

Cohens vs. Virginia

- ▶ Issue – Selling of DC Lottery Tickets in Virginia, the larger issue the court dealt with in making their decision was that of reviewing state court cases
- ▶ Outcome – Upheld conviction, but established review of Highest State Court Decisions
- ▶ Significance - United States Supreme Court decision most noted for the Court's assertion of its power to review state supreme court decisions in criminal law matters when they claim their Constitutional rights have been violated

Gibbons vs. Ogden

- ▶ Issue - monopoly of steamboat operation between New York and neighboring New Jersey
- ▶ Outcome - the Supreme Court of the United States held that the power to regulate interstate commerce was granted to Congress by the Commerce Clause of the Constitution. Ogden loses
- ▶ Significance – Federal authority over interstate commerce solidified

Legacy of the Marshall Court

- ▶ Established the primacy of the federal government over states in exercising control of the economy
- ▶ Opened the way for an increased federal role in promoting economic growth
- ▶ Affirmed protection for corporations and other private institutions from local interference. Allows for the growth of the new industrial capitalist economy