

## The Presidency of Andrew Jackson (1829 – 1837) & Jacksonian Democracy (1824-1840)

1. The period 1824–32 was politically chaotic
  - A. The Federalist Party and the First Party System were dead
  - B. The old Democratic-Republican Party withered away
  - C. Every state had numerous political factions, but did not cross state lines
  - D. Political coalitions formed and dissolved
  - E. Politicians moved in and out of alliances
  - F. By the late 1830s, the Jacksonian Democrats and the Whigs politically battled it out nationally and in every state
  
2. "Old Hickory" as President
  - A. Before the election of 1824, two Republican factions had formed:
    - i. National Republicans
      1. Adams & Clay
    - ii. Democratic-Republicans
      1. Jackson
  - B. Most former Republicans supported Jackson
    - i. Henry Clay opposed him
  - C. Most former Federalists opposed Jackson
    - i. i.e. Daniel Webster
  - D. After the election of 1824, a new party forms:
    - i. The Democratic Party
    - ii. Same party as today's Democrats
  
3. Election of 1828
  - A. Going "Whole Hog" for Jackson in 1828
    - i. "To go the whole hog" means to go all the way
    - ii. Its an Americanism that dates back to January 1828
    - iii. Supporters of Andrew Jackson were called "whole hog" Jacksonites
  - B. Andrew Jackson beat Adams to win the election of 1828
  - C. The majority of Jackson's support came from the South
  - D. Adams's support came from the North
  - E. Jackson was
    - i. First president from the West
    - ii. Second without a college education
  
4. Events and Issues of Jackson's Presidency
  - A. The Spoils System
    - i. Democrats rose to power in the White House
    - ii. They replaced most of the people in offices with their own people
    - iii. These were the "common man"
    - iv. These people were illiterate and incompetent
    - v. This system of rewarding political supporters with jobs in the government was known as the "spoils system"

## B. The Trail of Tears

- i. Jackson's Democrats were committed to western expansion
- ii. Expansion meant confrontation with the Indians
- iii. President Jackson wanted to move the Indians so the white men could expand
- iv. The Indian Removal Act (1830)
  1. It moved more than 100,000 Indians living east of the Mississippi to reservations west of the Mississippi
  2. The five "civilized" tribes were hardest hit
  3. The five civilized tribes were the Cherokees, Creeks, Choctaws, Chickasaws, and Seminoles
  4. Many Americans were against the act
  5. most notably Tennessee Congressman Davy Crockett
  6. it passed anyway
  7. President Jackson quickly signed the bill into law
- v. Black Hawk
  1. led Sauk and Fox braves from Illinois and Wisconsin
  2. resisted the eviction.
- vi. The Seminoles in Florida retreated to the Everglades fighting for several years
- vii. The Cherokees
  1. attempted to fight removal legally by:
    - a. challenging the removal laws in the Supreme Court
    - b. establishing an independent Cherokee Nation
  2. *Cherokee Nation v. Georgia* (1832)
    - a. Supreme Court ruled in favor of the Cherokee on the same issue in *Worcester v. Georgia* (1832)
      - i. Built foundation for tribal sovereignty
    - b. In this case Chief Justice John Marshall ruled that the Cherokee Nation was sovereign
    - c. making the removal laws invalid
    - d. The Cherokee would have to agree to removal in a treaty
    - e. The treaty then would have to be ratified by the Senate
    - f. "John Marshall has made his decision, now let him enforce it."
  3. By 1835 the Cherokee were divided and despondent
    - a. Most supported Principal Chief John Ross
      - i. He fought the encroachment of whites starting with the 1832 land lottery
    - b. Minority supported Major Ridge and his son John
      - i. Advocated removal
      - ii. less than 500 out of 17,000 Cherokee in North Georgia followed them
    - c. The Treaty of New Echota signed by Ridge and

- members of the Treaty Party in 1835
      - d. gave Jackson the legal document he needed to remove the Cherokee
      - e. Some spoke out against the treaty ratification: Daniel Webster and Henry Clay
      - f. Treaty passed by a single vote
      - g. Senate ratification sealed the fate of the Cherokee
    - 4. In 1838 the United States began the removal to Oklahoma
    - 5. General John Wool resigned his command in protest
    - 6. General Winfield Scott arrived at New Echota on May 17, 1838 with 7000 men
    - 7. Men, women, and children were
      - a. taken from their land
      - b. herded into makeshift forts
      - c. with minimal facilities and food
      - d. then forced to march a thousand miles
    - 8. About 4000 Cherokee died as a result of the removal
    - 9. The journey itself became known as “The Trail of Tears”
  - C. The Tariff of Abominations (1828)
    - i. The *South Carolina Exposition* (1828)
    - ii. Nullification Crisis (1832)
  - D. The Bank War
  - E. The Election of 1832
    - i. “Old Hickory” Wallops Clay
    - ii. The Anti-Masonic party
      - 1. Third party entered the election in the election of 1832
      - 2. The party opposed the Masonic Order, which was perceived by some as people of privilege and monopoly
      - 3. Jackson was against monopolies
      - 4. But Jackson was a Mason
      - 5. Therefore the Anti-Masons were an anti-Jackson party
      - 6. Anti-Masons gained support from evangelical Protestants
5. The Policies & Philosophies of Jacksonian Democracy (1828 – 1854)
  - A. Expanded Suffrage
    - i. Voting rights should be extended to all white men
    - ii. By 1840, universal white male suffrage was the norm
    - iii. Nearly all requirements to own property had been dropped
    - iv. Result: nearly 80% voter turnout
  - B. Manifest Destiny
    - i. Belief that white Americans had a destiny to settle the West and to expand control from the Atlantic to the Pacific
    - ii. Took their lead from Jefferson’s “Empire of Democracy”
    - iii. Free Soil Jacksonians
      - 1. notably Martin Van Buren
      - 2. argued for limitations on slavery in the new areas

3. to enable the poor white man to flourish

C. Patronage

- i. Also known as the spoils system
- ii. patronage was the policy of placing political supporters into appointed offices
- iii. rotating political appointees in and out of office was not only the right but also the duty of winners in political contests
- iv. Patronage was theorized to be good because
  1. it would encourage political participation by the common man
  2. it would make a politician more accountable for poor government service by his appointees
  3. long tenure in the civil service was corrupting
  4. civil servants should be rotated out of office at regular intervals
- v. It led to the hiring of incompetent and sometimes corrupt officials in the place of competent ones from the other party

D. Strict Constructionists

- i. Initially favored a federal government of limited powers
- ii. But not states' rights extremists
- iii. As Jacksonians consolidated power, they more often advocated expanding federal power and Presidential power in particular

E. Laissez-faire Economics

- i. generally favored a hands-off approach to the economy
- ii. opposed to govt sponsoring modernization, tariffs, railroads, banking, and economic growth

F. Banking

- i. opposed government granted monopolies to banks
- ii. Jackson himself was opposed to all banks
  1. believed they were devices to cheat common people
- iii. believed that only gold and silver should be money

G. Rigorous Separation of Church & State

- i. embraced anticlericalism
- ii. denounced the intrusion of politics of religious crusades such as
  1. Temperance
  2. Abolition
- iii. Democrats thus garnered adherents among
  1. religious dissenters and minorities
  2. Catholics
  3. Freethinkers
  4. Atheists

H. Contrasts with Jeffersonian Democracy

- i. Jacksonian democracy promoted the strength of the presidency and executive branch at the expense of Congress
- ii. Jacksonian democracy sought to broaden the public's participation in government

6. Jacksonian Democracy Evaluated
  - A. Jackson and the Democrats cast their party as:
    - i. the embodiment of the popular will
    - ii. the defender of the common man against the “aristocracy”
    - iii. The substance behind this claim is still disputed
  - B. Expanded Suffrage
    - i. constitutional changes in the states had broadened the participatory base of politics
      1. eased property requirements for suffrage
      2. state offices and presidential electors now popularly elective
    - ii. By 1828, nearly all white men could vote
    - iii. Jackson and his partisans benefited from and capitalized upon these changes, but they in no way initiated them
    - iv. While no major party advocated female suffrage
      1. Democrats more than Whigs identified politics as a distinctly masculine activity
      2. Relegated women to a subordinate, confined sphere
  - C. Supporter of the Common Man
    - i. The presence of a class component in Jacksonian parties
    - ii. Pit Democratic plain farmers and workers against the Whig bourgeoisie or business elite
    - iii. Some historians read Democratic praise of the plain people as a literal description of their constituency
    - iv. Others dismiss them as artful propaganda
    - v. Democrats usually marshaled a slightly larger (and better organized) following than the Whigs
    - vi. Whigs clearly had a mass popular appeal too
    - vii. Whether Democratic laissez-faire policies actually worked to the benefit of their claimed plebeian constituency has also been questioned
  - D. Truly Democratic?
    - i. Looking beyond the white male electorate, many of the Democrats' postures seem profoundly antiegalitarian and antidemocratic
    - ii. Democrats were more aggressively anti-abolitionist and racist than Whigs
    - iii. Acted to suppress antislavery's intrusion into politics and to curtail the liberties of free blacks
    - iv. Jackson's original core constituency was southern
      - v. At their competitive height in the 1840s, the two parties were nearly evenly politically matched throughout the country
      - vi. In the 1850s, Jacksonian Democracy would return to its sectional roots as the party of slaveholders and their northern sympathizers

7. *Democracy in America*, Alexis de Tocqueville (1835)

- A. toured the United States in 1831–1832

- B. found in America, “the image of democracy itself, with its inclinations, its character, its prejudices, and its passions.”
- C. Places Jacksonian Democracy in a broader sense
  - i. suggests an ethos and an era
  - ii. the flowering of the democratic spirit in American life around the time of Jackson's presidency
- D. To de Tocqueville and others:
  - i. US represented the democratic, egalitarian future
  - ii. Europe represented the aristocratic past
  - iii. Jackson's partisans appropriated this broader meaning to themselves:
    - 1. Democratic Party's democracy vs. Whig Party's aristocracy
    - 2. But this identification is more propaganda than actual fact
- E. de Tocqueville suggests democracy be viewed
  - i. as the reigning spirit of the age
  - ii. and to trace its workings in all areas of American life
  - iii. both within and outside party politics
- F. de Tocqueville famously observed, “the people reign in the American political world as the Deity does in the universe. They are the cause and the aim of all things; everything comes from them, and everything is absorbed in them.”
- G. To de Tocqueville, democracy's pervasive reign is marked by Americans'
  - i. Energetic volunteerism
  - ii. Enthusiasm for societies, associations, reforms, and crusades
  - iii. vibrant institutions of local government
  - iv. popular style and leveling spirit of their manners, customs, pastimes, art, literature, science, religion, and intellect
- H. From this perspective the fact that Andrew Jackson could ascend to the presidency spoke more than his policies in office
  - i. He was a rough-hewn, poorly educated, self-made frontiersman
  - ii. His rhetorical championship of the plain people against the aristocrats, whatever its substance or sincerity, was itself the sign and harbinger of a social sea change toward democracy, equality, and the primacy of the common man
- I. In this view Jackson stands as the symbol for:
  - i. an age and an era
  - ii. an ideal
  - iii. a nation
  - iv. not merely as the leader of a party

### **The Second Party System & The Birth of the Whigs**

- 1. There were major changes in politics after the Era of Good Feelings:
  - A. Politicians who were too clean, too well dressed, too grammatical, and too intellectual were not liked
  - B. Aristocracy was not liked by the American people

- C. The common man was moving to the center of the national political stage
2. The Second Party System
    - A. A new Two Party System Emerged
      - i. Democrats
      - ii. Whigs
        1. The National Republican Party died out
    - B. Jacksonian Democrats
      - i. Glorified the liberty of the individual
      - ii. Power based in South & West
      - iii. Supported:
        1. states' rights
        2. federal restraint in social and economic affairs
    - C. The Whigs
      - i. Power based in North & cities
      - ii. Conservatives who supported:
        1. Government programs
        2. public schools
        3. moral reforms:
          - a. abolition
          - b. temperance
      - iii. Called for internal improvements
        1. Canals
        2. Railroads
        3. Telegraph lines
      - iv. Opposed Manifest Destiny
        1. generally opposed expansion
        2. US should build up its cities first
      - v. Claimed to be defenders of the common man
      - vi. Declared the Democrats the party of corruption
3. The Election of 1836
  - A. Martin Van Buren (D)
    - i. Andrew Jackson's choice as his successor
    - ii. VP (1833 – 1837)
  - B. General William Henry Harrison (W)
    - i. one of the Whig's many presidential nominees
    - ii. The Whigs lost because they did not unite behind one candidate
2. The Election of 1840 & the Locofocos
  - A. Rematch of 1836
  - B. Whigs:
    - i. Try to Out-Common Man the Democrats
    - ii. Campaign Images: Log Cabins and Hard Cider
  - C. Democrats Split:
    - i. The Locofocos

1. radical faction of Democratic Party
2. existed from 1835 until the mid-1840s
3. originally named Equal Rights Party
4. Originated in NYC
5. Protested NYC's regular Democratic organization, Tammany Hall
6. It contained a mixture of anti-Tammany Democrats and labor union veterans of the Working Men's Party
7. vigorous laissez-faire advocates
8. Opposed monopolies
9. Leading intellectual: William Leggett
10. Name Origin: They were Jacksonians that used friction matches, called locofocs, to light candles to continue political meetings after Tammany men turned off gaslights to end meetings.
11. Locofocos supported:
  - a. Jackson & Van Buren
  - b. free trade
  - c. greater circulation of specie
  - d. legal protections for labor unions
  - e. legal protection against paper money, financial speculation, and state banks

- D. Whigs called all Dems "Locofocos" in 1840 election because
  - i. Democratic President Van Buren incorporated many Locofoco ideas into his economic policy
  - ii. Whigs considered the term to be derogatory
- E. William Henry Harrison defeated Van Buren to win the election of 1840
- F. Harrison died 30 days into his presidency
- G. John Tyler, "His Accidency", becomes President

### 3. The Legacy of Jackson & Jacksonian Democracy

- A. John Tyler
  - i. really a Democrat
  - ii. quickly reached accommodation with the Jacksonians
  - iii. a man without a party
- B. James K. Polk
  - i. a staunch supporter and protégé of Jackson
  - ii. the last of the true Jacksonian presidents
- C. James Buchanan
  - i. served in Jackson's administration as Minister to Russia
  - ii. served as Polk's Secretary of State
  - iii. did not pursue Jacksonian policies in an increasingly bitter and divided political climate
  - iv. ultimately resulted in the Civil War