

The Age of Jackson

1820 Election

Era of Good Feelings

New generation of leaders: Henry Clay, John C. Calhoun, Daniel Webster, and Andrew Jackson.

Missouri Compromise

The nation was expanding westward, industry was booming, canals and national roads were creating a transportation revolution

Banking and industrial interests still had a powerful influence on governance the so-called “age of the common man” was on the rise. Universal manhood suffrage

Economic Growth -- linked to international events, especially the explosive industrial revolution that began in Great Britain

The invention of steam-powered machinery in England led eventually to the development of railroads and labor-saving factory machines.

Demand for American cotton.

Abundance of natural resources like iron ore and timber in the U.S.

Erie Canal -- extraordinary growth of New York City,

Railroads -- By the 1850s there was over 30,000 miles of railroad tracks in the United States.

Factory system beginning to develop for the production of thread and cloth. Textile mills in Waltham, Lowell, and Chicopee, Mass.

At Lowell, at a time when it was considered scandalous for young unmarried women to live away from home, the Lowell mills gave women a unique opportunity. They could live and work at the mills in a safe, secure, environment, develop friendships, camaraderie, and a sense of female solidarity, while experiencing a wider world.

Still, less than 10 percent of the population were industrial workers while more than 60 percent were involved with agriculture.

New York grew from 123,000 in 1820 to 312,000 in 1840 and by 1850 more than half a million people lived there. Immigrants

Settlers moved into Michigan, Ohio, Indiana, and Illinois.

The destruction of Tecumseh's Confederacy signaled the end of significant Indian resistance and despite the brief uprising of Black Hawk's War of 1831-1832 in Illinois the Indians were unable to stem the tide of whites pouring into the old Northwest.

By the mid 1830s most of the eastern woodland Native Americans had been forced into reservations west of the Mississippi and their old lands were rapidly occupied and partitioned into thousands of productive farms that would soon become the agricultural heartland of the United States.

It was difficult, nearly impossible, to go it alone and so most settlements were developed by groups, not by individual families.

Pioneer families would link up with each other on the trek west and tackle the most difficult tasks together: land clearing, house and barn raising, harvesting, and quilting, was accomplished as a collaborative effort which. When the day's work was done was an opportunity for a social gathering of dancing, making music, and passing the ever-present jug.

In the south those on the move were planters from Georgia and South Carolina in quest of the rich, fertile black soil of Alabama and Mississippi that was perfect for growing cotton.

“Black Belt” – they brought their slaves with them. Jackson removed the Indians.

Environmental Impact -- forests were gone and with them the natural habitat for many species of wildlife.

When anthracite coal replaced wood as the major source of fuel in the 1840s air pollution rose.

The Second American Party System

Election of 1824 the party split

National Republicans -- advocated federally-sponsored projects

Democratic Republicans -- committed to maintaining the Jeffersonian principle of “that government is best which governs least.”

Four candidates, all Republicans,

**Andrew Jackson had 99 electoral votes,
John Quincy Adams was second with 84,
William Crawford with 41,
Henry Clay with 37.**

Adams later appointed Clay as Secretary of State -- “corrupt bargain”

**As James Monroe’s Secretary of State it was John Quincy Adams who
was the author of the “Monroe Doctrine.”**

1826 -- Fiftieth birthday

1828 Election

Ticket of Jackson & Calhoun

**The new Democratic Party -- highly efficient machine, went around the
country organizing parades, giving speeches, handing out presents
and souvenirs, throwing huge barbecues and providing
entertainment for potential voters.**

**Created a public image of Jackson as a man of the people, a down-to-
earth common man, an uneducated orphan, brought up in the
backwoods who became a great Indian fighter. (Supporters,
however, conveniently left out the detail that he was a wealthy
man who owned a large plantation and numerous slaves.)**

**It is true that at this time states dropped the property requirement for
voter eligibility which gave suffrage to all white male citizens**

regardless of class. But to speak of the Age of the Common Man, or Jacksonian Democracy, is somewhat misleading.

A major reason for the popularity of the rallies was not that the “common man” agreed with Jackson’s politics, or was deeply concerned with the issues, or even understood them, the rallies were popular because the Democratic Party had discovered that the most effective way to lure voters was to create an image of a candidate that the voters could identify with and then propagate that image with slogans and souvenirs and festivities and entertainment. 1828 marked the beginning of a new type of political campaigning that would influence elections for generations to come.

Presenting Jackson as a man of the people, Democrats used Adams’ education and intellectualism was used against him.

Jackson knew what real life was all about.

Elite, snobby, Harvard-educated Adams was more at home in the mansions of New England or Europe.

One Democratic slogan referred to Jackson as “A man who fights,” in contrast with Adams, “a man who writes.”

Mudslinging also was a feature of the 1828 election. Accusations that Jackson’s wife Rachel was an adulteress and bigamist because the divorce papers from her first husband had not been finalized before she married Jackson.

Rachel’s death

The inauguration

The “spoils system”

Peggy O'Neal affair:

John Eaton Secretary of War.

Shortly after her husband committed suicide Eaton and O'Neal married

Gossip mills began cranking out stories about their affair

Pressure was put on Jackson to remove Eaton from his cabinet.

Jackson was infuriated that people made a big thing of it.

Cabinet Wives ostracized her

The "Petticoat War"

Jackson ordered the men in his cabinet to inform their wives that they must accept Peggy Eaton into their circle.

Vice President John C. Calhoun's wife refused to do so.

Calhoun resigns in 1832 -- significant ramifications in the nullification controversy and pushed Calhoun even further into the states' rights cause, and later driving him to become the most influential Southern proponent of the idea of secession.

Calhoun was vehemently opposed to the so-called "Tariff of Abominations" signed into law by John Quincy Adams. Calhoun, like most southerners, opposed the tariff because in a cotton economy where southerners had to buy manufactured goods it meant that such products would be more expensive.

Calhoun now resurrects the "nullification" doctrine first raised by Jefferson and Madison in the Virginia and Kentucky Resolutions.

Southern states could protect themselves against inimical unconstitutional federal laws, Calhoun argued, simply by exerting their sovereign rights and “nullifying” those laws.

At a state dinner Jackson got to his feet, lifted his glass and, looking unflinchingly at Calhoun, toasted: “Our Union—it must be preserved.”

Calhoun then offered a second toast: “The Union—next to our liberty most dear.”

South Carolina nullified the tariff, threatened to secede from the Union, and voted to establish a state army if Jackson tried to enforce compliance. “The laws of the United States,” Jackson fumed, “must be executed. . . . Disunion by armed force is treason. . . . The Union will be preserved and treason and rebellion promptly put down.” Jackson then got Congress to pass a Force Bill enabling the president to use military force if necessary in order to enforce South Carolina’s compliance

South Carolina repealed its nullification of the tariff, but defiantly nullified the Force Bill.

Jackson chose simply to regard South Carolina’s continued defiance as a face-saving gesture and ignored it.

This issue is not resolved. Re-surfaces again in 1860

Indian Removal

In the eyes of Americans living in the southeastern states the Cherokee, Creek, Seminole, Chickasaw, and Choctaw were all a barrier to progress.

The Cherokee had assimilated to a large extent into white society— accepting Christianity, translating the *Bible* and Protestant hymns like “Amazing Grace” into Cherokee, abandoning Cherokee traditions, wearing white man’s clothing, learning to farm, even buying slaves -- they were still regarded by Americans as uncivilized savages.

Naturally, underlying such a racist attitude was the basic economic issue of white lust for Indian land.

In 1830 Jackson sent a bill to Congress calling for the removal of these five Indian nations to a reservation west of the Mississippi. Not everyone, however, agreed with his plan.

National Republican Senator Theodore Frelinghuysen of New Jersey led the congressional opposition to the Indian Removal Bill partly for political, partly for humanitarian reasons.

Frelinghuysen claimed that the Indians, living on the continent for thousands of years, held a far superior title to the land than Americans did. “Our ancestors,” Frelinghuysen spoke from the Senate floor,

“found these people, far removed from the commotions of Europe, exercising all the rights, and enjoying the privileges, of free and independent sovereigns of this new world. They were not a wild and lawless horde of banditti, but lived under the restraints of government. . . .” The whites, when they first arrived, “approached them as friends,” but soon began to take over their lands and destroy their way of life. It is the Indian who has been wronged. “Do the obligations of justice change with the color of the skin? Is it one of the prerogatives of the white man, that he may disregard the dictates of moral principles, when an Indian shall be concerned? No, sir..., if the

contending parties were to exchange positions, place the white man where the Indian stands, load him with all these wrongs, and what path would his outraged feelings strike out for....career?" Frelinghuysen scoffed at Jackson's claim that removing the Indians would be a boon for them, that it would ensure their moral and political improvement as well as their physical comfort. "The end, however, is to justify the means. 'The removal of the Indian tribes to the west of the Mississippi is demanded by the dictates of humanity.' This is a word of conciliating import. But it often makes its way to the heart under very doubtful titles, and its present claims deserve to be rigidly questioned. Who urges this plea? They who covet the Indian lands—who wish to rid themselves of a neighbor that they despise, and whose State pride is enlisted in rounding off their territories."

Despite Frelinghuysen's tireless efforts the Senate passed the Indian Removal Bill by a vote of 28 to 19 and the House by a much closer margin of 102 to 97.

At first the Cherokee refused to comply

In *Cherokee Nation v. Georgia* (1831) Chief Justice John Marshall ruled that the Cherokee "have an unquestionable right, and, heretofore, unquestioned right to the lands they occupy until that right shall be extinguished by a voluntary cession to our government...."

In *Worcester v. Georgia* (1832), Marshall declared that "the Indian nations had always been considered as distinct, independent, political communities. . . ." and hence the Cherokee people were indeed a sovereign nation that had a lawful right to its own territory. Efforts to remove them were therefore unconstitutional.

Jackson's response: "John Marshall has made his decision. Now let him enforce it."

Cherokee Chief John Ross protested to Congress:

“We are despoiled of our private possessions, the indefeasible property of individuals. We are stripped of every attribute of freedom and eligibility for legal self-defence. Our property may be plundered before our eyes; violence may be committed on our persons; even our lives may be taken away, and there is none to regard our complaints. We are denationalized; we are disfranchised. We are deprived of membership in the human family! We have neither land nor home, nor resting place that can be called our own....

We are overwhelmed! Our hearts are sickened, our utterance is paralyzed, when we reflect on the condition in which we are placed, by the audacious practices of unprincipled men, who have managed their stratagems with so much dexterity as to impose on the Government of the United States, in the face of our earnest, solemn, and reiterated protestations.”

In 1838 7,000 American soldiers forced 17,000 Cherokee at bayonet point on the one-thousand mile trek along the infamous “Trail of Tears.” One-fourth of the Cherokee died on the brutal march before they ever reached the bleak reservation set aside for them in the Oklahoma territory.

One 19th-century Indian who pointed out the discrepancy between what the white man said and what the white man did was William Apess.

Apess, a Pequot Indian who studied theology and was ordained as a Methodist minister, published an essay in 1833 entitled, appropriately, “An Indian’s Looking Glass for the White Man.”

“Is it right,” Apess wrote, “to hold and promote prejudices? If not, why not put them all away? I mean here, among those who are civilized.”

I would ask you if you would like to be disfranchised from all your rights, merely because your skin is white, and for no other crime. I’ll venture to say, these very characters who hold the skin to be such a barrier in the way would be the first to cry out, “Injustice! awful injustice!”

If black or red skins or any other skin of color is disgraceful to God, it appears that he has disgraced himself a great deal—for he has made fifteen colored people to one white and placed them here upon this earth....

Now let me ask you, white man, if it is a disgrace to eat, drink, and sleep with the image of God, or sit, or walk and talk with them. Or have you the folly to think that the white man, being one in fifteen or sixteen, are the only beloved images of God? Assemble all nations together in your imagination, and then let the whites be seated among them, and then let us look for the whites, and I doubt not it would be hard finding them; for to the rest of the nations, they are still but a handful. Now suppose these skins were put together, and each skin has its national crimes written upon it—which skin do you think would have the greatest? I will ask one question more. Can you charge the Indians with robbing a nation almost of their whole continent, and murdering their women and children, and then depriving the remainder of their lawful rights, that nature and God require them to have? And to cap the climax, rob another nation to till their grounds and welter out their days under the lash with hunger and fatigue under the scorching rays of a burning sun? I should look at all the skins, and I know that when I cast my eye upon that white skin, and if I saw those crimes written upon it, I should enter my protest against it immediately and cleave to that which is more honorable....

The Bank War

The Second National Bank had been given a twenty-year charter in 1816 charged with guiding and controlling the nation's economy by overseeing a centralized banking system, control interest rates and credit, and supervise currency.

Many Americans, especially in rural areas, distrusted the Bank as an elite, undemocratic institution whose real reason for existence was to promote the interests of the moneyed classes.

Jackson opposed the Bank and declared he would not renew its charter

Nicholas Biddle and National Republicans like Clay and Webster, thought the issue would give them a great deal of political capital. With National Republican support Biddle asked Congress to renew the Bank's charter four years ahead of time. The bill

passed both houses rather easily and was sent to the White House for Jackson's signature.

Jackson vetoed the bill declaring the Bank as undemocratic and unconstitutional because it gave too much power and too much financial advantage to too few people.

This became the major issue in the 1832 election campaign.

The National Republicans fiercely attacked Jackson as a tyrant, a would-be king, a monster, "King Andrew"

They began calling themselves Whigs, implying that Jackson and the Democrats were as wicked and corrupt as George III and the Tories.

Jackson easily won re-election

Wasn't until Woodrow Wilson that we got a stable banking system

The Plight of the Worker

In the mid 1830s nearly 200 strikes took place throughout the country. Workers mostly wanted better wages, but also better and safer working conditions as well as shorter hours. Trying to reduce the work day from 13 to 10 hours.

We have been too long subjected to the odious, cruel, unjust, and tyrannical system which compels the operative Mechanic to exhaust his physical and mental powers by

excessive toil, until he has no desire but to eat and sleep, and in many cases he has no power to do either from extreme debility. . . .

No man or body of men who require such excessive labor can be friends to the country or the Rights of Man. We also say, that we have rights, and we have duties to perform as American Citizens and members of society, which forbid us to dispose of more than Ten Hours for a day's work.

We cannot, we will not, longer be mere slaves to inhuman, insatiable and un pitying avarice. We have taken a firm and decided stand, to obtain the acknowledgment of those rights to enable us to perform those duties to God, our Country and ourselves....

When you understand that we are contending for your rights, for the rights of your families and your children as well as our own, we feel full confidence that you will make no movement to retard the accomplishment of the glorious and holy enterprise, both yours and ours. It is for the rights of humanity we contend....

The Boston workers did not secure the 10-hour day in the 1830s, but they set the foundation for future workers to make gains and twenty years later the 10-hour day did become a reality.

Martin Van Buren – 1836 -- just weeks after his inauguration, the “Panic of 1837” sent the country reeling.

The Election of 1840

As the campaign began the Whigs created a public image of their candidate that had nothing to do with reality, but resonated deeply with the electorate. Someone commented that Harrison was such a nobody that all you had to do was give him a jug of hard cider and a pension and he'd be happy to sit out the rest of his days on the porch of his log cabin. Harrison was a wealthy landowner from Indiana who lived in a mansion and had probably never been in a log cabin in his life, but the Whigs got their promotional image and their campaign theme and ran with it. They created the myth that Harrison was a man of the people

who was born in a log cabin and enjoyed nothing more than to belt back some hard cider. The Whigs held torchlight parades, and parties, and barbecues all over the nation, handing out jugs of hard cider, building miniature log cabins and carrying them around in their parades. Distributing postcards, placards, posters, coonskin hats, they painted Van Buren as a New York aristocrat unable to cope with the economic crisis or relate to the people

Tippecanoe and Tyler Too won 234 electoral votes to Van Buren's 60.

John Tyler -- not a Whig.

Whigs denounced Tyler as the "Executive Ass," and "His Accidency," and, after Tyler vetoed the bill to re-establish the Bank, nearly every member of the cabinet (appointed by Harrison) resigned in protest. Whig congressional leaders even went so far as to have an "excommunication" ceremony on the Capitol grounds in which they formally expelled Tyler from the party.