

A.P. U.S. HISTORY NOTES

Chapter 13: "The Rise of Jacksonian Democracy"

~ 1824 – 1830 ~

- I. Politics for the People
 1. When the Federalists had dominated, democracy was not respected, but by the 1820s, it was widely appealing.
 - a. Politicians now had to bend to appease and appeal to the masses, and the popular ones were the ones who claimed to be born in log cabins and had humble backgrounds.
 - b. Those who were aristocratic (too clean, too well dressed, too grammatical, too highly intellectual) were scorned.
 2. Western Indian fighters and/or militia commanders, like **Andrew Jackson**, **Davy Crockett**, and **William Henry Harrison**, were quite popular.
 3. Jacksonian Democracy said that whatever governing that was to be done should be done directly to the people.
 4. Called the **New Democracy**, it was based on universal manhood suffrage.
 - a. In 1791, Vermont became the first state admitted to the union to allow all white males to vote in the elections.
 5. While the old bigwigs who used to have power sneered at the "coonskin congressmen" and the "bipeds of the forest," the new democrats argued that if they messed up, they messed up together and were not victims of aristocratic domination.
- II. Nourishing the New Democracy
 1. The flowering of the political democracy was in part caused by the logical outgrowth of the egalitarian ideas that had taken root in colonial times.
 - a. The steady growth of the market economy also nourished it.
 - b. More and more people understood how banks, tariffs, and internal improvements affected the quality of their lives.
 - c. The **panic of 1819** and the **Missouri Compromise of 1820** also helped it grow.
 2. In the panic of 1819, overextended banks had called back their debts, and often, farmers unable to pay up lost their farms while the bankers didn't have to lose their property because they simply suspended their own payments, and the apparent favoritism caused outcry.
 3. The problem with Missouri had aroused Southern awareness to how the North could try to crush their slavery once and for all.
 4. During the Jacksonian era, voter turnout rose dramatically, as clear political parties developed and new styles of politicking emerged.
 - a. In 1824, only ¼ of all eligible voters voted, but that number doubled 4 years later.
 - b. Candidates increasingly used banners, badges, parades, barbecues, free drinks, and baby kissing in order to "get the vote."
 - c. Now, more members of the Electoral College were being chosen directly by the people rather than by state legislatures.
 - d. Since secret meetings now became unpopular, presidential nominations by congressional caucus emerged predominantly.
 5. Briefly, nominations were made by some of the state legislatures, but by 1831, the first of the circuslike national nominating conventions were held.
- III. The Adams-Clay "Corrupt" Bargaining.
 1. In the election of 1824, there were four towering candidates: **Andrew Jackson** of Tennessee, **Henry Clay** of Kentucky, **William H. Crawford** of Georgia, and **John Q. Adams** of Mass.

- a. All four called themselves Republicans.
 2. In the results, Jackson got the most popular votes and the most electoral votes, but he failed to get the majority in the Electoral College. Adams came in second in both, while Crawford was fourth in the popular vote but third in the electoral votes. Clay was 4th in the electoral vote.
 3. By the **12th Amendment**, the top three Electoral vote getters would be voted upon in the House of Reps. and the majority (over 50%) would be elected president.
 4. Clay was eliminated, but he was the Speaker of the House, and since Crawford has recently suffered a paralytic stroke and Clay hated Jackson, he threw his support behind John Q. Adams, helping him become president.
 - a. When Clay was appointed **Secretary of the State**, traditional stepping-stone to the presidency, Jacksonians cried foul play.
 - b. **John Randolph** publicly assailed the alliance between Adams and Clay.
 5. Evidence against any possible deal has never been found, but both men flawed their reputations.
- IV. A Yankee Misfit in the White House
1. John Quincy Adams was a man of puritanical honor, and he had achieved high office by commanding respect rather than by boasting great popularity.
 2. During his administration, he only removed 12 public servants from the federal payroll, thus refusing to kick out efficient officeholders in favor of his own, possibly less efficient, supporters.
 3. In his first annual message, Adams urged Congress on the construction of roads and canals, proposed for a national university, and advocated support for an astronomical observatory.
 - a. Public reaction was mixed: roads were good, but observatories weren't important, and Southerners knew that if the government did anything, it would have to continue collecting tariffs.
 4. With land, Adams tried to curb overspeculation on land, much to Westerners' anger, even though he was doing it for their own good, and with the **Cherokee Indians**, he tried to deal fairly with them and the state of Georgia successfully resisted federal attempts to help the Cherokees.
- V. The Tricky "Tariff of Abominations"
1. In 1824, Congress had increased the general tariff from 23% to 37%, but wool manufactures still wanted higher tariffs.
 2. In the **Tariff of 1828**, the Jacksonians schemed to drive up duties to as high as 45% while imposing heavy tariffs on raw materials like wool, so that even New England, where it was needed, would vote the bill down and give Adams another political black eye.
 - a. However, the New Englanders spoiled the plan and passed the law (amended).
 - b. **Daniel Webster** and **John C. Calhoun** reversed their positions from 1816, with Webster supporting the tariff and Calhoun being against it.
 - c. The Southerners immediately branded it as the "**Tariff of Abominations.**"
 3. In 1822, **Denmark Vesey**, a free Black, had led an ominous slave rebellion in Charleston.
 4. The South mostly complained because it was now the least expanding of the sections.
 - a. Cotton prices were falling and land was growing scarce.
- VI. The Tariff Yoke in the South
1. Southerners sold their cotton and other products without tariffs, while the products that they bought were heavily tariffed.
 2. Tariffs led the U.S. to buy less British products and vice versa, but it did help the Northeast prosper so that it could be *more* of the South's products.
 3. John C. Calhoun secretly wrote "**The South Carolina Exposition**" in 1828, boldly denouncing the recent tariff and calling for nullification of the tariff by all states.
 4. However, South Carolina was alone in this nullification threat, since Andrew Jackson had been elected two weeks earlier, and was expected to sympathize with the South.

VII. Going “Whole Hog” for Jackson in 1828”

1. Jacksonians argued, “Should the people rule?” and said that the Adams-Clay bargaining four years before had cheated the people out of the rightful victor.
 - a. They successfully turned public opinion against an honest and honorable prez.
2. However, Adams’ supporters also hit below the belt, even though Adams himself wouldn’t stoop to that level.
 - a. The called his mom a prostitute, called him an adulterer (he had married his wife thinking that her divorce had been granted, only to discover two years later that it hadn’t been), and after he got elected, his wife died, and Jackson blamed Adams’ men who had slandered Andrew Jackson on Rachel Jackson’s death; he never forgave them.
3. John Q. Adams had purchased, with his own money and for his own use, a billiard table and a set of chessmen, but the Jacksonians had seized, criticizing Adams’ incessant spending.

VIII. The Jacksonian “Revolution of 1828”

1. Jackson got 647,286 popular votes to Adams’ 508,064 and he also beat John in the Electoral College, 178 to 83.
 - a. Jackson had support from the West and South, while New England liked Adams.
2. The political center of gravity was shifting west, as Jackson had won because of his support by the West (well, they played a large part in it anyway).
3. Jackson sped up the process of transferring national power from the countinghouse to the farmhouse, and became the “People’s President,” not the aristocrat.
4. Adams still had a distinguished political career after presidency, getting elected to the House of Reps. of Massachusetts, and when he died in 1848, his funeral was the greatest pageant Washington D.C. had ever seen, and his popularity was greater near then end of his political career than during its zenith.

IX. The Advent of “Old Hickory” Jackson

1. When he became president, Andrew Jackson had already battled dysentery, malaria, tuberculosis, and lead poisoning from two bullets lodged somewhere in his body.
2. He personified the new West: rough, jack-of-all-trades, a genuine folk hero.
3. Jackson had been early orphaned, was interested in cockfighting as a kid, and wasn’t really good with reading and writing, sometimes misspelling the same word twice in one letter.
4. He went to Tennessee, where he became a judge and a Congressman, and his passions were so profound that he could choke up on the floor.
5. A man with a violent temper, he got into many duels, fights, stabbings, etc...
6. He was a Western aristocrat, having owned many slaves, and lived in a fine mansion, the Hermitage, and he shared many of the prejudices of the masses.
7. He was called “**Old Hickory**” by his troops because of his toughness.
8. He was anti-federalist, believing that it was for the privileged only, but maintained the sacredness of the Union and the federal power over the states, but he welcomed the western democracy.
9. Jackson commanded fear and respect from his subordinates, and ignored the Supreme Court on several occasions; he also used the veto 12 times (compared to a combined 10 times by his predecessors) and on his inauguration, he let commoners come into the White House.
 - a. They wrecked the china and caused chaos until they heard that there was spiked punch on the White House front lawn; thus was the “inaugural bowl.”
 - b. Conservatives condemned Jackson as “King Mob” and berated him greatly.

X. Jackson Nationalizes the Spoils System

1. The **spoils system**: rewarding supporters with good positions in office.
2. Jackson believed that experience counted, but that young blood and sharp eyes counted more, and thus, he went to work on overhauling positions and erasing the old.

3. Not since the election of 1800 had a new party been voted into the presidency, and even then, many positions had stayed and not changed.
- XI. More Victors than Spoils
1. Though he wanted to “wipe the slate clean,” only 1/5 of the men were sent home, and clean sweeps would come later, but there was always people hounding Jackson for positions, and those who were discharged often went mad, killed themselves, or had a tough time with it.
 2. The spoils system denied many able people a chance to contribute.
 3. Samuel Swartwout was awarded the lucrative post of collector of the customs of the port of New York, and nearly nine years later, he fled for England, leaving his accounts more than a million dollars short, becoming the first person to steal a million dollars from the government.
 4. The spoils system was built up by gifts from expectant party members, and the system secured such a tenacious hold that it took more than 50 years before its grip was even loosened.
- XII. Cabinet Crises and Nationalistic Setbacks
1. Jackson had a mediocre cabinet, except for secretary of state **Martin Van Buren**, who was called “Matty” by Jackson and the “Little Magician” by his enemies.
 2. He often consulted with newspaper editors who kept him up to date with his critics and the public opinion, though enemies criticized this perfectly okay thing.
 3. In 1831, the “Eaton Malaria” struck as a scandal: Secretary of War John H. Eaton had married **Peggy O’Neale**, a woman with whom scandal was linked, who was then scorned upon by the ladies of Jackson’s official family.
 - a. Jackson tried to intervene on Peggy’s behalf, but had to accept defeat.
 - b. Van Buren then began to pay special attention to pretty Peggy O’Neale, and in the subsequent scandal, Jackson turned increasingly against Calhoun, breaking with him completely eventually when Calhoun resigned as VP in 1832, one year after his followers were purged from the cabinet.
 - c. Calhoun turned increasingly sectionalist.
 4. Jackson was hostile to roads and canals; he let interstate roads be constructed, but roads inside states only were vetoed.
 - a. In 1830, when he vetoed a bill for improving the Maysville Road, it was a signal victory for eastern and southern states’ rightism in its struggle with Jackson’s own west.
- XIII. The Webster-Hayne Forensic Duel
1. Concerned at the power and population draining out of it and into the West, in 1829, New England proposed a resolution designed to curb the sale of public lands.
 2. The South, siding with the West against rival Northeast, had **Robert Y. Hayne**, a South Carolinian, who noted New England’s disloyalty in the War of 1812, the “Tariff of Abominations,” and New England’s inconsistent tariffs, and also called for nullification.
 3. Daniel Webster, for New England, insisted that the people and not the states had framed the Constitution, and decried nullification; he awesomely pleaded for the Union, ending with “Liberty and Union, now and forever, one and inseparable.”
- XIV. Websterian Cement for the Union
1. Both men were great for their sections, and both were correct on things as they were at the time, though not necessarily on how they were in the past.
 2. Webster’s speech was reprinted and its ideas seared into countless northerners like 21 year-old Abraham Lincoln, and helped win the Civil War years before it occurred by implanting the idea for the Union to fight for: preservation of it.
 3. Jackson, who had been silent for a while, was to be coaxed through some toasts in his honor so that he’d speak up for the states’ rights.
 4. Forewarned, he declared “Our Union: It must be preserved!” and dealt a huge blow to the scheme of the states’ rights advocates.