

A.P. U.S. HISTORY NOTES

Chapter 14: “Jacksonian Democracy at Flood Tide”

~ 1830 – 1840 ~

- I. “Nullies” in South Carolina
 1. South Carolinians, still scornful toward the **Tariff of 1828**, attempted to garner the necessary two-thirds majority to nullify it in the S.C. legislature, but determined Unionists blocked them.
 2. In response to the anger at the “Tariff of Abominations,” Congress passed the **Tariff of 1832**, which did away with the worst parts of the Tariff of 1828, such as lowering the tariff down to 35%, a reduction of 10%, but many southerners still hated it.
 3. In the elections of 1832, the **Nullies** came out with a two-thirds majority over the **Unionists**, met in the state legislature, and declared the Tariff of 1832 to be void within S.C. boundaries.
 - a. They also threatened with secession against the Union, causing a huge problem.
 - b. **President Jackson** issued a ringing proclamation against S.C., to which governor Hayne issued a counter-proclamation, and civil war loomed dangerously.
 - c. To compromise and prevent Jackson from crushing S.C. and becoming more popular, the president’s rival, **Henry Clay**, proposed a compromise bill that would gradually reduce the Tariff of 1832 by about 10% over a period of eight years, so that by 1842 the rates would be down to 20% to 25%.
 - (i.) The **Tariff of 1833** narrowly squeezed through Congress.
 - (ii.) However, to save face, Congress also passed the **Force Bill** (aka the “Bloody Bill”) that authorized the president to use the army and navy, if necessary, to collect tariffs.
 4. No other states had supported South Carolina’s stance of possible secession, though Georgia and Virginia toyed with the idea.
 5. Finally, S.C. repealed the nullification ordinance.
- II. A Victory for Both Union and Nullification
 1. The Unionists felt that they had won, since Jackson had appeased the South Carolinians and avoided civil war and an armed clash.
 2. The Nullists felt that they had won too, since they had succeeded in lowering the tariff without losing principle; the people of Charleston, the “Cradle of Secession,” threw a gala for its volunteer troops, though they now ominously considered secession more than nullification.
 3. Generations later, many people felt that if S.C. had been crushed, there would have been no Civil War, since it would not have been so brazen and arrogant and haughty.
- III. The Bank as a Political Football
 1. Jackson and his followers distrusted monopolistic banking and oversized businesses.
 - a. He was especially wary of the **Bank of the United States (BUS)**.
 2. In 1832, Henry Clay, in a strategy to bring Jackson’s popularity down so that he could defeat him for presidency, rammed a bill for the rechartering of the BUS—four years early.
 - a. He felt that if Jackson signed it, he’d alienate his followers, and if he vetoed it, he’d lose the supports of the “best people” of the East.
 - b. He failed to realize that the West held more power now, not the East.
 3. The recharter bill passed through Congress easily, but Jackson demolished in a scorching veto that condemned the BUS as unconstitutional (despite political foe **John Marshall**’s ruling that it was okay), and anti-American.
 4. The veto amplified the power of the president by ignoring the Supreme Court and aligned the West against the East.
- IV. Brickbats and Bouquets for the Bank

1. The BUS, led by **Nicholas Biddle**, was harsh on the volatile western “wildcat” banks that churned out unstable money, and seemed pretty autocratic and out of touch with America during its **New Democracy** era, and it was corrupt.
 - a. Nicholas Biddle cleverly lent U.S. funds to friends, and often used the money of the BUS to bribe people, like the press.
 2. However, the bank was financially sound, reduced bank failures, issued sound notes, promoted economic expansion by making abundant credit, and was a safe depository for the funds of the Washington government.
 3. It was highly important and useful, though sometimes not necessarily pure and wholesome.
- V. “Old Hickory” Wallops Clay in 1832
1. Jackson’s supporters again raised the hickory pole while Clay’s men detracted Jackson’s dueling, gambling, cockfighting, and fast living.
 2. However, a new third party, the **Anti-Masonic Party**, made its entrance for the first time.
 - a. Opposed to the fearsome secrecy of the Masonic order, it was energized by the mysterious murder of someone who threatened to expose the Freemason’s secrets.
 - b. While sharing Jacksonian ideals, they were against Jackson, a Mason.
 - c. Also, they were supported by churches hoping to pass religious reform.
 3. Also for the first time, national conventions were held to nominate candidates.
 4. Clay had the money and the “support” of the press, but the poor people voted too, and Jackson won handily, handing Clay his third loss in three tries.
- VI. Badgering Biddle’s Bank
1. Hoping to kill the BUS, Jackson now began to withdraw federal funds from the bank, so as to drain it of its wealth; in reaction, Biddle began to call for unnecessary loans, personally causing a mini panic.
 2. Jackson won, and in 1836, the BUS breathed its last breaths, but because it had been the only source of sure credit in the United States, hard times fell upon the West once the BUS died, since the wildcat banks were very unreliable.
- VII. Transplanting the Tribes
1. By 1830, the U.S. population stood at 13 million, and as states emerged, the Indians were stranded.
 2. Federal policy officially was to acquire land from the Indians through formal treaties, but too many times, they were tricked.
 3. Many people respected the Indians, though, and tried to Christianize them.
 - a. i.e. the **Society for Propagating the Gospel Among Indians** (est. 1787).
 4. Some Indians violently resisted, but the Cherokees were among the few that tried to adopt the Americans ways, adopting a system of settled agriculture, devising an alphabet, legislating legal code in 1808, and adopting a written constitution in 1827.
 5. The **Cherokees**, the **Creeks**, **Choctaws**, **Chickasaws**, and the **Seminoles** were known as the “Five Civilized Tribes.”
 6. However, in 1828, Congress declared the Cherokee tribal council illegal, and asserted its own jurisdiction over Indian lands and affairs, and even though the Cherokees appealed to and won in the Supreme Court, Jackson refused to recognize the decision.
 7. Jackson, though, still harbored some sentiment of Indians, and proposed that they be bodily transferred west of the Mississippi, where they could preserve the culture, and in 1830, Congress passed the **Indian Removal Act**, in which Indians were moved to Oklahoma.
 - a. Thousands of Indians died on the “**Trail of Tears**” after being uprooted from their sacred lands that had been theirs for centuries.
 - b. Also, the **Bureau of Indian Affairs** was established in 1836 deal with Indians.
 8. In 1832, in Illinois and Wisconsin, the Sauk and Fox tribes revolted but were crushed.
 9. From 1835 to 1842, the Seminoles waged guerrilla warfare against the U.S., but were broken after their leader, **Osceola**, was seized; some fled deeper in Florida; others moved to Okla.

VIII. The Lone Star of Texas Flickers

1. Americans continued to covet **Texas**, and in 1823, after Mexico had gained independence from Spain, **Stephen Austin** had made an understanding agreement with the Mexican government to bring about 300 families into a huge tract of granted land to settle and eventually become Mexicanized; these stipulations were largely ignored.
2. The Texans (among them **Davy Crockett** and **James Bowie**) resented the “foreign” government, but they were led by **Sam Houston**, a man whose wife had left him.
3. In 1830, Mexico freed its slaves and prohibited them in Texas, much to the anger of citizens.
4. In 1833, Stephen Austin went to Mexico City to clear up differences and was jailed for 8 mo.
5. In 1835, dictator **Santa Anna** started to raise an army to suppress the Texans; the next year, they declared their independence.
6. After armed conflict and slaughters at the **Alamo** and at **Goliad**, Texan war cries rallied citizens, volunteers, and soldiers, and the turning point came after Sam Houston led his army for 37 days eastward, then turned on the Mexicans, taking advantage of their siesta hour, wiping them out, and capturing Santa Anna.
 - a. The treaty he was forced to sign was later negated by him on grounds that the treaty was extorted under duress.

IX. Texas: An International Conflict.

1. Texas was supported in their war by the United States, but Jackson was hesitant to formally recognize Texas as an independent nation until he had secured Martin Van Buren as his successor, but after he succeeded, Jackson did indeed recognize Texas on his last day before he left office, in 1837.
2. Many Texans wanted to become part of the Union, but the slavery issue blocked this.
3. The end was an unsettled predicament in which Texans feared the return of Santa Anna.

X. The Birth of the Whigs and the Election of 1836

1. The Jacksonians were beginning to drop the “Republican” out of their party name and were now going by the name of **Democrats**.
2. Their opposition coalesced into the **Whigs**, a group united only by their opposition to Jackson and, at first, led by Clay and **John C. Calhoun**.
3. As the election of 1836 neared, the Whigs planned to put so many candidates (favorite sons) that no one would get a full majority; the leading “favorite son” was William H. Harrison.
4. Jackson rigged the election, and his favorite, **Martin Van Buren**, was elected president despite promising to follow in Jackson’s footsteps.
 - a. The Jacksonians supported him half-heartedly.
5. Jackson’s legacy: he bolstered the power of the presidency and the executive branch; united the Democratic party; proved that the people could be trusted with the vote; and showed the courage that won votes, but he also inflicted massive damage on the nation’s financial system by killing the BUS.

XI. Big Woes for the “Little Magician”

1. Van Buren was the first president to have been born in America, but he lacked the support of many Democrats and Jackson’s popularity.
2. A rebellion in Canada in 1837 threatened to plunge America into war, and Van Buren also inherited the depression caused by Jackson’s BUS killing.

XII. Depression Doldrums and the Independent Treasury

1. The panic of 1837 was caused by the “wildcat banks” loans, the overspeculation, the “Bank War,” and the **Specie Circular**.
2. Failures of wheat crops caused by the Hessian fly also worsened the situation, and the failure of two large British Banks in 1836 had already started the panic going.
3. Hundreds of banks fell, including some of Jackson’s “**pet banks**,” banks that had received the money that Jackson had withdrawn from the BUS to kill it.

4. The Whigs proposed expansion of bank credit, higher tariffs, and subsidies for internal improvements, but Van Buren spurned such ideas.
 5. Instead, he proposed the “**Divorce Bill**” (separating the bank from the government and storing money in some of the vaults of the larger American cities, thus keeping the money safe but also unavailable) that advocated the **independent treasury**, and in 1840, it was passed.
 - a. The next year, the victorious Whigs repealed it, but in 1846, it was brought back; it finally merged with the **Federal Reserve System** in the next century.
- XIII. “Tippecanoe” Versus “Little Van”
1. In 1840, William Harrison was nominated due to his being issueless and enemyless, with **John Tyler** as his running mate.
 2. He had only been popular from **Tippecanoe** (1811) and the **Battle of the Thames** (1813).
 3. A stupid Democratic editor also helped Harrison’s cause when he called the candidate a poor old farmer with hard cider and inadvertently made him look like many poor Westerners.
- XIV. The Log Cabins and Hard Cider of 1840
1. With slogans of “Tippecanoe and Tyler too,” the Whigs advocated this “poor man’s president” idea and replied, to such questions of the bank, internal improvements, and the tariff, with answers of “log cabin,” “hard cider,” and “Harrison is a poor man.”
 2. The popular election was close, but Harrison blew Van Buren away in the Electoral College.
 3. Basically, the election was a protest against the hard times of the era.
- XV. The Two-Party System Emerges
1. The Democrats had so successfully absorbed the Federalist ideas before that a true two party system had never emerged—until now.
 2. The Democrats
 - a. Glorified the liberty of the individual.
 - b. Clung to states’ rights and federal restraint in social and economic affairs.
 - c. Mostly more humble, poorer folk.
 3. The Whigs
 - a. Trumpeted the natural harmony of society and the value of community.
 - b. Berated leaders whose appeals and self-interest fostered conflict among individuals.
 - c. Favored a renewed national bank, protective tariffs, internal improvements, public schools, and moral reforms.
 - d. Mostly more aristocratic and wealthier.
 4. Things in Common
 - a. Based on the people, with “catchall” phrases for popularity.
 - b. Both also commanded loyalties from all kinds of people.