



Published on *Course-Notes.Org* (<http://www.course-notes.org>)

[Home](#) > Printer-friendly

## Chapter 13 - The Rise of Mass Democracy

### I. The “Corrupt Bargain” of 1824

1. After the Era of Good Feelings, politics was transformed. The big winner of this transformation was the common man. Specifically, the common white man as universal white manhood suffrage (all white men could vote) became the norm.
2. 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 Massachusetts.
  - All four called themselves Republicans.
  - Three were a “favorite son” of their respective region but Clay thought of himself as a national figure (he was Speaker of the House and author of the “American System”).
3. 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.
4. 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.
5. Clay was eliminated, but he was the Speaker of the House, and since Crawford had recently suffered a paralytic stroke and Clay hated Jackson, he threw his support behind John Q. Adams, helping him become president.
  - When Clay was appointed Secretary of the State, the traditional stepping-stone to the presidency, Jacksonians cried foul play and corruption. Jackson said he, the people’s choice, had been swindled out of the presidency by career politicians in Washington D.C.
  - John Randolph publicly assailed the alliance between Adams and Clay.
6. Evidence against any possible deal has never been found in this “Corrupt Bargain,” but both men flawed their reputations.

### II. 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. Like his father, however, he was able but somewhat wooden and lacked the “people’s touch” (which Jackson notably had).

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 a national university, and advocated support for an astronomical observatory.
  - 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 over-speculation of 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 although the state of Georgia successfully resisted federal attempts to help the Cherokees.

### **III. 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.
  - They successfully turned public opinion against an honest and honorable president.
2. However, Adams' supporters also hit below the belt, even though Adams himself wouldn't stoop to that level.
  - They called Jackson's mother a prostitute, called him an adulterer (he had married his wife Rachel thinking that her divorce had been granted, only to discover two years later that it hadn't been), and after he got elected, Rachel died. Jackson blamed Adams' men who had slandered Andrew Jackson for 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 this, criticizing Adams' incessant spending.

### **IV. "Old Hickory" as President**

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, a jack-of-all-trades, a genuine folk hero.
3. Born in the backwoods of the Carolinas (we're not even sure if it was North or South Carolina, and both states still claim to be his home), 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 the federal government was for the privileged only, although he maintained the sacredness of the

Union and the federal power over the states. Still, 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.
  - 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.”
  - Conservatives condemned Jackson as “King Mob” and berated him greatly.

## **V. The Spoils System**

1. The spoils system rewarded supporters with good positions in office.
2. Jackson believed that experience counted, but that loyalty and 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.
4. 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 were always people hounding Jackson for positions, and those who were discharged often went mad, killed themselves, or had a tough time with it.
5. The spoils system denied many able people a chance to contribute.
6. 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, and thus becoming the first person to steal a million dollars from the government.
7. 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.

## **VI. 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 (who disliked tariffs) 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 the tariff was needed, would vote the bill down and give Adams another political black eye.
  - However, the New Englanders backfired the plan and passed the law (amended).
  - Daniel Webster and John C. Calhoun reversed their positions from 1816, with Webster supporting the tariff and Calhoun being against it.
  - The Southerners immediately branded it as the “Tariff of Abominations.”
3. In the South at this time, Denmark Vesey, a free Black, led an ominous slave rebellion in Charleston. This raised fears by Southern whites and led to a tightening of control over slaves.
  - The South mostly complained because it was now the least expanding of the sections.
  - Cotton prices were falling and land was growing scarce.
4. Southerners sold their cotton and other products without tariffs,

while the products that they bought were heavily taxed. The South said all tariffs did for them was hike up prices.

5. Tariffs led the U.S. to buy less British products and vice versa, but it did help the Northeast prosper so that it could buy more of the South's products.
6. 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.
7. 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 against the tariff.

## **VII. "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.
  - They also threatened with secession against the Union, causing a huge problem.
  - President Jackson issued a ringing proclamation against S.C., to which governor Hayne issued a counter-proclamation, and civil war loomed dangerously.
  - 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%.
4. The Tariff of 1833 narrowly squeezed through Congress.
5. 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.
6. No other states had supported South Carolina's stance of possible secession, though Georgia and Virginia toyed with the idea.
7. Finally, S.C. repealed the nullification ordinance.

## **VIII. The Trail of Tears**

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.
  - 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.
  - Thousands of Indians died on the “Trail of Tears” after being uprooted from their sacred lands that had been theirs for centuries.
  - Also, the Bureau of Indian Affairs was established in 1836 to 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 into the Everglades of Florida; others moved to Oklahoma.

## **IX. The Bank War**

1. Andrew Jackson, like most westerners, distrusted big banks, especially the BUS—Bank of the United States.
  - To Jackson and westerners, the BUS was simply a tool of the rich to get richer.
  - The BUS minted coin money (“hard money”), but not paper money. Farmers out west wanted paper money which caused inflation, and enabled them to more easily pay off their debts.
  - Jackson and westerners saw the BUS and eastern banks as being in a conspiracy to keep the common man down economically. This conspiracy was carried out through hard money and debt.
2. The BUS, led by Nicholas Biddle, was harsh on the volatile western “wildcat” banks that churned out unstable money and too-lenient credit for land (which the westerners loved). The BUS seemed pretty autocratic and out of touch with America during its New Democracy era, and it was corrupt.
3. Nicholas Biddle cleverly lent U.S. funds to friends, and often used the money of the BUS to bribe people, like the press.
4. 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.
5. It was highly important and useful, though sometimes not necessarily pure and wholesome.
6. 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 re-chartering of the BUS—four years early.
7. He felt that if Jackson signed it, he’d alienate his followers in the West and South, and if he vetoed it, he’d lose the supports of the “best people” of the East.
8. He failed to realize that the West held more power now, not the East.
9. The re-charter bill passed through Congress easily, but Jackson demolished it in a scorching veto that condemned the BUS as unconstitutional (despite political foe John Marshall’s ruling that it was okay), and anti-American.
10. The veto amplified the power of the president by ignoring the Supreme Court and aligned the West against the East.

## **X. “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.
  - 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.
  - While sharing Jacksonian ideals, they were

against Jackson, a Mason.

\* Also, they were supported by churches hoping to pass religious reform.

1. Also for the first time, national conventions were held to nominate candidates.
2. 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.

## **XI. Burying 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 breath, 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.

## **XII. The Birth of the Whigs**

1. Under Jackson, the modern two-party system of politics came to be.
2. Opponents of Jackson despised his iron-fisted nature and called him “King Andrew.” This wide group coalesced into the Whig party, united only by dislike of Jackson.
3. Generally, the Whigs:
  - Disliked Jackson
  - Supported Henry Clay’s American System and internal improvements.
4. Once formed, American would have at least two major political parties thenceforth.

## **XIII. The Election of 1836**

1. “King Andrew” was too old to run again, but offered Martin van Buren to follow in his coattails.
2. The Whigs suffered from disorganization. They tried to offer a favorite son candidate from each section of the country—their hopes were that no one would win a majority of electoral votes, the election would thus be thrown to the House of Representatives, and they could win there. Their scheme failed, and van Buren won.

## **XIV. 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.

## **XV. Depression Doldrums and the Independent Treasury**

1. The Panic of 1837 was caused by the “wildcat banks” loans, the over-speculation, the “Bank War,” and the Specie Circular stating that debts must be paid in specie (gold or silver), which no one had.
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.
  - 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.

## **XVI. Gone to Texas**

1. Americans continued to covet Texas, and in 1823, after Mexico had gained independence from Spain, Stephen Austin had made an agreement with the Mexican government to bring about 300 families into a huge tract of granted land to settle.
2. The stipulations were: (1) they must become Mexican citizens, (2) they must become Catholic, and (3) no slavery allowed. These stipulations were largely ignored by the new settlers.

## **XVII. The Lone Star Rebellion**

1. The Texans (among them Davy Crockett and Jim Bowie) resented the “foreign” government, but they were led by Sam Houston, a man whose wife had left him.
2. In 1830, Mexico freed its slaves and prohibited them in Texas, much to the anger of citizens.
3. In 1833, Stephen Austin went to Mexico City to clear up differences and was jailed for 8 months.
4. In 1835, dictator Santa Anna started to raise an army to suppress the Texans; the next year, they declared their independence.
5. 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.
6. The treaty he was forced to sign was later negated by him on grounds that the treaty was extorted under duress.
7. 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.

8. Many Texans wanted to become part of the Union, but the slavery issue blocked this.
9. The end was an unsettled predicament in which Texans feared the return of Santa Anna.

### **XVIII. Log Cabins and Hard Cider of 1840**

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.
4. 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."
5. The popular election was close, but Harrison blew Van Buren away in the Electoral College.
6. Basically, the election was a protest against the hard times of the era.

### **XIX. Politics for the People**

1. When the Federalists had dominated, democracy was not respected, but by the 1820s, it was widely appealing.
  - 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.
  - Those who were aristocratic (too clean, too well-dressed, too grammatical, to highly intellectual) were scorned.
2. Western Indian fighters and/or militia commanders, like Andrew Jackson, Davy Crocket, and William Henry Harrison, were quite popular.
3. Jacksonian Democracy said that whatever governing that was to be done should be done directly by the people.
4. This time was called the New Democracy, and was based on universal white manhood suffrage.
  - 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.

### **XX. The Two-Party System**

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
  - Glorified the liberty of the individual.
  - Clung to states' rights and federal restraint in social and economic affairs.
  - Mostly more humble, poorer folk.
  - Generally from the South and West.
3. The Whigs
  - Trumpeted the natural harmony of society and the value of community.
  - Berated leaders whose appeals and self-interest fostered conflict among individuals.
  - Favored a renewed national bank, protective tariffs, internal improvements, public schools,



and moral reforms.

- Mostly more aristocratic and wealthier.
- Generally from the East.

4. Things in Common

- Based on the people, with “catchall” phrases for popularity.
- Both also commanded loyalties from all kinds of people.

© 2010 Course-Notes.Org

\*AP and Advanced Placement Program are registered trademarks of the College Board, which was not involved in the production of, and does not endorse this web site.

**Source URL (retrieved on 04/15/2012 - 23:26):** [http://www.course-notes.org/US\\_History/Notes/The\\_American\\_Pageant\\_13th\\_Edition\\_Textbook\\_Notes/Chapter\\_13\\_The\\_Rise\\_of\\_Mass\\_Democracy](http://www.course-notes.org/US_History/Notes/The_American_Pageant_13th_Edition_Textbook_Notes/Chapter_13_The_Rise_of_Mass_Democracy)