Democracy in America

# Main Ideas

* Andrew Jackson
* Rise of the common man

# Questions

1. How did American democracy change in the 1820s?
2. How did the rise and fall of the National Bank influence American life?
3. What role did tariffs play in American politics?
4. What issues motivated new political parties?
5. Is Andrew Jackson’s presidency best understood as tragedy, triumph, or irony?

# Democracy in the Early Republic

* 1790s – 1830s
* A wide variety of people participated in early U.S. politics, but this frightened elites.
  + Citizens voted
  + Citizens made public demonstrations

# The Missouri Crisis

* Early 1800s American politics shifted toward “sectional” conflict among the states of the North, South, and West.
* Northern political leaders thought Virginia and other Southern states had disproportionate power in politics as the Northern population was much larger than the South’s.
* Missouri Crisis

1820

Missouri Compromise

Passed House of Reps and died in Senate

Tallmadge Amendment

1819

Applied for Statehood

* **Tallmadge Amendment:** Amendment to Missouri’s application for statehood which proposed that Congress should admit Missouri as a state only if bringing more enslaved people to Missouri were prohibited and children born to those enslaved there were freed at age 25.
  + Wanted to maintain sectional balance of power
* **Missouri Compromise:** Contained three parts: First, Congress would admit Missouri as a slave state. Second, congress would admit Maine as a free state, maintaining the balance between the number of free and slave states. Third, the rest of the Louisiana Purchase territory would be divided along the 36\*30’ line of latitude – the southern border of Missouri – slavery would be prohibited above this line and permitted below it.
  + Split the Democratic-Republican party entirely along sectional lines
  + Demonstrated the volatility of the slavery debate

# The Rise of Andrew Jackson

* Career 1767 – 1845
* Andrew Jackson hated Great Britain because he lost his parents in the war
* He worked as a representative and senator, then a general in the war of 1812.
* He was considered impulsive, but highly successful
* Won popular vote in 1824 election, but lost in the electoral college. Finally became president in 1828
* Claimed to represent the interests of ordinary white Americans against the country’s powerful and elite.

# The Nullification Crisis

* One of the most controversial issues during his presidency was a sectional dispute over national tax policy that would come to define Jackson’s no-holds-barred approach to gov’t/
* **Tariff of 1828:** Tariff of Abominations – Import tax that provided protection for northern manufacturing interests by raising the prices of European products in America
  + Southerners opposed this tariff because it forced them to purchase goods from the North which were more expensive, and reduced European buying of Southern raw materials
  + Elite South Carolinans were worried that the tariff was a wedge for federal legislation to limit slavery
* In 1828, Vice President Calhoun secretly drafted the “South Carolina Exposition and Protest” resolutions. Calhoun argued that the U.S. was a compact among the States rather than among the whole American people. The states were by design sovereign, so they had a right to nullify a federal statute it considered unconstitutional.
  + Jackson got mad at him
  + South Carolina nullified the federal tariffs
  + United the ideas of secession and state’s rights
  + Showed that the immense power of slave owners was matched only by their immense anxiety about the future of slavery.

# The Eaton Affair and the Politics of Sexuality

**The Eaton Affair (The Petticoat Affair):** Began as a disagreement among elite women in Washington D.C. regarding Margaret Eaton’s affair and she was basically ostracized from society.

* Jackson saw the attacks on Eaton as attacks on his authority
* Jackson called together his cabinet to discuss women’s position as protector’s of the nation’s values.
* The scandal was only resolved with the resignation of four cabinet members.

# The Bank War

In 1816 Congress had granted a new charter to the Second Bank of the U.S.

Some Jeffersonians were suspicious of such a powerful institution, including Jackson

Jackson and his followers blamed the Bank for the Panic of 1819

Jackson, starting in 1829 and lasting 3 years, began to “start a war” against the bank.

* Vetoed the bill to reauthorize the Bank of the U.S. (1832)
* Jackson claimed the charter didn’t properly protect the bank from British stockholders.
* Jackson also wrote that the bank was a federal agency, but it had unconstitutional power
* 1833 Jackson directed his cabinet to stop depositing federal funds in the bank
* Opponents claimed the president’s ideas were dangerous to private property
* The Bank War gave supporters a specific “democratic” idea to rally around moreso than any other issue

With the help of Martin Van Buren, the democratic party was formed, the first modern party.

* Centralized leadership structure
* Consistent ideological program
* Other party was the Whigs

# The Panic of 1837

Economic boom from 1834-1836

In 1836 Congress increased the number of banks receiving federal deposits

In 1836 the Treasury Department issued an order called the Specie Circular which required payment in hard currency for all federal land purchases. By late fall, economic bubbles began to burst. Led to a general economic depression

# Rise of the Whigs

John Quincy Adams and Henry Clay

At first, the whigs remained divided by religion and ideology.

Gained significant public support after the Panic of 1837 and became increasingly well organized

1839 First national convention in Harrisburg

* William Henry Harrison nominated as whig candidate for president in 1840
* Harrison became ill and died suddenly after becoming president
* His Vice president Tyler became president and started adopting policies that looked more like Jackson policies
* Showed that the whigs had difficulty uniting around issues besides opposition to democrats
* Broke apart by 1856

# Anti-Masons, Anti-Immigrants, and the Whig Coalition

American Party: anti-immigrants

Freemasonry: An international network of clubs with secular order that proclaimed adherence to the ideals of the Enlightenment. An important part of the social life of the new republic’s elite, but many Americans were highly suspicious if it.

William Morgan planned to publish Illustrations of Masonry as an expose which outraged freemasons. Eventually Morgan was killed, which made people see Masonry as dangerous.

1830 Anti-Masons held a national convention

Eventually folded into the whig movement

Nativists (anti immigration) saw Catholics as a threat

They feared catholics would bring religious violence with them

In 1834 a mob attacked a Catholic convent near Boston

# Race and Jacksonian Democracy

In response to many northern states ending slavery, white men adopted new laws that made racial discrimination the basis of American democracy

By 1839, almost all states limited Black voting rights.

Waves of riots in cities during the 1830s due to racial tensions

Whites that supported Black activists typically lived in northern cities and came from the class of skilled laborers, the lower middle class. They were not rich, but were expected to rise in the world. Part of middle-class culture.