

Jacksonian Era & The Rise of the Common Man



Andrew Jackson portrayed by his enemies as a monarch, trampling on the Constitution and abusing the veto power
(Bettman Archives)

I. Era of Good Feelings

A. Period following War of 1812 free from partisan battles. Tradition of Secretary of State succeeding to the presidency established (Washington--Jefferson; Jefferson--Madison; Madison--Monroe; Monroe--J.Q. Adams)

B. Election of 1824

- 1) End of caucus system of selecting candidates
- 2) Jackson receives more electoral and popular votes than Adams, Clay, and Crawford, but not a majority
- 3) House chooses Adams because of Clay's support
 - a) Clay a rival of Jackson in the West
 - b) Adams and Clay agreed on American System
 - c) Jackson's followers accused Clay of Adams of a "Corrupt Bargain" when Clay was named Secretary of State

C. Adams' presidency

II. Jacksonian Democracy

A. Jackson's election in 1828 signaled rise of common man

- 1) Elected by western farmers and eastern workers
- 2) Property qualifications for voting eliminated in most states
- 3) Changing nature of political campaigns
- 4) Jackson's inauguration symbolic of new age

B. Jackson viewed himself as the spokesman of the people

C. Indian policy

- 1) Worcester v. Georgia (1832) ruled that Indians were not subject to the laws of a state. Jackson refused to enforce ruling
- 2) Trail of Tears--Cherokees and other Indian tribes in Southeast U.S. forced to march 1200 miles to Oklahoma territory

D. Nullification Crisis--South Carolina 1832

- 1) South Carolina stated its opposition to tariff in 1832 which continued high rates of Tariff of Abominations (1828)
- 2) Jackson appealed to people of South Carolina to obey national law, obtained authority from Congress (Force Act) to enforce laws any way necessary, and worked out a compromise tariff

III. War over the U.S. Bank

A. Jackson opposed re-charter of the Bank because banks

- 1) Were seen as tools of the rich oppressing the poor
- 2) Foreclosed mortgages on farmers
- 3) Restricted the issuance of paper money by state banks
- 4) Biddle made a number of loans to anti-Jackson politicians

B. Jackson removed government deposits and placed them in local (pet) banks, destroying the bank

C. Wildcat banks created in wake of U.S. Bank's failure

- 1) Money in circulation increased 300%
- 2) Loans made increased 400%
- 3) Inflation rose as loans were made to land speculators
- 4) Sales of western land increased from 4 million acres in 1832 to 20 million acres in 1836

D. States borrowed vast sums for internal improvements, increasing state indebtedness

E. Jackson distributed federal government surpluses to states, which stimulated spending and inflation

F. To check the inflationary spiral, Jackson issued the specie circular which required gold and silver for land purchases.

G. Panic of 1837 resulted when

- 1) English bankers called in loans to states and investors
- 2) Gold supplies were depleted, preventing banks from making payments and forcing failures