

# Chapter 11: The Age of Jackson

## 1. President Jackson

### The Man

Andrew Jackson had a tough life. His parents and brothers all died when he was only a child. Jackson was brave person and a proud person. He also had a bad temper and fought many duels over insults and disagreements. As a young man, Jackson became a lawyer and eventually entered politics. In the War of 1812, he became a successful general that earned him national fame.

### Becoming President

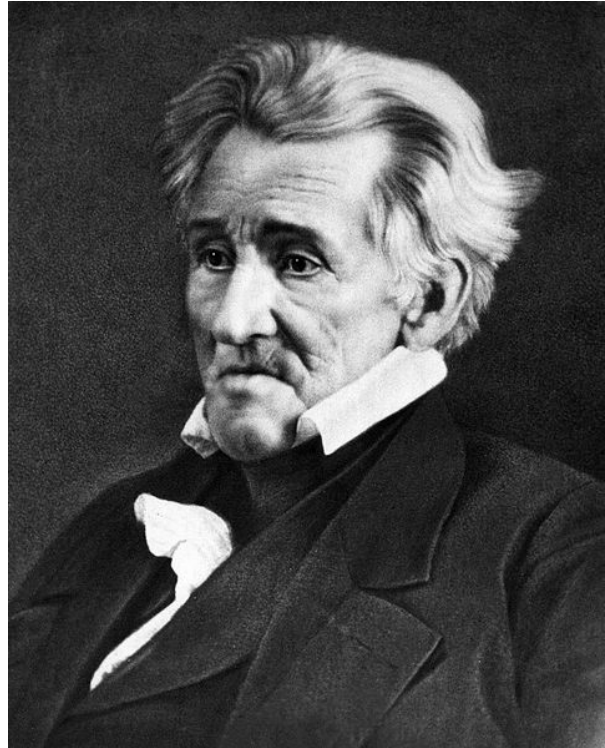
Although Andrew Jackson got the most votes in the 1824 election, no candidate got more than the required fifty percent. The House of Representatives ended up choosing John Quincy Adams to be president. Jackson was furious.

In 1828, Adams and Jackson ran again for president. By this time, the political parties had changed. The Federalist and Democratic-Republican parties had disappeared. Those people supporting Adams became the National Republicans and those supporting Jackson became the Democrats—the beginning of the modern Democratic Party. Jackson easily won the election.

## 2. Policies

### Nullification Crisis

Northern companies wanted protection from cheaper foreign goods coming into the country. To help, Congress passed the Tariff of 1828 and Jackson supported it. The **tariff** put a tax on all foreign goods coming into the United States. This tax



Andrew Jackson earned the nickname “Old Hickory” because he was said to be as tough as a stick of hickory wood. Source: c. 1844. Photo. Library of Congress.

made foreign goods more expensive, so people would buy the cheaper American goods.

The South liked to buy a lot of foreign goods from Europe, but now the tariff would make them more expensive. The South was angry and called it the Tariff of Abominations. This led to the first serious threat of **civil war** or war between groups in the same country.

The South Carolina legislature wanted to **nullify** or cancel the tariff. South Carolina declared that if a state did not like a federal law, it had the right not to obey it; furthermore, a state also had the right to **secede** from the Union.

On December 10, 1832, Jackson responded by saying a state could not nullify a federal law and secession was illegal. Congress passed the Force Bill allowing Jackson to send the army into

any state that refused to follow federal law. Congress representative Henry Clay calmed everyone down by getting Congress to pass the Compromise Tariff in 1833. This reduced the tax on imported goods and helped avoid a civil war.

## American Indian Removal

The Southeast American Indians made up of Cherokees, Choctaws, Chickasaws, Creeks, and Seminoles lived in the states of Georgia, Tennessee, and Alabama. There were no problems for a long time. However, when settlers and farmers wanted American Indian land, the state of Georgia wasted no time in trying to remove them.

Congress passed the Indian Removal Act of 1830 that allowed the federal government to remove American Indians from their homeland to other areas west of the Mississippi River.

Rather than go to war, the American Indians went to court. In *Worcester v. Georgia*, the Supreme Court stated that Georgia could not force the American Indians to leave; only the federal government could do that. President Jackson refused to enforce the Supreme Court ruling and stop Georgia from pushing the Cherokee off their land. In 1838, the U.S. army moved the Cherokee and several other tribes to Indian Territory—present-day Oklahoma. Approximately 4,000 Cherokee and others died on the 800 mile march that became known as the Trail of Tears.

## The National Bank

Jackson's veto of the national bank became his most controversial decision. When George Washington was president,

Secretary of the Treasury Alexander Hamilton created a government bank to collect taxes, pay government debts, and loan money to businesses. Jackson saw the bank as a tool for only the rich and wanted to get rid of it.

By the Election of 1832, the National Republican Party had disappeared. A new political party, the Whigs, formed to oppose Jackson. Henry Clay led the party and ran against Jackson for president. Clay criticized Jackson for opposing the national bank. However, Jackson's popularity allowed him to easily win the presidential election.

The result of the destruction of the national bank and other bad economic policies supported by Jackson led to the Panic of 1837, a **depression** that began at the start of the term of the next president, Martin Van Buren. As a result of the bad economy, Van Buren's enemies nicknamed him "Martin Van Ruin." Thus, Van Buren received the blame for Jackson's economic policies and became a one-term president.

## Legacy

Jackson used the veto more than any previous president. When he made up his mind, he viciously removed any obstacles in his way and frequently fired advisors for disagreeing with him. Jackson had many enemies. Thomas Jefferson called Jackson "a dangerous man," but Jackson had many supporters. His time as president became known as the Age of Jackson. He would be the last strong president to serve in the White House until Abraham Lincoln was elected in 1860. Jackson died at his home on June 8, 1845.