

Unit 3; 1800-1848

Antebellum America



The War of 1812



The election of 1800 was considered revolutionary for it was the first time that political power was transferred peacefully between two different political parties the Federalists and the Democratic Republicans. John Adams left office in a tizzy; midnight judges appointed in an effort to thwart Jefferson's attempts to loosen power of central government. One of the first things Jefferson did was repeal the hated whiskey tax and Alien Acts. The Sedition Acts expired, otherwise he would have had to take those apart, too. Jefferson's presidency was dominated with his efforts to keep the young nation out of war as Britain and France continued to "bully" America on the seas. Unfortunately the cost of his and Madison's efforts was economic ruin for the country with the Embargo Act, Non-Intercourse Act, and Macon's Bill No.2.

The United States began to grow with the acquisition of Louisiana (Louisiana Purchase in 1803 from France) and Florida (Adams-Onis Treaty in 1819). T.J. sent Lewis and Clark (with their Indian guide, Sacajawea) to explore the vast area of Louisiana, which nearly doubled the size of the United States. There was also the Pike Expedition, to Colorado, as westward migration continued. Jefferson's purchase illustrated one of his contradictory behaviors: acting as a Federalist while calling himself a Democratic-Republican. The parties were becoming more moderate, however the battle between state's rights and central power raged on. Jefferson faced off with Marshall most of all.

The Supreme Court, under the leadership of John Marshall, became a powerful branch. They ruled in the case of Marbury v Madison that their function was judicial review, which is where they can rule that a law was unconstitutional, and should be thrown out. Marshall extended the Federalist Party interests beyond its demise in 1815 until he retired in the 1830's. His rulings showed the supremacy of the federal government over the state governments. Among the other great cases were: Fletcher vs Peck, Cohen vs. Virginia, Dartmouth College vs Woodward, McCulloch vs Maryland and Gibbons vs Ogden. Marshall also communicated the power of the Supreme Court in his ruling for acquittal in the Aaron Burr trial.

Eventually President James Madison was pressured by the Congressional War Hawks into war as Britain continued its impressment of U.S. sailors and occupation of Ohio Valley. Contrary to the Treaty of Paris of 1783, the British still had military forts there and were supplying and encouraging hostile natives with weapons to terrorize new settlements. Tecumseh attempted to get an alliance of natives together to attack the Americans. His effort was thwarted; however it was the final push toward declaring war on Britain. This "Second War for Independence" ended in a draw, aka the War of 1812. The capital was burned, and Andrew Jackson became a war hero at the Battle of New Orleans which was actually fought after the Treaty of Ghent ended the war. Jackson, aka "maverick" who ignores orders, invaded Florida killing Indians and Spanish... which led to Secretary of State, John Quincy Adams securing Florida from the Spanish.

After the war an intense period of Nationalism, known as the Era of Good Feelings, swept the United States. Even a sharp recession called the Panic of 1819 failed to dim the optimism of many Americans. This era mirrors the two terms of President James Monroe, our last Founding Father president. Gone was the two political party system thanks to the Hartford Convention, and Francis Scott Key wrote The Star Spangled Banner after witnessing the Battle of Fort McHenry which eventually became our national anthem. In another manifestation of Nationalism, the Monroe Doctrine warned European powers, including Russia who had land claims in North America already, to stay out of the Americas. (Mexico and Canada eventually become independent (although Canada remained part of the British Commonwealth), and we would later knock Russia out in the 1860s when Alaska was purchased.) The United States was increasingly making its mark on North America and asserting its independence from Europe, an effort championed by John Quincy Adams as Secretary of State under Monroe (Adams was largely responsible for most treaties and for the Monroe Doctrine).

Eli Whitney invented the cotton gin in 1793, which led to fervor over producing more amounts of cotton. This caused the demand for slaves to increase dramatically. The United States and others such as Great Britain worked to enforce the end of the Atlantic slave trade after it became illegal in 1809. Southern cotton supplied new, northern textile factories and began to link regional economies, although the west and the north became linked more than the south. Slavery became an issue in regards to allowing it into the new state of Missouri. Eventually, the Missouri Compromise of 1820 temporarily settled the bitter, divisive issue of slavery which was one Henry Clay's great nationalistic proposals; Clay also introduced the American System of economic national development which included the Second Bank of the United States, a new protective Tariff of 1816, and funding for infrastructure (Bank and Tariff passed, but infrastructure was largely left to the states as it was judged as unconstitutional as a central government project). Whitney also invented interchangeable parts which helped fuel the early economic industrial revolution (Market Revolution) as factories sprang up in the North. Many young women went to work...example: Lowell System mainly worked by young, single women, the Lowell Girls. Other innovations including textile machinery and factories thanks to Samuel Slater, steam engines perfected by Robert Fulton, canals such as the Erie Canal, railroads, anthracite coal mining, and the telegraph, as well as agricultural inventions such as the steel plow and mechanical reaper, both extended markets and brought efficiency to production for those markets.

As the economy changed and grew and became more interconnected, immigrants continued to pour in such as the Irish (Irish Potato Famine pushed them our direction) and Germans (escaping political turmoil and searching for a better life). This immigration rush was at its height in the 1840s and 50s. Nativism was the typical reaction as fear of Catholics being more loyal to the pope than the republic and fear of job competition led to anti-immigrant sentiment, secret societies, a political party called the Order of the Star Spangled Banner -- more commonly known as the Know-Nothings, and policies such as "No Irish Need Apply." Immigrants migrated into western and northern regions. The Irish settled into Eastern cities. The Germans moved to the Midwest. Southerners migrated west into the deep south as their over-cultivation depleted arable land. This led "King Cotton" ruling the South as well as increased pressure on the slavery issue as slave owners wanted to expand slavery into the Louisiana Territory and Texas.

John Quincy Adams served one term as President following the "Corrupt Bargain" of 1824. Then came 'Old Hickory' in 1828. The period during Andrew Jackson's presidency became know as Jacksonian Democracy among other things like Era of the Common Man. It offered expanded sufrage to the common man. The regular people made the most of their new found voting rights, as elections in this time period had some of the highest voter turnouts in history. This era also witnessed a shift of the center of population westward into new territories (Louisiana Purchase) and both free and forced migration was promoted. The era of the common man also saw the end of the Virginia Dynasty.

The era also produced a concern for fixing societal ills through several **Social Reform Movements** following [and inspired by] the **Second Great Awakening**. In spite of the **cult of domesticity**, women began to find their collective voice and pushed for changes. The **women's rights movement** got its start during this time, though it would be put off during the civil war and would not reach fruition until the early 20th century. Most notable was the **Seneca Falls** declaration in 1848. The two leading women of the movement were **Elizabeth Cady Stanton** and **Susan B. Anthony**. Women were also influential in the **temperance movement** and the **abolition movement**. During this time the average American consumed five gallons of hard liquor per year. That basically means people were consuming at least one "shot" of whiskey or other liquor each day... or binging on payday (many saloons would cash workers' checks... and then men would proceed to spend a good deal of their paycheck on alcohol and maybe gambling or prostitution if they were particularly "sinful"). These behaviors had a devastating affect on families. The **temperance movement** preached reducing, but not eliminating consumption. Eventually the movement did turn toward prohibition... which we will get to later in the 20th century. People also began trying to change the harsh conditions in prisons. Prisoners were kept in silence for many hours a day and were beaten. **Dorothea Dix** advocated that the mentally insane should not be chained to the walls for life, and instead should be treated more humanely. **Horace Mann**, the father of universal education, believed that all children would benefit from a mandatory education. Some people decided that society wasn't worth reforming. They decided to set up ideal, **Utopian Societies**. Most notable among these were: the **Shakers**, **Oneida**, **New Harmony**, **Brook Farm**, and new religious sects such as the **Mormons (Joseph Smith & Brigham Young)**.

Americans became more culturally creative and began to paint America landscapes in a movement known as the **Hudson River School**. And the **transcendental school of literature** featuring romanticism and writing such as: **Hawthorne**, **Thoreau**, **Whitman**, & **Emerson**. During this era a new American culture that was truly unique from Europe and marked by multi-ethnic and multi-racial forces began to unfold. It was also marked by glorifying heroes and moments in history such as *Washington Crossing the Delaware* by **Emmanuel Luetz**.



Abolition became a rejuvenated cause during the reform movement too. It gained momentum behind leaders such as **Fredrick Douglass**, **Harriet Tubman**, **Sojourner Truth**, **Angelina Grimke**, and **William Lloyd Garrison**. In 1831 a slave preacher named **Nat Turner**, led an unsuccessful rebellion against the planters in Virginia. As a result, the south passed more restrictive laws known as the **Slave Codes**. More on abolition in the next unit.

And... shameless plug: super-awesome-worth-your-time extra credit option "The Abolitionists" coming next 9-weeks.

American Indians received little attention from the reform fervor of the era as they were forced aside to reservations. Jackson's policy of Indian Removal – **Indian Removal Act** - became the tool to displace thousands to Indian Territory (mainly **Oklahoma**). Especially tragic was the **Trail of Tears**, in which the **Cherokee** were forcibly moved and thousands perished. During this time the **Seminole Indian Wars** were fought as well, and only the most skilled Seminoles were able to stay... by going where the white man wouldn't... the everglades.

[Food For Thought: The name "Oklahoma" comes from a Choctaw word literally meaning "Red People." If the Washington Redskins change their name, should Oklahoma change theirs, too?]

By this time the United States had divided into three regions: the North, the South, and the West. In 1828 the **tariff of abominations** was passed. This caused the price of manufactured goods to increase, which hurt the agrarian south and benefited the industrializing north. The west stood to benefit as well because some of the money would be spent on internal improvements such as roads and canals in the West. This system, advocated by **Henry Clay**, was known as the **American System**. The south was under the leadership of **John Calhoun** who led the **Nullification Crisis**. (This raised the considerable ire of Jackson who threatened to invade South Carolina.) Eventually a compromise was reached.

Jackson hated the **Second Bank of the U.S.** This second bank was set up after the **War of 1812**. It was controlled by northern bankers and was not regulated by the Federal Government. Jackson saw it as an elitist operation that hurt the common man. This **bank war** pitted Jackson against **Nicholas Biddle** (and others) and resulted with the bank being dismantled before its official expiration. He distributed the funds to **Pet banks**, which led to rampant **land speculation** and the **Panic of 1837**. Jackson made quite a few enemies. These diverse individuals created a second political party known as the **Whigs**. The Jackson Democrats and the Whigs were the U.S. **Second Two-Party System**.

Although the Jacksonian time period is known as the "age of the **common man**" it did not embrace the **immigrants**, and was also marked with anti-Indian policies and increased southern dependence on and defense of slavery.

Texas won its independence from **Mexico** in 1836, but Jackson refused to admit it into the union for fear of the slavery issue further dividing the nation. **Martin Van Buren** served one term as President after Jackson. He spent his time mainly trying to dig the nation out of economic depression following the **Panic of 1837** thanks to Jackson's bank policies and the **Specie Circular**. Buren was followed by **William Henry Harrison** – the first Whig President. Harrison was a war hero from the **Battle of Tippecanoe** in 1811 (Indian Wars) which helped to defeat **Tecumseh**... hence campaign slogan of "**Tippecanoe and Tyler Too**" ... as well as serving in the **War of 1812**. He died shortly after taking office, and he was replaced by the "man without a party*," Vice President **John Tyler**. (*Tyler was elected with Harrison as a **Whig**, but he didn't support the party. The **Democrats** didn't welcome him, either.) Taking over as President yet the precedent of the V.P. succeeding the President (eventually this becomes law with the 25th Amendment). One victory of his Presidency was the **Webster-Ashburton Treaty** which settled northern border disputes with Britain. One of the last things Tyler did as President was to admit **Texas** into the union, although this was better accredited to **James K. Polk** who was elected in 1844. That takes us to **Manifest Destiny**... which is unit 4. ☺