

## Chapter 101 -- White Abolitionists Organize To Advance The Cause



**Dates:**  
1833-1835

**Sections:**

- Beginning Of The American Anti-Slavery Society
- A Southern Woman, Angelina Grimke, Speaks Out Against Slavery

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Time: December 6, 1833

### Beginning Of The American Anti-Slavery Society



Three Freed Slave Children from  
New Orleans

In the early 1830's, the two heretofore separate wings of the white abolitionist movements – one in Boston led by Lloyd Garrison and the other in New York led by the Theodore Weld and the Tappan brothers – link up to provide more scale and better coordination for the cause.

In December 1833 this pays off in a seminal event – the founding of The American Anti-Slavery Society.

The organization takes shape at a meeting held in Philadelphia on December 6, 1833, and attended by 62 delegates, including 21 Quakers, who are all committed to emancipating the slaves.

Lloyd Garrison drafts a Declaration of Sentiments that lays out the Society's guiding principles. These call for:

- Immediate emancipation of all slaves;
- Refusal to pay compensation to any “man-stealers;”
- Opposition to re-colonization plans;
- Efforts to assimilate blacks into white society; and
- Commitment to achieving these ends peacefully, without violence.

Arthur Tappan becomes the first President of the Society, and its membership comprises many of the early abolitionist leaders – Theodore Weld, Lucretia Mott, Wendell Phillips, Lucy Stone, Arthur Tappan, Abby Foster and others.

The Society provides the centralized organizational infrastructure the Abolitionists need to accomplish three things:

- Proliferate local anti-slavery chapters from New England to the western territories;
- Align the mission and agendas of these chapters with the national priorities; and
- Coordinate local and national initiatives to maximize public and political attention.

Chapters hold regular meetings to hear the latest news from national headquarters and to plan their local campaigns.

The word is spread in a variety of ways.

Public speaking tours feature the Society’s leading advocates for abolition addressing crowds gathered in local town halls and at Independence Day picnics. These events eventually include moving testimonials from ex-slaves, and often have a revivalist flair, in search of new converts.

Local newspapers touting abolition rhetoric also begin to spring up, much to the chagrin of citizens who regard the editors as dangerous radicals. While many of these papers are fleeting, a sizable and stable body of writers and publishers backing emancipation will materialize over time.

Once up and running, the national Society sends out agents to recruit local supporters. By 1840 this number will reach 2,000 chapters, with roughly 200,000 members.

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Time: 1835-1836

**A Southern Woman, Angelina Grimke, Speaks Out Against Slavery**

Among those courageous few whites who speak out early against slavery is Angelina Grimke, formerly of Charleston, South Carolina.

Angelina and her sister, Sarah, are born into Charleston society, daughters of a wealthy judge and plantation owner. In a world dominated by men and convention, “Nina” Grimke forms and expresses her own opinions, beginning in childhood.

She is drawn to religious study, converts from her Episcopalian roots to the Presbyterian Church, and teaches Sunday school, even to slave children. The more she reads her Bible, the more convinced she becomes that the slavery she witnesses around her conflicts with Christian moral tenets.

In 1829, at 24 years of age, she stands in front of fellow church members and asks them to end their practice of slavery. When they refuse, her outspoken persistence leads to expulsion, first from the church and then from Charleston society. From this point forward she is an outsider in the South.

True to her character, this outcast status only drives her further into the anti-slavery camp. She and Sarah both adopt Quaker tenets and practices, and flee to Philadelphia in 1827. Once there, Angelina becomes a founding member of the radical Abolitionist movement, connecting with Lloyd Garrison, and joining the Philadelphia Female Anti-Slavery Society in 1835. Her destiny is now set.

She writes a "letter" to Garrison in 1835 which he publishes in *The Liberator* under the title of *An Appeal to the Christian Women of the South*. The letter includes a carefully crafted review of the history of slavery as outlined in the Bible and its linkage to the American Declaration of Independence.

Its message to the women of the South is clear: those who believe in the teachings of Christ must abandon their support for slavery.

Angelina next trains as an official "lecturer" for the Abolitionist movement and goes on the speaking tour. In 1838 she marries her fellow advocate, Theodore Dwight Weld, and delivers a remarkable testimonial address in Philadelphia, as a hostile mob assaults the hall with stones and cat-calls.

*As a Southerner I feel that it is my duty to stand up here to-night and bear testimony against slavery. I have seen it -- I have seen it. I know it has horrors that can never be described. I was brought up under its wing: I witnessed for many years its demoralizing influences, and its destructiveness to human happiness.*

*Many times have I wept in the land of my birth, over the system of slavery. I knew of none who sympathized in my feelings -- I was unaware that any efforts were made to deliver the oppressed - - no voice in the wilderness was heard calling on the people to repent and do works meant for repentance -- and my heart sickened within me. Oh, how should I have rejoiced to know that such efforts as these were being made. I only wonder that I had such feelings. I wonder when I reflect under what influence I was brought up, that my heart is not harder than the nether millstone. But in the midst of temptation I was preserved, and my sympathy grew warmer, and my hatred of slavery more inveterate, until at last I have exiled myself from my native land because I could no longer endure to hear the wailing of the slave.*

*Many persons go to the South for a season, and are hospitably entertained in the parlor and at the table of the slave-holder. They never enter the huts of the slaves; they know nothing of the dark side of the picture, and they return home with praises on their lips of the generous character of those with whom they had tarried.*

*Nothing but the corrupting influence of slavery on the hearts of the Northern people can induce them to apologize for it; and much will have been done for the destruction of Southern slavery when we have so reformed the North that no one here will be willing to risk his reputation by advocating or even excusing the holding of men as property. The South knows it, and acknowledge that as fast as our principles prevail, the hold of the master must be relaxed.*

*What if the mob (outside) should now burst in upon us, break up our meeting and commit violence upon our persons -- would this be anything compared with what the slaves endure? No, no: and we do not remember them...if we shrink in the time of peril, or feel unwilling to sacrifice ourselves, if need be, for their sake....There is nothing to be feared from those who would stop*

*our mouths, but they themselves should fear and tremble. The current is even now setting fast against them.*

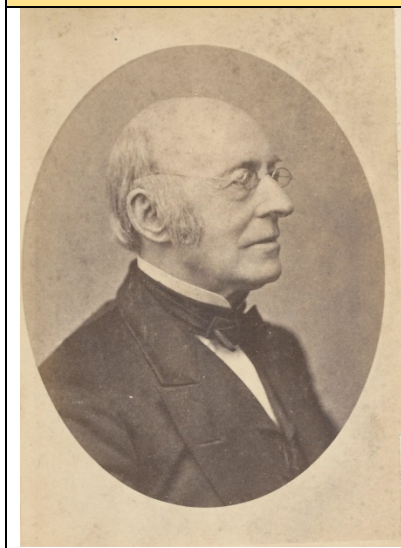
*We may talk of occupying neutral ground, but on this subject... there is no such thing as neutral ground. He that is not for us is against us. If you are on what you suppose to be neutral ground, the South look upon you as on the side of the oppressor.*

*We often hear the question asked, "What shall we do?" Women of Philadelphia! Allow me as a Southern woman with much attachment to the land of my birth, to entreat you to come up to this work. Especially let me urge you to petition. Men may settle this and other questions at the ballot-box, but you have no such right; it is only through petitions that you can reach the Legislature*

*Men who hold the rod over slaves, rule in the councils of the nation: and they deny our right to petition and to remonstrate against abuses of our sex and of our kind. We have these rights, however, from our God. Only let us exercise them*

Angelina Grimke's heroic break with her pro-slavery upbringing in Charleston serves as inspiration for others, especially women, to join the Abolitionist chorus. She herself will live on to 1879, and see the fruits of her quest.

## Chapter 102 -- White Abolitionists Are Attacked By Opponents Both North And South



**Dates:**  
1834-1836

- Sections:**
- Fearful Northerners Want To “Contain” Blacks In The South
  - A Simple Gesture Of Kindness Sparks A Race Riot In New York City
  - The South Tries To Ban All Abolitionist Literature
  - Violent White Protesters Threaten Garrison And Other Abolitionists
  - James Birney Joins The Abolitionist Cause And Is Attacked In Cincinnati
  - Harriet Beecher Stowe And Salmon Chase Join The Anti-Slavery Movement

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Time: 1830’s

### Fearful Northerners Want To “Contain” Blacks In The South



Slave Boy with Chamber Pot on his Head

After looking away from the “slavery question” since the 1820 Missouri crisis, many Northern whites are drawn back into the issue by the Second Awakening, the Abolitionist movement, and Turner’s uprising.

The vast majority seem to arrive at the following conclusions:

- Blacks are a different and inherently inferior species, and nothing can change that reality.
- Bringing them to America as slaves was wrong from the beginning.
- The South then compounded the problem by building their entire economy around slavery and greatly expanding the population of blacks to serve their needs.

- Sympathy with the slaves plight is understandable, but simply freeing them would result in a mass exodus north, and dire consequences for the region..
- These would include everything from lower wages for white labor, to increased poverty and crime rates, mixed marriages and racial pollution, even the possibility of more revenge murders and rapes.

Thus any anti-slavery sentiment growing in the North out of recent events, is still more than off-set by anti-black prejudices ingrained for generations.

In the end, mainstream Northerners view Africans as a form of “contagion” which will wreak havoc if allowed to spread their way. Hence the 1820 Tallmadge Amendment – attempting to stop the spread of slavery into Missouri – gains their support.

For many Northerners “containment” also seems like simple justice. The South wanted its black slaves, so let them stay penned up where they belong.

Of course this view is hardly what either the Abolitionists or the South want to hear from the North.



William Lloyd Garrison (1805-1879)

Garrison and his followers want mainstream Northerners to support immediate emancipation, free migration of blacks, assimilation into white society and full citizenship.

The South wants the North to back their rights to own slaves, to oppose the abolitionists, and to expand the institution throughout the western territories.

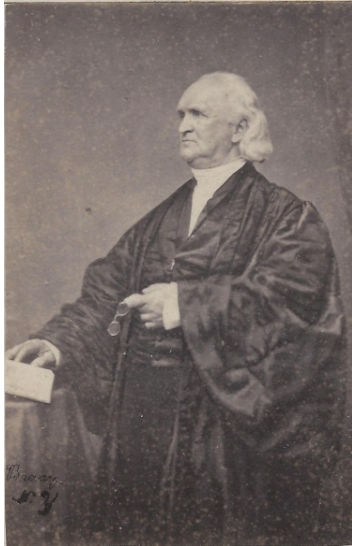
Instead, most Northern whites are already concluding by the early 1830’s that slavery is the South’s problem, not theirs – and that “territorial containment of blacks” is in their best interest.

These are the growing convictions that will eventually lead to secession and civil war.

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Time: June-July 1834

### **A Simple Gesture Of Kindness Sparks A Race Riot In New York City**



Rev. Samuel Cox (1793-1880)

As the Abolitionist's call for freeing all Africans and assimilating them into American society picks up steam, so too does active resistance among whites across the North.

With freedom will come "amalgamation" – black men mating with white women – and, in turn, inevitable deterioration of the white race. So say those who oppose any change in the status quo of blacks.

One way to avoid this "racial threat" lies in daily social humiliations of free blacks that reinforcement their subservience, that "keeps them in their place." This was the case back in October 1824 in Providence, Rhode Island, when a black man who fails to move off a sidewalk in the presence of oncoming whites and sparks a race riot. Gangs of incensed whites roam the segregated Hardscrabble section of town, beating blacks and destroying upwards of 20 homes. A similar incident is repeated in 1831, this time requiring the local militia to stop the attacks.

Another path of resistance lies in direct violence against abolitionist leaders.

The Chatham Street race riot in the summer of 1834 springs from an incident involving Lewis Tappan and the Reverend Samuel Cox.

The impetus is a simple act of kindness on Sunday, June 12, at the Laight Street Presbyterian Church in the notorious "Five Points" district of New York City. When Tappan arrives at the service he encounters a black minister, Reverend Samuel Cornish, and invites him to sit alongside him in his pew. This causes an immediate stir among other white parishioners, which is then compounded by words from the pulpit.

The Reverend Samuel H. Cox seizes upon the visible hostility toward both Cornish and Tappan to offer a sermon on the need for good will, especially between different races. After all, he intones, it is well known that the people of the Holy Land – including Jesus himself – were typically dark-skinned.

A hostile press immediately seizes upon Cox's words to fan the flames of anti-black feelings. Unless radicals like Tappan and Cox can be silenced, whites can expect to have Negroes invading their places of worship and ministers asserting that "Jesus was black." Tensions build from there.

Attempts to hold an abolitionist meeting at the Chatham Street Chapel two blocks south of the Five Points intersection are broken up by angry white mobs on three occasions around the 4<sup>th</sup> of July.

On July 10 they damage the homes of both Tappan and Cox, and then on the 11<sup>th</sup> hundreds of whites systematically go about destroying the homes, churches, businesses and welfare centers across the entire black enclave.

The message here is clear – there is no place in New York City for either abolition or "amalgamation."

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Time: July 6, 1835

### **The South Tries To Ban All Abolitionist Literature**

Southern whites are even more distressed by the Abolitionist movement than those in the North.

Of particular concern in the 1830's is the growing number of anti-slavery publications that are filtering into southern cities through the mail. They are regarded as propaganda efforts by the North, meant to stir up the slaves and prompt further violence akin to Nat Turner's rampage in Virginia in 1831.

On July 6, 1835, a white mob decides to put an end to this threat.

They do so by burning abolitionist tracts outside the Charleston post office, and demanding that Charles Huger, the local postmaster, refuse to accept any more of these materials when they are delivered.

This incident represents the first attempt by the South to officially "gag" the anti-slavery opposition.

Huger contacts Amos Kendall, a Dartmouth man, close friend of Jackson's and Postmaster General, about ordering an end to disseminating anti-slavery materials. Kendall responds by saying he has no legal authority to do so – although he agrees to encourage local offices to do just that, saying:

*We owe an obligation to the laws, but a higher one to the communities in which we live.*

For many Southerners this is not good enough.

Georgia passes a law in 1835 to impose the death penalty on anyone who publishes material that could provoke a slave uprising.

Governor George McDuffie, one of the early secessionist "fire-eaters" from South Carolina, proclaims that:

*The laws of every community should punish this species of interference by death without benefit of clergy.*

The intensity of these reactions will soon carry the suppression attempts into the political arena in Washington.



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Time: Fall 1835

### Violent White Protesters Threaten Garrison And Other Abolitionists



One "Boss Bailey," who would likely brook no abolitionists

With the American Anti-Slavery Society up and running, Lloyd Garrison turns his inflammatory rhetoric against what he considers another form of anti-black racism.

On June 1, 1832, he publishes his only book, *Thoughts of African Colonization*, a direct assault on those whites who wish to free the slaves -- but only if they are then put on ships and sent back to Liberia.

Colonization, according to Garrison, is nothing more than a ploy by which certain white leaders can appear to embrace "anti-slavery" idealism, while still holding on to their "Negro-phobia" beliefs.

It is one thing to wish to abolish slavery; quite another to support "assimilation" and black citizenship. And that is exactly what Garrison demands:

*All God's creatures can live in harmony together, of this I am sure.*

In May of 1833 a 27 year old Garrison sails to England to meet William Wilberforce and other abolition leaders, and to update them on progress in America. On July 12, in an address to a large British crowd at Exeter Hall, he lashes out against his homeland:

*America falsifies every profession of its creed in its support for slavery.*

When the American Colonization Society reports on Garrison's speech, opponents quickly brand him a traitor to his country – and violent mobs greet him dockside in NYC when he returns home on October 2.

Resistance to abolition also builds in Boston. On September 10, 1835, a burning cross signed by "Judge Lynch" appears on Garrison's front lawn. Six weeks later, on October 21, he is kidnapped by a mob in the city on his way to a lecture event and a hangman's noose is put around his neck. Only a last second rescue by the Mayor of Boston saves his life.

The Tappan brothers, Lucretia Mott and other visible leaders also experience attacks over time.

Even the gentle Unitarian minister William Channing chides the Abolitionists in December 1835 for their "showy, noisy societies" that run the risk of fomenting slave rebellions and jeopardizing peace with the Southern states. Characteristically Garrison responds by calling Channing an "equivocator."

Ironically these attacks draw new supporters to the cause, including James G. Birney and Gerrit Smith -- who will eventually steer many Abolitionists to search of a political solution.

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Time: July 1836

### **James Birney Joins The Abolitionist Cause And Is Attacked In Cincinnati**

For many years the city of Cincinnati has been a hotbed of racial tension, and the appearance in January 1836 of an anti-slavery newspaper, *The Philanthropist*, published by James G. Birney, is greeted by open hostility.

Going all the way back to 1804, one year after Ohio's admission to the Union, the legislature passes a series of "black codes" making it clear that Negroes are not welcome within the state's border. They are not banned outright – as will be the case with most other new states to the west – but are required to post an onerous \$500 bond to insure their residence and "proper behavior." Despite the stricture, many slaves, especially from Kentucky, flock across the Ohio River, seeking relative freedom in towns like Cincinnati.

Birney's new paper is regarded as an invitation for even more blacks to take up residence.

In April 1836, Irish mobs terrorize black neighborhoods in the city, apparently over competition for low wage jobs. The Governor resorts to martial law to end the uproar. But not for long.

The entire month of July is marked by white mob violence against blacks and against Birney. On July 12 and again on the 30<sup>th</sup>, Birney's office is ransacked and his presses are broken up and thrown into the river.

Posters offering a \$100 "bounty" for the "fugitive from justice, James Birney" – a black man masquerading in white skin – appear across Cincinnati, and the city council tries to ban further issues.

Some white, however, see these attempts to gag vocal opponents of slavery as an infringement on freedom of speech and decide to speak out in support of Birney.

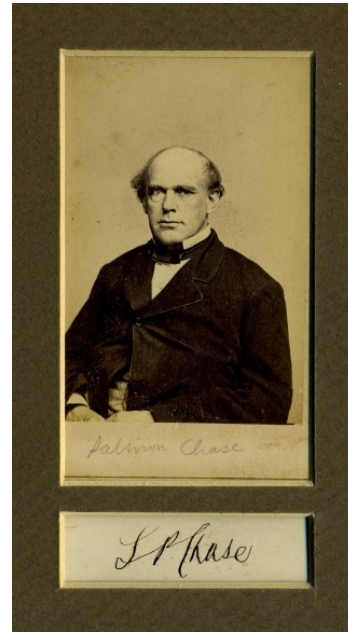
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Time: 1836

### Harriet Beecher Stowe And Salmon Chase Join The Anti-Slavery Movement



Harriet Beecher Stowe (1811-1896)



Salmon Chase (1808-1873)

The 1836 race riot in particular appalls two prominent residents of Cincinnati.

One is Harriet Beecher Stowe, daughter of influential Presbyterian Minister, Lyman Beecher, who records her fright at seeing “negroes being hunted like wild beasts” during the riots.

The other, Salmon P. Chase, a highly regarded city lawyer, witnesses his sister fleeing to her house for safety, and commits himself to re-establishing civil order.

Both will play pivotal roles over the next twenty-five years in the abolitionist movement.

## Chapter 103 -- The “Trail of Tears” Eviction Of The Southeastern Tribes



**Dates:**  
1835-Forward

**Sections:**

- The “Trail Of Tears” Gets Under Way
- The Long Sad Fate Of America’s First Settlers Continues

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Time: 1835 Forward

### The “Trail Of Tears” Gets Under Way



Crow King, A Sioux Chief

With his campaign against the Second Bank successfully concluded, Andrew Jackson charges after his next priority – forcing the remaining eastern tribes to new “reservations” west of the Mississippi River, so that whites can settle on their former lands.

The race into Georgia is accelerated by the discovery of gold in the northeastern mountains in 1829.

The legal basis for the transfer of land lies with the Indian Removal Act passed in Congress on May 28, 1830 – but it is immediately challenged in court by injunctions brought by Henry Clay and Daniel Webster.

A March 1831 ruling by the Supreme Court in *Cherokee Nation v Georgia* denies that the tribes are a foreign nation and therefore not governed by US law. But in March 1832, in *Worcester v Georgia*, the decision favors the Indian claims, saying that settlers may not occupy Cherokee lands without tribal consent.

Associate Justice Joseph Story expresses relief at the time that justice has finally been served:

*Thanks be to God, the Court can wash their hands clean of the iniquity of oppressing the Indians and disregarding their rights.*

Ex-General Jackson is said to have had a very different reaction, and one that will prevail:

*John Marshall has made his decision; now let him enforce it!*

Meanwhile the state of Georgia simply ignores the federal laws – another act of “nullification” – and supports the land grabs by white settlers.

The President is sufficiently alarmed by the lawlessness to meet with John Ridge, son of a Cherokee chief, educated at the Foreign Mission School in Connecticut, and acting as counsel for the tribe in Washington. Jackson assures Ridge that he does not intend to use military force in Georgia, but encourages him to work out a formal treaty to resolve the issue.

Ridge and a sub-set of Indian elders proceed to negotiate the Treaty of New Echota, which legally transfers the Cherokee land. It is signed into law on December 29, 1835, despite opposition from Principal Chief John Ross.

What happens next is the beginning of what become known in Cherokee lore as “the trail where they cried” – latter translated into “The Trail of Tears.”

Across the South, a total of some 120,000 people from the so-called “five civilized tribes” are forced to leave their ancestral and sacred homelands for the new “Indian Territory” – land “reserved” for them in what will eventually become the eastern half of Oklahoma.

Up North, another roughly 90,000 Indians are herded into concentration sites from Memphis to Cleveland, and then transported by wagons and flatboats across the Mississippi to their new reservations.

Estimates of death from hardship or disease during the exodus run from 15-25% of those in transit.

Among the casualties will be John Ridge and his father, who are assassinated for betraying the Cherokee heritage by pro-Ross backers in 1839.

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Time: 1835 Forward

**The Long Sad Fate Of America’s First Settlers Continues**



Map of final Tribal reservations in the west, circa 1890

The pillage that Jackson initiates against the tribes will continue largely unabated for the next six decades.

As such, it stands alongside slavery as one of the lasting stains on the soul of the nation.

In 1836 General Winfield Scott drives the remaining Creek resisters in Alabama off their lands; in 1837 he turns to the Choctaws in Mississippi, and in 1838 he leads a force of 7000 troops against the Cherokees in North Carolina. By 1842, after an expense of nearly \$20 million, the wars against the Seminoles are concluded.

**Key Events Related To The “Indian Removal” From Their Eastern Homelands**

Nations	Ancestral Home	“Trail of Tears”
Choctaw	Mississippi	About 17,000 moved in 1831, with 3-6000 killed along way. About 5500 stay in Mississippi and agree to “follow the law,” but the white settlers constantly harass them.
Creeks	Alabama	Most moved in 1834, with Scott completing the job in the Creek War of 1836.
Chickasaw	Mississippi	They are concentrated in Memphis in 1837 then driven west and forced to join the Choctaws Nation, until later regaining independent status.
Cherokee	North Carolina	In 1838 Van Buren sends Scott to round up all Cherokees in concentration sites in Cleveland, then drives them west. The Cherokees survive well and their population grows over time.
Seminoles	Florida	The Seminole Wars run from 1817 to 1842, at high cost and with renegade bands finally taking refuge in the Everglades.

As America’s borders shift into the Louisiana Territory and beyond, local tribes will again be forced to move from the homes to accommodate the white settlers, often backed by the U.S. Army.

### Further U.S. Moves Against The Native Americans In The West

Nations	Home	Conflicts
Comanches, Kiowa Apaches	Texas, Oklahoma, Kansas, New Mexico	From 1836 to 1875 Anglo settlers battle to settle on tribal lands in the Comancheria. The 1858 Battle of Antelope Hills signals the decline of the resistance. In 1875 the Comanches are forced into space set aside for the southeastern tribes in Oklahoma. The Apaches settle further west in Arizona.
Eastern Dakotas	Minnesota	In 1862 US troops under General John Pope defeat eastern Sioux tribes along the Minnesota River and hang 38 captives in Mankato.
Lakota Sioux and Northern Cheyenne	N/S Dakota, Montana	Lakotas pushed aside after gold discoveries in the Black Hills. Sioux victory at the Little Big Horn leads to US troops crushing remaining rebels.

In the end, the fate of America's native peoples is not much different from that of the Africans.

Most have greeted the white settlers in peace, helped them navigate the new land, and sought favorable relations. In return, they've gotten "The Great Father," promising them fair treatment in one inaugural address after another, from Washington through Jackson, reneging time and again. High-minded rhetoric quickly giving way to self-interest: the wish to occupy their tribal homelands, the power to make this happen, and justification based on the inherent superiority of the white race.

Some tribes fight back: Tecumseh and the Shawnees in 1813, the Red Stick Creeks in 1814, Blackhawk and the Sauks in 1832, Osceola Seminoles in 1832, out west, the Comanches and the Sioux. All too little avail beyond the lasting personal honors of counting coup.

As the Africans are enslaved, so too are America's native peoples – not in chains, but on "reservations."

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Time: June 25, 1876

**Sidebar: The Tribes Count Coup One Last Time at the Little Big Horn**



George Armstrong Custer (1839-1876)



Chief Sitting Bull (1830-1891)

Any residual empathy in the North for the plight of the tribes is eroded by events during America's Civil War.

When the conflict breaks out, several tribes who own African slaves align with the South. Some actually form brigades and engage in the fighting as Confederates – most notably at the 1862 Battle of Pea Ridge, in Arkansas. There both Cherokee and Choctaw warriors fight under the leadership of Albert Pike and Stand Watie. Watie is a Choctaw who grows up in Georgia, is educated, becomes a Christian, owns slaves, and eventually is named a brigadier general in the CSA army. (As such he is one of only two Indians of that rank, the other being Ely Parker of the USA.)

After the Union wins the war, the notion of “Indian independence” vanishes, and the U.S. government is unabashed about coercing all tribes to obey the will of “their great white father” in Washington.

When reservation land is needed to build railroads, DC simply takes it. When gold is found on Indian land, they are again “re-located.” When other tribes, such as the western Cheyenne, need to be moved, tribes “donate” the needed space.

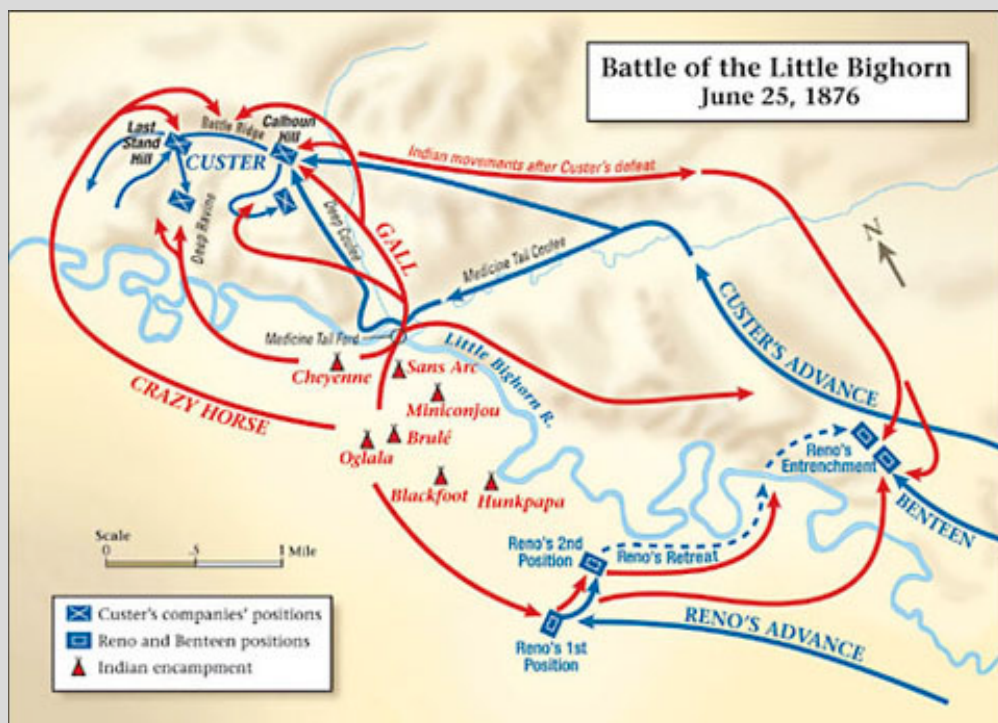
The Navajo end up in northern Arizona; the Shoshone and Nez Perce in Idaho; the Crow and Blackfeet in Montana; the Sioux in South Dakota; the Modocs in northern California.



The “treaty revisions” and relocations go on until roughly 1889, culminating with white “sooners” rushing into the western half of the original Indian Territory and finally establishing the state of Oklahoma.

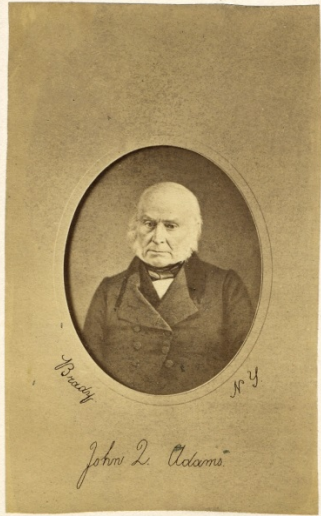
In the end, the land mass set aside in 1830 has shrunk by more than half, and it is occupied by a patchwork quilt of “Nations,” each with their own cultures and laws, and often with a history of prior conflicts.

On June 25, 1876, the Native American tribes – this time in the form of the Lakota Sioux and the Cheyenne – express their last defiance against the white intruders by thrashing General George Armstrong Custer and the Seventh Cavalry at the Little Bighorn River in Montana. After that, the Indian nations retreat forever to their ghetto reservations, even as black slaves are being emancipated.



Blunders by an Overconfident Custer Leads to the Loss of 211 Men at the Little Big Horn

## Chapter 104 -- The House Passes A “Gag Order” to Silence Anti-Slavery Petitions

 <p>A sepia-toned oval portrait of John Quincy Adams, an elderly man with white hair, wearing a dark suit and a white cravat. The portrait is mounted on a larger rectangular card. Below the oval, the name "John Q. Adams" is written in cursive. To the left and right of the oval are the words "Brady" and "N.Y." respectively.</p>	<p><b>Dates:</b> 1836</p>	<p><b>Sections:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• JQ Adams Protests Southerners Move To “Gag” House Debate On Slavery Issues</li> </ul>
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Time: May 1836

### JQ Adams Protests Southerners Move To “Gag” House Debate On Slavery Issues



John Quincy Adams (1767-1748)

The founding of the American Anti-Slavery Society in 1833 provides an organized forum for white abolitionists to have their voices heard across the North and the South.

Within the group, however, differences exist on which tactics are most likely to topple slavery. The New York faction – the Tappan brothers, Theodore Weld and now James Birney – believe that success lies in forming a political movement capable of electing advocates in Washington. The Boston faction – followers of Garrison – tend to distrust all politicians, and feel that direct calls to the public through publications and speaking tours are more likely to succeed.

Soon the efforts along both fronts begin to materialize – in the shape of “Citizen’s Petitions,” drawn up at local rallies and sent to the federal House of Representatives.

Once received, the time honored “rules of the House” require that all such public expressions be read into the record and then directed to appropriate committees for further consideration.

Historically, petitions related to abolition have trickled into the House one at a time, typically from Quakers. But with the advent of the Anti-Slavery Society chapters, the trickle turns into a flood.

And the response among Southern congressmen is one of outrage.

One man becomes the champion of reading these petitions out loud to his colleagues. He is ex-President John Quincy Adams, who joins the House in 1831 – and becomes the lone outright abolitionist in the House at the time.

Soon he is reading these abolitionist petitions in batches of ten or more – with Southerners bristling at every word.

Finally, on December 18, 1835, this procedure is challenged on the floor.

The impetus is a petition generated by a local abolitionist society calling on Congress to repeal slavery in the District of Columbia, a “territory” not a sovereign state, where the federal government has unilateral control over legal statutes

As one more appeal from Massachusetts is about to be read on December 18, James Hammond of South Carolina rises to object.

Why, he asks, should the House waste its time on these petitions, since the Constitution specifically guarantees the continuation of slavery? Instead of officially receiving these petitions, shouldn't the rules be changes to ignore them entirely?

Hammond's challenge sets off a fiery debate with Adams. It concludes with a decision to hand the controversy over to the rules committee headed by Henry L Pinckney, another South Carolina man, who supported Calhoun in his Nullification challenge.

On May 18, 1836 the Pinckney Committee Resolution is presented:

*Whereas it is extremely important and desirable that the agitation on this subject should be finally arrested for the purpose of restoring tranquility to the public mind...resolved that all petitions, memorials, propositions or papers relating in any way... to the subject of slavery or the abolition of slavery, shall, without being printed or referred, be laid on the table and that no further action shall be had thereon.*

Adams is outraged by the proposal:

*I hold the resolution to be a violation of the Constitution of the US, the rules of this House and the rights of my constituents.*

But the proposal passes by a comfortable margin of 117 yea to 68 nay.

Those in opposition henceforth refer to this as the “Gag Rule” – and its actual effect will prove to be very different from the intent of its backers.

Instead of ceasing to send in petitions, Rule #21 only serves to spur the abolitionists on – and, when received, Adams and others will continue to attempt to bring them up, despite the ban.

Also, as time passes, Northerners begin to regard the Gag Rule as another example of the South trying to unilaterally impose its will on Washington politics.

## Chapter 105 -- Americans Under Sam Houston Annex Texas



**Dates:**  
1836

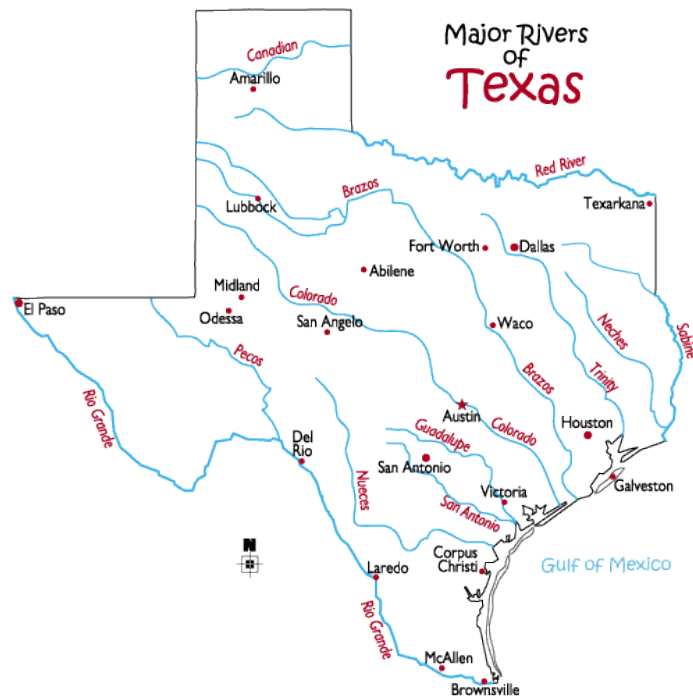
**Sections:**

- Settlers Found The Republic Of Texas
- Mexico Strikes Back At The Alamo And Goliad
- Sam Houston Wins Independence For Texas
- Jackson Backs Away From Annexing Texas

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Time: March 1836

### Settlers Found The Republic Of Texas



Texians Cross The Eastern Sabine River Border and Settle Along The Western San Antonio River

As anti-abolitionist mobs in the North signal their wish to stop the spread of slavery, Southern pioneers make another move to expand it west of the Mississippi.

Their target in this case is the Mexican province of Tejas, which (as Texas) will become the nation's number one producer of cotton in years to come.

Controversy over ownership of this land dates back to Jefferson's Louisiana Purchase from France in 1803. America claims that the western boundary of the purchase extends to the Rio Grande River while Spain draws the line much farther east.

The dispute seems settled for good in 1819 with JQ Adams' treaty, which acquires Florida from the Spanish and agrees that American territory ends at the Sabine River line.

But now Spain makes a tactical error. Because it has been slow to challenge the Comanche and Apache tribes and build settlements in Tejas, it negotiates a deal with an American named Miles Austin. This involves granting Austin some land in Tejas in return for beginning the settlement process. The door is now open a crack to American pioneers.

In 1821 Mexico wins independence from Spain, and soon thereafter examines conditions in Tejas.

The result is shock and dismay. Austin's settlers -- called Texians -- have penetrated all the way from San Jacinto in the east to Goliad and San Antonio de Bexar in the west.

After the Americans try on several occasions to purchase the province from the government, the Mexicans finally decide to ban further immigration, in 1830. But this proves futile and some 38,000 Americans have settled in Tejas by 1835, including 5,000 slaves -- even though slavery has been outlawed across Mexico since 1821.

On March 2, 1836, a convention of settlers declare their independence as a new nation, The Republic of Texas, and elect David Burnet, an early settler and political leader, as their interim President.

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Time: March 5-27, 1836

### **Mexico Strikes Back At The Alamo And Goliad**



A Mexican Warrior

Mexico is already in the process of trying to regain their land well before the Texians declare their sovereignty.

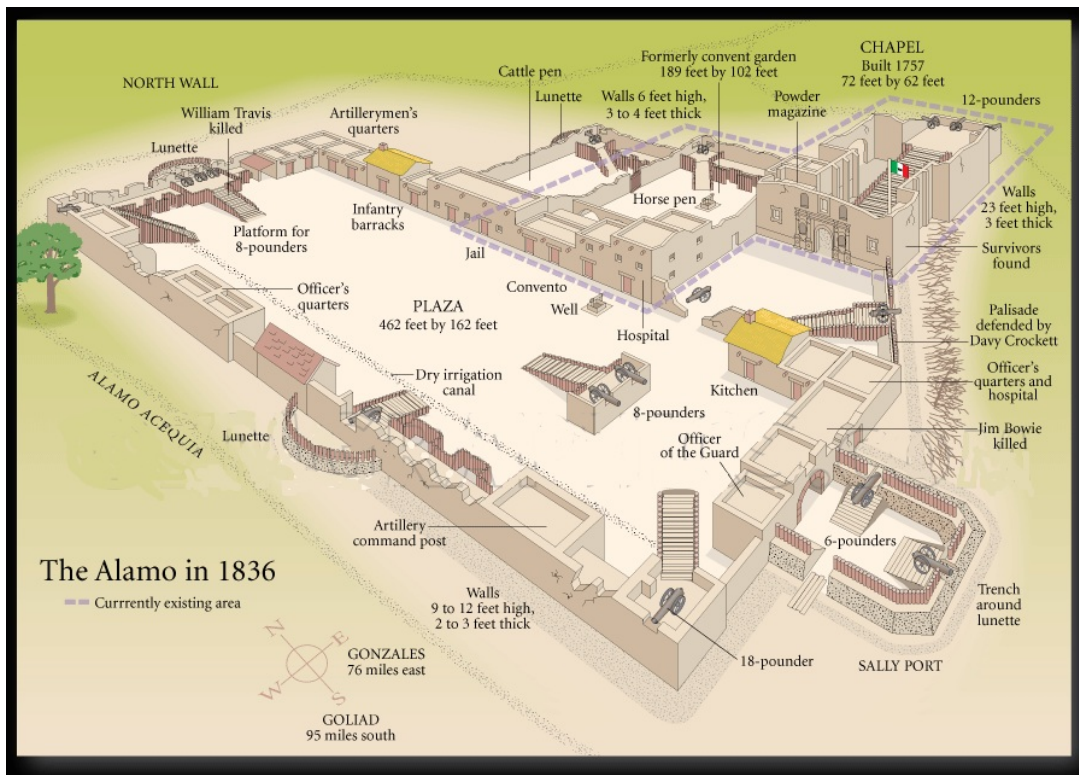
Initial fighting breaks out in October 1835 with the Mexicans intent on driving the invaders back to the US border at the Sabine River.

In early 1836, their focus is on taking back two fortified garrisons, one at The Alamo in San Antonio de Bexar, the other at Goliad, some 87 miles to the southeast.

Leading the charge against the Alamo is General Antonio Lopez de Santa Anna -- a 41 year old commander who has spent the last 15 years in the military and in politics, emerging essentially as dictator of the nation.

Santa Anna sets out toward the Alamo in late December and crosses the Rio Grande on February 12, 1836. Eleven days later he is within sight of the Alamo.

The mission is in poor shape to defend itself. Structurally it is designed to hold off bands of Indians, not an army of 1800 troops, armed with cannon. Conditions are so bad in fact that, in mid-January, Sam Houston sends Sam Bowie to retrieve all artillery and abandon the site. But lacking the needed draft animals for transport, Bowie and Lt. Colonel William Travis decide to try to hold out. They request reinforcements, and a few arrive, including ex-US Congressman, Davey Crockett. These bring his total troop count to roughly 285 men.



The Interior Of The Alamo Mission Defended By The Texians In 1836

Santa Anna surrounds the mission and hauls up a red flag signaling that he intends to take no prisoners.

After a brief siege, Santa Anna attacks the Alamo at 5:30am on March 5, 1836. The battle lasts for roughly one hour, with the Texians falling back from their outer walls into final defensive positions around the central barracks and church. But they are desperately outnumbered and finally succumb. The entire Texian force is wiped out and their bodies are stacked and burned by the Mexicans.

While Santa Anna is moving overland from the west against the Alamo, a separate Mexican army under General Jose de Urrea is advancing to the southeast, from the Gulf of Mexico, up the San Antonio River toward the town of Goliad, where Colonel William Fannin commands another small outpost he names Ft. Defiance.

Before Urrea arrives, however, Fannin is ordered to abandon the fort and retreat west some 26 miles to the town of Victoria. But on March 19, his force of some 300 men is surrounded by Urrea's troops on the open prairie. The Texians form a classical Napoleonic square, which holds off the Mexican attacks until nightfall.

Still their situation is hopeless and Fannin surrenders on the morning of March 20 – with some 300 survivors marched back to Goliad as prisoners.

What follows next becomes known as the Goliad Massacre.

General Urrea pleads with Santa Anna on behalf of fair treatment for the Texian prisoners, but is rebuffed.

On the morning of March 27, 1836, all 300 men are shot by Mexican firing squads in the town square.

Santa Anna's ruthlessness here will not be forgotten as the Texians prepare to strike back.

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Time: April 1836

### **Sam Houston Wins Independence for Texas**



Sam Houston (1793-1863)

After the losses at The Alamo and Goliad, the dashing Sam Houston steps in to lead the Texians.

Houston's life has veered in and out of control over the years. He is born in Virginia in 1793, moves to Tennessee at age 14, runs away from home to live briefly among the Cherokees and returns to fight gallantly in the War of 1812, alongside Andrew Jackson, who becomes his lifelong friend.

After studying law and opening a practice in Tennessee, he is elected to the U.S. Congress in 1823-27, and then becomes Governor from 1827-29. He appears ready to follow in Jackson's footsteps when his new marriage suddenly dissolves and he is overtaken by drink. He retreats to the wilderness again among the Cherokees of his youth, takes an Indian wife, and earns his Indian name, "Big Drunk."

Houston suddenly regains his bearings, and begins the next chapter of his life by moving to Tejas in 1833. Once there he parlays his skills as a lawyer, politician and military man into a leadership role in the drive for independence. As violence threatens, he is named a Major General in the Texas Army and then its Commander-In-Chief in 1836.

When the far western outpost at the Alamo falls, Houston rallies his small army and attacks Santa Ana's forces six weeks later on April 21, 1836, at the Battle of San Jacinto. The battle is a 20 minute rout. Houston suffers another of his many war wounds, but Santa Ana is captured, and signs a unilateral peace treaty granting Texas its independence.

Houston, henceforth known as "Old Sam Jacinto," becomes first President of the Republic of Texas on October 22, 1836.

However, the treaty signed by Santa Ana to gain his freedom is rejected in Mexico City, leading to ongoing tension and a threat of more war.

The Texans turn to hopes for annexation by the United States as a solution to their legitimacy.

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Time: Summer 1836

### Jackson Backs Away From Annexing Texas



Henry Mason Morfit & Granddaughter

The conflict in Texas and the request for annexation provokes Jackson to send an emissary there in the summer of 1836 to assess the “civil, military and political conditions” and recommend what, if any, action the U.S. should consider taking.

The man chosen for the visit is Henry Mason Morfit, 43 years old, who is born in Norfolk and becomes a practicing attorney before joining the U. S. State Department. Once situated in Texas, Morfit writes a series of ten letters to Jackson over five weeks which describe his findings and “urge against” offering statehood. Two reasons drive Morfit’s opinion.

First, he believes the Mexican army is about to gather in force in the spring of 1837 and that it will be able to overwhelm the Texans. Morfit tells Jackson that a commitment to Texas means a commitment to sending U.S. troops into a war against Mexico.

*The old colonists would not by themselves be able to sustain an invasion and, at the same time, supply the means for the war.*

Second, the emissary expresses reservations about the motives underlying the entreaty to Washington.

*Finally, (there are) suggestions and arguments that this whole enterprise of independence is a mere speculative scheme, concocted and encouraged for the aggrandizement of a few.*

Morfit’s suspicions about the entire Texas “enterprise” run the gamut from rumors that the Republic is broke and needs federal money to survive, all the way back to a repeat of the Aaron Burr conspiracy to conquer Mexico and set up an independent nation.

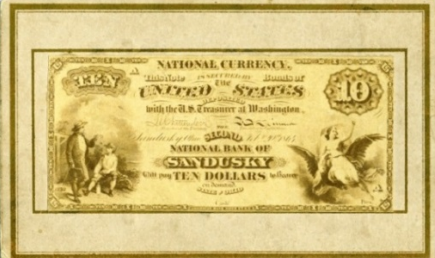
While Morfit’s letters all ring true to Jackson, the President is also surely swayed by the regional controversy he knows would accompany any attempt to admit Texas into the Union.

Such a move would be regarded by those in the North as a surrender to Southerners seeking to expand their cotton plantations and slavery further into the Louisiana Territory. It would most likely trigger a repeat of the 1820 conflict surrounding Missouri’s statehood – something Jackson intends to avoid as his time in office nears an end.

Instead of risking a costly foreign war with Mexico and another regional battle between the North and the South, he backs away from annexing Texas and turns instead to renewing his assault on the banking industry, believing now that it has corrupted America’s money supply through rampant speculation.

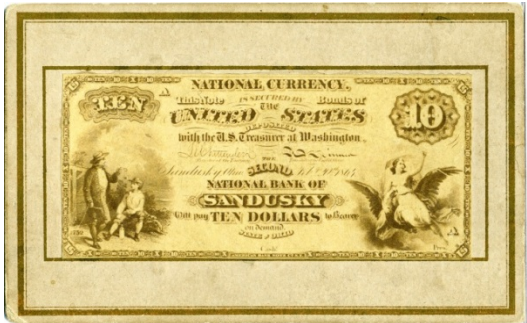


## Chapter 106 -- Jackson's "Specie Circular" Triggers A Monetary Crisis

	<p><b>Dates:</b> 1836</p>	<p><b>Sections:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Jackson Attempts To Insure The "True Value" Of The US Dollar</li> <li>The "Specie Circular" Action Initiates A Financial Panic</li> </ul>
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Time: July 11, 1836

### Jackson Attempts To Insure The "True Value" Of The US Dollar



A Ten Dollar Bill from Bank of Sandusky, Ohio

From the day he enters office in 1829, Andrew Jackson wars against what he regards as corrupt financial management practices By 1835 he has recorded two victories: shutting down the Second Bank of the United States and paying off the entire federal debt.

In 1836 he sets his sights on a third objective: protecting the integrity and value of the U.S. dollar against threats he sees from the proliferation of local banks, each allowed to print and issue their own "soft money."

Between 1820 and 1835, the number of registered banks in America has more than doubled, and the level of loans outstanding has expanded by sevenfold.

**Accelerated Growth In U.S. Banking**

Year	Banks	Loans (MM)
1820	327	55.1
1825	330	88.7
1830	381	115.3
1835	704	365.1

The spike in loans signals a spike in personal debt, which is anathema to the fiscally conservative Jackson.

It leads him to reflect again on Hamilton's scheme to fuel capitalism by increasing the nation's money supply.

This has been achieved by allowing banks to print a large amount of soft money notes to make loans or investments, with only a small amount of hard gold or silver in their vaults to be "redeemed on demand."

This whole system seems fundamentally flawed to Jackson.

What can the “true value” of the U.S. dollar be if banks no longer have the capacity to redeem each dollar with the “promised amount of hard specie” (minted gold or silver coins)?

Beyond that, won't bankers simply print whatever quantities of soft money they deem profitable at any moment in time – and won't this lead on to ruinous speculation and debt?

Not only for the common man, who is often inclined to borrow more money than he can be sure to pay back, and is crippled by personal IOU's -- but also for the nation.

As a prime example of this, Jackson points to what he regards as the reckless gambles being made in 1835 and 1836 by individuals and bankers on the value of U.S. land.

<b>Year</b>	<b>\$ Sales (000)</b>	<b>% Change</b>
1831	\$ 3,200	
1832	2,600	(19%)
1833	3,900	50
1834	4,800	23
1835	14,750	307
1836	24,870	69

What will happen, he wonders, when the bidding frenzy subsides and speculators find that the true value of the land they bought is much less than they thought? And if, as he suspects, many of the big speculators are the bank owners themselves, will their debt bring down the financial integrity of the entire country?

One thing Jackson knows for certain is his lifelong distrust of, and disdain toward, bankers in general.

*Gentlemen, I have had men watching you for a long time and I am convinced that you have used the funds of the bank to speculate in the breadstuffs of the country. When you won, you divided the profits amongst you, and when you lost, you charged it to the bank. You are a den of vipers and thieves.*

He is equally certain that his duty lies in acting before it is too late. He will not leave behind a shaky financial outlook as a legacy, when his term is up.

To correct the problem, he must find a way to curtail the rogue printing of the banknotes which fuel speculation, depreciate the real value of the dollar, and result in debt.

He does so by issuing an Executive Order (known as the “Specie Circular”) on July 11, 1836 requiring that future purchases of U.S. land by anyone other than actual settlers be paid off in gold or silver, not in banknotes.

Jackson's order quickly rocks the foundation of the financial system in place since Alexander Hamilton's time.

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Time: 1836-1843

### **The “Specie Circular” Action Initiates A Financial Panic**

The “Specie Circular” is widely regarded as a signal that the federal government itself is uncertain about the intrinsic value of the banknotes already in circulation across the economy.

Why else would the President suddenly be asking land investors to pay off their purchases in hard currency rather than soft banknotes?

As this doubt sinks in, the entire economy begins to witness a flight from dollars back into gold and silver – and a contraction of the nation’s money supply.

The result is a sudden reversal of Hamilton’s entire system of “credit” to support capitalism.

A nation accustomed to borrowing money today -- to buy property, to run a farm, to invest in a business – and paying it back with interest later on, now finds that the banks will no longer make these loans.

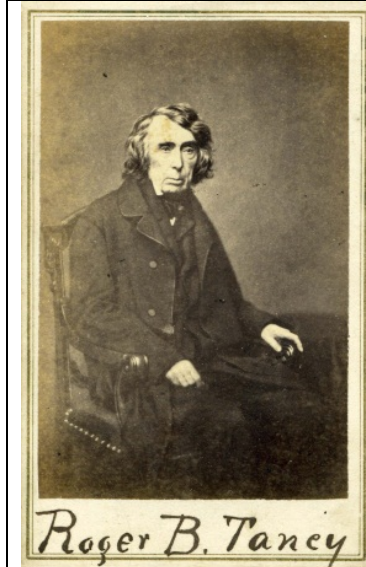
Worse yet, some banks are even demanding that outstanding loans be repaid immediately to protect the assets of their private owners.

What follows is fear, then bankruptcies and foreclosures.

The old General’s last campaign has found and attacked the vulnerabilities of the “fractional” banking system, and slowed the tide of both public and federal debt. But not without a cost.

The result will be the first extended depression in U.S. history, which will continue for almost seven years and have a devastating effect on Jackson’s successor, Martin Van Buren.

## Chapter 107 -- The “Taney Court” Begins To Assert Itself



**Dates:**  
1836-1864

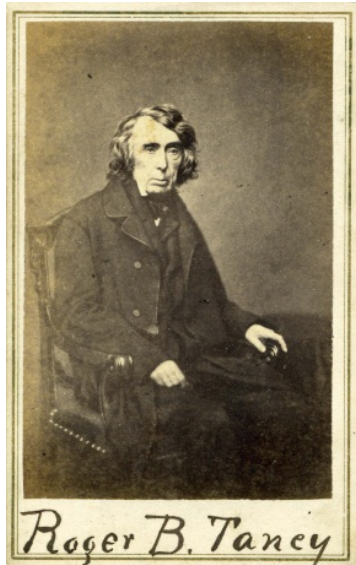
**Sections:**

- Roger B. Taney Succeeds John Marshall As Chief Justice Of The Supreme Court
- Community Interests Prevail In *Charles River Bridge v Warren Bridge*

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Time: March 15, 1836

### Roger B. Taney Succeeds John Marshall As Chief Justice Of The Supreme Court



Jackson’s second term includes one other legacy that will affect the course of history over the next 28 years – his selection of Roger B. Taney as Chief Justice of the Supreme Court.

The former Chief, John C. Marshall, serves for 34 years and essentially establishes the Court’s status as a co-equal branch of the federal government.

Marshall also proves to be a thorn in the side of Anti-Federalists, like his cousin, Thomas Jefferson, and others who follow in the Democratic-Republican Party. He does so by consistently affirming the supremacy of federal laws over state laws, and by extending the scope of cases and issues brought before the Court.

Marshall dies on July 6, 1835, and Jackson turns to Taney, a longtime friend and member of his “Kitchen Cabinet” to fill the vacancy.

Roger Brooke Taney (1777-1864)

Taney’s roots are firmly in tidewater Maryland, but he is not wealthy, and, like Jackson, favors the “common man” over the privileged, and the preservation of the Union at all costs.

His prior experiences are remarkably diverse, including a successful legal career, election to his state legislature, and then a series of presidential appointments, as Acting Secretary of War, U.S. Attorney General, and Secretary of the Treasury.

Despite this track record, Taney is met with resistance by those who oppose Jackson at every turn. In January 1835, Clay's Whig supporters deny his nomination to serve as an Associate Justice on the Court.

When the President sends his nomination up again on December 28, 1835, it is met by stiff opposition from Clay, Calhoun and Webster. But even that potent combination cannot prevail over a Senate full of Jackson men, and Taney is finally confirmed on March 15, 1836.

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Time: February 14, 1837

### **Community Interests Prevail In *Charles River Bridge v Warren Bridge***

As a justice, Taney is a strict "letter of the law" adherent to the Constitution, and, like Jackson, favors state's rights over federal intrusion. He demonstrates this view in one of his early cases, *Charles River Bridge v. Warren Bridge*.

Here the state of Massachusetts has contracted with the Charles River Bridge Company (CRBC) in 1785 to build a 1503 feet span connecting Boston to Charleston and saving travelers from an 8 miles roundabout trek. In payment for the bridge, the Company is granted rights to collect user tolls for a 70 year period, at which time the bridge would become state property.

The bridge proves to be an overnight success, and the original owners eventually reap huge profits by selling their shares to later investors. As the population of Boston grows so too do the profits to the company and the complaints of the public about the toll rates being charged. When the new owners refuse to adjust the charges, the state decides to build what will become the nearby Warren Bridge, to be free to travelers after an estimated six year toll period to pay off the construction costs.

Owners of the Charles River Bridge Company see that this "free" Warren Bridge will end their ability to charge a toll and, hence, their source of profits -- and view this as a violation by the state of their 70 year contract. They respond with a lawsuit asking the court to prohibit construction of Warren Bridge.

The case eventually reaches the U.S. Supreme Court in 1831, and it appears that John Marshall and his "pro-business" colleagues are about to side with the company over the state. But administrative matters delay the ruling, and then turnover in the justices, culminating in Marshall's passing, forces the case to be reargued in 1837, with Taney now presiding.

In the interim, the Warren Bridge has actually been built, has achieved a free/no toll status, and has indeed dried up traffic across the Charles River Bridge.

Despite this outcome, the Taney court votes 5-2 in favor of the state over the CRBC plaintiff.

Taney concludes that the original contract did not overtly grant "exclusivity" to CRBC and that the new Warren Bridge is simply an example of the state doing its job by acting in the best interest of its citizens.

*While the rights of private property are sacredly guarded, we must not forget that the community also have rights, and that the happiness and well-being of every citizen depends on their faithful preservation*

In regard to the company's lost toll profits, he argues that such outcomes are built into the evolving nature of commerce – canals cut into toll road profits and perhaps the new trains will impact canals in the same fashion. One cannot prioritize company profits over public progress.

Finally, Taney decides that the will of the Massachusetts's state legislature should trump any federal issues related to Article I, Section 10 – “no state shall pass any...ex-post facto law impairing the obligation of contracts.”

A vigorous dissent from Taney is registered by veteran justice Joseph Story. He cites the risks taken by the CRBC investors in building what in 1785 was...

*The very first bridge ever constructed, in New England, over navigable tide- waters so near the sea one that many believed would scarcely stand a single severe winter.*

And he warns that if the rewards of risking capital are threatened by the state, improving public lives will suffer in return. Massachusetts had a good faith contract with the CRBC and ex-post facto they reneged on it.

*I stand upon the old law...and can conceive of no surer plan to arrest all public improvements, founded on private capital and enterprise, than to make the outlay of that capital uncertain and questionable, both as to security and as to productiveness*

In 1857 Chief Justice Taney will be involved in another case, Dred Scott v Sanford, that will involve protection of another form of “property” – slaves. His decisions here will again prove controversial.

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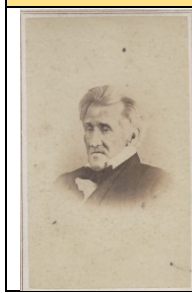
Time: 1801-1835

**Sidebar: Legacy Of The Marshall Court**

**Some of the Major Decisions Set Down By The Marshall Court**

<b>Year</b>	<b>Case</b>	<b>Impact</b>
1803	<i>Marbury v Madison</i>	Judicial review of Congressional laws
1807	<i>Ex Parte Bollman</i>	Supreme Court power to issue writs/commands to circuit courts
1810	<i>Fletcher v Peck</i>	First overturn of state law, protects property rights contract
1819	<i>McCulloch v Maryland</i>	Implied power of Congress to make necessary & proper laws
1819	<i>Dartmouth v Woodward</i>	Private corporations protected from state interference
1823	<i>Johnson v M'Intosh</i>	Inability of Native tribes to own lands
1823	<i>Propagation Of Faith v Town of Pawlet Vt.</i>	Corporations are a "group of individuals in perpetuity," with protected rights as such
1824	<i>Gibbons v Ogden</i>	Ends state power to regulate interstate commerce
1825	<i>The Antelope</i>	Confirms that slaves on board of a ship are legitimate property
1831	<i>Cherokee Nation v Georgia</i>	Indian nations as foreign states
1832	<i>Worcester v Georgia</i>	Sanctioning Indian removal
1833	<i>Barron v Baltimore</i>	Bill of Rights cases limited to federal, not state, challenges
1834	<i>Wheaton v Peters</i>	Copyright perpetuity

## Chapter 108 -- Andrew Jackson's Enduring Legacy



**Dates:**  
1829-1837

**Sections:**

- The Age Of Jackson
- His Farewell Address Warns Of Dangers Ahead
- Jackson's Final Years

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Time: 1829-1837

### The Age Of Jackson



Andrew Jackson is remembered as one of America's most ambitious, controversial and effective Presidents. He sets out his grand agenda in his first inaugural address and then proceeds to accomplish nearly every goal he identifies over his two terms.

In hindsight, several of these goals will be judged harshly, especially his cruel uprooting of the native tribes of the east, and his abrupt moves in regard to the Second Bank and the tightening of the money supply.

Andrew Jackson (1767-1845)

His critics will also charge him with expanding the powers of the Executive branch far beyond the guidelines laid out in the 1787 Constitution. For these men he will forever be cast as "King Andrew."

But what no one can question is his devotion to always doing what he feels is necessary to preserve and protect the sacred Union. Thus his famous dinner toast in 1829 challenging Calhoun and the "nullifiers"

*Our Federal union: it must and shall be preserved.*

His presidency is truly transformative. It is marked by a series of firsts that forever change the national political scene in America.

- He is the first president elected by the "common man" rather than by "land owners only" – a change in voting rights that boosts the popular vote from 353,000 in 1824 to 1,287,000 in 1832.
- He is the first "outsider" president, having served only briefly in Congress (1796-98) and never as either Vice-President or Secretary of State. Instead he sweeps into DC as the "hero of New Orleans," and unabashedly opens his inaugural party at the White House to the public.
- He is the first "western" president, and his election signals the population shift away from the original thirteen seacoast states and to the "new" thirteen inland states.
- He is the first truly "populist president," who sees himself as the protector of the average American against the special interests – especially the "money men" in banking and industry that he feels are rigging the system in their self-interest.



- He is the first president to accomplish what his predecessors have all called for – elimination of the nation’s public debt.
- He is the first president to face into a serious threat of Southern secession, stating that the Union is inseparable, and threatening to use force against South Carolina if it violates the federal tariff law.

He is also president at a time when the Second Great Religious Awakening is prompting many American’s to face inward in search of social reforms consistent with the founder’s vision of a “shining city on a hill.”

Among these reforms is the abolition of slavery – and during Jackson’s tenure the wheels are set in motion by which emancipation will occur and his sacred Union will dissolve.

As a lifelong planter and unrepentant slave owner he is quick to recognize this threat during the furor over the 1828 Tariff. As he says at the time:

*The tariff was only the pretext, and disunion and southern confederacy the real object. The next pretext will be the negro or slavery question.”*

Like his predecessors, Jackson lacks the know how to end the sectional tensions he sees developing – with the South needing to carry its slaves west of the Mississippi for economic reasons, and the North dead set against allowing any more blacks, slave or free, to take up residence in white men’s territory.

He does, however, have the foresight (despite his personal preference) to resist a mad long rush to annex Texas, an act certain to reignite the sectional conflict which accompanied the admission of Missouri as a slave state.

Jackson will also remain true to his role as the voice of the average white citizen, trying his best to protect the well-being of the many from the avarice of the few. As such, his popularity with “the majority of people” remains untarnished throughout his eight year term.

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Time: March 4, 1837

### **His Farewell Address Warns Of Dangers Ahead**

Like Washington before him, Andrew Jackson feels compelled to summarize his thoughts on the state of the Union in a farewell address which is published on March 4, 1837, the day he leaves office.

The address is lengthy and, while praising the nation’s progress to date, focuses mainly on the dangers that lie ahead.

The President begins by thanking the people for their support, and indicating that America is no longer a “doubtful experiment” but a proven success, “respected by every nation of the world.”

*FELLOW-CITIZENS: Being about to retire finally from public life, I beg leave to offer you my grateful thanks for the many proofs of kindness and confidence which I have received at your hands...At the moment when I surrender my last public trust I leave this great people prosperous and happy, in the full enjoyment of liberty and peace, and honored and respected by every nation of the world.*

*We have now lived almost fifty years under the Constitution framed by the sages and patriots of the Revolution. We have had our seasons of peace and of war, with all the evils which precede or follow a state of hostility with powerful nations Our Constitution is no longer a doubtful experiment, and at the end of nearly half a century we find that it has preserved unimpaired the liberties of the people, secured the rights of property, and that our country has improved and is flourishing beyond any former example in the history of nations.*

He references early on to the Indian Removal as one major advance domestically.

*In our domestic concerns there is everything to encourage us, and if you are true to yourselves nothing can impede your march to the highest point of national prosperity. The States which had so long been retarded in their improvement by the Indian tribes residing in the midst of them are at length relieved from the evil, and this unhappy race--the original dwellers in our land--are now placed in a situation where we may well hope that they will share in the blessings of civilization*

In foreign affairs, he says that America is presently enjoying good relations around the world.

*If we turn to our relations with foreign powers, we find our condition equally gratifying*

Still, he warns, it is important to recall Washington's admonitions in his farewell – most notably the potential for party politics and sectional disputes to erode the Union.

*The necessity of watching with jealous anxiety for the preservation of the Union was earnestly pressed upon his fellow-citizens by the Father of his Country in his Farewell Address... and he has cautioned us in the strongest terms against the formation of parties on geographical discriminations, as one of the means which might disturb our Union and to which designing men would be likely to resort.*

Jackson sees these same dangers growing at the moment, dangers which “excite the South against the North and the North against the South.” The source of these is a “delicate topic” which stirs “strong emotion.” While left unsaid, the President knows that topic to be the institution of slavery!

*But amid this general prosperity and splendid success the dangers of which he warned us are becoming every day more evident, and the signs of evil are sufficiently apparent to awaken the deepest anxiety in the bosom of the patriot. We behold systematic efforts publicly made to sow the seeds of discord between different parts of the United States and to place party divisions directly upon geographical distinctions; to excite the South against the North and the North against the South, and to force into the controversy the most delicate and exciting topics--topics upon which it is impossible that a large portion of the Union can ever speak without strong emotion.*

The sectional tension over slavery is already infecting the process of choosing the next president, and leading to talk of disunion.

*Appeals, too, are constantly made to sectional interests in order to influence the election of the Chief Magistrate, as if it were desired that he should favor a particular quarter of the country instead of fulfilling the duties of his station with impartial justice to all; and the possible dissolution of the Union has at length become an ordinary and familiar subject of discussion*

Jackson here elaborates on the many disasters that all Americans would suffer, were the union to come apart.

*It is impossible to look on the consequences that would inevitably follow the destruction of this Government and not feel indignant when we hear cold calculations about the value of the Union and have so constantly before us a line of conduct so well calculated to weaken its ties.*

The President admits that Congress may at time pass laws that are unpopular in one region or another, but any attempt to “forcibly resist their execution”— as with the “nullifiers” -- must be opposed.

*But until the law shall be declared void by the courts or repealed by Congress no individual or combination of individuals can be justified in forcibly resisting its execution. It is impossible that any government can continue to exist upon any other principles. It would cease to be a government and be unworthy of the name if it had not the power to enforce the execution of its own laws within its own sphere of action.*

At the same time, he admits that state’s rights are to be protected against overreach by the federal government.

*It is well known that there have always been those amongst us who wish to enlarge the powers of the General Government, and experience would seem to indicate that there is a tendency on the part of this Government to overstep the boundaries marked out for it by the Constitution Every attempt to exercise power beyond these limits should be promptly and firmly opposed, for one evil example will lead to other measures still more mischievous*

One example of federal overreach lies in taxation.

*There is, perhaps, no one of the powers conferred on the Federal Government so liable to abuse as the taxing power. Congress has no right under the Constitution to take money from the people unless it is required to execute some one of the specific powers intrusted to the Government; and if they raise more than is necessary for such purposes, it is an abuse of the power of taxation, and unjust and oppressive.*

The villains behind abuses such as exorbitant tariffs are the “corporations and wealthy individuals,” acting in their own self-interest at the expense of the common citizens – along with corrupt politicians who do their bidding.

*The corporations and wealthy individuals who are engaged in large manufacturing establishments desire a high tariff to increase their gains. Designing politicians will support it to conciliate their favor and to obtain the means of profuse expenditure for the purpose of purchasing influence in other quarters; and since the people have decided that the Federal Government can not be permitted to employ its income in internal improvements, efforts will be made to seduce and mislead the citizens of the several States by holding out to them the deceitful prospect of benefits to be derived from a surplus revenue collected...*

Jackson then takes out after the threats he has always seen lurking in a paper money supply rather than gold and silver coinage, and in the banking industry in general.

*The Constitution of the United States unquestionably intended to secure to the people a circulating medium of gold and silver. But the establishment of a national bank by Congress, with the privilege of issuing paper money receivable in the payment of the public dues, and the unfortunate course of legislation in the several States upon the same subject, drove from general circulation the constitutional currency and substituted one of paper in its place.*

The evils perpetrated by the soft money and unscrupulous bankers fall most heavily on the lower classes.

*Some of the evils which arise from this system of paper press with peculiar hardship upon the class of society least able to bear it... the laboring classes of society... whose daily wages are necessary for their subsistence. It is the duty of every government so to regulate its currency as to protect this numerous class, as far as practicable, from the impositions of avarice and fraud.*

For Jackson, of course, the leading symbol of this “avarice and fraud” is the Bank of the United States.

*But when the charter for the Bank of the United States was obtained from Congress it perfected the schemes of the paper system and gave to its advocates the position they have struggled to obtain from the commencement of the Federal Government to the present hour... The distress and sufferings inflicted on the people by the bank are some of the fruits of that system of policy which is continually striving to enlarge the authority of the Federal Government beyond the limits fixed by the Constitution. The severe lessons of experience will, I doubt not, be sufficient to prevent Congress from again chartering such a monopoly, even if the Constitution did not present an insuperable objection to it.*

The common man, the backbone of all that is good in the nation, is forever in danger of losing his liberty and his prosperity to the wealthy and privileged few who control the nation’s corporations.

*The mischief springs from the power which the moneyed interest derives from a paper currency which they are able to control, from the multitude of corporations with exclusive privileges which they have succeeded in obtaining in the different States... The paper-money system and its natural associations--monopoly and exclusive privileges--have already struck their roots too deep in the soil, and it will require all your efforts to check its further growth and to eradicate the evil... Unless you become more watchful... and check this spirit of monopoly and thirst for exclusive privileges you will in the end find that the most important powers of Government have been given... away, and the control over your dearest interests has passed into the hands of these corporations.*

He closes by returning to America’s remarkable progress so far, and the duty of those who follow to “preserve it for the benefit of the human race.”

*The progress of the United States under our free and happy institutions has surpassed the most sanguine hopes of the founders of the Republic. Our growth has been rapid beyond all former example in numbers, in wealth, in knowledge, and all the useful arts which contribute to the comforts and convenience of man, and from the earliest ages of history to the present day there never have been thirteen millions of people associated in one political body who enjoyed so much freedom and happiness as the people of these United States. You have no longer any cause to fear danger from abroad.*

*Providence has showered on this favored land blessings without number, and has chosen you as the guardians of freedom, to preserve it for the benefit of the human race. May He who holds in His hands the destinies of nations make you worthy of the favors He has bestowed and enable you, with pure hearts and pure hands and sleepless vigilance, to guard and defend to the end of time the great charge He has committed to your keeping.*

*My own race is nearly run; advanced age and failing health warn me that before long I must pass beyond the reach of human events and cease to feel the vicissitudes of human affairs. I thank God that my life has been spent in a land of liberty and that He has given me a heart to love my country with the affection of a son. And filled with gratitude for your constant and unwavering kindness, I bid you a last and affectionate farewell.*

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Time: 1837-1845

### **Jackson's Final Years**

Jackson is eleven days shy of his 70<sup>th</sup> birthday when he leaves the White House.

He has been sickly for years, suffering from assorted ailments. He carries a bullet so near his heart from his 1806 duel with John Dickinson that surgeons are fearful of removing it. The wound never heals fully, and causes an abscess in his lung leading on to fever and chills and spitting up blood. In 1813 his left upper arm has been shattered, again by a bullet, this time fired after a tavern brawl by the brother of Senator Thomas Hart Benton. During the War of 1812 he suffers a severe bout of dysentery, which becomes chronic in nature. He loses sight in his right eye in 1837 and is frequently racked by stomach cramps and a hacking cough.

Despite these afflictions, he soldiers on, returning to his Hermitage Plantation soon after leaving Washington.

His time there is spent organizing his presidential papers and restoring his long neglected property.

In 1840 he ventures out on his last extended trip, this time to New Orleans to celebrate the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary of his victory over the British that brought him national fame.

His heart begins to give out and he is unable to walk by 1844.

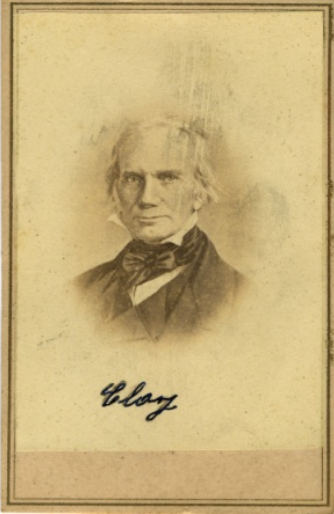
He is still, however, mentally sharp, and begins to work on behalf of James Knox Polk, a fellow Tennessean, in the 1844 race for the Democratic nomination and the presidency.

By May 1845 he is bedridden and fighting constant shortness of breath and swelling from head to toe. The end comes on June 8, 1845, two days after he sends a final note to Polk with his comments on the Oregon crisis.

The President is 78 years old when he passes. He is buried with little fanfare next to his long deceased wife, Rachel, in the tomb he has designed at the Hermitage.

He is eulogized soon after his death by one Jefferson Davis, who is on the verge of running for Congress at the time.

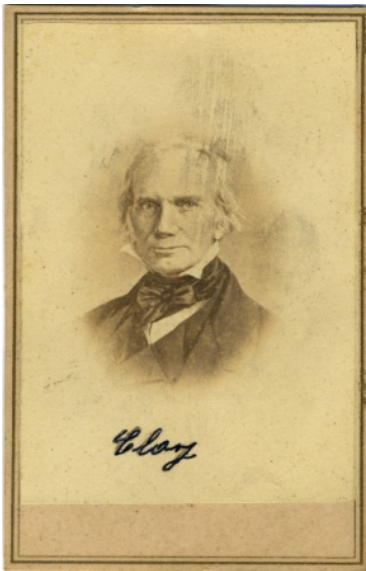
## Chapter 109 -- The Whigs Prepare To Challenge Van Buren For The Presidency

 A sepia-toned portrait of Henry Clay, an elderly man with white hair, wearing a dark suit and a white cravat. The name 'Clay' is written in cursive at the bottom of the portrait.	<b>Dates:</b> 1836	<b>Sections:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Henry Clay Advances The Whig Party</li><li>• The Whigs Nominate Four Regional Candidates</li></ul>
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Time: Fall 1836

### Henry Clay Advances The Whig Party



Henry Clay (1777-1852)

With Martin Van Buren set to run on the Democrat ticket in 1836, his opponents scramble to organize a credible challenge to his election.

Two of the parties created in 1832 to defeat Jackson – the Anti-Masons and the Nullifiers – have exhibited only limited regional appeal.

This leaves Henry Clay’s Whig Party as the only national option.

In settling on the Whig Party name in 1833, Clay declares his affinity with English politicians who are demanding the supremacy of an elected parliament over the autocratic policies of the ruling Tories.

In his case, the autocrat he opposes has been “King Andrew” Jackson.

But Jackson is now in retirement, and Clay himself has already suffered a humiliating defeat in 1832. If he is to overtake the Democrats, he must sharpen his party platform and his campaign strategies.

The policies in question follow a reasonably straight line back to Hamilton and the Federalists – belief in a strong central government, supporting the shift from an agricultural to an industrial economy, calling for federal funding of infrastructure projects to develop America’s domestic markets.

### Differences Between Democrat And Whig Policies In 1836

Issues	Jackson's Democrats	Clay's Whigs
Political Roots	Jefferson	Hamilton
Political Philosophy	Democracy/common man	Republic/leader class
Core Constituency	Small farmers	Farmers + city wage earners
Core Geography	South + West	Border + Northeast
Labor	Manual power	Manual + machines
Government Power	De-centralized/state's rights	Washington/federal control
Federal spending	Limit it/balance budget	Invest in infrastructure
Tariff	Lower and on fewer goods	Higher to protect mfrs.
Land prices	Lower	Higher to fund investments
Money	Hard/specie	Soft/paper
US Bank	Opposed/corporate privilege	Supportive/control currency
Capitalism	Suspicious/elites/corruption	Fundamental to growth

Clay also hopes to broaden the base of the Whig Party by uniting all forces who have opposed the Jackson Democrats – including remnants of the old Federalist and National Republican parties, the New York Anti-Masons, various southerners in the mold of his sometimes ally, John Calhoun, as well as the pro-business and pro-banking powers across regions.

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Time: 1836

#### The Whigs Nominate Four Regional Candidates

In addition, Clay is astute enough to recognize that 1836 is not the time for his name to appear at the top of the ballot.

Instead, he opts for a unique strategy, with a Whig ticket built around four candidates, all tied to at least some of the party's core principles, and all possessing regional popularity.

The four Whigs on the ballot are:

- Senator Daniel Webster of Massachusetts, the acknowledged leader of the New England region.
- William Henry Harrison, frontiersman, ex-Governor of the Northwest and Indiana Territories, military victor in tribal battles, congressman and diplomat, and currently living on his farm in Ohio. His role in Clay's plan will be to win the far West now that Jackson is off the Democrat ticket.
- Senator Hugh White of Tennessee, a long-time Jackson supporter who falls out over his belief that the President has failed in his support of state's rights. White is expected to succeed in the deep South.
- Senator Willie P. Mangum of North Carolina, a momentary Democrat who backs Clay's "American System" objectives and will be asked to campaign in the coastal states of the south.

Clay's hope is that this four man contingent will deny Van Buren the electoral votes he needs to win outright, and instead throw the final call into the House where a compromise candidate might be chosen – perhaps even himself.

## Chapter 110 -- Van Buren Barely Wins The Election Of 1836



**Dates:**  
1836

- Sections:**
- The Election Of 1836
  - Martin Van Buren: Personal Profile

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Time: 1836

### The Election Of 1836



The White House

Election ballots are cast between November 3 and December 7, 1836, by some 1.5million voters, up from the 1.3 million turnouts in 1832.

The winner is Martin Van Buren, whose margin of victory in the popular count – 51% to 49% -- signals the rising popularity of Clay’s Whig coalition.

### 1836 Presidential Election Results

Candidates	Party	Pop Vote	Electors	South	Border	North	West
Martin Van Buren	Democrat	764,176	170	57	4	101	8
William H. Harrison	Whig	550,816	73	0	28	15	30
Hugh White	Whig	146,107	26	26			
Daniel Webster	Whig	41,201	14			14	
Willie Mangum	Whig	--	11	11			
Total		1,502,300	294	94	32	130	38
Needed To Win			148				

The Democrats carry 14 states in total, with four pick-ups from 1832 – Rhode Island, Connecticut, Michigan and Arkansas, the latter two voting for the first time.



The Whigs capture 12 states, with seven additions brought in by the regional favorites – Mangum (South Carolina), White (Georgia and Tennessee), and Harrison (Vermont, New Jersey, Ohio, and Indiana). Meanwhile Webster keeps Massachusetts in the Anti-Jackson column.

The fact that the ex-military hero, Harrison, takes seven states overall, and dominates in the West, is not lost on Whig Party leaders looking ahead to the 1840 race.

**Party Power By State**

<b>South</b>	<b>1832</b>	<b>1836</b>	<b>Pick-Up</b>	<b>EC Votes</b>
Virginia	Democrat	Democrat		23
North Carolina	Democrat	Democrat		15
South Carolina	Nullifier	Whig (Mang)	Whig	11
Georgia	Democrat	Whig (White)	Whig	11
Alabama	Democrat	Democrat		7
Mississippi	Democrat	Democrat		4
Louisiana	Democrat	Democrat		5
Tennessee	Democrat	Whig (White)	Whig	15
Arkansas	---	Democrat	Democrat	3
Border				
Delaware	Nat-Rep	Whig (Har)		3
Maryland	Nat-Rep	Whig (Har)		10
Kentucky	Nat-Rep	Whig (Har)		15
Missouri	Democrat	Democrat		4
North				
New Hampshire	Democrat	Democrat		7
Vermont	Anti-Mason	Whig (Har)	Whig	7
Massachusetts	Nat-Rep	Whig (Web)		14
Rhode Island	Nat-Rep	Democrat	Democrat	4
Connecticut	Nat-Rep	Democrat	Democrat	8
New York	Democrat	Democrat		42
New Jersey	Democrat	Whig (Har)	Whig	8
Pennsylvania	Democrat	Democrat		30
Ohio	Democrat	Whig (Har)	Whig	21
Maine	Democrat	Democrat		10
Indiana	Democrat	Whig (Har)	Whig	9
Illinois	Democrat	Democrat		5
Michigan	---	Democrat	Democrat	3

A regional analysis shows that Van Buren’s win traces to support in Northeast states with high populations and electoral vote counts – most notably New York (42) and Pennsylvania (30).

**1836 Shifting State Alignments: Old/New And Slave/Free Electoral Votes**

	<b>Slavery Allowed (13)</b>	<b>Slavery Banned (13)</b>
Old Established East Coast States (15)	Democrats – 38 Whigs -- 35	Democrats – 101 Whigs -- 29
Emerging States West Of Appalachian Range (11)	Democrats – 23 Whigs -- 30	Democrats – 8 Whigs -- 30

The four larger states west of the Appalachians go for the Whigs – Ohio (21), Kentucky (15), Tennessee (15) and Indiana (9) – while the other seven fall to the Democrats.

The thirteen “slave states” tilt by a slight 7-6 margin in favor of Van Buren.

**1836 Shifting State Alignments: Old/New And Slave/Free**

<b>Geography</b>	<b>Democrats</b>	<b>Whigs</b>
Old East Coast States (15)	8 states – 139 votes	7 states – 64 votes
Emerging West States (11)	7 states – 31 votes	4 states – 60 votes
Slavery		
Allowed (13)	7 states – 61 votes	6 states – 65 votes
Banned (13)	8 states – 109 votes	5 states – 59 votes

The Democrats are able to retain control over both chambers of Congress in 1836 – despite losing a total of sixteen seats in the House.

**Congressional Election Of 1836**

<b>House</b>	<b>1834</b>	<b>1836</b>	<b>Change</b>
Democrats	143	127	(16)
Whig	76	102	26
Anti-Masonic	16	7	(9)
Nullifier	7	6	(1)
Senate			
Democrats	26	35	9
Whigs	24	17	(7)
Nullifier	2	0	(2)

The election, however, holds one further surprise, when all twenty-three of Virginia’s electors refuse to cast their votes for Van Buren’s designated running mate, Richard Mentor Johnson. The Kentucky congressman has become notorious in parts of the south for declaring that Julia Chinn, an octoroon slave, is his common law wife.

Virginia’s action leaves Johnson short of the 148 votes needed for a majority in the Electoral College, and he assumes the vice-presidency only after an affirmative vote in the Senate.

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Time: 1836

### Martin Van Buren: Personal Profile



Martin Van Buren (1782-1862)

Martin Van Buren is America's first non-Anglo Saxon president, the first from New York state, and the last Northern president to have grown up in the daily presence of slaves.

He is born in 1782 in the Dutch village of Kinderhook, New York, located on the Hudson River, in an area dominated by "patroons" – powerful families, such as the Van Rensselaers and Livingstons, whose 250,000 acre estates trace to early 17<sup>th</sup> century grants. His roots are positively humbling by comparison.

His father owns a small farm along with six slaves, and runs a tavern in town. Dutch is spoken at home, and the boy learns this before mastering English. He is a precocious child, but money runs out for schooling and, at age 13 he is apprenticed to a local lawyer.

In 1801 he moves to Manhattan to continue his study, and soon comes under the magnetic influence of Aaron Burr, a mentor who will transform his destiny. Burr is already at the peak of his fame, serving as Jefferson's Vice President after founding the Tammany Society to insure his position as godfather of New York politics. While the fatal July 1804 duel with Hamilton caps his future, Burr maintains an almost father-son relationship with Van Buren, and teaches him the merits of Jeffersonian policies along with ins and outs of organizing and aligning men with diverse interests behind a common cause.

In 1807 Van Buren returns to the Hudson Valley as a new man. He marries, begins to raise a family, and is quickly earning an astonishing \$10,000 a year as a lawyer – largely by winning land disputes for small farmers against the powerful patroons who "ran such things" before he joined the scene.

The theme of his practice – the common man standing up against the power and privilege of the rich – will play out through his career and link him inexorably to both Jefferson and Jackson.

In 1812, at age 29, he enters politics as state senator by defeating the patrician Edward Livingston.

In Burr-like fashion, he organizes the "Albany Regency," a cadre of like-minded young men who quickly dominate politics in the capital. He reaches a truce with the powerful DeWitt Clinton by backing his Erie Canal project, and in 1821 wins a close election to the U.S. Senate.

Once in Washington, Van Buren sets his sights on transforming the aging Democratic-Republican apparatus into a modern political machine which he calls "The Democracy." Rather than a loose collection of regional fiefdoms, he envisions a unified Democratic Party, holding national conventions to pick nominees and agree on a platform. Publicity for the candidates would involve a network of supportive journalists and newspapers. Those who deliver the hard detailed work during a campaign are rewarded through patronage jobs – "to the victors belong the spoils."

From the beginning, the “sly fox” Van Buren is an excellent vote counter and political strategist. To win the White House and control the national agenda, the Democrats must:

- Lock in electoral votes across the entire South in one fell swoop – by promising never to interfere with its economically vital practice of slavery; and
- Continue to hammer home, across the North and West, the Jeffersonian virtues of a small fiscally sound federal government dedicated to advancing the interests of yeoman farmers.

Van Buren recognizes early on the shift of political power from South to North, from Virginia to New York, from slave states to free states – and identifies the associated economic fears felt across Dixie. What if a Northern dominated Washington was to suddenly turn against slavery?

The New York congressman, James Tallmadge, has already signaled this possibility in his famous anti-slavery amendment during the 1820 debate over the admission of Missouri. Southerners wonder how this threat, especially from the powerful New Yorkers, can be kept under wraps. Who better than the titular head of the Albany Regency?

Starting with his 1824 visit to Jefferson at Monticello, Van Buren tours the South on behalf of his Democratic Party vision. Ironically he tries to nominate William Crawford rather than Andrew Jackson in the 1824 presidential race. But he recovers from this gaffe, and sets his sights on 1828, which lines up perfectly – Jackson completes a New York-Virginia-Tennessee axis for the Democrats and is up against the dour and vulnerable JQ Adams.

When Jackson wins, he brings his campaign manager into his cabinet as Secretary of State. Two years later he is in London as U.S. Ambassador, and then runs alongside Jackson as Vice-President in 1832. The two men become fast friends along the way, and Van Buren is nominated unanimously at the 1835 Baltimore convention.

## Chapter 111 -- Overview Of Van Buren's Term



**Dates:**  
March 4, 1837-March 4, 1841

- Sections:**
- Van Buren Addresses Slavery In His Inaugural Speech
  - Van Buren's Term In Office

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Time: March 4, 1837

### Van Buren Addresses Slavery In His Inaugural Speech



While Van Buren's inaugural speech is long and tedious, it is remembered for one startling moment when he openly names and addresses the highly charged topic of "domestic slavery."

In doing so, he acknowledges that future political debate in America will be played out within a sectional frame-work, with the South intent on protecting and expanding slavery and the North seeking to contain it.

He begins by referring to slavery as a "prominent source of discord" and one which the founders treated with "delicacy and forbearance."

*In justly balancing the powers of the Federal and State authorities, difficulties...arose at the outset, and subsequent collisions were deemed inevitable. Amid these it was scarcely believed possible that a scheme of government so complex in construction could remain uninjured.*

Martin Van Buren (1782-1862)

*The last, perhaps the greatest, of the prominent sources of discord and disaster supposed to lurk in our political condition was the institution of domestic slavery. Our forefathers were deeply impressed with the delicacy of this subject, and they treated it with forbearance so evidently wise that in spite of every sinister foreboding it never until the present period disturbed the tranquility of our common country.*

But he now feels that the current “violence of excited passions” evident in congress – presumably the angry floor debates on abolishing slavery in the federal District of Columbia -- must now be addressed.

*Recent events (have) made it obvious... that the least deviation from this spirit of forbearance is injurious to every interest, that of humanity included. Amidst the violence of excited passions this generous and fraternal feeling has been sometimes disregarded; and I can not refrain from anxiously invoking my fellow-citizens never to be deaf to its dictates.*

*Perceiving before my election the deep interest this subject was beginning to excite, I believed it a solemn duty fully to make known my sentiments in regard to it, and now, when every motive for misrepresentation has passed away, I trust that they will be candidly weighed and understood.*

At this point, Van Buren announces his stand on slavery.

He calls himself an “uncompromising opponent of every effort to abolish slavery in DC” and one who is decided to “resist the slightest interference with it in the states where it exists.”

All of this of course is music to the ears of his Southern constituency.

*I must go into the Presidential chair the inflexible and uncompromising opponent of every attempt on the part of Congress to abolish slavery in the District of Columbia against the wishes of the slaveholding States, and also with a determination equally decided to resist the slightest interference with it in the States where it exists."*

*The (election) result authorizes me to believe that (this view) has been approved by a majority of the people of the United States, including those whom they most immediately affect. It now only remains to add that no bill conflicting with these views can ever receive my constitutional sanction. These opinions have been adopted in the firm belief that they are in accordance with the spirit that actuated the venerated fathers of the Republic, and that succeeding experience has proved them to be humane, patriotic, expedient, honorable, and just.*

From there he expresses his confidence that the recent agitation around slavery has failed to threaten “the stability our institutions” or of the Government itself.

*If the agitation of this subject was intended to reach the stability of our institutions, enough has occurred to show that it has signally failed, and that in this as in every other instance the apprehensions of the timid and the hopes of the wicked for the destruction of our Government are again destined to be disappointed.*

After all, he says, slavery is simply one more obstacle in the many America has overcome on the road to a prosperity secured by the Constitution.

*We look back on obstacles avoided and dangers overcome, on expectations more than realized and prosperity perfectly secured.*

But has prosperity been perfectly secured?

Within thirteen days of Van Buren’s optimistic address, a New York financier named Philip Hone writes, “The great (financial) crisis is near at hand, if it has not already arrived.”

Much to the new President's chagrin, an economic depression is about to smother his high hopes for a successful administration.

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Time: March 4, 1837 – March 4, 1841

### **Van Buren's Term In Office**

Martin Van Buren surely lives up to his nickname as the "Little Magician" when it comes to maneuvering his way into the White House – but his stay there will prove anything but magical from start to finish.

Jackson's "Specie Circular" order, which Van Buren supports, sets off a financial crisis that sweeps across the country and turns the population against the President and the party he has so carefully crafted. A special session of congress – the first ever assembled for a non-military threat – meets in September 1837, but fails to arrive at a solution to stabilize the currency and restore access to bank loans, the necessary fuel of capitalism. Once again the proper balance between wild speculation and prudent investment is elusive in an increasingly complex American economy.

On top of the banking woes, the public conscience is soon shocked by the murder of an abolitionist newspaperman, Elijah Lovejoy, by a white mob in Alton, Illinois, in November 1837. This event galvanizes anti-slavery advocates across the North, and, in hindsight, makes Lovejoy "the first casualty of the civil war" to follow.

Two men in particular regard Lovejoy's murder as a call to action. One is John Brown, owner of a struggling tannery business in Ohio and future abolitionist martyr – the other is Abraham Lincoln, a 28 year old lawyer in southern Illinois, distressed by the breakdown he sees in law and order.

Lovejoy's death, and the lack of any punishment for his killers, also prompts a renewed flood of Anti-Slavery Society petitions to congress, which JQ Adams reads in defiance of the "Gag Order" of 1836. Southern politicians rally against Adams and behind John C. Calhoun's assertion that "slavery is a positive good" and in need of a fresh bill in congress affirming its legal legitimacy for all times.

The growing hostility on the floor turns again into open violence when the Kentucky Whig, William Graves, challenges and kills John Cilley, a Maine Democrat, in a duel over an alleged slight of honor.

To deal with the economic meltdown, Van Buren makes repeated attempts to create a new financial institution called an "Independent Treasury," to manage federal funds and stabilize the value of the dollar. He argues that this "US Treasury" would eliminate the conflicts of interest inherent in privately held bank corporations, and would print and circulate a new supply of "properly backed" paper money to jumpstart the loan-making process. The Senate backs this initiative, but the House tables it until June 1840, fearing the move would place too much power in the hands of a President.

Conflict and frustrations bleed into Van Buren's final years in the White House.

A Spanish slave ship, the *Amistad*, lands in a Connecticut port in August of 1839, filled with blacks who have killed the white crew to secure their freedom. Over the next eighteen months battles will be fought out in newspapers and in the courts about whether to return the prisoners to Spain as "slave property" or grant them liberty. Once again, JQ Adams is in the middle of the dispute, finally arguing for, and winning, their freedom before the Supreme Court.

Van Buren's final burden centers on what to do about the Republic of Texas. Despite his fervent wish to expand to the west, Andrew Jackson has walked away from annexation in 1836 for fear of war with Mexico and the prospect of a congressional battle over admitting Texas as another slave state. But the matter doesn't die there. The Texans again seek annexation; the South supports it; and so does Jackson, now from the safety of his retirement at the Hermitage.

Pressure mounts when both France and Britain recognize Texas as an independent nation, hardly the outcome favored by the public. Still Van Buren comes down on the side of restraint, resisting annexation for the same reasons Jackson had four years earlier.

### Key Events: Martin Van Buren's Term

<b>1837</b>	
February 6	(Pre-inauguration) Calhoun delivers his "slavery is a positive good" speech in congress
March 4	Jackson and Johnson are inaugurated
April	Uncertainty grows about the value of the dollar and access to loans across the country
May 10	Banks in New York stop redeeming dollars for gold/silver and other cities follow them
August 4	Texas petitions to be annexed by the US and be admitted as a state
August 31	RW Emerson's PBK speech "The American Scholar" proclaims US intellectual honors
September 5	Special Session of Congress discusses "Specie Circular" policy and bank failures
September 14	Bill to create an "Independent Treasury" passes the Senate, but is tabled in the House
October 2	Bank failure lead to omission of 4 <sup>th</sup> installment deposits under the Surplus Revenue Act
October 12	Congress authorizes printing and distribution of \$10 million "backed" banknotes
November 7	Abolitionist Elijah Lovejoy is murdered by an angry white mob in Alton, Illinois
November	John Brown "consecrates his life to ending slavery" at memorial service for Lovejoy
December 8	Wendell Phillips responds to Lovejoy's death with his first abolitionist speech
December 19	"Gag Rule" renewed, with South seeking affirmation that "slavery must be protected"
Year	Massachusetts Board of Education head Horace Mann reforms teaching systems
<b>1838</b>	
January 10	Calhoun speaks to the Senate about "the importance of domestic slavery"
January 27	Abraham Lincoln addresses Springfield Lyceum about Lovejoy's murder & lawlessness
January 3-12	Senate affirms Calhoun resolution positively "affirming slavery as a legal institution"
February 15	JQ Adams defies Gag Rule by introducing 350 anti-slavery petitions on the House floor
February 16	Kentucky legislature grants suffrage to women who are widows with school age children
February 24	Kentucky Whig, William Graves kills Maine Democrat, John Cilley, in a rifle duel.
March 26	House opposes Van Buren's wish to create an Independent Treasury not tied to banks
May 17	White mob burns the Pennsylvania Hall in Philadelphia after an anti-slavery meeting
May 21	Jackson's Specie Circular Order is repealed in a joint resolution of congress
June 12	The House finally passes the Independent Treasury bill by 17 votes
August 13	New York banks resume payouts of dollars in gold/silver, but crisis not over
August 18	Charles Wilkes sets out on expedition to explore the Pacific and Antarctic
October 12	Texas withdraws annexation request and new President Lamar proposes a new nation



<b>1838</b>	
October	Remaining Cherokees removed from their eastern lands
November	Van Buren suffers congressional losses in the mid-term election
November 7	Henry Seward is elected Governor of New York
December 3	The abolitionist Joshua Giddings is elected to the House
Year	Underground Railroad is formed to help run-away slaves
<b>1839</b>	
February 7	Henry Clay attacks abolitionists for risking civil war during senate debate
February 12	Maine and New Brunswick dispute lumber rights along the Aroostook River
February 20	Congress outlaws dueling in the District of Columbia
August	Slaves aboard the <i>Amistad</i> overthrow and kill their white crew and land on Long Island
September 25	France recognizes Texas as a new nation
November 13	The Liberty Party is founded by Tappan & Birney producing schism with Garrison
December 4	Whig convention nominates William Henry Harrison after Clay drops out for harmony
<b>1840</b>	
January 19	Wilkes Expedition sights Antarctica
March 31	Van Buren signs bill mandating a 10 hour workday for public employees
April 1	The abolitionist Liberty Party convention nominates James Birney for president
May 5	Democrats nominate Van Buren on platform that supports Southern slavery
June 12-23	Anti-Slavery Convention in London denies women delegates prompting backlash
June 30	The House finally passes the Independent Treasury Act
July 4	The Independent Treasury begins to house federal funds and stabilize the money supply
November 13	Britain recognizes the nation of Texas
December 2	The Whig William Henry Harrison is elected president
<b>1841</b>	
March 4	Harrison inaugurated

While tilted overall toward the loss column, Van Buren does record some small victories. The “Wilkes Expedition” explores and maps the Pacific Ocean and Antarctica; a border dispute between Maine and New Brunswick over lumber rights along the Aroostook River is resolved short of warfare; and “progress” continues on the transport of the eastern tribes across the Mississippi.

By 1840 per capita GDP drops sharply as a result of the financial stress caused by Jackson’s “Specie Circular” attempt to constrain land speculation and stabilize the value of the dollar. It will not be until 1847, during the Mexican War, when the broad American public enjoys another sizable jump in personal wealth.

#### Economic Overview: Martin Van Buren’s Presidency

	<b>1837</b>	<b>1838</b>	<b>1839</b>	<b>1840</b>
Total GDP (\$000)	1554	1598	1661	1574
% Change	5%	3%	4%	(5%)
Per Capita GDP	98	98	100	92

Martin Van Buren will live on for twenty-one years after exiting the Presidency, first enjoying the life of the “country squire” back in Kinderhook before returning to the political arena, hoping to regain his magical touch within the Democrat Party. But it is not to be.

He is actually favored to win the 1844 nomination, but again refuses to back the annexation of Texas. This costs him support from Southerners and Andrew Jackson, and hands the top spot to James Knox Polk.

By 1848 he feels betrayed by the Democrats and agrees to head the ticket of the new “Free Soil Party.”

During a losing campaign, Van Buren asserts that Congress has the power to limit the spread of slavery to the west – an argument that costs the Democrats a sizable number of Northern white voters, and sets the stage for the rise in 1856 of the Republican Party.

During his waning years, Van Buren does his best to support those trying to hold the Union together. He lives into the second year of the war, finally succumbing on July 24, 1862. Lincoln, who befriends Van Buren in 1842, honors his death by declaring a public day of mourning and ordering all flags to fly at half-mast.

## Chapter 112 -- America Suffers An Economic Depression



**Dates:**  
1837

**Sections:**

- Banks Panic As Western Land Price Inflation Becomes Evident
- Panic Spreads To The General Public
- An Economic Depression Ensues
- Van Buren Proposes The Creation Of An Independent US Treasury

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Time: April 1837

### **Banks Panic As Western Land Price Inflation Becomes Evident**

The financial collapse that begins in April 1837 strikes a blow at the American economy that will be unmatched until the Great Depression of 1929. It will also crush Van Buren's hopes for his presidency and threaten the entire Democratic Party he has so cleverly assembled.

The collapse originates with speculative greed on the part of bankers.

In this case, their scheme focuses on buying up new public land west of the Appalachians from the government at low prices -- and then re-selling it to eventual settlers at much higher prices.

When Andrew Jackson spots this "get rich quick" move in 1835, it strikes him as one more instance where the few privileged bankers profit mightily at the expense of the many common citizens -- and he will have none of that.

Jackson senses that the banks are paying for the public land by printing many more soft money notes than they can "back up" through the gold and silver in their vaults. To bring this practice, and the accompanying speculation, to a fast halt, Jackson's 1835 Specie Circular Order requires that all new public land purchased by "non-settlers" be paid for in gold or silver, not banknotes. This executive order quickly triggers two outcomes:

- Recognition among the bankers that the "real value" of the western land they purchased "to make a killing" is artificially inflated, and that settlers will refuse to pay the higher prices they had expected. What previously looked to the bankers like a parcel of land capable of commanding a \$100 price and yielding a \$25 profit, now looks like a \$50 price and a \$25 loss.
- As western land prices plummet -- which was Jackson's intent -- the bankers calculate the extent of their looming losses, and retreat into panic mode by trying to build enough cash on hand to

stay solvent. To accomplish this, they start selling off the western land at ever decreasing prices (“something is better than nothing”) and also “calling in existing loans” made to businesses and the general public.

At this point, the situation begins to spin out of control.

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Time: May 10, 1837

### **Panic Spreads To The General Public**



Too Young to Understand  
the Hard Times

hat begins as a panic among bankers, now threatens America’s entire financial system -- premised on a stable value for the dollar and an orderly system whereby everyday citizens can make deposits and loans with confidence

This confidence begins to disappear early in 1837.

The small farmer who has borrowed \$100 to plant his crops expecting to pay back the loan in six months after growing and selling them, is suddenly required by his banker to repay the loan now or lose his land. City merchants and manufacturers suffer a similar fate.

Foreclosures follow for those who cannot comply. These, however, often fail to solve the banker’s dilemma. They need cash to cover immediate operating expenses, not long-term assets like farms or shop which they can neither run nor sell off.

As conditions spiral downward, pressures from abroad add to the crisis – with fellow bankers in England and Ireland demanding repayment of their prior U.S. loans.

The Specie Circular order also causes many citizens to conclude that the banknotes in their wallets or in deposited savings may not be worth the paper it is printed on. To be safe, they head to their local bank to exchange their soft dollars for the gold or silver that the certificates promise them.

Those who arrive early may leave with minted coins. But the principle of “fractional banking” means that covering all demands for hard money will be impossible, if it arrives all at once.

When the Bank of New York announces on May 10, 1837 that it will no longer convert soft money into the promised gold or silver, depositors across the country begin to close out their accounts. As reported:

*Distrust(of banks) seized upon the public mind like fires in the great prairies.*

The dreaded “run on the banks” is under way.

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Time: 1837-1843

### **An Economic Depression Ensues**

Once their deposits are withdrawn, the banks themselves go under.

Out of some 850 banks operating across the country in 1837, 343 are forced to close entirely and another 62 are classified as partially failed.

With amazing suddenness, Hamilton's American economy – built on easy access to capital to support profitable investments – is left devoid of available capital. What money there is has been locked up tight in the reserves of the surviving banks, many of whom fueled the crisis in the first place.

In turn, the videotape of America's economic expansion plays out in reverse.

Absent the bank loans they need to operate, even more farmers are thrown off their land and more businesses shut their doors.

Unemployment also spikes, with more than 20,000 out of work in New York city alone.

As the supply of goods and services decreases, prices inflate, further strapping the citizenry.

Public confidence is lost as quickly as it was once found.

Instead of the "prosperity perfectly secured" envisioned by Van Buren in his March inaugural, the nation slips into a severe depression.

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Time: September 5, 1837

### **Van Buren Proposes The Creation Of An Independent US Treasury**

Advice on what to do about the dilemma flows into the White House from all sides – with his own party divided on the issue.

The Jacksonians want him to hold the line on bringing the supply of banknotes back in line with the supply of gold and silver.

Others argue that the banks have been sufficiently punished; that Jackson's order should be repealed; and that Van Buren needs to restore confidence in the system. The public must regain trust in the value of the dollar and in the banks so they are willing to again make deposits. The banks must feel secure enough about their own assets to resume making the loans needed to revitalize the economy.

Van Buren is sufficiently alarmed to call for a special session of congress, an action reserved to date only in times of war. The session meets on September 5, 1837, and it hears the President's proposals. Characteristically he attempts to play it down the middle, with something for all sides.

He is not about to exhibit confidence in the motives or the disciplines of private bankers. The time has come, he says, to stop funneling surplus federal money into state banks that are liable to misuse it. Instead he proposes the creation of a US Treasury, functioning apart from the private banking system.

The US Treasury would exist to meet the needs of the federal government rather than those of corporate stockholders. It would deposit federal revenue collected in taxes, land sales and other sources, and disburse the money to pay off federal expenses. It would also make loans to various state banks, after first verifying they have the proper gold/silver reserves to “back the value of the dollar.”

US Treasury funds loaned to these “reliable banks” could then be used for more loans to farmers, manufacturers and other businesses, thus revitalizing the capitalist economy. To back up this approach, Van Buren proposes to place \$10 million in US Treasury money into the state banks.

The Senate approves this approach, but it is tabled in the House – where the fear is that a US Treasury would put too much power in the hands of the President.

This stalemate continues until June 1840 when a third attempt to win House support succeeds by a 17 vote majority.

Over time, this US Treasury will help stabilize the value of the dollar and tamp down the speculative expansion of credit. But its effects are imperfect, especially during boom or bust periods where plugging the right amount of money into circulation becomes especially important.

On July 4, 1840, Van Buren finally signs his Independent Treasury into law. He hopes that it will turn the economy around and win him a second term in office. But neither wish will come to pass.

What the Bank Panic of 1837 reveals is the profound change that has occurred in America’s financial systems and economy. The much simpler and more transparent agricultural vision espoused by Jefferson has morphed into Hamilton’s multi-faceted industrial economy, dependent upon capitalism and corporations whose interests may not always correspond with the good of the commonwealth.

## Chapter 113 -- The South Amplifies Its Defense Of Slavery



**Dates:**  
1837

**Sections:**

- Anxiety Mounts Over The North's Anti-Slavery Intrusions
- John Calhoun Argues The "Slavery Is A Positive Good"

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Time: 1820-1836

### **Anxiety Mounts Over The North's Anti-Slavery Intrusions**

Ever since the 1820 controversy over admitting Missouri as a slave state, Southerners have feared that the North will indeed act against the "peculiar institution" that serves as the basis for their regional prosperity.

The threat level increases during the Second Great Awakening of the 1820's when calls to action by the Evangelical preacher, Reverend Charles Finney, produce a host of white abolitionist reformers – such as Lloyd Garrison, Theodore Weld, Arthur and Lewis Tappan, Lucretia Mott, Angelina Grimke, Gerrit Smith, and James Birney.

Garrison's 1831 *Liberator* newspaper provides early publicity for the movement, gives voice to pleas for freedom from blacks like David Walker, and attempts to shame the public and the politicians into amending the broken 1787 Constitution. As Garrison proclaims:

*That which is not just is not law.*

Nat Turner's 1831 rebellion demonstrates what can happen when slaves take the law into their own hands and seek retribution against their white masters. But this fails to slow down the reformers.

Even the presidency of lifelong planter and slave-holder Andrew Jackson fails to produce the kind of affirmative support for the "interests of the South" that was anticipated. When South Carolina signals its intent, as a sovereign state, to nullify the Tariff of Abominations, Jackson signals his intent to send US troops in to enforce federal law.

He then dumps the leading Southern advocate, John C. Calhoun, off his ticket in 1832, in favor of a Northern man, Martin Van Buren.

In 1833 the American Anti-Slavery Society organizes chapters across the North who gather abolitionist petitions and send them to congress to be read on the floor of the House.

When this form of agitation becomes visible in Washington, Southern politicians react by passing the 1836 “Gag Rule” to try to shut down public debate. But ex-President John Quincy Adams refuses to comply and the result is even more heated rhetoric.

The Northern men in Congress by no means favor abolition, but they also do not appreciate being maneuvered by Southerners – especially now that the population count in “their region” gives them majority voting power in the House.

And then in 1837, the new President from New York feels called upon to openly mention the heretofore taboo subject of slavery in his inaugural address to the nation.

All this adds up to a fear that has endured across the South since the founders met in Philadelphia – a fear that, at some moment, the North will turn the power of the federal government against the institution of slavery, the fragile foundation of the region’s wealth.

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Time: February 6, 1837

### **John Calhoun Argues The “Slavery Is A Positive Good”**



John C. Calhoun (1782-1850)

It is, of course, John C. Calhoun, who consistently tries to alert the South to the imminent dangers of a federal government intruding on the business of slavery.

On February 6, 1837, with his tenure as Vice-President and his prospects for the White House over, he rises on the Senate floor to deliver what will become known as his “slavery is a positive good” speech.” For the sake of drama, he begins by reading two anti-slavery petitions to his colleagues, then proceeds to counter with his own analyses.

*I hold that in the present state of civilization, where two races of different origin, and distinguished by color, and other physical differences, as well as intellectual, are brought together, the relation now existing in the slaveholding States between the two, is, instead of an evil, a good--a positive good.*

Instead of abusing the Africans, slavery has actually enlightened and elevated them.

*I appeal to facts. Never before has the black race of Central Africa, from the dawn of history to the present day, attained a condition so civilized and so improved, not only physically, but morally and intellectually.*

How much better off is the Southern slave than the pauper classes of society at large.

*I may say with truth, that in few countries so much is left to the share of the laborer, and so little exacted from him, or where there is more kind attention paid to him in sickness or infirmities of age. Compare his condition with the tenants of the poor houses in the more civilized portions of Europe--look at the sick, and the old and infirm slave, on one hand, in the midst of his family and*



*friends, under the kind superintending care of his master and mistress, and compare it with the forlorn and wretched condition of the pauper in the poorhouse.*

Furthermore, the practice of slavery has always been part and parcel of sustaining a prosperous society.

*I hold then, that there never has yet existed a wealthy and civilized society in which one portion of the community did not, in point of fact, live on the labor of the other.*

The lion's share of all wealth has always gone to those who have risen above the producing classes.

*Broad and general as is this assertion, it is fully borne out by history. This is not the proper occasion, but, if it were, it would not be difficult to trace the various devices by which the wealth of all civilized communities has been so unequally divided, and to show by what means so small a share has been allotted to those by whose labor it was produced, and so large a share given to the non-producing classes.*

The South has relied on a simple patriarchal approach to extract wealth from its slave class.

*The devices (to extract wealth) are almost innumerable, from the brute force and gross superstition of ancient times, to the subtle and artful fiscal contrivances of modern. I might well challenge a comparison between them and the more direct, simple, and patriarchal mode by which the labor of the African race is, among us, commanded by the European.*

Because of slavery, the South actually avoids the conflict between labor and capital seen in the North.

*There is and always has been in an advanced stage of wealth and civilization, a conflict between labor and capital. The condition of society in the South exempts us from the disorders and dangers resulting from this conflict; and which explains why it is that the political condition of the slaveholding States has been so much more stable and quiet than that of the North.*

Preserving slavery is the best path for America to sustain stable political institutions.

*I turn to the political; and here I fearlessly assert that the existing relation between the two races in the South, against which these blind fanatics are waging war, forms the most solid and durable foundation on which to rear free and stable political institutions.*

Attempts to abolish slavery will end the union between the South and the North.

*Abolition and the Union cannot coexist. As the friend of the Union I openly proclaim it. We of the South will not, cannot, surrender our institutions. Maintain(ing) the existing relations between the two races is indispensable to the peace and happiness of both. It cannot be subverted.*

The South has the means to defend itself, but only if it awakens to the threats in time.

*Surrounded as the slaveholding States are with such imminent perils, I rejoice to think that our means of defense are ample, if we shall prove to have the intelligence and spirit to see and apply them before it is too late. (But) I fear it is beyond the power of mortal voice to awaken it in time from the fatal security into which it has fallen.*


Thankfully the dangers can still be avoided if political concert can be achieved.

*All we want is concert, to lay aside all party differences and unite with zeal and energy in repelling approaching dangers. Let there be concert of action, and we shall find ample means of security without resorting to secession or disunion. I speak with full knowledge and a thorough examination of the subject, and for one see my way clearly.*

This 1837 address by Calhoun will stand the test of time as the clearest declaration of how the plantation aristocrats of the South view the institution of slavery and rationalize it to themselves.

Civilization has always been run and advanced by the superior few, operating off the daily labor of the producing masses – be they better off African slaves in Southern cotton fields or worse off wage slaves in Northern factories. This is the way it is – and the way it must remain. So says the Senator from South Carolina on behalf of his colleagues.

## Chapter 114 -- Abolitionist Editor Elijah Lovejoy Is Murdered In Alton, Illinois Riot

	<b>Dates:</b> 1837	<b>Sections:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Ordained Minister Elijah Lovejoy Becomes An Abolitionist In St. Louis</li><li>• He Moves To Alton Illinois After Being Attacked By White Mobs</li><li>• Lovejoy is Killed In An Armed Battle at His Office</li></ul>
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Time: 1833

### Ordained Minister Elijah Lovejoy Becomes An Abolitionist in St. Louis



Owen Lovejoy, Brother of Elijah, and Friend of Lincoln (1811-1864)

Calhoun is right in his belief that anti-slavery sentiment is growing in the North, but voicing anti-slavery rhetoric is a far cry from espousing abolition. From Boston to Cincinnati those wishing to free all slaves and welcome them into their society are met with open and often violent resistance.

This pattern is repeated in the Fall of 1837 at the southern Illinois town of Alton, across the Mississippi from St. Louis. The victim in this case is the abolitionist Elijah Lovejoy, whose death will, for different reasons, draw both Abraham Lincoln and John Brown into the slavery debate.

Elijah Lovejoy grows up in Maine, the pious son of a Congregationalist minister. He graduates first in his class from Waterville College (later Colby), then heads west to Missouri, where he hopes to serve God by using his skills as a teacher to improve society. He finds a home in St. Louis, and starts up a private high school. By 1830, however, he is ready for a new career, and becomes part-owner and editor of *The St. Louis Times*.

This lasts until 1832, when he attends a series of revivalist meetings led by the Reverend David Nelson, that prompt him toward the ministry. He heads back east to the Theological Seminary at Princeton, and is ordained as a Presbyterian minister on April 18, 1833.

Church friends support Lovejoy's move back to St. Louis, where he combines preaching in his own church with editing a religious newspaper, *The St. Louis Observer*. While his followers applaud him, others find him increasingly moralistic and outspoken. His criticism of the Roman Church become intense and unyielding, in a city that is heavily Catholic, and his vocal support for abolition is out of step in the slave state of Missouri.

Hostility toward Lovejoy erupts into violence in April 1836. A free black, one Francis McIntosh, kills a deputy sheriff and wounds another while trying to flee from a crime. He is momentarily jailed, until a mob breaks in and seizes him. Retribution is swift and savage, as McIntosh is tied to a tree and burned alive. When those involved are subsequently tried and acquitted, Lovejoy writes one editorial after another criticizing the outcome.

*We must stand by the laws and the Constitution, or all is gone.*

But legalities count little when it comes to a black man killing a white sheriff -- and, to drive home this point, another mob storms Lovejoy's office and destroys his printing press.

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Time: 1835

### **He Moves To Alton Illinois After Being Attacked By White Mobs**

He responds by moving across the river to the booming city of Alton, in the free state of Illinois. At the time he promises local leaders that he will refrain from trying to turn the town into a center for abolitionist agitation.

His actions, however, belie his words. He becomes a Garrison backer, opens a branch of the American Anti-Slavery Society, and on September 27, 1837 convenes a meeting of abolitionists in town. Then comes an editorial in his paper, *The Alton Observer*, calling for the immediate emancipation of all slaves.

Many citizens are outraged by Lovejoy's action and they respond much like the mob in St. Louis -- by swarming into his newspaper office and throwing his presses into the Mississippi River not once, but on three occasions.

When civic leaders warn him to leave the city for his own safety, he comes before them on November 3, still hoping for some kind of compromise. His speech captures both the religious fervor and personal fears so common to those who risk all for the cause of abolition.

*Mr. Chairman--it is not true, as has been charged upon me, that I hold in contempt the feelings and sentiments of this community, in reference to the question which is now agitating it. I respect and appreciate the feelings and opinions of my fellow-citizens.*

*But, sir, while I value the good opinion of my fellow-citizens, as highly as any one, I may be permitted to say, that I am governed by higher considerations than either the favour or the fear of man. I am impelled to the course I have taken, because I fear God. As I shall answer it to my God in the great day,*

*I have asked for nothing but to be protected in my rights as a citizen--rights which God has given me, and which are guaranteed me by the constitution of my country.*

*The question to be decided is, whether I shall be protected in the exercise ... of those rights; whether my property shall be protected, whether I shall be suffered to go home to my family at night without being assailed, and threatened with tar and feathers, and assassination; whether my afflicted wife, whose life has been in jeopardy, from continued alarm and excitement, shall night after night be driven from a sick bed into the garret to save her life from the brickbats and violence of the mobs; that sir, is the question."*

*I know, sir, that you can hang me up, or put me into the Mississippi, without the least difficulty. But what then? Where shall I go? I have been made to feel that if I am not safe at Alton, I shall not be safe anywhere. I recently visited St. Charles to bring home my family, and was torn from their frantic embrace by a mob. And now if I leave here and go elsewhere, violence may overtake me in my retreat, and I have no more claim upon the protection of any other community than I have upon this.*

*I have concluded, after consultation with my friends, and earnestly seeking counsel of god, to remain at Alton and here to insist on protection in the exercise of my rights. If the civil authorities refuse to protect me, I must look to God; and if I die, I have determined to make my grave in Alton.*

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Time: November 7, 1837

### **Lovejoy Is Killed In An Armed Battle At His Office**

Four days later, his fears are realized.

In a move that will dismay the passive Garrison, Lovejoy decides to arm himself against any further aggression.

He gathers some 20 supporters together at his warehouse to protect a new printing press. At nightfall on November 7 another mob attack begins. *The Alton Observer* reprises what happens next:

*As the crowd grew outside, excitement and tension mounted. Soon the pro-slavery mob began hurling rocks at the warehouse windows. The defenders retaliated by bombarding the crowd with a supply of earthenware pots found in the warehouse. Then came an exchange of gunfire. Alton's mayor tried in vain to persuade the defenders inside to abandon the press. They stood fast.*


*One of the mob climbed a ladder to try to set fire to the roof of the building. Lovejoy and one of his supporters darted into the darkness to over-turn the ladder, for they knew they would be doomed if a fire was set. But again a volunteer mounted the ladder to try to ignite the roof with a smoking pot of pitch.*

*As Lovejoy assisted in putting out the fire on the roof of the building, he received a blast from a double-barreled shotgun. Five of the bullets fatally struck Lovejoy. He died in the arms of his friend Thaddeus Hurlbut. The mob cheered and said all in the building should die. Amos Roff tried to calm the mob and was shot in the ankle.*

*Defenders of the press then laid down their weapons and were allowed to leave. The mob rushed the building, found the press, and threw it out a window to the riverbank, broke it into pieces and dumped the broken parts into the river, The body of Lovejoy was left undisturbed, remaining there until morning, guarded by friends who finally carried him home. He was buried on his 35th birthday, November 9, 1837.*

Lovejoy's death in Illinois joins the near lynching of Garrison in Boston in demonstrating the widespread resistance to abolition among whites in the North. Many may feel uncomfortable about the morality of slavery, but the prospect of having more blacks in their own towns remains terrifying.

## Chapter 115 -- Lovejoy's Murder Begets A Consecration From John Brown

 <p>John Brown.</p>	<b>Dates:</b> 1837	<b>Sections:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• John Brown Vows To Destroy Slavery In America</li><li>• The Emerging Clash Of Spirituality Vs. Materialism In America</li><li>• Sidebar: Monomania In 19<sup>th</sup> Century American Literature</li></ul>
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Time: November 1837

### John Brown Vows To Destroy Slavery In America



John Brown (1800-1859)

For messianic John Brown, living in Ohio at the time, Lovejoy's murder is the final straw setting off the Holy War he will wage against slavery over the final two decades of his life.

But for this cause comes Brown onto the American stage.

His is a hard life, beginning with the death of his mother when he is only eight years old. From then his youth is spent under the iron fist of his father, Owen, in Hudson, Ohio.

Owen Brown is a strict Calvinist of the old school, dedicated to studying his Bible and trying to achieve daily piety and self-perfection. He is also a life-long opponent of slavery, who will subscribe to Garrison's *Liberator*, become a trustee of the evangelist Charles Finney's progressive Oberlin College, and eventually support run-aways on the Underground Railroad network.

When not praying, Owen is working long hours at his tannery -- a particularly noxious occupation using human waste and chemicals to convert slaughtered animal hides into leather for shoes, belts, jackets and saddles. Young John Brown will be at his father's side, learning this trade, which he will practice the rest of his life.

At age sixteen, he begins religious studies at the local Congregational Church after publicly repenting and accepting Jesus Christ as his savior. He travels to Litchfield, Connecticut, and enrolls at the Morris

Academy, pondering the ministry, but both health and financial difficulties chase him back to Hudson within a year.

In 1820 he marries his first wife, whom he describes as “a neat industrious & economical girl, of excellent character, earnest piety & good practical common sense.” He opens his own tannery, which he runs until 1825, when he buys a 200 acre farm in northwestern Pennsylvania. His plan is ambitious and involves raising and slaughtering the cattle he will use to make and sell finished leather goods.

His dreams, however, fade by 1832, after two shattering events. First, his wife dies following an “instrumented-aided” delivery of a stillborn son, her seventh child over a ten year period. Then Brown himself suffers a prolonged illness that curtails his work and leads to stifling debt.

In 1833, Brown marries his second wife, the sixteen year old Mary Day, who will eventually bear 13 more children. Their days together will include a daily morning gathering where Brown requires each member of the family to read Bible verses, followed by delivering his own religious admonitions.

As a dedicated Calvinist, Brown is forever searching after God’s plan for his life – and he eventually believes that ending slavery is the answer.

In his autobiography, Brown will write that his antipathy to slavery begins when he is 12 years old, and witnesses a young black boy being “beaten with iron shovels.” As early as 1834, Brown tells his brother Frederick that he is “trying to do something in a practical way for my fellow men that are in bondage.” His initial thoughts turn toward bringing a black youth into his family, educating him and “teaching him the fear of God.”

His business debts mount, and, in 1836 he moves his family from Pennsylvania to a 92 acre farm in Franklin Mills, Ohio, where he again starts up a tannery, largely with borrowed money. But this venture too struggles during the Bank Panic of 1837, and he ends up with even more debt to show for his many talents and hard work.

By this time his abolitionist activities are picking up. He organizes a petition to protest Ohio’s “black codes,” hires freed men to work on his farm, and insists that they be treated respectfully within his local church, much to the dismay of the congregation.

When word reaches him of the Lovejoy assassination, he gathers his family together and reveals his intent to go to war against slavery.

His oldest son, John Jr., age thirteen at the time, recalls this event years later:

*He asked who of us were willing to make common cause with him in doing all in our power to “break the jaws of the wicked and pluck the spoil out of his teeth. Are you Mary (his second wife), John, Jason and Owen?” As each family member assented, Brown knelt in prayer and administered an oath pledging them to slavery’s defeat.*

John Brown and his father attend a prayer meeting at the First Congregational Church of Hudson, Ohio to honor Lovejoy’s memory. Toward the end of the service, Brown stands, raises his right hand, and makes a pledge:

*Here, before God, in the presence of these witnesses, from this time, I consecrate my life to the destruction of slavery!*



Over the next twenty years, Brown will exhibit obsessive zeal in completing his mission. Eventually he will cross Biblical sanctions against violence and murder -- and end up as a martyr to his cause.

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Time: 1824-1845

### **The Emerging Clash Of Spirituality Vs. Materialism In America**

John Brown's journey from the search for moral perfection of his Calvinist youth to the murderous acts of his adulthood is, in many ways, symbolic of an underlying struggle between spirituality and materialism that is playing out at the time.

On one hand, the Second Great Awakening movement tries to return the nation to its religious heritage, the wish for moral perfection represented by the vision of a "shining city upon the hill," the hope for eternal salvation.

On the other, a new generation is being drawn ever more intently toward another familiar, but perhaps conflicting vision -- the "American Dream." It is focused not on eternity, but on the here and now, the chance to settle on your own land, to work hard and get ahead, to accumulate wealth and achieve a lifestyle previously reserved for the aristocracy, not the common man. As the Transcendentalist Emerson puts it, by 1835 the daily emphasis is now on "things:"

*Things are in the saddle and ride mankind.*

The period of reflection marking John Brown's early adulthood -- 1830-1840 -- is thus, in many ways, the resumption of a long-term fundamental struggle for the "soul of America."

The striving for immediate material gains associated with the growing economic successes of capitalism vs. the echoing voices of the original Puritans focused on eternal salvation.

Like Emerson, the astute de Tocqueville, spots this struggle in his observation: "America must remain good to remain great." To fulfill its promise, it must hold true to its original high-minded religious principles, not retreat into Europe's corrupting materialism.

In swearing to "destroy slavery," John Brown asserts the primacy of Calvinist moral righteousness over the injustices of those who would profit economically from human bondage. Surely God's plan for America cannot tolerate this abomination any longer.

He also goes on to embrace a traditional, but now contentious path to righting wrong -- taking the law in his own hands. So it has been when the witches of Salem are summarily burned at the stake; the sitting Vice-President kills the Secretary of the Treasury in a duel; the slaves are beaten and lynched as a matter of course; a minister like Lovejoy is murdered by a mob of neighbors.

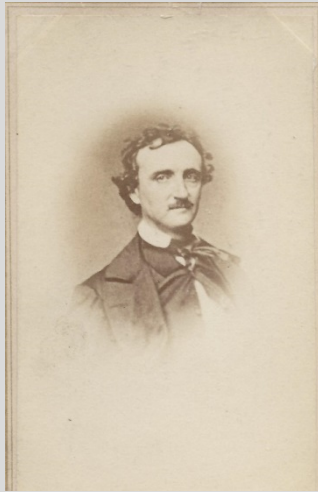
His murderous rampages through Kansas in 1856 and Virginia in 1859 will prove to be another test for those who believe that profound social change, such as abolishing slavery, can be achieved solely through legal means, rather than monomania and violence.

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Time: 1835-1860

### Sidebar: Monomania In 19<sup>th</sup> Century American Literature

The literature of the era is drawn repeatedly to all of these uniquely American themes, especially in the 1835-1855 timeframe.



Edgar Allan Poe (1809-1849)

The Salem born, Bowdoin educated, Nathaniel Hawthorne probes the full range of evils lurking just beneath the surface of the Puritan communities and characters he creates. The Reverend Arthur Dimmesdale is by no means among God's "elect" few, despite appearances to the contrary.

For the Richmond raised Edgar Allan Poe, the focus lies on individual lives ruined by "fixations" that turn into madness and murder. For some the rage traces to an insult from a prior friend. Others are transformed by a fiance's teeth, a pet cat, the fear of impending illness, an elderly man's "vulture eye." For Poe, the path to insane behavior begins with obsession.

But of course, no figure in antebellum American literature will mirror John Brown's pathology better than Herman Melville's Captain Ahab, from his 1851 novel, *Moby Dick*.

Like John Brown, Ahab decides that his fate lies in personally ridding the world of evil, which, in his case, is manifested in the form of the Great White Whale. In striking off Ahab's leg in a first encounter at sea, Moby Dick becomes for him...

*All that most maddens and torments; all that stirs up the lees of things; all truth with malice in it; all that cracks the sinews and cakes the brain; all the subtle demonisms of life and thought; all evil, to crazy Ahab, were visibly personified, and made practically assailable in Moby-Dick. He piled upon the whale's white hump the sum of all the general rage and hate felt by his whole race from Adam down; and then, as if his chest had been a mortar, he burst his hot heart's shell upon it.*

Like John Brown, peg-leg Ahab is seen by his crew as a messianic figure, an avenger out of the Old Testament, the seventh king of Israel, slaughtering the Assyrians at the Battle of Qarqar.


*He's a queer man, Captain Ahab--so some think--but a good one. Oh, thou'lt like him well enough; no fear, no fear. He's a grand, ungodly, god-like man, Captain Ahab; doesn't speak much; but, when he does speak, then you may well listen. Mark ye, be forewarned; Ahab's above the common; Ahab's been in colleges, as well as 'mong the cannibals; been used to deeper wonders than the waves; fixed*

*his fiery lance in mightier, stranger foes than whales.*

For John Brown, slavery will become his version of Ahab's great white whale. Infinite evil which must be stamped out, no matter what – and the ends justify the means.

From Elijah Lovejoy's murder in 1837 to his 1858 raid on Harper's Ferry, John Brown will be on iron rails headed toward his destiny on a scaffold in Richmond. "A grand ungodly, god-like man." A man obsessed.

## Chapter 116 -- Calhoun Again Tries To Rally The South Against Threats To Slavery

	<p><b>Dates:</b> 1838</p>	<p><b>Sections:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Calhoun Warns Against The “Deluded Madmen” Abolitionists</li> </ul>
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Time: January 10, 1838

### Calhoun Warns Against The “Deluded Madmen” Abolitionists



Isaac and Rosa, Slave Children of New Orleans

Southerners intent on protecting and expanding their wealth in slavery find little reassurance in the events of 1837.

The abolitionists have found a martyr in the death of Elijah Lovejoy; Anti-Slavery Society chapters proliferate across the North; John Quincy Adams continues his moral crusade in the U.S. House; outspoken critics like Joshua Giddings and Thaddeus Stevens echo the same themes in the state legislatures of Ohio and Pennsylvania; and the South’s historical control over the levers of power in Washington continue to erode.

John Calhoun again takes it upon himself to shake his fellow Southerners out of their complacency on the slavery issue, and warn the North of the dangers to follow if the central government tries to impose unconstitutional strictures on the institution.

His speech of February 6, 1837 tries to make the case that “slavery as a positive good” for all Americans, but this fails to dampen the opposition. Even with the Northerner Van Buren in the White House, most Southern politicians still believe that further compromises, like the 1820 Missouri solution, will prevail as needed.

Calhoun is not convinced of this, and eleven months from his prior address, on January 10, 1838, he tries again to make his case.

At one time the South regarded slavery as a “moral and political evil” – but time and events have now shown the folly of that assessment.

*Many in the South once believed that it was a moral and political evil; that folly and delusion are gone; we see it now in its true light, and regard it as the most safe and stable basis for free institutions in the world.*

The “two races, from different parts of the globe” were united in the South in nearly equal numbers by “a mysterious Providence” – and the result has been to the benefit of both.

*Experience has shown that the existing relation between them secured the peace and happiness of both. Each has improved; the inferior greatly; so much so, that it has attained a degree of civilization never before attained by the black race in any age or country. Under no other relation (than slavery) could they coexist together.*

He goes on to paint an idyllic picture of plantations as “little communities” living in balance and harmony, under the hand of a beneficent master.

*Every plantation is a little community, with the master at its head, who concentrates in himself the united interests; of capital and labor, of which he is the common representative. These small communities aggregated make the State in all, whose action, labor, and capital is equally represented and perfectly harmonized.*

This is unlike the North, where the equilibrium between capital and labor has been disturbed by constant aggression.

*In this tendency to conflict in the North between labor and capital, which is constantly on the increase, the weight of the South has and will ever be found on the Conservative side; against the aggression of one or the other side, which ever may tend to disturb the equilibrium of our political system.*


The institution of slavery has served both races well, and it has served the South and the entire Union well. It should be left undisturbed.

*This is our natural position, the salutary influence of which has thus far preserved, and will long continue to preserve, our free institutions, if we should be left undisturbed.*

“Deluded madmen” must not be allowed to tear it down.

*Such are the institutions which these deluded madmen are stirring heaven and earth to destroy, and which we are called on to defend by the highest and most solemn obligations that can be imposed on us as men and patriots.*

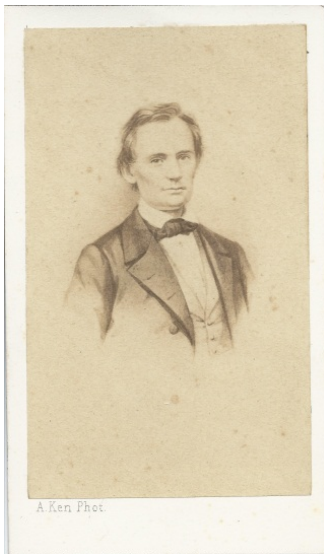
## Chapter 117 -- A Youthful Abraham Lincoln Speaks Out After Lovejoy's Murder

 <p>A Ken Phot</p>	<b>Dates:</b> 1809-1830	<b>Sections:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Abraham Lincoln's Early Years In Kentucky</li><li>• Lincoln Moves To Illinois And Dabbles In Politics</li><li>• Abraham Lincoln Speaks Out Against Civil Disobedience</li></ul>
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Time: 1809-1830

### Abraham Lincoln's Early Years In Kentucky



The death of Elijah Lovejoy will also capture the attention of a young lawyer named Abraham Lincoln.

At the time, Lincoln is 28 years old and still a bachelor, living in Springfield, Illinois, and just beginning to practice law under John Stuart, after passing the bar in 1836.

His life journey so far has been quite remarkable, given his roots.

He is born in Hardin County, Kentucky, to Thomas Lincoln, an embittered farmer who has lost much of his wealth over disputed land titles, and Nancy Hanks Lincoln, who teaches him "his letters" and shapes his early character. In 1816 Thomas moves his family across the Ohio River into Spencer County, Indiana, where young Abe lives from 9 to 21 years of age. His mother dies soon after the move, and he is subsequently raised by his older sister and then by his step-mother, Sarah, who cherishes him.

Abraham Lincoln (1809-1865)

While his formal education is close to nil, Lincoln is innately very smart, intensely curious and eager to make his way in the world around him. He masters language through repeated readings of the Bible, Aesop's Fables, Pilgrim's Progress and Shakespeare's plays, and then writing his thoughts on an easel. He masters daily life by throwing himself into it. His physical presence sets him off from others. He is 6'3" tall, remarkably strong from wielding an ax to split lumber, and noted for outwrestling all comers in

town. He is also gregarious, loves debate, and is a natural raconteur. People gather round him to hear his thoughts and share laughter.

Here indeed, at an early age, are the makings of the lawyer and politician he will become.

Throughout these early years, slavery is simply an accepted part of his world.

In Kentucky he sees coffles of slaves marching along the road to Nashville near his home. In December 1828, at age 19, and again in April 1831, he is hired to crew flatboats carrying cargo on the Mississippi down to New Orleans – with its omnipresent slave pens and auctions and its unmistakable messages about the innate inferiority of all Africans.

Lincoln's initial response to slavery appears to be simple empathy for its victims, and a visceral sense that it is evil. Looking back in April 1864, he will write:

*If slavery is not wrong, nothing is wrong. I cannot remember when I did not so think and feel.*

But as a young man, growing up where he does, his response is a very familiar passive one.

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Time: 1831-1837

### **Lincoln Moves To Illinois and Dabbles In Politics**

In 1831 Lincoln heads out on his own, canoeing down the Sangamon River to the village of New Salem, Illinois.

Once there he embarks on a string of potential careers, running a general store, serving as postmaster, acting as land surveyor, before deciding to become a lawyer. He begins this final quest, as usual, on his own, reading and re-reading Blackstone's Commentaries.

During his 5 year stay in New Salem, two other experiences will influence his future. The first provides him with a brief taste of military life.

When Chief Blackhawk and his Sauks attempt to occupy land along Illinois's northwestern border, Lincoln enlists in the militia on April 21, 1832, and is elected Captain of the 31<sup>st</sup> Regiment. His ten weeks of duty are largely spent marching and camping, although some believe he participates in a burial detail after the Battle of Stillman's Run. His own recall, years later, quips mainly about "fighting mosquitos."

After mustering out on July 10, Lincoln returns to New Salem and decides to enter politics, seeking a seat in the Illinois General Assembly.

He runs as a Whig, given his lifelong admiration for Henry Clay, but finishes eighth in a field of sixteen contenders. Despite this initial set-back, he runs again and wins the seat in 1834 and again in 1836.

In 1837 Lincoln is called upon to take a stand on slavery, when the Assembly is asked to vote on a resolution asserting that "the right of property in slaves is sacred...the General Government cannot abolish slavery in the District of Columbia...the formation of abolition societies is highly disapproved."

The resolution passes 77-6, with Lincoln being one of the six to vote against it -- and six weeks later, he and Representative Dan Stone file a protest to its passage, a rarely used device to register strong disagreement.

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Time: January 27, 1838

### **Abraham Lincoln Speaks Out Against Civil Disobedience**

In April of 1837, Lincoln moves to Springfield, ready to convert his 1836 law license into a live practice.

Once there, he is drawn to the Young Men's Lyceum, an educational forum attracting local intellectuals and up-and-coming professionals.

Speaking to this group is a natural for aspiring politicians like Lincoln, and he addresses it on January 27, 1838. The title of his speech is "The Perpetuation of Our Political Institutions," and he delivers it some ten weeks after the murder of Elijah Lovejoy in nearby Alton.

Many regard this as Lincoln's his first important public address. It is not about slavery, or even about Lovejoy perse. Rather it warns of two risks facing America's democracy.

One involves the threat of dictators, like Caesar or Napoleon, substituting their will for that of the people. The other lies in "savage mobs," imposing their wills on any whom they oppose, as in Alton.

Lincoln declares that any government that tolerates such behavior cannot last.

*Whenever the vicious portion of [our] population shall be permitted to gather in bands of hundreds and thousands, and burn churches, ravage and rob provision stores, throw printing presses into rivers, shoot editors, and hang and burn obnoxious persons at pleasure and with impunity, depend upon it, this government cannot last.*

A nation has but one path to escape these threats – and that lies in disciplined obedience to the law.

*Let every man remember that to violate the law, is to trample on the blood of his father, and to tear the charter of his own, and his children's liberty...Let reverence for the laws be breathed by every American mother...in short let it become the political religion of the nation....*

A continued disregard for law signals that "something of ill-omen is amongst us."

*I hope I am over wary; but if I am not, there is, even now, something of ill-omen, amongst us. I mean the increasing disregard for law which pervades the country; the growing disposition to substitute the wild and furious passions, in lieu of the sober judgment of Courts; and the worse than savage mobs, for the executive ministers of justice.*

Like the wizened Southerner, John Calhoun, a young Abraham Lincoln is already sensing, in 1838, a fundamental breakdown in the social fabric holding America together.

At this point, however, he has yet to fully plumb the depths of the disorder.

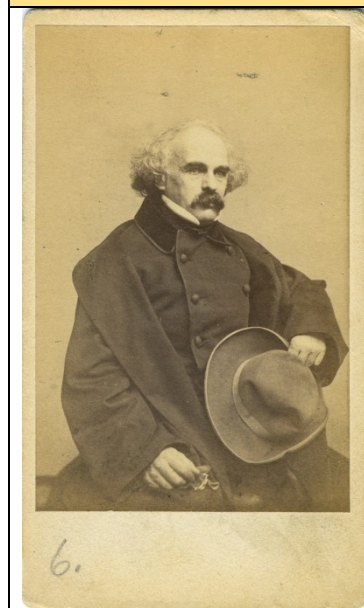


His brief experience in Illinois state government has taught him that it has to do with conflict over “the right of property in slaves.” He also knows that he oppose the notion of slavery on moral grounds.

But how to resolve the matter will absorb him for the remainder of his life.

Unlike John Calhoun and John Brown, the Lyceum speech shows that his answer will not lie in “wild and furious passions.” Instead, Lincoln the lawyer will seek solutions in following the laws, not breaking them.

## Chapter 118 -- Another Fatal Duel Underscores The Violent Tone In Congress



**Dates:**  
1838

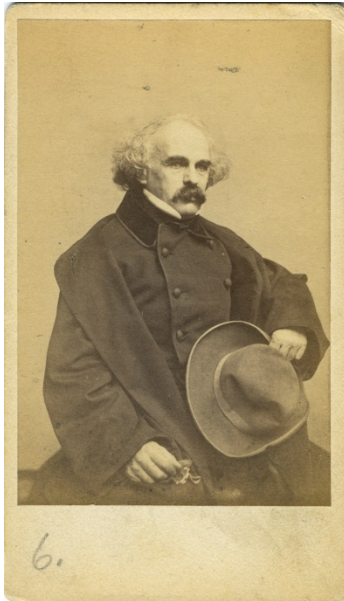
**Sections:**

- Congressmen Jonathan Cilley Is Killed In A Duel

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Time: February 24, 1838

### Congressmen Jonathan Cilley Is Killed In A Duel



Even as Lincoln is calling for civil restraint, America's penchant for settling disputes through violence is once again materializing in the halls of Congress.

This time it involves a duel between two sitting members of the U.S. House.

This duel originates with James Watson Webb, editor of the powerful Whig newspaper, *The New York Courier and Enquirer*. Webb is famous for scurrilous ad hominem attacks, many directed at abolitionists such as Lewis Tappan.

When Congressman Jonathan Cilley of Maine, also an abolitionist, questions the veracity of Webb's reporting on the House floor, Webb demands a public retraction. He writes a note to this effect and hands it to Congressman William Graves of Kentucky for delivery. Graves tries to deliver the note to Cilley, but he refuses to accept it.

Nathaniel Hawthorne (1804-1864) Eulogizes  
Congressman Jonathan Cilley (1802-1838)

His response, however, is conciliatory. He tells Graves that he simply wants to avoid any further unpleasantness with Webb -- but Graves finds this response insufficient and challenges Cilley to a duel.

Cilley accepts and settles on rifles as his weapon of choice.

The two men and their seconds meet on February 24, 1838, at the Bladensburg Dueling Grounds in Maryland.

They are placed 80 yards apart from each other and given the order to fire. When neither man is hit, the seconds attempt to end the matter, especially since both combatants claim no "personal animosity" toward the other.

But a truce is not to be, and another round is fired, again with misses from both men. In the third round, Graves scores a hit, striking Cilley in the upper thigh and puncturing his femoral artery. Cilley falls to the ground and bleeds to death in two to three minutes, absent a tourniquet.

He is 35 years old when killed, and leaves behind a wife and three children, and a sterling reputation.

His close friend and fellow Bowdoin College classmate, Nathaniel Hawthorne, commemorates him in a eulogy at the funeral.

*Alas that over the grave of a dear friend my sorrow for the bereavement must be mingled with another grief, --that he threw away such a life in so miserable a cause! Why, as he was true to the Northern character in all things else, did he swerve from his Northern principles in this final scene?*

*A challenge was never given on a more shadowy pretext; a duel was never pressed to a fatal close in the face of such open kindness as was expressed by Mr. Cilley; and the conclusion is inevitable, that Mr. Graves and his principal second, Mr. Wise, have gone further than their own dreadful code will warrant them, and overstepped the imaginary distinction, which, on their own principles, separates manslaughter from murder.*

*But his error was a generous one, since he fought for what he deemed the honor of New England; and, now that death has paid the forfeit, the most rigid may forgive him. If that dark pitfall--that bloody grave --had not lain in the midst of his path, whither, whither might it not have led him! It has ended there: yet so strong was my conception of his energies, so like destiny did it appear that he should achieve everything at which he aimed, that even now my fancy will not dwell upon his grave, but pictures him still amid the struggles and triumphs of the present and the future.*

## Chapter 119 -- Southern Fears Mount As The Supreme Court Frees Slaves In The *Amistad* Affair



**Dates:**  
1839-1841

**Sections:**

- African Slaves Bound For Spanish Cuba End Up In A Connecticut Courtroom
- A Supreme Court Ruling Frees The Africans And Alarms The South

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Time: July 1839 to March 9, 1841

### African Slaves Bound For Spanish Cuba End Up In A Connecticut Courtroom



Queen Isabella II of Spain (1830-1904)

Everywhere Van Buren looks, he is beset by thorny problems, related either to the economic depression or to public turmoil provoked by the anti-slavery movement.

One slavery incident in particular plays out between July of 1839 and the end of his term in office – and it results in a clear judicial victory for the abolitionists.

The case involves some 53 Africans who are snatched from their homeland in Nigeria and shipped to Cuba, in violation of bans on international slave trading passed by many nations, including the U.S. and Spain,.

Once in Cuba, the slaves are sold to two buyers, who give them Spanish names so they appear “homegrown” and can be marketed legally to owners of a sugar plantation on the island. When the deal is done, the slaves are loaded on to a Spanish schooner, *La Amistad*, for transport to the plantation.

Then things go awry.

On July 1, 1839, the slaves, under their leader, known later as Joseph Cinque, break free from their chains, kill the ship’s captain and a cook, and demand that the remaining crew sail them back home to Africa. But their knowledge of basic navigation is flawed, and the crew eventually lands the ship on Long

Island, New York -- where they are arrested by U.S. officials on charges of murder and sent to New Haven, Connecticut for trial.

Although the murder charges are eventually dropped, some 36 Africans remain in jail, as both the plantation owners and the government of Spain, which rules Cuba, claim them “as property.”

When the Spanish ambassador gets involved, President Van Buren is ready to simply ship the slaves back to Cuba, to appease the avaricious regents surrounding Queen Isabella II, and tamp down any further debates over slavery in America.

However, by the time he is ready to act, the Abolitionist Lewis Tappan has taken up the case and seen that a court trial is scheduled. After hearing the evidence, the District Court judge Smith Thompson rules that the slaves were indeed Africans, not Cubans, by origin, and, as such, they were entitled to their freedom, and should be sent back to their homeland.

*I find, then, as a matter of fact, that in the month of June, 1839, the law of Spain did prohibit, under severe penalty, the importation into Cuba of negroes from Africa. These negroes were imported in violation of that law, and be it remembered that, by the same law of Spain, such imported negroes are declared to be free in Spain. ... If, by their own laws, they cannot enslave them, then it follows, of necessity, they cannot be demanded. When these facts are known by the Spanish minister, he cannot but discover that the subjects of his queen have acquired no rights in these men. They are not the property of Spain. His demand must be withdrawn.*

This verdict upsets Van Buren and he orders his lawyers to appeal the decision in the Supreme Court.

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Time: February 23 To March 9, 1841

### **A Supreme Court Ruling Frees The Africans And Alarms The South**

Arguments before Chief Justice Taney and the high court begin on February 23, 1841.

Making the case for the Africans is none other than ex-President John Quincy Adams, who, at age seventy three, has long been the leading anti-slavery advocate in Congress. Among the lawyers representing the Spanish crown is Ralph Ingersoll, ex-US congressman from Connecticut, who had earlier helped the town of New Haven defeat a proposal to open a “Negro College.”

The oral arguments extend from February 23 to March 2.

Adams wraps up in an appeal that extends over seven hours. He says that American laws, not those of any foreign power, must determine the African’s fates – and that our laws have banned international slave trading since 1808. Hence they are free men, who have been kidnapped illegally.

*Now the unfortunate Africans, whose case is the subject of the present representation, have been thrown by accidental circumstances into the hands of the authorities of the United States; and it may probably depend upon the action of the United States Government, whether these persons shall recover the freedom to which they are entitled, or whether they shall be reduced to slavery, in violation of the known laws and contracts publicly passed, prohibiting the continuance of the African slave trade by Spanish subjects.*

Under America's habeas corpus statutes, no President has the right to seize free men and turn them over to a foreign power at his own discretion.

*There had been reports in circulation, which is by no means surprising, that the President intended to remove these people to Cuba, by force, gubernativamente, by virtue of his Executive authority--that inherent power which I suppose has been discovered, by which the President, at his discretion, can seize men, and imprison them, and send them beyond seas for trial or punishment by a foreign power*

*Is there a law of Habeas Corpus in the land? Has the 4<sup>th</sup> of July become a day of ignominy and reproach. Remember the indignation raised against a former President of the United States for causing to be delivered up...a British sailor, for murder on board of a British frigate on the high seas? And is it for this court to sanction such monstrous usurpation and Executive tyranny as this at the demand of a Spanish minister?*

*Had the precedent once been set and submitted to, of a nameless mass of judicial prisoners and witnesses, snatched by Executive grasp from the protective guardianship of the Supreme Judges of the land, at the dictate of a foreign minister, would it not have disabled forever the effective power of the Habeas Corpus?*

As free men, the Africans belong to no one but themselves; they are not property; and they deserve the right to liberty and justice under both our Constitution and our Declaration of Independence.

*The Constitution nowhere recognizes them as property. The words slave and slavery are studiously excluded from the Constitution. Circumlocutions are the fig-leaves under which these parts of the body politic are decently concealed. Slaves, therefore, in the Constitution of the United States are recognized only as persons, enjoying rights and held to the performance of duties.*

*The moment you come, to the Declaration of Independence, that every man has a right to life and liberty, an inalienable right, this case is decided. I ask nothing more in behalf of these unfortunate men, than this Declaration.*

Adams' arguments prevail and the Court decides by a 7-1 majority to uphold the ruling in Connecticut. In releasing Cinque and the others, Senior Justice Joseph Story's opinion states that

*The Africans on board the Amistad were free individuals. Kidnapped and transported illegally, they had never been slaves.*

After the verdict is in, authorities refuse to authorize a U.S. ship to take Cinque and his remaining band back to their homeland. But once again Lewis Tappan steps in and all 36 survivors of the ordeal arrive in Africa early in 1842.

While the *Amistad* decision has more to do with Admiralty law rather than Constitutional law, the mere fact of the US Supreme Court deciding to free the Africans is troubling to the South.

On hearing the decision, John Calhoun says "this could take us all one step closer to civil war."

Fortunately for Martin Van Buren, the verdict is not handed down until March 9, 1841, five days after he has left office. It serves as a fitting coda for what has been a painful term for both the President and the nation.

## Chapter 120 -- The Growing Sectional Divide As Van Buren Leaves Office



**Dates:**  
1841

**Sections:**

- The South's Historical Narrative Around Slavery In America
- The South's View Of Life In The North
- The Northern Narrative About The South
- Sidebar: Those Exiting And Entering The Public Stage in 1840

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Time: 1776-Forward

### The South's Historical Narrative Around Slavery In America



Beware of Threats to the Union

While the timing is premature, John Calhoun's warnings in 1837 and 1838 about the deep divisions between the South and the North over the future preservation and expansion of slavery will prove prophetic.

The Southern view is now well articulated in a narrative that harkens back to the start of the nation. It goes as follows:



- The practice of slavery does not originate in America but is imported here by the British.
- Most of the nation’s slaves enter the country through ports in the North, not the South.
- Over time, the North manages to cleanse itself of its slave population.
- The Africans are an inherently inferior and potentially violent species, incapable of being assimilated.
- The “burden” of caring for -- and controlling – the slaves then falls entirely on the South.
- In return for managing this burden, the South uses the slaves to support their agrarian economy.
- The slaves are also given the chance to embrace Christianity along the way and achieve salvation.
- The best interests of the nation are served by supporting the South’s practices and needs related to slavery.
- That kind of regional cooperation was exactly what the founding fathers sanctioned in the 1787 Constitution.
- The Union is being threatened by stealing power from the states and handing it to the federal government.
- The South will leave the Union if the federal power is turned against its interests in slavery.

These are the themes picked up and recited in the 1830’s by slavery’s most aggressive defenders, especially in South Carolina.

The institution has endured in the South out of “obligation and duty” to the nation. Blacks are “so poor, so wretched, and so vile...as to be totally disqualified from exercising freedom.” Instead of criticizing and meddling in slavery, the North should be thankful to the South for “fulfilling the high trust which has devolved on us as owners of slaves.”

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Time: 1841

**The South’s View Of Life In The North**

Along with the South’s defense of its “planter society” comes a scathing indictment of the many woes it sees in the North’s shift away from Jefferson’s agricultural vision and to Hamilton’s capitalism and industrialization.

- The basic freedoms and values Americans hold dear are now threatened across the North.
- No longer is it a place where independent farmers are working their own land, enjoying comparable wealth and influence, avoiding debt, solving their own domestic issues at the local level, and electing a small, fiscally frugal national government whose main role lies in managing foreign affairs.
- Instead wealth and power have been concentrated in the hands of a few at the expense of the many.
- The villains here are capitalism and corporations which place private profits above public good.
- Together they encourage personal greed and “get rich quick” speculation.
- Together they end all too often with personal debt and corruption.
- A corrupt corporate banking system provides the fuel for these schemes by printing and distributing soft money “unbacked” by gold and silver, thus eroding the “real value” of the dollar for all Americans.

- Corrupt politicians, co-opted by the wealthy few into supporting their profit-making programs, threaten the very notion of a “government for the people.”
- Corrupt businessmen convert Northern workers into “wage slaves,” whose daily lives in factories or offices often leave them worse off than a Southern field hand picking cotton.
- The credo of industrial capitalism across the North lies in maximizing profits for its stockholders over doing what is in the best interests of the country and the common man.
- Most critically, personal freedom has been eroded across the North. Jefferson’s yeoman farmer is, above all else a free (white) man, indebted to no one but himself. He is not a wage earner, dependent on a capitalistic owner/boss for his economic well-being. Nor is he a borrower, in hock to a capitalistic banker. Being free economically, he can be free politically. Government is there to serve him; not vice versa.

Starting from these principles, the South sees the North’s drift toward big cities and big factories, big banks and big government, not only as a threat to its chosen economic path, but to its personal values and its very “way of life.”

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Time: 1841

### **The Northern Narrative About The South**

By 1841, many Northerners are likewise forming up a negative impression of the South.

The basis for this is definitely not moral qualms related to the institution of slavery.

Indeed the vast majority of whites across the North and West have already signaled in state Constitutions and “black codes” that they want nothing to do with blacks – be they slaves or freed men – in their midst.

Instead, the antipathy felt probably centers on a “sense of privilege” perceived at play in Southern society.

The target here is the Southern planter class, with their vast farms, aristocratic lifestyles, and leisurely indulgences, all built off the backs of unpaid slave laborers.

The hard daily work recorded by the white men of the North – be it on farms or in cities – seems disrespected by the planter system that dominates the South. Over time, Northern politicians will vilify this system as an affront “to the dignity of free white labor.”

The sense of Southern privilege also seems to be operating within the Federal government.

The fact that four of the first five US President are Virginians is not lost on the Northern politicians in Washington.

Nor is the sense that the make-up of the Senate is rigged to insure that the Southern states retain equal control over the passage of legislation – despite the fact that Census counts show a widening majority of citizens living up North.

Animosity of this sort also grows around actions like the 1836 “Gag Rule,” the South’s attempt to shut down debate on the abolist petitions. It is not that the North supports these petitions – rather that a certain amount of heavy-handed Southern arrogance seems at work in the demands.

As the Northern economy takes off along with city life, the South also begins to appear backwards, as if it has been left behind. In its attempts to block congressional programs to build needed roads, canals and other infrastructure needs of the country, it appears out of touch and self-serving.

The sum total of these impulses across the North and West is to push back on the South, to “put it in its place,” especially when its planter class seems intent on exercising its privilege.

At times in almost perverse fashion, the North will discover that nothing rattles the South like goading it over the institution of slavery.

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Time: 1841

### **Two Roads Diverging In 1841**

As a disappointed Van Buren exits the White House, sectional differences that almost prevented the formation of the Union in 1787 are intensifying.

The South, frozen in its agrarian tradition, betting its entire future on crops of cotton and slaves, growing suspicious that the North will stand in the way of its future success.

The North, impatient to move on to the promises of capitalism and industrialization, sensing a backwards South asserting unwarranted privilege and blocking progress.

The threat of dis-union in the air.

All with echoes of George Washington’s 1796 Farewell Address ringing in the background:

*The unity of government which constitutes you one people is ...now dear to you.*

*Discountenance... even a suspicion that it can in any event be abandoned...frown upon...every attempt to alienate any portion of our country from the rest, or to enfeeble the sacred ties which now link together the various parts.*

*With slight shades of difference, you have the same religion, manners, habits and political principles. You Have in a Common cause fought and triumphed together; the independence and liberty you possess are the work of joint counsels...common sufferings and successes.*

*The most commanding motives (exist) for carefully guarding and preserving the union of the whole... Protected by the equal laws of a common government...the North...the South...the East...the West...secure enjoyment of ...outlets for their own production...across agriculture and manufacturing.*

*(Beware) of the danger of Parties in the State, with particular reference to the founding of them on geographical discriminations... The alternate domination of one faction over another, shaped by the spirit of revenge, natural to party dissension...*

*The name of American, which belongs to you... must always exalt the just pride of patriotism.*

**Sidebar: Those Exiting And Entering The Public Stage In 1840**

<b>Exiting</b>	<b>Death</b>	<b>Age At Death</b>
Charles Pinckney	October 29, 1824	67 years
CC Pinckney	August 16, 1825	79
William Eustis	February 6, 1825	71
John Adams	July 4, 1826	90
Thomas Jefferson	July 4, 1826	83
Luther Martin	July 10, 1826	78
Rufus King	April 29, 1827	72
John Jay	May 17, 1829	83
David Walker	August 10, 1830	33
James Monroe	July 4, 1831	73
Reverend Thomas Paul	1831	58
John Marshall	July 6, 1835	79
James Madison	June 28, 1836	85
Aaron Burr	September 14, 1836	80
Elijah Lovejoy	November 7, 1837	34
Tecumseh	October 3, 1838	71
Benjamin Lundy	August 22, 1839	50
Robert Hayne	September 24, 1839	47
<b>Aging</b>	<b>Born</b>	<b>Age In 1840</b>
Albert Gallatin	Jan 29, 1761	79
James Forten	September 2, 1766	74
JQ Adams	July 11, 1767	73
Andrew Jackson	March 15, 1767	73
William H Harrison	Feb 8, 1773	67
Roger Taney	March 17, 1777	63
Henry Clay	April 12, 1777	63
James Tallmadge, Jr.	January 28, 1778	62
Richard M. Johnson	October 17, 1780	60
Daniel Webster	January 18, 1782	58
Thomas Hart Benton	March 14, 1782	58
John C Calhoun	March 18, 1782	58
Lewis Cass	October 9, 1782	58
Martin Van Buren	Dec 5, 1782	58
Zachary Taylor	Nov 24, 1784	56
Arthur Tappan	May 22, 1786	54
Winfield Scott	June 13, 1786	54
Theo Frelinghuysen	March 28, 1787	53
John J. Crittenden	September 10, 1787	53
Lewis Tappan	May 23, 1788	52
John Tyler	Mar 29, 1790	50
George McDuffie	August 10, 1790	50
Francis P. Blair	April 12, 1791	49
James Buchanan	April 23, 1791	49

James Birney	February 4, 1792	48
Thaddeus Stevens	April 4, 1792	48
Willie P. Mangum	May 10, 1792	48
George Dallas	July 10, 1792	48
Rev. Charles Finney	August 29, 1792	48
Lucretia Mott	January 3, 1793	47
Sam Houston	March 2, 1793	47
Austin Steward	1793	47
Thomas Dalton	October 17, 1794	46
<b>Emerging</b>	<b>Born</b>	<b>Age in 1840</b>
Silas Wright	May 24, 1795	45
Joshua Giddings	October 6, 1795	45
James Polk	Nov 2, 1795	45
Rev. Samuel Cornish	1795	45
John Bell	February 18, 1796	44
Andrew Butler	November 18, 1796	44
Gerrit Smith	March 6, 1797	43
Thurlow Weed	November 15, 1797	43
Sojourner Truth	1797	43
Rev. Theodore Wright	1797	43
Millard Fillmore	Jan 7, 1800	40
Caleb Cushing	January 17, 1800	40
Daniel Dickinson	September 11, 1800	40
Robert B. Rhett	December 21, 1800	40
Henry Seward	May 16, 1801	39
Brigham Young	June 1, 1801	39
Ralph Waldo Emerson	May 25, 1803	37
Theodore Weld	November 23, 1803	37
Henry Foote	February 28, 1804	36
Nathaniel Hawthorne	July 4, 1804	36
Franklin Pierce	Nov 23, 1804	36
Angelina Grimke	February 20, 1805	35
William Lloyd Garrison	December 12, 1805	35
John Hale	March 31, 1806	34
Henry Wise	December 3, 1806	34
Preston King	October 14, 1806	34
Robert E. Lee	January 19, 1807	33
David Atchison	August 11, 1807	33
Salmon Chase	January 13, 1808	32
Jefferson Davis	June 3, 1808	32
Edgar Allan Poe	January 9, 1809	31
Abraham Lincoln	February 12, 1809	31
Robert MT Hunter	April 21, 1809	31
Hannibal Hamlin	August 27, 1809	31
Charles Lenox Raymond	February 1, 1810	30
David Ruggles	March 15, 1810	30
Robert Toombs	July 2, 1810	30
Robert Purvis	August 4, 1810	30

Charles Sumner	January 6, 1811	29
Owen Lovejoy	January 6, 1811	29
Horace Greeley	February 3, 1811	29
Harriet Beecher Stowe	June 14, 1811	29
Lewis Hayden	December 2, 1811	29
John McClernand	May 12, 1812	28
Alexander Stephens	February 11, 1812	28
John Fremont	January 21, 1813	27
Stephen A Douglas	April 23, 1813	27
William Yancey	August 10, 1814	26
Howell Cobb	September 7, 1815	25
Nathaniel Banks	January 30, 1816	24
Henry David Thoreau	July 12, 1817	23
Frederick Douglass	February 1818	22
Herman Melville	August 1, 1819	21
David Wilmot	January 14, 1820	20
John C. Breckinridge	January 16, 1821	19
Ulysses S. Grant	April 27, 1822	18