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The Rise of Jacksonian Democracy, 1824–1830

PART I: Reviewing the Chapter

A. Checklist of Learning Objectives

After mastering this chapter, you should be able to

1. describe and explain the growth of the “New Democracy” in the 1820s.
2. indicate how the “corrupt bargain” of 1824 weakened Adams and set the stage for Jackson’s election in 1828.
3. describe the “Tariff of Abominations” and explain why it aroused such furor in the South.
4. analyze the significance of Jackson’s victory in 1828 as a triumph of the “New Democracy.”
5. describe the “spoils system” and indicate its consequences for American politics.
6. trace the increasing sectionalism that appeared in the 1820s and show how it was reflected in the Hayne-Webster debate.

B. Glossary

To build your social science vocabulary, familiarize yourself with the following terms.

1. **constituents** The body of voters or supporters in a district, regarded as a group. “. . . his Tennessee constituents began to talk of running him for the presidency.”
2. **divine right** The belief that government or rulers are directly established by God. “. . . America was now witnessing the divine right of the people.”
3. **hard money** Coins, as distinguished from paper money. “They sought . . . to substitute hard money for bank notes. . . .”
4. **deference** The yielding of opinion to the judgment of someone else. “The deference, apathy, and virtually nonexistent party organizations . . . gave way to . . . boisterous democracy. . . .”
5. **subversive** Tending to corrupt, overthrow, or destroy something established. “This procedure was now condemned as . . . subversive of democracy.”
6. **clique** A small, exclusive, and snobbish circle of people. “. . . the voters . . . turned against the candidate . . . who had been selected by the congressional clique.”
7. **puritanical** Extremely or excessively strict in matters of morals or religion. “The only candidate left was the puritanical Adams. . . .”
8. **usurpation** The act of seizing, occupying, or enjoying the place, power, or functions of someone without right. “. . . Adams [was] . . . smarting under charges of . . . ‘usurpation.’ ”
9. **political plums** Choice, desirable offices or favors. “If the president would not reward party workers with political plums, why should they labor. . . ?”
10. **mudslinging** Malicious, unscrupulous attacks against an opponent. “Mudslinging reached a disgraceful level. . . .”
11. **bare-knuckle** Hard, unrestrained, brutal. “. . . the new mass electorate [had a taste] for bare-knuckle politics.”

12. **machine** A political organization, often controlled through patronage or spoils. "... [in] New York and Pennsylvania, ... well-greased machines were operating."
13. **spoils** Public offices given as a reward for political support. "The emphasis was more on spoils than on responsibilities."
14. **henchmen** Political supporters or followers. "... Jackson believed that the swiftest road to reform was to ... bring in his own trusted henchmen."
15. **incumbent** The person currently holding an office. "The open break with the incumbent ... blighted his hopes."

PART II: Checking Your Progress

A. True-False

Where the statement is true, mark **T**. Where it is false, mark **F**, and correct it in the space immediately below.

- ___ 1. The "New Democracy" was based on the ending of property qualifications for the ballot in most states.
- ___ 2. One sign of the "New Democracy" was that presidents were now chosen by democratically elected state legislatures rather than by the Electoral College.
- ___ 3. The congressional caucus increasingly replaced the national political convention as the method for nominating a party's presidential candidates.
- ___ 4. The voters failed to give an electoral majority to any candidate in 1824, so the House of Representatives had to choose the president from among the top three candidates.
- ___ 5. Henry Clay disproved the charge of a "corrupt bargain" between himself and President Adams by refusing to accept any favors from the administration.
- ___ 6. President Adams attempted to uphold strong nationalistic principles in a time of growing sectionalism.
- ___ 7. The South and its leading spokesman, John C. Calhoun, opposed a strong tariff in 1816 but had reversed their position and come to favor a strong tariff by 1828.
- ___ 8. The election campaign of 1828 was notable for its focus on the issues of the tariff and popular democracy rather than on personalities and mudslinging.
- ___ 9. The election of 1828 was in some ways a "revolution" of the common people of the West and South against the older, entrenched governing classes of the East.
- ___ 10. Jackson believed in using the federal government as a powerful instrument of economic activism on behalf of the common people.
- ___ 11. The Jacksonians practiced their belief that the ordinary citizen was capable of holding almost any public office without particular qualifications.
- ___ 12. One consequence of the spoils system was the building of powerful political machines based on favors and rewards distributed to political supporters.

- ___ 13. Jackson relied heavily on his strong official cabinet for policy decisions and political advice.
- ___ 14. Both President Jackson and Vice President Calhoun fought to maintain a strong nationalism in the face of growing sectionalism.
- ___ 15. In the Hayne-Webster debate, the southerner Hayne defended the doctrine of nullification by the states, while Webster attacked it as contrary to a Union formed by the whole American people rather than by the states.

B. Multiple Choice

Select the best answer and write the proper letter in the space provided.

- ___ 1. An essential cause of the "New Democracy" was
 - a. the corruption and scandals among the wealthy who had previously controlled politics.
 - b. the increased stake in politics felt by ordinary citizens after the panic of 1819 and the Missouri Compromise.
 - c. the rise of the common school and better education among the citizenry.
 - d. the growing threat of war with Britain.
- ___ 2. A new, seemingly more democratic method of nominating presidential candidates was
 - a. the direct primary.
 - b. the national nominating convention.
 - c. the congressional caucus.
 - d. the petition system.
- ___ 3. The Jacksonian charge of a "corrupt bargain" to gain John Quincy Adams the presidency arose because
 - a. William Crawford threw his electoral votes to Adams in exchange for a seat in the Senate.
 - b. Adams was charged with having bribed members of the House to vote for him.
 - c. Adams ended his previous opposition to Clay's American System.
 - d. Clay was named secretary of state after throwing his support to Adams.
- ___ 4. The New Democracy arose partly because
 - a. Americans finally understood the ideas of the Declaration of Independence.
 - b. many citizens were tired of the partisan fights between Republicans and Federalists.
 - c. economic distress and the issue of slavery in Missouri stimulated a heightened public awareness of politics.
 - d. farmer and labor organizations aroused populist opposition to elitist politics.
- ___ 5. One political innovation that illustrated the new popular voice in politics was
 - a. the rise of the caucus system of presidential nominations.
 - b. the growth of a third party, the Anti-Masonic party.
 - c. the development of extensive speechmaking tours by presidential candidates.
 - d. the rise of national party conventions to nominate presidential candidates.

- ___ 6. Which of the following was *not* among the factors that made John Quincy Adams's presidency a political failure?
- Adams's anti-western land and Indian policies
 - Adams's involvement with correct machine deals and politicians
 - Adams's stubborn and prickly personality
 - Adams's support for national roads, a national university, and an astronomical observatory
- ___ 7. In the battle over the "Tariff of Abominations,"
- New England backed high tariffs while the South demanded lower duties.
 - both New England and the South opposed the higher tariff rates.
 - the South fought for higher tariffs while the West sought lower rates.
 - the South backed higher tariffs while New England sought to lower the rates.
- ___ 8. Under the surface of the South's strong opposition to the "Tariff of Abominations" was
- a desire to develop its own textile industry.
 - competition between southern cotton growers and midwestern grain farmers.
 - a strong preference for British manufactured goods over American-produced goods.
 - a fear of growing federal power that might interfere in slavery.
- ___ 9. John C. Calhoun's theory of "nullification" was based on the idea that
- the president should be able to block congressional laws absolutely, without having his veto overturned.
 - individual citizens could refuse to obey those laws that violated their conscience.
 - states should be able to declare invalid those laws they deemed unconstitutional.
 - a special national convention should be able to overrule acts of Congress.
- ___ 10. The concept of a political "revolution of 1828" rests on
- the radical Jacksonian call for a redistribution of wealth and an end to slavery.
 - the increased involvement of ordinary voters in the political process.
 - the riots that accompanied Jackson's rise to power.
 - the weakening of the power of party machines to control the political process.
- ___ 11. One of the central beliefs of the new Jacksonian democracy was that
- the presidency should be weakened and Congress strengthened.
 - officeholding should be open to as many ordinary citizens as possible.
 - the federal government should take an active role in shaping the economy.
 - public offices should be distributed on the basis of merit rather than political affiliation.
- ___ 12. One unfortunate consequence of the spoils system was
- the weakening of political parties.
 - a growing lack of interest in politics.
 - a growing conflict between the executive and legislative branches of government.
 - an increase in incompetence and corruption in government.

- ___ 13. The Peggy Eaton affair contributed to the bitter, personal political conflict between
- a. Andrew Jackson and John C. Calhoun.
 - b. John C. Calhoun and Henry Clay.
 - c. Andrew Jackson and Martin Van Buren.
 - d. Martin Van Buren and John C. Calhoun.
- ___ 14. Jackson's Maysville Road veto signaled his opposition to
- a. the principle of states' rights.
 - b. Henry Clay's American System.
 - c. the replacement of canals by roads as a primary means of transportation.
 - d. the use of tariff revenue to finance internal improvements.
- ___ 15. In his debate with Hayne, Daniel Webster argued that
- a. the federal government had been formed by the people and the states had no right to nullify federal law.
 - b. the federal government had been created by the states but was superior to them.
 - c. the states and the Supreme Court had an equal right to rule on the constitutionality of laws.
 - d. only sections and not individual states could interfere with federal legislation.

C. Identification

Supply the correct identification for each numbered description.

- _____ 1. New form of Jacksonian government that created boisterous political parties and wide popular involvement in politics
- _____ 2. Requirements that were first eliminated in Vermont allowing the common people a larger place in politics
- _____ 3. Older method by which a party's representatives in Congress nominated its presidential candidate
- _____ 4. New, circuslike method of nominating presidential candidates that involved wider participation but usually left effective control in the hands of party bosses
- _____ 5. Small, short-lived third political party that originated a new method of nominating presidential candidates in 1831
- _____ 6. Body that chose the president in 1824 after no candidate received an electoral majority
- _____ 7. Contemptuous Jacksonian term for the alleged political deal by which Clay threw his support to Adams in exchange for a high cabinet office
- _____ 8. Office to which President Adams appointed Henry Clay
- _____ 9. Scornful southern term for the high Tariff of 1828
- _____ 10. Action led by Denmark Vesey in 1822, raising southern fears of federal power
- _____ 11. Pamphlet secretly written by John C. Calhoun that bluntly called on the states to nullify the federal tariff law

- _____ 12. Description of Jackson's victory over Adams that defined it as a victory of the poorer masses over the entrenched wealthy classes
- _____ 13. The popular idea that public offices should be handed out on the basis of political support rather than special qualifications
- _____ 14. New professional political organizations that were "greased" by the offices and favors handed out by winning candidates
- _____ 15. President Jackson's informal group of political advisers

D. Matching People, Places, and Events

Match the person, place, or event in the left column with the proper description in the right column by inserting the correct letter on the blank line.

- | | |
|-------------------------------|--|
| ___ 1. Davy Crockett | A. Election that witnessed the triumph of the New Democracy's homespun masses and their political hero |
| ___ 2. Election of 1824 | B. Silver-tongued South Carolina senator who defended nullification in a famous debate of 1830 |
| ___ 3. Henry Clay | C. Presidential candidate who threw vital support to Adams and then became his secretary of state |
| ___ 4. John Quincy Adams | D. Sky-high protectionist measure backed by New Englanders and hated by the South |
| ___ 5. Tariff of 1828 | E. Once an ardent nationalist and vice president of the United States, then a spokesman for purely southern interests |
| ___ 6. Denmark Vesey | F. Semiliterate, bear-killing Tennessee congressman whose rough popular appeal exemplified the New Democracy |
| ___ 7. John C. Calhoun | G. Free South Carolina black slave whose 1822 rebellion raised southern fears about slavery |
| ___ 8. Rachel Robards Jackson | H. Washington figure whose supposedly scandalous social life caused a cabinet crisis and the resignation of Vice President Calhoun |
| ___ 9. "Revolution of 1828" | I. Majestic New England statesman who defended "liberty and Union, now and forever, one and inseparable" |
| ___ 10. Andrew Jackson | J. Aloof New England statesman whose elitism made him unpopular in the era of popular democracy |
| ___ 11. Samuel Swartwout | K. Confusing four-way campaign that ended up in the House of Representatives |
| ___ 12. Martin Van Buren | L. Corrupt New York customs collector whose thefts symbolized the abuses of the spoils system |
| ___ 13. Peggy Eaton | M. Frontier aristocrat, military folk hero, hickory-tough candidate and president |
| ___ 14. Robert Y. Hayne | N. Jackson's "magician" secretary of state and his most effective cabinet member |
| ___ 15. Daniel Webster | O. Female target of vicious mudslinging campaign in 1828 |

E. Putting Things in Order

Put the following events in correct order by numbering them from 1 to 5.

- ___ An increasingly sectionalist South Carolinian resigns as Jackson's vice president after a cabinet crisis set off by social gossip.
- ___ A strange four-way election puts an icy New Englander in office amid charges of a "corrupt bargain."
- ___ A New England-backed high tariff raises howls of protest and talk of nullification in the South.
- ___ A slave rebellion in South Carolina raises southern fears of abolitionism and federal power.
- ___ Two eloquent senatorial orators debate sectionalism, nationalism, and the nature of the Constitution.

F. Matching Cause and Effect

Match the historical cause in the left column with the proper effect in the right column by writing the correct letter on the blank line.

Cause	Effect
___ 1. The panic of 1819 and the Missouri Compromise of 1820	A. Laid the basis for the spoils system and the often corrupt political machines that thrived on it
___ 2. The end of property qualifications for voting	B. Provoked protests and threats of nullification from South Carolina
___ 3. The nomination of presidential candidates by congressional caucus	C. Aroused Jacksonian fury and made Jackson's supporters determined to elect him in 1828
___ 4. The failure of any candidate to win an electoral majority in the four-way election of 1824	D. Allowed the common people to vote and created a new style of popular politics
___ 5. The alleged "corrupt bargain" between Adams and Clay for the presidency in 1824	E. Began as a minor social scandal but ended in the ouster of cabinet officers and the resignation of the vice president
___ 6. President Adams's strong nationalistic policies	F. Became issues that aroused the common people to political action and fueled the New Democracy
___ 7. The high New England-backed Tariff of 1828	G. Swept into national power the raw democracy of the West and South
___ 8. The Jacksonian "Revolution of 1828"	H. Aroused charges of "elitism" and led to a new system of choosing candidates by national nominating conventions
___ 9. Jackson's belief that any ordinary American could hold government office	I. Aroused the bitter opposition of westerners and southerners, who were increasingly sectionalist
___ 10. The Eaton affair	J. Threw the election into the House of Representatives

G. Developing Historical Skills

Interpreting Political Cartoons

Political cartoons are an important historical source. Even when they are strongly biased one way or another, they can yield information about political conflicts and contemporary attitudes.

The anti-Jackson cartoon on p. 270 reveals a number of things about how his opponents viewed Jackson. Answer the following questions.

1. What is the fundamental point of the cartoon's attack on Jackson and his cabinet?
2. What visual means are used to make the essential point?
3. In the hostile cartoon, all the "rats" are depicted as deserting Jackson. According to the text (p. 273), how does this distort the actions of at least one cabinet member?
4. According to the cartoonist, what "sacred" features of the "falling" Jackson home are causing the rats to flee?

H. Map Mastery

Map Discrimination

Using the maps and charts in Chapter 13, answer the following questions.

1. In the election of 1824, how many more electoral votes would Jackson have needed to win a majority and prevent the election from going to the House of Representatives?
2. In the vote on the "Tariff of Abominations," which of the five regions was most strongly in favor?

3. About what percentage of the opposition to the Tariff of Abominations came from New England: one-fourth, one-third, one-half, or two-thirds?

4. In the election of 1828, which of the eastern "middle states" did Jackson carry *completely*?

5. In which others did he gain *some* electoral votes?

PART III: Applying What You Have Learned

1. What was the “New Democracy,” and why did it arise in the 1820s?
2. How did the election and administration of John Quincy Adams arouse Jacksonian wrath and provide fuel for the new democratic forces in American politics?
3. Was the New Democracy essentially an extension of the ideals of the American Revolution, or was it a radical new idea of government by “the masses.”
4. Why was Andrew Jackson such a *personally* crucial leader of the New Democracy? Would mass democracy have developed without a popular hero like Jackson?
5. Why did Calhoun and the South see the Tariff of 1828 as such an “abomination” and raise threats of nullification over it?
6. From 1810 to 1815, New England was the hotbed of “sectionalism” and “nullification,” while the South and Southwest were strongly nationalistic (see Chapter 11). What accounts for the switch in positions in the 1820s, with the North becoming nationalistic and the South threatening nullification? How were the arguments about nationalism and states’ rights reflected in the Webster-Hayne debates?