

## THE AGE OF JACKSON

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Standards addressed:

1-A: the Second Great Awakening and Age of Jackson (Readiness)

5-C: the origin and development of American political parties (Readiness)

5-F: the impact of Andrew Jackson's election and of expanded suffrage (Supporting)

5-G: Removal and resettlement of the Indians (Supporting)

## OUTLINE

### I. Prologue: the Election of 1828

1. The incumbent: John Quincy Adams of Massachusetts
2. The challenger: Andrew Jackson of Tennessee
3. The people vs. the aristocracy

### II. Alexis de Tocqueville and *Democracy in America*

### III. “Jacksonian Democracy”

1. Jackson’s party: the American Democracy
2. Expansion of the suffrage
3. President Jackson
  - A. Presidential patronage: “rotation in office” or “the spoils system”
  - B. Destroying the Bank of the United States and attacking the corporations
  - C. The perpetual Union
  - D. The president as tribune of the people

### IV. An undemocratic Democracy?

1. 1828 revisited: the people vs. the aristocrats – or North vs. South?
2. The president as tyrant
3. Political parties: popular instruments or politicians’ tools?
4. People left out from “the people”
  - A. Women
  - B. Slaves and free blacks
    1. Andrew Jackson, slaveholder
    2. Jackson versus the abolitionists
  - C. Indians
    1. Jackson’s Indian removal Act (1830)
    2. *Worcester vs. Georgia* (1831)
    3. The “Trail of Tears” (1838)

### V. A democratic age

1. A participatory popular culture
2. Popular politics: the Whig opposition
3. Religion and the Second Great Awakening
  - A. Campaigning for converts
  - B. Newcomers: Baptists, Methodists, Mormons
4. Popular education and self-help
5. Celebrating the common man: Emerson and Whitman

### VI. Andrew Jackson, democratic symbol

## A Jackson Campaign Circular (1823)

[These resolutions were adopted by a local public meeting in Philadelphia in October 1823, during Jackson's first, unsuccessful presidential campaign. At this time there were no organized national political parties or conventions to nominate candidates or conduct campaigns.]

*Resolved*, That we hold it to be the imperative duty of the people, as well as a sacred right secured to us by the constitution, to select our own candidate for the presidency of the United States, independent of all interference, and aloof from all dictation.

*Resolved*, That, as *democrats*, we maintain the right to think and act for ourselves, and never will surrender to a self constituted aristocracy, that freedom of opinion, which is, at once, the source of our greatness and the preserver of our liberties.

*Resolved*, That, in accordance with these principles, we will support *general Andrew Jackson* as the next president of the United States.

Because, he has always been a uniform and consistent democrat.

Because, he is eminently qualified, both as a statesman and a warrior, to govern the nation wisely, in peace, and to conduct her triumphantly through war.

Because, as a patriot, we have full confidence in his moderation, his virtue and his firmness; being a friend to the *rights of man* and *universal suffrage*.

*Resolved*, That we consider Andrew Jackson as having claims to the gratitude of this republic, for this distinguished station, which no other candidate can prefer, and which we are bound to grant, by our love of country, our devotion to liberty, and our admiration of patriotism.

*Resolved*, That James Thackara [and eight others] constitute a committee of correspondence, to hold communication with similar committees throughout the state, and for the purpose of an interchange of sentiment with similar committees throughout the union.

*Resolved*, That this meeting do, earnestly, recommend to the *friends of Jackson* throughout the state, to hold meetings and organize their strength in their several districts, thus taking a firm stand in defence of their country, the constitution, and the glorious principles of *seventy six*.

President Andrew Jackson to the Creek Indians  
March 23, 1829

Friends & Brothers,

By permission of the Great Spirit above, and the voice of the people, I have been made a President of the United States, and now speak to you as your father and friend, and request you to listen. Your warriors have known me long. You know I love my white and red children, and always speak straight, and not with a forked tongue; that I have always told you the truth. I now speak to you, as to my children, in the language of truth—listen.

Friends & Brothers, listen: Where you now are, you and my white children are too near to each other to live in harmony and peace. Your game is destroyed and many of your people will not work and till the Earth. Beyond the great river Mississippi, where a part of your nation has gone, your father has provided a country large enough for all of you, and he advises you to remove to it. There your white brothers will not trouble you; they will have no claim to the land, and you can live upon it, you and all your children, as long as the grass grows or the water runs, in peace and plenty. It will be yours for ever. For the improvements in the country where you now live, and for all the stock which you cannot take with you, your father will pay you a fair price.

In that country, your father, the President, now promises to protect you, to feed you, and to shield you from all encroachment. Where you now live your white brothers have always claimed the land. The land beyond the Mississippi belongs to the President, and to none else; and he will give it to you for ever.

My children, listen: My white children in Alabama have extended their law over your country. If you remain in it, you must be subject to that law. If you remove across the Mississippi, you will be subject to your own laws, and the care of your father, the President. You will be treated with kindness, and the lands will be yours for ever.

Friends & Brothers, listen: This is a straight and good talk. It is for your nation's good, and your father requests you to hear his counsel.

Andrew Jackson

President Andrew Jackson's Veto of the Bank of the United States  
July 14, 1832

It is to be regretted that the rich and powerful too often bend the acts of government to their selfish purposes. Distinctions in society will always exist under every just government. Equality of talents, of education, or of wealth can not be produced by human institutions. In the full enjoyment of the gifts of Heaven and the fruits of superior industry, economy, and virtue, every man is equally entitled to protection by law; but when the laws undertake to add to these natural and just advantages artificial distinctions, to grant titles, gratuities, and exclusive privileges, to make the rich richer and the potent more powerful, the humble members of society - the farmers, mechanics, and laborers - who have neither the time nor the means of securing like favors to themselves, have a right to complain of the injustice of their Government. There are no necessary evils in government. Its evils exist only in its abuses. If it would confine itself to equal protection, and, as Heaven does its rains, shower its favors alike on the high and the low, the rich and the poor, it would be an unqualified blessing.

President Andrew Jackson's Farewell Address  
March 4, 1837

The planter, the farmer, the mechanic, and the laborer all know that their success depends upon their own industry and economy, and that they must not expect to become suddenly rich by the fruits of their toil. Yet these classes of society form the great body of the people of the United States; they are the bone and sinew of the country - men who love liberty and desire nothing but equal rights and equal laws, and who, moreover, hold the great mass of our national wealth, although it is distributed in moderate amounts among the millions of freemen who possess it. But with overwhelming numbers and wealth on their side they are in constant danger of losing their fair influence in the Government, and with difficulty maintain their just rights against the incessant efforts daily made to encroach upon them. 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, and which are employed altogether for their benefit; and unless you become more watchful in your States 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 or bartered away, and the control over your dearest interests has passed into the hands of these corporations.