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# The Age of Jackson

## Part 2

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# Old Hickory

- Jackson was a true folk hero to the masses
    - He had been an orphan but had made himself into a successful politician, war hero, and wealthy plantation owner
  - Jackson's anger was legendary, but so was his loyalty and honesty
  - Jackson believed in the common man and embraced democracy
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# Jackson's Political Beliefs

- Jackson was a true Republican
    - He denounced Federalist ways, believing that they were for the privileged and elitist
    - He did believe in the sacredness of the Union and believed that the federal government should be the true power of the country
    - He believed that the common man was as capable of achieving greatness as the wealthy was → he embraced Western democracy
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# The Spoils System

- Jackson firmly believed in appointing individuals to government jobs and offices (i.e. postmaster generals, sheriffs, fire chiefs, etc.)
    - When he became president most government job and office holders were fired and replaced with his loyal supporters → this process became known as the Spoils System and became a part of American government
    - Jackson defended this practice by stating that no man had any more of a claim for a government position than any other
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# The Spoils System

- The Spoils System also reinforced the two-party system as individuals were forced to choose a party for which to pledge loyalty (otherwise they would be left out of the rewards given to loyal followers by the victors)
  - A major disadvantage of the Spoils System was the fact that many positions were filled with inexperienced and unqualified individuals who were not prepared for the job → this led to many cases of inefficiently run government offices
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# Jackson as President

- Jackson fervently saw himself as a champion of the common man, thus he fought many government policies and bills that he felt would have given more wealth to the upper class
    - He opposed increased government spending (i.e. he vetoed bills that would have given money for internal improvements)
    - He vetoed the re-chartering of the Second National Bank of America
    - He removed what remained of Native Americans from the West in order to allow for more lands to be settled
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# Maysville Veto

- Jackson did allow for some money to be allocated for improved transportation, but he only allowed federal money to be contributed to interstate projects
  - He vetoed the construction of the Maysville Road, explaining that it was wholly within the state of Kentucky and would only benefit that one state
    - Many have argued he also did this to spite Henry Clay, for Kentucky was his home state
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# The Peggy Eaton Affair

- Jackson did have an official Cabinet, but they were mainly weak politicians who Jackson rarely consulted
    - The exception was Martin Van Buren, the Secretary of State, who was a very skilled negotiator
  - Jackson's main group of advisors were an unofficial group known as the "Kitchen Cabinet"
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# The Peggy Eaton Affair

- Jackson's Secretary of War, John Eaton, married Peggy O'Neale (now Peggy Eaton)
  - She was the source of much scandal and gossip (much as Jackson's now deceased Rachel had been during the election of 1828)
  - Jackson came to her defense and much of his Cabinet resigned over the matter
    - His vice president, John C. Calhoun, even resigned over the matter → the two would become very bitter rivals over this situation and other later disputes
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# Removing the Last Natives...

- Jackson believed that the best lands were for the white settlers
  - In 1830 he had the Indian Removal Act passed
    - He believed it to be the best situation for the Native Americans
    - It moved the Natives to lands west of the Mississippi River
    - By 1835 most of the native tribes had complied
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# Marshall and Old Hickory

- *Cherokee Nation v. Georgia* (1831) – Marshall ruled that the Cherokees did not have the right of a foreign nation and therefore they could not sue in federal court
  - *Worcester v. Georgia* (1832) – Marshall ruled that Georgia's laws did not have jurisdiction on Cherokee lands, and therefore the Cherokees did not have to move west
    - Jackson would reply to Marshall's decision, "He has made his decision, now let him enforce it"
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# The Trail of Tears

- Six years after *Worcester* the Cherokees, despite the decision of the Supreme Court, were forced off of their lands and moved west by US soldiers
  - Their trek west was known as the Trail of Tears
    - Of the 15,000 who were forced to move, over 4,000 would die from the harsh conditions of the forced march
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# Nullification

- Nullification means the right of a state to determine the constitutionality of federal laws, and thus their right to decide whether to follow them
  - States' rights advocates were the strongest supporters of the policy of nullification
    - These were mainly found in the South and in the West
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# Webster-Hayne Debate

- New England, afraid at the number of its people moving west (this drained their political power) proposed a bill in Congress that would make it more difficult to buy public lands
  - Robert Hayne, a South Carolina congressman, led the protests of the South and West against New England and the North...
    - He stated that since the Constitution was ratified by the states that they had the right to determine when the federal government was doing wrong... thus, the states could nullify federal laws
    - He noted Northern disloyalties in his speech (Hartford Convention, the Tariff of Abominations, etc.)
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# Webster-Hayne Debate

- Daniel Webster, a senator from New Hampshire, defended the Northerners
    - He argued that the people had made a pact with the federal government in forming the Constitution, not the states → therefore, the states had no justification in their nullification efforts
    - He ended with the now famous quote... “Liberty and union, now and forever, one and inseparable”
    - His words would prove significant in terms of the Civil War, for from then on the North had something to focus on, unity and the Union...
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# Nullification Continues...

- Jackson and Webster would become the leaders of the arguments for union... Jackson's own vice president, John Calhoun would become the leader for nullification (until he resigned)
  - Another incident occurred at a White House toasting
    - Jackson: "Our federal Union... it must be preserved"
    - Calhoun: "The Union, next to our liberties, most dear!"
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# *The South Carolina Exposition*

- Calhoun, while still vice president, would secretly write *The South Carolina Exposition*
    - This document furthered the argument for nullification
    - It stated that South Carolina had a right to nullify The Tariff of Abomination (the Tariff of 1828) since it was not serving in the state's best interest
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# Nullification Continues...

- In 1832 Congress passed the Tariff of 1832
    - It did away with the most harmful pieces of the Tariff of 1828, but many tariffs still remained that Southern states felt were harmful
  - In 1832 South Carolina called a special state convention where its representatives decided that no more tariffs would be collected within its borders, thereby nullifying the new tariffs
    - They also threatened with secession (breaking from the Union)
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# Nullification Continues

- President Jackson responded quickly and forcefully...
    - Jackson had the Force Bill passed
      - It authorized military force to enforce the Tariff of 1832 (the military would take over the harbors and customs houses in order to enforce the tariffs)
      - The House was able to stall the Bill long enough for their to be compromise...
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# The End of Nullification... For Now...

- Jackson did make one last effort to avoid conflict and he asked Congress to consider negotiating a new tariff
  - the Tariff of 1833 was passed and it was enough to calm the situation
  - Jackson called down the military invading South Carolina
  - South Carolina rescinded its acts of nullification
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# Another Banking Crisis

- The director of the National Bank in the 1820's and 1830's was Nicholas Biddle
    - He was a very effective director, but he was very arrogant
    - Jackson saw his arrogance as a sign that he was using his powers to help the wealthy and oppress the common man
    - Jackson made it very clear that he was not going to allow the bank to be rechartered
      - He planned to veto it on the grounds that it was unconstitutional
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# The Bank Veto

- Clay saw an opportunity to discredit Jackson on the banking issue in hopes of hurting his chances for reelection
    - He convinced Congress to bring the bank's charter up for reapproval, which it received and which Jackson of course vetoed, calling it an unjust monopoly
    - Instead of turning on him, the public loved Jackson for "defending" the common man
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# A Financial Crisis

- In order to 'kill' the bank even before its charter was expired Jackson had all of the nation's money pulled out of the National Bank and deposited into his "Pet Banks"
  - Land speculation continued to run rampant in the western states and prices for land and manufactured goods became badly inflated
    - Large amounts of money made their way into circulation because of the National Bank being no longer able to control currency → this led to further inflation
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# A Financial Crisis

- Jackson attempted to fight this inflation by issuing an order that stated that all lands purchased from the government (western lands) would now have to be purchased in gold or silver (called Specie Circular)
    - This only worsened the situation by making paper currency worth even less than its already decreasing value
    - Land sales plummeted and, as they had during the Financial Panic of 1819, land speculators failed on their bank loans and caused many banks to go bankrupt, leading to many people to lose their savings
    - This decrease in spending power led many industries/manufacturers to fail as well, leading to a nationwide financial crisis
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# The End of Jackson's Tenure

- Since Jackson's second term ended in 1836 and the financial crisis did not fully explode until 1837, blame for the financial downturn did not fall on his shoulders
    - The blame would fall on the next president, Jackson's protégé Martin Van Buren
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# The Election of 1836

- Jackson endorsed the man who had loyally supported him throughout his tenure as president, Van Buren
    - He had served Jackson as Secretary of State and as Vice President, and had also supported him throughout all of Jackson's controversies, the Peggy Eaton Affair, the Nullification Crisis, the Bank Veto, etc...
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# Another Political Party?

- Jackson's severe demeanor led to the splitting of the Republican Party
    - Jackson's supporters became known as Democrats
    - Clay's supporters would form another political party, the Whigs
      - The term Whig was a reference to both the British political party that had supported liberty during the Revolution, and also to the founding political party of the Federalists
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# The Democrats

- Were very similar to the Jeffersonians
  - Favored limited government
    - Wanted equal political and economic opportunities for all (that is, white males)
    - Opposed elitist, big government policies such as the National Bank and high tariffs that protected Northern manufacturers → anything seen as supporting the wealthy
  - Most strong in the South and the West, also in the working classes of the North
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# The Whigs

- Were very similar to the Federalists
  - Pushed for policies that would lead to a powerful and active federal government
    - Supported the policies of Clay's American System
    - Opposed anything associated with "immigrants"
      - Crime, immoral acts (drinking, gambling), radical government that empowered the lower classes
  - Were strongest in the New England region and in the upper classes of all regions, also with pious Protestants
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# The Election of 1836

- Knowing that they would have a very difficult time in defeating Jackson's hand-picked protégé, the Whigs tried a unique strategy of nominating three candidates in an attempt to keep Van Buren from gaining a majority of the electoral votes and thus sending the election into the House of Representatives
  - The Whigs' strategy failed horribly and Van Buren gained the necessary majority electoral vote
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# Van Buren as President

- Van Buren's term as president (1836-1840) was an uneventful and unproductive term
    - His presidency was mired in the Financial Crisis of 1837, which he adopted from his mentor Jackson
    - The Whigs tried to pass many pieces of legislation surrounding policies of the American System (higher tariffs, banking credit, internal improvements, etc.) but Van Buren continuously vetoed these bills as unnecessary
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# The Whigs Gain Power

- The Election of 1840
    - With his image hurt by the financial crisis that had embraced the country, Van Buren faced an uphill battle for reelection as president in 1840
    - The Whigs chose as their candidate the war hero William Henry Harrison (“Ol’ Tippecanoe”)
      - The Whigs stole a play from the Jackson handbook and portrayed Harrison as a common man (they played on his being born in a log cabin and being raised on hard cider)
    - Harrison swept the electoral vote and the Whigs won the election, bringing an end to the Age of Jackson...
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