**“Politics in the Antebellum Period”** ~ Jacksonian Democracy and the Rise of the Second Party System

1. Despite President Washington’s warnings against political factions in his Farewell Address, the political structure of the Early Republic was defined by the rivalry between the Federalists and the Democratic-Republicans. The “First Party System” (as historians have labeled this time period politically) was dominated by the Federalists until 1800, and then by the Democratic Republicans through 1824. Unpopular laws, such as the Alien and Sedition Acts, opposition to the War of 1812 and charismatic leadership by Jefferson, Madison and Monroe brought about the end of the Federalist Party and ushered in the “Era of Good Feelings.” By 1824 changes such as the Market Revolution, westward expansion and various reform movements created a climate of political change and the Rise of the Second Party System. **As the United States experienced massive economic, geographic, and social changes in the Antebellum Period, the old aristocracy transplanted from England was replaced by a new democratic spirit that was characterized by greater political participation and ongoing disputes over Federal authority and states’ rights.**
2. **The Election of 1824** signaled an end to the Era of Good Feelings and resulted in the division of the Democratic-Republican Party into two factions, the Democrats and the Whigs.
   1. Who?
   2. Results?
   3. Significance?
3. **Andrew Jackson** rode record voter turnout to defeat Adams in 1832 and championed the “common man” through the extension of presidential power
   1. Inauguration and the Spoils System
   2. Opposition to the Bank of the U.S.
   3. The Nullification Crisis
4. **The Whigs** rose primarily in opposition of “King Andrew,” favored active government support of economic development, and valued American traditions and nationalism.
   1. King Andrew
   2. Henry Clay and the American System
   3. Divided Interests
5. A new era of American politics began with Jackson's election in 1828, but it also completed a grand social experiment begun by the American Revolution. The ideals of the Revolution had, of course, been altered by the new conditions of the early nineteenth century and would continue to be reworked over time. Economic, religious, and geographic changes had all reshaped the nation in fundamental ways and pointed toward still greater opportunities and pitfalls in the future. Nevertheless, Jacksonian Democracy represented a provocative blending of the best and worst qualities of American society. On the one hand it was an authentic democratic movement that contained a principled egalitarian thrust, but this powerful social critique was always cast for the benefit of white men. This tragic mix of egalitarianism, masculine privilege, and racial prejudice remained a central quality of American life and would reach a new end with the coming Civil War.

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2. The Election of 1824 signaled an end to the Era of Good Feelings and resulted in the division of the Democratic-Republican Party into two factions, the Democrats and the Whigs.
   1. Who? (all 4 were Republican candidates)
      * John Quincy Adams: Massachusetts, son of former President, Sec. of State under Monroe
      * Henry Clay: Kentucky, Speaker of the House
      * Andrew Jackson: Tennessee, War Hero, Senator and Governor, Old Hickory
      * William Crawford: Georgia, Sec. of Treasury and War, suffered stroke during election, preferred by Jefferson and Madison
   2. Results?
      * Jackson with 41% of popular Vote and 99 electoral votes (38%) won but did not have a majority with the votes split which was required by the constitution
      * Decision went to the House of Representatives where Clay held great sway over the other members
      * Corrupt Bargain between Clay and Adams. Clay used his power over the House to elect Adams in exchange for Sec. of State position
   3. Significance?
      * Angry over the corrupt bargain Jackson wanted to run again in 1828
      * Election of 1828 where Democrats used support from South and West along with party organization and personal attacks against JQ Adams
      * Election saw 3x more voters than the election in 1824
      * Democratic Party follows Jackson
      * Whigs (National Republicans) followed Clay
3. Returning to defeat John Quincy Adams in 1828, Andrew Jackson rode record voter turnout to become the first western President and a champion of the “common man.”
   1. Inauguration and the Spoils System
      * Goals of Jacksonian Democracy to give people more power over the interests of the ruling class
      * Similar goals to frugal “Jeffersonianism”, had a narrow interpretation of the Constitution and used the veto 12 times, more than all previous presidents total
      * Open invitation to the U.S. Capitol, where 20,000 + showed up to see Jackson sworn in. Party later moved to the White House
      * “To the victor go the spoils” describes how winning politicians often promise friends and donors choice political jobs or appointments.
      * Jackson appointed many supports into top positions calling it “reform” it really was loyalty. Creation of the “kitchen cabinet” = Jackson’s closest advisors who were not actually members of his cabinet
   2. Opposition to the Bank of the U.S.
      * Bank was privately owned but received federal funds and promoted the common good, but many feared the corruption of Biddle and his wealthy friends
      * In 1832 Clay, hoping to trick Jackson, pushes a rechartering bill through Congress
      * Attempted to use his veto on the rechartering bill and attacked the “hydra of corruption”, but the BUS president Nicholas Biddle was successful in running the bank
      * Jackson schemed to ruin the bank by removing federal funds from BUS and depositing them in state “pet” banks. When prices spiked he issued “Specie Circular” which required payments for inflated federal lands in hard coinage rather than bank notes
      * Led to Panic of 1837 a financial disaster in which land value plummeted, bank notes lost value
   3. The Nullification Crisis
      * Jackson typically ruled in favor of states rights but not if it led to disunion
      * Tariff of 1828 aka Tariff of Abominations passed to support New England merchants and factories
      * John C. Calhoun (SC) voiced displeasure and called for nullification = that a state could rule a federal law “null and void”
      * Daniel Webster and Robert Hayne Debate: Webster (Sen. Mass) argued with Hayne (SC) in 1830.. Haybe pushed for succession and Webster famously said “Liberty and Union, now and forever, one and inseparable.”
      * At a White House event Jackson toasted “Our federal union, it must be preserved” to which Calhoun responded “The Union, nest to our liberties, most dear.”
      * Jackson favored the Federal government in this case against states’ rights and was supported by Henry Clay who proposed a compromise
4. The Whigs rose in opposition of “King Andrew,” favored active government support of economic development, and valued American traditions and nationalism.
   1. King Andrew
      * Democrat Issues: Local rule, limited government, free trade, opposed the banks, high tariffs and monopolies
      * Democrat Base: South, West, Small Farmers and Urban workers
      * Must like Jefferson and the Dem-Rep.
   2. Henry Clay and the American System
      * Whig Issues: American System, Federal government, opposed vice, crime and immigrants (somewhat)
      * Whig Base: New England, Mid Atlantic, Midwest and urban professionals
      * Much like the old Federalist Party
   3. Divided Interests
      * Election of 1836 = Jackson throws support to Martin Van Buren, while Whigs run three regional candidates thinking that the election would be split again, but it backfires
      * Panic of 1837 leaves the Democrats weakened
      * Election of 1840 = Whigs dust off War of 1812 hero William Henry Harrison (Tippacanoe and Tyler Too, Log Cabin and Cider), results in 78% voter turnout, Harrison gets sick at inauguration and Tyler takes over, first VP to succeed
5. A new era of American politics began with Jackson's election in 1828, but it also completed a grand social experiment begun by the American Revolution. The ideals of the Revolution had, of course, been altered by the new conditions of the early nineteenth century and would continue to be reworked over time. Economic, religious, and geographic changes had all reshaped the nation in fundamental ways and pointed toward still greater opportunities and pitfalls in the future. Nevertheless, Jacksonian Democracy represented a provocative blending of the best and worst qualities of American society. On the one hand it was an authentic democratic movement that contained a principled egalitarian thrust, but this powerful social critique was always cast for the benefit of white men. This tragic mix of egalitarianism, masculine privilege, and racial prejudice remained a central quality of American life and would reach a new end with the coming Civil War.