CHAPTER 11
Reform and Politics in the Age of Jackson, 1824–1845

Learning Objectives

After you have studied Chapter 11 in your textbook and worked through this study guide chapter, you should be able to:

1. Discuss the causes, characteristics, and consequences of the Second Great Awakening.
2. Indicate the ideas, leaders, and contributions of the following reform movements in early nineteenth-century American society.
   a. The antiprostitution movement
   b. The temperance movement
   c. The movement to establish penitentiaries, insane asylums, and other social institutions
   d. The women’s movement
3. Explain the Antimasonry movement, and indicate its impact on American politics.
4. Discuss the growth of the antislavery movement, and explain its impact on American society during the first half of the nineteenth century.
5. Examine the issues in the presidential election of 1828, and explain the election’s outcome.
6. Describe the characteristics of the second party system, and compare and contrast the political, social, and economic philosophies of the Jacksonian Democrats and the Whigs.
7. Examine how the political, social, and economic ideology of the Jacksonian Democrats was translated into policy during the terms of President Jackson and President Van Buren, and explain the impact of these policies on the United States.
8. Identify the domestic failures and the foreign policy accomplishments of the Tyler administration.
9. Discuss the emergence of expansionist sentiment in the 1830s and 1840s, and explain the debates over the Texas and Oregon territories.
10. Examine the issues in the presidential election of 1844, and explain the election’s outcome.

Thematic Guide

Americans responded in varied ways to the changes brought by industrialization and urbanization in the early nineteenth century. The religious revival known as the Second Great Awakening was the response of people who perceived a spiritual breakdown within society. This response, which was evangelistic and emotional in character and perfectionist in orientation, had an impact on the other reform movements of the era in that they all aimed to perfect the human condition. Some of the reform movements were attempts to
cleanse society of perceived moral evils (the American Female Moral Reform Society and the temperance movement). Some (the utopian communities dealt with in Chapter 12) attempted to create a sense of community in an increasingly impersonal society. And others (the movement to establish penitentiaries, insane asylums, and other social institutions) wanted to create a system by which the victims of a society perceived to be turbulent and unstable could be rehabilitated.

The reform impulse caused some Americans to redefine the ideal of equality and resulted in Antimasonry, the abolitionist movement, and the feminist movement. For many, Antimasonry served as the first bridge between reform and politics. Abolitionism, which was built on evangelical Christianity and the reform impulse, was the second bridge. Eventually territorial expansion prompted abolitionists to enter into the political arena and transformed the antislavery movement into one that consumed all other reforms.

Change in other aspects of American society was affecting the political process as well. The end of the caucus system, the trend toward choosing presidential electors by popular vote, and the election of Andrew Jackson as president all signaled the beginnings of a more open political system in which party organization and party politics were the most important ingredients in the acquisition of political power. Jackson’s acquisition of power brought with it an attempt to solve the nation’s problems through restoration of traditional republican values and through return to Jeffersonian concepts of limited government. It is within this context that the nullification crisis and the controversy over the rechartering of the Second Bank of the United States took place. In the former, President Jackson and Congress reaffirmed the supremacy of the federal government over what Jackson perceived to be special state privilege. In the latter, the concept of limited government was reaffirmed over what the Jacksonians perceived to be special economic privilege. However, Jackson’s antibank and hard-money policies led to economic hard times, with which his successor, Martin Van Buren, was unable to deal.

Jackson’s policies, his transformation of the executive branch into a more powerful arm of government, and the inching of reformists and evangelicals into politics led to the emergence of a loyal opposition in the form of the Whig Party and to the emergence of the second party system. As the democratization of American society caused an expansion of the electorate, the two parties took shape and began to compete in local, state, and federal elections. In the process, disagreements between Democrats and Whigs on the fundamental issues of the age energized the political process and caused more people to become politically active. Nevertheless, the main determinants of party membership were religion and ethnicity. In the 1840 election, the Whigs capitalized on the economic hardships of the Van Buren years to capture the presidency. However, President Harrison died a month after taking office and was replaced by John Tyler, who was more a Democrat than a Whig. Tyler’s achievements were confined to the area of foreign policy.

In the last section of the chapter, “Manifest Destiny and Expansionism,” we consider the reasons for the emergence of the expansionist sentiment of the 1840s. Brought to fever pitch through the debates over Texas and Oregon, this sentiment, as well as the entry of abolitionists into the political arena, led to the election of James K. Polk to the presidency in 1844. This event brought momentous changes to the republic over the next fifteen years.
Building Vocabulary

Listed below are important words and terms that you need to know to get the most out of Chapter 11. They are listed in the order in which they occur in the chapter. After carefully looking through the list, refer to a dictionary and jot down the definition of words that you do not know or of which you are unsure.

epitomize

circumscribe

galvanize

exhort

mesmerize

temperance

benevolent

sanctions

abstinence

tout

familial

ribald

catalyst

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coalesce
clarion
incendiary
equivocate
garner
anomaly
inept
sabotage
vindictive
prudence
demagogic
articulate
dissever
salvo
patrician
Identification and Significance

After studying Chapter 11 of *A People and a Nation*, you should be able to identify fully and explain the historical significance of each item listed below.

1. Identify each item in the space provided. Give an explanation or description of the item. Answer the questions *who, what, where,* and *when.*
2. Explain the historical significance of each item in the space provided. Establish the historical context in which the item exists. Establish the item as the result of or as the cause of other factors existing in the society under study. Answer this question: *What were the political, social, economic, and/or cultural consequences of this item?*

Dorothea Dix

Identification

Significance

the Second Great Awakening

Identification

Significance

Charles G. Finney
Identification

Significance

the American Female Moral Reform Society

Identification

Significance

the American Society for the Promotion of Temperance

Identification

Significance

the penitentiary movement

Identification

Significance

the asylum movement

Identification

Significance

the Antimasonry movement
Identification

Significance

the Morgan affair

Identification

Significance

the convention system

Identification

Significance

the American Colonization Society

Identification

Significance

gradualists vs. immediatists

Identification

Significance

black abolitionists
Identification

Significance

the American Anti-Slavery Society

Identification

Significance

William Lloyd Garrison

Identification

Significance

the *Liberator*

Identification

Significance

Elijah P. Lovejoy

Identification

Significance

the gag rule
Identification

Significance

women abolitionists

Identification

Significance

Angelina and Sarah Grimké

Identification

Significance

the Seneca Falls Declaration of Sentiments

Identification

Significance

the presidential election of 1824

Identification

Significance

the “corrupt bargain”
Identification

Significance

President John Quincy Adams

Identification

Significance

the presidential election of 1828

Identification

Significance

Andrew Jackson

Identification

Significance

the Jacksonian Democrats

Identification

Significance

the Kitchen Cabinet
Identification

Significance

the spoils system

Identification

Significance

the Maysville Road veto

Identification

Significance

the Tariff of Abominations

Identification

Significance

the doctrine of nullification

Identification

Significance

Exposition and Protest
Identification

Significance

the Webster-Hayne debate

Identification

Significance

the Tariff of 1832

Identification

Significance

the nullification crisis

Identification

Significance

the Force Act

Identification

Significance

the Tariff of 1833
Identification

Significance

the Second Bank of the United States

Identification

Significance

Nicholas Biddle

Identification

Significance

the veto of the Second Bank rechartering bill

Identification

Significance

the presidential election of 1832

Identification

Significance

“pet” banks
Identification

Significance

the Deposit Act of 1836

Identification

Significance

the Specie Circular

Identification

Significance

the Second Party System

Identification

Significance

the Whig Party

Identification

Significance

the presidential election of 1836
Identification

Significance

Martin Van Buren

Identification

Significance

the independent treasury system

Identification

Significance

the presidential election of 1840

Identification

Significance

John Tyler

Identification

Significance

the Webster-Ashburton Treaty

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Identification

Significance

Manifest Destiny

Identification

Significance

the Republic of Texas

Identification

Significance

“Remember the Alamo”

Identification

Significance

the Texas-annexation question

Identification

Significance

Oregon fever
Organizing Information

In the appropriate blanks in the following two charts that relate to the differences between Whigs and Democrats (1824-1845), record brief notes indicating and explaining the attitudes and actions that came to define the two parties and identify their leaders.
### Philosophical Distinctions between the Whigs and Democrats, 1824-1845

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Distinguishing Personalities, Social Attitudes, and Associations</th>
<th>National-Republicans (Whigs)</th>
<th>Democratic-Republicans (Democrats)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>National Leaders</td>
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<td>Presidents</td>
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<tr>
<td>Others</td>
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<tr>
<td>Religious Attitudes and Associations and Ethnicity</td>
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<tr>
<td>Attitudes toward Social Reform/Moral Issues/Government Activism</td>
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<tr>
<td>Association with Masonry/Antimasonry</td>
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<tr>
<td>Political Issues Separating Whigs and Democrats, 1824-1845</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Issues</strong></td>
<td><strong>National-Republicans (Whigs)</strong></td>
<td><strong>Democratic-Republicans (Democrats)</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>States’ Rights</td>
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<tr>
<td>Powers of the Presidency</td>
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<tr>
<td>Expansionism and Methods of Expansion</td>
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<tr>
<td>National Fiscal Policy (banking, credit, hard vs. soft money)</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Interpreting Information

Before you begin the main part of this exercise, find examples of the use of the terms *specie*, *charter*, and *national bank* in Chapter 11 in your textbook. Read thoughtfully the sentences in which they appear. Then look up the terms in one or more dictionaries. Finally, for each of the terms write a definition in your own words that suits the term’s use in Chapter 11:

specie

charter

national bank

After you have composed your definitions, look over the two charts you completed as the preceding Organizing Information exercise and compose a short essay contrasting Whigs and Democrats between 1824 and 1845. (Think about how you have described early nineteenth century Democrats in your essay and how you would describe a late-twentieth century Democrat. Are the descriptions similar?)

Ideas and Details

Objective 1

1. The Second Great Awakening bred reform because it taught that
   a. combating the forces of evil in human society could speed the Second Coming.
   b. all people were evil and would burn in the fires of everlasting Hell.
   c. God was no longer active in human affairs.
   d. Jesus had returned to Earth and had begun the Last Judgment.

Objectives 1 and 2

2. The work of the American Female Moral Reform Society demonstrates that the Second Great Awakening
   a. was antifemale in orientation.
   b. theologically supported the concept of women’s rights.
   c. was instrumental in leading women into the public and political arenas.
   d. was antiforeign in its orientation.
Objective 2

3. Which of the following is true of the temperance movement?
   a. The movement had little impact on the consumption of alcoholic beverages.
   b. Leaders of the movement simply wanted to regulate the sale of alcoholic spirits.
   c. Few women were involved in the movement.
   d. The movement was often supported by employers.

Objective 3

4. Although short-lived, Antimasonry is important because it
   a. led to the abolition of the electoral college.
   b. was the vehicle used by Andrew Jackson to gain grassroots support.
   c. demonstrated to future political candidates that moral crusades had no place in American politics.
   d. was a bridge between reform and politics.

Objective 4

5. Which of the following positions on slavery would William Lloyd Garrison most likely have endorsed?
   a. Colonization
   b. Immediate emancipation
   c. Compensated emancipation
   d. Free-soil

Objective 6

6. Both the Lovejoy murder and the gag rule served to
   a. cause dissension within the antislavery movement.
   b. increase northern support for the antislavery movement.
   c. mobilize national support for the temperance movement.
   d. increase national support for government regulation of industry.

Objective 5

7. The 1828 election was important because it
   a. demonstrated that issues were more important than personalities in presidential elections.
   b. led political reformers to charge that the electoral college was obsolete.
   c. demonstrated that party organization would be very important in presidential elections.
   d. led to literacy tests for voters.

Objective 6

8. Which of the following statements best expresses Jacksonian beliefs?
   a. Strong central government is the enemy of individual liberty.
   b. Public education is essential in a democratic society.
   c. Government should be active in the economic life of the state.
   d. A strong, powerful president is to be feared.
Objectives 6 and 7

9. In the Webster-Hayne debate, Webster argued that
   a. the doctrine of nullification would result in a society made up of warring states.
   b. the Union was a collection of sovereign, independent states.
   c. the Union was created by God and given as a gift to His special people, the American people.
   d. abolitionists sought to destroy the South.

Objective 7

10. As a result of the nullification crisis,
   a. federal authority was weakened because of the disagreement between Jackson and Congress.
   b. the South accepted the idea of secession.
   c. neither the federal government nor South Carolina won a clear victory.
   d. Jackson demonstrated his unwillingness to compromise.

Objective 7

11. In his veto message concerning the rechartering of the Second Bank of the United States, Jackson
   a. admitted that the bank was constitutional.
   b. denounced the bank as undemocratic.
   c. delivered a personal attack against the bank’s president.
   d. attacked the bank for its tight money policies.

Objective 6

12. A person’s political affiliation in the 1830s and 1840s was most closely associated with the person’s
   a. social class.
   b. religious beliefs.
   c. occupation.
   d. gender.

Objective 8

13. After ascending to the presidency upon the death of President Harrison, President Tyler
   a. turned the reins of government over to Secretary of State Daniel Webster.
   b. proclaimed his opposition to Senator Calhoun’s nullification theory.
   c. committed himself to the creation of an activist federal government.
   d. opposed the economic program put forward by his own party.

Objective 9

14. The expansionist sentiment of the 1840s emerged for which of the following reasons?
   a. The absence of threats by foreign powers caused Americans to think in expansionist terms.
   b. Such sentiment served as a release for internal conflicts caused by the economic problems of the 1840s.
   c. Spanish tyranny throughout the West was repugnant to Americans.
   d. Americans believed that it was their duty to carry their superior American civilization to inferior peoples.
Objective 10

15. James K. Polk’s election to the presidency in 1844 was in large part due to
a. fear among the voters that Henry Clay’s American System would lead the nation to war.
b. the support given him by Martin Van Buren.
c. the presence of the Liberty Party candidate on the ballot.
d. Polk’s stand against the expansion of slavery.

Essay Questions

Objective 1

1. Discuss the characteristics of the Second Great Awakening, and explain the impact of this religious revival on American society in the early nineteenth century.

Objective 4

2. Discuss the similarities and differences between “old” abolitionism as expressed through the American Colonization Society and “new” abolitionism as expressed through William Lloyd Garrison and the American Anti-Slavery Society.

Objective 2

3. Discuss the role of women in American society in the early nineteenth century, and explain the emergence, growth, goals, and achievements of the women’s rights movement that emerged during that time.

Objectives 6 and 7

4. Discuss the social, political, and economic views of the Jacksonian Democrats, and explain how those views manifested themselves in the nullification crisis and in the controversy over rechartering the Second Bank of the United States.

Objective 9

5. Examine the expansionist sentiment that emerged in American society in the 1830s and 1840s.