

10.2 Sam Patch's Legacy: Celebrity, Politics, and the American Type in Jacksonian America

Today

1. Two-Party System that Emerges in 1830s, in the Age of Jackson
2. What does Sam Patch's story and legacy teach us about Americans during this period

Friday (change in syllabus)

1. Finish up discussion of Patch
2. Controversies or Contradictions during Jackson's Administration and his predecessor Martin Van Buren
 - 2.1. State's Rights and Crisis over Nullification
 - 2.2. Indian Removal
 - 2.3. Banking

*Quiz will be on sections in Foner about Jackson's Administration and the Johnson chapter on Celebrity.

Mon 9 April

Submit Draft of Essay via Blackboard by 10 AM

I. Introduction to Politics during the Age of Jackson

- jumping by the presidencies of Madison, Monroe, and John Quincy Adams -- all Democratic-Republican
- key to remember is debates over how states entered union and whether they could/should be **slave or free** AND the **American System**, advanced by Democratic-Republicans in the Senate and Presidency like Henry Clay, John C. Calhoun, and John Quincy Adams

- The System was a new form of [federalism](#) that included:
 - 2.1. Support for a high [tariff](#) to protect American industries and generate revenue for the [federal government](#)
 - 2.2. Maintenance of high public land prices to generate [federal revenue](#)
 - 2.3. Preservation of the [Bank of the United States](#) to stabilize the currency and rein in risky state and local banks
 - 2.4. Development of a system of [internal improvements](#) (such as roads and canals) which would knit the nation together and be financed by the tariff and land sales revenues.

1. Jackson looms large, 1829-1837, in this political moment and defines it in many ways.

The career of Andrew Jackson, whose unprecedented inauguration drew a raucous crowd of 20,000 that crashed through the White House, represented major developments of his era.

His life and presidency reflected the power of the market revolution, westward expansion, the spread of slavery, and the growth of democracy.

He symbolized the self-made man, having risen from a humble frontier background in South Carolina and Tennessee and practiced law and served in the state's legislature and courts, all before winning fame through triumph at the Battle of New Orleans in the War of 1812.

Most important, Jackson represented the **rise of political democracy**.

2. Old but Evolving relationship between Property and Democracy is key.

One basis of political democracy in this period was the challenge to property qualifications for voting.

It began in the American Revolution but culminated in the early nineteenth century.

After the Revolution, no new state required property ownership to vote, and in older states, constitutional conventions in the 1820s and 1830s abolished property qualifications, partly because the growing number of wage earners who did not own much property demanded the vote.

In the **South**, however, where large slaveowners dominated politics and distrusted mass democracy, property requirements were eliminated only gradually and disappeared quite late, by 1860.

The personal independence required of the citizen was henceforth located not in owning property but in **owning one's self, a reflection of this period's individualism (remember Monday's Free Individual!)**

QUICK DISCUSSION: STUMP SPEAKING or the County Canvess (1853) by George Caleb Bingham

What elements in the painting Stump Speaking illustrate the growth of American democracy?

- drama of new democratic style
- finding nearest tree stump and using it as a platform
- did not include women, African Americans, Indians

3. "Information Revolution" - not just about computers

The market revolution and political democracy **expanded the public sphere** and the world of **print**.

This "information revolution" was facilitated in part by the invention of the **steam-powered printing press**, which printed much more matter at far less cost.

A new style of **sensational journalism** catered to a mass readership, which was soon created in newspapers (**think of all the newspapers mentioned in Sam Patch - why are they so important in the book?**) with a total circulation higher than that of all Europe.

Low postal rates and the **growth of political parties** also sparked the expansion of print.

Labor organizations, reformers, and even Native American tribes printed newspapers for the **first time** in American history, and the growth of print offered a new generation of **women writers** a venue for expression.

II. Second Party System

Question: What was the first Party system?

1. Election of 1824

In the 1824 presidential election, only candidate **Andrew Jackson**, known for his military victories, had nationwide support.

The other candidates—John Quincy Adams of Massachusetts, William Crawford of Georgia, and Henry Clay of Kentucky—found support mostly in their regions.

Though Jackson received the largest tally of the popular vote and carried all regions except for New England, none of the candidates received a majority of electoral college votes.

Running last and eliminated, Henry Clay used his influence to lead the House of Representatives into electing John Quincy Adams as president, whom Clay believed would promote the **American System**.

Clay was soon appointed secretary of state.

This appointment led to charges that a “**corrupt bargain**” between Clay and Adams had secured the presidency for Adams, and laid the basis for the emergence of a Democratic Party behind Andrew Jackson’s candidacy in the 1828 election.

The alliance around Adams and Clay came to form the opposition Whig Party in the 1830s, during the so-called SECOND PARTY SYSTEM.

2. The Whigs

Question: What do we learn about the Whigs in this chapter from Johnson?

p166, literati

p169, Hasty Pudding Club

p170, emerging middle class

p173, morality

174-175, gentility and respectability

Whigs supported modernization...the American system, believing the protective tariff, internal improvements, and a national bank could develop the economy and spread prosperity for all classes.

Also supported Congress over the Executive - because they were originally held together by their opposition to Jackson.

They were strongest in the Northeast, the most modernized region.

Many bankers and businessmen supported their program, as did farmers near rivers, canals, and other waterways.

While many slaveholders supported the Democrats, who believed states’ rights protected slavery, the largest southern planters voted Whig.

3. Democrats

Question: What do we learn about the Democrats in this chapter from Johnson?

p174-175 describes who they were

Democrats tended to be alarmed by the growing gap between social classes, and warned that “nonproducers,” such as **bankers, merchants, and speculators**, were using connections with government to enhance their wealth to the disadvantage of “producers,” such as **farmers, artisans, and laborers**.

They wanted government to avoid interfering with the economy and giving special favors to economic interests.

Without government interference in the market, ordinary Americans would fairly compete in a self-regulating market, and the most meritorious would succeed.

Democrats tended to be upcoming businessmen, farmers, and urban workers.

***THREE READINGS**

***RETURN to Stump Speaking**

- Bingham was a Whig opponent of the Democratic Party - too much democracy: “wiry” fellow who had grown grey in the pursuit of office and the service of his party” - literally bends to popular will in the painting
- in contrast - man in the top hat is an “outstanding citizen” - Whig - refused to bend

4. Election of 1828

Adams rallied an opposition around Andrew Jackson dedicated to **individual liberty, states' rights, and limited government.**

Jackson's campaign, organized by **Martin Van Buren**, a New York senator, started immediately after Adams took office.

While **Adams** typified an **old politics in which elites ruled**, **Van Buren**, the son of a **tavern keeper**, represented a new era in American politics, in which **ordinary men could become party managers and professionals** and wield great power.

Van Buren believed **political parties and party competition** were legitimate and good for the republic, by **checking** the power of administrations and offering voters choice.

He also believed parties would **suppress sectionalism** by bringing together supporters and candidates from all across the country - **wanted a national party.**

Van Buren was alarmed by the sectionalism inspired by the slavery question in the Missouri debates, and **he hoped to resurrect the Jeffersonian alliance between southern planters and northern farmers and urban workers.**

By 1828, Van Buren had created a vibrant Democratic Party embodying this alliance, and by using new techniques to mobilize mass voter turnout, helped elect Jackson president in a **huge majority** over Adams.

III. President Andrew Jackson

Andrew Jackson was a man of contradictions.

1. He was not well educated but he was eloquent;
2. he championed the common man but excluded Indians and African-Americans from democracy (**more on that on Friday**);
3. he rose from modest origins to become a rich man and slaveowner in Tennessee, BUT he disliked banks, paper money, and some of the results of the market revolution;
4. he was a strong nationalist BUT he believed that states, not the federal government, should govern, and he opposed federal intervention in the economy or interference in private life.

By Jackson's presidency, politics was a **mass activity**, engaging masses of Americans constantly and penetrating all spheres of life.

It was a mass spectacle, with enormous meetings, party newspapers, parades, and celebrated politician orator.

Large national conventions replaced congressional caucuses in nominating candidates.

Political parties and urban political machines dispensed patronage in the form of jobs, assistance, and other benefits.

Jackson himself introduced the "spoils system," in which a new administration replaced previously appointed officials with its own party's appointees.

IMAGE - In this attack on the spoils system, a demonic Andrew Jackson dangles the spoils of victory before eager office seekers.

IV. Sam Patch as Celebrity and as an American Folk Hero

1. Celebrity or Folk Hero

*Read p163 about celebrity.

*Dan Marble and Charles C. Brown (Read p177)

2. American Type - show Disney Film from 1955

- David "Davy" Crockett (August 17, 1786 – March 6, 1836) was a celebrated 19th century [American folk hero](#), [frontiersman](#), [soldier](#) and [politician](#).
- He is commonly referred to in popular culture by the [epithet](#) "King of the Wild Frontier".
- He represented [Tennessee](#) in the [U.S. House of Representatives](#), served in the [Texas Revolution](#), and died at the [Battle of the Alamo](#).
- Mike Fink King of the River

3. FINAL POINT: Public v. Private Definitions of Freedom

***For Democrats, Patch displayed personal freedom - achieved celebrity, stood for American rags to riches/choice by personal determination - by doing something**

***For Whigs, he was vulgar and the government power or institutional power was required for freedom to matter - need to look before you leap.**

Party battles of the Jacksonian era reflected conflict between “public” and “private” definitions of American freedom and their relationship to government power.

To **Democrats**, liberty was a private entitlement best protected by local governments and threatened by a powerful national state.

With Jackson, the national government’s power decreased.

Weak federal power ensured private freedom and states' rights, so Democrats under Jackson **reduced spending, lowered the tariff, killed the national bank, and refused federal aid for internal improvements.**

States thus replaced the federal government as main economic actors, planning road and canal systems and chartering banks and other corporations.

Democrats also thought **individual morality was a private concern**, and opposed attempts to impose a uniform moral vision on society, such as **temperance laws** restricting or banning the production and sale of liquor, or Sabbath laws banning business on Sundays.

This was one reason why Irish and German immigrants tended to vote Democratic.

Democrats supported policies that enhanced the **“free agency”** of individuals, leaving them free to make their own decision and pursue their own interests.

Whigs believed that liberty and power reinforced each other.

They thought an **energetic federal government enhanced freedom**, and liberty required a prosperous and moral America.

Government would create the **conditions for economic development**, producing prosperity for all classes and regions.

Like the Federalists, wealthy Whigs saw society as a **hierarchy of social classes**, **but unlike** the Federalists, they believed class status was not fixed; individuals through hard work could rise in society.

Whig also believed the government **should intervene in individual life** to ensure that they acted as free moral agents, and thus supported schools, temperance laws, and Sabbath laws.