

Chapter 12 Outline - Reform and Politics, 1824–1845

- I. Introduction

The enormous transformation of the United States after the War of 1812 and the religious revival movement known as the Second Great Awakening sparked a fervor for reform beginning in the 1830s. The “second political system,” made up of the Whig Party and the Jacksonian Democrats, emerged during the era and was characterized by strong party organizations, intense party loyalty, and religious and ethnic voting patterns.

- II. From Revival to Reform

- A. Revivals

The most famous revival of the era was at Cane Ridge, Kentucky, in August 1801. The call to personal conversion associated with the Second Great Awakening invigorated Protestant churches throughout the South.

As the debate over slavery heated up, southern Presbyterian, Baptist, and Methodist churches seceded from their national conferences.

Northern revivalists emphasized communal improvement. Evangelists of the age such as Lyman Beecher and Charles Finney preached that all could achieve salvation, emphasized the concept of human perfectibility, and the doing of good deeds. This message gave rise to social reform movements in the North.

- B. Moral Reform

Through the financial support of wealthy men, evangelists made use of new technologies such as the steam press and the railroad to spread their message.

Women proved to be the most ardent supporters of evangelism and reform. This work expanded the role of women from the domestic

sphere to the public realm.

The 1830 report on prostitution in New York City caused women to revive the fight against prostitution. Women soon transformed the emotionalism of revivals into an enthusiasm for moral reform by establishing organizations such as the Female Moral Reform Society.

- C. Penitentiaries and Asylums

Asylums and penitentiaries also came under scrutiny as reformers worked to improve these institutions. Dorothea Dix was especially important in the work to reform treatment of the mentally ill. Through her work, she moved from reform to politics and helped create a new public role for women.

- D. Temperance

One of the earliest and strongest concerns for reform resulted in a campaign against the use of alcohol. The American Society for the Promotion of Temperance moved from the goal of moderation to that of prohibition.

The movement against drinking led to a sharp decline in the use of alcohol.

- E. Public Schools

Horace Mann helped generate widespread interest in a secular system of education.

- F. Engineering and Science

More Americans were beginning to look to science and engineering to remedy the nation's problems. National scientific institutions were established to disseminate knowledge. Scientific discoveries were seen as progress even by some religious sects who believed them to be signs of the approaching millennium.

• III. Utopian Experiments

○ A. Mormons

The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints developed into the most successful communal group. Originating in 1830, they were persecuted for polygamist practices and were driven from Ohio to Missouri to Illinois, before finally settling in the Utah territory.

○ B. Shakers

The Shakers were the largest group of Americans to experiment with utopian communities. Founded by Mother Ann Lee in England in 1772, the Shakers emphasized agriculture, handcrafts, and self-sufficiency. Men and women lived in segregated quarters and celibacy was the norm.

○ C. Oneidans, Owenites, and Fourierists

These utopian communities rejected individualism in favor of communal living, child-rearing, property ownership and (sometimes) sexual relationships.

○ D. American Renaissance

The American Renaissance was a proliferation of literary accomplishment by American authors of the 1830s and 1840s. The style was a more distinctly American literature employing American settings and characters. Authors of the time included Ralph Waldo Emerson, Herman Melville, Nathaniel Hawthorne, and Henry David Thoreau.

• IV. Abolitionism

○ A. Early Abolitionism and Colonization

Free African Americans organized at least fifty abolitionist societies in the United States by 1830.

David Walker's *Appeal . . . to the Colored Citizens*, which advocated the violent overthrow of slavery, captured the attention of white Americans.

Early white antislavery advocates fought for the gradual abolition of slavery and helped African Americans who attempted to end slavery through judicial decisions.

The American Colonization Society advocated gradual emancipation and the removal of former slaves to Africa.

William Lloyd Garrison and other more radical white abolitionists demanded immediate emancipation. Garrison founded the American Antislavery Society in 1833.

- B. Immediatism

A number of reformers agreed with Garrison's call for immediate emancipation. Immediatists tended to be young evangelicals who believed slaveholding was a sin. Garrison and other immediatists believed in using the tactic of "moral suasion."

- C. The Lane Debates

Theodore Weld organized the Lane Debates at Lane Seminary in 1833 in which students and faculty debated the relative merits of colonization and immediatism.

Weld and the "Lane Rebels" eventually broke with Lane Seminary and enrolled in a new seminary at Oberlin that was dedicated to immediatism.

- D. The American Antislavery Society

The American Antislavery Society welcomed men and women of all races and social classes.

Through the American Antislavery Society, women took a more prominent role in the immediatist movement than in any previous reform.

- E. African American Abolitionists

In the 1840s and 1850s, African Americans continued their independent efforts to end slavery and to improve the lives of free African Americans.

Harriet Tubman, Sojourner Truth, and others participated in the Underground Railroad to help slaves escape to freedom.

- F. Opposition to Abolitionism

Many white Americans responded violently to abolitionism.

- G. Moral Suasion versus Political Action

Some immediatists, such as James G. Birney, favored a more practical, political solution to the abolition of slavery. These political abolitionists stood against the involvement of women in the American Anti-Slavery Society.

Arthur Tappan and Theodore Weld broke with William Lloyd Garrison, an ardent supporter of women's rights, in 1840 and founded the American and Foreign Anti-Slavery Society. This society formed the Liberty Party.

- V. Women's Rights

- A. Legal Rights

Women made some gains in property and spousal rights beginning in the 1830s.

- B. Political Rights

Elizabeth Cady Stanton, Lucretia Mott, and Mary Ann McClintock, Martha Wright, and Jane Hunt organized the Woman's Rights Convention at Seneca Falls in July 1848. They protested women's legal disabilities and their social restrictions and issued the Declaration of Sentiments.

- VI. Jacksonianism and Party Politics

- A. Expanding Political Participation

By 1840, only 7 of 26 states retained property restrictions for voters.

By 1824, 18 out of 25 states chose presidential electors by popular vote.

- B. Election of 1824

Popular participation in politics led to the demise of nominating the president by congressional caucus.

A supposed "corrupt bargain" led to the election of John Quincy Adams.

- C. Election of 1828

Jackson, the first president from the West, gained his popularity from a lifetime of bold achievements.

The Democratic Party became the first well-organized national political party as a result of Jackson's leadership in this election.

- D. Democrats

The Democrats enjoyed widespread support and fostered a Jeffersonian agrarian viewpoint. Fearing the concentration of economic and political power, the Democrats wanted to restore the independence of the individual by ending federal support of banks and corporations.

Jacksonians considered themselves reformers when they sought to limit the influence of government and promote individualism.

- E. King Andrew

As president, Jackson strengthened the executive branch of government and made the veto an effective weapon against Congress.

- VII. Federalism at Issue: The Nullification and Bank Controversies

- A. Nullification

The South opposed the Tariff of 1828 and referred to it as the Tariff of Abominations. To defend their interests against the power of the federal government, South Carolina's political leaders used the doctrine of nullification.

In 1830, Daniel Webster of New Hampshire debated Robert Y. Hayne of South Carolina in the Senate on the issue of nullification.

- B. The Force Act

When South Carolina nullified the Tariff of 1832, Jackson responded by issuing the Nullification Proclamation and by having Congress issue the Force Act. He also recommended tariff reduction, which temporarily ended the crisis.

- C. Second Bank of the United States

The rechartering of the Second Bank of the United States became the central issue in the 1832 election.

- D. Political Violence

Political violence was not uncommon in this era. Elections often involved fraud, coercion, and intimidation. Riots left party members

injured and even dead on occasion.

- E. Anti-Masonry

Opponents attacked the Masonic order as antidemocratic and antirepublican. Evangelicals labeled the order sacrilegious.

As Antimasons gained wider support, they organized politically, introducing the nominating convention.

- F. Election of 1832

Jackson denounced the Second Bank of the United States as undemocratic, and in 1832 he vetoed a bill to recharter the bank.

- G. Jackson's Second Term

Jackson tried to ensure that the national bank would never be rechartered, and he deposited federal funds in "pet" state banks. Land speculation, however, soon threatened the economy.

- H. Specie Circular

Jackson's "hard-money" policy that required payment in specie to buy federal lands failed to stop speculation.

- VIII. The Whig Challenge and the Second Party System

- A. Whigs and Reformers

The Whigs sought to recharter the national bank, create an active federal government, and promote humanitarian and moral reform. Whig policies embodied the beliefs of many reform organizations, and the Whig Party became the vehicle of revivalist Protestantism.

In an effort to avoid answering abolitionist petitions, the House of Representatives passed the "gag rule," which automatically tabled

such petitions from 1836 to 1844.

- B. Election of 1836

In 1836, Democrat Martin Van Buren, enjoying broad-based support, won the presidency. Van Buren managed to head off the as-yet unorganized Whig opposition, but Congress had to decide the vice-presidential race.

- C. Van Buren and Hard Times

Just after the election of 1836, the American credit system collapsed. Van Buren's hard money policies sent the economy spiraling downward.

- D. Anglo-American Tensions

The United States and Great Britain neared war over several issues in the late 1830s and early 1840s.

- E. William Henry Harrison and the Election of 1840

The Whig William Henry Harrison conducted a people's crusade and presented himself as an ordinary farmer in his successful campaign for the presidency in 1840. He died within a month of taking office, however, and John Tyler became president.

- F. President Tyler

Tyler opposed his own party's congressional agenda. With the exception of Secretary of State Daniel Webster, Tyler's entire cabinet resigned after the President's second veto of a bill aimed at reviving the Bank of the United States.