

# Jacksonian Democracy 1829 - 1853

The Jacksonian democracy began in 1829 when Andrew Jackson began his presidency. This era was characterized as an era of democracy for the common man, with free trade, a limited federal government, and equal economic opportunities for all men.

Andrew Jackson's vision of democracy promoted the power of the presidency and executive branch over the power of Congress. Jacksonian democracy also sought to increase the public's participation in the government.

During this time, the electorate (those who could vote) was increased to include all white male adult citizens, not just white men who owned land.

Westward expansion was then described as Manifest Destiny. Manifest Destiny was the belief that it was America's destiny to reach from shore to shore, from the Atlantic to the Pacific. The words came from John O'Sullivan, a journalist who wrote that it was "our manifest destiny" to cover the continent.

~~Planters and farmers became linked to new~~ marketplaces and raw natural resources in the western territories by new canals, steamboats, and railroads. The influx of both raw and natural resources encouraged growth in manufacturing in the Northeast. This industrialization led to the development of "free labor," which stood in sharp contrast to the forced labor of slavery in the South.

## Important Events during the Jacksonian Democracy Period

- 1831 Cyrus McCormick invented a crop-harvesting reaper that did the work of five men.
- 1834 The Whig Party was established in opposition to the Jacksonian Democrats. (Whigs were replaced around 1854 by the Republican Party. National Republicans had by then renamed themselves Democrats.)
- 1841 The Oregon Trail opened as the first wagon train set out from Missouri to Oregon, marking the beginning of westward expansion.
- 1844 Samuel Morse invented the telegraph and sent out the first telegraphic (long-distance) message, opening a new way to communicate.
- 1845 The Irish potato famine forced thousands of Irish to flee to the United States.
- 1846 Elias Howe invented the first sewing machine, and later improvements led to faster and cheaper production of clothing, which had been made by hand.
- 1848 Gold was discovered near Sacramento, California. The following year, the California gold rush began with thousands traveling west to find gold.
- 1848 The Seneca Falls Convention was held in support of women's rights. During this time, women did not have the right to vote, and the rights they had, including property ownership as citizens, were very limited.

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