

Analysis of andrew jackson and martin van buren assignment

[History](#)



The presidents have always played a crucial role in American politics and are known for their roles in unifying the nation. They are glorified for their charisma and ability to lead, but even these brilliant men make economic, political, and social blunders. Andrew Jackson, who was in office from 1829-1837, was a president of many firsts as he was the first frontier president, first to have a “kitchen cabinet”, and first to use a pocket veto. Jackson was later succeeded by his vice president, Martin Van Buren. Van Buren, who was in office from 1837-1841, was known for his shrewd political skills.

Both these men laid down the foundations for a stronger, more centralized national government with methods that garnered mixed responses. Andrew Jackson was a war hero turned president, but his battles did not end with his election. One type of problem Jackson faced was economic. South Carolinian planters saw that the protective tariff, passed by Congress in 1824, as oppressive since most of the revenue made from it was invested in the northeast’s manufacturing industry. They were more infuriated when the tariff was raised in the summer of 1828 (Brinkley 207).

The South Carolinians and Vice President John C. Calhoun saw the taxes as “blatantly unconstitutional, exceeding Congress’s powers to raise necessary revenues and oppressing one section of the country while enriching others” (Willets 63). A nullification document written by Calhoun known as the South Carolina Exposition and Protest was passed by the state legislature in 1832 as a response. This text announced that any state could declare its original sovereignty and disregard federal laws that are found offensive in their borders.

In retaliation, Jackson sent federal troops to South Carolina to enforce the law, but before any violence could ensue the state backed down (Brinkley 207). This created a strong rift between Jackson and his vice president that turned in to a bitter rivalry between the two. Jackson's strong approach caused the executive branch to become unstable and eventually Calhoun and he split in 1832 (Willets 64-65). Another negative economic event that Jackson faced was his clash with the Second Banks of the United States.

The Second Bank of the United States was a privately owned institution with an outrageous amount of public influence. With a congressional charter, it was the national government's sole fiscal handler and could use public funds without interest for its own discretion (Brinkley 211). Due to this, Jackson saw the Bank as "an unconstitutional aberration and an affront to popular sovereignty" (Willets 75). There was also opposition of the Bank by advocates of soft money, who were mainly state banks, and advocates of hard money, who were people that disapproved all banks and believed only in coins for currency (Brinkley 211). When it was time for the Bank's charter to be renewed in 1832, Jackson removed all federal funds the following year and when the original charter expired in 1836 all operations as a national bank ended. This would subsequently cause the economy to become unstable a year later (Willets 79-80). Although there were no wars during Jackson's administration, there have been close calls. A treaty was created, in 1831 a year before Jackson took office, whereby France agreed to pay reparations for damages made on American shipping under the reign of Napoleon.

The French Chamber of Deputies, however, later refused to allocate the appropriate funds. Jackson infuriated with this called on Congress to allow for reprisals should the French not pay. Both nations refused to back down and the “ bickering spiraled to the point where they recalled their ministers and a war seemed imminent” (Willets 138). The crisis was averted with the French eventually ceding with urgings from Britain. Jackson’s stubbornness and refusal to back down landed the United States in hot water, especially in provoking a nation like France that she would not be able to fight.

Jackson also faced the issue of American advancement into the west. The removal of Indians was a major concern of his administration and management of the situation was the most notable gaffe of his administration. Like many other Americans at the time, he believed that the Indians were inferior to white men and saw them as savages. Once in office, Jackson urged the Indians to move westward and give up their land, but he was adamantly opposed. The first of the land battles began with Georgia when the state claimed millions of acres of Indian land.

The Indians responded with a suit in the Supreme court that was ruled in their favor, stating that Georgia had no authority over their land. The Georgians ignored this and a white invasion of the land ensued. Jackson did nothing to enforce the ruling and there was no consequences to the blatant disregard of the Supreme Court (Ermine 60-61 Later, the Indian Removal Act of 1 830 was eased and signed by Jackson which gave him the authority to make treaties that would exchange land in the west for Indian land east of the Mississippi.

It also stated their relocation would be paid for by the federal government. The Indians opposed this act because although it seemed peaceful, they were removed forcefully. This led to many bloody conflicts in which one side would try to seize the land while the other side tried to protect it. The struggle continued and many citizens were polarize on the issue as some saw the Indians as hindrances to American expansionism while the others saw it as outright disrespect of the Indian's rights.

Eventually in 1835, after the anti- treaty supporters negotiated better terms, a treaty was signed in which the Indians would give up their land in exchange for other lands west of the Mississippi (Willets 139-141 This later led to the Indian's large exodus where thousands suffered. Although Jackson's decision allowed for the nation to expand, it was at the enormous expense of the Indians. He forcefully kicked them Off their land and treated them as if they were livestock that did not deserve basic human rights. Jackson served for two terms and remained incredibly popular even after resigning.

He was the true epitome of a poor, country boy who grew up to become president. He was a self-made man that used his presidency to help ordinary people rather than the rich. Although he had he helped the nation to grow, it came at the sacrifice of so many innocent lives. His popularity with the people led to the election of Martin Van Burden, who was his vice president and once the most powerful member of Jackson's cabinet as Secretary of State. At the very beginning of Van Burden's presidency, he faced the first major economic crisis that America had experienced - the

Panic of 1837. This fiscal fiasco was triggered by Jackson's withdrawal from the Second Bank of the United States and deposition into state banks of federal funds. Consequently, there was reckless speculation by the banks in lands westward (Willets 1 19). The bubble finally burst in 1837 and hundreds of businesses and banks failed, causing the worst depression of the economy at the time. Van Burden "did little to relieve popular misery" as he called for less government intervention and created no programs to help with the massive unemployment rate (Wider 102).

He later proposed for the transfer of federal funds to an independent treasury. This bill would eventually be passed year later, but many blamed him for the crisis and inadequate response to it. It ultimately led to his crushing defeat by the William Henry' Harrison, the Whig candidate, in the following election (Wider 103-104). During his presidency, Van Burden also faced raising tensions with Great Britain as there was a heated border dispute near the Canada-Maine border. This skirmish brought the two on the brink of war. However, Van Burden sought to resolve this conflict before violence resulted.

General Winfield Scott and an envoy were sent to Britain to negotiate a treaty, which subsequently concluded the conflict. Many criticized ' Van Burden's cautious diplomacy" as they felt that he should have taken a stronger stance against Britain and assert the United States as a force to be reckoned with (Wider 131). Slavery at the time was a controversial topic as many northern cities saw it as an abomination that should be abolished while in the south it was the center of the economy. Starting in 1836, many slave

owners looking for space to expand saw Texas as the solution to their problems.