

The impact of andrew jackson on american history

[History](#), [American History](#)



Introduction

Andrew Jackson... We encounter him regularly on the twenty-dollar bill but, have you ever thought about the significance of this man in our history? He did after all make it onto the face of our currency so, he must have done something good, right? Was he a man of the people or was he a man for himself and his own gain. In this paper, my goal is to essentially to play devil's advocate with the life and legacy of Andrew Jackson to try to decipher if he was truly a man of the people. For order for us to make this conclusion we need to become more familiar with Jackson's life. He was born in Waxhaws, South Carolina to Irish immigrants. His father passed away early from injuries that he received in a log accident and, this left his mother in a difficult situation being that it was such an early time in American and women depended solely on the male figure who provided for the family. This unfortunate situation caused Jackson to have a limited education. Eventually, as he grew up he relocated to somewhere in Tennessee at which point he began studying law and soon became a highly recognized lawyer.

Jackson's Character

We need to get a bit more familiar with Andrew Jackson's personality to understand if he truly had the people's best interest at heart. According to Whitehouse.gov " Fiercely jealous of his honor, he engaged in brawls, and in a duel killed a man who cast an unjustified slur on his wife Rachel." Okay so before we make any assumptions on this behavior let's try to rationalize this (if possible). Remember that this was a very different time and men were solely ruled by their pride and manliness to " assert dominance and gain

respect". On the other hand, was it necessary to actually have took someone's life over a cat call? Probably not, no. This shows us that Andrew Jackson was very concerned with making a statement that no one offended him and disrespect him that way or any way. He could have just beat up the man but, he took the extra step to actually kill him. This does have to have an effect on our overall perception of his character. Let's look at another one of his character traits. It was no secret that Andrew Jackson along with many other people at this time owned slaves. First off it is a well-known fact that saying you " own" another person is downright disgusting. It was a different time but, you can't honestly use the " if everyone jumped off a bridge" reference here, you know what is right and what is wrong. Thomas Jefferson thought of himself as a " humane" slave owner, whatever that means, but I cannot say the same thing for Andrew Jackson. According to Wikipedia. org, there is a copy of a want add posted by Andrew Jackson giving a physical description of the slave that had run away with a reward of fifty dollars to return him and even paid transportation fees if he made it out the state. In the want ads he uses phrases such as " speaks sensible" and " can pass for a free man". He also went the extra mile by including that he would offer ten dollars for every one hundred lashes given to him up to three hundred dollars. I'll let you do the math. This portrays that Andrew Jackson was only a president of the common WHITE man. Back in the young years of the United States, Native American's played a large part in our daily lives. Not only did they teach the original settlers about the land and how to grow crops they were here way before any immigrants were. America was their home and essentially, we stole it from them. Andrew Jackson was very hypocritical

when it came to the Native Americans. According to historyengine.richmond.edu " In 1830, Jackson passed the Indian Removal Act, which forcibly removed the Creek, Chickasaw, Seminoles, and even the Choctaws. This is ironic because in 1830, Jackson adopted a policy to remove the Indians that he claimed in 1814 ' were more civilized than the British.'. Jackson seemed to be doing what was best for him and his personal gain. He used the Indians as an ally when he needed them and then turned his back when we he didn't. Again, this shows to believe that Jackson only had the interest on the common white man in mind.

Thinking about the People

So, let's take look at something a bit more positive about Andrew Jackson. According to WhiteHouse. gov " In his first Annual Message to Congress, Jackson recommended eliminating the Electoral College." This seems to be something decent on Jackson's behalf. The founding fathers set up the electoral college because, they did not trust the common man to choose the president and the vice president directly. Back in the day it is understandable why this must have been implemented. Many people didn't know how to read or write and weren't too intelligent due to lack of education. Technically this doesn't make them qualified to choose the leaders of our country. However, as time passed people became more literate but, the electoral college was never removed. This makes you wonder if your voice really matters when you wonder if your voice really matters when you still have people who finalize decisions for you. Jackson wanted to get the power back to the people. When I say the people of course I mean the only people who could vote at that time white males. Andrew Jackson ran into an issue with the Second Bank of America during his presidency. He basically thought that this bank only had the well-being of the rich in mind and Jackson made sure they knew he disagreed with them. The bank didn't take too well to Jackson speaking his mind and used the power they had against Jackson. They ended up fight each other over a re-charter movement and Jackson won the popular vote. You have to applaud Jackson who stood up for what he believed was just the rich looking out for the rich. Very few people would openly disagree with something that has so much power for fear of stepping on the wrongs toes, but not Jackson. He was widely known for speaking his mind and not

caring what people had to say about. This worked for and against him of course. If Jackson did not like a law he would try to use his power of veto or, he would just blatantly ignore it. The Trail of Tears

Andrew Jackson is known for increasing westward expansion more than any of the other previous presidents. Removing and relocating all the Indians in the Trail of Tears was one of the reasons due to all the new vacant land that could now be expanded on. This newly free land allowed settlers and speculators (people who made money of the selling of land) to move in. This did on the other hand help us establish ourselves more as a country being that we didn't have the copious amount of land we have in today's time. The way Jackson went about the expansion was morally wrong. A substantial number of Native Americans would die in the Trail of Tears due to harsh conditions but this didn't matter to Jackson because he was not a fan of Native Americans. Let's go a bit more in depth with Andrews Jacksons involvement in the Trail of Tears. The Trail of Tears according to PBS. org was " In 1838 and 1839, as part of Andrew Jackson's Indian removal policy, the Cherokee nation was forced to give up its lands east of the Mississippi River and to migrate to an area in present-day Oklahoma.". This act was later called the Trail of Tears because of all the Native Americans that died during the trip. They were subjected to harsh weather, hunger, disease, and extreme fatigue. To uproot families and send people into slavery or force them to leave their homes and live in an unknown area for no other reason more than your own personal gain is despicable to say the least. Once again, we are left questioning Mr. Jackson's morals and true motives.

Attempt of Assassination

An interesting fact about Jackson is that he was actually the first president on whom an assassination was attempted on. Richard Lawrence III was the man who attempted to kill him, he had believed that Jackson tried to kill his father even though that turned out to be false. He brought two pistols and they both happened to misfire and Jackson obviously has tussle with the man who tried to kill him. Also, according to Occupytheory. org upon further examination of the guns they were both in perfect working condition. Coincidence?

Political Parties

Jackson's presidency brought with him the growth of different political parties. Before Jackson most people were Jeffersonian-Democratic-Republicans most because that was the only party at the time and they believed not to depend on currency because men could grow and provide things for themselves. The new democrats that formed during the Jacksonian era were usually farmers in the lower or middle class. Many of the people in this party were concerned with the widening gap between the rich and the poor. Also, many of the members were curious about merchants, bankers, and speculators who were becoming very rich off not producing anything according to John Green with Crash-Course US History. In response to Jackson's election another party was formed calling themselves the Whigs. They took their name from the well-known English Whigs who were completely against absolute monarchy. They thought that Andrew Jackson was receiving too much power from the executive branch and they nicknamed Andrew Jackson, King Andrew. So, Jackson must have been doing

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something pretty intense in order for an entire political party to form in his opposition. This makes you wonder how political parties would've been today if not for Andrew Jackson's influence or if there would've been any different political parties at all.

Nullification

Nullification was another big event during Jackson's presidency. According to John Green with Crash-Course US History in 1828 the House of Representatives passed the Tariff of 1828 which raised the taxes on imported goods like iron and wool. Andrew Jackson agreed to this and it made South Carolina mad because they did not invest any of their money into industry, they had put all their money into slavery instead. Northerners could avoid this extra cost because they were able to manufacture basic everyday items like pants, shirts, etc. at home. Meanwhile this caused people in South Carolina to end up paying more. In-turn this made them so upset that the Legislature of South Carolina were threatening to nullify it. Obviously, Jackson wasn't happy about this but neither was South Carolina so they stuck to their guns. Later on, another tariff was passed the Tariff of 1832 which actually lowered prices but South Carolina still decided to nullify it. This made Andrew Jackson force Congress to pass the Force Act which allowed him to use the army and navy to collect taxes. Finally, the Compromise Act was issued and South Carolina gave in.

Conclusion

Conclusively Andrew Jackson did have a positive and negative impact on our history. Was he a president of the common man? In a way, yes because he

didn't have much formal education and he promoted the interest in the common man versus the rich. Oppositely when speaking of the common man he was looking out for it was the common white man. He did not believe in women's involvement in any government or manly activity. He was an abundant slave owner owning over one hundred and forty slaves. He uprooted and killed numerous amounts of Native Americans. This did however, increase westward expansion. Along with his presidency came the diversity of political parties. In turn was Andrew Jackson a good a guy? No definitely not. Did he have a large impact on the early formation of America? Yes. It's easy to disagree with many of the actions of Old Hickory (his infamous nickname), but overall Andrew Jackson did have a small positive influence. He was a president of the common white people and asserted his dominance in his reign as President.