**III. Manifest Destiny**

During the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, the western world experienced the Industrial Revolution. It was a time when advances in technology led to massive economic changes. Before the Industrial Revolution, national economies tended to rely on artisans, merchants, and farmers. As a result, manufacturing was often slow as products had to be crafted individually by hand. With industrialization, however, factories that relied on mechanization (use of machines) began to transform manufacturing and replace manual labor with industry. The "revolution" began in Great Britain, but it soon spread throughout the western world, impacting trade and economies around the globe.

The Industrial Revolution reached the US as well. A number of inventions had great impact on the United States in the 1800s. One of the nation's most important figures was Eli Whitney. In 1793, he invented his famous cotton gin. The machine allowed people to process harvested cotton much faster and made the South a "cotton kingdom" (nickname given to the South as cotton became its most profitable crop and the basis of the South's economy during the 1800s).

Many southern plantation owners got rich as people in both the US and overseas demanded more cotton. Because the cotton gin led to a boom in cotton plantations, it also made the South very dependent on slave labor. While Whitney's cotton gin impacted the South, it was another of his innovations that transformed the economy of the North. After the cotton gin, Whitney began to manufacture muskets. In this industry, he introduced the idea of interchangeable parts. For the first time, each part of the musket was produced with such precision that it could fit with parts from any other musket. Whitney's concept of interchangeable parts spread to other industries and became a key principle behind industrial development.

Other men contributed to US industrialization as well. Samuel Slater helped introduce the idea of using machine manufacturing in factories to produce more goods in less time. Robert Fulton revolutionized the shipment of manufactured goods and agricultural products with his steam-powered boat. Meanwhile, Samuel Morse's telegraph, John Deere's steel plow, and Cyrus McCormick's reaper helped make it possible to settle new territories in the West. The Industrial Revolution also had another, unforeseen circumstance: sectionalism. Sectionalism refers to the economic, social, cultural, and political differences that exist between different parts of the country. As Whitney's cotton gin helped transform the South into a plantation system dependent on slaves and cotton, the North became a region dependent on factories and immigrant labor. Such economic differences caused strains on the nation that led to bitter disputes. Meanwhile, the West became a growing frontier of small landowners and aspiring plantation masters. The Industrial Revolution did more than transform the nation's economy, it helped set the nation on a course that ultimately led to westward expansion and civil war.

**III.1.Manifest Destiny**

As the United States approached the middle of the nineteenth century, many leaders and citizens believed it was God's sovereign will for the US to expand and possess territory all the way to the Pacific Ocean. They considered it the nation's sacred duty to conquer the West and labeled their ideology Manifest Destiny.

**III.2.Texas: Independence and Annexation**

In 1821, Mexico gained independence from Spain. Along with its independence, Mexico also gained control of Texas, a region which included a large number of US settlers. In 1834, General Antonio Santa Anna assumed power over the Mexican government and tightened his control over Texas. In response, Texans under the leadership of Sam Houston launched a rebellion. On March 2, 1836, a convention of Texas delegates declared the territory to be an independent republic. Santa Anna answered with military force and, on March 6, a small group of Texans took their stand against the Mexican leader at an old mission called The Alamo. Despite the Texans' brave resistance, Santa Anna's forces were too strong. Every Texan who fought at the Alamo perished in the battle or was executed after his capture (among them, the famed Davey Crockett of Tennessee). After a series of battles, the Texans eventually defeated Santa Anna and took him hostage. In exchange for his freedom, the Mexican leader promised to recognize the Republic of Texas and withdraw his forces back below the Rio Grande. Wanting to become part of the United States, Texas asked to be annexed (made part of the US). President Andrew Jackson was in favor of annexing Texas, but he could not overcome northern opposition. Northerners knew that Texas would be admitted as a slave state. They also feared that, because of its large size, the area might be divided into several slave states, thereby giving slave states an advantage in Congress. Texas remained an independent nation until 1845.

The annexation of Texas was a critical issue in the election of 1844. If split, the Democratic Party and James K. Polk became the first "dark horse"(unexpected winner) presidential nominee in US history. Polk took a strong stand as the Democratic candidate, calling for the annexation of both Texas and Oregon (the Northwest Territory explored years before by Lewis and Clark). Polk ultimately defeated Whig candidate, Henry Clay, and won the presidency. (The Whigs and Democrats were the two dominant political parties at the time.) Inspired by Polk's victory, his predecessor, President John Tyler, called for a joint resolution of Congress prior to leaving office. At his urging, Congress passed a resolution admitting Texas to the Union as a slave state in 1845.

**III.3.Oregon**

With the question of Texas settled, Polk turned his attention to acquiring Oregon. In 1827, the US and Great Britain reaffirmed their agreement to occupy the Oregon territory jointly. Beginning in 1843, thousands of US settlers moved to Oregon seeking a better life. President Polk approached Britain, arguing that the US had rightful claim to the territory up to 54°40'N. Thus arose the slogan,"54-40, or fight!" Polk's aggressive tone irritated the British, but they were ready to give up Oregon because the territory was no longer profitable. Furthermore, the United States had become an important consumer of British goods, leading Britain to desire friendly terms with the US. The United States accepted a treaty declaring the 49th parallel as the official boundary and, in 1846, Oregon became a US territory.

**III.4.War with Mexico and the Gadsden Purchase**

Mexico was angry with the US for annexing Texas. However, this did not deter President Polk and leaders in Congress who believed in Manifest Destiny. In June 1845, Polk ordered General Zachary Taylor to lead his troops to the Texas border. He also sent John Slidell to Mexico to settle the disputes over the US-Mexico border and negotiate for the purchase of California and New Mexico (the area between Texas and California). After the Mexican president refused to meet with Slidell, Polk ordered Taylor to move into the disputed territory between the Nueces and Rio Grande rivers. In response, Mexican troops crossed the Rio Grande and attacked Taylor's forces.

Immediately, Polk demanded that Congress declare war on Mexico, proclaiming that the Mexicans had "shed American blood on American soil." Though some representatives disagreed, Congress passed a declaration of war on May 13, 1846. The war was a series of US victories leading up to September 14, 1847, when General Winfield Scott finally marched his troops into Mexico City and forced Mexico to surrender. After months of negotiations, the US and Mexico finally ended the war with the Treaty of Guadalupe-Hidalgo on February 2, 1848. The treaty required Mexico to surrender the New Mexico and California territories to the United States in exchange for financial compensation. However, in 1853, boundary disputes with Mexico still remained. President Franklin Pierce sent James Gadsden to settle the problem and to purchase land for a southern transcontinental railroad. The Gadsden Purchase gave the United States parts of present-day New Mexico and Arizona in exchange for $10 million. The acquisition of these territories all but completed the continental expansion envisioned by those who believed in Manifest Destiny.

**III.5.California**

In 1848, settlers discovered gold just north of Sacramento, California. The following year, gold seekers came from all over the world as part of the California Gold Rush of 1849. These new arrivals came to be known as"49ers," and they served to rapidly increase California's population. This growth produced a need for stable government almost overnight. When the debate over slavery prevented Congress from organizing the territory, Californians took matters into their own hands by drafting and approving their own constitution. Finally, thanks to the Compromise of 1850, Congress admitted California as a free state on September 9, 1850.

**III.6.Jacksonian Democracy**

One great supporter of Manifest Destiny was Andrew Jackson. He was a war hero who had defeated the British at New Orleans in 1814 and forced concessions from the Spanish that led to Florida becoming a US territory in 1819 (it became a state in 1845). In addition, Jackson was a "common man." He was not born into the rich, upper class, but, instead, achieved his success despite growing up relatively poor and uneducated. As a result, he was very popular with western frontier settlers and "common folk." In 1824, he decided to take advantage of his popularity and ran for president.

**III.7.A "Corrupt Bargain"**

More than any previous election, the presidential election of 1824 was evidence of the sectional differences in the United States. New England backed the current secretary of state, John Quincy Adams, while the southern candidate was William Crawford of Georgia. Meanwhile, both Henry Clay and Andrew Jackson were formidable western candidates. The election came down to Adams and Jackson and was so close that the House of Representatives had to decide the winner. When Clay threw his support to Adams, it was enough to give the son of former President John Adams the victory. Jackson and his followers soon protested, however, when it was learned that Clay would be named secretary of state. Jackson and his supporters denounced it as a "corrupt bargain" made to give Adams the presidency. Four years later, however, Jackson defeated Adams to become the nation's president.

**III.8.Universal (white male) Suffrage**

Jackson's brand of politics and the changes he inspired came to be called Jacksonian Democracy. Jackson believed strongly in western expansion and the rights of white, frontier settlers. He, like many westerners, resented "eastern elites" and political leaders who seemed to favor the upper class and passed laws Jackson believed helped the wealthy over small landowners. As a result, Jackson favored universal suffrage. In other words, he believed that all white men should be free to vote, not just those who owned property. With the support of men like Jackson, all but a few states dropped property requirements for voting. Expanding suffrage made the nation more democratic and enabled "simpler men" like Jackson to win public office, rather than simply those from the upper class. (It is important to remember, however, that even Jacksonian Democracy did not attempt to extend the right to vote to women, blacks, or Native Americans.)

**III.9.The "Spoils System," Strict Interpretation, and Laissez-Faire Economics**

Once in office, Jackson instituted a policy of rewarding his political supporters with government positions. This policy became known as the spoils system, and set a precedent for rewarding faithful supporters with government jobs. Jackson believed it was a great way to encourage common people to become politically involved and ensure that wealthy politicians would not continually dominate the government. However, it ultimately led to corruption and a call for reform in later administrations. Jackson and his followers also favored laissez-faire economics. In other words, they did not think that the government should regulate business or pass policies to help US businessmen (although Jackson did occasionally support tariffs so long as he did not think they were so high as to hurt small farmers). They believed that such measures tended to favor wealthy easterners while hurting southern farmers and landowners along the western frontier. Jackson did not want to hurt large US businesses and landowners, but he did want to make sure that smaller merchants and small landowners had every bit as much chance to succeed as rich manufacturers. Jackson also had a strict interpretation of the Constitution. Although he often pushed the bounds of presidential power (Jackson believed the president should have more power and say than Congress) and was even accused by his enemies of acting more like a king than a president, Andrew Jackson believed that the federal government should be restricted to only those powers the Constitution specifically gave it. As a result, he used all the power at his disposal to close the second national bank during his second term in office. Unfortunately, Jackson's actions contributed to a nationwide depression in 1837.

**III.10.Indian Removal**

As mentioned earlier, Jackson believed in Manifest Destiny and westward expansion. He saw the Native Americans that occupied territories to the west as an obstacle to be removed. As a result, he supported Indian Removal. Under this policy, the US government forced Native Americans off lands it wanted for white settlement. Perhaps the most famous example of Jackson's support for this policy was his refusal to help the Cherokee in north Georgia and the western Carolinas. Despite the fact that the Cherokee had helped Jackson defeat his enemies at the battle of Horseshoe Bend during the War of 1812, Jackson supported Georgia's efforts to remove the tribe from their lands during the 1830s. Jackson's policies ultimately led to the forced removal of the Cherokee in 1838. Their march west to Oklahoma became known as the Trail of Tears because of the many Cherokee who suffered and died along the way.

**III.11.Return of the Two-Party System**

Sharp differences over the government's role in the economy and national development led to a break in the Jeffersonian Republican Party. Jackson's wing took the name "Democrats" while his opponents adopted the name "National Republicans." Eventually, many of the National Republicans formed a new party, the "Whigs." They chose this name because it was the name of the British party that opposed King George III during the Revolutionary War. Since they accused Jackson of acting like "King Andrew," they adopted the name "Whig" as well. After an "era of good feelings," the two-party system returned to national politics with a vengeance. Jackson left office after his second term, allowing his vice president and fellow Democrat, Martin Van Buren, to win the presidential election of 1836. Interestingly, Van Buren's presidential campaign gave birth to the common expression, "O.K." It originally stood for "Old Kinderhook," which was Van Buren's nickname. However, Andrew Jackson's enemies in the Whig Party turned it around and said that it stood for the way the uneducated, "common man" president use to approve executive papers with the initials "o.k.," meaning "oil korrect" (Jackson's way of spelling "all correct").