**Chapter 9**

Jacksonian America

*Reviewing Objectives*

**A thorough study of Chapter Nine should enable the student to understand:**

1. Andrew Jackson’s philosophy of government and his impact on the office of the presidency.
2. The debate among historians about the meaning of “Jacksonian Democracy,” and Andrew Jackson’s relationship to it.
3. The nullification theory of John C. Calhoun, and President Jackson’s reaction to the attempt to put nullification into action.
4. The supplanting of John C. Calhoun by Martin Van Buren as successor to Jackson, and the significance of the change.
5. The reasons why the eastern Indians were removed to the West and the impact this had on the tribes.
6. The reasons for the Jacksonian war on the Bank of the United States, and the effects of Jackson’s veto on the powers of the president and on the American financial system.
7. The causes of the Panic of 1836, and the effect of the panic of the presidency of Van Buren.
8. The differences in party philosophy between the Democrats and the Whigs, the reasons for the Whig victory in 1840, and the effect of the election on political campaigning.
9. The negotiations that led to the Webster-Ashburton Treaty, and the importance of the treaty in Anglo-American relations.
10. The reasons why John C. Calhoun, Henry Clay, and Daniel Webster were never able to reach their goal – the White House.

# Summary

At first glance, Andrew Jackson seems a study in contradictions: an advocate of states' rights who forced South Carolina to back down in the nullification controversy; a champion of the West who removed the Indians from land east of the Mississippi River and who issued the specie circular, which brought the region's "flush times" to a disastrous halt; a nationalist who allowed Georgia to ignore the Supreme Court; and a defender of majority rule who vetoed the

Bank after the majority's representatives, the Congress, had passed it. Perhaps he was, as his enemies argued, simply out for himself. But in the end, few would argue that Andrew Jackson was a popular president, if not so much for what he did as for what he was. Jackson symbolized what Americans perceived (or wished) themselves to be--defiant, bold, independent. He was someone with whom they could identify. So what if the image was a bit contrived, it was still a meaningful image. Thus Jackson was reelected by an overwhelming majority and was able to

transfer that loyalty to his successor, a man who hardly lived up to the image. But all this left a curious question unanswered. Was this new democracy voting for leaders whose programs they favored or, rather, for images that could be altered and manipulated almost at will? The answer was essential for the future of American politics, and the election of 1840 gave the nation a clue.