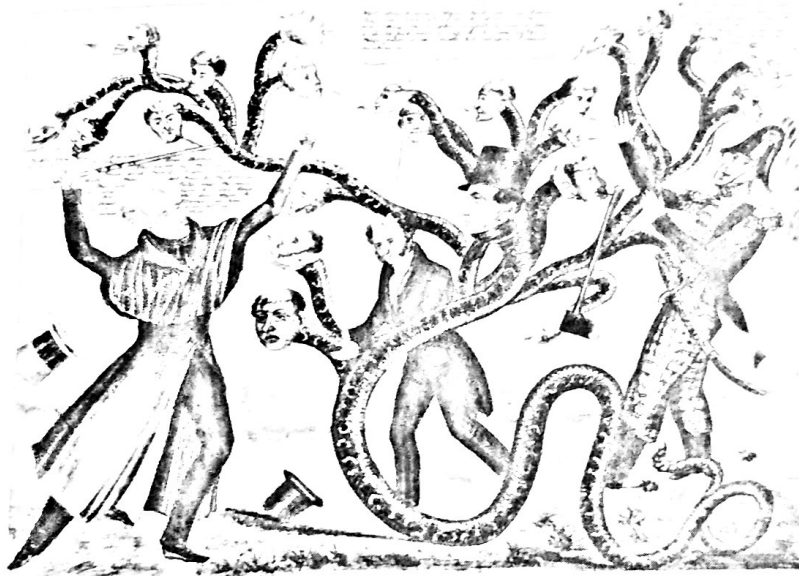


"General Jackson Slaying the Many-Headed Monster"

1836

The cartoon below represents Andrew Jackson's conflict with the Bank of the United States during his second presidential term (1833–1837). The cartoonist depicts Jackson (left), Vice President Martin Van Buren (center), and Major Jack Downing (right), a popular fictional character at the time, as they struggle against a serpent whose heads represent the states. The largest head (with top hat) is that of Nicholas Biddle of Pennsylvania, director of the bank.



GENERAL JACKSON SLAYING THE MANY HEADED MONSTER

Library of Congress Prints and Photographs
Division, LC-USZ62-1575.

Summary of the cartoon by the Library of Congress

A satire on Andrew Jackson's campaign to destroy the Bank of the United States and its support among state banks. Jackson, Martin Van Buren, and Jack Downing struggle against a snake with heads representing the states.

Jackson (on the left) raises a cane marked "Veto" and says, "Biddle thou Monster Avaunt!! avamount I say! or by the Great Eternal I'll cleave thee to the earth, aye thee and thy four and twenty satellites. Matty if thou art true . . . come on. if thou art false, may the venomous monster turn his dire fang upon thee . . ."

Van Buren (center): "Well done General, Major Jack Downing, Adams, Clay, well done all. I dislike dissentions beyond every thing, for it often compels a man to play a double part, were it only for his own safety. Policy, policy is my motto, but intrigues I cannot countenance."

Downing (dropping his axe): "Now now you nasty varmint, be you imperishable? I swan General that are beats all I reckon, that's the horrible wiper wot wommits wenemous heads I guess . . ."

The largest of the heads is president of the Bank Nicholas Biddle's, which wears a top hat labeled "Penn" (i.e., Pennsylvania) and "\$35,000,000." This refers

to the rechartering of the Bank by the Pennsylvania legislature in defiance of the administration's efforts to destroy it.

"General Jackson Slaying the Many-Headed Monster" printed by H. R. Robinson, New York, 1836, in *American Political Prints, 1766–1876*, ed. Bernard F. Reilly (Boston, MA: G. K. Hall, 1991), entry 1836–7, Library of Congress.

PRACTICING Historical Thinking

Identify: Describe the heads of the monster that General Jackson is slaying. Who or what do these heads represent?

Analyze: How does this image represent the conflict between class and politics in the new market economy? What "weapons" does Jackson have at his disposal?

Evaluate: To what extent are Jackson's concerns the same as John C. Calhoun's in Document 8.7?