

# Jacksonian Democracy

## Essential Question

How did political beliefs and events shape Andrew Jackson's presidency?

## Reading Guide

### Content Vocabulary

- majority (p. 337)
- nominating convention (p. 340)
- plurality (p. 337)
- tariff (p. 341)
- spoils system (p. 340)
- nullify (p. 341)
- caucus (p. 340)
- secede (p. 341)

### Academic Vocabulary

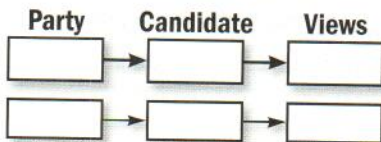
- select (p. 337)
- participate (p. 340)

### Key People and Events

- Andrew Jackson (p. 337)
- John Quincy Adams (p. 337)
- Nullification Act (p. 341)

### Reading Strategy

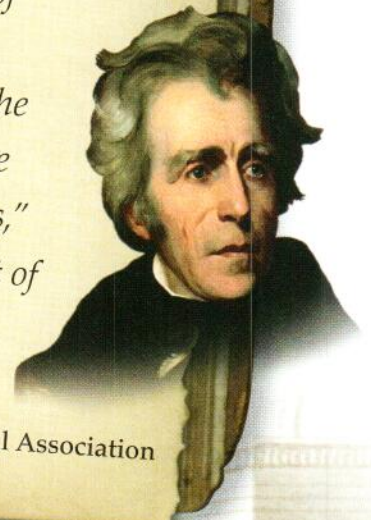
**Taking Notes** As you read about the parties competing in the election of 1828, use a diagram like the one below to organize the information.



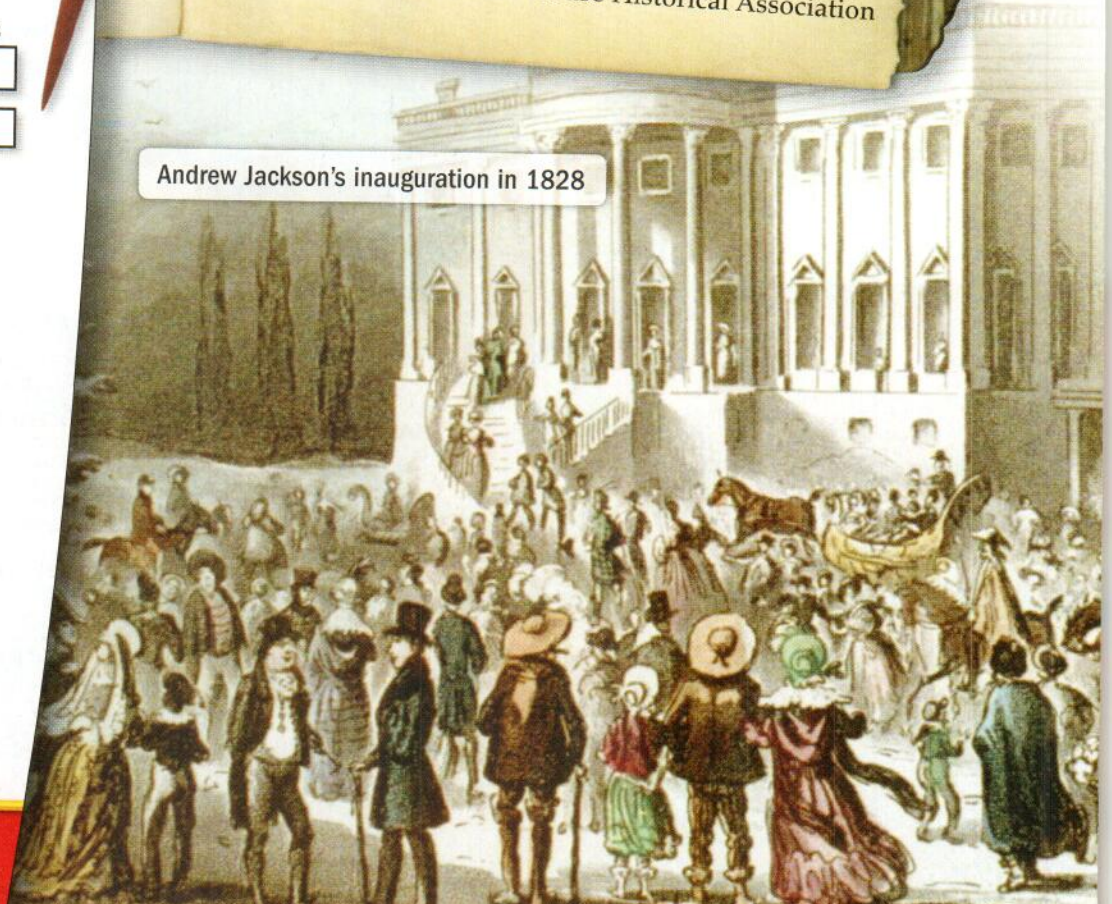
## American Diary

As a supporter of the "common man," Andrew Jackson lost the 1824 presidential election to John Quincy Adams. Because no candidate won an electoral vote majority, the election went to the House of Representatives, which elected Adams. Jackson's supporters, "the humble members of society—the farmers, mechanics and laborers," believed Jackson was cheated out of the presidency by a "corrupt bargain."

—from The White House Historical Association



Andrew Jackson's inauguration in 1828





## Elections of 1824 and 1828

**Main Idea** John Quincy Adams and Andrew Jackson introduced new ways of campaigning in the presidential elections of 1824 and 1828.

**History and You** Think of the ways that presidential candidates campaign today. What methods do they use? Read to find out about the new ways of campaigning that John Quincy Adams and Andrew Jackson brought about.

From 1816 to 1824, the United States had only one major political party, the Jeffersonian Republicans, or the Republican Party. In 1824, when James Monroe declined to run for a third term as president, four candidates from the party competed for the presidency. The views of the four candidates differed on the role of the federal government. Their views also differed because they represented different regions of the country.

The party nominated William H. Crawford, a former congressman from Georgia. The other three candidates were favorite sons—meaning they were backed by their home states rather than the national party. **Andrew Jackson** and Henry Clay came from the West. Clay, of Kentucky, was Speaker of the House of Representatives. Jackson, of Tennessee, was not a Washington politician, but he was a

hero of the War of 1812. Raised in poverty, he claimed to speak for the Americans who had been left out of politics. **John Quincy Adams**, of Massachusetts, son of former president John Adams, was popular with merchants of the Northeast.

### Striking a Bargain

In the election, Jackson received the largest number of popular votes. However, no candidate received a **majority**, or more than half, of the electoral votes. Jackson won a **plurality**, or the largest single share. According to the Twelfth Amendment of the Constitution, when no candidate receives a majority of electoral votes, the House of Representatives **selects**, or chooses, the president.

While the House was preparing to vote on the next president, Henry Clay met with John Quincy Adams. Clay agreed to use his influence as Speaker of the House to defeat Jackson. In return, Clay may have hoped to gain the position of secretary of state.

With Clay's help, Adams was elected president in the House. Adams quickly named Clay as secretary of state, traditionally the stepping-stone to the presidency. Jackson's followers accused the two men of making a "corrupt bargain" and stealing the election.

### By the Numbers Presidential Elections

Election of 1824

Candidate*	Electoral Votes	House Votes
John Q. Adams	84	13
Andrew Jackson	99	7
William H. Crawford	41	4
Henry Clay	37	-

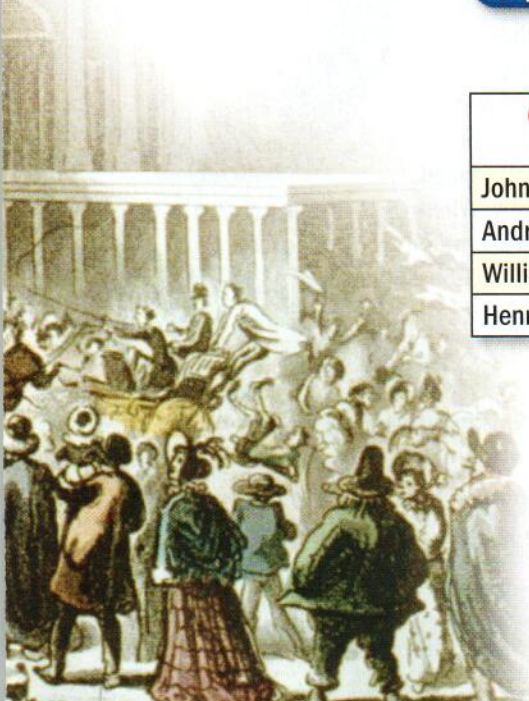
Election of 1828

Candidate*	Electoral Votes
Andrew Jackson Democratic Republican	178
John Q. Adams National Republican	83

\*All candidates represented the Democratic Republican Party.

### Critical Thinking

**Analyzing** What major differences can you see between the results of the two elections?





## The Adams Presidency

Adams and Clay denied any wrongdoing, and no evidence of a deal ever emerged. Still, the charge of a “corrupt bargain” cast a long shadow over Adams’s presidency. A hard-working and intelligent man, Adams was determined to leave his mark on the presidency.

In his first message to Congress, Adams announced an ambitious program of legislation. In addition to improving roads and waterways, Adams urged that the government spend money to build a national university, set up astronomical observatories, and support scientific research.

Adams’s proposals, however, horrified his opponents who desired a more limited role for the federal government. It would be wrong, they believed, to spend the taxpayers’ money on such projects.

In the end, Congress granted the president funds for improving rivers, harbors, and roads, but this was far less than Adams wanted. The rejection of many of Adams’s

proposals set the stage for the president’s defeat in his 1828 reelection attempt.

## The Election of 1828

By 1828, the Republican Party had divided into two separate parties: the Democratic-Republicans, who supported Jackson, and the National Republicans, who supported Adams. Jackson’s Democratic-Republicans, or Democrats, favored states’ rights and mistrusted strong central government. Many Democrats were people from the frontier, immigrants, or workers in the big cities.

The National Republicans wanted a strong central government. They supported federal measures, such as road building and the Bank of the United States, that would shape the nation’s economy. Many National Republicans were merchants or farmers.

During the campaign both parties resorted to mudslinging, or attempts to ruin their opponents’ reputations with insults. The Democratic-Republicans accused Adams of betraying the people. They put out a handbill

## Primary Source The Campaign of 1828

**Jackson Attacked** The presidential campaign of 1828 was one of the dirtiest in American history. Supporters of President John Quincy Adams attacked Andrew Jackson in print. The so-called “coffin handbills” (below) criticized Jackson’s execution of six

soldiers for desertion during the War of 1812. The handbills backfired, either because they exaggerated too much or because most Americans approved of what Jackson did. In addition, Jackson’s opponents accused his wife, Rachel Donelson Jackson, of bigamy. When Rachel died before the inauguration, Jackson blamed those who slandered her.



Rachel Donelson Jackson ▲



*“Gentle reader, it is for you to say, whether this man, who carries a sword cane, and is willing to run it through the body of any one who may presume to stand in his way, is a fit person to be our President.”*

—from the “Coffin Handbill”

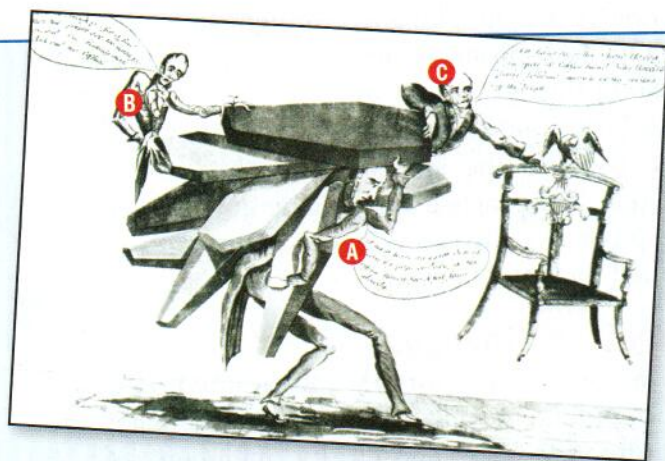


calling the election a contest “between an honest patriotism, on the one side, and an unholy, selfish ambition, on the other.” The National Republicans fought back. They created a vicious campaign song to play up embarrassing incidents in Jackson’s life. One involved Jackson’s order in the War of 1812 to execute soldiers who deserted.

Mudslinging was not the only new tactic introduced in the 1828 campaign. Election slogans, rallies, buttons, and events such as barbecues also were used to stir up enthusiasm. All of these new features became a permanent part of American political life.

In the election of 1828, Jackson received most of the votes cast in the frontier states. He also received many votes in the South, where his support for states’ rights was popular. John C. Calhoun of South Carolina, who had been Adams’s vice president, switched parties to run with Jackson. Calhoun also supported states’ rights. Jackson won the election in an overwhelming victory, or landslide.

**✓ Reading Check Identifying** What campaign practices of the 1828 election still are used today?



Philadelphia editor John Binns published several “coffin handbills” attacking Andrew Jackson. This cartoon shows Binns **A** struggling to carry a burden consisting of coffins for Secretary of State Henry Clay **B** and President John Quincy Adams **C**. Adams is clinging to the presidential chair that he was soon to lose.

### Critical Thinking

**Interpreting** What is the cartoonist trying to say about the coffin handbills?

## Jackson as President

**Main Idea** Andrew Jackson made the American political system more democratic.

**History and You** What are the requirements for today’s citizens to be eligible to vote? Read on to learn how President Jackson expanded voting rights to include a larger number of people.

**A**ndrew Jackson was everything most Americans admired—a patriot, a self-made man, and a war hero. Thousands of farmers and laborers arrived in Washington to hear Jackson’s Inaugural Address. Later, a crowd attended the White House reception. They filled the elegant rooms, trampling carpets with muddy shoes and spilling food on chairs. They were there to shake the hand of the president who seemed just like them.

### “Old Hickory”

Like many of his supporters, Andrew Jackson was born in a log cabin. During the War of 1812, he defeated the Creek Nation in the Battle of Horseshoe Bend and the British at the Battle of New Orleans. His troops called him “Old Hickory” because he was as tough as a hickory stick.

Small farmers, craftspeople, and others who felt left out of the expanding American economy loved Jackson. They felt that his rise from a log cabin to the White House demonstrated the American success story.

### New Voters

President Andrew Jackson promised “equal protection and equal benefits” for all Americans—at least for all white American men. During his first term, a spirit of equality spread throughout American politics.

In the nation’s early years, only men who owned property or paid taxes had suffrage, or the right to vote. By the 1820s, many states had loosened the property requirements. Democracy expanded as people who had not been allowed to vote became new voters.



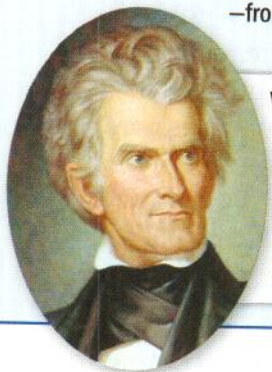
## Primary Source The Nullification Crisis

In 1832 South Carolina called a state convention to declare the tariffs of 1828 and 1832 null and void. In addition, the state threatened to secede, or withdraw, from the Union if the federal government attempted to use force to collect those tariffs within its borders.

*"It is hereby declared . . . that the . . . laws for the imposing of duties . . . on the importation of foreign commodities . . . are null, void, and no law, nor binding upon this State. . . ."*

*Any act authorizing the employment of a military or naval force against the State of South Carolina, . . . [is] inconsistent with the . . . continuance of South Carolina in the Union."*

—from the South Carolina Ordinance of Nullification

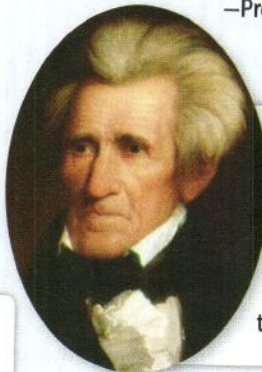


**Vice President John C. Calhoun** argued that any state had the authority to call a formal convention to declare null and void any federal law it considered unconstitutional. Tensions between Calhoun and President Jackson increased when Jackson sided with those opposing nullification.

The Nullification Proclamation declared that nullification was unconstitutional. It also stated that threatening to secede was an act of treason.

*"I consider, then, the power to annul a law of the United States, assumed by one State, incompatible with the existence of the Union, . . . and destructive of the great object for which it was formed."*

—President Andrew Jackson's proclamation from the nullification



### President Andrew Jackson

privately threatened to march an army into South Carolina to hang Calhoun. Instead, he issued a proclamation against nullification. Congress passed a bill to lower tariffs—along with a bill to enforce it.

### Critical Thinking

**Comparing and Contrasting** How did each side in the nullification crisis defend its position?

For the first time, white male sharecroppers, factory workers, and others **participated**, or took part, in the political process. Women, however, could not vote, and African Americans and Native Americans had few rights of any kind.

Also, by 1828, 22 of the 24 states had changed their constitutions to allow the people, rather than the state legislatures, to choose presidential electors. This change further broadened democracy.

### The Spoils System

Democrats wanted to open up government jobs to people from all walks of life. They argued that ordinary citizens could handle any government job. Many Democrats were disturbed that the federal government had become a bureaucracy, a system in which nonelected officials carry out laws.

President Jackson fired many federal workers and replaced them with his supporters. The fired employees protested.

They charged that Jackson was acting like a tyrant. Jackson responded that new federal employees would be good for democracy.

One Jackson supporter said: "To the victors belong the spoils." In other words, because the Jacksonians won the election, they had the right to the spoils, or the benefits of victory. The practice of replacing government employees with the winner's supporters is called the **spoils system**.

### Electoral Changes

Jackson's supporters abandoned the unpopular **caucus** system, in which major candidates were chosen by members of Congress. The caucuses were replaced by **nominating conventions** in which delegates from the states chose the party's presidential candidate. This system allowed many people to participate in the selection of candidates.



**Reading Check**

**Describing** What is a caucus

system?



# The Tariff Debate

**Main Idea** A fight over tariffs ignited a crisis on the question of states' rights versus the rights of the federal government.

**History and You** Can you ignore a school rule? Read how South Carolina rejected a federal law.

**A tariff** is a fee paid on imported goods. The high tariff on European manufactured goods pleased Northeastern factory owners. Tariffs made European goods more expensive, prompting American consumers to buy American-made goods. Southerners hated the tariff, because tariffs meant higher prices.

John C. Calhoun of South Carolina argued that a state had the right to **nullify**, or cancel, a federal law if it was considered to be against state interests. Because the states created the federal government, he argued, the states are the final authority. Daniel Webster disagreed, claiming that nullification would destroy the Union.

Nobody knew Jackson's views. At a dinner, however, Jackson spoke directly to Calhoun: "Our federal union . . . must be preserved!" Answering the challenge, Calhoun said, "The Union—next to our liberty, most dear." He meant that the Union must take second place to a state's liberty to overrule the Constitution if its interests were threatened.

In 1832 Congress enacted a lower tariff, but it did not cool the protest. South Carolina passed the **Nullification Act**, declaring it would not pay the "illegal" tariffs of 1828 and 1832. The state threatened to **secede**, or break away, from the Union if the U.S. federal government interfered.

To ease the crisis, Jackson backed a bill that would gradually lower the tariff. Jackson, however, had Congress pass the Force Bill, allowing him to use the military to enforce acts of Congress. South Carolina accepted the new tariff but nullified the Force Bill.

**Reading Check** **Explaining** How would Northeastern factory owners react to a high tariff?

## Section 1 Review

**History ONLINE**  
Study Central™ To review this section, go to [glencoe.com](http://glencoe.com).

### Vocabulary

1. Define each of the following words by using it in a sentence: majority, plurality, select, participate, spoils system, caucus, nominating convention, tariff, nullify, secede.

### Main Ideas

2. **Specifying** What key issue split the Republican Party in the 1828 presidential election?
3. **Explaining** Why did Andrew Jackson fire many government employees?
4. **Summarizing** Why was the issue of states' rights versus federal authority serious?

### Critical Thinking

5. **Making Inferences** Why do you think Speaker of the House Henry Clay was willing to make the "corrupt bargain"?
6. **Organizing** Use a diagram like the one below to describe the changes that took place in the political system under Andrew Jackson.



7. **Creative Writing** Write three questions you would ask President Andrew Jackson if you interviewed him. Then write answers to the questions as you think Jackson might have responded.

### 8. Answer the Essential Question

How did political beliefs and events shape Andrew Jackson's presidency?