

Democrats and Whigs

Democracy and American Culture, 1820–1840



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“American society is essentially and radically a democracy. . . . In the United States the democratic spirit is infused into all national habits, and all the customs of society.”

French traveler MICHAEL CHEVALIER, *Society, Manners, and Politics in the United States* (1839)

George Caleb Bingham’s painting, *Stump Speaking or the County Canvass* (1853), captures the drama of a new democratic style of politics that transformed American life starting in the 1820s. The term stump speech referred to politicians’ practice in some remote parts of the nation of addressing the electorate by simply finding the nearest tree stump and using it as a rough-hewn platform from which to speak. Bingham, a Whig opponent of the Democratic Party, used the painting to express his reservations about what he considered the dangers posed by too much

democracy. Bingham wrote that the politician on the platform was a “wiry” fellow who had “grown grey in the pursuit of office and the service of his party” and literally bends to the popular will in the painting. Across from the speaker, seated amid the crowd, a man in a top hat and light-colored suit listens thoughtfully, refusing to be swayed by the politician’s words. Bingham described this figure as an “outstanding citizen” whose noble features not only set him apart from the crowd but also contrast noticeably with the shifty look of the Democratic politician standing at the rostrum. The painting suggests that the “outstanding citizen,” a true Whig leader, refuses to pander to the mob.

As this scene reveals, democracy did not yet embrace all Americans; it excluded women, African Americans, and Indians. The crowd Bingham depicts is overwhelmingly male and, apart from a lone African American in the background, all white. While the white men participate in the political life of the nation, the lone black figure labors on a wagon selling refreshments to the crowd.

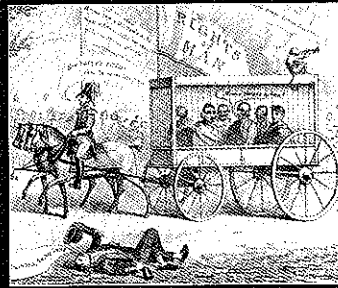
No figure better personified this new age than Andrew Jackson, the country’s leading Democrat. Jackson’s 1828 election changed American politics forcing his opponents, the Whigs, to make more effective use of the tools of democratic politics and the symbols of democracy in their campaigns. Indeed in their electoral win in 1840 the Whigs had outdone the Democrats, portraying their candidate William Henry Harrison, as a simple man born in a log cabin who drank hard cider like an ordinary farmer.

Although the Whigs may have learned valuable political lessons from the Democrats about how to campaign, their party steadfastly opposed Jacksonian policies on every major issue of the day. From economic issues to the question of how to deal with American Indians, the two parties battled one another, offering the American people competing visions and clear choices. Political participation in this period rose as Americans responded to the messages of the two parties and turned out to vote in unprecedented numbers.

What elements in the painting *Stump Speaking* illustrate the growth of American democracy?



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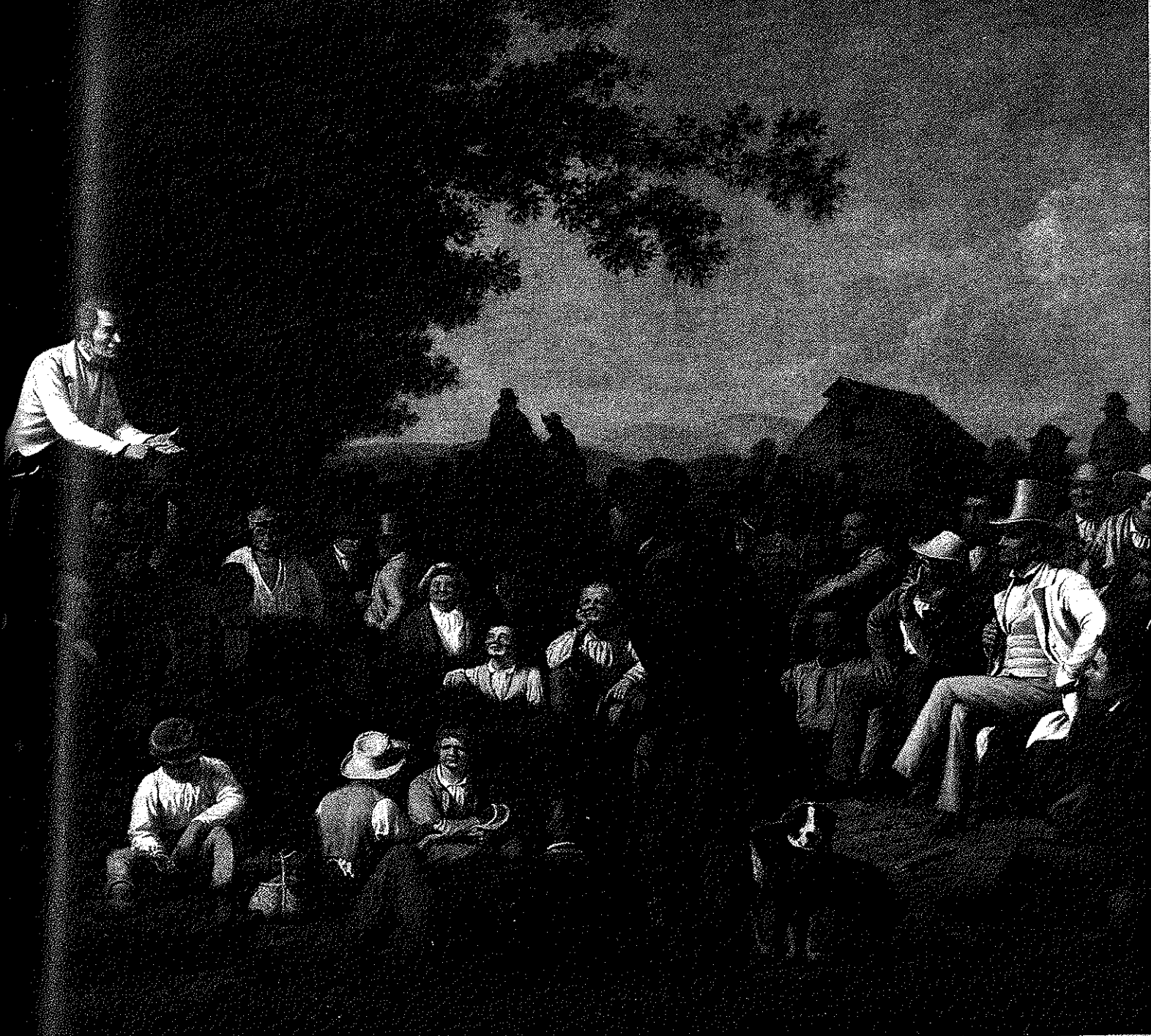
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Democracy in America



Between Thomas Jefferson's election in 1800 and Andrew Jackson's victory in his presidential bid in 1828, profound changes transformed American culture and politics. Travelers to America during this period consistently remarked about the democratic character of American society. Democracy appeared to suffuse every aspect of culture and politics. Whereas in 1800 most states had some type of property requirement for voting, within three decades most of these restrictions the right to vote had been swept aside. Many of the new Western states that entered the Union in the intervening years adopted constitutions with no property requirements. As population shifted westward the center of political gravity of the nation also shifted. Many of the politicians who dominated the national political scene came from Western states such as Tennessee and Kentucky, not the older, settled regions of the nation such as Virginia and Massachusetts.

Democratic Culture

In 1835 a young French nobleman, Alexis de Tocqueville, published an account of his recent trip to America. "No novelty in the United States struck me more vividly during my stay there," he wrote, "than the equality of conditions. It was easy to see the immense influence of this basic fact on the whole course of society." *Democracy in America* (1835), Tocqueville's analysis of the influence of democracy on American life, remains one of the most important books ever written about American society.

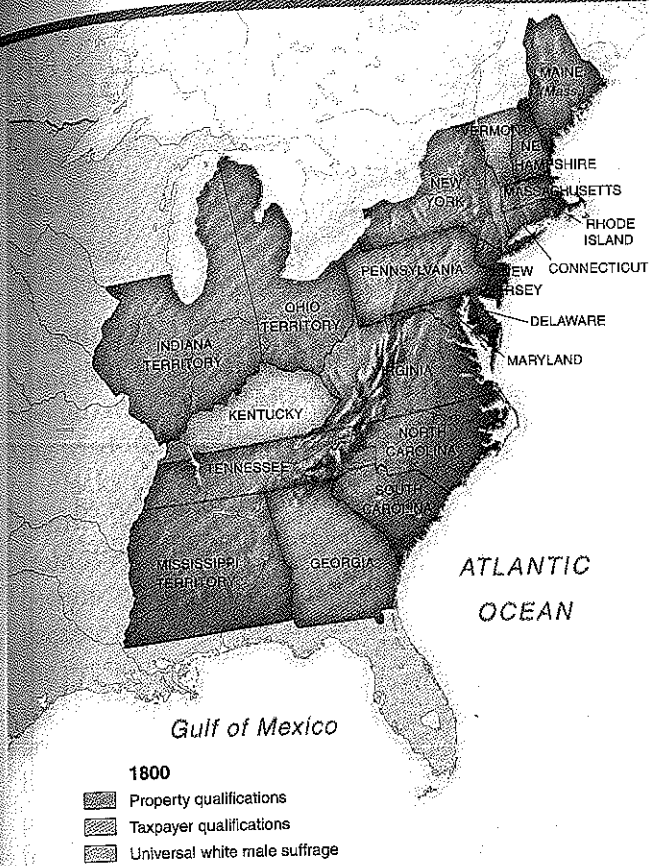
The young French aristocrat was hardly the only foreign visitor drawn to America. In the 1820s and 1830s, America attracted the interest of many other foreign visitors who were all impressed by the democratic character of American life. "The term *democrat*, which elsewhere would fill even republicans with terror," Michael Chevalier, a French visitor to America, noted, "is here greeted with acclamations." Francis Trollope, an English observer, was shocked to see Americans talking to complete strangers "on terms of perfect equality." Democracy nurtured a more egalitarian culture that shocked Europeans. In colonial America a bow, courtesy, or doffed hat and lowered head were all signs of deference to one's social betters. Many of these customs persisted in Europe. Americans, however, had abandoned most of them by the 1830s, preferring to shake hands, a form of greeting far more egalitarian in spirit. One English commentator complained that in America he had to "go on shaking hands here, there, and everywhere, and with everybody." Another Englishman confessed his astonishment that travel in America meant mixing with men and women of different classes. "There is but one conveyance, it may be said, for every class of people—the coach,

railroad, or steamboat, as well as most of the hotels being open to all; the consequence is that the society is very much mixed."

A significant political consequence of the growth of democracy was the expansion of suffrage to include virtually all white men. As the maps (8.1) show, most of the new Western states that entered the Union after the War of 1812 adopted democratic constitutions that rejected property qualifications for suffrage. The constitutions of the new Western states generally embraced this ideal from the beginning. When older states such as New York revised their constitution in the 1820s, the question of suffrage became one of the most contentious. See *Competing Visions: Should White Men Without Property Have the Vote?*, page 224.

Davy Crockett and the Frontier Myth

The French visitor to America Alexis de Tocqueville commented that "in the Western settlements we may behold democracy arrived at its utmost limits." Tocqueville may well have been thinking of figures like the legendary frontiersmen and politician Davy Crockett (1786–1835) when he made that statement. No figure in American public life did more to help establish the association of the West with democracy than Davy Crockett. Born in Tennessee in 1786, Crockett served under Andrew Jackson during the Creek Wars (1813–1814), where he distinguished himself as a soldier. In addition to putting him in the Tennessee state legislature, his home state elected Crockett to Congress, where he became a supporter of his former commander, Andrew Jackson, another symbol of frontier democracy.



8.1 Changes in Suffrage Requirements between 1800 and 1828

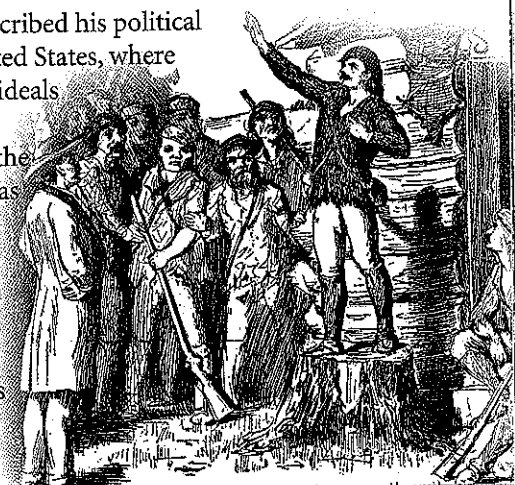
Many of the Western states that entered the Union after 1800 did not impose property requirements for voting. By 1828, most states had eliminated such requirements.

Crockett's achievements inside the chambers of the state legislature and Congress paled in significance to the stories about his exploits as a frontiersman and Indian fighter, myths that Crockett helped shape and market to a growing audience of readers eager to learn of his daring exploits. As one contemporary English magazine noted: "Democracy and the far west made Crockett: he is a product of forests, freedom, universal suffrage, and bear hunts."

In his own colorful account of his entry into politics, Crockett becomes a politician almost by accident. While coming to town to sell his pelts and furs, he exchanges a few words with local politicians, who immediately recognize him as a natural leader and draft him for the state legislature. Crockett's career in Congress was brief, but his fame grew as literary treatments recounted stories about his exploits. *Crockett's Almanac*, for example, a cheaply marketed magazine-like publication, vividly described the frontiersman-politician, whose honesty as a stump speaker and legendary adventures wrestling alligators, hunting bears, and fighting Indians captivated audiences. For Crockett delivering a stump speech meant literally standing on the nearest tree stump, as shown in this illustration from the *A Narrative of the Life of David Crockett* Life (8.2).

Although Crockett was a big hit on the stump and celebrated in the popular literature of the day, the most important political figure to make use of the association of the West with democracy was Andrew Jackson. The Tennessee-born Jackson had distinguished himself as a military leader during the battle of New Orleans and earned a reputation as a fierce Indian fighter during the Creek War (1813–1814). Jackson entered politics, serving as both a member of Congress and a member of the Senate. A supporter of Jackson described his political style as typical of the Western United States, where democratic values and egalitarian ideals flourished: "In Europe" custom "decreed that kings shall rule and the people submit. In this wilderness, as if by magic, a new and different order of things has appeared." Jackson's effort to link his Western origins with his democratic values became a key component of his political message for the rest of his career in public life.

8.2 Crockett as Politician
Crockett the frontiersman-politician addresses a crowd outside a rural tavern. Crockett reflected and helped shape the myth of frontier democracy in the new Republic.



What aspects of Davy Crockett's life made him a good symbol of frontier democracy?

Competing Visions

SHOULD WHITE MEN WITHOUT PROPERTY HAVE THE VOTE?

In 1821 New Yorkers gathered to revise their state's 1777 constitution. The issue of property requirements for elections proved to be one of the most heated in the convention. James Kent, a conservative lawyer and judge who began his career as a Federalist, defended the idea of property requirements. Kent's vision of politics was deeply hierarchical, which led him to oppose an expansion of suffrage. Kent was opposed by a group of younger politicians. Nathan Sanford, a man who entered politics fully a decade later than Kent, began his career as a Jeffersonian democrat. Jefferson's election to the presidency had not ushered in the reign of terror that his Federalist enemies predicted, and Sanford eagerly embraced the growing enthusiasm for democracy that marked politics in the early decades of the nineteenth century. Which man has a more optimistic view of human nature? Which theory of politics seems closer in spirit to the ideas behind the Federal Constitution?

The most eloquent champion of retaining property requirements was James Kent, a former State Supreme Court judge and Chancellor of the State of New York (an English-style judicial office that no longer exists). Kent warned that an unchecked democracy composed of the property-less and working classes would threaten the rights of private property.

The tendency of universal suffrage is to jeopardize the rights of property and the principles of liberty. There is a constant tendency in human society, and the history of every age proves it; there is a tendency in the poor to covet and to share the plunder of the rich; in the debtor to relax or avoid the obligation of contract ... there is a tendency in ambitious and wicked men to inflame these combustible materials.

The notion that every man that works a day on the road, or serves an idle hour in the militia, is entitled as of right to an equal participation in the whole power of government is most unreasonable and has no foundation in justice. Society is an association for the protection of property as well as life, and the individual who contributes only one cent to the common stock ought not to have the same power and influence in directing the property and concerns of the partnership as he who contributes his thousands.

Nathan Sanford was a lawyer from Long Island who entered politics as a Jeffersonian, holding several state offices before being elected as a senator from New York. Rather than focus on the need to protect property, Sanford argued that those who bore the burdens of government had earned a right to have a say in their government.

The question before us is the right of suffrage—who shall, or who shall not, have the right to vote ... the principle of the scheme now proposed, is, that those who bear the burthens of the state, [paid taxes, served in the militia, or consented to volunteer to work on public works projects such as roads] should choose those that rule it... To me, and the majority of the committee, it appeared the only reasonable scheme that those who are to be affected by the acts of the government, should be annually entitled to vote for those who administer it.

Fourth of July in Center Square
by John Lewis Krimmel, 1819



Why did James Kent oppose the elimination of property requirements?

Andrew Jackson and His Age



The new democratic spirit of American politics helped elevate Andrew Jackson's political career, and he in turn did everything in his power to promote his particular vision of democracy. Jackson's democratic ideas stopped well short of the most radical egalitarian ideas of his day. Indeed Jackson's vision of democracy had no room for blacks, Indians, or women.

Still Jackson's invocation of the will of the people marked a turning point in the history of American political development. After Jackson, politicians from across the political spectrum would outdo each other in affirming their commitment to democracy and lavishing praise on the wisdom of the people.

Jackson's long road to the presidency began with his narrow defeat in 1824, which eventually led to his decisive victory in 1828. In contrast to earlier presidents who were drawn from the ranks of the nation's elite, Jackson was a self-made man. An orphan who rose to become a rich planter and influential political figure in his home state of Tennessee, Jackson became a symbol for American democracy. Indeed one of Jackson's supporters characterized the presidential election of 1828, in which Jackson squared off against John Quincy Adams for the second time, as a struggle in which "the Aristocracy and Democracy of the country are arrayed against each other." Others viewed Jackson's democratic leanings in a less positive light, however, viewing his election as the start of the "reign of King Mob." Jackson's presidency proved to be marred by deep divisions within his own administration and serious challenges from outside. In particular South Carolina's decision to respond to federal tariff policy by calling a convention to nullify federal law forced a showdown between Jackson and states' rights supporters.

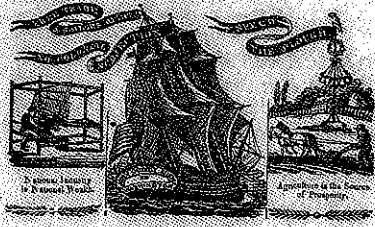
The Election of 1824 and the "Corrupt Bargain"

James Monroe, the fourth Virginian to occupy the presidency since the adoption of the Constitution (1817–1825), anointed no political figure to be his successor and carry forward his policies and ideas. Following Washington's model Monroe had sought out a talented but diverse collection of men for his cabinet who represented a broad spectrum of political and economic views. Three of these cabinet ministers sought the presidency in 1824: William Crawford, secretary of the treasury; John Quincy Adams, secretary of state; and John C. Calhoun, secretary of war. A fourth candidate was Henry Clay, Speaker of the House of Representatives (who had turned down an offer to serve as secretary of war in the Adams administration). Andrew Jackson, hero of the battle of New Orleans, also joined the race for president. Jackson had served in Congress, as a judge in Tennessee, and as an appointed governor of the Florida territory.

Crawford, born in Virginia but raised in Georgia, was heir to the old Jeffersonian republican vision of politics with its emphasis on states' rights and strict construction of the Constitution. Crawford opposed Monroe's National Republican synthesis of Jeffersonian politics with Hamiltonian economics (see Chapter 7). In contrast to the other candidates in the crowded field, Crawford clearly opposed using federal power for economic development. Public expenditures for internal improvements, such as roads and canals, and charters for banks were government functions that the Constitution, Crawford argued, had wisely left to the individual states.

John Quincy Adams, the son of President John Adams, was a New Englander who had been a professor at Harvard and spent considerable time in Europe as a diplomat, serving in Holland, Prussia (now part of Germany), Great Britain, and Russia. As secretary of state he had not only successfully negotiated the Treaty of Ghent that ended the War of 1812 but also was largely responsible for formulating the Monroe Doctrine (see Chapter 7). A short,

Our Country....Home Industry.



MANUFACTURERS AND MECHANICS.

Your enemies have rallied under the banner of Gen. Jackson—the same man whom they a few days since declared a traitor and a murderer. One of their avowed objects is a repeal of all the laws which have been enacted for the encouragement of manufactures.

If the Jackson Party prevail a majority of the next Congress will be opposed to the tariff to mechanics, manufacturers, and domestic industry. A proof of this the Jackson papers, assembly and all, have published articles recommending the repeal of all laws that have been passed to encourage our mechanics and manufacturers. The consequence will be, that the sound of the whistle will no more be heard. Our stores will be filled with British and foreign manufactures, shawls, ribbons, and head-dresses; and not a piece will be found for a yard of American cloth. British goods, labelled with Jackson's name, and in large quantities, have been sent among us.

The Legislature of Virginia, a majority of whom were Jacksonians, recently resolved, that all the laws passed for the protection of mechanics and manufacturers were a violation of the constitution. At a great Jackson meeting, held in South Carolina, a committee, previously appointed to ascertain public opinion, reported that sixteen-twentieths of the southern section of the country were opposed to all laws enacted to encourage manufactures. There are the warm advocates of General Jackson. Will you take away the power from such old tried friends as Henry Clay, who has always been your hearty supporter, and give it to your enemies? If you vote for the Jackson ticket, you will do it. If the Jackson Assembly ticket prevails, they will repeal the Electoral law, and appoint Electors that will drive Henry Clay, and all the friends of the American system, from office.

Fellow-citizens, Manufacturers, and Mechanics! be on the look out, as you will be most woefully betrayed. Don't suffer yourselves to be deceived by stories that General Jackson is your friend. He has conspired to serve your enemies, and he must be judged by his company. What will be the result of New-Orleans and you, if you are thrown out of employment and wide beggars? Don't fall to go to the polls, and show by your

votes that you are not the dupes of such men as Coleman, who has always been your enemy. He tells you to vote for General Jackson's vote directly opposite to his advice, and you will vote for your country. As a proof of this, I ask who has always sided with the British against his country? Will you not answer, Coleman? He has opposed the best patriots America ever produced? Is not Wm. Coleman the man? Who has slandered Madison? Who vilified Jefferson? Who has slandered Henry Clay? Who has vilified Calhoun? Jackson, and destroy your best friends, cripple your own occupations, build up a nation, and ruin the American system. This is the man who, when a British fleet lay off the Hook, the Evening Post was received not from his office, but from their ships every day. Nothing but respect for the late government has secured contempt from demagogues of the press and types that printed the disloyal treason.

Fellow-citizens! Henry Clay was your early friend. He first risked his all to sustain you. His speeches will be read as long as eloquence has columns. By arguments unanswerable, he brought forward the American system. He has since sustained it, and if he is not sacrificed by those whom he has befriended, he will continue the system he has begun. If General Jackson's party prevail, a majority of the next Congress will sweep him, and every friend you have in the Administration, from their places; and the treaty, almost, and best friend you ever had, will be destroyed. It is for his friendship to you that Virginia, his native state, has denounced him. It is for this that Georgia and the Carolinas have labelled him. It is for this that the enemies of the American system, the Colemans, Pickens, and Coopers, who are not by birth or choice, have vilified him, and cruelly endeavored to blot his character. This is what has made every British agent that lurks in our city the laughing-stock of Henry Clay. The history of depravity shows nothing that exceeds the villainy of their country towards him—witness the testimony of their own witnesses, Richman.

Go to the Polls—put down the favorite British candidates—vindicate your friends—and save yourselves and your country.
ON BEHALF OF THE MANUFACTURERS.

tutional reservations about such policies that his predecessors Jefferson and Madison had articulated. Clay was an unapologetic champion of aggressive federal involvement in economic development. The **American System**, Clay's plan for using the power of the federal government to encourage American industry, included tariffs to help protect American industry by keeping cheap foreign goods from undermining American producers, continuing support for a national bank, and an ambitious program of federal funding for internal improvements.

Clay's theory sought a harmonious interplay between agriculture, industry, and commerce. John Quincy Adams endorsed the essence of Clay's American system; this election broadside (8.3) reflects his support for Clay's economic policies. The central image of a ship symbolizes commerce, while the two smaller vignettes depict a farmer at the plow and a worker at a loom. The name of the ship, *John Quincy Adams*, symbolizes Adams's claim to be a proven leader who could pilot the nation to a prosperous future.

Of the major candidates for the presidency in 1824, Andrew Jackson's agenda was the least defined. Clay and Adams sought to portray Jackson as an opponent of the American System, and Jackson tried to finesse the issue by stressing that he wished to support commerce, agriculture, and industry. Jackson's campaign focused less on issues and more on character and underlying political values. Jackson fashioned himself as a frontier democrat whose honesty and courage were his primary credentials for the presidency.

In the divided field Jackson won 42 percent of the popular vote and the most electoral votes, but he fell short of the majority in the Electoral College necessary to win the election (8.4). Under such circumstances the Constitution directed that the House of Representatives choose from among the top three candidates. Henry Clay did not emerge as one of the frontrunners in this tight race, but his powerful role as Speaker of the House made him a key player in determining the outcome. Given the choice among Crawford, an old-style Jeffersonian who opposed Clay's vision for America's future; Jackson, whose support for a more nationalist economic program was lukewarm at best; and Adams, who was sympathetic to Clay's American System, the choice was an easy one for Clay. Adams became president.

Adams chose Clay to be his secretary of state, which in this era functioned as the stepping-stone

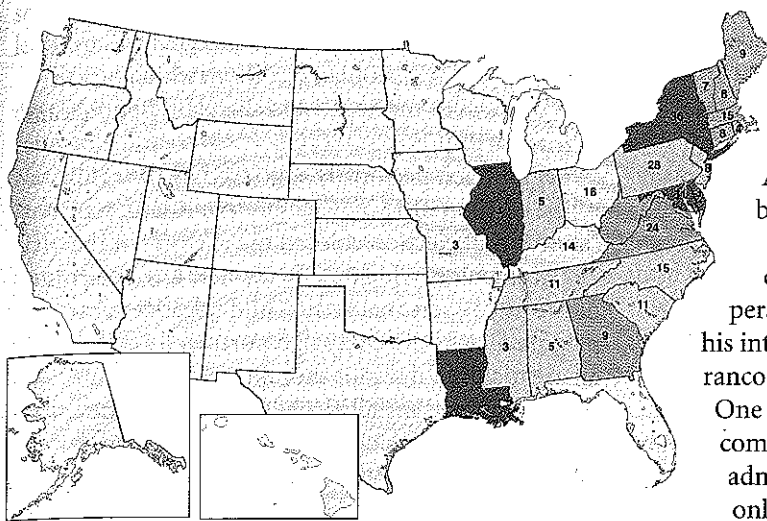
8.3 Our Country ... Home Industry

This detail of an election broadside links John Quincy Adams with Clay's American System. The images at the top symbolize the way the American system would help manufacturing, commerce, and agriculture.

balancing, intellectual figure, Adams was neither charismatic nor politically astute; he even admitted that he could seem dogmatic and pedantic. Before entering the race for president, his primary experience had been in foreign, not domestic, politics.

John C. Calhoun, the other Southerner in the race, had been a prominent War Hawk during the War of 1812. An astute politician Calhoun decided to withdraw from the crowded race. Jackson and Adams each accepted him as their running mate, which virtually guaranteed his election to the office of vice president. Calhoun expected to bid his time until the moment was more auspicious to mount another try for the presidency.

Henry Clay, the vivacious Speaker of the House from Kentucky, began his career as a War Hawk during the War of 1812. On economic issues Clay had the most clearly developed vision of America's future. Clay built on Monroe's neo-Hamiltonian policies, pushing them in a more nationalistic direction. Monroe favored federal support for internal improvements such as roads as a matter of policy, but he maintained some of the same consti-



Electoral vote by state	Electoral Vote (%)	Popular Vote (%)
John Quincy Adams (Democratic-Republican)	84 (32)	108,740 (31)
Andrew Jackson (Democratic-Republican)	99 (38)	153,544 (44)
William H. Crawford (Democratic-Republican)	41 (16)	40,856 (12)
Henry Clay (Federalist)	37 (14)	47,531 (14)
States that split electoral votes		

8.4 Electoral Votes and Popular Votes 1824

Although Jackson won the most votes, no candidate gained a majority in the Electoral College. After the House of Representatives decided the outcome, Jackson claimed that Adams and Clay had struck a "corrupt bargain" to deprive him of the presidency.

for the office of the presidency. (In the United States today, the vice presidency sometimes functions as the path toward the presidency.) Jackson and his supporters charged that Clay had traded his support for the office of secretary of state in a "**corrupt bargain**" that deprived Jackson of the presidency and gave the election to Adams.

Adams embraced Clay's American system. In addition to supporting Clay's plan for public expenditures on internal improvement projects, including new roads and canals, Adams hoped to create a national university and an astronomical observatory. Yet while he embraced the forward-looking nationalist vision of economic development associated with Clay's American System, Adams was an eighteenth-century politician when it came to thinking about the role of the president as a virtuous leader who stood above partisan bickering. He continued to believe that Monroe's goal of rising

above party was not only laudable but also achievable. Rather than use his patronage powers as president to reward his political friends and consolidate his administration's power, Adams appointed individuals on the basis of merit, with little concern for their political loyalties or even their commitment to his agenda or to him personally. Adams proudly proclaimed his intention to "discard every element of rancor" and "yield to talents and virtue."

One exasperated supporter of the president complained that "the friends of the administration have to contend not only against their enemies," but "against the Administration itself, which leaves its power in the hands of its own enemies." Adams sought to move beyond partisanship at a time when America was on the verge of becoming more politically polarized.

Adams made another tactical error when he chastised Congress for refusing to embrace his economic agenda. He accused legislators of being hampered "by the will of their constituents." Seen in light of his republican belief in the need for virtuous leadership, Adams's comment invited Congress to lead rather than follow the nation. For his opponents, however, the remark smacked of condescension and elitism. His comments were out of step with the rising tide of democratic sentiment that had swept over American society. For those who supported this new, more democratic ethos, Adams had maligned the people. Andrew Jackson and his supporters exploited Adams's gaffe, using it to highlight their own commitment to democracy. Jackson extolled "the voice of the people" and attacked Adams for his apparent haughty contempt for the popular will.

The Election of 1828: "Old Hickory's" Triumph

The election of 1828, which saw Andrew Jackson squaring off with John Quincy Adams for a second try at the presidency, was a pivotal moment in American politics. Jackson trumpeted his humble origins, military career, and support for democratic values. Jackson's supporters applauded their candidate's commitment to democracy and lambasted Adams's aristocratic pretensions.

8.5 "Some Account of the Bloody Deeds of General Jackson"

This pro-John Quincy Adams broadside casts Jackson as a brutal despot whose military record demonstrated that he was unfit to be president. The coffins symbolized the six militiamen Jackson ordered executed for desertion during the Creek War (1813-1814).

Adams's supporters defended his traditional republican ideals and support for the American System and warned voters that Jackson was a demagogue who would undermine America's constitutional system.

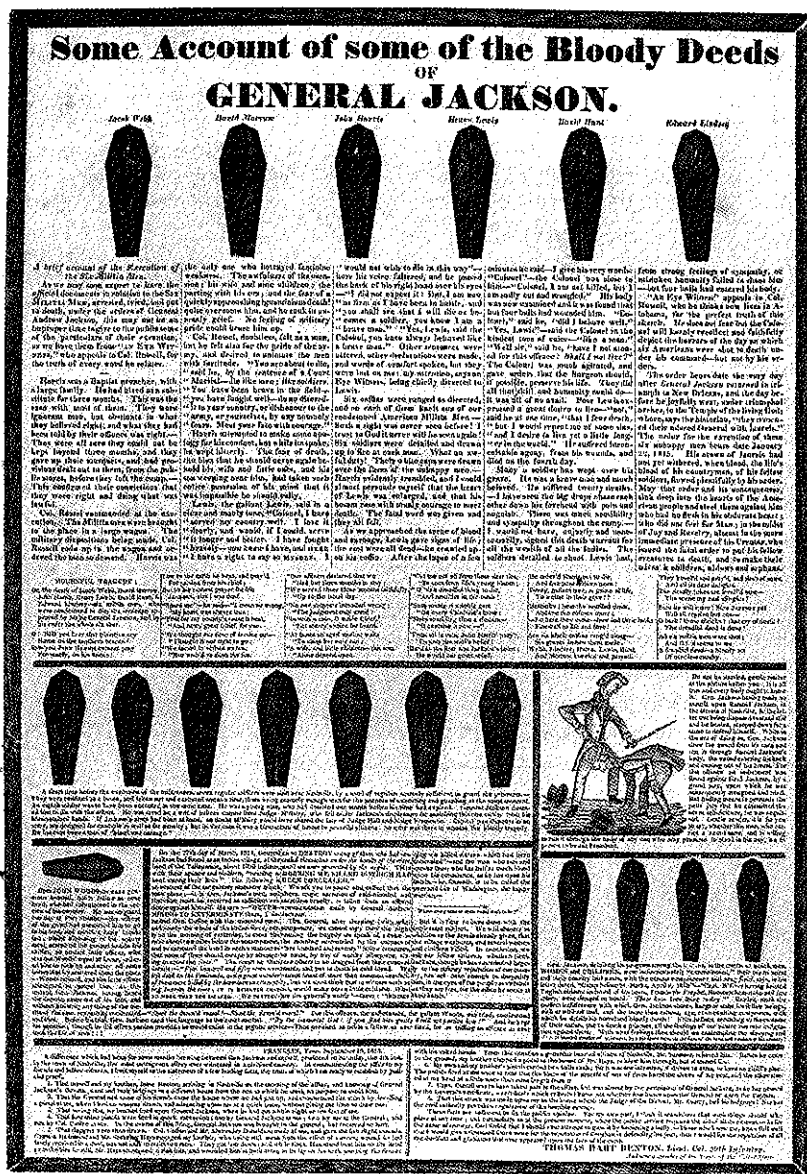
At a more fundamental level, Jackson rejected the antiparty sentiments of Monroe and Adams. Jackson set out to win the presidency in 1828, forming an alliance with Crawford and Calhoun to defeat Adams and Clay in the election. The politician who formulated the strategy for this new alliance was New York's Martin Van Buren, an influential Republican figure in New York politics who had served both as a state senator and a U.S. senator. Van Buren's supporters were nicknamed "Bucktails" because they wore buck tails (the tails of a deer) on

their hats instead of feathers. Van Buren embraced the idea of party with a passion. His goal was to recreate the old Jeffersonian coalition, which united "the planters of the South and the plain Republicans of the North."

Jackson felt personally aggrieved by the result of the election of 1824. Charges that Adams had "stolen" that election colored the rhetoric of the 1828 campaign, which marked a new low in terms of the use of personal attacks and negative campaigning. Jackson's campaign portrayed Adams as an aristocrat of dubious morality, pointing out that Adams had installed a billiard table in the White House. Although now known as a popular recreation, originally billiards was an aristocratic pastime. Perhaps the most sensational claim the Jackson campaign made against Adams was that during Adams's time as a diplomat in Russia he had "made use of a beautiful girl to seduce the passions of the Emperor." The Jacksonians charged that Adams was a licentious aristocrat with perverse sexual values.

The attack on Adams's character was more than matched by the ferocious assaults on Jackson's morality. The smear campaign against Jackson also charged him with sexual immorality, challenging the legality of his marriage. Supporters of Adams claimed that Jackson had seduced a married woman and lived with her in "open and notorious lewdness" before she had legally divorced her first husband. Jackson, they claimed, was a violent, brawling frontiersman who could not be trusted with the nation's highest office. The Adams campaign even attacked Jackson's military accomplishments. Philadelphia printer John Binn's "Coffin Handbill" (8.5) detailed the "bloody deeds of General Jackson," who had in fact executed six militiamen during the war against the Creek Indians. The author of the pamphlet warned Americans about the danger of putting "at the head of our government, a man who was never known to govern himself."

In Jackson's defense his supporters cast the general as "Old Hickory," a rough-and-tumble democrat and latter-day George Washington whose plain frontier code of ethics contrasted with Adams's elitist eastern values. To call attention to Jackson's reputation as the hero of the battle of New Orleans, his supporters gathered on the anniversary of the victory to plant hickory trees and raise liberty poles made of hickory. They ridiculed Adams's bookish temperament, chanting "Adams can write" but "Jackson can fight." Supporters of Adams answered the smears by praising "his long and varied public



How did the "Coffin Handbill" attempt to discredit Andrew Jackson?

services, his great experience, his talent, his learning.”

To get out their message, Jackson’s supporters developed a sophisticated and highly organized campaign apparatus. A centralized committee in Nashville directed the actions of local and state Jackson committees, who in turn worked with local “Hickory Clubs.” In addition to these innovations in campaign organization, Jackson’s supporters created an effective network of pro-Jackson newspapers to get out the word about their candidate. Eighteen new pro-Jackson newspapers sprouted up in Ohio alone. The Jacksonians also pioneered new fundraising tactics to pay for their campaign, including public banquets and other ticketed events in which supporters gathered to celebrate the achievements of their candidate. They developed an astonishing range of campaign knick-knacks and mementos, including badges, plates, sewing boxes, and ceramics. Jacksonians also used rallies and parades effectively to spark enthusiasm for their candidate. The tactics of Jackson and his supporters galvanized the electorate. In 1824 only about one-fourth of the eligible voters had participated; in 1828 more than half of the electorate turned out to vote. In the end Jackson won an impressive victory, garnering more than twice as many electoral votes as Adams.

The Reign of “King Mob”

Andrew Jackson’s inaugural in January 1829 captured the new democratic spirit of the age. Jackson’s supporters poured into Washington for the event, captured in this contemporary print of the crowds who thronged the White House (8.6).

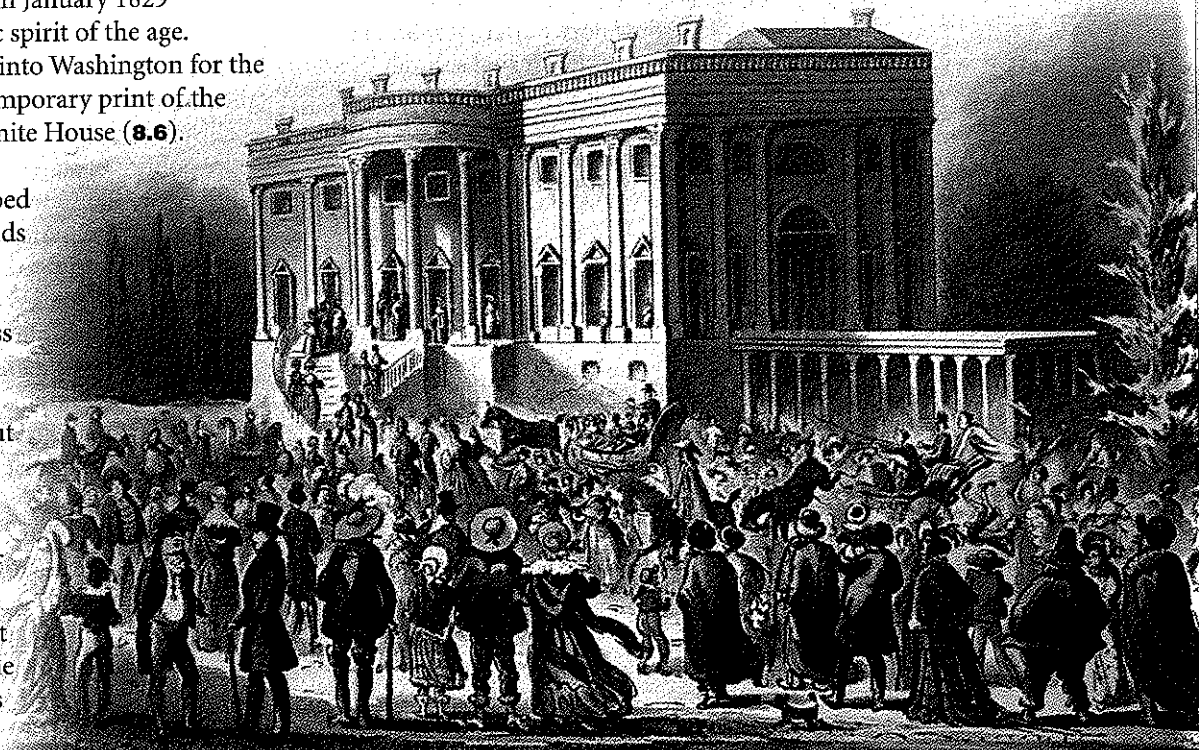
Margaret Bayard Smith, a Washington socialite, described the scene in detail. “Thousands and thousands of people, without distinction of rank, collected in an immense mass around the Capitol.” Smith was shocked not only by the composition of the crowd but also by its rowdiness. The boisterous attendees, she recounted, broke “glass and bone china to the amount of several thousand dollars.” Smith was clearly ambivalent about the inauguration of the “people’s president.” She was

impressed by the “majesty” of the people assembled at the swearing-in ceremony but disturbed by the rude and disorderly behavior of Jackson’s supporters at the reception that followed at the White House. This print of the inaugural confirms Smith’s impressions that Jackson’s inaugural was a popular affair, drawing a much more diverse crowd than previous inaugurations had. Not everyone was as impressed by the people’s majesty. Supreme Court Justice Joseph Story complained that Jackson’s inaugural had ushered in the “reign of King Mob.”

In contrast to Adams, who refused to use his powers of appointment to reward his political supporters, Jackson was unabashed in appointing his supporters to office. In his first inaugural Jackson defended the need for rotation in government offices. Jackson rejected the traditional republican notion, advanced by John Quincy Adams, that government offices were best reserved for a small elite, typically drawn from the ranks of the wealthy and well educated. “The duties of all public officers,” Jackson maintained, were “plain and simple.” One Jackson supporter proudly proclaimed that he saw “nothing wrong in the rule that to the victor belong the spoils of the enemy.” Opponents mocked Jackson’s appointments as “men of narrow minds” who were “hardly gentlemen.” Opponents also attacked Jackson’s system of replacing government officeholders with those loyal

8.6 “President’s Levee, or all Creation going to the White House”

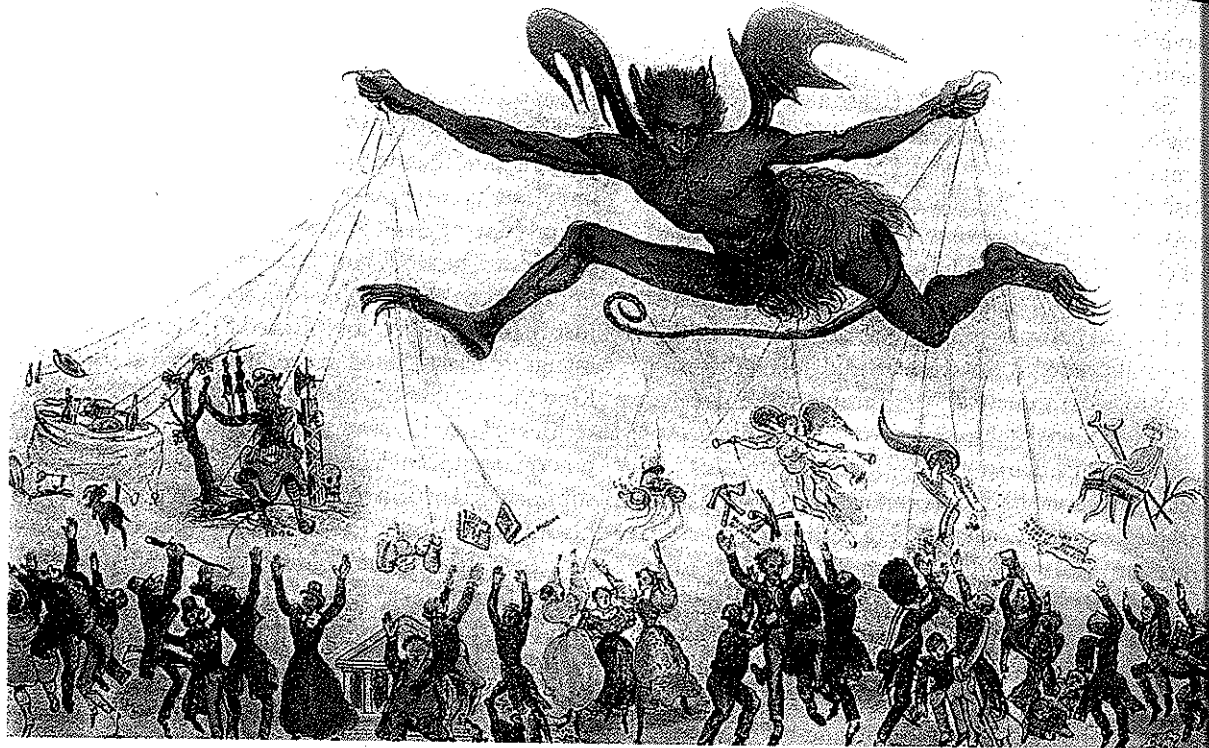
This image of the boisterous crowd in front of the White House during Jackson’s inaugural captures the fear that his presidency would usher in the “reign of King Mob.”



How did the spoils system further Jackson’s democratic agenda?

8.7 Office Seekers

In this attack on the spoils system, a demonic Andrew Jackson dangles the spoils of victory before eager office seekers.



to him as the **spoils system**. This cartoon (8.7) shows Jackson dangling the spoils of victory before eager office seekers. However Jackson's practices were less radical than his rhetoric. Only 20 percent of federal officeholders lost their job because of Jackson's new policy.

Apart from his appointment of Martin Van Buren as secretary of state, Jackson's cabinet comprised undistinguished figures selected for their loyalty to Jackson. Shortly after Jackson had assembled his cabinet, another sexual scandal engulfed his administration. The controversy swirled around his new secretary of war, John Eaton, a close friend of the president. Washington society, prone to gossip, began spreading rumors that Eaton's wife, Peggy, the daughter of a Washington tavern keeper, was a promiscuous woman who had engaged in a clandestine affair with Eaton before their marriage. The fact that Peggy's first husband had committed suicide only further besmirched her reputation. Still angry over the attacks on the legitimacy of his own marriage (his wife died before Jackson took office), the president defended Peggy Eaton's reputation and ordered his cabinet members to do likewise. The Eaton scandal, which some contemporaries described as "Eaton Malaria," consumed Jackson's presidency for months, preventing him from focusing on pressing public matters. Because the wife of the vice president, Floride Calhoun, had been one of the most prominent women to snub Peggy

Eaton, the Eaton affair also strained the already tense relations between Jackson and Vice President John C. Calhoun. The disruption to Jackson's administration forced the president to fire most of his cabinet in 1831.

States Rights and the Nullification Crisis

Even if Jackson and Vice President Calhoun had not fallen out over the Eaton affair, the two men were on a collision course. The rift between the two widened as the politics of states' rights divided the nation. Calhoun's home state of South Carolina became a hotbed of radical states' rights doctrine, and Calhoun was forced to carry the banner of states' rights forward or retire from public life. Choosing to take up the cause, Calhoun became one of its leading spokesmen. The issue that vexed South Carolina was federal tariffs on imported goods. In 1828 Congress passed new tariff legislation that enacted high import duties on a variety of goods, including textiles. The South objected to the tariff, believing that Britain would retaliate against America by raising tariffs on imported cotton, a move that would hurt Southern agriculture. John C. Calhoun secretly wrote a manifesto, *Exposition and Protest* (1828), defending South Carolina's right to nullify, or make legally void, the 1828 tariff. Calhoun's

manifesto developed ideas first articulated by Jefferson and Madison in the Virginia and Kentucky Resolutions and fashioned them into a radical theory of states' rights (see Chapter 6). According to Calhoun the Union was a sovereign compact among the people of the states. When the states and the national government disagreed over the constitutionality of a federal law, Calhoun asserted, the states were entitled to judge the constitutionality of federal laws. This position challenged both the supremacy of the federal government and the power of the federal courts to be the final arbiter on the constitutionality of federal laws. Asserting that a state could call special conventions to nullify federal laws, Calhoun's doctrine of **nullification** went further than either Jefferson or Madison's earlier defenses of states' rights.

The issue of states' rights resurfaced in 1830 when Congress debated a proposal to limit sales of Western lands. Samuel Foot, a senator from Connecticut, proposed to slow western expansion by cutting back on the public sale of Western lands, a decision that would have also robbed the government of revenues and made it even more dependent on tariffs. Prompting Foot's resolution was a report from the land office that 72 million acres of land already surveyed remained unsold. Thomas Hart Benton of Missouri and Robert Hayne of South Carolina rose in the Senate to denounce Foot's resolution. Benton and Hayne saw an opportunity to forge a southern and western alliance against New England's commercial interests. Benton saw Foot's proposal as a means for New England's industrialists to maintain their supply of cheap labor by making it harder for laborers to settle on Western lands. Hayne took a different tactic; framing the issue in terms of South Carolina's theory of states' rights, he moved beyond the specifics of Foot's proposal to suggest that federal control over Western lands was itself a source of danger since it encouraged the growth of federal power. Hayne suggested that Western lands be returned to those states in which they were located.

Daniel Webster, senator from Massachusetts, responded directly to Hayne's proposal, attacking the South Carolinian's theory of states' rights. The ensuing debate between Hayne and Webster was a brilliant display of rhetoric and oratory. One contemporary observer recalled: "It was a day never to be forgotten by those who witnessed the scene in the Senate Chamber and a day

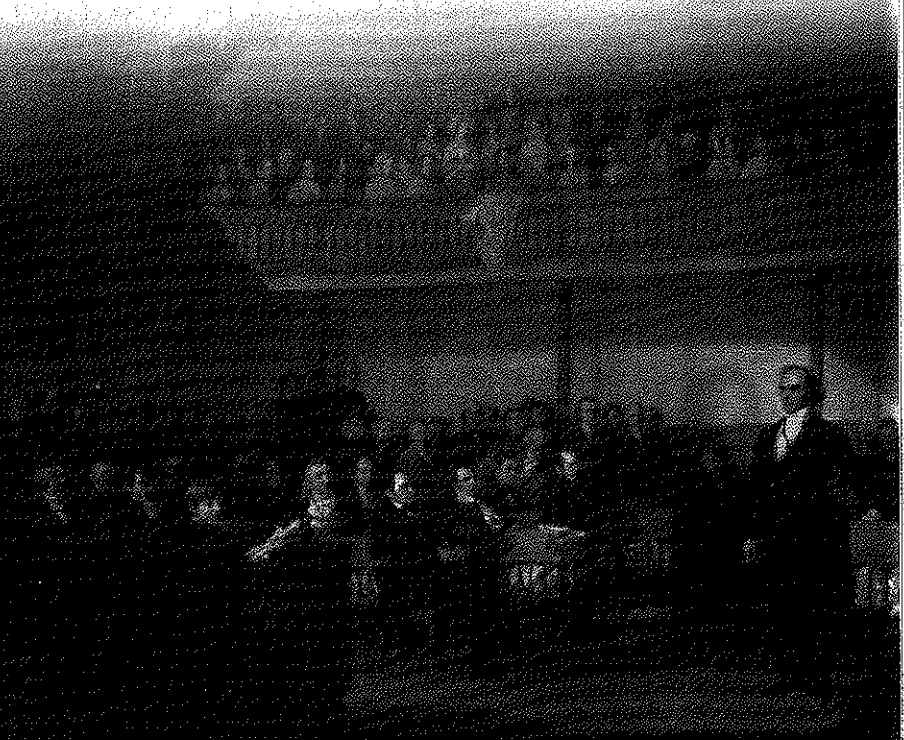
"Every seat, every inch of ground, even the steps, were compactly filled, and yet not space enough for the ladies—the Senators were obliged to relinquish their chairs of the State to the fair auditors who literally sat in the Senate."

MARGARET SMITH'S recollections of the Senate Chamber during Webster's reply to Hayne

destined to be forever memorable in the Annals of the Senate." In a riveting speech Webster concluded by denouncing the theory of states' rights and asserting the supremacy of the Union over the individual states: "Liberty and Union, now and forever, one and inseparable." Building on ideas developed by Hamilton and John Marshall (see Chapter 6 and Chapter 7), Webster's constitutional nationalism denied that the states could judge the constitutionality of federal laws and rejected the theory of nullification.

The contemporary press widely reprinted Webster's reply to Hayne. The speech became an instant classic; schoolchildren would recite it throughout the Northeast for generations. This meticulous historical painting by artist George Healy (8.8) immortalized the debate. In the painting Webster, pausing for a moment's reflection, stands in

8.8 Webster Replying to Hayne
George Healy's painting of Webster's famous speech is reminiscent of Bingham's *Stump Speaking*. Calhoun is presented as a wiry character, while Webster stands tall, a model of virtue.



a hushed Senate Chamber. Onlookers crowd the galleries, transfixed by the senator's oratory. Not shown in the painting, a number of senators had given up their Senate seats in the chamber to accommodate the many women who attended to hear the speech. Healey instead placed all the women in the Senate gallery, a decision likely motivated by his belief that this would be less distracting and give the painting a more serious air.

With the Webster-Hayne debate fresh in everyone's memory, supporters of states' rights gathered in Washington to honor the memory of Thomas Jefferson. Hayne and Calhoun both attended this dinner as did President Jackson. When Hayne concluded a long address devoted to defending states' rights, attention turned to Andrew Jackson, who was expected to propose a toast to Hayne's pro-states' rights sentiments. Having always been a moderate supporter of the doctrine of states' rights, Jackson would surely support Hayne, the crowd thought. They were shocked, however, when Jackson lifted his glass and proclaimed, "Our Federal Union. It must be preserved." Rather than echo Hayne, the president appeared to echo Webster. Vice President Calhoun, who had become an outspoken defender of states' rights, responded with his own toast, "The Union, next to our liberties, the most dear." Realizing that he could not effectively defend the interests of South Carolina and promulgate the cause of states' rights from the position of vice president, Calhoun

resigned. South Carolina promptly elected him to the Senate.

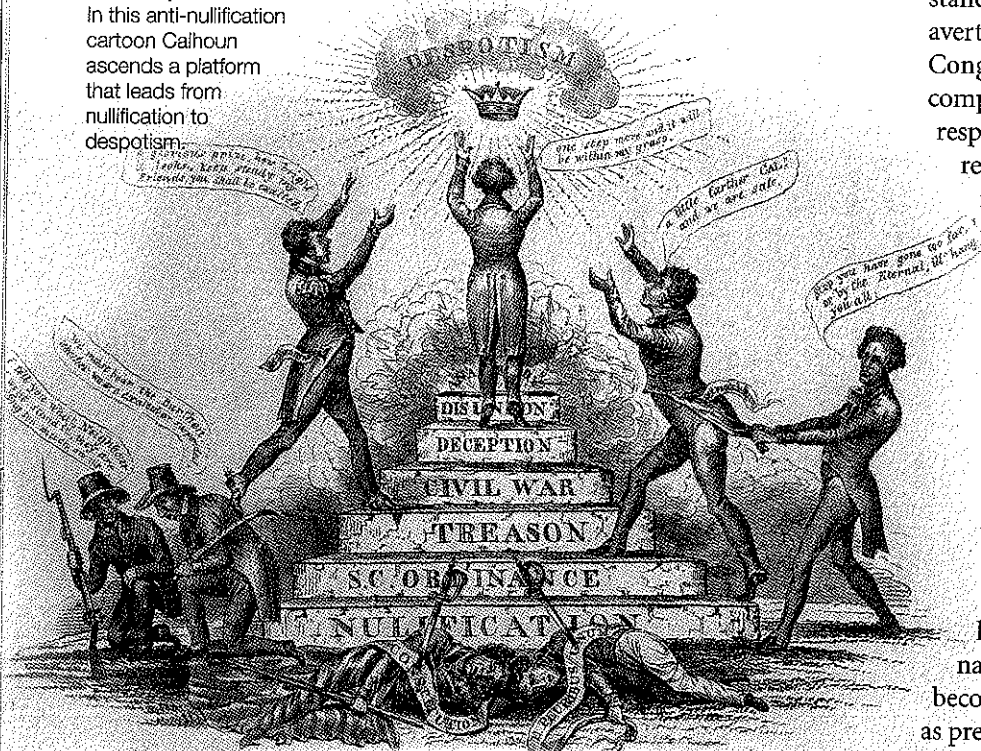
The issue of states' rights and nullification was once again at the center of American political life as the controversy over tariffs heated up another time. Congress intended the Tariff Act of 1832, which President Jackson signed, to be a conciliatory gesture to South Carolina. Although the new act lowered import duties, South Carolinians continued to view tariffs as an illegitimate effort by one section of the nation to wage economic war against another. The state of South Carolina called a convention and issued a declaration nullifying the tariff. Andrew Jackson denounced Carolina's actions as "subversive of the Constitution." Privately Jackson warned that if South Carolina spilled a drop of blood in "defiance of the laws of the United States," he would, "hang the first man of them I can get my hands on to the first tree I can find." Missouri senator Thomas Hart Benton, warned that when President Jackson "begins to talk about hanging, they can begin to look out for ropes." This contemporary cartoon attacking nullification (8.9) highlights Jackson's tough stance toward the nullifiers. The president, restraining one of Calhoun's supporters, declares, "Stop you have gone too far. Or by the Eternal I will hang you all!"

The president persuaded Congress to pass a **Force Bill** that gave him the power to use military force to collect revenues, including tariffs. At the same time that Jackson was adopting a public tough stance, Henry Clay was working behind the scenes to avert a confrontation. On the same day that Congress passed the Force Bill, it also passed a compromise measure that scaled back tariffs. In response to this conciliatory gesture, South Carolina rescinded its act of nullification, but not before issuing another act nullifying the Force Act. Clay's compromise measure had narrowly averted a constitutional crisis in which the states and the federal government had nearly come to blows. For the moment the conflict between states' rights and a more nationalist vision of the Constitution had been settled in favor of the latter theory.

Although Jackson adopted a hard line with South Carolina, he would prove to be far more flexible when federal and state power collided over other issues, notably Indian rights. Jackson's democratic nationalism had little room for anyone but white men. The narrowness of his democratic vision would become increasingly clear during his term as president.

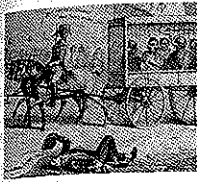
8.9 Despotism

In this anti-nullification cartoon Calhoun ascends a platform that leads to despotism.



How does the political cartoonist represent nullification theory in the cartoon *Despotism*?

White Man's Democracy



The democratic ideas that swept Andrew Jackson into the presidency were premised on a vision of society that was not truly inclusive: it excluded blacks and Indians, and showed little interest in women's rights. The new state constitutions drafted in the Jacksonian era expanded rights for nonproperty-owning white men at the same time that they stripped voting rights from property-owning African Americans. The plight of American Indians also became a major issue during Jackson's presidency. Jackson and his supporters sought to restrict Indians' rights and expropriate their lands.

Although the revised state constitutions systematically stripped away rights from free blacks, African American communities created a network of thriving communities in the free states of the North and the old Northwest (the modern Midwestern states of Ohio, Indiana, Michigan, and Illinois). However, harassment of African Americans in the nation's cities also increased during the Jacksonian era. Indeed the struggles of African Americans to achieve some measure of economic and social respectability prompted vicious attacks in the popular press.

Jacksonian democracy showed little regard for the rights of Indian peoples. The Cherokee fought a valiant effort to defend their rights within the rules established by the Constitution and learned that the rule of law provided scant protection against racism and a rapacious desire for Indian land.

Race and Politics in the Jacksonian Era

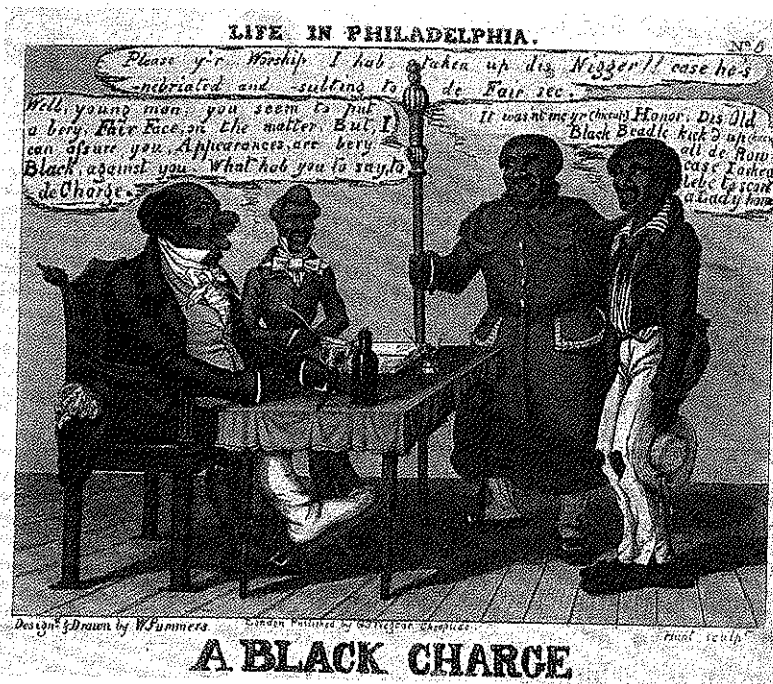
While many individual states were expanding the suffrage for white men, many other states were imposing new restrictions on black men. The 1821 New York state constitutional convention that had abolished property requirements for white men adopted a high property requirement for African Americans that effectively disenfranchised most blacks. Thus while the state's African American population numbered some thirty thousand in 1825, fewer than three hundred black men were eligible to vote. New York's actions were part of a broader pattern of racial exclusion that limited the rights of African Americans throughout the North and West. African Americans lost the right to vote in Rhode Island in 1822 and Pennsylvania in 1838. Most of the new states that entered the Union after 1819, apart from Maine, denied suffrage to African Americans.

Many states also passed laws regulating the conduct of free African Americans. In 1831 Indiana passed a law requiring that "Negroes and mulattoes emigrating in the state" post a bond (much like prisoners awaiting trial were expected to do) or be deported. Illinois not only barred blacks from voting but also prohibited them from testifying in court or

bringing civil law suits. Ohio barred African Americans from access to the courts in "any controversy where either party to the sale is a white person" and passed a law declaring that African Americans "have no constitutional right to present their petitions to the General Assembly for any purpose whatsoever."

Gradual emancipation schemes in the North increased the number of free blacks in the North and West. In part the intensification of racism reflected concern over economic competition from the rising number of free blacks. Yet despite the legal barriers placed in the way of African Americans' economic progress, vibrant communities grew in many parts of the North. The most obvious measure of the success of these communities was the rise of a rich array of African American cultural and economic institutions, including churches, fraternal organizations, and benefit societies. African Americans published their first newspaper, *Freedom's Journal*, in New York in 1827.

The efforts of free blacks in the North and West to improve their conditions became a subject of widespread comment in the press. Typically the press lampooned the efforts of African Americans to attain some measure of cultural and economic respectability. Exploiting this popular racism, artist



A BLACK CHARGE

8.10 A Black Charge

From a series of racist caricatures of black life in Philadelphia, this image lampoons African American aspirations to respectability. A church official disciplines a church member for alleged misconduct. (Source: The Library Company of Philadelphia)

Edward William Clay published a series of fourteen cartoons ridiculing Philadelphia's African American community. For example in *A Black Charge* (8.10), Clay mocks a black church official who must attempt to discipline a disorderly member of his community. As was typical in all of the racist caricatures of this era, the artist has exaggerated the physical appearances of African Americans and caricatured their speech patterns, suggesting that blacks could only speak a distorted form of English.

The racism inherent in the notion of a white man's democracy was directed not only at African Americans but also at Indians. Racism played a central role in Jackson's Indian policy. Andrew Jackson's military reputation was closely identified with his role as an Indian fighter. At the conclusion of the Creek War (1812–1813) Jackson had seized 23 million acres of Creek land, more than half of present-day Alabama and part of Georgia. Jackson treated the Indians as conquered subjects, not as a sovereign people. Given this status of the Indians, Jackson did not believe that "treaties with Indians" could be "reconciled to the principles of our government." Jackson's dealings with Indian peoples during his presidency were also consistent with his view that Indians were culturally inferior to whites, and that their civilization was on the path toward extinction. In Jackson's political calculus white settlers' need for land was paramount and the rights of Indians carried little if any weight. These beliefs shaped Jackson's response to the conflict between the state of Georgia and the Cherokee Indians.

The Cherokee were among the Indian peoples that white Americans described as the "Five civilized tribes:" Cherokees, Choctaws, Seminoles, Creeks, and Chickasaws. These five Indian tribes earned this name because to varying degrees they chose the path of cultural assimilation rather than resistance to America's expansionist policies. These tribes together numbered some 75,000 people who were spread out over the Carolinas, Georgia, Alabama, Mississippi, and Tennessee. Adopting the agricultural practices of their white neighbors and converting to Christianity were two major efforts the tribes made to accommodate to American culture.

No tribe was more committed to the strategy of accommodation than the Cherokee. The Cherokee nation took a dramatic series of steps to assert its right to govern itself and exist as a sovereign nation. They converted to Christianity, established schools, and practiced American-style agriculture; a few prosperous Cherokees even kept slaves to work on their cotton plantations, mimicking their white neighbors in Georgia. In addition they abandoned their traditional form of tribal governance, declared themselves an independent republic, and adopted a constitution modeled on the Federal Constitution. As a sovereign nation they claimed to enjoy all the legal privileges that all nations enjoyed and were therefore not subject to the laws of the state of Georgia. However the ideas that the Cherokee wished to enact, such as becoming an independent nation within the territorial confines of Georgia, did not sit well with the government of the state.

When Georgians discovered gold on Cherokee land in 1828, a horde of non-Indian prospectors tried to stake out claims on Indian lands, a clear violation of tribal authority and law. Declaring tribal law null and void, the state of Georgia backed the prospectors and passed a law that stripped the tribe of any legal authority over their lands. Henceforth Georgia law, not Cherokee law, would govern the Cherokee. The state also created a special police force, the Georgia Guard, to patrol Indian territory. The tribe lobbied opponents of Jackson sympathetic to their plight and turned to the federal courts for protection, arguing that Georgia's actions violated treaties between the Cherokee and the United States.

While the Cherokee awaited their day in court, Jackson turned up the pressure on them. The president refused the Cherokee's plea for federal troops to protect them. Since Indians could not testify in Georgia courts, the Cherokee were left

without any legal means of defending their rights under the laws of Georgia.

Jackson seized the opportunity provided by the Georgia crisis to advance a plan to remove the Cherokee from Georgia and relocate them to Western lands beyond the Mississippi River. Jackson cast himself as benevolent father, intervening to rescue the Cherokee from certain extinction. Jackson's program would not force Indians to leave, but it made it extremely unattractive for anyone to remain behind. The program would relegate Indians who refused to relocate to the status of free blacks, who had only minimal legal rights under Georgia law. Jackson presented the Cherokee with two equally disastrous choices: accept the legal destruction of their tribal identity and live as second-class citizens in Georgia, or relocate to a distant territory far from their ancestral homes.

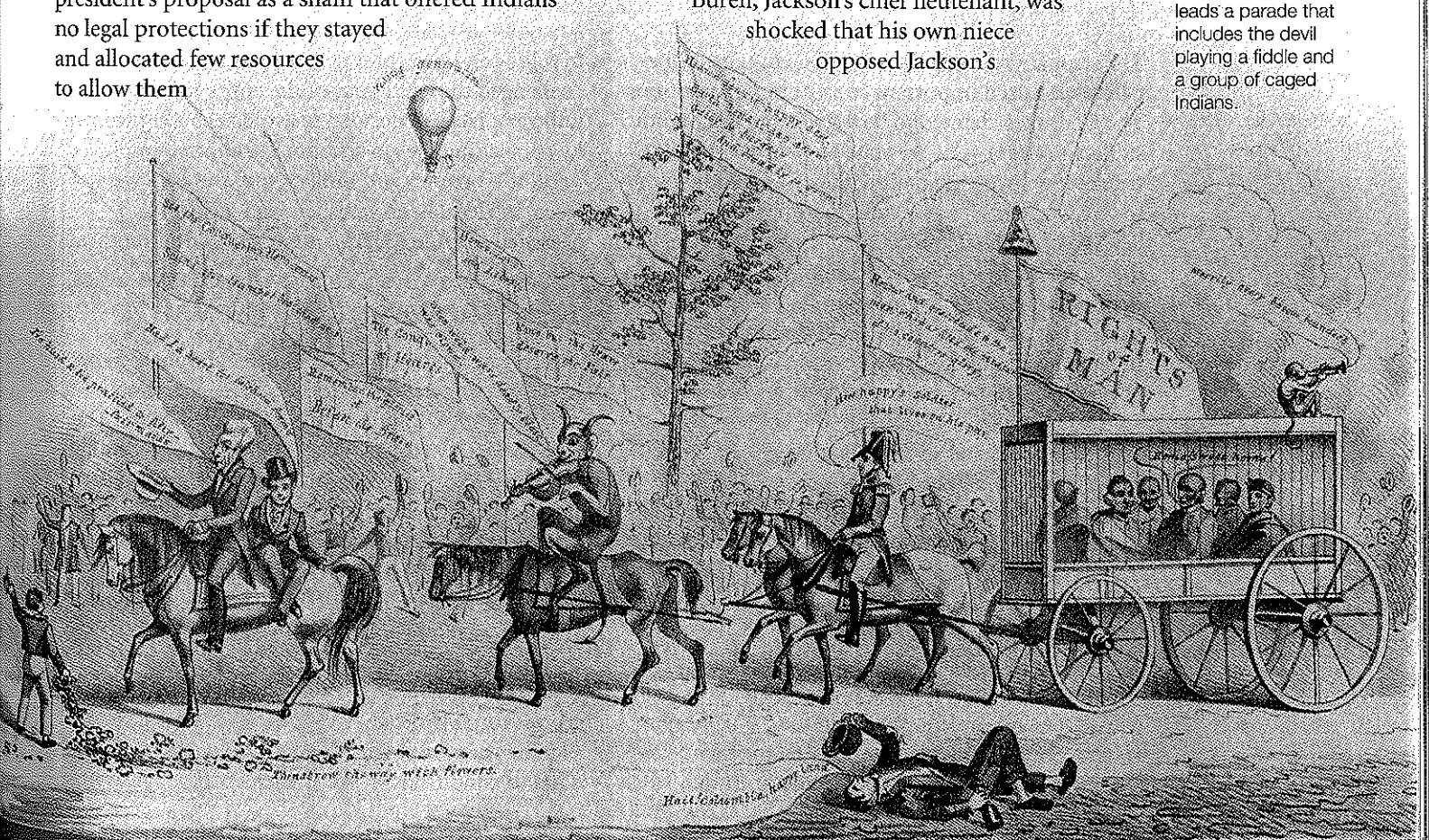
Jackson's opponents in Congress, many of whom had close ties to Protestant churches and missionary societies that had helped convert the Cherokees to Christianity, attacked his proposals. New Jersey's senator Theodore Frelinghuysen wondered if "it is one of the prerogatives of the white man, that he may disregard the dictates of moral principles, when an Indian shall be concerned." Others attacked the president's proposal as a sham that offered Indians no legal protections if they stayed and allocated few resources to allow them

to make a safe journey west. In this cartoon critical of Jackson's Indian policy (8.11), the president leads a parade that includes the devil and a group of caged Indians.

Protestant clergymen who had taken a leading role in converting Indians to Christianity led the opposition to Jackson's Indian policy. However although they valiantly defended Indian rights, religious leaders who opposed removal were not great champions of Indian culture. Indeed the religious defense of Indian rights shared many of the racist assumptions about Indians and their cultures of Jackson and others eager to dispossess Indians. Yet these supporters of Indians' rights believed that the supposed "inferiority" of Indian culture did not sanction unjust treatment or the violation of Indian rights. Women's reformers also rallied to the cause of Indian rights. Women's groups touted themselves as disinterested guardians of public morality who were not subject to the "blinding influence of party spirit." Removal, they argued, threatened the ongoing effort to Christianize and civilize the Indians. Invoking the moral authority of women's own spheres, opponents attacked Jackson's policies as an affront to church, school, and the family. Indeed such appeals were so effective that Martin Van

Buren, Jackson's chief lieutenant, was shocked that his own niece opposed Jackson's

8.11 The Grand National Caravan Moving East
In this attack on Jackson's Indian policy, the president leads a parade that includes the devil playing a fiddle and a group of caged Indians.



How does the Grand Caravan represent Jackson's Indian policy?

policy and hoped that the president would lose his bid for reelection in 1832!

The Jacksonians defeated the supporters of Indian rights and passed their removal bill by a narrow margin. The **Indian Removal Act of 1830** gave President Jackson the authority to confiscate Indians lands within the borders of the existing states. Although some tribes reluctantly accepted the inevitability of relocation, other resisted. The Cherokee eloquently protested against their forced relocation. Cherokee leaders stated their desire to remain on the land of their ancestors and reminded Americans that their existing treaties with the United States guaranteed them this right.

“We wish to remain on the land of our fathers. We have a perfect and original right to remain without interruption or molestation.”

Address of a council of the Cherokee nation to the people of the United States, written in July of 1830.

The Cherokee Cases

The struggle between the state of Georgia and the Cherokee raised important constitutional questions. The Cherokee claimed to be a sovereign nation not subject to the laws of the state of Georgia. As was true of any sovereign nation, they claimed the right to govern themselves by rules that their own legislature enacted and claimed the right to deal with the United States as a sovereign power. Georgia rejected both these claims, arguing that Indians were subjects of the United States and that the idea of an independent Indian state within Georgia was an absurdity. The status of Indian nations in American constitutional law came before the Supreme Court of the United States in two separate cases related to the claims of the Cherokee nation.

In the **Cherokee Cases**, *Cherokee Nation v. Georgia* (1830) and *Worcester v. Georgia* (1832), the Supreme Court determined that Indian nations retained certain rights traditionally associated with sovereign nations, including the right to govern themselves by their own laws, but lacked other rights, such as the ability to sue the state of Georgia. The latter case came to the Supreme Court because Georgia had imprisoned two Protestant missionaries, Samuel Worcester and Elizur Butler,

charging them with residing on Indian land without obtaining a license from the state. As both men were citizens of the United States, clearly they were entitled to sue in federal courts. Writing for the Supreme Court, Chief Justice John Marshall found that the missionaries had been wrongly imprisoned and were entitled to protection by the federal courts. Moreover Marshall gave the Cherokee an important victory when he held that “the laws of Georgia can have no force” on Cherokee territory. Although the Cherokee did not enjoy all the privileges accorded foreign nations by U.S. law, they did retain the right to make laws within their own lands.

Some Cherokee leaders, including Elias Boudinot—who believed that with the courts on their side, Georgia would have no alternative but to respect the Cherokee’s rights—greeted Marshall’s ruling in *Worcester* enthusiastically. Others within the tribe, including Chief John Ross, were more wary of putting excessive faith in the rule of law when Indian rights were at issue. Sadly Ross, not Boudinot, turned out to be right. Georgia refused to accept the high court’s ruling and did not release the imprisoned missionaries. President Jackson was unwilling to antagonize Georgia, and was generally ill-disposed to Indians rights. He refused to enforce Marshall’s decision. The case might have precipitated a major constitutional crisis: A president refusing to follow an injunction from the court would have challenged the legitimacy of the entire federal judiciary. Jackson decided to avoid such a showdown by persuading the governor of Georgia to simply pardon Worcester and Butler. Once the men were freed, the legal issue vanished, and Jackson and Marshall were no longer pitted against one another.

Resistance and Removal

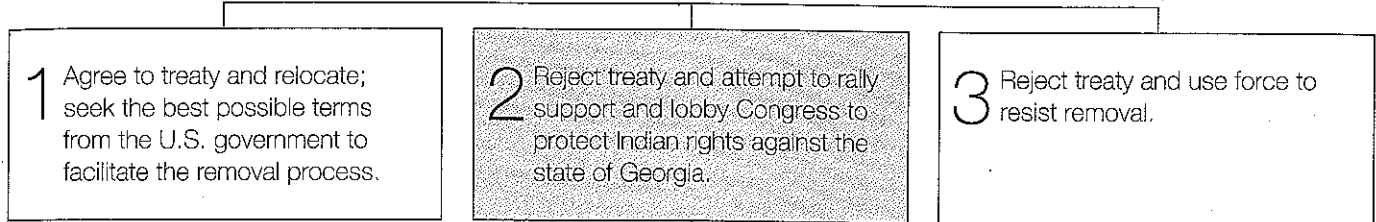
The release of the two missionaries eliminated any legal issues and cleared the way for the Jackson administration to pursue its policy of removal. The Cherokee now faced the painful choice of accepting the inevitability of removal or continuing to resist Jackson and the state of Georgia. (See *Choices and Consequences: Acquiesce or Resist? The Cherokee Dilemma*.) In 1835 a minority of the Cherokee leadership gave in and signed a treaty agreeing to relocate west of the Mississippi. Many Cherokee denounced the treaty, and many hoped that their leaders could avert relocation. In 1838 federal troops forcibly began rounding up Cherokee and placing them in stockades to await deportation. The squalid conditions in the stockades took a heavy

Choices and Consequences

ACQUIESCE OR RESIST? THE CHEROKEE DILEMMA

Should the Cherokee have resisted Jackson's removal policy? The Cherokee nation faced a difficult decision regarding how to deal with the increasing pressure on them to abandon their land and relocate to Western territory in what is now Oklahoma. The tribal leadership was divided. The majority of the Cherokee supported Principal Chief John Ross, who advised resisting, while a minority of the tribe supported Elias Boudinot, who argued that it was better to relocate than to continue to oppose the inevitable.

Choices



Decision

A small but vocal minority of the Cherokee, including Elias Boudinot, believed that continued residence in Georgia would only result in further harassment. They reasoned that it would be more prudent to try to obtain the best deal from the United States and relocate to Western territories. However the majority of Cherokee supported John Ross, who believed that it was still possible to rally support among religious groups and other whites sympathetic to Indian rights. Influential senators Daniel Webster and Henry Clay opposed Jackson and were eager to use the plight of Indians to attack him. Most Cherokee rejected the treaty requiring them to relocate and refused to participate in the referendum held on it.

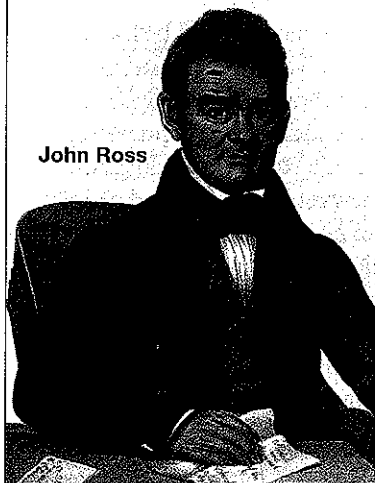
Consequences

Bolstered by popular opposition to the treaty among the Cherokee, John Ross lobbied the Senate to reject the treaty as fraudulent and came within one vote of defeating it. Having won a narrow victory, Jackson signed the treaty and the Cherokee were given two years to leave their homes or face military deportation. After relocation, supporters of John Ross assassinated several prominent Indian supporters of the fraudulent treaty, including Elias Boudinot.

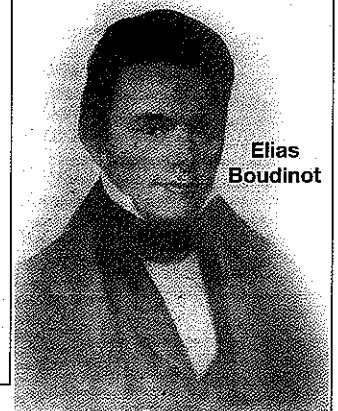
Continuing Controversies

Was it realistic for the Cherokees to think that they might be able to win support for their cause?

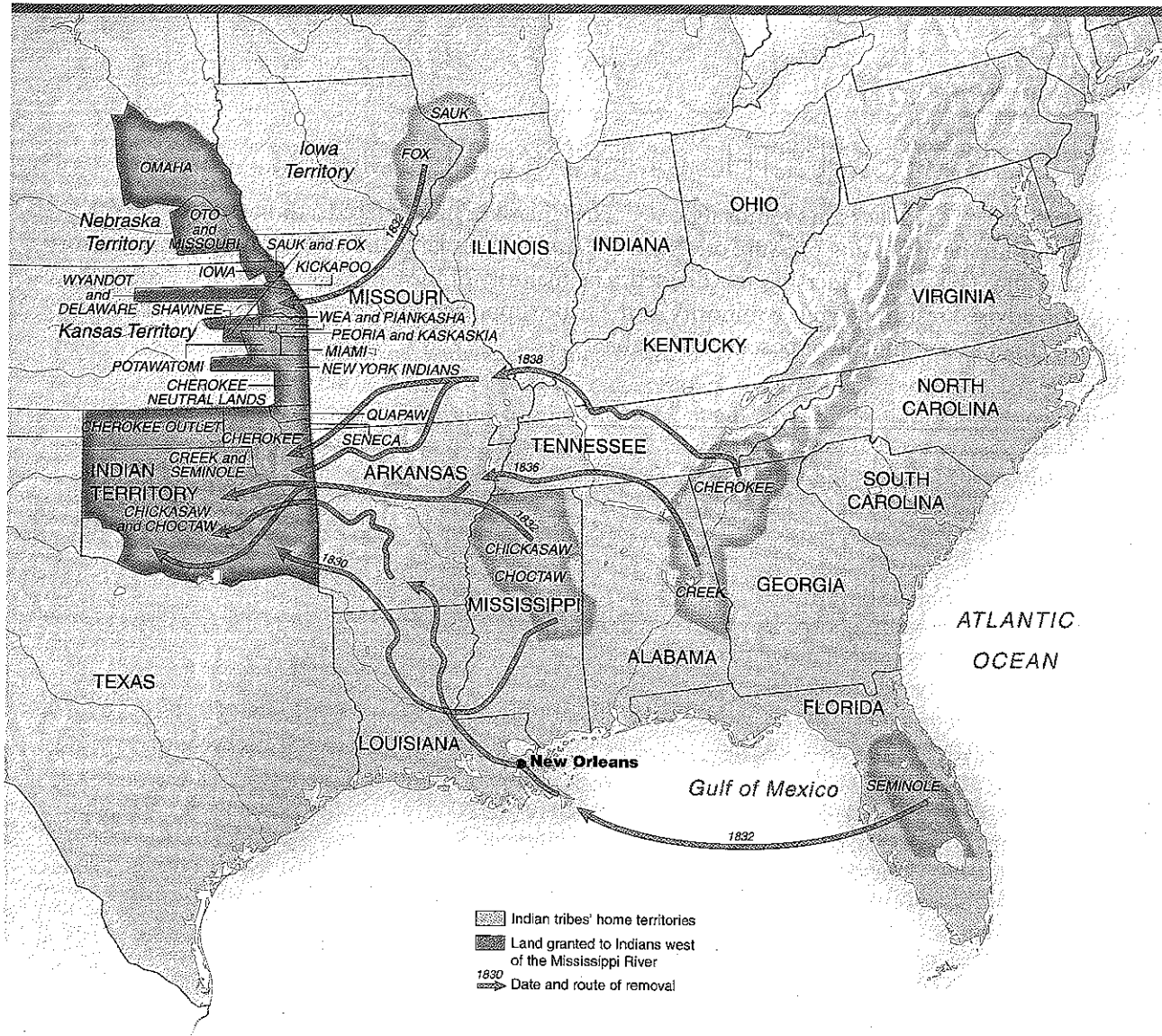
Most scholars agree that Jackson's Indian policy was racist and unethical, particularly the violation of existing treaties. There is, however, some disagreement over the Cherokee response to the dilemma created by Jackson's policy. Supporters of John Ross note that he was an extremely savvy politician whose calculation that opposition to Jackson and sympathy for the plight of Indians was a reasonable gamble. Opponents of Ross argue that Boudinot and others who voted in favor of the treaty were more realistic in their assessment of the political situation.



John Ross



Elias Boudinot



8.12 Cherokee removal

This map shows the path taken by Indian tribes forced to relocate under Jackson's Indian removal plan. Thousands died during the forced migration.

toll, and many of the most outspoken Cherokee opponents of removal now recognized that further resistance was futile.

Indian leaders who had continued to protest were joined in their protest by a broad coalition that included clergymen, women reformers, and constitutional nationalists such as Henry Clay and Daniel Webster, who were horrified at Jackson's behavior toward the Cherokee. The two men were particularly outraged by Jackson's disregard for treaty obligations, and his disrespect for the authority of the federal courts. Opposition to Indian removal provided a rallying point for a diverse

collection of opponents who believed Jackson had become a tyrant who showed little regard for justice or the rule of law.

During the long and arduous march westward to what is now Oklahoma (8.12), thousands of Cherokee men, women, and children died. Harsh weather, a shortage of supplies, and poor sanitation facilities contributed to a staggering death toll. Estimates vary but as many as four thousand of the twelve thousand Cherokee who were relocated perished in the trip. For the Cherokee and their descendants, the move westward became known as "the Path Where They Cried," or the "Trail of Tears."

Democrats, Whigs, and the Second Party System



Unlike previous partisan movements Jackson's Democratic Party operated as an efficient and nationally integrated political organization. The new party organization called also for a new party name. In the election of 1828, Jackson supporters had described themselves as Democratic-Republicans, while Adams supporters opted for the name National Republicans. These two labels testify to the transitional nature of the election of 1828. Both names harked back to political labels that were associated with the partisan struggles of Jefferson's and Monroe's administrations. By the election of 1832, Jackson supporters were simply calling themselves Democrats.

By contrast Jackson's opposition was still defining itself. A third political party, the Anti-Masonic party, organized in response to the undue influence of the Masonic order—a fraternal organization whose members included many of the nation's most prominent politicians—capturing the imagination of voters briefly, but then disbanded. During Jackson's second term a new political party, the **Whigs**, rose out of the ashes of the old National Republicans, stressing the need for a talented, virtuous elite to shape the nation's future. Evoking the name of the seventeenth-century English opponents of absolute monarchy and the Patriot leaders who had opposed the tyranny of George III during the American Revolution, the Whigs saw themselves as defenders of the Constitution against executive despotism. Opposition to Jackson's Indian policy created one of the essential elements of the coalition that formed the Whig Party. Economic policy, as defined by Clay's American System (which included support for the national bank), and a general opposition to the new vision of executive power personified by Jackson also defined core Whig ideas.

Once voters aligned with one of the two main parties, they tended to remain loyal to it over the course of their lifetime. Rather than seeking votes from an undifferentiated electorate, both sides now concentrated on getting out the vote from their party's constituents and maintaining popular enthusiasm for the party's choices for local, state, and national offices. This further intensified the divisions between the two new parties.

Third Party Challenges: Anti-Masonry and Workingmen's Parties

In the election of 1832, Andrew Jackson, aiming at a second term as president, faced Henry Clay, who still saw himself as the heir to James Monroe and John Quincy Adams's National Republicans. Another candidate, William Wirt, a talented lawyer who had argued the Cherokee cases before the Supreme Court, entered the fray as the choice of the Anti-Masonic party. The presence of a third party

complicated the election and worked against Clay, effectively splitting the anti-Jackson vote.

The Anti-Masons emerged in New York state as a reaction against the power of the Masonic order, a secret fraternal organization that included many of the nation's most powerful figures, including Andrew Jackson and Henry Clay. Freemasonry had a long history in America. Many members of America's Founding generation had been Freemasons, including George Washington and Benjamin Franklin. The Freemasons championed Enlightenment ideals, but they also drew some of their rituals and symbols from the mystical

tradition. The best-known Masonic symbol, an eye suspended over an unfinished pyramid, appears on the reverse side of the Great Seal of the United States (and also on the modern dollar bill). Several characteristics of the Freemasons made them a likely target of popular suspicion. Secret handshakes, rituals, passwords, and other Masonic practices were one source of suspicion. The presence in the order of many prominent politicians who were Masons encouraged conspiracy theories about the organization. In addition Freemasonry's support for the Enlightenment angered some religious groups, especially evangelicals, who believed that Masons were anti-Christian.

8.13 Anti-Masonic Apron

This parody of the Anti-Masons contrasts their values, "Persecution, Intolerance, Hypocrisy," with the Masons' Enlightenment ideals: universal benevolence, equal rights, tolerance, and scientific inquiry.

These suspicions and resentments provided the backdrop to a sensational crime involving the Freemasons. In 1826 a disgruntled ex-Freemason, Daniel Morgan, threatened to expose the order's secret rituals. When this ex-Mason was kidnapped and disappeared, a popular clamor arose against the order. The Anti-Masonic party, capitalizing on this sensational crime, attracted evangelicals to the Anti-

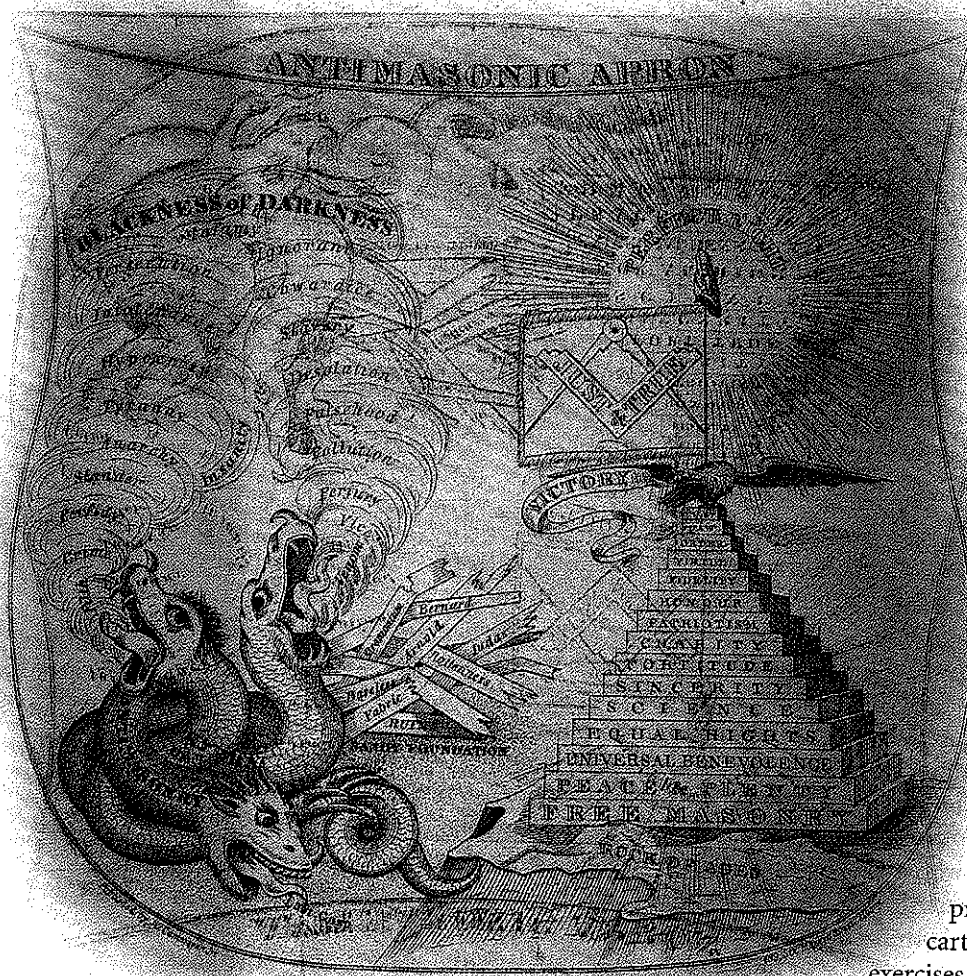
"As long as property is unequal: or rather, as long as it is so enormously unequal, as we see it at present. . . those who possess it, will live on the labor of others."

THOMAS SKIDMORE,
The Rights of Man to Property! 1829

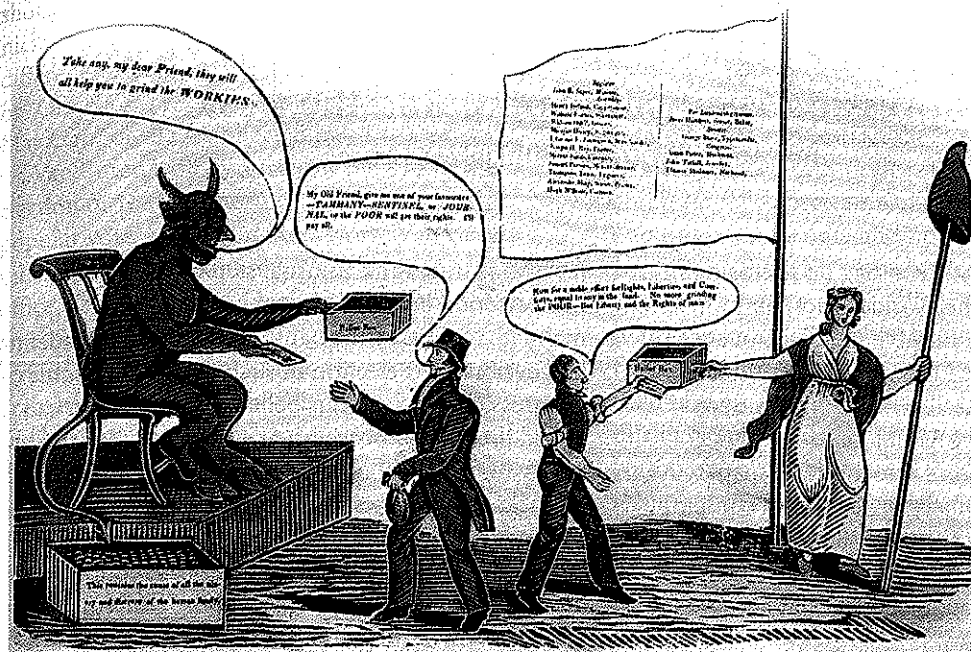
Masonic cause. Meanwhile the Freemasons did not remain silent. In this attack on the Anti-Masons, who are cast as the mythical monster the hydra, the Freemasons represent their own Enlightenment values, such as science and equality, as the steps of a pyramid, a common Masonic symbol (8.13).

The Anti-Masons proved to be innovative politicians, building an effective popular political movement. Although short-lived, their party, the first third-party movement in American history, helped pioneer several new political techniques that mainstream parties soon adopted. The Anti-Masonic party pioneered the use of a national nominating convention to select a presidential candidate. It was also the first party to adopt an official party platform, published so that voters could judge the party's position on the important questions of the day. This party also energized an important group of religious voters who were drawn into public life and politics as a result of the party's efforts.

At the same time that the Anti-Masonic party was organizing, workers in Philadelphia (1828) and New York (1829) formed their own political parties. The Workies, as they were called, won several seats in the state legislatures. Among the political reforms the Workies managed to achieve was the abolition of imprisonment for debt. In this pro-Workie cartoon (8.14), an honest working man exercises the ballot freely, while a corrupt tool of the moneyed interest serves the devil.



What lasting contributions did the Anti-Masons make to American politics?



8.14 No More Grinding the Poor—But Liberty and the Rights of Man

The devil hands money to a rich man in an effort to buy his vote, telling him to “grind the Workies.” A virtuous workingman invokes Liberty and the Rights of Man and casts his vote independently, while the goddess of Liberty holds out the ballot box.

The most radical spokesmen among the Workies, men such as the artisan Thomas Skidmore, advocated a comprehensive program to use inheritance taxes to equalize wealth. In his book *The Rights of Man to Property!* (1829) Skidmore proposed to abolish inherited wealth and redistribute wealth to each new generation, who would start life equally and prosper or fall by their own efforts. Although the Workies were unable to turn their successes into the basis for creating a national labor party, their attack on banking had a strong influence on mainstream Democratic politicians, including Andrew Jackson. The class-conscious rhetoric of the workers would influence the way Democrats framed their political message for the American people.

The Bank War and the Rise of the Whigs

Jackson’s growing opposition to Clay’s American System, including a visceral hatred for the Bank of the United States, emerged as one of the defining features of his presidency. The political war that arose over the bank issue helped Jackson’s opponents to define their political identity and to create a new political party, the Whigs.

Henry Clay and Daniel Webster, two very influential figures within the anti-Jackson National Republican party, believed that the president’s hatred for the bank could be used to defeat Jackson in the

election of 1832. Clay reasoned that Jackson’s opposition to the bank would alienate most voters from Jackson because they would recognize the importance of a national bank. Clay approached Nicholas Biddle, the head of the Bank of the United States, with the idea of petitioning Congress for an early renewal of the bank’s charter. Clay knew that Jackson was opposed to the bank and might veto the new charter, a move that Clay believed would turn the public against Jackson. Jackson confided to Martin Van Buren his intention to destroy the bank. “The Bank, Mr. Van Buren, is trying to kill me, but I will kill it!” The bank became the central issue of the presidential campaign of 1832.

Although the bank had many supporters, including some figures in Jackson’s administration, the veto turned out to be extremely popular. Jackson had managed to convert opposition to the bank into support for democracy itself. In his **Bank Veto Speech**, Jackson not only explained why he opposed rechartering the Bank of the United States but also took the opportunity to lay out his own vision of American democracy and constitutional government. Jackson attacked “the rich and powerful” who “too often bend the acts of government to their selfish purposes.” His speech appealed to “the humble members of society—the farmers, mechanics and laborers.”

Democratic newspapers echoed Jackson’s view of the bank. “The Jackson cause is the cause of democracy and the people against a corrupt and

“The Bank Veto ... falsely and wickedly alleges that the rich and powerful throughout the country are waging a war of oppression against the poor and the weak.”

Boston Daily Atlas, editorial, 1832

abandoned aristocracy.” Drawing on rhetoric similar to that employed by the Workies, Jackson framed his appeal directly to the “humble members of society.”

Opponents attacked the veto as an assault on the Constitution itself. The press hammered away at Jackson, charging that he had become “a DICTATOR.” Jackson’s veto, one newspaper claimed, was the act of a tyrant who had contempt for Congress. Rather than represent a victory for democracy, Jackson’s recklessness was a sign of his corruption. For his opponents Jackson became the embodiment of tyranny.

Jackson’s war against the Bank of the United States inspired a rich assortment of political cartoons, both critical and supportive of his policies. Democratic cartoonists cast Jackson as the champion of the common man, while supporters of the bank depicted him as a reckless tyrant. These images are explored in *Images as History: “Old Hickory” or “King Andrew”*: *Popular Images of Andrew Jackson*, page 244.

In the election of 1832, Jackson defeated Clay by 150,000 votes and by a roughly 5-to-1 margin in the Electoral College. Clay’s strategy of making the bank the central issue in the campaign had backfired, and Jackson’s attack on the bank had actually increased his popularity. Still the Bank War provided Jackson’s opponents with an issue that helped them define their own political identity and helped create a new political party, the Whigs.

Having defeated supporters of the Bank of the United States, Jackson might have opted to let the bank die a natural death by simply allowing its charter to expire. However fearing that his enemies would try to revive the bank during the next congressional session and vote it a new charter, he decided to withdraw all federal funds from the bank, a move that would have made its revival financially impossible. Jackson ordered his secretary of the treasury to remove the government’s deposits, but even his own minister thought such a move rash and damaging to the economy. The president had to fire two men before he could find one willing to take the job of secretary of the treasury and follow his orders.

Jackson justified this unusual step by noting that his reelection had given him a broad popular mandate to destroy the bank. No previous president had ever cast his election in such terms. Even some congressional Democrats believed that Jackson had risked the economic well-being of the country to satisfy his personal vendetta against the bank.

Jackson’s enemies in Congress condemned his actions as additional proof that Jackson was a tyrant who sought “a total change of the pure republican character of the Government and the concentration of all powers in the hands one man.” In the view of the Whigs, Jackson was little better than George the III, the monarch America’s own Whig Patriots had opposed more than fifty years before.

Economic Crisis and the Presidency of Martin Van Buren

Jackson’s decision to remove funds from the bank and deposit them into state banks damaged the economy. State banks were far less cautious than the Bank of the United States in loaning money, particularly for speculative land ventures. The resulting expansion of credit led to a speculative frenzy. Between 1832 and 1836 land sales expanded from 2.6 million to almost 25 million. To slow down the overheated economy, Jackson adopted a hard money policy, the Specie Circular, which required that land purchased from the government be paid for with hard currency (before this policy individuals had purchased land with bank notes that were not guaranteed by gold or silver). Jackson left office with the nation’s economy teetering on the verge of collapse.

Martin Van Buren had become the most influential figure in Jackson’s inner circle and would become the Democrats’ candidate for the presidency in 1836. In most respects Van Buren was nearly the opposite of Andrew Jackson. Political caricaturists made much of the physical and personality differences between the two. Jackson was tall, thin,

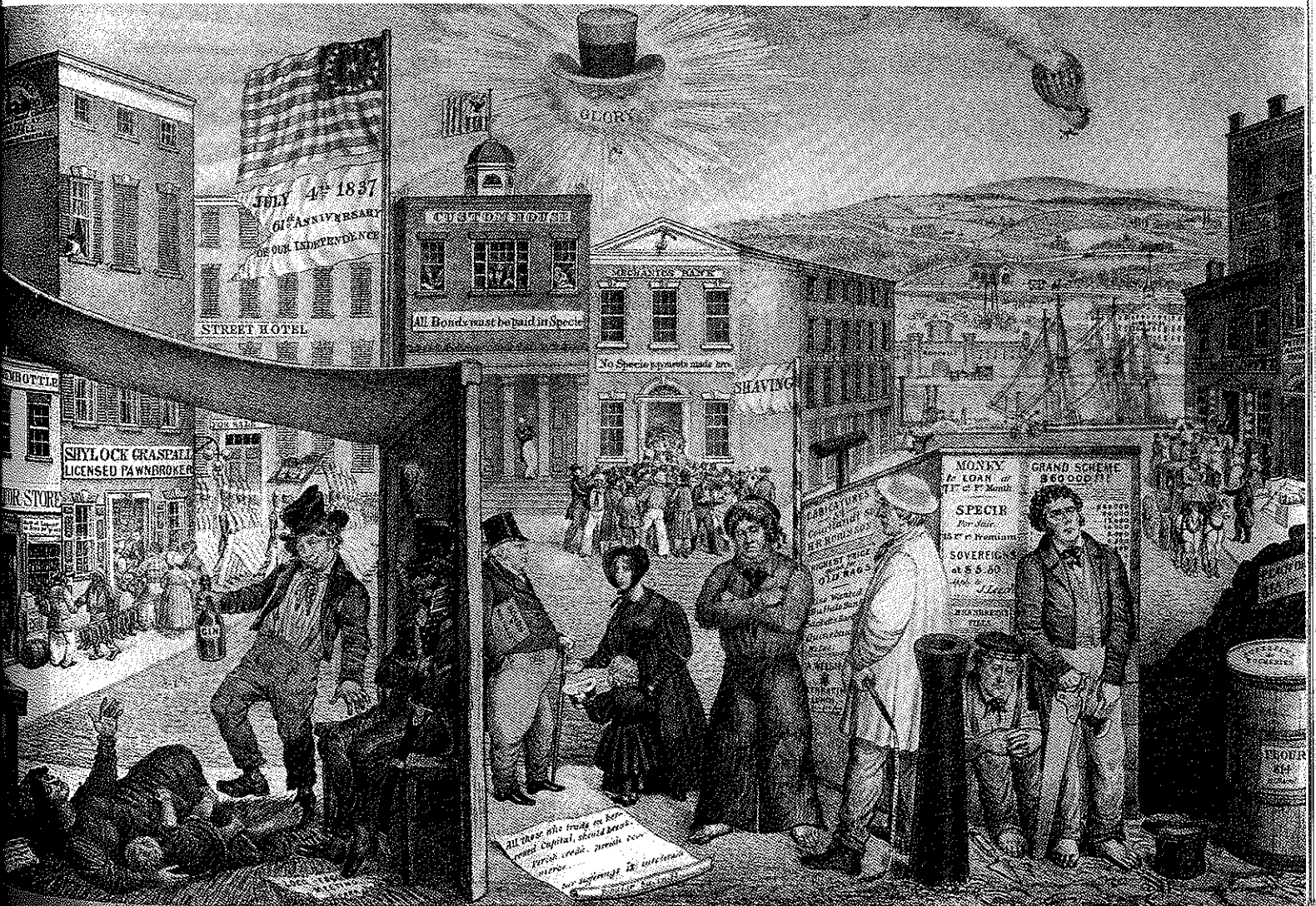
impulsive, and headstrong, while Van Buren was short, stout, cautious, and compromising. The nicknames of the two only underscored the differences. Jackson was the “Hero of New Orleans” or “Old Hickory,” while Van Buren was the “Little Magician” or the “Slippery Elm.”

Van Buren won by a narrow margin in the election of 1836, garnering 50.2 percent of the popular vote. Making matters worse Van Buren inherited a weak economy. Within a year of taking office, he was forced to deal with the Panic of 1837, an economic crisis that plunged the nation into a serious economic depression. Unemployment rose dramatically, and the number of farm foreclosures and business failures increased. Wages dropped as much as 50 percent, and a third of the workforce was out of work in some hard-hit areas, such as Philadelphia. The cartoon *The Times* illustrates the failure of Jackson’s economic policies (8.15). The images of idle workers staggering drunk, while a

respectable-looking woman and child beg for coins, show the plight of the working class. Although Whigs blamed Jackson’s war against the bank, the economic causes of the panic were largely foreign. In 1837 the Bank of England decided to raise its interest rates and restrict the flow of credit to British banks investing in America. This constriction of credit forced American banks to restrict their loans and call in many outstanding debts. Without access to additional credit, many businesses and farms defaulted on their loans. When these loans went bad, many banks, caught short, had to close. These bank failures led to a further constriction of credit, which then triggered another round of foreclosures and business failures. To make matters worse the price of cotton on the world market plummeted in 1837, leaving many cotton speculators without the funds to cover their loans and causing additional bankruptcies. Critics of the president gave him a new nickname—“Martin Van Ruin.”

8.15 Panic of 1837

This political cartoon highlights the economic hardships caused by the Panic of 1837. The spirit of Andrew Jackson, symbolized by his hat, glasses, and clay pipe, hovers over the scene of suffering and despair.



What are some of the signs of economic distress in this political cartoon on the Panic of 1837?

Images as History

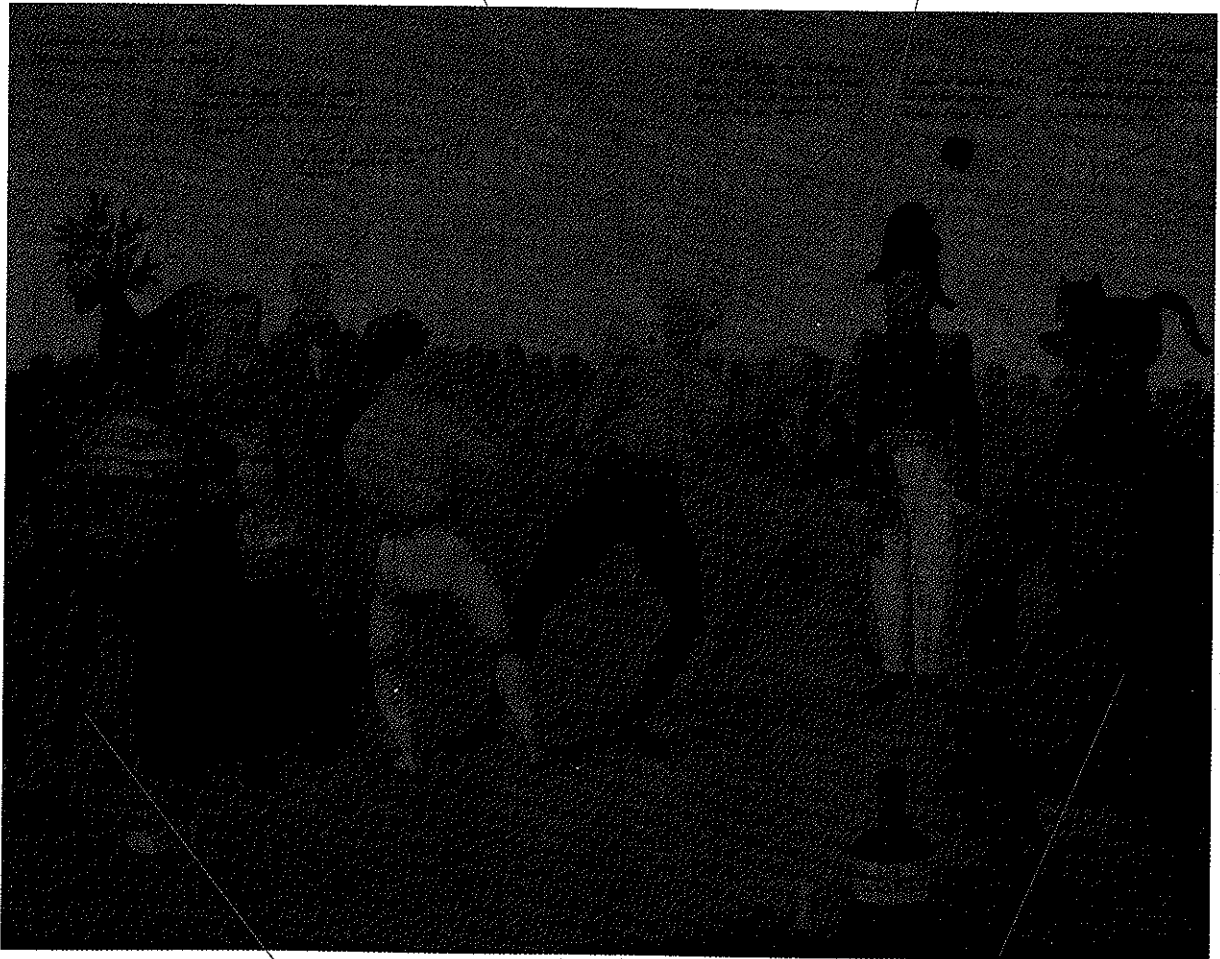
"OLD HICKORY" OR "KING ANDREW": POPULAR IMAGES OF ANDREW JACKSON

The controversies swirling around Andrew Jackson's presidency, particularly his war on the Bank of the United States, provided political cartoonists with ample material for parody and praise. The Jacksonian era, riddled with partisan tensions, generated some of the most memorable cartoons in American political history. They portrayed Jackson variously as a rough frontiersman, a spiteful old lady, a tyrannical king, and a heroic statesman.

This pro-Jackson image, *Set To Between Old Hickory and Bully Nick*, produced to defend Jackson's Bank Veto, shows the president boxing with Nicholas Biddle, president of the bank. Jackson's loyal sidekick, Martin Van Buren, urges him on to victory. Jackson is represented as "Old Hickory," a rough-hewn westerner who does not shy away from a good fight. The other figures in the lithograph reinforce the contrast between Jacksonian democracy and the aristocratic bank.

The shirtless Jackson stands firm like an "Old Hickory" ready to stand up to Biddle and the bank.

Martin Van Buren stands behind Jackson, urging him on.



Old Hickory vs. Bully Nick [Source: The Library Company of Philadelphia]

Mother Bank, dressed in finery, stands behind Biddle and shouts encouragement.

A buckskin-clad frontiersman urges Jackson to defeat Biddle.

How would you describe the difference between the two images of Jackson in these political cartoons?

Behind Biddle, Mother Bank, clad in a fancy dress, stands with a bottle of port in her hand, a type of alcoholic beverage typically consumed by the wealthy. By contrast, championing Jackson's cause is a backwoodsman clad in buckskin who stands beside a bottle of whiskey, a drink associated with frontiersmen and the working class.

This anti-Jackson cartoon, *King Andrew the First*, portrays the president as a monarch in regal robes. He

holds the Bank Veto in one hand and a royal scepter in the other.

Visual images such as these two cartoons helped translate the complex political and legal issues at stake in the controversy over the bank into terms that most Americans could understand. The two radically different visions of Jackson captured the divisive politics of his presidency.

Jackson is clad in the regal robes and crown of a monarch.



In his hand he holds the Bank Veto.

The regal Jackson tramples on the text of the Constitution of the United States, which lies in shreds below his feet.

King Andrew

Why is Jackson portrayed as a monarch in this political cartoon?

Playing the Democrats' Game: Whigs in the Election of 1840



Largely because the Whigs split their vote among different regional candidates in 1836, they lost the election to Van Buren. However the failure of the Whigs also reflected their problem communicating their message to the American people. Millard Fillmore, a young Whig from upstate New York (who would later become president), lamented the “heterogeneous mass” of the Whig Party, which included “old national republicans, and revolting Jackson men, Masons and Anti-Masons, Abolitionists, and pro-Slavery men.” Fillmore hoped that his party could find some “crucible ... to melt them down into one mass pure Whigs of undoubted good metal.” In 1840 the Whigs did find a route to unification and learned how to frame their message in terms that appealed to the American people. Drafting a popular military figure, William Henry Harrison, the Whigs reshaped their campaign using the tools and rhetoric that had made the Democrats so successful, especially their direct appeals to the people. In brief they learned to play the Democrats' game. In addition the Whigs pioneered new techniques for mobilizing voters and made an unprecedented effort to involve women in their cause.

The Log Cabin Campaign

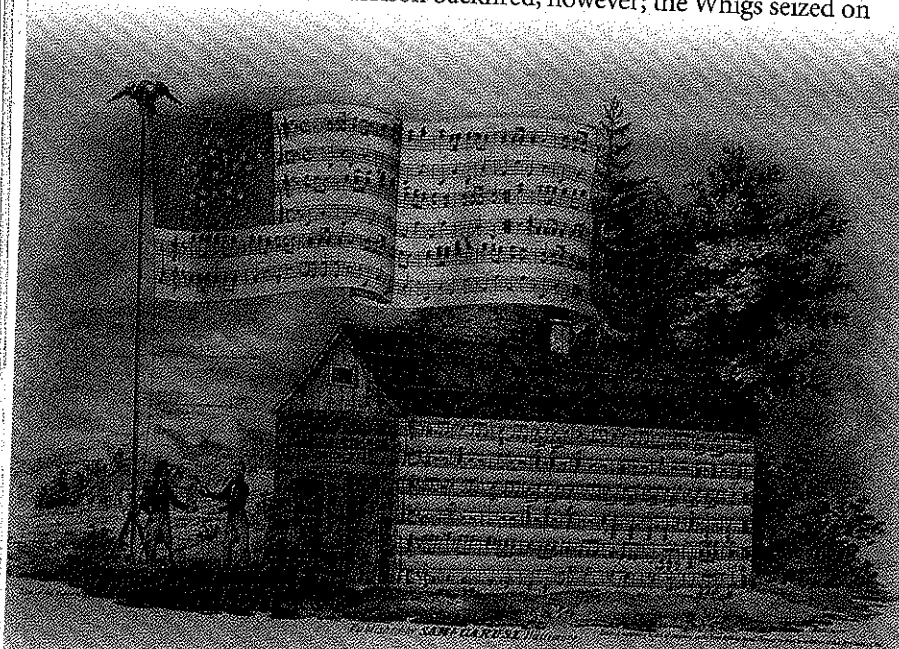
Democrat Martin Van Buren's supporters derided the Whig candidate in 1840, General William Henry Harrison, as “Old Granny” or “Old Tippecanoe.” The nicknames alluded to the general's age—he was almost seventy—and to his role in defeating Shawnee Indians at the battle of Tippecanoe in 1811. One Democratic editor in Baltimore suggested that given his advanced age it might be best to “give him a barrel of hard cider” and let him “sit out the remainder of his days in his log cabin.” The effort to ridicule Harrison backfired, however; the Whigs seized on

the twin images of hard cider and log cabins as the symbols for their campaign. The new campaign message transformed Harrison's public persona almost overnight: he was no longer the well-educated son of a wealthy Virginia planter (his real background), but was instead William Henry Harrison, a simple farmer born into a log cabin who enjoyed a glass of hard (alcoholic) cider like all common folk. Eager to take advantage of the Democratic mistake, the Whigs plastered log cabins and barrels of hard cider onto an astonishing array of items: badges, banners, buttons, belt bucklers, hair brushes, pewter spoons, lithographed prints, quilts, and song sheets. The Whigs also used miniature wooden log cabins as parade floats, transforming what had been marches into truly festive parades. Two Whig slogans became two of the most successful campaign slogans in U.S. history: “Tippecanoe and Tyler too” to support Harrison, and “Van, Van is a used up man” to taunt their opponent.

The *Democratic Review*, capturing the irony of the election of 1840, noted that “we have taught them how to conquer us.” Whigs not only adapted the Democrat's campaign techniques for mobilizing the popular vote but also developed their own innovative campaign style. With parades and campaign music such as “General Harrison's Log Cabin March & Quick Step,” one of several popular campaign songs, the Whigs trounced their opponents (8.16). One Democratic paper complained: “We could meet the Whigs on the field of argument

8.16 Harrison Log Cabin and Hard Cider Sheet Music

This piece of sheet music includes the two most common symbols of Harrison's campaign, a log cabin and a barrel of hard cider. To highlight Harrison's own military accomplishments, the artist shows him greeting a disabled veteran.



What political innovations helped the Whigs out-democrat the Democrats?

and beat them." But, the paper went on to say, how were Democrats to respond when the Whigs "lay down the weapons of argument and attack us with musical notes"?

While Whigs cast Harrison and his running mate John Tyler as men of the people, they made Martin Van Buren out to be a dissipated aristocrat who gorged himself on expensive French cuisine and sipped expensive champagne while Americans suffered economic hardship. Although charges of sexual misconduct were not new in American politics—Jefferson had been tarnished by the Sally Hemmings scandal during his administration (Chapter 7)—the political smears of the Jacksonian era sunk even lower. Eager to discredit him the Whigs spread malicious rumors that Van Buren was a sexual pervert who had instructed the groundskeeper at the White House to create a giant anatomically correct mound in the shape of a women's breast in the back of the White House.

Gender and Social Class: The Whig Appeal

Another especially innovative aspect of the Whig's electoral strategy was their effective mobilization of women to their cause. Although women could not vote, the Whigs hoped to get them to deliver their husbands' votes. The Whig appeal to women relied on two elements: a defense of morality against corruption and an appeal to economic interest. Whig newspaper editor Horace Greeley's description of the choice Americans faced in the 1840 election captures the appeal of the Whigs to many women. The debate, Greeley noted, was one between the Whigs, whom he characterized as supporters of the family and Christian morality, and the Democrats, whom he accused of being atheists and sexual perverts. "Wherever you find a bitter, blasphemous Atheist and enemy of Marriage, Morality, and Social Order, there you may be certain of one vote for Van Buren." Although such appeals to traditional family values and morality motivated some women to devote their energies to the Whig cause, other women were inspired by economic arguments that Whigs directed at male voters. Democratic policies had left the American economy in shambles, and Whig policies promised to bring back prosperity. Taking advantage of women's interest, Whigs sponsored all-female political rallies in support of Harrison, including a meeting in Ohio in which Whig women raised cups of tea in toasts to "Old

Tippecanoe." Democrats complained about the Whigs "making politicians of their women," which was "something new under the sun."

Whigs also attacked Democrats for fanning the resentments of class antagonism. Thus one Whig chided the Democrats for their "incessant and unrelenting assaults" that tore "asunder the good feelings which bind men to each other." Rather than highlight the struggle between democracy and aristocracy, a favorite rhetorical theme of Democrats, Whigs stressed the essential harmony of all economic classes. An observer at a Whig rally proudly noted that "all classes" had rediscovered that "their interests were the same." Calvin Colton, a leading Whig, evoked the notion that "This is a country of self-made men, than which nothing better could be said of any state of society." Whig policies would promote prosperity for all hard-working Americans.

**"The ladies they flock'd to their windows,
In numbers, I say not a few,
And held out their star-spangled banners
All to the honor of Tippecanoe."**

Harrison campaign lyric, 1840

The election clearly energized the voting population, who turned out in record numbers, nearly four-fifths of eligible voters casting a vote. Harrison defeated Van Buren by 150,000 votes and a 4-to-1 margin in the Electoral College. President Harrison's inaugural speech was the longest in American history, 105 minutes long. His term in office, however, was the shortest. Within a month of becoming president, he contracted pneumonia and died. Harrison's vice president John Tyler became the tenth President of the United States. Some dubbed him "His Accidency" because he inherited his position after Harrison's death.

Democrats and Whigs: Two Visions of Government and Society

The Whigs and Democrats represented opposing political visions. The Whigs favored a strong central government, encouragement for industry, and defense of Indians' rights; in the North and parts

of the Midwest they aligned themselves against slavery. Rejecting the views of old-style conservatives such as Chancellor James Kent, an heir to the Old Federalist vision of politics, the Whigs adopted the more popular style of politics pioneered by the anti-Masonic party, using it to reach out to American voters. Whigs embraced Clay's American System, arguing that the rich and poor would each see their fortunes rise. Whigs emphasized the harmonious interaction of different elements of the economy and attacked Democrats for preaching an ideology that fostered class conflict.

The Whig version of democracy was not egalitarian, but rather it recognized the need for a talented and virtuous elite to guide the nation. The Whigs' frank acceptance of inequality allowed them to find a place in their ranks for African Americans, Indians, women, and any other group who needed guidance or protection from an enlightened elite. Although slightly paternalistic in outlook, the Whigs believed they had a duty to protect these groups. Thus Whigs championed the rights of Indians against the efforts of Jackson and other Democrats to forcibly remove them from their lands. Although Southern Whigs supported the institution of slavery, Whigs outside of the South often supported the abolition of slavery. Finally Whigs actively cultivated women's involvement in their campaign efforts.

The Whig Party drew from the Old National Republican Party of John Quincy Adams, adding to their ranks Democrats who opposed Jackson's Bank War. Anti-Masons and the more commercially minded Southern planters were also drawn to the Whig message. Whiggery also had a significant ethnic and religious basis. Individuals of English origin were also more likely than others to be Whig in sympathy, and mainstream Protestant denominations such as the Congregationalists, Presbyterians, and Episcopalians were more likely to vote Whig.

Democrats' vision of white men's democracy was more egalitarian than that of the Whigs, but it was also more exclusive. Although Democrats often couched their appeals in egalitarian terms, this rhetoric was not inclusive when it came to the issue of racial equality. Instead Democrats reached out to workers, small farmers, and members of the planter class. Democrats attracted voters more suspicious of the burgeoning market economy, including those who blamed banks, especially the Bank of the United States, for the economic problems they experienced. They asserted their support for the sanctity of private property and for the doctrine of states' rights, meaning that they were the party best suited to protect the interests of Southern slaveholders. Obtaining more land for white farmers, including Southern planters, was the primary goal of Democrats. Promoting this old Jeffersonian ideal of an expanding nation of yeoman farmers meant having to sacrifice the rights of Indians. From Jeffersonianism, Jacksonian Democrats inherited a strong fear of centralized government and large concentrations of financial power. Thus Democrats opposed Clay's American System and the Whig's emphasis on a powerful federal government involved in economic development. Although not opposed to economic growth, Democrats believed that the individual states, not the federal government, ought to guide economic development.

Rural farmers and urban workers flocked to the ranks of the Democrats. Religious affiliation also dictated Democratic Party affiliation. Democrats were more popular among the less affluent evangelical Protestant sects such as the Baptists and Methodists, who found Jackson's egalitarian message appealing. Democrats also attracted some free thinkers and Catholics who feared that the Whigs were trying to impose Protestant morality on others. For a summary of the ideas of the Democrats and Whigs, see the following chart (8.17).

8.17 Democrats and Whigs: Major Beliefs

Democrats

- Oppose tariffs
- Oppose federal support for internal improvements
- Oppose Bank of the United States
- Favor Indian removal
- States' rights



Whigs

- Favor tariffs
- Favor federal support for internal improvements
- Support the Bank of the United States
- Oppose Indian removal
- Support strong central government



What were the most important differences between Whigs and Democrats on economic issues?

“The aristocracy of our country ... continually contrive to change their party name. It was first Tory, then Federalist, then no party ... then National Republican, now Whig. ... But by whatever name they reorganize themselves, the true democracy of the country, the producing classes, ought to be able to distinguish the enemy.”

FREDERICK ROBINSON, Democrat, 1834

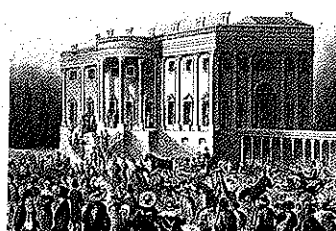
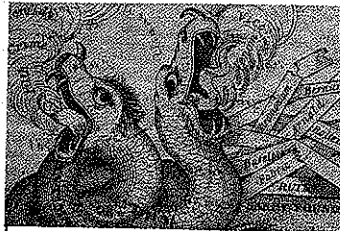
Conclusion

Between the elections of Thomas Jefferson in 1800 and Andrew Jackson in 1828, American politics and society underwent a gradual democratization. Foreign travelers to the young republic often noted the relatively democratic and egalitarian nature of American society. In part the change in American life reflected the increasing importance of the new Western states. Politicians such as Davy Crockett and Andrew Jackson typified this new type of political leader. Democracy was hardly the exclusive province of the West, however. Many eastern states adopted new constitutions that eliminated property qualifications for suffrage for nearly all white men. While some states were eliminating legal barriers to the participation of white men in politics, they were also erecting new barriers to prevent African Americans from participating fully in the political life of the new nation.

Democrats, led by Andrew Jackson, cultivated white male voters and showed little concern for the rights of blacks, Indians, or women. Jackson's vision of politics was forcefully expressed in his Bank Veto Speech, when he attacked special interests and championed the cause of ordinary Americans. By contrast the Whigs, especially the influential Daniel Webster and Henry Clay, made their Senate careers supporting greater government involvement in the economy. The Whigs also defended the rights of women, blacks, and Indians. Indeed the protests against Cherokee removal galvanized many

opponents of Jackson and provided an important core around which the Whigs could later organize. The Whigs were particularly effective at reaching out to women, involving them in the political process. Although the political techniques the Democrats and Whigs employed had become nearly indistinguishable by the pivotal election of 1840, the underlying visions of politics and the policies pursued by the two parties remained radically different. The Democrats defended the idea of states' rights and opposed efforts to use the power of the national government to further economic development. The Whigs, by contrast, became the champions of a stronger activist national government.

The Whigs and the Democrats each grappled with profound changes in American political culture and economic life. Each group not only responded to the democratization of politics but also grappled with major changes in the American economy. Changes in technology, the expansion of the factory system, and expanding market were transforming American life. Taken together these changes helped spread a set of interrelated changes that historians describe as a market revolution. The Whigs championed the market, believing that government could help expand the market economy and promote American prosperity. Democrats accepted the necessity of the market but were more wary of its changes, and were particularly concerned that government not manipulate the market economy to further the interests of a wealthy elite.



CHAPTER REVIEW

1824–1826

Tariff of 1824

Congress adopts protective tariff, a key element of Clay's American system

John Quincy Adams elected president

House of Representatives decides presidential election. Jackson charges Adams and Clay with a "corrupt bargain"

Murder of ex-Mason Daniel Morgan

Morgan's murder spurs rise of anti-Masonry as organized political movement

1828

Andrew Jackson elected president

In a bitter election campaign, Jackson defeats Adams and claims a broad popular mandate for his democratic agenda

Publication of South Carolina Exposition and Protest asserting states rights

South Carolina forcefully states the theory of states' rights and nullification

1829–1830

Thomas Skidmore publishes *Rights of Man to Property!*

Skidmore's book energizes Workingmen's movement

Webster-Hayne Debate

In dramatic speech to a crowded Senate chamber, Daniel Webster defends the Union against supporters of states' rights

Review Questions

1. What were the main features of Clay's American System?
2. How did the negative themes of the presidential campaign of 1828 reflect the new, more democratic style of American politics?
3. What role did states' rights play in shaping Andrew Jackson's presidency?
4. Was Jackson's Indian policy consistent with his democratic ideals? How did Jackson's perception of Indians allow him to reconcile his policy with his ideals?
5. Why did Jackson's opponents call their new party the Whigs? What were the Whigs' main beliefs and how did they differ from those of the Democrats?
6. What kinds of images did Democratic and Whig cartoonists use to represent Jackson during the Bank War?
7. Did the Bank War cause the Panic of 1837? How did the Bank War impact subsequent American politics?
8. How did the Whigs out-democrat the Democrats in the election of 1840?



1831–1832

Jackson's Bank Veto

Jackson vetoes renewal of Bank of the United States while attacking privileged elites.

Cherokee Nation v. Georgia decided by Supreme Court

Supreme Court rules against Cherokees in the first of two cases concerning their status as a sovereign nation.



1833

South Carolina nullifies federal tariff

South Carolina becomes the first state to invoke the doctrine of nullification and resist federal law.



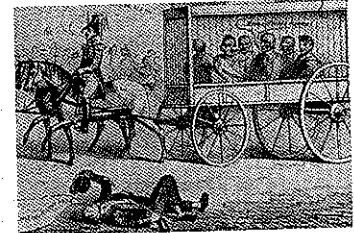
1836–1837

Martin Van Buren elected president

Democrats retain control of the White House after Jackson's retirement from office.

Panic of 1837

Economic downturn is blamed on Jackson's policies.



1838–1840

Cherokee Removal (Trail of Tears)

Jackson's policy of forcing Indians to give up their lands and homes and relocate to Western lands is approved and implemented.

William Henry Harrison Elected President

Whigs exploit new methods of democratic politics to elect their candidate to the presidency.

Key Terms

American System Henry Clay's comprehensive national plan for economic growth that included protective tariffs for American industry and government investment in roads and other internal improvements. 226

"corrupt bargain" Term presidential candidate Jackson's supporters used to attack the alliance between John Quincy Adams and Henry Clay that deprived Clay of the presidency. 227

"Old Hickory" The nickname that General Andrew Jackson earned for seeming as stout as an "Old Hickory tree" in fighting against the British in the War of 1812. 228

spoils system The name applied to Jackson's system of replacing government officeholders with those loyal to him. 230

nullification A constitutional doctrine advanced by supporters of states' rights that held that individual states could nullify unconstitutional acts of Congress. 231

Force Bill A bill enacted by Congress that gave President Jackson the power to use military force to collect revenue, including tariffs. 232

Indian Removal Act of 1830 Legislation that gave President Jackson the authority to remove Indians tribes to lands west of the Mississippi. 236

Cherokee Cases *Cherokee Nation v. Georgia* (1830) and *Worcester v. Georgia*, the two cases in which the Supreme Court of the United States determined that Indian nations retained certain rights of sovereign nations, but did not enjoy the full powers of a sovereign nation. 236

Whigs (American, 19th Century) Anti-Jackson political party; the name evoked the seventeenth-century English opponents of absolute monarchy and the Patriot leaders who had opposed the tyranny of George III during the American Revolution. Whigs supported Clay's American System and a stronger central government. 239

Bank Veto Speech Jackson's veto of a bill to re-charter of the Bank of the United States, in which he explained why he opposed the bank and laid out his own vision of American democracy and constitutional government. 241

