

TEACHER GUIDE

1800 DOC. #6: Jefferson Banner

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Professionals are not the only ones who can create media messages. You can make your own web page, button, or song to influence the political process.

> **Project** the document.

This hand-painted linen banner was created following the announcement of Jefferson’s victory in the election of 1800. It was most likely used in one of the many inaugural festivals that marked the first change of political parties through elections in the United States. This peaceful transfer of power caused Jefferson to refer to this election as “The Revolution of 1800.” He made an effort to unify the opposing sides in his inaugural address by saying: “We are all Republicans, we are all Federalists.”

The portrait of Jefferson on this banner was apparently based on an engraving from an 1800 painted portrait of Jefferson by well-known artist Gilbert Stuart.

The words on the banner read: “T. Jefferson President of the United States of America / John Adams is no more.”

QUESTION Who is likely to have made this banner and for what purpose? Give evidence.

SUGGESTED ANSWER A Republican supporter of Jefferson probably made this banner to honor the winner and to belittle the loser.

EVIDENCE proud image of Jefferson beneath eagle with his name on top; including “John Adams is no more” suggests that the artist wants to highlight Adams’ loss

QUESTION Who is the target audience for this image? Give evidence to support your answer.

SUGGESTED ANSWER Local townspeople who would participate in, or witness, the inaugural celebration are the target audience.

EVIDENCE a cloth banner like this could not have been reproduced like a newspaper article or engraving; probably only shown locally for the short period of time around Jefferson’s inauguration

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Jefferson Banner

PowerPoint Slide

QUESTION

What symbolism did the artist use to celebrate Jefferson’s victory?

SUGGESTED ANSWER

symbols include: 16 stars representing the 16 states of the union in 1800; the eagle, which is taken from the Great Seal of the United States to represent the nation; and the streamers representing celebration

FURTHER QUESTIONS

Can you think of contemporary examples of individuals, not political parties or organizations, making media messages for or against political candidates? Can individuals really make a difference in presidential elections?

ADDITIONAL INFO

This banner represents one of the first known physical objects to be used for a partisan political purpose in the United States. In later elections there would be campaign items such as commemorative vases, badges, buttons, and bumper stickers.

In 1800 there occurred the first major celebrations to accompany a political regime change in U.S. electoral history. This banner was discovered near Pittsfield, Massachusetts in 1958. This is particularly interesting since New England was the region that most strongly opposed Jefferson’s election and since Massachusetts was Adams’ home state.

CONNECTIONS

(see thematic listing)

Reaching Voters

(handmade banner)