

A SHORT HISTORY OF MAJOR POLITICAL PARTIES

The earliest political parties were **Federalists** and **Anti-Federalists**. In the 1790s Thomas Jefferson founded the **Democratic Republican** Party, also called the **Jeffersonian Republicans**, in opposition to the Federalists. By 1816, the Federalists had disappeared and the Democratic-Republicans were the only major party.

In the election of 1824, four Democratic Republicans vied for the presidency. Although Jackson won the popular vote and got more electoral votes than any other candidate, he did not have a majority in the Electoral College. So the decision went to the House of Representatives, with each state getting one vote. After making a deal with the Speaker of the House, Henry Clay, John Quincy Adams was elected President. During this time those who supported Jackson came to be known as **Jacksonian Democrats**, although still officially Democratic-Republicans, while followers of John Quincy Adams and Henry Clay began calling themselves **National Republicans**.

After the 1832 election, the National Republicans joined up with other anti-Jackson groups and formed the **Whig** Party. In 1844 the Democratic Republicans shortened their name to **Democratic Party**. The Whig party later broke apart over the issue of slavery and states' rights, with pro-slavery Whigs moving to the Democratic Party and anti-slavery Whigs forming the new **Republican Party**.

TEACHER GUIDE

1828 DOC. #1: Jackson on his Way to Washington

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

In 1828 Andrew Jackson mounted the first truly "popular" campaign. He was able to do this because by then 22 of the 24 states elected the president by popular vote rather than by a vote in the state legislature. The lifting of property qualifications allowed far more white men to cast a vote than ever before. In fact, 1828 saw three times as many votes cast as in the previous election.

Jackson's campaign workers were known as "Hurrah Boys." They organized as never before to elect their candidate whom they nicknamed "Ol' Hickory," a reference to Jackson's unbending will and determination. His Democratic Party organized Hickory Clubs, which collected funds, compiled lists of voters, and made up songs and slogans. The "Hurrah Boys" hosted rallies, barbecues, and street demonstrations. They distributed hickory poles to plant in town squares and gave out hickory leaves for parade marchers to wear in their hats. Adams' supporters protested, "Planting hickory trees! Odd nuts and drumsticks! What have hickory trees to do with republicanism and the great contest?" (Boller 44).

Jackson himself only made one major campaign trip during the election season since it was still seen as unbecoming of a presidential candidate to seek votes in person. He attended a commemoration of his 1815 victory in New Orleans and was cheered by supporters wherever he appeared. We have few images of these gatherings today since newspapers of that time did not usually print illustrations.

This document is a drawing of Jackson greeting a crowd on the way to his inauguration in March 1829. It gives a sense of what the crowds might have been like during the aftermath of the first great popular campaign in U.S. presidential election history. This scene took place somewhere between Jackson's home in Nashville and his new residence at the White House.

> **Project** the document.

QUESTION **What messages are being communicated by this image? Give evidence to justify your answer.**

SUGGESTED ANSWER Jackson is a distinguished man who is popular among the people.

EVIDENCE Jackson stands above everyone dressed in top hat and tails; crowd is smiling and waving hats to greet him

FURTHER QUESTIONS

How were citizens able to see the candidates in the early 19th century?

Although property qualifications for voting were lifted by 1828 in most states, the majority of people in the United States still could not vote in presidential elections. Who were the disenfranchised voters in 1828 and who are they today? Should everyone be allowed to vote? Why or why not?

The 1828 election became a national celebration of the right to vote as much as a contest for the presidency. Can you think of modern examples of campaigns as celebrations? Do you think this a good thing or a bad thing for our democratic process? Why?

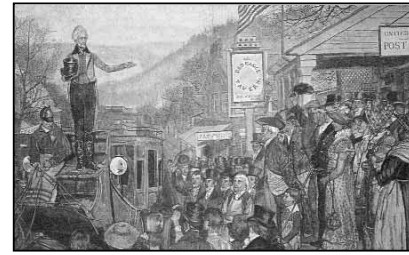
CONNECTIONS

(see thematic listing)

Reaching Voters

In 1828 there were very few ways for candidates to reach out to the electorate. Television and the Internet would not be invented for more than a century and newspapers in 1828 did not reach a wide audience. Today presidential candidates fly from state to state meeting voters and attracting the media, but in the early 19th century the fastest form of transportation was the stagecoach. It was also considered inappropriate (or unseemly) for candidates to campaign publicly. Compare Jackson’s access to voters in 1828 with that of contemporary candidates.

1828 DOC. # 1



Jackson on His Way to Washington

PowerPoint Slide

ADDITIONAL INFO

As the incumbent President, John Quincy Adams chose to remain aloof throughout the campaign. His supporters were aristocrats who felt that the average voter owed his allegiance to the sitting President. How wrong they were. Jackson won the election by the largest majority achieved in the 19th century. An Adams supporter afterwards acknowledged his candidate’s failure saying, “Organization is the secret of victory. By the want of it we have been overthrown” (Boller 44).