



## ANDREW JACKSON AND THE PRESIDENCY:



### PART 1



*Drawing of the Scene at the White House after Jackson's First Inaugural: The Playfair Papers, 1841*

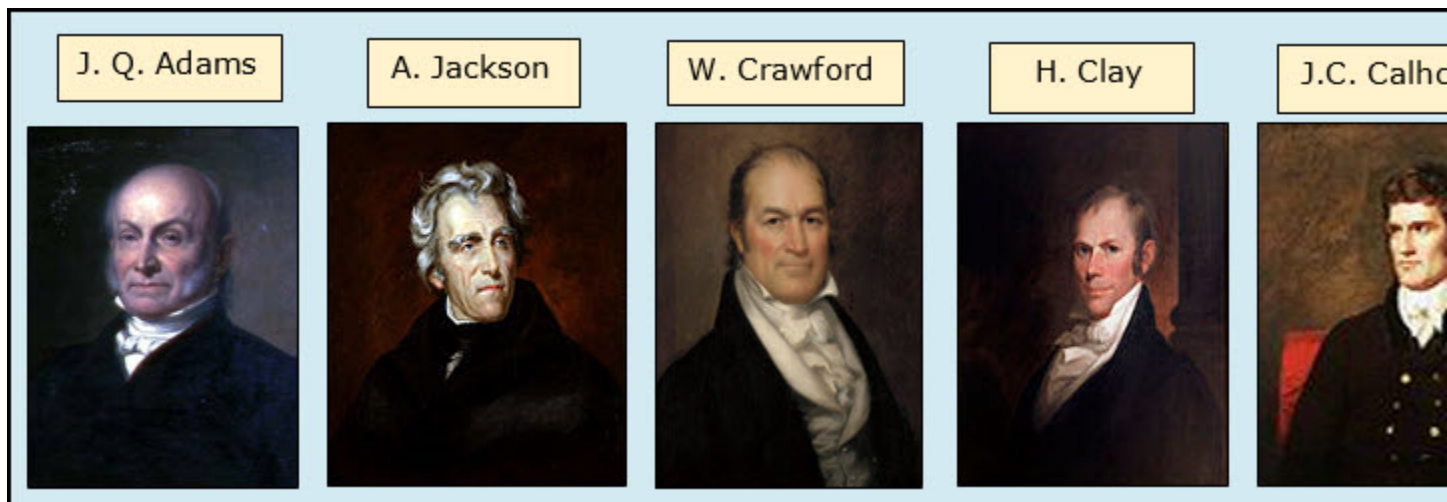
### Unit Overview

The election of 1824 proved that the Era of Good Feelings was over. Although Andrew Jackson won the popular vote, he did not receive the majority required by the Electoral College. This left the decision of who would be president up to the House of Representatives. When members of the House chose John Quincy Adams, Jackson was furious. With the help of Martin Van Buren, he formed the Democratic Party which carried him to victory in 1828. Jackson brought a new

style to the White House and based his decisions on his definition of democracy. Let's see how it all happened.

## The Controversial Election of 1824

By the time James Monroe finished his second term, the Federalist Party had all but disappeared, and most Americans considered themselves Republicans. There were, however, differences among the various groups within the party, and four candidates for the presidential election of 1824 emerged from the three major sections of the country. Although they all called themselves Republicans, each one had a different opinion on the role of the federal government. Let's meet the candidates!



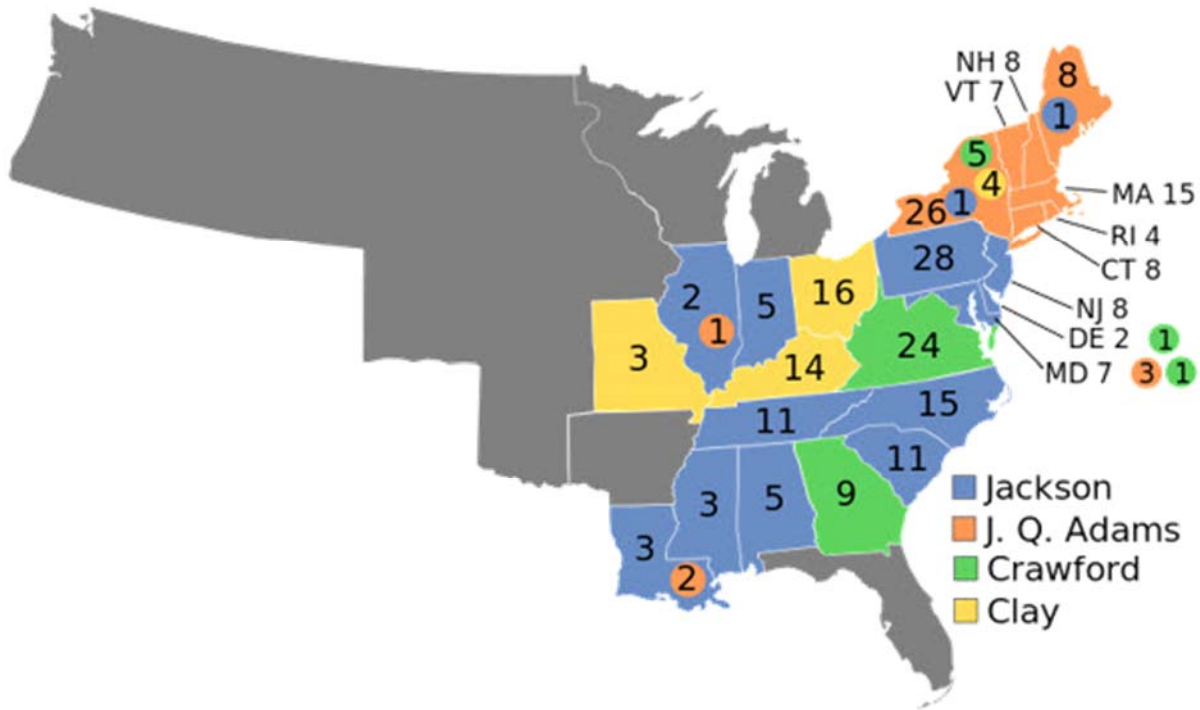
- **Henry Clay:** Henry Clay, Speaker of the House of Representatives and a congressman from Kentucky, called for a federally funded program of internal improvements, including roads and canals. According to Clay, this would improve and increase the exchange of western farm products for eastern manufactured goods. He favored a national banking system and supported high tariffs on imported goods to protect American manufacturers. Henry Clay called his economic plans the **American System** and was a favorite of some western voters.
- **John Quincy Adams:** John Quincy Adams, son of former President John Adams, received the support of the merchants and factory owners

throughout the northeast. Having served as President Monroe's capable secretary of state, Adams had foreign policy experience and proposed measures that strengthened the country as a whole.

- **Andrew Jackson:** Andrew Jackson briefly served his home state of Tennessee in the House of Representatives and the Senate, but he was not a Washington career-politician. Born in the Carolina back country in 1767, Jackson was raised in poverty and was an orphan at age fourteen. He eventually became a wealthy planter and slave-owner. Unlike the other candidates in the election of 1824, Andrew Jackson was not just a sectional hero but a national one as result of his success in the Battle of New Orleans. He refused to take a stand on most issues during the campaign, because he did not want to risk losing votes.
- **John C. Calhoun:** John C. Calhoun had served as a congressman, vice president, secretary of war and secretary of state. Once a nationalist, he became a strong supporter of states' rights by the 1820s. He opposed high tariffs and claimed that they only protected the inefficiency of manufacturers. Because most southerners supported Crawford, Calhoun dropped out of the race for president and ran for vice president. Since he was the only candidate for that office, he was assured a victory.
- **William Crawford:** William Crawford, a former congressman from Georgia and secretary of the treasury during the Monroe administration, was the nominee of the Republican Party. Former Presidents Jefferson, Madison and Monroe supported his candidacy. Although Crawford was well-known throughout the South, he suffered a stroke, and his ill-health limited his ability to conduct a convincing campaign.

When voters cast their ballots, Andrew Jackson received the largest number of popular votes. However, he did not have a **majority** of the electoral votes required by the Constitution. Therefore, the House of Representatives had to decide who would be the next president. You can see the number of electoral votes each candidates received on the map below. The gray areas represent parts of the country that were territories but not yet states. According to the Constitution, the three candidates with the most electoral votes were to be presented to the House. They were Jackson, Adams and Crawford. Clay finished fourth and was out of the presidential race. The remaining candidates knew that Henry Clay still had the

power to influence congressmen because he was Speaker of the House of Representatives.



*Distribution of the Electoral Votes: Presidential Election of 1824*

Each candidate sent a delegation to earn Henry Clay's support. The Jackson people made a strong case. **Old Hickory**, as he was nicknamed, had been the people's choice and had received the largest number of electoral votes. William Crawford's team had little to present since their candidate's health had not improved. John Quincy Adams, on the other hand, remained a serious challenger. Adams won Clay's backing because he supported Clay's American System. John Quincy Adams was chosen as president by the House of Representatives on February 9, 1825.



Go to Questions 1 through 3.

## Plotting Revenge

Following his inauguration, President Adams appointed his Cabinet and named Henry Clay as secretary of state. Andrew Jackson, furious over losing the election,

was convinced that this confirmed a secret deal between Adams and Clay. Although there was no evidence to support this claim, Jackson went home to Tennessee and began to plan a strategy to make it very difficult for the new administration to accomplish anything. Take a quick tour of the **Hermitage**, Andrew Jackson's home, by clicking on the graphic below.



With the help of Senator **Martin Van Buren** from New York, Jackson organized strong opposition in Congress against any legislation proposed by President Adams. This made John Quincy Adams appear to be a very weak president. At the same time, Jackson and his followers organized a new political party, the **Democratic Party**. With Jackson as their leader, the Democrats appealed to those who were unhappy with Adams and the **National Republicans**, the new name for members of the Republican Party. As the election of 1828 approached, the National Republicans and the Democrats prepared for a tough campaign.

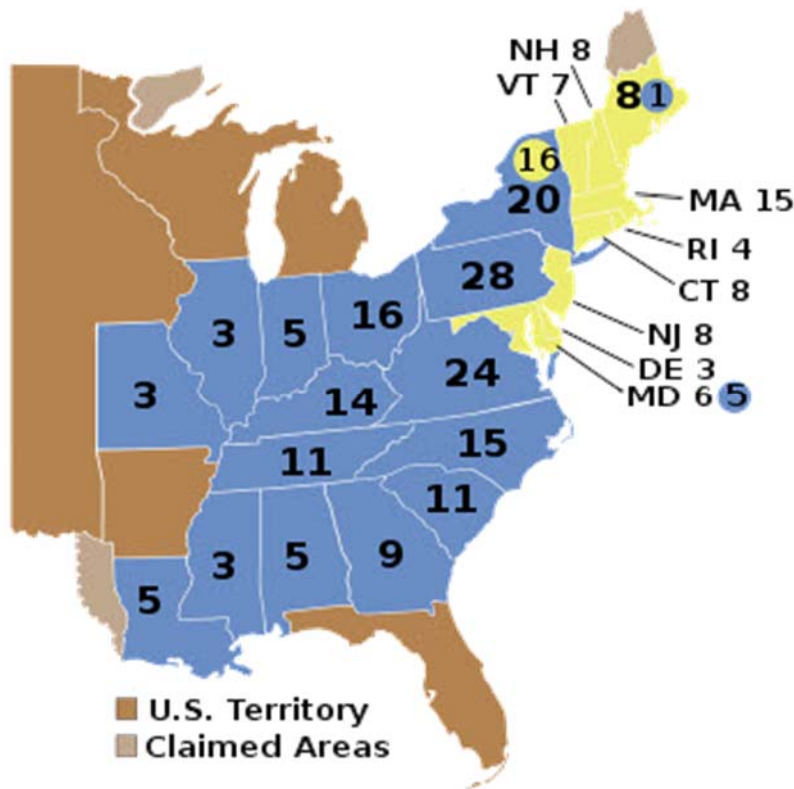


Go to Questions 4 and 5.

## The Election of 1828

Most American expected both parties to engage in plenty of mudslinging during the presidential election campaign of 1828, and they were not disappointed. There were vicious attacks on the character and background of each candidate. **John Quincy Adams** ran for a second term as the National Republican nominee with **Richard Rush** as the vice presidential contender. The Democrats relied on state conventions or state legislatures rather than caucuses to choose their candidates. **Andrew Jackson** was the Democratic choice for president, and **John C. Calhoun** ran for vice president after joining the Democratic Party. When the votes were counted, Jackson won 56% of the popular vote and a clear majority in the Electoral College as noted on the map pictured below. John Quincy Adam's reaction was

similar to that of his father when he lost the election of 1800. He left Washington D.C. shortly after midnight on his last day in office and refused to attend the inauguration of President Jackson.



*Distribution of Electoral Votes: Presidential Election of 1828*

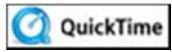


Go to Questions 6 through 8.

## Jackson's Presidential Style

Throughout his presidential campaign, Andrew Jackson referred to himself as the champion of the common man. He stressed his life story, frontier experience and military career rather than political issues. Because most states no longer listed the ownership of property as a voting requirement, the number of white males participating in presidential elections increased from 27% to 58% by 1828. This meant that many Americans, including sharecroppers, factory workers and farm hands, voted for the first time in the elections held during the 1820s. Many of

these people saw Andrew Jackson their president. Westerners, in particular, were overjoyed when Jackson won the presidency. For the first time, Americans had chosen a chief executive who was not from Virginia or Massachusetts. Settlers in the West saw Jackson as someone who cared about them and understood their problems.



## Introducing Andrew Jackson

On March 4, 1829, President-elect Andrew Jackson made his way on foot down Pennsylvania Avenue to his inaugural ceremony at the U.S. Capitol. Thousands of people lined the route to cheer his accomplishment. After one of the shortest inaugural addresses in United States' history, Jackson made his way to the White House. Following a custom started by Thomas Jefferson, Jackson's followers had planned to hold an open house for his supporters. An enthusiastic crowd of common people, who had come to shake hands with their president, circled the White House. Because there were no guards to provide security, they made their way indoors. The throng around Andrew Jackson was so great that his friends had to protect him from injury. Socialite Mary Smith was a frequent guest at White House social functions. Read her description of the event quoted in the graphic below.

Cut glass and china to the amount of several thousand dollars had been broken in the struggle to get the refreshments, punch and other articles had been carried out in tubs and buckets, but had it been in hogsheads it would have been insufficient, ice-creams, and cake and lemonade, for 20,000 people, for it is said that number were there, though I think the number exaggerated.

Ladies fainted, men were seen with bloody noses and such a scene of confusion took place as is impossible to describe, - those who got in could not get out by the door again, but had to scramble out of windows. At one time, the President who had retreated and retreated until he was pressed against the wall, could only be secured by a number of gentleman forming around him and making a kind of barrier of their own bodies, and the pressure was so great that Col. Bomford who was one said that at one time he was afraid they should have been pushed down, or on the President. It was then the windows were thrown open, and the torrent found an outlet, which otherwise might have proved fatal.

Mary Smith  
Letter to a friend, March 11, 1829

Once Jackson took office, he was determined to reward the people who helped him win the election. He planned to accomplish this by hiring them as federal workers. To create these positions, Jackson fired 20% of those who were employed by the national government. Then, the President replaced them with loyal friends, members of the Democratic Party and financial contributors to his campaign. Jackson insisted that it was more democratic to change people in government service periodically. Although his opponents argued that it was unfair not to choose the person best qualified for the job, the President's system remained in effect. The policy of rewarding loyal political supporters with government jobs became known as the **spoils system**. The term was derived from the following phrase used by Senator William L. Marcy to describe Jackson's policy: To the victors (winners) belong the spoils (rewards)! The spoils system continued to be a source of controversy long after Jackson left office. This cartoon picturing Jackson on a pig, a symbol of greed, is an example of the strong opinions generated by the practice.





Figure 1Cartoon Critical of Jackson and the Spoils System: Thomas Nast

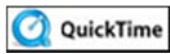
Like previous presidents, Andrew Jackson appointed members to his Cabinet. Unlike his predecessors, he did not usually rely on or meet with them. When he needed advice, Jackson talked things over with trusted friends and business associates. They often sat around a table in the White House kitchen during their discussions. Jackson's critics called the group the **Kitchen Cabinet** and complained about its influence on presidential decisions. Andrew Jackson's strong will and commanding presence, however, left little doubt as to who was in charge of the executive branch. During his eight years in office, President Jackson made his share of enemies but remained popular by appealing directly to the people for support. He also vetoed more bills passed by Congress than all the other previous presidents put together.



Go to Questions 9 through 14.

## The Tariff of Abominations

Early in Jackson's presidency, a major disagreement developed between the sections of the country concerning tariffs. At first, tariffs generated money to run the government and to pay the national debt. After 1816, Congress passed several **protective tariffs** to help American industries. The taxes usually made imported products more expensive than those manufactured in the United States. This helped American industry to grow and to be competitive. Because most factories were located in the North, that section of the country strongly supported this policy. Southerners, however, questioned its benefits to the country as a whole.



The Import Crisis

In 1828, the controversy over tariffs intensified. Congress passed and President John Quincy Adams signed a new protective tariff law that increased taxes on imported goods to a new high. Manufacturers in the northeast were happy with the legislation, but it angered planters throughout the South. They argued that it forced all Americans to pay higher prices. Southerners also feared that European nations would retaliate with tariffs of their own on cotton. Decreased sales of cotton abroad meant less money for plantation owners. To emphasize just how much they hated this law, people throughout the South referred to it as the **Tariff of Abominations**. In South Carolina, there was talk of leaving the Union.



Go to Questions 15 and 16.

## The Nullification Crisis

South Carolina planters were determined to fight the tariff, and they turned to the state's most powerful politician, Vice President **John C. Calhoun**, for help. This placed Calhoun in a difficult position. He knew that Andrew Jackson would enforce the tariff because it was a federal law. At the same time, he did not want to lose the support of South Carolinians. Therefore, Calhoun tried to find a way for South Carolina to avoid obeying the law.

<b>The Nullification Crisis: Timeline of Events</b>	
May, 1828	U.S. Congress passed the Tariff of 1828.
March, 1829	President Jackson took office.
July, 1832	Congress passed the Tariff of 1832.
November, 1832	South Carolina nullified the Tariffs of 1828 and 1832.
December, 1832	President Jackson issued the Proclamation to the People of South Carolina.
March 1, 1833	Congress authorized the use of force to collect tariffs.
March 1, 1833	Congress passed a compromise bill to reduce tariffs over ten years.
March 15, 1833	South Carolina cancelled the Nullification Ordinance

Vice President Calhoun argued that a state or a group of states had the right to cancel, or to **nullify**, a federal law if it was in the state's best interest. He reasoned that the Union existed because the states had voluntarily agreed to give up some of their authority. If a law passed by Congress gave the national government powers not specifically mentioned in the Constitution, a state could legally nullify it. In other words, the law did not have to be obeyed within that state. To deny this right to the states was dangerous, Calhoun noted, because, without it, the federal government could easily abuse its authority. This made perfect sense to southerners, who viewed the Tariff of 1828 as a law that deserved to be nullified.

Calhoun's theory of nullification caused heated debates in Congress over states' rights. One of the most famous exchanges took place in the United States Senate in January of 1830. **Robert Hayne**, a young senator from South Carolina, defended the right of a state to nullify a federal law and concluded that a state also had the right to leave, or to **secede**, from the Union. **Daniel Webster**, representing Massachusetts in the Senate, responded by delivering a dramatic speech that emphasized the importance of the Union and the Constitution. Southerners hoped that President Jackson would side with them, but Jackson made it clear that, during his presidency, the Union would be preserved. Vice President Calhoun knew that Jackson would not change his mind. After resigning as vice president, Calhoun was elected to represent South Carolina as a U.S. Senator.



*An Artist's Rendition of Daniel Webster during the Debate*

Anger over the tariff continued to escalate throughout the South. In July of 1832, Congress passed a new, lower tariff law, but it did little to improve the situation. South Carolina passed the **Order of Nullification**, which declared that the Tariff of 1828 and the Tariff of 1832 would not be observed in the state. Some South Carolinians suggested that the state should leave the Union. This resulted in a stern response from President Jackson, who was determined to enforce the federal law as he was sworn to do. First, he alerted the army to prepare 50,000 soldiers to enforce the tariff laws in South Carolina. Then, he issued the **Proclamation to the People of South Carolina**. As you can see from reading the excerpt below, Andrew Jackson made it very clear that South Carolinians would pay a high price if they chose to ignore federal law.

If your leaders could succeed in establishing a separation, what would be your situation? Are you united at home--are you free from the apprehension of civil discord, with all its fearful consequences? Do our neighboring republics, every day suffering some new revolution or contending with some new insurrection--do they excite your envy?... The laws of the United States must be executed. I have no discretionary power on the subject--my duty is emphatically pronounced in the Constitution. Those who told you that you might peaceably prevent the execution of the laws, deceived you--they could not have been deceived themselves. They know that a forcible opposition could alone prevent the execution of the laws, and they know that such opposition must be repelled. Their object is disunion: but be not deceived by names: disunion, by armed force, is treason....

Andrew Jackson

*Proclamation to the People of South Carolina: 1832*

Although the proclamation was issued, President Jackson worked behind the scenes to resolve the crisis. He met with the congressional leaders of the Democratic Party and asked them to help write a tariff bill that would be acceptable to southerners. With the assistance of **Henry Clay** and his ability to encourage compromise, Congress passed a new tariff law in 1833. It gradually lowered taxes on imports for the next ten years. Jackson wanted to make sure that South Carolina would accept Clay's compromise. For this reason, he convinced Congress to pass the **Force Act**, which permitted the president to use the United States military to enforce laws established by Congress. On March 15, 1833, South Carolina removed the Nullification Ordinance. In the long term, however, this did not end southern interest in secession or narrow the gap between the North and the South. Radicals in South Carolina realized that they would need the support of other states if they were going to challenge the federal government. They also learned that the federal government would not permit states to leave the Union without a fight.



Go to Questions 17 through 25.

## What Happened Next?

The Nullification Crisis was only one of the controversies that erupted during the Jackson administration. As the United States expanded westward, settlers on the frontier demanded that Native Americans be relocated. President Jackson, a frontiersman himself, supported their position. This led to the Indian Removal Act and Native American resistance. Jackson also became involved in another political battle when he vetoed the bill to renew the Second Bank of the United States. In the next unit, you will see how these issues affected Jackson's presidency and power of the executive branch. Before moving on, review the names and terms in Unit 23; then, complete Questions 26 through 35.



Go to Questions 26 through 35.