

10



THE JACKSONIAN ERA 1824-1845



WHAT MADE Andrew Jackson so popular among ordinary Americans?

HOW WERE free black people and women disenfranchised in the 1820s and 1830s?



WHAT SOCIAL, political, and economic events led to the creation of the Whig party?

HOW DID the Whigs come to dominate American politics?



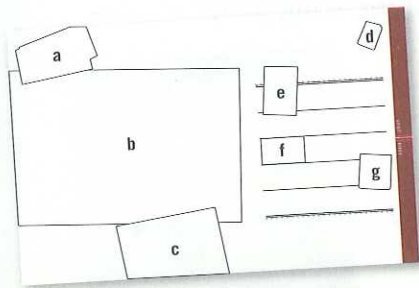
WHAT DID the Whigs achieve while in power?

Credits

- e. The Corcoran Gallery of Art. Thomas Sully "General Andrew Jackson," 1845, Oil on Canvas. In the collection of The Corcoran Gallery of Art, Washington, DC, Gift of William Wilson Corcoran. 1986.44

IMAGE KEY

for pages 240–241



- a. \$5 note of the Second Bank of the United States.
 b. Andrew Jackson speaking to a crowd after his election.
 c. Cherokee Indian newspaper.
 d. An old, antique Bible bound in leather with a gold cross on the front cover.
 e. General Andrew Jackson portrait by Thomas Sully.
 f. Americans endure poverty and unemployment by drinking, begging, and rioting in the streets of a city during the 1837 Specie Panic.
 g. A banner for William Henry Harrison and John Tyler features political slogans of the Log Cabin campaign above the date of the rally.

Newport, New Hampshire
 September, 1828

Wherever a person may chance to be in company, he will hear nothing but politicks discussed. In the ballroom, or at the dinner table, in the Stage-coach & in the tavern; even the social chitchat of the tea table must yield up to the everlasting subject.

How many friendships are broken up! With what rancor the political war is carried on between the editorial corps! To what meanness[,] vulgarity & abuse is that champion of liberty, in proper hands, the press prostituted! With what lies and scandal does the columns of almost every political paper abound! I blush for my country when I see such things, & I often tremble with apprehension that our Constitution will not long withstand the current which threatens to overwhelm it. Our government is so based that an honest difference between American citizens must always exist. But the rancorous excitement which now threatens our civil liberties and a dissolution of this Union does not emanate from an honest difference of opinion, but from a determination of an unholy league to trample down an Administration, be it ever so pure, & be its acts ever so just. It must not be. There is a kind Providence that overlooks the destinies of this Nation and will not suffer it to be overthrown by a party of aspiring office seekers & political demagogues.

—Benjamin B. French

Donald B. Cole and John J. McDonough, eds., *Witness to the Young Republic: A Yankee's Journal, 1828–1870* (Hanover, N. H.: University Press of New England, 1989), pp. 15–16.

BENJAMIN BROWN FRENCH, a young editor and county clerk in Newport, New Hampshire, penned these words in his journal in September 1828. Like most other Americans, he was amazed by the intense partisanship stirred up in the presidential election of 1828 between Andrew Jackson and John Quincy Adams. Whether measured by the vulgar personal attacks launched by a partisan press, the amount of whiskey and beef consumed at political barbecues, or the huge increase in voter turnout, this election marked the entrance of ordinary Americans onto the political stage.

The partisanship that French found so disturbing in 1828 quickly became the basis of his livelihood. After joining the Democrats in 1831, he held a variety of appointive jobs in Washington, first as a Democratic and then, after breaking with the Democrats in the 1850s over slavery, in Republican administrations until his death in 1870.

What had made possible French's career was the democratization of American politics. The number and potential power of the voters expanded, and party success depended on reaching and organizing this enlarged electorate. Men like French, working for the party, could help them do this. The "Jacksonian Democrats," named for their leader Andrew Jackson, were the first party to learn this fundamental lesson. They won a landslide victory in 1828 and held national power through the 1830s. The Jacksonians promised to protect farmers and workers from the monied elite.

The Whig party, formed in opposition to the Jacksonians in the mid 1830s offered an ordered vision of American progress and liberty, anchored in the use



of governmental power to expand economic opportunities and promote morality. Their capture of the presidency in 1840s heralded a new party system based on massive voter turnouts and two-party competition in every state.

However, the Whigs's newly elected president, William Henry Harrison, died shortly after entering office, and Vice President John Tyler, his successor, blocked their economic program. Spurned by the Whigs as a traitor, Tyler then reopened the explosive question of slavery and territorial expansion by pushing to annex Texas, where slavery was legal.

The Democrats regained power in 1844 by exploiting the Texas issue, but debates over the expansion of slavery became embedded in the political system, and the mass-based parties' ability to tap and unleash popular emotions now became their greatest weakness. Party leaders lost control of the slavery issue. The seeds of the Civil War were being sown.

THE EGALITARIAN IMPULSE

Political democracy, defined as the majority rule of white males, was far from complete in early-nineteenth-century America. Legal barriers prevented the full expression of majority sentiments. Property requirements for voting and officeholding, the prevalence of appointed over elected offices, and the overrepresentation of older and wealthier regions in state legislatures came under increasing attack after 1800 and were all but eliminated by the 1820s.

As politics opened to mass participation, popular styles of religious leadership and worship erupted in a broad reaction against the formalism and elitism of the dominant Protestant churches. The same egalitarian impulse drove these twin democratic revolutions, and both movements represented an empowerment of the common man. (Women would have to wait longer.)

THE EXTENSION OF WHITE MALE DEMOCRACY

In 1816, Congress voted itself a hefty pay raise, which seemed prudent and justified. The public thought otherwise. The citizens of Saratoga, New York, resolved that Congress was guilty of “wanton extravagance” and “a daring and profligate trespass against . . . the *morals* of the *Republic*.”

So sharp was the reaction against the Salary Act of 1816 that 70 percent of the members of Congress were turned out of office at the next election. Congress quickly repealed the salary increase, but not before John C. Calhoun spoke for many in Congress when he plaintively asked, “Are we bound in all cases to do what is popular?” The answer was apparently yes. As Richard M. Johnson of Kentucky noted, “The presumption is, that the people are always right.” The uproar over the Salary Act marked a turning point in the transition from the deferential politics of the Federalist-Republican period to the egalitarianism of the Jacksonian era. The public would no longer passively accept decisions handed down by local elites or established national figures.

Individual states, not the federal government, defined who could vote. Six states—Indiana, Mississippi, Illinois, Alabama, Missouri, and Maine—entered the Union between 1816 and 1821, and none of them required white male voters to own property. Constitutional conventions in Connecticut in 1818 and Massachusetts and New York in 1821 eliminated longstanding property requirements for voting. By the end of the 1820s, universal white male suffrage was the norm everywhere except Rhode Island, Virginia, and Louisiana.

Representation in most state legislatures was made more equal by giving more seats to newer, rapidly growing regions in the backcountry. States removed

HOW WERE free black people and women disenfranchised in the 1820s and 1830s?

QUICK REVIEW

Salary Act of 1816

- ◆ Congress voted itself pay raise.
- ◆ Outraged public rejects 70 percent of incumbents at next election.
- ◆ Conflict represents turn toward the politics of Jacksonian era.



or reduced property qualifications for officeholding. The selection of local officials and, in many cases, judges was taken out of the hands of governors and executive councils and given to the voters in popular elections. With the end of oral or “stand-up” voting, the act of casting a ballot became more private and freer from the intimidation of influential neighbors. Written ballots were the norm by the 1820s. Most significant for national politics, voters acquired the power to choose presidential electors. In 1800, only two states had provided for a statewide popular vote in presidential elections; by 1832 only South Carolina still clung to the practice of having the state legislature choose the electors.

Several currents swelled the movement for democratic reform. Limiting voting rights to those who owned landed property seemed increasingly elitist when economic changes were producing new classes—workers, clerks, and small tradesmen—whose livelihoods were not tied directly to the land. Propertyless laborers in Richmond argued in an 1829 petition that “virtue [and] intelligence are not among the products of the soil. Attachment to property, often a sordid sentiment, is not to be confounded with the sacred flame of patriotism.”

Of greatest importance, however, was the incessant demand that all white men be treated equally. Seth Luther, an advocate for workers’ rights, insisted that “we wish nothing, but those equal rights, which were designed for us all.” This demand for equality was the logical extension of the ideology of the American Revolution. Only the will of the majority could be the measure of a republican government.

As political opportunities expanded for white males, they shrank for women and free black people. New Jersey’s constitution of 1776 was exceptional in also granting the suffrage to single women and widows who owned property. By the early 1800s, race and gender began to replace wealth and status as the basis for defining the limits of political participation. Thus when New Jersey’s new constitution in 1807 broadened suffrage by requiring only a simple taxpaying qualification to vote, it specifically denied the ballot to women and free black men. None of the ten states that entered the Union from 1821 to 1861 allowed black suffrage. African Americans protested in vain. “Foreigners and aliens to the government and laws,” complained New York blacks in 1837, “strangers to our institutions, are permitted to flock to this land and in a few years are endowed with all the privileges of citizens; but we *native* born Americans . . . are most of us shut out.” By the 1850s, black males could vote only in certain New England states.

Advocates of greater democratization explicitly argued that only white males had the rational intelligence and love of liberty necessary to be entrusted with political rights. Women were too weak and emotional, black people too lazy and lascivious. The white egalitarians simultaneously erected new distinctions based on race and sex that were supposedly natural and hence immutable. Thus personal liberties were now to be guarded by all white men, whose equality ultimately rested on assumptions of their shared political superiority over women and nonwhites.

THE POPULAR RELIGIOUS REVOLT

In a blaze of fervor known as the **Second Great Awakening**, evangelical sects led by the Methodists and Baptists radically transformed the religious landscape between 1800 and 1840. A more popularly rooted Christianity moved outward and downward as it spread across frontier areas and converted marginalized and common folk. By 1850, one in three Americans was a regular churchgoer, a dramatic increase since 1800.

The Baptists and Methodists were the largest religious denominations by the 1820s. The key to their success was their ability to give a religious expression

QUICK REVIEW

Expansion of the Franchise

- ◆ Opposition to land ownership as qualification for voting.
- ◆ Demands that all white men be treated equally.
- ◆ As political rights for white men expanded, political opportunities shrank for women and free black people.

Second Great Awakening Series of religious revivals in the first half of the nineteenth century characterized by great emotionalism in large public meetings.



to the same popular impulse behind democratic reform. Especially in the back-country of the South and West, where the first revivals occurred, itinerant preachers reshaped religion to fit the needs and values of ordinary Americans.

Evangelical Christianity emphasized personal, heartfelt experience that would produce a spiritual rebirth. Preaching became a form of theater in which scenes of damnation and salvation were acted out by both preacher and audience. “The scene that then presented itself to my mind was indescribable,” recalled James Finley of the camp meeting at Cane Ridge, Kentucky, in 1801. “At one time I saw at least five hundred swept down in a moment, as if a battery of a thousand guns had been opened upon them, and then immediately followed shrieks and shouts that rent the very heavens.”

Salvation no longer passively depended on an implacable God as taught by the Calvinist doctrine of individual predestination. Ordinary people could now actively choose salvation, and this possibility was exhilarating. “Why, then, I can be saved!” exclaimed Jesse Lee upon hearing a Methodist preacher in Massachusetts. “I have been taught that only a part of the race could be saved, but if this man’s singing be true, all may be saved.” Evangelical churches bound the faithful into tightly knit communities that expressed and enforced local values and standards of conduct. Their hymns borrowed melodies from popular music and were accompanied by fiddles and other folk instruments.

The revivals converted about twice as many women as men. Church membership offered them, as the wife of a Connecticut minister explained, a welcome release from “being treated like beasts of burden [and] drudges of domineering masters.” In the first flush of evangelical excitement, female itinerant preachers spread the gospel up and down the East Coast. Other women organized their own institutions within denominations still formally controlled by men. Women activists founded and largely directed hundreds of church-affiliated charitable societies and missionary associations.

Evangelicalism also empowered black Americans. Baptists and Methodists welcomed slaves at their revivals, encouraged preaching by blacks, and, above all else, advocated secular and spiritual equality. Many of the early Baptist and Methodist preachers directly challenged slavery. In converting to Methodism, one slave stated that “from the sermon I heard, I felt that God had made all men free and equal, and that I ought not be a slave.”

But for all its liberating appeal to women and African Americans, evangelicalism was eventually limited by race and gender in much the same way as the democratic reform movement. Denied positions of authority in white-dominated churches and resentful of white opposition to integrated worship, free black Northerners founded their own independent churches. Southern evangelical attacks on slavery were replaced by a full-blown religious defense of it. Just as southern Protestant ministers rested their proslavery case on the biblical sanctioning of human bondage, they also used the Old Testament patriarchs to shore up the position of fathers as the unquestioned authority figures in their households, the masters of slaves, women, and children. Many popular religious sects in the North also used a particular reading of the Bible in the same way.

In religion as well as politics, white men still held the power in Jacksonian America. Still, the Second Great Awakening removed a major intellectual barrier to political democracy. Traditional Protestant theology—whether Calvinist, Anglican, or Lutheran—viewed the mass of humanity as sinners predestined to damnation. In rejecting this theology, ordinary Americans made a fundamental breakthrough in intellectual thought. “Salvation open to all” powerfully reinforced the legitimacy of “one man, one vote.”

QUICK REVIEW

Evangelical Christianity

- ◆ Second Great Awakening (1800–1840) transformed religious landscape.
- ◆ Evangelicals emphasized personal experience that would result in spiritual rebirth.
- ◆ Revivals converted about twice as many women as men.



This 1845 painting captures the heroic, forceful side of Andrew Jackson that made him so appealing to many voters.

Thomas Sully, *General Andrew Jackson*, 1845. Oil on canvas. In the Collection of The Corcoran Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C. Gift of William Wilson Corcoran

Democratic party Political party formed in the 1820s under the leadership of Andrew Jackson; favored states' rights and a limited role for the federal government.

Albany Regency The tightly disciplined state political machine built by Martin Van Buren in New York.

THE RISE OF THE JACKSONIANS

At the core of the Jacksonian appeal was the same rejection of established authority that was the hallmark of the secular and religious populists. By tapping into the hopes and fears of ordinary Americans the Jacksonians built the first mass-based party in American history.

In Andrew Jackson the new **Democratic party** that formed between 1824 and 1828 had the perfect candidate for the increasingly democratic temperament of the 1820s. Born of Scots-Irish ancestry on the Carolina frontier in 1767, Jackson was a self-made product of the southern backcountry. Lacking any formal education, family connections, or inherited wealth to ease his way, he relied on his own wits and raw courage to carve out a career as a frontier lawyer and planter in Tennessee. He won fame as the military savior of the republic with his victory at the Battle of New Orleans. Conqueror of the British, the Spanish, and the Indians, all of whom had blocked frontier expansion, he achieved incredible popularity in his native South. His strengths and prejudices were those most valued by the restless, mobile Americans to whom he became a folk hero.

Jackson lost the election of 1824, but his defeat turned out to be a blessing in disguise. The wheeling and dealing in Congress that gave the presidency to John Quincy Adams enveloped that administration in a cloud of suspicion from the start. It also enhanced Jackson's appeal as the honest tribune of the people. His supporters now claimed that the people, as well as Jackson, had been swindled by the "corrupt bargain" between Adams and Clay.

The ill-fated Adams presidency virtually destroyed itself. Though the same age as Jackson, Adams seemed frozen in an eighteenth-century past in which gentlemanly statesmen were aloof from the people.

Adams revealed how out of touch he was when he delivered his first annual message to Congress in 1825. He presented a bold vision of an activist federal government promoting economic growth, social advancement, and scientific progress. The Jacksonians charged that an administration born in corruption now wanted to waste the people's money by promoting more corruption and greed. They also pounced on Adams's political gaffe of urging Americans not to "proclaim to the world that we are palsied by the will of our constituents." Besides being depicted as the tool of the Northeastern monied interests, Adams was attacked as an arrogant aristocrat contemptuous of the common man.

Little of Adams's program passed Congress, and his nationalist vision drove his opponents into the Jackson camp. Southern planters jumped onto the Jackson bandwagon out of fear that Adams might use federal power against slavery; more Westerners joined because Adams revived their suspicions of the East. The most important addition came from New York, where Martin Van Buren had built the **Albany Regency**, a tightly disciplined state political machine.

Van Buren was a new breed of politician. The son of a tavern keeper, he became a professional who made a business out of politics. The discipline and regularity of strict party organization gave him a winning edge in competition against his social betters. In battling against the system of family-centered wealth and prestige on which politics had previously been based, Van Buren redefined parties as indispensable instruments for the successful expression of the popular will against the dominance of elites.

CHRONOLOGY

1826	Disappearance of William Morgan.	1836	Texas War of Independence and establishment of the Republic of Texas. Congress passes first gag rule on abolitionist petitions. Van Buren elected president.
1827	Emergence of the Anti-Masons, the first third party.	1837	Panic of 1837 sets off a depression.
1828	Andrew Jackson elected president. John Calhoun writes <i>The South Carolina Exposition and Protest</i> .	1840	Independent Treasury Act passes. William Henry Harrison elected as first Whig president.
1830	Congress passes the Indian Removal Act.	1841	John Tyler succeeds to presidency on death of Harrison.
1831	William Lloyd Garrison starts publication of <i>The Liberator</i> . Nat Turner leads a slave uprising in Virginia.	1842	United States and Britain sign the Webster-Ashburton Treaty.
1832	Jackson vetoes bill for rechartering the Second Bank of the United States; Bank War begins. South Carolina nullifies the Tariffs of 1828 and 1832. Jackson reelected.	1844	Polk elected president. Gag rule repealed.
1833	Congress passes the Force Act and the Compromise Tariff. American Anti-Slavery Society established.	1845	Texas admitted to the Union.
1834	Whig party begins to organize.		

State leaders such as Van Buren organized the first national campaign that relied extensively on new techniques of mass mobilization. In rallying support for Jackson against Adams in 1828, they put together chains of party-subsidized newspapers and coordinated a frantic schedule of meetings and rallies. Grass-roots Jackson committees reached out to the voters by knocking on their doors, pressing party literature into their hands, dispensing mass-produced medals and buttons with a likeness of Jackson, and lavishly entertaining all who would give them a hearing.

The election of 1828 centered on personalities, not issues. This in itself was a victory for Jackson's campaign managers, who proved far more skillful in image making.

Jackson carried every state south and west of Pennsylvania in 1828 and polled 56 percent of the popular vote. Voter turnout shot up to 55 percent from the apathetic 25 percent of 1824. Adams ran well only in New England and in commercialized areas producing goods for outside markets. Aside from the South, where he was virtually untouchable, Jackson's appeal was strongest among ordinary Americans who valued their local independence and felt threatened by outside centers of power beyond their control. He rolled up heavy majorities from Scots-Irish farmers in the Baptist-Methodist evangelical belt of the backcountry and unskilled workers with an Irish Catholic background.

JACKSON'S PRESIDENCY

Once in office, Jackson tolerated no interference from his subordinates. At one time or another, his administration angered Southern planters, frightened Eastern bankers and commercial interests, and outraged New England reformers. Nonetheless, Jackson remained popular because he portrayed himself as the embodiment of the people's will.

WHAT MADE Andrew

Jackson so popular among ordinary Americans?



WHERE TO LEARN MORE

The Hermitage,
Hermitage, Tennessee
www.thehermitage.com/



10-4
The “Commoner” Takes Office
(1828)



10-5
Andrew Jackson, First Annual
Message to Congress (1829)

Bank War The political struggle between President Andrew Jackson and the supporters of the Second Bank of the United States.

Nullification crisis Sectional crisis in the early 1830s in which a states’ rights party in South Carolina attempted to nullify federal law.

Spoils system The awarding of government jobs to party loyalists.

The Jacksonians had no particular program in 1828. Two political struggles that came to a head in 1832–1833—the **Bank War** and the **nullification crisis**—stamped the Jacksonians with a lasting party identity. By destroying the Second Bank of the United States and rejecting the attempt of South Carolina to nullify (or annul) a national tariff, Jackson firmly established the Democrats as the enemy of special privilege, the friend of the common man, and the defender of the Union.

THE JACKSONIAN APPEAL

Jackson’s inauguration struck many conservatives as ushering in a vulgar new order in national affairs. A vast crowd poured into Washington to applaud their hero. They cheered loudly when Jackson took his oath of office and then rushed to the White House for a postinauguration reception. Bowls of liquor-laced punch went flying, and glass and china crashed to the floor as a seeming mob surged through the White House. “But it was the People’s day,” reported one conservative onlooker, “and the People’s President and the People would rule. God grant that one day or other, the People do not put down all rule and rulers.”

Jackson proclaimed his task as one of restoring the federal government to the ideal of Jeffersonian republicanism, in which farmers and artisans could pursue their individual liberty free of any government intervention that favored the rich and powerful. Jackson began his assault on special privilege by proclaiming a reform of the appointment process for federal officeholders. Accusing his predecessors, especially Adams, of having created a social elite of self-serving bureaucrats, he vowed to make government service more responsive to the popular will. He insisted that federal jobs required no special expertise or training and proposed to rotate honest, hard-working citizens in and out of the civil service.

In reality, Jackson removed only about one-fifth of the officeholders he inherited, and most of his appointees came from the same relatively high status groups as the Adams people, but he opened the way for future presidents to move more aggressively against incumbents by providing a democratic rationale for government service. Thus emerged the **spoils system**, in which the victorious party gave government jobs to its supporters and removed the appointees of the defeated party, tying party loyalty to the reward of a federal appointment.

When Jackson railed against economic privilege, he had in mind Henry Clay’s American System, which called for a protective tariff, a national bank, and federal subsidies for internal improvements. Clay’s goal was to bind Americans together in an integrated national market. To the Democrats, Clay’s system represented government favoritism at its worst, a set of costly benefits at the public’s expense for special-interest groups. In 1830, Jackson struck a blow for the Democratic conception of the limited federal role in economic development. He vetoed the Maysville Road Bill, which would have provided federal money for a road to be built entirely within Kentucky. The bill was unconstitutional, he claimed, because it benefited only the citizens of Kentucky and not the American people as a whole. Moreover, since the Maysville project was within Clay’s congressional district, Jackson also embarrassed his most prominent political enemy.

Jackson’s Maysville veto did not rule out congressional appropriations for projects deemed beneficial to the general public. This pragmatic loophole allowed Democrats to pass more internal improvement projects during Jackson’s presidency than during all of the previous administrations together.

Jackson’s strongest base of support was in the West and South. By driving Native Americans from these regions, he enhanced his appeal as the friend of the common (white) man.

INDIAN REMOVAL

Some 125,000 Indians lived east of the Mississippi when Jackson became president. Five Indian confederations—the Cherokees, Creeks, Choctaws, Chickasaws, and Seminoles—controlled millions of acres of land in the Southeast that white farmers coveted for their own economic gain.

Pressure from the states to remove the Indians had been building since the end of the War of 1812. It was most intense in Georgia. In early 1825, Georgia authorities finalized a fraudulent treaty that ceded most of the Creek Indians' land to the state.

When Adams tried to obtain fairer terms for the Creeks in a new treaty, he was brazenly denounced in Georgia. Not willing to risk an armed confrontation between federal and state authorities, Adams backed down.

In 1828, Georgia moved against the Cherokees. By now a prosperous society of small farmers with their own written alphabet and schools for their children, the Cherokees wanted to avoid the fate of their Creek neighbors. In 1827, they adopted a constitution declaring themselves an independent nation with complete sovereignty over their land. The Georgia legislature reacted by placing the Cherokees directly under state law, annulling Cherokee laws and even their right to make laws, and legally defining the Cherokees as tenants on land belonging to the state of Georgia. By also prohibiting Indian testimony in cases against white people, the legislature stripped the Cherokees of any legal rights. They were now easy prey for white settlers, who scrambled onto Cherokee land after gold was discovered in northern Georgia in 1829. Alabama and Mississippi followed Georgia's lead in denying Indians legal rights.

The stage was set for what Jackson always considered the most important measure of his first administration, the **Indian Removal Act**. Jackson allowed state officials to override federal protection of Native Americans. In his first annual message, Jackson sided with state authorities in the South and advised the Indians "to emigrate beyond the Mississippi or submit to the laws of those States." This advice enabled Jackson to pose as the friend of the Indians, the wise father who would lead them out of harm's way and save them from rapacious white people. Congress acted on Jackson's recommendation in the Indian Removal Act of 1830. The act appropriated \$500,000 for the negotiation of new treaties under which the Southern Indians would surrender their territory and be removed to land in the trans-Mississippi area (primarily present day Oklahoma). Although force was not authorized and Jackson stressed that removal should be voluntary, no federal protection was provided for Indians harassed into leaving by land-hungry settlers. Ultimately, Jackson did deploy the U.S. Army, but only to round up and push out Indians who refused to comply with the new removal treaties.

And so most of the Indians were forced out of the Eastern United States—the Choctaws in 1830, the Creeks and Chickasaws in 1832, and the Cherokees in



For the Cherokees, the *Trail of Tears* stretched 1,200 miles from the homeland in the East to what became the Indian Territory in Oklahoma.

The Granger Collection, New York

QUICK REVIEW

Georgia and the Cherokees

- ◆ Georgia stole land of Creek Indians in 1825.
- ◆ Georgia moved against Cherokees in 1828, stripping them of all legal rights.
- ◆ Stage was set for Indian Removal Act.

Indian Removal Act President Andrew Jackson's measure that allowed state officials to override federal protection of Native Americans.



Trail of Tears The forced march in 1838 of the Cherokee Indians from their homelands in Georgia to the Indian Territory in the West.

Black Hawk's War Short 1832 war in which federal troops and Illinois militia units defeated the Sauk and Fox Indians led by Black Hawk.

1838 (see Map 10–1). The private groups who won the federal contracts for transporting and provisioning the Indians were a shady lot interested only in making a quick buck. Thousands of Indians, perhaps as many as one-fourth of those who started the trek, died on the way to Oklahoma, the victims of cold, hunger, disease, and the general callousness of whites they met along the way. “It is impossible to conceive the frightful sufferings that attend these forced migrations,” noted a Frenchman who observed the Choctaw removal. It was indeed, as recalled in the collective memory of the Cherokees, a **Trail of Tears**.

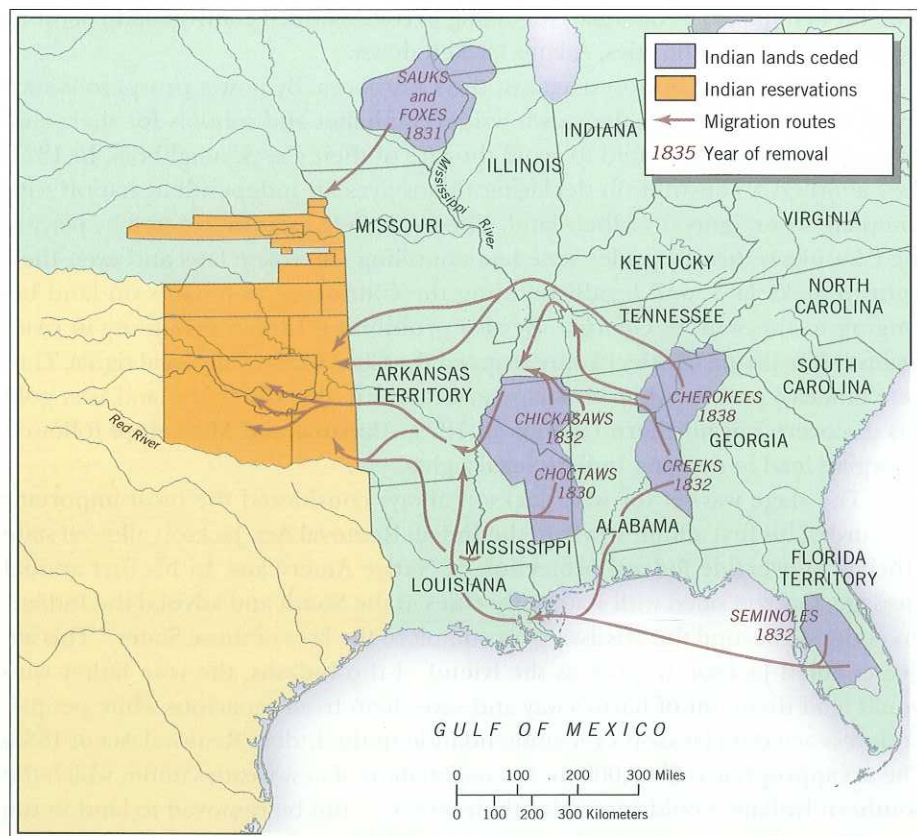
Federal troops joined local militias in 1832 in suppressing the Sauk and Fox Indians of Illinois and Wisconsin in what was called **Black Hawk's War**. This affair ended in the slaughter of five hundred Indian men, women, and children by white troops and their Sioux allies. The Seminoles held out in the swamps of Florida for seven years between 1835 and 1842 in what became the longest Indian war in American history. Their resistance continued even after their leader, Osceola, was captured while negotiating under a flag of truce.

Aligned with conservatives concerned by Jackson's cavalier disregard of federal treaty obligations, eastern reformers and Protestant missionaries came with-



MAP EXPLORATION

To explore an interactive version of this map, go to <http://www.prenhall.com/goldfield2/map10.1>



MAP 10–1

Indian Removals The fixed policy of the Jackson administration and pressure from the states forced Native Americans in the 1830s to migrate from their Eastern homelands to a special Indian reserve west of the Mississippi River.

WHY DO you think the Indian reservations are located west of the Mississippi?



in three votes of defeating the removal bill in the House of Representatives. Jackson ignored their protests as well as the legal rulings of the Supreme Court. (*See American Views: Memorial and Protest of the Cherokee Nation, 1836, p. 252*) In *Cherokee Nation v. Georgia* (1831) and *Worcester v. Georgia* (1832), the Court ruled that Georgia had violated the U.S. Constitution in extending its jurisdiction over the Cherokees. Chief Justice Marshall defined Indian tribes as “dependent domestic nations subject only to the authority of the federal government. But Marshall was powerless to enforce his decisions without Jackson’s cooperation. Jackson ignored the Supreme Court rulings and pushed Indian removal to its tragic conclusion.

THE NULLIFICATION CRISIS

Jackson’s stand on Indian removal confirmed the impression of many of his followers that on issues of centralized power, Jackson could be trusted to take the states’ rights position. The most sensitive issue involving the power of the national government concerned tariffs. States’ rights forces in South Carolina directly challenged Jackson in the early 1830s over tariff policy. After the first protective tariff in 1816, rates increased further in 1824 and then jumped to 50 percent in 1828 in what was denounced as the “Tariff of Abominations.” Southerners were especially angry over the last tariff because it had been contrived by Northern Democrats to win additional Northern support for Jackson’s presidential campaign. What fueled antitariff sentiment was not just the economic argument that high tariffs worsened the agricultural depression in the state. Protective tariffs were also denounced as an unconstitutional extension of national power over the states; many southern planters feared that it was only a prelude to forced emancipation.

South Carolina was the only state where African Americans made up the majority of the population. In the marshes and tidal flats south of Charleston, South Carolina, the lowcountry district of huge rice plantations, blacks outnumbered whites ten to one in the summer months. Nat Turner’s Rebellion, a bloody slave uprising in Virginia in 1831, and earlier aborted rebellions in the 1820s (see Chapter 13) left fearful planters convinced that growing antislavery agitation in the North and in England was feeding slave unrest. Turner’s revolt and renewed talk of emancipation would be “nothing to what we shall see,” warned the South Carolina planter James Hamilton Jr., “if we do not stand manfully at the Safety Valve of Nullification.”

Led by the lowcountry planters, the antitariff forces in South Carolina controlled state politics by 1832. They called themselves the nullifiers, a name derived from the constitutional theory developed by Calhoun in an anonymous tract of 1828 entitled *The South Carolina Exposition and Protest*. Calhoun argued that a state, acting through a popularly elected convention, had the sovereign power to declare an act of the national government null and inoperative. Once a state nullified a law, it was to remain unenforceable within that state’s borders unless three-fourths of all the states approved a constitutional amendment delegating to the national government the power that was challenged. If such an amendment passed, the nullifying state had the right to leave the Union.

Calhoun, who had been elected Jackson’s vice president in 1828, openly embraced nullification only after he had broken with the president. Jackson felt betrayed by Calhoun and vowed political revenge. With Calhoun’s approval, a South Carolina convention in November 1832 nullified the tariffs of 1828 and 1832 and decreed that customs duties were not to be collected in South Carolina after February 1, 1833.

Calhoun always insisted that nullification was not secession. He defended his doctrine as a constitutional means of protecting minority rights within a Union

WHERE TO LEARN MORE



Rice Museum,
Georgetown, South Carolina
www.ricemuseum.com/

QUICK REVIEW


Fear of Rebellion and Northern Intentions

- ◆ African Americans were majority of South Carolina’s population.
- ◆ Rebellions convinced planters that anti-slavery movement was feeding slave unrest.
- ◆ Southerners feared that protective tariffs were a prelude to emancipation.



◆ AMERICAN VIEWS ◆

MEMORIAL AND PROTEST OF THE CHEROKEE NATION, 1836

f the major tribes in the Southeast, the Cherokees fought longest and hardest against the Jacksonian policy of Indian removal. Led by their principal chief, John Ross, the son of a Scot and a mixed-blood Cherokee woman, they submitted the following protest to Congress against the fraudulent 1835 Treaty of New Echota forced on them by the state of Georgia. Although clearly opposed by an overwhelming majority of the Cherokees, this treaty provided the legal basis for the forced removal of the Cherokee people from Georgia to the Indian Territory.

ON WHAT legal grounds did the Cherokees base their protest? What pledges had been made to them by the U.S. government? What did the Cherokees mean when they said they had been “taught to think and feel as the American citizen”? If the Cherokees had become “civilized” by white standards, why did most whites still insist on their removal? Why would President Jackson have allowed white intruders to remain on land reserved by treaties for the Cherokees? Were the Cherokees justified in believing that they had been betrayed by the American government?

The undersigned representatives of the Cherokee nation, east of the river Mississippi, impelled by duty, would respectfully submit . . . the following statement of facts: It will be seen, from the numerous treaties between the Cherokee nation and the United States, that from the earliest existence of this government, the United States, in Congress assembled, received the Cherokees and their nation into favor and protection; and that the chiefs and warriors, for themselves and all parts of the Cherokee nation, acknowledged themselves and the said Cherokee nation to be under the protection of the United States of America, and of no other sovereign whatsoever: they also stipulated, that the said Cherokee nation will not hold any treaty with any foreign power, individual State, or with individu-

als of any State: that for, and in consideration of, valuable concessions made by the Cherokee nation, the United States solemnly guaranteed to said nation all their lands not ceded, and pledged the faith of the government, that “all white people who have intruded, or may hereafter intrude, on the lands reserved for the Cherokees, shall be removed by the United States, and proceeded against, according to the provisions of the act, passed 30th March, 1802,” entitled “An act to regulate trade and intercourse with the Indian tribes, and to preserve peace on the frontiers.” It would be useless to recapitulate the numerous provisions for the security and protection of the rights of the Cherokees, to be found in the various treaties between their nation and the United States. The Cherokees were happy and prosperous under a scrupulous observance of treaty stipulations by the government of the United States, and from the fostering hand extended over them, they made rapid advances in civilization, morals, and in the arts and sciences. Little did they anticipate, that when taught to think and feel as the American citizen, and to have with him a common interest, they were to be despoiled by their guardian, to become strangers and wanderers in the land of their fathers, forced to return to the savage life, and to seek a new home in the wilds of the far west, and that without their consent. An instrument purporting to be a treaty with the Cherokee people, has recently been made public by the President of the United States, that will have such an operation, if carried into effect. This instrument, the delegation never before the civilized world, and in the presence of Almighty God, is fraudulent, false upon its face, made by unauthorized individuals, without the sanction, and against the wishes, of the great body of the Cherokee people. Upwards of fifteen thousand of those people have protested against it, solemnly declaring they will never acquiesce.

Source: U.S. Congress, *Executive Documents* (1836)

dominated by a tyrannical national majority. Jackson rejected such reasoning as the talk of a scheming disunionist and vowed to crush any attempt to block the enforcement of federal laws. He told a congressman from South Carolina that “if a single drop of blood shall be shed there in opposition to the laws of the United States, I will hang the first man I can lay my hand on engaged in such treasonable conduct, upon the first tree I can reach.”

In January 1833, Jackson received full Congressional authorization in the Force Act to put down nullification by military force. Simultaneously, he worked to defuse nullification by supporting a new tariff that would cut duties by half within two years. Because Jackson’s opponents in Congress did not want him to get political credit for brokering a compromise, they pushed through their own tariff measure. The Compromise Tariff of 1833 lowered duties to 20 percent but extended the reductions over a ten-year period. Up against this combination of the carrot and the stick, the nullifiers backed down.

Jackson’s stand established the principle of national supremacy grounded in the will of the majority. Despite his victory, however, states’ rights doctrines remained popular both in the South and among many Northern Democrats. Many Southerners, and especially slaveholders, agreed that the powers of the national government had to be strictly limited. By dramatically affirming his right to use force against a state in defense of the Union, Jackson drove many planters out of the Democratic party. In the shock waves set off by the nullification crisis, a new anti-Jackson coalition began to form in the South.

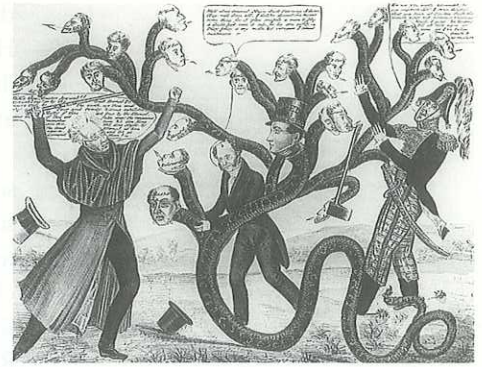
THE BANK WAR

What amounted to a war declared by Jackson against the Bank of the United States became the centerpiece of his presidency and a defining event for the shaping of the Democratic party. Like most Westerners, Jackson distrusted banks. As a result of the scarcity of gold and silver coins and the absence of any paper currency issued and regulated by the national government, money consisted primarily of notes issued as loans by private and state banks. These bank notes fluctuated in value in accordance with the reputation and credit worthiness of the issuing banks. In the credit-starved West, many banks were “wildcat” operations that made a quick profit by issuing notes without the gold or silver reserves to redeem them and then skipping town when they were on the verge of being found out. Even when issued by honest bankers, notes often could not be redeemed at face value because of market conditions. All of this struck many Americans, and especially farmers and workers, as inherently dishonest. They wanted to be paid in “real” money, gold or silver coin, and they viewed bankers suspiciously.

The largest and most powerful bank was the Bank of the United States, and citizens who were wiped out or forced to retrench drastically by the Panic of 1819 never forgave the Bank for saving itself at the expense of its debtors. Still, prosperous times had returned, and the Bank underwrote the economic expansion with its healthy credit reserves and stable banknotes.

Beginning with his first annual message, Jackson had been making noise about not rechartering the Bank. In the presidential campaign of 1832, Clay then forced Jackson’s hand and convinced Bank president Nicholas Biddle to apply to Congress for a new charter. Clay reasoned that he had Jackson trapped. If Jackson went along with the new charter, Clay could take credit for the measure. If he vetoed it, Clay could attack Jackson as the enemy of a sound banking system.

Clay’s clever strategy backfired. Jackson turned on Clay and the Bank with a vengeance. As he told his heir apparent, “The bank, Mr. Van Buren, is trying to kill me, *but I will kill it!*” On July 10, 1832, Jackson vetoed the rechartering bill for



This Democratic cartoon portrays Jackson as the champion of the people attacking the Bank of the United States, a many-headed monster whose tentacles of corruption spread throughout the states.

“General Jackson caricature slaying the many-headed monster,” 1836. Courtesy of Collection of The New York Historical Society

QUICK REVIEW

Jackson and the Bank of the United States

- ◆ Jackson and most Westerners distrusted banks.
- ◆ Jackson talked about not rechartering the Bank of the United States.
- ◆ Struggle over future of Bank ended with victory for Jackson at expense of Democrats image.



the Bank in a message that appealed both to state bankers and to foes of all banks. He took a ringing “stand against all new grants of monopolies and exclusive privileges, against any prostitution of our Government to the advancement of the few at the expense of the many.”

The business community and Eastern elites in general lashed out at Jackson’s veto as the demagogic ravings of an economic fool. For Biddle, the veto message had “all the fury of a chained panther, biting the bars of his cage.” But Jackson won the political battle, and he went to the people in the election of 1832 as their champion against the banking aristocracy. Although his support was no stronger than in 1828, he easily defeated Clay, the candidate of the short-lived National Republican party that had also backed Adams in 1828.

Having blocked the rechartering of the Bank when Congress failed to override his veto, Jackson then set out to destroy it. He claimed that the people had given him a mandate to do so by reelecting him in 1832. He finally found a secretary of the treasury (his first two choices refused) who agreed to sign the order removing federal deposits from the Bank in 1833. The government’s monies were deposited in “pet banks,” state banks controlled by loyal Democrats.

Jackson won the Bank War, but he left the impression that the Democrats had played fast and loose with the nation’s credit system. In his second term, high commodity prices and abundant credit, both at home and abroad, propelled a buying frenzy of western lands. Prices soared, and inevitably the speculative bubble had to burst. Jackson was out of office when the Panic of 1837 hit; Van Buren, his successor, paid the political price for Jackson’s economic policies.

VAN BUREN AND HARD TIMES

Like John Adams and James Madison, Martin Van Buren followed a forceful president who commanded a strong popular following. Where Jackson forged ahead regardless of consequences, Van Buren tended to hang back, carefully calculating all the political angles. Facing a sharp economic downturn, Van Buren appeared indecisive and unwilling to advance a bold program. When the rise of a radical abolitionist movement in the North revived sectional tensions over slavery, he awkwardly straddled the middle of the divisive issue. In the end, he undermined himself by failing to offer a compelling vision of just what he wanted his presidency to be.

THE PANIC OF 1837

Van Buren was barely settled into the White House when the nation was rocked by a financial panic. For over a decade, the economy had benefited from easy credit and the availability of Western territories opened up by Jackson’s Indian removal policy. Government land sales ballooned from under 4 million acres in 1833 to 20 million acres by 1836. As in 1817 and 1818, Americans piled up debt. A banking crisis in 1837 painfully reintroduced economic reality.

Even as it expanded, the American economy had remained vulnerable to disruptions in the supply of foreign capital and the sale of agricultural exports. The key foreign nation was Britain, a major source of credit and demand for exports. In late 1836, the Bank of England tightened its credit policies. Concerned with the large outflow of specie to the United States, it raised interest rates and reduced the credit lines of British merchants heavily involved in the American trade. Consequently, the British demand for cotton fell and with it the price of cotton. Because cotton, as the leading export, was the main security for most loans is-

WHAT SOCIAL, political, and economic events led to the creation of the Whig party?



WHERE TO LEARN MORE

Martin Van Buren National Historic Site, Kinderhook, New York
www.nps.gov/mava/home.htm

sued by American banks and mercantile firms, its drop in value set off a chain reaction of contracting credit and falling prices. When panic-stricken investors rushed to the banks to redeem their notes in specie, the hard-pressed banks suspended specie payments.

The shock waves hit New Orleans in March 1837 and spread to the major New York banks by May. What began as a bank panic soon dragged down the entire economy. Bankruptcies multiplied, investment capital dried up, and business stagnated. State governments slashed their budgets and halted all construction projects. Nine states in the South and West defaulted (stopped making payments) on their bonds. Workers in the shoe, textile, mining, and construction industries suddenly found themselves without jobs. "Workmen thrown out of employ by the hundreds daily," nervously noted a wealthy merchant in New York City in May 1837. He half expected that "we shall have a revolution here."

After a brief recovery in 1838, another round of credit contraction drove the economy into a depression that did not bottom out until 1843. In the manufacturing and commercial centers of the Northeast, unemployment reached an unheard-of 20 percent. The persistence of depressed agricultural prices meant that farmers and planters who had incurred debts in the 1830s faced the constant threat of losing their land or their slaves. Many fled west to avoid their creditors.

THE INDEPENDENT TREASURY

Although the Democrats bore no direct responsibility for the economic downturn, their political opponents, now coalescing as the **Whig party**, pinned the blame on Jackson's destruction of the Bank of the United States. In their view, Jackson had then compounded his error by trying to force a hard-money policy on the state banks that had received federal deposits.

Jackson had taken his boldest step against paper money when he issued the **Specie Circular** of 1836, which stipulated that henceforth large blocks of public land could be bought only with specie. The Specie Circular likely contributed to the Panic of 1837 by requiring the transfer of specie to the West for land transactions just when Eastern banks were strapped for specie reserves to meet demands on their own bank notes. Bankers and speculators denounced Jackson for unwarranted government interference with the natural workings of the economy and blundering into a monetary disaster.

By dramatically politicizing the banking issue and removing federal monies from the national bank, the Democrats had in effect assumed the burden of protecting the people from the paper aristocrats in the banking and business community. Once they shifted treasury receipts to selected state banks, they had to try to regulate these banks. But even the "pet banks" joined in the general suspension of specie payments when the Panic of 1837 hit. Thus the banks favored by the Democrats proved themselves unworthy of the people's trust.

Van Buren reestablished the Democrats' tarnished image as the party of limited government when he came out for the **Independent Treasury System**. Under this plan, the government would dispense with banks entirely. The Treasury would conduct its business only in gold and silver coin and would store its specie in regional vaults or subtreasuries.

The Independent Treasury System passed Congress in 1840 and restored the ideological purity of the Democrats as the friends of honest money, but it prolonged the depression. Specie locked up in government vaults was unavailable for loans in the private banking system that could expand the credit needed to revive the economy. The end result was to reduce the money supply and put even more downward pressure on prices.

Whig party Political party, formed in the mid-1830s in opposition to the Jacksonian Democrats, that favored a strong role for the national government for promoting economic growth.

Specie Circular Proclamation issued by President Andrew Jackson in 1836 stipulating that only gold or silver could be used as payment for public land.

Independent Treasury System Fiscal arrangement first instituted by President Martin Van Buren in which the federal government kept its money in regional vaults and transacted its business in hard money.



UPROAR OVER SLAVERY

In 1831, the year that Nat Turner led a slave uprising in Virginia, William Lloyd Garrison of Boston inaugurated a radical new phase in Northern attacks on slavery with the publication of his abolitionist paper *The Liberator*. The abolitionists embraced the doctrine of *immediatism*, an immediate moral commitment to begin the work of emancipation. Inspired by the wave of religious revivals sweeping the North in the late 1820s, they called upon all Americans to recognize their Christian duty of ending a system of human bondage that deprived the enslaved of their God-given right to be free moral beings. (For more on the abolitionists, see Chapter 14.)

Most white Southerners ignored the abolitionists until 1835, the year that the abolitionists produced over a million pieces of antislavery literature, much of which was sent to the South through the U.S. mails. Alarmed whites vilified the abolitionists as fanatics intent on enticing the slaves to revolt. Abolitionist tracts were burned, and, with the open approval of Jackson, Southern postmasters violated federal law by censoring the mails to keep out antislavery materials.

Beginning in 1836 and continuing through Van Buren's presidency, hundreds of thousands of antislavery petitions, some of them with thousands of signatures, flooded into Congress. Most of them called for the abolition of slavery in the District of Columbia. Southern congressmen responded by demanding that free speech be repressed with the **gag rule**, a procedural device whereby antislavery petitions were automatically tabled with no discussion.

The gag rule first passed in 1836. With Van Buren's reluctant support, it became a Democratic party measure, and it identified the Democrats as a pro-southern party in the minds of many Northerners. Ironically, while Van Buren was attacked in the North as a lackey of the slave interests, he was damned in the South as a nonslaveholder from the North. His fate was to be cast as a vacillating president fully trusted by neither section.



10-11

A French Traveler Reports on American Society (1835)

Gag rule A procedural device whereby antislavery petitions were automatically tabled in Congress with no discussion.

HOW DID the Whigs come to dominate American politics?

THE RISE OF THE WHIG PARTY

The Bank War and Jackson's reaction to nullification shook loose pro-Bank Democrats and many Southern states' righters from the original Jacksonian coalition, and these groups joined the opposition to Jackson. By 1834, the anti-Jacksonians started to call themselves Whigs, a name associated with the eighteenth-century American and British opponents of monarchical tyranny.

By 1840, the Whigs had mastered the techniques of political organization and mobilization pioneered by the Democrats in the late 1820s. They ran William Henry Harrison, their own version of a military hero, and swept to victory. The **second party system** of intense national competition between Whigs and Democrats was now in place (see the overview table "The Second Party System"). It would dominate politics until the rise of the antislavery Republican party in the 1850s.

THE PARTY TAKING SHAPE

The Whig party was born in the congressional reaction to Jackson's Bank veto and his subsequent attacks on the national bank. Led by the unlikely trio of Henry Clay and Daniel Webster, nationalists from the West and New England, and John C. Calhoun, a states' righter from the South, the congressional opposition accused Jackson of demagogic appeals to the poor against the rich. What upset them was the way Jackson wielded his executive power like a bludgeon. Whereas all earlier presidents together had used the veto only ten times, Jackson did so a dozen times. He openly defied the Supreme Court and Congress. To his opponents, Jackson was threatening to undermine the constitutional system of checks and balances.

Second Party System The national two-party competition between Democrats and Whigs from the 1830s through the early 1850s.

OVERVIEW

THE SECOND PARTY SYSTEM

	Democrats	Whigs
Ideology	Favor limited role of federal government in economic affairs and in matters of individual conscience: support territorial expansion	Favor government support for economic development and controls over individual morality; opposed to expansion
Voter support	Mainly subsistence farmers, unskilled workers, and Catholic immigrants	Mainly manufacturers, commercial farmers, skilled workers, and Northern evangelicals
Regional strength	South and West	New England and Upper Midwest

Local and state coalitions of the Whigs sent an anti-Jackson majority to the House of Representatives in 1835. The most powerful of these coalitions was in New York, where a third party, the **Anti-Masons**, joined the Whigs. The party had originated in western New York in the late 1820s as a grass-roots response to the sudden disappearance and presumed murder of William Morgan, an itinerant artisan who threatened to expose the secrets of the Order of Freemasons. An all-male order steeped in ritual and ceremony, the Masons united urban and small-town elites into a tightly knit brotherhood of personal contacts and mutual aid. Rumors spread that the Masons constituted a vast conspiracy that conferred special privileges and legal protection on its exclusive members. Farmers and townspeople flocked to the new Anti-Masonic party, seeking, in the words of an 1831 Anti-Masonic address, “equal rights and equal privileges among the freemen of the country.”

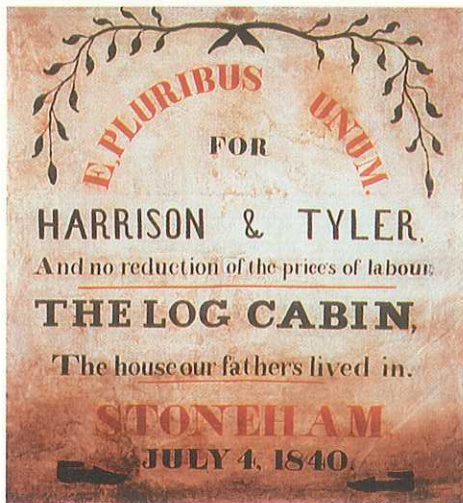
Despite spreading into New England and the neighboring Mid-Atlantic states, the Anti-Masons were unable to sustain themselves as a separate party. Shrewd politicians, led by Thurlow Weed and William Seward of New York, took up the movement and absorbed most of it into the anti-Jackson coalition. They thus broadened the Whigs’ mass base and added an egalitarian message to their appeal.

By 1836, the Whigs were strong enough to mount a serious challenge for the presidency. They ran three candidates—Webster of Massachusetts, William Henry Harrison of Ohio, and Hugh Lawson White of Tennessee—and some Whigs hoped that the regional popularity of these candidates would siphon off enough votes from Van Buren to throw the election into the House of Representatives. But Van Buren won an electoral majority by holding on to the populous Mid-Atlantic states and improving on Jackson’s showing in New England. Still, the Whigs were encouraged by the results. Compared to Jackson, Van Buren did poorly in what had been the overwhelmingly Democratic South, which was now open to further Whig inroads.

WHIG PERSUASION

The Whigs, like the Democrats, based their mass appeal on the claim that they could best defend the republican liberties of the people. They attributed the threat to those liberties to the expansive powers of the presidency as wielded by Jackson and in the party organization that put Jackson and Van Buren into office. In 1836, the Whigs called for the election of “a president of the *nation*, not a president of party.” Underlying this call was the persistent Whig belief that parties fostered and rewarded the selfish interests of the party faithful. The Whigs always insisted that Congress should be the locus of power in the federal system.

Anti-Masons Third party formed in 1827 in opposition to the presumed power and influence of the Masonic order.



This cotton banner used by the Whigs in the campaign of 1840 celebrated their ticket as the friends of common Americans who had been raised in a log cabin.

Smithsonian Institution / Office of Imaging, Printing, and Photographic Services

The Whigs were quicker than the Democrats to embrace economic change in the form of banks and manufacturing corporations. Most Whigs viewed governmental power as a positive force to promote economic development. They favored encouraging the spread of banking and paper money, chartering corporations, passing protective tariffs to support American manufacturers, and opening up new markets for farmers through government-subsidized transportation projects.

The Whigs drew heavily from commercial and planting interests in the South. They were also the party of bankers, manufacturers, small-town entrepreneurs, farmers prospering from the market outlets of canals and railroads, and skilled workers who valued a high tariff as protection from the competition of goods produced by cheap foreign labor. These Whig groups also tended to be native-born Protestants of New England or Yankee ancestry, particularly those caught up in the religious revivals of the 1820s and 1830s. The strongest Whig constituencies comprised an arc of Yankee settlement stretching from rural New England through central New York and around the southern shores of the Great Lakes.

Whigs believed in promoting social progress and harmony through an interventionist government. The Whigs favored such social reforms as prohibiting the consumption of alcohol; preserving the sanctity of the Protestant Sabbath through bans on business activities on Sundays; caring for orphans, the physically handicapped, and the mentally ill in state-run asylums and hospitals; and teaching virtuous behavior and basic knowledge through a centralized system of public education.

Much of the Whigs' reform impulse was directed against non-English and Catholic immigrants, those Americans whom the Whigs believed most needed to be taught the virtues of self-control and disciplined work habits. Not coincidentally, these groups—the Scots-Irish in the backcountry, the Reformed Dutch, and Irish and German Catholics—were the most loyal Democrats. They resented the aggressive moralism of the Whigs. These Democrats were typically subsistence farmers on the periphery of market change or unskilled workers who equated an activist government with special privileges for the economically and culturally powerful and identified with the Democrats' demand for keeping the government out of the economy and individual religious practices.

THE ELECTION OF 1840

Aside from the Independent Treasury Act and legislation establishing a ten-hour workday for federal employees, the Van Buren administration had no program to combat the Whig charge of helplessness in the face of economic adversity. The natural choice for the Whigs against Van Buren in 1840 was seemingly Henry Clay running on his American System to revive the economy with government aid. Yet the party dumped Clay for their version of a military hero popular with the people, William Henry Harrison of Ohio.

Harrison had run surprisingly well as one of the Whigs' regional candidates in 1836 and had revealed a common touch with the voters that the Whigs generally lacked. Unlike Clay, he was untainted by any association with the Bank of the United States, the Masonic Order, or slaveholding. As the victor at the Battle of Tippecanoe and a military hero in the War of 1812, he enabled Whigs to cast him in Jackson's former role as the honest, patriotic soldier worthy of the people's trust. In a decision that came back to haunt them the Whigs geographically balanced their ticket by selecting John Tyler, a planter from Virginia, as Harrison's running mate. Tyler was an advocate of states' rights and a former Democrat who had broken with Jackson over the Force Bill.

When a Democratic editor wisecracked that "Old Granny" Harrison (he was 67) was such a simpleton that he would like nothing better than to retire to a log cabin with a government pension and a barrel of hard cider, the Whigs created a Harrison

QUICK REVIEW

William Henry Harrison of Ohio

- ◆ Untainted by association with Bank of the United States, Masonic Order, or slaveholding.
- ◆ Hero of War of 1812.
- ◆ Selected John Tyler of Virginia as his running mate.



who never was—a yeoman farmer of humble origins and homespun tastes whose rise to prominence was a democratic model of success for other Americans to follow. Thus Harrison, who was descended from the Virginia slaveholding aristocracy, became a Whig symbol of the common man. Indeed, the Whigs pinned the label of the dandified and elitist aristocrat on Van Buren whom they called “Martin Van Ruin.”

The Whigs beat the Democrats at their own game of mass politics in 1840. They reversed the roles and symbolism of the Jackson-Adams election of 1828 and seized the high ground as the party of the people. In a further adaptation of earlier Democratic initiatives, Whig politics became a carnival in which voters were shamelessly wooed with food, drink, and music in huge rallies complete with live animals and gigantic buckskin balls that were triumphantly rolled from one rally to another.

The Whigs gained control of both Congress and the presidency in 1840. Harrison won 53 percent of the popular vote, and for the first time the Whigs carried the South (see Map 10–2). Voter turnout surged to an unprecedented 78 percent, a whopping increase over the average of 55 percent in the three preceding presidential elections (see Figure 10.1). As the new majority party, they finally had the opportunity, or so they thought, to implement their economic program.

THE WHIGS IN POWER

The Whigs expected that Clay would move quickly on Whig economic policies by marshaling his forces in Congress and trying to dominate a pliant Harrison. Harrison’s death from pneumonia in April 1841, barely a month after his inauguration, ruined Clay’s plans.

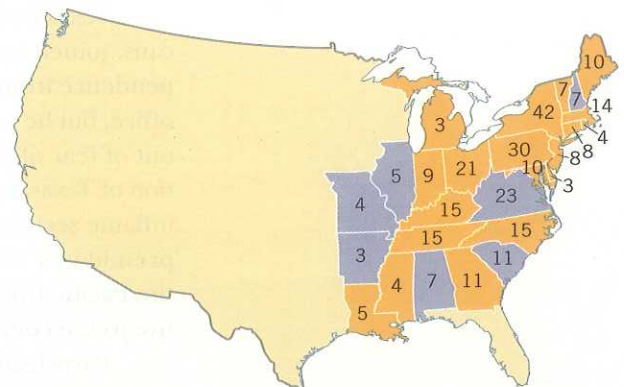
HARRISON AND TYLER

As president, Harrison fumed that “I am bothered almost to death with visitors. I have not time to attend to my person, not even to change my shirt, much less to attend to the public business.” He had pledged to follow the dictates of party leaders in Congress and defer to the judgment of his cabinet. Bowing to Clay’s demands, he agreed to call Congress into special session to act on Whig party measures. Thus his death was a real blow to Whig hopes of establishing the credibility of their party as an effective agent for positive change.

The first vice president to succeed on the death of a president, Tyler was cut from quite different cloth than Harrison. This stiff, unbending planter subscribed to a states’ rights agrarian philosophy that put him at odds with the urban and commercial elements of the Whig party even in his home state of Virginia. Clay’s economic nationalism struck him as a program of rank corruption that surrendered the constitutional rights of the South to power-hungry politicians and manufacturers in the North. Clay forged ahead with the party agenda—the repeal of the Independent Treasury System and its replacement by a new national bank, a protective tariff, and the distribution of the proceeds of the government’s public land sales to the states as funds for internal improvements.

Tyler used the negative power of presidential vetoes to stymie the Whig program. He twice vetoed bills to reestablish a national bank. The second veto led to the resignation of the cabinet he had inherited from Harrison, save for Secretary of State Daniel Webster, who was in the midst of negotiations with

WHAT DID the Whigs achieve while in power?

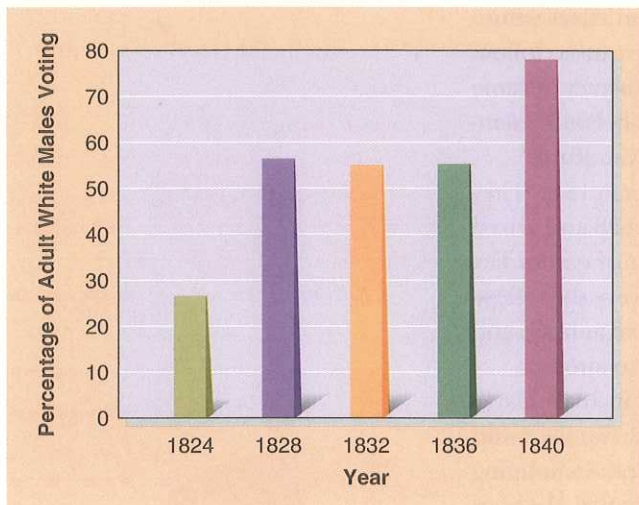


	Electoral Vote (%)	Popular Vote (%)
WILLIAM HENRY HARRISON (Whig)	234 (80)	1,274,624 (53)
Martin Van Buren (Democrat)	60 (20)	1,127,781 (47)

MAP 10–2

The Election of 1840 Building upon their strength in the commercializing North, the Whigs attracted enough rural voters in the South and West to win the election of 1840.

WHY WERE Southerners not unified in their support for a party in the election of 1840?



Voter Turnout in Presidential Elections, 1824–1840

The creation of mass-based political parties dramatically increased voter turnout in presidential elections. Voting surged in 1828 with the emergence of the Jacksonian Democratic party, and again in 1840 when the Whig party learned to appeal to the mass electorate.

Source: Richard P. McCormick, "New Perspectives on Jacksonian Politics" in *The Nature of Jacksonian America*, ed. Douglas T. Miller (1972), p. 103.

the British. Enraged congressional Whigs then expelled Tyler from the party.

A now desperate Clay sought to salvage what was left of his American System. He lined up Southern votes for the distribution of federal funds to the states by agreeing to a ceiling of 20 percent on tariff rates. Westerners were won over by Clay's support for the Preemption Act of 1841, a measure that allowed squatters—settlers on public land that had not yet been surveyed and put on the market—to purchase with noncompetitive bids up to 160 acres of land at the minimum government price of \$1.25 per acre.

Clay's legislative wizardry got him nowhere. When the Whigs passed a higher tariff in 1842 with a provision for distribution, Tyler vetoed it and forced them to settle for a protective tariff with no distribution. In the end, Clay had no national bank, no funds for internal improvements, and only a slightly higher tariff. Although Clay's leadership of the Whigs was strengthened, Tyler had deprived that leadership of meaning by denying the Whigs the legislature fruits of their victory in 1840.

THE TEXAS ISSUE

In 1842, Webster wrapped up his negotiations with the British. The **Webster-Ashburton Treaty** of that year settled a long-standing dispute over the boundary between British Canada and Maine and parts of the Upper Midwest. An agreement was also reached to cooperate in suppressing the African slave trade. Webster now resigned from the cabinet to join his fellow Whigs, allowing Tyler to follow a pro-southern policy of expansion that he hoped would gain him the Democratic nomination for the presidency in 1844. His goal was the annexation of Texas.

Texas had been a slaveholding republic since 1836, when rebellious Americans, joined by some *tejanos* (Texans of Mexican descent), declared their independence from Mexico. Jackson extended diplomatic recognition before leaving office, but he refused the new nation's request to be annexed to the United States out of fear of provoking a war with Mexico. But he was also aware that the addition of Texas, a potentially huge area for the expansion of plantation slavery, would inflame sectional tensions and endanger Van Buren's chances in the upcoming presidential election. In private, however, he urged Texans to seize harbors on the Pacific Coast from Mexican control and thus make annexation more attractive to the commercial interests of the Northeast.

Party leaders sidestepped the Texas issue after 1836. Spurned by the Whigs and anxious to return to the Democrats, Tyler renewed the issue in 1843 to curry favor among Southern and Western Democrats. He replaced Webster as secretary of state with a proannexationist Virginian, Abel P. Upshur, and secretly opened negotiations with the Texans. After Upshur's death, Calhoun, his successor, completed the negotiations and dramatically politicized the slavery issue. Calhoun made public his correspondence with Richard Pakenham, the British minister in Washington. He accused the British of seeking to force emancipation on Texas to block American expansion and destroy slavery in the South. Calhoun concluded that the security and preservation of the Union demanded the annexation of Texas.

The Pakenham letter hit the Senate like a bombshell, and antislavery Northerners were now convinced that the annexation of Texas was a slaveholders' conspiracy to extend slavery and swell the political power of the South. In June 1844, the Senate rejected Calhoun's treaty of annexation by a two-to-one margin. Still, the issue was hardly dead.

Webster-Ashburton Treaty Treaty signed by the United States and Britain in 1842 that settled a boundary dispute between Maine and Canada.



THE ELECTION OF 1844

The Whig and Democratic National Conventions met in the spring of 1844. Both Clay, who had the Whig nomination locked up, and Van Buren, who was the strong favorite for the Democratic one, came out against immediate annexation. Clay's stand was consistent with Whig fears that territorial expansion would disrupt the party's plans for ordered economic development, but Van Buren's anti-Texas stand cost him his party's nomination. In a carefully devised strategy, Western and Southern Democrats united to deny him the necessary two-thirds vote of convention delegates. A deadlocked convention turned to James K. Polk of Tennessee, a confirmed expansionist who had received the blessing of Jackson, the party's patriarch.

To counter the charge that they were a prosouthern party, the Democrats ran in 1844 on a platform that linked Oregon to Texas as territorial objectives. Glowing reports from Protestant missionaries of the boundless fertility of Oregon's Willamette Valley triggered a migration by Midwestern farm families still reeling from the Panic of 1837. The report of a naval expedition sent to explore the Pacific aroused the interest of New England merchants in using Oregon for expanded trade with China.

Some six thousand Americans were in Oregon by the mid-1840s, and demands mounted, especially from Northern Democrats, that the United States abandon its 1818 agreement of joint occupation with the British and lay exclusive claim to Oregon far to the north of the area of American settlement. The Polk Democrats seemed to endorse them when they asserted an American claim "to the whole of the Territory of Oregon."

Polk's expansionist program united the Democrats and enabled them to campaign with much more enthusiasm than in 1840. Acquiring Texas and Oregon not only held out the economic hope of cheap, abundant land to debt-burdened farmers in the North and planters in the South but also played on the anti-British sentiments of many voters. In contrast, the Whig campaign was out of focus. Clay began to waver on the issue of annexation of Texas but he failed to stem the defection of proslavery southern Whigs to the Democrats and lost support among antislavery Whigs in the North. Clay lost to Polk by less than 2 percent of the popular vote.

Tyler claimed Polk's victory as a mandate for the immediate annexation of Texas. He knew that it would still be impossible to gain the two-thirds majority in the Senate necessary for the approval of a treaty. Thus he resorted to the constitutionally unprecedented expedient of a joint resolution in Congress inviting Texas to join the Union. By the narrow margin of twenty-seven to twenty-five, the Senate concurred with the House in favor of annexation. Tyler signed the joint resolution on March 1, 1845.

Although Tyler had failed to secure the Democratic nomination in 1844, he had gained Texas. He also had the satisfaction of getting revenge against the Whigs, the party that had disowned him. Texas, more than any other issue, defeated Clay and the Whigs in 1844.

CONCLUSION

The Jacksonian era ushered in a revolution in American political life. Politicians learned how to appeal to a mass electorate and to build disciplined parties that channeled popular desires into distinctive party positions. Voter participation in national elections tripled, and Democrats and Whigs competed on nearly equal terms in every region.

Politics did not fully enter the mainstream of American life until the rise of the second party system of Democrats and Whigs. The election of 1824 revived interest



in presidential politics, and Jackson's forceful style of leadership highlighted the presidency as the focal point of American politics. Voters in favor of government aid for economic development and a social order based on Protestant moral controls turned to the Whigs' program of economic and moral activism. Conversely, those who saw an activist government as a threat to their economic and cultural equality turned to the Democrats.

The national issues around which the Democrats and Whigs organized and battled down to 1844 were primarily economic. Slavery in the form of the Texas question replaced the economy as the decisive issue in the election of 1844. Once this shift occurred and party appeals began to focus on the place of slavery in American society, an escalating politics of sectionalization was set into motion.



SUMMARY

The Egalitarian Impulse As politics opened to mass participation in the early nineteenth century, popular styles of religious leadership and worship erupted in broad reaction against the dominant Protestant churches. The Second Great Awakening further transformed the religious landscape between 1800 and 1840. In politics, longstanding property requirements for voting were dropped by many states, and the rise of Jacksonian Democrats resulted in the election and reelection of Andrew Jackson as president.

Jackson's Presidency Once in office, Jackson tolerated no interference from his subordinates. His dealings in such crises as the Bank War and the nullification movement further showed his intolerance for interference in any form. And, in his dealings with the Native Americans, as shown through the Indian Removal Act, the Trail of Tears, and Black Hawk's War, Jackson further illustrated his unwillingness to compromise.

Van Buren and Hard Times Where Jackson forged ahead regardless of consequences, Martin Van Buren tended to hang back, carefully calculating all of the political angles. Early in his presidency he was forced to deal with the economic Panic of 1837. Following this crisis, Van Buren reestablished the Democrats tarnished image as the party of limited government when he came out for the Independent Treasury System. His support, though reluctant, of the gag rule in 1836 may have been the beginning of the end for his presidency as he was beaten handily in electoral votes by William Henry Harrison in the election of 1840.

The Rise of the Whig Party The Whig party was born in the congressional reaction to Jackson's Bank veto and his subsequent attacks on the national bank. By 1836, the Whigs were strong enough to mount a serious challenge for the presidency. The Whigs, like the Democrats, based their mass appeal on the claim that they could best defend the republican liberties of the people. Whigs believed in promoting social progress and harmony through an interventionist government. By 1840, Whigs had mastered the techniques of political organization and mobilization, and in 1840 they gained control of both Congress and the presidency.

The Whigs in Power William Henry Harrison's death was a real blow to Whig hopes of establishing the credibility of their party as an effective agent for positive change. John Tyler, the first vice president to succeed on the death of a president, was cut from a different cloth than Harrison. Tyler used the negative power of presidential vetoes to stymie the Whig program. Enraged congressional Whigs then expelled Tyler from the party. In the 1844 election, the Whigs ran Henry Clay as their candidate, losing in a close race to James K. Polk.

REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. What role did race and gender play in the democratic movements of the nineteenth century?
 2. How did Jackson redefine the role of the president?
 3. Why did American politics change between 1824 and 1840?
 4. In terms of ideology and voter appeal, how did the Democrats and Whigs differ? How did each party represent a distinctive response to economic and social change?
-

KEY TERMS

Albany Regency (p. 246)

Anti-Masons (p. 257)

Bank War (p. 248)

Black Hawk's War (p. 250)

Democratic Party (p. 246)

Gag rule (p. 256)

Independent Treasury System

(p. 255)

Indian Removal Act (p. 249)

Jacksonian Democrats (p. 295)

Nullification crisis (p. 248)

Second Great Awakening (p. 244)

Second party system (p. 256)

Specie Circular (p. 255)




Spoils system (p. 248)


Trail of Tears (p. 250)

Webster-Ashburton Treaty (p. 260)

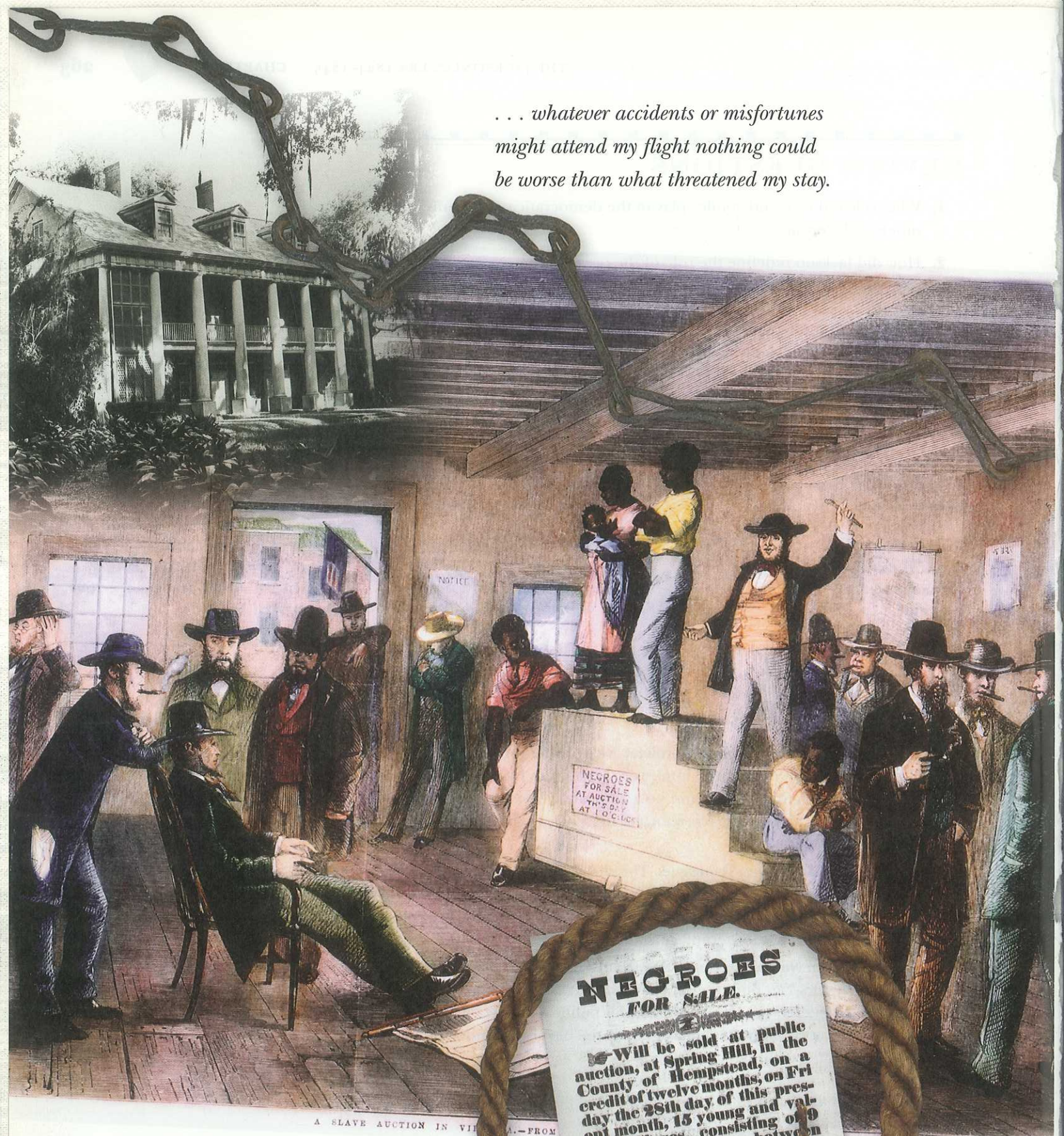
Whig party (p. 255)

WHERE TO LEARN MORE

-  **Rice Museum, Georgetown, South Carolina.** Rice planters were the leaders of the nullification movement, and the interpretive materials here on the history of rice cultivation help one understand how slave labor was employed to produce their great wealth. Maps to the museum and news of special events can be found at: www.ricemuseum.com/
-  **The Hermitage, Hermitage, Tennessee.** This site, the plantation home of Andrew Jackson, includes a museum with artifacts of Jackson's life. Its website www.thehermitage.com/ lists events and programs and examines the archeological projects undertaken at the Hermitage.
-  **Martin Van Buren National Historic Site, Kinderhook, New York.** The site preserves Lindenwald, Van Buren's home after he left the presidency and includes a library with materials on Van Buren and his political era. Its recently expanded website www.nps.gov/mava/home.htm discusses the history of Lindenwald and includes a virtual tour of its art collection.

 For additional study resources for this chapter, go to: www.prenhall.com/goldfield/chapter10

*... whatever accidents or misfortunes
might attend my flight nothing could
be worse than what threatened my stay.*



A SLAVE AUCTION IN VIRGINIA. — FROM

A Slave auction in Virginia. 1861.

NEGROES FOR SALE.

Will be sold at public
auction, at Spring Hill, in the
County of Hempstead, on a
credit of twelve months, on Fri-
day the 28th day of this pres-
ent month, 15 young and val-
uable Slaves, consisting of 9
superior Men & Boys, between
12 and 27 years of age, one
woman about 43 years who is
a good washer and cook, one woman about twenty-seven, and one
very likely young woman with three children.
Also at the same time, and on the same terms, three Male and one female
forty head of Cattle, plantation tools, one waggon, and a lot of iron
Gin stand, manufactured by Pratt & Co.
Hand with two or more approved securities will be required.
Sale to commence at 10 o'clock.

**E. E. Humphrey,
W. Robinson,
H. M. Robinson.**
Spring Hill, Jan. 1, 1842.