

The Age of Jackson

Section 1



MAIN IDEAS

1. Democracy expanded in the 1820s as more Americans held the right to vote.
2. Jackson's victory in the election of 1828 marked a change in American politics.

Key Terms and People

nominating conventions public meetings to select a party's presidential and vice presidential candidates

Jacksonian Democracy the democratic expansion that occurred during Jackson's presidency

Democratic Party a party formed by Jackson supporters

John C. Calhoun Jackson's vice presidential running mate

spoils system the practice of rewarding political supporters with government jobs

Martin Van Buren the secretary of the state in Jackson's cabinet

Kitchen Cabinet an informal group of Jackson's trusted advisers that sometimes met in the White House kitchen

Section Summary

EXPANSION OF DEMOCRACY

In the early 1800s state legislatures expanded democracy, giving more people voting rights. However, women and African Americans still had no voting rights in most states.

By 1828 almost all states had changed the system under which state legislatures nominated electors in the electoral college. Now, the people nominated their own electors. Some parties began to hold **nominating conventions**. Broader voting rights and conventions allowed more people to actively participate in politics.

Andrew Jackson entered the political scene as American democracy grew. Historians called the expansion of democracy in this era **Jacksonian Democracy**.

Who was left out in the push to give Americans more voting rights?

Section 1, continued

ELECTION OF 1828

Jackson's supporters were mainly farmers, frontier settlers, and southern slaveholders. They believed he would protect the rights of the common people and the slave states. They referred to themselves as Democrats and established the **Democratic Party**. Many supporters of President John Quincy Adams called themselves National Republicans.

The presidential candidates were President Adams and Andrew Jackson in a replay of the 1824 election. Jackson selected South Carolina Senator **John C. Calhoun** as his running mate. The campaign concentrated on personalities. Jackson's campaigners said he was a war hero who was born poor and earned success through hard work. They said that Adams knew nothing about everyday people because his father had been the second U.S. president. Adams's backers said Jackson was too coarse to be president.

Jackson and Calhoun won the election. Jackson's supporters described his victory as a triumph for the common people. A crowd of some 20,000 people held a big party on the White House lawn to celebrate. Jackson began the **spoils system**, but he replaced fewer than one-fifth of federal officeholders. One of Jackson's strongest cabinet members was **Martin Van Buren**. Jackson also relied heavily on a trusted group of advisors that was called the **kitchen cabinet**.

Who supported Adams for president?

What were some of the key differences between Jackson and Adams?

Why might so many people have attended the election party?

CHALLENGE ACTIVITY

Critical Thinking: Analyze Make a chart contrasting facts about Adams and Jackson with people's opinions of them.