THE WHITE HOUSE
HISTORICAL ASSOCIATION

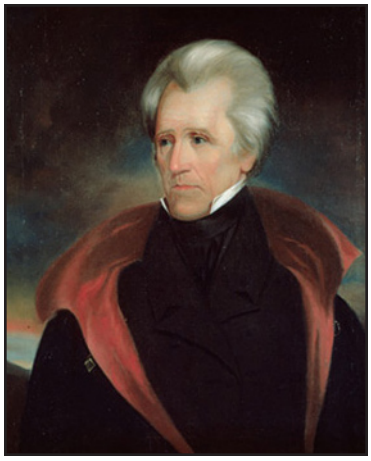
CLASSROOM | *Primary Documents*

The Rise of Jacksonian Democracy / Eyewitness Accounts

Andrew Jackson, the first president born in a log cabin and to hail from a state beyond the Allegheny Mountains, swept into office in 1828 with the help of expanded suffrage and the emergence of new, aggressive approaches to political campaigning. Jackson, a hero of the War of 1812, was elected as a reform candidate, the victim of the so-called John Q. Adams-Henry Clay "corrupt bargain" of 1824. A complex man, Jackson is often described as loyal, brave, decisive and honorable, but the adjectives irritable, opinionated, unbending, and dictatorial are also associated with him. Though born in poverty, and touted as the "champion of the poor," by the time of his presidency he was a wealthy Tennessee plantation owner. While held up as the first "president of the people," he owned 95 slaves when he took office and 150 by the end of his two terms. Nor did his democratic spirit extend to Native Americans whose rights he ignored as he steadfastly oversaw their removal from their ancient home to undesirable lands beyond the Mississippi. A man concerned about the honor of women, he defended the tarnished reputation of the secretary of war's wife so fiercely that it created a damaging rift between him and his first cabinet. Despite his respect for women, the democratizing effects of his administration did not extend to them. Though calling himself the protector of the Constitution, as the chief executive he once refused to enforce a decision of the U.S. Supreme Court, saying, "[Chief Justice] John Marshall has made his decision, now let him enforce it."

Yet when Jackson became president on March 4, 1829, the throngs of "common citizens" who gathered for his inaugural festivities seemed to view him simply; as one newspaper put it, he was a man "of plain and simple dress, . . . unaffected and familiar in his manners." Further, the editors exclaimed, "It was a proud day for the people, General Jackson is their own president." Recalling the wild scene at the White House reception that mild March day, Senator Daniel Webster of Massachusetts remarked that folks came from 500 miles away and seemed to think that the country had been "rescued from some dreadful danger."

This lesson examines factors shaping the people's belief that Andrew Jackson was "their" president. Using one case in point, students will consider whether Jackson's leadership style, often driven by fierce personal loyalties or hatreds, helped or hurt his efforts to achieve the goals of his political philosophy.



Andrew Jackson. White House Collection

Objectives

Using primary documents and data, students will:

1. Examine conditions that contributed to the people's belief, reflected in the inaugural celebration of March 4, 1829, that Jackson was "their own president" - more so than those who had been previously elected.

2. Assess the influence of Jackson's aggressive, complex personality on his effectiveness as a leader by examining the social and political crisis revolving around Margaret O'Neal Eaton, the wife of his secretary of war, John Eaton.

National History Standards

This lesson and accompanying activities meet the following National Standards for United States history, grades 5-12:

The student understands the changing character of American political life in "the age of the common man." Therefore, he will be able to:

Analyze the influence of the West on the heightened emphasis on equality in the political process. [Standard 3A]

Explain why the election of Andrew Jackson was considered a victory for the "common man." [Assess the importance of the individual in history. Standard 3A]

The student thinks chronologically. Therefore, he will be able to:

Appreciate historical perspectives - (a) describing the past on its own terms, through the eyes and experiences of those who were there, as revealed through their literature, diaries, letters, debates, arts, artifacts, and the like; (b) considering the historical context in which the event unfolded - the values, outlook, options, and contingencies of that time and place. [Standard 2F]

PART 1 . THE PEOPLE'S PRESIDENT

Background

When Andrew Jackson became the seventh president of the United States on March 4, 1829, he was best known as the hero of the Battle of New Orleans. By the time he walked through the doors of the Capitol rotunda, just before noon, 20,000 people had arrived to cheer him. From among the throngs rose shouts of "Huzza, there is the old man . . . there is the old veteran . . . the general." Years before, in January 1815, Jackson had led his troops to an unlikely victory in the largest battle yet to be fought on the American continent. Never mind that as the acrid smoke of cannon fire cleared from that triumph, a peace treaty to end the war was already two weeks old, negotiated in Ghent, Belgium, between American and British ministers. From the viewpoint of the American people, whose capital had recently been burned by the British, the victory in New Orleans restored national pride and symbolized the collective belief that the United States had finally broken away from a parent country that had doubted their independence for decades. Jackson, who had led an army made up of rough western volunteers with little formal military training, became the personification of that restored pride. Towns were named for him, songs were written extolling his glories, and many began to imagine him as the president. Now, on inauguration day, so enthusiastic were the mobs of people who rushed him after his inaugural speech, he had to take temporary refuge in the Capitol building.

Those who revered Jackson had been determined that their hero would be elected in 1828, because, to many minds, Jackson had been cheated of the presidency in 1824 by a "corrupt bargain." Indeed, that election had proven one of the most difficult in the nation's young history. In 1820, James Monroe had been elected president almost unanimously, so much so that his administration was called "The Era of Good Feelings." Yet those supporters in the Democratic-Republican Party were not as single-minded as they seemed - factions were emerging that suggested the increasingly diverse interests of the people of the United States. Other factors came into play as well, changing the political environment of that decade.

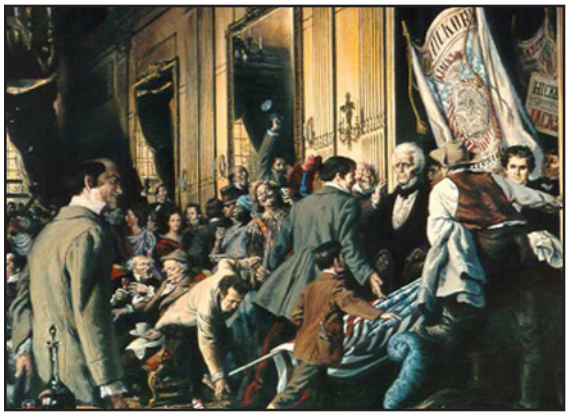
Playing by New Rules

In the early 1800s, as new states entered the Union, the requirements that their legislatures placed on the right to vote were less strict than in the original thirteen states. Furthermore, over time most of the older states relaxed laws that made property ownership a prerequisite for voting, so that by the election of 1824, most white males who were 21 or older could vote. The method for choosing the presidential nominees was changing too. Previously, a congressional caucus, made up of a small number of political leaders, had determined the candidates. By 1824, this system was breaking down. Several men aspired to the presidency, and neither they nor their followers were willing to let a small group of congressmen determine their fate. True, a congressional caucus did meet in 1824, though only about one-third of the Congress showed up for the meeting, and true, the caucus did select a candidate, William H. Crawford of Georgia, then secretary of the treasury. Crawford's opponents immediately attacked this method of candidate selection as undemocratic, dictatorial, and unconstitutional. The erosion of this selection approach was further indicated when three other candidates received nominations from state legislatures, and endorsements from irregular mass meetings throughout the country. John Quincy Adams, Monroe's vice president, was named, as was Speaker of the House Henry Clay of Kentucky, and General Jackson, a Tennessee senator who would, as he said, speak for "the humble members of society - the farmers, mechanics and laborers."

An Unusual Election

Another element shaping a broader political base for the common man had to do with changing methods for choosing electors. Rather than leaving the decision to a small group of state legislators, the states - one by one - had begun to allow the people to elect electors. Perhaps electors chosen by this liberalized method would more closely reflect the interests and desires of the common folks. The 1824 popular election mirrored this change, with Jackson gaining a plurality of the vote. Though Jackson had the most electoral votes as well, with so many candidates competing, he did not receive the electoral majority required by the Constitution. Thus, the election would be settled in the House of Representatives from among the top three candidates: Jackson, Adams, and Crawford. Since Crawford had suffered a serious illness, the real election came down to Jackson and Adams. Henry Clay of Kentucky, now out of the running, would control the outcome, since he controlled the vote of the three states that he had carried in the general election. A powerful voice in the House of Representatives, Clay apparently persuaded a single New York congressman, Stephen Van Rensselaer, to support Adams over Jackson. That sealed the New York delegation's vote, and the election. In terms of political beliefs, Clay was closer politically to Adams than Jackson, finding the Tennessee senator inexperienced in public office, a bit vague on what he called "reform issues," and lacking in restraint as a military commander. When Adams appointed Henry Clay to the prestigious secretary of state position only days after the House election "squeaker," it was easy enough for Jackson supporters to cry "foul" and "corrupt bargain." Jackson himself called Clay "the Judas of the West," who received his "thirty pieces of silver" as the reward for his "betrayal" of the people's will. No matter what Clay's motivations, the "corrupt bargain" became a part of the campaign fodder that would put Jackson in the White House in 1828.

John Quincy Adams. White House Collection



President Jackson's inauguration celebration at the White House. WHHA

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An Emerging Party and a Long Campaign

Almost from the time Adams became president in the spring of 1825, the drive began to send "the people's choice" to Washington by 1828. Jackson resigned his senate seat and went back to Tennessee. By October 1825, the Tennessee legislature had already nominated Jackson for president with the next race three years away. Supporters got aggressive in advancing their candidate. In Nashville, Tennessee, Jackson's backers formed a new party, soon to be called the Democratic Party, and developed an impressive organizational structure to promote their man. In Washington, Martin Van Buren - a savvy New Yorker with a reputation as a political wizard - applied new campaign strategies. Van Buren was among the first leaders of the time to see political parties as a legitimate means for providing voters with opposing views on political issues, not as dangerous tools of division. Especially in this environment of one-party dominance, Van Buren believed that competing parties could curb the tendency for those in power to become corrupt and tyrannical. He put into place a campaign headquarters in Washington that would be impressive even by today's standards. The themes he emphasized were simple: 1) Adams was not a legitimate president; 2) only Jackson could bring the citizenry a "true democracy."

Marketing a Candidate

Van Buren and the Nashville men knew how to market Jackson's popularity as a war hero and to fan the anti-Adams fires with the fuel of a "stolen presidency." They organized parades and barbeques where the liquor flowed, and gave out thousands of buttons and hats. Earlier in his career, Jackson had been given the name "Old Hickory," because as a leader, especially during battle, he was "as strong as a hickory stick." Hickory canes became the rage, with Democrats proudly carrying them to show support for the hero of New Orleans. Identifying friendly newspapers, Jackson promoters courted editors, feeding them prepared speeches and reports, and leveling accusations against Adams as a "stingy, undemocratic aristocrat." Jackson's opponents fired their own shots: Jackson was violent, they said, a temper-driven dueler, a slaveholder, and a general who had overstepped the orders of his president during military raids into Spanish Florida. The Jacksonians countered with "select" public opinion polls and circulated their favorable results to newspapers, along with neatly finished rebuttal articles.

The People Have Ruled

By the time the inauguration of 1829 rolled around, everyone understood that Andrew Jackson was to be considered the "democratic president." Jackson himself saw it that way, telling a political supporter in a letter that the verdict of the people "has pronounced to an admiring world that the people are virtuous, and capable of self-government, and that the liberty of our beloved country will be perpetual." That judgment would be tested and questioned during the next eight years of his two-term presidency.

PART 1 . *Activities*

After students have read the background, invite them to complete one or more of these activities:

1. Margaret Bayard Smith, a highly-ranked member of Washington society and wife of a banker, wrote extensively and in great detail about life in the capital city in the first half of the nineteenth century. Her grandson, Henley Smith, published her letters in Forty Years of Washington Society. Ask students to read a passage **(SEE PG.10)** from that collection describing a scene after the election of John Quincy Adams by the House of Representatives in 1825. After students read, ask them to summarize Mrs. Smith's assessment of why Adams won the election. (Mrs. Smith was a supporter of William Crawford of Georgia.) Have several students read about this event from at least two other accounts, including a biography of Henry Clay **(see bibliography)**. Ask them to compare the accounts. After discussion, ask all students to write a new version, offering a balanced view of the Adams-Clay connection.

2. Margaret Bayard Smith described in great detail the inaugural festivities **(SEE PG.13)** of Andrew Jackson on March 4, 1829. After students have read the account, ask them to collect evidence from the excerpt that Mrs. Smith viewed Andrew Jackson as "the people's president." Ask students to cite any lines from the passage that indicated Mrs. Smith "s negative reaction to the masses who were so enthusiastic about Jackson. Ask them to show evidence that Mrs. Smith saw these multitudes as distasteful or dangerous. Do students glimpse any ambivalence in her attitude toward both the "masses" and the new president? Ask students to speculate to what degree Mrs. Smith's attitude reflects generalized fears about the "common man" as a political player in her time.

As a quick follow-up activity, ask several students to imagine that Mrs. Smith could "time travel" to the present. Invite them to imagine that she is "set down" in the living room of some political activists who are having a post-2000 election conversation. Students should then create a dialogue with the "time traveler" in which they explain to Mrs. Smith the advantages of democracy, even in an election as controversial as this one.

Invite several students to imagine that as avid Jackson supporters they attended the inaugural events of March 4, 1829, and ask them to write their version of the day's activities. Ask students to compare these versions and Mrs. Smith's to the newspaper accounts of the day. **(SEE PG.14)**

Select other students to conduct research to find out about inaugurations of presidents who served before the time of Andrew Jackson. Ask each researcher to share his/ her findings, comparing their chosen president's inaugural with that of Jackson's.

From all of the above activities, ask students to draw conclusions regarding whether or not Jackson's inauguration seemed to reflect the broadened political base described in this lesson's background narrative.

3. Ask several students to conduct research about the 2001 inauguration of President George W. Bush. They can start by visiting "A Brief History of Presidential Inaugurations" (*http://www.whitehousehistory.org/whha_exhibits/presidential_inaugurations/index.html*) and The Library of Congress online exhibit, "I Do Solemnly Swear: Presidential Inaugurations" (*http://memory.loc.gov/ammem/pihtml/pihome.html*)

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Invite them to discover in what ways inauguration festivities have changed over time. Further, direct them to consider this question: how do the planners of modern inaugural festivities take into consideration the desire of the "common people" to be part of an incoming president's big day?

As a creative writing assignment, after students read about the 2001 inaugural, ask several of them to write a modern-day newspaper article describing the celebrations ushering in the presidency of George W. Bush.

4. Explain to students that Andrew Jackson associated himself with the democratic principles of Thomas Jefferson and saw his presidency as an opportunity to restore those principles to the national government. Political scientists have noted that Jackson attracted the vote of the western states that had entered the Union since 1776. Many westerners linked Jackson with the political thinking of the early Democratic-Republican Party, led by Jefferson, and focused on the goodness of an agrarian, decentralized nation.

• Ask students to click on the list of states (*http://www.whitehousehistory.org/whha_classroom/classroom_documents-1828_i.html*) entering the Union from 1787-1820, and have them identify the western states. Invite students to study the general election maps for 1808-32 (*http://www.uselectionatlas.org/*), and determine whether or not the western states consistently voted for the Democratic-Republican Party. Ask students to state their conclusions in a generalization.

• Invite students to observe the same maps and determine what area of the country consistently did not support the Democratic-Republicans.

• After students present their conclusions, divide them into research teams, inviting each group to discover the goals of one of the parties dominant in the 1808 election (Democratic-Republican/Federalists) or the emerging parties of the 1828 election (Democratic-Republicans/National Republicans). Ask teams to combine their findings on a large chart, noting similarities and differences.

• As a culminating activity, ask them to respond either in a short essay, or in class discussion, to this statement by Martin Van Buren: "The two great parties of this country, with occasional changes in their names only, have, for the principal part of a century, occupied antagonistic positions upon all important political questions . . . Sons have generally followed in the footsteps of their fathers, and families originally differing have in regular succession received, maintained, and transmitted this opposition." Or, alternatively, this assertion by Jackson biographer, Robert V. Remini:

• "But the Jacksonian movement, as it developed, was more than a crusade to restore popular government and root out corruption. It was a recognition that the old divisions between the ideals of Jefferson and the goals of Hamilton had not vanished. It reaffirmed the principles of republicanism, principles that had been overthrown, according to the Jacksonians, by the election of John Q. Adams."

Other related assignments:

Ask several students to read and analyze Jackson's first inaugural address and compare

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it to that of Thomas Jefferson "s inaugural address on March 4, 1801. (*http://avalon.law.yale.edu/subject_menus/inaug.asp*)

The emphasis here is to see if there are clear connections between the two presidents in terms of their vision for the nation. Ask these students to share their findings with the teams of students who are researching the relationship between the Jacksonians and the Jeffersonians.

Ask several students to conduct research about the political climate at the time of James Monroe's near unanimous election in 1820, ushering in what came to be called "The Era of Good Feelings. " Ask the researchers to discover whether or not this election reflected true homogeneity, or was simply a time when the political power of the old Federalists was temporarily submerged by unusual circumstances. Have the students act as a resource to the other assigned research teams who are finding the connecting threads between Jacksonians and Jeffersonians. Further, invite a couple of these students to prepare a short speech to deliver in class, using one of these titles: "Yes, Virginia, There Really Can Be an Era of Good Feelings; " or, "Okay, So Not Everything Was That Good. "

• Have students analyze the general election map of 1824. If Jackson was considered the choice of the western states, who appears to be his "spoiler" in this election? Ask a couple of students to study the political philosophy of Henry Clay and compare his views to those of Jackson. Ask the researchers to specifically explain Clay's "American System" and how westerners viewed it. Ask students to examine the general election map of 1832 and compare Clay's showing with the states he won in 1824. Have students explain, based on their research, why Clay's support was diminished. (*http://www.uselectionatlas.org/*)

5. Some political scientists believe that one reason Andrew Jackson's democratizing ideas gained broader support was that the electors who chose the president better represented the desires and interests of the common people. After students analyze the Methods of Electing Electors (*http://www.whitehousehistory.org/whha_classroom/classroom_documents-1828_j.html*), outlining how electors were chosen in the states from 1804-1832, ask them to write several generalizations speculating about why this might have been true. Ask students to rate each state in terms of how quickly each expanded the base of voters who selected presidential electors. Invite students to analyze whether or not the later western states had a better track record than the original thirteen.

6. Ask students to review the chart, Voter Participation in Presidential Elections (*http://www.whitehousehistory.org/whha_classroom/classroom_documents-1828_k.html*). Tell them that the popular vote in 1828 was 800,000 greater than in the election of 1824 - an impressive jump. Using the information in the background, ask students to hypothesize about why there was such an increase. Does that increase appear to be reflected in the percentage of the popular vote for each of the 24 states? What added information would the analyst need to better interpret the meaning of this chart?

7. According to the chart, which states had the greatest turnout of voters in 1828 compared to 1824? Supposedly, democratizing influences were strongest in the western states. Does the data on this chart bear that out? In the early 1800s, would voters in the western states find it harder to vote than those along the eastern seaboard? How might this distort these percentages? Which state scored the highest percentage across the board on this chart? Why? Ask students to check election websites and determine voter turnout for your state in the most recent presidential elections. Has it stayed about the same or increased?

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8. Under the U.S. electoral system, 15 presidents have been elected who did not receive a majority of the popular votes cast in the election. Two of them, besides John Quincy Adams, actually trailed their opponents in the popular vote: Rutherford B. Hayes in 1876, and Benjamin Harrison in 1888. Ask a couple of students to find out more about these two elections and compare the circumstances to that of Adams's election. Invite three students to write and present a dialogue featuring the three presidents, using the title: "You Think You Had It Bad!" For a list of the 15 presidents, click here. (*http://www.whitehousehistory.org/whha_classroom/classroom_documents-1828_l.html*)

9. Ask students to read Jackson's first inaugural address (*http://avalon.law.yale.edu/subject_menus/inaug.asp*)and list evidence that he intended to do the will of the people. As students continue their study of Jackson's two terms as president, ask them to find specific examples showing that the president's policies matched the promises he made in this inaugural speech. Specific topics might include: The Margaret O'Neal Eaton Affair; The "Spoils System;" The Bank War; Jackson and the Indian Removal Policy; The Nullification Crisis.

Have students present the results, then ask them to write a culminating essay affirming or refuting this statement: Andrew Jackson deserves the title, "The First True President of the People."

From the writings of Margaret Bayard Smith: As Mrs. Smith finished a letter written to Mrs. Boyd of New York, begun on February 11, 1825, she breathed a sigh of relief that the election of 1824 had been decided:

After church on Sunday, Mr. Crawford and the rest of the family, came out with me and spent the rest of the day. When I shook hands and bid him farewell, "not yet," said he smiling. "I shall come to see you again." Various rumours are afloat, concerning the members of the Cabinet, but without foundation. Mr. A.[John Quincy Adams] I do not believe himself knows. If, (as it is believed) the leading republicans will not accept places, he will be embarrassed, and must either take federal gentlemen or secondary republicans. As yet, he has shown a great desire to conciliate and it is said will be a very popular Pred. I hope so. I love peace and good will with every one. I hope his administration will do honor to himself and good to his country. All sides show equally good dispositions,-- no personal enmity, no asperity. Genl. Jackson has shown equal nobleness and equanimity and received equal testimonies of respect and affection. To the honor of human nature, as much attention has been paid the two unsuccessful, as the successful candidate. For foreigners this election must have had something new and imposing, and to every one presented a spectacle of moral sublimity. These agitations and anxieties are now over, for my own part, I have felt much and rejoice once more to sit down tranquilly. I shall resume my books and pen without any wandering thoughts. We now feel fixed for life, the retirement of Sidney, I have no more to look forward to any change in our mode of living. The few remaining years of my life, (if indeed years await me) I will endeavour to improve, as well as to enjoy in endeavours to promote the happiness and welfare of my children and neighbors. The circle is a very contracted one, but contains sufficient objects to fill the hands, the heart, the mind.

From Mrs. Smith's notebook, February 1825:

When I returned to the parlour, the gentlemen were giving the family an account of the election--the mode in which it had been conducted and the causes which had produced this unexpected result. "Falsehood--damnable falsehood," exclaimed Mr. Cobb, "the poor miserable wretch after three times in the course of an hour giving his word of honor not to vote for Mr. A.--Five minutes after this last promise--did vote for him and this gave him a majority on the first ballot." "Do not say such bad words," said Caroline, "bad words and hard names, will not alter the matter." "It is enough to make a saint swear," reiterated Mr. Cobb. "Such treachery and cowardice!" If Mr. A. had not been chosen on the first ballot it was calculated--nay, promises had been pledged,--that three states that voted for him first, would come over to Mr. C[lay] on the second--and that on each succeeding ballot, his course would have gained strength. Many who voted for A. did so only in compliance to some previous engagement with their constituents to make him their first choice, tho' they in their own minds preferred Crawford, and have since regretted, not following their own judgments, instead of the instructions of their constituents. It was likewise supposed that when Jackson's friends lost hope of success, they would prefer C. to A. and would ultimately vote for him. Such at least was the understanding between the different parties, tho' it never seemed possible to me that Jackson who had so many more states than C. should ever yield to a minority. The only ground for such a hope, was the known impossibility of C.'s friends--who had resolved at all events to vote for no one but him, even tho' there should be no President and that Mr. Calhoun should come in--he being Vice-P. About dusk several other members and senators came in.--The conversation turned on the same subject and every one appeared as much mortified and disappointed as if assured of success previous to the election. Two of the gentlemen proposed going to the Drawing room to see how things appeared there and promised to come back and bring us some account of it. Cards were brought Mr. Cobb and Ann, Mr. Crawford and myself made the game of whist, Caroline and Mr. Lowry played chess and

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the rest talked and laughed while they looked over our game. That ease which certainty gives the mind after long endured anxiety and suspense, supplied it with pleasurable sensations which for the moment seemed to overbalance the mortification of defeat, and relieved from this pressure the spirits rose with an elastic spring and inspired us with mirth.

This seemed to me the cause. But be it what it might, the fact was certain that we were all very merry and joked and laughed in all honesty and sincerity. Between ten and eleven the gentlemen returned, and gave us an account of the drawing room. "Luckily," they said, they went late, otherwise they could not have got in. Some of the company had gone and made room for the others, but at one time the mass was so compact that they could scarcely move. "Pray Sir, take your finger out of my ear," said some one, "I will, Sir, as soon as I get room to stir."

Some were absolutely lifted from their feet and carried forward without any exertion of their own. Persons who never before had been seen in company, had got in that night, altho' the Marshall who stood at the door of the entrance had done his best to prevent intruders and had actually sent many away. Genl. Scott had been robbed of his pocket-book containing 800 dolls., and much mirth occasioned by the idea of pick-pockets at the Presidents Drawing room. A good anecdote for the Quarterly Review! [a British publication] "But when we got there," said Mr. Williams [Senator Thomas Williams of Mississippi], "the crowd was not so dense. We could see and move. Mr. Adams was not more attended to than usual, scarcely as much so as General Jackson." "I am pleased to hear that," said I, "it is honourable to human nature." "But it was not very honourable to human nature to see Clay, walking about with exultation and a smiling face, with a fashionable belle hanging on each arm,--the villain! He looked as proud and happy as if he had done a noble action by selling himself to Adams and securing his election. More than one, pointing to A. said, there is our 'Clay President,' and he will be moulded at that man's will and pleasure as easily as clay in a potter's hands." "When Prometheus made a man out of clay," said Mr. W., "he stole fire from heaven to animate him. I wonder where our speaker will get the fire with which he means to animate his *Clay President*." "Not from Heaven, I warrant," said one of the gentlemen. "Genl. Jackson," said Mr. Williams, "shook hands with Mr. Adams and congratulated him very cordially on his sweep." "That was a useless piece of hypocrisy," observed Mr. Crawford--"it deceived no one--shaking hands was very well--was right--but the congratulatory speech might have been omitted. I like honesty in all things." "And [New York Congressman Stephen Van Rensselaer] was there too," said Mr. Williams, "but tho' he too had a lady hanging on his arm, he looked more in want of support himself, than able to give it to another.""Poor Devil!" said Cobb, "one cant help pitying as well as despising him."

"Pity!" said Mr. L[owry] --"I have no pity for a wretch like him. If he had not strength to do his duty, why did he not confess it then one would have pitied without blaming him, but to lie--to betray--to give his solemn and voluntary word of honor and five minutes afterwards to violate that word of honor--showed him as destitute of honesty, as he is of strength--such a fellow I cannot pity. . . .

"No, no," said another gentleman, "But Clay, the grand mover, tempter rather--whispered in his ear, some one told me he saw him leave his chair and go and whisper a few words, just after Van Buren left him."

"That is not so," said another. "I heard it was Webster."

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"No, not Webster," said Mr. Vale, "I was in the gallery and with my own eyes saw all that passed, just after he had taken his seat in the New York delegation, and a few minutes before the Ballot box was handed him I saw Scott of Missouri go and whisper in his ear, and some delay certainly did take place when the Box was handed to the N. Y. delegation."

"Well it comes to the same thing," said Mr. Lowry, "it was Clay after all, for Scott was a mere emissary of his, and had previously by his arts secured the votes of this one too. Scott was irresolute, until Clay got hold of him, he had him with him until late last night. And altho his inclination led him to vote for us, Clay had power to persuade him to vote for Adams. 'Ah,' as John Randolph observed after counting the ballots, 'it was impossible to win the game, gentlemen, the cards were stacked.'"

"And that," said Mr. Cobb, nodding his head, "is fact and the people have been tricked out of the man of their choice."

When the news of his election was communicated to Mr. Adams by the Committee and during their address, the sweat rolled down his face--he shook from head to foot and was so agitated that he could scarcely stand or speak. He told the gentlemen he would avail himself of the precedent set by Mr. Jefferson and give them his answer in writing. One of the Committee told me from his hesitation, his manner and first words, he really thought he was going to decline. If success, thus discomposed him, how would he have supported defeat?

The day of the election was a heavy snow-storm--this was a fortunate circumstance, as it prevents the gathering together of idle people, who when collected in crowds, might have committed some foolish violence. Indeed in one ward of the city, Mr. Vale told me, an effigy of Mr. Adams had been prepared and had it not been a stormy day, his opponents among the lower citizens would have burnt it. This would have excited his friends, (particularly the negroes, who when they heard of his election were the only persons who expressed their joy by Hurras) some riot might have taken place. Among the higher classes of citizens, no open expressions of exultation took place. Respect and sympathy for the other candidates, silenced any such expression.

Is there any other country, in which such earnest and good feelings would have governed the populace?

The clapping in the Gallery of Congress, was short as sudden--it was silenced by loud hisses, before the order of the Speaker to clear the Galleries could have been heard--silenced by popular feeling. And a simple order, without the application of any force, instantly cleared them. How admirable are our institutions. What a contrast does this election by the House of Representatives form to the elections of the Polish Diet. They were surrounded by foreign armies, controlled by foreign powers. In Washington on the 9th of February not a sign of military power was visible and even the civil magistrates had nothing to do.

While the electoral votes were counting, (which was done by the Senate and House conjointly) foreign ministers, strangers of distinction and General Lafayette were present. But when the Senate rose and the house formed itself into a *Body of States* to elect the President, the Senators withdrew from the floor, and all other persons from the House. "What even General Lafayette?" said I, "Yes," replied Mr. Lowry, "and had General Washington himself been there, he too must have withdrawn." The delegation of each State, sat together and after ascertaining by ballot which candidate had the majority in the State, appointed one of its delegation, to put the ballot for that candidate into the Ballot box.

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The whole proceeding was conducted with silence, order and dignity, and after the Ballots were collected Mr. Webster and Mr. Randolph were appointed the Tellers. It was Mr. Webster who with an audible and clear voice announced J. Adams elected.

Such a scene exhibited in perfection the moral sublime.

The succeeding day, Thursday, citizens and strangers crowded to pay their respects, not only to the President-elect, but to Mr. Crawford and Genl. Jackson.

[Source: Margaret Bayard Smith, *The First Forty Years of Washington Society* . . . New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1906]

Several Newspaper Accounts of President Andrew Jackson's First Inauguration

I. The Daily National Intelligencer, Washington, D.C., March 4, 1829. The inauguration of the new President is to take place to-day at the Capitol. There will be no military array upon the occasion but such as is voluntary. A vast assembly of the People, however, from every part of the country, will attend the ceremony. There is to be a Ball in honor of the occasion, in the evening, at Carusi's Assembly Rooms. The great concourse of strangers in the city, at this season, has attracted hither a proportionate number of those who live by depredations upon society. As a caution to others, it may be useful information, that a gentleman from one of the Southern States had his pocket picked, in the Theatre last night, of a pocket-book containing eight hundred dollars; and we should not be surprized to learn that others than he were equally unfortunate.

II. The Daily National Intelligencer, Washington, D.C., March 5, 1829. In the midst of the throng yesterday, in and about the President's Square, where persons of every rank in life (and of almost every nation and complexion) flocked promiscuously, the nimble-fingered gentry were not idle. Several pockets were picked: and notwithstanding the caution published yesterday morning, one gentleman suffered his pocket to be picked of eight or nine hundred dollars, and others of smaller sums. One or more of the cut-purses were detected in the fact, and committed for trial. They are all strangers here.

III. The Daily National Intelligencer, Washington, D.C., March 6, 1829. The great concourse of strangers in this City has already subsided; and the steady rain of yesterday kept within doors most of those who remain. This busy throng has passed away without any occurrence seriously to mar the pleasure of its assembly. What particularly gratifies us, and does credit to the character of our People, is, that, amidst all the excitement and bustle of the occasion, the whole day and night of the Inauguration passed off without the slightest interruption of the public peace and order, that we have heard of. At the mansion of the President, the Sovereign People were a little uproarious, indeed, but it was in any thing but a salacious spirit.

[Source: Library of Congress]

A letter of Margaret Bayard Smith to Mrs. Kirkpatrick.

[Washington] March 11th, Sunday [1829.] . . . . Thursday morning. I left the rest of this sheet for an account of the inauguration. It was not a thing of detail of a succession of small incidents. No, it was one grand whole, an imposing and majestic spectacle and to a reflective mind one of moral sublimity. Thousands and thousands of people, without distinction of rank, collected in an immense mass round the Capitol, silent, orderly and tranquil, with their eyes fixed on the front of that edifice, waiting the appearance of the President in the portico. The door from the Rotunda opens, preceded by the marshals, surrounded by the Judges of the Supreme Court, the old man with his grey locks, that crown of glory, advances, bows to the people, who greet him with a shout that rends the air, the Cannons, from the heights around, from Alexandria and Fort Warburton proclaim the oath he has taken and all the hills reverberate the sound. It was grand,--it was sublime! An almost breathless silence, succeeded and the multitude was still,--listening to catch the sound of his voice, tho' it was so low, as to be heard only by those nearest to him. After reading his speech, the oath was administered to him by the Chief Justice. The Marshal presented the Bible. The President took it from his hands, pressed his lips to it, laid it reverently down, then bowed again to the people--Yes, to the people in all their majesty. And had the spectacle closed here, even Europeans must have acknowledged that a free people, collected in their might, silent and tranquil, restrained solely by a moral power, without a shadow around of military force, was majesty, rising to sublimity, and far surpassing the majesty of Kings and Princes, surrounded with armies and glittering in gold. But I will not anticipate, but will give you an account of the inauguration in mere detail. The whole of the preceding day, immense crowds were coming into the city from all parts, lodgings could not be obtained, and the newcomers had to go to George Town, which soon overflowed and others had to go to Alexandria. I was told the Avenue and adjoining streets were so crowded on Tuesday afternoon that it was difficult to pass. . . .

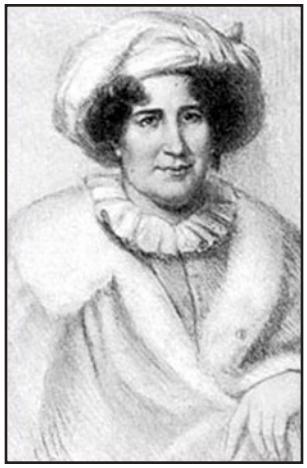
We stood on the South steps of the [Capitol] terrace; when the appointed hour came saw the General and his company advancing up the Avenue, slow, very slow, so impeded was his march by the crowds thronging around him. Even from a distance, he could be discerned from those who accompanied him, for he only was uncovered, (the Servant in presence of his Sovereign, the People). The south side of the Capitol hill was literally alive with the multitude, who stood ready to receive the hero and the multitude who attended him. "There, there, that is he," exclaimed different voices. "Which?" asked others. "He with the white head," was the reply. "Ah," exclaimed others, "there is the old man and his gray hair, there is the old veteran, there is Jackson." At last he enters the gate at the foot of the hill and turns to the road that leads round to the front of the Capitol. In a moment every one who until then had stood like statues gazing on the scene below them, rushed onward, to right, to left, to be ready to receive him in the front. Our party, of course, were more deliberate, we waited until the multitude had rushed past us and then left the terrace and walked round to the furthest side of the square, where there were no carriages to impede us, and entered it by the gate fronting the Capitol. . . .

At the moment the General entered the Portico and advanced to the table, the shout that rent the air, still resounds in my ears. When the speech was over, and the President made his parting bow, the barrier that had separated the people from him was broken down and they rushed up the steps all eager to shake hands with him. It was with difficulty he made his way through the Capitol and down the hill to the gateway that opens on the avenue. Here for a moment he was stopped. The living mass was impenetrable. After a while a passage was opened, and he mounted his horse which had been provided for his return (for he had walked to the Capitol) then such a cortege as followed him! Country men, farmers, gentlemen, mounted and dismounted, boys, women and children, black and white. Carriages, wagons and carts all pursuing him to the President's house . . . .

[w]e set off to the President's House, but on a nearer approach found an entrance impossible, the yard and avenue was compact with living matter. The day was delightful, the scene animating, so we walked backward and forward at every turn meeting some new acquaintance and stopping to talk and shake hands. . . . We continued promenading here, until near three, returned home unable to stand and threw ourselves on the sopha. Some one came and informed us the crowd before the President's house, was so far lessen'd, that they thought we might enter. This time we effected our purpose. But what a scene did we witness! *The Majesty of the People* had disappeared, and a rabble, a mob, of boys, negros, women, children, scrambling fighting, romping. What a pity what a pity! No arrangements had been made no police officers placed on duty and the whole house had been inundated by the rabble mob. We came too late. The President, after having been *literally* nearly pressed to death and almost suffocated and torn to pieces by the people in their eagerness to shake hands with Old Hickory, had retreated through the back way or south front and had escaped to his lodgings at Gadsby's. 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, tho' I think the estimate 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 gentlemen forming round 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.

This concourse had not been anticipated and therefore not provided against. Ladies and gentlemen, only had been expected at this Levee, not the people en masse. But it was the People's day, 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. I fear, enlightened Freemen as they are, they will be found, as they have been found in all ages and countries where they get the Power in their hands, that of all tyrants, they are the most ferocious, cruel and despotic. The noisy and disorderly rabble in the President's House brought to my mind descriptions I had read, of the mobs in the Tuileries and at Versailles, I expect to hear the carpets and furniture are ruined, the streets were muddy, and these guests all went thither on foot.

[Source: Margaret Bayard Smith. *The First Forty Years of Washington Society* . . . . New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1906]



Margaret Bayard Smith. Library of Congress

Background

One attribute that characterized Andrew Jackson was personal loyalty to friends, especially those who had worked hard to advance his political goals. His loyalty to one such friend, John Eaton, a devoted supporter and promoter of Jackson in his two election bids, would cause an uproar that threatened the stability of the president's first administration. Jackson and Eaton had known each other since the days when they both served as senators from Tennessee and had roomed at the same boarding house in Washington, D.C. Eaton was in love with Margaret O'Neal Timberlake, the daughter of the boardinghouse owner, who lived there at the time. A beautiful and flirtatious young woman, she was smart and outspoken. Far from home and family, the gentleman at the boardinghouse - many of them senators and congressmen - found her beguiling. She would later say, "I was always their pet." At the time Margaret met John, she was married, with her husband often away. Many said her relationship with Eaton was scandalous. Margaret and Eaton described it as a friendship. When Margaret's husband died under suspicious circumstances, the gossips claimed that he had committed suicide over the unfaithfulness of his wife. Just after Jackson's election in 1828, Eaton came to ask Jackson's advice on his decision to marry Margaret, despite the rumors. Jackson told him, "If you love Margaret Timberlake go and marry her at once and shut their mouths."

A Bitter Memory

Not only was the recently widowed Jackson a staunch defender of the "honor of women," but he also had personal reasons for resenting those within the Washington social circles who would malign the name of Margaret Timberlake. His own wife, Rachel Donelson Robards, had been married when Jackson met her. Her husband, Lewis Robards, was a rabidly jealous man who eventually left her and supposedly obtained a divorce. Believing she was divorced, Rachel married Jackson, only to learn two years later that Robards had only just been granted a final decree. To quell the scandal, the Jacksons re-took their marriage vows, but in the presidential election of 1828, the pro-Adams press was relentless: "Ought a convicted adulteress and her paramour husband be placed in the highest offices of this free and Christian land? " ran one editorial. Nashville gossips accused the Jacksons of immorality and bigamy. When Rachel died of a heart attack in December 1828, the president believed that the mental abuse she had experienced at the hands of politicians and Nashville socialites had hastened her death. He was bitter and unforgiving.

"I Will Appoint Him"

Jackson wanted to appoint John Eaton secretary of war in his new administration. Some of Jackson's supporters begged him not to do so, citing the inevitable social and political fallout associated with Mrs. Eaton. Jackson explained that, "When I mature my course, I am immovable," and refused to back down. He told his critics, "Do you suppose that I have been sent here by the people to consult the ladies of Washington as to the proper persons to compose my cabinet?" Once his cabinet was in place, Jackson insisted that its members force their wives to receive Margaret Eaton socially, something the wives steadfastly refused to do. One day, when John Eaton was absent, Jackson called a cabinet meeting for the express purpose of defending Margaret's honor, presenting evidence of her morality. The lecture did not achieve the desired results. At the annual cabinet dinner, all wives, except Margaret Eaton, found reasons to stay away. The most adamant was Floride Calhoun, Vice President John Calhoun's wife. Calhoun had seemed to be the man in line to become Jackson's handpicked successor at the end of his term. Yet Jackson's anger at Calhoun's inability to control his wife led to a breach in the relationship and emphasized other irreconcilable differences between the two men on personal and political issues.

A Politic Suggestion

The so-called "Petticoat War" raged on, and began to erode the energy and focus of Jackson's cabinet. Only Secretary of State Martin Van Buren, being a man with presidential ambitions of his own, sided with Jackson. Van Buren, a widow, was not in the same position as the other cabinet members. Furthermore, he saw that the Democratic Party was being damaged by this whole affair, and perhaps recognized that his own political career might be enhanced if he could mend the rift. Knowing that Jackson would not ask Eaton to resign, he convinced Eaton to do so on his own. Then Van Buren resigned. Other cabinet members followed suit, at Jackson's request, thus allowing him the opportunity to be rid of all involved in the controversy, and start afresh.

Washingtonians were amazed and wondered what it all meant. Questions abounded. The Senate had confirmed all of these cabinet officers. By demanding that they resign, did Jackson intend to end the Senate's role and set up a dictatorship? Did Mrs. Eaton's efforts to gain legitimacy in Washington society symbolize the democratizing influences of Jackson, and, if so, wasn't it a dangerous trend? Eventually the displaced cabinet members and others wrote letters to the editors of prominent newspapers, claiming that Mrs. Eaton was influencing presidential patronage. To hear them tell it, she was controlling every government appointment Jackson made, a charge that proved unfounded. Jackson was undeterred by their complaints: the cabinet acted as an advisory body to the president, he said, and the task required harmony. When harmony did not exist - some said harmony meant compliance with Jackson's views - it was time for a change.

A Parting of the Ways

With Eaton and Van Buren already gone, President Jackson replaced every other cabinet member, except one, Postmaster General William Barry. Vice President Calhoun was finding his political views less and less in agreement with Jackson's; he eventually resigned and returned to South Carolina to become a U.S. senator. Van Buren, the one cabinet member who had remained loyal to the president, profited from the Calhoun-Jackson split and would himself become Jackson's successor. Democrats in Washington breathed a sigh of relief

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when the dust finally settled from this strange event. The so-called "Eaton malaria" inspired the most popular toast of the season: "To the next cabinet may they all be bachelors or leave their wives at home."

Discussion

Ask students to read the Margaret Bayard Smith excerpts **(SEE PG.10)** in which this Washington society commentator discusses Margaret Eaton. Consider these questions with the class: According to Mrs. Smith, why had she and her husband decided not to attend the Eaton wedding? Why was Mrs. Eaton "left alone" at the president's inaugural ball, and on three other public occasions? Why does Mrs. Smith refer to Mrs. Eaton and Mrs. Jackson as "birds of a feather?" Was this justified? According to these excerpts, does Mrs. Smith believe that Andrew Jackson will win the "Petticoat War?"

PART 2 . THE MARGARET EATON O'NEAL AFFAIR

Activities

1. Some say that the breakdown in the relationship between Jackson and Vice President Calhoun was caused when Mrs. Calhoun became the ringleader of the Margaret Eaton "snub." One historian would later write that Calhoun's "vain and silly" wife had, by rejecting Mrs. Eaton, destroyed her husband's career, "at its zenith." Ask several students to conduct further research about the relationship between Jackson and John C. Calhoun. One group should focus on Calhoun's role in the Nullification Crisis of 1832, while another should investigate Jackson's reaction to the revelation that Calhoun, as James Monroe's secretary of war, had favored the censure of Jackson for his behavior in the Florida Seminole War of 1818. After students have completed research, ask several to take the position that Jackson and Calhoun would have had a parting of the ways even if there had been no "Petticoat War," and have them present their arguments to the class.

As an alternative, after completing the research, ask students to prepare a letter defending Calhoun's behavior in both of these matters. Ask one other student to write a letter that could have been penned by Floride Calhoun, defending her right to refuse social contact with Mrs. Eaton.

2. Ask a student to create a scenario in which Jackson resolves the messy Eaton matter in a different way. Have the class critique the alternative strategy, keeping in mind these criteria: would the political fallout have been less damaging? Would it have taken into consideration Eaton's loyal service? Based on what students know about Jackson's personality, would Jackson have found this alternative acceptable?

3. Ask students to discover what happened to John C. Calhoun and Martin Van Buren after the "Eaton Affair." After they have completed the research, ask them to assess the validity of this statement by Milton Meltzer in Andrew Jackson and His America:

"The Eaton Affair is an example of how personality can shape political decisions. Petty and subjective feelings and motives can influence the behavior of powerful people like Jackson and turn a whole country in this direction or that, more by accident than by design."

4. Though obviously a very bright woman, and a prolific writer, Margaret Bayard Smith reflected her times. She could sit on the sidelines and observe, ridicule or cheer those who held positions of power, but she was not free to fully participate herself. The historian J. Kingston Pierce noted that this was an era when "women expected to be submissive and demure, domestic and irreproachably virtuous, and utterly uninterested in politics, much less able to argue government issues with anything approaching insight."

5. Ask students to picture Mrs. Smith on the "Washington scene" today, and to imagine what social or professional role she might choose if she were living in this century. From the perspective of this role, have the students pen a "Mrs. Smith" letter (or e-mail) describing some current capital event. Have other students write a "Mrs. Smith" letter from the same modern perspective, but have them make the subject of their letter a re-telling of the Mrs. Eaton story. After students read their letters aloud, engage them in a discussion regarding the degree to which attitudes toward gender and morality issues have changed.

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For a collection of presidential election maps | *http://www.uselectionatlas.org*