

# Jackson as President

**GUIDING QUESTION** *How did Andrew Jackson make the American political system more democratic?*

Andrew Jackson had qualities most Americans admired. He was a patriot, a self-made man, and a war hero. Thousands of ordinary people came to Washington for his inauguration. Later, many attended a White House reception.

## Expanded Voting Rights

President Andrew Jackson promised “equal protection and equal benefits” for all Americans—at least, all white American men. Jackson’s promise reflected the spirit of the times.

In the nation’s early years, only men who owned property or paid taxes could vote. By the 1820s, many states had loosened these requirements. White male sharecroppers, factory workers, and others could now **participate** in the political process. By 1828, nearly all states let voters, rather than state legislatures, choose presidential electors. Women still could not vote. African Americans and Native Americans had few rights of any kind.

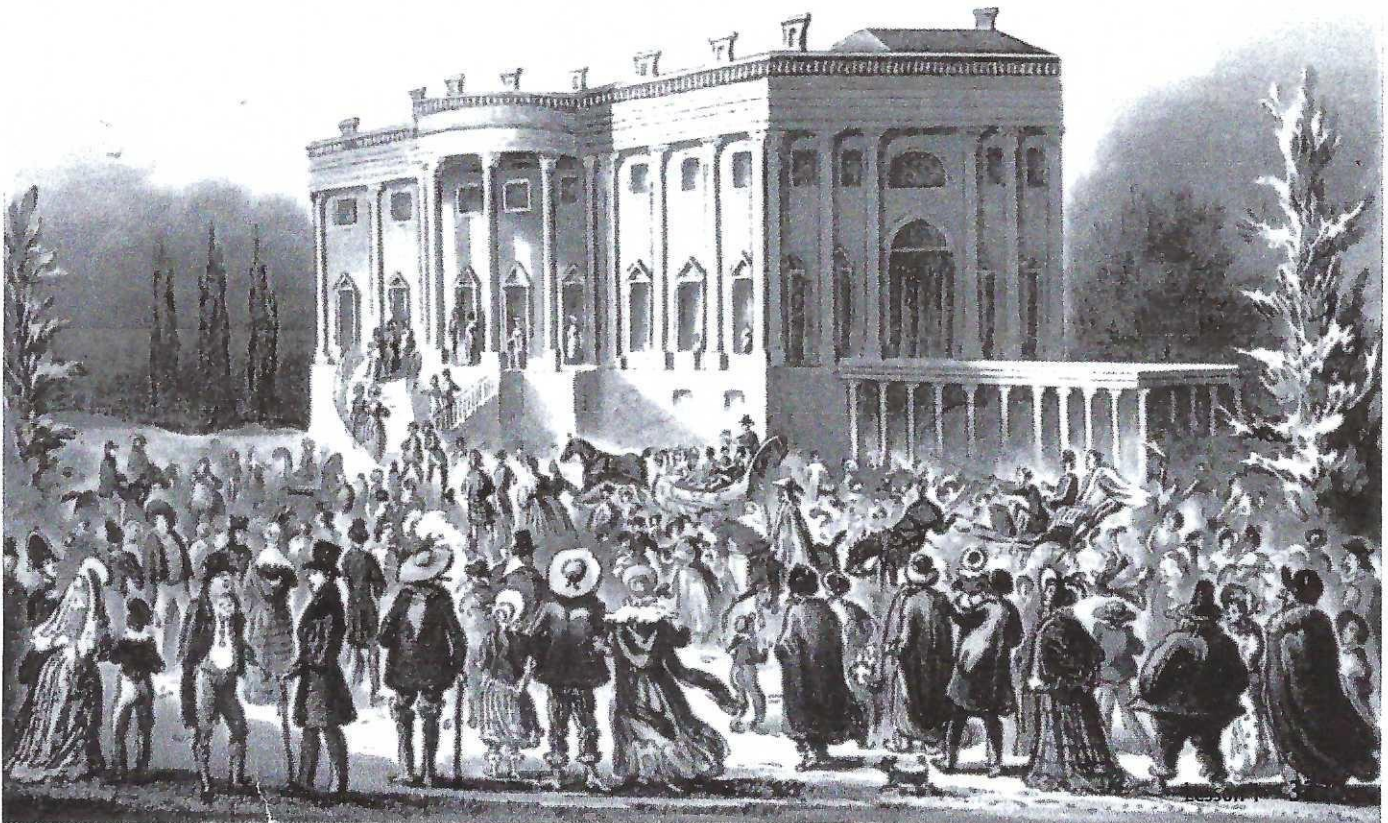
## Making Government More Democratic

Democrats wanted to further open government to the people. They argued that ordinary citizens could do most government jobs. They were disturbed that the federal government had become a **bureaucracy** (byuh•RAH•kruh•see), a system in which nonelected officials carry out laws.

Andrew Jackson’s supporters gather outside the White House hoping to shake hands with a president who seemed to be just like them.

### ► CRITICAL THINKING

**Drawing Conclusions** Why do you think people identified so closely with Andrew Jackson?





## BIOGRAPHY



### Andrew Jackson (1767–1845)

Like many of his supporters, Andrew Jackson was born in a log cabin. A noted war hero, Jackson was called “Old Hickory” because he was said to be as tough as a hickory stick. Small farmers, craftspeople, and others who felt left out of the expanding American economy admired Jackson. They felt that his rise from a log cabin to the White House demonstrated the kind of success story possible only in the United States.

#### ► CRITICAL THINKING

**Making Inferences** Why do you think voters would identify with a candidate who was from humble beginnings?

Soon after taking office in 1829, Jackson fired many federal workers and replaced them with his supporters. The fired employees protested. They charged that the president was acting like a tyrant.

One Jackson supporter said: “To the victors belong the spoils.” In other words, because Jackson had won the election, his supporters had the right to the spoils, or benefits, of victory. This practice of replacing current government employees with supporters of the winner is called the **spoils system**.

Jackson’s supporters also abandoned the unpopular caucus system, in which top party leaders chose the party’s candidates for office. Instead, parties began using **nominating conventions** (NAHM•ih•nayt•ing kuhn•VEN•shuhnz), where delegates from the states chose the party’s presidential candidate. This system allowed many more people to participate in the selection of candidates.

#### PROGRESS CHECK

**Analyzing** How did nominating conventions make government more democratic?

## The Tariff Debate

**GUIDING QUESTION** *How did a fight over tariffs become a debate about states’ rights versus federal rights?*

A tariff is a tax on imported goods. The high tariff on European manufactured goods was pleasing to Northeastern factory owners. Tariffs made European goods more expensive. This encouraged Americans to buy American-made goods. Southerners disliked the tariff. They had a profitable trade selling their cotton to Europe. They feared that taxing European goods might hurt this trade. In addition, tariffs meant higher prices for the goods they bought from their European trading partners.

In 1828 Congress had passed a very high tariff law. Vice President Calhoun claimed that a state had the right to nullify, or refuse to accept, a federal law if it was not in that state’s best interests. President Jackson disagreed with this reasoning. He feared that nullification would destroy the Union.

#### Reading **HELPDESK**

**spoils system** practice of handing out government jobs to supporters; replacing government employees with the winning candidate’s supporters

**nominating convention** a meeting in which representative members of a political party choose candidates to run for important elected offices

In 1830, at a Washington dinner marking Thomas Jefferson's birthday, Jackson had a chance to make his feelings on nullification known. He offered a toast. Looking directly at Calhoun, the president declared, "Our Union! It must be preserved!" Answering Jackson's challenge, the vice president rose with a toast of his own: "The Union, next to our liberty, most dear." To make sure his meaning was clear, Calhoun added, "It can only be preserved by respecting the rights of the states."

Not long after Jackson and Calhoun faced off at the dinner, Congress passed the Maysville Road bill. The bill provided federal funds for the building of a road in Kentucky. Jackson vetoed the bill. Jackson argued that because the road would be entirely within Kentucky, it should be a state project. In other words, the federal government should support only projects that benefited the entire nation.

In 1832 Congress passed a lower tariff. It was not enough to cool the protest. South Carolina passed the Nullification Act, declaring it would not pay "illegal" tariffs. The state threatened to secede, or break away, from the Union if the federal government interfered.

Jackson believed in a strong Union. He asked Congress to pass the Force Bill. This act allowed him to use the military to enforce federal law. South Carolina accepted the new tariff but nullified the Force Bill.

#### **PROGRESS CHECK**

**Making Inferences** How might the workers at a factory in the Northeast react to the lowering of the tariff?

## **LESSON 1** REVIEW

### **Review Vocabulary**

1. Show understanding of the following terms by using them in a sentence about the election of 1824.  
**a.** plurality   **b.** majority
2. Use the following terms in a sentence that illustrates how the terms are connected.  
**a.** bureaucracy   **b.** spoils system

### **Answer the Guiding Questions**

3. **Evaluating** How do you think new election campaign methods affected American democracy?
4. **Analyzing** How did the election of 1828 show the growth of democracy?
5. **Explaining** How was the fight over tariffs related to the issue of states' rights?
6. **INFORMATIVE/EXPLANATORY** Andrew Jackson once said, "One man with courage makes a majority." Write a paragraph explaining what you think Jackson meant by this quote and how this idea influenced his leadership.