

Chapter 56 - Andrew Jackson's First Term

Time: 1828 Forward

The Popular Vote Count Determinate Electability

The election in 1828 is often regarded as the first truly “democratic” exercise in the nation’s history.

It takes place between October 26 and December 2, 1828, and witnesses a profound jump in turn-out, the result of fewer restrictions on voting rights.

According to the Constitution, decisions about voter qualifications are left up to individual state legislatures -- and the answer since 1788 has been “white men who own property and are 21 years of age or older.” But in 1828, many states drop the requirement to own property.

The result is a fourfold increase in turn-out to 1,148,018, from only 365,833 in 1824.

Popular Voting For President & Number Of States Where Electors Chosen By Their Votes

1800	1804	1808	1812	1816	1820	1824	1828
67,282	143,110	192,691	278,786	112,370	106,701	365,833	1,148,018
6 of 16	11 of 17	10 of 17	9 of 18	10 of 19	15 of 24	18 of 24	22 of 24*

* State legislators in Delaware and South Carolina still choose electors in 1828.

From this point on, the popular vote becomes a major factor in determining who is elected president, rather than state politicians working deals with each other to choose electors.

Sidebar: Suffrage Milestones In America

By 1842 all states will have dropped the “property test” – meaning that all white males over 21 years old are qualified to cast ballots.

This won’t change until after the Civil War when black men are given the vote through three “Reconstruction Amendments” -- the 13th, outlawing slavery, the 14th, granting citizenship to non-whites and the 15th, and granting eligibility to all men, regardless of race.

By 1870, three states (Wyoming, Colorado and Montana) take the lead in extending suffrage to include women.

From there, however, the tide reverses for some fifty years.

In 1876, several state legislatures maneuver around the 15th Amendment by adding new “qualifications” aimed at excluding Black people and Native people.

The 1882 Chinese Exclusion Act bans all further immigration from Asia and prohibits those already in the United States from becoming naturalized citizens.

It is not until 1920, after “suffragette” battles and the 19th Amendment, that women are given the right to vote.

In 1924 Native people are included via the Indian Citizenship Act – although the state of Utah refuses to enforce this law until 1956.

For both Black Americans and Asian-Americans the “wait” will extend all the way to the 1965 Voting Rights Act, which finally enfranchises both groups.

Time: October – December 1828

Jackson Beats JQ Adams In Convincing Fashion

Within this first more “open” election, it is Jackson, the “common man of the west,” who prevails over Adams, the patrician eastern intellectual, by a comfortable margin.

Results Of The 1828 Presidential Election

Candidates	State	Party	Pop Vote	% Tot
Andrew Jackson	Tn	Democrat	642,553	56%
John Quincy Adams	MA	National Republican	500,897	44
Unpledged			4,568	0
Total			1,148,018	100%

In the Electoral College, the General wins, 178 to 83, sweeping the “emerging western states” by a 65-0 margin and taking the “slave states” by 105-9 – while losing only in Delaware and splitting Maryland.

He also cuts into Adams’s hold on the northeast, winning Pennsylvania 28-0 and, with Van Buren’s help, taking New York by 20-16.

Shifting State Alignments: Old/New And Slave/Free

	Slavery Allowed (12)	Slavery Banned (12)
Old Established East Coast States (15)	64 Jackson 9 Adams 73 Total	74 Adams 49 Jackson 123 Total
Emerging States West Of Appalachian Range (9)	41 Jackson 0 Adams 41 Total	24 Jackson 0 Adams 24 Total

Note: East Coast slave states (Maryland, Delaware, Virginia, NC, SC, Georgia); east coast free (Maine, Mass, NH, Vt, Conn, Penn, RI, NY, NJ); west slave (Ky, Tenn, Ala, Miss, La, MO); west free (Ohio, Ind, IL)

Jackson shifts five states – Virginia, Georgia, Kentucky, Ohio and Missouri – into the Democrat Party column.

Party Power By State

South	1824	1828	Pick Ups
Virginia	Dem-Rep (Cr)	Democrat	Democrat
North Carolina	Democrat	Democrat	
South Carolina	Democrat	Democrat	
Georgia	Dem-Rep (Cr)	Democrat	Democrat
Alabama	Democrat	Democrat	
Mississippi	Democrat	Democrat	
Louisiana	Democrat	Democrat	
Tennessee	Democrat	Democrat	
Border			
Delaware	Democrat	Nat-Rep	Nat-Rep
Maryland	Democrat	Nat-Rep	Nat-Rep
Kentucky	Dem-Rep (Cl)	Democrat	Democrat
Missouri	Dem-Rep (Cl)	Democrat	Democrat
North			
New Hampshire	Dem-Rep (Ad)	Nat-Rep	
Vermont	Dem-Rep (Ad)	Nat-Rep	
Massachusetts	Dem-Rep (Ad)	Nat-Rep	
Rhode Island	Dem-Rep (Ad)	Nat-Rep	
Connecticut	Dem-Rep (Ad)	Nat-Rep	
New York	Democrat	Democrat	
New Jersey	Democrat	Nat-Rep	Nat-Rep
Pennsylvania	Democrat	Democrat	
West			
Ohio	Dem-Rep (Cl)	Democrat	Democrat
Indiana	Democrat	Democrat	
Illinois	Democrat	Democrat	

(Notes: Cr = Crawford, Cl = Clay; Ad = JQA; NA = National Republicans/JQA)

Jackson’s coattails are strong in 1828, with the Democrats solidifying control over both chambers of Congress by 2-1 margins, thus assuring his capacity to start dismantling many of what he regards as Adam’s Federalist policies.

Congressional Election Trends

U.S. House	1825	1827	1829
Pro-Jackson	49%	53%	64%
Pro-Adams	51	47	36
U.S. Senate			
Pro-Jackson	49%	53%	64%
Pro-Adams	51	47	34
Other			2
President	JQA	JQA	AJ

The loser, John Quincy Adams, is dismayed over what he regards as his failure in office followed by his humiliating defeat at the hands of the lesser man, Andrew Jackson. As he writes:

No one knows, and few conceive, the agony of mind that I have suffered from the time that I was made by circumstances, and not by my volition, a candidate for the Presidency till I was dismissed from that station by the failure of my election.

He leaves Washington without attending Jackson’s inaugural and heads back home, not realizing that a remarkable political future lies ahead after his return to the U.S. House in 1831.

Time: 1767-1845

President Andrew Jackson: Personal Profile



Andrew Jackson (1767-1845)

Andrew Jackson’s narrative is familiar in American political history – the military hero turned president and commander-in-chief.

His roots are “log cabin humble” and in the western soil -- unlike the refined, eastern elites who have run the country up to his time.

Born in 1767, Jackson and his widowed mother are taken in by relatives in Waxhaw, SC, where, at age 14, he is wounded and imprisoned by the British General Tarleton, during the Revolutionary War.

At age 21 he moves to Nashville, and in 1790 marries into the renowned Donelson family. With their backing, Jackson’s career takes off.

He becomes a successful lawyer and is later elected to the House of Representatives in 1796 followed by a year in the Senate before returning to Tennessee as a state Supreme Court justice. There he invests his wealth in purchasing slaves for The Hermitage, a cotton plantation whose enslaved population rises from nine in 1804 to about 160 by 1820.

He is also known for his hair trigger temper and penchant for dueling. His first duel with an opposing lawyer ends harmlessly. In 1802 he confronts an ex-Governor of Tennessee, but the fight is called off. His next duel, in 1806 over a horse racing wager, ends with his 26 year old opponent, James Dickinson, dead and a bullet permanently embedded in Jackson's chest. In 1813 he is again nearly killed in a saloon gun fight with Jesse Benton and his brother, soon-to-be Senator Thomas Hart Benton.

Like George Washington before him, Jackson's business and political careers run parallel to his military career. By 1801 he is colonel in the Tennessee militia, and a supporter of using force to secure the "sacred union" and its borders. The War of 1812 thrusts him into active combat against a host of foes, the British army, the Creek tribe and the Seminoles.

Having witnessed Indian attacks on settlers, Jackson is ruthless in retribution. In 1814 he defeats the Red Stick Creeks – who are allied to the British – at the Battle of Horseshoe Bend, in central Alabama, with support from Lt. Sam Houston. In the 1814 Treaty of Ft. Jackson peace which follows, the Creeks cede 23 million acres of land in Alabama and Georgia to the U.S. government.

Jackson's future destiny is sealed, however, on January 8, 1815.

On that day he becomes a national hero by leading his 5000 troops to victory over a 7500 man force of British regulars at New Orleans, ending the War of 1812 and earning a special "Thanks of Congress" award for this action.

From then on, he is "Old Hickory," with his supporters touting him for the presidency.

Time: March 4, 1829

Jackson's Inauguration Lays Out His Priorities

The President's inaugural is unlike anything ever seen before in DC. A crowd of some 20,000 people – "a rabble, a mob, of boys, negroes, women, scrambling, fighting, romping" – flocks into the capital.

After John Marshall administers the oath of office on the East Portico of the Capitol, Jackson delivers a relatively brief but very precise address regarding his views and plans.

He first expresses his gratitude for the honor of being chosen, and then declares his intent to act as “the instrument of the Federal Constitution.”

As the instrument of the Federal Constitution it will devolve on me for a stated period to execute the laws of the United States, to superintend their foreign and their confederate relations, to manage their revenue, to command their forces, and, by communications to the Legislature, to watch over and to promote their interests generally.

In carrying out his duties he promises not to overstep the authority given the federal government in relation to that of the individual states. In this regard he echoes the boundaries of the Tenth Amendment.

In administering the laws of Congress I shall keep steadily in view the limitations as well as the extent of the Executive power trusting thereby to discharge the functions of my office without transcending its authority...In such measures as I may be called on to pursue in regard to the rights of the separate States. I hope to be animated by a proper respect for those sovereign members of our Union, taking care not to confound the powers they have reserved to themselves with those they have granted to the Confederacy.

After mentioning his intent to act fairly and equally with all foreign powers, he turns to the importance of carefully controlling national finances, extinguishing the debt, counteracting the profligate of money by the Government.

The management of the public revenue...will, of course, demand no inconsiderable share of my official solicitude...Advantage must result from the observance of a strict and faithful economy...I shall aim at the extinguishment of the national debt, the unnecessary duration of which is incompatible with real independence, and because it will counteract that tendency to public and private profligacy which a profuse expenditure of money by the Government is but too apt to engender.

In gathering revenue, his goal will be equal treatment of agriculture, commerce and manufactures. Only certain essential products may expect protection in tariffs.

With regard to...revenue, it would seem to me that the spirit of equity, caution and compromise in which the Constitution was formed requires that the great interests of agriculture, commerce, and manufactures should be equally favored, and that perhaps the only exception to this rule should consist in the peculiar encouragement of any products of either of them that may be found essential to our national independence

He supports internal improvements and education.

Internal improvement and the diffusion of knowledge, so far as they can be promoted by the constitutional acts of the Federal Government, are of high importance.

His fear of a standing army harkens back to the 1787 Convention, and he is convinced that a million man militia is fully capable of defending against any foreign threat.

Considering standing armies as dangerous to free governments in time of peace, I shall not seek to enlarge our present establishment, nor disregard that salutary lesson of political experience which teaches that the military should be held subordinate to the civil power....But the bulwark of our defense is the national militia... (and) a million of armed freemen, possessed of the means of war, can never be conquered by a foreign foe.

Despite his military record, he says that future treatment of the Indians will be humane and considerate – while caveating the promise in such a way as to negate it entirely in the end.

It will be my sincere and constant desire to observe toward the Indian tribes within our limits a just and liberal policy, and to give that humane and considerate attention to their rights and their wants which is consistent with the habits of our Government and the feelings of our people.

He vows to reform patronage practices which threaten free elections and protect incompetency.

The recent demonstration of public sentiment inscribes on the list of Executive duties...the correction of those abuses that have brought the patronage of the Federal Government into conflict with the freedom of elections... and have placed or continued power in unfaithful or incompetent hands.

He will hire subordinates who are diligent and talented in public service, and look to wise precedents from those who came before him in office.

I shall endeavor to select men whose diligence and talents will insure...the public service... (and) look with reverence to the examples of public virtue left by my illustrious predecessors...

And he closes by pledging cooperation with the other branches of Government, and hoping for divine guidance from that Power who has protected the nation from infancy.

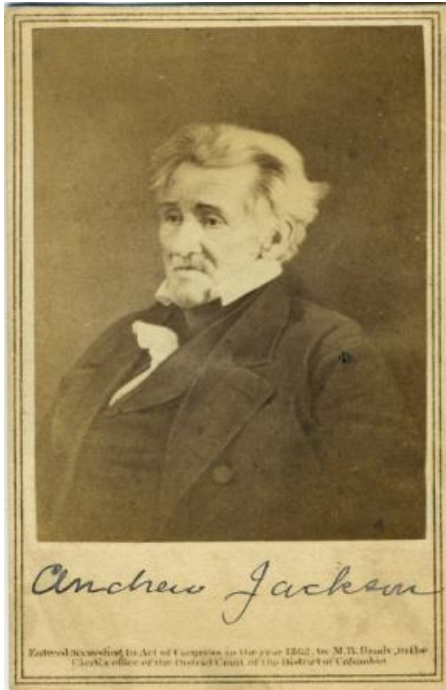
The same diffidence induces me to hope for instruction and aid from the coordinate branches of the Government, and for the indulgence and support of my fellow-citizens generally. And a firm reliance on the goodness of that Power whose providence mercifully protected our national infancy...encourages me to offer up my ardent supplications that He will continue to make our beloved country the object of His divine care and gracious benediction.

After the official ceremony, the White House is thrown open to all comers, with bands playing, hard liquor flowing, and food aplenty, including a 1400 lb. cheese sent by an admirer. Jackson is swarmed over by admirers, and finally has to depart to a nearby hotel for his own safety.

The entire demeanor of the event sends shivers through his opponents, who view it as the beginning of his “Mobocracy.”

Time: March 4, 1829 – March 3, 1833

Overview Of Jackson’s First Term



Andrew Jackson (1767-1845)

Jackson is about to be 62 years old when he becomes President, and he tells friends that his intent is to achieve his goals in one term.

The cabinet he assembles includes two men, both 46, who very much hope to succeed him: Vice-President John C. Calhoun of South Carolina, and Martin Van Buren of New York, chosen as Secretary of State after serving as Jackson’s campaign manager.

Jackson names Samuel Ingham, a paper mill owner and House member from Pennsylvania, to the Treasury slot. His close personal friend and biographer from Tennessee, Senator John Eaton, is tapped for War; John Branch, Senator from North Carolina, heads the Navy; and the Kentucky jurist, William Barry, becomes Postmaster General. For Attorney General, Jackson calls on Senator John Berrien of Georgia, a strong proponent of both states rights and slavery.

This group will prove troublesome for Jackson, and he will dissolve it in early 1831.

Andrew Jackson’s Cabinet in 1829

Position	Name	Home State
Vice-President	John C. Calhoun	South Carolina
Secretary of State	Martin Van Buren	New York
Secretary of Treasury	Samuel Ingham	Pennsylvania
Secretary of War	John Eaton	Tennessee
Secretary of the Navy	John Branch	North Carolina
Attorney General	John Berrien	Georgia
Postmaster General	William Barry	Kentucky

As he begins, Jackson has a clear five-point action agenda in mind for the country:

- Above all else, secure the borders and preserve the sacred Union.
- Relocate Indian tribes west, so that white settlers can occupy the southeast.

- Shut down the US Bank, ending its spendthrift, eastern elite focused manipulations.
- Restore tight fiscal constraints, avoid inflation and pay off the national debt.
- Protect the well-being of the many from the avarice of the few.

His first term is a period when many of the great themes shaping, and ultimately undermining, America's future are set in motion.

It begins with a threat to the sanctity of the Union, when an emerging southern coalition, headed by South Carolinians, challenges the national government's authority to impose laws which "sovereign states" find damaging to their own interest.

This leads to a "nullification crisis" over the 1828 Tariff and a famous debate in the senate between Robert Hayne and Daniel Webster over "state's rights" regarding federal regulation of land sales in the west. It also results in a final breach between Jackson and Calhoun.

The President then turns to a particularly disturbing part of his legacy – the forced removal of Native American tribes from their ancestral homelands in the east to new settlements west of the Mississippi River. Despite his restrained rhetoric in the inaugural, Jackson is intent on handing the Indian lands over to white settlers, using whatever means are required. Wars with the Blackhaws and Seminoles signal his determination.

Halfway through the term, a bizarre incident occurs within Jackson's cabinet. John Calhoun's wife, Floride, initiates a campaign to discredit and shun "as an adulteress," Peggy Eaton, who is married to Jackson's close friend and Secretary of War, John Eaton. When other cabinet members fail to support the Eaton's, an irate Jackson forces all except Postmaster Barry to resign – replacing them with what becomes known as his "kitchen cabinet" of long-time insiders.

While seemingly trivial at the moment, the "Petticoat Affair" ends with Calhoun discarding party unity and launching his "firebrand role" as defender of Southern interests and a leading proponent of secession.

The tinderbox issue of slavery also assumes center stage during Jackson's first term.

A hard core of Northern white abolitionists, influenced by the Second Great Awakening, rally around journalist William Lloyd Garrison, in his call for the immediate emancipation of all slaves. Garrison's newspaper, *The Liberator*, quickly becomes a lightning rod across the South and the North, the former intent on keeping enslaved people in check, the latter intent on cleansing all Black people from their borders.

Adding to Southern tensions are inflammatory words published by David Walker, a free black, who pleads for justice, while warning of retribution – and inflammatory action in Virginia taken by Nat Turner and a group of enslaved people who slaughter their masters and are slaughtered themselves in return.

As the election of 1832 nears, Jackson concludes that a large part of his agenda – especially closing down the Second US Bank and paying off the national debt – is still undone, and that a second term will be needed.

Key Events: Andrew Jackson's First Term

1828	
December	Calhoun attacks the 1828 tariff in his “South Carolina Exposition and Protest” plea
1829	
March 4	Jackson and Calhoun are inaugurated
March 23	Creek tribe ordered to either obey Alabama laws or move across the Mississippi River
August 25	Mexico rejects Jackson's offer to buy Texas
September	David Walker's <i>Appeal</i> for emancipation is published
December 8	Jackson's annual message questions the constitutionality of the Bank of the United States
December 29	Connecticut Senator Samuel Foot's bill to temporarily restrict land sales in west
1830	
January 18	Benton criticizes Foot's bill as an attack by New England on the prosperity of the west
January 19	Robert Hayne of SC backs Benton, calls for states rights, questions the value of the union
Jan 20-27	Hayne and Webster square off on states rights vs, national unity
April 6	Mexico moves to block further immigration of American immigrants and slaves
April 6	Joseph Smith founds Church of Latter Day Saints in New York
April 13	Jackson and Calhoun clash at the annual Thomas Jefferson memorial dinner
May 20	Tariff reduced on tea, coffee, molasses, salt
May 21	Foot's land bill voted down
May 27	Jackson vetoes Kentucky Road bill as not a federal project
May 28	Jackson signs the Indian Removal Bill
May 29	Preemption Act protects western squatters from speculators/can buy 160 acre at \$1.25
August 28	Peter Cooper's Tom Thumb train makes first run on B&O
September	National Republicans meet in Hartford and nominate Henry Clay for 1832 race
October 5	Martin Van Buren settles treaty re-opening trade with Brit W Indies
December 6	Jackson again attacks USB, federal debt and using federal funds for infrastructure
1831	
January 1	Garrison publishes first edition of <i>The Liberator</i>
January 15	First passenger train opens in Charleston SC
February 15	Calhoun publishes letters critical of Jackson's actions in Seminole War
February 15	Jackson picks Van Buren as his running mate in 1832

March 18	In <i>Cherokee v Georgia</i> the Supreme Court rules that tribes are not independent nations, but rather “domestic dependents” and therefore cannot sue the state.
April 5	Commerce Treaty with Mexico signed
April 7	John Eaton resigns amidst the “Petticoat Affair”
April 26	NY state declares that poverty is not a crime and ends prison sentencing
June 30	Chief Blackhawk agrees to move west across the Mississippi River
August 8	Jackson forces all cabinet members, except one, to resign over the Petticoat Affair
August 9	A dissident group meeting in NYC nominates Calhoun for President in 1832
August 21	Nat Turner Rebellion occurs in Virginia
September 26	The Anti-Mason Party meets and nominates William Wirt for President
December 5	JQAdams takes seat in House & begins to file anti-slavery petitions
December 12	National Republicans meet in Baltimore and nominate Henry Clay for President
1832	
January 9	The Second BUS files for early re-chartering fearing Jackson opposition
January 9	Clay introduces a party plank to abolish tariff on non-competitive imports
January 21	Virginia Assembly debates an old Jefferson bill for gradual emancipation, but it loses as opponents cite pro-slave arguments
May 3	In <i>Worcester v Georgia</i> , John Marshall’s majority opinion says the federal government has jurisdiction over the state on Indian affairs; Jackson responds “let him enforce it.”
April 6	Black Hawk War begins: both Abe Lincoln and Jeff Davis participate
May 1	First wagon trains head out west on the Oregon Trail
May 9	Seminoles sign treaty to exit Florida
May 21-22	First national Democrat Party convention nominates Jackson for a second term
July 10	Jackson vetoes a congressional bill passed to recharter the Second BUS
July 14	Tariff of 1832 lowers rates, but the South remains upset
August 2	The Battle of Bad Axe ends the Black Hawk War
September 21	The Sauks agree to move west
Nov19-24	The South Carolina legislatures votes to nullify the 1828 and 1832 Tariffs
December 5	Jackson re-elected easily
December 28	John Calhoun resigns as Vice-President to become Senator from SC

The national economy rebounds from Adams’ last year in office, and grows nicely throughout Jackson’s first term.

Key Economic Overview – Jackson’s First Term

	1828	1829	1830	1831	1832
Total GDP (\$000)	897	930	1022	1052	1129
% Change	(2%)	4%	10%	3%	7%
Per Capita GDP	74	74	79	79	83