The Two-Party System

- The one-party system that had characterized Monroe's presidency (the Era of Good Feelings) gave way to a two-party system under Jackson.
- Supporters of Jackson were now known as Democrats, while supporters of his leading rival, Henry Clay, were called Whigs.
- At the same time, the new parties reflected the changed conditions of the Jacksonian era.
- Democrats and Whigs alike were challenged to respond to the relentless westward expansion of the nation and the emergence of an industrial economy.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Democrats</th>
<th>Whigs</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Favored local rule</td>
<td>Favored Henry Clay's American System</td>
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<tr>
<td>Favored Limited Government</td>
<td>Favored a National Bank</td>
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<td>Favored Free Trade</td>
<td>Favored Federal Funding of Internal Improvements</td>
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<td>Favored Equal Economic Opportunity for White Males</td>
<td>Favored a Protective Tariff</td>
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<tr>
<td>Opposed Monopolies</td>
<td>Opposed Immorality</td>
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<tr>
<td>Opposed a National Bank</td>
<td>Opposed vice &amp; crime that same blamed on immigrants</td>
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<td>Opposed High Tariffs</td>
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<td>Opposed High Land Prices</td>
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Base of Voter Support

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Democrats</th>
<th>Whigs</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Southerners</td>
<td>New Englanders &amp; Mid-Atlantic States</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Westerners</td>
<td>Upper-Middle-Western States</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Small Farmers</td>
<td>Protestants of old English stock</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Urban Workers</td>
<td>Middle-Class Urban Professionals</td>
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</tbody>
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Jackson's Second Term

- After winning reelection in 1832, Jackson dealt with economic consequences of his decision to oppose the Bank of the U.S.

Pet Banks

- Jackson killed the national bank not only by vetoing its recharter but also by withdrawing all federal funds.
- Aided by Sec. of Treasury Roger Taney, he transferred the funds to various state banks, which Jackson's critics called pet banks.

Specie Circular

- As a result of both Jacksons' financial policies and feverish speculation in western lands, prices for land and various goods became badly inflated.
- Jackson hoped to check the inflationary trend by issuing a presidential order known as the Specie Circular.
- It required that all future purchased of federal lands be made in gold and silver rather than in paper banknotes.
- Soon afterward, as banknotes lost their value and land sales plummeted, a financial crisis (the Panic of 1837) plunged the nations' economy into a depression.

The Election of 1836

- Following the two-term tradition set by his predecessor, Jackson decided not to seek a third term.
- To make sure his policies were carried out even in his retirement, Jackson persuaded the Democratic Party to nominate his loyal vice president, Martin Van Buren.
- Fearing defeat, the Whig Party adopted the unusual strategy of nominating three candidates from three different regions.
- In doing so, the Whigs hoped to throw the election into the House of Representatives, where each state had one vote.
- The Whig Party strategy failed, however, as Van Buren took 58% of the electoral vote.
President Van Buren and the Panic of 1837
- Just as Van Buren took office, the country suffered a financial panic as one bank after another closed its doors
- Jackson’s opposition to the rechartering of the Bank of the U.S. was one of many causes of the panic & resulting depression
- But the Whigs were quick to blame the Democrats for their laissez-faire economics, which allowed for little federal involvement in the economy

The "Log Cabin and Hard Cider" Campaign of 1840
- In the election of 1840, the Whigs were in a strong position to defeat Van Buren and the Jacksonian Democrats
- Voters were unhappy with the bad state of the economy
- In addition, the Whigs were better organized than the Democrats, and also had a popular war hero, William "Tippecanoe" Harrison, as their presidential candidate
- The Whigs took campaign hoopla to new heights
- To symbolize Harrison’s humble origins, they put log cabins on wheels and paraded them down the streets of cities and towns
- They also passed out hard cider for voters to drink and buttons and hats to wear
- Name-calling also marked the campaign as Whigs attacked "Martin Van Ruin" as an aristocrat with a taste for foreign wines
- A remarkable 78% of eligible voters (white males) turned out on election day to cast their ballots
- Old "Tippecanoe" and John Tyler of Virginia, a former states’ rights Democrat who joined the Whigs, took 53% of the popular vote and swept most of the electoral votes
- This election established the Whigs as a national party

The Harrison and Tyler Presidencies (1841-1845)
- Unfortunately for the Whigs, Harrison died of pneumonia less than a month after taking office, & "His Accidency," John Tyler, became the first vice-president to succeed to the presidency
- President Tyler proved to not much of a Whig as he voted the Whigs’ national bank bills & other legislation, and favored southern and expansionist Democrats during the balance of his term (1841-1845)
- The Jacksonian Era was in its last state, & ended with the Mexican War in 1846 & the increased focus on the issue of slavery

HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVES: JACKSONIAN DEMOCRACY
Historians still debate whether or not the election of Jackson in 1828 marked a revolutionary new turn in American politics or was merely an extension of an ongoing trend. The traditional view is that Jackson's election began the era of the common man, when the masses of newly enfranchised voters drove out the entrenched ruling class and elected one of their own. The Revolution of 1828 has also been characterized as a victory of the democratic West against the aristocratic East.

19th Century Whig historians, on the other hand, viewed Jackson as a despot whose appeal to the uneducated masses and corrupt spoils system threatened the republic. In the 1940s, the historian Arthur Schlesinger argued that Jacksonian democracy relied as much on the support of eastern urban workers as on western farmers. Jackson's coalition of farmers and workers foreshadowed a similar coalition that brought another Democrat president, Franklin D. Roosevelt, to power in the depression decade of the 1930s.

Contemporary historians have used analysis of voting returns to compare elections before, during & after Jackson's presidency. This analysis showed that increased voter participation was evident in local elections years before 1828 and did not reach a peak until the election of 1840, an election that the Whig Party won. Strong links were discovered between voting behavior and the voters' religious and ethnic backgrounds. For example, Catholic immigrants objected to the imposition of the Puritan moral code (temperance) by the native Protestants. Much of the increased participation in the election process had little to do with the election of 1828 or Jackson's politics.

Other contemporary historians see Jackson’s popularity in the 1830s as reaction of subsistence farmers and urban workers against powerful and threatening forces of economic change. A capitalist, or market, economy was rapidly taking shape in the early year of the 19th century. This market revolution divided the electorate. Some people (mainly Whigs) welcomed the changes as the hope for enterprising and disciplined men. Others (mainly Jacksonian Democrats) viewed the wealth of successful capitalists and entrepreneurs as a threat to Jefferson's vision of a nation of independent farmers. Those who were most uncomfortable with economic change rallied around Jackson. Why was Jackson's veto of the bank such a key event? Some contemporary historians, such as Charles Seller see Jackson’s popularity as expressing people's unspoken fears about the rise of capitalism.