

Nowadays, you'll find Andrew Jackson's face on a twenty dollar bill. However, this not without controversy. **Jackson was a controversial figure during his time, and he continues to divide Americans today.**



To say that Andrew Jackson was a little rough around the edges would be an understatement. By the time Jackson moved to Nashville, Tennessee, he had developed a reputation for being a "horse-racing, card-playing, mischievous fellow" and was **known for his hot temper**. He even once killed a man in a duel with pistols after the man called him "a worthless scoundrel". This behavior however, did not prevent Jackson from becoming a fine lawyer, a gentleman farmer, and a successful politician. On top of this, Jackson was an Army General, and **his victory at the Battle of New Orleans turned him into a national hero. Jackson's popularity skyrocketed with the American people, especially the common folk.** They began calling him "Old Hickory", because he was as "hard as hickory" (a type of wood).



In 1824, Jackson ran for President. The election turned out to be one of the most unique in American history. Jackson had run as a Democratic-Republican, against four other members of his party. When the votes were tallied, **Jackson had the most votes, but none of the candidates had enough votes to win (50%)**, so the decision went to the House of Representatives. Henry Clay who had come in fourth, worked out a shady deal with John Quincy Adams (the son of John Adams) who had come in second: Clay would convince members in the House to vote for Quincy, if Quincy would appoint Clay as his Secretary of State. The shady deal worked, and the House elected John Quincy Adams as the 6th President of the United States. Jackson and his supporters weren't happy.

Though Jackson lost the election, he rallied enough support to form a new political party, the Democratic Party. **This new Democratic party, they promised, would represent ordinary farmers, workers, and the poor, not the rich and upper class who controlled the Republican Party.** It's no coincidence that during the same time, voting laws were changing. While women and minority races were still restricted from voting, the "common" man (non-wealthy white men) were now legally allowed to vote. When Jackson ran for President again in 1828, this new class of voters turned out and gave Jackson a great victory.

After Jackson was sworn in as President, a huge crowd followed him to the White House for an inauguration party. The party quickly got out of hand and turned into a riot. Jackson had to escape out the back door. Despite the crazy start, **Jackson's win was also a**



win for the idea that the common people should control their government, now known as Jacksonian Democracy.