

# The Rise of the Whigs – Tippecanoe and Tyler, Too!

**Context:** After the debacle of the one-party presidential campaign of 1824, a new two-party system began to emerge. Strong public reaction to perceived corruption in the vote in the House of Representatives, as well as the popularity of Andrew Jackson, allowed Martin Van Buren to organize a Democratic Party that resurrected a Jeffersonian philosophy of minimalism in the federal government. This new party opposed the tendencies of National Republicans such as John Quincy Adams and Henry Clay to invest more power in the federal government. Van Buren built a political machine to support Jackson in the 1828 election. Van Buren's skills helped give the Democrats a head start on modern-style campaigning and a clear advantage in organization.

**Directions:** Working with a partner, analyze the included primary sources. One student should work with the Democratic Platform of 1840 and the other, the Proceedings of the Whig State Convention. Using the graphic organizer on p. 3, discuss the Whig and Democratic perspectives on the following issues: American System, Indian Affairs, National Bank, Paper Money, Slavery, and Territorial Expansion. As you discuss, cite textual evidence to support any and all claims made.

The information gathered by both students will be used to complete the graphic organizer for your notes.

## Document 1: Democratic Platform – 1840

1. Resolved, That the federal government is one of limited powers, derived solely from the constitution, and the grants of power shown therein, ought to be strictly construed (interpreted) by all the departments and agents of the government, and that it is inexpedient (not advantageous) and dangerous to exercise doubtful constitutional powers.
2. Resolved, That the constitution does not confer upon the general government the power to commence and carry on, a general system of internal improvements.
3. Resolved, That the constitution does not confer authority upon the federal government, directly or indirectly, to assume the debts of the several states, contracted for local internal improvements, or other state purposes; nor would such assumption be just or expedient (advantageous).
4. Resolved, That justice and sound policy forbid the federal government to foster one branch of industry to the detriment of another, or to cherish the interests of one portion to the injury of another portion of our common country – that every citizen and every section of the country, has a right to demand and insist upon an equality of rights and privileges, and to complete and ample protection of person and property from domestic violence, or foreign aggression.
5. Resolved, That it is the duty of every branch of the government, to enforce and practice the most rigid economy, in conducting our public affairs, and that no more revenue ought to be raised, than is required to defray the necessary expenses of the government.
6. Resolved, That congress has no power to charter a national bank; that we believe such an institution one of deadly hostility to the best interests of the country, dangerous to our republican institutions and the liberties of the people, and calculated to place the business of the country within the control of a concentrated money power, and above the laws and the will of the people.
7. Resolved, That congress has no power, under the constitution, to interfere with or control the domestic institutions of the several states, and that such states are the sole and proper judges of everything appertaining (relating) to their own affairs, not prohibited by the constitution; that all efforts by abolitionists or others, made to induce congress to interfere with questions of slavery, or to take incipient (beginning) steps in relation thereto, are calculated to lead to the most alarming and dangerous consequences, and that all such efforts have an inevitable tendency to diminish the happiness of the people, and endanger the stability and permanency of the union, and ought not to be countenanced by any friend to our political institutions.
8. Resolved, That the separation of the moneys of the government from banking institutions, is indispensable for the safety of the funds of the government, and the rights of the people.
9. Resolved, That the liberal principles embodied by Jefferson in the Declaration of Independence, and sanctioned in the constitution, which makes ours the land of liberty, and the asylum of (safe haven for) the oppressed of every nation, have ever been cardinal principles in the democratic faith; and every attempt to abridge the present privilege of becoming citizens, and the owners of soil among us, ought to be resisted with the same spirit which swept the alien and sedition laws from our statute-book.

## Document 2: Proceedings of the Whig State Convention

*Note: Since no national Whig platform was published, it cannot be said that this regional platform represented the entire party. However, it does reveal the political positions of the Whigs in one region.*

Worcester, Mass., June 17, 1840

Resolved, That our beloved country calls aloud this day upon her sons, and with a voice hardly less imploring than that with which she called five and sixty years ago on their Fathers, to rise up and rescue her from misrule and oppression.

Resolved, That an Elective Despotism (The power of the executive under Jackson and his handpicked successor Van Buren is portrayed as having grown too great.) is not the Government which our Fathers fought for; and that unless the tyrannical domination which now overshadows the liberties of this country be defeated in its desperate efforts to perpetuate its power, the blood of Bunker Hill will have been shed in vain.

Resolved, That the administration of our National affairs for twelve years past has been one continued scene of injustice and outrage--that the Constitution has been violated, the most solemn Treaties trampled on, the Laws disregarded, the public Treasure seized and squandered, the People's interests overlooked, the people's rights overleaped, and the People's will defied.

Resolved, That the derangement of the currency (referring to the recent depressions and issues related to the negative Democrat position on paper money and the National Bank), the confusion of the exchange, the depression of prices, the reduction of wages, the stagnation of trade, and the general discontent and distress of the People are the legitimate results of bad government, ruinous measures, and wrong-headed men.

Resolved, That we cannot repress our indignation, when we behold the rulers of the nation, instead of applying themselves to repairing the mischiefs they have occasioned, engaged in devising new modes of oppression, and urging forward the adoption of measures by which the wages of the working man will be reduced still lower, and the bounties of the fishermen abolished altogether.

Resolved, That there can be no substantial and permanent relief from existing evils, and no sure and lasting escape from other and even greater evils impending, but in a change of the National Administration.

Resolved, That in WM. H. HARRISON of Ohio, we recognize the selected instrument by whom relief is to be administered to the People--the destined agent of the People themselves, in restoring the country to the prosperity and purity of its best and brightest days;--that his honesty, his ability, his bravery, his patriotism, his true hearted democratic republicanism, having stood the test of more than forty years of service, in peace and in war, can now alike dispense with the praises of his friends, and defy the slanders of his enemies;--and that we pledge to him our unanimous support for the presidency.

Resolved, That we have entire confidence in the integrity and capacity of JOHN TYLER of Virginia, and that we cordially concur with the Harrisburg Convention, in associating his name with that of Gen. Harrison's, for the two highest offices in the gift of the People.

	Democrats	Whigs
Origins/History		
Party Leaders		
Regions of Strong Support		
Positions on:		
American System (Internal Improvements)		
Federal Land Policy		
Indian Affairs		
National Bank		
Paper Money		
Slavery		
Tariffs		
Territorial Expansion		