

Expanding Democracy

Learning Objective 4.G: Explain the causes and effects of the expansion of participatory democracy from 1800 to 1848.

Expansion of Suffrage

KC-4.1.I: The nation's transition to a more participatory democracy was achieved by expanding suffrage from a system based on property ownership to one based on voting by all adult white men, and it was accompanied by the growth of political parties.

- New _____ culture
 - Equality of _____ (for free white males), ignored women, non-white, enslaved
- New state constitutions have _____ for voting - older states amend to remove requirements
 - Voters in presidential election increase from 350K in 1824 to _____ in 1840
- Death of Federalists - _____
- Split of D-R - _____ / _____
- _____
 - Makes process more transparent
- New 2-Party System - _____ and _____
 - More campaigning, _____ too
 - Party Loyalty strengthened through the _____

Recap

- Voting rights expanded for adult white men nationwide, more people participate in politics
- New Two-Party System between Whigs and Democrats

Part II

Short Answer Questions

Answer the following in AT LEAST three sentences.

1. Explain the causes of the expansion of participatory democracy from 1800 to 1848.

2. Explain the effects of the expansion of participatory democracy from 1800 to 1848.

Rhode Islanders Protest Property Restrictions on Voting, 1834

Many poor white men gained voting rights, also known as suffrage, for the first time in the 1830s. These changes in American democracy did not take place without conflict. Voting rights in Rhode Island only changed after poor Rhode Islanders raised a militia and threatened violence. Below is the proposal of many of the men who seven years later took up arms to fight for voting rights.

...We have arrived at the conclusion that government was designed for the protection and perpetuation of rights—not derived from itself, but natural and inherent—in such a way as to promote the greatest good of the whole; and that the question now before us is, not what right of suffrage the government ought to grant as a gift, but with what restrictions, required by this greatest good, suffrage may be claimed as a right by the people of this State. Is it consistent with this general good that the present landed qualifications should be any longer continued...?

...we should show that the present restriction is, in its operation, inconsistent with republican principles, then we shall secure the aid of all those who consistently hold those principles, in having this restriction removed...

...whatever course a true patriot might feel himself to adopt in one of the corrupt monarchies of the old world, no such reason can be given for a postponement of political rights in our own country. No privileged orders have ever existed in it, to create a vast inequality which prevails elsewhere between the many and the few. A freedom was brought with the by our ancestors, and has ever subsisted among us...The true American doctrine is, that the majority have not only a right to govern, but that they are sufficiently intelligent and honest to govern; and that, if there be any doubt about this sufficiency, we ought immediately to set to work and build more schools. Men in Europe, who are opposed to any further improvement in government, may talk about the necessity of “barring out the people,” and of “defending themselves against the people.” But this will not do here...

...the condition of things has changed—the towns have changed; new interests have sprung up, and useful citizens, who own no land, but who contribute by their occupations, and by the payment of taxes to the extent of their means, their proportionate measure to the public welfare. Yet these men have no voice in the government which they contribute to support; being excluded upon the false notion that landed property is the only kind that is decisive of a man’s intelligence and honesty. Look at the hardship of the case of a mechanic, for instance. He has received a common education; he has served as a journeyman, and is now about to commence business for himself with some small earnings of his own; his savings are only sufficient to procure the implements of his trade. After fairly starting in life on his own account, he becomes anxious to provide for himself a home. He marries; he hires a tenement; in the course of time he acquires more money, which his interest demands should be invested in the stock of his trade. He is fully able to purchase one hundred and thirty four dollars worth of land; but it is, in most cases, against his interest to do so, until he can purchase a great deal more. In the mean time, he is debarred from the polls; and if he asks why, the answer must be that the non freeholders are too ignorant and dishonest to be trusted in so important a matter as voting. This we believe is a fair statement of the case of hundreds of mechanics in this State...

But this restriction is not merely burdensome upon traders and mechanics. How fare the younger sons of farmers? True, a sort of virtue is transmitted from the land-owner, but it reaches no farther than the first-born son... the real question is why either of the sons, or any other person should be exempted from the general law of qualification, whatever it may be. No good reason has been, nor can be, given...

The majority of lawyers, clergymen, and physicians, as a body, certainly are not landholders, and yet we freely intrust our property, our consciences, and our lives, to men who, the law says, are too ignorant and corrupt to vote for a constable!...

The existing restriction on suffrage is, then, we think, clearly in opposition to the real intention of our ancestors, and to the spirit of democracy which they established... If it were unjust for our forefathers to be taxed without representation, it is equally unjust for our their descendants to

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be so taxed by their brethren, as long as they have not vote in determining either the quantity or appropriation...

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3. Provide 2 sentences of analysis from one category of HAPP for this document.
4. Give an A-C-E response on a piece of outside evidence that is relevant to the document and topic of the thesis

Black Philadelphians Defend their Voting Rights, 1838

PHILADELPHIA, March 14, 1838.

FELLOW CITIZENS:— We appeal to you from the decision of the “Reform Convention,” which has stripped us of a right peaceably enjoyed during forty-seven years under the Constitution of this commonwealth. We honor Pennsylvania and her noble institutions too much to part with our birthright, as her free citizens, without a struggle. To all her citizens the right of suffrage is valuable in proportion as she is free; but surely there are none who can so ill afford to spare it as ourselves...

To us our right under the Constitution has been more precious, and our deprivation of it will be the more grievous, because our expatriation has come to be a darling project with many of our fellow citizens. Our abhorrence of a scheme which comes to us in the guise of Christian benevolence, and asks us to suffer ourselves to be transplanted to a distant and barbarous land.... We love our native country, much as it has wronged us; and in the peaceable exercise of our inalienable rights, we will cling to it. The immortal Franklin, and his fellow laborers in the cause of humanity, have bound us to our homes here with chains of gratitude. We are PENNSYLVANIANS, and we hope to see the day when Pennsylvania will have reason to be proud of us, as we believe she has now none to be ashamed. Will you starve our patriotism? Will you cast our hearts out of the treasury of the commonwealth? Do you count our enmity better than our friendship?...

We were regarded as citizens by those who drew up the articles of confederation between the States, in 1778...On the adoption of the present Constitution of the United States no change was made as to the rights of citizenship. This is explicitly proved by the Journal of Congress....

We ask your attention, fellow citizens, to facts and testimonies which go to show that, considering the circumstances in which we have been placed, our country has no reason to be ashamed of us, and that those have the most occasion to blush to whom nature has given the power.

By the careful inquiry of a committee appointed by the “Pennsylvania Society for Promoting the Abolition of Slavery,” it has been ascertained that the colored population of Philadelphia and its suburbs, numbering 18,768 souls, possess at the present time, of real and personal estate, not less than \$1,350,000. They have paid for taxes during the last year \$3,252.83, for house, water, and ground rent, \$166,963.50. This committee estimate the income to the holders of real estate occupied by the colored people, to be 7½ per cent. on a capital of about \$2,000,000. Here is an addition to the wealth of their white brethren. But the rents and taxes are not all; to pay them, the colored people must be employed in labor, and here is another profit to the whites, for no man employs another unless he can make his labor profitable to himself. For a similar reason, a profit is made by all the whites who sell to colored people the necessaries or luxuries of life. Though the aggregate amount of the wealth derived by the whites from our people can only be conjectured, its importance is worthy of consideration by those who would make it less by lessening our motive to accumulate for ourselves.

Nor is the profit derived from us counterbalanced by the sums which we in any way draw from the public treasures. From a statement published by order of the Guardians of the Poor of Philadelphia, in 1830, it appears that out of 549 out-door poor relieved during the year, only 22 were persons of color, being about four per cent. of the whole number, while the ratio of our population to that of the city and suburbs exceeds 8¼ per cent...

That we are not neglectful of our religious interests, nor of the education of our children, is shown by the fact that there are among us in Philadelphia, Pittsburg, York, West Chester, and Columbia, 22 churches, 48 clergymen, 26 day schools, 20 Sabbath schools, 125 Sabbath school teachers, 4 literary societies, 2 public libraries, consisting of about 800 volumes, besides 8,333 volumes in private libraries, 2 tract societies, 2 Bible societies, and 7 temperance societies....

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We would not misrepresent the motives of the Convention; but we are constrained to believe that they have laid our rights a sacrifice on the altar of slavery. We do not believe our disfranchisement would have been proposed, but for the desire which is felt by political aspirants to gain the favor of the slave-holding States. This is not the first time that northern statesmen have “bowed the knee to the dark spirit of slavery,” but it is the first time that they have bowed so low!...

Firm upon our old Pennsylvania BILL OF RIGHTS, and trusting in a God of Truth and justice, we lay our claim before you, with the warning that no amendments of the present Constitution can compensate for the loss of its foundation principle of equal rights, nor for the conversion into enemies of 40,000 friends.

In behalf of the Committee, ROBERT PURVIS, Chairman.

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