



Martin Van Buren's
Lindenwald farm
about 1850. Drawn by
Steven N. Patricia, R.A.

Title: What's So Funny About Political Cartoons?

Subject: Social Studies

NY State Standards: SST 1, SST 5

Target Audience: 4th grade

Program Offered: October through April

Lesson Summary:

This program introduces 4th grade students to Martin Van Buren and his contemporaries. The students are exposed to important lessons about American political culture including the rule of law, party politics and compromise. The program uses a fun, interactive classroom game to familiarize students with the seemingly arcane subject of political struggle before the Civil War.

Contact: Dawn Olson
Park Ranger/Educator
Martin Van Buren National Historic Site
1013 Old Post Road
Kinderhook, NY 12106
518-758-9689
www.nps.gov/mava
Dawn_Olson@nps.gov

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Lesson Plan

Curriculum Standards Connections

- Standard 1:1 19th century politicians believed in American democracy as outlined in the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution.
- Standard 1:2 Traditions and practices were passed from the Founding Fathers to a second generation of politicians.
- Standard 1:3 Identify individuals who were committed to the success of democracy in the United States.
- Standard 5:1 The United States' political system is based upon people's beliefs and the decisions they make.
- Standard 5:3 It is our right and our responsibility to participate in community life.
- Standard 5:4 Citizens with opposing viewpoints can work together.

Goal

The goal of this lesson is to decipher the meanings/nuances of a political cartoon and, in the process, introduce 19th century politicians to elementary students.

Objectives

*Name three politicians portrayed in the political cartoons.

*Compare two politicians - what are their similarities/differences (birthplace, elected offices, political party affiliation)

*Identify two issues that were important in 1838. (economic crisis, rights of state and central government, slavery)

Procedure

*Pre-Visit Activity

Students complete a worksheet with pictures of 19th century politicians.

*Classroom Experience

*Ranger-Led Component

All On Hobbies, Gee Up, Gee Ho political cartoon

Using colored stickers, students identify the politicians portrayed in a 19th century political cartoon and learn about each individual (profession, political party, offices held during political career, etc). Discussion with students uses questions and answers to identify similarities and differences among individuals. Examples include Northerner/Southerner, Democrat/Whig, Lawyer/Military Career. Identify/discuss the issue important to each politician (rider) as printed on their hobbyhorse.

*Assessment/Students Put Their Skills To Use

Cutting Down The Hickory Tree And Disturbing The Crow's Nest political cartoon

Students individually analyze a second cartoon and write a description of the meaning(s).

*Post-Visit Activity

Teachers and students decipher the meaning(s) of the political cartoon titled The North Bend Farmer, which features politicians from the first two cartoons.

Materials

These supplies are provided for the class

*One reproducible student pre-visit worksheet (4 pages) to familiarize students with 19th century politicians

*One reproducible post-visit student worksheet (2 pages)

*Library of Congress cartoon explanation for teacher use with post-visit activity.

Ranger will bring the following to your classroom the day of the program

*Student copies of two 19th century political cartoons

*Stickers

*Pencils

Vocabulary

What is politics?

Politics is the word for getting people to support common action. It is getting a group to make a decision. Although it is usually applied to governments, it takes place in all areas of life including the (insert name of school).

BIOGRAPHY PAGE - STUDENT PRE-VISIT WORKSHEET

Name, Birthplace, Nickname of Each Politician In Cartoon

Martin Van Buren

Born December 5, 1782 in New York

Nickname: "The Little Magician" because he was 5'6" and because he worked 'magic' to get politicians to agree when choosing presidential candidates.

Thomas Hart Benton

Born March 14, 1782 in North Carolina

Nickname "Old Bullion" because he supported the use of gold coin (also known as bullion) as opposed to paper money - hard money vs. soft money

Henry Clay

Born April 12, 1777 in Virginia

Nickname: "The Great Compromiser" because he was able to help fellow politicians settle their arguments (i.e. 1820 Missouri Compromise)

Daniel Webster

Born January 18, 1782 in New Hampshire

Nickname: "Black Dan" because of his dark complexion

John C. Calhoun

Born March 18, 1782 in South Carolina

Nickname: "Cast-Iron Man" because he defended the causes he believed in – he believed that state governments could declare a federal law they believed to be unconstitutional null and void (i.e. tariffs which Southern cotton growers felt were favorable to Northern manufacturers)

William Henry Harrison

Born February 9, 1773 in Virginia

Nickname: "Old Tippecanoe" because he led forces against the American Indians during the Battle at Tippecanoe (in Indiana) in 1811

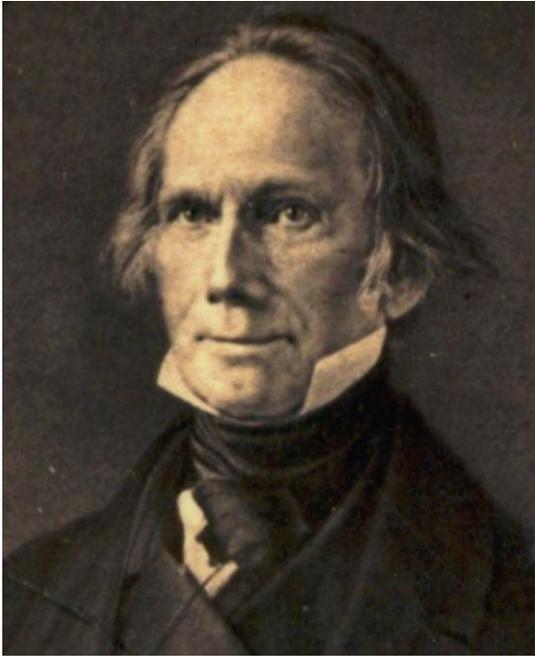
John Quincy Adams

Born July 11, 1767 in Braintree Massachusetts

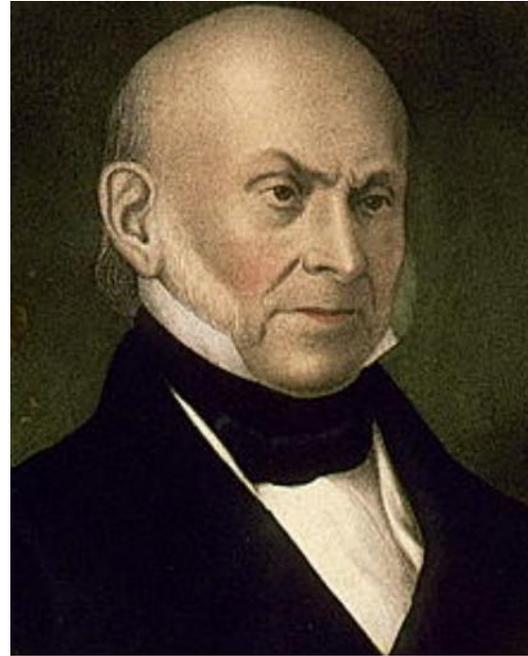
Nickname: "Old Man Eloquent" because he spoke clearly when speaking in opposition to slavery

ANSWER
KEY

- 1=A
- 2=B
- 3=C
- 4=D
- 5=E
- 6=F
- 7=G
- 8=H
- 9=I
- 10=J
- 11=K
- 12=L
- 13=M
- 14=N
- 15=O
- 16=P
- 17=Q
- 18=R
- 19=S
- 20=T
- 21=U
- 22=V
- 23=W
- 24=X
- 25=Y
- 26=Z



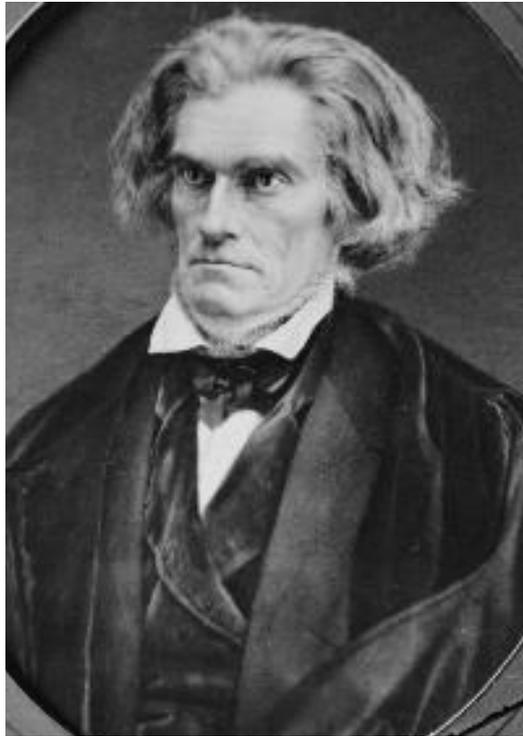
8 5 14 18 25 3 12 1 25



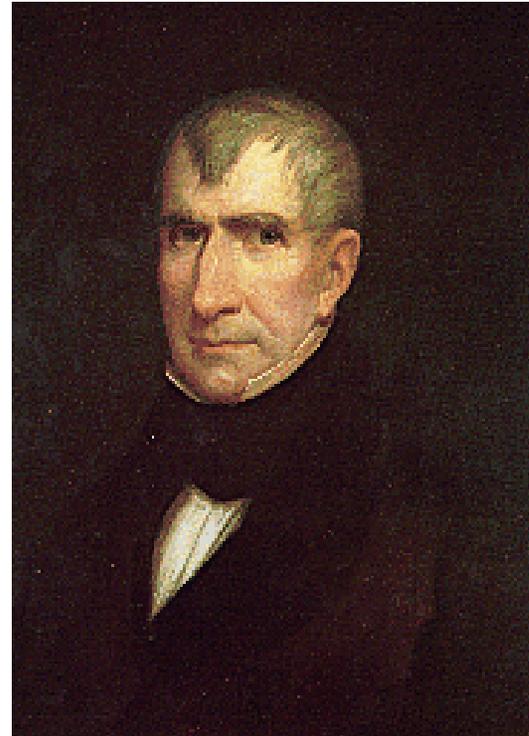
10 15 8 14 17 21 9 14 3 25 1 4 1 13 19

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- 14=N
- 15=O
- 16=P
- 17=Q
- 18=R
- 19=S
- 20=T
- 21=U
- 22=V
- 23=W
- 24=X
- 25=Y
- 26=Z



10 15 8 14 3 3 1 12 8 15 21 14



W
23 9 12 12 9 1 13 H 8 5 14 18 25
H
8 1 18 18 9 19 15 14

★ Lawyer

★ Congressman

★ Whig Party

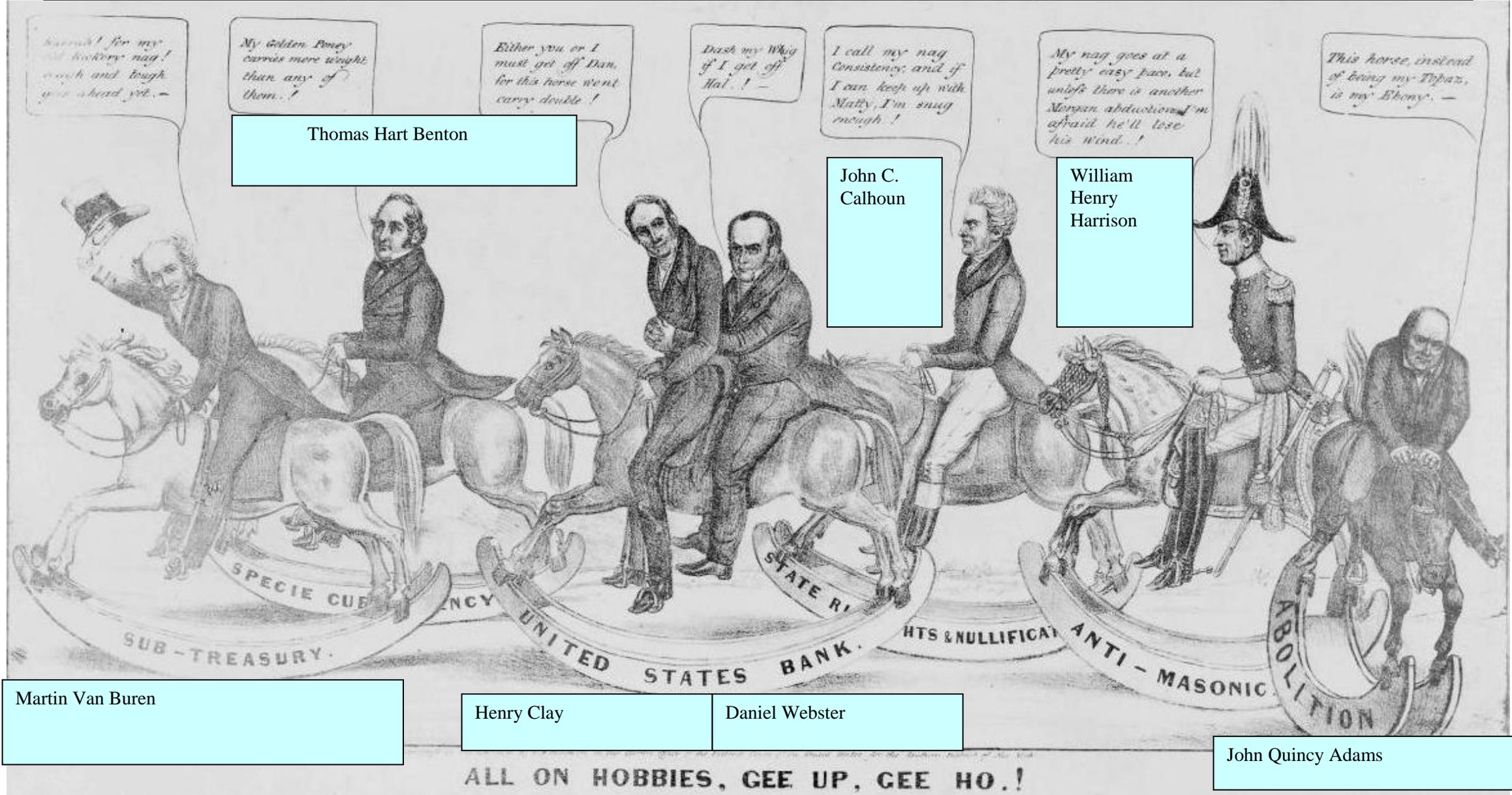
★ Democrat Party

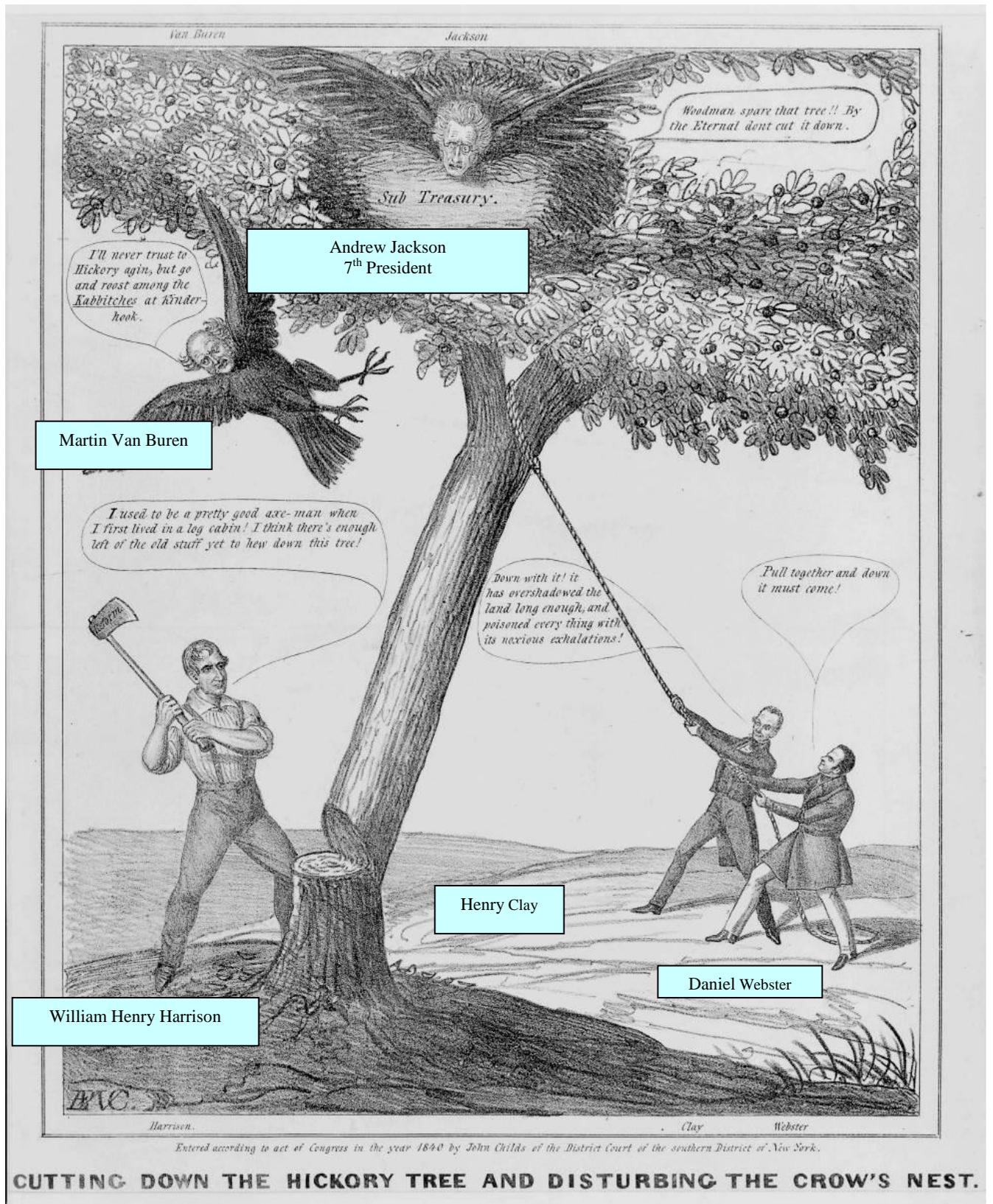
★ Governor

★ Vice President

🇺🇸 President

Name





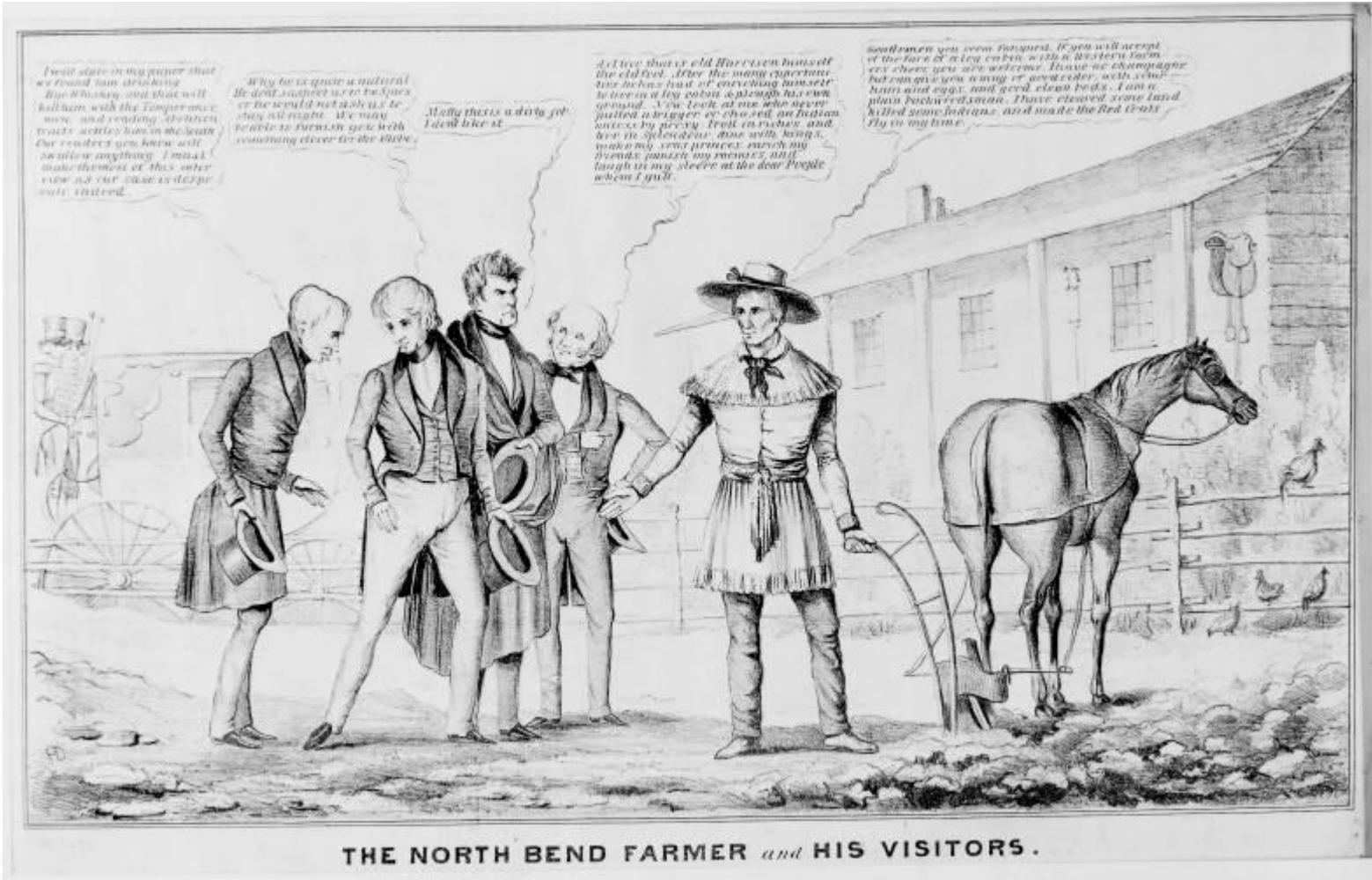
LIST OF THINGS I SEE

- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____

Explain what the political cartoon means to you. Write your explanation on the lines provided.

Name: _____

POST-VISIT ACTIVITY



What do you see in this political cartoon?

*William Henry Harrison and Martin Van Buren were candidates on the 1840 presidential election.

What is presidential candidate William Henry Harrison wearing?

What are President Van Buren and the Democrats wearing?

Why are President Van Buren and the Democrats wearing suits and ties to visit a farmer?

What other symbols in the cartoon emphasize the candidate's character?

LIBRARY OF CONGRESS EXPLANATION
1840 THE NORTH BEND FARMER and HIS VISITORS.

Signed with monogram: HD [Henry Dacre?]
Printed & Published by H. R. Robinson No. 52 Courtland
St. N.Y. & Pennsa. Avenue Washington B.C.

A slanderous portrayal of Democratic tactics against Whig presidential candidate William Henry Harrison. The supposedly insidious and high-living Van Buren and his minions suffer by comparison with the Whig candidate, here portrayed as rustic and plainspoken.

Harrison is shown dressed in buckskins and standing near a plough on his Ohio farm. A contingent of Democrats have arrived in an elegant coach at left. The visitors are (left to right) Francis Preston Blair, Amos Kendall, John Calhoun, and Martin Van Buren.

Blair remarks to Kendall, "I will state in my paper that we found him drinking Rye Whiskey and that will kill him with the Temperance men and reading Abolition tracts setdes him in the South. Our readers you know will swallow anything. I must make the most of this interview as our case is desperate indeed."

Kendall responds, "Why he is quite a natural. He dont suspect us to be Spies . . . We may be able to furnish you with somediing clever for the Globe [i.e., Blair's newspaper the Washington *Globe*]."

Calhoun protests to Van Buren, "Matty this is a dirty job. I don't like it." Van Buren says, "As I live that is old Harrison himself the old fool. After the many opportunities he has had of enriching himself to live in a log cabin and plough his own ground. Now look at me who never pulled a trigger, or chased an Indian unless by proxy: I roll in riches, and live in splendour, dine with kings, make my sons princes, enrich my friends, punish my enemies, and laugh in my sleeve at the dear People whom I gull."

Harrison greets them with, "Gentlemen you seem fatigued, If you will accept of the fare of a log cabin, with a Western farmer's cheer, you are welcome. I have no champagne but can give you a mug of good cider, with some ham and eggs, and good clean beds. I am a plain backwoodsman, I have cleared some land, killed some Indians, and made the Red Coats fly in my time."

Reference: Weitenkamp p. 64. *Negative no.* LC-USZ62-5568

Credit:

American Political Prints 1766 – 1876

A Catalog of the Collections in the Library of Congress

Bernard F. Reilly, Jr.