Modified “**Rise of Democratic Politics”**

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When James Monroe began his second term as president in 1821, he rejoiced at the idea that the country was no longer divided by political parties, which he considered “the curse of the country,” breeding disunity, demagoguery, and corruption. Yet even before Monroe’s second term had ended, new political divisions had already begun to evolve, creating an increasingly democratic system of politics.

(remember that we said the Federalists party began to lose power and disappear)

Between 1820 and 1840, a revolution took place in American politics. In most states, property qualifications for voting and officeholding were repealed; and voting by voice was largely eliminated.

What does that mean for voting?

The Expansion of Voting Rights

The most significant political innovation of the early nineteenth century was the abolition of property qualifications for voting and officeholding. Hard times resulting from the panic of 1819 led many people to demand an end to property restrictions on voting and officeholding. In New York, for example, fewer than two adult males in five could legally vote for senator or governor. Under the new constitution adopted in 1821, all adult white males were allowed to vote, so long as they paid taxes or had served in the militia. Five years later, an amendment to the state’s constitution eliminated the taxpaying and militia qualifications, thereby establishing universal white manhood suffrage. By 1840, universal white manhood suffrage had largely become a reality. Only three states--Louisiana, Rhode Island, and Virginia--still restricted the suffrage to white male property owners and taxpayers.

Why did people demand the changes to voting qualifications? (remember to give evidence from the above paragraph AND explain what it means)

In order to encourage popular participation in politics, most states also instituted statewide nominating conventions, opened polling places in more convenient locations, extended the hours that polls were open, and eliminated the earlier practice of voting by voice.

While universal white manhood suffrage (the right to vote) was becoming a reality, restrictions on voting by African Americans and women remained in force. Only one state, New Jersey, had given unmarried women property holders the right to vote following the Revolution, but the state rescinded (cancelled) this right at the time it extended suffrage to all adult white men. Most states also explicitly denied the right to vote to free African Americans. By 1858 free blacks were eligible to vote in just four northern states: New Hampshire, Maine, Massachusetts, and Vermont.