

Name: _____

Date: _____

The Corrupt Bargain

Diary Entry 1:

Edward Wyer [**confidential informant**] came also to the office and told me that he had it from good authority that Mr. Clay was much willing to support me, if he could at the same time be useful to himself...I had conversation at dinner with Mr. Clay...

John Quincy Adams (December 15, 1824)

1) Who wrote the document?

Confidential Informant: A person working for the police/government that provides information

2) When was the document written?

3) Did this document suggest that Adams and Clay entered into a “corrupt bargain”? Explain

Diary Entry 2: [Conversation with R. P. Letcher, member of the House of Representatives of Kentucky, Clay’s state]:

...The meaning of all Letcher’s communication was much the same as Wyer had told me, that Clay would willingly support me if he could thereby serve himself, and, that if Clay’s friends could know that he would have a important share in the administration, that might induce him to vote for me...

John Quincy Adams (December 17, 1824)

1) Who wrote the document?

2) When was the document written?

3) Did this document suggest that Adams and Clay entered into a “corrupt bargain”? Explain

Document 3: Letter from Henry Clay to Francis P. Blair

The friends of Jackson have turned upon me, and with the friendliest agreement to abuse me...The dishonest man cannot comprehend how a man can be honest. They cannot conceive that I should have questioned my conscience and asked it to tell me seriously what I ought to do. That is should have enjoined me not to establish the dangerous **precedent** of elevating, in this early stage of the Republic, a military leader, because he has won a great victory...

Mr. Adams, you know well, I should never have selected, if at liberty to draw from the whole mass of our citizens for a President. But there is no danger in his elevation now, or in time to come. Not so of his competitor, of whom I cannot believe that killing 2500 Englishmen at New Orleans qualifies for the various, difficult, and complicated duties of the President.

Letter: Henry Clay to Francis P. Blair (January 29, 1825)

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| Precedent: An earlier action that is regarded as an example |
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1) Who wrote the document?

2) When was the document written?

3) Did this document suggest that Adams and Clay entered into a “corrupt bargain”? Explain

Document 4: Andrew Jackson on the Alleged “Corrupt Bargain”

To William Berkeley Lewis (private)
Senate Chamber
Janry 24th. 1825

I wrote you in great speed the other day in which I gave you the rumors that were in circulation of intrigue, union, and corruption, about the election – I am told it has this morning developed itself, & that Mr. Clay has come out in open support of Mr. Adams – This, for one, I am pleased with – It shows the want of principle in all concerned – and how easy certain men can abandon principle, unite with political enemies for self advancement. I have said I was pleased with this development; it will give the people a full view of our political views here, and how little confidence ought to be reposed in the professions of some great political characters...

Andrew Jackson

1) Who wrote the document?

2) When was the document written?

3) Did this document suggest that Adams and Clay entered into a “corrupt bargain”? Explain

Document 5:

“Clay voted for Adams and made him President and Adams made Clay secretary of state . . . Is this not proof as strong as holy writ of the understanding of corrupt coalition between them?”

Andrew Jackson, 1844

1) Who wrote the document?

2) When was the document written?

3) Did this document suggest that Adams and Clay entered into a “corrupt bargain”? Explain

Homework: MEAEAL

Does the evidence you examined suggest that John Quincy Adams and Henry Clay entered into a “corrupt bargain” to win the presidential election of 1824? Explain using evidence from the documents.