



*P*RESIDENTIAL *P*OWERHOUSES

# ANDREW JACKSON'S PRESIDENCY

Andrew Jackson

CHRISTINE ZUCHORA-WALSKE

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# ANDREW JACKSON'S PRESIDENCY



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# ANDREW JACKSON'S PRESIDENCY

CHRISTINE ZUCHORA-WALSKE

*Andrew Jackson*

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# ★ TABLE OF CONTENTS ★

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<b>INTRODUCTION .....</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>CHAPTER ONE</b>	
<b>AN ADVENTUROUS LIFE.....</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>CHAPTER TWO</b>	
<b>SHAKING UP THE ESTABLISHMENT .....</b>	<b>26</b>
<b>CHAPTER THREE</b>	
<b>THE AMERICAN SYSTEM AND</b>	
<b>ABOLITIONISM.....</b>	<b>36</b>
<b>CHAPTER FOUR</b>	
<b>THE BANK WAR .....</b>	<b>48</b>
<b>CHAPTER FIVE</b>	
<b>WESTWARD EXPANSION AND</b>	
<b>AMERICAN INDIAN REMOVAL .....</b>	<b>60</b>
<b>CHAPTER SIX</b>	
<b>FOREIGN AFFAIRS AND JACKSON'S</b>	
<b>LEGACY.....</b>	<b>74</b>
<b>TIMELINE.....</b>	<b>91</b>
<b>SOURCE NOTES .....</b>	<b>93</b>
<b>GLOSSARY.....</b>	<b>96</b>
<b>SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY.....</b>	<b>98</b>
<b>FURTHER INFORMATION.....</b>	<b>99</b>
<b>INDEX .....</b>	<b>101</b>

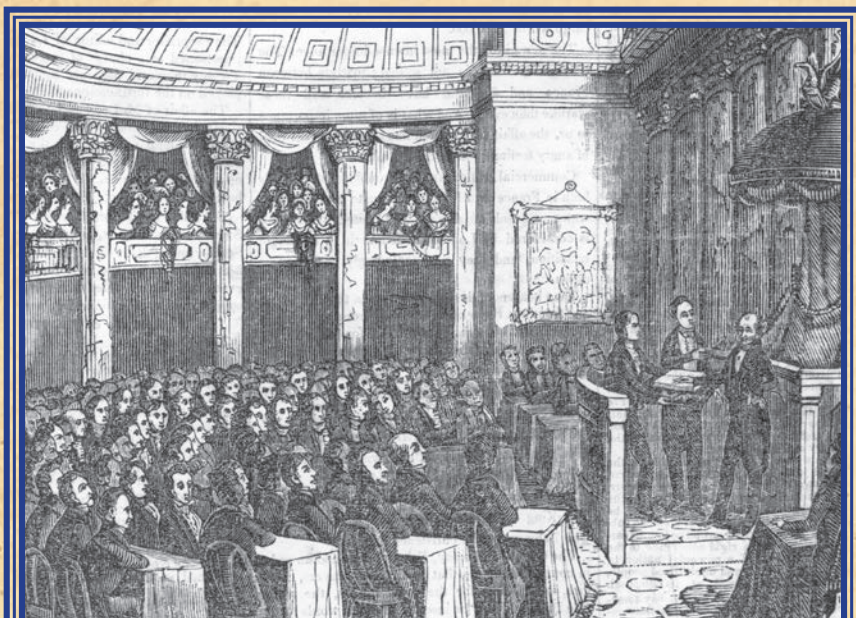


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# ★ INTRODUCTION ★

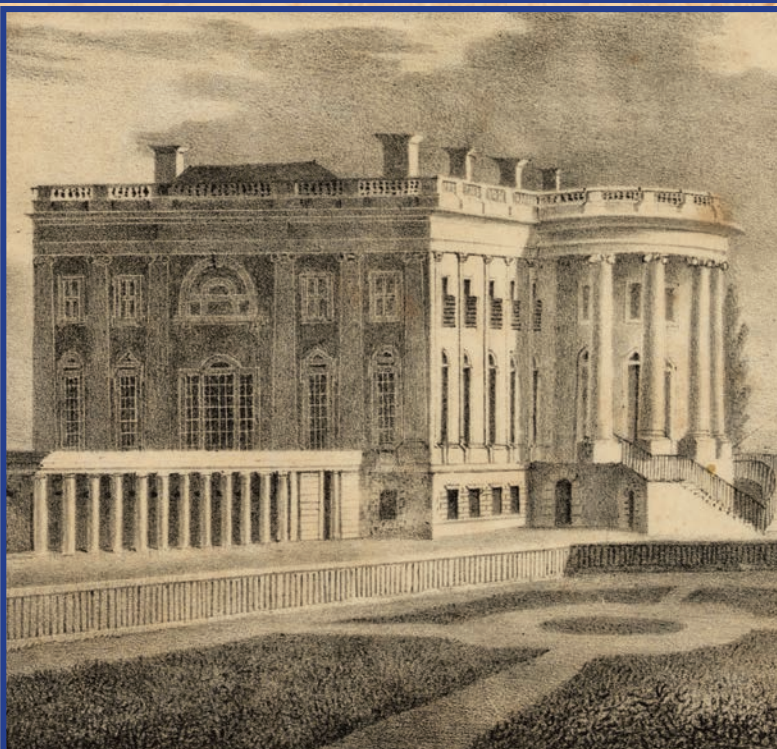
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It was March 4, 1837, and Andrew Jackson was no longer president of the United States. After eight years in office, he'd just handed over the presidency to his loyal vice president, Martin Van Buren. The festivities exhausted seventy-year-old Jackson, whose health was failing. He planned to stay at the White House for a few days afterward, gathering his strength for the journey home to Tennessee.



*This wood engraving depicts President Martin Van Buren's inauguration in the US Senate chamber.*





*The White House in Jackson's time*

The next day, while Jackson rested, a few friends stopped by to visit him. Among them were Missouri senator Thomas Hart Benton and Frank Blair, a newspaper publisher and a member of Jackson's informal circle of advisers. The men reminisced about Jackson's presidency. They talked about what Jackson had accomplished, and someone asked Jackson if he had any regrets.

"Only two," Jackson supposedly replied. "I regret I was unable to shoot Henry Clay or to hang John C. Calhoun."

Why would a president say such a thing about his colleagues in Congress? In modern times, if such a remark by the president were made public, it would likely bring instant condemnation.

But such a statement was not out of character for Jackson. He had built his career with tough actions and strong words. Like a lion, he could be both a stalwart protector and a ruthless predator.

It was no secret that Jackson disliked Clay and Calhoun. Clay had been a thorn in Jackson's side for two decades, criticizing Jackson's military leadership; stealing, in Jackson's view, the presidency from him in 1824; and opposing his economic policies. Jackson thought Clay, known as the Great Compromiser,



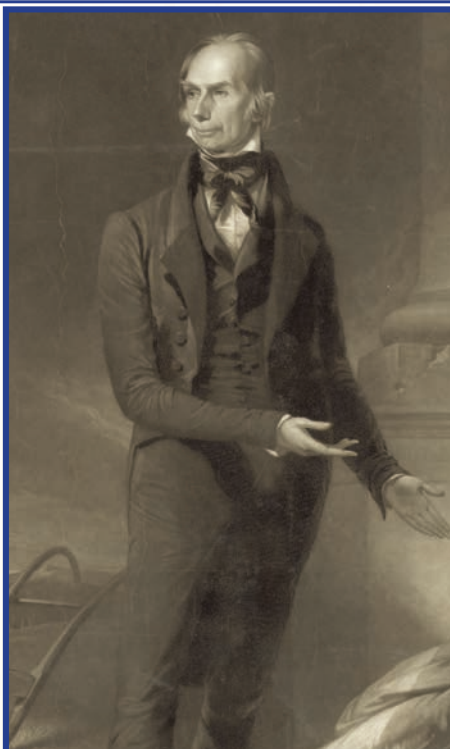
*John C. Calhoun*

was untrustworthy and opportunistic. As for Calhoun, Jackson found him haughty and cruel on a personal level and dangerously divisive on a political one. Jackson believed Calhoun's strident support for states' rights jeopardized the Union. And Jackson had, in fact, once threatened to hang Calhoun for it.

Jackson's strong language at the end of his presidency fit perfectly with his public persona. Jackson had been a wild youngster; a ferocious soldier; and a



passionate, iron-willed, and heavy-handed political leader. He made it clear that in retirement, he would remain the same barely tamed American lion he'd always been.



Henry Clay



Marsico, Katie. *Andrew Jackson*. New York: Benchmark Books, 2011.

This comprehensive biography conveys facts about Andrew Jackson, and it also relates the history and the culture of the period in which Jackson lived and led.

Morris-Lipsman, Arlene. *Presidential Races: Campaigning for the White House*. Minneapolis: Twenty-First Century Books, 2012.

Morris-Lipsman ushers readers through the most dramatic, influential, and pivotal presidential elections in US history. Political cartoons and photos complement the text.

The Presidents: The White House

<http://www.whitehouse.gov/1600/presidents>

This official website provides basic biographical information about all the US presidents.

Primary Documents in American History: Library of Congress

<http://www.loc.gov/rr/program/bib/ourdocs>

Search for original documents relating to Andrew Jackson from the Library of Congress. This site provides links to materials, including images, that relate to topics in this book.





# INDEX

---

- Adams, John Quincy, 23, 24, 26, 27, 29, 39, 46–47, 75–76
- African Americans, 38, 44–45, 65, 69
- Alabama, 21, 64, 65, 66, 70
- Alamo, 81
- American Colonization Society, 45
- American Indians, 12, 41, 44
- Cherokee Nation, 16, 22, 68, 69, 71
- Creek, 21, 61–65, 84
- Indian Removal Act, 66–68, 70, 87
- tensions with, 16, 20, 22, 60–62
- Trail of Tears, 70–73
- treaties with, 65–66
- American Revolution, 48–49, 50, 74, 85
- Jackson family in, 13, 76
- patriots, 13, 43
- tensions leading up to, 12–13
- American System, 36–38, 42–43
- nullification, 39–42, 46, 54, 57
- problems with, 38–39
- Tariff of Abominations, 39
- Biddle, Nicholas, 52, 54, 57
- Calhoun, John C., 7–8, 23, 33–35, 39–46, 54
- Clay, Henry, 7–9, 23, 37, 42–43, 55–57
- Congress, 7, 12, 17, 30, 37, 39–41, 43, 45–46, 48–49, 53–57, 58, 66, 67–68, 76, 77–78, 83, 87, 89
- Continental Congress, 12, 48, 50
- corruption, 27, 41, 60
- cotton, 16, 38–39, 65
- Democratic Party, 24, 82, 86
- dueling. *See* Jackson, Andrew: fighting
- Eaton, John, 29
- Eaton Affair, 31–35
- Eaton, Margaret (Peggy) O’Neal, 32–34
- economics, 8, 36–39, 41, 52, 61, 74–75, 77
- currency, 48–54, 59
- economic turmoil, 49, 59, 87
- of the South, 39, 42–44. *See* also cotton
- Specie Circular, 59
- farewell address, 89
- First Amendment, 30, 46. *See* also freedom of the press
- First Bank, 48–49, 52
- Florida, 22, 35, 65–66, 71–72
- France, 36, 74, 77–79, 87
- freedom of the press, 29, 30. *See* also First Amendment
- Georgia, 22, 65, 66, 69, 70–71
- Great Britain, 12–13, 20, 36, 74–77, 87
- McLane, Louis, 75–77
- Hermitage, 18, 64, 83, 84–85, 86–87
- Jackson, Andrew
- assassination attempt of, 58
- character, 8, 10, 12, 90
- early life, 10–14, 76, 90
- early political career, 16–18, 22–23
- end of life, 6–7, 83, 86–87, 88
- fighting, 12, 14–15, 19
- inauguration of, 27, 28
- law career, 14–15, 18, 61

marriage and family life, 16–17,  
25, 33–34, 64, 84–85  
military career, 8, 13–14, 20–21,  
22–23, 65  
nicknames, 20–21, 61–65  
Jackson, Rachel Donelson Robards,  
24, 25, 64, 65, 84–85  
Jefferson, Thomas, 40, 49, 54  
kitchen cabinet. *See* presidential  
cabinet  
Lawrence, Richard, 58  
Louisiana. *See* Jackson, Andrew:  
military career  
Madison, James, 20, 49, 63  
Mexico, 74, 79–82  
Mississippi, 16, 66, 70  
National Bank. *See* First Bank  
North Carolina, 11, 14, 61, 66  
Philadelphia, 17, 48, 53  
presidential cabinet, 29, 31–35  
presidential elections  
of 1824, 8, 22, 23  
of 1828, 25, 52, 75, 84  
of 1832, 35, 54–57  
Red Sticks, 61–65  
Revolutionary War. *See* American  
Revolution  
Robards, Rachel Donelson, 15–16.  
*See* Jackson, Rachel Donelson  
Robards  
Second Bank of the United States,  
49, 52–59, 87  
slavery, 15–18, 38–39, 64–65, 69, 82  
abolition of, 42–47  
gag rule, 46–47  
South Carolina, 10–11, 39–41, 44, 46  
Spain, 16, 22, 41, 65, 79  
spoils system, 26–31, 86  
Tennessee, 6, 14–18, 19, 22, 32, 44,  
61, 64–66, 80  
militia, 20  
Texas, 79–83  
Union, 8, 17, 39–41, 44–46, 60, 82, 86  
US House of Representatives, 17,  
23, 46–47, 68  
US Senate, 6, 17, 23, 32, 42  
Van Buren, Martin, 6, 29–31, 33–35,  
55, 82–83  
veto, 87  
of the Second Bank, 55–56  
of the transportation subsidies,  
41  
War of 1812, 20–23, 36–37, 49, 72,  
75–76  
Whig Party, 43, 55, 58



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## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

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Christine Zuchora-Walske has been writing and editing books and magazines for children and their parents for twenty-five years. Her author credits include many science books; books exploring the world's nations, US history, and current events; books on pregnancy and parenting; and more. She has also edited hundreds of articles and books in many genres and for all ages. She is especially fond of science and history. But she loves all kinds of knowledge and literature. She never tires of learning new things, and she gets a kick out of trading knowledge with others. Zuchora-Walske lives in Minneapolis, Minnesota, with her husband and two children.



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## NO ONE EVER THOUGHT WILD ANDREW JACKSON WOULD

grow up to hold the highest office in the land. Jackson led an adventurous—some would say notorious—life. The son of immigrants, Jackson fought for American independence from Great Britain, fell in love with a married woman, and killed a man in a duel. His ambition also led him to become a lawyer, build a plantation, and represent Tennessee in the US Congress. His leadership in the War of 1812 earned him the respect of the nation and the affection of his soldiers.

In 1829 Jackson became the seventh president of the United States—the first who did not come from a wealthy family. More than any president before him, he sought to represent the voters (at the time, only white men) and the common people who, in his view, built and sustained the nation. Jackson's policy of forcing American Indians to move west, however, led to disaster, including the deaths of thousands on the Trail of Tears. In addition, Jackson supported slavery and, in fact, had slaves on his own plantation. President Jackson left a controversial legacy—one that modern Americans still grapple with today.



ABRAHAM LINCOLN'S PRESIDENCY

ANDREW JACKSON'S PRESIDENCY

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