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# Andrew Jackson And the Indian Removal Act of 1830 Personal Agenda or Territorial Expansion

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**Andrew Jackson And the Indian Removal Act of 1830**  
**Personal Agenda or Territorial Expansion**



The Hermitage – Taken by Austin Valentine September 2015

**By Austin Valentine Jr.**

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## **Introduction**

For well over a century, historians have pondered Andrew Jackson's motivation behind the Indian Removal Act of 1830. Was Andrew Jackson's decision for a massive social cleansing of Native Americans motivated by a personal agenda or by American calls for westward expansion?

Through a brief analysis of Andrew Jackson's long and winding road to the White House, I hope to shed light on Andrew Jackson and his call for the forced removal of Native American inhabitants residing east of the Mississippi River. With such, I hope to give the reader a better understanding of Jackson's attitude, military strategies, calls for vengeance, and his firm belief that one should be held accountable for his or her own actions. Jackson's tragic childhood fostered a deep hatred and fury, shaped a man into a national hero, and defined an iconic President.

### **A Childhood That Defined the Man**

Andrew Jackson was born on March 15<sup>th</sup>, 1767 to the parents of Andrew and Elizabeth Jackson near the town of Lancaster, South Carolina. His parents, who were both poor Irish immigrants looking to make a fresh start, had come to the Waxhaw's region of British America with his two older brothers Robert and Hugh, where they settled just prior to Andrew's birth. Shortly after Andrew was born his father died, leaving his widowed mother and two brothers to provide for the Jackson family.<sup>1</sup>

In April of 1775, when Andrew Jackson was merely eight years old, the Revolutionary War broke out in the eastern colonies. However, it wasn't long before the fighting spread into the Carolinas. It was during that time when young Andrew, like many Carolina youth, were employed as couriers to carry messages between various militia regiments.<sup>2</sup>

It was a chain of tragic events during this time in Andrew's life that would define the man who would become publicly known as Andrew Jackson. This tragic tale started in 1779 with the death of Hugh Jackson, Andrew's eldest brother. Hugh died as a result of heat stroke during the Battle of Stono Ferry, South Carolina.<sup>3</sup>

Just one year later on the 29<sup>th</sup> of May 1780, young Andrew witnessed the effects of the Revolutionary War first hand, when the fighting hit close to home during the Battle of Waxhaw's. Andrew was among the many area residents who helped tend to the wounded at an area church. The carnage was so devastating that out of roughly 400 patriots, 113 were killed,

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<sup>1</sup> Andrew Jackson Foundation, "ORPHAN - Spark from the Start." (n.d.) <https://thehermitage.com/learn/andrew-jackson/orphan/>, accessed 12 February 2018.

<sup>2</sup> *Andrew Jackson - Good, Evil, and the Presidency*, DVD, directed by Carl Byker and Mitch, produced by KCET, Wilson (PBS Home Video, 2007).

<sup>3</sup> Andrew Jackson Foundation.

over 150 were wounded in such a manner they could not be moved, and 53 were taken prisoner by the British. The skirmish was eventually called the Waxhaw's Massacre, a conflict in which British Commander Lieutenant Colonel Banastre Tarleton gained the nickname "Bloody Ban" the "Butcher of Waxhaw's."<sup>4</sup>

Two years later, Andrew and his brother Robert were both captured and imprisoned by the British. Both brothers became gravely ill from smallpox during their incarceration. While in the custody of British forces, a British officer demanded young Andrew to polish his boots, a command which he refused. Andrew's defiance provoked the officer to slash young Jackson across the face with his sword, leaving a scar that would serve as a reminder of both his captivity and British hatred for the rest of his life.<sup>5</sup>

After a short imprisonment by the British, Andrew's mother Elizabeth was able to arrange for the release of her two boys. Both Andrew and Robert had become gravely ill with smallpox during their stay in prison. Shortly after their release Andrew's brother Robert died as a result of his illness.<sup>6</sup>

Once young Andrew had recovered, his mother journeyed to Charleston, South Carolina where she provided nursing assistance to sick and injured soldiers. However, in November of 1781 she contracted cholera and died leaving young Andrew Jackson an orphan. Fourteen years old and full of hatred, Andrew felt as if the British had taken away his family and destroyed his childhood.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> RevolutionaryWar, "The Battle of Waxhaws (Bufords Massacre)." (2017) <https://revolutionarywar.us/year-1780/battle-waxhaws-bufords-massacre/>. accessed 12 February 2018.

<sup>5</sup> *Andrew Jackson - Good, Evil, and the Presidency*, 2007.

<sup>6</sup> Andrew Jackson Foundation.

<sup>7</sup> Andrew Jackson Foundation.

After the Revolutionary War had concluded Andrew lived with various relatives, moving around and constantly getting into mischief. Troubled, fearless, and full of fire, young Andrew became addicted to horse racing, gambling, and playing cards, to the extent he gambled away his entire inheritance left to him by his grandfather.<sup>8</sup>

Andrew Jackson completed his schooling and made the decision to study law. He moved to Salisbury, North Carolina sometime around 1784, where he served as a lawyer's apprentice for three years before obtaining his own license to practice. It was shortly thereafter when, a now twenty-year-old, Jackson moved to the frontier town of Nashville, Tennessee where he became a prosecuting attorney.<sup>9</sup>

While in Nashville Andrew met Rachel (Donelson) Robards, who was at the time married to Kentucky native Lewis Robards. Both Andrew Jackson and Rachel Robards shortly thereafter fell in love and eloped to the southern town of Natchez, Mississippi where they were married. Upon the couple's return to Nashville, Andrew began to broaden his accolades by speculating on land and raising race horses.<sup>10</sup>

It wasn't long until the public saw Andrew Jackson as a potential man of the people. This was illustrated when Andrew Jackson was elected as Tennessee's representative to Congress in 1796 at the age of twenty-nine years old. However, his stay in Washington was short lived. Andrew found that Washington D.C. politics was littered with backroom deals and favoritism, qualities that he associated with corruption. Wanting nothing to do with such, he resigned his office before the end of his term and returned home to Nashville, Tennessee.<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> *Andrew Jackson - Good, Evil, and the Presidency*, 2007.

<sup>9</sup> Andrew Jackson Foundation.

<sup>10</sup> *Andrew Jackson - Good, Evil, and the Presidency*, 2007.

<sup>11</sup> *Andrew Jackson - Good, Evil, and the Presidency*, 2007.

By the early 1800's Andrew had again settled back into his comfortable Nashville lifestyle at his Hermitage home, where he continued raising horses, racing, business ventures, and gambling. However, this was soon disrupted in 1806 by a man disgruntled over a gambling debt. Charles Dickinson was upset with his losses and made a number of derogatory comments about Andrew's wife Rachel. As a result, Andrew challenged Dickinson to a duel that took place on May 30<sup>th</sup>, resulting in the death of Dickinson and severe wounding of Andrew Jackson.<sup>12</sup>

Shot in the chest, Andrew Jackson carried Dickinson's bullet inside his body from that point until the end of his life. When asked how he managed to accurately shoot down Dickinson, he replied; "If he had shot me through the brain, sir, I should have killed him."<sup>13</sup> Thus, giving truth to Andrew Jackson's quote; "I was born for a storm, and a calm does not suit me."<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>12</sup> *Andrew Jackson - Good, Evil, and the Presidency*, 2007.

<sup>13</sup> Conradt, Stacy. "12 of Old Hickory's Best Lines." (23 July 2014) <http://mentalfloss.com/article/57837/quatable-andrew-jackson-12-old-hickorys-best-lines>. accessed 12 February 2018.

<sup>14</sup> Conradt.



### **Andrew Jackson - The Soldier and War Hero**

Life for Andrew Jackson would again take a dramatic turn just six years later during the summer of 1812. While Andrew Jackson was in the comfort of his beloved home in Nashville, Tennessee, a number of issues with Native Americans took place miles to the north in a section of the old Northwest Territory.<sup>15</sup>

This northern disruption began just a year prior in 1811, with a local Shawnee Indian chief named Tecumseh. Tecumseh realized the threat of white western expansion and took swift and immediate preventative action against western encroachment. He traveled to a number of tribes east of the Mississippi River in an effort to gain unified Indian support in suppressing westernization of white settlers.<sup>16</sup>

However, during one of Tecumseh's travels a conflict erupted in his home village near the Tippecanoe River in which a number of British firearms were recovered thus, confirming strong ties existed between the British and the local Native American tribes. Such fear coupled with a number of British led conflicts on the high-seas, such as impressment of American sailors into the British Navy, provoked the United States Congress to declare war against Great Britain and their allied Native Americans on June 8<sup>th</sup> of 1812.<sup>17</sup>

Seeing a chance to affect his own personal resolve against the British who had orphaned him, Andrew Jackson volunteered for a commission as a military officer to President James Madison. However, his request fell upon deaf ears due to Andrew's hot temper as well as his

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<sup>15</sup> *War of 1812*, DVD. directed by Lawrence Holt, Diane Garey, and David C. Rotterman. Produced by John Grant. (New York, NY: Western New York Public Broadcasting Association, 2011).

<sup>16</sup> *War of 1812*, 2011.

<sup>17</sup> *War of 1812*, 2011.

association with Aaron Burr. His dream of retribution was given away to William Hull, who was appointed by President Madison as General and Commander of American forces.<sup>18</sup>

Initially, the War of 1812 went very badly for the United States, especially on August 16<sup>th</sup> of 1812 when General William Hull surrendered Ft. Detroit. General Hull and roughly 2,200 men relinquished their arms to British General Isaac Brock's small band of 1,000 men and Tecumseh's band of 600 Native Americans.<sup>19</sup>

With such losses by militia, thoughts of British retaliation for the Revolutionary War, and the concentration of fighting involving both British and Native Americans in the North; political leaders feared the possibility of flanking by the British. Officials felt the British might attempt a similar military action in the south by aiding the southern Indian tribes. Therefore, on November 1<sup>st</sup>, 1812 William Blount, Governor of the Territory South of the River Ohio, authorized Andrew Jackson to assemble a force of militia and proceed south on an expedition into Creek Indian territory.

In a letter from Governor Blount to Andrew Jackson he states: Sir, I am required by Brigadier Genl. Harrison who acts under the Authority of the President of the United States to hold two Regiments of the Militia of the 2d. Division detached conformably to the Act of the 10th. of April 1812, in readiness to march as soon as they may be called for...<sup>20</sup>

Upon receiving orders, Jackson led his men as far south as Natchez, Mississippi but returned in the spring of 1813 to no avail. However, during the journey back he was noted as

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<sup>18</sup> HISTORYNET. "Andrew Jackson." (n.d.) <http://www.historynet.com/andrew-jackson>. accessed 22 March 2018.

<sup>19</sup> *War of 1812*, 2011.

<sup>20</sup> Blount, William, "Willie Blount to Andrew Jackson." (11 November 1812) [https://www.loc.gov/resource/maj.01010\\_0139\\_0141/?st=text](https://www.loc.gov/resource/maj.01010_0139_0141/?st=text). accessed 22 March 2018.

walking the entire distance. Thus, gaining Andrew Jackson the nickname “Old Hickory” since his men felt he was as tough as a hickory stick.<sup>21</sup>

Shortly after Andrew’s return, news of a victory in the North by General William Henry Harrison spread into the south. In May of 1813 during a siege on Ft. Meigs, General Harrison and his men were able to repel nearly 900 British and 1,250 of Tecumseh’s Native American warriors. Thus, indicating that a possible change may be on the horizon.<sup>22</sup>

When news of the white man’s victory reached the southern Indian Nations, an unrest and need for vengeance spread across the various Indian tribes. One such tribe was the Creek Indians led by Tenskwatawa, a follower of Shawnee chief Tecumseh, who was part of what was known as the “Red Stick” faction.<sup>23</sup>

In response Tenskwatawa, on August 30<sup>th</sup> of 1813, led 700 Creek warriors on a raid against Ft. Mims in southern Alabama. The result was the slaughter of nearly 250 men, women, and children as well as the capture of an additional 100 citizens. Such a raid on United States soil infuriated the American public. Thus, provoking a call for immediate action.<sup>24</sup>

By October of that year, Andrew Jackson and his force of 1,000 Tennessee Militia and 1,300 Tennessee Cavalry had entered northern Alabama, with orders in hand by Governor William Blount to engage the Red Stick Creeks whenever possible. Initially, Jackson’s campaign

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<sup>21</sup> *Andrew Jackson - Good, Evil, and the Presidency*, 2007.

<sup>22</sup> *War of 1812*, 2011.

<sup>23</sup> Waselkov, Gregory A. “Fort Mims Battle and Massacre.” (2007)  
<http://www.encyclopediaofalabama.org/article/h-1121>. accessed 19 March 2018.

<sup>24</sup> Waselkov.

was marked by a few small skirmishes, one which produced a small victory at Tullusahatchee as well as a defeat at Talladega. However, Jackson's luck would soon change.<sup>25</sup>

On the morning of March 27<sup>th</sup> of 1814, General Andrew Jackson and his army of Tennessee militia attacked a large Creek village situated in a bend of the Tallapoosa River. The village was fortified by the river on three sides along with a series of impregnable breast works along the front. However, this proved to be no obstacle for Jackson and his men who killed more than 800 Red Stick warriors, burned the village, and took more than 350 prisoners.<sup>26</sup>

At the end of the battle a soldier under Jackson's command called the Tallapoosa River, the river of blood. It was said the Tallapoosa River ran red the entire night from the blood of the dead at Horseshoe Bend. Despite the brutality, the victory of Horseshoe Bend thrust Andrew Jackson's view as a military leader to a new level within the public's eye. Americans saw how Andrew Jackson was a man who exhibited a fire, passion, and leadership that was unmatched. He was a man who was not dissuaded in his actions and possessed a strong desire to win despite the potential costs.<sup>27</sup>

But, there was a side of Jackson demonstrated after Horseshoe Bend that is not well known. Despite the brutality of the fight and the dark feelings that Andrew Jackson fostered for the Native Americans during Jackson's Red Stick campaign, he and his wife adopted a Creek

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<sup>25</sup> Braund, Kathryn, "Creek War of 1813-1814." (28 October 2008) <http://www.encyclopediaofalabama.org/article/h-1820>, accessed 22 March 2018.

<sup>26</sup> Jensen, Ove. "Battle of Horseshoe Bend." (2007) <http://www.encyclopediaofalabama.org/article/h-1044>. accessed 21 March 2018.

<sup>27</sup> *Andrew Jackson - Good, Evil, and the Presidency*, 2007.

child orphaned from the battle of Tullushatchee. Andrew Jackson noted in a letter to his wife that he had felt an unusual sympathy for the young child.<sup>28</sup>

Now with a second United States victory, the Madison administration knew the victories in both the North at the hands of General Harrison and the South under General Jackson would provoke the British into further military engagement. But, the administration was unsure as to Great Britain's measure of resolve. However, on the 24<sup>th</sup> and 25<sup>th</sup> of August 1814, their intentions were made perfectly clear when British forces marched into Washington, D.C. and burned the town.<sup>29</sup>

From Washington, D.C. British forces then proceeded along the Atlantic coast by ship to nearby Ft. McHenry in Baltimore, Maryland. On September 12<sup>th</sup> 4,500 British troops landed roughly eleven miles from Baltimore and proceeded to march toward Ft. McHenry while a number of British vessels proceeded in the same direction up the Patapsco River.<sup>30</sup>

While British ships of the line were engaged at Ft. McHenry, British General Robert Ross was engaged with nearly 15,000 Americans at a fortified location known as North Point. Despite constant bombardment by the British, the Americans were able to hold the ground and repel the British attack.<sup>31</sup>

Despite the victory at Ft. McHenry, the Madison administration once again feared the battle was far from completion. They felt the only location that possessed the greatest importance to Great Britain was the mouth of the Mississippi River. For the administration, it only made

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<sup>28</sup> National Park Service. "Lyncoya." (n.d.) <https://www.nps.gov/people/lyncoya.htm>. accessed 01 March 2018.

<sup>29</sup> *War of 1812*, 2011.

<sup>30</sup> National Park Service. "The Battle for Baltimore." (2015)

<https://www.nps.gov/stsp/learn/historyculture/battlebaltimore.htm>. accessed 10 March 2018.

<sup>31</sup> National Park Service.

sense for the British to lay siege on America's richest city which controlled commerce to the interior of the United States.<sup>32</sup> Therefore, an immediate order was issued for General Andrew Jackson to proceed to New Orleans at once to defend the port. Prior to leaving his home in Tennessee, Andrew told his wife "I owe to Britain a debt of retaliatory vengeance, should our forces meet I trust I shall pay the debt."<sup>33</sup>

The strong desire to fight along with the reputation of Andrew Jackson was such that hundreds of volunteers hurried to New Orleans. Proud of one's family history, a Kentuckian in 1906 once wrote of his maternal grandfather Capt. John C. Dodds' journey from Western Kentucky to the city of New Orleans to fight with Jackson. "... on the 28<sup>th</sup> day of Oct. 1814, he marched his company from Princeton to Eddyville, where they took flat boats for the mouth of the river, joining a similar flotilla from Louisville of 2,500 Kentuckians, under General Thomas and Adair. His company numbered 86 men and became company C, Mitchusson's 14<sup>th</sup> Kentucky Infantry..."<sup>34</sup> Joining my own 5<sup>th</sup> great maternal grandfather who proudly volunteered to serve under General Jackson's command in one of Mitchusson's regiments.

Upon Jackson's arrival in New Orleans he began to organize his nearly 4,500 troops which consisted of militia, various Native Americans, slaves, free blacks, and pirates. By the end of December 1814, a few trivial skirmishes had already occurred. But, on the morning of January 8<sup>th</sup>, 1815 the largest and most significant battle occurred when Jackson and his 4,500 irregulars

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<sup>32</sup> Pickels, Tim. *New Orleans 1815 - Andrew Jackson Crushes the British*. (Westport, CT:Osprey Publishing Limited, 2004). 11-38.

<sup>33</sup> HISTORY - A&E Television Networks, LLC. "Battle of New Orleans." (2018) <https://www.history.com/topics/battle-of-new-orleans>. accessed 01 March 2018.

<sup>34</sup> Valentine, Austin. *The Westward Migration - The History of the John Frederick Croft Family*. (Marion, KY: Austin Valentine Jr., 2015). 522.

faced off against an overwhelming force of British regulars numbering more than twice their size.<sup>35</sup>

Even though the British greatly outnumbered Jackson's forces, the confrontation was a complete American victory resulting in nearly 2,000 British casualties. The victory at New Orleans thrust General Andrew Jackson into the spotlight as a national hero. A new-found fame that dubbed him the national savior, which fourteen years later led him to the Presidency of the United States.<sup>36</sup>

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<sup>35</sup> Pickels, 11-38.

<sup>36</sup> HISTORY - A&E Television Networks, LLC.

### Andrew Jackson – The President

In 1824 General Andrew Jackson ran for President of the United States against John Quincy Adams, son of former President John Adams and Kentucky native Henry Clay the current Speaker of the House. Both Clay and Adams knew that it was doubtful Andrew Jackson even had a chance at the office since the election of a President was not in the hands of the people. Especially since many in Washington politics felt Jackson was unfit for the executive office.<sup>37</sup>

Both Clay and Adams were astounded to find that Andrew Jackson had won the popular vote. However, after the electoral votes were divided among the candidates neither had secured the majority vote. With Clay coming in last and Jackson and Adams tied, the final decision between Adams and Jackson was placed into the hands of the House of Representatives.<sup>38</sup>

Henry Clay, who was out of the election, placed his electoral support behind John Quincy Adams who was elected as President. In return, Adams appointed Henry Clay as the Secretary of State. This infuriated Jackson supporters who felt as if Adams had been elected through corruption and insider politics. Thus, making Andrew Jackson's determination to become President that much greater and Americans desire to vote that much stronger.<sup>39</sup>

When the 1828 election came to pass, Andrew Jackson won in a landslide. However, his campaign was not without obstacles. Prior to the election a friend of Henry Clay published a copy of Rachel Jackson's divorce papers from her previous marriage to Lewis Robards. Illustrating to the public that Andrew Jackson had an affair with a married woman, in an effort to

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<sup>37</sup> *Andrew Jackson - Good, Evil, and the Presidency*, 2007.

<sup>38</sup> *Andrew Jackson - Good, Evil, and the Presidency*, 2007.

<sup>39</sup> *Andrew Jackson - Good, Evil, and the Presidency*, 2007.



give the Jackson campaign a black eye. This did little to affect the election but infuriated Andrew Jackson.<sup>40</sup>

Andrew's wife Rachel was dismayed that she had come under attack by others for falling in love with Andrew Jackson. She wrote: "I would rather be a doorkeeper in the house of God than to live in that palace at Washington."<sup>41</sup> And so, December 22<sup>nd</sup>, 1828 twenty days after the election, Rachel (Donelson) Robards-Jackson died from heart failure at their Nashville, Tennessee home. Quite possibly from the undo strain of the challenges in Washington, D.C. yet to come.<sup>42</sup>

One interesting fact that was not exploited during the 1828 election was Andrew and Rachel Jackson's adoption of an orphaned Creek Indian boy they named Lincoya Jackson. This may have been due to the fact that Lincoya had passed away from tuberculosis just months prior to the election.<sup>43</sup>

Upset with the passing of his dear wife and adopted son, he laid their bodies to rest in the garden behind their Nashville home. Andrew Jackson then boarded a steamboat in Nashville, Tennessee for his lengthy journey to Washington, D.C.

Once Andrew took office he shook the Washington establishment in a number of ways. His first item of business was to fire a number of federal employees and cabinet members, which

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<sup>40</sup> *Andrew Jackson - Good, Evil, and the Presidency*, 2007.

<sup>41</sup> Jackson, Rachel "Rachel Jackson Quotes." (n.d.) [http://www.azquotes.com/author/23511-Rachel\\_Jackson](http://www.azquotes.com/author/23511-Rachel_Jackson). accessed 22 March 2018.

<sup>42</sup> *Andrew Jackson - Good, Evil, and the Presidency*, 2007.

<sup>43</sup> National Park Service.

the Washington elite deemed as untouchable. These individuals were replaced with members of his own choosing, which turned the Washington establishment upside down.<sup>44</sup>

While in office Andrew Jackson tackled a number of issues such as the near secession and civil war of the southern states over taxes, a Washington sex scandal surrounding his Secretary of State, abolitionist calls for the extinction of slavery, as well as concerns over corporate industrialization destroying the American working-class. However, none of these issues were as controversial as a single piece of legislation passed into law on May 28<sup>th</sup> of 1830.<sup>45</sup>

This particular bill was known as the Indian Removal Act of 1830. It called for the forced removal of nearly 250,000 Native Americans from approximately 85 tribes residing east of the Mississippi River to lands to the west, in present day Oklahoma.<sup>46</sup>

In a speech to Congress Andrew Jackson exclaims: "It gives me pleasure to announce to Congress that the benevolent policy of the Government, steadily pursued for nearly thirty years, in relation to the removal of the Indians beyond the white settlements is approaching to a happy consummation."<sup>47</sup>

Andrew Jackson's justification to Congress for the act was: "What good man would prefer a country covered with forests and ranged by a few thousand savages to our extensive Republic, studded with cities, towns, and prosperous farms embellished with all the

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<sup>44</sup> *Andrew Jackson - Good, Evil, and the Presidency*, 2007.

<sup>45</sup> *Andrew Jackson - Good, Evil, and the Presidency*, 2007.

<sup>46</sup> *Trail of Tears*, DVD, directed by Chip Richie, produced by Chip Richie and Steven R. Heape (Octapixx Worldwide Distribution, 2006).

<sup>47</sup> National Park Service. "Andrew Jackson's Speech to Congress on Indian Removal." (06 December 1830) [https://www.nps.gov/museum/tmc/MANZ/handouts/Andrew\\_Jackson\\_Annual\\_Message.pdf](https://www.nps.gov/museum/tmc/MANZ/handouts/Andrew_Jackson_Annual_Message.pdf). accessed 11 February 2018.

improvements which art can devise or industry execute, occupied by more than 12,000,000 happy people, and filled with all the blessings of liberty, civilization, and religion?”<sup>48</sup>

Jackson went on to state that Indian removal to the West would “...separate the Indians from immediate contact with settlements of whites; free them from the power of the States; enable them to pursue happiness in their own way and under their own rude institutions...”<sup>49</sup> Thus, making the Indian Removal Act appear as a humanitarian effort to protect the Native Americans and their culture.

However, Jackson’s statement seems to be very contradictory to the Native American viewpoint on their society and system of living. One such view of Native American life in the late 18<sup>th</sup> to early 19<sup>th</sup> century comes from an autobiography published in 1833. The author’s name was Blackhawk, an Indian Chief of the Sauk Indian Tribe of North-Western Illinois. Despite his personal lack of involvement in the Indian Removal Act, Blackhawk’s autobiography is one of the best documented sources of Native American life prior to the acts approval.<sup>50</sup>

In his writings, Blackhawk spoke of the abundance of food that his people possessed as well as the challenges he and his people faced by westward expansion. In his writings he illustrates a somewhat happy lifestyle free from hunger and white encroachment. With regard to hunger he stated: “The rapids of Rock river furnished us with an abundance of excellent fish, and the land being very fertile, never failed to produce good crops of corn, beans, pumkins, and squashes. We always had plenty; our children never cried from hunger, neither were our people in want.”<sup>51</sup>

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<sup>48</sup> National Park Service.

<sup>49</sup> National Park Service.

<sup>50</sup> Black Hawk. *Life of Black Hawk or Ma-ka-tai-me-she-kia-kiak* (Carlisle: Applewood Books, 1834), 21-25.

<sup>51</sup> Black Hawk, 89.

Blackhawk also wrote of how friendly he and his people were initially treated by white settlers, but he expresses how the mood quickly changed despite every effort they forwarded to live in harmony. He spoke of how one winter the white settlers simply moved in and took without asking while they were away at their winter hunting grounds. "I received information that three families of whites had come to our village and destroyed some of our lodges, were making fences and dividing our cornfields for their own use. They were quarreling among themselves about their lines of division..."<sup>52</sup>

Blackhawk stated upon return home, which took ten days of travel, "...I went to my lodge and saw a family occupying it. I wished to talk to them, but they could not understand me."<sup>53</sup> Indicating the initial Native American lifestyle, in their opinion, was perfectly fine without settler interference. It wasn't until the unlawful and unjustified encroachment of white settlers did problems for Native inhabitants become evident.

This sentiment of Blackhawk and his people were very similar to that of the Cherokee Indian tribes who were residing in the Southeast portion of the United States. By the early part of the 1800's, most of the Cherokee towns had been left abandoned and roughly two-thirds of Cherokee families had become uprooted by American expansion.<sup>54</sup>

Many of the remaining Cherokee, in an effort to gain white support, adopted white ways. Most of whom, just like white settlers, lived in homes or plantations, farmed, and even owned slaves. The Cherokee in particular had their own newspaper and elected officials, demonstrating how they could assemble and function as their own independent society.<sup>55</sup>

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<sup>52</sup> Black Hawk, 104.

<sup>53</sup> Black Hawk, 104-105.

<sup>54</sup> Satz, Ronald N. "The Cherokee Trail of Tears: A Sesquicentennial Perspective." *Georgia Historical Quarterly* 73, no 3 (1989):431-466.

<sup>55</sup> *Trail of Tears*, 2006.

However, when the Indian Removal Act was passed these individuals along with thousands of other Native Americans residing east of the Mississippi River were forced to leave their homes and move west. Some of whom left without resistance, but others did not leave so easily.<sup>56</sup>

As a result, thousands of Native Americans from various tribes such as Cherokee, Chickasaw, Choctaw, Creek, and Seminole were forced to relocate to the Oklahoma Territory on lands appropriated by the United States government. The affair cost the lives of many who embarked on the long journey west.

Out of the Cherokee Indian nation over 15,000 Cherokee relocated, out of which nearly 4000 died in route to their new home. The path on which the journey took place coined the name “Trail of Tears.” A name that would be forever associated Native Americans and their heartbreaking and deadly journey West. Raising the question, why did Andrew Jackson force the Native Americans through such pain and misery by enacting the Indian Removal Act of 1830?

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<sup>56</sup> *Trail of Tears*, 2006.

### **Andrew Jackson – The Businessman**

One of the least publicized aspects of Andrew Jackson's life is his various business dealings. It is common knowledge that Andrew Jackson became a lawyer, moving to Nashville, Tennessee in October of 1788 to practice law and serve as a Circuit Riding-Judge for the state of Tennessee.<sup>57</sup>

It is also readily known that Andrew and Rachel Jackson's farm was a large cotton plantation which retained over 150 slaves, placing Jackson into the class of the planter elite. But, most have no idea about some of the other transactions in which Andrew Jackson had ties.<sup>58</sup>

On February 16<sup>th</sup> of 1801, Andrew Jackson established a business relationship with Thomas Watson and John Hutchings. The venture was known as the Jackson, Watson, & Hutchings Mercantile.<sup>59</sup>

The three business partners; Jackson, Watson, & Hutchings owned and operated a distillery and cotton gin as well as stores in Hunter's Hill, Lebanon, and Gallatin, Tennessee. The cotton gin was located on the property of Thomas Watson, while the distillery was located on the property of Andrew Jackson.<sup>60</sup>

However, by August of 1803 Jackson dissolved his partnership with Thomas Watson but retained his relationship with John Hutchings. This wasn't the only merchant business in which Andrew Jackson had an association. On April 19<sup>th</sup>, 1804 Andrew obtained a license to operate a

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<sup>57</sup> Library of Congress. "Family Life, the Law, Business, and Politics: 1767-1811." (2018)  
<https://www.loc.gov/collections/andrew-jackson-papers/articles-and-essays/andrew-jackson-timeline-1767-1845/family-life-the-law-business-and-politics-1767-1811/>. accessed 22 March 2018.

<sup>58</sup> Library of Congress.

<sup>59</sup> Library of Congress.

<sup>60</sup> Remini, Robert V. *Andrew Jackson: The Course of American Empire, 1767-1821*. (Baltimore, MD: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1998).

retail store named Andrew Jackson & Company.<sup>61</sup> However, during 1804 he nearly went bankrupt and was forced to sell his large plantation and purchase a smaller farm, which he called “The Hermitage.” Jackson continued to focus on his business ventures until the onset of the War of 1812.<sup>62</sup>

After the war had concluded and during his Presidency, Andrew Jackson began to show an interest in mining, particularly in Western Kentucky. In 1835 a group of men which included President Andrew Jackson opened a silver mine in Livingston County, Kentucky, also known as the Illinois-Kentucky Fluorspar district. The mine, known as the Columbia mine, was noted as having massive concentrations of fluorite, galena crystals, smithsonite, and smoky quartz crystals.<sup>63</sup>

Jackson’s interest in minerals also included Iron Ore, which was a necessary component of a rising industry in the young United States. According to Gideon D. Cobb, Andrew Jackson instructed him that Iron Ore lay in the hills along the Cumberland River near the present-day Crittenden County Kentucky town of Dycusburg. Jackson was correct in his statements to Cobb, the area ended up being extremely rich in Iron Ore. Therefore, Gideon established a very productive Iron Furnace which at times produced up to 1300 ton of iron per year.<sup>64</sup>

A few years after his father’s death, Andrew Jackson’s son Andrew Jackson Jr. established an iron furnace in Western Kentucky. The furnace was known as the Jackson

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<sup>61</sup> Library of Congress.

<sup>62</sup> HISTORYNET.

<sup>63</sup> MINDAT. "Columbia Mine, Marion, Crittenden Co., Kentucky." (20 March 2018) <https://www.mindat.org/loc-10255.html>. accessed 22 March 2018.

<sup>64</sup> Kentucky Historical Society. "Historical Marker Database Search." (n.d.) <http://migration.kentucky.gov/kyhs/hmdb/MarkerSearch.aspx?mode=All>. accessed 22 March 2018.

Furnace and, like Gideon Cobb's furnace, was located in the same county in Western Kentucky near the present-day town of Tolu. Prior to the furnace's construction, Kentucky ranked 3<sup>rd</sup> in the nation in Iron production in the 1830's.<sup>65</sup> It is unknown if Andrew's comments to Gideon Cobb had any bearing on his son's decision to establish an iron furnace. However, it is a striking coincidence that Andrew's son would proceed down a path that his father had recommended to a friend.

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<sup>65</sup> Kentucky Historical Society.



### Andrew Jackson's Conversion

Another least discussed aspect of Andrew Jackson's life, was his view of God and his association with religion. Jackson who was raised in a Presbyterian home, appears to have exhibited little religious interest until the later part of his life. However, his younger life was not void of religion. In a few of his early letters he made references to God such as a letter referencing his advance on Spanish Florida. "I trust in God, it will enable me to be upon my legs until we are in the peacable possession of Floridas."<sup>66</sup>

However, it wasn't until the fall of 1818 when Andrew Jackson began to exhibit signs of change. In October of 1818 Peter Cartwright, who was noted as a controversial circuit minister, preached a revival service in Nashville, Tennessee. While addressing the congregation and quoting from (**Mark 8:36**) "For what shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?"<sup>67</sup> General Andrew Jackson entered the service just as Cartwright began his quote, to find the revival was full and not an empty seat existed.

Andrew Jackson, who had been noted for his long walk back from Alabama during the war, stood throughout the entire service. During the revival Cartwright indirectly conveyed to Jackson that men like he were no different than any other man, and such men would be damned to Hell just as quickly.<sup>68</sup>

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<sup>66</sup> RAAB Collection. "Preparing to Invade the Floridas." (13 December 1819)  
<https://www.raabcollection.com/andrew-jackson-autograph/preparing-invade-floridas-andrew-jackson-has-trust-in-god>. accessed 03 March 2018.

<sup>67</sup> Grady, Dr. William P. "The Conversion of President Andrew Jackson." (n.d.)  
<https://www.biblebelievers.com/Grady1.html>. accessed 23 March 2018.

<sup>68</sup> Grady.

Later the following day Andrew Jackson ran into Cartwright on the street, it was noted that Jackson simply smiled, reached out his hand, and told him: "Mr. Cartwright, you are a man after my own heart..."<sup>69</sup> He also told Cartwright that "... a minister of Jesus Christ ought to love everybody and fear no moral man."<sup>70</sup>

By 1823, General Jackson appears to have taken a great interest in religion. This was illustrated when he along with several of his neighbors donated money to build a neighborhood church, which was named Ephesus Church. The 150 square foot brick structure was completed in January of 1824, constructed on land donated by Andrew Jackson.<sup>71</sup>

Jackson's new-found interest in religion and belief in God is further substantiated by the following quote in a May 30<sup>th</sup>, 1830 reply to a letter from Vice President John C. Calhoun. Jackson's letter states: "Sir: Your communication of the 29<sup>th</sup> instant was handed me this morning as I was going to church, and of course was not read until I returned."<sup>72</sup>

Jackson also states in the letter "Motives are to be inferred from actions and judged of by our God."<sup>73</sup> Thus, indicating that Andrew Jackson now placed his religious views before his electoral duties and demonstrates an acceptance of God and God's judgment.

Past this point, little is written about Andrew Jackson's religious rituals until after he left the White House. In fact, the first year of Jackson's retirement was fairly quiet until 1838 when

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<sup>69</sup> Grady.

<sup>70</sup> Grady.

<sup>71</sup> The Andrew Jackson Foundation. "Andrew Jackson's Hermitage Home of the People's President." (2018) <https://thehermitage.com/learn/mansion-grounds/garden-grounds/hermitage-church/>. accessed 23 March 2018.

<sup>72</sup> Jackson, Andrew. "Andrew Jackson to John Caldwell Cahoun." (30 May 1830) [http://international.loc.gov/service/mss/maj/06162/06162\\_0001\\_0004.pdf](http://international.loc.gov/service/mss/maj/06162/06162_0001_0004.pdf). accessed 01 March 2018.

<sup>73</sup> Jackson.

the former President decided to fulfill a promise which he had made to his dear wife Rachel before her death.

Rachel Jackson wanted her husband to join a church once he was free of his political engagements. Therefore, Jackson officially joined the Ephesus Church where he and the members made several improvements. In 1839, the Ephesus Church officially became known as the Hermitage Presbyterian Church.<sup>74</sup>

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<sup>74</sup> Andrew Jackson Foundation.

### Conclusion

Andrew Jackson is a hard individual to understand and is one whose decisions and actions exhibit no true repeating pattern and very few rational qualities. Jackson, in his early years, clearly demonstrates a hatred and desire for vengeance toward the British and their Native American allies. This sentiment stemmed from the loss of his family during the Revolutionary War which left him orphaned as a teenage boy.

Jackson's hatred and desire for retribution against the British and their allies is clearly exhibited in a comment that Andrew made to his wife Rachel. Just prior to Andrew leaving for New Orleans during the War of 1812, he told his wife: "I owe to Britain a debt of retaliatory vengeance, should our forces meet I trust I shall pay the debt."<sup>75</sup>

His desire for vengeance is further substantiated by his actions during the Battle of Horseshoe Bend when Jackson and his men killed hundreds of Creek Indians and burned their village to the ground. It was a massacre that was so brutal the Tallapoosa River which surrounded the village ran red and was nicknamed the river of blood by soldiers under Jackson's command.<sup>76</sup> Thus, reinforcing Jackson's hatred toward those he deemed as an enemy.

Based only on the information above, if one was to ask if Andrew Jackson's motivation for the Indian Removal Act of 1830 was related to a personal hatred, the answer would be absolutely without doubt. But, based on the research herein Andrew Jackson was more complicated in his ideals than that of the fiery young soldier full of hatred and rage.

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<sup>75</sup> HISTORY - A&E Television Networks, LLC.

<sup>76</sup> *Andrew Jackson - Good, Evil, and the Presidency*, 2007.

Andrew Jackson underwent a moral and philosophical change at some point in the middle of his life. One cannot be certain as to the actual cause of the change, but the reason can be speculated to a certain degree of accuracy. This change in Andrew Jackson appears to have begun near the end of his southern Indian campaign. The event that triggered this change may have been centered around General Jackson's adoption of an orphaned Creek Indian boy.

During one of the battles, Andrew Jackson found a young Creek Indian child on the battlefield next to the child's dead mother. Andrew and Rachel adopted the young boy and named him Lyncoya Jackson. From that point on Andrew Jackson took great interest in the child's well-being.<sup>77</sup>

It was at this time that I feel Andrew Jackson saw a vision of himself being orphaned by progress, expansion, and greed. It is my opinion that Andrew Jackson realized his own personal actions of running rough shot over the Native Americans mimicked the British who had in turn conducted similar actions years earlier. However, this did not affect Andrew Jackson wholeheartedly. He still conducted military operations during the Battle of New Orleans in 1815 and the seizure of Florida from 1816 to 1819.<sup>78</sup>

However, this wasn't the first sign of change in Andrew Jackson's life. Another example occurred during the Presidential election of 1828. A friend of Henry Clay began a series of personal attacks on his wife Rachel in an effort to discredit Jackson.<sup>79</sup> The Andrew Jackson before the War of 1812 would have most likely challenged Henry Clay and his friend to a duel as he did years before with Charles Dickinson.

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<sup>77</sup> Andrew Jackson Foundation.

<sup>78</sup> *Andrew Jackson - Good, Evil, and the Presidency*, 2007.

<sup>79</sup> *Andrew Jackson - Good, Evil, and the Presidency*, 2007.

One must keep in mind that Jackson challenged Dickinson as the result of a comments heard by only a select few individuals. Whereas, Clay's friend had published information that had been viewed and discussed by thousands. Thus, illustrating that Andrew Jackson's mindset and thirst for vengeance may have started to dissipate.

This event with Clay occurred five years after Andrew Jackson's endeavor in constructing the Ephesus Church on his property in Nashville.<sup>80</sup> This also took place after Andrew Jackson's interaction with reverend Peter Cartwright, which may have opened the eyes of Andrew Jackson to God. Despite the possible causes for his new behavior, the fact remains that Andrew Jackson exhibited a totally different mindset than was once illustrated in his younger years.

Once he took office, it appears Andrew Jackson began to see other injustices such as the birth of Corporate Industry resulting in the death of the Craftsman. This was a time when the young United States was progressing faster than the country's means would allow. His disgust with big business and industrialization is illustrated by the strong stance Jackson took against the National Bank and Corporations.<sup>81</sup> Jackson felt that a business or organization should have someone to hold responsible, such unaccountability was capable of destroying the lives of those who built the country and threaten the American economy.

During his administration, Andrew Jackson also saw the steady encroachment of white settlers into Native American lands. One example was a Gold rush in the southeast which caused problems between the local Native Americans and incoming white settlers. Despite Native

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<sup>80</sup> HISTORY. "Andrew Jackson." (2017) <http://www.history.com/topics/us-presidents/andrew-jackson>. accessed 10 February 2018.

<sup>81</sup> *Andrew Jackson - Good, Evil, and the Presidency*, 2007.

American's best efforts to live together with the whites, they along with their rights were being extinguished at the hand of progress and expansion.<sup>82</sup>

Between westward expansion and industrial growth, Andrew Jackson's decision to relocate the Native Americans was his solution to two problems. The first was to avoid Native American extermination by the progress of man. The second was to avoid further conflicts between settlers and the Native Americans.

By moving Native Americans out of harm's way, I feel Andrew Jackson actually felt he was sacrificing the lives of a few Native Americans in an effort to preserve the lives and cultures of many. Thus, classifying the Indian Removal Act of 1830 as a preservation and humanitarian effort by in the eyes of Andrew Jackson.

This along with other actions throughout Jackson's life helps us to better understand James Parton's description of Andrew Jackson. Parton wrote: "Andrew Jackson, I am given to understand, was a patriot and a traitor. He was one of the greatest of generals, and wholly ignorant of the art of war. A writer brilliant, elegant, eloquent, and without being able to compose a correct sentence, or spell words of four syllables. The first of statesmen, he never devised, he never framed a measure. He was the most candid of men and was capable of the profoundest dissimulation. A most law-defying, law-obeying citizen. A stickler for discipline, he never hesitated to disobey his superior. A democratic aristocrat. An urbane savage. An atrocious saint."<sup>83</sup>

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<sup>82</sup> *Trail of Tears*, 2006.

<sup>83</sup> University of Groningen - Humanities Computing. "American History from the Revolution to Reconstruction and beyond." (2012) <http://www.let.rug.nl/usa/biographies/andrew-jackson/introduction-an-atrocious-saint-in-a-bewildering-era.php>. accessed 20 March 2018.

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