



## **S.C Hall of Fame Transcript**

### *Andrew Jackson*

Andrew Jackson was born near Waxhaws Creek in Lancaster County, South Carolina, on March 15th, 1767. His parents had immigrated to the New World from Northern Ireland.

Andrew Jackson always thought and believed and said that he was born in South Carolina.

The American Revolution came to the region in 1780 at the Battle of Waxhaws, or Buford's Massacre, fought about 16 miles from Jackson's home.

Andrew, barely a teenager, got his first taste of military action at the Battle of Hanging Rock.

That particular battle became important to Andrew Jackson because he was allowed to go with the soldiers, and he held their horses while the battle went on beyond him. So he was within earshot of hearing what was going on in the battle, and he could see the wounded coming back out. And it was during this time Andrew Jackson really developed his love of the military which would continue to follow him through the rest of his life.

None of Jackson's family survived the war.

In peacetime, Jackson earned a law degree and moved to Nashville, Tennessee, where he married, started a plantation, and dabbled in politics.

He was elected Major General of the Tennessee Militia, which was activated in the War of 1812. Jackson's men called their leader "Old Hickory" because of his discipline and toughness.

Jackson was a resourceful and very determined commander throughout the war. He garnered the loyalty of a substantial majority of his troops, and probably the absolute hatred of others—he was very hard on his men. He wasn't an easy general to fight for, but those who stuck it out ended up with a great deal of respect and affection for him.

Jackson was first sent to quell an Indian rebellion in Alabama, then went on to become the hero of the Battle of New Orleans.



The ironic thing is that neither Jackson nor his British counterpart knew that a peace treaty had already been signed over in Belgium. News of Jackson's victory and the news of the peace treaty arrived in Washington, D.C. about the same time. And as a result, Jackson was toasted as the savior of the nation and the man who guaranteed the rising glory of the republic.

Jackson rode this wave of popularity to be elected seventh President of the United States in 1828, and served two terms.

States were just beginning to allow the people to vote on Presidential candidates rather than just have their legislature choose. So it was possible for a candidate to just catch fire at the grass roots level, and that's what happened to Jackson.

Andrew Jackson believed government should serve the "will of the people." He also believed that to carry out the will of the people you needed a strong President. His administration made great strides carrying the young nation forward economically.

In the decade before Andrew Jackson took office, the real enduring political controversy throughout the United States was how much the government should intervene to help change the economy in a more commercial or industrial direction. These were years of the early Industrial Revolution. The factories wanted tariff protection. As transportation became more advanced, the railroad came along—the railroads wanted to organize themselves as corporations. There were banks. All these things required government intervention to get them going.

When rival and fellow South Carolinian John C. Calhoun threatened "nullification" of the tariff, Jackson did not hesitate to threaten his former home state with military force.

Jackson was a person of extraordinary strong personality. He almost never thought he was wrong. He certainly was not a "small d" democrat, in that he thought he should always consult the majority and do what they wanted. He thought he was the majority, in some sense. But he enjoyed such popularity, it's kind of easy to see.

But "Jacksonian democracy" did nothing to improve the standing of minorities such as American Indians.

From the very beginning of his administration Jackson was determined to remove all the Indians to west of the Mississippi. The most famous example is the expulsion of the Cherokees,



and the Cherokees were basically rounded up at gunpoint and sent out to Oklahoma. There wasn't enough food, blankets, medical supplies, and things of that nature to take care of people in the winter. And about ¼ of the Cherokees died on the way.

Jackson also failed to confront the issue that would eventually drive a wedge through the Union—slavery.

Sentiment for gradual emancipation was already out there. And in 1831, you began to get the appearance of true anti-slavery “radical” sentiment.

There were people who thought that slavery was fundamentally hostile to American free institutions and that we ought to find some way to do away with it.

In retirement, Andrew Jackson returned to his plantation in Nashville, “The Hermitage,” where he died June 8th, 1845.

He represented the movement of political power and economic activities to the west. He represented the rise of a self-made man, of a commoner, to wealth and prominence—probably the first kind of “rags to riches” story in American history.

He was the last President elected who was born in the colonial period. So he understood where America came from—its very beginning—and where it was headed.

Jackson's permanent accomplishment was to enshrine the so-called “will of the people” as the ultimate arbiter in American government and American society. When the principles of Jacksonian democracy are fully implemented and fairly enforced, most Americans are fully in favor of them and understand that they're indispensable.