

# NORTH CAROLINIANS *of* NOTE

## Andrew Jackson

*Though scarred, gained the presidency*

By Sonya Chudgar

Wars often leave emotional wounds, but for President Andrew Jackson, the Revolutionary War left a literal scar.

Jackson enlisted in the war in 1780, a hot-headed 13-year-old. He served in the Continental Army for a year, until he and his brother Robert were taken prisoner by the British in 1781.

While holding him captive, a British officer barked at Jackson to clean his boots. When Jackson refused, the officer slashed his saber across Jackson's face and hand.

Jackson was then 14. The scar would remain until he died.

Jackson was born on March 15, 1767. Both North Carolina and South Carolina claim to be Jackson's home state. The exact location was technically a backwoods settlement on the border, but since the state line had yet to be drawn, his birthplace is accepted as the Waxhaws.

Jackson's father passed away mere weeks before his birth, while the family was relocating to the Waxhaws from Pennsylvania.

The Revolutionary War would rob Jackson of the rest of his family.

His older brother Hugh died in 1779 after the Battle of Stono Ferry in South Carolina.

During their British imprisonment in 1781, which lasted only a few weeks, both Jackson and his brother Robert contracted smallpox. Though Jackson survived, Robert died within days of their release.

Later that year, Jackson's mother Betty traveled to Charleston to serve as a nurse during the war. She fell ill and died soon after her arrival.

For depriving him of his family, Jackson harbored resentment toward the British for the rest of his life.

After the war, Jackson resolved to try teaching grade school. After a few years, he decided it did not suit him. In 1784, the 17-year-old moved to Salisbury, N.C., to study law.

He passed the bar in September 1787 in North Carolina and soon became prosecuting officer for the Superior Court in Nashville, Tenn., which at the time was part of

North Carolina's Western District.

Tennessee was admitted to the Union in 1796 as the 16th state. Jackson became the state's first congressman. He served one year as a U.S. senator and six years as a judge of the Tennessee Supreme Court.

Jackson resumed his military career in 1802, when he was elected major general of the Tennessee militia.

He led two significant defeats during the War of 1812, first against the Creek Indians in 1814 and later against the British at the Battle of New Orleans in 1815.

Jackson's troops said that his resolute triumphs and strict discipline made him as tough as hickory, earning him the nickname Old Hickory.

In 1824, Jackson ran for president, participating in a mystifying election often referred to as the Stolen Election. Jackson faced three rivals and decisively won 41.3% of the popular vote. Since no candidate received a majority of the electoral vote, however, the election was thrown into the House of Representatives. John Quincy Adams won and became the sixth U.S. president.

But Jackson roared back in 1828, unseated Adams and became the first president not to come from a prominent family. Jackson was an everyman who clawed his way to the top.

Jackson sought to define his presidency with decisiveness. His decisions would lead unhappy constituents to regard "King Andrew" as a power-hungry, selfish leader.

"Jackson believed in a strong executive branch – as long as he was the executive," said Dr. Harry Watson, a history professor at UNC-Chapel Hill who has written three books on Jackson. "He would not have paced the floor at night thinking, 'should we have a strong president or not?' or 'what would James Madison have said about this?'"

He arranged an informal circle of his friends to use as advisers, and they were nicknamed the Kitchen Cabinet. They often ignored the officials in the elected Cabinet, a move that angered his political opponents.



Photo by Matthew Brady, [www.wikipedia.com](http://www.wikipedia.com)

Jackson's stance on a strong union put him at odds with the American Indians, whom he saw as trespassers on American land. He supported the Indian Removal Act in 1830, which forced the Indians west on a path they suitably nicknamed the Trail of Tears.

Watson said Jackson believed no matter what treaties the U.S. signed with an Indian tribe, the land was, by all rights, property of the U.S. and therefore, "He had no compunction at all in trying to force the Indians west of the Mississippi when the thought it was time for the Americans to take the land from them."

Jackson's term ended in 1837. He retired to his Tennessee plantation, the Hermitage.

He died on June 8, 1845, but before that, he achieved a historic first.

Photography had been invented in 1839. Photographer Mathew (correct spelling) Brady began gathering photos of famous Americans in 1845 to produce "The Gallery of Illustrious Americans" in 1850.

Jackson became the first of the U.S. presidents to be featured in the book. His photograph had one striking feature: a jagged scar across the left side of the face.

<http://iconicphotos.wordpress.com/2010/03/09/andrew-jackson-by-mathew-brady/>  
[www.sparknotes.com/biography/jackson/section1.html](http://www.sparknotes.com/biography/jackson/section1.html)

[www.notablebiographies.com/Ho-Jo/Jackson-Andrew.html](http://www.notablebiographies.com/Ho-Jo/Jackson-Andrew.html)

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Mathew Brady and His World. Time-Life Books.

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