

Name _____

Date _____

Andrew Jackson

When a boy is thirteen years old his thoughts often involve going fishing with his friends, working on the family farm and perhaps one day having a horse of his own. But the year was 1781 and for Andrew Jackson the thoughts of fishing, farming, and a horse couldn't be farther from what was on his mind. Andy and his older brother Robert were in the American Revolutionary War right up to their ears. They couldn't be soldiers like their older brother because they were too young. But they could be couriers to deliver messages from one American battle unit to another, on horseback. For Andy and Robert this was the least they could do in memory of their fallen older brother.

But the British caught the two young boys and intended to teach them a lesson. One British officer ordered Andy to clean and shine his boots. But the fiery teenager refused. In an attempt to show the young Andrew just who was in charge the officer swung his sword down upon him. However, the future president raised his arm to block the blow. The sword sunk all the way to the bone in Andy's arm and slashed open a gash on the side of his face. Reeling from his wounds Andy and his brother Robert were force marched to a prison camp some forty miles away. The conditions of the camp were horrible and both brothers caught smallpox. There were no medicines to treat this and the British were certainly in no mood to help the Jackson boys.

Their father had died just before Andrew was born so that left only Mrs. Jackson to find a way to save her two remaining sons. Having heard that the Americans and the British were about to exchange prisoners, Mrs. Jackson was at the camp when the time for the exchange came to be. With her two sons now back with her, Elizabeth Jackson began the long return trip to Waxhaw, an area that was between the two Carolinas.

Robert never lived to make it back home. He died and was buried on the trail. For weeks Andy, now the only son, rested as best he could, slowly recuperating from the disease and the terrible slashing he received from the British officer. The young nation needed everyone that could do anything to help. With Andy at home, Mrs. Jackson volunteered to look after sick and injured soldiers held on ships in the Charleston harbor.

Andrew Jackson (Cont'd)

Andrew Jackson was now barely fourteen, still recovering from war wounds and was about to lose the last remaining member of his family. Elizabeth Jackson contracted cholera from the sick men she tried to help. She too died from this disease and was buried, without as much as a tombstone to remember her, somewhere outside of Charleston.

Now Andy was completely alone but he fought to survive against boys and anyone else that he needed to. By some chance coincidence, one of Andrew's grandfathers left him a rather large amount of money. But the now wild Andrew took the money and lived an uncontrolled life in Charleston. Having no one to guide him he lost all of the money he inherited. Now he really had to settle down or starve. So he moved to Salisbury, North Carolina. Though only fifteen, he convinced a lawyer to let him study law in the attorney's office. Within five years Andy passed the requirements to become a lawyer. He was now just twenty years old but for such a very young man he had seen a lot hardship and conflict. He never forgot the slashing he took at the hands of the British officer.

Mr. Jackson moved even further west to the town of Nashville. But at this time in American history, Nashville was still in western North Carolina. Andrew was quite a figure with the scar on his face and his steel blue eyes. He was six feet one inch tall, but he weighed less than one hundred and forty five pounds.

This tall and lanky man served as the prosecutor for the western district of North Carolina and as a lawyer in the city of Nashville. Andy met his future wife while he was rooming in a boarding house owned by the girl's mother. By 1791 Andy and Rachel Robards became husband and wife but even this sweet moment was to be taken away. The new Mrs. Jackson had previously been married and thought that she was truly divorced from her prior husband. This was not the case and the Jackson's were married again in 1794. People were mean and evil to the new couple. For their entire lives Andy and Rachel lived under the cloud of her being accused of being an adulteress.

Andrew Jackson (Cont'd)

Within two years Mr. Jackson was serving with the convention group that wrote the constitution for the new State of Tennessee. He went on to be a member of the Tennessee House of Representatives.

He even was elected to the United States Senate but left that position to return home after only one year of service. Upon returning to Tennessee Andy Jackson became a justice on the superior court. He was a successful cotton farmer. By the year 1804 the Jackson's were living quite well on a new plantation that the man, who would one day become president, purchased. It would be fifteen long years, however, before the home he wanted for his beloved wife and their adopted son was actually finished. It was indeed a fine mansion.

Anger and turmoil continued to follow Mr. Jackson. He fought for the integrity of his wife and family and even found himself in a duel. Seriously wounded yet again, Andy Jackson shot and killed his opponent. He carried the lead ball that struck him near his heart for the rest of his life. By 1812 America was again at war with Britain. Andrew had been given the military rank of Major General in the Tennessee militia in the year 1797. Never one to turn from his duty or a fight, Major General Andrew Jackson led his militia of 2,000 men more than 800 miles to the city of Natchez, Mississippi. Rebuked by the military command there Andy led his men back home. He received the nickname of "Old Hickory" by his men because although due to his rank he could have had a horse, Andy walked so that soldiers who were ill could ride in his place. Yes Andrew Jackson was "tough as old hickory."

Just a year later Jackson and his men were fighting an Indian uprising in the region that one day would be called Alabama. For months the battle raged but the Creek Indian tribe finally lost to the more highly armed and provisioned Tennessee militia. Andrew gave no mercy to the surviving Indians and forced them into a very brutal treaty. At this time in American history the treatment of America's native people was very poor indeed.

Andrew Jackson (Cont'd)

For his valor and courage in this campaign, President Madison transferred Andrew Jackson's rank from the militia to the regular armed forces and furthermore charged him with the command of American forces fighting the British in the Southern United States.

The new general somehow learned of the pathway that the British forces were going to take as they prepared to march on New Orleans. General Jackson was prepared. Even though he and his men were outnumbered two to one, Andrew Jackson had plans for the British. Initially there were several small fire fights between the two armies. Finally on January 8th of 1815 the British started their major offensive toward New Orleans. The British soldiers wore their bright redcoats while the Americans wore clothing that made it easy for them to hide in the woods. The invaders as always marched in their familiar rows and columns while the Americans fought almost as guerilla fighters in their homeland. The British suffered huge losses of men and materiel, as well as their worst defeat of the entire war, at New Orleans. Andrew Jackson was a hero to one and all. What was even more disheartening for the British soldiers was that this great battle occurred after a truce had been signed between American and British representatives in Belgium.

Nine years later the Tennessee legislature nominated Andrew Jackson for President. Their nomination was more than a year before the election. In another twist of fate, Jackson won the most electoral votes but not the necessary "one half plus one" of the popular vote. The U.S. House of Representatives was again charged with voting to determine who would be President. They choose John Quincy Adams, the son of the second President of the United States. Although Jackson could have continued to serve as a U.S. Senator from Tennessee, he resigned and began a four year long campaign in preparation for the next Presidential election.

Andrew Jackson (Cont'd)

He and his followers created a new party name – The Democratic Party. The old Federalist Party had ceased to exist. Even though it had happened decades before, the misery of Mr. Jackson having married a woman who was not yet divorced from her first husband was brought up again. However, Mr. Jackson easily won election. Mrs. Jackson was not in good health and did not wish to be the center of this old and vicious scandal yet again. She hated the thought of even going to the White House. Such was the strain on Andrew's beloved wife Rachel that she died on Christmas Eve, in 1828. She never spent a single day in the house of the President of the United States.

The new President Jackson was bent on maintaining the United States as a whole. When an unpopular tariff bill was passed, the State of South Carolina threatened to not collect the tax in their port cities. Jackson was furious and the Congress passed a law that gave to him the authority to use U.S. troops to collect the tax in South Carolina if necessary. The original bill was also altered so that over time the tariff would be lowered. While this kept things somewhat calm for a while, the seeds of a civil war that was to erupt in a little more than a quarter of a century were sewn.

The creation of a National Bank became another huge issue for Jackson to deal with. He did not favor the bill at all. He wanted the government's money to be placed in small banks rather than in just one bank that had so many investors from outside the country. Jackson vetoed a bill to extend the charter of the bank before the first charter even had expired. A strong supporter of the bank was Henry Clay who was going to run against Jackson in the next election.

While Clay made it the main issue of the election the President held firm to his convictions. The Congress was not able to override the President's veto and ultimately Clay lost the election to Jackson. Now elected for a second term President Jackson moved the money of the government out of the National Bank and into small banks of different states throughout the country. This caused the giant bank to close.

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Andrew Jackson (Cont'd)

Now well into the 1830's the issue of the remaining Indians east of the Mississippi became a big issue. Even the U.S. Supreme Court stated that the Georgia government had no legal authority to move the Indians off the reservations that had been allocated to them within the confines of the state. However, Andrew Jackson made no effort on behalf of the Cherokee Indians and by the years 1838 and 1839 the fifteen thousand remaining Cherokee Indians were forced to walk to areas of the country west of the Mississippi to areas that ultimately became the State of Oklahoma.

Although an assassin tried to kill the President in 1835, neither of his firearms worked. The would-be assassin was committed to a mental institution. Two years later Andrew Jackson left the Office of the President and went back to the home he and Rachel had built in Tennessee, called "The Hermitage." He lived out his remaining years at this beautiful estate and upon his death he was buried next to the woman he loved and treasured so deeply, in the gardens of the Hermitage. He was seventy eight years of age.

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Andrew Jackson Questions

Circle True or False after analyzing each of the following statements.

1. True False Andrew Jackson was in the Revolutionary War and the War of 1812.
2. True False Andrew Jackson contracted cholera as a youth.
3. True False Andrew Jackson helped to write the U.S. Constitution.
4. True False Andrew Jackson's nickname was "Old Hickory."
5. True False During the War of 1812 Andrew Jackson's army defeated the British at New Orleans.
6. True False Andrew Jackson was one of the founders of the Republican Party.
7. True False The seeds of the Civil War were planted during Jackson's presidency when North Carolina protested over tariffs.
8. True False Andrew Jackson favored a centralized National Bank.
9. True False Andrew Jackson was sympathetic to the plight of Native Americans.
10. True False Andrew Jackson's home was called The Hermitage.

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Andrew Jackson Answers

1. True
2. False
3. False
4. True
5. True
6. False
7. False
8. False
9. False
10. True