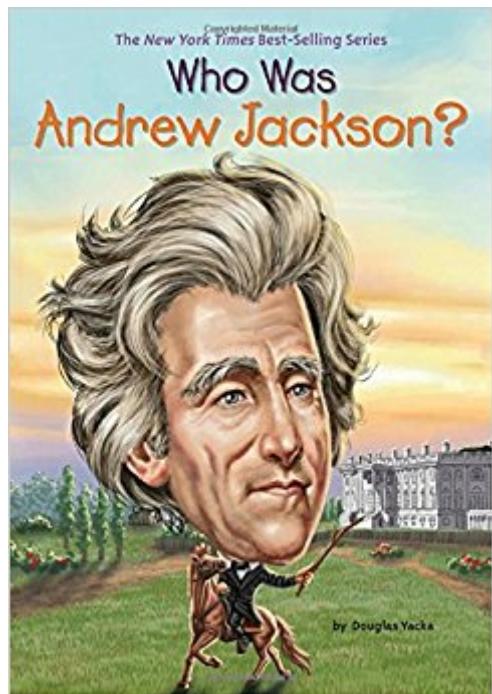


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Who Was Andrew Jackson?



Synopsis

Controversial in his day and still controversial now, President Andrew Jackson left his mark on American history. Seventh President Andrew Jackson was a man of contradictions: quick tempered and brash, he often seemed to look for fights, but he was so devoted to his wife, he quit Congress twice to be by her side. He was a celebrated war hero who nevertheless most enjoyed his serene life in Tennessee. Although he saw himself as a champion of the poor, he grew to be a rich plantation owner owning many slaves. He adopted a young Native American as his son despite ordering the expulsion of tribes — hundreds of thousands of people — from their homeland in the Southeast. Douglas Yacka captures the many sides of Andrew Jackson, whose life began just before the Revolution and ended not long before the Civil War. This book in the New York Times best-selling series contains eighty illustrations that help bring the story to life.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Douglas Yacka is the author of Eat, Drink, and Be Mad Libs and co-author of Give My Regards to Mad Libs.

Who Was Andrew Jackson? It was still dark on the morning of January 8, 1815. In an

army camp just outside of New Orleans, Louisiana, General Andrew Jackson sat alone in his tent. He had a very important decision to make. Andrew either had to surrender his American soldiers to the British army or lead his troops into battle. Andrew left his tent and walked through the camp. He looked at the faces of the men who had fought beside him over the last few weeks. They were cold and hungry and tired. They had been fighting the British for weeks, even through Christmas and New Year's Day. To make matters worse, he and his men knew that the British army was twice the size of theirs. In every direction, the bright red coats of the British soldiers surrounded them in the woods. But Andrew had a plan. Even though his troops were outnumbered, they knew these woods better than the British. He knew that the British army wasn't expecting an early-morning attack. And he knew that he wasn't going to return from the war as a failure. Andrew woke his soldiers and told them to prepare for battle. As soon as it was light enough to see, General Jackson sent troops out in all directions, attacking the British from every side. The British army was taken completely by surprise. They were not prepared for this type of battle. Many British officers and their general were killed quickly, leaving the soldiers without leaders to give them orders. Andrew and his men won a major victory in just thirty minutes! The epic fight is called the Battle of New Orleans. Jackson became a national hero, and he was eventually elected the seventh president of the United States. Throughout his life, Andrew would face difficulty and danger with bravery, just as he did on that morning in 1815. His actions helped to shape a young nation as it continued to grow. A self-taught man, he gave many Americans hope that they could shape a better future for themselves. For this reason, Andrew Jackson became known as "the people's president." Today, however, Andrew Jackson also is remembered for some shameful events, including his terrible treatment of Native Americans and for his terrible attitudes such as his support for slavery. Jackson was a very complicated man • stubborn, brave, quick-tempered, loyal, unforgiving • and he has left a mixed legacy for the history books.

1: A Brave Boy

Andrew Jackson was born in what was then known as the Carolinas on March 15, 1767. His parents were from Scotland. They had come to America in 1765 in search of a better life. Sailing across the Atlantic was a long and dangerous trip. It took around six weeks to cross the ocean in those days. Even after Andrew Sr., Elizabeth, and their two sons, Hugh and Robert, finally landed at Philadelphia, their journey was not over. They still had to travel five hundred miles by carriage to reach the home of relatives in South Carolina. The area where they lived was called the Waxhaw settlement. There wasn't much there at that time, and most of the settlers were poor. In addition, the land was already home to Native Americans who had

lived there for generations. They did not welcome these new intruders. Violence often broke out between the local Cherokee tribe and the settlers. Andrew's father built a small log cabin for his growing family. He was a farmer who struggled to keep food on the table, and often worked seven days a week. It was a very hard life. Andrew Jackson Sr. died in the winter of 1766, shortly before Andrew was born. Now Andrew's mother had to struggle on by herself, with three boys and a farm to run. She was a very serious woman. She taught her sons about the importance of hard work. As a child, Andrew was smart and curious. He learned to read at an early age. Most adults back then didn't know how. Andrew was also full of energy. He could be wild and defiant. When he played games with his friends, he hated to lose. He often fought with other boys, even those who were bigger and stronger. Once, when he was being teased, he shouted, "By God, if one of you laughs, I'll kill him!" Until Andrew was nine, South Carolina was one of thirteen colonies belonging to Great Britain. But in 1776, the colonies declared their independence. War started the American Revolution. The Jacksons supported the fight for independence. Andrew, still a young boy at the time, was chosen to read the Declaration of Independence out loud when a copy arrived in town. It was a great honor. Andrew's oldest brother, Hugh, joined the American army and was killed in battle. Andrew was very upset and angry over Hugh's death. He and Robert wanted to be soldiers like Hugh. They wanted to fight the British and make them pay for the death of their brother. But Andrew was only thirteen years old. When he tried to join the army, he was told that he was too young. The army made him a messenger instead. His job was to carry information back and forth between American army camps in South Carolina without the British army finding out. Andrew liked the adventure and danger, and was glad to help fight the enemy. In addition to the British, Andrew had to avoid the Cherokee Indians, who were known as fierce fighters. The Cherokees had made peace treaties and trading deals with the British, and they were not about to lose them to the new American settlers. During one battle with the British in Waxhaw, Andrew and Robert were both captured and taken to a prison in Camden, about forty miles away. The two boys were terrified. One of the British officers ordered Andrew to clean his boots. That made Andrew furious. He wasn't going to obey the enemy. Andrew gathered up all his courage, stood up, and refused! The soldier became so angry, he swung his sword at Andrew's head. The wound left a large scar that he had for the rest of his life. Andrew and Robert were thrown into prison with very little food, water, or medicine. Many prisoners caught a serious disease called smallpox, including the two boys. When the boys' mother found out that her sons had been captured, she traveled the forty miles to the prison. Elizabeth convinced the British to include her

sons in a prisoner exchange, and they were freed. □ Unfortunately, Robert was much sicker than Andrew. He died soon after arriving home. Andrew's mother also became ill and died a few months later. At only fourteen years old, Andrew was left alone. □ Shortly before her death, Elizabeth told Andrew, "In this world you will have to make your own way."

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