

THE PAPERS OF
Andrew Jackson
VOLUME V, 1821–1824



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This fifth volume of *The Papers of Andrew Jackson* documents Jackson's retirement from the military in 1821 and his emergence as the leading presidential candidate in 1824, winning a plurality of popular and electoral votes over John Quincy Adams, Henry Clay, William H. Crawford, and John C. Calhoun. In the interim, he served a troublesome few months as governor of Florida and thereafter enjoyed a brief retirement at the Hermitage before the Tennessee legislature called him again into service as United States senator.

The tension between Jackson's longing for retirement and his dedication to public service forms the main theme of this volume. In Jackson's correspondence during these four years, there are many examples of the rhetorical trademarks of Jacksonian democracy—an almost mystical confidence in the virtue of the common people and a fear of any entrenched elite. Jackson came to view himself as the instrument of a grassroots movement to purify American politics of the corruption of political intrigue and private ambition. As he saw it, his victory would restore the design of the founding fathers, a government reflecting the will of the voters and accountable at all times to the public.

Jackson became a presidential candidate not because he sought the office but because the voters called him to public service. It was a call to root out the corruption that had become rampant in Washington, an evil characterized by scrambling for office rather than concern for the country's good. At the center of the corruption, in Jackson's view, was Treasury Secretary William H. Crawford, who would use the congressional caucus and patronage to obtain the presidency in defiance of the will of the people. Once Jackson answered the call, a groundswell of popular support transformed him from a favorite son of Tennessee into the top contender, whose chief goal was to defeat Crawford and to restore thereby the majority will.



The Series

The Papers of Andrew Jackson is to be a selective edition of sixteen volumes, bringing together the full text of the most significant letters and documents by and to Jackson. Each volume will also list and describe the remaining body of Jackson manuscripts, drawn from widely scattered repositories, not selected for publication. A comprehensive index will complete the series.

The Editors

Harold D. Moser, former editor of the Correspondence Series, Papers of Daniel Webster, Dartmouth College, is Research Professor in History at the University of Tennessee. David R. Hoth, former Associate Editor of the *Journal of American History* and NHPRC Fellow with the Correspondence of James K. Polk, is Assistant Editor with the Jackson Papers. George H. Hoemann is currently a student in the School of Information Sciences at the University of Tennessee.

Jacket illustration: Andrew Jackson, Congressional Medal presented March 16, 1824. Etching by Jules Jacquemart after engraving by Moritz Fürst. From J. F. Loubat, The Medallic History of the United States, 1776-1876 (2 vols.; New York: n.p., 1878), 2: plate 47. Courtesy of the Special Collections Library of the University of Tennessee, Knoxville.

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EXCERPTS FROM VOLUME FIVE

On Presidential Appointments

AJ TO JAMES CRAINE BRONAUGH, January 10, 1822

"The only proper course for a president to pursue is to nominate those he may think well qualified and fit—and leave it to the senate to approve—in doing so he fully discharges his constitutional duties and the Senate does theirs independantly—but this logg roling business between the President & the senate ought to be scouted by every lover of the Existance of our constitutional Goverment—The checks and ballances in this way will be kept alive in their purity—"

On His Presidential Candidacy

AJ TO JAMES CRAINE BRONAUGH, August 1, 1822

"I have no desire, nor do I expect ever to be called to fill the Presidential chair—but should this be the case, contrary to my wishes & expectations, I am determined it shall be without any exertion on my part—and on this unexpected event, all that can be expected of me, is to obay the call of the people, and execute the duties, to the best of my matured Judgt."

On Virtue and Government

AJ TO JOHN MCNAIRY, [September 6, 1823]

"I have but one grand view, and that is to promote as far as I have influence a proper respect for character, religion & morality, and thereby lay a solid foundation for the perpetuity of our happy form of Govt. Whenever these are lost sight of party views substituted in their stead, our Goverment will be changed—it cannot stand, virtue being the only prop which sustains it."

On the Tariff

AJ TO LITTLETON H. COLEMAN, April 26, 1824

"It is time that we should become a little more *americanised*; and, instead of feeding the paupers and labourers of England, feed our own; or else, in a short time, by continuing our present policy, we shall all be rendered paupers ourselves. It is, therefore, my opinion, that a careful and judicious Tariff is much wanted, to pay our national debt, and afford us the means of that defence within ourselves, on which the safety of our country and liberty depends; and last, though not least, give a proper distribution to our labor, which must prove beneficial to the happiness, independence, and wealth of the community."

On His Reputation

AJ TO JOHN COFFEE, June 18, 1824

"Great pains had been taken to represent me as a savage disposition; who allways carried a Scalping Knife in one hand, & a tomahawk in the other; allways ready to knock down, & scalp, any & every person who differred with me in opinion—instead of this they as they expressed found a man of even temper—firm in his opinions advanced, and allways allowing others to enjoy theirs, untill reason convinced them that they were in error—"

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