

THE PAPERS OF
Andrew Jackson
VOLUME I, 1770-1803



SAM B. SMITH
HARRIET CHAPPELL OWSLEY
EDITORS



ANDREW JACKSON, seventh president of the United States, is an American folk hero. His strong personality and natural gift for leadership contributed to his wide influence throughout his lifetime. Jackson was known to be quarrelsome, honest, loyal, and self-willed, and the examination of his early years as documented in this volume provides insight into his career before he became a military and national hero.

During these years Jackson developed into a local and statewide leader of importance. His career as an attorney prospered and he became successively a member of the Tennessee Constitutional Convention, the first congressman from Tennessee, and a member of the United States Senate. He also served as one of the three members of the state superior court. Besides an active public life, Jackson owned and managed general stores with a succession of partners, raced horses for substantial stakes, operated a large farm with slave labor, and engaged in trade and commerce with the Natchez and New Orleans areas. The documents in Volume I chronicle Jackson's growing influence spanning the years to 1803.

This volume contains not only letters to and from Jackson, but documents that relate to him and are important in a variety of ways to our knowledge of him. Represented are samples of slave and land sale records, land appraisals, and receipts from his farm near Nashville. Jackson's early years in Washington are recorded in petitions, licenses and commissions, election returns, court appointments, speeches, and legislative reports. Jackson's financial transactions are also included, as are powers of attorney.

George Washington, John Adams, William Polk, and Thomas Jefferson are among the many who wrote to Jackson and received letters from him long before his rise to national prominence.

(Continued on back flap)

Their letters, as well as exchanges between Jackson and Tennessee statesmen William Blount and John Sevier, his wife Rachel, and the countless neighbors and friends with whom he associated, shed light on Jackson's temperament and priorities in a variety of situations. The editors have included only brief annotations, allowing the documents to speak for themselves. An appendix includes important information previously unavailable.

During the years to 1803, Jackson demonstrated substantial entrepreneurial talent and a remarkable degree of resourcefulness, qualities that stood him in good stead throughout his career. This first volume of a landmark series clearly reveals the character, personality, and abilities that were to make Jackson a major force in American political history.



The Jackson Project

The Papers of Andrew Jackson, the record of his career as businessman, farmer, attorney, military hero, and President, will number some fifteen volumes. Devoted primarily to correspondence, speeches, military papers, and legal documents, these volumes will shed new light on the life and work of Andrew Jackson and on nineteenth-century America.

The Editors

Sam B. Smith is Professor of History at Tennessee State University in Nashville and was previously Tennessee State Librarian and Archivist. Harriet Chappell Owsley, former director of the Manuscript Section, Tennessee State Library and Archives, has been coeditor of the Andrew Jackson Papers since 1971.

THE UNIVERSITY OF TENNESSEE PRESS

KNOXVILLE 37996-0325



E X C E R P T S F R O M V O L U M E O N E

On Public Life

AJ TO RACHEL JACKSON, May 9, 1796.

“Tho I am absent My heart rests with you. With what pleasing hopes I view the future period when I shall be restored to your arms there to spend My days in Domestic Sweetness with you the Dear Companion of my life, never to be separated from you again during this Transitory and fluctuating life. I mean to retire from the Buss of publick life, and Spend My Time with you alone in Sweet Retirement, which is My only ambition and ultimate wish. . . .”

From the United States Senate on Political Life

AJ TO JOHN OVERTON, January 22, 1798.

“the frowns of fortune may cause me to continue in a political life one more Session—perhaps more—but not my wishes. I have Experienced more disquietude in a political life than all the advantages derived from it, can compensate for and I assure you that my political life will be a short one. . . .”

On Napoleon

AJ TO JAMES ROBERTSON, January 11, 1798.

“do not then be surprised If my next letter Should announce a revolution in England. Should Bonaparte make a landing on the English shore, Tyranny will be Humbled, a throne crushed and a republick will spring from the wreck—and millions of distressed people restored to [the rights of man by the] conquering arm [of Bonaparte]. . . .”

On Friendship

AJ TO WILLIAM BLOUNT, [June 24, 1798].

“I forgot when I answered your letter to observe to you that it would not be agreeable to me to receive the appointment in the Judiciary if any of my friends had it in view and could obtain it. It is a Principle with me never to be departed from if I can avoid it not to stand between a Friend and a Benefit. . . .”

On John Sevier

AJ TO JOHN SEVIER, [October 2, 1803].

“The ungentlemanly Expressions, and gasgonading conduct, of yours relative to me . . . unmask you to the world, and plainly shews that they were the ebulations of a base mind goaded with stubborn prooffs of fraud, and flowing from a source devoid of every refined sentiment, or delicate sensation. . . . [I] call upon you for that satisfaction and explanation that your ungentlemanly conduct & expressions require, for this prupose I request an interview, and my friend who will hand you this will point out the time and place, when and where I shall Expect to see you with your friend. . . .”

* * * * *

JOHN SEVIER TO AJ, [October 2, 1803].

“I shall wait on you with pleasure at Any time and place not within the State of Tennessee, attended by my friend with pistols presuming you know nothing About the use of Any other Arms. . . .”