



South Carolina's Andrew Jackson State Park Commemorates 250th Anniversary of the President's Birth

Lancaster, South Carolina (March 7, 2017) – Andrew Jackson, the seventh president of the United States, has roots in several Southern states. Most of us remember from our American history classes that he was a lawyer and judge from Tennessee who returned to that state after his presidency and settled at his home, The Hermitage, in Nashville. Residents of Louisiana know the stories of Jackson rallying a ragtag group of soldiers – including a band of pirates – to soundly defeat the British at the Battle of New Orleans, the final conflict in the War of 1812. Floridians may recall that he served as their state's governor in 1821. But it's in South Carolina where Jackson's legendary life began, and as the nation marks the 250th anniversary of his birth on March 15, it's the perfect time to share stories of Jackson's time in the Palmetto State.

There's some debate about whether Jackson was truly born in South Carolina or whether perhaps North Carolina gets those bragging rights. The state line between the Carolinas was blurry in 1767 and the entire region where we know he has roots, "the Waxhaws," is a district that straddles that border. But since Jackson himself claimed South Carolina as his birthplace – perhaps, many argue, for political purposes – we're giving the edge to South Carolina on this one. [Andrew Jackson State Park](#) in Lancaster, South Carolina (admittedly, just a smidge south of the state line, but very definitely in the lower Carolina) is where visitors can learn about this president's childhood.

Jackson was the youngest of three sons fathered by Andrew Jackson Sr. and Elizabeth Hutchinson Jackson, Scots-Irish immigrants of limited means who came to the colonies in 1765. Just three weeks before his youngest son was born, the elder Andrew died as a result of a farm accident; Elizabeth named her third child to honor his late father. It's said that Jackson was the first U.S. president born in a log cabin, aiding his reputation of being the first "man of the people" to rise through the ranks to assume the nation's highest office. Prior to the presidential race of 1828, when Jackson defeated John Quincy Adams, the office had been occupied by wealthy and well-born men. Jackson was anything but an aristocrat and, in fact, led a life of great hardship that began very modestly in the American frontier.

Though historians remember his role in the War of 1812, Jackson launched his military career during the Revolutionary War. The war began when Jackson was just 9 years old, and it claimed his oldest brother in 1779. The following year, after a brutal local battle known as Buford's Defeat,

Jackson and his mother nursed colonial soldiers. At the age of 13, Jackson and his brother Robert fought at the Battle of Hanging Rock. The following spring the pair was captured by British troops and held as prisoners of war. When a British officer ordered the boys to clean his boots, they refused ... and the officer punished them with slashes from his sword. The youngest Jackson suffered a gash to his left hand and his face, leaving him scarred for life. (Look for *that* the next time you pull out a \$20 bill.)

The brothers were moved to a prison in Camden, about 40 miles away from their home, where young Andrew chiseled a hole in the wall to witness the Battle of Hobkirk's Hill. Conditions at the prison were horrific, and the boys' wounds became infected and both contracted smallpox. The boys were eventually released, but Robert died shortly after his return home and Andrew struggled for several months. When her only remaining son was finally well enough, his mother left him to go to Charleston and nurse friends and family. She contracted cholera and died in Charleston, leaving her youngest son alone in the world – a 14-year-old orphan who never even learned where his mother was buried.

Clearly Jackson's days in South Carolina weren't his happiest, but there's no doubt they helped shape him as a person and as a leader. These stories and many more are shared at Andrew Jackson State Park, which delves into the president's early life in South Carolina's backcountry and gives visitors insight into aspects of the American Revolution they may not remember from those history classes.

Though Jackson's 250th birthday would have been March 15, the park always celebrates about a week later. This year the birthdate will be commemorated on Saturday, March 25 from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m., and the park has scheduled a series of monthly events to mark the anniversary year. In addition to a museum that documents Jackson's earliest years, the 360-acre park is home to an 18th-century replica schoolhouse, playground, campground, picnic shelter, fishing pier, boat dock, lake and nature trails. A highlight of a visit here is time spent admiring a bronze statue called "[Boy of the Waxhaws](#)," which depicts Jackson riding a farm horse and which this year marks its 50th anniversary at the site. In addition, the Daughters of the American Revolution have installed a marker recognizing Jackson's birthplace ... officially acknowledging him as the only president born in South Carolina.

For more information about Andrew Jackson's part of South Carolina, the Olde English District, please visit www.oldeenglishdistrict.com. The region is full of stories like this, just waiting to be discovered and shared.

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MEDIA CONTACT

Mindy Bianca

mindy@mindybiancapr.com

919-200-6060