

The Perennial Andrew Jackson

Two Exhibitions

Celebrate America's First Popularly Elected President



(Previous Page) "Battle of New Orleans" by Dennis Malone Carter, 1856. Oil on canvas; 18¾ by 24½ inches. The Historic New Orleans Collection.

(Right) "Major General Andrew Jackson" by Samuel Lovett Waldo, 1819, oil on canvas; 42¾ by 35½ inches. The Historic New Orleans Collection.

Andrew Jackson was a rock star. This anti-Eastern Establishment, working-class hero enjoyed wild popularity during his lifetime. He accrued fame initially as the victor of the Battle of New Orleans during the War of 1812 and later as the first American president to come from humble origins. Grateful citizens presented him with awards in homage. Artists and artisans fanned the flames of his celebrity by fashioning likenesses and promotional items. His foes deployed negative imagery in smear cam-paigns against him. Like many of his renegade rocker brethren, Jackson was a difficult and polarizing character.





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THE BRAVE BOY OF THE WAXHAWS.

Andrew Jackson, the Seventh President of the United States, in 1780 when a boy of 13 enlisted in the cause of his country, and was taken prisoner by the British. Being ordered by an officer to clean his boots, he indignantly refused, and received a sword cut for his temerity.

"The Brave Boy of the Waxhaws" by Currier & Ives, 1876. Hand colored lithograph; 133/8 by 167/8 inches. Jackson was born in the Waxhaws wilderness on the border of the Carolinas. In the American Revolution, the teenager served as a Patriot courier. He was held for a time by the British. During his captivity, a British officer struck him with a sword for refusing to polish his boots. The Historic New Orleans Collection.

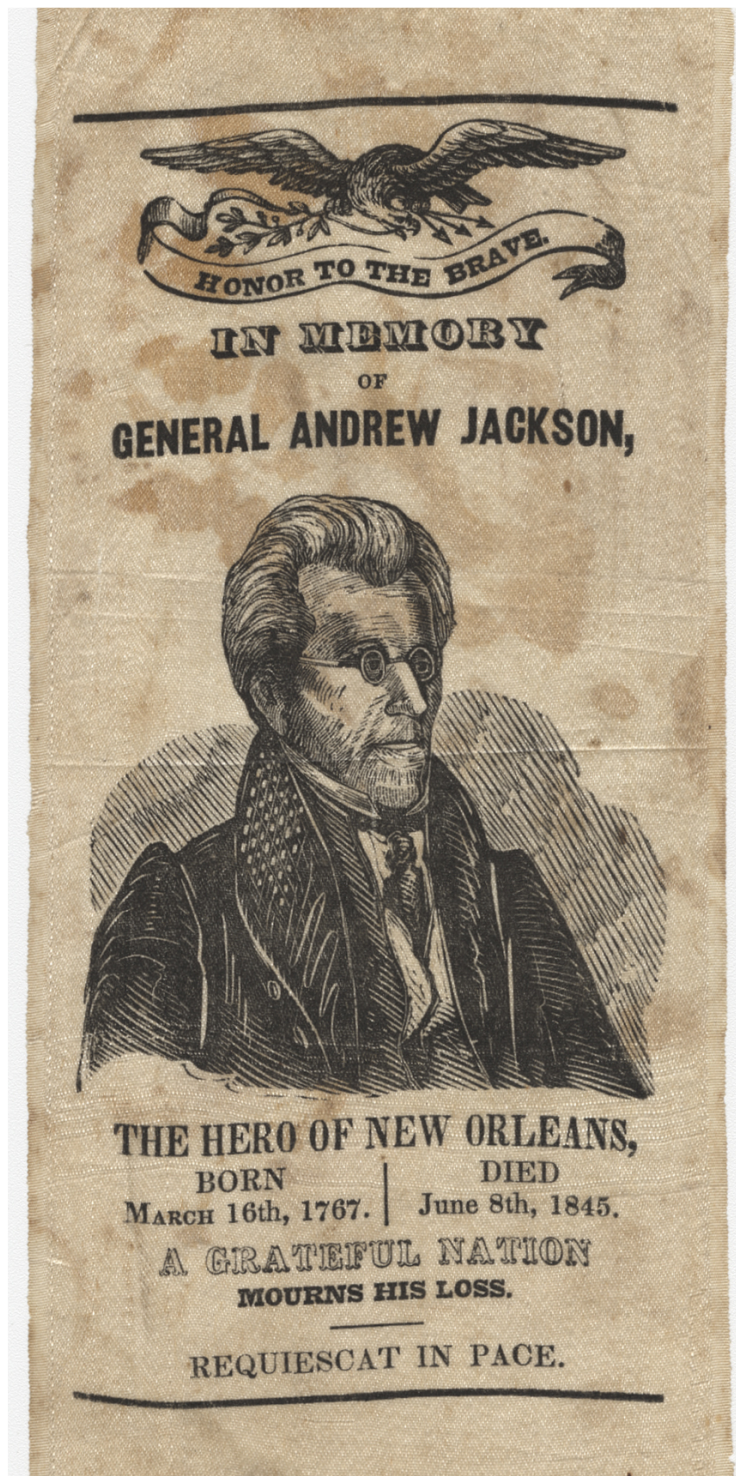


Unbeknownst to each other, two curators recently likened Jackson to a Nineteenth Century version of a rock star in their separate exhibitions commemorating the bicentennial of Battle of New Orleans. Jason Weise, director of the Williams Research Center at the Historic New Orleans Collection (HNOC), New Orleans, La., curated “Andrew Jackson: Hero of New Orleans.” It continues at the New Orleans museum until March 29.

Statuette based on Clark Mills's equestrian statue of Major General Andrew Jackson by Cornelius and Baker, foundrymen; 1855–1859. Cast zinc with imitation bronze paint; 237/8 by 18¾ by 7¾ inches. The Historic New Orleans Collection.

I Marsha Mullin, vice president of museum services and chief curator of Andrew Jackson's Hermitage, created a semipermanent exhibition entitled "Andrew Jackson: Born for a Storm" in the visitor center of Jackson's country estate in Nashville, Tenn. Weise and Mullin use this opportunity to explore not only the history of the battle but also the dramatic life, monumental achievements and at times controversial actions of Jackson (1767–1845), the frontiersman-farmer-soldier who is considered the first popularly elected president.

HNOC's exhibition, "Andrew Jackson: Hero of New Orleans," examines Jackson's central role in the Creek War and Battle of New Orleans, as well as the sudden national fame that followed the general's successful defense of the city.



Andrew Jackson funeral ribbon after Ralph E.W. Earl by unknown engraver, 1845. Wood engraving on silk; 7½ by 3 inches. The William C. Cook War of 1812 in the South Collection at The Historic New Orleans Collection.

Early paintings and prints, sculptures, medals and material culture artifacts illustrate the evolving public concept of Jackson as a military and political leader. Rare, one-of-a-kind objects—some belonging to Jackson himself—are on loan from the Hermitage, the Library of Congress and other institutions. Highlights from HNOC's own holdings include a selection of the infamous "coffin broadsides" printed by supporters of John Quincy Adams in the 1828 presidential election and rare funeral ribbons memorializing Jackson after his 1845 death. Subsequent uses of Jackson's image in artworks and vintage advertisements demonstrate his lasting impact on New Orleans and the South.