

Robert V. Remini

Andrew Jackson

Volume One
The Course of American Empire
1767-1821



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Available in paperback for the first time, these three volumes represent the definitive biography of Andrew Jackson. Volume One covers the role Jackson played in America's territorial expansion, bringing to life a complex character who has often been seen simply as a rough-hewn country general. Volume Two traces Jackson's senatorial career, his presidential campaigns, and his first administration as President. The third volume covers Jackson's reelection to the presidency and the weighty issues with which he was faced: the nullification crisis, the tragic removal of the Indians beyond the Mississippi River, the mounting violence throughout the country over slavery, and the tortuous efforts to win the annexation of Texas.

Andrew Jackson: The Course of American Empire, 1767-1821 Details

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From Reader Review Andrew Jackson: The Course of American Empire, 1767-1821 for online ebook

Rick Rapp says

When I was in school, Jackson was treated as a hero in history books. Over the years, more unflattering facts have come to light about him, his vindictiveness, and his deplorable treatment of the Indians of the Southeast. I read this book in a hope to find a more balanced account of the man, the myth, and the legend. Unfortunately, all the facts presented by Remini only prove what a tyrant he was. Evidently, his charisma carried him a long way, for his battles (both military and personal) were often won by sheer luck and bullying more than real skill or planning. One positive thing I can take from this book is that our country survived the likes of this poorly educated and wildly uncontrollable individual. That gives me a little hope in the face of current affairs.

AC says

So I've had this affinity for Andrew Jackson ever since high school US history. He was always portrayed as the president for the common man. After all, it was under Jackson that the nation became more democratic (suffrage for all free white men though). He was also a brawler, an able general who was able to increase the size of the US through sheer will and also by skirting and disobeying orders. This volume reiterates Jackson as the type of guy who is quick tempered, erratic, and violent. He stole land from the Indians under the guise of protecting them from white men. There were many times that his actions could've started a war with both Britain and Spain, but thanks to JQA, that never happened. Being a man of the people really doesn't come through in this volume, only at the very end: "I did believe, and ever will believe, that just laws can make no distinction of privilege between the rich and poor, mad that when men of high standing attempt to trample upon the rights of the weak, they are the fittest objects for example and punishment. In general, the great can protect themselves, but the poor and humble, require the arm and shield of the law."

Doug says

Perhaps this is the series to read for all serious students of presidential history and should be required reading for anyone considering political office. Every significant event in General Jackson's life is covered but perhaps most interesting is the background on the creation of the Democratic Party. I don't think the General would be pleased with either side but he would be astounded at what passes for acceptable behavior by those who govern today.

Andrew Canfield says

This book was the first of a three volume work on the life of President Andrew Jackson by Robert Remini. It covers the time from Jackson's birth (disputed as to whether or not it took place in South or North Carolina) until the conclusion of the Seminole War (stopping around the time he became a U.S. Senator from Tennessee). The detail in this book was compelling; Remini poured a lot of effort into letting the reader

know the intricacies of Jackson's character in his pre-presidential years. He doesn't go out of his way to smear Jackson, but does offer some personal insights into why Jackson did some of the things he did, particularly when it comes to the Native Americans. A lot of the mistreatment of the Indians by Jackson is chronicled in this first volume; everything from violence to constantly moving goal posts is documented.

The portion on the Battle of New Orleans offered some facts that I hadn't been aware of prior to reading *The Course of American Empire*. Jackson's near-imperial behavior after the victory was something I didn't know about before reading this biography. The extended look that Remini offers of the battle leaves the reader with a thorough grasp of how those events unfolded. It was nothing short of an outstanding read, and I couldn't want to begin the second volume once the first was wrapped up.

Phillip says

Detailed Easy Flowing Balanced and critical. Adeptly illuminates a not well known Chapter of US History. Consolidation of South East of Mississippi seems a forgone conclusion after Louisiana purchase. Remini brings the down and dirty process to life and reminds us of Jackson's pre-eminent role in the process. Poignant today as this Chapter is politically incorrect and serves as justification for Jackson's demotion from the face of the \$20 Bill.

Aaron Million says

Remini's first volume (three total) follows Jackson from his birth in South Carolina through the year 1821 when he resigned the Governorship of the Florida Territory. Throughout the book, Jackson's volatile, combustible temper is on display: challenging men to duels, lustng after military glory (as well as another man's wife), openly fighting with multiple Presidents and other Washington heavyweights, and being incredibly vindictive towards almost all Indians and anyone who disagreed with him about anything. The latter two classes he considered to be his enemies.

Jackson had a difficult childhood - his father dying before he was born. He was abused as a young boy by the British during the Revolutionary War; his mother died when he was in his early teens, and his brothers perished as well at the hands of the British. He drifted west, eventually settling in Nashville. Incredibly, with very little education, he was able to establish a fairly successful legal practice. Jackson was nothing if not tenacious in whatever he endeavored to do.

Remini chronicles Jackson's romance and "marriage" to Emily Robards. He may or may not have known that she was still married to her first husband. Remini ultimately believes that, if Jackson truly did not know that she was not divorced, being a lawyer he certainly should have known.

Jackson was ruthless and cold-blooded. He killed a man, Charles Livingston, in a duel and didn't give it a second thought. He was violent and out of control - hungering for a military command and, once he finally got one, proceeding to wage war against the British, Indians, and the Spanish. Jackson was bent on seizing Florida, and he ultimately succeeded in doing so. He was demanding, yet fair, to his troops and proved himself many times over during his successful campaign at New Orleans during the War of 1812, and later in

the Indian Wars.

Remini's portrayal of Jackson is fairly balanced and swift-moving: he points out his admirable qualities and also the many despicable behaviors that Jackson engaged in. In general, Remini seems to be slightly pro-Jackson as he dances around Jackson owning slaves - preferring to place Jackson in the context of his times. While there is merit to this approach, Jackson needs to be taken to task for owning slaves, forcibly relocating Indian tribes and purposely destroying their villages, hanging Arbuthnot and Ambrister when he had no authority to do so, being borderline insubordinate to Presidents Madison and Monroe, and holding grudges over petty grievances. As Thomas Jefferson said in describing Jackson: "He is a very dangerous man."

Grade: B+

Riley says

I didn't know very much about Andrew Jackson before reading this book, the first in a series of three by Robert Remini on his life. It certainly demonstrates Jackson's contribution to the expansion of America, and also gives a good sense of his impervious character. I was struck particularly by Jackson's willingness to ignore laws and treaties that went against his wishes, despite being a lawyer and onetime Tennessee Supreme Court justice.

I feel there's a clear dividing line among those who study early American history: those who root for the settlers and those who root for the Indians. I inevitably find myself in the second camp, which makes Jackson's legacy a difficult one for me to appreciate, given his contempt for natives and their claims to their own lands.

Here was one passage I highlighted, about the Creek War:

"On the morning of November 3, 1813, a thousand men encircled Tallushatchee and systematically slaughtered most of its warriors. It was a massacre. 'We shot them like dogs,' attested Davy Crockett.

"So horrible was the killing that Lieutenant Richard Keith Call became almost physically ill. 'We found as many as eight or ten dead bodies in a single cabin,' he wrote. 'Some of the cabins had taken fire, and half consumed human bodies were seen amidst the smoking ruins. In other instances dogs had torn and feasted on the mangled bodies of their masters. Heart sick I turned from the revolting scene.'"

Lianna says

From http://www.cracked.com/article_15895_...

"When the 1828 election rolled around, a lot of people were terrified when they heard Andrew "Old Hickory" Jackson was running. If you're wondering how a guy we're calling a bad ass got such a lame nickname, it's because he used to carry a hickory cane around and beat people senseless with it, and if you're wondering why he did that, it's because he was a fucking lunatic."

Massanutton Regional Library says

Butch, Central patron, June 2017, 5 stars:

By "the foremost Jacksonian scholar of our time" (*New York Times*), the critically acclaimed and most concise biography of Andrew Jackson that takes a comprehensive look at the political, personal, and military life of the seventh president of the United States.

Christopher Saunders says

Robert V. Remini's **Andrew Jackson: The Course of American Empire** is the first in his three-volume series on Old Hickory, covering his life from birth through his military career and time as Governor of Florida in 1821. Like all of Remini's work it's elegantly written and evocative in depicting the swirl, tumult and outsized personalities of early American politics, when the country's survival was hardly guaranteed and political divisions often resulted in duels, murders and other outrages. Yet Remini clearly struggles with his protagonist: as much as he wants to laud Jackson, he finds it hard to square his admiration with the less-than-appealing figure that emerges. Young Jackson wasn't much better than President Jackson, by modern standards, from his browbeating and butchering the Creek Indians to his unauthorized invasion of Spanish Florida, tertiary involvement in assorted filibustering schemes and his heavy-handed military rule over New Orleans. Whatever one may think of Jackson, Remini succeeds in showing his importance in solidifying, and ensuring America's emergence as an expansionist empire.

Kevin says

Definitely pro-Jackson. Not as slavish as volume 2 where he calls Jackson "the Hero" every other page, but still very pro-Jackson. Even then, the prose and detail covered here is top of the line. I can't imagine reading a single, one-volume, 400 page work on such a monumental figure. It's really interesting reading the War of 1812 recently from so many perspectives (Jackson, Madison, W. Harrison, and the peacemakers).

Nathan says

This, the first of a trilogy, begins with its author's asserting the inscrutability of his subject, which, in my experience, is a bad way to start a biography. If one's subject is indeed inscrutable, what can be the use of three hefty volumes devoted to it?

Remini manages to find enough to say about Jackson. The chronology is straightforward enough, neatly sectioned off in Remini's subtitular framework. This is indeed a sketch of Jackson the imperialist. The bulk of the early part of the book is devoted to Jackson's dealings with the Indian tribes, culminating in a brisk and engaging account of the Creek War that showcases a vivid and engaging flair quite unusual for Remini. The details of military maneuvers, of Jackson's keen sense of warfare, of the horrible carnage wreaked upon men, are all dealt with in unvarnished and memorable style. The Spanish and British receive equally brisk treatment as Jackson consolidates his military power and the the beginnings of an American empire.

Unfortunately, off the battlefield, Remini reverts to his tiresome drone, expecting his general themes of Jackson's headstrong independence and penchant for maverick behavior to explain the details of events sketched out only in the broadest terms. Where the preceding volumes regularly gave us updates on Jackson's home front, humanizing him with tales of his private relationship with Rachel, we see little of that here. Now Jackson is preoccupied with matters of state and war, and this facet, narrow as it is, takes up the full stage.

There needs to be as surer hand at the helm here, some solid opinion to stand up to and explain the blustery unpredictability of Jackson's nature. Remini does not provide it. At the close of the book, we leave Jackson to rest- for a moment- on the laurels of his military career, and look ahead to his rise to the White House. A shame, though, that his road there is mapped out in the roughest style. The facts of this period in Jackson's life may demand such rough and hurried narrative, but I look forward, past this volume, to a more deliberate and careful study in the second chapter.

Steve says

<http://bestpresidentialbios.com/2013/...>

“Andrew Jackson: The Course of American Empire (1767-1821)” is the first of three volumes in Robert Remini’s series on Andrew Jackson. This first volume was published in 1977 and the series was completed seven years later. Although highly regarded, the series does not seem widely read. Remini’s 1988 single-volume abridgment of the series, however, remains quite popular despite the publication of more recent biographies of Jackson.

Remini was a historian and professor at the University of Illinois and authored several biographies during his forty-year literary career (of John Quincy Adams, Henry Clay and Martin Van Buren, among other notable figures). However, he was best known for his exhaustive study of Andrew Jackson. Remini died earlier this year at the age of 91.

This initial volume of Remini’s series focuses on the first fifty-four years of Jackson’s life – from his youth through his service as governor of the new territory of Florida. This swath of his life also encompasses his service in the American Revolution, his work as a lawyer and frontier prosecutor, his representation of Tennessee in Congress, his time spent as a judge and his extensive – and highly conspicuous – service as a military leader.

Remini’s first volume provides spectacular insight into Jackson’s turbulent, tempestuous and wonderfully colorful personality. Superbly described is Jackson’s rise from an unrefined but intuitive frontiersman to a budding local politician and, finally, to a respected and successful (and frequently abrasive) Major General. Jackson’s numerous military campaigns (variously against the Indians, the British and the Spanish) are very well detailed and almost beg to form the basis for a movie script.

Although Remini clearly admires Andrew Jackson, he frequently calls out “Old Hickory” for his unrestrained behavior and his treatment of Indians. And despite Jackson’s notable military victories (particularly at the Battle of New Orleans) Remini often criticizes failures in General Jackson’s tactics or oversight. But despite this balance, Remini fails to hold Jackson accountable for his views on slavery – a not

uncommon feature of most biographies of early American presidents.

Overall, the first of Robert Remini's three volumes on Andrew Jackson is captivating, marvelously humanizing and remarkably penetrating. It quickly exudes the feeling of a David McCullough narrative combined with a Joseph Ellis character analysis, and Andrew Jackson seems a perfect choice to play the starring role in a thrilling biography. Imbued with an ideal balance of fact, analysis and opinion, and appropriately comprehensive in scope, "Andrew Jackson: The Course of American Empire" is a perfect start to what I hope is a consistently excellent series on Andrew Jackson.

Overall rating: 4½ stars

Daniel DeLappe says

Fantastic read on a fantastic and controversial man. A great, well paced, detailed read. Looking forward to part 2
