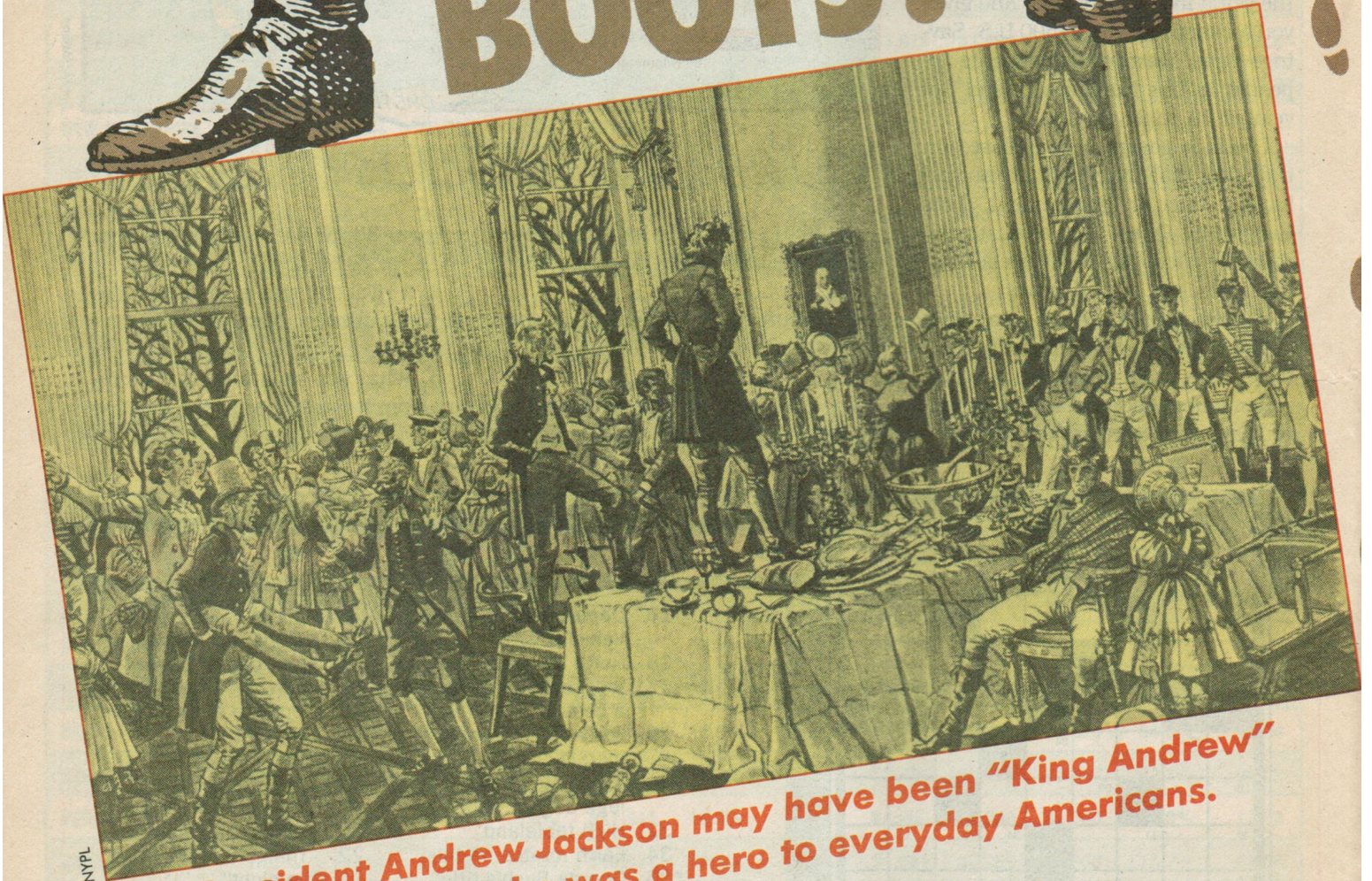


by Kathy Wilmore

# MUDDY BOOTS!



President Andrew Jackson may have been "King Andrew" to his critics, but he was a hero to everyday Americans.

### ABOUT THIS PLAY

Everything about Andrew Jackson seemed larger than life: bigger, louder, tougher, more direct. He was a popular hero, and people loved to talk about him. After all, he was the first President born in a log cabin. Raised in poverty, he was a self-made man. He had worked hard all his life — as a farmer, lawyer, shopkeeper, and politician. As a general during the War of 1812, Jackson's heroism won him a reputation for toughness — and the nickname "Old Hickory." Jackson was stubborn and opinionated, with a hot temper that got him into many a duel. Yet he

### CAST

- |   |                |                               |
|---|----------------|-------------------------------|
| Narrators A-F   | Robert Hayne   | } U.S. senators               |
| President Andrew Jackson                                  | Daniel Webster |                               |
| Andrew Jackson Donelson, his nephew and private secretary | Man            | } people in crowd scenes      |
| John C. Calhoun, Jackson's first Vice President           | Woman          |                               |
| Martin Van Buren, Jackson's second Vice President         | Little kid     |                               |
|   | Teenager       | } servants at the White House |
|   | Butler         |                               |
|   | Maid           |                               |
|   | Reporter       | for a newspaper               |



was a devoted family man. What was there to do with such a person? To Americans of his day, the answer was obvious: elect him President. In 1828, that is just what they did.

The first six U.S. Presidents had been wealthy men, raised in privilege. But Andy Jackson, self-made man of the frontier, was different. Everyday Americans saw him as one of their own, a rough-and-tumble "common man" who would never forget where he came from.

Jackson's America was changing and growing at a dizzying pace. Pioneers were pushing boundaries farther west. The Industrial Revolution, made possible by newly invented machines, was changing Americans' way of life, for better and for worse.

Jackson thought it was about time Americans found out what *democracy* really meant. The "hero of the common man" turned Washington, D.C., upside down (though not always the way he meant to) from first day in office. . . .

### SCENE 1

**Narrator A:** It is March 4, 1829 — inauguration day in Washington, D.C. Andrew Jackson, candidate of the newly founded Democratic Party, has just been sworn in as the seventh President of the United States.

**Andrew Jackson** (*addressing a cheering crowd*): The federal Constitution must be obeyed, state rights preserved, our national debt must be paid, direct taxes and loans avoided, and the federal Union preserved. These are the **objects** [goals] I have in view and, regardless of all consequences, will carry into effect.

**Man** (*in crowd*): I never thought I'd see this. An ordinary fellow, just like us, sittin' in the White House!

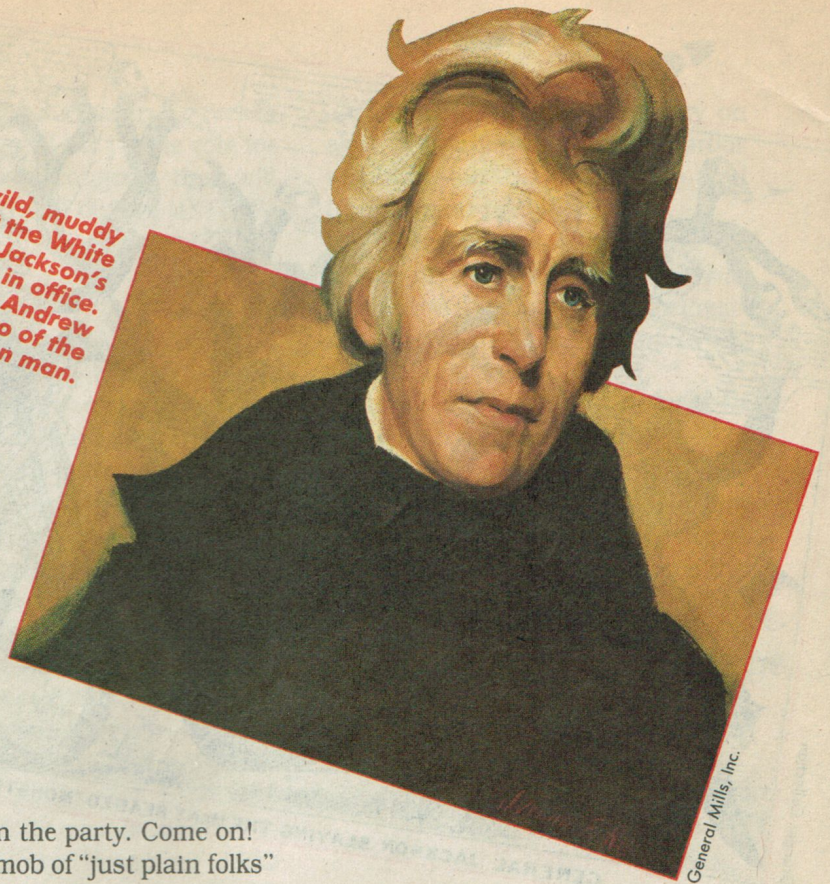
**Little kid** (*as Jackson rides by on horseback*): Look! There he goes!

**Woman:** You'll remember this day, child. It's historic, that's what it is.

**Man:** Where is everybody going?

**Woman:** They heard Andy sayin' that this celebration is as much ours as his. So we're goin' over to the White

*Left: The wild, muddy scene at the White House on Jackson's first day in office. Right: Andrew Jackson, hero of the common man.*



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House to join the party. Come on!

**Narrator A:** A mob of "just plain folks" goes to the White House and pours in, uninvited. People stand on tables and chairs, trying to get a peek at Jackson. Glasses are smashed, carpets are ruined —

**Maid:** Good heavens! This is terrible!

**Butler:** These filthy people are tromping their muddy boots everywhere! And how *dare* they wear coonskin caps and leather breeches to the White House! They smell like they've lived in the woods for *months*.

**Maid:** They have. Oh, dear! Is this what the next four years will be like?

**Teenager:** Hey! Where did the President go? (*chanting*) We want Andy!

**Mob** (*yelling*): We want Andy! We want Andy! We want —

**Andrew Jackson Donelson** (*entering*): The President thanks you all! But please go home now. He must get started on his work. (*Privately, to servants*) The President can't stay here tonight with this crowd! We'll have to take him to a hotel.

### SCENE 2

**Narrator B:** The new President gets right to work. He gives government jobs to many of his supporters — a practice called "the spoils system."

**Donelson:** This jobs thing has some people pretty upset, Uncle.

**Jackson:** I'll bet most of them were people who lost their jobs when I hired new government workers.

**Donelson:** That may be true. But why stir up the works?

**Jackson:** The old way was unfair. No one has a right to a lifetime job. Anybody who wants a job under *this* President has got to earn it!

**Narrator B:** Controversy continues to plague Jackson's administration. A scandal erupts over the wife of John Eaton, Jackson's secretary of war. Mrs. Eaton is one of the "everyday people" Jackson has always championed. But Washington society is shocked by Mrs. Eaton's past — she once worked as a barmaid in her father's tavern. The uproar leads Eaton and several other members of Jackson's Cabinet to resign.

### SCENE 3

**Narrator C:** Next, Jackson runs into trouble with his Vice President. . . .

**John C. Calhoun:** Mr. President, I must protest the men that you have





This cartoon from Jackson's day shows him battling what he called "the many-headed monster": the Bank of the United States.

and forever, one and inseparable!  
**Narrator C:** At first, Jackson stays neutral — publicly, at least. Then, at a political dinner in April . . .  
**Donelson** (*whispering in his uncle's ear*): You're next, sir. Twenty-four speakers before you, and nearly every one has come out in favor of nullification and state's rights!  
**Jackson** (*whispering back*): So I see. I'll make this simple, so they will understand. (*He stands; his voice is loud and clear*) Our Union: It must be preserved! (*He sits.*)

**Narrator D:** Jackson has finally spoken, but the bitter difference of opinion remains. The split between Jackson and his Vice President grows so deep that Calhoun resigns.

#### SCENE 4

**Narrator D:** The nullification battle quiets down for a time. Meanwhile, pioneers, hunters, farmers, and business people are moving farther and farther west. Jackson, the former frontiersman, heartily approves.

White settlement of the West runs into a major obstacle — the people who already live there. For hundreds of years, Indians have hunted and farmed on land that white people now want for their own. In 1830, Congress passes a new law. . . .

**Donelson:** A messenger just arrived from the Capitol. He says Congress passed the Indian Removal Act.

**Jackson:** Good! I'll sign it into law. The Indians must be moved. There is no way that Indians and white folks will ever be able to live together in peace.

**Donelson:** What will happen to the Indians?

**Jackson:** The U.S. government will make an offer to all Indians living in the South, east of the Mississippi River. If the Indians give up their

picked to fill those Cabinet posts.  
**Jackson:** They're all good men, John.  
**Calhoun** (*angry*): But every one of them opposes my policies, sir!  
**Jackson:** If you're upset about the new tariffs [taxes on imports and exports], you're forgetting how this system works. The people voted for Congress, and Congress voted for those tariffs. That makes those tariffs the law of the land.  
**Calhoun:** But that doesn't make them right. Our economy in South Carolina depends on trade with Europe. We sell cotton to Europeans and buy manufactured products from them. Those tariffs are hurting us badly.  
**Jackson:** If you don't like the tariffs law, get Congress to change it.  
**Calhoun:** That won't work! The northern states are in the majority, and have all the power. Things are tilted unfairly in their favor. Minority states like mine must have the right to nullify [refuse to obey] any federal laws they consider unfair.  
**Jackson:** That is ridiculous! What would happen to our country? It would get split every which way.

The Union must be preserved!  
**Narrator C:** In January 1830, debate over nullification rages on the Senate floor. Two leading debaters are Hayne of South Carolina and Webster of Massachusetts. . . .  
**Robert Hayne:** This nation was born of a revolution. Why did we fight? Because a strong, central, faraway government was slaying us with unfair taxes! We built our new nation on the strengths of its individual states! If South Carolina lets Washington burden us with heavy tariffs, are we any better off than before?  
**Daniel Webster:** Our revolution was fought for liberty. That includes the liberty to make our own rules. So when representatives of the people pass a law for the good of *the entire nation*, everyone must obey. We must share the burdens as well as the benefits!  
**Hayne:** The Constitution is our supreme law! Our Bill of Rights says that powers not clearly given to the federal government belong to the states. It must be within a state's power to nullify unfair federal laws.  
**Webster:** Above all, we must remain *one nation*. Liberty and Union, now



lands here in the East, we'll give them some new land, out West. We're setting aside some land out there in Oklahoma, called Indian Territory, just for them.

**Donelson:** But what if they say no?

**Jackson (scowling):** They don't really have a choice. If they won't move on their own, we'll have to make them.

**Narrator D:** Many Indians of the Southeast do move, believing it is the only way to avoid bloodshed. But some Cherokees who live in Georgia stay on. They have heard that Indian Territory is dry, flat, forbidding land — nothing like the rich, rolling farmlands of Georgia that they already call home.

The Cherokee appeal to the federal government to let them stay. They even take their case to the Supreme Court, and win. But Jackson is determined to have the land, and orders them to move. A new treaty gives them a deadline of May 1838. If they are not gone by then, the U.S. Army will force them out.

## SCENE 5

**Narrator E:** Jackson has plenty of other problems. As the first term draws to an end, he takes on one of the nation's most powerful institutions: the Bank of the United States.

**Reporter:** Sir, this Bank of the United States has been in business since 1816. What's wrong with the federal government having its own bank?

**Jackson:** The federal government is supposed to represent *the people!* That means the *real people, all the people* — not just wealthy businessmen and the idle rich!

**Reporter:** Are you the only one opposing the Bank?

**Jackson:** Of course not. Many Americans call it an unfair monopoly. Why should a privileged few have so much control over the nation's money?

**Reporter:** The Bank of the United States has some very powerful supporters, Mr. President. Do you really think you can change the system?

**Jackson:** The bank is trying to kill me, but *I will kill it!* I am making

the bank a major issue in my reelection campaign. If the people vote for me, and for a Congress that will back me up, *I will change it.* That's a promise!

## SCENE 6

**Narrator F:** Jackson's 1832 reelection campaign makes history. He is nominated to be the Democratic Party's candidate at a national political convention — the first ever.

Jackson defeats Senator Henry Clay of Kentucky, candidate of the National Republican Party, by a wide margin. Clay is a long-time supporter of the Bank of the United States. Jackson is determined to get rid of it.

After he is reelected, Jackson orders federal money withdrawn from the Bank of the U.S. and redeposited in state banks. By 1836, the Bank of the U.S. was no more.

Soon after the November 1832 election, Jackson meets with his Vice President-elect.

**Martin Van Buren:** There is trouble brewing down in South Carolina.

**Jackson:** What's wrong now?

**Van Buren:** People there hate the new tariffs law. South Carolina has declared the tariffs law **null and void** [nonexistent]. South Carolina says it will **secede** [withdraw] from the Union if the federal government tries to enforce the tariffs law.

**Jackson:** This is treason!

**Narrator F:** On December 10, 1832,

Jackson puts the U.S. military on alert. Warships sail into the harbor at Charleston, South Carolina, and troops stand ready for action.

**Van Buren:** There's a big uproar in Congress, sir. Some people say that it is not within your power as President to use the U.S. military to enforce federal laws.

**Jackson:** Then I will ask Congress to give me that power!

**Narrator F:** Jackson requests, and Congress passes, a "Force bill." This gives the President the authority to use the U.S. military to enforce the tariffs law. But 10 days before South Carolina's February 1, 1833, deadline, the state's leaders revoke the nullification proclamation. The federal tariffs law is upheld and the Union is preserved. It is a great victory for Jackson.

## AFTERWORD

Andrew Jackson is remembered as a champion of democracy, but a limited one. "The people" he so staunchly defended did not include blacks, Indians, or women. In his day, white men were the only Americans who were allowed to vote.

Jackson used his strong will and beliefs to give the U.S. presidency more power than it ever had before. He strengthened the office, but remained faithful to democratic ideals. The people, he believed, should always have the final say in running the U.S. government. ☆

## YOUR TURN

### Word Match

- |             |                         |
|-------------|-------------------------|
| 1. spoils   | a. import/export taxes  |
| 2. tariffs  | b. withdraw             |
| 3. treaty   | c. agreement            |
| 4. monopoly | d. disloyalty           |
| 5. secede   | e. rewards              |
| 6. treason  | f. control by one group |

### Think About It

1. Jackson was a staunch supporter of democratic ideals. What did he believe in? Who was helped by his style of democracy? Who was left out?

2. If Andrew Jackson was running for President today, would you vote for him? Explain.