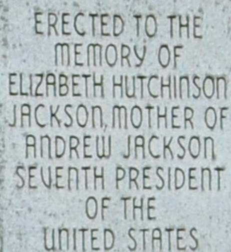
South Carolina
Revolutionary Era Biographies

REVOLUTIONARY WOMEN

Elizabeth Hutchinson Jackson

THE MOTHER OF AMERICA'S SEVENTH PRESIDENT

by
Sheila Ingle



SC 250 ANNIVERSARY
American Revolution

ELIZABETH HUTCHINSON JACKSON

The Mother of America's Seventh President

Both in history books and various media today, we can read and watch migration. People don't stay in the same places all of their lives. Either as individuals, families, or communities, they cross borders, rivers, and oceans to start over. Leaving home, they always take something of their legacy with them. Whether it is little or much in worldly goods, they always carry their memories of family and culture.

With those who founded our country in those original thirteen colonies, each one carried hope for a better life. Whether it was those who immigrated from a debtor's cell, a barren land, lack of opportunity, religious persecution, or a bent for adventure, these settlers carried a fire in their eyes to start over. One of these groups was the Ulster Scots, who became known in America as the Scots-Irish (Blethen and Wood XIII).

From Scotland to Ireland to America, their steps moved forward, searching for land and independence. They arrived, filled with hope, along the eastern coast, one shipload at a time.

English historian, J. A. Froude, wrote, "No people have scored so deep a mark in the world's history as the fierce Scots have done" (Bruce 3).

In 1603, James VI and 1 became the first king to rule over England, Scotland, and Ireland, and he wanted unity with the Irish-speaking Catholics in Ireland. To make the native Irish friendlier, he opened up Ulster Plantation to Scottish and a few English settlers. The Lowland Scots brought their Presbyterian faith and Scottish language, and the English settlers took their Anglican faith and English language to Northern Ireland. The earls of Tyrone and Tyrconnell, owners of this land, fled to France, and acerage was divided among the immigrants (Blethen 6).

Figure 1
Portrait of James VI and I by John de Critz after he had acceded to the throne and moved to London. Bequeathed to National Galleries Scotland by Sir James Naesmyth 1897. Image courtesy of National Galleries Scotland.

Only the narrow North Channel of the Irish Sea separated northeastern Ulster from southwestern Scotland. Immigration was easy, and the new land was inviting (Blethen and Curtis 3). The Scottish were willing to move across the water, but they also were eager to migrate. When persecution from the British created a life where hardship soured their daily existence, they were willing again to move to a land they had only heard about. This new country was America (Blethen and Wood 13).

"Lord, grant that I may always be right, for thou knowest I am hard to turn" is an archaic Scots-Irish prayer that reveals a deep-seeded character trait that moved the Lowlanders from Scotland to Northern Ireland and lastly to the New World. James VI of Scotland and I of England started this resettlement to the Plantation of Ulster. Because of their zeal for their faith and freedom, the Scots willingly took opportunities to better themselves and their families' plights.

As Billy Kennedy remarked in a lecture on "Scots-Irish Forefathers," "God-fearing Scots-Irish, or Ulster-Scots, combined in their ideals: a total reverence for the Almighty, a deep devotion to their families, sincere love of country and passionate belief in their liberty. Generally, as a people, the Scots-Irish stayed true to the four main cornerstones of life: God, Country, Family and Liberty, although there were some, as in every community, who did not attain these standards" (Kennedy 2001).

According to the Carrickfergus History site, Andrew and Elizabeth Jackson were Scots-Irish parents working in Boneybefore Co Antrim in 1765. "They had a farm and plot of land in the Bellahill townland, and were most likely tenants of the Dalway family who owned most of the land in that area, alongside Dobbs land to the south – indeed the family farm was in close proximity to both Dalway's Bawn and Castle Dobbs. While not poor, the Jacksons were certainly not considered affluent, and lived a modest life. They were weavers and linen drapers by occupation, which were reliable jobs in Ulster at this time. They were devoted Presbyterians and worshipped at Ballycarry Presbyterian Church, a mile to the north-east." ("US President Andrew Jackson").

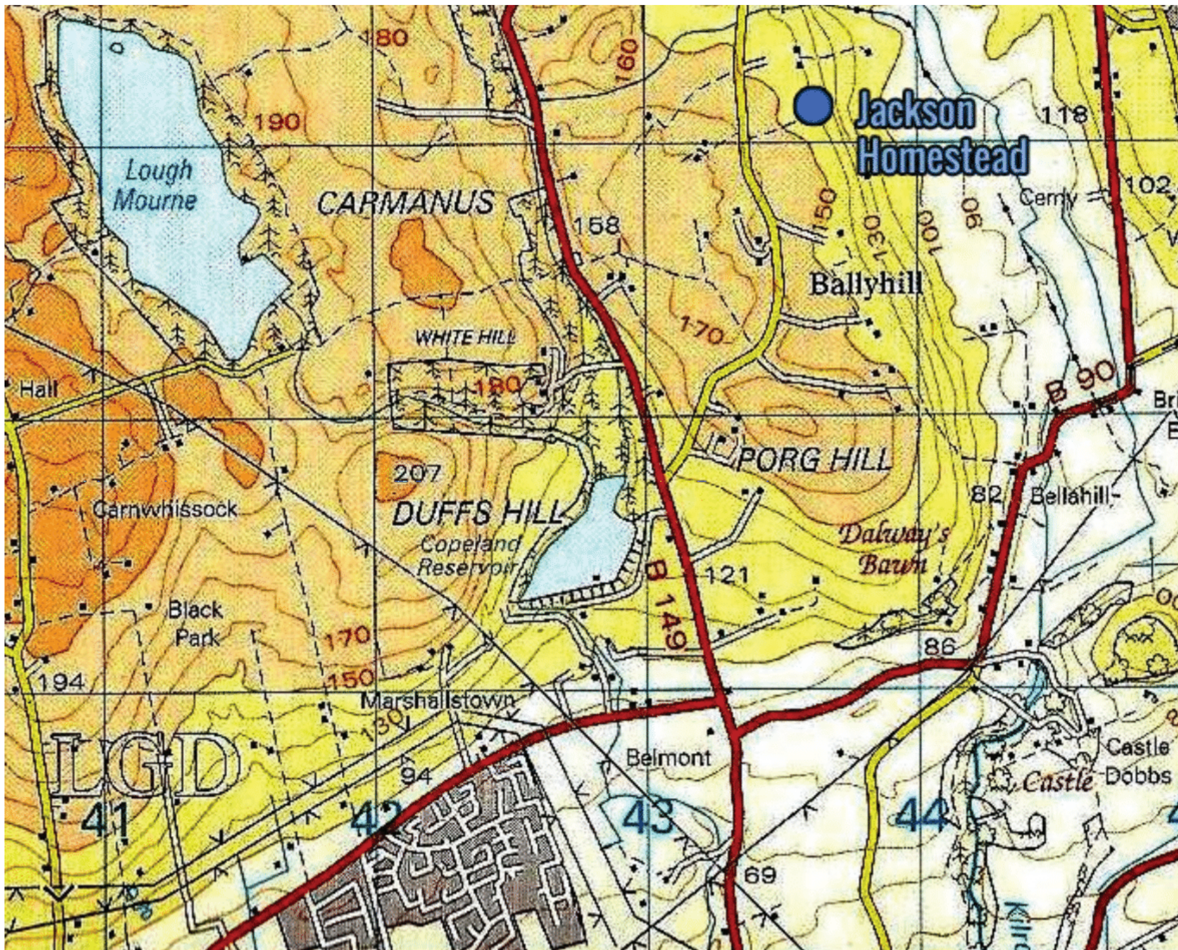


Figure 2
Map on the web site of https://carrickfergushistory.co.uk/us-president-andrew-jackson/. The location of the Jacksons' "real" homestead, a farm in the Bellahill townland. The ruins can still be discovered today, for the dedicated explorer.

Moving to Boneybefore, a few years before their decision to emigrate to America, it was another thatched farmhouse they lived in. The Donaldson family had lived along the river there for over three hundred years and were successful farmers. With the proximity of the two households, the Jacksons were probably tenants ("US President Andrew Jackson").

Elizabeth, who was called Betty, was from a family that worked with linen, either spinning or weaving. She had excessive energy, was quite talkative, and was physically strong. Andrew Jackson, Sr. was a hard-working tenant farmer (Booraem 2). Because of the constant robbing of their freedoms by the British, as well as the increase in higher taxation, their lives were in a rut. Rising rents and shorter leases also kept their livelihood in peril. There was going to be no climbing out of their predicament of living hand-to-mouth. They were constantly looking for ways to better their lot, and the colony of Carolina offered it.

In the mid seventeenth century, Carolina offered to new immigrants one hundred acres of free land for head of household, a tax exemption, and free tools to Protestant settlers (Booraem 1). Weighing their options in whether to stay in Ireland or cross the Atlantic Ocean to an unknown land was easy for this young couple. With two boys, Hugh and Robert, under the age of three, this determined couple decided to leave their home and families for a better future.

The term Scots-Irish refers to the those descended from Scottish ancestors who moved to Ireland and then to America. In Britain and Ireland, they were called Ulster Scots.

On Boneybefore Road were twelve Scots-Irish farm cottages. This is where Andrew and Elizabeth Jackson lived with their two sons, Hugh and Robert, before they immigrated to America.

Andrew Sr. was the son of a linen weaver, but the land called to him in a different way, and tenant farming is what he chose. Returning from his years before the mast, brother Sam told him of the exotic places he had seen and his adventures on the open sea. Another brother Hugh had chosen the life of a soldier and served in His Majesty's Forty-Ninth Regiment of Foot. His tales of fighting the Cherokee and then hunting with the friendly Catawba Indians in Carolina stirred the risk-taking heart of Andrew (Janes 4).

Andrew's desire for his own land grew. Since Elizabeth had sisters living in the Waxhaw region of Carolina, she was in agreement and ready to start over, too.

They left because of economic privations, laws that refused them an opportunity to a profession or role in government because of their Presbyterian religion, and increasing taxes. The couple headed for Carolina, where family and new land awaited them (Booraem 1).

Fourteen miles from Carrickfergus was the port of Larne, and the Jackson family sailed from this port for a seven-to-eight-week voyage across the Atlantic Ocean ("US President Andrew Jackson"). Carrying six-month-old Robert and with two-year-old Hugh tightly held by hand, they left Ireland (Remini 4).

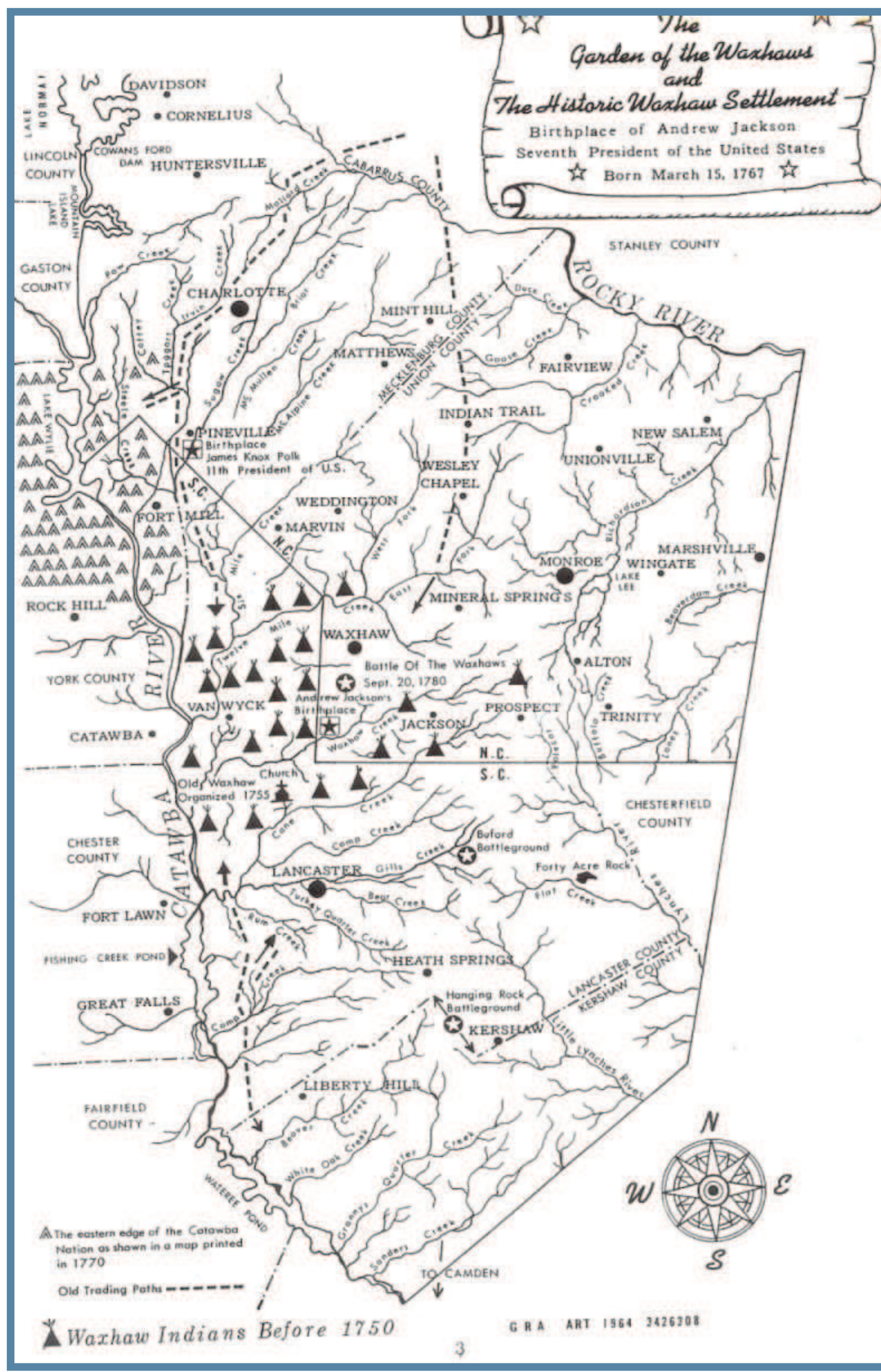
Where they landed in America is disputed, but their destination was the Waxhaws where four of Betty's sisters lived with their families. (James 4-5).

The lush Waxhaws was in the backcountry of Carolina in the area between today's Charlotte and Camden. Its name originated with a Native American tribe that had lived there earlier. Rich topsoil covered the rolling hills, even though the red clay was only twelve inches below. Oak and hickory were the abundant hardwoods. Cattle grazed on the dense canebrakes that were along the rivers and many streams. Grasslands and colorful flowers carpeted the ground in the spring. Large and small wild game was abundant, and fish populated all the fresh waters (Edgar 2). This was land filled with opportunity to not only survive, but thrive.

Since cattle were primary to the Irish way of life, a healthy environment for these farm animals was essential. The diet of most Ulster families was mainly dairy products. Besides milk, butter and buttermilk, they enjoyed curdled milk called clabber. This soured milk, the white clumps in buttermilk, was often eaten for breakfast with honey and spices. Branding cattle and allowing livestock to roam free was a bonus to their care. Fences were unnecessary.

Figure 3

An accurate map of North and South Carolina, with their Indian frontier, showing in a distinct manner all the mountains, rivers, swamps, marshes, bays, creeks, harbours, sandbanks and soundings on the coasts; with the roads and Indian paths; as well as the boundary or provincial lines, the several townships, and other divisions of the land in both the provinces created by Henry Mouzon (circa 1741-circa 1807), mapmaker and civil engineer of Saint Stephen's Parish, was appointed by Governor Lord Charles Greville Montague to survey South Carolina in 1771. London, Printed for Robt. Sayer and J: Bennett, 1775.



Courtesy of the Robinson-Spangler Carolina Room, Charlotte Mecklenburg Library.

Most Scots-Irish were staunch Presbyterians. In this Waxhaw community was a church with Reverend William Richardson as the minister. He had been trained at the University of Glasgow. In the middle of heavily forested land was a place to worship weekly and be taught by a learned man. Since she was a dedicated churchgoer and believer, Betty was pleased to know that a Presbyterian meeting house and preacher would await them (Booraem 4). This Waxhaw Meeting House was the first church in the back country (Deppisch 11).

There was a distinct pride in the Scots-Irish of their heritage. They never forgot the hammering of their forefathers that were mistreated by the English. Family relationships were sacred, and loyalty to kith and kin overshadowed decisions and lifestyles. Many emigrated to the colonies with family members, and some congregations traveled together (Edgar 5).

When this homeless Jackson family arrived in the Waxhaws, the Hutchinson sisters and their husbands welcomed them. Andrew and Betty settled on land around Twelve Mile Creek, some twelve miles from the Waxhaw Meeting House (Moore 52). Besides the church, a county store owned by John Walker (Booream 18), and a few homesteads completed the settlement.

Because of their persecution of their beliefs by the English, these Scots-Irish Presbyterians were fervent in their faith. In this small settlement, the church was the only social meeting place. With the closest town of Camden about fifty miles away, they depended on each other. Bartering, being good neighbors, and each family member contributing to one job or more for the family or the farm made for a bustling community (Moore 3).

Figure 4
Meeting House at Andrew Jackson State Park along the Crawford Trail. Built in the style of a Presbyterian Church by early Scotch-Irish Settlers much like the one Andrew Jackson attended. More than just a place of worship, the Meeting House was the center of the community. Whenever important decisions had to be made, neighbors would gather at the meeting house. (https://carolinaodyssey.com/south-carolina/andrew-jackson-state-park/)

Around the meeting house at the center were houses and farms. They were all on the east side of the wide Catawba River. The log cabins were spread out with fields and forests separating them. Most of those cabins were primitive with lengths of around sixteen feet deep and about twenty-two to twenty-four feet wide. A chimney was at one end with both front and back doors. Filled with either mud or clay, the rough-cut logs were sturdy. A loft was for storage and where the children slept. If rough slabs of split wood didn't cover for an almost level floor, packed dirt was the other option. Most of the light came from the open fire or the few windows.

Like the homes they left in Ireland, these one-room cabins were simple (Booraem 6).

For two years, Andrew and Elizabeth worked to eke out a living on the two hundred acres he received on the headright system (Moore 20). Cooperation and help to the newcomers were always available. The borrowing system included not only labor, but also tools, livestock, and seed. A house or barn-raising, quilting bee, or harvest brought the clan together (Moore 25). And Sunday services some fifteen miles away from the Waxhaws church (Moore 52), were attended by all the sisters.

In midwinter of 1767, twenty-nine-year-old Andrew died. He left his two boys and Betty, pregnant again, with shelter from their one-room cabin and a small farm to tend. Hugh was four, and Robert was two. Frontier life was a full-time job for both a husband and wife; each had their responsibilities. Betty and her boys moved in with her invalid sister Jane and husband James Crawford. On March 15, 1767, Andrew Jackson was born. Because Betty could help her sister with the household and children, Betty and her sons joined this part of her family for fourteen years until her death. She never lived in her own home again, and her sons were always guests.

Elizabeth, "though small in stature…was strong and resilient in spirit. She adapted to life's changes and disappointments and put others' needs before herself. Working hard and pushing forward through challenges was the model she set for her sons" (Deppisch 13).

Both South Carolina and North Carolina, which were in the one colony called Carolina when Andy was born, claim this seventh President as being born in their state. The controversary is based on whose house Betty gave birth in. Oral tradition claims that he was born in the home of his Aunt Peggy McCamie, which eventually became part of North Carolina. South Carolina believes that Andy was born at his Aunt Jane Crawford's home only about a mile away. The state lines were drawn after 1767.

In a letter to James Witherspoon, President Jackson wrote, "As to the question asked, I with pleasure answer, I was born in So Carolina, as I have been told at the plantation whereon James Crawford lived about one mile from the Camden Road near the Waxhaw Creek, left that State in 1784, was born on the 15 of march in the year 1767"

(Andrew Jackson to James Witherspoon). This dispute has lessened through the years between the states.

This new Jackson-Crawford blended family met the challenges of daily life in the Waxhaws.

In a house on the banks of Crawford's Branch of Waxhaw Creek, the house sat on a knoll. Looking over the post road, it was roomy enough for the family and to even host travelers that passed by (James 5). Traveling north on the road were Virginia and Pennsylvania, and south led travelers to Camden and then Charles Town. Whether it was men on horseback or cattle being driven to the beef market in Charles Town, there was regular hoof traffic (Booraem 18). Betty was the housekeeper, nurse for her sister, and caregiver for the fourteen living in that household.

Hugh and Robert Jackson, then baby Andrew, became part of an already busy and crowded home. Four boy cousins, Tommy, Robert, Will, Joseph, and James, (Booraem 35), plus their sisters, Martha, Jane, and Mary (Veach 5) welcomed the new arrivals.

The pastor of the Waxhaw Meeting House, Reverend William Richardson, acquired a plantation and built a two-story manse. His library was his favorite room. He hosted "literary evenings" where he led conversations about his readings. Part of the curriculum at his "academy" was the teaching of Greek and Latin. In a time when entertainment was fixed on "cock fights, log-rolling and funerals," his parishioners were in awe (James 13).

"Early churches were not large but wielded an enormous influence. The desire for religious freedom and to worship without government interference that brought settlers here was long lasting. The church, no doubt, was the main source of their strength of character and their love of freedom" (Veach X).

Betty was an educated woman, and, as all Scots-Irish, she believed in the importance of education. Listening to the sermons of Richardson, she decided one of her sons would have the opportunity to "wear the cloth." (James 13). The three boys did not agree.

Andy wrote later that he learned to read, write, and "cast accounts" and then studied the "dead languages" (Remini 5).

This single mom was respected in the community for her hard-working industry and her excellent spinning. Her "fresh-looking," eager face glowed at the prospect toward which she bent all her bustling energy. "Betty Jackson . . . [was] very conversive," wrote a woman who knew her, "[and] could not be idle. "She spun flax beautiful" being, indeed, a spinner's daughter.

"She spun us heddie-yarn for weaving and the best and finest I ever saw" (James 13).

Another said that Betty and her sisters were "comely, thrifty, well-bred, and sprightly-besides which, they could read and write" (Deppisch 9).

Soon, Betty became friends with Agnes "Nancy" Craighead Richardson, the wife of her pastor. Some of the parishioners thought that "The vivacity of Virginia-born Nancy Craighead smacked a trifle too much of the liberal ways of the Low-Country aristocracy" (James 5).

Shock rocked this community in the summer of 1771, and Nancy needed a close friend.

"On the evening of July 20, 1771, William Boyd rode up from Rocky Creek, on the other side of the Catawba, the emissary of a new settlement from Ireland, to solicit the guidance of Reverend Richardson. At the same time the minister's wife, who had been to a quilting party, arrived at the house. She showed Mr. Boyd to her husband's study where Doctor Richardson was found in an attitude of prayer, but dead with a bridle twisted about his throat (James 14).

Rumors immediately grew, as no one could believe he had committed suicide. The only other possibility was murder. As it is today, fingers pointed to his wife Nancy, but there was no proof. Scandal slowly settled, and voices finally silenced. Betty stayed close to her friend. Nancy remarried George Dunlap and stayed in the Waxhaws community.

A woman's day in the 1770s in the Waxhaws was long and labor intensive.

Before starting breakfast in the open fireplace, she went to bring in water in wooden buckets for the pots to cook in and then wash up. From the fields of corn, she had helped plant, weed, pick the ears and grind the corn, a usual breakfast was mush or boiled corn meal. Served hot in a large bowl or wooden trencher, it was eaten with pewter spoons. Milk might have been added to individual portions from a pewter pitcher.

For diversity, Betty would bake cornbread in a fry pan on the hot coals in the fireplace.

Served with butter, fried bacon might have been the side.

Since Betty had milked the cows, that was the beverage. In fact, sweet milk or buttermilk was the usual drink at a Scots-Irish table.

Before all left to start their first chores, the family sang songs together and ended the time with prayer by James. There was no time for idleness, but there was always rest on Sundays.

The tasks for making their lives and the farm move forward were gender specific, and Betty had the help of the Crawford daughters. Not only was cooking the food every day their work, but planting, watering, and picking from the garden had to be done. Mending, sewing, and washing the household clothes and linens were a daily task. Spinning sheep's wool or flax to make linen were year-long tasks. Making soap and candles was a seasonal chore (Booream 37-38).

Even in the evenings, mending and spinning continued from the light of the fire. It appears that whatever she set her mind to do, it was in an exemplary fashion. With a captive audience, she told the young listeners about the oppression and tyranny of the British in Ireland. "Often would she spend the winter's evenings in recounting to them the sufferings of their grandfather at the siege of Carrickfergus, and the oppressions exercised by the nobility of Ireland, over the laboring poor; impressing it upon them, as a first duty, to expend their lives, if it should become necessary, in defending and supporting the natural rights of man" (Cobbett 12).

Because of Andy's references as an adult to Sir William Wallace, Betty must also have shared stories of his heroic deeds fighting the English. Andy recommended this hero's strengths to one of his wards. He described the Scottish knight as "the best model for a young man…We find in him the truly undaunted courage, always ready to brave any dangers, for the relief of his country or his friend" (Remini 6).

Andrew Jackson's memory was long, and soon his own personal experiences would be added to these other tales.

But a storm of war was brewing, and it was headed South. News filtered into the Waxhaws community from travelers from the North and traders in Camden. Copies of the *South Carolina Gazette*, published in Charles Town, carried news from the northern colonies. Rumblings about protests in Boston and a meeting called the Continental Congress in 1774 were discussed at length. Talks across fences, in the church yard, and around family tables were constant. All had opinions, whether voiced or not. The Waxhaw community knew first-hand about how the English had taken their freedoms away in Ireland. That was why they came to the colonies, and these now independent families who owned their own land became stiff-necked at the thoughts of losing their freedoms again.

Local militia groups formed. Every man turned himself into a soldier; even the children . . . drilling with sticks were would-bes. The Waxhaw militia company elected Robert Crawford its captain.

On horseback and on foot, the men trained and then rode off to fight and to defend Charles Town in 1776 from the British. Under Colonel William Moultrie, four hundred, colonial Americans defeated nine man-of-war ships from an unfinished fort on Sullivan's Island. Waxhaw militiamen returned with tales of huge mosquitoes, of a battle that lasted ten hours, and a hero named Sergeant William Jasper. "Scores of frigate balls smacked the palmetto curtain and bastions, unanswered, including one that snapped the flagstaff and brought down the garrison colors. Sergeant William Jasper, risking himself to enemy fire, jumped from the bastion to the beach, retrieved the flag, cutting it from the broken pole, lashed it to a gunner's sponge, and planted it in the sand" ("Battle of Sullivan's Island").

This American victory over a superior Naval force was an incredible boost to the morale of the colonists in these early years of their fight for independence. General George Washington wrote, "…With such a bright example before us, of what can be done by brave and spirited men, fighting in defense of their Country; we shall be loaded with a double share of Shame, and Infamy, if we do not acquit ourselves with Courage, or a determined Resolution to conquer or die…" ("Battle of Sullivan's Island").

Betty's oldest son Hugh, age sixteen, was determined to join the militia and fight, and he did. News from the North continued to trickle down to Carolina, as Captains Robert Crawford, another uncle of the Jackson boys, George Dunlap, and Robert Montgomery trained their Waxhaw companies and kept the members meeting and practicing the art of war.

In the spring of 1779, word reached the backcountry that the British were planning an attack on Charles Town. Several militia companies left to help. Lieutenant William Richardson Davie, the nephew of Reverend Richardson, arrived on his way south with his North Carolina troops. Betty allowed sixteen-year-old Hugh to join him (Booream 47).

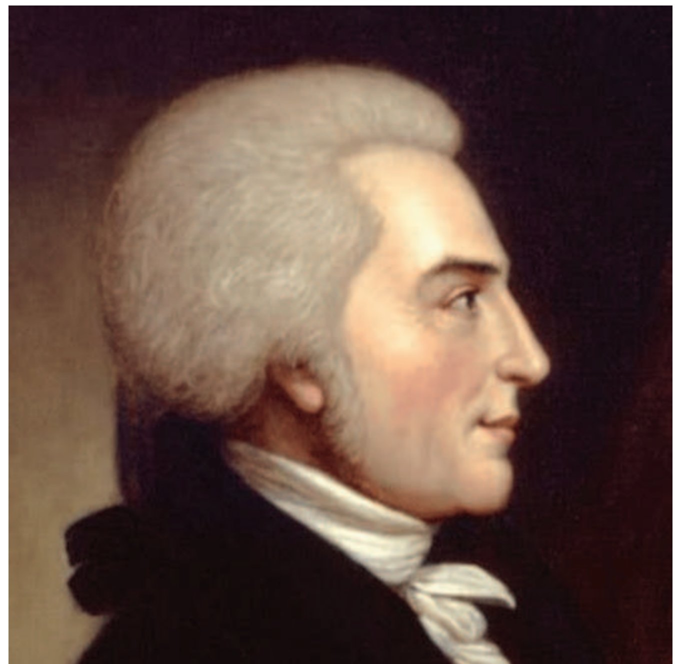


Figure 5:
Posthumous portrait of William Richardson Davie, painted by Charles Willson Peale in 1826. Portrait property of the Dialectic and Philanthropic Societies Foundation, Chapel Hill, North Carolina.

The Battle of Stono Ferry, outside of Charles Town, awaited these men, and the Patriots lost. Also, lost was Hugh Jackson. "He had been sick, and Davie had ordered him to stay out of the engagement, but he had gone into battle anyway and collapsed from exhaustion after it was over. He barely made it home, died almost at once, and was buried quickly in the churchyard" (Booream 47) with his father.

This widowed mother now mourned the loss of her oldest child. His determination to fight against the British had now been passed down to his two younger brothers; this conflict was now personal to Robert and Andy, and retaliation was a priority. Though the enemy army had retreated to Georgia, the Jacksons' hard feelings followed them.

Work on the land followed the seasons, and the militia continued to train. Even though Robert and Andy were only fourteen and twelve, they were eager to defend their family and stike back for their brother's death. Not knowing the future, their time would come.

British troops captured Savannah and had their sights back on Charles Town. On April 9, "a British fleet of fourteen warships slipped past the forts defending Charles Town and sailed into the inner harbor" (Edgar 30). The siege began and lasted forty-two days. Major General Benjamin Lincoln surrendered his army of around five thousand men on May 12, 1780 (Edgar 31).

South Carolina was now open to General Sir Henry Clinton and his troops, except for 350 Virginia regulars under Colonel Abraham Buford. After the fall of Charles Town, Buford quickly headed North. Traveling with him was the governor of Carolina, John Rutledge. Escape from the British was uppermost on their minds (Edgar 55).

Cornwallis sent Banastre Tarleton with 270 men, forty British regulars, 130 Legion cavalry, and 100 mounted Legion infantry to catch the Continentals (*The Road to Guilford Courthouse* 81). Tarleton pushed the men and horses, so that they marched 154 miles in only fifty-four hours. On May 29, 1780, around 3:00 in the afternoon, the two forces met.

Figure 6:
Portrait of Maj. Gen. Benjamin Lincoln Painter: Charles Willson Peale National Park Service (Independence National Historical Park)

On the Rocky River Road, sixteen miles from the Waxhaw church, Buford prepared for battle (Moore 60), not the slaughter that awaited his men. Tarleton charged the center and both flanks simultaneously, and Buford's first line was destroyed. Buford ordered a white flag of surrender to be flown; it was ignored (Moore 60).

There were five British casualties and fifteen wounded. The Americans lost 113, with 54 taken prisoner and 150 too wounded to travel. Sixty of those wounded shortly died. British bayonets dealt death blows on the defeated over and over (Moore 61).

"Under the blazing Carolina sun, the war struck the Waxhaws with shocking ferocity" (*Jackson's Way* 3).

Elizabeth Jackson and her sons, Robert and Andy, helped nurse the wounded and dying, along with the others in the community. They turned the meeting house into a hospital. Moving the benches to the walls, they covered the floor with clean straw for beds. Betty and the other women, as well as young boys like Robert and Andy, were the nurses. "Changing bandages, applying poultices, and giving them food, water, and whiskey were the primary tasks" (Booream 49). Evidence of those bayonet's raw cuts and bleeding hacks opened all their eyes to the horror of war.

One of the local Presbyterian ministers, William Martin, who had brought his congregation to Carolina spoke to his people about the carnage that happened on that road. He used scripture to prove that fighting against tyrants was acceptable, and he emotionally exhorted them to fight against the British, saying, "Go see," he cried—"the tender mercies of Great Britain! In that church you may find men, though still alive, hacked out of the very semblance of humanity: some deprived of their arms—mutilated trunks: some with one arm or leg, and some with both legs cut off. Is not this cruelty a parallel to the history of our Scottish fathers, driven from their conventicles, hunted like wild beasts? Behold the godly youth, James Nesbit—chased for days by the British for the crime of being seen on his knees upon the Sabbath morning!" (Thompson *Personal Blog*.)

Now the time had come for the youngest two Jackson sons to join the fight against the British. Under the leadership of William Richardson Davie, the brothers watched and learned from him and other veterans. Andy carried messages, took care of the

horses, and other noncombatant services. Being two years older, Robert carried and shot a rifle.

Both friendly and enemy forces traveled through this community. There was looting of food and horses. Betty and her neighbors fled, taking only what they could carry, and hid when it was the British, even traveling as far as North Carolina for safety. During the autumn of 1780-1781, Betty, her sons, and many other refuges sheltered there for four months (Deppisch 15).

"Armies marched and countermarched and mounted partisans of both sides raided, pillaged, and burned. Civilians and irregulars, Rebel and Tory alike, were ready at a moment's notice to flee to the woods at the approach of the enemy" (*Jackson's Way* 4). They never knew what destruction would await them on their return home.

Always resourceful, Betty worked at her spinning wheel, while in exile, using the raw flax to make flaxen yarn for weaving. Even as a guest in another's home, she earned her keep, and her sons helped with the outside work. As their hostess, Susan Alexander, later said, the mother often lamented the death of her oldest son, as well as her fears about the British (Booream 13-14).

In the spring of 1781, the two brothers faced the beginnings of their own personal nightmares.

Major John Coffin led a British force into the Waxhaw, bent on destruction and intimidation. As Andy wrote later, they "burned the Waxhaw Meeting House and next day captured me and my brother" (*Jackson's Way* 4).

Robert and Andy sought refuge at the home of their cousin, Lieutenant Thomas Crawford. Major John Coffin and a British force captured the brothers and their cousin on April 11, 1781. The commander ordered Andy to clean his boots, and the youngster refused, saying he was a prisoner of war.

Enraged at the insolence, the major struck Andy with his sword. The boy raised up his left hand in self-defense, but the weapon still sliced his head and fingers. Then the Major turned to Robert with the same request of cleaning his boots, but Robert

also refused. Again, the Tory soldier attacked with his saber, which left a deep cut to his head (*Jackson's Way* 4-5).

The two boys, along with twenty other Patriot prisoners, were marched to the Camden jail, forty miles away. The overcrowded facility already housed 250 prisoners. There were no beds, no medicine, or even cloth to cover their wounds. Thrown into separate cells, where a smallpox epidemic was raging, the brothers shortly succumbed to the same disease (Remini 8).

Looking back to these days in the Camden jail, Jackson said, "my brother, cousins, and myself, as soon as our relationship was known, were separated from each other. No attention whatever was paid to the wounds or to the comfort of the prisoners, and the small pox having broken out among them, for want of proper care, many fell victims to it. I frequently heard them groaning in the agonies of death and no regard was paid to them" (*Jackson's Way* 5).

Within a few days, there were sounds of the Continental Army, under the command of Continental General Nathaniel Greene close to the jail. Lieutenant Colonel Frances Rawdon had the prisoners moved to the basement, but then moved back to their cells after a couple of days. Rawdon led a surprise attack on the Continentals camped on Hobkirk's Hill on April 25, 1781. Rawdon forced them to retreat, but his supply chain had been cut off. The British left Camden two weeks later.

A prisoner exchange was initiated, and the Jackson boys walked out of their captivity, along with five other Waxhaw boys (Booream 101-104). When Betty arrived in Camden is unclear, but she had a hand in these talks. She arrived with two horses to take her sons home. Both were suffering from smallpox, and Robert was weak from his head wound and dysentery. A violent rainstorm drenched them, but they kept moving. The hope of home must have driven this ragged and weary family to keep on keeping on.

Once again, Betty sought her nursing skills to take care of her two youngest.

Before the war, no one born in the Waxhaws had seen a case of smallpox, but the name conjured up fear in all ages. Besides being highly contagious, it was the

greatest killer of the eighteenth century. There were few that survived its ravages of a splitting headache, chills and fever, nausea, backache, and delirium before the rash even broke out. Those unbearable sores were both inside and outside the body (Booraem 106-107).

Robert's condition was more dire, and he died two days later. Now the churchyard of Waxhaw Presbyterian Church was home to her husband and two sons. Well into the summer, Betty nursed Andy (Buchanan, *Jackson's Way* 5).

By the end of May, the scabs had fallen off, but then he contracted malaria. A new set of chills, fever, and tremendous weakness had to be fought with a young body that had survived an incredible fight. At this point, Betty must have turned to her Bible over and over for its words of hope. Because of the fear of the smallpox, no one visited, so they had been on their own for weeks. What strength of spirit kept her in place beside her son. What determination she had to keep him alive. As Andy started to turn the corner toward wellness, the two went to live with the Robert Crawfords (Booraem 108).

Outside of Charles Town in the harbor were British prison ships. Two of the Crawford boys, Will and Joey, were captives there. The overcrowded ships were "floating plague houses anchored off the coast, where the food was wormy and diseases were epidemic. Prisoners sickened and died daily and were thrown overboard for the sharks (Booream 100).

Betty had helped raise these two boys, and there were other Waxhaw boys held there. They were family, and her heart went out to them. With her friend Nancy Richardson Dunlap and several other Waxhaw women, they planned to go see how they could help. Word had been received that a possible prisoner exchange was imminent, and the women wanted to help these young men get home. Bringing home her sister's boys was important to Betty. Both their parents were dead, but she wasn't (Booraem 108). Betty possessed a generous and loving heart.

It was a three- or four-day trip by horses, and they could take food, medicine, and clean clothes to them. There would be safety in their traveling together, and since Andy was feeling so much better, he could continue to recover with family. Around

the age of forty at this time, Betty would not and could not leave someone behind to suffer in such conditions, especially her family.

Her last words to her only son were akin to last words, though neither had any inkling of the future. She said, “Make friends by being honest. Keep them by being steadfast. Andy, never tell a lie or take what is not yours. Never sue for slander. Settle them cases yourself” (Booraem 108).

And then, these Revolutionary War heroines headed for Charles Town to save lives.

For weeks, the women nursed and encouraged the prisoners, and then on an unrecorded day, Elizabeth Jackson sickened and died. (James 31). Betty caught cholera, known as ship’s fever, and died in the home of William and Agnes Barton.

This couple had lived in the Waxhaws before moving to the outskirts of Charles Town. Mr. Barton, a carpenter, built her casket, and Mrs. Barton buried her in one of her own dresses. The grave was unmarked. Somewhere “on the gloomy flat of Charles Town Neck, a mile from Governor’s Gate” (James 31) was her final resting place. Her fifteen-year-old son Andy received a small bundle of her possessions (Remini 9), brought back by the women she traveled with (Booream 109).

As an adult, Andy recalled, “I felt utterly alone and tried to remember her last words to me.” (James 31).

As with many others, the war hammered this family. A weakened Will Crawford finally came back home; Joseph had died on the prison ship. Hugh died first and then Robert. Betty caught a dreadful disease by being a Good Samaritan. Andy was left an orphan without any siblings. He never saw his fearless mother’s grave, because the site was lost. In the span of only two years, Andrew Jackson became the last one standing in his immediate family.

Though her hardships and challenges were many, Elizabeth Hutchinson Jackson met them all with strength and fortitude. She was consistent in choosing a life of helping others and was undaunted by the daily toil of eighteenth century life. Her perseverance is noteworthy, and her life is one to follow, respect, and remember.

Another woman who lived through these times shared her thoughts on this war and those who survived.

In a letter to her son, John Quincy Adams, on January 19, 1780, Abigail Adams wrote, “These are times in which a Genious would wish to live,” she wrote. “It is not in the still calm of life, or the repose of a pacific station, that great characters are formed. Would Cicero have shone so distinguished an orater, if he had not been roused, kindled and enflamed by the Tyranny of Catiline, Millo, Verres and Mark Anthony. The Habits of a vigorous mind are formed in contending with difficulties. All History will convince you of this, and that wisdom and penetration are the fruits of experience, not the Lessons of retirement and leisure. Great necessities call out great virtues. When a mind is raised, and animated by scenes that engage the Heart, then those qualities which would otherways lay dormant, wake into Life, and form the Character of the Hero and the Statesman” (“Abigail Adams to John Quincy Adams, 19 January 1780”).

As all thirteen colonies were fighting for our liberty, Abigail Adams encouraged her son to continue to battle on. Until her death, Elizabeth Hutchinson Jackson heard that same clarion call and never faltered in her struggle against British tyranny and passed her heroic strength on to her son, President Andrew Jackson.

In her world, there were no safe spaces, and she never quit fighting. ■

EPILOGUE

South Carolinians have set markers in place to remember Betty Jackson.

There in the cemetery of the Old Waxhaws Meeting House, close to the graves of her husband and two sons, is a statue.

"Not until 1949 was there a marker to Mrs. Jackson placed in the Old Waxhaw Presbyterian Church cemetery. It was by the efforts of Mrs. Fred C. Lawrence, who headed Winthrop College's extension division and was the regent of the Catawba Chapter, Daughters of the American Revolution, that a sculpted figure was located.

The soft, youthful features of the memorial statue surely do not resemble Elizabeth Hutchinson Jackson, who was described by Susannah Smartt as a "fresh-looking, fair-haired, very conversive old Irish lady, at dreadful enmity with the Indians!" but the statue, nevertheless, is a lovely tribute to the spirit of love and sacrifice that motivated Andy Jackson's mother to travel far from home to nurse smallpox victims in the midst of a terrible war" (Pettus, *York Observer*).

The inscriptions give a synopsis on who she was, as well as her character. On the west side are carved "Erected to the memory of Elizabeth Hutchinson Jackson. Mother of Andrew Jackson seventh President of the United States." Relating to her persistence of finishing strong are these words of "It was her zeal for accomplishment that made handicaps seem to resolve themselves in her favor which enabled them to endure the hardships of the great wagon road to the gardens of the Waxhaws" on the south side. Words inscribed on the east side are "Elizabeth Hutchinson, wife of Andrew Jackson, Sr. of Larne County, Antrim, Ireland settled in Waxhaws 1765. While nursing Waxhaw patriots on a British prison ship in Charleston, S.C. Elizabeth was stricken with small pox died November 1781, buried near Charleston S.C." The words of advice to her son cover the north side with "Last words to her son "make friends by being honest, keep them by being steadfast. Never tell a lie - nor take what is not your own - nor sue for slander" (Nix, *The Historical Marker Database*).

Public Domain: Elizabeth Hutchinson Jackson marker from west side photographed by Michael Sean Nix on October 28, 2009 for The Historical Marker Database.

In Charleston, South Carolina, there are two granite markers in memory of this President's mother.

A newspaper story, published in November, 1942, called "Elizabeth Jackson, War Mother" caught the eyes and vision of five soldiers stationed at Fort Moultrie. Intrigued with her story, they decided to put their money together and buy a granite monument to commemorate her life. On the block, the soldiers had inscribed the date of Betty's death and her last words to Andy. They had the marker placed near the forks of Meeting Street and King Street. After the war, this memorial fell into disrepair, as it stood alone for the next twenty-five years, and there was no one to take care of it.

There was disagreement on the accurate placing of the stone by several groups, but the one remaining soldier didn't want it moved. An intermediary came to the stage in 1967. President Walter R. Coopedge of the College of Charleston offered space on the downtown campus. Objections to the removal dissipated, and in August of 1967 the marker was moved to the school's Cougar Mall. Today many Charleston visitors can visit this memorial that is only a short distance south of Calhoun Street (Butler, *The Moving Memorials to Elizabeth Jackson*).

Public Domain: Photo taken by Mike Stroud on March 6, 2012 and published on "Elizabeth Jackson" in The Historical Marker Database.

The Rebecca Motte Chapter NSDAR in Charleston was one of the groups that wanted the above marker moved to a more historically accurate place within the city limits,

as well as a place that many would see it. It was in the early 1950s that their negotiations began. Finally, with permission from the city, this chapter planned and erected a new monument in Washington Square. This stone memorializes her life of sacrifice on the prison ships and was unveiled in April 1954. It stands in place today at the north end of the park near Chalmers Street. Its words of tribute to a woman who "gave her life in the cause of independence while nursing revolutionary soldiers in Charles Town and is buried in Charleston" (Butler, *The Moving Memorials to Elizabeth Jackson*).

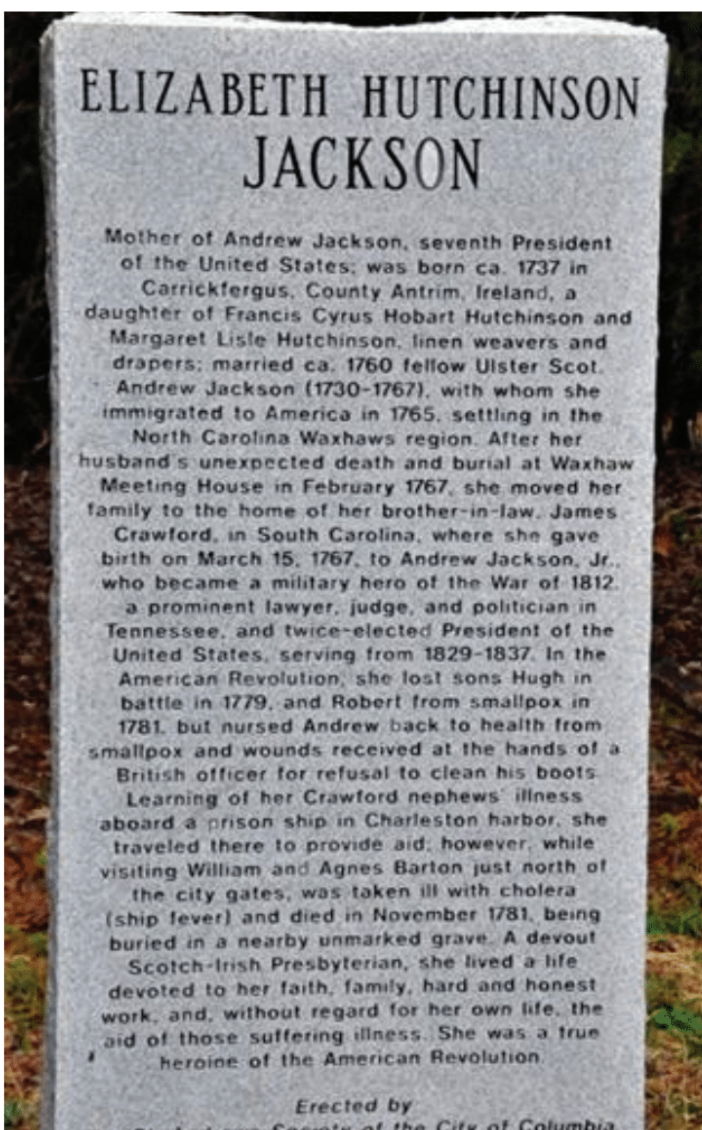
Public Domain: photographed by Michael Sean Nix on February 13, 2010 for The Historical Marker Database.

The Saint Andrew Society of the City of Columbia placed a marker to Elizabeth Jackson in Andrew Jackson State Park on July 29, 2017. Scotsmen, as well as sons,

grandsons and great grandsons of Scotsmen and Scotswomen, are members of this charitable and social organization.

Placement of this marker on the land where she once lived on was quite appropriate ("St. Andrews Society unveils new memorial to Elizabeth Jackson," Press Release).

The inscription on the marker clearly tells the viewer why this Scots-Irish immigrant should be remembered.



Jackson often recounted what he claimed were his mother's last words to him. In 1815, after his triumph at New Orleans, he spoke of his mother to friends: "Gentlemen, I wish she could have lived to see this day. There never was a woman like her. She was gentle as a dove and as brave as a lioness. Her last words have been the law of my life" (Meacham, 14).

Her shadow was long on her youngest son, and Betty's life is one for us to remember.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Sheila Collins Ingle

Retired educator and community volunteer, Sheila is the author of five books about South Carolina women. *Courageous Kate, Fearless Martha,* and *Brave Elizabeth* introduce readers to Revolutionary War heroines who helped their families fight for liberty in Carolina. *Walking with Eliza* shares a day in the life of sixteen-year-old Eliza Pinckney when she took over the management of her father's three plantations. In the twentieth century, textile mills in South Carolina took over the economy, and Appalachian families brought their traditions and lifestyles to become the work force. *Tales of a Cosmic Possum* shares eight stories of the women in John Ingle's family, as they labored in various cotton mills. An avid reader, baker of sourdough bread, and beach lover, Sheila enjoys sharing the stories of our state.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Bass, Robert D. *Ninety-Six, the Struggle for the S.C Back Country*. Orangeburg, S.C.: The Sandlapper Store, Inc., 1978.

Blethen, H. Tyler and Curtis W. Wood Jr. *From Ulster to Carolina*. Raleigh. North Carolina Office of Cultural Resources, 2013.

Booream, Hendrik. *Young Hickory: The Making of Andrew Jackson*. New York: Taylor Trade Publishers, 2001.

Borick, Carl P. *A Gallant Defense: The Siege of Charleston*, 1780. Columbia, S.C.: Univerity of South Carolina Press, 2003.

Bruce, Duncan A. *The Mark of the Scots*. Secaucus, New Jersey, A. Birch Lane Press Book. 1996.

Bray, Robert, and Paul Bushell, eds. *Diary of a Common Soldier in the American Revolution*. Dekalb, Illinois: Northern Illinois University Press, 1977.

Buchanan, John. J*ackson's Way*. New Jersey: John Wiley and Sons, Inc., 2001.

Buchanan, John. *The Road to Guilford Courthouse*. New Jersey: John Wiley and Sons, Inc., 1997.

Cobbett, William. *Life of Andrew Jackson, President of the United States of America*. London: Mills, Jowett, and Mills, 1834.

Davis, Burke. *Old Hickory: A Life of Andrew Jackson*. New York: Dial Press, 1977.

Deppisch, Ludwig M. *Women in the Life of Andrew Jackson*. Jefferson, NC. McFarland, 2021.

Ellet, Elizabeth. *The Women of the American Revolution. Vol. 1.* New York: Baker and Scribner, 1848.

Floyd, Viola Caston. *Historical Notes from Lancaster County, S.C.* Lancaster: Lancaster County Historical Commission, 1977.

Fries, Adelaide L. *Records of the Moravians in N.C.* Raleigh, N.C.: Litho Industries, 1968.

Fries, Adelaide L. *Road to Salem*. Winston-Salem, N.C.: John F. Blair, 1993.

Gullan, Harold. *Faith of Our Mothers*. Grand Rapids, Michigan: William B. Eerdman's Publishing Co., 2001.

Howe, George. *History of the Presbyterian Church in S.C. Vol. 1.* Columbia, S.C.: Duffie and Chapman, 1870.

James, Hunter. *Quiet People of the Land*. Chapel Hill, N.C.: University of North Carolina Press, 1976.

James, Marquis. *The Life of Andrew Jackson*. New York: The Bobbs-Merrill Co., 1933.

Johnson, Gerald W. *Andrew Jackson: An Epic in Homespun*. New York: Menton, 1927.

Lathan, Reverend Robert. *Historical Sketches of the Revolutionary War in the Upcountry of SC*. Norfolk, Virginia: Broad River Basin Historical Society, 1984.

Lewis, Kenneth E. T*he Camden Jail and Market Sites: A Report on Preliminary Investigations*. 1984.

Lumpkin, Henry. *From Savannah to Yorktown*. Lincoln, Nebraska: Excel Press, 1987.

Meacham, Jon. *American Lion: Andrew Jackson in the White House*. New York: Random House, 2008.

Moore, Peter N. *World of Toil and Stress*. Columbia, S.C.: University of South Carolina Press, 2008.

Mouzon, H. & Robert Sayer and John Bennett (1775). London, Printed for Robt. Sayer and J: Bennett. [Map] Retrieved from the Library of Congress, https://www.loc.gov/item/gm71002153/.

Pettus, Louise. *Elizabeth Jackson-Mother of Andrew Jackson*. “York Observer:” December 10, 1989.

Pettus, Louise. T*he Nation Ford Road*. Columbia, S.C.: Palmetto Conservation Foundation, 2000.

Pettus, Louise, and Nancy Crockett. *Waxhaws*. Rock Hill, SC.: Regal Graphics, 1993.

Remer, Richard George. “The Great Wagon Road of the Carolinas” (1974). Dissertations, Theses, and Masters Projects. Paper 1539624870. https://dx.doi.org/doi:10.21220/s2-w0y7-0655

Remini, Robert V. *Andrew Jackson: Border Captain*. Westport, Connecticut: Mecklin, 1990.

“Saint Andrews Society unveils new monument for Elizabeth Jackson.” Press Release. SC Department of Parks, Recreation, and Tourism. 2018.

Schattschneider, Allen W. *Through Five Hundred Years*. Winston-Salem, N.C.: Comenius Press, 1982.

Shaw, Ronald E. *Andrew Jackson, 1767-1845*. Dobbs Ferry, New York.: Oceana Publications, 1969.

Stanley, George Edward. *Andrew Jackson: Young Patriot*. New York: Alladin Paperbacks, 2008.

Unger, Harlow Giles. *Lafayette*. New Jersey: John Wiley and Sons, 2002.

Online Sources:

"Abigail Adams to John Quincy Adams, 19 January 1780," *Founders Online*, National Archives, https://founders.archives.gov/documents/Adams/04-03-02-0207. [Original source: The Adams Papers, Adams Family Correspondence, vol. 3, April 1778–September 1780, ed. L. H. Butterfield and Marc Friedlaender. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1973, pp. 268–269.]

Andrew Jackson to James H. Witherspoon, 11 August 1824, from the Andrew Jackson Papers at the Library of Congress (https://www.loc.gov/item/maj010588/).

"Battle of Sullivan's Island." Fort Sumter and Fort Moultrie National Historic Parks. National Park Service. https://www.nps.gov/articles/battle-of-sullivan-s-island.htm.

Butler, Dr. Nik. "The Moving Memorials to Elizabeth Jackson," *Charleston Time Machine*. Episode 206. https://www.ccpl.org/charleston-time-machine/moving-memorials-elizabeth-jackson. June 25, 2021.

Nix, Michael Shawn. "Elizabeth Hutchinson Jackson." *The Historical Marker Database*. Last revised on December 14, 2019.

Thompson, Mark. *Personal Blog*. "Rev. William Martin sermon extract, South Carolina, Sunday 11 June 1780: "unresisting Americans, praying for quarter, were chopped to pieces." November 22,2016. http://clydesburn.blogspot.com/2016/11/rev-william-martin-sermon-extract-south.html.

"US President Andrew Jackson." Carrickfergus History. https://carrickfergushistory.co.uk/us-president-andrew-jackson/ 3a, May 2022.
https://carolinaodyssey.com/south-carolina/andrew-jackson-state-park/