

# Andrew Jackson as an anti-democrat

[Politics](#), [Democracy](#)



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## **Introduction**

Throughout history, countries have held many different forms of governmental jurisdictions. The United States of America is no exception. Throughout our glorious democratic-republican history, we have had 44 men hold the powerful position of President, but only one is known as “ The Father of Democracy,” Andrew Jackson. Born into a poor family, Jackson could relate to those living in hard working conditions and poverty which made him a perfect advocate for those in that class. All those who rallied behind his banner of freedom expected democracy, but was that what they got? Was Andrew Jackson really who you thought he was, or were his democratic intentions just a cover-up and a ploy to get him into the position of power?

## **Samuel Swartwout**

Though Andrew Jackson was the poster boy of democracy, many of the actions and decisions that he made throughout the course of his presidency contradict this hastily generated title. Jefferson began his campaign with the

counterrevolutionary promise of democracy, yet signs of undemocratic intentions seemed to be evident even from this point. In 1829, Jefferson attempted (successfully, might I add), to place a man named Samuel Swartwout, a man who had criminal tendencies, into the position of Collector of the Port of New York, a very sensitive and important position due to the \$15 million passed through annually. The previous holder of the position tried to dissuade Jackson from continuing Swartwout's placement, but Jackson took no notice of the advice. Soon after, Swartwout left the position, taking with him over a million dollars. (Doc. I) Jackson decided to trust a criminal over an honest man, ignoring the advice of many men. Van Buren, for he was the placeholder of the position previously, was not the only one who opposed the decision. In a message to Jackson, he alerted him that Swartwout's appointment would "not be in accordance with public sentiment, the interest of the country, or the credit of the administration." (Doc. I).

## **Jackson and Native Americans**

Not only did Andrew Jackson repeatedly ignore the advice of his cabinet, but he forced Native Americans off of the land that they had lived on for generations. Jackson set apart a specified land area for the natives, asking them to move, which they did not. Jackson then instituted the forced removal of them, not a very democratic action. He was only interested in his own goals of gaining power, resources, and new land, to the point where he didn't care who or what got in his way. (Doc. J, K, L)

## **Jackson as a Slave Owner**

The treatment of the natives was not the only time that these questionable actions of Jackson would be noticed. He was also a cruel slave owner, who even went extra distances to thwart abolitionist plans. (History. com) Though through everything, all that mattered to him was his social image. In 1814, Jackson revealed a document stating that every “ noble hearted free man of colour” who joined the fight against Britain would not “ by being associated with white men in the same corps, be exposed to improper comparisons, or unjust sarcasm.” (Doc. N) Yet throughout all of this, he was a cruel man to his own slaves. How can one advocate for the freedom and protection of one’s brother, yet at the same time, be the driving force behind the whip upon the back of the rest of the family?

## **Conclusion**

Old Hickory may have been many things, but democratic was not among them. Though he claimed to be democratic, many of his actions didn’t reinforce this fact. Jackson may not have advocated for democracy, but nobody could deny that the persona that he wore outside of his personal life was a hero for the common man and everything that America represented. There is no doubt that Jackson will be remembered, the only question is... What for? If historians decided to dig a little bit deeper into those gray areas of Jackson’s life, what would they find? The world may never know.