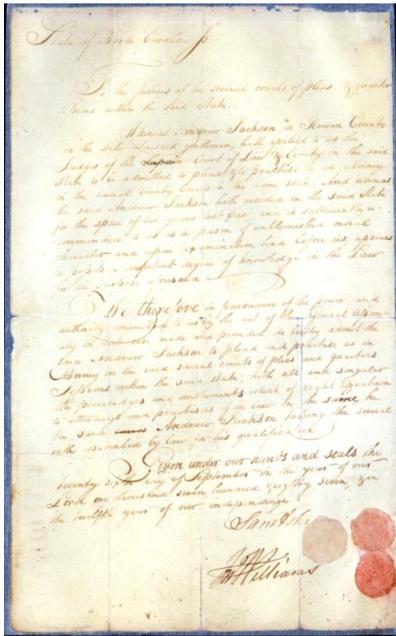


Jackson's Library Collection
By
Ashley Bouknight
Curatorial Assistant

On September 26, 1787, President Andrew Jackson began his career in the realm of law and politics when he officially became a licensed lawyer in North Carolina. On this same day ten years later, Jackson was elected to represent the state of Tennessee in the United States Senate. From lawyer to senator and eventually President of the United States, Jackson worked fervently to practice and shape the laws of this country. Many who witnessed him speak were amazed at this frontiersman that could effectively use rhetoric just as well as any learned politician of his time. With every speech and public appearance, Jackson spoke fluently and with such eloquence that even his adversaries took notice. To accomplish such a feat with very little formal education, Jackson relied heavily on his personal library.

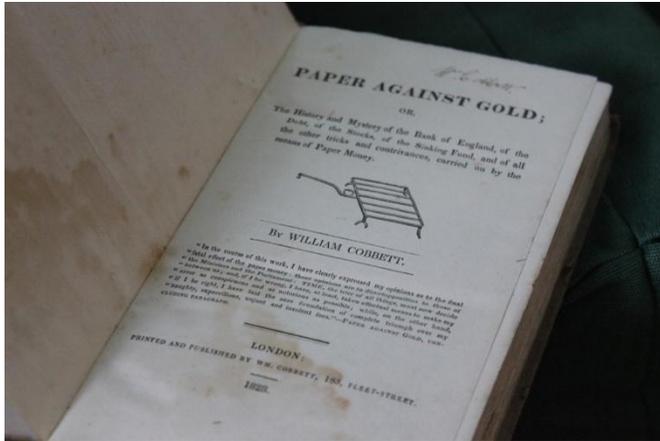


Jackson's law license from the North Carolina Superior Court of Law and Equity, issued September 26, 1787.

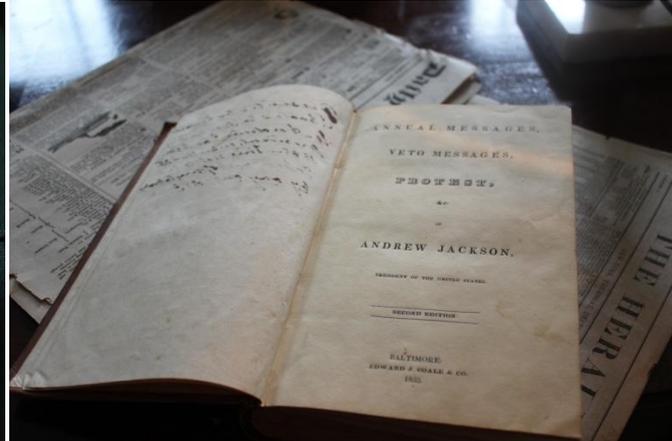


Jackson's personal library after the 2011 renovations

President Jackson was enthralled with the written word. He would spend a great deal of time exploring the pages of countless works to assist him in effectively executing his duties in office. Although Jackson focused much of his attention on newspapers and periodicals, one can only imagine what titles from this library were referenced as he made some of the most influential political decisions of his career.



Paper Against Gold, 1828



*Annual Messages... of Andrew Jackson
President of the United States, 1835*

The early 19th century was a tumultuous period in Jackson's presidential career as he dealt with the economic crisis concerning the United States Bank. It is no surprise Jackson would have these titles on his shelves.

Jackson continued to pour himself into various reading materials even after his presidency. Upon retiring to the Hermitage at the conclusion of his second term, he continued to communicate with government officials, conducting his business primarily in the Hermitage library. Visitors to the Hermitage recall the General's library being covered with papers, periodicals, and books spread out across the room. He often placed his notes in the margins of newspapers, adding his own commentary to the author's narrative.



A newspaper from 1835 with "Col. Benton" written on the top in Jackson's handwriting.

One of the only books Jackson has ever been noted to read in its entirety was the Holy Bible. Jackson's staff fondly recall the President reading from Rachel's bible every evening while living at the White House- the locket containing her image rested on the table below. President Jackson's library collection has a large number of books on religious topics. Although a great deal of these works belonged to Rachel, many were probably owned by other members of the Jackson family. These books would have been of particular interest to the President, especially after his religious conversion to the Presbyterian faith in the later years of his life.



An 1813 bible once belonging to Rachel Donelson Jackson. Her name is inscribed on the top of the first page.



A locket containing a miniature image of Rachel. This locket was worn by AJ continuously-taken off only at night and placed on the table by his bed next to his bible.

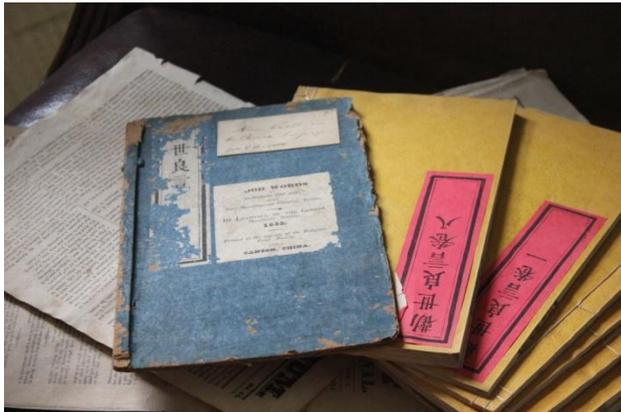
Currently, The Hermitage houses over 750 works from Jackson’s personal library. Books in this library cover subjects such as law, biographies, religion, history, medicine, and popular culture. Bound copies of speeches and periodicals line several bookshelves, along with multiple volumes of research tools, such as dictionaries and encyclopedias. There are also a number of titles in the library that are written in different languages, such as French and Latin, and a few works are even written in middle -eastern and Asian languages.



Original bound copies of various newspapers located in Jackson’s Library



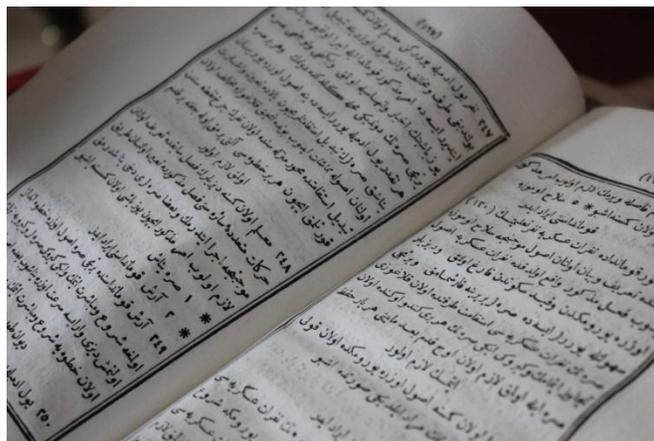
Encyclopedia Americana, 1829



Good Words to Admonish the Age, 1832

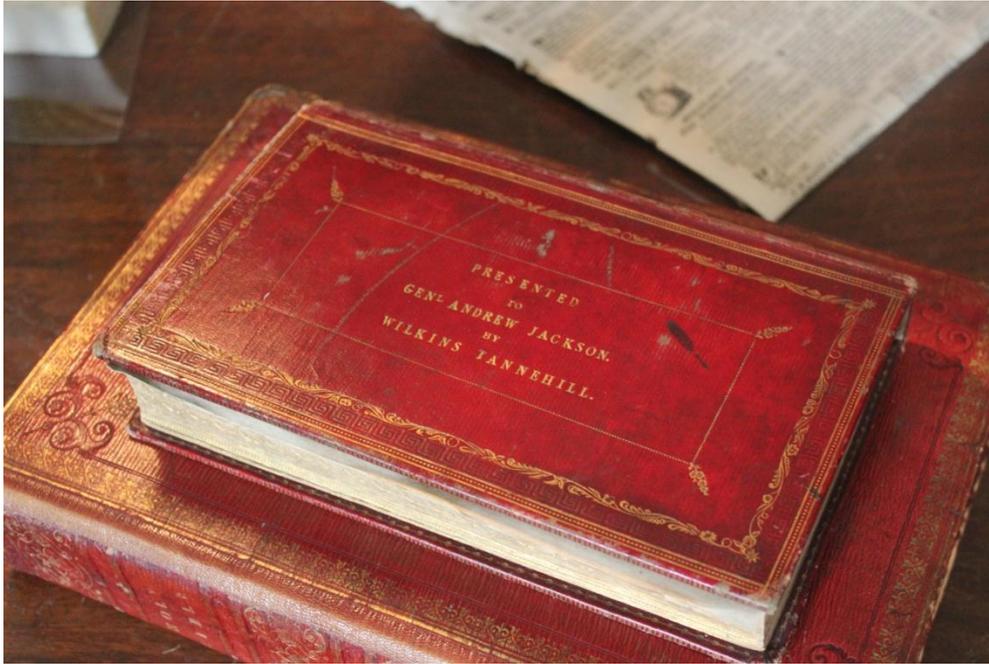


Don Juan, 1825



Unknown title, written in a middle-eastern language

Several of these items have been inscribed to Jackson with very decorative, ornate gold gilt lettering. These were often presented to Jackson as gifts from various colleagues, constituents, and foreign dignitaries as was the customary gift giving tradition during Jackson's time period.



Masonic Manual/Freemasonry Illustrated, 1824

Jackson's library speaks volumes of his interest in a multitude of topics. The collection, furthermore, conveys his desire to stay abreast of popular culture and current events during both his presidency and retirement.