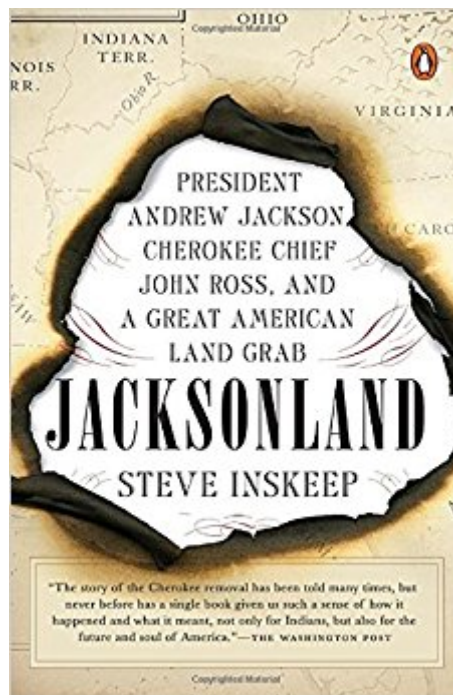




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Jacksonland: President Andrew Jackson, Cherokee Chief John Ross, And A Great American Land Grab



Synopsis

“The story of the Cherokee removal has been told many times, but never before has a single book given us such a sense of how it happened and what it meant, not only for Indians, but also for the future and soul of America.” —The Washington Post

Five decades after the Revolutionary War, the United States approached a constitutional crisis. At its center stood two former military comrades locked in a struggle that tested the boundaries of our fledgling democracy. One man we recognize: Andrew Jackson — war hero, populist, and exemplar of the expanding South — whose first major initiative as president instigated the massive expulsion of Native Americans known as the Trail of Tears. The other is a half-forgotten figure: John Ross — a mixed-race Cherokee politician and diplomat — who used the United States’ own legal system and democratic ideals to oppose Jackson.

Representing one of the Five Civilized Tribes who had adopted the ways of white settlers, Ross championed the tribes’ cause all the way to the Supreme Court, gaining allies like Senator Henry Clay, Chief Justice John Marshall, and even Davy Crockett. Ross and his allies made their case in the media, committed civil disobedience, and benefited from the first mass political action by American women. Their struggle contained ominous overtures of later events like the Civil War and defined the political culture for much that followed.

Jacksonland is the work of renowned journalist Steve Inskeep, cohost of NPR’s Morning Edition, who offers a heart-stopping narrative masterpiece, a tragedy of American history that feels ripped from the headlines in its immediacy, drama, and relevance to our lives.

Jacksonland is the story of America at a moment of transition, when the fate of states and nations was decided by the actions of two heroic yet tragically opposed men.

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Customer Reviews

Washington Post: "Surely everyone knows, or should know, about the Cherokee Trail of Tears - an ordeal imposed upon thousands of Cherokees, who, after fighting and winning a judgment in the Supreme Court against their removal from the Eastern Seaboard, were nonetheless dispossessed of their tribal lands and marched to Indian Territory in the early 1830s. The scale of the removal was staggering. Not only the Cherokee but also the Muskogee, Seminole, Chickasaw, Choctaw, Creek and many of their African-American slaves were removed in one of the largest and most brutal acts of aggression ever committed by the United States. But not till now, with the coming of NPR journalist Steve Inskeep's magnificent book, focusing as it does on the two key players - President Andrew Jackson and Cherokee Principal Chief John Ross - has this episode in American history been rendered in such personal detail and human touch. . . The story of the Cherokee removal has been told many times, but never before has a single book given us such a sense of how it happened and what it meant, not only for Indians, but also for the future and soul of America."

Chicago Tribune: "Grounded in vivid primary sources, it is also a moving tale of leadership, betrayal and (violated) minority rights, culminating in the tragedies we know as Indian removal and the Trail of Tears. . . "Jacksonland" successfully transports readers to an era when travel was slow and dangerous, racial and sectional divisions growing, and America very much a work in progress . . . Inskeep writes with the urgency of a thriller, a cinematic eye and a consciousness that even history's apparent losers won occasional important battles."

Pittsburgh Post-Gazette: "The narrative reads as if written by a watchful observer. It brings a part of history alive that is not usually discussed with this much depth."

Kirkus: "Confident, lucid prose. . . . The author knows how to hold an audience. . . Well-researched, -organized, and -presented, this is a sober, balanced examination of the origins of one of the more regrettable chapters in American history."

JON MEACHAM, author of *American Lion: Andrew Jackson in the White House* "Steve Inskeep has found an illuminating and provocative way to talk about the American past - and, truth be told, the American present and future too. By taking us back to the epic struggle between Andrew Jackson and Chief John Ross, Inskeep tells an essential story of geography, greed, and power: and the forces he so clearly delineates are the ones that shape us still."

CANDICE

MILLARD, author of *A Destiny of the Republic* and *The River of Doubt*—“Inskeep tells this, one of the most tragic and transformative stories in American history, in swift, confident, colorful strokes. So well, and so intimately, does he know his subject that the reader comes away feeling as if Jackson and Ross’s epic struggle for the future of their nations took place yesterday rather than nearly two hundred years ago.”

JAMES McPHERSON, author of *Embattled Rebel* and *Battle Cry of Freedom*—“This narrative of the forced removal of Cherokee Indians from their ancient homeland in the 1830s is framed as a contest between two determined and stubborn adversaries who had once been allies. President Andrew Jackson eventually prevailed over Cherokee chief John Ross in a conflict that culminated in the infamous Trail of Tears. Steve Inskeep skillfully captures the poignant drama of this tragic tale.”

DANIEL FELLER, director of the *Papers of Andrew Jackson*, University of Tennessee—“Few episodes in American history evoke greater controversy and bitterness than Indian removal and the Cherokee Trail of Tears. Steve Inskeep’s *Jacksonland* brilliantly illuminates this troubling story. Told with pinpoint accuracy, evenhanded sympathy, and sparkling prose, this is truly a tale for our times.”

PRINCIPAL CHIEF BILL JOHN BAKER, Cherokee Nation—“Steve Inskeep has paid incredible attention to detail and his references are impeccable and well researched. History often overlooks, or briefly mentions, that one of Andrew Jackson’s major initiatives as President of the United States was the removal of Indian tribes, including the Cherokee, from their ancestral homelands. The honest and factual detailing of how Cherokee traditional lands were usurped is compelling, and I hope it gives contemporary American readers a new perspective on our collective history. Andrew Jackson and his political allies in Congress wanted what we had and they simply took it by any means necessary. Clearly, our ancestors didn’t stand a chance. Steve Inskeep tells the story fairly and pays proper due diligence to the politics of the day, especially the treatment of the Five Civilized Tribes.”

H.W. BRANDS, author of *The Man Who Saved the Union and Andrew Jackson*—“History is complicated, and in its complications lies its appeal. Steve Inskeep understands this, and his elegantly twinned account of Andrew Jackson and John Ross shows just how complicated and appealing history can be. Each man was a bundle of contradictions; together their lives illuminate the confusing, sometimes infuriating adolescent years of the American republic.”

MICHAEL BESCHLOSS, author of *Presidential Courage*—“With brisk, original storytelling and insight, Steve Inskeep brilliantly illuminates a crucial too-little-known chapter in American history, and show us how the confrontation between Andrew Jackson and John Ross resonates today.”

From the Hardcover edition.

Steve Inskeep is a cohost of NPR's *Morning Edition*, the most widely heard radio news program in the United States. His investigative journalism has received an Edward R. Murrow Award, a Robert F. Kennedy Journalism Award, and an Alfred I. duPont-Columbia University Award. He is the author of *Instant City: Life and Death in Karachi*. Follow him on Twitter: @NPRinskeep.

Mostly enjoyable and interesting, although not as good as I was expecting based on Steve Inskeep's work for NPR. I liked the focus on Cherokee chief John Ross, who often gets overlooked, as well as Inskeep's exploration of how Jackson and his cronies made out like bandits. But writing about history is hard. I found myself skimming pages frequently as backstory would kill the book's momentum time and time again, something the best popular histories manage to avoid. But at least I now understand the Yazoo land fraud.

I read this book after spending a day this summer at The Hermitage in Tennessee. I found Jacksonland to be a well-written and fascinating story of a part of our history of which I was probably less aware than I should be. The author writes well and weaves the lives of Jackson and Ross into an intricate dance that is captivating. It is a very readable book. The author's research and illumination of obscure facts and documents was outstanding. My reasoning for not giving 5-stars: at a number of points throughout the story the author's "modern day" judgment of Jackson's and Ross' positions bleeds ever so slightly onto the pages (and in several passages not "ever so slightly"). It is obviously we are being led to a conclusion. In historical texts, and historical novels based largely on facts and original evidence, I believe the reader should be "pointed in a direction" without being "pushed there". Still, I was able to filter that out and read the entire book eagerly. It is well worth the time spent and I hope to return to The Hermitage in the next several years with more information with which to view his plantation.

This author has done his research and I learned many things about Andrew Jackson and his treatment of my Cherokee brothers and sisters. He was a liar, a manipulator and a very greedy individual. Cherokee Chief John Ross was used and abused because he expected honesty and integrity from Jackson. It is a sad commentary on politics during that time, but, then, here we are in 2015 and not much has changed in this regard. I highly recommend this book to anyone who is interested in the earlier history of the United States and the Indians who inhabited this land.

"It is about my country, which makes it a love story. Of the many ways to show one's love, one of the best is to tell the truth." This is a controversial story about one of our most beloved Presidents and his adversary John Ross of the Cherokee Nation. Most books gloss over Andrew Jackson's treatment of the American Indian saying it was the way it was in those times, or manifest destiny made it inevitable. This book however takes it on headlong without a helmet. I found this history hard to read sometimes in the real words of Andrew Jackson and his abhorrence of the American Indian as a people. To them he was "the devil" and for good reason. "Even when we won, we lost." John Ross was said to have uttered after the Supreme Court overruled Jackson's removal act because Jackson refused to follow the Supreme Court as the law of the land. While John Ross was no saint to his people, I believe he tried to do his utmost best for them knowing it was a losing cause. Jackson was beloved by the people and his influence was felt decades after his death. I don't think it makes him a good president though as his policies with the Cherokee and other tribes or his banking policies almost destroyed our country while it was still relatively young. This book is well written and I was happy to receive it as part of the Penguin First to Read Program. I highly recommend it to anyone ready to look beyond the myth and seek the truth.

Well narrated audio by author. It's a history book so not exactly fast paced action. But, it was filled with information of which I was unaware. I knew how the US had stolen lands from Native Americans but not how blatantly and repeatedly our leaders at the Federal and especially State level had lied and cheated. This was true especially with the Cherokee who had essentially determined to assimilate and were not allowed to.

My overwhelmingly positive review of this book is the result of a couple of (related) things: A recent slog through "Old Hickory's War" a History-geek's delight of an overly comprehensive book filled with references to documents, dates and happenings all proving the same thing: Jackson's easy ability to play the 19th century communication system like a viola and get away with it AND a contrasting effort by Innskeep who takes an entirely different approach. In Jacksonland, a talented writer lays out a comparison of two contemporaries who couldn't be more different and somehow makes them both sympathetic. If you want to understand the great events of the Southern Frontier, you could do a lot worse than reading this book.

Okay, I am part Cherokee. But have just recently become more interested on how I got here

(currently Northwest Arkansas). Now I know. But I did not know all of the background history and behind-the-scenes schemes that were going on to bring my family here. It is a sad story about a naked land grab. Everyone used nuance to their advantage but ultimately Cherokees trusted the courts and the courts acted, in some cases, without power. It is an old story. Powerful forces with Jackson's involvement stole thousands of acres of Indian land. The story is interesting, the writing good and the facts powerful. It is not what most people think and I am amazed at the ignorance many have about "my people" who were often living better than their non-Indian neighbors. Fortunately the government was less greedy with Oklahoma and many Indians elected to stop or stay in Arkansas (where others had been for some time). It is a great history and a good read.

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