

Chapter 6

A Fledgling State in a New Nation



Chapter Preview

Terms: Articles of Confederation, precedent, judicial review, compromise, United States Constitution, veto, ratify, Federalists, Anti-federalists, Bill of Rights, state's rights, republican simplicity, War of 1812, recession, internal improvements, canal, common school, Literary Fund

People: Mrs. Elizabeth Bayard, James Iredell, Samuel Ashe, John Sevier, Hugh Williamson, John Steele, Thomas Jefferson, Nathaniel Macon, Benjamin Forsythe, Johnston Blakely, Otway Burns, Dolley Madison, Andrew Jackson, Archibald Murphey

Places: State of Franklin, Portsmouth, Raleigh, Fayetteville, Chapel Hill

Sometimes a small decision leads to bigger and better accomplishments. This was certainly the case for early North Carolina's most famous bully.

Andrew Jackson might well have been acting out his sorrow. The Waxhaws native had been orphaned during the war. He had also been scarred for life after the British took him prisoner. When he refused to clean the boots of a British officer, the cavalryman slashed his forehead with a saber.

A teenaged Jackson came to Salisbury in 1784 to study law, but instead he ran races in the street, played cards all night, and pulled pranks at parties. One Salisburian remembered him as "the most roaring, rollicking . . . mischievous fellow that ever lived in Salisbury." He was asked to leave town.

After getting his law license, Jackson moved west of the Blue Ridge to get a new start. But his continued reckless behavior there almost got him killed. Jackson unwisely insulted a respected attorney who liked to say "I side with Bacon," a reference to a famous law textbook. When Jackson made fun of the remark, a duel resulted where the two men were to fire at each other with pistols at close range. Friends convinced both men to fire into the air, which they did. To help ease the tension, Jackson then put "a side of bacon" in the saddlebags of his former opponent. The two became lifelong friends.



Although Jackson still had a temper, he began to use his energy more wisely. He became a leader in Tennessee: the new state's first congressman at age twenty-nine, a senator at thirty, a judge at thirty-one, and a general at thirty-five. It was the fastest rise to prominence seen anywhere on the American frontier. After helping win the War of 1812 at the Battle of New Orleans, Jackson ran for president in 1824, lost, but was elected in 1828. Jackson was soon followed as president by another North Carolinian who had also moved to Tennessee, James K. Polk.

While states like Tennessee helped lead the new United States, North Carolina continued to struggle to get ahead in the early years of the nation. Its geographic disadvantages continued to plague it, and its lack of unity hindered any progress it could make. It was no wonder that the most famous North Carolinians of the period often went elsewhere to make a better life.

Below: This lithograph depicts General Andrew Jackson's victory at the Battle of New Orleans.

Opposite page, above: The first North Carolina capitol building in Raleigh.





SIGNS OF THE TIMES

POPULATION

The state had the slowest growth rate in the new nation. There were about 100,000 additional residents every ten years. The state population was 478,000 in 1800 and 737,000 in 1830. Only 2 percent lived in a sizable town; only Wilmington and Fayetteville even resembled cities.

MUSIC

While the waltz was being introduced in Europe, North Carolinians still danced “scampers,” an early form of square dancing. String bands, often made up of slaves, played at “subscription balls,” where a community sold tickets for a series of Saturday night events.

FOOD

When North Carolinians got together, they often made Brunswick stew, a dish that originated in Virginia. Huge iron pots were used to simmer potatoes, onions, and beans with squirrel meat.

EDUCATION

Most North Carolinians, if they went to school at all, attended “old field schools” built in abandoned farm fields. Sons of richer families were often sent to “military schools,” which were popular across the state in the early 1800s.

LITERATURE

Noah Webster of Massachusetts put out his first dictionary in 1803 and a larger one in 1828, using many “American words” for the first time, like *bunkum*, coined by a North Carolinian to describe a political speech that had little value. The word came from Buncombe County. Americans still use the slang word *bunk*.

RELIGION

The Second Great Awakening encouraged people of the new nation to join churches. It was started in Kentucky by people who had moved there from North Carolina. The revival quickly spread back to North Carolina and led to the growth of the Baptist and Methodist churches.

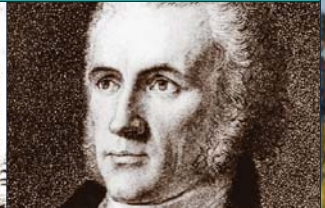
SPORTS

Horse racing took the state by storm in the early 1800s. Every town had a racecourse; the most popular were in Halifax, Raleigh, and Fayetteville.

FADS

Rich white men sometimes settled their disputes by dueling. Andrew Jackson, who later became president, fought a duel in 1788 with Waightstill Avery, for whom Avery County was named.

Figure 10 Timeline: 1780–1820



1788
Hillsborough Convention rejected U.S. Constitution; Raleigh named capital

1787
Bayard v. Singleton case

1785
State of Franklin formed

1784
North Carolina ceded western lands for first time

1789
North Carolina ratified U.S. Constitution and ceded western lands; State University established

1790
James Iredell appointed to U.S. Supreme Court

1794
Legislature moved to Raleigh

1795
State University opened

1799
William R. Davie appointed ambassador to France; gold discovered in Cabarrus County

1780

1790

1800

1810

1820

1781
Articles of Confederation ratified

1788
U.S. Constitution ratified

1787
Constitutional Convention

1791
U.S. Bill of Rights ratified

1795
Jay's Treaty

1812
War of 1812

TARGET READING SKILL

Distinguishing Fact from Opinion

Defining the Skill

Not everything you read in a textbook is fact. Sometimes authors weave facts, inferences, and opinions into their writing to make it more interesting. This writing style, however, makes it more difficult to separate facts from opinions.

A *fact* may be defined as something that can be proved or verified. Facts may be verified by observation or by research. “Eighteen-year-olds have the right to vote” is a statement of fact.

An *opinion*, on the other hand, is something a person thinks, believes, or feels is true. Opinions are open to debate and cannot be verified. Opinion statements often include words like *bad, good, probably, believe, feel, think, greatest, worst, best, most, least, always, never, all, none, and may*. For example, “A person should not be allowed to vote until he or she is twenty-one years of age” is a statement of opinion.

Practicing the Skill

Read the following statements. On a separate sheet of paper or a form like that below, write the statements and identify each as a fact or an opinion.

1. Most of the Federalists in North Carolina after the American Revolution lived along the coast.
2. North Carolinians gambled with their future by delaying the ratification of the United States Constitution.
3. Americans who came to distrust the Federalists rallied to the leadership of Thomas Jefferson.
4. The best citizens in a republic lived as simply and independently as possible in the country.
5. The best government was to be local, where people knew one another and could work out what needed to be done.
6. Conditions grew worse in North Carolina after the War of 1812.
7. North Carolinians elected representatives who would not raise the already low tax rate.
8. North Carolinians were proud people with close families, but they knew little beyond the habits and values of their locality.
9. North Carolinians tried to put the Revolutionary War behind them.
10. Some prominent North Carolinians tried to make the state better.

STATEMENT	FACT	OPINION	WHY?