

## Section 2

# Jackson in the White House



### VOCABULARY

**spoils system** the practice of rewarding political supporters with government jobs

**"kitchen cabinet"** Democratic leaders and newspaper writers who served as President Jackson's unofficial advisors

### SUMMARY

Andrew Jackson was a powerful President. His life experiences helped make him a successful leader. (See chart.) His parents died before he was 15, and he had to grow up quickly. He began his military career in the American Revolution. After the Revolution, he became a lawyer in Tennessee. Then, Jackson became a hero in the War of 1812.

Jackson was elected President in 1828. He fired many government employees and replaced them with his supporters. Critics complained that Jackson's new appointments were not qualified. Jackson said he was letting more people take part in government. Jackson's practice of rewarding supporters with jobs became known as the **spoils system**. Jackson even ignored his official Cabinet of advisors, relying instead on advice from Democratic leaders and

newspaper writers who were his friends. Because their informal meetings were often held in the White House kitchen, the advisors became known as the **"kitchen cabinet."**

Jackson believed that the national Bank of the United States was too powerful. The national Bank controlled loans made by state banks and limited the amount of money state banks could loan. This practice hurt farmers and merchants who needed to borrow money. When Jackson ran for reelection in 1832, the Whigs made the Bank an issue. Jackson told the American people that he thought only states had the right to charter banks. He also said that the Bank helped rich people at the expense of common people. Jackson won the election. The Bank closed when its charter ran out in 1836, leading to an economic downturn.

### JACKSON'S RISE TO THE PRESIDENCY

#### Background

- Studied law
- Lived on the frontier
- Born the son of immigrants

#### Military Experience

- Gained fame as hero in War of 1812
- Defeated Creek Indians
- Fought in American Revolution

#### Political Experience

- Senator
- Judge
- Lawyer

### REVIEW

Answer the following questions on a separate sheet of paper.

1. Why did Andrew Jackson oppose the Bank of the United States?
2. **Diagram Skills** List three facts that help explain Jackson's rise to the presidency.