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### Is Jackson Worthy?

The face that stares up at you from every \$20 bill is the 7th president of the United States, who was elected in 1828 by a landslide. His name is Andrew Jackson, but did he earn his place on the \$20? To most, he was a war hero who helped the people of America conquer land, but what the majority of the world doesn't know is that Andrew Jackson was a beastly president. He had no respect for the Native American civilization, he forced them off land, told them lies, and all the while ignored federal laws and therefore his duties as president.

Andrew Jackson used violence and force against the Natives to gain their land. The war of 1812 allowed the United States to expand into Indian territory. Jackson fought the battle of Horseshoe Bend in 1814 against one thousand Creeks, killing eight hundred of them. In the same year, he started to buy up lands, and when in charge of treaties, took away half of the Creek Nation's land. In Howard Zinn's 'As Long As Grass Grows Or Water Runs' chapter of 'A Young People's History Of The United States' he writes, "Over the next 10 years Jackson helped whites take over 3/4 of Alabama and Florida, 1/3 of Tennessee, and parts of 4 other states all through force, bribery, and tricks." Not only did Jackson not honor treaties, but used violence and capitalized on the Natives lack of knowledge about the treaty process.

Jackson removed Native Americans from lands through bribery and breaking promises. Zinn tells us that once, in the early 1800s, "Jackson promised the Choctaw and Cherokee tribe that if they left their old lands peacefully, they would be given new lands, the government would leave them alone, and that he would protect them." In 1831 the Choctaws were bribed with money and land, and agreed to a treaty that gave away their lands east of the Mississippi. Thirteen thousand members of the Choctaw tribe set out on a journey west, and were told they would receive financial help. The military was to organize their trip, but instead of keeping their promises of food and protection, they allowed the Choctaw peoples to die by the thousands from hunger, cold, and disease. President Jackson was capable of stopping the tragedy, and could have protected the Choctaws from the harm they faced.

Jackson ignored his presidential duties, and federal laws. In the early 1820s, he, as president, was supposed to enforce the federal laws, which put the U.S. Congress in charge of Indian affairs. Instead of enforcing them, he ignored them, which allowed the states to pass their own laws that gave away Indian land to whites. Zinn says, "Georgia passed laws that stripped the Cherokees of their land and outlawed the tribal government, meetings, and newspaper that the Cherokees had created." The Cherokee tribe had created the tribal government, meetings, and newspaper to try and assimilate into the white culture in the hope that settlers would leave them be. In the end, their technique was still proven a failure thanks to the U.S. government being scornful of anything and everything the Indians did. Jackson was ignoring federal laws by not acting when Georgia passed those laws that took away the rights of the Natives.

Andrew Jackson was prone to disrespecting the Native culture whether ignoring laws, breaking promises, or forcing the Natives off their ancestral land. Jackson showed his discrimination towards the Natives too many times to count. He, in all of his violence towards the Native Americans, was a cruel president of this country.