

**TEACHER GUIDE**

# 1828 DOC. #3: Coffin Handbill

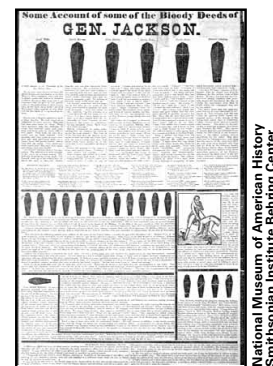
**BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

One of the forms of media that developed quickly during this election period was that of the handbill. A handbill was simply a small sheet of paper, usually an advertisement, that was meant to be distributed by hand. In a time when many voters could not afford to buy a newspaper, handbills became an easy way to reach a wide audience. Since many voters could not read, handbills often contained illustrations that conveyed a message without words.

> **Project the document.**

QUESTION	<b>Without reading the small text, what seems to be the message communicated about Andrew Jackson on this handbill?</b>
SUGGESTED ANSWER	He has blood on his hands.
EVIDENCE	text "bloody deeds of General Jackson"; image of coffins with names

**1828 DOC. #3**



National Museum of American History  
Smithsonian Institution Behring Center

**Coffin Handbill**

PowerPoint slide

**FURTHER QUESTIONS**

What is the favored medium for today's political attacks?

Political advertisements are exempt from the truth in advertising regulations of the Federal Trade Commission. Why do you think this is the case?

How can voters assess the accuracy and credibility of attack ads?

**ADDITIONAL INFO**

This document is one of a number of versions of the “coffin handbill” that was circulated widely by hand and reprinted in newspapers during the 1828 campaign. In the text Jackson is accused of atrocities involving the execution of six U.S. militiamen in 1815. It doesn’t mention that they were shot after being found guilty of mutiny. The drawing in the middle right depicts an event in Nashville, Tennessee where Jackson stabbed a man to death with his sword cane. The handbill leaves out that a jury found that Jackson acted in self-defense. The handbill also accuses Jackson of “exterminating” Indian men, women, and children “in cold blood.”

**CONNECTIONS**

(see thematic listing)

**Attack**

**Reaching Voters** (handbills)