

## Andrew Jackson's Inauguration

**Directions: Read and annotate for loaded language. Circle any words that help describe the event/people.**

**Impression:** An idea, feeling, or opinion about something or someone

Many of Andrew Jackson's supporters turned out on the streets of Washington, D.C., to observe his **inauguration** on March 4, 1829. To them the **inauguration** marked the beginning of a great new era for the common people. To others, the events of **inauguration** day were too rowdy. In the following document, an observer named Margaret Bayard Smith describes what she saw that day. The excerpt (including misspelled words) are from a letter Mrs. Smith wrote to a friend.

**Inauguration:** When someone takes elected office

"Washington March 11th, Sunday 1829 Thousands and thousands of people, without distinction of **rank**, collected in an immense mass round the Capitol, silent, orderly and calm, with their eyes fixed on the front of that structure, waiting the appearance of the President...

**Rank:**  
Position in society

**1) What impression does Mrs. Smith give the reader about the event?**

The door...opens,...the old man with his grey locks, that crown of glory, advances, bows to the people, who greet him with a shout that rends the air...It was grand,--it was beautiful! An almost breathless silence, ... and the crowd was still,---listening to catch the sound of his voice, tho; it was so low, as to be heard only by those nearest to him.

**2) What impression does Mrs. Smith give the reader about Jackson?**

Now I will give you an account of the **inauguration** in detail...By ten oclock the Avenue was crowded with carriages of every description, form the splendid **Barronet** and coach, down to wagons and carts, filled with women and children, some in jewelry and some in rags, for it was the peoples President, and all would see him; ... When the speech was over, and the President made his parting bow, the barrier that had separated the people from him was broken down and they rushed up the steps all eager to shake hands with him.

**Inauguration:** When someone takes elected office  
**Barronet:** A women of wealth

**3) What impression does Mrs. Smith give the reader about the event?**

[Later at the White House] what a scene did we witness! The **Majesty** of the People had disappeared, and a group, a mob, of boys, blacks, women, children, scrambling fighting. The President, after having been literally nearly pressed to death and almost suffocated and torn to pieces by the people in their eagerness to shake hands with Old Hickory (his nickname), had retreated through the back way or south front and had escaped to his lodgings.

**Majesty:** Impressive stateliness, dignity, or beauty.

**4) What impression does Mrs. Smith give the reader about the event?**

Cut glass and dishes to the amount of several thousand dollars had been broken in the struggle to get the refreshments, punch and other articles had been carried out in tubs and buckets, but had it been in hogsheads [a large keg of beer or wine] it would have been insufficient... Ladies fainted, men were seen with bloody noses and such a scene of confusion took place as is impossible to describe, - those who got in could not get out by the door again, but had to scramble out of windows...

**Source:** Smith, Margaret Bayard, *The First Forty Years of Washington Society* (1906); Leish, Kenneth, (ed.) *The American Heritage Pictorial History of the Presidents of the United States*; Seale, William, *The President's House* vol. 1 (1986).

**5) What impression does Mrs. Smith give the reader about the event?**