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Andrew Jackson's Hermitage: Home of the People's President

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State to grant The Hermitage ownership of Andrew Jackson's previously owned land

Land previously owned by U.S. president was sold to state, private owners from 1856–1858

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (Oct. 26, 2018) – For the first time since 1856, the vast majority of the land U.S. President Andrew Jackson owned at the time of his death will be under one ownership, that of the Andrew Jackson Foundation. The new land acquisition will increase the size of this National Historic Landmark presidential home by 41 percent.

At 11 a.m., Friday, Oct. 26, Gov. Bill Haslam delivered the signed quitclaim deed to Robert L. McDonald and Frances B. Spradley, regent and past regent of the Andrew Jackson Foundation, respectively, effectively transferring ownership of 460 acres of land once owned by Andrew Jackson.

“The Hermitage is a true Tennessee treasure. We look forward to this site continuing its role as a historical landmark of great importance to Tennessee – and of great interest to people all over the world,” Haslam said.

With the land now under its ownership, the Andrew Jackson Foundation will begin work on a sitewide master plan to determine best uses for one of the largest and little-known green spaces in Davidson County.

History of the land ownership transfer between the state and Jackson family

- Between 1856 and 1858, Andrew Jackson Jr. sold half of The Hermitage's acreage to the state of Tennessee and the remaining half to several private owners to pay off debt.
- Between 1889 and 1989, the state of Tennessee transferred management of its 500 acres to the Andrew Jackson Foundation (AJF), then the Ladies' Hermitage Association (LHA).
- During this time, the AJF/LHA purchased the privately owned parcels of the original acreage as they became available.
- In 1971 and 1972, the state of Tennessee purchased the remaining 460 acres from private ownership for use as a recreational and wildlife area and to protect it from development.
- In 2002, the state of Tennessee granted the AJF a 30-year lease on the 460 acres.
- Earlier this month, Haslam signed a quitclaim deed for the land, transferring it to the AJF as approved by the State Building Commission.

The Andrew Jackson Foundation board of trustees requested that the state of Tennessee consider the transfer of the 460 acres to the Foundation's ownership to ensure unified management in combination with its existing 660 acres well into the future. Some 125 acres of Andrew Jackson's Hermitage has been lost to development, but other than one homestead built in the 1930s, the land comprising the 460 acres that are being transferred has never been developed.

Since Andrew Jackson began purchasing land that became The Hermitage in 1804, the land has been either farmland or woods. The land at one time belonged to Revolutionary War veterans Hugh Hays and Captain John Donelson as a part of 640-acre land grants the men were awarded in 1785 for their military service. Under Jackson's ownership, the land was used to grow cotton, corn and other grain crops, while the wooded areas supplied building lumber and firewood.

Since 2002, the Foundation has used the land for nature and history walks, leased a small portion of the land to an archery club, and worked with a local farmer to continue the agricultural tradition on the property. In 2009, with funding from The Nature Conservancy, the Foundation removed 200 cubic yards of waste from a sinkhole on the land that had been used as a dumpsite for decades.

"Andrew Jackson's Hermitage is one of the best preserved and most visited presidential homes in the country. We are grateful to Governor Haslam and his administration for their support of this national landmark," Andrew Jackson Foundation President and CEO Howard J. Kittell said. "The land transfer is much more than a symbolic gesture. It is confidence in the Foundation's stewardship of these historic lands into the distant future. It will be a great benefit to the visitor experience in years to come. We are excited about what lies ahead for this remarkable site of our nation's history."

About Andrew Jackson's Hermitage

Andrew Jackson's Hermitage: Home of the People's President is one of the largest, most well preserved and most visited presidential homes in the United States. Opened to the public in 1889, The Hermitage is one of America's first presidential museums. Today, The Hermitage is a 1,120-acre National Historic Landmark with 27 historic buildings, including Jackson's mansion and tomb, restored slave cabins, a church, and gardens. In recent years, new interpretive initiatives and educational programs such as on the history of slavery have enhanced the experience of the 228,157 visitors in FY 2018. For more information, visit www.thehermitage.com.

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