

Wyndham Robertson Library Undergraduate Research Award
Junior/Senior Finalist

[John Andrew Jackson: Enslaved Resistance, Uncle Tom's Cabin, and the Downfall of American Chattel Slavery](#)

by Alexander Ernst

Recommended by Assistant Professor [Chris Florio](#)



What about this topic made you want to find out more?

I was initially drawn to this topic because John Andrew Jackson was once owned by my ancestors. He wrote a book about his experiences as a slave. While researching family history, my mother came across his book, and when I talked about the history of slavery class I was taking she sent me a link to an online copy. At first I was simply curious about my own family history, but as I read his book, I became more and more interested in Jackson. He was a compelling author and lived a fascinating life, and his book made me want to learn more about who he was.

What are you most proud of when it comes to this project?

When I talked with my parents about this paper, my mom said she wanted to read it when I was done. I was pretty nervous because my mom used to study history and knows her way around a paper. And, her opinion means a lot to me. As it turned out, she really liked it, and thought I made strong arguments! Making her proud is definitely what I'm proudest of.

Having completed a project like this, if you could advise other students working on a research project, what would you tell them?

The hardest project to complete is one you don't care about. It's much easier to do research when you're invested in the subject you're researching and actively want to know the answers to questions you're asking yourself.

Is there anything else you would like people to know about your work?

I wouldn't have been able to write this paper without professor Florio's help. If you have the chance, take one of his classes.

Judges' Comments:

"This author's work impressed me with its meticulous approach to Stowe's classic, Uncle Tom's Cabin. It managed to find a connection that has the potential to offer up new paths of academic inquiry—not an easy task for a work that turns 170 years old this year! "

"This microhistory so beautifully intertwines narrative and historical analysis that you might forget you're reading a scholarly essay."