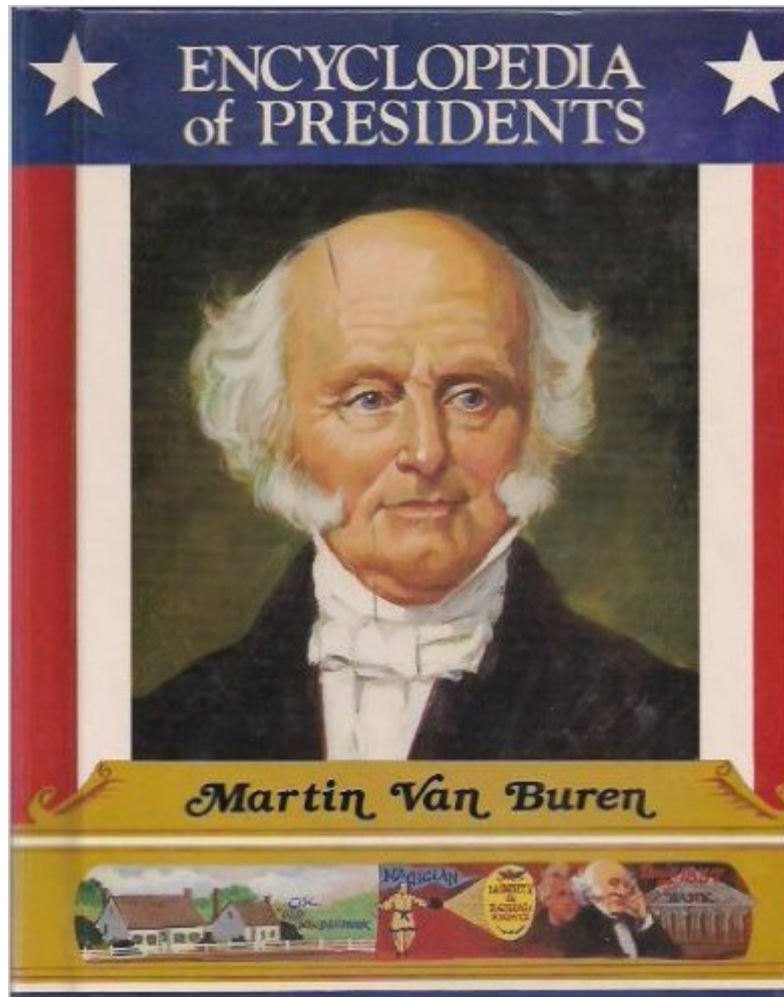


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Martin Van Buren, Eighth President Of The United States (Encyclopedia Of Presidents)



Synopsis

Examines the life of the lawyer politician who became the eighth president of the United States and led the country through its first serious depression.

Book Information

Age Range: 10 and up

Series: Encyclopedia of Presidents

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Average Customer Review: 5.0 out of 5 starsÂ Â See all reviewsÂ (1 customer review)

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Customer Reviews

All of the volumes in the Encyclopedia of Presidents series begin in media res, with the first chapter devoted to a pivotal and defining moment in the history of that particular President. For the story of Martin Van Buren author Jim Hargrove picks the Panic of 1837 for the book's opening, which actually started a month before the eighth president was sworn in to office. By focusing on the depression that followed, Hargrove presents Van Buren as pretty much the Herbert Hoover of 19th century American politics, although clearly it was the policies of Van Buren's predecessor, Andrew Jackson, who would bear the responsibility for the nation's financial crisis. However, as young readers will learn from this informative juvenile biography, it was Van Buren who played a major role in putting Old Hickory in the White House, which eventually led to him being Jackson's handpicked successor. What makes this an above average volume in this series is that ultimately Hargrove is writing as much about American politics at the start of the 19th century as he is about Van Buren's personal life and political career. This volume probably has more political cartoons in it than any other in the series, which is rather significant since I have been reading the books in alphabetical rather than chronological order. Most of them focus on Jackson rather than Van Buren, but it was

during Old Hickory's two terms in the White House that editorial cartooning first flourished, although its apex that century would be during the Civil War. By beginning the story of Van Buren's life with the fact he was the first future president born under the American flag, Hargrove emphasizes that this political career represents some significant changes from what we associate with the Founding Fathers as political figures.

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