

## Term "O. K." First Used in Tennessee Court Records

The first known use of the term O. K. appears in the court records of Sumner county, Tennessee, October 6, 1790. On that date Andrew Jackson "proved a bill of sale from Hugh McCary to Gasper Mansker, for a negro man, which was O. K." James Parton, in his biography of Jackson, suggests that what appeared to be O. K. in the record may really have been a poorly penned O. R., which was the abbreviation for "Ordered Recorded." Apparently O. K. came into general use after Jackson was elected President in 1828. Jackson's illiteracy was one of the chief criticisms of his opponents during the next campaign; Seba Smith seems to have originated the story that Jackson indorsed his papers O. K., under the impression that it was the abbreviation of "All Correct," which he, according to the story, spelled "Oll Korrekt." Some dictionaries accept this explanation of the phrase; others say it is probably from the Choctaw "okeh," which is pronounced o-kay, and defined as "it is so and in no other way." This theory was accepted by Woodrow Wilson who, as President, used "okeh" in approving papers. There is little evidence to support this theory. Another theory derives O. K. from the town of Aux Cayes (pronounced o-kay), from which the best tobacco and rum were imported in Colonial times.