



# The Battle of New Orleans: Andrew Jackson and America's First Military Victory

By Robert V. Remini



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The Battle of New Orleans was the climactic battle of America's "forgotten war" of 1812. Andrew Jackson led his ragtag corps of soldiers against 8,000 disciplined invading British regulars in a battle that delivered the British a humiliating military defeat. The victory solidified America's independence and marked the beginning of Jackson's rise to national prominence. Hailed as "terrifically readable" by the **Chicago Sun Times**, **The Battle of New Orleans** is popular American history at its best, bringing to life a landmark battle that helped define the character of the United States.



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*By Robert V. Remini*

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### Editorial Review

#### Amazon.com Review

The United States and Britain had already negotiated an end to the War of 1812 when their troops met on the Plains of Chalmette near New Orleans in 1815. Word of the peace had not yet reached that far west, so a group of professional British soldiers clashed with a rag-tag band of about 4,000 "frontiersmen, militiamen, regular soldiers, free men of color, Indians, pirates, and townspeople" along the banks of the Mississippi River. These were "citizen-soldiers" in the finest sense, writes Robert V. Remini, the acclaimed biographer of Andrew Jackson, and they were commanded by a man whose military experience had commenced only two years earlier. Yet the battle "was one of the great turning points in American history" because it "produced a President and an enduring belief in the military ability of free people to protect and preserve their society and their way of life." Remini may oversell the battle's importance, but not by much. His enthusiasm is the mark of a historian in love with his subject. The Battle of New Orleans (and the War of 1812 in general) has tended to suffer more from neglect than from too much attention. This concise book, full of workmanlike prose, is a fine introduction to what Remini calls "America's first military victory" (he downplays Saratoga and Yorktown as "simply surrenders, nothing more"). Military history buffs won't want to miss it. --*John J. Miller*

#### From Publishers Weekly

As the alpha wolf of Jackson scholars and a master of historical narrative, Remini (whose three-volume biography, *Andrew Jackson*, won a National Book Award and was reissued last year) is the perfect writer to recount how Old Hickory, leading a motley crew of fighters, decisively repelled the British attack on New Orleans in January 1815. Remini's impeccable scholarship and lively pen produce what undoubtedly will become the standard account of the 1814-1815 military operations around New Orleans. In addition to some regular army units, Jackson used backwoodsmen from Tennessee and Kentucky, free blacks, Creoles and others from the local militia, Indian allies and pirates led by Jean Lafitte. Such a roster did not appear to stack up favorably against the British, who boasted thousands of veterans of the Napoleonic wars. But the British, despite their experience, committed many key blunders throughout the campaign, the most important of which was underestimating American resolve. Remini paints the background of the campaign, including battles with the pro-British Creek Indians, Jackson's invasion of Spanish Florida and the importance of the fabled Baratarians pirates led by Lafitte. As he brings the exciting story to life, Remini cogently argues that New Orleans was America's first important military victory, that it provided the impetus for the young nation to believe in itself and, just as importantly, convinced Europe that the United States was not a fleeting historical anomaly. Maps not seen by PW. (Sept.)  
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#### From School Library Journal

-An excellent account of the most decisive battle in the War of 1812. After the terrible defeats in New York and Washington, DC, the fate of the new nation was in great peril. Not only was this battle the turning point in keeping the British from dividing the young country into conquerable pieces but it also served as the major event that united the states. Remini systematically draws together the facts, details, and background of the conflict and describes the actions and decisions of both sides that ultimately decided the battle. His descriptions of the generals and the fighting men capture both the individuality of the soldiers and the unique personality traits that became such important factors in deciding the outcome. For example, Major General Sir Edward Michael Parkham's impatience and egotism clearly marked the attitude of the British troops and are significant factors in the defeat, just as Andrew Jackson's logistical abilities and control gave him the

upper hand. In addition, Remini brings up the many additional elements that played important parts in the British defeat, with luck being mentioned several times. Readers are introduced to the Lafitte brothers, pirates and guerilla fighters, and others who shaped this battle that determined the fate of a young nation.

*Pam Johnson, Fairfax County Public Library, VA*

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