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**The Battle of New Orleans Part I**

**Lead: The biggest American victory of the War of 1812 was won after the war was over. The Battle of New Orleans put an exclamation point on the conflict days after a peace treaty brought hostilities to a conclusion.**

**Intro.: *A Moment in Time* with Dan Roberts.**

**Content: In Fall 1814, a large British fleet left Jamaica. Its goal: gain control of access to the Mississippi River. To accomplish this, the Brits needed to assault and take the City of New Orleans located on**

**the decisive bend in the great river not far from its mouth.**

**Initially the campaign went very badly for the Americans. In December 1814 the enemy defeated the yanks in the Battle of Lake Borgne, a body of water in Orleans and St. Bernard parishes that connects Lake Pontchartrain with the Gulf of Mexico. Several skirmishes followed as the British advanced to just south of the City. The decisive battle occurred on January 8, 1815 on east-bank Plains of Chalmette about 6 miles from New Orleans. The British outnumbered their foes by almost 2 to 1, 8000 to 4500, but the American Commander, Major General Andrew Jackson had the advantage of**

**preparation time. He declared martial law in the city, organized the digging of fortifications and defensive positions, including the installation of eight batteries of artillery.**

**The British commander, General Edward Pakenham, in the early morning of January 8<sup>th</sup>, ordered a frontal attack under the cover of fog, but the fog lifted just as the British were marching across open ground. The well-entrenched Americans simply blew them away and several British senior officers, including Pakenham, were killed in the attack. The Americans inflicted over 2,000 casualties while suffering only 71 of their own.**

**This complete and decisive victory, though, was a “needless battle.” Unknown to both leaders, the treaty which ended the War of 1812 – The Treaty of Ghent – had been signed back in December, some 15 days before the battle. Next Time: the highly useful useless battle.**

**Research assistance by Ann Johnson, at the University of Richmond this is Dan Roberts.**

## Resources

**Devine, Robert A., et al. *America Past and Present*. New York: Longman, Inc., 1998.**

**Patterson, Benton Rain. *The Generals: Andrew Jackson, Sir Edward Pakenham, and the Road to the Battle of New Orleans*. New York: New York University Press, 2005.**

**Remini, Robert V. *The Battle of New Orleans: Andrew Jackson and America's First Military Victory*. New York: Penguin, 2001.**

**“Battle of New Orleans.” *The Cabildo: Two Centuries of Louisiana History*  
<<http://lsm.crt.state.la.us/cabildo/cab6.htm>>.**

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