



## **Text Version of Audio Story: War of 1812 Part 2**

Part 2 of a 2-part story:

In our last episode, the British had just burned Washington, D.C. As President Madison rode through the streets on horseback, the only building he saw standing was the Post Office. The White House was a burned-out shell. The British were on a rampage, pillaging and plundering. British troops were raping American women all along the way.

Their next target was Baltimore, but the resilient people of that city and the soldiers of Fort McHenry heroically repelled the invasion. So the British, the most powerful war machine in the world, moved South with their armada. Their objective, storm the city of New Orleans and move inland, capturing the American interior.

The British, although thwarted at Baltimore, had seriously depleted American fighting resources. Taking New Orleans would be a walk in the park, or so they thought. But there was one thing the British had not counted on. One thing or one man, a common man with a ragtag band of militia freedom fighters. His name, General Andy Jackson, Old Hickory to his men.

He was tall, tenacious and a little bit crazy. He hated all things British. As a thirteen-year-old boy he volunteered as a messenger in the Revolutionary War. He was captured by the British. A British officer slashed young Andy across the face with a saber when the boy refused to polish the officer's boots. He carried the scar for life.

Preparing for battle, Jackson takes his time and organizes his men and resources. He is seriously outnumbered and even more seriously outgunned. Odds makers looking at this battle would have definitely seen the British as the heavy favorite. After all, British troops were comprised of professional soldiers. They were highly skilled, highly trained, and highly seasoned. They had just defeated Napoleon.

As the British and Americans square off for the Battle of New Orleans, no one is aware that just two weeks earlier, a peace accord had been signed by representatives of both nations in an overseas summit. It was being carried by messenger, but it would take a while. There were no phones, fax machines, radios, televisions ... no way of instantly communicating with commanders in the

field. To Andy Jackson, it probably wouldn't have mattered anyway. It was payback time.

The British advanced toward the American position with bayonets fixed. They were immaculately uniformed in red. They were battle hardened and well-practiced. Andy's men saw them coming and collectively threw up a lusty cheer for the fight. Jackson had galvanized his untrained men, who came from every walk of life.

*"They will not sleep on our soil tonight,"* Jackson defiantly said. Not hiding somewhere in a rear echelon, but standing in the frontlines, Andy Jackson's booming voice could be heard. *"They are within range, you may fire. Boys, let's finish the business today."*

With deadly precision, Andy's backwoods militia annihilated the British forces. Within two hours, it was all over. The Brits counted 2,000 dead. Andy Jackson had lost only 13 men. The British went off with their tails between their legs.

Jackson would, of course, go down in history as the hero of New Orleans. Later the American people would send him to the White House. There he would redefine the office. Today, he is thought of as the architect of the modern presidency. Gone were the aristocratic airs. Jackson ushered in the idea of a common person for president. After his time in office, he returned to Nashville with \$90 in his pocket. He lived out his life at his Hermitage and is buried there on its grounds.

I'm the American Storyteller.