



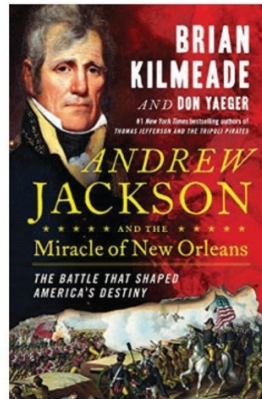
Written by [Steve Byas](#) on January 22, 2018

Published in the January 22, 2018 issue of [the New American](#) magazine. Vol. 34, No. 02

## Another Look at Andrew Jackson

From the print edition of *The New American*

***Andrew Jackson and the Miracle of New Orleans: The Battle That Shaped America's Destiny*, by Brian Kilmeade and Don Yaeger, New York: Sentinel, 2017, 237 pages, hardcover.**



On January 8, 1815, leading a rag-tag army that included frontier militia, pirates, and allied Indians, Andrew Jackson defeated the British army at the Battle of New Orleans — an army that had just defeated Napoleon at the Battle of the Nations. But how significant was this victory, considering that the War of 1812 had already supposedly ended, unbeknownst to the combatants at New Orleans?

In 1961, Johnny Horton celebrated the American victory in his well-known song “The Battle of New Orleans,” which topped the music charts for weeks. In more recent years, the American commander Andrew Jackson has come under increasing assault, cast as a man of almost unbelievable evil. He is portrayed as a man who hated Native Americans — despite having adopted two Indian children as his own — and in Dinesh D’Souza’s movie *Hillary’s America*, he is even shown essentially raping a slave. Of all of Jackson’s sins, this last one is totally without historical foundation: There is not one shred of evidence that Jackson was ever unfaithful to his wife, Rachel, in their entire marriage.

Even Jackson’s greatest achievement — his victory at New Orleans — is often dismissed as meaningless. Detractors argue, and have largely convinced most Americans, that since the great battle was fought two weeks after British and American negotiators in Belgium had concluded the Treaty of Ghent, ending the war, even had Jackson lost the battle, and the British captured New Orleans and the mouth of the Mississippi River, it really would not have mattered. The British would have just given it back.

This is naïve. The treaty had not yet been ratified by the British Parliament, and it is doubtful it would have been, had Jackson been defeated at New Orleans.

*Andrew Jackson and the Miracle of New Orleans*, by Brian Kilmeade, co-host of *Fox and Friends*, and collaborator Don Yaeger, is a powerful antidote to the misconceptions surrounding Jackson’s legacy.

The authors document Jackson’s animosity toward the British, dating back to his confrontation with them as a boy during the Revolutionary War, the persistent British refusals to respect American national sovereignty, the causes of the War of 1812, the divisions within the country that threatened its dissolution, and the rise of Jackson to the rank of major general in the American army.

This is all background to the exciting story of how Jackson saved New Orleans, and why it mattered.



Written by [Steve Byas](#) on January 22, 2018

Published in the January 22, 2018 issue of [the New American](#) magazine. Vol. 34, No. 02

---

More than a decade before the War of 1812, Thomas Jefferson had made the case that New Orleans not only mattered, but that its acquisition was critical to the nation's survival. "There is on the globe one single spot, the possessor of which is our natural and habitual enemy. It is New Orleans," Jefferson said in 1803, in explaining his desire to obtain it. As Kilmeade and Yaeger explain, the city "was the great gateway to and from the heart of the country. America's inland waterways — the Ohio, the Missouri, and the numerous other rivers that emptied into the Mississippi — amounted to an economic lifeline for farmers, trappers, and lumbermen upstream."

Jackson knew, the authors write, "Anyone who could read a map knew that by capturing the city, His Majesty's forces would consolidate control of the North American continent from the Gulf Coast to Canada."

But the defense of New Orleans would be very difficult. For a start, it was not certain that the city's inhabitants were loyal to the United States, as the authors noted: "In the event of invasion, Jackson would have to shape an unprecedented unity among a motley population of French colonials, Native Americans, freed slaves, American woodsmen, and even pirates." As Jackson frantically worked to organize the city's defenses, the peace talks in Europe were not going well for the Americans. It was the summer of 1814, and after having defeated the French, the British were in a mood to punish the Americans for having declared war on the British Empire. Some in Parliament were openly advocating taking New Orleans from the Americans and incorporating it into that empire.

*This article appears in the January 22, 2018, issue of The New American.*

American negotiator Albert Gallatin wrote President James Madison, informing him that the British "mean to inflict on America a chastisement that will teach her that war is not to be declared against Great Britain with impunity." He added that it was his understanding that a huge British invasion force was on its way across the Atlantic.

The British were demanding "a large buffer zone for the Indians in the center of the North American continent." It was clear that the British demands "were those of a conqueror."

Ominously, the British proposed that treaty language include two Latin words: *uti possidetis*, which means "as you possess." The proposal meant that the land held by each side at the time of ratification of the treaty *would remain with its possessor*. Gallatin immediately suspected the words' purpose. As he wrote James Monroe, "It appears to me most likely that their true and immediate object is New Orleans." As the authors conclude, "If the British were able to conquer New Orleans before the treaty was signed ... the future shape of the United States would be determined by the British."

By late 1814, the British were nearing New Orleans, and no peace treaty had been signed. Meanwhile, in Hartford, Connecticut, delegates from the New England states met to discuss their complaints about the war. Many even advocated secession. Across the Atlantic, negotiator Henry Clay despaired of being able to bring a peaceful conclusion to the war.

The very real possibility loomed that the British would take New Orleans and incorporate it and the surrounding area into the British Empire, and that the states of Massachusetts, Connecticut, Rhode Island, and New Hampshire were leaving the Union. America was on the verge of dissolution.

Jackson desperately worked to put together a force large enough to stop the British capture of New Orleans. His acceptance of two battalions of free colored troops sparked bigoted opposition. In



Written by [Steve Byas](#) on January 22, 2018

Published in the January 22, 2018 issue of [the New American](#) magazine. Vol. 34, No. 02

---

response, Jackson organized a parade of his forces to create unity in the city. It was quite a diverse force that he had constructed — Louisiana militia, Choctaw Indians, black Haitians, Creoles, frontier militia from Kentucky and Tennessee, and even pirates under Jean Lafitte.

Unknown to Jackson as the year 1814 drew to a close was that the peace mission in Belgium had concluded on Christmas Eve. According to the document, each side's "possessions" would be returned. But, as the authors note, "The British had never accepted Louisiana as a legitimate American *possession* — the Crown regarded the territory as the rightful property of the king of Spain, wrongly taken by Napoleon and therefore illegally transferred to the United States."

The instructions given to General Edward Pakenham (the brother-in-law of the Duke of Wellington) were quite specific. The British secretary of war told Pakenham that even if a treaty is signed, "Hostilities should not be suspended *until you have official information*" that the treaty had been ratified. Instead, he was to fight on until the British gained "possession" of New Orleans.

In short, the popular view prevalent in America today — that the Battle of New Orleans made no difference, because the war was already over — is mistaken.

A copy of the Treaty of Ghent did not reach the desk of President Madison until February 14, one month after the American victory at New Orleans. If New Orleans had fallen to the British, the Americans no doubt would have been quite ready to ratify the agreement, but what about the British? It is probable that the British Parliament would have rejected the Treaty of Ghent, demanding instead its modification to recognize the British annexation of Louisiana.

The book includes a riveting account of the spectacular American victory on the Chalmette Plantation just outside the city. In one morning, the British sustained 2,600 casualties, to about 12 American dead. The British lost three generals, seven colonels, and 75 officers. "In some places," the authors write, "the bodies were so numerous that it seemed possible to walk without ever touching the ground for a distance of perhaps two hundred yards." Among the dead was General Pakenham.

Earlier, with the battle imminent, much of the female population of the city, five miles away, joined the nuns at the Chapel of Our Lady of Consolation to pray that General Jackson and his soldiers would save the city from the Redcoats. After the city was saved, Jackson requested a "service of public thanksgiving" from the Abbe Duborg, the apostolic minister of the diocese of Louisiana and Florida, at the cathedral in New Orleans. The cathedral could not contain the crowd of 10,000 that responded.

After Jackson's remarkable victory, the Federalist Party, identified with the secessionist Hartford Convention, began a rapid decline. The Union was saved. Had Jackson lost at New Orleans, the American Republic would likely have fragmented. As it was, the nation experienced a burst of nationalistic pride — with mixed consequences that continue to the present day. Unfortunately, the defeat of one empire (the British) has contributed greatly to the rise of another (our own).

But Kilmeade and Yaeger expertly dispel the myth that the Battle of New Orleans was meaningless.



Written by [Steve Byas](#) on January 22, 2018

Published in the January 22, 2018 issue of [the New American](#) magazine. Vol. 34, No. 02

## Subscribe to the New American

Get exclusive digital access to the most informative,  
non-partisan truthful news source for patriotic Americans!

Discover a refreshing blend of time-honored values, principles and insightful perspectives within the pages of "The New American" magazine. Delve into a world where tradition is the foundation, and exploration knows no bounds.

From politics and finance to foreign affairs, environment, culture, and technology, we bring you an unparalleled array of topics that matter most.



**Subscribe**

### What's Included?

- 24 Issues Per Year
- Optional Print Edition
- Digital Edition Access
- Exclusive Subscriber Content
- Audio provided for all articles
- Unlimited access to past issues
- Coming Soon! Ad FREE
- 60-Day money back guarantee!
- Cancel anytime.