

## Lesson Forty-Six

# Andrew Jackson

### LESSON IDEA

To describe how superior leadership won the final battle of the War of 1812 against the most powerful and professional army England could assemble.

### PREPARATION

Make a copy the map on page three for each family member, and also have available a copy of the "time line" listed in the "During The Week" section.

**"NO** PERSONS will be permitted to leave the city .... No vessels, boats or other craft will be permitted to leave .... Street lamps shall be extinguished at the hour of nine at night, after which time persons of every description found in the streets, or not in their respective homes ... shall be apprehended as spies." Such were the orders issued to citizens of New Orleans in December 1814 as General Andrew Jackson prepared to defend the city against British invasion.

Between 9,000 and 10,000 English troops were sailing toward New Orleans at that moment. Many had fought against Napoleon. They were ready for battle and confident of victory. Their commanders had already drawn up plans for governing the rich seaport at the mouth of the Mississippi River. Appointments had been made at every level of government, from customs collector to governor. A victory celebration had been planned, and many officers' wives — adorned in satin gowns, jewels, and plumed hats — accompanied the invading fleet in anticipation of the festive social life that awaited in New Orleans.

Two of England's top generals — John Keane and Sir Edward Pakenham (brother-in-law of the famous Wellington who defeated Napoleon) were to lead the invasion army. Vice Admiral Alexander Cochrane commanded the 50-ship fleet and its 2,000 sailors. Do you remember Admiral Cochrane from our lesson about Baltimore and Washington? [Remind family members of Cochrane's hatred for Americans, his command of the forces that burned and sacked our nation's capital in August 1814, and his bombardment of Fort McHenry.] England was sending one of the most powerful and elite forces ever assembled to capture New Orleans and punish the American "savages."



**Andrew Jackson**

As commanding general of the U.S. southern forces, General Jackson was assigned to defend the resource rich and strategically crucial seaport. His patchwork army was comprised of backwoodsmen from Kentucky and Tennessee; clerks, merchants, and bookkeepers from New Orleans; a battalion of freed slaves; a small unit of Choctaw Indians; and some veterans from Napoleon's armies. One of the many problems he faced was where to position his men. There were more approaches to the city than they could guard. The surrounding area was laced with winding, sluggish waterways called bayous. Any pro-British native familiar with the back country could guide the enemy from the Gulf of Mexico to New

Orleans by any number of secret routes.

To preclude this possibility, Jackson ordered that every bayou deep enough to float a barge be barricaded with trees. And to keep British ships

