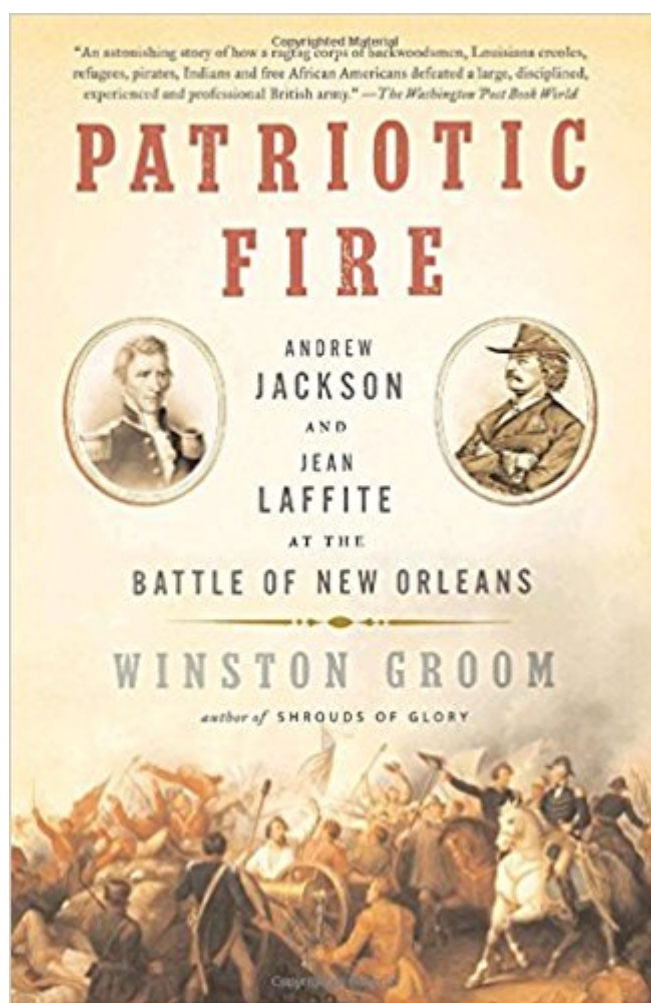


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# Patriotic Fire: Andrew Jackson And Jean Laffite At The Battle Of New Orleans



## Synopsis

December 1814: its economy in tatters, its capital city of Washington, D.C., burnt to the ground, a young America was again at war with the militarily superior English crown. With an enormous enemy armada approaching New Orleans, two unlikely allies teamed up to repel the British in one of the greatest battles ever fought in North America. The defense of New Orleans fell to the backwoods general Andrew Jackson, who joined the raffish French pirate Jean Laffite to command a ramshackle army made of free blacks, Creole aristocrats, Choctaw Indians, gunboat sailors and militiamen. Together these leaders and their scruffy crew turned back a British force more than twice their number. Offering an enthralling narrative and outsized characters, *Patriotic Fire* is a vibrant recounting of the plots and strategies that made Jackson a national hero and gave the nascent republic a much-needed victory and surge of pride and patriotism.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Groom is a novelist (*Forrest Gump*) and popular historian, with a string of well-reviewed books on war (e.g., *Shrouds of Glory*). A diligent researcher, he nevertheless has no pretensions as a scholar. His strength is a remarkable ability to recreate and revitalize events long considered familiar. He's best at structuring his narrative around personalities, and the Battle of New Orleans offers him a colorful cast. Andrew Jackson was a backwoods politician wearing the epaulettes of a general. Smuggler and buccaneer Jean Laffitte rejected a British bribe to become an American patriot. Around them coalesced a hard-bitten army. Five thousand regular soldiers and militiamen from

Tennessee and Kentucky; free blacks and Creole aristocrats; displaced Acadians; gunboat sailors and pirates turned artillerymen—•all confronted twice their number of British, most of them veterans of the Napoleonic Wars. At stake was New Orleans and the Mississippi River basin: the developing heartland of an expanding nation. Groom is defensibly hyperbolic in describing Jackson's unexpected victory as the wellspring of a pride and patriotism that endured into the 20th century. His vivid account of how that victory was won merits a place in both public and private collections. Photos, maps. (May 4) Copyright © Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved. --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

The Battle of New Orleans is undoubtedly one of the most celebrated military engagements in U.S. history. The military significance was negligible, since the War of 1812 had formally concluded with a peace treaty signed in Belgium two weeks earlier. But the emotional impact for the young nation was immense; Americans took pride in the defeat of a great military power, and victory added to the already growing legend of Andrew Jackson. Groom is a celebrated novelist (*Forrest Gump*, 1994) and historian (1942: *The Year That Tried Men's Souls*, 2005). He is also a descendant of Elijah Montgomery, who served in Jackson's army. He has written a stirring and often moving account of the battle and the events surrounding it, and his main focus is on the roles and personalities of Jackson and the enigmatic pirate turned patriot, Laffite. Jackson is seen as a larger-than-life figure, at times appearing almost heroic, but not someone to turn one's back to. This is a beautifully written and exciting work of popular history. Jay Freeman Copyright © American Library Association. All rights reserved --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

Andrew Jackson has fallen out of favor in recent years since he was a ruthless warrior and (gasp!) a slave owner, but he was a product of his times and his foundational distrust of Central Banking has and will continue to stand the test of time. I was especially interested in the story of the Laffite brothers and their contribution to the Battle of New Orleans. I think Jackson's failure to reward their contributions, especially Jean's, was a tremendous moral failing. The battle descriptions are phenomenal, utilizing letters and diary entries from both sides to bring the harsh realities of war to life. When one considers how the Americans defeated the most feared army and navy in the world, with a rag tag militia and a small contingent of regular troops, it is really quite an amazing story. For the most part, Americans today are far too soft to be able to do what our ancestors were able to accomplish under terrible circumstances.

Definitely a fun read. Like most of Winston Groom's historical works, it's not aimed at historians or buffs of the period or war in question but at the general reading public and on that level it works very well. Certainly, we get strong portraits of the various personalities and very entertaining descriptions of the battle itself. Scholars and other more serious readers though should probably look elsewhere. Certainly Andrew Jackson was not only the man of the hour but probably the best possible man for the occasion, with a deep seated hatred for the British and remarkable determination. But Jean Laffite seems to have been a far more interesting personality and surprisingly devoted to his new nation, especially so given that the government of Louisiana was spending a lot of time and energy trying to prosecute him just prior to the battle. Not to mention the British commander spent a lot of time and energy to recruit him to their side with a very lucrative offer. Andrew and Jean made a very odd couple indeed and it took some time to convince General Jackson could be trusted or had anything to offer. But the book makes it pretty clear it probably would not have gone our way, much to the surprise of the US public and the British army without Monsieur Laffite. Interestingly enough, Winston Groom feels strong emotional ties to the battle as one of his ancestors figured prominently in the outcome. His feelings make this a very personal work for him as he makes clear in the book.

If you read the sample, this is a good example of not judging a book by the sample! I was interested in the Battle of New Orleans after finding some family connections to the campaign. This book was priced low enough that I took a chance... after reading the sample which discussed the authors personal connection to the battle I expected to see a book focused on that aspect rather than a general overview of the campaign. With that said, this was exactly the book I was looking for and I highly recommend it to anyone who wants to understand this battle and the War of 1812 in general and the Battle of New Orleans specifically. It should be noted that the writing is excellent and the author also wrote *Forrest Gump* and another non-fiction book that was nominated for a Pulitzer. I would recommend that the author extend the sample to include the at least one additional chapter so the sample reader could properly evaluate this book. \*Will look harder at the authors other historical non-fiction books.

We took the Steam Boat from New Orleans to Memphis for the Civil War Tour. Being in New Orleans for the first time required taking a tour of the Chalmette Battlefield to be on the site of the greatest American victory overshadowed by the events half a century later in the Civil War. This is the place that restored American esteem after the disastrous defeats of the War of 1812 in the East,

save for the defense of Fort McHenry in Baltimore. Our history is being lost, as far as I can tell, in the schools our children and grandchildren are now matriculating through. How to instill in them the grand traditions of our Republic and what it took to create and preserve it is becoming an ever more daunting task. This well written book is worth having available. It wasn't just the final day with the one large attack. What faced Andrew Jackson and how the many smaller battles figured into the tactics and heroism on both sides is well worth knowing and noting.

While exploring various angles on the War of 1812, I came upon Winston Groom's Patriotic Fire." Here was a careful examination (and a bit of extrapolation) on the Battle for New Orleans. The MYRIAD ways this confrontation could have gone the other way were presented in an exciting yet highly informative fashion. The battle sequences were exceptionally vivid and graphic, as befits the era. Getting into the heads of Jackson and Lafitte worked quite well here...Mr. Groom certainly did his homework.

I read it from the library, but just had to have it in my personal library. Winston Groom is so freakin' good! And, since I work at The Hermitage, I'm always looking for more information about General Andrew Jackson. I love this book.

An absorbing historical account of the Battle of New Orleans. A shot by shot account of the battle that literally created the UNITED STATES. Written in such a manner that it was really difficult to put it down. Groom delves into the characters of the time; Their personalities, their loyalties, their strengths and weaknesses the indian war with the Creeks. Andrew Jackson, Jean Lafitte, Colonel Hinds, Naval ships USS Carolina, USS Louisiana, USS Enterprize, and all the important characters of the city of New Orleans. Mr. Groom also goes into personalities of the British army (Generals Keane & Pakenham) and Navy (Admiral Cockburn). A facinating story of the events leading up to the final battle, the pirates, the citizens of New Orleans, and the military of the United States. A truly wonderful read.

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