

To New Orleans Citizens

As the British invasion neared, Jackson and naval commander Daniel T. Patterson scrambled to improve their defenses. Manpower was needed and, on December 14, Jackson ordered Governor Claiborne to hold the Louisiana militia in readiness to take the field, while Patterson requested a suspension of the writ of habeas corpus to enable him to impress seamen. The Louisiana legislature had readily cooperated with plans to build fortifications, but perhaps mindful of previous unpleasant experiences with martial law under James Wilkinson in 1806, a joint committee of the legislature headed by Louis Louaillier recommended against a suspension, suggesting instead an embargo on vessels leaving New Orleans and an appropriation of funds to lure sailors into naval service. When news of the British capture of American gunboats on Lake Borgne reached New Orleans on December 15, Jackson waited no longer for legislative sanction and declared martial law on December 16.

General Orders.

Head Quarters 7th. M District
Adjutant Generals office N. Orleans
16th. December 1814

Major General Andrew Jackson commanding the 7th. U. States Military District declares the city and environs of New Orleans under strict martial law—and orders that in future the following rules be rigidly enforced. Viz—Every individual entering the city will report at the Adjutant General's office, and on failure to be arrested and held for examination—No person shall be permitted to leave the city without a permission in writing signed by the General or one of his Staff—No vessel, boat or other craft will be permitted to leave New Orleans or Bayou St. John without a passport in writing from the General (or one of his staff) or the commander of the naval forces of the United states on this station—The street lamps shall be extinguished at the hour of nine at night, after which period, persons of every description found in the streets, or not at their respective homes without permission in writing as aforesaid and [207] not having the countersign shall be apprehended as spies and held for examination¹ I—The Dragoons and Hussars will be held in readiness to furnish patrols for the city and vicinity—The city guard will be furnished from the U. S. Inftry. and militia as will be specially required and posted under the direction of the proper officers—Brig General [David Bannister] Morgan of the Louisiana Militia has been ordered into the service and will assume the command of said troops as under the requisition of the Sectry of War²—Colo G[eorge] T[hompson] Ross and Lt Colo MacRea although on the recruiting service will consider themselves on duty in the line³—The resignation of Thomas Gales Esqr is accepted to take effect this day and Augustus Davezac Esqr is hereby appointed Judge Advocate of the 7th. M. District vice Gales resigned subject to the approval of the proper authority⁴—Mr Davezac will immediately receive from Mr. Gales all the documents relative to the court martial at present constituted, and will enter on his duties immediately⁵—Colo G T Ross officer of the day *for to day* and Lt Colo McRea for tomorrow—
By command

Robert Butler
Adj General

LC, DNA-RG 98 (mAJs). Published in *Niles' Register*, 7:317 (extract, 4-0406).

¹ In response to a request by Gallien Preval for the city's mayor, Jackson rescinded the order extinguishing street lamps on January 2, 1815. See Preval to Edward Livingston, January 1 (DLC-15), and Robert Butler to [Nicholas Girod], January 2, DNA-RG 98 (4-0057).

² On December 14 Governor Claiborne had appointed Morgan (1773–1848), a state senator, to command the Louisiana militia and ordered him to report to AJ. For AJ's order confirming the appointment, see Henry Chotard to Morgan, December 16, DNA-RG 98 (4-0046). Morgan commanded the troops on the west bank of the Mississippi during the battle of January 8.

³ Ross (d. 1816) commanded the 44th U.S. Infantry Regiment.

⁴ See Gales to AJ, December 16. Davezac (1780–1851), Edward Livingston's brother-in-law and a New Orleans lawyer, was later appointed to a number of diplomatic posts by AJ.

⁵ The court-martial, presided over by Henry D. Peire, had convened on December 5 for the trials of Charles Wolstonecraft, Thomas G. Murray, Esquin de Mirepoix, Burgess B. White, and Joseph Bosque.

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