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The Hermitage to commemorate the 199th anniversary of the Battle of New Orleans

Annual event draws thousands of visitors, distinguished speakers

December 20, 2013 – The Hermitage, home of President Andrew Jackson, will open its doors with free admission to commemorate the 199th anniversary of the Battle of New Orleans on Wednesday, January 8, 2014. This annual event, celebrating the historic victory led by General Jackson, attracts thousands of visitors to the seventh President’s home. Vincent Vaise, Chief of Interpretation and Visitor Services at Fort McHenry National Monument and Historic Shrine will be the keynote speaker during the ceremony.

“The American’s stunning victory at Battle of New Orleans was the pivotal moment in Andrew Jackson’s military career that catapulted him onto the national stage,” said CEO of The Hermitage, Howard J. Kittell. “This final major battle of the War of 1812 was a miraculous win for the United States and it set Jackson on the path towards the Presidency.”

On the morning of January 8, 1815, General Jackson led a ragtag force of 4,000 men into battle against some 10,000 elite British forces. As the British troops had honed their fighting skills against Napoleon over the prior decade, Jackson’s army – made up of frontiersman, slaves, free black, army regulars and others – were at a clear disadvantage. However, in just 20 minutes, the battle concluded and saw 2,000 British casualties. On the American side: 71 casualties.

“The Battle of New Orleans is an object lesson in how one leader’s resourcefulness, determination, strong will and dedication to an ideal – American freedom – can win the day,” said Kittell.

The ceremony led by keynote speaker Vincent Vaise will begin at 11 a.m., followed by a reception with coffee and pralines. Visitors are invited to attend activities throughout the day at no charge, including a presentation by James Yasko, director of education at The Hermitage, titled, “Teaching the War of 1812.” Yasko’s presentation will take place at 9:30 a.m. and again at 1:30 p.m.

Throughout the day, The Hermitage’s Education Center will also offer War of 1812-themed games and a special art project, designing mementos for General and Mrs. Jackson, to honor his success at New Orleans.

“This is one of the few times during the year we’re able to invite the public to share in the rich history of The Hermitage at no charge,” said Kittell. “We have been overwhelmed with record numbers of visitors year after year, and we are proud to offer such distinguished speakers and engaging activities to honor President Jackson and keep his legacy alive.”

About the Battle of New Orleans

On the foggy morning of January 8, 1815 at a place that has come to be known as Chalmette Battlefield just downriver from New Orleans, General Andrew Jackson led a ragtag army of Americans to a stunning victory over the highly trained British forces at the Battle of New Orleans. This American victory was the final and pivotal battle of the War of 1812, thus ending the three-year conflict with Great Britain. Jackson and his force of approximately 4,000 men defeated a British army of 10,000 soldiers, and resulted in 13 American casualties against approximately 2,000 British casualties. This battle changed how both Americans and Europeans thought about the United States "experiment" in self government, branded Andrew Jackson as an American military hero, and served as the springboard for Jackson's eventual election to the U.S. presidency in 1828. Each year on January 8th The Hermitage commemorates the anniversary of this American victory with public programs for children and adults and offers free admission to the public.

About The Hermitage

The Hermitage, Home of President Andrew Jackson, is one of the largest and most visited presidential homes in the United States. In 1856, the State of Tennessee purchased the property from the Jackson family, entrusting it to the Ladies' Hermitage Association in 1889 to operate as one of America's first historic site museums. Today, The Hermitage is a 1,120-acre National Historic Landmark with more than 30 historic buildings, including restored slave cabins. Thanks to efforts of this nonprofit organization, the mansion is the most accurately preserved early presidential home in the country. The Hermitage is a national model for authenticity, conservation, and historic preservation. In recent years, new interpretive initiatives and educational programs such as archaeology and the history of slavery have enhanced the experience of some 180,000 annual visitors, including 30,000 school children, from all 50 states and many foreign countries; in fact, we interpret the Hermitage mansion in five foreign languages. The property also receives 30,000 annual visits from the local community, including more than 1,000 children who play Little League baseball at The Hermitage's Rotary Park. The Hermitage is a "Partner Place" with the National Trust for Historic Preservation; and a site along the National Park Service's Trail of Tears National Historic Trail. For more information, visit www.thehermitage.com.

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