

ELEAZOR DARBY WOOD

Eleazor Darby Wood was born in Lunenburg, Massachusetts, in December, 1783. As a young man he studied medicine briefly at Albury, Vermont, but quickly chose a military career instead when he received an appointment to the recently created United States Military Academy at West Point. The academy was not yet a four year school so Wood spent a relatively short time there, entering May 17, 1805 and graduating October 30, 1806. He was at once commissioned second lieutenant in the engineers and was assigned to duty assisting in the construction of defenses on Governor's Island in New York Harbor.

In February 1808 he was promoted to first lieutenant and sent to Norfolk, Virginia, where he was in command of a force detailed to fortify the harbor there. After two years at this work (1808-1810) he was promoted to captain, quite rapid advancement for a young officer in the miniscule United States army.

His experience in the War of 1812 began at New London, Connecticut, where he was in charge of the defenses for a brief period. He was soon ordered to Sag Harbor on Long Island to supervise the erection of a fortified battery.

In November, 1812, Captain Wood was assigned to the "Northwestern Army" where he found himself doing the work of the chief engineer due to the illness of Captain Gratiot who officially held that post. His service in northwestern Ohio included overseeing the construction of Fort Meigs, some work on Fort Stephenson (at present-day Fremont) and assisting in the movement of General Harrison's army to Canada after Perry's victory on Lake Erie. On May 6, 1813, while the siege of Fort Meigs was in progress he was brevetted\* major.

After participating in the crucial battle of the Thames in Canada, Wood was transferred to western New York where he served with distinction in the Niagara area. For his conduct at the Battle of Niagara he was brevetted once more, to the rank of lieutenant colonel, in June, 1814. His career came to end on September 17, 1814, when he was killed during an assault on British forces besieging Ft. Erie.

It seems more than likely that his career would have continued with distinction had he survived the War of 1812. He was a man of ability, bravery, and common sense who won the admiration and friendship of most of his military colleagues.

\*Brevet rank was a temporary service in a higher rank.

JOURNAL

of the

Northwestern Campaign of 1812-13,

under

MAJOR-GENERAL WILLIAM H. HARRISON.

by

Bvt. Lieut.-Colonel Eleazor D. Wood,

Captain Corps of Engineers, U. S. Army

Major-General William H. Harrison, having been appointed to the command of the Northwestern Army, arrived at Upper Sandusky early in January, 1813, with two brigades of militia, under Brigadiers Leftwich and Crooks, the former from Virginia and the latter from Pennsylvania, together with a few regulars and volunteers, making a force in all of about 1,500 men.<sup>1</sup> These troops principally constituted, and were denominated, the right wing of the Army. The object in raising of which, seemed to have been the security of the Northwestern frontier; the expulsion of the enemy from the Michigan Territory; and the invasion of Upper Canada, the latter, *particularly* for the reduction of Malden.<sup>2</sup> These important objects, if attained at all, were to be attained with a force almost entirely composed of *raw militia*. As the officers were utterly ignorant of their duty, or to use the words of a worthy young officer in service, "many of them

<sup>1</sup> The Virginia Brigade was under the command of Brigadier General Joel Leftwich of Bedford County Virginia and was composed of components of the 10th and 20th Brigades, Infantry of the Line, Light Infantry, and Riflemen, and the Petersburg Volunteers. The Pennsylvania troops were under the command of Brigadier General William Crooks and was composed of the Pittsburgh Blues, the Greensburg Rifles, two troops of light dragoons all from Western Pennsylvania.

<sup>2</sup> Malden, on the Canadian side of the Detroit River, just above Amherstburg, was the British stronghold where part of the fleet was built for the Battle of Lake Erie.

incapable of learning it," and the men entirely unaccustomed to obedience or subordination, it became necessary to halt the army a few days at this place to equip, and, as far as possible, to establish some little system of discipline. A halt was equally necessary to await the arrival of the field battering train of artillery; the latter, consisting of five 18-pounders, were required for the Siege of Malden; also the provisions, forage and ordnance stores. Everything was done by the General that possibly could be accomplished towards establishing subordination and discipline among the troops but men who, at that inclement season of the year, had just left their comfortable dwellings to endure the hardships and privations incident to a winter campaign in the wilderness, were not to be made soldiers of in fifteen, or even twenty days! But as much was required, every human exertion must be made. A large proportion of the troops were on daily duty, in building block-houses and storehouses, the latter to deposit the supplies in, and the former for their protection; in fact, the aspect of affairs announced the speedy approach of that state of preparation necessary to the commencement of active operations.

About the 12th, the artillery came into camp, and large quantities of every kind of supplies were constantly arriving.

At Upper Sandusky was established the principal depot of the army. This place is situated on the Sandusky River, about sixty miles from the Lake<sup>4</sup> forty above Lower Sandusky, thirty from Norton<sup>4</sup> and seventy from the Rapids of the Miami.<sup>5</sup> These two rivers, the Miami and Sandusky, are thirty-six miles apart, and the country, which lies between them, is almost an entire marsh, or sunken swamp; which, on account of its being miry and generally covered with an immense body of water, can scarcely be passed at any other time than in the summer or middle of winter, after its waters are sufficiently frozen to bear the traveller.<sup>6</sup> Through the middle of this marsh runs the Portage River, which, like an aqueduct, receives, conveys and empties its waters into Lake Erie, about two miles west of the Sandusky Bay. The Rapids of the Miami are about

<sup>3</sup> Lower Sandusky is present day Fremont, Ohio, in Sandusky County.

<sup>4</sup> Norton, Ohio, is on the northern edge of Delaware County.

<sup>5</sup> The present day Maumee River is called the Miami by Colonel Wood. The rapids of the Maumee are near Fort Meigs.

<sup>6</sup> The Black Swamp area of northwest Ohio.

eighteen miles from the Lake, sixty from Fort Wayne, and thirty-six from the River Raisin, which latter place is only eighteen miles from the village of Brownstown, situated opposite to Amherstburg, and twenty miles below Detroit.

Brig.-General Winchester,<sup>7</sup> who commanded the left wing of the Army, consisting of one thousand Kentucky Volunteers and the Regulars, had been directed to take the route of Fort Wayne; as well for the purpose of strengthening that place, as to construct block-houses and stockades, at such other points as he might deem best calculated for the defense and security of the inhabitants along the frontier. And as soon as the preparations of the right wing should be found sufficiently matured to enable it to commence operations against the enemy, it was understood that he was to descend the Miami, and the two corps from a junction at the foot of the Rapids. This was an excellent plan; for by dividing the troops and sending them different routes, with a view of concentrating somewhere in the neighborhood of the enemy, the operations of the army would not only be facilitated, but the frontier would be more effectually protected.

Parties had been sent on ahead to open roads, bridge creeks, and prepare the way as much as possible for the army, which it was expected would soon follow. The artillery had already arrived and been sent on towards the Rapids; and time, patience, perseverance and fortitude, seemed only necessary to enable the army to surmount the numerous obstacles, which nature alone had raised to its future glory.

General Perkins<sup>8</sup> with five or six hundred Ohio militia, was at Lower Sandusky, where he had been stationed some time for the immediate protection of the inhabitants along the margin of the Lake; and General Tupper,<sup>9</sup> with about as many more militia, was somewhere in the Black Swamp (such is denominated that part of the country lying between Upper Sandusky and the Rapids), west of the route from Upper Sandusky to the Miami; no one could tell exactly where. This latter named General had some time previously been sent on an expedition against the Indians who were then lying opposite to the Rapids, and by whom he was readily met and compelled to fall back. This affair was not thought altogether honorable to the General; however, his conduct afterwards underwent an investigation, and was approved by the Commanding-General.

<sup>7</sup>General James Winchester.

<sup>8</sup>Brigadier General Simon Perkins.

<sup>9</sup>Brigadier General Edward W. Tupper also of the Ohio militia.

About the 15th of January intelligence was brought to camp that General Winchester had already arrived at the Rapids, and that he intended advancing immediately to the River Raisin. This news, for a moment, paralyzed the army; or at least the reflecting part of it. General Harrison was astonished at the imprudence and inconsistency of such a step, which, if carried into effect, could be viewed in no other light than as attended with inevitable destruction to the corps. Nor was it a difficult matter for a man entirely destitute of theory or a knowledge in the art of war, to foresee the terrible consequences which were certain to mark the result of a scheme, no less rash in its conception, than hazardous in its execution.

But what human means within the control of the General, could prevent the anticipated disaster from taking place, and save the left wing of the army, which was already looked upon as destined for destruction? Certainly none; because neither orders nor troops could reach him in time. Besides, he was already in motion, and General Harrison still at Upper Sandusky, seventy miles in his rear; the weather inclement, the snow deep, and a considerable portion of the Black Swamp yet open. What could a Turenne or an Eugene have done, under such a pressure of embarrassing circumstances, more than Harrison did?<sup>10</sup> He directed General Leftwich to put his brigade in motion for the Rapids; mounted his horse and started for Lower Sandusky, whence he took a part of General Perkins' brigade, and pushed with all possible expedition for the River Raisin.

General Proctor<sup>11</sup> had posted a small party at the River Raisin to watch our motions, and co-operate with the Indians in their predatory incursions upon our frontier.

General Winchester arrived at the River Raisin and attacked this picquet (picket) on the 18th of January; a few were killed, some prisoners were taken and the rest driven off. Thus had the left wing, become the van, fought a battle, gained a victory, covered itself with glory; and all at a very little expense too. But the temerity of an insult,

<sup>10</sup>

Turenne, Henri de la Tour d'Auvergne, Vicomte de Turenne, Marshall of France (1611-'75). He was one of the leading generals of the age of Louis XIV. He fought primarily against the Dutch. Eugene: (1665-1737) Eugene was the Prince of Savoy who served the Austro-Hungarian Empire. He was the most outstanding general in Austrian history, winning thirteen battles and being associated with the English Duke of Marlborough in the victory over the French at Blenheim.

<sup>11</sup>Brigadier General Henry Proctor, Commander of the British forces.

thus of ed in the very teeth of the enemy, was not long to go unpunished; and the very authors of it were the ill fated creatures who were to receive the chastisement due to the folly and rashness of their conduct. However, elated with this flush of success, the troops were permitted to select for themselves such quarters as pleased and suited them best in the village on the west side of the river, whilst the General posted himself on the east. Not the least regard was paid to order or regularity in the quartering of the men. No fortifications were erected nor any information obtained of the enemy, or what he was about, although but twenty miles distant.

Having obtained the necessary information of the strength and manner in which General Winchester's corps was quartered (for it was not encamped) on the morning of the 22d of January, at break of day the enemy approached and commenced a most furious attack upon the right with cannon and musketry, whilst the Indians advanced upon the ice in the rear, and separated at once the General from his troops, of which he was never able afterwards to take command, nor to join until he met with them in captivity.

The troops on the right, which were first attacked, attempted to change their position, in doing which they were thrown into confusion, and mostly very soon captured; the left consisting of about 500 men under Major Madison<sup>12</sup> conducted much better; they were posted behind some old pickets, which served them as a breastwork, and which enabled them to maintain their position till 10 or 11 o'clock in the forenoon; when, having entirely exhausted their ammunition, they were compelled to lay down their arms and submit to the indignities of an *Englishman*, and the cruelties of a *Savage*.

The enemy suffered much on this occasion; and perhaps, may with propriety, be said to have paid dear for the laurels of the 22d of January, which by the inhuman and barbarous treatment of his prisoners, were withered on his brow, ere he could leave the crimsoned plain on which they seemed untimely gathered.

How many of our troops were killed and wounded in this engagement, has never been correctly ascertained; but the loss is supposed to have been very great, for the number in battle. The dead were left lying as they fell, and have never been buried to this day; and such of the wounded as were not tomahawked upon the field, were put into houses and Indians furnished as attendants; who on receiving a large quantity of whiskey from General Proctor, as a sign of approbation, set fire to the whole of them, and in one volume

<sup>12</sup>Major George Madison.

of flame, sent their contents all to heaven!

Thus were these, a corps of 1,000 men (the elite of the army too) sacrificed in the most wanton, and reprehensible manner, and that too, without the least benefit to themselves, to their country, or to their posterity. With only one third of the army, entirely destitute of artillery, of engineers, and with but a very inadequate supply of musket ammunition, what right had General Winchester to believe that he could oppose, successfully, the combined British and Indian forces at and in the vicinity of Malden? to say nothing about his advancing without orders. Until a general has a better claim to victory than General Winchester had at the River Raisin, he will be eternally beaten, whether he expects it or not; and, what is more, eternally ought to be.

General Harrison was unable to get farther than the Miami Rapids, before he had the pain and mortification to meet the fugitives flying from the tragical scenes of the River Raisin. General Harrison immediately fell back upon the Portage River, a distance of fifteen miles, as well for the purpose of covering the artillery, then in the swamp, as to meet the reinforcements, which were already far advanced from Upper Sandusky, on their way to the Rapids. This position was taken about the 24th of January, and maintained till the 1st of February, when the artillery and reinforcements having arrived, the army again returned to the Miami, and was encamped upon a beautiful ridge near the foot of the Rapids, on the right bank of the river, and about 150 yards distant from it. The camp was situated two and a half miles above old Fort Miami,<sup>13</sup> and directly opposite the ground on which old Anthony Wayne gave the Indians such a drubbing in '94. It was judiciously chosen by General Harrison and Captain C. Gratiot of the Engineers, and afterwards fortified with block-houses, batteries, and palisades, in such a manner as to stand the test of British artillery for five days, closely applied. But this must be spoken of in its proper place.

Here the army lay with its rear to the river, being covered by a considerable ravine in front, which extended round, and communicated with another very deep and wide one, which passed the left, and entirely secured it.

A fine train of artillery (which always gives confidence to troops), consisting of five 18-pounders, six 6-pounders and three howitzers, together with a

<sup>13</sup>Fort Miami was built in 1794 by Colonel John Graves Simcoe and Lt. Robert Pilkington of the Royal Engineers. Located about fifteen miles from the mouth of the Maumee River on the west bank in the present City of Maumee.

small supply of ammunition having arrived in camp, the countenance of the army began very much to brighten, and the late shock at the River Raisin seemed in some measure to be forgotten.

General Tupper, having found himself, and arrived in camp, our number of troops amounted to about 2,000 or upwards; and General Crooks, who had been left at Upper Sandusky with 600 or 700 men for the purpose of completing a stockade, had not yet made his appearance. It was now about the 10th or 12th of February, when a rumor was spread through camp that a great council was then in session, and that the subject of deliberation was, whether or no arrangements should not be made immediately for the army to advance against the enemy. That such a council did sit is a fact, and that it was decided that the army should not, or was not in a situation to advance, is also a fact, for although the writer was not one of the council, yet he received his information from a source which could not be doubted.<sup>14</sup>

It was shortly afterwards directed by the General that a camp for 2,000 men should be laid out and strongly fortified; and that this work might be in a state of progression, and a large portion of labor immediately designated, and assigned among every corps or regiment in the army. Each Brigade or Regiment commenced that particular portion of work which was assigned it, with great vigor and spirit.

The camp was about 2,500 yards in circumference, which distance, with the exception of several small intervals, left for block-houses, and batteries, was every foot to be picketed with timber, 15 feet long, from 10 to 12 inches in diameter, and set 3 feet in the ground. Such were the instructions of the engineer. To complete this picketing, to put up eight block-houses<sup>15</sup> (the number required) of double timber, to elevate four large batteries, to build all the store houses and magazines required for the supplies of the army, together with the ordinary fatigues of the camp, was an undertaking of no small magnitude. Besides, an immense deal of labor was to be performed in excavating ditches, making abatis,<sup>16</sup>

<sup>14</sup> General Harrison was continually sending out scouts trying to keep abreast of General Proctor's activity. Colonel Wood was attached to one of the scouting parties on February 14th, 1813.

<sup>15</sup> The original plan was to construct eight block-houses, however, just prior to the first siege one block-house on the east end of the fort was converted to a battery.

<sup>16</sup> Abatis - A military obstacle consisting of pointed stakes or logs or fallen trees (a fore-runner of barbed wire).

and clearing away the wood about camp, and all this to be done too, at a time when the weather was extremely severe, and the ground so hard frozen, that it was almost impossible to open it with a spade and pick-axe. But in the use of the axe, mattock and spade, consisted all the military knowledge of the army. So we fell to work to bury ourselves as fast as possible, and heard nothing of the enemy. The army was tolerably healthy, and well provided with bread and meat; for the woods were literally alive with beebes,<sup>17</sup> hogs, and pack horses loaded with flour.

Somewhere about the 15th of February, intelligence was brought the General that a party of Indians were still lurking near the mouth of the river, at a small cluster of Indian huts, called Presque Isle. A party of spies (for at this time these were the greatest characters in the army), were immediately despatched to the mouth of the river to get all possible information relative to the strength and position of this impudent foe, and after being absent one day and a part of a night, returned and reported that, from what they could discover without giving the alarm (of which they were generally very cautious), they were induced to believe the enemy consisted of about one or two hundred. (There might have been perhaps five or six.) An expedition of 1,100 men were ordered to be in readiness to march the following night against those demons of the wood. The plan and order of march was thus:--Brig.-General Perkins, with 600 men formed in column by companies, at entire distances, and marching by the left, was to leave camp at 8 o'clock in the evening and move down the river on the ice; at half-past eight, General Tupper, with 500 men formed in the same manner as the preceding corps, was to follow; and General Harrison to command the whole. Every necessary arrangement having been made, the night arrived and the troops under General Perkins were put in motion, agreeably to orders; and half an hour after, they were followed by General Tupper who was accompanied by General Harrison and staff. On arriving within four or five miles of the destined place, a halt of the front was ordered to give time to the rear to come up, and to await the return of the spies who had been sent ahead to gain further information of the enemy; but as they did not return so soon as was expected, the rear having come up, it was determined to advance; so we moved on within one or two miles of Presque Isle, when the spies were met, and informed that the enemy had burnt a part of the houses, taken their cattle and horses, and gone on to the River Raisin. This was a monstrous disappointment indeed; however, all hopes of meeting with the enemy were not yet fled, as the General,

<sup>17</sup> Cattle.

after a signal, gave directions for the troops to be again put in motion for the River Raisin, in hopes of coming up with the Indians at that place. The night was light, moderately cold, and there was a little snow upon the ice, which enabled us to discover and follow the trail of the enemy. After proceeding six miles further it was found that the men were generally very much fatigued, and that many of them had actually given out, and were not able to march a step further without refreshment and rest. For this purpose, the army was again halted upon a small island, and fires over the whole of it were instantly built. Here we lay till eight the next morning, when a poor Canadian citizen living near the River Raisin, having been taken a prisoner by a party that went on ahead, and brought in to the General, informed him that the Indians were in pursuit of had already arrived at the River Raisin, and gone to Malden. The expedition was therefore abandoned, and the troops ordered back to camp, where they arrived, very much worried and fatigued, at about 4 o'clock in the afternoon, after having performed a march of forty-eight miles in twenty-four hours. On this occasion "the mountain had brought forth a mouse," and I thought our spies deserved to be well scourged.

The weather being severe, and the ground in many places, where the men had to work, extremely wet and bad, the lines of defense naturally progressed but slowly. No event of any importance occurred for some time. Small parties which were almost constantly passing between the different posts, were not unfrequently attacked by the Indians, though usually but little damage was done. It was not uncommon for the enemy to be about the camp at night, but probably his presence was more frequently imagined by the sentinels, than real, for scarcely a night passed without one, two or three alarms, and the army as often turned out under arms. The practice of turning the troops out because a frightened sentinel happens to hear a rustling in the bushes, or a bug fly over his head, is one of the most absurd practices that ever entered into the head of a general, and is no less destructive to an army than an epidemic among the troops. Vain and unnecessary alarms were never known in the Camps of Conde, nor will they ever be made within any camp where the general correctly understands and performs his duty.

About the 20th, General Crooks (not a man of books), who had been left to complete the stockade at Upper Sandusky, having finished that duty had been ordered on to headquarters, and arrived at a time when the services of his men were very much wanted indeed.

A plan was now set afoot for the burning of the

Queen Charlotte,<sup>18</sup> a British vessel then lying by the wharf at Amherstburgh, immediately under the guns of Malden. But that made no difference--she was to be burnt. To carry this enterprise into execution, Captain Langham<sup>19</sup> a very gallant officer, was selected with one hundred men; Major Stoddard<sup>20</sup> of the artillery, and Captain Wood of the Engineers, were directed to prepare suitable combustibles for the destruction of the unfortunate Queen; to prevent distortion of features, and to preserve her beauty to the last moment, it was determined not to administer this inflammable dose by her head but by her tail--or stern.

Everything preparatory to the enterprise having been reported ready, the forlorn hope (if there ever was one) was paraded; the General made a few observations to them, setting forth the dauntless courage of their Commander, and the important national advantages which must certainly result from the destruction of this Lady of the Lake; when, having finished, Captain L. (Langham) put himself at the head of his party and moved off by the way of Lower Sandusky for Malden. Sleighs were got at Lower Sandusky in which the party proceeded to Put-in-Bay,<sup>21</sup> where they discovered that the lake was quite open between them and Amherstburgh, and that it was utterly impossible for the object of the expedition to be accomplished; so, after being absent several days, they steered for the mouth of the Miami, and arrived at camp on the 5th of March. Thus did the coquetish Queen disappoint an ardent and sincere lover, reserving her smiles and charms for the more fortunate and gallant Perry.<sup>22</sup>

On the 4th, Captain E. D. Wood of the Engineers was sent, by way of the lake to Lower Sandusky, with directions to assume the command of the garrison and to spend ten or fifteen days in constructing such additional works as in his opinions might be found necessary for the security of the Post,<sup>23</sup> and to

<sup>18</sup> Queen Charlotte, a 17 gun warship of 400 tons, later captured in the battle of Lake Erie.

<sup>19</sup> Captain A. L. Langham of the 19th U. S. Infantry Regiment.

<sup>20</sup> Major Amos Stoddard of the 2d Artillery Regiment.

<sup>21</sup> South Bass Island of the group of islands in Lake Erie north of present day Sandusky, Ohio.

<sup>22</sup> Commodore Oliver H. Perry, Commander of the naval forces in the Lake Erie region, later gained fame for his victory over the British at the Battle of Lake Erie.

<sup>23</sup> Fort Stephenson.

save it <sup>if</sup> falling an easy prey should the enemy think its reduction an object worthy of his notice; then to return to the Rapids.

As the presence of General Harrison was no longer particularly required, he gave the necessary instructions to General Leftwich relative to the importance of a vigorous prosecution of the lines of defense, and on the 6th, left camp for Chillicothe. This became necessary, as well to make arrangements for supplying the army, as to take seasonable measures for getting on a re-enforcement of militia, to fill the places of the Virginia and Pennsylvania militia whose terms of service would expire, the former on the 2nd and the latter on the 6th of April, leaving (unless re-enforced) not more than 600 or 700 men to garrison and defend the camp at the Rapids. And as there were many sick and unable to perform their duty, it was probable that not to exceed 400 or 500 would by the first of April, be found capable of rendering the least assistance.

General Harrison foresaw the lamentable situation in which the army was likely to be placed, and in consequence of the ebbing and flowing of the militia, endeavored to be as well prepared to meet the event as possible. The two brigades of Ohio militia, under Perkins and Tupper, were already discharged and gone home, and it was generally believed in camp that not one of either the Virginia or Pennsylvania militia could be prevailed on to remain a single day after the expiration of their legal tour of duty; but to the immortal honor of the latter, in this belief we were happily disappointed. For, on the 6th of April, finding that we were threatened with an immediate attack, and that the Virginians to a man, and to their eternal disgrace, had gone home, their General the first to set the example, and that no re-enforcements had yet arrived, 150 of the Pennsylvania troops very handsomely volunteered their services to remain fifteen days, or even longer in case that re-enforcements should not arrive in the meantime. Finding that it would be impossible, from the badness of the roads and the tardiness of the militia, to get the new draft from Kentucky on to Camp Meigs by the 1st or even the middle of April, General Harrison had very wisely written to Brigadiers Leftwich and Crooks desiring them to use every honorable means to induce a part of their men to remain a few weeks after their term of service should have expired, and stated to those Generals the dreadful consequences that were likely to attend their leaving the camp with all their men before other troops should arrive to fill their places; and that, in the event of the camp falling into the hands of the enemy, the disaster in a great

<sup>24</sup> Chillicothe was the capital of Ohio at this time.

measure would be attributed to them. But all availed nothing with Leftwich--nothing could excite his feelings nor arouse his patriotism, for he was as destitute of both (except where his interest was concerned) as a Dutchman is of genius and vivacity. The 2d of April arrived, and away went every Virginian belonging to the drafted militia, without the least concern as to what became of those they left behind, or caring whether the enemy or ourselves were in possession of the camp, so long as they could escape from the defense of it.

The conduct of General Leftwich on this occasion was highly reprehensible indeed, for notwithstanding he had received express directions to prosecute the lines of defense with all possible vigor, and to place the camp in the best possible situation to sustain a siege, which it was almost certain sooner or later it would have to undergo, and evidences of which became more apparent every day; yet this phlegmatic, stupid old granny, so soon as General Harrison left camp, stopped the progress of the works entirely, assigning as a reason that he couldn't make the militia do anything, and therefore they might as well be in their tents, as to be kept out in the mud and water, and accordingly were gratified. So far from improving the works they were permitted to burn the timber, which had been brought into camp with an immense deal of labor, for pickets and block-houses; not only did they burn this timber, but on the 20th of March, when Captain Wood returned from Lower Sandusky, he had the pain and mortification to find several of the men actually employed in pulling the pickets out of the ground, and conveying them off for fuel. On asking them who gave permission for that manner, he was informed that no body gave permission, but that it was a common thing for each mess to take what they wanted and nothing was said about it. Was not this most perplexing and vexatious indeed to an officer the least acquainted with our situation, and particularly to one intrusted with the important duty of planning and fortifying the camp, and on the success of which, in the event of a siege, his honor and reputation entirely depended? Captains Croghan, <sup>25</sup> Bradford and Langham of the 17th and 19th regulars had remonstrated in the strongest terms against such an abominable and wanton destruction of work which had been erected with so much labor and trouble; and on which, they

<sup>25</sup> Captain George Croghan of the 17th U. S. Infantry, later became major of the 2d Rifles and distinguished himself as commander of Fort Stephenson.

<sup>26</sup> Captain William Bradford of the 17th U. S. Infantry.

... saw, ... in a great measure the future salvation of the army, but all to no purpose. Captain Wood found great difficulty in stopping the militia from destroying his works, but much greater in getting them to repair the breaches and deprivations already made and committed on the lines.

About this time, near the end of March, the Indians were getting to be quite troublesome round the camp; no party could be sent out after fuel, timber, or anything else without being fired on, and frequently one or two persons killed, and as many more taken prisoners. The militia officers as well as men were frequently in the habit of crossing the river without arms, for the purpose of examining the remains of old Fort Miami, and prowling about to gratify a vain and foolish curiosity, until at length a thick-headed Pennsylvania Lieutenant with two or three men went to see this famous old work, but no sooner were they well engaged in examining it, than a party of Indians, who were lying in the bushes attentive to their duty, fired and killed the Lieutenant and wounded two or three of the men; but not so badly but what they were able to effect their escape. The Lieutenant was scalped-- and I thought he deserved it. On this occasion a man's religion saved his life--or rather a Psalm Book which was in his pocket, and which saved his side from being penetrated with a ball. This was a wonderful escape indeed--when I first heard of it, the idea of a man's having religion somewhere about him, even if it was in his pocket, struck me very forcibly.

Somewhere about the 26th or 28th of March a party consisting of three citizens came through from Detroit and informed us that General Proctor had issued a proclamation directing all the militia in the vicinity of Maiden, and upon the river Detroit to assemble at Sandwich<sup>27</sup> on the 7th of April, for the purpose; it was well understood, of aiding in an expedition to be carried into effect against Camp Meigs. One of the persons, a man by the name of Bucknel, a respectable inhabitant of Detroit, stated that he had often been in company with Major Meur, and that while in his company had heard him describe the plan of attack that was to be pursued in case General Proctor went to the rapids, and the success of which enterprise he observed could not be doubted a moment. The principal plan of attack was as follows:--On arriving before the camp, the Indians were to be immediately thrown into our rear, or rather they were to invest the camp, and cut off at once all communication, while the troops were to be

<sup>27</sup> Sandwich a British post in Canada across from Detroit.

<sup>28</sup> Major Adam Meur, British officer who had been active in the proposed attack on Fort Wayne in the fall of 1812.

employed on the opposite side of the river, preparing the batteries and mounting the guns to cannonade and bombard the camp--and that in a very few hours after the batteries were opened upon the Americans, they would be compelled to seek safety by flying to the swamps, when the Indians would accomplish the rest. Major Meur's opinion was, that they would "be able to smoke the Yankees out," in the course of the first day's cannonade; but on this occasion, that gentleman certainly reckoned without his host.

A party of British officers had been down to the Rapids and reconnoitred our position, and from the situation they found it in, it is not at all surprising that such an opinion as Major Meur's should have been formed, and the plan they had formed was perhaps as good a one as could have been fallen upon for the attack in the first instance, but it should have been abandoned and changed altogether so soon as it was discovered that we were beginning to entrench ourselves, entirely anew, within the original lines of the camp.

It was now the 1st of April, when all became perfectly convinced of the approaching storm, and that in the course of a very few days we might expect a portentous visit from his Excellency General Proctor, accompanied by the great Tecumseh, and both attended with a numerous retinue.

The Virginians left us on the 2d and 4th, and the Pennsylvanians had not yet made up their minds how many, or whether any, would volunteer to remain a week or two, or not. From the example just set them by the Virginians, nothing could be expected; however, another letter in the meantime was received by Brig.-General Crooks, from General Harrison, soliciting him to exert his influence to the utmost among the men, to get a part or the whole of his brigade to volunteer their services for a few days, until he could have time to arrive at the Rapids with a small party of regulars and militia, both of which were already on their march. But the woods were almost impassable, and it was not expected they could arrive before the 10th or 15th of the month, the very time that it was presumed the enemy would be engaged in carrying on the siege; which, were they permitted to commence before those reinforcements arrived, all hopes of success were cut off, and these troops must fall a prey to the enemy on arrival in the vicinity of the camp. As already stated, about 150 of those patriotic militia from Pennsylvania were, with some difficulty, prevailed on to remain fifteen or twenty days longer. This conduct, when contrasted with that of the Virginia militia, was noble indeed.



On the 8th, Lieut.-Colonel Ball,<sup>29</sup> with about 200 dragoons,<sup>30</sup> arrived at the Rapids, and in fine time to afford assistance, which was very much wanted, in the completion of works. A short time afterwards General Harrison arrived with a small corps of regulars and militia.

The enemy did not make their appearance so soon as we had expected.

About the 20th the fifteen days' volunteers were paid off, highly complimented in general orders, and permitted to return home. The whole number of troops in camp at this time was about 1,200 or 1,300, of which not more than 850 were reported fit for duty. They were better than half regulars and volunteers, and the rest Kentucky and Ohio militia, who had just been drafted into service, and of course utterly ignorant of their duty. In the event of an attack, it was on this handful of undisciplined and inexperienced troops that General Harrison would have solely to rely for the defense of the camp, and the safety of the immense supplies of provisions and ordnance, both of which had been got to that place with great difficulty, and at an enormous expense. And it was now all but certain that the place would soon be invested, for we received information that the enemy were assembling in great force at Sandwichee, and that a large number of Indians had just arrived at Detroit from St. Joseph<sup>31</sup> and the neighborhood of Mackinaw. Small parties of scattering Indians were constantly round the camp, whose object it seemed to be presumably to take prisoners, as we supposed, for the purpose of obtaining information relative to our strength and situation, and which, as we afterwards learned, was actually the case.

Our block-houses, batteries, magazines and connecting lines of defense were now generally completed; and the appearance of the camp, in every direction, was such as to inspire confidence in the minds of those whose duty it had become either to defend, or with it throw themselves into the hands of an English savage.

Fuel for the garrison, and timber to repair breaches and to make bombproofs should it be found

<sup>29</sup> Lt. Col. Stephen Ball, the fortification constructed at present day Tiffin, Ohio, was named after this officer.

<sup>30</sup> Dragoons: In the 18th century, mounted infantry, now little different from cavalry.

<sup>31</sup> A British fort on St. Joseph Island, just inside Canadian waters at the south end of the St. Marys River, above Lake Huron.

necessary, were brought into camp in great abundance; and two or three wells were instantly commenced, and everything done that possibly could be to place the camp in the best situation to sustain a lengthy siege.

On the 25th a scouting party was sent down to Presque Isle, to see if any discoveries could be made of the approach of the enemy, which party returned in the afternoon of the same day, and reported that they saw several tents pitched upon the west side of the river, and two or three sail boats off the mouth of the bay. On the 26th, in the afternoon, a party of horsemen, consisting of about fifteen or twenty English officers and Indians, debouched from the woods upon a small plain on the opposite side of the river, and galloped over it apparently with a design of examining its local position, and to select suitable sites for the placing of their batteries. Our guns were all instantly loaded; but before we could get ready to pay due honor to these new guests they thought proper to dispense with all ceremony on that occasion and to be off. The next morning sixty or eighty dragoons were despatched a short distance down the river to see what the enemy were about.

They had proceeded but a short distance before they met the Indians, who by their manoeuvring manifested a design of getting into the rear of the dragoons, which the intrepid Lieutenant who commanded the party did not altogether like so well; he therefore opposed a counter manoeuvre by bringing his men suddenly to the right about and hastening expeditiously back to camp, where he arrived safe with only one man slightly wounded. This was certainly the best thing he could have done.

It afterwards appeared, that on the 25th the combined British and Indian forces consisting of 800 militia, 500 regulars, and 1,500 Indians, all under the command of Brig.-General Proctor, arrived at the mouth, and landed on the left shore of the Miami, and instantly threw a party of Indians across the river, to observe and watch the conduct of our troops, should any of them be sent to reconnoitre, as was the constant practice. The next day the army was put in motion, keeping its left to the river, and arriving with the gunboats and batteries, in which were the artillery and ordnance stores, and advanced gradually up until it arrived on the 27th at Old Fort Miami, situated, as already described two and a half miles below Camp Meigs, and near the foot of the rapids. The bateaux<sup>32</sup> were immediately unloaded and employed

<sup>32</sup>

Bateau (bateaux) - This was a light, flat bottomed boat with tapering ends.

in conveying the balance of the Indians to our side of the river. Today the camp was completely invested, and on the following night the enemy broke ground in four different places, and were very industriously employed until morning, when their works were discovered to be in a tolerable state of forwardness. No sooner were these nocturnal works discovered, than orders were given for all our guns, that could be brought to bear, to open instantly upon them, which orders were executed with alacrity and promptitude; and those works of one night's growth, soon looked as if they had been but a moment's.

Understanding now perfectly the enemy's plan of attack, and where each of his principal batteries were going to be erected, and the particular object of each, and knowing that we should be greatly annoyed in our present state by his artillery, it became necessary to intrench the army entirely anew, which of course must be done within the original lines of the camp. A plan for a kind of intrenched citadel had been some time before arranged and recommended by Captain Wood of the engineers to General Harrison as the only effectual security for the army in case the enemy should attack with artillery, and which in a measure had been mentioned by him. It had not only met his approbation, but he had on one or two occasions observed that he thought it had better be commenced and in a state of progression, that we might be the better prepared for the reception of the enemy in case he should come suddenly upon us. Orders were given for Captain Wood to commence the new intrenchments. On the 28th in the morning the whole army was set to work, and continued in the trenches until "tattoo"; when, on account of darkness and rain, a suspension of their labors until reveille was recommended by the engineer to the General and readily approved of; the troops were accordingly dismissed with directions to the different commandants of parties to resume their stations in the trenches again at break of day, which orders were strictly complied with.

Orders had been previously given in the forepart of the day for the troops to continue at work all night in the trenches; but they had progressed most rapidly through the day and the night being a very bad one, it was thought that more labor might be accomplished the next day by letting the men rest, than by keeping them all night at work.

Never did men behave better, on any similar occasion than did ours on this. The Indians had now become extremely troublesome; there was not a stump, bush, or log, within musket shot of the camp, but what shielded its man, and some of them two or three. Unfortunately, we had not been able to clear the wood away to a sufficient distance, on our left,<sup>33</sup>

of which circumstance those demons of the fore very readily availed themselves, and, instead of remaining idle at the foot of the trees, they bounced into their tops, with as much agility and dexterity as if they had been taught it from their infancy; and from those elevated stations, poured down into our camp prodigious showers of musketry; but the distance being so great, out of the numerous quantity of balls received in camp, but very few took effect; many of the men, however, were wounded and rendered incapable of performing duty for some time. This ethereal annoyance from the Indians, certainly served as a source of great stimulus to the militia in camp, for notwithstanding their prompt obedience to orders and attention to duty, yet their movements were very much accelerated by it, as will always be found the case whenever musketry is brisk about their ears.

It is by no means astonishing that any kind of troops should act with energy and courage when situated as were those in Camp Meigs, one hundred miles distant from any settlement, in an impenetrable swamp the camp entirely surrounded with Indians, who filled it with musketry as thick as hail, no hope of relief, and the active preparations across the river for cannonading and bombarding the camp, all announcing the necessity for the most spirited and vigorous resistance.

After the first day's labor in the trenches, one-third of the troops only, were kept in them constantly, who were relieved every three hours by fresh ones. In this way we continued our operations, occasionally firing at the civilized savages across the river, as well as upon the wild ones in the woods, whenever the former exposed themselves, or the latter became too troublesome.

The General was extremely active through the day, was everywhere to be seen in the trenches, urging on the works, as well by precept as example. He slept but little, and was uncommonly vigilant and watchful through the night.

The first thing commenced, to shield the troops against the annoyance of cannon, was a traverse, of about twenty feet base, laid parallel with the river, upon the most elevated ground, which was near the middle, and running the whole length of the camp; it was from ten to fifteen feet high, and completed early on the morning of the 1st of May. An avenue, as it were, had been opened through the tents and as many left standing on that side next the enemy as possible, to cover from his view our operations, until the traverse should be completed, and which

34 A traverse is a wall of earth.

33 This was on the east side of Fort Meigs.

seemed from his conduct to have answered the purpose extremely well.

This particular piece of work was completed early on the morning of the 1st of May, just as it was discovered that the enemy had finished three of his principal batteries had got his guns in, was then loading and bringing them to battery; when orders were directly given for all the tents in front to be instantly struck and carried into the rear of the traverse. This was done in almost a moment, and that beautiful prospect of beating up our quarters, which but an instant before presented itself to the view of the eager and skilful artilleryists, had now entirely fled, and in its place suddenly appeared an immense shield of earth, obscuring from his sight every tent, every horse (of which there were 200) and every creature belonging to the camp. How disappointed must have been the indefatigable and skilful engineer on discovering the futility of all his works, and what a gloomy and hopeless prospect presented itself to the ardent and scientific artilleryist!

Those canvas houses, which in a great measure had covered the growth of the traverse, by keeping from the view of the enemy the operations about it, were now with their inhabitants in them, entirely protected in their turn.

But as neither the general, engineer or artilleryist were convinced of the *folly* and *futility* of their works, and five days of arduous cannonading and bombarding were necessary to produce a *thorough conviction*. At 11 o'clock at night, when all was again silent. As we sustained but little injury through the day, having but one or two men killed, and five or six wounded, (the latter principally by the Indians) and our supply of ammunition being quite inadequate to the necessities of a lengthy siege, we fired very little during the day, contenting ourselves in safety and listening to the enemy's music. Some shells and a few rounds of grape were occasionally fired at the Indians, to drive them from their stations whenever they approached too near the lines, which, in consequence of their teasing, were kept in almost a constant blaze with musketry. On the 2d, at dawn of day, the cannonade again commenced with great vigor, and the batteries continued to play with considerable briskness through the day, and with about the same effect as the preceding day. The position, however, of one of our magazines was discovered in the course of the day, and great hopes seemed to have been entertained by the enemy of effecting its destruction, the roof having been hit by a 24-pound shot; the whole of the batteries were instantly directed upon it, and the traverse not being of sufficient height to protect the roof, that part of it was pretty soon battered down, or rather blown off by a shell, which fell and exploded directly upon its loft, no damage of consequence, how-

ever, was done to it. As soon as the firing ceased in the evening, Captain Bradford (a most excellent officer) with a party of men, went to work, and before day had the magazine entirely repaired. Its loft had been covered with two tier of large timbers, with plenty of raw hides placed between them, so as to prevent the fire from falling down into the magazine in case of shells lighting upon it; these timbers were hewn on two sides, and well spiked together. It had been apprehended that the enemy finding he could not effect his purpose by battering from the opposite side of the river, might take it into his head to establish batteries somewhere along our front, or on one or other of the flanks, and in order that we might be prepared to receive him at all points, another traverse, parallel with the first, and distant about one hundred yards had been commenced--was soon finished, and the two connected by several short ones. This was done with a view to cut the space up so much that ricochet firing lengthways the camp should be attended with no injury while the men were in their tents.

Our intrenchments now, in a manner, formed a complete citadel, which could have been defended to great advantage, and would have been found extremely difficult to force had the enemy been able to have effected a passage at the first lines, which he never could have done without sustaining an immense loss.

On the 3d, at 10 o'clock A.M., our apprehensions respecting the enemy's crossing the river were completely realized, for it was now discovered by the fire of three or four pieces that he was already on our left, with his cannon stuck in the edge of a small ravine. From a few of the first shots some damage was sustained but the best position had not yet been taken, and by setting two or three 18-pounders to work upon those impudent fellows in the "bush" we were soon able to silence them for a time. An attack from the left having been anticipated its consequences were, in a great measure, foreseen and guarded against. The person who was employed with the howitzer seemed a friend or possessed of very little skill in his profession, for notwithstanding he was but about three or four hundred yards distant from the camp, yet not more than one out of four or five shells thrown ever came inside the lines. It was the opinion of many of our men that he certainly must be a friend, and felt for our situation. Be that as it may, he badly acquitted himself. In course of the third day we had two or three dragoons killed, several slightly touched, and a number of horses killed; in fact, it seemed to have been particularly an un-

35

This was called the Indian battery.

fortunate day for the cavalry.

On the 4th, the enemy neither opened his batteries so early in the morning as he had been accustomed to do, nor did he fire them with his usual activity. The fire, though somewhat lively in the morning, grew less so through the day, until toward evening when it became quite dull; and everything about the batteries appeared as if the enemy were convinced that their labor was entirely lost, and that a farther prosecution of the attack from that side of the river would only be attended with an immense waste of powder and ball, and ultimately prove of no avail.

From excess of fatigue and almost constant watching in the trenches, through the night, our troops had become somewhat broken down, however, their spirits were yet good, and a little refreshment, with a few hours rest, were only necessary to render them as effective as ever. The garrison frequently showed itself above the works, and occasionally gave three cheers, especially when the fire of the enemy was not brisk, and when it could be done with safety. It always occasioned a most hideous yell from the Indians. These rascals appeared to be greatly delighted at the bursting of the shells in our camp, and whenever great or material damage was supposed to have been done by an explosion, they were sure to express their approbation by *yelping*.

At about 12 o'clock on the night of the 4th, Mr. Oliver,<sup>36</sup> a young man who had been dispatched to meet General Clay,<sup>37</sup> who was supposed to be somewhere on the Miami, returned and brought information that the General was then within about eight miles of the camp with 1,200 militia; and that he would be able in all probability, to reach Camp Meigs before day. Mr. Oliver left camp to meet General Clay on the 28th of April. General Harrison immediately formed a plan for having the enemy's batteries across the river stormed and the guns spiked. Captain Dudley<sup>38</sup> was furnished with spikes, and directed to get out of camp as secretly as possible, to take a canoe, and make the best of his way up the river until he should meet with General Clay to whom he was to deliver the following instructions:--that he must land the whole or such part of his troops on the opposite side of the river early in the morning, as he might deem sufficient to storm and carry the enemy's batteries and to spike their guns; the bearer of the

<sup>36</sup> Captain William Oliver

<sup>37</sup> General Green Clay, commander of the Kentucky militia raised to relieve Fort Meigs during the first siege.

<sup>38</sup> Captain Peter Dudley of the 10th Infantry Kentucky Militia.

orders to act as a guide, and to conduct the storming columns to the batteries. The magazines were likewise to be destroyed, and the troops instantly to return to their boats, and recross the river to Camp Meigs. Captain Dudley reached General Clay in time to deliver his orders. Of the 1,200 men, 800 under the directions of Colonel Dudley<sup>39</sup> (a man alike ignorant and rash, and who had never heard a hostile gun), were ordered to land at dawn of day, to perform this gallant service.

The troops were formed into three columns and moved down to the attack, but they did not reach the batteries until about 9 o'clock in the morning. On coming within 300 or 400 yards of the works, his men set up a most tremendous yell (under an impression, I suppose, that a Kentucky yell was more to be dreaded than their arms), and pushed on without order or opposition and took possession of all the enemy's works, almost without firing a single gun, and without the loss of a single man. The few artillerymen who were about the batteries, on hearing this tremendous yell, took the alarm, snatched the colors from their standards and flew with great precipitation to the main force below, which was at old Fort Miami--nor were they easily overtaken. Colonel Dudley now found himself in complete possession of the objects of his enterprise, and he had nothing further to do but to spike the guns, blow up or destroy the magazines, and return with all possible celerity to his boats and cross the river before the enemy should have time allowed him to march the army up from Fort Miami, and attack him in return.

But, great God! neither knowing how to obey orders nor to profit by success, Colonel Dudley remained with his men upon the ground, gratifying a vain curiosity, without spiking but a part of the guns, and leaving the magazines entire, until the enemy had ample time to collect his forces, and return to repossess himself of his works, and chastise in the severest manner the temerity, folly, ignorance and stupidity of this most unfortunate commander. Yes, it seemed as if those miserable creatures were only waiting upon the theatre of their success and glory, for the enemy to be fully prepared to take ample revenge.

These batteries were situated near the bank of the river, upon a small plain, with a wood in the rear, and entirely edged with thick bushes except in front; and the ground, on leaving the plain to go into the woods, was considerably intersected with small ravines, whose

<sup>39</sup> Colonel William Dudley, commander of Dudley's Regiment Kentucky Volunteers.

band were entirely covered with under-mall brush. After remaining in groups upon this plain, in the most disorderly manner possible, for about thirty minutes, the Indians returned, and commenced a scattering fire from the edge of the bushes, which instantly drew the militia from the plain into the woods; in the meantime a column of British regulars were marched along up the river until they came upon the ground just left by Colonel Dudley, when they halted, formed in order of battle, and advanced to the attack of his rear. Thus situated between two fires, his troops in the greatest disorder, skirmishing with the Indians, in every direction, and possessing not the least knowledge of the local situation of the field of battle, what was to be expected, or what could be done by Colonel Dudley? No human means within the control of this unfortunate officer could save him, his fate was fixed, and the destruction of his corps inevitable. The contest was but short--a few minutes were sufficient to place this gallant corps of 800 Kentuckians at the mercy of a most *cruel, savage and barbarous foe*, who only knew to conquer and slaughter. Of the 800 in this engagement, only about 100 were able to effect their retreat--80 or 90 of them got across the river to Camp Meigs, and the balance escaped to Fort Wayne, 60 of 70 were killed and the rest taken prisoners. Upwards of 600 were taken and marched under an escort of Indians to headquarters and confined in Old Fort Miami, with a strong chain of sentinels round the works. The Indians were then permitted by General Proctor to assemble upon the surrounding rampart, and there at their leisure, to amuse themselves by loading and firing at the crowd of prisoners, until at length, they preferred slaughtering those wretched mortals in a manner more suitable to their savage feelings; they therefore laid by their rifles, walked into the slaughter-pen, seized such persons as they pleased, and leading them to the gateway, there tomahawked and scalped them without mercy or restraint. Nine bodies were found lying in one pile, near the gate of the Fort, after General Proctor left the Miami. Many were found in other places tomahawked and scalped, and their bodies mangled in the most barbarous and inhuman manner. Colonel Dudley was found on the field of battle, scalped, his breast cut open, and his heart taken out! He fell a victim to his own descretion and folly--and shared the fate of many of his brave countrymen, who were less fortunate, in escaping death upon the field of battle, as a more horrid one awaited them at Fort Miami. Long will Kentucky have cause to remember the 5th day of May, as well as the 22d of January, no less memorable for the massacre at Raisin. Just as the unfortunate contest terminated on the other side of the river, another of much less importance took place upon our side and within a few hundred yards of the camp. On attempting to land the balance of his men from the boats in which they had descended the Miami, Gen-

eral Clay met with considerable opposition from the Indians, who poured forth from the woods in great swarms, and seemed determined that not a single man should reach the camp. The Kentuckians, wishing to see the works and their friends in camp, obstinately persisted in pushing on, and a sharp fire soon ensued. Such guns as could be brought to bear upon the enemy, from the camp, were played with great briskness. Lieut.-Colonel Ball with 200 dragoons and one battalion of Infantry was sent to the assistance of General Clay, who by this time had been able to repulse the enemy, and to get within a short distance of the camp; being re-enforced, he drove the enemy quite into the woods, when orders were sent for the troops all to return to camp. In this affair he had fifteen or twenty killed, and one man taken prisoner; the enemy's loss was somewhat greater. General Clay's men had got into camp, and that alone was all the advantage we could boast of. In fact, I thought it rather unprofitable business, for the lives of fifty savages will not, in my opinion, compensate for the loss of one single brave soldier. Those guns which Colonel Dudley had failed to spike were played upon the camp, and the rear of our troops, during their skirmish with the Indians, with great vehemence and considerable effect; this was truly perplexing and vexatious. That we should experience annoyance from these pieces, which but a few moments before were in the possession of our troops, and might so easily have been spiked and rendered useless to the enemy, seemed almost insupportable. In fact, it was but too just to say that Dudley's conduct merited almost any fate that could possible befall him.

General Clay and Colonel Ball having got into camp with their wounded, General Harrison determined to try one other experiment with the enemy; he therefore ordered Colonel J. Miller<sup>40</sup> of the 19th Regulars with 850 men to rally from two different places, and to storm those batteries which were erected upon our left, on the 3d of May. This officer, always ready to distinguish himself, formed his men and moved along the small ravine until he came near the enemy without being discovered, but on rising the bank within fifty or one hundred yards of the batteries he appeared in full view of twice or thrice his force. His men, however, were ordered to charge, which they did in the most gallant manner, and in a moment had possession of the batteries and the guns were dismounted. The enemy were pursued some distance into the woods when orders were received for these brave fellows to return to camp, which they did, but suffered much from the

<sup>40</sup> Colonel John Miller of the U. S. 19th Infantry Regiment.

Indians while returning to the lines; two lieutenants and forty-one privates, were the fruit of this affair. Our loss was about thirty killed and three times that number wounded. Many reasons tend to confirm a belief that the enemy's loss in this affair was much greater than ours.<sup>41</sup> Captain Croghan (now Colonel Croghan), Langham and Bradford, particularly distinguished themselves in this action (if such it may be called) as did several subalterns, among whom were Ensigns Shipp,<sup>42</sup> Mitchell<sup>43</sup> and Stockton.<sup>44</sup> The company of volunteers from Petersburg (Virginia) particularly distinguished themselves by their intrepid and cool conduct while approaching the batteries under a heavy fire of musketry. Colonel Miller commanded his troops with conspicuous courage and gallantry, but being the only officer on horseback it was out of his power to see what occurred on the flanks and in the centre at the same time, or to get the requisite orders conveyed to those places, in consequence of which the Indians came very near turning his right and getting into his rear, which had they gained, being at that time very numerous, it is more than probable that the consequences would have been terrible indeed. Lieutenant Gwynne,<sup>45</sup> then commanding a company on the right, fought his men man to man, for some time, and held the Indians in check until their manoeuvre was completely understood, and Colonel Miller had time to counteract it.

It was now about 12 or 1 o'clock when all the firing had ceased, and each looked as if he had received all the injury that the other could possibly do him. The Indians were seen passing constantly to and from Colonel Dudley's boats which were a short distance up the river, with immense loads of plunder. Flags were now passing between the two armies upon the subject of an exchange of prisoners, which ceremony the Indians soon availed themselves of by hoisting a white shirt or towel on a stick, and then prowling along before us with heavy loads of plunder, and in the most impudent manner.

In the course of the afternoon, General Proctor had the audacity to summon us to surrender the camp; he was

<sup>41</sup> American casualties were 80 killed, 124 wounded; British casualties were 15 killed, 45 wounded.

<sup>42</sup> Ensign Edmund Shipp who later gained further recognition at Fort Stephenson.

<sup>43</sup> Ensign R. Mitchell of the 19th U. S. Infantry.

<sup>44</sup> Ensign (?) Stockton (?)

<sup>45</sup> Lieutenant David Gwynne.

very properly answered and told that if ever he got possession of Camp Meigs, it would be under such circumstances as to give him greater claims upon the gratitude of his country than he possibly could have by its being surrendered into his hands--or words to that effect.

The day was extremely wet and cold, and having no comfortable places for our sick and wounded, both seemed to suffer much. But everything was done for them that possibly could be, and no means were spared to make them as comfortable as the nature of their situation would admit. The wounded had hitherto been lying in the trenches<sup>46</sup>, on rails barely sufficient to keep them up out of the water, which in many places, from the bleeding of the wounded, had the appearance of puddles of blood. These poor fellows were many times lying in that state without any other cover of shelter than that of the heavens.

It was now believed that General Proctor, contenting himself with the partial success he had met with, would soon raise the siege and return to Malden; and without troubling us any more, on the morning of the 9th he accordingly left us. The prisoners which he took were carried down to Huron,<sup>47</sup> and there landed.

Having many sick and wounded, as was naturally to be expected after a close siege of nine days (five days batteries open), and our force greatly impaired besides by the sorties from the right and left, on the 5th, it now became an object of the greatest importance to make such provisions, and to take such measures as might tend speedily to a restoration of health and vigor in the army. The block-houses about the lines were immediately cleared of the guns and stores and converted into temporary hospitals; tents were pitched with arbors about them, and such general arrangements were made to soften and alleviate their distresses as their situation and the nature of circumstances would admit. They, however, were but badly provided with the little necessities and comforts which belong, and afford so much relief, to the brave soldier who had recently lost a leg or an arm, or had his side pierced with a bayonet while gallantly mounting the ramparts of his country's enemy.

There was no head to the Hospital Department, which was extremely deficient in almost every respect. Those to whom the important duties of that department had been committed were but a young, inexperienced set of men, with nothing but the title of Surgeon to recommend them, or to give them a claim to employment, and the principal part of whom had been picked up here and there among the militia, wherever a person could be found with a lancet in his pocket, or who had by some means or other obtained the title of doctor. Such

<sup>46</sup> The trenches here used were those made by the construction of the traverses.

<sup>47</sup> The mouth of the Huron River in Huron County, Ohio.

limb of PERSONS whose duty it became, to say whether the gallant officer or brave young soldier should be lopped off, or preserved. There had previously been a man of skill and talents at the head of the Hospital Department, but one alike destitute of honor and reputation, and whose departure from the army was followed with disgrace. What was to be expected from that department, thus managed and most wretchedly supplied? What prospects of recovery had the wounded; dying for a gill of gin or a spoonful of vinegar? Neither were to be had! Not a particle of vegetables, nor a pound of fresh meat; and one hundred miles from any inhabitants; not more than one-third of the army fit for duty, and that third to perform all the ordinary duties of the camp; to make many considerable repairs in the lines (for we knew not how soon the enemy might return) and to give the required and necessary attendance on the sick; in short, so much exhausted and so low were the spirits of those who were reported for duty, that for a number of days it was painful for an officer to be under the necessity of putting his men upon the slightest service. The camp exhibited a very melancholy spectacle for some time. The success of having defeated the enemy, and disappointed his best expectations, were nothing when contrasted with the sufferings and hardships which they had to undergo. It was by no means astonishing that the troops should be generally gloomy and low spirited, when we come to consider that they were principally men of family and who were on a tour of duty only for a few days; that many were already dead, others dying constantly; and that the shocking disaster of Dudley's defeat of the 5th was still fresh upon their recollections.

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The remainder of Colonel Wood's Journal has been lost, however, a note book was found in Wood's pocket when he was killed at Fort Erie. It contained material pertaining to Harrison's invasion of Canada leading to the Battle of the Thames.

Camp on the Peninsula, 48  
September 11, 1813.

I received orders on the 9th inst. to repair to Lower Sandusky--there to assume the immediate command of two companies of artillery, commanded by Captains Price and Thomas, the latter Pennsylvania drafted troops, and to embark them with all or such part of the ordnance as I might deem most proper.

In pursuance of said orders, I went to Sandusky, made

48 The Marblehead Peninsula in Ottawa County, Ohio

the necessary arrangements, and on the 12th at 8 o'clock A.M., my detachment, consisting of 130 men with eleven pieces of ordnance, were all on board the boats. The day was fine--we set sail with a fair wind and delightful music; and just at night landed on the south side of the Peninsula and near the mouth of Sandusky River.

This river is generally from 60 to 80 yards wide, and is navigable for bateaux as high up as Sandusky, or Fort Stephenson--a place rendered memorable on account of the gallant defense which Major Croghan made on the 2d of August, 1813.

The banks along the Sandusky River are generally very low, and edged with a beautiful border of wild grass--especially towards its mouth, where it seems entirely to waste itself in a large prairie and is again collected in the spacious Bay below. It is 18 miles from Sandusky to the mouth of the river and the same distance from thence to the mouth of the Bay. The land along the river, from Sandusky down, and the Peninsula, is extremely rich and fertile. Bull Island which lies at the mouth of the Bay, is a perfect garden spot.

Early on the morning of the 12th, I mounted my horse, took Captain Holmes and two spies, and went to the mouth of Portage River, a distance of two miles; on arriving there, I met with Captain Stockton of the infantry just from the fleet, with dispatches for General Harrison, which contained an account of the glorious victory which our Navy gained over the enemy on Lake Erie on the 10th inst., and requesting assistance in landing and securing the prisoners. I instantly returned to camp, mounted Captain C., and gave him a guide and he went on to headquarters. I wrote the following letter, and sent it by him to the General:

Camp on the Peninsula,  
September 12, 1813.

Dear Sir:

With my detachment and eleven pieces of ordnance I have encamped on the south side of the Peninsula, near the mouth of the Sandusky Run.

I am informed by Captain Stockton that Commodore Perry is in great want of aid, having many prisoners aboard the fleet, and his crews very much exhausted. In consequence of which information I have thought proper to despatch Captain Price with a detachment of fifty men to his assistance. I have laid out an excellent road to the mouth of Portage River, and find at that place a delightful situation to encamp our troops.

I am, etc.,

E. D. Wood,

Major of Engineers, Commanding Detachment of Artillery.

Major-General William H. Harrison,  
Commanding the N. W. Army.

Camp on the Peninsula,  
September 12, 1813.

Dear Sir:

I am informed by Captain Stockton, who has just left this for the headquarters of the N. W. Army, that you have a large number of prisoners on board the fleet; that your crews are quite exhausted, and that you are in want of aid. I therefore have thought proper to despatch Captain Price with a detachment of fifty men to your assistance. Should you see fit to send any prisoners ashore, I shall have it in my power to secure as many as Captain Price's detachment will be able to bring.

Permit me to congratulate you, sir, on the splendid victory you have achieved over the enemy on Lake Erie. I have the honor to be, with high consideration and esteem, sir, your obedient servant,

E. D. Wood,

Major Commanding Detachment of Artillery.

Commodore Perry,

Commanding the American Fleet on Lake Erie.

On the 13th of September I marched a detachment of 100 men to the mouth of Portage River, and in the course of the same day, got all my ordnance across the Peninsula to that place, which I had selected as the most eligible situation as well for the encampment as for the embarkation of our whole army. General Harrison, like a flash of lightning, to my utter astonishment, arrived there the same evening, as did also Colonel Paul with his regiment.

The next day we fired several signal guns for the fleet to come ashore. At about 9 o'clock in the morning, seeing nothing of the fleet, I climbed into the top of a tall tree, from which with my glass, I was able to discover four vessels just getting under way near Put-in-Bay, and standing in for the shore. They arrived off the mouth of Portage at 4 P.M., and immediately began landing their prisoners. That night and the next day about 300 and upwards were landed and put under a strong guard.

I was requested by the General to take some of the officers to my quarters, which I did--notwithstanding I had a very great aversion to Englishmen, and wished to meet them no where but on the field.

Two Lieutenants, brothers, by the name of Garden lived with me until the morning of the 18th, when I received orders from the Adjutant General to embark my corps together with the ordnance, and proceed to Put-in-Bay and there land on one of the islands. *These were very pleasing orders to me for I always like to be ahead of the main Army, and to tarry but a very short time in any one place.* Colonel

Paul received orders at the same time. We embarked our corps--and the immediate directions of General Cass, we proceeded to Put-in-Bay and landed late in the afternoon on Edward's Island. The wind breezing up late in the day and some of my bateaux being loaded, it was with some difficulty they were able to get in. Only one, commanded by a *timid old maid*, put back, and did not arrive for one or two days afterwards.

\* \* \* \* \*

September 20th. 1,500 troops arrived on Edward's Island from camp No. 2, at the mouth of Portage River, since yesterday morning. The army in fine health and spirits; the weather extremely pleasant and favorable to our operations.

September 24, 1813. This morning at 9 o'clock the troops began to embark on board the vessels, and to move on to the Westernmost Sister. General Harrison embarked, but in consequence of bad weather and adverse winds, after going out a short distance, returned with the transports, and landed.

4 o'clock P.M. Just received orders to hold my command in readiness to embark to-morrow morning at 3 o'clock--all ready and have been so since 8 o'clock this morning.

September 25th. To-day the army left Put-in-Bay and went to the Middle Sister, a small island situated in the Lake, and about 18 miles from Malden. That night after we arrived on the island, General Harrison, Commodore Perry, the General Staff and myself went on board a pilot boat, for the purpose of going on a reconnoitering trip to Malden. The wind being fair, at break of day we got under way, and run up to Malden--or within a very short distance of Amherstburgh, took soundings and examined the coast for three or four miles below the town. We discovered that Malden and all the public buildings had been burnt. Its ruins were yet smoking. We returned to the island--spent the night there and early the next morning the army was embarked for the invasion of Canada. The wind was fair and the day extremely beautiful. Our large vessels and from 80 to 90 bateaux all started at the same time, and exhibited one of the grandest scenes, almost, that my eyes ever beheld. The day was important and interesting to every one in the army which consisted of about 4,500 Kentucky militia and 2,500 regulars.

On this occasion, I commanded a battalion of artillery--all belonging to the N. W. Army--and crossed the lake with six pieces mounted in bateaux--one gun in each--loaded and matches lighted--so that I could have fought as well by sea as land.

At three in the afternoon of the same day, we landed three miles below Amherstburgh, without opposition--the same night marched up to Fort Malden, and encamped, where we remained till the next morning, when we commenced our march and proceeded about half way to Sandwich.

On the 29th, the army arrived at Sandwich where it remained until the 3rd of October.



General Proctor, after burning Malden and all the public buildings in Amherstburgh, had retreated to Sandwich, where he remained till our army was in possession of the ruins of Malden, when he again took up his line of march for the River Detroit.

The Indians were very numerous on our approach to Detroit, but soon left the village on seeing our vessels and troops moving up the River St. Clair.

The country along both sides of this river is one of the most interesting and beautiful that I have ever met with in any part of the United States. Immediately on its banks the land is fertile, and in a high state of cultivation. The inhabitants on the English shore are principally Canadians or French.

Detroit is a perfect paradise, but many of its beauties have been defaced and tarnished by the ruthless hand of the savage.

October 2d.--To-day the army commences its march in pursuit of General Proctor.

October 16th, 1813.--On the 2d inst., the army left Sandwich in pursuit of Proctor, and at night encamped within six miles of the River Thames. Early the next morning we commenced our march, and at about 10 o'clock A.M. we took a Lieutenant of dragoons and sixteen privates, who were employed in cutting down a bridge; this indication of our approach to Proctor stimulated the army extremely, and we marched that day nearly thirty miles, and encamped at John Pike's, on the Thames. The enemy were so hard pressed the next day that they were compelled to set fire to two gun-boats which were heavily laden with ordnance and other stores, and consumed the whole. At Bowler they also burnt vast supplies of munitions of war, and property of almost every description to a very considerable amount. Our army arrived there sufficiently early to save from the flames a considerable quantity of fixed ammunition and a few barrels of pork. Every few miles we heard of the enemy, and our spies were very frequently in contact with his rear guard. On the 5th, and fourteen privates in a boat; shortly after the spies took a Captain Crowther, his family, and about forty or fifty privates.

In crossing the right branch of the Thames, at the forks yesterday, we had quite a brush with the Indians. The enemy had gone over, taken up the plank of the bridge, and left the Indians to oppose our crossing, while the English army continued its *slow and easy retreat*.

So soon as we came to the bridge the Indians commenced firing on our men. I was immediately directed to bring up the artillery and cannonade the enemy, as well across the branch as over the main stream, where was posted in a small house a party of Indians and English for the purpose of annoying our troops while crossing the river. I set two 6-pounders to work upon them and they soon cleared out, and went off in great haste. We repaired the bridge as quickly as possible, and the whole army was soon over and in pursuit of John Bull.

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