

POLTROONS
and PATRIOTS

GLENN TUCKER

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POLTROONS
AND PATRIOTS



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 Poltroons
and Patriots

*A Popular Account of the War
of 1812*

By GLENN TUCKER

Maps by W. T. Tucker

Volume II

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First Edition

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Contents

Volume II

CHAPTER		PAGE
Twenty-one	"MIST-TAKING CANADA"	413
Twenty-two	A WAR ON CREDIT	430
Twenty-three	THE CREEK WAR	436
Twenty-four	AN "ALLY" FALLS	470
Twenty-five	HOSTAGES EXCHANGED	491
Twenty-six	BRITISH INVASION PLANS	501
Twenty-seven	WASHINGTON THREATENED	508
Twenty-eight	DEFEAT AT BLADENSBURG	535
Twenty-nine	REDCOATS ON THE AVENUES	552
Thirty	BIRTH OF A SONG	585
Thirty-one	"DON'T GIVE UP THE SOIL"	599
Thirty-two	HONOR AT NIAGARA	606
Thirty-three	NORTHERN INVASION	620
Thirty-four	CLEANING THE GULF COAST	640
Thirty-five	THE HARTFORD CONVENTION	651
Thirty-six	PEACE THAT LASTED	667
Thirty-seven	THE BATTLE OF NEW ORLEANS	673
	NOTES	709
	INDEX	763

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Thirty-four	CLEANING THE GULF COAST	640
Thirty-five	THE HARTFORD CONVENTION	651
Thirty-six	PEACE THAT LASTED	667
Thirty-seven	THE BATTLE OF NEW ORLEANS	673
	NOTES	709
	INDEX	763

List of Illustrations

Volume II

General Andrew Jackson	<i>frontispiece</i>
	FACING PAGE
The United States Capitol after the Fire of August 24, 1814	432
Jackson Quelling the Mutiny	433
Weatherford Surrendering to Jackson	464
Washington as It Looked during the War of 1812	465
The President's House in 1816, Still Showing Traces of the Fire	560
American Sloops <i>Growler</i> and <i>Eagle</i> Chasing Three British Gunboats	561
Macdonough's Victory on Lake Champlain	592
Scenes in the Capture of Washington	593
The Death of Ross, at Baltimore	656
The Capture of American Gunboats on Lake Borgne	657
The Battle of New Orleans	688

Battle Maps

Volume II

	PAGE
The Creek War Theater	455
The Battle of Horseshoe Bend	464
The Chesapeake Bay Theater	524
The Battle of Bladensburg	545
The Battle of Lake Champlain	630
The Battle of Lake Champlain	633
The Battle of New Orleans	695

POLTROONS
AND PATRIOTS

“Mist-taking Canada”

There had been another humiliating disaster on the Niagara border—Colonel Charles G. Boerstler, of the 14th U.S. Infantry Regiment, had surrendered in an affair at Beaver Dams, about seventeen miles from Fort George.

Boerstler had taken 540 men and two fieldpieces on the simple assignment of destroying an enemy storehouse. On June 24, 1813, when he was near St. David's, he was attacked by 260 Indians. He fought them off, but they caused him to abandon the purpose of his expedition. Boerstler called on Dearborn for reinforcements and began a retreat. Lieutenant James Fitzgibbon, with fifty men of the British 49th Infantry, boldly took a stand in front of the Americans and, seeing their confusion, demanded they surrender. Boerstler outnumbered the British regulars more than ten to one, but he was so distracted and fearful that more British were coming up that he complied.

News of this latest ignominy reached Washington on July 6 and caused a sensation in the lobby of the House of Representatives. Speaker Clay sent Representative Charles J. Ingersoll to call on Madison and demand Dearborn's dismissal. Madison was willing to follow the recommendation of Congress. He and Armstrong had been thinking along these lines for some time, and Armstrong had already, in early March, written Wilkinson about replacing Dearborn. Orders were issued immediately after the arrival of Clay's agent and on July 15, 1813, Dearborn left the Niagara border.

I.

When James Wilkinson finally reported for duty as commander of the Northern armies, Secretary of War Armstrong

kept him in Washington eleven days discussing the Canadian campaign. Then the Secretary of War and the general rode together to the Northern theater for the beginning of the grand operations. They reached Sackets Harbor on August 20, 1813, and Wilkinson took over the command which Dearborn had yielded more than a month earlier.

As the two blustering strategists, Armstrong and Wilkinson, rode north, having no more confidence in each other than their respective records justified, they mapped out a series of movements that made up one of the most extraordinary of American military campaigns.

They fell to quarreling almost at once. Wilkinson wanted to clean up the Niagara frontier and move west to the capture of Malden. He apparently believed Harrison could not be counted on. Armstrong thought the war to the west would merely "wound the tail of the lion," the heart of the beast being Montreal.]

Wilkinson then wanted to "descend like lightning with our whole force on Kingston." Armstrong also wanted to capture Kingston, but the method seemed more important to each than the end. More than a month was devoted to wrangling. The plan that eventually evolved was for Wilkinson to board his army on boats and move down the St. Lawrence, effect a juncture with Wade Hampton, who had assumed command in the Lake Champlain area, and march into Montreal.

¶ Wilkinson commanded an army of from 12,000 to 15,000 men, including Hampton's force of 4,000. Hampton would neither speak to his commander nor receive orders from him. When he learned that he had been placed under an officer of Wilkinson's notorious reputation, he wrote to Armstrong that his own command was separate from Wilkinson's, but if such were not the case, his resignation was therewith rendered. No action was taken on the resignation, nor was there prospect of harmonious co-operation between the two wings of the American army. In order to placate Hampton, Secretary Armstrong agreed that Wilkinson's orders should be relayed to Hampton through the War Department. He set up a War Department office at Sackets

Harbor partly to handle this exchange. A second motive, it later developed, was that Armstrong hoped he could conduct operations free from President Madison's close supervision.

Wilkinson visited Fort George and nearly cleared the Niagara border of troops in order to concentrate a sizable army at Sackets Harbor. He left Colonel Scott in command at Fort George. After Harrison had defeated Proctor at the Thames the British had withdrawn temporarily from the Niagara area and taken a defensive position at Burlington Heights on Lake Ontario. Scott consequently marched his 800 regulars across New York to Utica, where he encountered Secretary Armstrong and obtained permission to fall in with Wilkinson at Ogdensburg. |

/ This left Fort George and the Niagara border under the command of Brigadier General George McClure, of the New York militia. In the grand movement against Montreal, no one was giving this frontier much attention.

Just as in 1812, the campaign against Montreal had now been deferred until late in the season. On October 17, 1813, Wilkinson loaded his army of about 8,000 men on 600 boats that had been built or assembled at Sackets Harbor, and started down the river. The expedition was elaborately planned. Each unit had a distinctive flag, and the commanding general had a key by which he could identify a division at any time by the flag on its boats. Order was soon lost when a gale scattered the boats. |

Hampton meanwhile began a complementary movement along the Chateaugay River toward the St. Lawrence preparatory to effecting a juncture with his despised commander. His circuitous route passed the town of Chateaugay, New York, and then turned north into Lower Canada. He took a position on the Chateaugay near the juncture of Outard Creek, roughly fifteen miles from the St. Lawrence and forty in a direct line from Montreal. He had heard nothing from Wilkinson but decided to attack a British force in a forest in his front. His key unit was a regiment under Colonel Robert Purdy which was to give the signal for the assault. First it strayed and never located its objective and then was surprised and scattered, although it lost only one man. Hampton, believing he was about to be attacked by

another British force, retreated and brought his campaign to an end.

Wilkinson's movement by boats turned into an utter failure, principally because he lacked the determination to press it vigorously. General Jacob Brown moved as an advance guard along the north bank of the St. Lawrence, and Colonel Alexander Macomb conducted a flank movement farther back, but the rear was unprotected. General Brown cleared the British in Wilkinson's front five miles above Cornwall, and the commanding general, who was again feeling "the heavy hand of disease," addressed a note to him "from my bed," telling him of rear-guard difficulties. British gunboats and about 1,000 men from Kingston fell in behind Wilkinson and caused him such annoyance that on November 11, 1813 he debarked about 2,000 men. General John Parke Boyd deployed them on a farm, owned by Canadian militia officer John Chrysler, situated a few miles below Williamsburg and about fifteen miles above Cornwall, Ontario.

Boyd delivered an attack against the British and Indians in the rear. The engagement, fought for five hours in a snow and drizzle, and known as the Battle of Chrysler's Farm, ended in Boyd's defeat. He was saved from a rout by the timely arrival of 600 fresh troops under Colonel Timothy Upham, who checked the British advance until darkness ended the fighting. The British lost twenty-two killed, 150 wounded; the Americans 102 killed, 237 wounded. Although the battle was by no means decisive, it annoyed Wilkinson sufficiently to make him call off the movement against Montreal. He was so angry when he learned that Hampton was not awaiting him at St. Regis, close to the departure of the New York boundary from the St. Lawrence River, that he threatened to arrest Hampton. On reflecting, he did no more than emit a few curses. Some of the officers felt that with General Brown in command the army could have gone to Montreal. Wilkinson took it up the Salmon River to French Mills, New York, built huts and went into winter quarters.¹ The boats were soon frozen in the river. Later, to prevent their capture, they were burned. The principal movement against Montreal in the War of 1812 was thus ended.

In addition to displaying his incapacity, Wilkinson's efforts revealed to the whole country the mutual distrust between him and the War Secretary. About Armstrong, Wilkinson confided personally to Dearborn: "I know of his secret underworkings, and have therefore, to take the bull by the horns, demand an arrest and a court martial. . . . Good God! I am astonished at the man's audacity, when he must be sensible to the power I have over him." With this as the Army commander's attitude, that of his subordinate, Hampton, is understandable.

Wilkinson wrote a letter asking for a court-martial to place the blame for the failure of the St. Lawrence expedition. It had scarcely been dispatched when he decided to demonstrate the true character of his leadership by a bold, overland march into Montreal. He sent Brown with 2,000 men to Sackets Harbor to protect his rear, then moved his main force to Plattsburg. Boiling with rage against Armstrong, pitying himself because he was misunderstood and distrusted, he faced north and entered Canada.

Five miles across the border he reached La Colle River, where Dearborn's invasion had been checked in the first winter of the war. There the British had a force of 200 men in a stone mill with walls eighteen inches thick and heavy timbers, pierced with loopholes for muskets, across the windows. Wilkinson had 4,000 men. The ground was soft from melting snow and the Americans could get only a few guns into action. Wilkinson surrounded the mill, placed Forsyth's riflemen in the rear to cut off a retreat by the British, and opened on the structure with one 12-pounder and one five-inch mortar. For two hours he kept up a bombardment without effecting a breach.

Some sorties attempted by the British were easily repulsed. Then Wilkinson apparently decided he had vindicated himself sufficiently and ordered a retreat. The action, dignified by the title of the Battle of La Colle Mill, was Wilkinson's last. He went to Washington to engage in his last grand controversy with Armstrong over the failure to take Montreal, which he had not even approached. Wilkinson's campaigns were satirized in the New England press:

What fear we, the Canadians cry,
 What dread have we from these alarms?
 For sure, no danger now is nigh,
 'Tis only Wilkinson in arms.²

2.

But the unfortunate consequences of the campaign laid out by Wilkinson and Armstrong to "renew the scenes of Saratoga" were only beginning.

The New York militia general, George McClure, who was left in command at Fort George on the Canadian side of the Niagara River, had been a carpenter in Londonderry, Ireland. He emigrated to Baltimore to ply his trade there and in Chambersburg, Pennsylvania. Later he moved to Bath, New York, to set up as a merchant and came to own the local distillery and flour and woolen mills. Finally he appeared before the national public as the brigadier general commanding New York militia on the Niagara border.

McClure, who had 500 soldiers after the departure of Scott and the regulars, turned to rhetoric and fashioned florid proclamations. Suddenly he found that his enlistments were expiring and that his army was going home for the holidays. He offered a bounty for further service, which many of his men collected as they departed. With no reinforcements in sight, he moved the 100 remaining militiamen to the New York side of the river. But before crossing he put his mark on Canada by tossing firebrands around Newark and leaving the people homeless in the chill of winter. The *Ontario Repository* of December 21, 1813, told of the destruction:

In the village, at least 130 buildings were consumed; and the miserable tenants of them, to the number of nearly four hundred, consisting mostly of women and children, were exposed to all the severities of deep snow and a frosty sky, almost in a state of nakedness. How many perished by the inclemency of the weather, it is, at present, impossible to ascertain.

A special indignity was visited on Mrs. William Dickson, whose husband, a lawyer, was a prisoner of the Americans. She was ill, but was moved out of her house and left on her bed in

the snow. Her husband's library, valued at between £500 and £600, was burned.

McClure's contention that he fired the town to deprive the British of winter quarters sounded most inept when it developed that the only structures he left standing were the Army barracks, with tents stored therein for 1,500 additional men, along with artillery and quantities of ammunition. The approaching enemy was to be well provisioned for the next campaign.

It is possible that McClure misread a letter from Secretary of War Armstrong which authorized him to destroy Newark in the defense of the fort if necessary. Fighting appeared to be the last of McClure's intentions. "The enemy is much exasperated," he wrote as he retreated.

His information was entirely accurate. This time apologies, such as Dearborn advanced after the burning of the Parliament buildings at York, made no impression. Residents of the American side were preparing for their Christmas observances when the British, riding in sleighs and trailed by 600 Indians, came up to the river. That night they crossed. Someone had left the front gate of Fort Niagara open, despite numerous warnings that the enemy was at hand, and the garrison commander was sleeping with neighbors. The British bayoneted sixty-seven American soldiers before acknowledging a surrender.³ Then the Indians were turned loose. By New Year's Day Buffalo was a cinder, and Black Rock, Lewiston, Youngstown, Manchester, Schlosser and Tuscarora village were black piles of smoking rubbish. A section thirty-six miles long and twelve miles wide was a barren waste. All public and private property was destroyed.

"Retaliation with a vengeance!" the *New York Spectator* called it, and published on New Year's Day, 1814, a colorful description of the beginning of the work of devastation. The account was taken from an express which passed through Herkimer on Christmas Day:

As we predicted in our paper this morning, the tragic scene has commenced. Death and desolation pervade our defenseless frontiers! Oh, folly; Oh, madness! We learn that on Sunday last, the British and Indians under General Vincent crossed the Niag-

ara, in number about 1,200—took Fort Niagara by storm, and put every man to death excepting two, who were fortunate enough to make their escape, and, like the messengers of Job, relate the woeful tale. Everything for 12 miles back in the country was destroyed and burnt, and every person that fell in the way of the incensed enemy massacred. At the last advices, the enemy were progressing rapidly, spreading ruin and destruction in every direction. The express informed us that when he came away, the enemy were but a few miles from Buffalo, and ere this that place was doubtless in ashes!—an awful responsibility rests somewhere!

The New York *Commercial Advertiser*⁴ published a letter from Cayuga, New York, dated December 24, 1813, which gave a similar account of the capture of Fort Niagara and added:

After exasperating the enemy by acts of the most wanton barbarity—then to dismiss the troops before a fresh conscription had been ordered to supply their places, leaving the inhabitants on the lines naked and exposed to an enemy in plain sight and acquainted with their condition—evinces such incompetence in our commander in chief, as would disgrace the meanest private.

The devastation of the border country was such sensational news that handbills describing it were issued by the *Commercial Advertiser* late at night January 3, 1814. The results of this turn of warfare on civilians were evidenced by a letter to the *Albany Argus*, dated December 26, 1813:

I proceeded with thirty mounted volunteers to Lewiston. The sight we there witnessed was shocking beyond description; our neighbors were seen lying dead in the fields and roads; some horribly cut and mangled with tomahawks, others eaten by the hogs, which were probably left for the purpose, as they were almost the only animals found alive. It is not yet ascertained how many were killed, as most of the bodies were thrown into the burning houses and consumed. We found the bodies of William Gardner, deputy sheriff, John E. Low and E. St. John (whose family cannot be found), attorneys, Dr. Alverd and six others whose names I have forgotten.

The story was the same all along the border strip. Heads were cut off, hearts cut out. The atrocities continued to Buffalo and

the party of retaliation retired to the Canadian side of the river without molestation.

"This was a melancholy, but just retaliation," said the British commander, Lieutenant General George Gordon Drummond. But retaliation was not likely to end this medieval type of warfare. Rather than balance accounts, it bred deeper hatreds. Prevost, apparently ashamed of the slaughter and burning, issued a proclamation in early January 1814, stating that he would not continue the policy which was "so revolting to his own feelings and so little congenial to the British character" unless the future measures of the United States compelled it. On the American side many considered that the balance had been left too thoroughly in Prevost's favor. Officially the government might write regrets and offer reparations. The press might denounce, Armstrong storm and Madison display another wrinkle from his concern and humiliation, but the upstate people appeared to hold nothing against McClure. They elected him sheriff and then sent him off to the assembly in Albany.

3.

Zest soon overcame another American detachment on Lake Erie. It fitted out an expedition of five vessels at Erie, Pennsylvania, and crossed to Long Point, where Ontario extends a thin strip southward into the Lake. The party was commanded by John B. Campbell, the colonel who earlier in the war had led the expedition against the Indian villages on the Mississinewa River. Campbell had 250 regulars and 600 militiamen under Colonel Fenton of the Pennsylvania line. It is not difficult to determine the intent of the foray because on May 15, before the detachment had returned from the other side of the lake, the Erie correspondent of the *New York Spectator* sent in a dispatch saying "the object of the expedition is to capture a quantity of flour at the mills at Long Point, and, it is said, burn the mills."

The flour mills were burned, to be sure. In addition, according to the Greensburg, Pennsylvania, *Gazette* of May 28, 1814, saw-mills, distilleries, about one hundred houses, a fulling mill with 1,000 yards of cloth and all other buildings for eight miles inland

were destroyed. The detachment marched on the town of Port Dover, wiped it out and drove off the inhabitants, permitting them to carry only a few bedclothes. The excuses offered were that "the town contained a character who, during our Revolution, was a Tory," and that many inhabitants belonged to the Army, "as was proved by the regimentals found in their houses."

After Dover was burned the Americans re-embarked. They went twenty miles along the lake and capped their campaign by stopping at the home of an aged clergyman, who had preached twenty years in the neighborhood. They burned his gristmill and carried off his geese and chickens, and started to burn other property near by. When they heard of a collection of 200 British troops three miles away, "Colonel Campbell hurriedly set sail and reached Erie in safety!"

The details were related in letters from volunteers received in Greensburg, Pennsylvania. These volunteers blamed Colonel Campbell's regulars and the sailors of the transports and insisted that the militia "did not plunder a dollar's worth and went on the expedition without knowing its intention." Much good loot found its way to the American side. "One of our citizens," related an Erie resident, "on his return, has richly furnished his house with looking glasses, china, plate, etc. I fear that in consequence of this destruction of private property, we may expect from the enemy a similar treatment."⁵

That, indeed, was the general apprehension. The *New York Spectator* condemned the expedition and sounded the alarm.

It cannot be too severely censured. It would have dishonoured the savages of the wilderness. But it was not less impolitic than inhuman. It will raise a retaliatory spirit in the enemy, which will probably soon be felt, not only throughout our whole frontier, but also along our extensive and exposed seacoast. The United States have a hundred vulnerable points where the enemy have one. A single company of our militia, by so base an enterprise, may bring misery and ruin upon ten thousand of their honest and innocent fellow citizens.

The *Pittsburgh Mercury* had similar condemnation:

We turn with disgust and indignation from a scene in which the American character is disgraced by a wanton attack on de-

fenseless women and children; where the military are suffered to become, not the honorable and proud defenders of the country's rights, but miserable incendiaries for the burning and destruction of private property.

Colonel Campbell was required to write immediately an explanation of this foray. In a letter to General Jacob Brown, who had taken over the Niagara command from Wilkinson, he stated that "this expedition was undertaken by me without orders, and upon my own responsibility."

To this admission Campbell added a paragraph which was a bit impertinent, or which at least conveyed the idea that he was without remorse and probably would do the whole thing over again if he had the chance. General Brown ran his pen through that paragraph and sent the original letter on to Prevost in the hope of forestalling retaliation by letting the British commander know the expedition was a flare-up of individual genius and not the deliberate move of responsible leadership.

Colonel Campbell was tried by a court-martial presided over by Brigadier General Winfield Scott. The court held Campbell guilty of the offense of committing an "error of judgment." Even that censure was softened, for the court attributed his actions to his recollection of the River Raisin and Miami and of the recent devastation of the Niagara frontier. The military tribunal, cautioned, however, that retaliation should be left to decision by higher authority.

Unfortunately for the Americans, Colonel Campbell's expedition occurred at a time when the balance of military power was shifting to the British. When news of it reached Prevost and when he learned how brazenly his January ultimatum had been defied, his anger rose to new heights. He skipped the explanations and hastened off a letter, dated June 2, 1814, instructing Sir Alexander Cochrane, vice-admiral of the British Navy, recently appointed to command His Majesty's warships in American waters, to "assist in inflicting that measure of retaliation which shall deter the enemy from a repetition of similar outrages." This further retaliation, it may be noted, was not to be only for Long Point and Dover. It was to be cumulative and all-embracing; it

was to extend back of required Newark to the original instance of the York Parliament buildings.

The orders from the governor-general reached Cochrane at Bermuda. They left him little latitude. In compliance with them he issued a circular, dated July 18, to the forces under his command blockading the American coast from Maine to Louisiana. They were "to destroy and lay waste such towns and districts upon the coast as [they might] find assailable." The circular led to a later exchange between Cochrane and Secretary of State Monroe, in which the admiral held that such orders were "imperiously my duty." In the circular he made this explanation:

For only by carrying this retributory justice into the country of your enemy can we hope to make him sensible of the impropriety as well as of the inhumanity of the system he has adopted. You will take every opportunity of explaining to the people how much I lament the necessity of following the rigorous example of the commander of the American forces.⁶

Cochrane's commands were going by dispatch boats to the British frigates when the Americans on the border again became restive. A detail of General Peter B. Porter's dragoons crossed at Queenston, just above the ruins of Newark on the Niagara River, and penetrated to St. David's, four miles inland. They drove out the Canadians and gave the village over to fire and plunder. They considered that the general would be interested and sent three wagonloads of booty to Porter's headquarters. What they got in return was the severest condemnation that had yet been meted out in the Army. General Brown was putting some system into the border operations. He wanted subordinates held accountable for their depredations. He fastened the blame for St. David's on the senior officer present, Lieutenant Colonel Isaac W. Stone, whose men were described as "licensed plunderers" by the British General Riall. Stone, although he professed innocence, was relieved of his command. The *New York Post* saw the gravity of this resumption of the fire feud:

. . . We hope the property will be restored to its owners, and we are happy to find that Colonel Stone, who burnt the village and committed the other outrages, has been dismissed from the

service. We cannot avoid expressing our utter detestation of this kind of petty warfare, waged against defenseless villages and farm houses. The burning and plundering business has disgraced many commanders on both sides, during this unnatural war; and we did hope that our people, when our cities and villages are so much exposed to the depredations of the enemy, would have refrained from it as much as possible.⁷

4.

Apart from Perry's success on Lake Erie and Harrison's destruction of Proctor's army, the war to the spring of 1814 had brought only defeat, disappointment and shame. The American frigates were now blockaded. Coastwise American shipping was no more than a memory. Long trains of wagons rumbled on creaking axles over muddy roads.⁸ More than 800 waiting wagons were counted at a single Pennsylvania ferry—more than ever lined up in Sunday-night ferry congestion in the early days of automobile popularity. Goods became scarce, prices soared. The main roads were so crowded that circuitous routes were employed. Hundreds of wagonloads of cotton from Savannah, bound for Providence, Rhode Island, passed through Lancaster, Pennsylvania, and teamsters were required to sell portions of their products for subsistence costs. Sleepy villages became boom towns on the wagon roads.

On top of the blockade by the British warships was the new embargo the government found it necessary to impose in December 1813 to prevent New England shipowners from provisioning British troops in Canada. Flour was moving by the thousands of barrels. Animals were passing the border in herds too large for the highways and had to make their own paths through the forests. Governor-General Prevost wrote Lord Bathurst that two thirds of the army in Canada was at that moment eating beef provided by American contractors.⁹

Before the blockade was tightened, American ships were busy provisioning Wellington's army on the Spanish Peninsula. The *London Times* of January 9, 1813, stated:

The Portuguese markets are literally glutted with grain. In the first twenty-five days in December, no fewer than 116 American

vessels entered the Tagus. Their cargoes were estimated at 148,000 barrels of flour, 100,000 bushels of wheat, 24,000 barrels of Indian corn.

An unusual experiment in manufacturing occurred when the British blockage became so effective that nitrate, always in higher demand in wartime, could not be imported. American ingenuity and resource went into action and the result was the establishment of workings in Mammoth Cave which developed the nitrate so badly needed for gunpowder from the bat droppings.

One of the two amusing incidents in connection with trade with the enemy revived discussion for a moment of the rights of neutral shipping. The war had been in progress two years when the *Boston Advertiser* entertained itself with a news story saying it had confirmed the report that "neutral" vessels were transporting goods on Lake Champlain. The paper was indignant that "the monstrous doctrine that a yard of bunting precludes all inquiry into the nationality of the goods beneath it is acknowledged by our officers in that quarter."¹⁰ The district collector issued a denial, which got poor display space. At about the same time two wagons marked as "neutral" arrived in Boston, loaded with British goods from Canada. The marshal seized them, but ordered their release when they exhibited a certificate of entry. The entire population observed this illicit wagon trade across the border, which usually proceeded without anyone bothering to use the neutral flags or labels. The press carried comments as routine news. *Niles' Register* reported in the late summer of 1814 the passage through Troy, New York, of 100 wagons bound with British products from Montreal to New York.

Thus marked by every foul disgrace
Goes on this war for power and place.
The nation, pillaged of its fame,
Is sunk in infamy and shame.

The country was jittery. Petitions circulated in Maryland called for Madison to abdicate; others demanded impeachment. "Should the perverse nature of Mr. Madison induce him to hold on to the government," said Mr. Hanson's *Federal Republican*,

"it may still have the happiest effect for the nation to step forward and invite him to retire." ¹¹

A typical wartime dispatch appeared in the *Herkimer*, New York, *American* of July 8, 1814. It complained ironically about the lack of economy. "Waggons," it said, "are not infrequently seen passing each other freighted with Cannon Balls, some bound from Rome to New York, and others from New York to Rome." ¹²

Federal officers were suspicious of strangers. Washington was brimming over with rumors of espionage and sedition. In Boston a young man was hauled before the United States marshal three times on charges that he was a spy. Each time he was released he was rearrested. But the press reported that "the only suspicious circumstances that could be developed against him were that he carried a long whip, wore an unusual number of buttons on his pantaloons and bore the name of one of our disgraced generals." ¹³ Considering the restless temper of the country the young man was fortunate that with such evidence, he finally escaped.

The newspapers, pointing out that the national debt was mounting by a million dollars a week and had reached such colossal proportions that none could ever expect it to be paid, complained that "the camps are deserted while the cities and towns are crowded with army officers." ¹⁴ They listed the discredited generals, thirteen in number, headed by "Granny" Dearborn. The popular attitude is reflected by the refrain that made the rounds during General Hull's court-martial, which the Army finally convened more than a year after Detroit was surrendered:

Pray, General Dearborn, be impartial,
When President of a Court-Martial;
Since Canada has not been taken,
Say General Hull was much mistaken.
Dearborn himself, as records say,
Mistaken was, the self-same way.
And Wilkinson, and Hampton, too,
And Harrison, and all the crew.
Strange to relate, the self-same way
Have all mist-taken Canada. ¹⁵

Enlistments were difficult. The cost of a substitute for militia duty amounted to \$300.00, with takers scarce. The unusual allurements offered to get recruits were indicated by the notice of an ensign of rangers, calling for fifty additional men, which the *Rhode Island American* said it found in an unnamed Western newspaper. SEVENTY-FIVE CENTS A DAY TO DO NOTHING read the heading of the singular appeal. It continued:

We have lately received orders from Colonel Russell to recruit without delay our company of Rangers. This is a glorious opening to young gentlemen who feel too lazy to work; such will do well to come forward immediately and be sworn in, while they have yet an opportunity. Reflect but a moment on the horrors that attend the cornfield in the hot months of July and August, and the pleasures of laying on your back under a shady beach, or strolling lordly through the woods with your gun, and common sense will point out the choice.

Reporting directions followed. The document, which looked like drollery, was published with a straight face.

President Madison's questionings about Armstrong meanwhile had matured into complete distrust. Restricted to the State Department, Monroe awaited the inevitable results of the incapable management of the adjacent offices. He considered that Armstrong "wants the head to fit the station," and predicted in a note to Madison, at the time when the Niagara border was being ravaged, that Armstrong would ruin the administration and the future of the Republican party and cause, if continued in office. "Indolent except to improper purposes," Monroe told the President, "he is incapable of that combination and activity which the times require. My advice to you, therefore, is to remove him at once."¹⁶

Monroe completed the picture by mentioning, as causes for dismissal, Armstrong's failure to reinforce McClure at Fort George and the burning of Newark, if that had been done by the Secretary's orders. He put in what looked like a clincher: "His removal . . . would revive the hopes of our party now desponding." Madison did not comply fully, but he did determine to curb Armstrong. He directed the Secretary not to issue orders

to departmental commanders without first submitting them to the executive for approval.

Restrained by Madison and watched suspiciously by Monroe, Armstrong thereafter had a mere semblance of authority, but was by no means prevented from developing constructive measures for the prosecution of the war. Had Armstrong done so, Madison, in his anxiety to get something accomplished, would have been delighted to ratify the measures. But instead of undertaking to work closely with his chief and closing the chasm between them, Armstrong preferred to lapse into indolence and await developments. What Monroe expected was that when the indifferent generals had been relegated one by one to the scrap heap, Armstrong would then come forward with his original plan and insist on leading the Army in person. The Army, meanwhile, was an excellent source of patronage, and Armstrong's critics were suspicious that he was utilizing it to build up a personal organization among the officers in order to forward his presidential ambitions. They felt that Armstrong had tried to make the promotion of Andrew Jackson from brigadier to major general, clearly ordered by Madison, look like his own rather than the President's decision.¹⁷

Monroe, however, diagnosed the public attitude correctly when he informed Madison that Armstrong had few friends, and among those, "some cling to him rather . . . from improper motives." Armstrong's opportunity rested in a successful campaign, but he did not seem to sense it.

A War on Credit

A difficult problem was how to finance the war. Political considerations, with an election less than five months distant at the time war was declared, made new taxes unpopular with House and Senate members who had to face their constituents. The question of revenue was deferred until the next session.

When Congress adjourned July 6, 1812, the national debt, a heritage from the Revolutionary War, stood at \$45,000,000. This was looked on as large. It was, in fact, inconsiderable—only about \$4.50 per individual citizen—compared with a debt of roughly \$1,700 per capita in 1954.

In 1812 government income was \$9,674,000, which was a sharp reduction from \$14,363,000 collected in 1811. The decrease was due mainly to a sharp falling off in customs collections. The government's fiscal year at that time coincided with the calendar year.

Due to the rapid growth of the country the general trend of peacetime revenues was upward. Almost any tax would yield continually higher revenues at the same rate. Few governments ever entered a war in sounder financial condition than the United States did in 1812. Nonetheless public confidence was lacking. Many citizens questioned whether the United States could win the war; more feared the country would fall apart. Lack of public confidence made money rates high.

The estimate was that the war would cost between thirty and forty million annually. It actually did increase the debt by \$78,000,000. This, for the two and a half years of the war, was at a rate of \$31,200,000 of new debt annually. In addition the government spent what it could collect in revenues at a time when

smuggling was rampant and many sections were indifferent to the Treasury's need of cash.

Despite the healthy financial conditions, the plan adopted in 1812, contrary to the urgency of Cheves and Lowndes of South Carolina, was to fight the war on borrowed money.

Langdon Cheves, chairman of the Ways and Means Committee, prudently felt that the war should be paid for as much as possible by the imposition of new taxes. He and his pay-as-you-go colleague were weak voices until after the fall elections of 1812, although some customs rates were increased in that year. Congress got around to the revenue question in the special session beginning May 25, 1813, to which Madison recommended a system of new taxes.

On July 24, 1813, Congress gave the country a real "setfast," one which Representative Nathaniel Macon had not thought of when he predicted that war would saddle America with a permanent navy and industry.¹ The office of Commissioner of Revenue was created, and a long list of internal revenues was provided. Some of the stipulated taxes were: four cents a pound on sugar refined in the United States, one cent on auction sales, \$20.00 on a coach, \$14.00 on a chaise and \$10.00 on a phaeton. In addition, there were to be taxes on loans and notes, and, after all of the early argument, a tax on stills and liquor, which was increased as the war continued. Customs also were increased, some of the items being \$1.00 a ton on pig iron, five per cent ad valorem on boots, eight per cent ad valorem on umbrellas and twenty per cent ad valorem on tobacco products.

The average yield per year of the domestic war taxes was \$5,300,000. The levies were abolished as soon as it became clear that the government could get along with money from other sources. The average duration of the war taxes was three years and the total yield was about \$16,000,000. Ingersoll, a member of the Congress which enacted them, pointed out that if these taxes had been continued until 1840, the yield would have become \$20,000,000 annually at the same rate, instead of \$5,300,000. The growth of the country would have accounted for the gain.

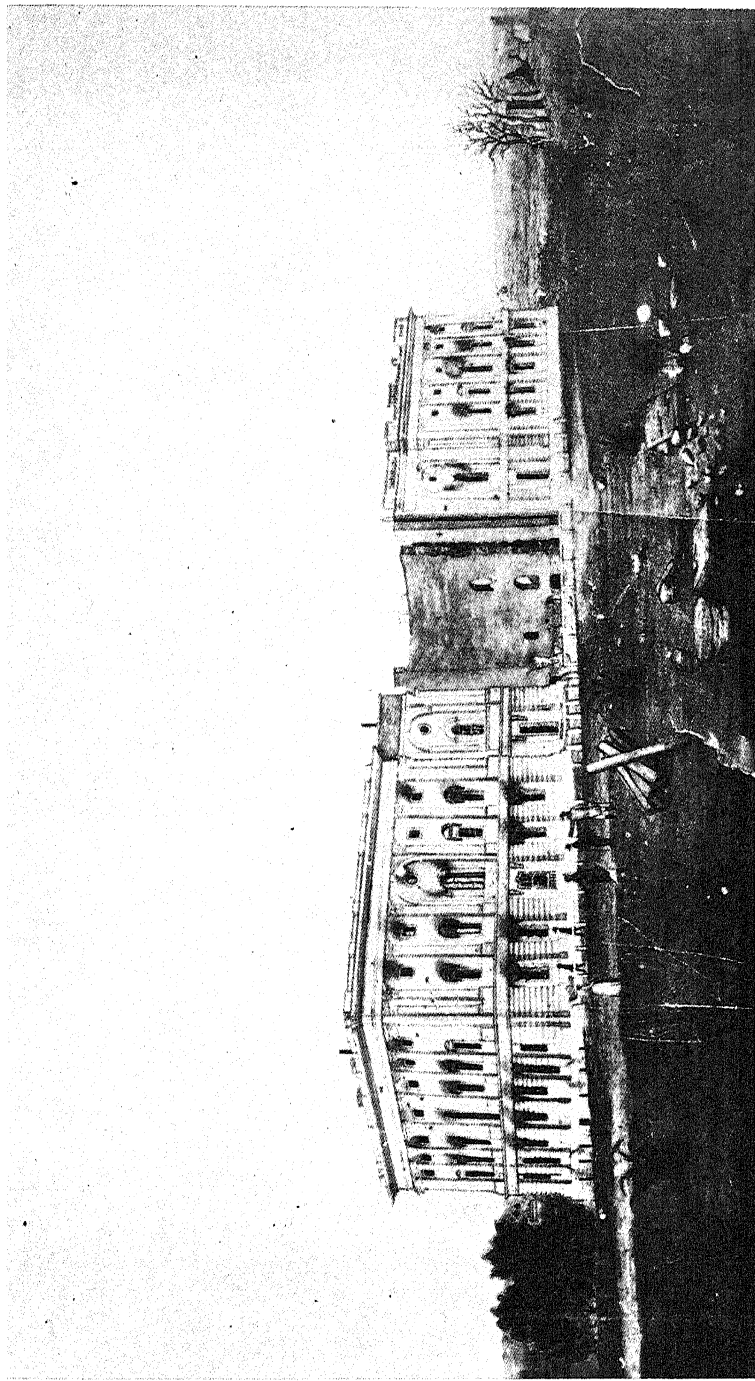
Customs receipts, with the higher rates, increased from \$8,958,000 in 1812 to \$13,244,000 in 1813, but they dropped to \$5,998,000 in 1814. The blockade was effective. The larger volume of imports came in duty-free because it was smuggled. In 1816, the first full year after the war, customs yielded \$36,306,000, or nearly four times the amount of the whole federal income in 1812, a year in which there was virtually no blockade and little smuggling.²

Requirements of the first partial year of the war were placed at \$11,000,000, and a loan of that amount, with interest at six per cent, was authorized before the actual declaration. As an inducement to the banks, the Treasury agreed that subscriptions should remain on deposit in the subscribing banks until the Treasury required the money. But the bank subscriptions were slow, and on June 30, 1812, the Treasury issued notes for \$5,000,000 payable in one year and bearing interest of five and two fifths per cent. The notes were receivable in payment of all obligations to the Treasury and were designed to serve as paper money. Eventually the balance of the \$11,000,000 was subscribed chiefly by the banks.

Purchase of government bonds was openly opposed by the press and, in some instances, by the pulpit in New England. One of the newspapers declared subscribers forfeited any claim to common honesty and courtesy. In some New England churches subscribers to war loans were denounced as "participants in the unholy, unrighteous, wicked, abominable and unnatural war."³

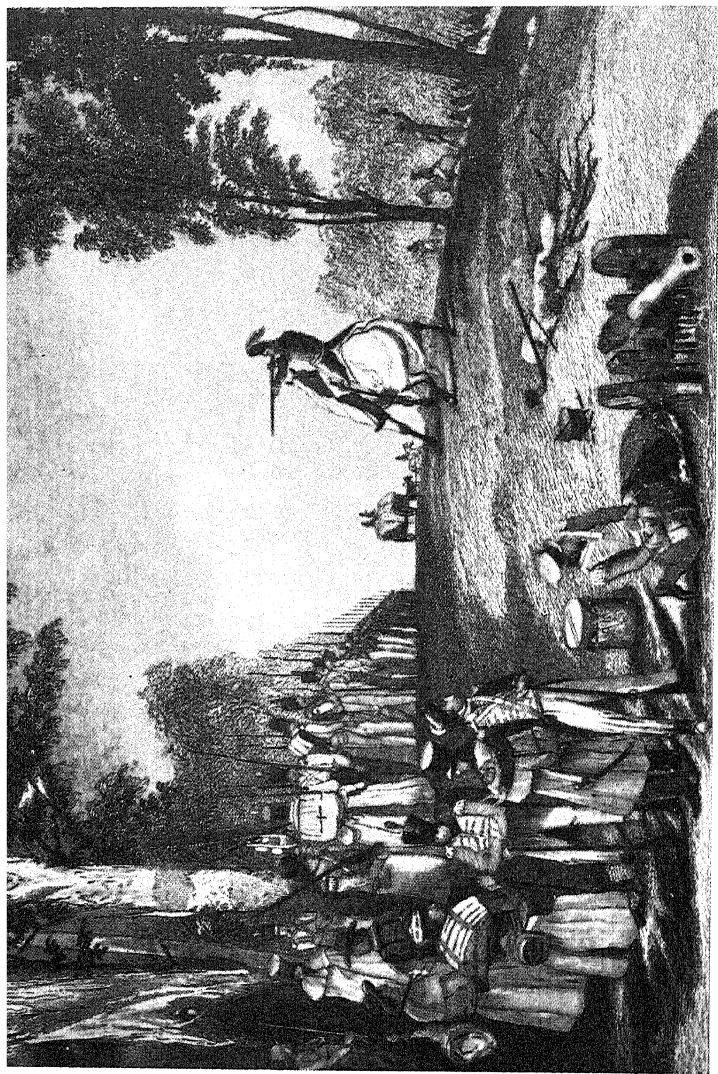
Advertisements promising that the names of subscribers would not be made public were finally published in the Boston papers.

Despite the opposition, the loans did succeed, and for two reasons. The first was the public spirit and confidence in the future of the country felt by Stephen Girard and David Parish, both wealthy Philadelphians, and John Jacob Astor of New York. The other reason was that the loans were condemned so heartily in the newspapers that they came to be regarded as good bargains, which they certainly were, to the subscribers. The issue of \$16,000,000 floated in early 1813 was offered at eighty-eight and six per cent interest, or at par with an annuity of one and one



Courtesy Library of Congress

THE UNITED STATES CAPITOL AFTER THE FIRE OF AUGUST 24, 1814



Courtesy Library of Congress

JACKSON QUELLING THE MUTINY

half per cent plus interest. They were known as "Gallatin's loans." Because Girard and Parish took \$7,000,000 of this loan and Astor \$2,000,000, some newspapers commented that the only means the United States had of carrying the war were provided by "foreigners." Gallatin, the issuing authority, was of Swiss birth, Stephen Girard was French, and Parish and Astor were both born in Germany. This claim continued throughout the war, as the two succeeding Secretaries of the Treasury were George Washington Campbell,⁴ born in Scotland, and Alexander J. Dallas, born a British subject in Jamaica.

The total in loans and Treasury notes issued from 1812 to 1815, inclusive, was:

1812	\$12,837,000
1813	\$26,183,000
1814	\$23,337,000
1815	\$35,263,000
1816	\$ 9,494,000

The total borrowing was about \$110,000,000 and the total of revenue and customs collected during the period was \$47,403,000. Of the amount borrowed, approximately \$32,000,000 was retired during the war. Thus the cost of the War of 1812 was roughly \$125,000,000.

The attitude of New England on the loans was important because the specie was moving to that section in payment of goods smuggled from Canada and Great Britain and of articles manufactured in this enterprising section which had no extensive agriculture to command its time. During the early part of the war the British blockade was not applied against New England. Boston made use of this trade advantage to become the financial capital of the country. New England had two advantages for maintaining an illicit trade with Canada. The first was its proximity to Canadian markets and the other was the cold temperature. When water transportation was suspended the best means of transport was by sleigh across the snow, for which good roads were not required.

But if New England had manufactured articles for sale, the New England people had to pay through the nose for food im-

ports from the South. Flour that sold for \$4.50 a barrel in Richmond had a \$7.50 transportation charge added by the time it reached Boston, where the price was \$12.00.

That the trade advantage did rest with New England, however, may be seen by figures published by *Niles' Register*. The statistics showed that deposits in the banks of Massachusetts increased from \$2,671,000 in 1810 to \$8,875,000 in 1814, and that during the same period, specie increased from \$1,561,000 to \$6,393,000. While New England was obtaining specie from the rest of the country, it was being compelled to send gold to Canada in payment for goods, the balance of the illicit trade being in favor of the Canadians and their British principals. This was particularly true toward the close of the war. The specie in the hands of Massachusetts banks on July 1, 1814, amounted to \$5,468,000, and by January 1, 1815, it had declined to \$1,999,000, a loss of about \$3,500,000 in six months. But New England industry had been firmly established by that time.

At the close of the war Treasury notes were selling at about twenty-five per cent below par and the six per cent bonds at thirty per cent below par. Stronger control over governmental finances was exercised when Dallas became Secretary of the Treasury, October 6, 1814. Through his urgency Congress finally passed, in April 1816, an act establishing the United States Bank.

Secretary Dallas' earlier moves for a national bank with a capital of \$50,000,000, although unsuccessful because of Madison's veto, tended to restore such confidence that by January 1815 Treasury notes were approaching par. Those who did back the United States financially in the War of 1812 realized handsomely on their investments, but not even they could have anticipated the great forward sweep that was to be made by the United States during the benign administration of James Monroe.

The press of the day was aware of the industrial change that was making the United States more independent of old-world manufactures. Making a play on words, the *National Intelligencer* in its issue of November 14, 1812, gave a thumbnail sketch of Anglo-American relations when it said: "Great Britain STAMPED us into independent states. She has COUNCELED us into

a manufacturing people, and now she is FIGHTING us into a maritime power."

The trend toward manufacturing, which had begun during the embargo and was most evidenced in New England, had made substantial headway by the end of 1812.⁵ The *National Intelligencer* pointed out in its issue of December 15, 1812, that "super fine" broadcloth, as fine as could be found on the market, was being made in this country, whereas three years earlier such American textiles were unknown. Samples were brought to Washington and exhibited from new mills in Massachusetts, Connecticut, New York and Delaware.

We can state that the President of the United States is clothed in a coat manufactured by Elkanah Watson, Esq., of Pittsfield, Mass., and from wool of his own growing, which is admitted by the best judges to be superior as to both material and workmanship to any piece of foreign broadcloth which has been imported into the United States in the past year.

Such are the recoiling effects of that system of injustice which has been exercised against us.

Another resumé of the growth of industry was published by the *Intelligencer* in April 1813. It told of the setting up of the "Bronx River Paint Company," an industry as complete as any European paint manufacturer and prepared to make paint "from metallic substances." Other new manufacturers made paper, earthenware, and snuff and tobacco products. All were located at West Farms, twelve miles from New York on the Boston turnpike. It was the beginning of industry in the Bronx and Westchester County, New York, one of the "setfasts" predicted by Macon.

The same account continued:

The trader will be convinced of the facility with which Americans can manufacture their own supplies and of the useful policy of encouraging every description of industry and improvement, whether roads, canals or manufactures—or what other branches of industry, that will lead to the independence, the comfort or the elegancies of civilized life.

❧ *Chapter Twenty-Three*

The Creek War

I.

On June 26, 1812, the day on which news had reached Nashville, Tennessee, that Congress had declared war on Great Britain, Andrew Jackson, commander of the Tennessee militia, had offered his services to Governor William Blount and through the governor to the War Department.

Jackson was a tough, ready fighter, forty-five years old. He stood six feet one inch and appeared to be taller because of his crest of graying hair. He was already the idol of the Southwest, where the kind of personal courage he frequently displayed in the turbulent life of the new state of Tennessee was a prerequisite for popularity. He had been the state's first representative in the House, then one of its senators and later judge of the Tennessee Supreme Court. In 1804 he retired to private life at his own choice and then it was said of him that "although he was a private citizen, he was the most public man in Tennessee."¹ Governor William Blount described him as a man who "has a peculiar pleasure in treating his enemies as such."²

Jackson's elevation to popular favor had been won over the opposition of John Sevier, the state's first governor, who had fought in Lord Dunmore's War and the Revolution. In 1801, when Sevier was out of the Tennessee governorship temporarily, the field officers of the Tennessee militia balloted for a major general to command the state troops and the election resulted in a tie between Sevier and Jackson. Sevier's name had lost some of its luster by association with land frauds in the state, and Governor Roane, Sevier's successor, broke the tie and cast the deciding vote for Jackson.³ The militia was commanded by Jackson

during Sevier's second period of service as governor, extending from 1803 to 1809, and there was no pretense of harmony. Sevier's attempts to belittle Jackson, who was the last man in the state to be intimidated, ended in the governor's, not Jackson's, loss of prestige. Sevier gave clear proof that he was not anxious to answer Jackson's challenge, and failed to appear on two occasions.⁴

Jackson's conduct in this and other altercations appeared to be bellicose, yet he was only acting according to his understanding of the injunctions of his devoted and intelligent mother, who had reared him in the Waxhaw settlement of South Carolina. Her last letter to him reads like a thumbnail sketch of his career, excepting her admonition for calmness:

Andrew, if I should not see you again I wish you to remember and treasure up some things I have already said to you: In this world you will have to make your own way. To do that you must have friends. You can make friends by being honest, and you can keep them by being steadfast. You must keep in mind that friends worth having will in the long run expect as much from you as they give to you. To forget an obligation or be ungrateful for a kindness is a base crime—not merely a fault or a sin but an actual crime. Men guilty of it sooner or later must suffer the penalty.

In personal conduct be always polite, but never obsequious. No one will respect you more than you esteem yourself. Avoid quarrels as long as you can without yielding to imposition. But sustain your manhood always. Never bring suit at law for assault and battery or for defamation. The law affords no remedy for such outrages that can satisfy the feelings of a true man. Never wound the feelings of others. Never brook wanton outrage upon your own feelings. If ever you have to vindicate your feelings or defend your honor do it calmly. If angry at first, wait till your wrath cools before you proceed."⁵

As commanding officer of the Tennessee militia, Jackson could easily bring into the field a division of 2,500 men and more in an emergency. Because he was not in the good esteem of Washington, his offer of men resulted for four months in no more than a courteous reply by Secretary Eustis to Governor Blount. Jackson was looked on with distrust by Jefferson, who while serving

as Vice-President had formed a dislike for him. Jefferson, when presiding over the Senate, observed that Jackson could not speak without choking with rage. Jefferson nourished his misgivings, and they matured into a distinct aversion at the time of the trial of Aaron Burr, during which Jackson, a bold defense witness for Burr, declaimed against Jefferson loudly on the Richmond streets.⁶

At the outbreak of the war James Wilkinson, a brigadier general in the Regular Army, commanded the Southwestern Department, with headquarters at New Orleans. He continually feared slave revolts and British invasions. After Hull's surrender of Detroit, Secretary Eustis, on October 21, 1812, called on Governor Blount to send troops to strengthen Wilkinson in New Orleans. Jackson's cavalry, numbering 670, was commanded by an officer of extraordinary merit, Colonel John Coffee. Jackson's two infantry regiments, each numbering about 700 men, were led by Colonels Thomas H. Benton, later senator from Missouri, and William Hall. His brigade inspector was William Carroll, destined to fame with Jackson. On December 10, 1812, a day when an early blizzard struck through the South, the Tennessee army assembled at Nashville. On January 7, 1813, the infantry units boarded small craft and went down the Cumberland River, for a rendezvous with Coffee's cavalry at Natchez on the Mississippi. Mindful that the New York militia had declined to serve outside their own state, Jackson wrote the War Department that his men did not quibble about where they should fight.

I am now at the head of 2,070 volunteers, the choicest of our citizens who go at the call of their country to execute the will of the government, who have no constitutional scruples, and, if the government orders, will rejoice at the opportunity of placing the American eagle on the ramparts of Mobile, Pensacola and Fort St. Augustine.⁷

Jackson's expedition fell afoul of the intriguers, Wilkinson and Armstrong. Wilkinson had no intention of allowing any militia officer of superior rank, especially Jackson, to come to New Orleans and deprive him of the command there. He directed Jackson to remain in Natchez.⁸ The *esprit de corps* of Jackson's

troops was high. His division was perhaps the most resolute in the entire service, yet it was permitted by the War Department to remain idle for weeks in barracks near Natchez and then was coldly dismissed from the service by Secretary Armstrong two days after he took charge of the War Department. Not knowing the type of man with whom he was dealing, Armstrong ordered Jackson to muster out his men immediately—"on the receipt of this letter"—and turn over his military property to Wilkinson. Jackson had traveled a thousand miles by the water route to Natchez and had no intention of discharging his men that far from home. Armstrong's order, considering travel difficulties of 1812, was fully as inconsiderate as if the War Department of 1953 had discharged a division of soldiers in Korea and told the men to get home as best they could. Jackson decided at once that he would pay no attention to Armstrong. He wrote heated letters, one of them to Wilkinson:

These brave men, at the call of their country, voluntarily rallied around its insulted standard. They followed me to the field; I shall carefully march them back to their homes. It is for the agents of the government to account to the State of Tennessee and the whole world for their singular and unusual conduct to this detachment.⁹

Wilkinson made the insulting reply that if Jackson wanted to help the country he might get his men to enlist in the Regular Army. This added fuel to Jackson's rage. When one of Wilkinson's recruiting agents appeared, Jackson informed him that if he were caught trying to "seduce" a single Tennessee volunteer into the Regular Army he would be drummed out of the lines.¹⁰

Scarcely mollified by a more conciliatory letter from the War Department, Jackson was compelled to give his personal security for the food, clothing and equipment required to march the men across country to Nashville. The Natchez merchants trusted him. He made rapid progress, moving eighteen miles a day. En route he wrote an offer to take his army north to capture Malden if the War Department consented. "I have a few standards wearing the American eagle," he said, "that I should be happy to place upon the ramparts of Malden." With troops of this quality

and Jackson in command, the promise might have been fulfilled, but Armstrong was not interested. The offer went unheeded.

Walking with his troops, sharing every exertion and hardship, Jackson caused some of his men to comment that he was "tough as hickory." The remark was even more descriptive of his character than physique. Inevitably it suggested the name of "Old Hickory" which Jackson retained.¹¹ The nickname fitted him like a newly tailored suit. When his men were discharged in Nashville, the War Department declined to honor his vouchers. That was indicative of the type of management of the Department under Armstrong and it came near to alienating the enthusiastic state of Tennessee from the administration. Jackson was faced with ruin.¹² Thomas H. Benton went to Washington to present the case of the militiamen and was advised that nothing could be done for Jackson. He finally laid the matter before Madison personally, who decided the government should honor the bills.¹³

One of Jackson's contemporaries, Major General Ferdinand L. Claiborne, brother of the governor of Louisiana, was not so fortunate in having his accounts honored. When he left for the Creek War in the following year, only a scant quartermaster fund was available, and he, too, gave his note and secured it with his personal estate. The accounts were not honored. After his death his estate was sold to satisfy the costs of the troops in battling the Creeks.¹⁴

On reaching Nashville, however, Jackson was soon incapacitated for service by a needless affray brought on as much by his own belligerence as any other factor.

After the return from Natchez, a campaign in which William Carroll and John Coffee had so endeared themselves to Jackson as to establish lifelong friendships,¹⁵ Carroll was challenged by Lieutenant Littleton Johnson because of the severity of Carroll's inspection methods. Carroll refused to meet Johnson, maintaining he was not a gentleman. Jesse Benton, brother of Thomas H. Benton, who had commanded one of Jackson's regiments, then challenged Carroll, for the reason that he had carried Johnson's message. Carroll accepted this challenge and requested Jackson to serve as his second.

Jackson did not approve the duel and tried to call it off. He went to Thomas Benton and for a time it seemed he would be successful, but all adjustment eventually fell through and Jackson accompanied his young friend Carroll to the field. Benton fired first, missed, and then apparently took fright. He crouched and received Carroll's bullet in the seat of his trousers, to the amusement of most of the state and no more than superficial damage to Benton. There the matter might readily have stopped, had not Jackson possessed the scarcely controllable anger, the quality in him which first attracted the notice and disfavor of Thomas Jefferson.

The Bentons lived in Franklin, where Thomas had settled to practice law after his graduation from William and Mary College. When they came to Nashville after the Carroll duel, they made it a point to go to the City Hotel in order to avoid Jackson and his followers, who customarily frequented the Nashville Inn, diagonally across the courthouse square. When Jackson and Coffee went to the post office they avoided the City Hotel, where Jesse Benton stood on the walk and Thomas at the door. Returning, Jackson and Coffee went directly by the hotel. There Jackson, armed with a whip, shouted to Thomas Benton, "Now defend yourself you damned rascal," and started at him. Before Benton could draw Jackson had his pistol out and with its muzzle against Benton's chest, backed him down the hotel corridor. Just then Jesse Benton came up from behind and shot Jackson. Jackson's fire merely burned Thomas Benton's sleeve. Jackson fell grievously injured in his shoulder.

Jackson fortunately escaped with his life but he was seriously incapacitated for his next and vastly important campaign and he carried the effect of the injury for the rest of his life. Said his biographer Parton:

He could not mount his horse without assistance when the time came for him to move toward the rendezvous. His left arm was bound and in a sling. He could not wear his coat-sleeve; nor, during any part of his military career, could he long endure on his left shoulder the weight of an epaulette. Often, in the crisis of a maneuver, some unguarded movement would send such a thrill

of agony through his attenuated frame as almost to deprive him of consciousness. It could not have been a pleasant thought that he had squandered in a paltry, puerile, private contest, the strength he needed for the defense of his country. Grievous was his fault; bitter the penalty; noble the atonement.¹⁶

2.

In the autumn and early winter of 1812, while Proctor commanded at Malden and the Indians were massacring Winchester's men at the River Raisin, Tecumseh was absent from the Northern lakes, on another of his long journeys to the South.¹⁷ The Creek War, the most relentless ever carried on against a tribe of Indians in this country, had its inception in this visit of the Shawnee leader.

Late in October Tecumseh appeared at the Creek town of Coosawda, situated where the Coosa and Tallapoosa Rivers join to form the Alabama. He told a great gathering about the capture of Detroit and the success of the British and Indians on the Great Lakes. Inspired by the enthusiastic reception he received from his old friends, Tecumseh moved on to the capital of the Creek confederation, Toockabatcha. The Indians had been summoned into convention by the representative of the United States government, Indian Agent Colonel Benjamin Hawkins. Tecumseh appeared on the fringe of the gathering with his escort of thirty braves. He listened to the addresses. Then on the second day he forced his way into the center of the great throng of warriors and braves, where all but one chief gave him welcome. The dissenter was Big Warrior, who shook the buffalo horns that adorned his head and called Tecumseh a "bad man," a man no greater than himself. Tecumseh did not speak until Indian Agent Hawkins had departed and the tribe was in its own council. Although Hawkins reported that Tecumseh delivered a peaceful talk, and Adams says he talked only in pantomime,¹⁸ the address proved not only an appeal for war, but also one of great power and eloquence. Parton gives a detailed account:

Every day, Tecumseh appeared in the square to deliver his 'Talk,' and all were ever anxious to hear it; but, late in the eve-

ning, he would rise and say, 'The sun has gone too far today—I will make my talk tomorrow.' At length Hawkins terminated his business and departed. . . . That night, a grand council was held in the great Round-house. Tecumseh, presenting his graceful and majestic form above the heads of hundreds, made known his mission in a long speech, full of fire and vengeance. He exhorted them to return to their primitive customs, to throw aside the plow and loom, and to abandon agricultural life, which was unbecoming Indian warriors. He told them that after the whites had possessed the greater part of their country, turned its beautiful forests into large fields, and stained their rivers with the washings of the soil, they would then subject them to African servitude. He exhorted them to assimilate in no way with the grasping, unprincipled race, to use none of their arms, and wear none of their clothes, but dress in the skins of beasts which the Great Spirit had given his red children for food and raiment, and to use the war-club, the scalping-knife, and the bow. He concluded by announcing that the British, their former friends, had sent him from the Big Lakes to procure their services in expelling the Americans from all Indian soil; that the King of England was ready handsomely to reward all who would fight for his cause."¹⁹

The Creeks, among the most civilized of the North American tribes, heard the moving address with eagerness and excitement. Probably it was the most influential speech in the history of the Indians. It—and it alone—led the Creek nation into a war against the whites at a time when these Indians were living in comparative wealth and comfort and had no actual cause for hostility.

3.

The Creeks were a federation with a lofty tradition, recorded on beads, each one of which carried its message of lore and history. The story was preserved by a Frenchman, Le Clerc Milfort, who lived with the Creeks twenty years in the latter part of the eighteenth century, then returned to France, became a brigadier general and in 1802 wrote a book about them.

The tradition, briefly, was that the original Creeks, the Muskogee, had been allies of the Aztecs in fighting Cortez, and when the Spaniards were victorious, had moved north, where they encountered the Alibamu.²⁰ They drove the Alibamu ahead of

them on a long circuit of the Missouri River, then across to the Ohio and finally south to the region of the Coosa, Tombigbee and Alabama rivers. There the running warfare ended and the Muskogee and Alibamu decided to merge. Other tribes came under their protection and a federation, or nation, was formed. They settled along the small streams running into the larger rivers. These tributaries were numerous and the early whites called the region the "creek country" and, in turn, the Indian inhabitants the "Creeks."

By the time the whites came, the nation gave impressive evidence of either an advancing or declining civilization. It was surprising that Tecumseh could appeal to them with his huntsman doctrine, for the Creeks had long been agriculturists. They enjoyed local self-government, each town having its ruler selected from a leading family. They possessed a system of family rank akin to nobility; leading families were named for animals or forces of nature, such as the bear or wind. The Creeks possessed rigid laws, as distinguished from the hunting customs or rules of other tribes, and regulations for marriage and divorce. They built houses and made and wore clothing of fabrics instead of skins. They had buildings and codes for conduct of public business and a system of military promotions. They received the early whites with friendship, listened to the missionaries, often intermarried with whites and sent their children to the missionaries' schools. During the period of the Revolutionary War and the Washington administration they were ably led by their chief Alexander McGillivray, who styled himself "emperor," and who at different times held colonelcies in the British and Spanish armies and the commission and pay of a brigadier general in the Army of the United States. His Scottish father had been a Tory in the American Revolution and had had his property confiscated. For that reason the son sought refuge and made his life with the Indians.²¹

After Tecumseh's oration, leadership of the Creek war faction was assumed by a half-breed chief, Red Eagle. His name according to the white custom was William Weatherford. He was a handsome, intelligent man thirty-one years old. Tecumseh per-

ceived that Weatherford was the keyman among the Southern tribes and made especial efforts to convert him.

There is little detail about Weatherford's early life, except that he stubbornly resisted opportunities to obtain a formal education, never learned to read or write even his own name, but early became one of the best horsemen and hunters of the Alabama region. Wealthy beyond the ambitions of most Indians, persuasive in his eloquence, fluent in conversation, noble in appearance, he could have chosen almost any life in America or abroad, yet he preferred to live as a Muskogee Indian and boast that "there is not one drop of Yankee blood in my veins."²²

His father, Charles Weatherford, was a shrewd Scottish peddler who came from Georgia to trade with the Indians. He married the beautiful Sehoj, of the leading family of the tribe, the Wind family. She was a half sister of the "emperor" and "beloved man," McGillivray, and a sister-in-law of the French general and historian, Le Clerc Milfort. Charles Weatherford prospered and soon had baronial estates at Hickory Ground, on the east bank of the Alabama River, not far below the juncture of the Coosa and Tallapoosa rivers, and opposite the Indian town of Coosawda. On his plantation he bred fine horses and laid out a race track where races were held and the white settlers came to place their bets. He acted as a sort of secretary of state for "Emperor" McGillivray, who consulted him on diplomatic transactions with the other powers.²³

Here, probably in 1780, William Weatherford was born. The conditions of his birth were vastly different from those that marked Tecumseh's humble beginning in a tent on the Mad River. Weatherford's two noted uncles, Le Clerc Milfort and "Emperor" McGillivray, undertook to tutor him in elementary subjects, but he resisted reading and writing. From them he must have obtained his poise and self-confidence. He studied English by conversational methods, and when he found that the knowledge of a second language helped his speaking ability, he moved on to the acquisition of conversational French and Spanish. He visited Mobile and Pensacola and from the Spaniards learned to

dislike the Americans. He rode his father's blooded Arabian horses; it was said that "the squaws all quit hoeing corn whenever he rode by the corn patch."²⁴ He took a place in the council of the Creeks but never spoke until some commanding question came before the body. Then he employed his fine reasoning and unusual oratorical gifts to direct the decision.

Just before the war with Great Britain, the United States had negotiated the right to run a roadway through the Creek territory. The tribe had originally assented, but later a group of Indians, stimulated by the Spaniards, raised strenuous objection to this invasion by the Americans. These Indians charged that the road opened the way for continual encroachments on three sides—from Georgia, Tennessee and Louisiana. The Spaniards controlled the Gulf coast on the fourth side. The Creeks were finding themselves hemmed in. They also claimed the whites were depleting the game, and there is no doubt it was being exhausted more rapidly than the game of the Northwest.

Mainly because of his aversion to the Americans and because of his resentment of the whites' growing control of the country over which he and his family had ruled with almost a feudal splendor, Weatherford was sympathetic to Tecumseh's plan for a red confederation.

The Shawnee leader employed his mystical powers to initiate some Creek prophets. One named Josiah Francis was shut in a cabin for ten days and was taught by Tecumseh's sorcerers. He emerged allegedly without sight, but he recovered his vision and became a soothsayer and leader of the war party. Others were Siquista and High Head Jim. All became lieutenants of Weatherford, who used them without accepting their sorcery. Tecumseh told the defiant Big Warrior that the Creeks would know when he returned to his home territory. They would be able to feel the stamp of his foot when he entered Detroit. After the elapse of about the time required for such a journey an earthquake did shake Alabama and knocked over houses. Tecumseh thereby won many converts.

Tecumseh's mission to the Creeks resulted in a northern visit by a band of thirty Creeks headed by Chief Little Warrior, who

was feted at Malden and softened toward the British. On their return south the Creeks halted near the mouth of the Ohio River and killed two white families, then passed into the Chickasaw country, where they murdered seven other families and carried off a woman. The enraged Chickasaw, who had held aloof from Tecumseh, appealed to the Indian agent to enforce the treaties and punish Little Warrior and his band. Hawkins organized a posse of Creeks under two friendly chiefs, McIntosh and Isaacs, and beat the brush for Little Warrior. Little Warrior went into hiding with a party of friends, including a brave from the Creek town of Tuskegee, known as Tuskegee Warrior.

Little Warrior was inveigled by treachery to come out of his swamp refuge and was shot down.²⁵ Tuskegee Warrior was burned to death in a house at the Hickory Ground and two of his brothers were tomahawked. Others were hunted down and killed by the friendly Creeks.

The slaughter of Little Warrior and his band caused the Creeks to divide sharply. The larger and more warlike faction was comprised mainly of the Upper Creeks, who lived in the higher valleys of the Gulf Coast streams. This faction wanted Little Warrior avenged. They hunted down his executioners and killed all they could lay hands on. The Lower Creeks, who lived chiefly along the lower Chattahoochee and Apalachicola rivers, did not want war with the whites, and held aloof from their more emotional kinsmen.

Fired by Tecumseh and angered by the loss of Little Warrior, bands of the Upper Creeks began to attack white settlers and the Lower Creeks. They robbed the United States mail and took the bundles to Pensacola. When Big Warrior, who favored the Americans, sent a message they killed his messenger. During the spring of 1813 the Creek country was seething with warnings of approaching conflict.

Through Tecumseh the Creeks were advised that they could obtain military stores from the British fleet off Pensacola. That message led to open hostilities. With the assent of the Spanish governor the British landed agents at Pensacola in early 1813, set up a base and began the distribution of firearms to all Indians

unfriendly to the Americans. Three chiefs—Peter McQueen, a half-breed from the Tallahassee region, Prophet Josiah Francis, and High Head Jim—had been making raids on white settlements. They decided to take the booty they had collected to Pensacola and exchange it for whisky and provisions. They also planned to pick up guns and powder there.

The chiefs and their 300 warriors drove a herd of cattle before them and attracted such attention that the white settlers planned to intercept them upon their return.

Militia under Colonel James Caller and Captain Sam Dale, an Indian fighter famous in the Mississippi territory, undertook to surprise the McQueen party at Burnt Corn Creek. One hundred and eighty Americans descended on the Indians while they were eating. The attackers routed and scattered their victims, but made the mistake of not organizing a pursuit into the canebrake. While the militia lingered to plunder the Indian baggage, McQueen rallied his red forces and made a surprise attack on the unwary Americans. Dale was wounded and the American victory was turned into a complete rout. The troops fled in confusion, leaving the reds in possession of the baggage and the battlefield. Colonel Caller wandered for fifteen days before he found friends. His command was never brought together again.

This victory gave the ascendancy to the war party among the Creeks, who were reassured by the British that if the Americans pressed them back, they would be taken aboard British ships to Havana. The Creek nation numbered 30,000 of whom 7,000 were warriors.²⁶ Probably more than half, or 4,000, warriors were in the war faction. Weatherford had not wanted the war so early but when it came he gave it his untiring support.

4-

The Battle of Burnt Corn was the signal for white families to move into forts, just as the whites of the Wabash did after the Battle of Tippecanoe.

One of the main posts in southern Alabama was Fort Mims, situated on Tensaw Lake, about ten miles above the juncture of

the Alabama and Tombigbee rivers and forty miles north of Mobile. It was one mile back from the Alabama just below the cutoff that forms Nannahubba Island. Here the elderly Mims, who was part Indian, operated a trading post, a plantation and a ferry across the Alabama. He had built a spacious plantation house and during the summer of 1813 had surrounded it with a high picket fence enclosing approximately an acre of ground.

When danger from the Indians was imminent numerous other buildings were added inside the enclosure and the settlers entered for safety. General Ferdinand L. Claiborne, an experienced Indian fighter who had served under Anthony Wayne, made an inspection of the fort and was not satisfied with its defenses. He ordered blockhouses constructed at commanding positions. The garrison had been brought to a strength of 200 volunteers, commanded by a half-breed, Major Daniel Beasley. Beasley does not appear to have feared further hostilities from the Creeks any more than General Thomas Flournoy, the Department commander who succeeded Wilkinson. Flournoy was anxious to avoid aggressive measures that might extend the war.²⁷

The number of persons inside Fort Mims at the end of August 1813, was 553, of whom about 100 were children. Many warnings of Indian activity came to the fort. One was given by a Negro slave who had escaped from a gathering of the Creeks at McGirth's plantation up the river. He had accurate information on the warriors' preparations for a descent on the fort, but it was distrusted. The garrison was becoming contemptuous of danger signals. On August 29, 1813, two other Negro slaves were sent outside the stockade to round up some beef cattle. Soon they were running back into the fort, their eyes bulging with fear. When questioned they said they had seen Indians decked out with war paint hiding in the canebrake and swamp. A small scouting party searched the spot pointed to by the slaves and found no trace of Indians. Major Beasley ordered the Negroes flogged for exciting a false alarm. One owner objected to the flogging but yielded when told by the dictatorial Beasley that he would have to take his family out of the fort unless he obeyed orders and applied the lash. The

front gate of the fort remained open as an evidence of the garrison's indifference to warnings of danger. Dirt and sand had drifted against the gate and made it difficult to close.

Beasley had no conception of military discipline and conducted no drills. The troops loafed about the fort, played cards and did not even take time to complete the blockhouses.²⁸ The soldiers and settlers were beginning their dinner on August 30, when Weatherford, who had awaited the signal of the fort's noon drums, led a thousand whooping Creeks through the front gate. One of the Negroes who had been whipped saw the Indians when they were some distance from the gate, but he was afraid to sound an alarm for fear of another punishment.²⁹ Beasley and some of his men saw the Indians just before they reached the gate and ran to stop them. The gate would not budge, and Beasley was killed in the first onslaught.

Inside the fort the soldiers made a defense along a second line of pickets. For five hours a battle of extermination was carried on by the red assailants, who now invested the fort from all sides and eventually breached the picket near one of the unfinished corner blockhouses. They shot through the portholes and gradually forced the whites from building to building. Captain Dixon Bailey, who had fought at Burnt Corn Creek, led the defense after the death of Beasley and kept up the battle until nearly sundown. The Indians fired the last building with flaming arrows and made the whites concentrate in a small enclosure known as the bastion.

At this point Weatherford tried to check his followers and wanted to request the whites to surrender. But the warriors, inflamed by their heavy losses, would not hear him. They threatened to kill him if he interfered. Not caring to see the bestial finish of the carnage he had begun, he mounted his beautiful black horse and rode away from the action.³⁰ Although Weatherford was later exonerated by the whites of responsibility for the slaughter that followed, it was evident that he had expected butchery. He was in love with a girl, Lucy Cornells, of mixed blood, whose father earlier had sought refuge in Fort Mims.

Weatherford had sent him a warning and he had left the fort in advance of the attack.³¹

Bailey finally was slain and all defense ended. Dr. Thomas G. Holmes and about ten others cut their way through the Indians and escaped into the woods. A few Negroes were spared to serve as slaves to the Creeks. One half-breed woman and her children were saved by a Creek warrior whom she had befriended. In all, seventeen survived out of the 553 who were in Fort Mims when Weatherford attacked.³²

Weatherford later said: "My warriors were like famished wolves and the first taste of blood made their appetites insatiable."³³ That night the Indians trimmed their scalps and smoked their pipes. The fort was a smoldering ruin.

Nothing in the war gave the American nation a greater shock than the massacre at Fort Mims. In the Northern cities the dispatches were at first obscured to some extent by celebrations of Perry's victory on Lake Erie, then in progress. When the enormity of the grisly news was appreciated, the demand for vengeance was widespread and insistent. In the Southwest the horror at the slaughter was followed by a fear that Weatherford would be emboldened to conduct forays into the more settled sections of Tennessee, Georgia and Louisiana, or attack Mobile, then in American hands. The Spanish governor, who wanted to recapture Mobile, wrote a dissuading letter to Weatherford from Pensacola. He said, "I hope you will not put into execution the project you tell me of to burn the town, since these houses and properties do not belong to the Americans, but to true Spaniards."³⁴ Weatherford turned north and did not molest the coastal communities.³⁵

When news of the massacre at Fort Mims reached Nashville, Andrew Jackson was recovering from his affray with the Benton brothers. He was in bed at the Nashville Inn with a shattered shoulder and a second bullet, a companion to the one he had carried since his duel with Dickinson, embedded in his body. A mass meeting was held by Nashville citizens and an expedition against the Creeks was demanded. The legislature was in session.

It voted for 2,500 new volunteers—and appropriated \$300,000 for immediate expenses. Mindful of Jackson's difficulty in getting his accounts paid, it voted also to pay the expenses of the campaign out of the state's treasury in case the bills were not assumed by the federal government.

The insistence by the Tennesseans that Jackson lead their army against the Creeks is evidence of that soldier's commanding personality. His campaign to Natchez had been barren of glory. His military background was not impressive. As a boy he had served with South Carolina partisans in the Revolution, and as a private he had been with Major James Ore in a minor expedition up the Tennessee River in 1794. He had never commanded an army in battle. But it was clear that if the young men of the state were to march against the Creeks, Jackson must head them. They trusted him. He wrote and issued from his bed a ringing appeal for volunteers, in which he appointed Fayetteville, in south-central Tennessee, for the rendezvous October 4, 1813. Soon, scarcely a young man could be seen on the Nashville streets.

An immediate concern was the reaction of the other tribes to the Creek outbreak. Tecumseh's appeal had been carried by medicine men and prophets to the Cherokee, who inhabited the mountains of northern Georgia, western North and South Carolina, and Eastern Tennessee. After Tecumseh's visit to the Creeks the Cherokee assembled at their capital, Ustanili, for a medicine dance and parley. Their prophets reproved them for imitating the whites and using beds and tables. "Some even have books and cats," said these exhorters.³⁶ They called for the Cherokee to "put on paint and buckskin and be Indians again."

But the prophets were too brash. They forecast a calamity and urged the faithful to meet on a peak of the Great Smoky Mountains. The tribesmen left their homes, animals and bees and even abandoned their slaves. They sacrificed all methods and possessions they had obtained from the whites. The prophets misjudged the capricious mountain weather. The great storm did not come and the disillusioned Cherokee straggled back to their crops and bees. Then a Cherokee woman was killed by Creeks near Eto-wah, Georgia. The Cherokee pursued the band of murderers and

killed them. They decided then to support the Americans. They served in good numbers with the American armies and 500, led by their chief, Junaluska, were with Jackson at the final battle of Horseshoe Bend.

Years later, when he was President, Jackson enforced the migration of the Cherokee from their ancient lands in one of the choice scenic and climatic sections of America. These lands had long been recognized as theirs by treaty. When moved to the flatlands of Indian Territory, Junaluska said, "If I had known that Jackson would drive us from our homes, I would have killed him that day at the Horseshoe." ³⁷

5.

At the outset the Creeks had no conception of the great power of the white settlers in surrounding states, nor did they realize that the British would be able to provide but meager assistance. Jackson, with Coffee's cavalry in advance, pressed against the Creeks from the north. Major General John Cocke and Brigadier General James White marched down from East Tennessee. General John Floyd moved in with Georgia troops. Claiborne was in the field from Mississippi.

But it was Jackson's war, dominated by the drive and energy he put behind an undisciplined army in a campaign over an almost trackless territory filled with swamps and numerous rivers. Jackson's troops were tough, sturdy, independent men, before whom many conventions of Army life would have to give way. A striking personality among them was Davy Crockett, "the merriest of the merry, keeping the camp alive with his quaint conceits and marvelous narratives." ³⁸ Both of his grandfathers had been killed by the Creeks and it was natural to find him in the ranks.

Jackson's moderate orders to preserve discipline were looked on as excessively severe by some of the frontiersmen. The orders prohibited the sale of liquor without written permission from headquarters. For drunkenness an officer was liable to arrest, a soldier to confinement and court-martial. Civilians were not allowed to enter or leave the camp at night. Soldiers might sleep

away from camp only with permission. "On parade, silence, the duty of a soldier, is positively commanded."³⁹

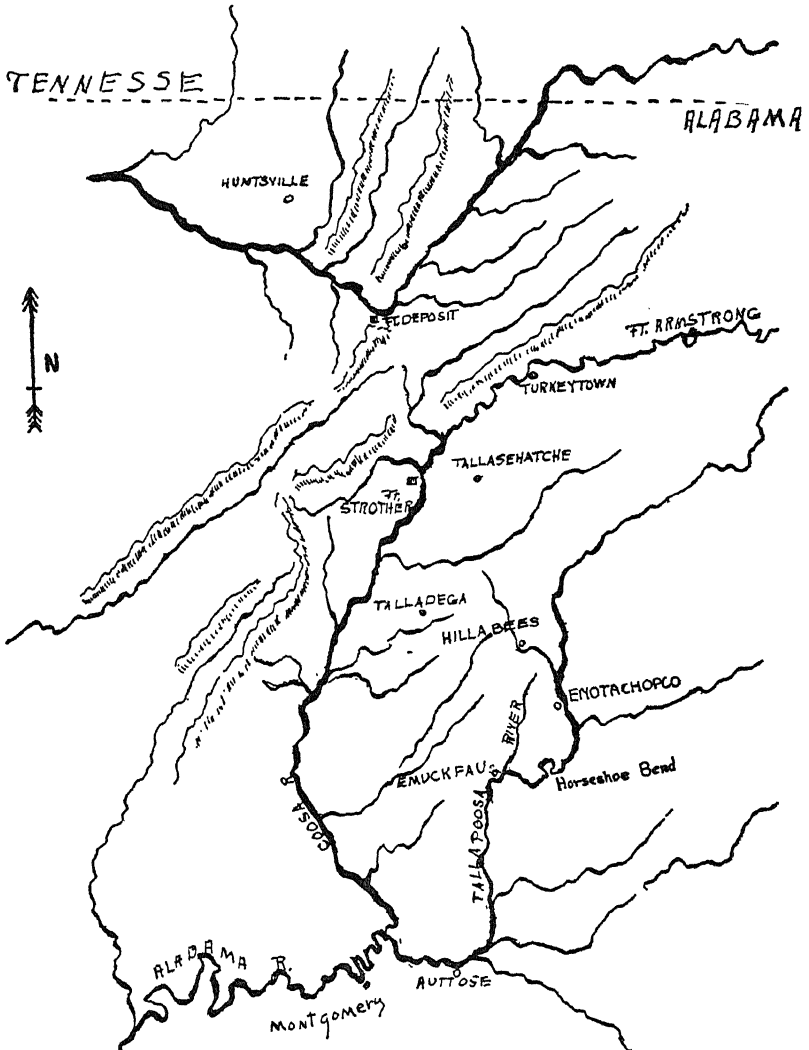
Jackson was not well enough to be present on the assembly date of October 4, 1813, and when he finally appeared on October 7 he bore the marks of his brawl with the Bentons. He established a base in Huntsville, in northern Alabama. His strokes were swift. He routed the Indians from Litlefutchee and sent Coffee, now a brigadier general, against them at Tallasehatche, where they had gathered in force. On November 3, 1813, Coffee slaughtered them after they made an unyielding resistance. He said not one survived. The Indian dead counted on the field numbered 186. Coffee lost five killed and fourteen wounded.⁴⁰

Among the eighty-four women and children Coffee captured was a small boy who was trying to suckle the breast of his dead mother. Indian women refused to care for the baby, saying, "All his relations are dead. Kill him too." Jackson, who could be as humane as he could be relentless, pitied the infant. He gave him sugar water and paid for his nursing at Huntsville. At the end of the war he took the child back to the Hermitage, educated him and apprenticed him as a saddler in Nashville. The young Indian, named Lincoyer, held the deep affection of both Andrew and Rachel Jackson. He contracted tuberculosis in late adolescence and died at the Hermitage, where he was buried in the family plot.

Jackson's principal difficulty in the campaign was in getting supplies.⁴¹ With hungry men he built Fort Strother on the Coosa River. Then he got word that hostile Creeks were besieging friendly Indians at Talladega, thirty miles south.⁴² He marched at midnight with 1,200 infantry and 800 cavalry. He sent a request to General White, who was at Turkeytown, twenty-five miles away, to move and protect Fort Strother with its wounded. But White, never co-operative with Jackson, thought he had other work to do. Therefore, on November 9, 1813, Jackson, unaided, put his famished army of 2,000 into action against an Indian force of 1,090. In fifteen minutes his men surrounded the Indians and broke their ranks, killing 293 warriors. Jackson probably would have destroyed the enemy force entirely had not

incautious or laggard subordinates left a gap through which a large number of fleeing Creeks found an outlet from a carefully planned encirclement. Jackson lost fifteen killed and eighty-five wounded.

The Battle of Talladega was an outstanding victory. But though it avenged Fort Mims, it left Jackson with a still hungry



The Creek War Theater

army and no prospects of food. To get provisions for the men and forage for the horses, he had to retire to Fort Strother, and there, to his intense disappointment, he found the commissary was not functioning. The troops set up a grumble which only food or Jackson could have prevented from progressing into a mutiny. During the march one of the soldiers angrily approached the general, who was resting and eating under a tree, and demanded food. Jackson cheerfully turned over part of his meal. It was acorns. The humiliated soldier disappeared in the ranks.⁴³

At Fort Strother the men ate tripe and decided they had had sufficient excitement for a time and would go home to put some flesh on their ribs. Mutiny was becoming a serious threat. Unwilling to abandon the fort, Jackson announced that he would march with them for a while; if supplies were met en route he would insist that they return to the campaigning. Twelve miles north the column met 150 beeves, some of which were immediately slaughtered. The troops were nonetheless determined to go home. The situation was not dissimilar to that which had occurred along the Canadian border. The most significant difference was, however, that this time the militiamen were commanded by Jackson. A company had resumed the homeward march north when it suddenly found Jackson across its path. With him were Coffee and a few supporting soldiers. Jackson, mounted and holding a menacing rifle across his horse's neck, faced the disgruntled men and declared he would shoot the first man who moved a step forward. He still had one weak arm, yet his eyes flashed fire and not a man doubted he would keep his word. The would-be deserters stood silent. This was one of the tense, dramatic moments that were sprinkled generously throughout Jackson's career. One man of great personal power stood against the crowd. And he won. The malcontents were cowed. Not one tried the road to Nashville. Not one moved a step toward Jackson after he raised his rifle.⁴⁴

6.

A large number of the Creeks who fought Jackson at Talladega were from a group of Indian villages known as the Hillabee

towns, in what is now Cherokee County, Alabama. Those who escaped returned to the towns and determined at once to make peace overtures. They induced an elderly Scotsman, Robert Graison, who had lived with the Creeks, to serve as emissary.

On November 13, 1813, Graison left for Jackson's headquarters at Fort Strother and on November 17 received Jackson's acceptance of the surrender, with certain conditions, and started on the return journey. The conditions were that property seized from the whites or friendly Creeks must be returned and that the leaders who had plotted the Fort Mims massacre must be turned over for punishment. Jackson concluded the negotiations by saying: "Upon those who are disposed to remain friendly I neither wish nor intend to make war." It appeared likely that the submission of the important Hillabee towns would be followed by that of other Creek communities and that the war would be ended in 1813.

While Graison was returning with his pleasant news that peace had been granted to the Hillabees, General James White and his East Tennessee troops, accompanied by 400 Cherokee, was approaching the town. Jackson had asked White's superior, General John Cocke, to unite their forces at Fort Strother, but Cocke had held that supplies were not ample to sustain so large an army. The main consideration was that the East Tennessee general wanted to do his own fighting and win some of the acclaim that was going to Jackson. White had ample food to take three days' rations with him.

Marching toward the Hillabee towns, White destroyed the Creek communities of Little Ockfuske, Genalga and Netta Chaptoa. Genalga was an established town of about ninety houses. White's army surrounded the Hillabee towns at dawn on November 18, 1813. The community that had sued for and expected peace offered no resistance. But apparently to terrify the Indians elsewhere, the American commander attacked the peaceful Indians and slaughtered sixty. Not one of his own men was killed or wounded. It was the type of action which, if perpetrated by the Indians, would have been called a brutal massacre. White took as prisoners 250 widows and orphans of Creeks who had

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been slain in this action and at Talladega. He marched back to the post which General Cocke had built on the Coosa River. In honor of the Secretary of War the post was named Fort Armstrong.⁴⁵

Not understanding the divided responsibility among the Americans, the Creeks attributed the slaughter at the Hillabee towns to the perfidy of General Jackson. Survivors of other communities in the Hillabee section thought the suit for peace had been answered by treachery. They believed the whites intended to exterminate them and concluded that their only recourse was a fight to the finish. The war was continued in deep hatred. Cocke must have felt there was no glory for his command in the type of battle his subordinate, White, had won over the unresisting Hillabees. He agreed to merge his force with Jackson's and promptly marched to Fort Strother.⁴⁶

Other contingents pressed their attacks against the Creeks. General Floyd and his Georgia troops gained allies from the Lower Creeks, led by the half-breed, William McIntosh, who had helped catch Little Warrior. Floyd had about 1,000 militia and 400 Indians. On November 29, 1813, he sent his whole force against Auttose, a settlement having twin towns. Together the towns had about 400 houses, many of an attractive and substantial construction, described as a "fine Indian architecture," which evidenced the civilization of the Creeks.⁴⁷ They were on what the Creek prophets called "holy ground," land set aside by the Great Spirit exclusively for the red men; whites who entered the area would, they believed, die. Auttose was on the Tallapoosa River twenty miles above its juncture with the Coosa. The Indians defended themselves with desperation born of their conviction that they would be butchered if they surrendered. Their efforts were futile against the artillery and bayonets of the Americans. Two hundred Indians were killed; Floyd's loss was eleven killed and fifty-four wounded. When every house in the Indian settlement had been burned, Floyd marched back to the Chattahoochee.⁴⁸

Nearer Mobile, General Flournoy unleashed Claiborne's command which he had held inactive until the Fort Mims massacre.

Now he ordered it into the Creek territory "to kill, burn and destroy all their negroes, horses, cattle, and other property that could not be conveniently brought to the depots."⁴⁹ Claiborne turned north toward the Creeks, but he regretted that he could not attack the Spaniards and British at Pensacola who were providing the Creeks with the weapons and ammunition. He wrote that he "wished to God he was authorized to take that sink of iniquity, the depot of Tories and instigators of disturbances on the southern frontier."⁵⁰ Claiborne built a fort, named after him, in present Monroe County, Alabama, and in a spirit of co-operation sent word to Jackson that supplies were being collected there. He informed Jackson that additional British vessels had come into Pensacola with munitions for the Creeks.

With an army of 1,000 Mississippi militia and Choctaw Indians and the 3rd U.S. Infantry under Colonel Gilbert C. Russell, Claiborne moved into the heart of the Creek country, building forts as he went. He attacked Econochaca, another city on "holy ground" where it was not supposed whites could survive. Here Weatherford had built a refuge and shrine which Tecumseh's Shawnee prophets had dedicated. Situated on a bluff overlooking the Alabama River, in deep woods difficult to penetrate, it served as a haven for the Creeks after their defeats, a hospital for their wounded, and a religious center for their prophets. It was protected in the rear by swamps, canebrakes and ravines. In order to keep its existence a military secret, the Creeks refrained from making a trail that would lead to it through the woods. But Indians friendly to the whites disclosed its existence and Claiborne moved against it. The action was known as the Battle of the Holy Ground.

Claiborne attacked in three columns at daybreak December 23, 1813. The Indians, who had sent their women and children across the river as the whites approached, began a determined resistance under Weatherford's eye and the admonitions of two prophets, Josiah Francis and Siquista, and three "Shawnees of distinction."⁵¹ To Weatherford's chagrin, his red warriors suddenly broke and fled into the forest, where the ravines made pursuit difficult. One of Claiborne's colonels left a gap along the river-

bank, which the fugitives found. Weatherford refused to join in the flight until he was entirely deserted. Then it appeared that he had waited too long. He was mounted on a beautiful gray horse described as of "unsurpassed strength and fleetness." It was an animal of such distinction that it was known by horse fanciers in Alabama. Pickett, the early historian of the state, remarked that "the Weatherfords always had fine horses."⁵²

Weatherford galloped easily along the bluff that reared above the Alabama River while the Mississippi volunteer cavalry under Colonel Carson gradually hemmed him in. His white enemies were on three sides and on the fourth, beneath an apparently impassable bluff, was the river. Suddenly Weatherford turned his responsive horse toward the river, urged the steed forward and dashed off the bluff into the swirling stream below. The feat was so sensational that the Mississippi cavalymen marveled at it and gave it the name of "Weatherford's Leap." The pursuing soldiers saw horse and rider sink beneath the rushing current, then rise together. The Indian was holding the horse's mane with one hand and in the other was still clutching his rifle. Thus horse and Indian swam until Weatherford regained his saddle and rode defiantly up the opposite shore. The struggle of this resourceful man to escape when flight seemed impossible apparently held his pursuers spellbound, for none shot him as he braved the river and mounted the opposite bank.

The height from which Weatherford leaped is not known. A bluff one hundred feet above the river was long pointed to. Then a fifty-foot bluff, where a ravine neared the river, was identified as the spot. Pickett, however, gave the distance as "10 to 15 feet," and Parton said fifteen. It was enough of a leap to awe those who observed it.⁵³

Claiborne burned the refuge city of Econochaca. The Creeks left no food, and his own provisions were exhausted. On Christmas, in the ruins of the smoldering town, his men ate parched corn. The troops were marched back to Fort Claiborne, where the regulars were put in the garrison and the Mississippi volunteers, whose term of enlistment had expired, were discharged.

On January 23, a month after the battle, Claiborne had only sixty men remaining.

Although Jackson had quelled the mutiny, he could not impose full trust in the men who had defied him. He waited until Governor Blount sent down two fresh detachments, numbering 850 men, on January 14, 1814. They were sixty-day volunteers. In order to employ them, Jackson projected a campaign that would serve as a diversion for the Georgia troops advancing across the Chattahoochee and at the same time further weaken the Creek resistance. He was joined by 200 Cherokee and friendly Creeks. These allies expressed concern over his meager numbers.

Jackson marched his men past the old battlefield of Talladega to the Hillabee country and at Enotachopco he encountered the trails of a large body of Indians. He camped on the night of January twenty-second in a hollow square on Emuckfau Creek. At six o'clock the next morning, just before daylight, the Creeks fell suddenly on his left flank and rear. Coffee charged them after daylight and drove them two miles; but they returned to attack Colonel William Carroll, the able soldier commanding Jackson's other flank. Carroll was joined by Coffee, and with their combined forces they drove the assailants three miles. The most costly aspect of this action, known as the Battle of Emuckfau, was that General Coffee was severely wounded.

Because of the fury with which the Creeks had attacked and the gradual reduction of his command to 767 militia and less than 200 Indians, Jackson decided to return to Fort Strother.⁵⁴ The Indians thought he was fleeing and were emboldened to attack him again, on January 24, 1814, while he was fording Enotachopco Creek. His rear guard gave way and the little army was threatened with defeat, but was saved by a single 6-pounder that poured grape into the charging Indians and by the militia elements that stood firm and followed the Indians when the grape-shot scattered them.

In the end Jackson's victory was decisive and his loss was light. In the two engagements, his casualties were twenty killed

and seventy-five wounded. The Indian dead numbered 189. But Jackson was not pleased with this campaign. The Indians opposed to him numbered only 500. Most of the warriors were fighting under Weatherford against Floyd's army or were at work fortifying the Horseshoe, a site on the Tallapoosa which allowed strong defense.

Floyd's campaign, for which Jackson was providing a diversion, resulted in a desperate engagement at Calebee Creek. Floyd had marched back into Alabama. The Creeks were commanded by Weatherford, under whom they did their most determined fighting. The assault was delivered in the early-morning darkness, which was prolonged and made depressive by the heavy pine forest in which Floyd camped. Urged on by Weatherford, the spirited Indians, who fought the entire war without a single fieldpiece, pressed close to the mouths of the cannon in their attack. But they could not remain firm before the artillery fire or the lines of charging bayonets, and they fled when the whites counterattacked. They lost thirty-seven killed; the Georgians lost seventeen killed and 132 wounded. Floyd marched back to the Chattahoochee. His men, their terms of enlistment having expired, were soon discharged.⁵⁵

7.

Tennessee was now recruiting another army for Jackson and enlistments came readily because the sixty-day men praised him unstintingly upon their return to their homes. While he awaited the arrival of troops, Jackson had boats built at Fort Strother which would transport men and supplies down the Coosa River for a campaign in central Alabama designed to bring the Creeks into submission. The 39th U.S. Infantry arrived February 6⁵⁶ and was followed by the almost indispensable Coffee, who had recovered from his wound. He brought a partial brigade of mounted men, to whom were added dragoons from East Tennessee. The militia from East Tennessee assembled at Lookout Mountain, and those from West Tennessee at Huntsville, Alabama. By the middle of February 1814, Jackson had an army

aggregating 5,000 men, the largest assembled in the Creek War. In it were Choctaw and Cherokee Indians.

Friendly Indians brought him word on February 15 that Creeks from a number of towns had moved to the great bend of the Tallapoosa River, in the northeastern part of what is now Tallapoosa County, Alabama, and had fortified it so that it was nearly impregnable to infantry attack. The site was about five miles from the Emuckfau battleground where Jackson had fought on January 23, and the general was familiar with the surrounding territory. The bend of the Tallapoosa formed a peninsula with an area of a hundred acres.

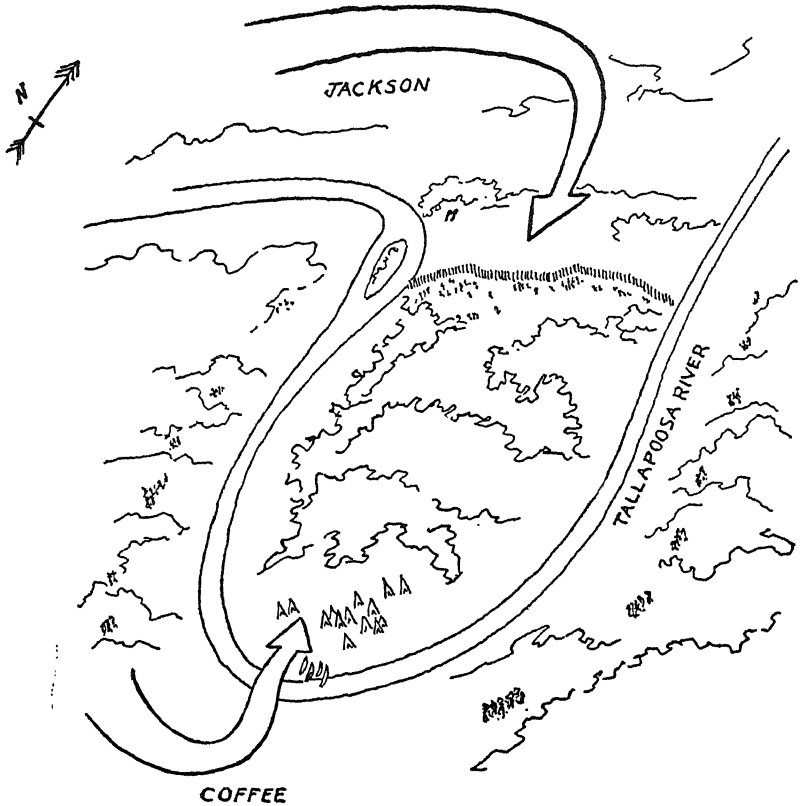
The Indians called the place Tohopeka, or Horseshoe. In the center was timbered high ground covered with underbrush. An Indian village of log huts was situated on the riverbank within the enclosure. Hundreds of canoes were moored at the village and along the river and provided an emergency crossing.

White engineers from Pensacola had helped the Creeks fortify the peninsula. Across the narrow neck of the peninsula an abatis and breastwork five to eight feet high had been formed. The breastwork was pierced with a double row of portholes ingeniously arranged so that an attacking party would be subjected to cross fire. The number of warriors behind the defensive line was 1,000, and 250 women were in the village or at work helping to strengthen the fortifications. The Indians had brought in a supply of food judged sufficient to last through a prolonged siege. They were prepared in all respects except leadership. Weatherford was not with them. No one gave attention to the details of a battle plan, not even such an important one as providing for the security of the boats along the river.

Jackson left a strong garrison at Fort Strother, sent his supplies down the Coosa on flatboats protected by the regulars and began his march overland for the Horseshoe. On March 26, 1814, he camped with 2,000 men five miles distant. Early on the following morning he detached Coffee with the cavalry and Indian allies. Coffee's orders were to cross the Tallapoosa two miles below the Horseshoe, gain possession of the high ground along the river across from the Indian stronghold and close all means of escape

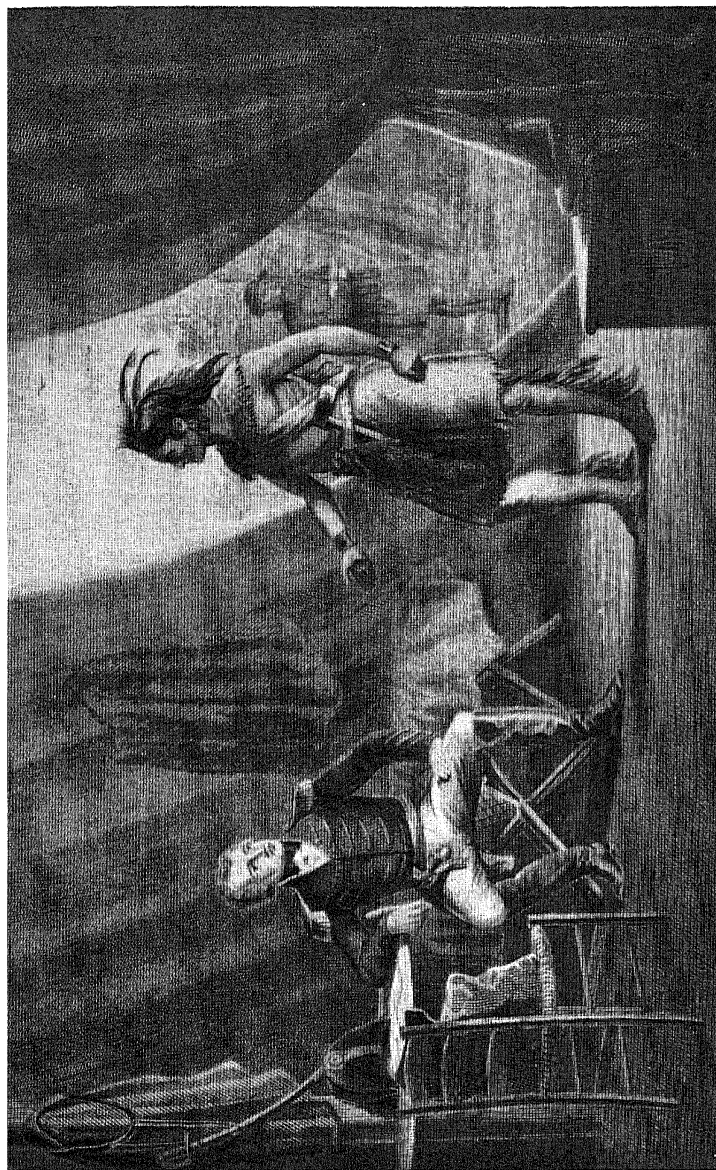
in the rear. Jackson planned to storm the breastworks across the neck when Coffee was in position.

Coffee executed the movement faithfully. When he patrolled the opposite shore the eager Cherokee in his command swam the river, captured the canoes and paddled them back to the Ameri-



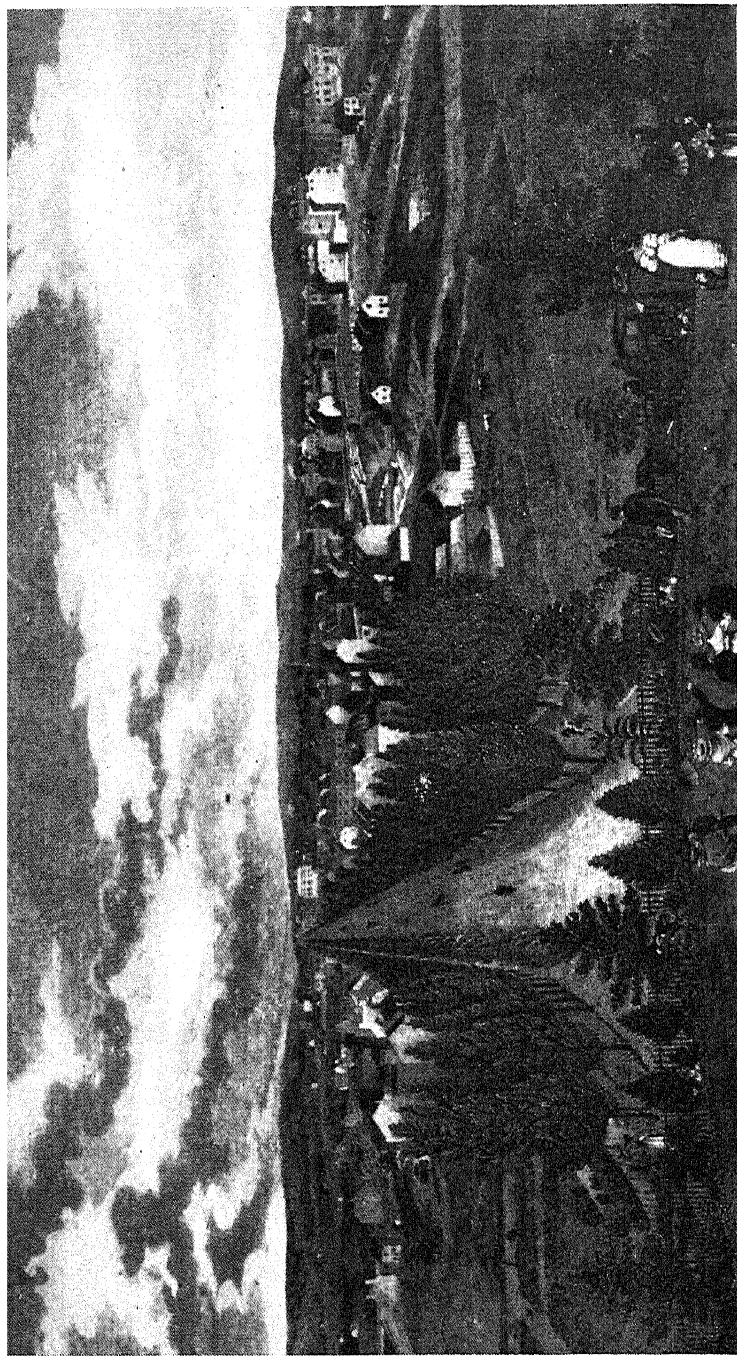
The Battle of Horseshoe Bend

can side. Jackson moved to the breastwork and advanced two fieldpieces to within eighty yards of the timber barricade. At 10:30 A.M. on March 27, 1814, the battle began. Jackson opened with grape from the fieldpieces. The small pellets from the cannon sank harmlessly into the great timbers, and the Indians set



Courtesy Library of Congress

WEATHERFORD SURRENDERING TO JACKSON



Courtesy Library of Congress

WASHINGTON AS IT LOOKED DURING THE WAR OF 1812
Pennsylvania Avenue and the poplars planted by Jefferson.

up a scornful shout. Jackson saw at once he could not effect a breach with his artillery.

As Jackson opened his fire, Coffee, that vigilant officer, put 200 dismounted cavalymen in the canoes and ordered them across the river to seize the Indian town. The Tennesseans captured it and set it on fire. The smoke and flames signaled to General Jackson the success of his men in the enemy's rear.

When he noted a slackening of the gunfire near the village, Jackson mistakenly thought Coffee's troops were hard pressed. By then it was after noon and the ineffectual bombardment of the Indian defenses had been in progress two hours. He decided to carry the breastwork with an infantry charge. The assault party consisted of the 39th U.S. Infantry under Colonel John Williams and an East Tennessee brigade under Colonel Bunch. The men moved forward steadily under a heavy fire and reached the portholes. Then at close range they returned the fire of the Indians through these apertures while some of their companions were mounting the breastwork with their bayonets fixed. The first man to reach the top was the East Tennessee major, Lemuel Purnell Montgomery, a relative of General Richard Montgomery, who was killed in 1775 in the American attack on Quebec. Major Montgomery, twenty-eight years old, was the only orator in Tennessee credited with the ability to stand against the eloquent War Hawk Congressman, Felix Grundy. Now, as he waved his sword to his men to follow, an Indian rifle ball hit him in the head and killed him instantly. Jackson shed tears when he saw Montgomery's body. "I have lost the flower of my army," he said.

A county in Alabama was named for this courageous major. The capital of the state, which was also the first capital of the Confederacy, is situated in this county and bears the same name. But the city was named in honor of the major's more famous kinsman.⁵⁷

The youth who leaped to the top of the breastwork just as Montgomery fell was destined to much greater glory. He was Ensign Sam Houston. Although hit in the thigh by an Indian bullet and in the body by a barbed arrow at almost the same

time, he went on over the log breastwork, calling on his men to follow. He pitched into the hard battle that soon raged inside the Indian lines. It was an action which earned him Jackson's lasting gratitude and affection and initiated his career to the governorship of Tennessee, the presidency of Texas and numerous other honors and distinctions.

The infantrymen soon were piling over the barricade. Here, as in other actions against the Creeks, the bayonet was persuasive. The Indians were pressed back to the high timberland in the center of the peninsula, and they suffered fearful losses with each yard of earth they yielded to the advancing infantry. Some hid in the bluffs and caves along the river; most of the others seemed to desire only to sell their lives at the highest price they could exact in the blood of the whites.

Jackson now saw that he had achieved an overwhelming victory. He was anxious not to destroy a race which he looked on as fearless. He sent a messenger to the pocket of resistance in the center of the peninsula with the assurance of clemency if the surviving Indians would surrender. The Creeks answered by firing at the messenger and sending up new shouts of defiance.⁵⁸ The messenger, an interpreter, came back bloody with wounds. The fieldpieces were brought up and the peninsula was swept with grape. A pocket of Creeks remained on the riverbank behind a part of the abatis. Jackson asked for volunteers to carry the position. Again Ensign Houston stepped forward. He was hit by two additional bullets in his shoulder and had to be carried from the field. Finally the abatis was fired and the Indians rushed into the open, where they were shot down without mercy. The gunfire and carnage continued until darkness fell on the great bend of the Tallapoosa. The nation of the Creeks had almost ceased to exist.

On the next morning the Tennesseans counted 557 Indian bodies on the peninsula. How many others were shot or drowned in trying to cross the river was never known. Jackson's loss was thirty-two killed and ninety-nine wounded.⁵⁹ The retaliation for the massacre at Fort Mims was terrible and complete.

Jackson moved down the Tallapoosa the day after the battle

and reached the Hickory Ground of the Indians, where the Coosa and Tallapoosa join to form the Alabama River. At a place four miles above the confluence, where the Frenchman, Governor Bienville, had built Fort Toulouse a century earlier, Jackson cleaned out the old entrenchments. Here, where the rivers approach to within 600 yards of each other, he constructed a new stronghold which was called Fort Jackson. It was at the very heart of the Creek "empire" ruled for many years by Chief McGillivray with pomp and splendor. Near by were the plantation lands of the Scottish peddler, Charles Weatherford, where the defeated Red Eagle was born. From this encampment Jackson sent word that he would receive the submission of the surviving leaders of the nation.

The Battle of the Horseshoe ended the Creek War. Bands of Indians came to Jackson and asked amnesty. One by one the chiefs submitted.⁶⁹ Weatherford finally bowed to the inevitable. As he approached the camp of the whites he shot a deer that ran across his path and threw it across his horse's neck. Then he double-shotted his rifle. The two bullets were intended for Big Warrior, the Creek chief who had boasted at the tribal gathering in 1812 that he was as great as Tecumseh and whose name has remained in history principally because of that boast. Big Warrior had served with the whites. Weatherford intended, in case his surrender was not accepted, to dispatch Big Warrior before his own end. Big Warrior was lounging in front of Jackson's marquee when Weatherford rode up, mounted on the fine, gray thoroughbred that had carried him over the bluff at the Holy Ground.

Big Warrior leaped to his feet. "Ah, Billy Weatherford, we have got you at last!" he exclaimed.

"You damned traitor," Weatherford answered. "If you give me any insolence I will blow a ball through your cowardly heart."

Jackson heard the commotion and rushed out of his tent. The group was surrounded quickly by numerous officers and enlisted men. Jackson demanded, "How dare you ride up to my tent, after having murdered the women and children at Fort Mims?"

"General Jackson, I am not afraid of you," replied Weatherford. "I fear no man, for I am a Creek warrior. I have nothing to request on behalf of myself. You can kill me if you desire. But I have come to beg you to send for the women and children of the war party, who are starving in the woods. Their fields and cribs have been destroyed by your people, who have driven them to the woods without an ear of corn. . . . I exerted myself in vain to prevent the massacre of the women and children at Fort Mims. I am now done fighting. The Red Sticks are nearly all killed. If I could fight you any longer I would most heartily do so. Send for the women and children. They never did you any harm. But kill me if the white people want it done."

When he had finished there were cries from the crowd: "Kill him. Kill him!"

In stern tones Jackson called for silence. "Any man who would kill as brave a man as this would rob the dead," he declared. Then he invited the chief into his tent, where Weatherford gave Jackson the deer and they drank brandy. Jackson explained the peace terms and said Weatherford could accept them or could depart and keep on fighting, but that if he fought and was captured he would pay for his persistence with his life. Weatherford said he would accept any terms Jackson offered; he knew Jackson would not exact conditions to which a conquered people could not honorably accede.⁶¹ Once, he commented, he had a choice between war and peace. Then he added: "I have none now. Even hope has ended. Once I could animate my warriors. But I cannot animate the dead. My warriors can no longer hear my voice. Their bones are at Talladega, Tallasehatche, Emuckfau and Tohopeka."

Weatherford left the camp a free man and devoted his time to inducing other Creek warriors to accept peace. Those who refused to surrender fled to join the Seminole in Florida. About the only requirement Jackson imposed on those who surrendered was good conduct. Jackson gave Weatherford the highest tribute he could pay: "He is fit to command armies."

Some of the settlers were at first not disposed to deal as generously as Jackson with the man who had commanded the Indians

at Fort Mims. Weatherford tried to settle in the section of Alabama that gave him birth.⁶² Threats on his life were made continually by relatives of those who had died at Fort Mims. When hatreds subsided at the end of the war he obtained possession of a good farm in Monroe County in southern Alabama. He operated it profitably with a number of slaves and recovered his financial independence, but he never regained the wealth he had known before he led the Creeks in their unfortunate uprising. Weatherford won the respect of his neighbors by his faultless honor and integrity. "No man," it was said, "was more fastidious in complying with his engagements. His word was held by him to be more sacred than the most binding legal obligations."⁶³

Weatherford made one other appearance in the public affairs of his section. In 1820 an old man whose son had fought at Burnt Corn Creek and later lost his life in the Creek War was murdered by two desperate characters in the presence of a group of local citizens. Weatherford observed the murder and also the murderers' defiance of the crowd. They dared anyone to try to take them. The county judge was present and ordered the men seized, but nobody wanted to challenge them. Finally Weatherford, contemptuous, advanced.

"These, I suppose, are white men's laws," he said. "You stand aside and see a man—an old man—killed, and not one of you will avenge his blood. If he had one drop of Indian blood mixed with that which runs upon the ground there, I would instantly kill his murderers."

When the judge, named Henderson, assured him he would not be touched by white men's laws if he subdued the murderers, Weatherford drew a long, silver-handled knife. He went up to the first of the men, grabbed him by the throat and turned him over to the authorities. Then he turned to the second murderer.

"I will not resist you, Billy Weatherford," the man shouted. These men who had stood off the crowd surrendered quietly to the lone Red Eagle of the departed Creeks.

True to his Indian heritage, Weatherford remained a hard rider and hunter. Six years after his encounter with the murderers he died of exhaustion, while on a bear hunt.⁶⁴

Chapter Twenty-Four

An "Ally" Falls

The brig *Ida*, out of La Rochelle, reached Boston May 12, 1814, with smallpox on board. The harbor authorities communicated with the *Ida's* captain from their boats and at safe distance. The words that were shouted from the brig electrified the country. The allies had entered Paris.

So it was finally decided! Ever since Leipzig, America had been divided into two schools: one was confident that Napoleon's defense would crumble; the other was quite willing to match his wits, energy and luck against the stupendous resources of man power moving against him. The latter school's faith was expressed in Napoleon's own dictum: "Men count for nothing; a man, everything."

That inspiration would dominate mass had become almost the normal expectancy in the wars of the Empire. The idea had even been grudgingly accepted by President Madison, whose glowing republicanism was in ceaseless revolt against its enforced alliance with the colossus of tyranny. M. Serurier, the fervid and irrepressible French minister at Washington, had reported to De Bassano, minister of foreign affairs, his conversation with Mr. Madison about the "monstrous coalition" ¹ renewed against the Emperor after the retreat from Moscow. In the course of the talk he pointed to the advantage shared by France and America: that while the coalition had ten heads, France had but one.

"And what a powerful head!" the President replied quickly, but M. Serurier noted Madison spoke "with less grace than conviction in his whole countenance." ² When he appointed his first cabinet, the harassed American executive had discovered that politics thrust peculiar types of companions upon him; after the

experience of the last two years, he had learned that war supplied even more grotesque bedfellows.

I.

Four days after the *Ida*, the cartel ship *Fair American* came through the Narrows³ with a variety of information: muffs were passing out of Paris fashion, only eight having been seen on the last Sunday at the Tuileries; the most distinguished hats were of white beaver; the Duchess of Oldenburg, Archduchess of all the Russians, was expected on a visit to London; and it was true that Paris had capitulated, old Blücher having descended into the city from the heights of Montmartre on March 30, the Tsar and Prussian Emperor riding with him.

Just as the country was assimilating this confirmatory intelligence, it was rudely jolted by the appearance in Charleston, South Carolina, of a handbill containing the well-nigh incredible information that the Tsar and Prussian Emperor had indeed entered Paris, along with 20,000 soldiers, not as victors, but as prisoners of war to Bonaparte, whose genius had flashed in another brilliant triumph.⁴ The word went by courier and the nation paused. Reflection caused the majority to distrust news so startling from a source that was not quite clear. One New York barbershop at 104 Broadway wanted to bet. It advertised a "Bulletin Congratulatory," which "imperially invited" all "French gentlemen and their partisans" to come in and furnish themselves with beaver hats if they cared to back their opinion that the allied monarchs were captured. If the report proved groundless, the price for shaving would be fifty dollars.⁵

But firsthand information of unquestionable accuracy was on its way to America. On the night of June 8, 1814, a warship stood off Sandy Hook, and the next morning she made her way up the bay. Glasses were focused on her, and it was discovered she flew a white ensign from her mainmast. A generation had passed since such a flag had been displayed in American waters. Word circulated through the city and a crowd assembled at the Battery to gaze on the banner of the Bourbons. Reaching Governor's Island, the ship belched forth a national salute of twenty-

one guns, which Castle William answered with eighteen. Her canvas fluttered and her anchor went down. When her officers came ashore they were wearing white cockades.

The strange craft, which had come from Lorient, bore the striking name of *Olive Branch*. She was an armed brig of His Majesty Louis XVIII, King, by the grace of God and British persistency, of France and Navarre. Napoleon had abdicated, and the Bourbon monarchy was restored.

Probably no warring nation ever possessed an ally more resourceful than Napoleon. But certainly none ever lost military assistance of any variety with enthusiasm greater than that of the United States in the early summer of 1814. The arrival of the *Olive Branch* was the signal for wild rejoicing in what had been a season of dullness and disappointment. No fifty-dollar shaves were recorded, but an abundance of preliminary celebrating is testified to by contemporary reports. The taverns resounded with the clinking glasses of exultant Federalists. The *New York Gazette* exemplified the mood when it proclaimed: "The arrival of a ship under the ancient French colours recalls the feeling of *our* glorious revolution; and for the first time, during a lapse of more than twenty years, enables us to reiterate our regards for the French people through the medium of an heir to that generous King, who so largely contributed to sustain us in the 'times that tried men's souls.'"⁶

So significant was the occasion that the harbor artillery commander, Colonel James House, made a public apology that the Castle William battery had fired only eighteen guns in recognizing the white pennant. America at that time had not adopted the twenty-one-gun national salute of Great Britain and France, but regulations specified that on highly formal occasions a salute should answer gun for gun. Colonel House said he gave orders for the full twenty-one, but the firing squad deplorably limited the reply to the customary American national salute for a gun for each state in the Union. Thus the officers of the French warship might know that there was no affront intended to the Bourbon monarchy in the hour of its brilliant restoration.

Between the middle of June and the observance of Independence Day the American people ignored their own conflict and devoted themselves to a series of elaborate services and entertainments feting the "unexampled blessings promised the whole Christian world" by the overthrow of the "colossal tyrant," "the destroyer of nations," "the most hideous ironhanded despotism that has ever oppressed mankind."⁷ As though these spontaneous epithets were not sufficiently expressive of American sentiment, the newspapers offered such substitutes as the "sanguinary ruffian of Corsica," "the blasphemer of heaven," and the "Scourge of God," and John Randolph of Roanoke contributed, "the deflowerer of the virginity of republics."

At Charleston, South Carolina, the Catholic churches started the *Te Deums* that sounded in the cities throughout the country over the liberation of the Pope.⁸ America groped for a fitting title to bestow on the young Tsar, the "virtuous Alexander," "the undoubted friend of the American people,"⁹ who had earned American good will by declining to close Russian harbors to neutral commerce and who now emerged in the newspaper accounts as Bonaparte's nemesis. Robert Goodloe Harper, the well-known Baltimore attorney, Congressman and boy soldier of the Revolution, had used the accepted title at an early meeting in Georgetown, at which Federalists, representatives of the Russian legation and anti-Bonapartists celebrated the ejection of the Grand Army from Russian soil. Harper had lifted his glass to "Alexander the Deliverer,"¹⁰ a name which soon echoed from toasts at a hundred stately banquets and made its way to Europe, throwing a mantle of democracy over an autocrat no less absolute under his outer habiliments than the fallen French Emperor.

The Baltimore *Federal Gazette* contrasted Napoleon's abdication scornfully with the glorious death of many men who had fought for his cause. The *Federal Gazette* saw in the abdication proof of the maxim "The cruel are always cowards." The *Delaware Gazette* began a series of facetious "Dear James" letters, replete with patronizing advice from Elba to the American President and conveying also kindly wishes to Mr. Jefferson.

The Trenton *Federalist* judged that "no event which has occurred in the present, or perhaps any other age, is so striking and wonderful."¹¹

Boston prepared one of the city's grand occasions. The more formal observance, a religious festival, was held in Chapel Church. Two thousand prominent residents were admitted by ticket, among them the governor and lieutenant governor of Massachusetts, members of the state senate and house, the Boston city council, business and commercial leaders and "a great concourse of ladies." A choir sang Handel's "Hallelujah Chorus," and joined with the band, organ and congregation in the timely hymn:

When mad ambition flies to arms,
 And rage, and noise, and tumult reign:
 And war resounds its dire alarms,
 And slaughter dyes the hostile plain;
 Thy sovereign eye looks calmly down,
 And marks its course, and bounds its power:
 The tyrant falls—Thy hand we own,
 And noise and war are heard no more.

Another poetic tribute, an ode for the occasion, was written by L. M. Sargeant, Esq., at the request of the committee on arrangements. It was set to the tune of "Ye Mariners of England," some of whom were hovering at the time on the blockade just outside Boston harbor.¹² The scriptural readings were so judiciously selected that the press commented: "It almost seemed that the Bible had expressly and personally doomed Bonaparte to the calamities which have befallen him." The minister, the vigorous and elequent Reverend William Ellery Channing, spoke from the Ninth Psalm:

Thou hast rebuked the heathen, thou hast destroyed the wicked,
 thou hast put out their name for ever and ever.

The discourse was described as "finished, pathetick and patriotic," and seemed highly appropriate even though Napoleon's name was scarcely obscured for all time. The committee had requested the people to light their houses, and that night most complied, it being noted with satisfaction that the house of the late Governor John Hancock, the father of independence, was

"illuminated in handsome style." The State House was radiant with 2,600 lamps, one for each small square of glass in the building. Boston Common was packed with people, for whose enjoyment the committee discharged 500 rockets and fifty carbonic comets; the latter rose to such heights that they made a splendid display for the surrounding territory and shipping anchored idly in the harbor.

The Massachusetts House of Representatives detected in the Corsican's collapse "the signal interposition of a wise, merciful and overruling Providence, for the punishment of lawless ambition and the restoration of peace and tranquillity." The *Boston Patriot*, a small voice raised amid the exultations, found a favorable comparison for the deflated Emperor in that "he excelled Pompey in dignity of conduct after his downfall." To this the *Salem Gazette* added: "We must confess, too, that he puts to shame John Adams, for the moment his term of office expired his evacuation of the seat of government was as precipitate as the flight of Jefferson when Tarleton's Legion had him in the wind."¹³

This Salem newspaper was discerning enough to perceive the true victor over Napoleon and bold, or perhaps indiscreet, enough to proclaim its findings. To its own question—to whom is the restoration of world liberty principally due?—it answered: "Yea; to that very nation which the unprincipled men whose counsels bear sway in our country (themselves slave drivers by profession) have held up to their unsuspecting countrymen as the enemy of liberty and the oppressor of mankind." England, and "the immortal Pitt," were responsible for the joy "which the whole civilized world feels for this signal deliverance."¹⁴

At a large dinner held at Bennett's Coffee House in Hartford Wellington was applauded and wine was raised "to the liberation of enslaved Europe." Other communities entered the celebration with equal enthusiasm.¹⁵ Newburgh and Morristown held formal banquets. At Newburyport "the colors were displayed from the naked stumps of our few remaining shipping."¹⁶ Bells rang at eleven o'clock and salutes sounded at high noon. Washington's picture was illuminated at the observatory. The city hall was

adorned with a bust of Alexander, beneath which large capitals proclaimed: NAPOLEON DETHRONED, TYRANNY DESTROYED, EUROPE FREE.

Up at Hanover, New Hampshire, a traveler brought in the news at sunset. The scene is described in a letter written by one of the residents. The Dartmouth students collected on the plain in front of the college building, gave a series of huzzas and appointed a committee to receive the dispatches expected the following day. On the next afternoon the entire college assembled and hauled out a fieldpiece that had been used by New Hampshire troops in the Revolution. When the mails arrived one of the committee members mounted the cannon and read each communication aloud. As a dispatch was completed the cannon was fired and the cheerleader called for nine huzzas, whereupon the reading was resumed.

It happened that a recruiting officer was in the village trying to drum up enlistments. He failed to sympathize with the triumph of a cause in which Britain was an important beneficiary. Approaching the gathering, he ordered the firing stopped. The student who was loading bluntly advised him to carry his grievance elsewhere. At this the officer whipped out his sword and slashed at the youthful artillerist. One of the other students stretched out his arm and broke the blow. The second student received a bad cut, while the one at whom it was directed had his belt severed and his body grazed by the sword point. The latter quickly had the officer on his back and gripped him strongly about the throat until his eyes bulged from their sockets. It was severe treatment for a uniform symbolizing federal authority. Just as the victim was nearly throttled, the crowd suggested mercy and the student released him, bent his sword double, threw it away and "sent its insolent owner off to his quarters." The reading of the dispatches was completed and the students took their gun on a parade about the village. They fired a series of salutes in front of the president's house, cheered some more and that night held a big illumination. The demise of tyranny had to be observed fittingly by youthful republicans.¹⁷

Philadelphia was amused by a light news story on a rumor

that Bonaparte planned to open a dancing academy in the "Masonick Hall in Chestnut Street," but probably would fare poorly because he was unversed in the "Cossack swing."

British newspapers took pleasure in republishing from Hanson's antiadministration *Federal Republican* an editorial stating that the United States had done everything possible to perpetuate Napoleon's tyranny. The editorial asserted: "To England, stigmatized as a nation of shopkeepers and pirates, we owe the emancipation of our liberties."

While the people were rejoicing and the Federalist newspapers were smacking their lips over their extraordinary opportunity for spirited editorializing, the administration press found it difficult to conceal its resentment. These newspapers could not deplore the loss of such an exemplification of oppression as Bonaparte, but they could denounce the extraordinary pleasure obtained by the Federalists out of the administration's discomfiture. In reply to criticism from proadministration newspapers the *Rhode Island American* asserted that the people were giving voice to deep-seated principles, so fundamental that they transcended all reasons of state. "They rejoice," it said, "at the triumph of liberty over tyranny, of truth over error, of mercy over cruelty. The honest emotions of joy should not be repressed at this interesting crisis, and every one who feels should fearlessly express them."¹⁸

New York citizens met on June 16 at the Tontine Coffee House to adopt plans for the observances. The celebration was held over the July 4 period, beginning on June 29 with a meeting that filled the Presbyterian Church on Cedar Street, at which the Reverend Mr. Mason read from the prophecy of the tenth chapter of Isaiah:

And it shall come to pass in that day, that his burden shall be taken from off thy shoulder, and his yoke from off thy neck.

The high point came with an address delivered "in a strain of eloquence rarely equaled" by Gouverneur Morris. Morris had been recalled as United States minister to France at the request of the Directory at the same time President Washington was

dismissing Citizen Genet as the French minister to the United States. The ex-minister introduced his remarks with the thought common to most Americans at the moment—"The long agony is over." Like many other Americans Morris forgot that the United States was involved in a bitter war on its own account and that a host of British soldiers now disengaged in Europe might be turned westward at any minute.

The speaker was elegant in his powdered wig. That hair style was not followed by the younger republicans, but was one natural to a veteran of the Continental Congress and a father of the Constitution. His voice was deep and melodious, his carriage erect, his stately figure supported by his wooden leg. The fire of his unyielding spirit still flashed from the embers of his declining years. Moved by no purpose except the country's good, he towered above the charges of treason that might affect lesser men and hurled his invectives against the association of the republic for which he had labored with the mad usurper whose trail over Europe was washed with blood.

Morris called to America to arouse herself: "My dear, abused, self-murdered country, bleeding as thou art, rejoice!" At the American Bonapartists he cast this defiance: "Let those who would know the idol of their devotion . . . seek him on the Island of Elba." His remarks expressed an estimate of Bonaparte held by a large, and certainly the most articulate, part of the United States at the hour of the Corsican's first abdication:

In the month of September, 1812, the son of an obscure family, in a small island of the Mediterranean, was at the head of a greater force than was ever yet commanded by one man, during the long period to which history extends. His brow encircled with an imperial diadem, his sword red with the blood of conquered nations, his eye glaring on the fields he had devoted to plunder, his feet trampling on the neck of kings, his mind glowing with wrath, his heart swollen with the consciousness of power unknown before, he moved, he seemed, he believed himself a god.

After the church services the celebrators moved up Broadway to Washington Hall, where a large dinner was served. It was presided over by Rufus King, who, although a Federalist, was so

distinguished for independent thought and action that he had but recently been returned to the Senate by a legislature with a strong Republican majority. At the banquet King was thoughtful and original enough to insert among the many toasts one for the President of the United States, "our wise leader."¹⁹

The dinner threatened for a time to transfer the war into the heart of New York City. While the diners were seated a mob of about 2,000 people formed and hurled stones at the building. Windows were broken and missiles crashed on the banquet tables. Two of the banqueters were injured before the police arrived. The city custodians managed to quell the disturbance without summoning troops. They made twenty or thirty arrests. The principal result was a season of more pronounced bitterness between two of the city's newspapers. The *Commercial Advertiser* contended that the administration organ, the *Columbian*, had incited the riot by its unseemly attacks on those who were fittingly observing a fall of a dictator. The *Columbian* exuded its wrath in a campaign assailing Gouverneur Morris, whom the *Commercial Advertiser* aggressively defended.

That the anti-Bonapartists were in the ascendency—which did not necessarily mean that the majority was antagonistic to Madison—was evidenced by the extraordinary enthusiasm that attended the July 4 festivities. The day had new meaning. Bells rang and salutes sounded from sunup to sundown. The Declaration of Independence, read aloud according to custom, seemed a more stable, proven creed. The exercises were followed by a mammoth parade in which the Washington Guards, the Washington benevolent societies, the Hamilton societies and the Tammany Society were important participants.²⁰ Tammany took occasion to cement friendly relations with the oncoming generation of voters, and it was commented that the braves "turned out with all their might; they particularly exhibited a fine show of papooses just under twenty."

2.

In Washington President Madison and his cabinet observed these rejoicings with little enthusiasm. It was clear that the cele-

brations in many cities were being promoted by Federalists eager to embarrass the administration and those in New England by the deep-seated commercial opposition to the war. Yet whole sections of the public entered into the festivities enthusiastically. They could not be dismissed as partisan demonstrations. Madison had long smarted under the charge that he was Bonaparte's "satellite," "creature," and "humble tool." But it was difficult for him to wax enthusiastic over an event so portentous as the triumph of British armies on the Continent. Madison had been ill and out of touch with the country during the late summer and autumn of 1813. He had passed the time in retirement at Montpelier,²¹ and was just beginning to reassert his control when Napoleon's fortunes spiraled downward. Madison had offered no official view on the steady tramp of the allied armies toward Paris. Now that peace in Europe was an accomplished fact, the people watched for an indication of the administration's attitude. It came informally, but none the less authoritatively, from Joe Gales, the *National Intelligencer* editor who was recognized as Madison's mouthpiece. The statement was guarded, but nevertheless sufficiently clear to show that the President would not try to resist the sweep of national sentiment.

"On the friends of liberty, in whatever country residing, Bonaparte has no claims," the *Intelligencer* asserted. It went on to say that Napoleon had really been an object of distrust. He had destroyed American commerce so extensively that the government had been forced to hesitate in determining whether its course would be against England or France; he had so invaded neighboring nations that had the United States been adjacent to France it doubtless would have been arrayed against him with the other allies. Thus the position of the administration was finally clarified.²²

The *Commercial Advertiser* observed:

They now have a rallying ground. They need no more to knock their heads against each other, being at a loss to determine in what light the news should be viewed; whether they should still eulogize their old friend Napoleon, or load him with execrations. The die is now cast. It has been determined at headquarters

that all should rejoice; that it is the duty of every liege subject of Mr. Madison to give the once super-eminent Napoleon a kick as he is passing downhill from his exalted elevation.²³

After Joe Gales had committed the President to indifference to the banishment of the French militarist, the administration could not hold aloof from the celebrations in the capital city.

M. Serurier received word on June 14 that he represented King Louis rather than the Emperor Napoleon. It was perhaps due more to M. Serurier's agility than to chance that he was the only diplomatic representative of the Empire continued at his post by the Bourbon restoration. His ear had been close enough to the ground for him to have on hand a store of white cockades, which immediately made their appearance on the capital streets. He announced to the French residents of America that they could pledge allegiance to the monarchy through the French consuls.²⁴ Then, at a season which was to have been devoted to the observance of the twenty-fifth anniversary of the fall of the Bastille, M. Serurier made arrangements for a formal testimonial dinner to the ancient, legitimate Bourbon house, which American Jacobins, by the strange twist of circumstance, were now required to look on as the epitome of virtue. It was a brilliant gathering, attended by nearly everyone of importance in Washington except the President and Secretary of State Monroe. Attorney General Rush, the President's close friend, and the spokesman whom the administration had put forward to defend the war, was there with his suite, along with Supreme Court justices, Army officers and a host of Congressmen.

The toasts went the round of the table. They discreetly omitted reference to Wellington, but were unrestrained in flattery of Louis and high tribute to Tsar Alexander, who at that very moment was being feted about London by the Prince Regent and his coterie of macaronies.

Amid the celebrating very little attention was given to an item tucked away in the news columns relating that a number of British transports had appeared in the Garonne River at Bordeaux to board detachments of Wellington's army.²⁵ Some prominence, however, was accorded a paragraph reprinted earlier from a

London newspaper asserting that Britain was preparing to bring the United States into "unconditional submission." The comment which followed, in the New York *Commercial Advertiser*, showed that the depths of the American nation had not been touched: "Let them clearly manifest such an intention, and the people of this country will at once unite in the war, not to support a weak and misguided administration, but to maintain their National Independence and their Honor." ²⁶

Some time before the receipt of intelligence from abroad, President Madison had talked at length about the contingencies that would arise if the war ended in Europe. Two years had made a vast difference. It was one thing for the United States to be at war with England when Napoleon was commanding the greatest army of modern history, and quite another when Napoleon was leading a forlorn hope against the combined might of Europe. The President went so far as to mention to Attorney General Rush, and perhaps others, the possibility of an attack on Washington. But popular enthusiasm over the fall of Bonaparte, curiosity about the government he was setting up on Elba and interest in the measures by which Louis was reorganizing France overshadowed the potential menace to America from more aggressive British action on this continent.

The American public believed that the United States would be included, in normal course, in the general pacification.²⁷ An American peace delegation went to Europe in 1813. When Armstrong was named Secretary of War, Albert Gallatin asked to be relieved. He had completed a dozen years as Secretary of the Treasury, had clashed with Armstrong while the latter was commanding in New York City and had been disgusted with Armstrong's appointment of his Pennsylvania enemy, William Duane, as Adjutant General. Many in Washington regarded Gallatin the ablest man in the federal service. But he was tired of receiving little co-operation and was persuaded that nobody in his adopted country understood the elementary principles of conducting warfare. Congress was continually denouncing him because he could not produce money by painless methods. In order to cover his departure with an atmosphere of harmony, he took advantage

of Alexander's request for mediation and asked assignment on the American commission which the President, although reluctant, was compelled to grant. James A. Bayard, of Delaware, an outstanding Federalist, was appointed with Gallatin. They sailed in May, 1813, for Russia, where they joined the third commissioner, John Quincy Adams, the American minister at St. Petersburg. Henry Clay and Jonathan Russell were added when the commission was reappointed later.

While America gave her attention to the coming peace negotiations, England did not press the peace talks. Instead she hurriedly embarked detachments of Wellington's army on the Atlantic.

3.

Overseas there was similar rejoicing. On the first day of August, 1814, the people of London were joined by milling throngs from the length and breadth of Britain—bustling tradesmen, squat Sussex farmers, Birmingham artisans, lean-faced sailors from the Channel ports. All turned out in festive spirit to celebrate in the gala fashion of Georgian England the one-hundredth anniversary of the accession of the House of Brunswick, or Hanover. The day was also the anniversary of Nelson's victory of the Nile, which annually called for commemorative rejoicing. But more especially it was to be Britain's mammoth peace demonstration, the first prearranged season of carnival since Napoleon's abdication had crowned British arms with new splendor. The Corsican had been returned to the Mediterranean—a retribution for its offense of delivering him, twenty-five years earlier, to the training school at Brienne. Safely deposited on Elba, he might reflect at leisure on the eventual fate of those who challenge England on land or sea. The sword of Frederick was back in Berlin once more. Talleyrand, Metternich and Castlereagh were studying their tricky phrasings for the approaching Congress of Vienna. England, luxuriating in victories by Wellington as resplendent as those of Marlborough, seemed at peace, and London was given over to pageantry and jubilee.

There was little for a discerning population to extol, to be

sure, in a century of Hanoverian guidance, except that it followed a century of Stuarts.²⁸ The House of Brunswick really presented a dual noxiousness. It was personified at the moment by the decaying George III, whose imbecility was no longer broken by lapses to lucid obstinacy, and by the sensual middle-aged Prince Regent, on whom profligacy now sat much less gracefully than it had when he was a youth. But peace was in the air, "happily accomplished under the auspices of his Royal Highness," and Bonaparte was finished. The long fear of invasion was past and general fiesta well might be observed for the four Georges.

Plans for the jubilation had sprung up spontaneously after the departure of the Russian and Prussian monarchs, who had visited England with their trains of "royal, princely and illustrious personages."²⁹ including Metternich and gruff old General Blücher, a short time after their grand entry into Paris. The picturesque Cossack hetman, Platoff, whose detachment escorted Alexander and gave delighted British crowds their first view of the famous horsemen from the steppes (and incidentally prompted inquiries in Parliament as to who had authorized foreign soldiers to land on British soil), soon ceased to be the subject of general talk. Platoff had startled the world by offering 100,000 ducats and his daughter to anyone who would assassinate Napoleon, but Alexander annulled the proposition as "infamous in honorable warfare."³⁰ The preparations for the celebrations obscured the opening of a dramatic version of Byron's new *Corsair* at Sadler's Wells.³¹ They momentarily overshadowed interest in the day-by-day activities of the Elban exile, despite a late rumor that Maria Louisa was planning a reconciliation as the initial move in a Hapsburg scheme to vest him with command of the Austrian armies.³²

Carpenters labored by day and night on booths, bridges and pavilions. They erected a splendid Temple of Concord "enriched by transparencies, fountains and statues," and a Gothic castle, symbolic of war, so constructed that it could be converted into a peace palace at a moment's notice. The metamorphosis was to occur at a high point in the rejoicing. "Innumerable butts of beer

and vast quantities of all sorts of provisions" were carried into Hyde, Green and St. James's parks.³³ Trees along the Serpentine River blossomed with ornate clusters of Chinese lanterns. Over the royal booth in the center of the principal gallery was inscribed in large letters the thought common to all England:

PEACE RESTORED UNDER THE REGENCY

While these preparations were in progress, reflections occurred which threw the proceedings into temporary disorder. An occasion of such magnitude for a nation that lived under the tradition of Drake, Howard, Rodney and Nelson called for gaiety culminating in mimic naval warfare which would reveal to the street people and farm people how the fleets of England triumphed on far-flung oceans. An essential requirement for mimic warfare, in turn, was a hostile flotilla against which the majesty of the British line might be displayed. And in casting about for the composition of this enemy squadron, the functionaries of the huge peace demonstration found themselves face to face with the glaring inconsistency that England was not at peace after all and jubilee was hardly in order. The dust had been collecting on affairs in North America.

The American war was vital to the Empire and had to be recognized even though it conflicted with the general mood. The inscription over the royal booth, heralding an era of concord for Britain and her dependencies, was taken down. Peace could be celebrated, but war was not over. England paused as did the United States in 1945 when the people wondered whether the formal celebration of V-E Day should be at once or more appropriately should await the surrender of Japan. In London there was a period of uncertainty about the principal object of the festivities; then the newspapers explained the purpose: "A sort of general celebration is made of War, Peace and the accession of the House of Brunswick."³⁴

Although slightly muddled, the motif commanded no less popular enthusiasm than complete peace would have. "So immense a number of people at large were never brought together in any previous instance, by any description of public rejoicings or any

of the great events which have so often gilded the page of the British story.”³⁵ There appears to be no reason to challenge this estimate by a *Times* reporter, even though he had not counted noses at the execution of Charles I nor witnessed the happy festivities of the Restoration. He was observing an extraordinary assemblage. Hosts of country people camped in fields and streets. Chevaux-de-frise were erected to protect houses. When the throngs started for the parks early on the appointed Monday morning they filled the streets so compactly that vehicular traffic was excluded and pedestrians found it impossible to make headway in any other direction. Shops were closed. The city abandoned itself to rejoicing.

Obviously, most of the ships in the mock hostile squadron which would test British sea power in the pageant had to be French. That was demanded by the Nile anniversary. But a fair representation of American warcraft, “those fir-built frigates manned by bastards and outlaws,” was added. The London *Times* felt the flotilla did not do justice to England’s naval tradition. The miniature British Navy was a bit too strong, it thought, for the number of adversaries, and the *Times* hoped there were more ships in the mock battle than would be “necessary to the victory of a British fleet fighting in sight of its own shores.” Nonetheless, the paper conceded that “gallant ships they were, moored in a line ahead, and ready for action.” Fireworks lined the Kensington bank. One of the new captive balloons, sufficient in itself for a spectacle of ordinary proportions, was held near by to rise with the tidings of victory.

Thus, with the Union standard arrayed against the Stars and Stripes in the mimic battle before a vast assembly, all England was dramatically notified of the continuation of the North American conflict.

As the din heightened along the Serpentine and the miniature fleets engaged before the great galleries of cheering spectators, the American frigates ignominiously hauled down their ensigns and fell in as prizes, while the French ships burst into flames and sank. “Bastards and outlaws” could not be allowed the gallant conduct of fighting to the finish.³⁶

Applause echoed throughout the city. London was pleased and excited. The people were thinking finally of the struggle across the Atlantic. Since France offered no further fighting amusement, the surplus of martial fervor that flamed when Wellington marched out of the Pyrenees might now be directed toward the treacherous former colonies, whose impertinence entitled them to a final chastisement.

British newspapers had been publishing news from the American war theaters, but the minor New World affrays had attracted no more public notice alongside such magnificent butcheries as Borodino, Leipzig and Vittoria than a mouse's squeak in a slaughterhouse.

About all the British public could understand from the accounts they read was that across the Atlantic a fawning worshiper of Napoleon, whom the press described as a loathsome little man with no vestige of character or honor to whom any term of contempt might be applied, ruled the United States in accordance with the dictates of the Tuileries. The public required a spectacular peace demonstration, with its rockets and flotillas, its excitement and cheering, before it could attend seriously to the neglected North American conflict. Madison, it was asserted, had promoted this war, the origin of which was wrapped up in a maze of diplomatic nonsense and chicanery. The cardinal fact was that Britain had tried to avoid it and she had even conformed to rather distastefully presented American demands.

A review of newspaper files of the early nineteenth-century period suggests that its war propaganda excelled that of the next century in color and vitality. The wars of the French Revolution and Empire caused the British scribes to dust off their choicest phrases of aspersion. The writing was artful, even fascinating. Full of gossip, exaggeration and innuendo, this propaganda appeased the popular appetite for information during the long periods which in an age of slow communication intervened between arrivals of official intelligence. Unlike later propaganda, which has evoked the remark that "truth is the first casualty in war," it usually had some factual foundation on which its embel-

lishments might rest. But at times it was no more than emotional vituperation.

After the fall of Napoleon the United States was reintroduced to English newspaper readers as a mingling of semibarbaric frontiersmen, fugitive thieves, renegades and nondescript drifters who inhabited a new continent because they could not succeed in the ordered competition of the old. Americans were the residuum cast off by advancing civilization.

England could easily rationalize the unwanted, far-off war for which, she saw clearly, she was not responsible. American politicians had been the aggressors. Some, like Madison, were fumbling idealists, imbued with the absurd notion that Bonaparte stood for popular progressive revolt against the old monarchic order. Others were anxious to weaken England and build up America commercially. All had perceived an opportunity to grab territory while England was being bled by Napoleon's armies. "Let us not forget that the present war is an unprovoked attack on the very existence of Great Britain. The arch conspirators, of whom Madison is the ostensible, and Jefferson the real head, fancied that whilst our army was employed in Spain, they could wrest Canada from our dominion."³⁷ The facts were clear. Madison's war message had been approved in Washington in the very week Napoleon crossed the Niemen and most of Europe was marching behind the tricolor against an England shorn of virtually all her allies.

4-

When the English people had been instructed on the causes of the conflict, they asked what was to happen with the war in North America. For this question the cabinet, for once, had the answer. Lord Liverpool had given the American campaign his fullest consideration when he was worrying over the disposition the cabinet might make of the numerous British soldiers who would be released when the noose that was being tightened about France choked out the Empire. Before Bonaparte was en route to his island seclusion, the cabinet began preparations which, in its opinion, would terminate the conflict and probably leave

Britain possessed of New England and the vast, disputed expanses of Louisiana that Napoleon had transferred with questionable title, according to the British viewpoint, to Thomas Jefferson.

The first expeditionary force, consisting of two brigades, would provide an effective army for Sir George Prevost. New England was believed to be so unsympathetic to Madison's war that it might be brought back into the fold of the mother country. Victory in the North would permit Britain to adjust the Canadian border. There were various notions about how this should be done, but the general view was that after the creation of a buffer state, the border, west of New England, should be moved south of the Great Lakes, perhaps a hundred miles, so that those waters would be entirely British.

To divert attention from this major enterprise and prevent Southern and Central militia from assisting the American border army, a second squadron would convey four line regiments to harass the American seaboard more intensely. A third detachment of troops would go out later to reinforce the second and capture New Orleans. Thus British rather than American jurisdiction would extend from Hudson Bay to the Gulf. Capturing New Orleans would bottle up the Kentuckians who had led the war agitation.

With these projects in motion, the American war received nourishment sufficient to mature it into a conflict of imposing proportions. Odd North American names replaced those of familiar Spanish and French villages in the leading news columns. The *Times* explained: "American news now presses upon us at intervals with stronger demands for consideration than when the chief energy of our minds was directed to the nearer concerns of the Continent."

The peace negotiations initiated by the Tsar when Napoleon was pressing toward Moscow, which for a year had kept an American delegation roaming about Europe, ceased to interest the Foreign Office. Foreign Minister Castlereagh, indifferent to the American commissioners who were cooling their heels in Holland or looking for him in London, was busy in Paris. The

Times shed light on the deplorable characters of the men selected by America to treat with distinguished, cultured British representatives. John Quincy Adams was alleged to be a dunce in diplomacy whose misinformation had led Madison into unconscionable blunders. Gallatin was a poor Swiss nonentity "whom crime may have driven to the common sewer of nations"; Jonathan Russell "a mere cypher," a clerk of a shopkeeper in Boston; and Bayard a gentleman, but inactive on the commission. Henry Clay was considered the most perfect example of frontier grossness and perfidy: "This gentle creature exhibited last winter at Washington, and in the President's presence, a razor strop formed, for his particular use, from the skin of the great and gallant Tecumseh, your Indian ally, who had been slain by the Americans and publicly flayed in the center of the camp."³⁸

The *Times* told a little later that British representatives of "great respectability" had been designated to meet "the Genevese democrat Gallatin, the furious orator Clay, the surly Bayard and Mr. Russell, the worthy defender of the forged revocation of the Berlin and Milan decrees."

But before peace, the former colonies would have chastisement.

Hostages Exchanged

More than a year had passed since Great Britain had captured twenty-three Irish-born American soldiers under Winfield Scott and taken them to England to stand trial for treason. These Irish-Americans still awaited trial and it appeared that they would have little chance against English law, which declared that the Irish were British subjects whether or not they had migrated to America and enlisted in United States armies.¹

When England forcibly reclaimed these soldiers, the competition for hostages began. To insure the safety of his men Winfield Scott held twenty-three British prisoners as hostages. The Prince Regent, in turn, set aside as double protection for his captive subjects forty-six American commissioned and noncommissioned officers. The prospects of both the American and the British hostages looked bleak indeed.

In the United States there was growing anger against this practice of holding prisoners of war as hostages. Most Americans had never heard of the citizenship precedents of ancient times. A straightforward policy was advocated, especially along the frontier; if the British hanged any American prisoners of war, the United States should hang an equal number of British prisoners. Whether the hanged Americans had been born in Ireland or Kentucky should make no difference.

1.

On October 27, 1813, Governor-General Prevost published in Montreal orders from London which showed the Prince Regent had set his elegantly buckled foot down on any yielding to the Americans on the question of hostages. Britain's right to try her

own subjects in her own way, regardless of where or in what circumstances they might be apprehended, was not to be contested. Immediately the American public demanded reprisals. For the first time in the course of the war traces of American solidarity appeared.

In response to the public demand President Madison had set aside forty-six British prisoners as guarantees for the last batch of Americans held by the British. The British then found sixteen American sailors alleged to be British- or Irish-born and imprisoned them at Halifax to await deportation to England. Madison replied by holding sixteen British sailors. Prevost continued with another group of forty-six, and then all exchanges of prisoners of war ended. The point had been reached where hostage hunting received more attention from the two governments than the prosecution of military operations. Each side stood firm and waited for the other to commit the overt act that would start the series of retaliatory hangings.

Soon virtually all prisoners of war were hostages, and before long special and select hostages came to be required. An example is the case of Joshua Penny, a New York harbor pilot and fisherman who lost his liberty because he got interested in the then experimental weapon, the torpedo. Robert Fulton and his group of pioneering associates were renewing research with the torpedo. Before the war Fulton had peddled the idea around Europe and had exploded a brig at a demonstration in the Thames River in front of Pitt's house. Subsequent demonstrations were given in America but they were not considered successful. The fact that few Americans believed the torpedo could be used practically in warfare did not diminish the terror of British naval officers when intelligence of the new experiments seeped out of New York. In the spring of 1814 Sir Thomas Hardy was commanding off New York. According to information reaching the *Niles' Register*, Hardy did not sleep for nine nights in succession, so great was his fear for his flagship, the *Ramillies*, when reports about the torpedoes reached him. Later, when torpedo attempts were made against the *Ramillies*, he kept her in motion constantly and swept her bottom with a cable every two hours.²

The British regarded the underwater weapon as diabolical and denounced its use as unfair and contrary to the rules of warfare. This moralistic attitude caused several American newspapers to wonder how the British justified their very free use of rockets in the air. American public opinion sanctioned the torpedo and the experiments were continued.

Joshua Penny became Stephen Decatur's pilot when Decatur took over the defense of New York Harbor in 1814. Penny was experimenting with a torpedo in a whaleboat near his home on Long Island. One night the British landed a small party which quietly made its way to his house, snatched him from his bed and carried him away to the *Ramillies*, where he was shackled in solitary confinement in the brig and treated very much as though he might have been a rattlesnake.

When President Madison heard of the incident he ordered two British prisoners set apart as special hostages for Penny. By this time the United States had its military prisons filled with hostages and had to farm new ones elsewhere about the country. The sixteen sailors were held in jail at Ipswich. Eighty British officers captured at the Battle of the Thames were hostage prisoners at Newport, Kentucky. A detention camp at Chillicothe, Ohio, was filled. British officers and sailors captured by Perry on Lake Erie were guarded by the United States marshal of Ohio. Fort Sewall, outside Marblehead, Massachusetts, was loaded with hostages, as was the Kentucky state penitentiary at Frankfort.³

Reports that the American hostages in Canada were shamefully mistreated passed the Northern border and spread rapidly over the country. It was said American prisoners were held in close confinement under rigorous rules and restrictions, fed on scant rations and generally handled as criminals. Persons reaching Plattsburg, New York, from Canada told of a local boy who was almost starved.

Reaction in the United States is indicated by a resolution passed without a dissenting voice by the Pennsylvania legislature. It denounced the enemy on the issue of hostages and reprisals. With the public thoroughly aroused, Congress took closer interest in the controversy. The Senate called on Secretary of State

Monroe for all information. What was the situation with respect to the hostages? What action did Great Britain take with the Americans who were serving on British ships at the outbreak of the war? What precedents existed for the British course in claiming the right to try prisoners of war captured on the battlefields? Monroe glanced into the lawbooks and hastened to assure Congress that it would involve long research to compile the precedents.⁴ Fortunately—from his standpoint—Congress was approaching an adjournment. He did not have to prepare a history of the treatment of prisoners of war, but he did present a strong case for the American soldiers without seeking the support of ancient custom. Every nation in Europe, he stated, naturalized citizens of other nations and employed them in their armies. Citizenship, he contended, was a temporary, dissoluble relationship, not necessarily a permanent association between the individual and the country of his nativity, and it obtained only during the individual's residence in that country. The right to emigrate, recognized by all, implied the right to change allegiance and to support a new government and a new flag.

Thus the American position sharply opposed the British contention that the individual's nationality was governed by the monarch's pleasure. To England, the obligations of the individual to the state were inalienable; to the United States, by Monroe's reasoning, those obligations might be assumed or terminated, under certain conditions of change in residence, by the individual's choice. Although he did not mention this argument, Monroe might have emphasized that the British theory had been invalidated when the independence of the colonists, born under the British Crown, was recognized by England in 1783. Monroe's reasoning established the citizenship policy of America. It has been generally enforced by treaties, the first of which was negotiated by George Bancroft, the historian, cabinet member and diplomat.

While the United States was seething over the hostages, Governor-General Prevost, the Prince Regent's agent of retaliation, was incensed also. He wanted to make some adjustment about the ordinary run of prisoners but could get no response from the

inflamed Americans. The reason proved to be Dearborn's indifference or carelessness. At the time when the first group of forty-six Americans was set aside, Prevost saw difficulties ahead with all the other prisoners and wrote a letter to General Dearborn inquiring about their status. The elderly American commander allowed three months to elapse before sending Prevost's letter to Washington and requesting instructions.

This delay had fomented need for action in a greatly irked Prevost; he promptly put every American officer who was a prisoner in Canada in close confinement. Paroles were ended, and those who had been given the liberty of the town were forced to remain in their none too spacious quarters. American prisoners were taxing the facilities of Canada, a country which did not possess the building accommodations for the many additional requirements the war had imposed on it and could ill afford to maintain Americans. The prisoners, in turn, complained about being held when exchanges had been the common practice earlier in the war. When Prevost told them Dearborn caused the trouble, the prisoners protested against Dearborn's inaction in letters to Congressmen in Washington.

The governor-general, his jail space filled, began to transport prisoners to England. They sickened on the long voyage, and the American newspapers inveighed against the practice as heartless and unnecessary. Aroused by American newspaper charges of brutal treatment of the hostages, Quebec authorities appointed a grand jury of responsible citizens to visit the public jail, inspect the prisoners, question them on the treatment they received and inquire whether they had complaints. The finding of the jury, as published in Quebec and sent in dispatches across the border, was that "all expressed their satisfaction, by saying that they had every comfort their situation would admit of." The dispatch added, "This must silence all calumny in the states, against this government, respecting its treatment of the prisoners of war."

Prevost had gathered a presentable galaxy of American officers for close confinement in the Beauport jail near Quebec. The

most illustrious were Brigadier General William Henry Winder and General Chandler, both captured at the Battle of Stoney Creek.

General Winder was an amiable, captivating man of handsome appearance and fluent address. He had obtained a good education and legal background from his studies at the University of Pennsylvania and in the law office of his uncle, John Henry, a delegate to the Continental Congress from Maryland during most of the Revolutionary War period. His training seemed to indicate a career in politics, and consequently Winder, on being admitted to the bar, had selected Tennessee as an inviting new state and had ridden horseback across the mountains. After sampling life with the frontiersmen, he decided he would fare better with his own people, and his conclusion appeared to be justified when he was elected on his return, at the age of twenty-three years, to the Maryland legislature as a representative of his home county of Somerset. Four years later, in 1802, he removed to Baltimore, where in the course of the next ten years he established himself as one of the leading attorneys of the state. He also became a friend of the great Luther Martin, but apparently was more abstemious, although Secretary Armstrong regarded him as assailable on the basis of his "bottle friends."⁵ Winder's pleasing manner and ready speech were accepted as military quite as much as courtroom attributes and quickly won him the command of a brigade. Only Winfield Scott noted about him: "It is a misfortune to begin a new career with too much rank, or rather, too late in life."

Winder was soon on agreeable terms with his captors. He received food enough to keep his mind active and his spirits soaring and from his discussions with Prevost's adjutant general, Colonel Baynes, he soon developed some ideas on a *modus operandi* for an exchange of prisoners which offered promise of breaking the deadlock.

From an American standpoint, with most of the people looking for peace, the ending of the controversy over the prisoners was desired most earnestly. Great Britain had asserted that she

would not enter peace negotiations until the hostage question was dispensed with; she was determined that it should have no place in the discussions.

Prevost, desirous on his own account to get rid of the prisoners who were encumbering Canada, gave Winder a parole of sixty days. He enjoined the American general not to impart any information which would be advantageous to the American cause and started him off for Washington.

Winder went by Baltimore and the city gave him an ovation.⁶ At the capital he was closeted with Madison, a consultation which caused the newspapers to speculate that he had brought a message from the enemy which probably related to the hostages. On returning to Quebec, he continued his discussions with Prevost's adjutant general. The convention which he proposed was affirmed by the governor-general on April 15, 1814. It provided, as Prevost explained to his army, for the release of all prisoners of war "with the exception of the forty-six American officers and non-commissioned officers placed in close confinement as hostages in conformity with general orders of the 27th of October last, in retaliation for twenty-three British born subjects [the Irish], taken from the ranks of the enemy, and sent to England for trial." Except for these, prisoners were to be exchanged mutually. When unequal numbers were released, the extra men would be withheld from military service, on parole, until exchanges to compensate for them could be effected. Prevost took pleasure in pointing out that the British held more prisoners than the Americans. General Winder won his release.

President Madison's first reaction to the Winder cartel had been one of disapproval, but meanwhile the American government had made inquiries about the twenty-three Irish soldiers over whom the controversy started and had ascertained that they were being treated in London exactly as the other prisoners of war. Madison finally concluded that he would be justified in assuming they would not be tried and might be regarded as on the same basis as the other Americans held in England. The Irish-Americans were, in fact, restored to the United States after the

war. Madison felt that even should his assumption prove wrong, it would be possible to get new hostages. Colonel Tobias Lear, former secretary to General Washington, was designated to meet a British representative on Lake Champlain for the drafting of a supplementary convention, which was completed July 16, 1814. It released the balance of the hostages but made no mention of the first twenty-three prisoners. Madison accepted it.

It appeared for a moment in midsummer of 1814 that the wounds of retaliation were being healed. While the newspapers were telling of the returning and departing of hostages, they were describing also how Buffalo was rising from its ashes. Less than six months after the town was destroyed, new construction had created a community of twenty-three houses, four dry-goods and other general stores, three taverns, twelve groceries and shops, three offices and "thirty or forty huts or shantas."

General Winder reached Plattsburg from Quebec on May 20, 1814, and started out for Washington again, this time to report for duty. He had just passed Baltimore when he discovered General Wilkinson along the roadside. Wilkinson was bound for Washington for the court-martial he had requested to resolve whether he or Armstrong was at fault for the collapse of the campaign against Canada. A hypochondriac, he had become ill just after leaving Baltimore and decided that he could not make the distance to Washington on horseback. He stood on the roadside and thumbed a ride from the first carriage, which happened to have General Winder as its passenger. They reached the capital together in late June.

President Madison at the very moment was looking for a general to command the proposed military department of the Chesapeake, the creation of which he was to discuss at the cabinet meeting called for July 1.⁷ Fate dealt unkindly with him in throwing into his hands a carriage load of Wilkinson and Winder. The President had resigned himself in large measure to abiding by the consoling conclusions of Jefferson, who wrote from Monticello: "The Creator has not thought proper to mark those on the forehead who are of the stuff to make good generals. We are first, therefore, to seek them, blindfolded, and then let them

learn the trade at the expense of great losses." Jefferson's remarks seemed to mean that one person was as likely a choice for a general as another. The senior general in the Washington territory was Moses Parker, a Revolutionary War veteran who had participated in the repulse of Admiral Warren at Norfolk, but he was not seriously considered because he was backed by Armstrong.

Winder's fortuitous arrival seemed to Madison, despite the unfavorable company the general was keeping, to provide a happy solution for the problem of defending Washington. It chanced also that of all who had been critical about the defense of the area to be embraced in the new department and of the government's failure to drive Cockburn from the Chesapeake, the most outspoken was Levin Winder, the Federalist governor of Maryland and a veteran of the Revolution. The appointment of Governor Levin Winder's cousin would silence complaints from that quarter. President Madison ignored the Stoney Creek campaign. Undoubtedly he was more impressed with the reception accorded Winder in Baltimore. Taken with his kinship to the governor, the ovation evidenced that Winder would have the support of Maryland in his defensive measures for the Chesapeake region. There was the adverse factor that Winder had stood for Congress from Baltimore in 1808 and had received less than 1,900 out of the 9,000 votes cast. But that might be attributed to the fact that he ran as a Federalist against the popular Republican merchant Alexander McKim, a well-known horse fancier. The passage of six years and the mob outrage in 1812 had given a Federalist a different standing in Maryland.

Refraining from consultation with Secretary Armstrong, Mr. Madison made the choice. Winder should command the army that would be raised to defend the American capital.⁸

In such manner did sad coincidence give the country General Winder. The selection resulted chiefly because he arrived from prison at the hour when the decision had to be made. The command of the Chesapeake Department proved to be the heaviest responsibility of the American military service.

Winder found himself a general without an army, a staff,

equipment or even a secretary. Instead of occupying himself with obtaining those prerequisites, he began a series of inspection trips to the forts in his new department and over the terrain and roads between Washington and the lower Patuxent River. He examined the ground carefully and carried with him a mass of maps and papers.⁹ When he finally returned to the capital he amiably gave his time to anyone who drifted into his office to chat. It was not until the end of July that he obtained the service of a guard at his door. His large correspondence produced no soldiers. The army, which requisitions issued on July 4, 1814, had sought to conjure up, proved to be imaginary. Although one might walk from the War Department to Annapolis in a day, it required six days for the requisition to reach the Maryland capital and ten days to reach the capital of Pennsylvania. The old Pennsylvania militia law had expired and the new law would not become effective until after the harvest, so no immediate drafts could be provided by that state.

Governor Levin Winder of Maryland called for 3,000 men for the new department and got less than 300, of whom 250 comprised the only force made available to Winder from outside the District of Columbia.

British Invasion Plans

The principal instrument selected by the British cabinet for the chastisement of the Americans was Robert Ross, a quiet, deferential man who usually carried an air of preoccupation; of cultured conversation such as befitted a landed proprietor; and of courtly attitude, reflecting his Trinity education at Dublin.

One of his American prisoners called him "the perfect model of the Irish gentlemen . . . of easy and beautiful manners, humane and brave, and dignified in his deportment to everyone."¹ His home, which he rarely saw, was in County Down, where he owned the Rosstrevor Estates. He retained with his ease and urbanity a solidity which made him coldly practical in his Army transactions. He was known as one of the strict disciplinarians in a service where the gods worshiped were high drill and fleckless accouterments.²

He was born at Rosstrevor, where in after years the soldiers of his old 20th Regiment, the Lancaster Fusiliers, erected a monument in his memory. Leadership of the 20th was a measure of a British officer's stature. It had been Wolfe's regiment, and with it the hero of the Heights of Abraham had won early notice. Britain might have fared better in North America if more former colonels of the 20th like Wolfe and Ross had been elevated to high command.

In the retreat of Sir John Moore to Corunna in 1809, Ross commanded the rear guard. On the Peninsula again, Wellington gave him promotion and mention in dispatches: "General Ross's brigade distinguished themselves beyond all former precedent."³ At Sorrauren Ross had two horses shot under him, while his division won from Wellington the tribute, "The gallant fourth divi-

sion, which has so frequently been distinguished in this army, surpassed their former good conduct."

Although the campaigning through Spain was exacting even to veteran soldiers inured to all manner of hardship, Ross was accompanied throughout by his spirited Irish wife. She hovered on the side lines at the engagements and wished, with all her courage, that her husband was well removed from the war, secluded in the green hills of County Down. Ross was to feel her absence from his expedition to America, from which the hazards of the voyage and the prospect of naval engagements excluded her. He made her one concession—that America would be his last campaign.⁴

I.

Wellington had battled Soult beyond Toulouse when news came that Bonaparte had abdicated and the long war was ended. In the armistice the Duke made arrangements to board British troops at Bordeaux for America. Transports were soon waiting in the Garonne River. While the soldiers celebrated the Army buzzed with gossip as to which units would be selected for North American adventures. Eleven regiments and demiregiments were chosen for initial embarkation, a force aggregating about 8,000 men. An additional 8,000 would follow later in the season. It was the cabinet's early intention to place Lieutenant General Sir Rowland Hill, Wellington's principal lieutenant, in charge of the entire North American Army,⁵ but the first troops sailed under their respective brigade commanders.

The men were not surprised that the Duke recommended Ross for important overseas duty. Everyone liked the air of assurance he carried on the battlefield. Lord Liverpool later was to bemoan the mistake of assigning the larger British force to Canada instead of to the Atlantic seaboard, where Ross was entrusted with independent command. The prime minister pointed out that with half the troops sent to Prevost, Ross could have captured every American seaport city south of Philadelphia, and when the condition of the American defenses is taken into account, the assumption seems well founded. Britain rarely encountered such

an open coast line; it invited everything down to petty freebooters and marauders. And the Irish disciplinarian revealed a perception unusual among British officers sent to the North American wars.

The force given to Ross for his diversions along the American coast contained the 4th (King's Own), the 44th and the 85th line regiments, to which a battalion was added at Bermuda. The regiments typified the spirit that had made Wellington's fine army stand firm at Torres Vedras, break the French at Talavera and contribute in no small measure to the twelve votes of thanks awarded its commander by the British Parliament. "I could have done anything with that army," Wellington remarked affectionately in later reflections. With pride in the army's achievements and with new dominance in world politics resulting from Napoleon's downfall, the British public heartily supported the plan of dispatching Wellington's troops to punish America.

Two of Ross's regiments already had left their imprints on New World history. The 4th had suffered forty-four casualties on the first day of the American Revolution. When Lieutenant Colonel Smith's detachment, harried by the Minute Men, retired from the affair at Concord Bridge, on April 18, 1775, it found safety at Lexington behind eight companies of the 4th. The old Royal Lancaster Regiment comprised the bulk of the succoring force dispatched by General Gage under Lord Percy to cover the retreat into Boston. Two months later the 4th carried the trenches with the bayonet in the third assault at Bunker Hill. The regiment was one of Great Britain's oldest and had been so recognized by the numeral given it when King William settled the question of Army precedence in 1694. The 44th Regiment had an even more extended record of North American campaigning than the 4th. Its service during the Revolution under Lord Howe had been preceded by combat with the French. It marched with General Forbes over the Pennsylvania mountains to Fort Duquesne, where it stood at parade alongside Washington's Virginians when the British flag was raised at the christening of Pittsburgh, the far outpost commanding the land beyond the Alleghenies. The third regiment, the 85th, had been formed

in 1793 and was of light infantry. In 1793, it had won notices on the Peninsula.

At their embarkation the 4th and 44th Regiments mustered about 800 bayonets each, and the 85th mustered 600. There were detachments of engineers, sappers, artillerymen, rocket men and drivers, and units of medical and commissariat departments—a force altogether of about 2,800 men. They wore the plumed black shakos of the resplendent Napoleonic period of army dress. With scarlet coats and blue facings faded by sweat, rain and Spanish sun, the regiments moved down to the transports chanting a Spanish marching song. Their *esprit de corps* was heightened by the knowledge that they had been designated out of all the Peninsular Army to fight in America and by the buoying excitement that rises at the departing hour of every overseas expedition. News of the embarkation, carried to England by the British ship *Clinker*, stated that the soldiers were “in the highest spirits; their superior state of discipline and courage in the field had long been the admiration of their own officers.”⁶ The Bordeaux press complimented them on their good conduct in the French city. The squadron of eleven ships dropped down the Garonne and Gironde on June 2, 1814.

2.

The Bordeaux fleet found Bermuda a center of intense military and naval activity. The soldiers were pleased with the chance to get their shore legs. A few days after their arrival another British squadron of six frigates and a number of transports appeared from the Mediterranean and brought the 29th and 62nd regiments and the first battalion of the 21st, the Royal Scots Fusiliers. This battalion, which had 900 bayonets, was a substantial addition to Ross's army. The 29th and 62nd regiments went on to Prevost.

The 21st had appeared in British history at Bothwell Bridge, where it fought with Monmouth against the Scottish revolt. Its thistle badge and waist plate of St. Andrew's cross had moved across the principal European battlefields for more than a century.

Admiral Cochrane was flying his pennant from the *Tonnant*, a majestic vessel of eighty guns, one of Nelson's prizes from the

French at the Nile. He assembled from his ample squadrons the ships that would transport Ross to the American seaboard. He designated Edward Codrington captain of the fleet. Codrington was the young admiral who had commanded the *Orion* at Trafalgar, and who later, in the naval battle of Navarino Bay, destroyed the Turkish and Egyptian fleets, thereby cutting through the tangle of diplomatic uncertainty and giving Greece her independence.

General Ross's regiments included junior officers who would rise to high rank and distinguished service in the next half century of British empire building. Ross appointed a bustling captain of British foot, Harry Smith, his assistant adjutant general. Smith had joined Wellington's army to participate in the capture of Badajoz, which the Duke took by a frontal assault that turned the French ramparts into a shambles and made a mangled, bleeding brute out of the British army. Suddenly casting off all restraint, indifferent to the provost marshal's threat to execute any soldier found plundering, the soldiers plunged into a saturnalia of lust and looting that badly sullied their Spanish record. All night and for two days thereafter the revels of the troops continued.

On the morning after the capture two Spanish girls made their way to the British camp outside the walls, and there encountered friendly, effervescent Harry Smith and asked his protection. One was the wife of a Spanish officer serving elsewhere on the Peninsula. The other, her sister, Juana Maria de Los Dolores de Leon, was a girl of such striking Spanish beauty as to make the British officers who saw her catch their breath. In later years, invitations to the illustrious levees she held were among the most sought after missives of London society. Harry Smith hid the sisters.⁷ He and the younger were so enamored of each other that they were married. The romance was enduring and remained one of the most beautiful and inspiring of the service during the Victorian era. The girl-wife stayed with the British army, followed it through the Pyrenees and waited impatiently for Smith's return from the war in America. General Ross selected Smith to carry the dispatches from the Chesapeake to England. The assignment was a recognition of the officer's bravery, but it was also a reward

for the girl's affection, for Ross understood the situation, similar to his own.

Nearly a century later, during the Boer War, the eyes of the world were fastened on Sir Redvers Buller's efforts to relieve the South African city of Ladysmith, named in honor of this Spanish girl. Smith rose through the different grades to become one of Britain's first field officers. He fought with Gough against the Sikhs and commanded at Aliwal, where he won from Wellington the remark: "I never read an account of an affair in which an officer has shown himself more capable than this officer did of commanding troops in the field." He fought the Kaffirs and Pretorius and the Boers. His famous ride from Cape Town to Grahamstown in six days, rated by the travel routes at that time as near 700 miles, was rarely equaled for combined speed and distance even in the armies of Genghis Khan and Tamerlane. He served for many years as the British governor of the Cape Colony, and is remembered in Natal by the city of Harrysmith.⁸

Colonel William Thornton, who commanded the 85th Regiment, was a familiar figure in British colonial work, having served as military secretary and aide to Lieutenant General Craig when he was governor-general of Canada. Sir George de Lacy Evans, known to the home government for his daring on the Peninsula, where he frequently volunteered for suicide-squad assignments and was rewarded by citations, acted as Ross's deputy quartermaster general. He rose in later years to the rank of lieutenant general and commanded a wing of Lord Raglan's army in the Crimea. "Black Charley" Napier sailed with the fleet. Lord Byron's cousin, Sir Peter Parker, grandson of the British admiral who attacked Charleston and captured Newport in the American Revolution, commanded the frigate *Menelaus*.

By August 1 the provisions were loaded and the ships were ready for the embarkation.⁹ It was a clear Bermuda day with a fresh breeze blowing across the white and green islands. Back in London the people were celebrating the peace, the Nile victory and a hundred years of Brunswick. The frugal, deaf old king, wrapped in his hallucinations, sat with his flute in his dressing gown of purple velvet and conversed with the angels. They

continually formed themselves into the beautiful young girl, graceful and vivacious, who had walked in the lead of the stately procession of countesses at his coronation. Fifty-four years had slipped by, but the picture of this girl had lasted, gaining in vividness as other memories faded.¹⁰

General Ross walked the deck of the *Tonnant* with his usual air of detachment. He probably thought little of the Brunswick Centennial. His thoughts must have gone back to earlier times in the Army: the first wound at Krabbendam and the citation he received there as a lieutenant . . . the long drill at Minorca and Malta . . . Corunna and the rest period that followed, which had given him a chance five years ago to see the County Down countryside . . . the names he had helped place on the colors of the old 20th Regiment—"Egypt," "Sphinx" and "Pyrenees." It was a natural occasion for reflection. It was just twenty-five years ago that very day when he had donned the scarlet uniform of an ensign in His Majesty's foot.

The big sails billowed full on the morning of the third of August, and Cochrane's squadron stood out to sea, carrying Ross's army of retaliation to the Chesapeake.

Washington Threatened

One of the reasons for the American government's apathy about the danger to the Eastern seaboard and the capital city from Admiral George Cockburn's raiding parties was the complacency of editor Joe Gales of the *National Intelligencer*.

Next to Madison, Gales was probably the man most odious in America to the British invaders and the newspapers in London. He was one of the select editorial group "whose lives are forfeit under British laws"—this because he was born in Eckington, near Sheffield, where his father, before coming to the United States, had published the *Sheffield Register*. Father and son fled to America as political refugees in 1795 and a short time later the father began publication in North Carolina of the *Raleigh Register*. The son became the proprietor of the *National Intelligencer* in 1810 and two years later took his brother-in-law William W. Seaton, who had worked on the *Raleigh Register*, into partnership with him. Gales continued the publication until his death just before the War between the States and remained the semiofficial Presidential spokesman until controversy with Jackson caused Jackson to call on Francis P. Blair to edit a new Democratic organ, the *Globe*.

Gales's great dome, like his careless bookkeeping, lent validity to his title of editor. One of the senators described him as standing "as erect as the quills on a porcupine," and others, including Clay, in later years called him the man best-informed on the United States government save only John Quincy Adams. Gales obtained his background of federal affairs from the years during

which he was the closest observer of the Senate and most attentive listener to its debates.

When he left his father's Raleigh paper in 1807 and went to Washington as a reporter for the *National Intelligencer*, then published as a triweekly by S. Harrison Smith, Gales was assigned to cover the Senate proceedings. The Senate had no official stenographer and Gales's transcript provided the principal record. The august Senate was unfamiliar with newspaper scribes and had no press gallery until one was established on June 12, 1813. Gales was provided with a chair on the front rostrum, alongside the Vice-President's seat. He and Vice-President George Clinton borrowed each other's snuffboxes while the senators declaimed.¹ In December 1813 Gales married Sarah Juliana Lee, niece of Light-Horse Harry Lee, whose cousin, Robert E. Lee, had been born the year Gales moved to Washington.

Being a naturalized American citizen, Gales was considered by Cockburn a traitor to Great Britain, and the admiral's fingers itched for the opportunity either to get at his throat or to pi his type boxes.² Quite innocently the editor contributed toward the latter eventuality by his eagerness to shield Madison from condemnation voiced freely because the Chesapeake area was kept in an inviting condition for the invaders. Gales thought it better to allay than arouse fears and he treated as a minor incident a British squadron's capture of Poplar and Sharp's islands. What was startling about it? An American vessel had taken over and held for two weeks a small island off the coast of Scotland. In mid-May the *National Intelligencer* was asserting, "We have no idea of his [the enemy's] attempting to reach the vicinity of the Capitol; and if he does, we have no doubt he will meet such a reception as he had a sample of at Craney Island. The enemy knows better than to thrust himself abreast of, or on this side of Ft. Washington." This was a fort on the Potomac opposite Alexandria.

I.

While Gales saw security and counseled contentment—not for the country as a whole, but emphatically for Washington—others

found added reasons for preparedness in the June 20 news story from Quebec, published in the New York newspapers July 11, 1814, and copied throughout the country. The article featured the reopening of commerce between Quebec and Bordeaux—the first vessels had arrived from Bordeaux in fifty-five years, or since Wolfe's victory on the Heights of Abraham. Only incidentally did it relate that the vessels brought Wellington's soldiers and publish the complete list of the regiments ordered to North American duty.

The increased clamor for action rose most loudly from two sources. The residents of southern Maryland could not understand why Winder did not employ the "corps of observation" he had at Wood Yard, consisting principally of the District of Columbia troops, against Cockburn's marines. The District of Columbia residents, the other clamorous group, finally abandoned hope that Armstrong would stir himself and prepare the city's defenses.³

Maryland complaints reached the New York newspapers. One correspondent told on August 1 of British seizures of Negroes, stock and tobacco. "Will the people of the United States believe," he added, "that a strong, regular force has been, for the past three weeks, within fifty miles of an enemy laying waste the whole country and that the Secretary of War has not, although repeatedly solicited, ordered a solitary individual to our assistance?" Another letter written three days later from Port Tobacco to Baltimore described how the raiders had made Charles, St. Marys and Calvert counties "unenviable places of residence." Tobacco was burned, villages and houses destroyed. "Above, far above us, and in perfect safety at present, the government have a camp of regulars, under General Winder."

Washington residents began a search for reasons for Armstrong's inaction. They concluded that the Secretary was hostile to the city as the capital. "They think he wishes to have the seat of the government removed," said a correspondent to the New York *Post*, "that he may destroy the Virginia combination, which now stands in the way of his promotion to the next Presidency." ⁴ The capital at the time was not convinced of its stabil-

ity, as repeated attempts had been made in Congress in late years to reopen the question of the location on the Potomac.

Armstrong's notorious hostility to Virginia gave credence to the popular deduction that he did not want the city protected because defenses would contribute to its permanency. This report, which Armstrong did not deny, was accompanied by a more specific rumor, published by the *New York Post* on the authority of letters received from Washington: "We understand that General Armstrong has given it as his opinion that the city of Washington cannot be defended; and it is said he has engaged quarters in Carlisle (Pen.) [*sic*] to which place it is supposed he will retreat, should the British make their appearance in the District." The day this opinion was published in New York, August 8, 1814, the *Post* printed another interesting bit of correspondence which proved prophetic:

Armstrong is suspected and cursed by almost every person here. Deputations have been sent to the President both from this city and Georgetown. They have declared to the President their total want of confidence in Armstrong, and demanded in strong terms that steps be immediately taken to place the District in a state of defense. Armstrong and some others in power will be well watched. If any disaster befall the District through their neglect or disaffection to the seat of government, they may not from the present temper of the people find it easy to escape.

Armstrong meanwhile was deeply involved in his rhetorical battle with Wilkinson and seemed unconcerned about the storm that was gathering around him.⁵

2.

While Armstrong was inditing epistles about Wilkinson, a single performer, a direct-actionist, was busy in the Chesapeake. Joshua Barney, a ready tar from Baltimore, had been given command of 503 seamen and fourteen old scows and barges. He fitted them out as gunboats in Baltimore harbor and took them against the men of war, frigates, brigs and other hostile craft that had come to be as much at home in the Chesapeake as in Plymouth Harbor. Ordinarily such a flotilla would scarcely have caused

Cockburn to lift his eyebrows, but under Barney it kept a sizable fleet of big vessels occupied. Commodore Barney was an American institution, a gay, flashily appareled officer of the old John Paul Jones Navy school. At heart he was possibly only a shade from being a buccaneer, and certainly from the day he began work on a pilot boat at the age of twelve until the day he received a final bullet at the Battle of Bladensburg he was a fighter.

Barney was present on important occasions in American beginnings. In 1776, when he was aboard the *Andrea Doria* at St. Eustatius in the West Indies, the commander of the brig, Captain Robinson, saluted the Dutch governor. The reply to that salute was the first recognition in history of the American flag; it preceded that accorded the flag of John Paul Jones. Barney was in France when the British signed on the line designated by Dr. Franklin and he hastened back to America with his ship to bring the first news of King George's recognition of American independence, as well as a neat French loan in gold.

His principal Revolutionary War fame, however, rested on a feat he performed in 1782, when at the age of twenty he commanded the *Hyder-Ally*, of sixteen 6-pounders and 110 men. With this small power, he captured the British sloop of war *General Monk* off the cape of Delaware. It was an action, as James Fenimore Cooper said, "justly deemed one of the most brilliant that ever occurred under the American flag." Barney outfought the much more powerful ship and won a gold-hilted sword from Philadelphia, where the people sang a ballad:

Come all ye lads that know no fear,
To wealth and honor we will steer,
In the *Hyder-Ally* Privateer,
Commanded by bold Barney.

Barney sailed the *General Monk* to France. The exploit of the handsome young officer caused such a sensation off Versailles that the good-looking blonde Marie Antoinette kissed him heartily before all the people of the court. Her example caused the maids of honor and other court ladies to follow suit, thereby winning for Barney some hard scowls from the courtiers. The occasion was worth more than a few couplets and resulted in a full-length

popular song, "Barney, Leave the Girls Alone," which seemed to accumulate a variety of verses not associated with the original incident.

Barney was in and out of British prisons three times during the Revolution, but managed nonetheless to unfurl the first Stars and Stripes seen in Baltimore. When Baltimore celebrated the adoption of the Federal Constitution he gave the city a thrill by moving a full-rigged ship down the street as a float. At the end of the procession he left it on high ground overlooking the basin, a circumstance that awarded to this elevation the name it still holds, "Federal Hill."

Barney had a falling out with the government when he thought it, in selecting commodores for the six new frigates of the *Constitution* class, gave a shore sailor a higher file than it gave him. Instead of commanding one of these first warships of the American Navy, he took service with the French and participated in the Santo Domingo expedition. There he met Napoleon's youngest brother, Jérôme, who was following a naval career. Barney and Jérôme became good friends. After Barney resigned from the French service in 1802 and returned to Baltimore, Jerome stopped by to visit him and passed several weeks at Barney's home. Barney's son, William Bedford Barney, had married Mary Chase, daughter of Samuel Chase, signer of the Declaration of Independence. At the father's house Jerome met Miss Elizabeth Patterson, took her to the Havre de Grace races and, despite the commodore's efforts to prevent the match, married her, thereby throwing the Emperor into one of his choice tantrums. When in 1812, war with England came, Barney disappeared down the Chesapeake aboard his schooner *Rossie* in search of British prizes. He captured fifteen and sank nine before returning to Baltimore to fight a duel and accept, on April 27, 1814, the commission of captain of the Chesapeake flotilla.

In the fighting that followed Barney inflicted punishment on larger British vessels and then ran for shallow water where the big ships could not follow. His flagship, the only cutter of his flotilla, was named appropriately the *Scorpion*. She had eight carronades, a heavy long gun and furnaces for heating shot. With

this curious squadron and its 503 seamen, Barney set out after the British schooner *St. Lawrence* and pursued her and half a dozen smaller craft until they found a haven under the big guns of the *Dragon*, with seventy-four guns, which in turn pursued Barney back to shallow water. Because of Barney's enterprise the British had to be continually vigilant. Cockburn, who had returned to the Chesapeake in March 1814, could no longer undertake movements of the proportions of the Havre de Grace attack, but had to remain content with minor tobacco-gathering incursions.⁶

3.

A strong, easterly wind blew across the Virginia capes and up the Chesapeake on the morning of August 15, 1814. Residents of Yorktown, scanning the horizon, saw a great squadron of square-rigged and lesser craft moving majestically across the ruffled waters.

It was an extraordinary spectacle which revealed the full splendor of British sea power. Observers on the shore counted six sail of the line, twenty-one frigates, six brigs and a proportionate number of smaller vessels—more than half a hundred ships in all. In the center rode a great line two-decker flying a blue admiral's flag at the maintop. She was Cochrane's *Tonnant*, once one of Brueys' mammoths at Aboukir Bay.

The favorable wind brought the British squadron in from the sea on the fourteenth and took it up the bay in advance of overland intelligence of its arrival. Yorktown residents watched with consternation as it passed the mouth of the York River. They calculated that it must have a considerable army on board, possibly 10,000 men, a force large enough to undertake the subjugation of the entire district. One articulate resident immediately dashed off a letter to the *Virginia Patriot* at Richmond; he denounced the administration for its failure to prepare for just such a contingency and complained that there was not a company of regular troops and not more than 2,000 militia in the field. The writer concluded ironically: "Thus we are about to taste the blessings of 'Free Trade and Sailors' Rights.'"

On the vessels Wellington's veterans were getting a delightful first view of America. Their admiration was stirred by the spaciousness of the bay and the majesty of the great rivers, the James, the York and finally the Potomac, and by a country with "forests and rivers sublime beyond description." ⁷ At the mouth of the Potomac, on August 16, the fleet was met by Admiral Cockburn with three ships of the line and a number of frigates, sloops and gun brigs, comprising his original squadron and other vessels that had joined August 2 for the grand concentration. With Cockburn were 700 British marines, with whom he had been harrying the countryside and fighting Barney, and one hundred North American Negroes, armed and drilled, who might be employed in an emergency for combat as well as labor duty. General Ross had instructions through Lord Bathurst not to inspire revolts among the slaves nor to transport them to further servitude, but to accept any Negroes who volunteered for duty.

After this union of British forces in the Chesapeake region, Ross and Cockburn went ashore and reviewed the prospects of the campaign.

An attack on Baltimore was suggested because that city was of much greater commercial importance than Washington. It was the third largest city of the United States and one of the principal shipping centers of the New World. It possessed naval significance because it was the home port of many of the privateersmen sent out at the beginning of the war to drive the British merchant shipping from the seas. British owners would be pleased to have Baltimore placed under indemnity.

The plan finally adopted at the meeting was Cockburn's and it was obviously the best available. The major portion of the fleet was to enter the Patuxent, rather than the Potomac or Patapsco, and the army was to debark and stand in readiness at a position suitable for a descent on either Baltimore or Washington, or possibly Annapolis. This strategy would confuse the Americans and tempt them to keep their available forces divided for the protection of three cities, and Fort Washington as well. Meanwhile, the presence of Barney's flotilla in the Patuxent offered a plausible motive for the concentration in that river and screened the true

purpose of an advance on the capital. The plan called for the detachment of a small fleet under Captain James A. Gordon, commander of the frigate *Seahorse*, which would sail up the Potomac, pass Fort Washington, capture Alexandria and co-operate with Ross in front of Washington.⁸

To create a minor diversion, Admiral Cockburn sent the frigate *Menelaus*, commanded by Sir Peter Parker, for a cruise along the eastern shore of Maryland. The move, of no military significance, seems to have had no other purpose than to provide amusement for Sir Peter, who remarked that he "did not want to leave America without a frolic with the Yankees." It cost Sir Peter his life in a small brush with militia. The balance of the squadron, consisting of thirty-eight sail, entered Patuxent River on August 17 and, after being becalmed for a time, proceeded to the head of fleet navigation at Benedict, thirty-eight miles overland from Washington. There the four line regiments and the marines began debarking on August 19.⁹

4.

Ross found the town of Benedict, consisting of a number of small houses neatly kept and uniformly painted white, deserted. The residents had departed hurriedly without attempting to transport their household effects. The town was surrounded by patches of corn and orchards, beyond which stood a deep pine forest described by Lieutenant George Robert Gleig as "of prodigious extent and gloomy appearance." The small clearings seemed to the British soldiers, familiar with an open, well-cultivated country, as "petty thefts from the wild beasts and wilder savages of these savannahs, which they care not to resent because unworthy of notice." Immediately after the first troops landed, the general, with the prudence that characterized all his moves in Maryland, posted pickets around the camp and thus commanded every yard of ground from the river above his camp to the river below. To the surprise of Admiral Cockburn, he issued strict orders against the pillage of private houses.

Barney had his flotilla at Pig Point on the Patuxent River. The flotilla now consisted of sixteen boats, behind which thirteen

tobacco-laden merchant schooners had sought security. The British plan was for Cockburn to take his marines up the river while Ross marched along the roadway, the two to act in concert in an attack on Barney. Ross completed his debarkation on August 20 and on the twenty-first began his movement along the river road, while Cockburn loaded his marines on forty tenders and barges and breasted the sluggish current of the river.

The entire British force in the Patuxent now consisted of 5,123 men available for combat duty. Weapons available were rocket tubes and three guns—two small 3-pounders and one 6-pounder. There were plenty of additional cannon with the fleet but there were no animals. The guns were dragged by seamen.

General Ross anticipated an attack by an American army before he could progress very far from his shipping and, since no hostile troops made their appearance during the two days required for the debarking, he took precautions against an ambushade, "for the happy application of which," wrote Lieutenant Gleig, "the nature of the country afforded every facility." Before he started his march he brigaded his army. The light troops were withdrawn from three of the regiments and formed, with the 85th Light-Infantry Regiment, into the Light Brigade, the command of which was assigned to Colonel William Thornton, the leader of the 85th.

As the army began its march, the Light Brigade took the advance. It was characteristic of General Ross that he frequently rode with the advance party.¹⁰

The British infantry, according to Gleig, found that laboring over the heavy pike of South Maryland, under a blazing August sun, was much more difficult than marching along the hard Roman roads of Spain. Loaded with three days' provisions, eighty rounds of ball cartridges, knapsacks, extra shoes and wooden water kegs, and heavy long-barreled muskets and bayonets, they required frequent rest periods. Their lack of vigor, however, was due less to the conditions of the journey, severe as these proved to be, than to their long voyage, on which they had softened. "Some of the finest and stoutest men of the army were literally unable to go on," Gleig reported.

5.

Washington was drowsing listlessly on the dull summer morning of August 18, 1814. The hot sun beating down made the day already sluggish, and so few people were on the sidewalks that the scene justified Washington Irving's complaint that the capital city of the Republic was a "forlorn desert" when Congress was not in session. Those citizens who were visible were lolling in the thin shade of Jefferson's poplars along Pennsylvania Avenue when a foam-spattered horseman dashed through the streets, sending up great clouds of dust, and drew up at the War Department. He was from the Army's observatory station at Point Lookout, where the Potomac enters the Chesapeake. The news he brought quickly shook the city out of its somnambulism. The British Army had come at last.

Two hours later the situation was without precedent, even to those who had been familiar elsewhere with the approach of the British during the Revolution. The capital was charged with excitement—most of the people on the streets; couriers riding madly to summon the militia detachments that had never appeared; women stacking their personal belongings on doorsteps; crowds gathering at 6th Street and Pennsylvania Avenue, Northwest, for the *Intelligencer* bulletins; and Winder and the cabinet conferring at length on what to do in an emergency of such gravity.

The two principal military figures of the city, Winder and Armstrong, manifested in the crisis the extent of their innate resourcefulness. Armstrong did nothing. Winder, like a lawyer with a poor case and doubting clients, put on a show of intense activity by darting in and out of meetings, riding about the city, talking, writing general orders, and in the end accomplishing little of value.

Monroe, the President's adviser, also showed his caliber, and fortunately it was of a better kind. He had a somewhat different conception of the requirements of an emergency. Sharing no responsibility for the mobilization or conduct of the Army, confined officially to the dull tasks of the State Department, he nevertheless perceived that the first need was for accurate intelligence

about the enemy's intentions and he correctly concluded that Armstrong was not likely to produce it. Monroe had been a lieutenant colonel of Continental cavalry. The past crowded in upon him—the columns of marching men, the trumpet blasts and drum roll. He could imagine himself back in the saddle once more. He acted. Like one released from a long sleep, he ordered his horse and galloped off to prevail on twenty-five men of Captain Thornton's militia troop from Alexandria to take the field at once—an easy task for a fellow Virginian. Soon he left a seething city behind him as he rode happily toward the scene of action.

Monroe combed the Potomac and Patuxent regions and at ten o'clock on the morning of the twentieth established contact with General Ross's army at Benedict. There, secreted in the pine forest, with his cavalry escort hidden at a distance, he watched the redcoats leaving their ships, studied their camp and the size of their pickets, and arrived at the fairly accurate estimate that the full force numbered approximately 6,000 men. That day and night he sent reports to Madison. Still undetected by the British scouts, he retired in front of the invaders as they moved on the next morning from Benedict to Nottingham.

Monroe was leaving Nottingham as the British entered, a circumstance which caused him in his enthusiasm over being back in the cavalry saddle to suggest in one of his notes that he came close to being captured. It was a pardonable exaggeration. He probably had not observed closely enough to notice that the invading forces had no horses except the general's mount. Monroe's expedition is the only instance in American history of the ranking cabinet officer serving as a simple cavalry scout,¹¹ and it demonstrated to Madison that his friend and helper had the courage to hover alone in the near proximity of the enemy, while the tactician who dreamed of repeating the scenes at Saratoga clung to his War Department desk and awaited developments.¹²

In Washington Winder called out the District of Columbia militia and ordered the mobilization at the Tiber River, at the west foot of Capitol Hill, for Friday night, August 19. The exodus of citizens began. The countryside along the road leading toward Montgomery Court House (now Rockville, Maryland)

was white with the dust of the fugitives. The banks removed their specie to Hagerstown. Federal Departments packed records. The city, not yet in receipt of Monroe's estimate, was fed with rumors that the British had landed seven, ten, fifteen thousand men, commanded by Lord Hill in person. Stage passengers to New York spread the alarm to the cities on the route. The common assertion was that not only Rowland Hill but also Thomas Picton, another of the better-known of Wellington's generals, whose reputation had reached to virtually every American village, accompanied the troops.

General Wilkinson, awaiting his court-martial, offered his services if his arrest should be lifted temporarily, but Madison concluded that Wilkinson's talents for confusing things were not required in a situation that was already thoroughly confounded and refrained from answering the letter Wilkinson addressed through Monroe.

The District of Columbia militia, consisting of two brigades, was commanded by John P. Van Ness, a militia major general who had officiated at the drills and reviews. Van Ness was something of a man of parts in Washington—banker and property owner and in later years mayor. He had worn Armstrong's threshold thin during the last year requesting defenses for the city, and now that the British were present he called at the War Department again to reflect his alarms and say that the enemy probably intended to strike a forceful blow.

"Oh, yes, by God!" Armstrong exclaimed. "They would not come with such a fleet without meaning to strike somewhere, but they certainly will not come here. What in the devil will they do here?"

Van Ness explained that they would do nothing more nor less than capture the seat of the American government, which would be worth writing home about.

"No, no!" the Secretary asserted. "Baltimore is the place, sir. That is of much more consequence."

In view of the doubts about Winder among the Washington militia soldiers, Van Ness felt that the responsibility of defending the District of Columbia should be upon a banker's rather than

a lawyer's shoulders. When President Madison decided the question of seniority in favor of Winder, Van Ness petulantly resigned his commission, leaving the militia of the district under the leadership of Brigadier General Walter Smith of Georgetown, who was subject to Winder's orders.

When the men assembled on the Tiber Friday night, they were so indifferently armed, equipped and uniformed that Smith dismissed them until the following morning with orders to go home and get some better shoes and, in effect, if they couldn't find a gun to bring a butcher knife.¹³ On Saturday morning the militiamen formed again in slightly better fighting condition and were mustered into the federal service.

6.

The sight of the militia fired many of the residents, including Editor Joe Gales, with confidence. With his ardor mounting as he wrote for his August 22 issue of the *Intelligencer*, Gales confused conditions with those of the Revolution and harkened back to thoughts of the Hessian hirelings. He predicted:

In a few hours thousands of brave men will be prepared to resist the host of mercenaries that now threatens us. Arrayed in defense of all that renders life a blessing, and for protecting from insult and desolation the metropolis of our country, every arm will be nerved with a vigor irresistible. Great as the public anxiety must naturally be at such a time, all look with confidence to the capacity and vigilance of the Commanding General, and we feel no doubt that his foresight and activity will leave nothing undone that our security requires.

The *Washington City Gazette* felt more pride than assurance. It described how the militia, with its artillery, cavalry and riflemen, took up the march toward Benedict:

Nothing could exceed the alacrity and cheerfulness with which these true Americans left the comforts of home to repel the ferocious invader. With few exceptions, almost everyone capable of bearing arms, assembled on the Capitol Hill; and about 2 o'clock P.M., after giving three cheers, took the road to meet the enemy. Such men are worthy of the blessings of liberty. Heaven and the prayers of the country go with them.¹⁴

General Winder took command at the Wood Yard on August 21, where he was joined on the morning of the twenty-second by Barney with 400 of the 503 flotilla seamen. Barney had ordered the others to follow later. He had left them to blow up his gunboats when the British advanced. Secretary of the Navy Jones, concluding that Barney's squadron was likely to fall into British hands and that Barney could be employed more effectively in defense of the capital than of the barges, issued orders on August 20 that if the British started toward Washington the flotilla should be destroyed. At the Wood Yard General Winder's army, undetected by Ross, was on the flank of the British column as it moved to Upper Marlboro. It was just such an opportunity as many generals pray for and seize eagerly when presented, but Winder did nothing about it. He observed the British march, to be sure. On going out with some scouts, he found an elevation that commanded a distant view of the roadway, and from it studied the column through his glasses.¹⁵ No efforts were made to impede the advance of the British, although Armstrong, had he not remained in Washington, might have described to Winder and helped execute some of the delaying measures taken against Burgoyne in 1777.¹⁶

Both Winder's and Ross's armies heard the series of explosions as Barney's gunboats were destroyed. Ross entered Upper Marlboro and waited at the home of Dr. William Beanes until he could gain reliable information from spies on the situation in Washington, the nature of the defending army, the capacity of its leadership and the best approach to the city. Cockburn already had spies in Washington and apparently Ross, on landing, added to their number.¹⁷

At two o'clock on the afternoon of the twenty-second Ross received the intelligence for which he had been waiting. The deliberation which had attended his earlier movements suddenly ended. Leaving 500 marines and his 6-pounder at Upper Marlboro to protect his rear, which might be attacked by the militia gathering at Annapolis, he put the balance of his army, 3,500 men, on the roadway toward Washington and resumed his position with the advance guard.

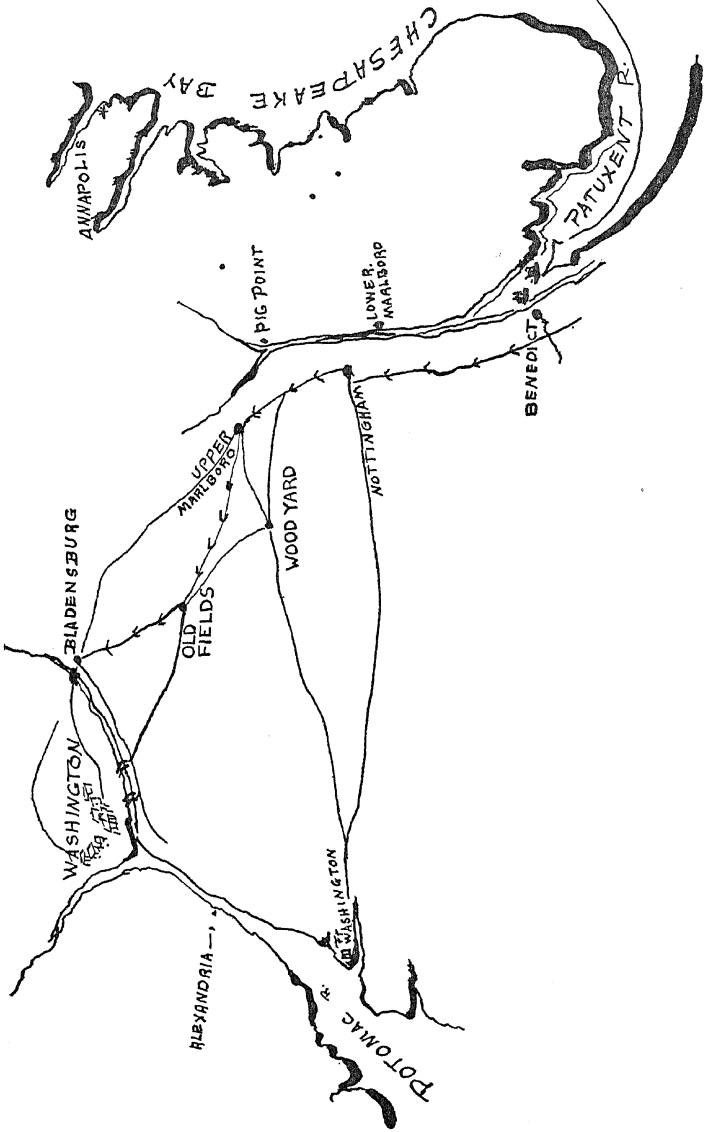
7.

General Winder's camp at Long Old Fields, now the town of Forestville, Maryland, was the scene of confusion on the night of August 22 while Ross's army slept peacefully half a dozen miles away. Winder's army at this stage was an aggregation of indefinite form and size, rated by him to number 3,200 men, but according to the *Gazette*, he drew rations for 7,000 from the quartermaster corps for delivery on the morning of the twenty-third. Even at that his men were poorly provisioned because the quartermaster was scarcely functioning. The supply wagons were transporting government records to Virginia. Winder's army, being then without the reinforcements from Baltimore, probably did not number more than 4,000, with an additional 1,500 subject to his call at Fort Washington and Alexandria. The largest unit was Smith's Georgetown brigade.

Subsequent testimony showed that the camp was "as open as a racetrack," and "noisy as a fair."¹⁸ Militia soldiers were coming and going through the night. There was boisterous talk and quarreling. No one trusted the discretion of the pickets. Those entering the camp shouted the countersign from a distance, taking no chances of surprising the sentries and drawing their impetuous fire. Anyone desiring access might have obtained it by waiting fifty yards in the woods until the password was revealed. The army was still without tents and camped in the open fields.

Repose finally settled over the assembly after midnight, but it was repose of short duration. At two o'clock on the morning of the twenty-third the false alarm, which usually overtakes raw troops on their first bivouac in the presence of the enemy, caused Winder, mindful of the night surprise of the British at Stoney Creek, to turn out the entire army and keep it in formation until daylight. It was the second night without sleep for the soldiers. During the night the President, Secretary Armstrong, Attorney General Rush and a number of orderlies arrived for a review of the troops at nine o'clock in the morning.

Mr. Madison, who had slept little, conversed with Winder and Smith while the parade was being arranged.¹⁹ The men straggled



The Chesapeake Bay Theater

past the reviewing stand in fair order, yet their appearance was nothing to disconcert any spies who might observe it. Half the men were in civilian attire and others were only partially uniformed. Barney's seamen closed the procession. The commander was garbed in a flashy blue uniform and imparted a bit of swagger to his small command.

Just after the review ended Colonel Thomas L. McKenney, superintendent of Indian Affairs, who was serving as a voluntary aide on the staff of General Smith, rode in with some vedettes with whom he had been scouting around the British camp at Upper Marlboro. McKenney had picked up two men who described themselves as British deserters. He brought these prisoners forward and Mr. Madison, in his role as commander in chief of the Army, examined them. The learned President did not prove to be adept as a third-degree inquisitor, for according to McKenney's report the deserters divulged less than nothing about the complexion of the invading army. They did not know the name of the general who commanded them, which was still a mystery to the Americans. They did not know where they had been or what the British destination might be. They were entirely unenlightened about the size of the British force. Colonel McKenney then took over the questioning and asked the prisoners to look about at Winder's army and say whether the British was equal to it. They looked about, smiled pleasantly and responded: "We think it is."²⁰

President Madison saw that little was to be gained by prolonging his research among prisoners. With him men were less communicative than books. He gathered his party and returned to Washington.

Winder's urgent calls on Baltimore for assistance awakened a response in that city, although it had its own defense problems to consider and could not part with all its troops. Baltimore was commanded by the veteran Revolutionary War general and senator, Samuel Smith, who had three brigades of volunteer and drafted militia, in addition to the small regular force at Fort McHenry under Major George Armistead.

General Smith recognized that Winder's need was the more

urgent and assigned to Winder the brigade of General Tobias E. Stansbury, another Revolutionary War soldier, and half of Stricker's brigade, consisting of the 5th Maryland Infantry commanded by Lieutenant Colonel Sterett. Smith sent also two companies of artillery and a rifle battalion led by former Ambassador, Congressman and Attorney General William Pinkney to act under Winder's orders.

During his parsimonious administration of the War Department, Secretary Eustis had saved money on Army uniforms, with the result that none were available for federal issue to the Baltimore units now being mustered into the federal service. Equipment owned by Stansbury's brigade included winter but not summer uniforms. Those who marched in the woolen regimentals suffered severely from the intense heat.

Stansbury was in a position at Bladensburg on the early evening of August 22. Another Maryland unit assigned to Winder was a regiment of 800 men under Colonel William D. Beall, also a soldier of the Revolution, which guarded Annapolis. The Maryland militia which concentrated at or near Bladensburg on August 23 made an army of about 3,300 men. With these, plus his own 4,000 men at Long Old Fields, ten miles away, Winder should have been able to stop the British advance.

8.

News that the British were at Upper Marlboro, less than twenty miles via the Navy Yard bridge from the President's house, intensified the excitement in Washington. A correspondent to New York merchants wrote on the twenty-second: "I have just returned from taking a load of children eight miles out of town and the road was filled with women and children."²¹

Another letter of the same date to Cox and Montandvert, New York merchants, gave a clearer picture of the confusion:

The distress here in Georgetown is beyond description—women and children running in every direction. All the papers from the public offices have been removed today and all persons who could get a conveyance have moved what they could. General Hill commands the enemy in person and has from 7,000 to

10,000 men, only 300 of which are mounted. Our troops advanced about 18 miles today but are retiring. All is confusion, as you may easily imagine. I never saw so much distress in my life as today. I am fearful by 12 o'clock tomorrow this city will not be ours.²²

Still another letter from Georgetown described the consternation:

I cannot find language to express the situation of the women and children, who are running the streets in a state bordering on distraction; their husbands, fathers and brothers all under arms, scarce a man to be seen in the city. Some are trying to remove their bedding, clothes and furniture, while others are determined to stay by their homes until they are burnt round them.

When the British started toward Washington, S. Pleasanton, one of Monroe's State Department clerks, began packing the Department files. Believing that a government depends more on its records than its buildings, Pleasanton had immediately ordered a large number of linen sacks, and as soon as they were delivered he began to transfer the official papers to them. Secretary of War Armstrong, passing down the hallway from the adjacent War Department, observed the activity and put his head through the door to remark that it "looked to him like an unnecessary alarm."²³

Pleasanton nevertheless obtained wagons and on the twenty-second transferred the State Department to a gristmill owned by Edgar Patterson on the Virginia side of the chain bridge. The mill did not impress him as being sufficiently secure, so a day later the records were carried on to Leesburg, Virginia, where an unoccupied house was rented and the government papers were placed under the custodianship of the Reverend Mr. Littlejohn, collector of internal revenues for the district. President Madison, acting on Monroe's advice, was taking an interest in the preservation of the papers. Soon the War Department files, also despite Armstrong's complacency, were on the way to Leesburg. Thus the original records of the Revolutionary War soldiers, or those which had survived the War Department fire of 1800 and the Treasury fire of 1800, were saved.²⁴

9.

General Ross moved about five miles down the road toward Washington. Then sometime after 3:30 o'clock on the afternoon of August 23 his head of column touched the American outpost in advance of Barney's and Peter's batteries. The American pickets were at the bottom of a wooded ridge, on the crest of which the artillery was concealed. Ross had noticed the rising ground ahead and had ridden forward to the point of his army when the Americans saluted the British with scattering musket fire.²⁵ He drove in the American picket, thereby unmasking the batteries, which were supported on the elevation by what appeared to be 1,000 to 1,200 American infantry. Ross made a feint toward Fort Washington²⁶ on the Potomac, which caused Winder to seek the safety of the capital city.²⁷

The night march of Winder's army into Washington became a movement of great disorder. The most conservative description of it was that it was "precipitate." It was, in fact, a virtual run to the false security of the city. The committee of Congress which later investigated the retirement was informed that the captains at the side of the column hurried along the men, "who were extremely fatigued and exhausted before they reached the camping ground near the Eastern Branch Bridge."²⁸

At the time Winder was beginning his withdrawal, Colonel Monroe was reaching Stansbury's camp in Bladensburg. He had moved on the flank of the British army during its advance. Monroe had no military authority but he did not want to see the country lost by a delicacy about prerogatives. He took it on himself to make suggestions and only regretted that he could not deliver them as orders. His first suggestion to Stansbury was to advance toward Upper Marlboro and fall on Ross's rear while Winder was in his front.²⁹

Stansbury was in poor condition to undertake any kind of a movement. His men, unaccustomed to rapid marching, were still suffering from their hike from Baltimore. The beef issued them in rations on the twenty-third was tainted and the flour was musty. In one regiment 250 were ill. To add to their difficulties,

one of the sentries fired a random shot into a thicket where he heard a noise which would not respond to a challenge. The entire command, like Winder's on the night before, had to be formed for a night attack and kept under arms until daylight. Monroe was with Stansbury at midnight, at which time, because of the poor intelligence service, the Bladensburg forces had not received information of Winder's withdrawal to southwest Washington. This word came at 2 A.M. in the form of an order from Winder directing Stansbury "to give battle to the enemy, should he appear at Bladensburg, in which case, if necessary, I will join you."

Stansbury immediately called a council of war. His officers agreed that their small force could not fight unaided a British Army estimated at from 9,000 to 12,000 men and believed to be commanded by Lord Hill, one of the best tacticians of Europe. Stansbury did maintain himself until daylight, but then judged his position to be so exposed that he vacated Bladensburg and moved down the east side of the East Branch. He hoped to cross into Washington by Bennings Bridge, from which a road led into Maryland Avenue at the city limits at H Street, Northeast. When he arrived at this bridge he found that it had been destroyed. There was no way into Washington except by Bladensburg, where the East Branch of the Potomac narrowed to a fordable rivulet. Stansbury hesitated and called on Winder for instructions.

Monroe, confused when he learned of Winder's hurried retreat, rode into Washington to learn what was occurring.

After his demoralizing withdrawal to Washington, General Winder appeared to be thoroughly defeated by the rigors of the four-day campaign. He was worn out physically and mentally. He had fallen to the ground during the night and was still suffering from the shock of the accident.

When his army reached Combs, the general, who was on a jaded, borrowed horse, rode in to the President's house and had a talk with Madison, whom he cast into the depths of gloom. He then went to Armstrong, roused him out of bed and conferred at greater length. As he was starting back to the Navy Yard, his horse collapsed and Winder had to walk all the way from the

west side of the Capitol. The distressed man was thoroughly spent and fell into the gutter en route, but managed to make the rest of the distance unaided. The degree to which he was prostrated mentally was evidenced by a letter he wrote to Armstrong just after he had seen that official. He formally requested the guidance of the Secretary and the government.

The result of this letter was a council of war convened soon after dawn at the Navy Yard, in the house of the chaplain, Dr. Hunter. It was attended by President Madison, Secretary Armstrong, Secretary of the Navy Jones, Attorney General Rush, Secretary of the Treasury George Washington Campbell, some subordinates and General Winder. The President was accompanied as usual by his devoted freedman retainer, Jim Smith. A crowd of women, children and idlers collected as the meeting progressed.

When news spread about Washington that a council was in progress, various of the town's prominent civilians rode to the Navy Yard and walked in and out of the meeting at their pleasure to give their opinions about the defense of the city. Mr. Madison was baffled. One glance was sufficient to tell him that the experiment with the cousin of the Federalist governor of Maryland had been a failure. Yet Winder could hardly be condemned; the situation was just as the British newspapers explained to the home public in order that they might understand the phenomenon of the Battle of Bladensburg. Giving Winder command had been like suddenly handing over to some distinguished British lawyer, such as Lord Brougham, the job of Wellington.

Monroe reached the Navy Yard at just about the time Major Laval's dragoons, who were watching the British Army, galloped in with news that the enemy was moving directly on Bladensburg. It was ten o'clock in the morning.

Without waiting for more conversation, Monroe asked and obtained the President's permission to go to Bladensburg. He mounted and was gone. The council continued for a time, and not until 11 A.M., an hour later, did Winder direct his troops to march through Washington to Bladensburg. The army had been waiting at Combs, on the outskirts of Washington.

10.

There was tumult and disorder at the Navy Yard as the cabinet council ended and the army hurried away to battle. Clusters of Negroes stood in the streets to give rapt attention to the confused activity.

Secretary of the Treasury Campbell (he was christened George and personally had added the Washington) seems to have considered this council the culminating indignity that could be imposed on a cabinet member. He was disgusted with trying to get money for the war from a nation that would not respond. His bond with Madison was merely that they had both been Princeton honor students. As he left the meeting, he handed to the President his brace of big dueling pistols, much as though he were turning in his commission. The guns seemed almost as large as the little President, but Madison buckled them around his waist. They had been to Bladensburg before, when Campbell, as a member of the House, shot his colleague, Barent Gardenier, in a duel over the latter's charges that the American Congress was under French influence. After bestowing his pistols on Madison, Campbell went by his lodging, packed a few belongings and rode on to his home in Tennessee, whence he sent in his written resignation. Everything in Washington down to the title, which John Randolph had fixed on him, of the "Prince of Prigs and Puppies" displeased him. He was through.

Finally the atmosphere at the Navy Yard began to clear. The army had gone and Armstrong had followed them, for he believed Winder's condition would make Madison want the Secretary of War to command the army. Madison had mounted with Secretary Jones and Attorney General Rush, and they were beginning to move away. It was almost noon and only the gathering of women and children and the clusters of Negroes bore testimony of the late excitement.

Suddenly in front of the President loomed the only show of force and character that had yet appeared in all the host assigned to the protection of the American capital. It was the seamy-faced commodore of the United States Navy, Joshua Barney, issuing

seaman oaths and buccaneer imprecations, storming and denouncing, making the President think that the whole British army had suddenly hit him a solar-plexus blow. The Negroes hurriedly formed a wreath about the group at a respectful and safe distance, while Barney got his story off his chest.

In hastening to Bladensburg, General Winder had forgotten all about the 503 seamen of the Pig Point flotilla, who, according to Barney, were "the precious few fighting men in the whole damned army."

Smith had pulled out with the District of Columbia militia, but he could give no directions to a detachment from another Department. One by one the Army officers had left. Finally one of them had offered the sailors the pinched-up little assignment of minding the Navy Yard bridge while the soldiers were fighting the British at Bladensburg. It was thimble-headed stupidity, nonsense and tomfoolery "to give these 500 seamen a job that any damned corporal in the army can better do with five!" the enraged sailor stormed. His men were not going to do that job, not if he could throw a harpoon into some petty official's stomach. The historian Henry Adams gently called it a "disrespectful remonstrance."

The sensitive President, unaccustomed to this firsthand contact with rough strength and embarrassed at having anyone and everyone denounced in such bold waterman's language in front of a gathering of slaves and colored freedmen, hastened to pacify Barney by volunteering to the Secretary of the Navy that there must have been a mistake somewhere. Mr. Jones hurriedly agreed that something had gone awry and told Barney to get his big guns and his seamen and hurry after the army to Bladensburg.

To protect the Navy Yard entry into Washington, the simple process was followed of blowing up the bridge.

Madison and Rush were joined by General John Mason, the commissioner of prisoners, and Colonel Decius Wadsworth, both close friends of the President. The four men started on horseback to Bladensburg, seven miles from the Navy Yard. En route Madison, still greatly perturbed over the army's leadership, discussed the matter with the attorney general, who rode abreast him.³⁰ It

was a late season for indecision, for as the President and his party rode northward through the District of Columbia toward the small Maryland village, a long, red column of Wellington's veterans was executing the famous "Moore quickstep" (alternating three steps at a trot and three at a walk) on the other side of the town.³¹ Madison finally decided that he would have to restrain Armstrong and place his reliance on the Baltimore barrister.

Reaching the army, which was going into position, the President was just behind Armstrong. Accounts of their meeting have been provided, but none is fully satisfactory. One quotes Madison as saying bluntly: "It is too late to make any change. Come with me and leave the decision of the defense to the military authorities, where it belongs."

However the President may have worded his instructions, Armstrong was both enraged and disappointed. He soon detached himself from the President's party and had little further contact with Madison. He later explained that he "now became, of course, a mere spectator of the combat." As the battle was opening the President saw that the army needed one and not half a dozen commanders, and announced, "Leave the military functionaries the discharge of their own duties on their own responsibility."

II.

Ross, despite the heat, had ordered the most rapid movement possible against Bladensburg. The troops responded. "Never did I suffer more from heat and fatigue," one of his soldiers said. The temperature was 98° in the morning of August 24 and continued to go higher. Many fell from the ranks. Ross allowed one good halt at a stream. Some Americans who saw the column said that the tongues of the British soldiers were hanging from their mouths. An account after the battle was that twelve were found dead in the fields along the road, not one having a bullet wound.

At 12:45 P.M. the general, riding again with the advance party, reached Lowndes Heights overlooking Bladensburg village and cast about over the surrounding country with his glasses.

Lieutenant Gleig supplies a description of the American army

as it appeared to General Ross at that moment. The force in their front might have been taken for anything "rather than an army on whose valour the safety of a great capital depended." Some of the Americans wore black coats, some blue, and others shooting jackets. Still others were garbed in what he termed "round frocks." These were linen or cotton field tunics. The "three motley lines" of infantry were obviously poorly equipped, but their order was "tolerably regular." Gleig thought "they might have passed off very well for a crowd of spectators come out to view the approach of the army." Two or three battalions wore the blue jacket "which the Americans had borrowed from the French," and maintained some of the aspects of regular troops; but the remainder "seemed like country people who were much more properly employed attending to their agricultural occupations." Some squadrons of horse were visible and the British officers counted twenty pieces of artillery.

Gleig's description continues with a hint of smugness. He gives this picture of the advancing British army: "The dress, the perfect regularity of their step, the good order which they preserved and, above all, the internal conviction that they were marching to victory," characterized their movements.

Ross turned to Major Brown, commanding the advance party, and directed him to carry the town in his front. The major moved forward, expecting to find the houses filled with marksmen. To his amazement he saw that they were altogether unoccupied. As the remaining units of his army came forward unchecked, General Ross formed his light division for attack.

Defeat at Bladensburg

Of the American officers and cabinet members gathered at the Navy Yard, Colonel Monroe reached Bladensburg the earliest. With customary aggressiveness, amounting here to an intrusion, he began to suggest defensive measures to Stansbury and Stansbury's subordinates. The Secretary of State later was to regret this liberty but at the moment his eagerness to become a participant overcame him.

Already on the field was Francis Scott Key, late opponent of warfare of any variety. Officially he was no more than a civilian onlooker, one who, incidentally, had never seen a battle, but he was as active as Stansbury's officers in drawing up the troops for combat.¹ He could not have been so influential had he retained his earlier status as a member of Peter's District of Columbia militia battery; as an unattached attorney he had broader prerogatives on the field.² Like Monroe, Key rode along the line Stansbury had selected and accompanied detachments to positions which to his fine legal eye looked favorable for defense. Present also on one of his thoroughbreds was the wealthy Baltimore merchant and Congressman, Alexander McKim, who asserted that he had voted for the war and meant to stand by the soldiers who had to fight it.

Other civilians were there to add to the confusion. It was not until the arrival of Attorney General Richard Rush that stump oratory was attempted. Rush, the son of the distinguished Philadelphia physician, the speaker who had carried the campaign load for Mr. Madison in 1812 and the young man of the cabinet, knew all the justifications for the war and judged it important that the soldiers too should know them. But he had hardly got his theme well launched before a disgusted officer with an aversion

to politics reprimanded him by saying the soldiers did not need to be told their duty.

I.

Stansbury placed his artillery in the first line, one battery behind the single trench which commanded the East Branch bridge and others scattered without effort to obtain a converging fire. He stationed his prize regiment, the 5th Baltimore, and two Washington companies, as artillery supports. Stull's riflemen, one of the Washington companies, were still doubtfully examining the muskets just issued to them.³ The 5th faced the East Branch bridge. Ahead of the guns, but removed from the river instead of in the protective timber near the riverbank, Stansbury posted Pinkney's rifle battalion. The regiments of Ragan and Schutz formed his second line.

Half an hour ahead of the British came Colonel William D. Beall with 800 militiamen from Annapolis who had marched sixteen miles that morning.⁴ Almost simultaneously the commanding general of the department, William Henry Winder, came dashing to the field at a gallop, followed eventually by the army from the Navy Yard that had rushed pell-mell into Washington on the previous evening.

Leaving Stansbury's two lines in their advanced stations, Winder arranged a third line on the hill above them. The third line was thus nearer Washington and too far removed for effective co-operation. The ridge along which the third line stationed itself follows the District of Columbia line. It afforded Winder an admirable position for defense provided his entire army should there be united. Smith, with the District of Columbia troops, was on the left; Colonel Beall, who, after arriving from the opposite direction, had passed through Stansbury's ranks, was recessed on the right. In the center were 300 regular soldiers, recently recruited and almost as green as the militia, under Lieutenant Colonel William Scott. With these was a company of United States Marines under Captain Samuel Miller.

Thus ten minutes before the battle opened, Winder's and Stansbury's armies were finally being joined, although nearly a

mile still intervened between the separate lines they presented to the enemy. Apparently forgetful that in a defensive maneuver fortune usually favors the larger army, Winder sent to Stansbury's artillery the extraordinary instructions: "When you retreat, take notice that you retreat by the Georgetown road."⁵ Winder brought into line an army of almost 7,000 men.

These dispositions were being completed when a mounted detachment halted in the rear of Winder's position and surveyed the spectacle of an American army making ready for combat. It was Mr. Madison, the President, wearing his dueling pistols and accompanied by Rush, Wadsworth and others of his entourage. Except for Lincoln's visit to Fort Stevens on the 7th Street pike during Jubal Early's raid on Washington, when Mr. Lincoln was within range of desultory firing, this appearance by Mr. Madison at Bladensburg constitutes the only presence of the commander in chief with an American army in battle. It is one of the whims of history that such a distinction should go to the peaceful Madison. The small, delicate, reticent and erudite "Father of the Constitution," who was among the most learned of American Presidents, was greatly out of his element on the battlefield. An anonymous wag composed the doggerel "The Bladensburg Races" to commemorate the occasion, and put into the President's mouth these words:

"Nor, Winder, do not fire your guns
Nor let your trumpets play,
Till we are out of sight—forsooth,
My horse will run away."

President Madison nearly was guilty of wandering into the center of the British Army. He left the rear and rode through the heart of the American position until he reached the East Branch bridge into Bladensburg, which he was about to cross when an American scout told him he was already in no man's land and that the enemy was just over Lowndes Hill.⁶ He turned back and met Monroe, who informed him of the American alignment and the approach of the British.

The moment when Monroe and the President conferred chanced to be the one during which Stansbury and Smith, both

brigadier generals of militia, were arguing about their rank and their respective claims to be second in command under Winder. The dispute diverted Stansbury's attention and permitted Monroe to assume additional supervision. Monroe rode rapidly to the front line of the army, where he threw Stansbury's command into fresh confusion by shifting the positions of some of the units.⁷

Possibly he weakened the first line and gave the second line the position he did because he contemplated a pocketing of the British after they had crossed the East Branch. He may have intended to use Sterett, on the extreme left, to strike them in the flank while they were attacking Schutz and Ragan. Monroe requested Winder to inspect the new position. Stansbury also went to Winder, but nothing was done, although there was still time before the red flash of British infantry shone through the foliage along the Bladensburg street.

When Stansbury saw what had occurred he flew into a fury and threatened to leave the field. "The order is an outrage and can only result in disaster," he stormed. After the battle his words were more moderate but no less emphatic. In his report he said: "Whose plan it was I know not; it was not mine, nor did it meet my approbation."

Exactly what was in Monroe's mind is subject only to conjecture; the Secretary never gave much testimony about this churning up of the forward elements of the army. The interference earned for him Armstrong's denunciation of a "busy and blundering tactician"⁸ and the criticism of others. But Monroe's intervention probably made little difference in the outcome. The promptness with which Stansbury's army fled the field makes unimpressive any contention that in slightly altered circumstances it would have displayed tenacity. Nonetheless, Monroe may have been imprudent in making the changes, and certainly he did not have the authority to do so.

Winder was near Stansbury's second line studying through his glasses the appearance of the first British soldiers to reach the crest of Lowndes Hill, when a messenger handed him a note announcing that General Izard had just won a great triumph over

British General Drummond on the border and captured 1,000 men.⁹ The information was as bizarre and false as every other note in the Bladensburg battle, yet Winder was elated and directed that the intelligence be circulated among Stansbury's soldiers.

Shortly thereafter the men let out a mysterious shout. Winder thought it was their enthusiasm over the good tidings of Izard's victory. British officers heard it, and Gleig judged it a shout of defiance raised by the Americans on their first sight of the enemy. Some thought it meant the arrival of more District of Columbia troops in the rear. Whatever it was—and it has never been explained—the shout marked the beginning of the battle.

With his light brigade in the advance, Ross made straight for the bridge over the East Potomac, which in any proper American preparation should have been the first thing destroyed. About a third of his army, 1200 men, formed his assaulting party.¹⁰

As the attack approached the bridge a galling fire was begun by Pinkney's riflemen. Taken with the grape from a two-gun battery behind Stansbury's trench near the main roadway, the fire indicated that the American army meant to contest the crossing with vigor and caused the British to waver. But Ross was not to be delayed by a flash of resistance unsupported by an aggressive countermovement. As a brigade commander he had plowed with the Iron Duke through Marshal Jourdan at Vittoria, where, as Robert Southey said, the French "were beaten before the town, in the town, out of the town, behind the town, and all around the town." Consequently he knew how to carry an attack forward. One of his subordinates stood near him as he watched through his glasses, and to allay any possible tendency toward hesitation at this moment of first resistance, observed: "What will they say of us in England, if we stop now?" Ross turned and said sharply to those about him, "Even if it rains militia we go on."¹¹

Ross stationed some of the light companies of the 85th Regiment behind the willows and larches on the riverbank and others behind the houses and barns of the village. Because he had no artillery with which to command a crossing, drawing with him

only the two 3-pounders, he had to employ his infantry to cover the assault. To the right and left of the bridge, on elevations above the trees, he set up his rocket tubes. Then he ordered Colonel Thornton to cross.

2.

With a rush from the trees and bushes on the opposite shore, the British, though suffering from Pinkney's rifles and Stansbury's guns, swept across the bridge. They turned quickly to right and left, threw their heavy knapsacks into squad piles along the west bank of the stream and formed files of skirmishers ten paces apart. Meanwhile the firing from the other side of the stream had pressed back the American riflemen. Pinkney, regarded as the country's leading constitutional lawyer, well known to the British from his ambassadorship at St. James's, held his ground and came close to falling into enemy hands as the British skirmishers started forward. A musket ball struck him in the upper arm and broke the bone. He fell, but some of his soldiers helped him back from the advancing British.

Before the files of British skirmishers could reach the first line of the American position, Ross opened on the second line with his rockets. These missiles were disgustingly effective. They caused a mad rush of men and animals in a frenzy of panic. Terrorized spectators merged with the mob. Turned in the other direction, the mob might have cut wildly through Ross's army. What it did was dash headlong back into Washington, then on to Georgetown, Tennallytown and Montgomery Court House, a day's journey distant, and then, its fear-driven vigor still unspent, on to the foothills overlooking the Potomac.¹²

There were many reasons for this stampede, to be sure, but not the sudden apprehension, as some of the men said, that their homes were endangered by a slave insurrection.¹³ Most factors that make men run from danger—irresolution, strange adversaries of unknown power, lack of discipline, pusillanimous leadership—were present. No element conducive to resistance existed in the American ranks. Under the barrister's leadership, the army was fairly certain to become a rabble before the engagement was far

advanced. Yet it was scarcely to be expected that Americans defending their capital would break almost before they felt the enemy's lead and would fly from the most innocuous weapon that has appeared in modern warfare—the Congreve rocket—which the British Army soon abandoned because it ceased to frighten even savage tribes.

The first few discharges of rockets passed over the heads of Stansbury's soldiers, who gazed upward as the screeching, sputtering projectiles flew above them. Then the rockets' trajectories were flattened to a more horizontal course. Suddenly men and mules were seized by mad fright. Before Stansbury could make a rallying gesture, the soldiers threw away their guns and dashed frantically from the battlefield. "Never did men with arms in their hands make better use of their legs," the observer Gleig commented. Armstrong, who witnessed, described the flight as "base and infamous." The only casualty was one captain who ran himself to death.¹⁴ Captain Henry Thompson, aide to Brigadier General Stricker in Baltimore, was watching the action for that general from a position above Bladensburg 300 yards from the British Army. He sat down and wrote immediately of the flight, stating that he could distinguish the rockets and their effect plainly "and did not see one strike the American lines."¹⁵ Winder, who was near by, saw to his consternation a "universal" departure of the center and left of Stansbury's command.

At the moment Stansbury's main line was breaking, to be followed promptly by the retirement of the American artillerymen in the first line, Ross was bringing a fresh regiment into action. The 44th, which had just reached Bladensburg, was thrown to the British right, where it forded the stream and appeared suddenly on the left flank of the 5th Baltimore Regiment. Winder, when he saw the greater portion of Stansbury's command leave the field, had ordered the 5th to retire "for the purpose of putting it out of the reach of the enemy." It was a difficult movement, yet the 5th retreated up the hill, only to find that Winder had countermanded the order, "from an aversion," as he explained. "to retire before the necessity became stronger." Again the regiment responded and resumed its former position,

which it reached just as Winder observed the appearance of the enemy on its left. He ordered another retirement, but that was too much for the regiment.¹⁶ It had not yet suffered from the British fire, but its morale, already shaken by the flight of the rest of the line, was shattered. The regiment retired in disorder. "We were outflanked and defeated in as short a time as such an operation could be performed," Colonel Sterett remarked dryly. Nevertheless, in early newspaper accounts of the battle the 5th Baltimore was credited with performing a commendable role.¹⁷

The battle had been in progress less than thirty minutes and an important part of the American Army was gone. The dispersion of the forward lines caused wavering throughout the other militia units stationed in the rear. After Stansbury's flight the commanding general abandoned further pretense at battle and ordered Smith to retreat. The army's backward movement quickly became disordered, and then was a general rout.

Residents of Washington saw with some amusement, amid their general fears, the veteran of Saratoga, who had proclaimed that the British could want nothing "in this sheep walk," come dashing back to the city he had done so little to defend. He spurred his horse until he reached the Capitol, where he met Winder, who likewise arrived ahead of the troops. The commanding general explained that he had left the men and ridden ahead to look for a position. Armstrong at once reiterated an earlier suggestion, made again at the council of war that morning, that the Capitol be garrisoned and defended.¹⁸ Winder objected that the army could not be supplied with water and was in no condition to withstand a siege. Monroe, arriving, concurred with Winder, and Armstrong consented to a retreat to Georgetown. It was merely succumbing to the inevitable, for the militia showed no intention of tarrying.

The French officer, Major Laval, who commanded Winder's cavalry, described the panic:

All of a sudden our men seemed routed. A confused retreat appeared in almost every corner of the battleground. An artillery company drove through the gate near our ravine, crushing down several of our men and horses, nearly taking off and breaking my

thigh by the blow of a wheel, hurrying away one of my troops without my orders, leaving me alone with Captain Burd and fifty-five dragoons.

John Law, an officer of Washington artillery, told of the lack of damage from the British fire:

We had scarcely fired three rounds when the line of the Baltimore militia began to break. Several of the 5th Baltimore Regiment also fled. General Winder ordered us to retreat, in consequence of the flight of the militia. The British column had just then begun to advance. Not a man of our company had been touched by the fire of the enemy; and I thought that the battle was only then seriously commencing. After retreating about a hundred yards, we were directed to continue to retreat, nor were we at any time told where to rally.

In his report to General Stricker Captain Thompson credited Winder's army with much less than half an hour's engagement. Ten minutes after the British crossed the bridge, he said, the Americans were out of sight. Miserable as was the behavior of Stansbury's soldiers, General Smith insisted that Winder's orders calling for his retirement were altogether unnecessary. Colonel Beall declined to recognize the retreat order. He held a knoll at the right of the third line, south of the Bladensburg-Washington highway. He kept his men steady for a time, awaiting further development of the British intentions. Captain Miller with his marines likewise held to his position on the roadway in the center of the last American line.

General Ross was somewhat astonished to see the American army suddenly leave the field just as the engagement appeared to be beginning. Passing the positions that had been held by the first two American lines, he proceeded with his regiments at a cautious pace up the turnpike toward Washington. It was not yet two o'clock, but to all appearances the skirmish had already been won.

There was another stir in the rear of the American position. Breaking through the crowds of fleeing soldiers at the crest of the hill at the District of Columbia line, rolling along like a boy on a lark, came wind-wrinkled Joshua Barney with his 503 sea-

men. Mules toiled before carts laden with ammunition for which the Navy Yard had been ransacked and some of the men, harnesses about their shoulders, helped draw the five great Navy guns, two 12- and three 18-pounders.

For Barney the defense of the American capital had not yet started.

3.

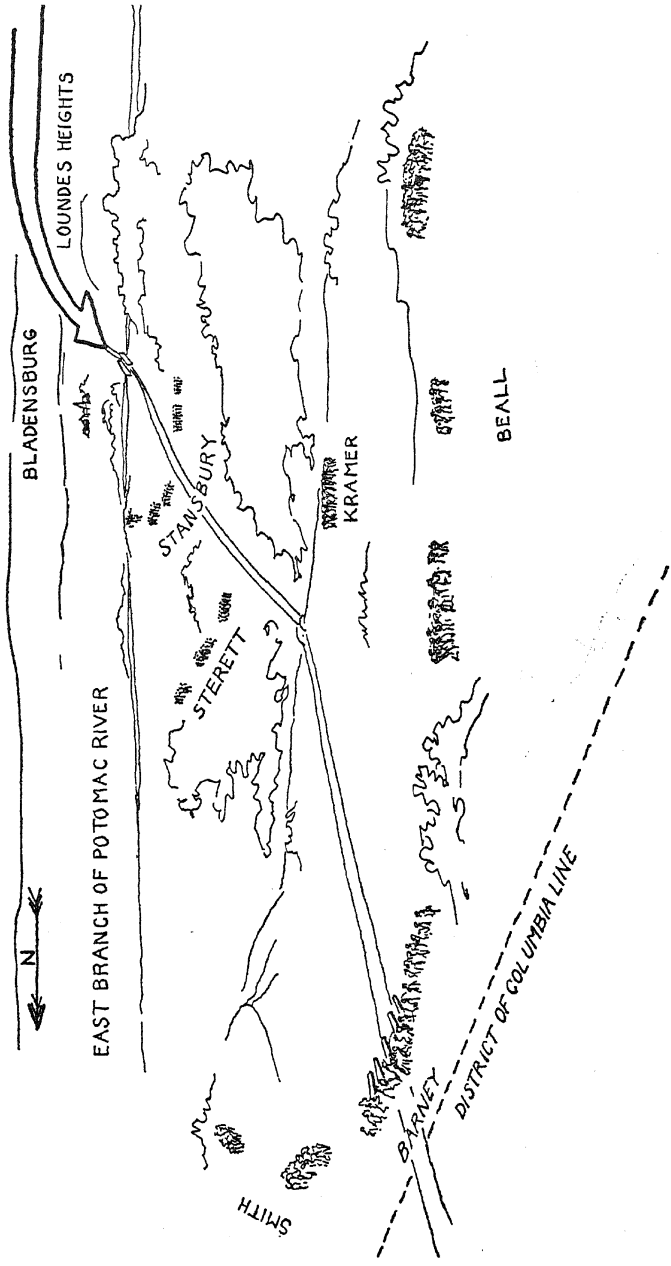
Reaching the field at the moment of the rout, Barney received no orders from General Winder, who was being swept away.¹⁹ He devoted the few minutes at his disposal to arranging emplacements for the big guns and laying out a defensive line for his seamen.

Captain Miller, along with his subordinate, Captain Alexander Sevier, placed themselves and their 150 marines at Barney's command. Glancing over the wreckage of the field, the sea captain noted with satisfaction the large body of troops on the knoll to his right. This was Beall's regiment. The fact that it had not fled the field with the remainder of Winder's army encouraged Barney and gave him some hope that he could expect energetic assistance from this quarter.

Ahead of Barney and to his right was a glade, the bit of ground just over the District line in Maryland that had been selected for the duel between Campbell and Gardenier. That precedent confirmed it for the next thirty years as the field of honor for the capital city. There Barney's fellow commodore, Stephen Decatur, later fell.

The enemy soon made their appearance in force. Flanked by skirmishers in the fields and woods, the redcoats moved in column on the main highway toward the center of Barney's position. It was apparent that the British veterans expected no further opposition, but they did pay Barney the compliment of halting when they saw that the hill ahead of them was manned by Americans. Barney held his fire. Shortly, as he expected, the enemy formed for a frontal attack in close order directly up the highway.

When the British neared the incline a hurried volley sounded



The Battle of Bladensburg

from Beall's militia on the right. Then, much to Barney's and Beall's disgust, the entire regiment suddenly took to its heels and headed in the direction of the distant dust clouds that marked the course of Winder's other soldiers. Beall raged but could not hold a man.²⁰ Barney thus was left to fight unaided, with not a militia unit remaining on the field. He ordered one of his 18-pounders to open. The aim of the Navy gun was so accurate that the piece made a direct hit on the British in the road, killing ten and wounding many more. It blew off the road, according to British accounts, an entire company, and caused the column in the rear to seek cover. This British advance consisted of the light troops of the 85th Regiment. The regiment reformed quickly and, being supported by the other units of the light brigade, began a more general movement, along a wider front, against Barney's position. The old commodore, his eyes lighted with the excitement of battle on a new element, answered by bringing his other pieces into action. He used the seamen who were not needed in the gun crews and the marines much as he would marksmen in the rigging and along the deck rail as two hulks came together.

These marines and seamen, instead of emitting volleys, sent a continuous withering fire into the close British ranks, while the Navy guns roared with a speed and regularity that astonished the British soldiers quite as much as did their precision. A third attempt was made by the light troops to carry the hill by frontal assault, yet was no more successful than the first two.²¹

General Ross was now at the front, assuming personal direction of the effort to dislodge this stubborn and unexpected opposition. During a lull in the battle an occasional roar from one of Barney's guns caused Captain Thompson and General Stricker's vedettes on the road beyond Bladensburg to wonder what kind of action was still in progress. Meanwhile the road over the undulating country between Barney and Bladensburg was filled with a new column of soldiers in faded red, the celebrated King's Own Regiment, which had yet taken no part in the engagement. When the regiment was up Ross extended his lines through the woods to his left and again placed the assault under the direction

of Colonel Thornton. That officer, with his customary energy, began a movement against the right of Barney's position.

Barney was well prepared in that quarter. Two of his 12-pounders were placed to sweep the dueling glade, while Captain Miller's marines, together with all the seamen who could be spared from the forward guns, were shifted to meet this threat on the starboard. Barney again held his fire and again let loose with cannister at close range. The King's Own was staggered. First to fall, severely wounded, was Colonel Thornton. Before the regiment could close the great gaps caused by Barney's guns or before Colonel Brooke, who took over the command, could reform it, a wave of wild, shouting sailors, armed with cutlasses and muskets, and a line of marines with bayonets swarmed down from the hill. The seamen charged with the cry of "Board 'em! Board 'em!" It was over in a flash. The impact of this sudden assault was too much for the startled British soldiers, already torn by the well-served artillery. They recoiled, turned and quickly regained the cover of the woods. This was the moment for a counterattack all along the line, if an American army had been present to deliver it.

Barney was finally on foot, his big bay shot through the head. He took a position immediately behind one of the 18-pounders. Two score of his men were lying about the hill, fifteen of them dead, but considering the damage he had inflicted the loss was not heavy. His greatest disaster had resulted from a brief entanglement with Beall's flying militia. Half a dozen of his mules, frightened by the turmoil, broke away from their tenders and dashed into the rout with the reserve ammunition carts. Captain Miller of the marines was wounded and out of action.

General Ross, however, did not intend to continue wasting men in futile small attacks against Barney. He was now fully advised that he faced troops of different character from those confronting him earlier in the afternoon. The force before him obviously was small and its flanks were unprotected. He could readily reach its rear. He dispatched the 4th Regiment on a wider enveloping movement and at the same time pushed forward the 85th and portions of the 44th Regiment on Barney's

front and left. The seamen were being assailed from three directions. At this critical moment Barney was dropped by a musket ball. The bullet entered his hip, where it remained embedded and eventually caused his death.²²

It was approaching four o'clock, and there was no indication that Winder had been able to rally any portion of his army. Sweeping across the high ground in the rear of Barney's right, which had been occupied by Beall when the battle opened, came the reorganized line of the King's Own with fixed bayonets. The regiment was not one to remain rebuffed, and a second sudden charge was not likely to repel it. Even from Barney's prone position it was clear that the fight was ending. He issued directions for his remaining seamen and marines to withdraw. To those who were fashioning a litter to carry him with them he gave an emphatic order that he would remain where he had fallen. He, for one, would not retreat. Some of his men wanted to stay with him to the finish, but Barney denied them the privilege. He later refuted with a great deal of firm language British statements that some of his sailors, with fuses in their hands, were bayoneted at their guns. He fought his men hard, but he pushed them into the lifeboats when the riddled hulk of his battle line took a fatal list. There were no unnecessary sacrifices.

When the firing ceased, General Ross walked up the hill with Admiral Cockburn. The admiral, remembering the bruises inflicted on him in the coves of the Chesapeake, glanced about at the dead and wounded in naval garb, and turned to Ross. "I told you it was the flotilla men!" he exclaimed.

"They have given us our only real fighting," the general responded.²³

A British soldier found Barney behind one of the big guns. Ross went to him, congratulated him warmly on his battle and immediately paroled him. The general told Barney he would convey him to Washington when the British army entered, back to Bladensburg or anywhere else in reason the commodore might name. Not anxious to see the capital in enemy hands, Barney said he would prefer Bladensburg, where the British were using the tavern for a hospital. General Ross had four soldiers make a

litter. After the old commodore had been moved a short distance, he complained of the way they carried him and asked whether the British had no sailors. Cockburn thereupon summoned four seamen who had been drawing the British guns and the journey to Bladensburg was completed to Barney's satisfaction. The Army was not in good order with him that day. Barney was appreciative of the consideration shown him by Ross and Cockburn, who, he said, "treated me as though I was a brother."

In the hospital with Barney was Colonel Thornton, who became his friend. When Ross returned to his fleet after the occupation of Washington, he left his wounded, including Thornton, under Barney's supervision in the Bladensburg hospital. They thereby became American prisoners. After Thornton recovered and was exchanged, Barney, still carrying his Bladensburg bullet, accompanied him to the British fleet in the James River, where it was refitting after the repulse at Baltimore. Thornton commanded the left wing of Pakenham's army in the attack on New Orleans.

Another wounded prisoner was one of Stansbury's young soldiers, John P. Kennedy, nineteen years old, who was hit while helping a wounded comrade from the field. It is not always obvious after the ripples have widened where the pebble that originally started them fell, but it is probable that young Kennedy's interest in the United States Navy, over which he was destined to preside in the years of the world supremacy of the American clipper ships, was awakened by the example of Barney's courage at Bladensburg. Distinguished in later life as writer, legislator and cabinet member, Kennedy left his mark on world history by organizing the expedition which opened to commerce the ancient hermit kingdom of Japan and by appointing Commodore Matthew C. Perry to head it.

The day after the battle General Ross bestowed on Barney admiring praise:

A brave officer, sir. He had only a handful of men with him, and yet he gave us a very severe shock. I am sorry he was wounded. However, I immediately gave him a parole and hope he will do well. Had half your army been composed of such men

as your commodore commanded, with the advantage you had in choosing your position, we should never have got to your city.²⁴

The scene of Barney's Battle on the main highway from Baltimore to Washington is now crowded by the great city that has overflowed the District of Columbia boundaries. Clusters of houses, gasoline stations, road stands and overnight cottages cover the ground where his seamen fought. Hundreds of thousands pass the site each year as they go and come to the world's most highly monumented city. Yet Barney's hill is unmarked and forgotten. The gallantry of his 503 seamen and of Captain Miller's marines is lost. American history refers to them rarely, because the page of Bladensburg, on which their story falls, is one that many Americans would rather have forgotten. Barney has no monument. He won no battle. Monuments usually are for men with better odds.

General Ross was altogether accurate in his statement that Barney gave the invaders a severe shock. Accounts of the British loss are conflicting but all show the extent of the pommeling from the big guns. The *National Intelligencer* estimated the British killed at 200 and the American loss at twenty-six killed and fifty-four wounded. Virtually all the American casualties occurred in Barney's Battle. The only other instance of British loss was in crossing the Bladensburg Bridge. Ross reported sixty-four killed and 185 wounded, a total of 249 casualties. He took no notice, however, of his missing, many of whom were killed. Gleig gave the casualties as 500.

It was much too hot at Bladensburg for General Ross to undertake an aggressive pursuit of the fleeing Americans. Cockburn, amused, sent a report to London that the defeated army could not be followed because "the victors were too weary and the vanquished too swift."

General Ross halted his men for two hours on the field for rest and refreshments from the intense heat. After the wounded had been removed he laid out a camp for the larger portion of his army at Bladensburg, thereby maintaining his communication between Washington and the force at Upper Marlboro, which, in turn, kept him in contact with Admiral Cochrane and the

fleet. He formed a new brigade, approximately 1,500 strong, of those who had felt the shock of battle least—chiefly men of the Royal Scots Fusiliers and the 44th Regiment—and sent it to the front.

The August sun, blazing the length of its downward course, finally dropped behind the hills and steaming marshlands of the capital of the American Republic, and in the hot twilight the little British army of 1,500 men from Essex and the Scotch lowlands crossed the District of Columbia line.

Redcoats on the Avenues

General Ross placed himself at the head of an advance party of 200 soldiers and arrived at the outskirts of the city of Washington at eight o'clock on the evening of August 24.

Here, where the presence of dwellings showed that he was within the confines of the straggling capital, he halted his detachment, sounded a drum roll and then moved forward a distance under a white flag. He was seeking a parley with any authorities present in order that the public buildings might be held for indemnity in accordance with his instructions from Lord Bathurst. But the city ahead of him, lighted now by a pale moon in the last glow of evening, bore a silence as grim and ominous to his soldiers as the great pine forests through which they had recently passed. Streets were empty, houses shuttered. The drum roll was unanswered.

I.

Passing in by the old Baltimore turnpike, Ross marched down Maryland Avenue, at the end of which the massive United States Capitol stood starkly silhouetted against the southwestern twilight. Reaching 2nd Street, Northeast, he was suddenly greeted by a volley from the large house on the northwest corner, owned by Robert Sewall and rented by Albert Gallatin during his long service as Secretary of the Treasury. Although the house had been unoccupied since Gallatin's departure for Europe more than a year earlier, it was still regarded as his home.

The volley killed a British soldier, wounded three others and killed the general's horse beneath him. Ross clearly was the target. Few things in the course of the British occupation caused

greater concern to Washington, in retrospect at least, than this effort to shoot the British leader. Ross's clemency, sharply contrasted with Cockburn's well-known grossness and buffoonery, won for him the admiration of many of the residents with whom he came into contact.

The firing on General Ross was variously attributed by newspapers and others to some of Barney's seamen who were unwilling to concede that the battle was over and to either of two local barbers, one a French and the other an Irish immigrant.¹ Although the identity of the men who fired on Ross has never been discovered, it is clear that the British received more than a one-man welcome.

Gleig reported, and insisted after other versions were called to his attention more than half a century later, that Ross was still displaying his white flag at the time of the volley. Gleig judged that those who fired did not understand the significance of the white flag and he tended to exonerate the seamen. Ross ordered his men to surround the house. They found no one in it or near by, except some unarmed Negroes who were hiding in the bushes. The British burned the house to the ground. It was the only private dwelling in the city destroyed by the invading army. Most residents considered the destruction justified.

Ross then moved his 1,500 troops—the smallest army that ever seized the capital of a modern major power—to an open field east of the Capitol, the site now occupied by the Library of Congress and Supreme Court buildings and two or three residential blocks adjacent to the east. Here he waited again in further hope that he could effect an accommodation that would mean a neat sum of prize money for the expedition. But the town was stripped of governmental authorities and of almost everyone else except wide-eyed Negroes who hovered on the rim of the British camp and curiously followed the activities of each small detachment. They carried the information of the arrival of the British to other sections of the city.

In his later writings on the capture of Washington, Secretary Armstrong asserted that General Ross did establish contact on Capitol Hill with Dr. William Thornton, the resourceful, Eng-

lish-born Virgin Islander who had become an active governmental and social figure in the early life of the city. Dr. Thornton was naturally interested in protecting the Capitol, of which he was the principal architect. Armstrong indicated that Thornton was able to reflect something of the President's coldness in maintaining that the United States government would not treat with an invading army. Dr. Thornton provided a detailed account of his activities while the British were in the city, and, because he was a Federalist, he took the precaution to have a witness of Republican faith accompany him during the siege. Armstrong's statement is unsupported by him or his observer.

Thornton's explanation was that on the evening of the twenty-fourth he had joined in the general flight, vacating his F Street home for the security of Georgetown. It was not until the following morning that his sense of duty overcame his apprehensions and caused him to establish contact with the British, and not until the twenty-sixth that by virtue of his commission as Justice of the Peace, making him the only official present, he assumed jurisdiction over the American capital and restored order. In support of Thornton's assertion that he had not neglected any responsibility assigned him it might be said that had Mr. Madison covered the indemnity question before his own departure, it is not likely that he would have selected a Federalist, even one who chanced to be his racing partner, to convey his message to the enemy. Madison was being assailed too generally for reliance on Federalists, of whom General Winder was a last cautioning example.²

2.

When Ross arrived at the Capitol, a deserted, solitary pile crowning the hill above the city, he found the doors barred and forcible entry necessary. The troops were on the alert for surprises and fired a volley through the Capitol windows. It awakened no response.³ Ross's deputy quartermaster, De Lacy Evans, noted on the Peninsula for his intrepid leadership of storming parties, stepped forward at this moment and led the detail of

British soldiers in the less daring charge against the locks of the Capitol doors.

Ross's first intention was to blow up the Capitol with gunpowder, of which he had such an ample supply that it was becoming a problem. The American army had left a considerable quantity on the Bladensburg battlefield along with the ten guns that fell into British hands; other large supplies were in storage in Washington, where that night and the next day he seized 540 barrels, together with 206 cannon and 100,000 rounds of musket-ball cartridges. Gunpowder provided the quickest means of obliterating this great symbol of American independence. But while the method was being discussed some residents of the neighborhood pointed out to Ross that an explosion would endanger the private properties to the north, west and south. He agreed, and directed that the building should be burned.

It was obvious that the general obtained little pleasure from the destruction of the Capitol by any method. Had he not considered himself bound, as he indicated repeatedly, to retaliate for the destruction of the capitol of Upper Canada, he would have contented himself with the destruction only of military and naval stores, regarding which Bathurst's instructions allowed no temporizing or indemnification. General Ross did not survive to explain his work in Washington, which was not touched on in his brief report listing the buildings laid waste by his soldiers. A soldier of the Duke's school, he would not have questioned anything he understood to be his orders. Sir Duncan McDougall, who as a captain of the 85th foot served as his aide-de-camp, wrote many years later that it was not until Ross was "warmly pressed," presumably by Cockburn, that he consented to the burning. The purpose, as McDougall explained it, was to prevent "a repetition of the uncivilized proceedings of the troops of the United States."⁴ Such also was the clear impression conveyed by the general in his conversations on the following day.⁵

But whatever his personal attitude may have been, Ross entered into the demolition with a thorough efficiency, yet held his soldiers under close supervision to prevent the kind of revels they could engage in readily. The Capitol fire was started by a

discharge of gunpowder and rockets, of insufficient force to disturb neighboring buildings, placed in the central, wooden bridge of the Capitol which formed a temporary connection between the two freestone wings. The explosion was heard about the city just before the hour of ten.

A story frequently told about the destruction of the United States Capitol, that of the mock Congress of British soldiers, is supported, like many other traditions of the occupation, by scant historical evidence. In this particular event the spotlight of tradition casts its beam on the haughty, domineering admiral whose restless spirit and aggressive personality soon came to color, even though it could not command, the events of the occupation. Cockburn, the account runs, gathered a detail of His Majesty's foot soldiers in the chamber of the representatives, took the speaker's chair customarily occupied by "the furious orator Clay," rapped for order and boisterously propounded the question: "Shall this harbor of Yankee democracy be burned?" A substantiating element of the story is the language, which is about what the roving admiral would have employed. The "ayes" had it unanimously. The Congress of redcoats having so decided, its members piled up the chairs, mixed in some rockets and other combustibles and soon had the "harbor of democracy" with its library and records of democratic government going up in flames.

The story had its first circulation among members of the legitimate American Congress which met in extra session in Washington in the month following the British occupation. One of the members was Charles Jared Ingersoll, who included the anecdote in his sketch of the second war with Great Britain.⁶ It did not appear in current newspaper descriptions of the occupation nor does it have a place in the British regimental histories or accounts, despite Gleig's tendency toward details. The version of the burning provided by the story is out of keeping with Ross's ideas of discipline; the general frowned on levity between officers and men such as is implied by Cockburn's riotous conduct. But Cockburn was something of a law to himself in American waters and probably would have considered himself under

no restraints when the commanding general was not in hearing distance. Certainly the incident is of a type that he would like to pass on to his good friend the Prince Regent.

In 1814 the United States Capitol did not possess the great dome, the construction of which was not completed until late in 1863 when the figure of Freedom was placed in its commanding position at the summit of the building. The present extensive limestone wings were finished shortly before the War between the States; the hall of representatives was occupied in 1857 and the Senate wing in 1859. They were additions which more than doubled the length and area of the building. In 1814 the grounds were an upgrowth of weeds in summer and were unkept in winter. Partridge could be flushed in the fields near by.⁷ Landscaping had not yet been attempted.⁸

The wings then used by the House and Senate now form portions of the central structure of the present Capitol. They immediately flank the great rotunda and may still be distinguished on the exterior of the building by their color. The earlier wings are Virginia sandstone painted white, while the present limestone House and Senate wings are unpainted. The interior space used by the House in 1814 is now Statuary Hall. The old Senate Chamber was long used by the Supreme Court. The rotunda, which occupies the position of the early wooden bridge, was begun in 1818. Much of the interior of the Capitol as it stood in 1814 was unfinished; the south, the House, wing had been completed only three years earlier. Nonetheless, the edifice was as imposing to the early republic as the existing Capitol is in our own day, and was looked on by the inhabitants of Washington as a fine achievement because it represented the almost continuous building effort of twenty-two years.

The Supreme Court, presided over by John Marshall, heard its cases in the gloomy basement chamber beneath the Senate floor. Three rooms above the Senate were occupied by the Library of Congress, then a meager storehouse of information compared with the impressive personal library that Thomas Jefferson had been collecting for fifty years, which was regarded as one of the finest in the world. By purchasing it from Jefferson a little

later for the modest sum of \$50,000, Congress acquired a library of imposing proportions in place of the scanty shelves it lost to the British.

The Library of Congress had been under the supervision for many years of Samuel A. Otis, secretary to the Senate, who had recently died, causing the direction to pass to Patrick McGruder, clerk of the House. When the British appeared in the Patuxent most of the members of the Capitol staff were called to duty with Smith's brigade. In the hurried departure of the militia, and the absence among those who remained of anyone with the foresight of Pleasanton at the State Department, little attention was given to the removal of the legislative records, and none was given to the library.⁹ Only one cartload of papers was taken from the building.

That so little was saved led a few days later to the publication of charges of neglect against McGruder by J. B. Colvin, another Washington resident. Colvin had been directed by Secretary of the Navy Jones to carry dispatches to Baltimore and had impressed McGruder's horse, which he asserted was engaged in no more important duty than transporting the clerk's personal chattels from the city. An altercation followed which gave public emphasis to what was already clear: no one had been particularly diligent in safeguarding the books and records of the legislative establishment.¹⁰ These literary contents were of interest to the British foot, like those of the government of Upper Canada to the American sailors, only in so far as they helped in the ignition. The fire did not reach the Supreme Court law library, which was not damaged, but did leave many gaps, which are still encountered by research workers and the Library of Congress staff, in the early records of Congress.

One of the British newspapers sought to anticipate the denunciations that followed the burning of the documents by commenting: "There will be great joy in the United States on account of the destruction of all their public and national records, as the people may now invent a *fabulous* origin. They will, however, find a sore obstacle in the Newgate Chronicle." The *Chron-*

icle was the calendar containing biographical information on the most notorious murderers and thieves who had been confined in Newgate prison.

The wooden bridge that joined the stone wings was highly inflammable, as were the wooden floors throughout the building. Only slightly less inflammable was the wooden roof, which was covered by sheet iron. Fifteen minutes after the explosion great flames were licking out the windows and wrapping themselves about the Capitol roof. Gleig described the scene as "striking and sublime," comparable to the burning of San Sebastian.¹¹

Another conflagration along the Potomac water front was lighting up the city. Secretary Jones had directed Commodore Thomas Tingey, commandant at the Navy Yard, to destroy that establishment when the British entered the city. Entreaties from citizens living in the neighborhood, who feared that destruction of the yard would mark the end of Washington as a naval and shipbuilding center, did not deter the commander.

Tingey and Secretary Jones were severely condemned then and subsequently for what some regarded a hasty and unnecessary action.¹² Those who criticized believed that if the American naval authorities had not destroyed the yard the British would have left it intact, because Ross had no trains with his army and consequently could not carry the large amount of shipbuilding, ordnance and other equipment with him. But it is difficult to believe the British would have ignored such an active shipping station. The British commander took credit in his report for the demolition of this important naval center; he had dispatched a detachment to the site on the following morning to make certain that the destruction was complete. It would not have been ignored.

Vessels of considerable importance, including a first-line frigate and a sloop of war, were under construction at the yard. The frigate was almost ready for launching. Both vessels, along with smaller craft, docks, warehouses, machine shops, ammunition stores and quantities of equipment were consumed. Explosions of ammunition stores sounded through the night. In the end it did

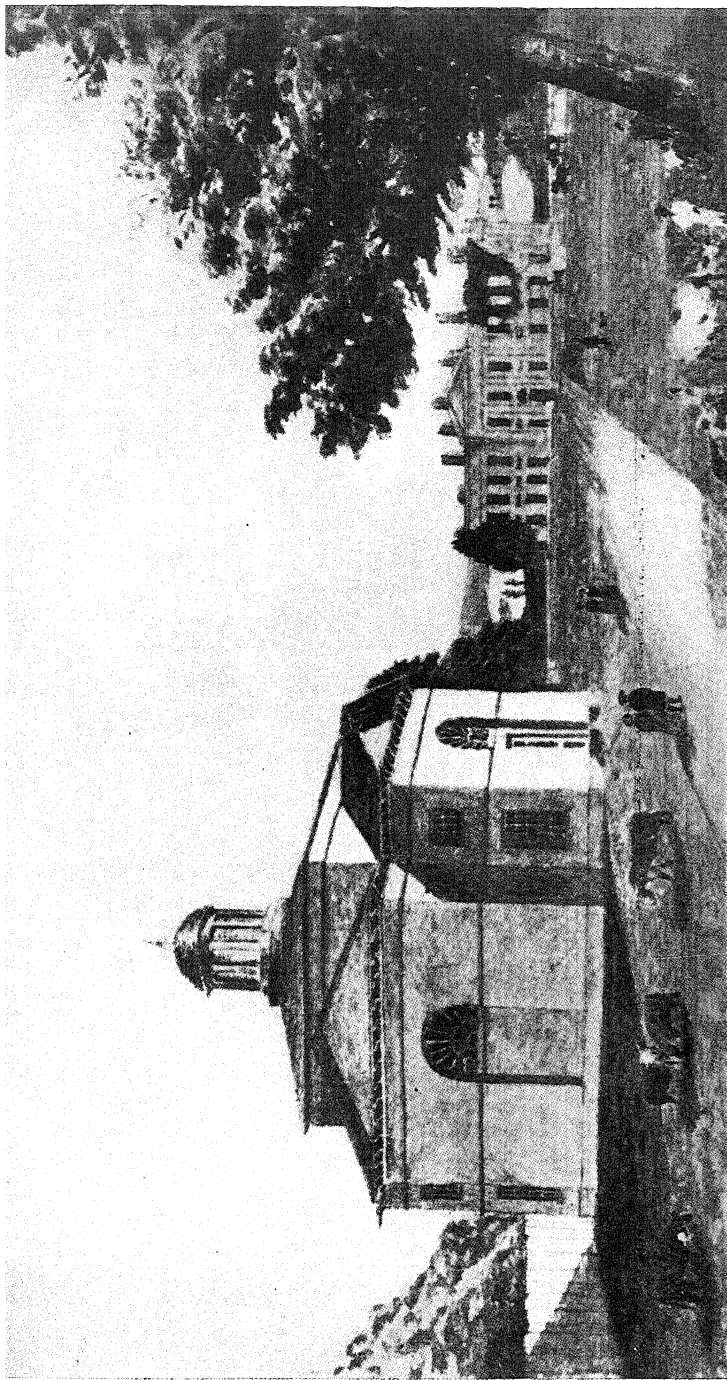
not matter whether the flames were the agents of the invading British or the retiring Americans. The loss was estimated at a million dollars.

Wind from the southwest which suggested the oncoming of an August electrical storm fanned the Capitol fire toward the northern, Senate end. By a peculiar play, the flames ate around but merely scorched the empty frames that had held the portraits of the European sponsors of American independence, King Louis XVI and Marie Antoinette, which hung in a room adjacent to the Senate floor. British soldiers or marauders in the Capitol before the British came had cut the canvases from the frames. The portraits never have been recovered and the Capitol has since that time been without this early recognition of the debt to the Bourbons.¹³

Within an hour after the kindling of the Capitol, the conflagrations there and at the Navy Yard were visible for a distance of thirty miles. The orange and black sky proclaimed that the new seat of government in Washington had endured less than two decades. President Madison, riding in his distress up the Virginia side of the Potomac, saw the red glare; Armstrong looked back on it on his journey to Fredericktown; William Henry Winder viewed it at Tennallytown, where he was trying ineffectually to lay out a camp for those among his fugitives he could hold together. But the angry sky caused fresh tremors to pass through the remnants of the American army and the retreat was continued through the night.¹⁴

3.

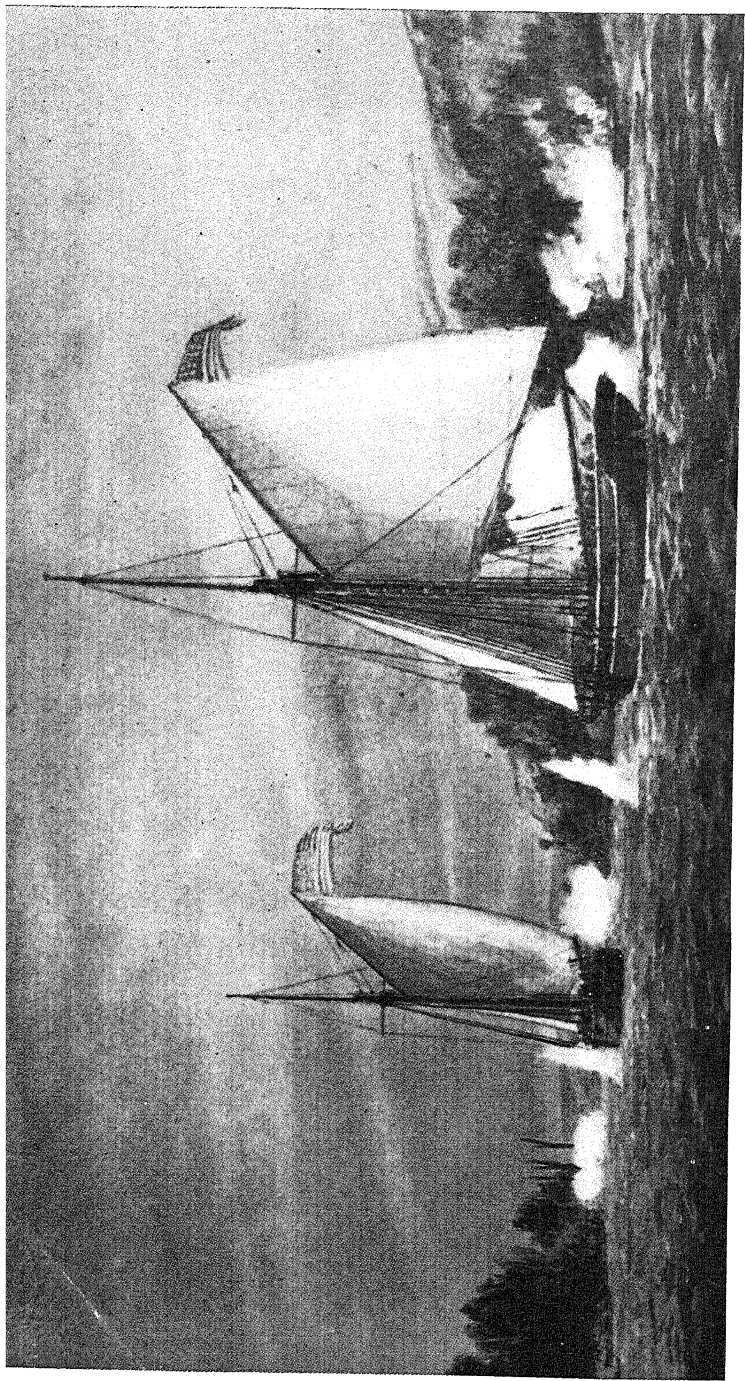
A few of the residents who had remained in Washington were standing in front of Mackgowan's Hotel on lower Pennsylvania Avenue when two small British detachments were seen approaching through the yellow light. It was a silent march down the dusty street, then the only serviceable link between the Capitol and President's house. They were unattended by drums or music. It was not a triumphal entry, but a cautious penetration to the heart of an enemy capital by a few platoons of soldiers. Warfare had presented few more singular conquests, and, indeed, to find



Courtesy Library of Congress

THE PRESIDENT'S HOUSE IN 1816, STILL SHOWING TRACES OF THE FIRE

St. John's Church, in foreground, still stands.



Courtesy Library of Congress

AMERICAN SLOOPS GROWLER AND EAGLE CHASING THREE BRITISH GUNBOATS AT HEAD OF LAKE CHAMPLAIN

a parallel, as Henri Jomini pointed out, it was necessary for the military classrooms of Europe to look back to the march of the white gods of Cortez into the capital of Montezuma.

The first British detachment was headed by General Ross. In spite of the attempt on his life a few hours earlier he rode according to his custom in front of his troops. At a distance of three or four city blocks came Admiral Cockburn with the second small group of invaders. Ross halted at the hotel and there had his second meeting of the night with a gathering of American civilians. One of them, Colonel Isaacs, pointed to the blazing Capitol and asked the general his intention about the property of private citizens. Ross stated immediately that all private property would be respected, a pledge which Cockburn, coming up during the conversation, felt it expedient to repeat. Present in the American group was Chester Bailey, mail contractor of the Post Office Department. He returned to Baltimore on the following evening to give that city and the country the first eyewitness account of the incidents to the seizure of the capital and the destruction of the government buildings.

When his interview was published Bailey was startled to see himself quoted as saying: "The troops were of all nations and the most hellish looking fellows that ever trod God's earth." The remark looked highly sensational in cold type and he hastened to disavow the description, explaining that he was talking with the postmaster of Baltimore and did not know that another gentleman present, Mr. Munroe, was editor of the Baltimore *Patriot*. But the quotation had gone forth, blazoned by Mr. Munroe in the special handbill issued by the *Patriot*. It was copied in Philadelphia, New York and other cities, and it quickly became the stock description of Ross's army.¹⁵ By its suggestion that the British were using foreign mercenaries in their effort to subjugate America, it served to arouse and unite the country, not against some academic issue of the Orders in Council, but against wanton and barbaric invasion.

Some information about the British was being hesitantly supplied to the country in advance of Bailey's statement by Postmaster Burrall of Baltimore. Burrall's dispatch to the postmaster

of Philadelphia said: "The enemy have taken Washington. They entered it last evening without much opposition. . . . They marched in solid column, and appeared to take no notice of the fire of our militia." ¹⁶

Word that a battle was being fought for the defense of the capital was at first given the country only by stage passengers and letters. When the army was defeated and the city vacated, it occurred to neither Winder nor Armstrong that people might be interested in the outcome and no official bulletins were issued. When stage transportation stopped, the country was fed on rumors. The lack of information finally caused the *New York Post* to ask:

Where are our commanders? Why have we nothing to satisfy the public mind, in such a disastrous crisis? It is a fact, that to this hour, we know not where our army is, or whether we have any. Our President and his secretaries are also missing, and no one knows where to look for them! Was there ever such a thing before in a civilized nation? A country invaded—battles fought—and yet no official account of the movements of either friend or foe!

An early letter from Baltimore ventured that "Winder seems to have done nothing, at least in a fighting way."

At the corner of Pennsylvania Avenue and 15th Street, Northwest, where the avenue turns alongside the Treasury, the British halted at the town pump, where they could drink with assurance that the water was not poisoned.¹⁷ While the men were slaking their thirst, Ross entered the boardinghouse conducted by Mrs. Suter. The low, brick building was popular as an eating place because of its proximity to the federal Departments, being situated directly south of the Treasury on the site now occupied by General Sherman's statue. At Mrs. Suter's the provident general requested that supper be prepared for his party of officers who would return later in the evening. When Mrs. Suter explained that there was little in the house, and suggested the McLeod Tavern facing southward a few doors east on the avenue, Ross expressed a partiality to her fare. According to her account he mentioned incidents that showed a familiarity with her tavern

which he had obviously obtained from some of his officers who had been in the city.

Mrs. Suter's boardinghouse commanded a view of the President's house and the Treasury. That circumstance probably was more controlling with Ross than the fame of Mrs. Suter's cuisine, since it gave him opportunity to supervise his men while he was eating. While Ross was negotiating dinner, Cockburn waited with the soldiers at the pump. In later years, on information from a source she did not name, Mrs. Madison credited Cockburn with thoughtfully sending a messenger to the President's house at this moment with word that the admiral would be glad to escort her to any place of safety she might choose.¹⁸ She had, however, left the city well in advance of the arrival of the British.

4.

Ross resumed the march around the Treasury, then a small brick building on part of the site of the present structure, and entered the deserted home of the President. To the surprise and delight of the hungry British soldiers, the dining table was loaded with viands choice enough to spread before a gourmet like the Prince Regent. It was laid out for a banquet of forty persons—a sizable dinner company even for entertainers like the Madisons. For the British home public the most amusing feature of the invasion was that the American President had ordered an elaborate dinner which he thought to enjoy at leisure with his friends and Army officers in celebration of the deliverance of the capital city. No doubt it was the merriment of the British which caused the banquet story to be denied so emphatically by American sources, including some of the members of Madison's staff, who refused to concede that the President's meal, prepared for cabinet members, dignitaries and generals, was eaten by privates of the wrong army.

The first reference to the banquet was contained in a letter from a British midshipman published in a London newspaper. The historian of the 44th Regiment relates the story. Gleig adhered to it sixty-odd years later, after the various reasons why it was challenged were submitted to him. His description ran:

Several kinds of wine, in handsome glass decanters, were cooling on the sideboard. Plate holders stood by the fireplace, filled with dishes and plates; knives, forks and spoons were arranged for immediate use; in short, everything was ready for the entertainment of a ceremonious party. In the kitchen, spits loaded with joints of various sorts, turned before the fire. Pots, saucepans and other culinary utensils stood upon the grate, and all the other requisites for an elegant and substantial repast, were exactly in a state which indicated that they had been lately and precipitately abandoned.

Jean P. Sioussa, a refugee of the French Revolution known around the President's house as "French John," formerly a retainer of the British minister, Anthony Merry, served as Madison's doorkeeper at the time of the invasion. He repudiated the entire banquet story.¹⁹ Nothing was in the kitchen when the British came, he asserted, except a little meat.

One wonders that the matter has been considered of sufficient importance for all the inquiries and denials, but controversies lead to re-examinations and conclusions. The British did, in fact, find a banquet awaiting them. One of the enlightening accounts of what occurred at the President's house before the coming of the British has been supplied by Madison's body slave, Paul Jennings. In his pamphlet, *A Colored Man's Reminiscences of James Madison*, Jennings tells how he had set the table on the afternoon of August 24 and had "brought up the ale, cider and wine, and placed them in coolers, as all the cabinet and several military gentlemen and strangers were expected." Mrs. Madison had informed him that dinner would be ready at the regular hour of three, when the President, who ordinarily ate no supper, dined. The slave's account leaves no doubt that a large meal was in prospect, and that it was ordered by either the President or his wife. The question of who ordered it might have been answered had Admiral Cockburn preserved the trinkets and souvenirs he took from the executive palace. They included the penciled notes Madison had written to Mrs. Madison from the Bladensburg battlefield.²⁰

General Ross dispatched a detail to bring fire, which was obtained at Frenchy Nardin's saloon opposite the Treasury.²¹ While

it was en route Cockburn amused himself by peering through the President's household effects. His principal gleanings were notes, one or two books, a picture and apparently some other small articles which, according to the *Intelligencer*, he took delight in exhibiting on the streets next day wherever he could gather a crowd of spectators. The admiral never presented a full inventory of these seizures, and as far as the official record is concerned the only items he took were the notes which Mrs. Madison had rolled into a bundle and put in a desk drawer. The explanation for taking them offered by the British was that they might have information of military value on the movements of the American army.

From the Octagon—which held the French legation—at New York Avenue and 18th Street, M. Serurier, the French ambassador and only foreign diplomat in Washington, had been looking at the great fires blazing in the city. Fearful that the exodus of the American government might lead to mob control unless the invaders imposed their authority over the civilians remaining, he determined to request an embassy guard. His report to Talleyrand, who had visited Washington on his extensive American travels, gives a colorful description of the situation.

I never saw a scene at once more terrible and more magnificent. Your Highness, knowing the picturesque nature and grandeur of the surroundings, can form an idea of it. A profound darkness reigned in the part of the city that I occupy, and we were left to conjectures and to the lying reports of Negroes as to what was passing in the quarter illuminated by these frightful flames. At eleven o'clock a colonel, preceded by torches, was seen to take the direction of the White House, which is situated quite near mine; the Negroes reported that it was to be burned, as well as all those pertaining to government offices. I thought best, on the moment, to send one of my people to the general with a letter, in which I begged him to send a guard to the house of the Ambassador of France to protect it.

My messenger found General Ross in the White House, where he was collecting in the drawing room all the furniture to be found, and was preparing to set fire to it. The general made answer that the King's Hotel should be respected as much as though his Majesty was there in person; that he would give or-

ders to that effect; and that if he was still in Washington the next day, he would have the pleasure to call on me.²²

Soon after eleven o'clock the mansion was sending up great flames, companions to those still illuminating the surrounding country from Capitol Hill and the southeast water front. Ross then gave directions for the firing of the Treasury building and withdrew with ten of his officers to Mrs. Suter's, where they were followed a little later by Admiral Cockburn. Due to the spent condition of the small number of horses Ross had been able to collect, and the necessity of using the better mounts for patrolling the roads to prevent surprise by militia gatherings, Cockburn made his trip from Capitol Hill to downtown Washington on muleback. Now that the work of burning was being happily consummated, he expressed his exhilaration by riding his mule through the front doorway of Mrs. Suter's tavern,²³ calling to the British officers already assembled within, "Make way for the much-abused Admiral Cockburn!" Part of his exhilaration undoubtedly was due to the porter the British drank at the President's house. Ross showed no mirth over his associate's mode of entry. Residents of the city checked notes after his departure and agreed that the general maintained his serious demeanor the entire period of his stay, without smiling once. His thoughts must have been on the hazardous situation of his little army in the capital of what had already become one of the wealthiest and most populous nations of the world.

The dinner completed, Ross began the assembly of the troops for the return to the camp on Capitol Hill. Cockburn renewed contact with the American group at the Mackgowan Hotel, where he asked to be directed to the printing establishment of Joe Gales. "Gales," he said, "has been telling some tough stories about me." Mail Contractor Bailey said he was a stranger in Washington and did not know where the plant was located. Cockburn then addressed two others, who likewise said they were uninformed. At this the admiral flew into a rage and, according to Bailey's version of the incident, threatened to throw the men into jail if they didn't loosen their tongues a bit. They decided to talk and Cockburn learned that the *Intelligencer*

office was on the south side of Pennsylvania Avenue between 6th and 7th streets. He immediately ordered an officer to go to the address to see what was inside the building; he followed shortly with his detachment.

The *Intelligencer*, Cockburn found, occupied an office in a building row which contained residences. His officer reported on his arrival that the interior contained nothing more than types and printing materials. Cockburn considered setting fire to the whole establishment. Without risking an opinion from Ross, he judged it to be a quasi-governmental institution, and British-owned at that, because Gales, according to his concept, was one of His Majesty's wayward subjects. Cockburn desisted only because two women who lived in the house adjoining came to the street and begged him not to burn the building, which would mean the destruction of their property also.

"Never fear, ladies; be tranquil," the admiral said patronizingly. "You are much safer under my administration than you were under Jimmie Madison's." ²⁴

By this time Ross was moving the remaining troops up the avenue. Rain was falling, quenching the fires. Cockburn concluded that the matter of the *Intelligencer* offices could wait until the morning.

Even had they known of Cockburn's reassurances, repeated on the streets, that "all persons may consider themselves just as safe tonight as they were last night," the residents elsewhere about the capital would have been too excited for slumber. "Few thought of going to bed," said Mrs. Mary Hunter in a letter to her sister. "They spent the night in gazing on the fires and lamenting the disgrace of the city." ²⁵

The army of occupation retired to its camp and ended activities for the evening. The single exception involved one of the extraordinary incidents of the invasion. When Cockburn had reached the *Intelligencer* office he had placed a sentry on the street, a normal precaution when any detachment halted. When he departed, Cockburn, apparently through neglect, failed to relieve the sentinel. The British camp was on the other side of the Capitol, near the outskirts of the town, almost a mile distant. Yet

throughout the night this sentinel paced his beat on Pennsylvania Avenue alone and without molestation. In full charge of the situation, a single redcoat controlled the capital of America.

5.

James Madison had been the best reporter present at one of the biggest news stories in American history—the meeting of the convention to draft the Constitution of the United States. The running account he wrote for his own satisfaction was the only presentable eyewitness story ever offered of the transactions of that gathering and, although it remained buried in his personal archives for half a century, it ultimately netted his widow \$30,000.

But Mr. Madison could scarcely have qualified for a reporter's job on a modern metropolitan newspaper. The outstanding day of his administration from a news standpoint was the twenty-fourth of August, 1814, the events of which he duly recorded, according to his custom, in his journal. The inadequate, noncommittal summary discloses the suppression of drama in his make-up and causes one to wonder how much sensational detail at the Constitutional Convention may have been lost to posterity because of his restraints and cautions as a journalist. The journal relates only:

When the battle was decidedly commenced, I observed to the Secretary of War and the Secretary of State that it would be proper to withdraw to a position in the rear, where we could act according to circumstances; leaving military movements now to the functionaries who were responsible for them. This we did, Mr. Rush joining us. When it became manifest that the battle was lost, Mr. Rush accompanying me, I fell down into the road leading to the city and returned to it.

When the President finally reached the Virginia side of the Potomac that evening his two dueling pistols were missing. A possible explanation for their disappearance is that someone stole them from his holsters during the short stop he made at the President's house after the battle. He went there to make certain that Mrs. Madison had fled to safety ahead of the oncoming British.

A more entertaining version of the President's flight from the battlefield was offered the country by the anonymous author of "The Bladensburg Races."

For saddle-tree scarce reached had he,
And seated to his mind,
When turning round his face, he saw
His cabinet behind.

Monroe was there, and Armstrong bold,
No bolder man mote be:
And Rush, th' Attorney-Ge-ne-ral
All on their horses three.²⁶

The ride that followed was, according to the poet's interpretation, ludicrous to the extreme. The account has the President heralding the tidings of defeat along the highways, but it leans heavily on poetic license.

Mr. Madison's first action after returning to the city, which was already filled with the remnants of the army, was to refresh himself at the Cutts house on F Street and then to exchange his mount for the Cutts carriage. The transfer was understandable because the strain of being in the saddle since dawn undoubtedly was telling on a frail man sixty-three years old. The collapse that overcame him after witnessing the flight of the army affected his spirits even more than his body. He was depressed for weeks, and does not appear to have emerged fully from the gloom of failure until the news finally came of the signing of the Treaty of Ghent.²⁷ Nevertheless, assisted by his more sprightly wife, he managed to retain his composure and dignity.

Dolley Madison,²⁸ christened Dorothy, easily was the outstanding woman of the capital city, a distinction she was destined to enjoy until her death. She was genial and plump, but also, by common agreement, beautiful. Aside from her brunette attractiveness, the salient point to her personality appears to have been a disarming genuineness. This disposition to be utterly natural was probably what made the country girl from North Carolina break through the severity of her Quaker rearing and advance in worldly interests even to wearing the latest fripperies from Paris, dancing, gambling on the horses (which she later abandoned),

riding in a \$1,500 coach behind four prancing, caparisoned thoroughbreds and using rouge.

With all her elegance and amusements, Dolley Madison wasted nothing. Both she and her husband, whose public-service career was supported by his tobacco sales, made it a point to live within their budget. Her indulgence in the new freedom of American women extended to snuff dipping, a habit which any other woman would have found it difficult to dignify. A glimpse of her frankness is seen in her remark to Henry Clay when they were attending a state function. She was holding a trim, lace-fringed handkerchief, about which Clay must have commented, for she promptly drew from the folds of her dress a large bandana. "This is for business," she said pointing to it, "and this"—she pointed to the patch of lace—"is my polisher."

She had been a widow of twenty-six when Madison, who had been jilted in youth by little Catherine Floyd, daughter of William Floyd, a New York girl he remembered wistfully into advancing middle age, was introduced to her by Aaron Burr at the boardinghouse conducted by her mother in Philadelphia. Her husband, John Todd, was a victim of the yellow-fever epidemic in Philadelphia in 1793. Dolley Payne Todd married Madison before her late husband had been dead a year, which was sufficiently unconventional for comment. A good many legislators at the temporary capital wondered what she saw in the precise little representative of forty-three, who lived so carefully. But she was thoroughly devoted to him and the marriage was in all respects successful. She began her "reign" in Washington under Jefferson and continued, as a sort of "Queen Mother," to rule Washington society to the closing days of James K. Polk.

When Madison became President—in an age when it was scarcely seemly for a lady to dip deeply into statecraft—Dolley Madison, with her intense energy, took a frank interest in federal affairs. Her conversation was not laden with contentious opinions on current questions, but her influence on them was such that when in later times James G. Blaine looked into the phenomenon of Madison's re-election in 1812, he attributed it all to Dolley Madison. Washington Irving found her highly stimulat-

ing and called frequently. Ingersoll said she was "better fitted for courts than many of those frequenting them." Her parties of ladies visited the Senate and House galleries and ignored precedent by invading the forbidding Supreme Court chamber in the basement. There was something of a sensation in the capital the day Dolley Madison, Anna Cutts and their group of friends discovered this stuffy little corner of the Capitol. William Pinkney was giving the finishing touches to a long argument, but the appearance of Mrs. Madison's party caused him to extend his remarks through the balance of the afternoon. An associate justice commented testily after the session that "the Supreme Court is no place for ladies."

Mrs. Madison was such an extrovert that she could not sit quietly in the President's house and await the outcome of the battle on which the security of the city depended. She wrote letter after letter to her sister. They shed little fresh light on the situation in Washington but give an interesting insight into her own reactions. She would pack records for a time, write another letter and then rush to the upper story of the mansion and look through her spyglass to the northeast, where the guns told of the meeting at Bladensburg. "I have just pressed so many cabinet papers into trunks as to fill one carriage," she wrote. "Our private property must be sacrificed." There was no easy confidence here that the Americans would win the battle. Mrs. Madison's personal effects were worth about \$12,000,²⁹ a sum which included also the small amount of clothing owned by the President. All were destroyed by the British.

"French John, with his usual activity and resolution," she wrote, "offers to spike the cannon at the gate, and to lay a train of powder which would blow up the British should they enter the house. To this last proposition I positively objected, without, however, being able to make him understand why all advantages in war may not be taken."³⁰

Had Mrs. Madison permitted Sioussa to lay his mine, the sufferers might have been members of the American militia and nondescript residents of the city who overran the President's grounds between the departure of the Madisons and the coming

of the British soldiers. This mob, which was described by the President's slave Jennings as "a rabble that ran all over the White House," did not tarry long enough to do much plundering. Madison had stationed one hundred militiamen to protect Mrs. Madison and the President's house, but these men became involved with the first batch of fugitives to fly through the city and hurried off for Georgetown without orders. Mrs. Madison remarked about it ironically in one of her letters. She examined the country with her spyglass and again wrote: "I can descry only groups of military wandering in all directions, as if there was a lack of arms or spirit to fight for their own firesides."

Finally at three o'clock in the afternoon, an hour after Winder's militia had scattered from Bladensburg, Mrs. Madison penned her last note:

Would you believe it, my sister, we have had a battle or skirmish near Bladensburg, and I am still here within sound of the cannon. Mr. Madison comes not. May God protect him! Two messengers covered with dust come to bid me fly, but I wait for him. At this late hour a wagon has been procured. I have had it filled with plate and most of the valuable portable articles belonging to the House.

While Mrs. Madison was writing this letter her Negro slave Sukey, who was leaning from one of the upper windows, saw Madison's freedman Jim Smith, who had accompanied the President from the Navy Yard to Bladensburg. He was galloping toward the executive mansion, waving his hat and shouting, "Clear out! Clear out! General Armstrong has ordered a retreat!" Of the many accounts of what followed, the President's body slave Jennings gives the most concise information:

All then was confusion. Mrs. Madison ordered her carriage, and passing through the dining room, caught up what silver she could crowd into her old-fashioned reticule, and then jumped into the chariot with her servant girl Sukey, and Daniel Carroll, who took charge of them; Jo Bolin (another slave) drove them over to Georgetown Heights; the British were expected in a few minutes. Mr. Cutts, her brother-in-law, sent me to a stable on 14th Street for his carriage. People were running in every direction. John Freeman (the colored butler) drove off in a coachee

with his wife, child and servant; also a feather bed lashed on behind the coachee, which was all the furniture saved except part of the silver and portrait of Washington.

President Madison had asked Charles Carroll to escort his wife to safety. A frequently repeated story is that as Dolley Madison was hastening to her carriage she snatched up the celebrated document composed by her husband's closest friend, the Declaration of Independence, and thus saved it from the British, who would have been pleased to annul that manifesto by burning it, carrying it back to London or otherwise obliterating it.³¹ What Dolley Madison probably took with the cabinet records was a facsimile copy of the Declaration which hung in the President's house. The picture she guarded so carefully was not the full-length portrait of Washington which Gilbert Stuart painted for Lord Lansdowne, as has often been stated.

The portrait secured by Dolley Madison may still be seen in the White House, where for many years it hung in the basement corridor.³² It is a doubtful Stuart. She emphasized to the household that the portrait was not to be left behind, and gave instructions that if it seemed likely to be captured it should be destroyed. Because the frame in which it hung was screwed to the wall, it was difficult to remove the canvas. Mrs. Madison called Sioussa, who in turn summoned the President's gardener, Magraw. The gardener mounted a short ladder and chopped away the frame with an ax. Mrs. Madison, fearing the paint would crack, cautioned Sioussa against rolling the canvas. Sioussa laid the picture on the floor.

Just then the President's friend Jacob Barker, a Quaker ship-owner from New York, stopped by the mansion with a companion, R. G. L. de Peyster, to inquire whether they could be of assistance to Mrs. Madison. "Save the picture," she told them hurriedly, adding further injunctions that it should not be captured. Anna Cutts was waiting in the carriage, and Dolley Madison rushed out with her parcels. She would have been quite willing to remain, she wrote later, if she had had some cannon pointing from the windows. "But alas!" she exclaimed, "those who should have placed them there fled before me." Barker took

charge of the picture, which was transported by the gardener Magraw on the back of a wagon, along with some silver urns, to a farmhouse. A short time later it was returned by Barker to Mrs. Madison.³³

Two travelers who skirted Bladensburg while the battle was being fought continued their southward journey to Richmond, Virginia, and reported to the editor of the *Enquirer* there that they had seen Madison riding in a carriage through the Washington streets. Someone from the groups of civilians on the streets had shouted, "There goes the President." It was a final evidence that resistance was over. Madison's body slave walked to the Georgetown Ferry about 6:30 P.M. and found the President waiting for a boat. He was accompanied across the river by Attorney General Rush, Tench Ringgold, local rope manufacturer, and Charles W. Goldsborough, chief clerk of the Navy Department.

Madison had notified the cabinet that if the Americans lost the city the executive branch of the government would reassemble at Fredericktown, Maryland, about forty-five miles distant. These directions had not been altered. It was to Fredericktown that Secretary Armstrong retired, while Secretary of the Treasury George Washington Campbell tarried there briefly en route to his home in Tennessee. Monroe was with the army, which he accompanied to Tennallytown and then on to the Montgomery Court House. There is a possible explanation of the President's passage of the Potomac in a report current in Washington during the late afternoon. Because Winder's baggage had become separated from his troops and had crossed the Long Bridge while the general and his men were heading northward, word spread that the army had retreated to Virginia. Madison traveled northwest along the road that runs up the right bank of the Potomac until he was ten miles from the city. There, midway between the upper and lower falls, he slept, exhausted and humiliated by the red glare in the southeastern sky.³⁴

Mrs. Madison journeyed about three miles above Georgetown and remained that night at the home of Mrs. Love. She rose early the next morning and went on to locate the President, who had

arranged a meeting place at an inn about sixteen miles up the river. En route she stopped at what looked like a friendly farmhouse, and while her attendants were announcing her to the housewife, she went upstairs. Her experience here proved unpleasant. As soon as the woman learned the identity of her guest she set up a shout:

“Mrs. Madison, if that is you, come down and get out. Your husband has got mine out fighting, and damn you, you shan’t stay in my house. So get out.”

Probably this was the only instance of the wife of a President being roughly ejected from an American household. The rude words and Dolley Madison’s reaction were reported by the slave Jennings.³⁵ Mrs. Madison left promptly, without so much as a reply, and stopped a few miles farther on her journey at the home of Mrs. Minor. Later in the morning she joined Mr. Madison, who had continued to the inn. Secretary Monroe meanwhile sent out a dragnet from Montgomery Court House, located the President at the tavern and crossed the river. When the President and Monroe came together on the afternoon of August 25, something of a government for the United States was restored. Yet it was only for a brief period, because Monroe recrossed to Maryland and rejoined the army, where his presence seemed more urgently required.

6.

General Ross established himself in the home of Dr. James Ewell, in Carroll Row east of the Capitol. He imposed a curfew and ordered a penalty of one hundred lashes for any soldier found guilty of the theft of private property. Colonel Ragan, Stansbury’s regimental leader wounded at Bladensburg, later reported that during the period of his captivity two soldiers apprehended in thefts were given fifty-nine lashes each.

Next morning the British were up early. Cockburn, anxious to enjoy fully his day of triumph in the city he had been wanting to reach for more than a year, began his activities at 5:30 A.M. Accompanied by only three soldiers, he was bold enough to ride

down Pennsylvania Avenue the mile and a quarter to the President's house, where for all he knew an American army might have been mobilized during the night. He rode a small gray horse and apparently made the journey for no other purpose than to inspect his handiwork of the night before and poke about in the mansion ruins. The admiral stopped in front of Mackgowan's Hotel and talked banteringly with an early-morning group in the street. Throughout the remainder of the day he was much in the public eye.

In conversations they held at different periods of the morning, Dr. Ewell mentioned to Ross his regret that the Library of Congress had been consumed in the Capitol fire.

"I lament it most sincerely that I was not told of the circumstance," Ross replied. "Had I known of it in time the books most certainly would have been saved."

"Neither do I suppose, General," Dr. Ewell continued, "you would have burned the President's house had Mrs. Madison remained at home?"

"No, sir," said the general. "I make war neither against letters nor ladies, and I have heard so much in praise of Mrs. Madison that I would rather protect than burn a house which sheltered such an excellent lady."³⁶

Before the morning was far advanced General Ross organized 900 soldiers into three detachments, each being followed by about thirty Negroes carrying gunpowder and rockets. The first moved down Pennsylvania Avenue at eight o'clock and relighted the Treasury, where the flames had not gained satisfactory headway before the thunder shower of the previous night. Then it moved on to the War and State Department building immediately west of the President's house, in the block now occupied by the State, War and Navy building. Using powder and rockets, the soldiers quickly had the War Department fire consuming what remained of Armstrong's papers. Gleig viewed these edifices of the American government as little more than eyesores, having "a plainness amounting to almost coarseness, and a general air of republicanism, by no means imposing." The President's

house he found "small, incommodious and plain," built so as not to excite jealousies.

After the War Department was blazing satisfactorily, the detachment on duty there, headed by Major Waters, moved east on F Street to Blodget's old hotel in the block bounded by 8th and 9th and E and F streets, Northwest, the later site of the Patent Office. This building housed the only government Departments that had not yet been touched by the retaliatory torches of the enemy: the Post Office Department and the Patents Bureau of the State Department. Samuel Blodget had erected the structure, three stories high and 120 feet long, out of the proceeds of the lottery he conducted during the real-estate boom of the capital. Its six Ionic pilasters were ornaments worthy of comment in the infant years of the city, but the glory of the building was short-lived. As early as 1804 the poet Thomas Moore described it on his Washington visit: "The hotel is already a ruin; a great part of its roof has fallen in and the rooms are left to be occupied gratuitously by the miserable Scotch and Irish immigrants." The government purchased the hotel in 1810, after it had run through a season as a makeshift theater, renovated it and made it not only the postal headquarters of the nation, but also the display room and storehouse of the several hundred models of patents which represented the budding inventive genius of a country that was to become the world's leading contributor to technological progress.

Chief of Patents Dr. William Thornton had no more than a clerkship in the State Department, yet in many respects he was the most extraordinary individual in the federal service—physician, inventor, artist, novelist, architect, breeder of race horses, organizer of colonization schemes for Negroes, patron of South American liberation and general man about the government. To these achievements he was about to add that of talking a bull-necked major of British foot out of burning a government building when Cockburn stood in the offing and the major had orders to destroy it. Thornton's accomplishment was of no small significance to the city and country. By saving Blodget's Hotel he pre-

served for Washington a building of proportions ample enough to accommodate the American Congress, and the existence of such a building, in turn, kept Congress in Washington for its September meeting when there was pressure to have it go to Lancaster, Pennsylvania. The temper of the period was such that had the capital been moved from the Potomac, public opinion probably would not have demanded that it be returned. The nation probably would have had, as many expected, a new seat of government.

Dr. Thornton was a Quaker, born at Jost van Dyke in the Virgin Islands when they were governed by British cruisers. He gained his Doctor of Medicine degree at the University of Aberdeen and found his way to Delaware the year the United States was born under the Constitution. He was working with the inventor John Fitch on the first American steamboat, which expressed some of his own abundant ideas, when he read in the newspapers about the \$500.00 prize and free lot in Washington offered for the best design for the United States Capitol. Although architecture was an unexplored field for him, he borrowed some books, made his drawings and startled the experts by winning the award. A like award was granted later to the more professional French architect, Étienne Sulpice Hallet, for drafting the plans from Thornton's designs. To this Virgin Islander the country owes the conception of the rotunda and wings that have remained the central theme of the United States Capitol and the source of its magnificence, through the extensive alterations and enlargements of more than 150 years. Thornton built also the Octagon House, for Colonel John B. Tayloe—the house of the French legation. It was taken over for a residence by Mr. Madison after the destruction of the President's house, and is now preserved as the national headquarters of the American Institute of Architects.

Dr. Thornton worried in Georgetown on the night of the twenty-fourth about the fate of his treasured models, which at that time had to be submitted before patents were issued, and which remained the principal record of inventions. His own tinkering with firearms, boilers, musical instruments and numer-

ous other practical and visionary objects had made extensive contributions to the collection. He concluded that his duty was with this irreplaceable property that had been entrusted to him by both Jefferson and Madison and by the numerous inventors throughout the land. He picked up his model maker, Nicholson, en route and galloped to Washington, where he was met by the Reverend O. B. Brown and two other residents. He took the precaution to see that one of them was a Republican. When he reached the Patent Office, the British soldiers were at the door with axes.

Thornton remonstrated with Major Waters. He said that the soldiers were working overtime in their hunt for public property; that patents granted by the United States were the property of the inventors and not the government; and that to destroy these records of inventive enterprise would be an act of savagery and vandalism appalling to the world and equal in its barbarity to the burning of the library at Alexandria. The situation, as this earnest official explained it and as he finally illustrated it by playing a freak musical instrument of his own invention, became a bit intricate for the major of foot. He told his soldiers to stand away with their axes and the Negro service men to hold off the powder until he reflected. General Ross's orders about private property were plain. It would not be well to take chances. So he finally followed the easy course and agreed to let Thornton obtain a ruling from his superior, Colonel Jones, who was then with Cockburn at the *Intelligencer* office. The record fails to show how Thornton presented the question, but he rode away and came back with an opinion from the colonel that private property was indeed exempt, and with a reassurance of his own that the patent models were one hundred per cent private. The major was apparently still unconvinced, but he was sufficiently harassed to defer the entire question until later. He said he had another assignment—to burn the arsenal at Greenleaf's Point—and would get that out of the way first. Possibly he would return to consider the patents later. The events at Greenleaf's Point were such that the entire patent question was forgotten.

Dr. Thornton's own account of his diligence was much more

restrained than the stories of others. One version attributed to him the melodramatic act of baring his chest at the office door, describing the purpose of the building, and shouting: "Would you destroy it? If so, fire away and let the charge pass through my body." Entirely through his efforts, Blodget's Hotel, which was an antique before it had rounded out a dozen years, and which had so annoyed the Irish lyricist, was spared. Thornton's storehouse of specifications and models, which were to perplex a great many federal courts for quite a number of decades, was about the only thing relating to the government saved in the capital.

It did not occur to anyone during the dispute over the burning of the buildings to bring up the status of the Post Office Department. Had Thornton been required to defend it, he very likely would have argued that the letters went from private citizen to private citizen without the government's even examining them.

Yet, one never knows. Possibly eloquence and forceful argument had little to do with the saving of the hotel. Perhaps the British soldiers were diverted and the major caused to abandon his effort by the impediment in the persistent Thornton's speech, rather than by any appreciation of patents or inventive genius, concern about Ross's orders, or understanding of anything that ever happened to a library in Alexandria.

7.

As the sun ascended Admiral Cockburn and a file of soldiers became exhibit A on Pennsylvania Avenue. Cockburn sportively showed the trinkets that formerly graced the home of the chief executive, denounced Editor Gales and asserted with a bluff humor (which approached the successful), "I'll punish Madison's man Joe as I have the master, Jim." After more than a year's perusal of the *Intelligencer* columns in his ship cabin on the Chesapeake, he could finally break through the front office door and call for the editor to come out and eat his words or watch his rag go out of business.³⁷ Gales, to be sure, could not be present and thus risk going back to England in irons to answer for being born at Eckington. A studious editor, Gales had accu-

mulated several hundred volumes as a newspaper library. The gleeful admiral, no doubt judging them textbooks on traitorous intercourse, had the books moved to the center of the avenue and burned before the eyes of the gathering crowd of citizens. Here a hundred lectures about the library at Alexandria would have done no good. Onlookers reported that Cockburn waxed so enthusiastic that he broke the tradition of the service and entered into the pillage with his own hands. The presses were pounded into scrap iron. The admiral gave specific directions to the soldiers to pi the type: "Be sure that all the C's in the boxes are destroyed so that the rascals can have no further means of abusing my name."³⁸

Dr. Thornton, learning what was in progress when he called to see Colonel Jones, hastened to Gales's house and protected it by hanging out a sign reading, THIS HOUSE TO LET. The residence was not molested.

The *Intelligencer*, with virtually all of its staff in the militia, had suspended publication the night before the battle, when the mails closed down, and it was a revelation of Gales's editorial stature that its comments on the British were fair after they departed and publication was resumed. Gales's editorial said: "Greater respect was certainly paid to private property than has usually been exhibited by the enemy in his marauding parties. No houses were half as much plundered by the enemy as by the knavish wretches of the town who profited by the general distress."³⁹ On August 27 a correspondent of the *New York Post* summarized: "To give the devil his due, his conduct here was as orderly as could be expected."

While Cockburn was in the street supervising the extinguishment of the pro-Madison journal one of the citizens baited him with the remark, "If General Washington had been still alive, Admiral, you would never have got here so easily."

"Sir," replied the admiral quickly and candidly, "if General Washington had been President, we would never have thought to come here."

There was another testimonial to the first President from the British. Captain Gordon's squadron, which was inching its way

up the Potomac, reached Mount Vernon four days later, and by firing a salute as it passed honored the man who more than any other had broken the link between the two countries. *Niles' Register*, mentioning this tribute, recalled that the last time a British warship paused at Mount Vernon was during the Revolution. A frigate had stopped and demanded provisions, which General Washington's estate manager supplied. When the general learned of the visit he wrote one of his most severe letters, reprimanding his manager and stating that it would have been less painful had he heard the entire plantation was laid ruin.

The British detachment that went from the Patent Office to Greenleaf's Point, a promontory jutting into the Potomac southwest of the Capitol, reached it at two o'clock and met disaster as severe as might have resulted from a second major battle. The object of the mission was to destroy the powder magazine, which the American soldiers already had emptied. Much of the powder had been hidden in a dry well on the grounds. This well had been a dump for old explosives, guns and munitions, part of which had been transferred to Washington from Philadelphia when the seat of government was removed. Shortly after the British reached the spot a tremendous explosion shook the city, shattered neighboring houses, blew great masses of dirt, rock, military equipment, debris and mutilated men into the air, and caused a concussion sickening to everyone. Buildings were unroofed; brick walls collapsed. The mass of flying matter was seen from the Patent Office more than a mile distant. Statements of the British loss varied, but a conservative account made by a British officer placed the dead at seventeen and the wounded above thirty. Dr. Ewell, who helped attend the mangled men, said thirty were killed and a larger number injured;⁴⁰ others gave the total killed and injured at near one hundred.

The cause of the explosion could not be determined positively, yet no effort was made to attribute it to American soldiers or residents. All agreed that the powder was discharged by a British torch. It was believed that the torch was carelessly tossed into the well by a soldier who sought to extinguish it. Another explanation was that when the Americans moved the powder to the

cache a bung fell out of the barrel and a trail of powder was left along the ground, where next day a British soldier laid his torch. This explanation appears improbable because the rain on the night of the twenty-fourth would most likely have washed the trail away.

The injured soldiers were carried to Capitol Hill, where the Carroll Row houses adjoining Dr. Ewell's were turned into a hospital. Ross personally supervised their transfer and the arrangements for their care. "I never saw more endearing marks of sympathy than were here exhibited on his countenance," Dr. Ewell said. A cause of the general's distress was the necessity of leaving the injured men behind because he had no ambulances. He expressed hope that mattresses could be procured for them in Georgetown. He was relieved when the doctor assured him that the men would receive every possible medical attention. "He gave me a look of gratitude which I shall never forget, and then turning toward his men where they lay, burned, bruised and mangled, on the floor, he silently gazed at their deplorable state."⁴¹

The disaster dampened the ardor of the British army, depressed Ross and Cockburn and caused both to lose interest in any further contact with the American capital. Gordon's fleet had not yet appeared. Rumors had been reaching the city that 12,000 militia were coming from Virginia and 15,000 were concentrating in Maryland. As time went on Ross's position became more uncertain. He had in his rear the entire garrison of Baltimore, which under energetic leadership might march out and intercept him if he tarried too long. His original plan had worked ideally. The strength of the two cities had never been united against him, but that eventually must happen if he turned his *coup de main* into an occupation. He laid plans for evacuating the city after sundown.

One other unusual experience was in store for the British in the capital of America. In the late afternoon the sky darkened and a typical American tornado struck the city. It tore the roofs from houses, felled trees and blew with such ferocity on Capitol Hill that it overturned Ross's two 3-pounders planted to com-

mand the westward approaches. The soldiers flattened themselves on the ground or hid behind the bleak walls of the Capitol, losing all order. Although they had been indifferent to militia bullets, their morale was deeply affected by the violent natural elements of the strange continent. "It fairly lifted me out of the saddle, and the horse I was riding I never saw again," said Lieutenant Gleig.⁴²

As the August light began to fade General Ross had large fires built along his Capitol Hill position, which might be seen from the heights above Georgetown. It was a signal that he would remain in Washington for another evening. But at eight o'clock he suddenly broke camp, made a forced march to Bladensburg, where the balance of his army already was in column, and moved on without halting to Upper Marlboro. There, after four hours' sleep for his men, he resumed the rapid movement via Nottingham to Benedict. In forty-eight hours he covered the more than forty miles, by the indirect route through Bladensburg, from Capitol Hill to the British fleet.⁴³

Governor-General Prevost might now be satisfied, for York had been avenged.⁴⁴ In this respect the war was turning into something of a success. The Congresses of the two North American governments met that autumn in the ballrooms of two rather shoddy hotels.

With four regiments of foot, a battalion of marines and a few artillerists and rocket men, the colonel of the old 20th Regiment had marched into the heart of a nation of 10,000,000 people, routed its army, ousted its government, seized its capital city, destroyed its public buildings, and was back on board the transports again, all in seven days.

"Certain it is," the *New York Evening Post* said, when the country was reflecting after the first startling news, "that when General Ross' official account of the battle and the capture and destruction of our CAPITOL is published in England, it will hardly be credited by Englishmen. Even here it is still considered as a dream."

Birth of a Song

The British army's return to the fleet at Benedict was so rapid that many soldiers straggled, and thus quite inadvertently helped create the important by-product of the invasion, the writing of the American national anthem.

Behind Ross's army as it moved across Maryland trailed a scattering of exhausted redcoats who had fallen from the column. They passed along the Upper Marlboro road singly and in small groups, moving leisurely, stopping at farmhouses for food and proving an annoyance to a countryside that was already thoroughly tired of the invasion.

Dr. William Beanes, whose house had been the British headquarters in Upper Marlboro during the march on Washington, felt called on to relieve the community of this nuisance, now that the main British army was gone. The best account of what followed on August 26 and 27 appears to be also the first. It is the version published as a minor item by the Baltimore *Federal Gazette* in its August 28 issue and is therefore uncolored by the furor which developed in Washington and lower Maryland when Dr. Beanes was imprisoned and held unnecessarily long by the British.

I.

After Ross's army had cleared Upper Marlboro, Robert Bowie, the former governor of Maryland who owned farms in the neighborhood, rode into town and suggested to a group of citizens that they should intercept the stragglers and hold them as prisoners of war. Dr. Beanes agreed.

Several others, according to the Baltimore newspaper account,

demurred and "urged the dangerous consequences that might result while the enemy was so near." But under the direction of Bowie, Beanes and another Upper Marlboro resident, John Rodgers, the plan to keep the roads clear of drifters was adopted. Six British soldiers were captured and sent to jail at Queen Anne, nine miles distant.

Everything was calm until one o'clock on the morning of August 27, when Upper Marlboro was rudely aroused by the arrival of a mounted detachment of British who halted in front of the Beanes's house. Dr. Beanes had as his guests for the night a fellow physician, Dr. William Hill, and another friend, Philip Weems. As far as is known, they had taken no part in the seizure of the prisoners. The British marines burst into the Beaneses' house, snatched the doctor and his guests from their beds, hoisted them bareback on some of the farm plugs that served as their only mounts, and trotted them off to the British fleet. The ride gave the sixty-five-year-old doctor a jostling. The British detachment left word with other residents of Upper Marlboro who came from their houses that unless the prisoners were released by twelve o'clock noon that day British soldiers would return and burn the town. The six British prisoners were liberated promptly. Former Governor Bowie, whose counsel had been responsible for the incident, went to the British camp at Benedict, where he too was placed under arrest while 200 British soldiers were sent to a farm he owned three miles away, which they stripped of provisions.

Citizens of Upper Marlboro sent a hurried request to Ross for release of the American prisoners. The general released Hill and Weems when he understood how they became involved, but remained adamant about the doctor. Bowie also obtained his freedom without much difficulty, although he was the father of the project, and Rodgers appears to have been passed over entirely. But the prospects were that Dr. Beanes would be transported to Bermuda or Halifax—both were mentioned—to stand trial on one charge or another. If the British command held to the view expressed by Lieutenant Gleig, that Beanes had been born in Scotland, the charge against him would have been trea-

son. His situation was serious, because in Halifax he could never have established proof of his Maryland nativity.

Prince George County residents got up a petition for him, but when it failed to move Ross and Cockburn and when the British fleet made ready to sail from Benedict with the doctor on board, his friends looked about for more weighty influence. Richard E. West, owner of the Wood Yard estate, had married Francis Scott Key's elder sister. Beanes was their family physician. It occurred to West that Key was just the man to help the doctor out of his difficulties, so he rode into Georgetown and laid the case before the attorney, who, on his brother-in-law's urgent solicitation, agreed to do his best.

Key called first on President Madison, who accredited him a governmental emissary to the British commander and suggested that he talk with the American commissioner of prisoners, General John Mason. Mason gave him a letter to John S. Skinner, a young Baltimore attorney who was acting as his agent in effecting exchanges. The letter instructed Skinner to accompany Key. Skinner also wrote a letter to General Ross stating that the citizens taken at Upper Marlboro were "unarmed and [of] entirely noncombatant character" and that their arrest was a "departure from the known usages of civilized warfare."

Officially the government was less concerned about Dr. Beanes personally than about the possibility that indifference to him might seem to condone a British policy of making civilians prisoners of war. Such a policy would permit the British, whenever the balance of exchanges might favor the Americans, to cross the border and herd up as many noncombatants as were needed, and contend that they were bona fide captives, subject to exchange. It could readily be done in a war where the wearing of uniforms was by no means general among militia soldiers. Under such practices the recently executed exchange cartel would be worthless. Mason's letter made an official demand on Ross for the doctor's release. General Winder also wrote a letter making a similar demand from Annapolis.

Before leaving Washington on the night of September 2, Key stopped at the hospital on Capitol Hill, where Dr. Ewell, assisted

by Dr. William Baker of Georgetown, was caring for the British who were injured in the Greenleaf's Point explosion. At Bladensburg, on his way to Baltimore, he visited also the hospital that had been placed under the supervision of the government, where the battle wounded of both armies were convalescing. Dr. Ewell had considered himself bound by his promise to Ross that the injured soldiers should have every attention possible and had arranged an efficient, sanitary hospital where he was providing the best food obtainable in the city. Key, not without guile, let it be known at both hospitals that he would visit the British fleet. The wounded soldiers asked him to carry their letters. He collected a large packet which fortunately for the purposes of his mission included a letter from a Sergeant Hutchinson who recognized that he and his fellow sufferers were obtaining better attention than invaders might normally expect after devastating their adversary's capital. Hutchinson's message advised General Ross in detail of the situation of the soldiers he had left behind.

Key picked up Skinner in Baltimore, where they boarded the cartel boat *Minden*. They sailed into the Chesapeake and spent two days looking over its waters for the British fleet, which was finally located on September 7 concentrated near the mouth of the Potomac.

On the *Tonnant* they were greeted cordially by Cochrane, Ross and Cockburn until Key divulged his purpose. From the changes in the countenances of the three officers as he spoke, Key could tell that he had failed to arouse any sympathy over the plight of Dr. Beanes. General Mason's letter also did not win favor. Cochrane's manner became cold, while the more emotional Cockburn fell into one of his petulant fits and denounced the request for the release of Beanes as the most preposterous suggestion he had ever heard in his many ports of call. He proclaimed that "the old man" was entitled to no compassion, would be taken to Halifax for trial and ought to be hanged. Key had brought along some fresh underwear and soap for the doctor but Cockburn saw no reason why he should be pampered with such luxuries in his confinement, nor why the American commissioners should have access to him at all. Ross himself was unmoved

by Key's plea and asserted that the prisoner had not been dealt with unfairly. In view of Ross's general justness, this is impressive judgment.

Fortunately Sergeant Hutchinson's letter, when Key delivered it with the others from the British prisoners, put a different face on the matter. Ross dropped into one of his detached moods, gazed for a time into the distance and, to the surprise of the commissioners and to the disgust of Cockburn, delivered his opinion: "Dr. Beanes deserves more punishment than he has received. But I feel myself bound to make a return for the kindness which has been shown to my wounded officers—and upon that ground, *and that only*, I release him."

Ross followed this decision by inditing a reply much to the same effect to General Mason, explaining that Beanes had been apprehended capturing British soldiers, but would be released "not from any opinion of his not being justifiably detained, nor from any favorable sentiment of his merit, but purely in proof of the obligation which I feel for the attention with which the wounded have been treated."

Key and Skinner were permitted to deliver the toilet articles. Ross then made known that neither they nor the doctor could depart because the fleet intended to put into the Patapsco River and he was unwilling to have the Americans apprised of its approach. The three Americans witnessed the bombardment of Fort McHenry from the deck of the cartel boat. The elderly doctor could not see the flag well, although it was a huge piece of bunting twenty-nine feet wide and thirty-six feet long. When the day of September 14, 1814, began to break, after the long bombardment of the fort, Beanes kept asking, "Is the flag still there?" Key said it was, and the idea impressed itself on his mind. He took out an envelope and jotted down phrases.

The British attack was abandoned after daylight, and the Americans were released. Key went that evening to a Baltimore tavern and wrote his song to the meter of a British drinking song, "Anacreon in Heaven." John Stafford Smith had composed this song years earlier for the Anacreontic Society of London, a group which formed after Thomas Moore, then a law student,

had published in 1800 the translations he had made in Trinity College, Dublin, of the odes of the Greek bard, Anacreon. Through the ages, rumor had said Anacreon wrote when he was drunk.

Key took his poem next day to another brother-in-law, Judge J. H. Nicholson, who liked it and suggested immediate printing. A printer's devil, Samuel Sands, set it in type at the Baltimore *American* office, and it was issued in a handbill entitled "Bombardment of Fort McHenry." Its first newspaper publication was in the Baltimore *Patriot* of September 20, 1814. It was sung in the taverns and copied in other newspapers.¹ Congress adopted it as the official national anthem by Act of March 3, 1931.

2.

General Ross had meanwhile landed at North Point. He was toying with the idea of making Baltimore his winter headquarters. His situation there on the bay, with the fleet to support him and strong forts in his possession, would have been vastly different from what it had been in Washington, where a superior force might cut him off from the fleet.

Ross went ashore with Cockburn at seven o'clock in the morning, September 14. While the army was landing he and the admiral found a farmhouse removed a short distance from the shore and had a breakfast of fresh eggs, milk and chicken such as was not obtainable on shipboard. As he left the house Ross stopped to thank the farmer. The latter, with natural curiosity about the British movements, inquired whether he would be back for supper.

"No," said the general, "I'll have supper tonight in Baltimore," and then, by afterthought: ". . . or in Hell."

The army was formed for a march, the light brigade forward, followed by the heavy infantry and supported by a complement of marines and seamen. Baltimore was fourteen miles away and a battle would have to be fought with the American militia while the fleet was trying to reduce Fort McHenry. Ross threw ahead an advance party and put out his flank patrols. Accompanied by his aide, Duncan McDougall, he took his position with the for-

ward point of the army. When the road inclined gently, he and his aide rode ahead to a clump of oak trees. Ross began to scan the country with his field glasses.

Stricker's brigade was moving from Baltimore to meet the British. Stricker pushed out Asquith's rifle corps, which was in position beyond the low eminence where General Ross halted. Two shots sounded from the bottom of the hill. One bullet hit Ross. He lurched back into McDougall's arms. He had time merely to call his wife's name.

McDougall laid the general's body under one of the oak trees. Most of the soldiers saw it as they moved ahead to push back Asquith and Stricker. "A groan came from the column," Gleig said. Colonel Brooke took command. In the small engagement that followed, the two militiamen who had fired on Ross—Daniel Wells and Henry McComas—were killed. But the spirit that dominated the British expeditionary force was gone. In the words of Gleig, "the army lost its mainspring." A single musket ball at North Point was more decisive than the fire of the entire American army at Bladensburg.

The British force held back from a decisive engagement with the American militia and waited for a success by the fleet at Fort McHenry. When the fort held, the army retreated.² The failure to capture Baltimore proved a severe blow to the British peace delegation then negotiating with the American commissioners at Ghent.

Less than a year later virtually all that survived of Ross's army of retaliation was its record. The regiments fought at New Orleans and then went on to Waterloo. The general's body was preserved in spirits and transported for burial in Halifax. He is but one of the innumerable British soldiers who have remained away from home. Great Britain has too many distinguished officers to devote much attention to the leader of one small expedition. But contrary to the frequent assertion that he was severely condemned in England for his destruction of the American capital, Ross was mourned sincerely as an admirable soldier. Parliament voted him a monument in St. Paul's and the soldiers of the 20th honored him similarly at his County Down home. When

the opposition in Commons attacked the ministry's order for retaliation, Mr. Whitebread, the opposition speaker, added:

It was happy for humanity and the credit of the empire that the extraordinary order upon that occasion had been entrusted to an officer of so much moderation and justice.

The Chancellor of the Exchequer told the House of Commons:

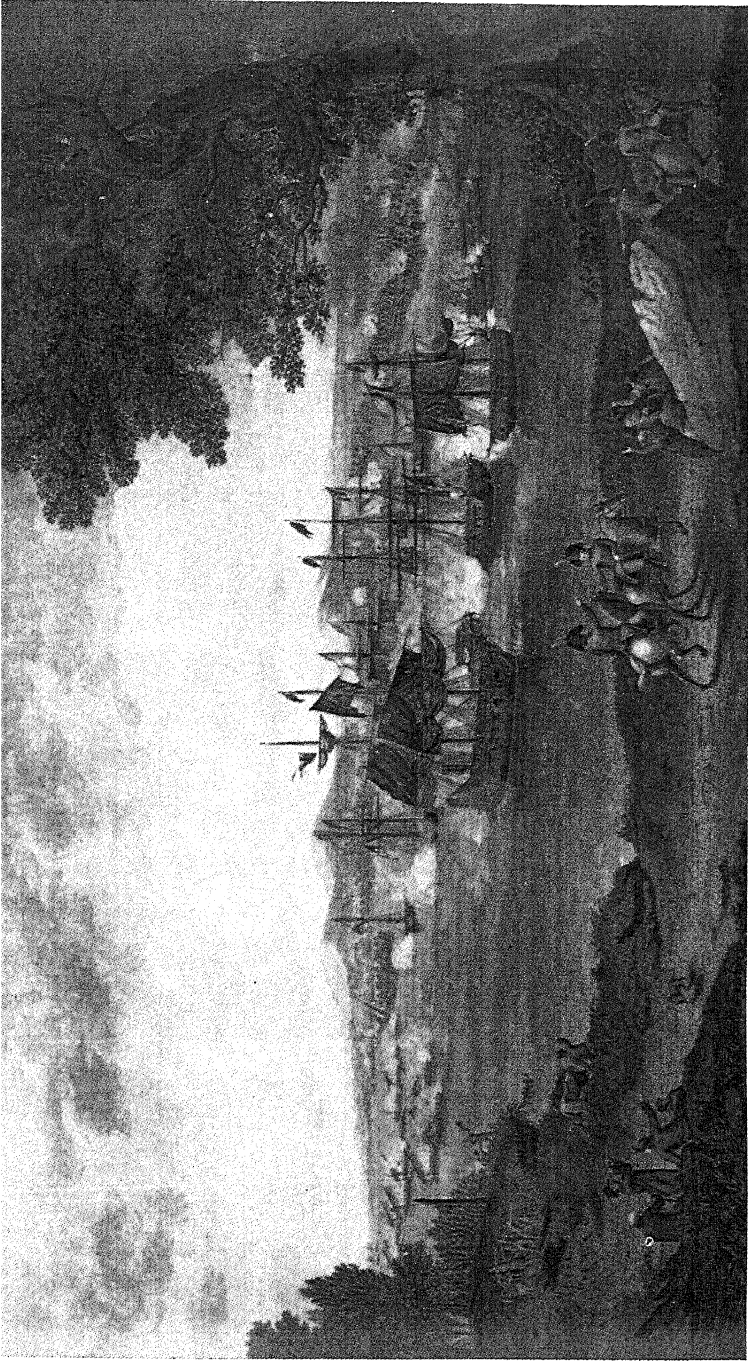
While he inflicted chastisement in a manner to convey in the fullest sense the terror of British arms, the Americans themselves could not withhold from him the meed of praise for the temper and moderation with which he executed the task assigned him.

The Prince Regent raised him posthumously to the peerage and made his family Ross of Bladensburg. Gleig, who had observed Ross in battle, said "a braver man the British army never produced."³ In America, Niles commented in his *Register*, "A brave and able commander. We admire him but cannot esteem his memory."

3.

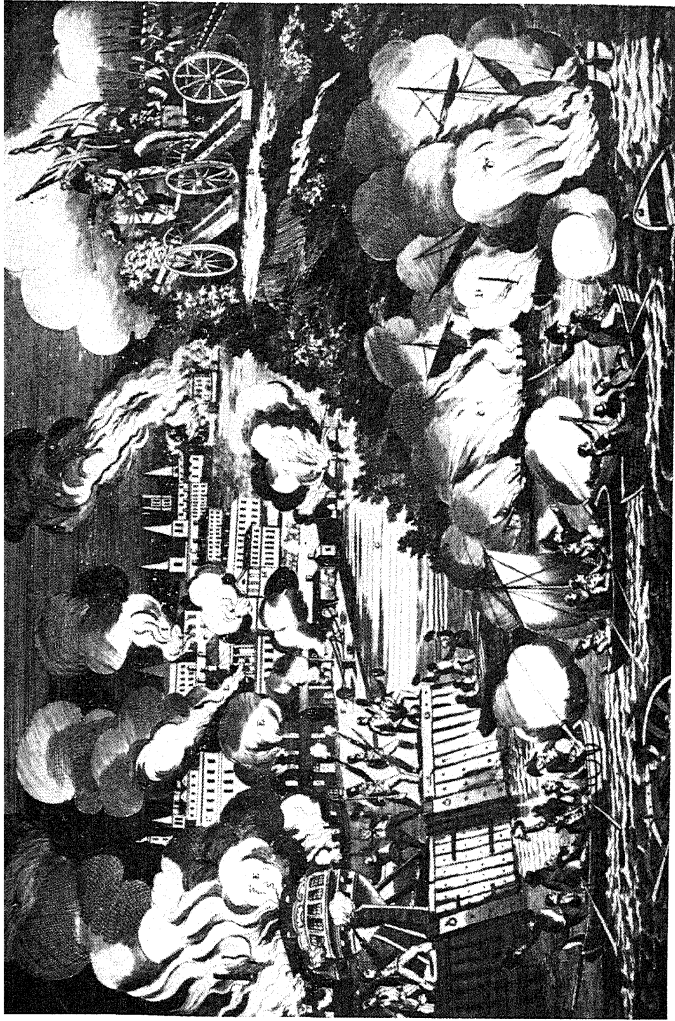
To many, Washington seemed an unfortunate site for the Capitol. It was too unhealthy, remote and exposed. Of late Armstrong had promoted a transfer, and the North vociferously opposed the Potomac site. Philadelphia offered to welcome the Capitol back to Chestnut Street and threw in the tender of nice quarters for the Madisons. Other localities were advanced as ideal for the national requirements. It appeared for some weeks that the matter of locating the seat of the government, which had presented so many problems to the early Congress, would have to be threshed out again.

Even in the beginning Washington had been selected only by the thin majority of three in the House and two in the Senate. It was little preferred over Germantown, Pennsylvania, which also had been voted the capital by both Houses, but those votes had been reconsidered. Fourteen years had added neither to the popularity nor convenience of the Potomac River site. Everyone poked jibes at Washington, a dust bowl in summer, a mudhole in winter. Blodget's old hotel did not make an impressive meet-



Courtesy Naval History Division, Office of Chief of Naval Operations

MACDONOUGH'S VICTORY ON LAKE CHAMPLAIN



Courtesy Library of Congress

SCENES IN THE CAPTURE OF WASHINGTON
British print published less than two months after the event.

ing place for the Congress already summoned to extraordinary session.

But public opinion suddenly crystallized. The nation would show the world that it could rebuild and then defend its capital. It would not permit Great Britain to drive it out like a refugee. The people decreed that the scars of the invasion should be effaced. When Representative Jonathan Fiske introduced his bill to move the capital he found that instead of the almost unanimous sentiment expected to favor it, opposition was so deep-seated and widespread that the proposal had to be withdrawn.

The residents of the District of Columbia appointed a committee of seven to preserve the federal city. The Englishborn landowner, John Law, conducted an effective lobby with bricklayers and carpenters. He had acquired wealth in India, removed to Washington and allied himself so enthusiastically with the Republic that he was among the most outspoken in condemning the lack of aggressive action during his service as a soldier in Winder's five-day campaign. He had bought 500 lots in Washington, which placed him alongside Robert Morse and James Greenleaf as large property holders in the capital.⁴ When it was evident to all that Congress must have a meeting place or the city would lose the government, and that Blodget's Hotel would be the merest sort of a makeshift, Law raised a public subscription and produced a building with a speed worthy of the Presqu' Isle shipwrights who built Perry's fleet on Lake Erie. In the matter of a hundred days, the long, brick structure was erected on Capitol Hill which became known as the "Little Capitol," sometimes as the "Old Capitol." Later it was the home where John C. Calhoun lived and died. During the War between the States, when it was used as a military prison, Mrs. Surratt was held there. It was occupied for a time by the Woman's National Party, and was finally razed to make way for the new Supreme Court building.

By the time Blodget's Hotel had proved its inadequacy, ex-Englishman Law was able to point to a Capitol to replace for a time the one Englishmen had destroyed. The capital on the Potomac was saved.

“Don’t Give Up the Soil”

I.

The character of the American nation never showed to better advantage than upon receipt of the news that the capital had been taken.

Incredulous at first, the people were in turn angered and then inspired with a determination to repel the powerful British armies collecting on the borders before there was further talk of peace conditions. The burning of Washington had produced a cause in which the nation might unite. The new note was caught in a ringing proclamation by the governor of Vermont. Opposition to the war had been highly vocal in the Green Mountain state, but it was swept aside by the sudden wave of indignation. An announcement from Montpelier stated that “the war has assumed an entirely different character.” It had become “a common, not a party concern” in which the people should forget the circumstances under which it was declared and stand solidly together “for the protection of our common country and our liberty.”¹

Typical of the reaction was that of New York City, which for two years had been torn with dissensions that threatened at times to flame into open conflict between Madisonites and Federalists. The first expressions were of anger rather than remorse—anger vented principally on the administration and the American military authorities for allowing the nation to be dishonored. The *Spectator* said:

Yes, Fellow-Citizens, we have to record the humiliating, disgraceful fact, that, in the third year of the war, the City of Washington, the SEAT OF OUR GOVERNMENT, situated 300 miles from the ocean, and in the very heart of this great and extensive country,

has been captured and its public buildings destroyed, by a paltry force of 5,000 men.²

The *Evening Post* dealt with the "startling and deplorable information" in similar vein:

Six months ago no one would have thought such an event could have possibly taken place. The City of Washington, containing valuable public buildings, which have cost the nation millions of money; a large naval arsenal, cannon foundry, etc., etc.,—this city, situated at such a distance from the ocean and only approachable with shipping by long, crooked and narrow rivers, on a spot selected above all others as the most secure from foreign invasion;—who could have supposed that it could so easily have been destroyed by an enemy? Is it possible that after being two years at war, our capital, the seat of our general government, should have been left so defenseless? Can it be believed that a small armament of a few ships, and from six to ten thousand troops, which came into our waters on the 17th instant, could demolish our capital on the 24th?—But such is the fact.

In less than one month from the sailing of the expedition from Bermuda, the British General has fixed his Head Quarters in the heart of our nation, in the seat of our government. . . . Were there no places on the Patuxent or Potomac which might have been fortified? Were there no means of defending the property of the nation? Can men who manage in this way be fit to govern a great and free people?

But criticism of the administration quickly subsided. It was much as after Pearl Harbor in a later day, when large elements of the population deeply hostile to the administration in power found unity in a national cause. Mr. Madison had been at fault, no doubt, but that, they felt, had no bearing on the task at hand. First among the reactions was a movement of the people to protect the other seacoast cities. The day following receipt of the news in New York, large numbers of volunteers stepped forward to complete the construction of Fort Green, overlooking New York Harbor on Brooklyn Heights. The city societies contributed their labor. A large company of women marched with the Tammany Society to Brooklyn Ferry and the Heights to work on the fortifications. It was noticed by reporters that one woman seventy-two years old took up a wheelbarrow and moved it as

agilely as anyone present. Again on the next day 1,500 Tammany members labored. They were followed by 1,000 members of the Free Masons. The work was speeded by the arrival of the full moon. "Six hundred hardy fellows," a local story said, "continued to work during the night; and we are told that the directing engineer declared they performed as much service as any fatigue party of the same number which has yet been on the works."

Commodore Stephen Decatur commanded the New York defenses and had the entire population at his disposal. The uniformed companies of city and county, numbering 6,000, were reviewed under arms. "While we prefer to do our talking later," said the *Evening Post*, "it may be said that a better and more martial looking corps of men was never before seen in our city." When a loan of \$1,000,000 at seven per cent was announced, the *Post* explained: "It is now ascertained that the National Treasury is empty—the government is absolutely penniless—we must, therefore, provide our own means of defense or the country is lost." The Federalist Rufus King followed with this statement: "Let the loan be immediately opened. I will subscribe to the amount of my entire fortune." To which the *Post* added, "This is a man for these, or any times."

New Jersey, whose governor, William S. Pennington, issued a spirited address sharply in contrast with the state's earlier denunciation of the war, went to the assistance of New York City. "This morning about 500 patriotic inhabitants of Bloomfield and Springfield, N. J., proceeded on the Steam-Boat to work on the forts at Harlaem. They were accompanied by the Rev. Messrs. Gildersleeves and Williams, their respectable pastors."

At Newark more than 1,000 businessmen and citizens prepared the city for attack. A parade was formed in the early morning and with bands playing and flags waving, the citizens marched to the defensive works at the water front. On his hat each man wore a printed placard which borrowed from the words spoken by Captain Lawrence when he fell on the deck of the *Chesapeake*. The placards gave the country its new war cry: "DON'T GIVE UP THE SOIL!"

Samuel Woodworth, who is remembered for his authorship of

"The Old Oaken Bucket," was editor of a New York leaflet devoted to war news called *The War*. Woodworth observed the New York military activities and dedicated a poem to the people who were sacrificing their normal occupations:

To protect our rights
'Gainst your flints and triggers,
See on Brooklyn Heights
Our patriotic diggers;
Men of every age,
Color, rank, profession,
Ardently engage,
Labor in succession.
Pickaxe, shovel, spade,
Crowbar, hoe, and barrow.
Better not invade,
Yankees have the marrow.

Although the *Evening Post* had led in the opposition to the war, it now threw itself with even greater vigor into the cause of national defense. In a general communication addressed to its readers, it called on the entire male population of the country to begin practice with firearms to fit themselves for combat and to enter into drill and all other requirements to make the United States a formidable military power. In its appeal to arms it stated the new issue:

Without adverting at present to the course of events which have brought us to the disgraceful situation in which we find ourselves; with our CAPITAL taken, our administration driven from their strong hold, but one sentiment should animate us, but one question should present itself to every true patriotic bosom, Shall we basely surrender our country, or nobly and honorably rise in our might and crush the foe that has polluted the sacred soil of our birth or our adoption?

The paper then gave detailed suggestions for transforming the United States into a military power. It republished as evidence that the country had once possessed an efficient army the circular issued from Washington's headquarters at Morristown, New

Jersey, January 28, 1780, which consisted of general instructions for the preservation of military discipline.

Public response to the war was translated into legislative action. The New York legislature voted an increase of \$2.00 a month in the pay of militia soldiers and enrolled 2,000 for seaboard duty. It followed this by an act for the enlistment of 12,000 additional men as a quota from the state for the federal government.³ While recruiting was carried on, New York women formed an association for supplying hoods, moccasins, socks and mittens to the army on the Lakes. "The present will be a proud time in the history of our state," said Governor Tompkins. "The acrimony of party has disappeared." He initiated the construction of a cannon foundry on the Hudson above New York and announced the offer of an unnamed private citizen to equip a corps of cadets to be trained for officers. Proceedings of the legislature were described by the newspapers as "extensively patriotic."⁴

An incident which demonstrated the sudden turn in sentiment occurred on the Hudson River steamboat, on which Washington Irving, then a promising humorist who wrote for the *Salmagundi* magazine, was a passenger. On its way to Albany, Irving learned from passengers who boarded the vessel at Poughkeepsie that the British Army had captured Washington and burned the public buildings. A man was lolling in the dark on one of the settees of the boat. Overhearing the news, he remarked rather rudely, "Well, I wonder what Jimmie Madison will say now?" Irving, suddenly enraged, took a quick swing at the scoffer, caught him a glancing blow, and then gave him a lesson in the rudiments of patriotism:

"Sir, do you seize on such a disaster only for a sneer? Let me tell you, it is not now a question about Jimmie Madison or Johnny Armstrong. The pride and honor of this nation are wounded. The country is insulted and disgraced by this barbarous success, and every loyal citizen should feel the ignominy and be eager to avenge it."⁵ In Albany, Irving went to the state capitol and offered his services in any capacity in which they might be useful. Governor Tompkins made him his aide with the rank of colonel.

Philadelphia was plunged into a sudden war frenzy. Newspapers were filled with military notices, volunteers who even yet could not be summoned officially under the peculiar state militia law poured in from the country, while women worked on equipment. The city council borrowed \$300,000 for defense. Private corporations pledged \$1,000,000 more. Camps were formed, committees were appointed and in a few days the city felt it was in a position to defeat any attempt against it and to provide assistance in case the enemy began a movement against the Du Pont powder mills at Wilmington.⁶

In Baltimore, Niles addressed an inspiring appeal to all the people:

The Spirit of the Nation is roused. If the barbarian warfare of an inflated enemy would not have roused it, our liberties had perished forever. War is a new business with us, but we must "teach our fingers to fight" and Wellington's invincibles shall be beaten by the sons of those who fought at Saratoga and Yorktown. We can more easily become a military nation than any in the world, and we must become one or be slaves.⁷

Aroused by the invasion, Baltimore merchants and shipping men prepared to give Great Britain a taste of the war. It was recalled that when the American sloop *Peacock* sailed around Great Britain and Ireland during the previous year taking prizes, the British public was thrown into an apprehension that approached a panic. Baltimore began plans to equip from thirty to fifty small vessels, armed with 6- and 12-pound guns, to attack the coastal trade around the British Isles.

The project was one of the most feasible suggested during the war. American privateers already had destroyed so much British merchant shipping that the home public was fretting about the worthlessness of the conflict. For America it was such a good business venture, despite the hazards involved, that more than five hundred privateers went out from American ports to seize and carry the war with impunity into the seas immediately around the British Isles. Baltimore sent more privateers than any other city, with New York, Philadelphia, Boston, Salem and Charleston contributing good numbers. Many of them were

small craft and swift sailers able to draw away at ease from the larger British warships.⁸

At Charleston, South Carolina, work on the fortifications was taken over by the Society of the Cincinnati, Revolutionary War veterans, which organized volunteer workers. Two hundred women presented a flag to the city and then marched out, as in New York, to help in the trench digging. One of the newspaper observers remarked that "the women labored manfully."

The eyes of the country were fastened on Boston to see what contribution that city would make, and the people were finally gratified when Governor Strong threw his active support into the war by lending six 32-pound guns to Commodore Bainbridge for any possible use against the enemy. "We are happy to see," Niles commented,⁹ "that Governor Strong and the people at large seem now to feel the necessity of defending their independence."

Boston, where American independence had been nurtured, did not intend to skulk when the rest of the country was aroused. Citizens began the erection of a new fort in east Boston and Governor Strong was obliged to give the project his blessing and support. The engineers issued an appeal for volunteers and tools and the citizens of Boston came out en masse with their picks and shovels. Any reading of the newspaper accounts makes it quite clear that the great number of Massachusetts citizens were intensely patriotic, not seditious. The *Boston Gazette* of October 3, 1814, said:

Fort Strong progresses rapidly. On Saturday the citizens of Concord and Lincoln, to the number of two hundred, performed labor on it; the punctuality of the patriotic husbandmen deserved the highest praise of their fellow citizens of the metropolis. The volunteers of Wards 1, 3 and 4, together with others, amounted yesterday to five hundred.

Just as was done at New York, in Boston special groups were assigned particular days for work on the fortifications: diggers and hammerers one day, mechanics another, dealers in dry goods and hardware yet another, and thus through the businesses and trades. The *Boston Centinel* which in the early stages had been

so vitriolic against Madison and the war accommodatingly published the schedules each day for the different bodies of workers.

The tramp of the British soldiers down Pennsylvania Avenue echoed through the far-off Ohio and Kentucky forests. When the news reached Cincinnati General Harrison, superseded and inactive, issued a call for dragoons who would ride over the mountains to the Eastern seaboard. The frontier country responded readily and a detachment was formed and placed at the disposal of the War Department.¹⁰

2.

Washington residents who had been sleeping in the fields straggled back to the city. Captain Gordon's fleet was approaching up the Potomac and the townspeople hastily began the erection of fortifications along the Potomac River and at the juncture with the East Branch. Gordon's force consisted of two frigates and a number of smaller vessels. On Saturday August 27, three days after Washington had been vacated by General Ross, the squadron appeared off Fort Washington. The garrison retreated and blew up the fort, leaving Alexandria open. Gordon contented himself with levying a heavy indemnity against Alexandria, which the helpless town paid. He ventured no nearer Washington but rejoined Cochrane at the rendezvous at the mouth of the Potomac.¹¹

The rebuilding of Fort Washington was started soon after his retirement. Residents of Washington and Alexandria who went out to work on the entrenchments noticed an old man in rough garments digging with a spade. At first they did not recognize him. He proved to be Major Pierre Charles L'Enfant, the engineer George Washington had commissioned to lay out the federal city. Continually involved in controversies, he was remembered by the city of 1814 chiefly because of his unwillingness to modify his original designs and his insistence on the destruction of a number of attractive houses that had been built without conformity with his plans for avenues. He had passed into obscurity and poverty, but arrived from the north a few days after the departure of the British, and went out as a laborer

for the city he had conceived. His scheme of wide avenues, suited for defense, had not saved Washington. The greater need was for trained men.

Another reaction, which followed the first cries of condemnation, was a wave of sympathy for President Madison. His position had become too abject for further complaint. None could doubt his sincerity of purpose. What he needed was assistance, instead of more useless criticism. According to one of his callers, the invasion left him "miserably shattered and woebegone . . . heartbroken."

On August 26 Madison learned at his refuge up the Potomac that the British had evacuated Washington. Monroe had returned to the army at Montgomery Court House. The President decided to cross the river and seek him there. Much as Jefferson had needed Madison for mental guidance, Madison required Monroe for emotional support. Winder, however, had marched the army toward Baltimore, which was judged to be threatened, and Monroe accompanied him as far as Ellicott City.¹² The President picked up an escort in Virginia and with it followed after the army to Brookville, where he stopped for the night and summoned the cabinet to meet in Washington on the following day. A glimpse at the President's morale at this low point of his administration was provided in a letter from a Maryland resident:

At nine o'clock last night Mr. Madison arrived here [Brookville] escorted by General Mason and 50 Virginia dragoons. Lodgings were asked for two doors below where I stay with my wife's uncle. It was positively refused. He was taken at the next door, Mason having asked for lodgings for himself, and Mr. Bently not knowing until the President was introduced that he was there. My brother and Mr. Dorsey went down and supped at the table with Madison. The defense of the city was freely criticised and the situation of the country was freely spoken of. Madison said little more than expressing his surprise how they could discriminate between Gales' office and Foxall's foundry, both being private property, and the latter being spared by the enemy while the other was destroyed. A short time before the President arrived I had held a conversation with Mr. Samuel Harrison Smith at the house where the President lodged.

In the course of my remarks, I spoke of the disgrace of the

President flying about from place to place, and said he might at least make his head quarters at Fredericton and there call his cabinet about him, and try to rouse the nation. I also gave it as my opinion that the enemy would not march to Baltimore, but would reembark: because they had left a guard at every place they passed through, and all that. Smith repeated my conversation to the President. He said nothing, but anxiously inquired after Colonel Monroe and Armstrong, saying he did not know where either of them were. My brother has just come in and stated that Madison has received a dispatch from Winder, informing him that the enemy has gone, upon receipt of which information the dragoons were ordered in readiness to guard the President to the city, where the blacks are reported to be plundering, burning, etc. Everywhere I go the people are heaping curses upon the government. An officer told me this morning that the ground chosen by Winder and Armstrong admitted of the enemy's coming up under cover of the apple orchards in the neighborhood of Bladensburg, and that while passing through the orchards in front of our harmless fire, the officers were picking apples from the trees.¹³

3.

Madison re-entered Washington on the morning of the twenty-seventh, to find Justice of the Peace William Thornton in control and the plundering of houses which followed the departure of the British checked. Mrs. Madison, arriving in the disguise of a house servant, joined him there. Monroe and Armstrong came later in the day, and Madison finally was forced to a decision as to his Secretary of War's serviceability. Feeling against Armstrong was intense. The incident which applied the required pressure on the President was initiated by Charles Carroll of Bellevue, owner of 80,000 acres and regarded the nation's wealthiest man.

When Gordon's fleet became threatening in the Potomac, Smith's militia brigade was hurried back to the city, where it began defensive works on an eminence near the southeast water front known as Windmill Hill. Secretary Armstrong soon rode up.

"My first notice of his presence in camp," General Smith said, "was from the loud voice of Mr. Charles Carroll, then one of our

most prominent citizens, which reached my quarters, refusing his proffered hand and denouncing his conduct. I was soon notified of a general commotion in camp, and a pervading determination, too emphatically expressed to admit of doubt, not to serve under his orders." Colonel Thomas L. McKenney, Smith's aide, provided a fuller account of the reception of the Secretary of War.

What occurred, in fact, was that the District of Columbia militia mutinied against Armstrong. Some of the officers stepped up to General Smith, and, speaking for the entire group, said: "There, sir, are our swords. We will not employ them if General Armstrong is to command us in his capacity as Secretary of War, but we will obey the orders of any other member of the Cabinet." Meanwhile someone had sketched on the charred walls of the Capitol an effigy suspended from a gallows, under which was written, "Armstrong the Traitor." Stories were circulated about the city that Armstrong had been in treasonable correspondence with a relative in the British Army, a man named Buchanan who had been wounded in the battle. No evidence supported such a charge, but it was clear that the capital city had fastened on Armstrong blame for the late disaster and that the first requirement for the restoration of orderly government was Armstrong's dismissal.

Charles Carroll's vehement language represented the view of what seemed to be the large majority. Armstrong's indolence had been too well publicized in advance of the invasion for anyone to have confidence in his future conduct. General Smith sent his two aides, Colonel McKenney and Major Williams, to report the state of affairs to Mr. Madison, who was found riding on F Street. The President said he would give immediate consideration to the issue raised by the militia and promised that no orders would be given by Armstrong conflicting with those the President had already issued. Madison was, however, still unwilling to dismiss his cabinet officer peremptorily. He suggested to Armstrong that he retire from the city until the wave of indignation subsided. Armstrong consequently went to Baltimore, but upon his arrival there he forwarded his resignation to the President. His public career was at an end.¹⁴

Although he had to bear the charge of exciting the militia against Armstrong, Monroe appears to have scrupulously avoided either direct or indirect pressure upon the President for the Secretary of War's dismissal after Bladensburg. Yet when the Secretary's retirement was an accomplished fact, Monroe began at once an assumption of War Department duties. Madison, while observing this, still hesitated to face the criticism involved in giving Monroe the two leading cabinet positions.

Eventually Monroe was forced to create a situation which would compel the President either to repudiate him or to entrust the armies to his full supervision. He apparently felt that had he possessed the authority, he could have prevented the loss of the city, and he did not want to take further chances. A colonel was placing guns near Georgetown. Monroe ordered him to change their positions. The colonel pointed out that Monroe had no military authority, whereupon the Secretary of State told him either to follow instructions or leave the field. The colonel promptly departed. The case was carried to the President. Monroe's services were indispensable and Mr. Madison had no choice but to support him and give him the War portfolio, which he did formally tender. Yet at the same time, in order to compensate for New York's loss of cabinet representation, he invited Governor Tompkins to become Secretary of State. When the latter declined, Monroe held both positions. That the Department for the remaining months of the war had an efficient administration which encouraged the generals in the field to their best efforts, was attested by the fact that the American armies did not lose another engagement.

Honor at Niagara

I.

In the summer of 1814 the cabinet approved a plan for a new advance on the Niagara frontier. General Jacob Brown was to capture Burlington Heights and invade Upper Canada along the north shore of Lake Ontario to York. As a prelude to this campaign he was directed to capture Fort Erie, opposite Buffalo, and move down the Niagara River to Chippewa and Fort George.

Brown now commanded a solid army of 3,500 men, most of whom were regulars familiar with his determined purpose and strict enforcement of orders. His troops had been warned that the death penalty would be imposed on any soldier found pillaging private property.

Brown's first brigade was commanded by Brigadier General Winfield Scott, now experienced in combat and possessed of a quick comprehension of good tactics and a readiness of decision to take advantage of any opportunities opened on the battlefield. He had become, as he remained in later life, an advocate of the principle that the greatest safety lies in the offensive. His brigade had a nucleus of the troops he had been drilling seven to ten hours daily almost since the beginning of the war.¹

Brigadier General Eleazar Wheelock Ripley commanded the second brigade and was next in rank to Brown. Ripley was another New Englander who gave the lie to the prevalent notion that all New England was estranged from the American government. Born in Hanover, New Hampshire, he was graduated in 1800 from Dartmouth, where his father was professor of divinity. His grandfather, Eleazar Wheelock, for whom he was christened,

had founded Dartmouth as a college for Indians in 1770. Ripley practiced law in Portland, Maine, then a part of Massachusetts, and soon was representing the district in the Bay State legislature. He succeeded the eminent Joseph Story as speaker of the Massachusetts House when Madison in 1811 appointed Story an associate justice of the United States Supreme Court. When war was declared Ripley volunteered in the 21st Infantry and rose from a lieutenant in 1812 to the regiment's colonel in 1813. A year later, at the age of thirty, he was given command of a brigade. Compared with Scott, he seemed to lack daring. Possibly his excess of caution resulted from his being a lineal descendent of the reticent although stanch Puritan captain, Myles Standish.

Brown's third brigade consisted of New York and Pennsylvania militia and Indians of the Six Nations. It was commanded by a fixture of the Niagara army, Peter B. Porter, the War Hawk congressman who was quartermaster general of New York militia. The full military strength of the Six Nations, so powerful in the Revolution, consisted now of less than 600 warriors. But these were inspired to join their old enemies, the Americans, by the rousing eloquence of the great but aging Seneca orator, Chief Red Jacket, not yet sunk to the senility and derangement in which he allowed himself to be exhibited for money.²

The British on the border numbered about 4,000. The troops, scattered at the different posts, were commanded by a wealthy Irish major general, Phineas Riall, of Tipperary, who was gallant in action but comparatively inexperienced in handling large units. Elements of Wellington's Peninsular Army had not yet reached the Niagara, although the tension was relieved for the British and Canadians by reassurances that they were coming.

General Brown gave occasion for added Fourth of July celebrating along the border by capturing Fort Erie on July 3, 1814. General Scott crossed the Niagara from Black Rock before daylight. His movement was conducted so efficiently that within two hours after its departure from American soil his full brigade was in battle formation below Fort Erie. Ripley was more dilatory in crossing from Buffalo and by the time he arrived Brown

had already thrown a ring around the fort with Scott's brigade. Batteries were established and an 18-pounder was mounted on the heights called Snake Hill. But no bombardment was necessary. The British garrison of less than 200 officers and men surrendered. Meanwhile reinforcements, which were being rushed forward by General Riall, learned at Chippewa that the fort had capitulated. They halted on the north side of Chippewa Creek and fortified a camp.

Brown next moved on the British regulars who were concentrated at Chippewa, Scott in the advance. The march Scott made of sixteen miles on July 4 was a running skirmish with the 100th British Regiment commanded by the Marquis of Tweeddale. It developed one of the interesting sidelights of the War of 1812 in that it caused the adoption by West Point of the traditional blue-gray uniforms still worn by the cadets.

Before the campaign opened Scott's troops were threadbare, and the general requisitioned blue woollens for uniforms. The American textile industry was in its feeble beginnings and had nothing serviceable. Imported material was unavailable to the quartermaster because of the British blockade. Scott learned that he could get gray fabric in Philadelphia. He ordered it promptly and had it worked into the trim new garb which his men wore when they crossed into Canada on July 3.

Both Riall and the Marquis of Tweeddale observed these unconventional uniforms. They judged that they were being opposed by Buffalo militia units instead of American regulars in the customary service blue. The British officers attributed the smartness of these troops to the circumstance that they were fighting on the Fourth of July and believed they would resume the customary indifference of the militia on July 5. But their sharpness in pressing the British regulars across Street's Creek, which entered the Niagara a mile above Chippewa Creek, was not greater than the courage they displayed on the battlefield at Chippewa on July 5. Their determination not only disconcerted the British, but also won them applause at the recently established military academy on the Hudson, where the cadets were hungry for news of some resolute American fighting. The uniform worn in this

engagement was adopted in honor of Scott and his soldiers as the official uniform of the West Point cadets and is retained to the present day.³

2.

The hotly contested Battle of Chippewa was fought on the level ground between Street's and Chippewa creeks, with the Niagara River to the east and a heavy wood on the west. Both armies employed Indians, chiefly as flank guards and skirmishers. Brown sent Porter across Street's Creek through the woods to the left, where Indians on Riall's right were annoying the Americans by firing from the dense timber. In the late afternoon Porter's militia and 400 Indians under Red Jacket scattered their adversaries and swept out of the wood into the plain along Chippewa Creek. Suddenly they found themselves faced by the entire British army moving forward to the attack. Riall had been reinforced during the night by an additional regiment of regulars. He was intent on driving the Americans, whom he still regarded as impudent militia, across the Niagara River to the American shore.

When they encountered the British regulars, Porter's Indians, who had behaved well in the wood, broke and ran.⁴ The British advanced with fixed bayonets on Porter's militia. Porter ordered his men to fall back and the movement quickly degenerated into a rout.

Observing from the left of his line, Brown saw the flight of Porter's brigade and noticed the cloud of dust rising toward Chippewa, which indicated the advance of a large British force. He hurried to Scott, whom he found preparing to lead his men across Street's Creek and drill and parade them on the plain. Scott doubted Brown's conclusion that the enemy was at hand. He prepared his men for either drill or battle, but by the time he crossed the creek at a bridge he was under heavy artillery fire. His left flank, exposed by the flight of Porter, was covered by the advance of Ripley.

The British general brought into the action three partial regiments of British regulars, an artillery detachment and some regu-

lar dragoons, in addition to militia and Indians. He advanced in three columns and met Scott on the shore of the Niagara midway between the two creeks. Riall's lack of skill in handling his army was obvious to the observant Scott, who perceived that the British regiments were fighting independently and not in close battle line and that their flanks were at times woefully exposed. At an inviting opportunity, Scott suddenly drove the 11th U.S. Infantry Regiment, whose colonel, John B. Campbell, was already mortally wounded, into a gap in the British line. The American regiment was led on this decisive movement by Major John McNeil, of New Hampshire.

Under the impact of McNeil's charge and some well-directed artillery fire from the battery of a Maryland artillery officer, Major Nathan Towson, the British line broke and fled across Chippewa Creek to their fortified camp. Major Thomas Sidney Jesup, commanding Scott's left regiment, the 25th Infantry, on which much of the force of Riall's attack had fallen, poured a heavy fire into Riall's left and then charged with McNeil. Riall's right elements fell back in confusion. Major Henry Leavenworth, commanding Scott's right regiment, charging along the surging waters of the Niagara River, kept pace with McNeil and Jesup. His later Army career west of the Mississippi was long and capable, and Fort Leavenworth, Kansas, was named in his honor.

Thus the long drills which Scott had enforced upon his men finally allowed the American Army to vindicate itself on a torrid July day that would have been oppressive to any army. Later critics of American military campaigns questioned whether Scott should have "tempted destruction" by abandoning his security behind Street's Creek and crossing the bridge in the face of fire from 24-pounders. But they could not censure severely a vigorous attack by a leader so clearly able to inspire his men to extraordinary effort.⁵ Scott's later campaign against Mexico City was marked by this same reliance on an audacious offensive.

The British tore up the planks of the Chippewa Creek bridge and the Americans made no effort to cross. Scott went forward to reconnoiter and upon his return recommended against an as-

sault on the British camp. Rain fell to break the heat and Brown ordered his army to return to their camp on the other side of Street's Creek, leaving the muddy battleground unoccupied.

General Riall's actions at the moment of defeat were in marked contrast with the flight of Proctor at the battle of the Thames. When Riall saw his army breaking, he did not follow it. At first he seemed to have in mind a suicide charge. He rode straight toward the Americans as if seeking death in preference to the humiliation of defeat. His aide rode with him and was severely wounded. Then Riall apparently abandoned any thought of suicide, but he was one of the last to leave the field.⁶

Chippewa, an American victory, gave Brown's army and the entire country a lift in morale at the moment when the American public was becoming most apprehensive over the new turn in the war caused by Napoleon's downfall. The battle demonstrated that American troops could meet and drive back British regulars.⁷

The British loss in the battle was 236 killed, 322 wounded and forty-six missing. The American loss was sixty-one killed, 255 wounded and nineteen missing. The troops actually participating in the battle numbered 1,700 British and 1,300 Americans. Ripley's brigade was not engaged. A reason for the heavier British loss was believed to be the American practice of putting three buckshot in front of each ball when the muskets were loaded. The buckshot scattered and did much execution.⁸

3.

Two days after the battle of Chippewa, Brown ordered Ripley's brigade to cross Chippewa Creek, upstream from the British camp and fall on Riall's flank. Before the movement could be completed Riall broke his camp, retired down the Niagara River to Queenston, and then retreated to Fort George as Brown approached. Riall was continuing to Burlington Heights when he met reinforcements consisting of two partial regiments. This caused him to return to Fifteen Mile Creek and keep Brown under observation. Brown was anxious to invest Fort George and move on to Burlington and Kingston but was unable to gain the

co-operation of Chauncey and the Lake Ontario fleet. On July 25 he retired to the battleground of Chippewa.

On July 25, 1814, the situation on the Niagara border suddenly changed. Lieutenant General Sir George Gordon Drummond reached Queenston with 800 reinforcements including the first trickle of Wellington's veterans.⁹

Transported by Yeo's fleet up the Niagara River, they occupied Lewiston, on the American side. Meanwhile Riall, apprised of the arrival of these troops, marched back to the Niagara and camped along Lundy's Lane, a small public road leading to Hamilton, running at right angles with the main highway connecting Chippewa with Queenston, and about two miles below Chippewa Creek.

The appearance of British soldiers on the American shore of the Niagara River, when the American army was on the Canadian side, confused both Brown and Scott. Brown, unaware of Drummond's arrival, thought Riall was trying to destroy the American stores at Schlosser. Adopting the idea that the best means of bringing the British back to their own territory would be by moving against Fort George and cutting their communications, he ordered General Scott to march down the Niagara River toward Queenston and Fort George. No unit could have been more eager than Scott's brigade, given high confidence by its victory at Chippewa. Brown issued his orders for its advance after four o'clock on July 25, 1814, and within twenty-five minutes Scott was on the roadway. He did not expect serious opposition, for he believed Riall to be on the American side.

At Niagara Falls, at a house near Table Rock, he saw some mounted British officers ride hastily away, and was told that about 1,100 British soldiers were in the woods near by. Distrusting such information, he moved ahead confidently through the wooded country. Upon approaching Lundy's Lane, he suddenly found himself facing the British army. Sending a request to Brown to hurry forward, Scott deployed immediately to attack.

On the British side, Riall, aware of Scott's approach, had ordered a retreat to Queenston when Drummond, marching with 800 men from that point, reached Lundy's Lane and took com-

mand. Drummond countermanded the retreat, put a battery on an eminence in his center, commanding the surrounding country, and re-established a battle line. He had meanwhile recalled the small detachment that was creating a diversion on the American side of the river.

Scott came forward impetuously with his inferior force. It was seven o'clock on the July evening when he struck the British line like a tornado cast out from the near-by cataract. For two hours the deep roar of Niagara Falls was no more than a dull undercurrent to the fire of the muskets and booming of the cannon in a battle that exceeded in fury and grimness any contest that had ever been fought on North American soil. The two armies stood in their ranks and fired at each other at point-blank range, both refusing to give up a foot of soil.

After the battle was joined, Scott detected that the weakness of the British position was a gap between Riall's left and the Niagara River. He consequently detached Major Jesup with the 25th Regiment, which had shared in the decisive assault at Chippewa, to move into a small wood and try to gain the British left flank. The movement was not only strikingly successful, but also resulted in the capture of General Riall and his staff. One of Jesup's companies had gained the British rear and in the gathering darkness was mistaken by Riall's aide for British soldiers. Riall was severely wounded. His aide, who was attempting to get the general to the rear, called out, "Make room there, men, for General Riall." The Americans complied, then surrounded the British party with fixed bayonets. The astonished general made no effort to escape. Jesup could not maintain his isolated position. He retired to the American lines, taking his prisoners with him. Scott directed that Riall be given all possible attention in the rear of the American army.

Both Scott and Drummond now being spent, a lull occurred in the fighting. But the battle was not over. Brown, riding forward with Ripley's brigade, arrived at nine o'clock, just as darkness was settling over the field. Riall's remaining regiment, on reserve down the Niagara, reached Lundy's Lane at approximately the same moment and the slaughter was resumed. Brown's

first action was to pass Ripley's brigade through that of Scott and relieve the troops who had borne the brunt of the most severe fighting of the war.

At Lundy's Lane, as at Chippewa, it was a New Hampshire colonel who made the decisive movement against the British army. Here, the role that had been taken by Colonel McNeil at Chippewa was held by Colonel James Miller, of Ripley's brigade. Brown saw that the key to the British position was the battery on the eminence in the center. He asked Miller, who had commanded at the battle of Monguaga in Hull's Detroit campaign, and served under Harrison in Indiana, whether he could capture these works.

"I'll try, sir," responded the colonel coolly, and led his 21st Infantry Regiment forward.

A supporting regiment, the 1st Infantry, broke under the British fire and retreated. Miller was not disconcerted. Under cover of the darkness, a rail fence and heavy shrubbery, he took his 300 men up the hill in the British center. At ten yards he fired a volley into the British artillerymen which dropped all of them. He quickly captured the guns.

The British infantry was immediately behind the guns, and so rapid was the firing at a range of twenty-five yards that the space between the two infantry lines appeared to be an unbroken sheet of flame. The British attacked with bayonets and a stubborn hand-to-hand fight was waged in the darkness. Drummond's reinforcements tried in three assaults to recapture the eminence, but Ripley came to Miller's help and the Americans remained in possession of this key to the British position. The opposing forces were so close to each other that the American marksmen could aim at the gleam of the buttons on the chests of the British soldiers. Drummond's army was pressed back. Miller retained seven brass pieces and the entire park of ammunition wagons.¹⁰

British and Americans agreed that Miller's attack at the heart of the British army was a most gallant assault. "You have immortalized yourself," Brown told him after the battle.

Fighting continued at the ridge and along the entire line until 11 P.M., when, with the troops quite done in, the firing stopped.

By that hour many of the leading officers of both armies were out of action. Brown and Scott were severely wounded and the more cautious Ripley was left in command. On the British side, Riall was a prisoner and Drummond wounded, although able to retain his command.

At this time Brown issued a peculiar order which went far toward depriving his army of the fruits of a victory won by their desperate fighting. The wounded American commander directed his successor, Ripley, to leave the Lundy's Lane arena and retire to the old Chippewa battlefield, three miles in the rear. There he was to re-form his army and move forward again at daylight to renew the attack. Scott was so severely wounded his recovery seemed doubtful; he was unable to give any counsel. Undoubtedly he would have favored retaining possession of the newly won field. But Brown was concerned about the number of American stragglers he encountered. He appeared to have forgotten that, despite this straggling, he had ousted the British from their position because his subordinate, Scott, had not hesitated to grasp the offensive. Now, in a retirement, he would needlessly surrender it.

Ripley was able to haul back his own artillery. Having few ropes and an insufficient number of animals, he could not move the captured British guns in the darkness. At daybreak on July 26 the British advanced into possession of the battlefield. They recovered all except one of the guns the Americans had taken. What was of greater importance, they recovered the initiative.

Brown blamed Ripley. He held that Ripley had not been sufficiently enterprising in reorganizing his army and returning to the engagement. Ripley had not moved at daybreak as directed. Brown by-passed his successor and sent orders to the regimental commanders urging them forward. The army advanced across Chippewa Creek and approached within a mile of the Lundy's Lane battleground, where Ripley learned that the British, who had been modestly reinforced during the night, had repossessed their old lines. Ripley again retreated to Chippewa.

Exasperated, Brown determined to replace Ripley. He sent a messenger to Sackets Harbor ordering Brigadier General Ed-

mund P. Gaines to hasten to Niagara River and assume command.

Further experience probably would have persuaded Brown of the imprudence of abandoning a hard-won battlefield to reorganize regiments that were flushed with victory. The original fault appears to have been his, not Ripley's.

Each side might well claim a victory at Lundy's Lane. For the Americans it was a confirmation of Chippewa in demonstrating to the world that a republican form of government could develop armies of top fighting quality, able to compete with troops considered the best the monarchies of Europe could produce.¹¹ For the British, it proved a check to Brown's advance toward Fort George, Burlington Heights and Kingston. It broke up the American invasion plans.

The American loss at Lundy's Lane—sometimes called the Battle of Niagara, or Bridgewater Mills—was 171 killed, 571 wounded and 110 missing, a casualty rate of thirty-two per cent of the 2,600 men actively engaged. The British lost eighty-four killed, 559 wounded and 235 prisoners or missing. The available strength of each army was about 4,000.¹²

4.

On July 27, the second day after the battle, Ripley judged it prudent to retire to Fort Erie, which Drummond, seizing the offensive that Brown had sacrificed, soon invested. Gaines arrived on August 5 and Ripley in a good spirit resumed his subordinate position as brigade commander.

In February 1807 Gaines had won national notice as the lieutenant who had arrested Aaron Burr near Fort Stoddard in Alabama. A North Carolina farm boy, he rose in the Regular Army from ensign to major general and held important commands later in the Seminole and Mexican wars. He is remembered by the cities of Gainesville in Georgia, Florida and Texas, all named in his honor.

Ripley had diligently strengthened Fort Erie with new bastions, but Drummond after a reconnaissance determined to storm the works. He opened on August 7 with a heavy bombardment

from cannon and rocket tubes. The Americans replied and the exchanges from the big guns continued for eight days without much damage to either side.

At two o'clock on the morning of August 15 the British advanced in three columns. One was directed against Snake Hill, at the south end of the redoubt, another at Battery Douglass at the north, and a third against the fort itself. The attack on Snake Hill was abandoned after five repulses. The second column was rebuffed at Battery Douglass, but the men joined the third column, which Drummond sent against the main works. Drummond in this assault appears to have first brought into prominent usage the phrase, "Damned Yankee," merged into one word during the War between the States. Of passing interest is the fact that it was employed against troops commanded by Gaines, Virginia-born and North Carolina-reared, who had numerous Southerners in his ranks. Gaines wrote to the War Department that he and others repeatedly heard orders issued to "give the damned Yankees no quarter."

The assault on the fort was more successful than those against Snake Hill and the battery. A detachment of one hundred members of the Royal Artillery obtained a lodgment inside the main northeast bastion. There, for two hours, they resisted the most determined efforts of the Americans to drive them out. The assaulting columns, rushing to the aid of the artillerymen, tried, in turn, to win the remainder of the fort. The hand-to-hand fighting continued with the same fury that had characterized the clash of these resolute armies at Lundy's Lane.

Properly supported, the British probably could have ousted the American garrison, which had to maintain a long defensive line and could not concentrate so readily as the assailants. Drummond, however, did not give sufficient help to his soldiers inside the American bastion.

At a critical moment a tremendous explosion occurred immediately beneath the bastion the British occupied. It hurled stones and earth and splintered timbers, blew bodies into the air, burned the men with a great sheet of flame, and utterly destroyed the

ardor of the attacking party. The surviving British soldiers evacuated the bastion on the double and gained their own entrenchments. The assault was costly to Drummond. He lost, in killed and wounded, 905; the Americans lost eighty-four.

Just as the causes of the crucial explosion at York were disputed, so here the causes of the eruption were argued by the armies and by some historians of the war. Although the Fort Erie devastation has been considered accidental by some, there is impressive evidence that an American officer blew up a chest of ammunition located under a platform in the center of the bastion.

The siege of Fort Erie dragged on. General Gaines was at his desk inside the fort on August 28 when a shell came through the roof and wounded him severely. After another brief command by Ripley, Brown was recovered sufficiently to resume active service. On September 17, in a driving rain, Brown made a sortie and drove the British from their advance positions but did not undertake to storm Drummond's camp. Brown's men captured two British batteries but were repulsed at a third on the shore of the lake.

Both sides claimed victory. Drummond had been "roughly handled," which Brown said was the purpose of his sortie. Bad weather was setting in. The British soldiers had insufficient shelter for winter operations. Drummond finally lost his stomach for the siege. On September 21 he retreated beyond Chippewa Creek.

An energetic movement against the British could at this time have easily given the American army a final and clear-cut victory on Canadian soil. Brown was now receiving more numerous volunteers and would no doubt have developed such an attack. Unfortunately Major General George Izard had been ordered from Sackets Harbor to the Niagara after Gaines was wounded. He ranked Brown and took command. His moves were abortive, although the Niagara Army, combined with the troops he brought from Sackets Harbor, gave him 8,000 men, the largest army yet assembled on the frontier. Izard advanced on Chippewa, destroyed 200 bushels of wheat at Cook's Mill, then decided to withdraw from Canada. He mined Fort Erie, blew it up

on November 5, 1814, and crossed the Niagara River. Drummond meanwhile had withdrawn to Fort George.

A long era of peace, unlikely to be broken, came to the Niagara border. There had been enough brutality, leavened with little glory, to convince both sides in that quarter that war accomplishes no worthy purpose, but only ravishes and defiles.

Northern Invasion

I.

Stubbornness was a dominant quality of the British War Office. In 1777, under the direction of Lord George Germain, an indifferent strategist, it had prepared a plan for severance of New England from the balance of the colonies by an expedition down the eastern border of New York. Lake Champlain and the Hudson River were to be used for communication and the transport of supplies.

The campaign had collapsed, because, for one reason, Germain failed to give explicit orders to Lord Howe in New York about how he should co-operate. The orders were prepared, to be sure, and put in a pigeonhole in Germain's desk when he left town for the week end, only to be forgotten upon his return. Burgoyne could not maintain a supply line from Canada. Howe sailed blithely off against Philadelphia and permitted the Americans to waste Burgoyne away.

Now, in 1814, after the passing of thirty-seven years, the War Office went into its garret recesses and brought out this old plan. That applying it must have unfortunate consequences might easily have been determined by a glance at the independent status of the United States.¹ The new conditions made the plan less practical than ever. In 1814 the campaign could not hinge on any uniting of two British armies in the wilderness of upstate New York, for the British no longer held a base in New York City. The severance of New England would now have to be accomplished by a single veteran army moving down from Montreal to Albany and thence southward or eastward as conditions might dictate. The British, who erred in thinking the secessionist senti-

ment in New England was pro-British rather than anti-Virginian, hoped to stimulate a popular uprising and reunite the New England states with the crown by revolt as well as invasion. It was a mistaken impression of the New England attitude, for however strongly many New Englanders may have opposed the war and sought separation from the Southern and Western states, their aim was another independent republic, and most certainly not incorporation into Canada or resumption of a colonial status within the British Empire.

The British keenly wanted a better land outlet from Montreal and other inland cities. During the winter months the St. Lawrence was icebound and water communication came to a standstill. The only way to reach England was on a long overland journey by horseback or sled through the wilderness of New Brunswick and across Nova Scotia to Halifax. The hardships of the journey created the desire of the home government for a strip of the Maine coast and accounted for the tenacity with which the British commissioners clung to that demand at the peace negotiations. Massachusetts would serve even better than Maine for an outlet, with Boston the harbor.

The War Office could scarcely have expected the generous co-operation it received at the outset of the Champlain campaign from Secretary of War Armstrong and General George Izard, the Northern American commander. As the British invasion forces gathered north of Plattsburg, Izard, responding to Armstrong's directions, marched his army 280 miles across northern New York to Sackets Harbor and almost stripped the Lake Champlain area of trained soldiers. Until the summer of 1814 there had been no conspicuous military activity in the Lake Champlain district. This looked to Armstrong like a quiet sector. Either he was a poor newspaper reader or he was indifferent to the fact that by midsummer the British were beginning to build up a veteran army whose first objective would undoubtedly be the Lake Champlain invasion route.²

Dispatch after dispatch told of the coming of fresh British troops. An example is the reprint by the *New York Post* on June 23, 1814, of this story from the *London Times*:

The number of men intended to be sent from Lord Wellington's army direct to America is reported to be 10,000, of which the Fusiliers, the 29th Regiment and a strong corps of artillery will form a part.

In the same issue a dispatch from Halifax said:

By accounts brought by the packet Mr. Madison may soon expect a British Land Force not less than 15,000 on some part of his coast, commanded by Sir Thomas Picton, whilst the army in Canada will be reenforced by a still stronger number. Whether any foreign troops will be employed on this occasion is uncertain as we do not see the necessity.

The amount of the British army in December last was 239,431 Regulars of which 31,082 were Cavalry. 12,000 Spaniards will appear at nearly the same time in Florida and if this does not sicken Madison and his accomplices, we shall have a better opinion of Yankee prowess than any other of their former acts would justify.

The conditions of Izard's march shed light on one of the main canards of the War of 1812, the authorship of which was usually attributed to Secretary of War Armstrong. The story does not occur in his *Notices of the War of 1812*, or his *Spectator*, but it is supposed to have been contained in a pamphlet he withdrew from circulation. More likely the tale never got beyond the conversational stage. Supposedly Armstrong charged that the administration did not truly want Canada and continually schemed to prevent the capture of Canada. To that end, according to the story, it kept slave-holding generals in command on the border as a precaution. Possession of Canada would lead to admittance of additional free states and would end Southern dominance in the government. The historian Lossing, whose accounts have an original source value because of his conversations with numerous participants of the war, relates the story in detail as current both during and after the war.

The generals from the slave states who commanded on the Canadian border were Smyth of Virginia, Hampton of South Carolina and Louisiana, Wilkinson and Winder of Maryland, and Izard of South Carolina. The story in circulation was that Madison, yielding to Calhoun's alleged pressure, failed to rein-

force Hull and thus made Hull's failure certain, then kept the army under Southerners. One of Armstrong's suppressed pamphlets was reported to have been in the possession of Alvan Stewart, who, in 1846 wrote a letter to the Liberty party in which he said:

Four slave-holding generals [he omitted reference to Izard] with their four armies, were stretched out on our northern frontier, not to *take* Canada, but to prevent its being taken by the men of New England and New York, in 1812, '13 and '14, lest we should make some six or eight free states from Canada, if conquered. This was treason against northern interests, northern blood and northern honor. But the south furnished the President and the Cabinet. This revelation could have been proved by General John Armstrong, then Secretary of War, after he and Mr. Madison had quarreled.³

Apart from the fact that Madison's integrity and Monroe's high sense of honor were firmly enough established to make such a charge ridiculous, the first opportunities to capture Canada went to Dearborn of Massachusetts, Hull of Connecticut and Van Rensselaer of New York. The best border fighting was done by the Virginian, Winfield Scott.

The circumstances of Izard's march appear never to have been cited to show that it was Armstrong, of New York, who opened the border to the British advance, over the heated protest of South Carolinian Izard. Izard detected the accumulation of troops in his front. On August 11 he replied to Armstrong's orders that he march to Sackets Harbor:

I will make the movement you direct, if possible, but I shall do it with the apprehension of risking the force under my command, and with the certainty that everything in this vicinity but the lately erected works at Plattsburg and Cumberland Head will, in less than three days after my departure, be in the possession of the enemy. He is in force superior to mine in my front; he daily threatens an attack on my position at Champlain; we are all in hourly expectation of a serious conflict.⁴

Izard wrote a similar protest again on August 20. He said he would not be responsible for the consequences of abandoning his

strong position but would obey orders. Reluctantly he vacated Champlain on August 29. True to his prediction, the British moved in without delay. By September 3 they had 14,000 men across the American line immediately north of Lake Champlain.

The Burlington, Vermont, *Gazette* on September 8 indicated that Vermont possessed her old self-reliance. It said:

The President by withdrawing General Izard from this quarter, it would *seem*, considers us as unworthy of his protection. But we hope there is yet a redeeming spirit among us, and we trust we shall be able to take care of ourselves.

Again, a Burlington correspondent to the New York *Commercial Advertiser* said: "The invasion draws forth all parties and the soil will be defended."

In London the success of the invasion was taken for granted. The *Times* wrote: "American papers are replete with effusions of vexation and rage against their government, that 20,000 British troops may march wherever they will through the United States."

The British Army was composed principally of the Peninsular brigades of Major General Robinson and Brigadier Generals Brisbane and Power. The high command was held by Governor-General Prevost. His quartermaster general was Sir Sidney Beckwith, who captured Hampton, Virginia, in 1813; his adjutant was Edward Baynes, who had negotiated the early armistice with Dearborn and, later, the exchange of prisoners.⁵

Never before in her long North American experience had Great Britain concentrated such a fine army in the New World. But the army was woefully deficient in the most necessary quality: leadership. The brigadiers were capable. Robinson, Power and Brisbane were high-spirited fighters, but none had achieved distinction in independent command in Spain. By 1814 everyone in Canada knew that Prevost, while an organizer, was no general. The invasion of the United States was of sufficient consequence to the future of Great Britain for the cabinet to have dispatched Wellington to command it. If Wellington could not be sent, a selection could have been made among Hill, Beresford and Hope, all of whom had demonstrated their leadership in independent

command. Beresford had served in Canada and was familiar with the conditions of New World campaigning.⁶

Remaining to oppose the 14,000 British veterans who had been fighting Napoleon's best marshals in Spain were 1,200 effective American troops under Brigadier General Alexander Macomb.

Macomb was one of the few trustworthy officers who appeared in the early Niagara fighting. In promotions he had moved along with Scott. His thorough reliability made him, after the war, chief engineer of the Army, and, upon the death of Jacob Brown in 1835, its commander in chief. He was the son of a Belfast fur dealer who settled in Detroit, where Alexander Macomb was born in 1782. His father acquired wealth and bought great tracts of land in Georgia, North Carolina and Kentucky, and 3,670,000 acres along the St. Lawrence River in New York, including the Thousand Islands. The son decided on an Army career when war with France seemed likely in 1799. He became a cornet of horse and served successively in the artillery and engineer corps. As a captain he instructed and prepared texts at the new academy at West Point. It was a stroke of good fortune for the United States that after Izard's departure for Sackets Harbor the command of a handful of troops left at Plattsburg fell to Macomb.

Minor naval action had taken place on Lake Champlain earlier in the war. In June 1813, Lieutenant Sidney Smith, whose name might have arrested British attention, took two sloops up the Sorel River, which flows into Lake Champlain from the north. He made a gallant fight with his sloops—the *Growler* and *Eagle*—but one was sunk in shallow water and one run aground by gunboats.⁷ The British repaired them and named them the *Finch* and the *Chub*, and with them raided Plattsburg and held control of the Lake. Lieutenant Thomas Macdonough, commander on the lake, who had a faculty common with Perry of not being disheartened by past losses, hurriedly built new ships, but not in time to prevent the plundering of Plattsburg.

Macdonough was born at Newcastle, Delaware, the son of a physician and major in the Revolutionary Army. As a midshipman he was with Decatur at the sinking of the *Philadelphia* in

Tripoli Harbor, an act of courage which brought together three of the outstanding naval officers of the War of 1812, the third being Lawrence. As a young lieutenant Macdonough had made clear his impatience with the American captains who, like Barron of the *Chesapeake*, were permitting searches of their own or other American vessels without a fight. When he was aboard the *Siren* in Gibraltar Harbor under the British guns, with an American merchant brig near by, Macdonough saw a boat from a British man-of-war go to the merchant brig and take off a seaman alleged to be a British subject. He manned his gig, which was armed, went after the boat and overhauled her near the British frigate. Then he seized the seaman and took him back to the merchant brig.

The British captain soon stormed on board the *Siren*, threatening to lay his frigate alongside and sink her.

"While she swims, you shall not have the man," said Macdonough calmly. "He was under the protection of my country's flag."

The British captain, his anger mounting, asked, "Would you interfere if I were to impress men from that brig?"

"You have but to try," said Macdonough.

The captain made no further efforts at impressment.

Macdonough was known in the service for his calmness and devoutness. Where Perry could easily fly into a rage, Macdonough disciplined himself even more rigidly than he did his men. But Macdonough was like the hero of Lake Erie in that, though he was a handsome man of vigorous appearance, his health was uncertain. Immediately after the war he was forced to begin a ten-year, losing battle with tuberculosis, from which he died in 1825.

When Prevost invaded American territory at the towns of Champlain and Chazy he followed the conventional practice of issuing a proclamation. He invited the inhabitants to drop their American allegiance and requested supplies. As Prevost advanced toward Plattsburg Macomb, who had already called out the militia, began to dispute his progress. Major General Benjamin Mooers, commanding the New York militia district, brought in

700 men. These Macomb ordered to harass the enemy, in co-operation with 200 men and two fieldpieces of the 13th Infantry.

On September 6, Prevost resumed his advance with 11,000 men. Macomb sent the spirited John E. Wool, now a major, who had captured Queenston Heights early in the war, to help bolster the militia. This capable officer took a position at Beekmantown and met the advancing British with a volley which surprised and checked them, although he meantime was deserted by the militia. Retiring before the overwhelming force, he found militia elements returning and made another stand at Culver's Hill, but was soon flanked and forced back to Halsey's Corners little more than a mile north of the Plattsburg bridge over the Saranac River.

Macomb had improved his situation every minute after the departure of Izard. He strengthened the Plattsburg defenses, by building two forts which he named Brown and Scott after his two associates in the earlier border fighting. Izard had built Fort Moreau, named after the French general. The forts commanded the Saranac River crossings and the flat land along the lake. Macomb now ordered all of his delaying units to retire into the town south of the river, where his force administered a repulse to the British advance parties as they came to the bridge. Planks were removed from the two bridges across the Saranac. After desultory fighting along the river Prevost put the main body of his army into camp about a mile north of Plattsburg. Here he remained for the next five days, bringing up trains of provisions and waiting for the British fleet. In the fighting around Plattsburg the British suffered 200 casualties, the Americans forty-five.⁸

2.

The Battle of Lake Champlain was extraordinary among naval engagements because it was fought by fleets at anchor. The most celebrated parallel instance is Nelson's victory at the Nile, where the French fleet was at anchor. For that reason Lake Champlain lacked the drama of Perry's victory on Lake Erie, just as the Nile did that of Trafalgar.

Macdonough had built the main elements of his fleet in the Otter River, at Vergennes, Vermont. One who looks at this rivulet today must wonder how it ever supported a squadron so consequential in American history. Macdonough's fleet, like Perry's, was built of green timber and was rushed so urgently that not all of the ships were finished when the battle was fought. The *Eagle* was launched seventeen days after her keel was cut in the forest.⁹ Neither was the British fleet ready. It was built in the Sorel River, and rushed along while the army waited.

September 11, 1814, broke clear and bright across the Green Mountains of Vermont and over the long gray ribbon of Lake Champlain. It lighted up the little basin of Plattsburg Bay, where the American fleet lay at anchor.

Macdonough's force consisted of four ships and ten gunboats. His flagship was the *Saratoga*, of 734 tons, with an armament of twenty-six guns. The brig *Eagle*, commanded by Captain Robert Henley, was about the size of Perry's sister ships, the *Lawrence* and *Niagara*. It was of 500 tons, with twenty guns. The schooner *Ticonderoga*, Lieutenant Commander Stephen Cassin, of 350 tons and seventeen guns, narrowly missed the extraordinary distinction of being the first steamship to fight in a naval engagement. She was built with steam propulsion, but her engines were so unreliable that Macdonough had her rigged as a schooner. The fourth ship was the *Preble*, Lieutenant Charles Budd, eighty tons, seven guns. Six of the row galleys had two guns each while four mounted one gun each.

The *Saratoga*, being much the largest vessel, had the largest crew, of 240 men, while the *Preble* had but thirty.

At 8 A.M. the British fleet, composed of four ships and twelve gunboats, appeared around Cumberland Head, the arm of land which forms the eastern shore of Plattsburg Bay. The British commander, Captain George Downie, had arrived only three days earlier from Lake Ontario, where he had commanded the *Montreal*, of 637 tons and seventeen guns, in Yeo's fleet.

His flagship, the *Confiance*, was larger than any other vessel on the lake, being in the frigate class. Varying estimates have been made of her tonnage. She was of 1,200 tons or more. She

was not so strong a frigate as the *Constitution*, which was of 1,567 tons. Before the battle Downie was certain that the *Confiance* could successfully fight the entire American fleet.¹⁰ She was a splendid frigate, mounting thirty-seven guns. Her equipment included a furnace for heating shot. Nevertheless, the weight of her broadside was not decisively heavier than that of the *Saratoga's*. The *Confiance* could throw 480 pounds, compared with 414 pounds in the broadside of the *Saratoga*.

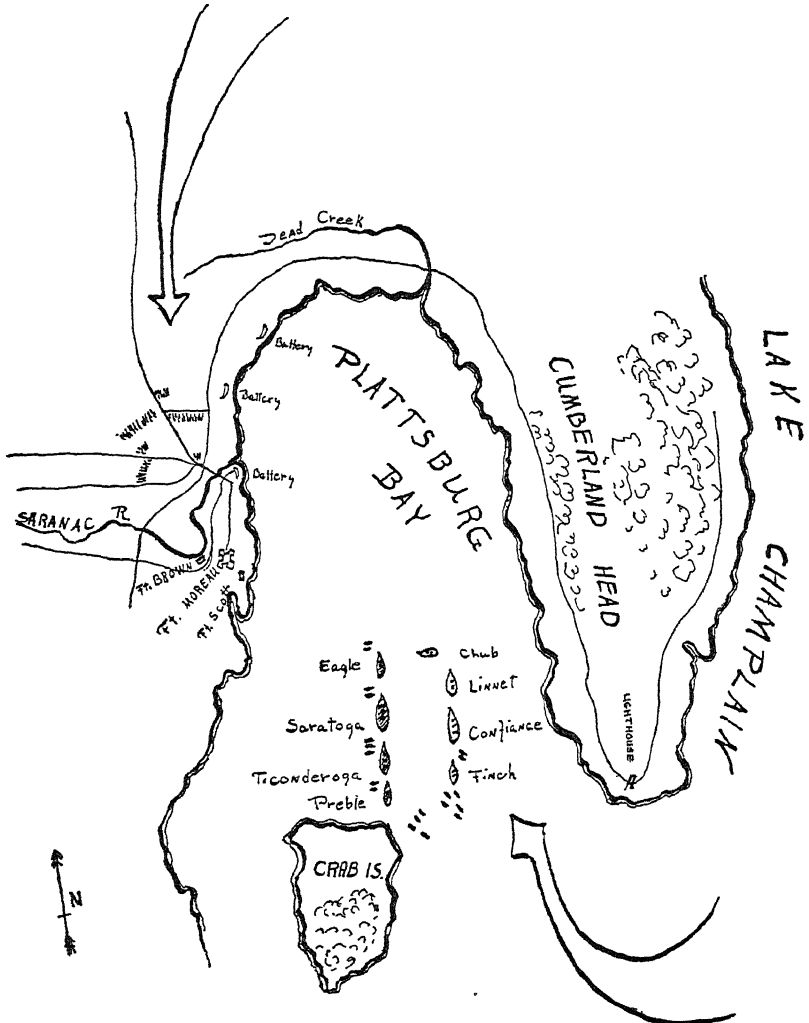
Downie's second ship was the *Linnet*, commanded by Captain Daniel Pring, whom Downie had superseded as the fleet commander. She was of 350 tons and mounted sixteen guns. The other two British vessels, the *Chub*, 112 tons, and the *Finch*, 110 tons, were the captured American sloops, the *Growler* and the old *Eagle*. The *Chub* was commanded by Lieutenant William Hicks. Each had eleven guns. Five of the gunboats, or galleys, mounted two guns each, and seven of them had one gun each.

In all, fourteen American vessels, of 2,244 tons, opposed a British squadron of sixteen vessels, of 2,400 tons, and 882 Americans opposed 937 British. The American broadside weighed 1,194 pounds, the British 1,192 pounds. The British had a superiority in long-range guns, the Americans in short guns; yet the fleets were so evenly matched that the outcome of the engagement rested with the leadership, the steadfastness of the crews, and the element of chance that hovered so purblindly over all naval fighting of the period.

Just before the battle began, Macdonough personally conducted a religious service on the deck of the *Saratoga*. Kneeling with his officers and men, he asked God's aid in the task before him and committed his squadron to God's care.

The strategy of the battle was simple. Macdonough's fleet lay in a line across the entrance, a mile and a half wide, of Plattsburg Bay.¹¹ Downie brought his fleet to anchor alongside, and the two fleets slugged it out at close range like two boxers fighting in the clinches. And as is often the case in the prize ring, it was difficult to tell which was administering the telling blows until the moment of the knockout. The story was related that Sir George Prevost, watching on shore, took out his watch as the British

fleet went into action to see how many minutes would be required to sink the Americans. He predicted to other officers that the Yankee flag would be struck in forty minutes. None of the British officers doubted the result; they drew complete confidence from the superior size of the *Confiance*. The troops made ready to storm Plattsburg as promptly as the American fleet was



The Battle of Lake Champlain

out of action.¹² Crowds came to the high points and headlands on both the New York and Vermont shores to witness the spectacle.

Macdonough had the advantage as the battle opened because the British vessels approached bow on and the Americans could deliver a broadside against them without being exposed to a return broadside. The *Finch* came first, accompanied by the gunboat flotilla, and made for the right of the American line near Crab Island, where she engaged the *Preble* and Macdonough's second ship, the *Ticonderoga*. The *Chub*, Downie's next vessel to round Cumberland Head, made for the other end of the American line and engaged the *Eagle*. The *Linnet* followed, under orders to assist the *Chub*. Downie then came with his big *Confiance*, took an American's broadside without replying and anchored close to the *Saratoga*. One of the first shots that hit her as she came on was from a 24-pounder Macdonough personally aimed, and the example of marksmanship he set for the fleet was inspiring. The ball bounded along the deck of the *Confiance*, destroyed the wheel, sent splinters flying in all directions and killed several of Downie's crew.

As the *Linnet* went into action against the *Eagle* she paid the *Saratoga* the compliment of a passing broadside, which led to perhaps the most frequently related incident of the Battle of Lake Champlain. One shot struck a coop on the *Saratoga's* deck, and released the spirited game cock which the seamen, who enjoyed cock fighting, had either borrowed or pilfered from a cock fancier on shore.¹³ The excited cock could tell from the din that something involving a challenge was in progress. He jumped onto a gun slide, haughtily looked over the scene of battle and let out a defiant crow. The bird's attitude appealed to the seamen. They thought it presaged victory.

As the *Confiance* anchored, a sheet of flame burst from her decks, a roar shook the lake and the broadside she emitted, double-shotted for short range, shivered the *Saratoga* in every timber. It killed or wounded one fifth of Macdonough's crew and flattened most of the others on the deck.¹⁴

The *Saratoga's* first lieutenant, Peter Gamble, was killed by the blast. Within a few minutes after his death a ball from the

Saratoga hit one of the *Confiance's* 24-pounders. The shot drove the gun from its mounts and sent it flying across the deck. The catapulting gun hit Captain Downie in the groin and killed him almost instantly, although it did not break his skin. Modern diagnosis would probably have been that shock contributed to his death.

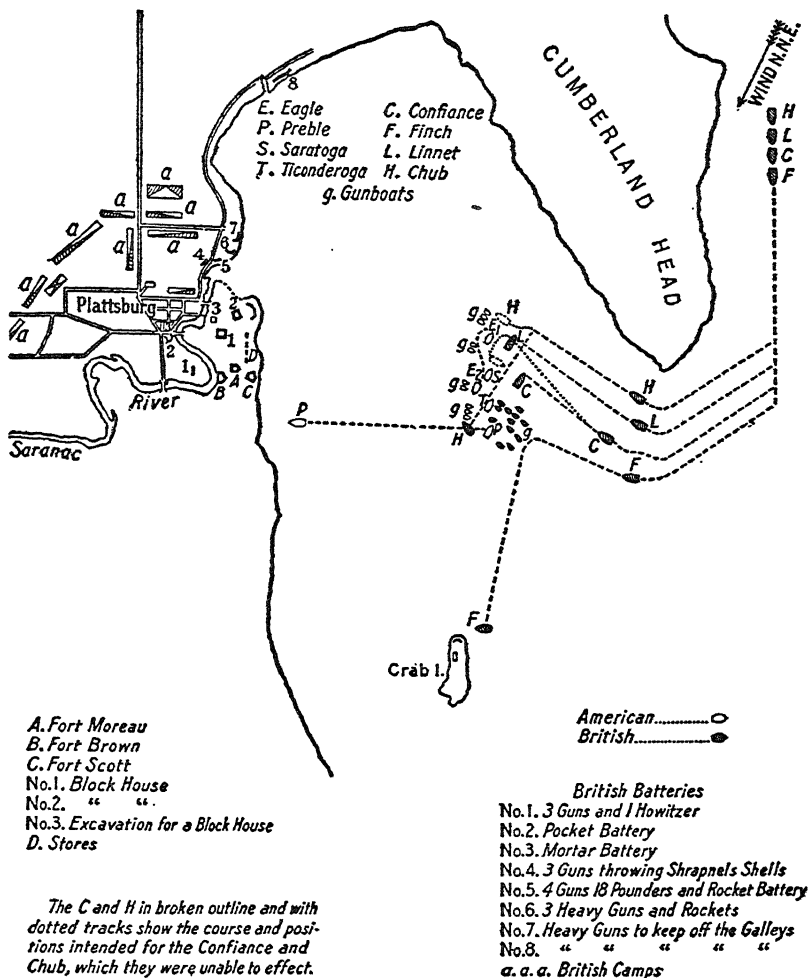
The *Saratoga* poured a steady fire into the *Confiance* and the engagement grew more intense between the other ships. The first to weaken under the fearful fire was the *Chub*. Captain Henley was handling the *Eagle* ably; one of his broadsides made the *Chub* a virtual wreck which drifted helplessly in the midst of the action. The *Saratoga* gave her a finishing shot and she struck her colors. A midshipman boarded her and had her towed as a prize to the mouth of the Saranac River.

Downie was dead and one of his vessels was gone, but the fight between the *Confiance* and *Saratoga* was at its top fury. Macdonough's losses were so heavy that he personally took a position at one of the guns and sighted it until it was dismantled by the British fire. Twice he was knocked senseless to the *Saratoga's* deck. The entire battle was an example of how spars and flying splinters became among the most dangerous of missiles in close-in fighting on wooden ships. A British shot hit the spanker boom and broke it in two, One piece was hurled against Macdonough's head and knocked him unconscious. He was revived and returned to the fighting, only to be thrown entirely across the ship when another shot from the *Confiance* hit a gun he was sighting and knocked him senseless into the scuppers. A report that he was dead passed over the ship, but he was soon up again and back in the fighting. Officers of both fleets had their uniforms torn off their backs by flying splinters, which often were heavy, jagged pieces of oak that mangled and lacerated and caused more dreaded wounds than bullets.

Red-hot shot from the *Confiance* twice set the *Saratoga* afire, but each time Macdonough managed to get the flames extinguished. Both ships suffered heavy losses in men; both had their rigging and sails leveled to their decks. Finally the guns on the engaged side of the *Saratoga*, and most of those of the *Confiance*,

were put out of action by direct hits and the firing gradually slackened. The last of the *Saratoga's* starboard guns was hurled down the hatch when a bolt broke and the weapon left its carriage.

It was at this juncture that the foresight and seamanship of Macdonough saved him. He had gone into the battle supplied with kedges and hawsers so he would be able to manuever while



BATTLE OF LAKE CHAMPLAIN

anchored. With the aid of his sailing master he wound the ship around by throwing out kedges from her bow, until her larboard broadside batteries, not yet engaged in the conflict, were brought to bear on the *Confiance*. The *Saratoga* had to take heavy fire from the *Linnet* as she was brought around, but her larboard guns were immediately riddling the *Confiance*, which had few serviceable guns bearing on the *Saratoga*. The mighty *Confiance* struck.

Meanwhile the British gunboats had battered the American *Preble* and put her out of action. But the *Ticonderoga* had handled the British *Finch* so severely that she drifted and grounded on a shoal off Crab Island, which was being guarded by convalescents. These opened on her with a two-gun battery and she hauled down her flag. After the surrender of the *Confiance*, the *Saratoga* opened on the *Linnet* and in a quarter of an hour the last of the British ships struck her colors. To Macdonough's great regret, the British gunboats, equipped with oars, escaped. Not one ship in either squadron had a mast that could hold a sail and enable him to pursue them.¹⁵

3.

The Battle of Lake Champlain lasted two hours and twenty minutes, instead of the forty minutes predicted by Prevost. Prevost began an attack when the naval action was in progress and a crossing of the Saranac River was effected at an upper ford. A more timid American general would have withdrawn, but not Macomb. At the two bridges farther down the stream, he held. The victory of the American fleet, proclaimed by a shout that went along the American line, brought orders that halted the British infantry advance. The triumph of the Americans on the water disconcerted the British commander in chief to the point of panic. He explained later that he wanted to retire to the border and observe what use the Americans made of their superiority on the water. His numbers were such that he might readily have captured Plattsburg and compensated in that small measure for Downie's defeat. His subordinate, Brisbane, said he could have forced the Americans out of their works in twenty minutes.¹⁶

That night Prevost sent off his artillery and much of his baggage. The next morning his withdrawal became precipitate.¹⁷ His haste was due to his interception of a false message that 10,000 Vermont militia were marching north on the Vermont shore to St. Albans. He was less apprehensive when he reached Champlain, where he rested. His troops cleared American soil on September 24, 1814, and retired to Montreal.¹⁸

After the *Linnet* had struck, Macdonough sent the following message ashore to be dispatched to the Secretary of the Navy:

Sir—The Almighty has been pleased to grant us a signal victory on Lake Champlain in the capture of one frigate, one brig, and two sloops of war of the enemy.

The American loss in the engagement was fifty-two killed and fifty-eight wounded. The total British casualties, killed and wounded, were above 200. The British fleet commander, Downie, was buried at Plattsburg.

The British vessels and the *Saratoga* were so thoroughly wrecked that they were scuttled at Whitehall, at the southern end of the lake.

Another great wave of rejoicing passed over the country and strengthened the new solidarity so noticeable after the burning of the Capitol.¹⁹ Macdonough and Macomb received tributes and testimonials from all sections. The honors began with a public dinner tendered by the citizens of Plattsburg, at which Macomb's army band provided the music and the diners drank "seventeen regular toasts." The phrase suggests there were many impromptu expressions as the hour grew late.

A toast was drunk to "The pious and brave Macdonough—the professor of the religion of the Redeemer—preparing for action, he called on God, who forsook him not in the hour of danger: may he not be forgotten by his country."

That the incendiarism and Indian barbarities of the war had not smothered all gallantry was proved when the gathering observed a moment of silence and gave a toast to the dead commander of the British fleet: "[to] the memory of Commander Downie, our brave enemy."

Bonfires illuminated the towns, meetings passed resolutions, cities extended their "freedom." New York State presented a sword to Macomb, Madison made him a major general by brevet and Congress ordered a gold medal struck in his honor. The gifts to Macdonough were substantial. Not only did Congress vote him the thanks of the nation and a gold medal, but New York State presented him with 2,000 acres of land. Vermont acquired 200 acres on Cumberland Head, with a farmhouse overlooking Plattsburg Bay and the scene of the battle, and deeded the tract to Macdonough. Albany and New York presented city lots. With tears in his eyes he told a friend, "In one month, from a poor lieutenant I became a rich man."

Because of the effort of the military to put on the best possible front, news of the defeat reached London in trickles and caused confusion. The official dispatch of Prevost's Adjutant General Baynes, published October 22, said:

The Commander of the Forces has to thank the left division for the steady discipline, unwearied exertions and gallantry, which have conspicuously marked its short service in the territory of the enemy, so unfortunately arrested in its course by the disastrous fate of the flotilla that had advanced to co-operate in the ulterior object of the campaign. The intrepid valor with which Capt. Downie led his flotilla into action, encouraged the most sanguine hope of complete success, which was early blasted by the fall of that gallant officer, combined with accidents, to which naval warfare is peculiarly exposed. . . .

The ironical comment of the *Times* correspondent was:

You have herewith a copy of the General Order of the 13th inst., to understand which requires more than the being able to read it.—There never was perhaps such a composition: for without knowing the results, one might be led to think we had gained a victory. Report says our hero [Prevost] on passing some of the troops on the road was *bissed* by them; and further, and which I believe to be true, that when the order was given for retreating, General Power rode up to the Commander-in-chief, and begged the order for retreat might be recalled, as General Brisbane was about storming the fort and would have possession of it in a few minutes. The reply, it is said, was "My orders must be obeyed," and then the general retreat took place.

It was a fair battle between the fleets: the fort did not play on the *Confiance* and *Linnet* as has been stated. Captain Pring in the *Linnet*, though aground, is said to have fought his vessel for a considerable time after the *Confiance* had struck.

A dispatch which followed from the same Quebec correspondent to the *Times* said:

Stories become blacker and blacker, respecting our disgrace and misfortunes at Plattsburg—there were only 1,400 men in it [the American fort] under Gen. M'Comb, who informed Capt. Pring of the *Linnet*, that everything was prepared to surrender on the advance of the British army. Report says that Gen. Robinson is under arrest: that Gens. Brisbane and Power tendered their swords to Sir G. Prevost: and that Col. Williams of the 13th had declared he would never draw his sword again while under the command of Sir George. Sir George is gone to Kingston.

Another comment came from Quebec: "The Wellington soldiers say that the hunters and the hounds are capital but that the huntsman and the whipper are two—fools: meaning, I consider, Sir. G. Prevost and his Adj. Gen. Major E. Baynes." When the report of Lieutenant Macdonough was published in London, the *Times* quoted again the opening phrase, "Sir—The Almighty has been pleased to grant us . . ." and continued:

Much as we admire the laconic in letter-writing, we should have been better pleased with Com. M'Donough had he informed us by whose *earthly* means exclusive of his own he was allowed to achieve a victory so contrary to expectation and all human probability.

These comments of the *Times* show why Macdonough's victory had such a strong influence on the ministry and the peace negotiations in progress at Ghent. Coupled with the repulse of Ross at Baltimore, the defeat of Downie at Plattsburg persuaded the cabinet for peace.

Prevost's greatest error was to retreat precipitously. He left behind stores valued at a hundred thousand pounds. With his fine army, and a weak foe in his front, he appeared to flee. Much of Canada, and later England, charged him with cowardice and

the loss of the campaign.²⁰ Charges were preferred against him by Sir James Lucas Yeo, who had, himself, contributed little to the British cause during his extended command of the Lake Ontario fleet. The Prince Regent ordered a court-martial.

Winter had set in and Canada was snowbound. Yet Prevost declined to await the opening of navigation on the St. Lawrence. He set out for Halifax and made much of the journey across New Brunswick on foot. When he reached London he was ill. His health was weakened more by disappointment than the rigors of the Canadian winter. Before the court-martial could be summoned to try him, he died. Few good words have been spoken for him, but by his untiring efforts, the British commonwealth of nations includes Canada.

Macdonough's victory on Lake Champlain has often been described as the most important naval battle of the war, and Macdonough, in turn, the ablest of the naval officers produced by the conflict. The battle lacked the high drama of Perry's triumph. Macdonough had full co-operation from his American associates and was not at any time so near defeat as was Perry when he left the *Lawrence*. Nor did the outcome of the battle rest so utterly with one man.

The results of the battle were far-reaching. The British invasion was brought to an abrupt end. The question of how far Prevost might have penetrated into heavily populated New York—and the timidity of his leadership did not offer his good army much promise—does not cast doubt on the decisive nature of Macdonough's victory. It demonstrated that while the United States could not invade Canada, neither could the British invade the United States.

In the case of Perry's victory, the British, and not the attacking Americans, held control of Lake Erie and the entire northwest. A loss of the Battle of Lake Erie would have confirmed them in these possessions. It is not likely that with the coming of the Peninsular regulars, the Americans could have recovered the offensive in the Northwest. The British unquestionably would have been more insistent on the principle of *uti possidetis* at the peace conference.

All factors considered, it appears that Perry's was, indeed, the more decisive and important victory to the American cause, and Perry the abler of the American fleet commanders. But in those splendid triumphs, which were two of the best-fought battles in the history of wooden vessels from Themistocles to Farragut, there was ample glory for the officers and men of both American fleets.

Cleaning the Gulf Coast

I.

All through the Creek War Jackson had looked toward Pensacola as the objective of his campaign: the city was the open sore of the Gulf Coast, from which the poison seeped into the back country to infect the Indians. Pensacola, in West Florida, was in Spanish territory, and the United States was not at war with Spain.

That might have been an insurmountable obstacle to another officer, but not to a man of Jackson's stubbornness. What angered Jackson was that the Red Stick survivors found refuge behind the banner of Spain where they dressed their wounds and prepared for a return attack, and he was restrained from going after them by diplomatic niceties. On June 27, 1814, he had written to Secretary of War Armstrong requesting orders to capture Pensacola. Armstrong did not reply. That did not quiet Jackson; it merely made him resolve on independent action.

Jackson, now a major general of the Regular Army and commander of the Seventh Military District, completed his treaty with the miserable survivors of the Creeks at Fort Jackson, and passed down the river to Mobile in mid-August. It was certain that he would attack Pensacola on one excuse or another.

At this moment a justification arose that would have satisfied the most fastidious about international formalities in 1814 warfare. The British occupied Pensacola. In late July 1814 a British expedition appeared off the Spanish city and, with a degree of effrontery rare even with the junior officers of His Majesty's service, landed a party and took the town from the docile Spanish governor.

The British force was commanded by Sir William H. Percy, who had the sloops of war *Hermes* and *Carron*. The Army contingent was under the command of Lieutenant Colonel Edward Nicholls, whose force consisted of little more than a hundred soldiers and marines, and two howitzers. He brought along 1,000 stand of arms with the idea that he could capture the South coast with the aid of its own inhabitants.

Whether these were Indians or whites was not material to the lieutenant colonel. After he had run up the British flag alongside the banner of Spain over Forts Barrancas and St. Michael, guarding the Pensacola harbor, he sent emissaries to the Indians in Florida; issued a proclamation inviting the Louisianians and Kentuckians to come into the British service; and dispatched a mission to visit the fraternity of the coast headed by the Lafitte brothers, on the Barataria Bay Islands.

Indians crowded into town to receive any distributions that might be offered by the British and found themselves possessed of guns and red uniforms, with which they were required to drill in the Pensacola summer in a manner incompatible with Indian fighting customs. The proclamation to the Louisianians and Kentuckians was an even greater piece of impudence than the proclamations of Hull and Smyth on the Canadian border. It told the residents of New Orleans that they would have sure protection by the display of a flag over their door, if the flag were English, French or Spanish. "Inhabitants of Kentucky!" it continued, "you have too long borne with grievous impositions. The whole brunt of the war has fallen on your brave sons. Be imposed on no longer. Range yourself under the standard of your forefathers or be neutral."

2.

The third avenue of recruitment which Nicholls undertook led to one of those romantic episodes in American history that through the decades has been related in story, picture and poem, and will always remain a part of the color and background of the Mississippi delta region and old New Orleans.

Jean and Pierre Lafitte were brothers born in Bordeaux. They

were resourceful, enterprising, intelligent men, who mastered the languages required for knocking about the world. Both were fluent in French, English, Spanish and Italian. Pierre, the elder, served in the French Navy, became proficient in navigation and dexterous with the rapier. Handsome, possessed of a pleasant manner and an abundance of native shrewdness, he saw unusual opportunity in the teeming city that commanded the vast expanses of the Mississippi basin. His younger brother, Jean, a captain under Napoleon, was equally impressed with the New World. Pierre set himself up as a fencing master in New Orleans. Jean became a master blacksmith at Bourbon and St. Philip streets, where he supervised a gang of Negroes who worked at the forge.

Money came to the Lafittes, but in insufficient amount. They found their first opportunity to rise above the forge and fencing academy in a provision of the American Constitution, which was, that the importation of slaves into the United States should end in 1808. That chanced to be the year of the embargo, which Congress enacted in late December 1807. One of the extraordinary smuggling opportunities of all times was therefore opened to any sharp individual who wanted to deal in either merchandise or flesh.

By business talents and better luck, Jean came to be the dominant force in the Lafitte organization. He later insisted, as have many since his time, that his only difficulties arose out of "certain vices in the laws." In New Orleans he and Pierre boldly set up a sales and distribution house for Negro slaves and British goods, and were soon missing from the forge and fencing school. That they looked on their business as an upright one, entitling them to station and respect, is indicated by Jean's statement that "I may have evaded the payment of duties at the custom house, but I have never ceased to be a good citizen."

The bayou country below New Orleans was ideally suited for smuggling and, in turn, piracy. A canal approached the Mississippi opposite New Orleans, from which only a short haulage was required to put merchandise afloat on the river and to transport it to the docks of the city. This canal entered a bayou,

which meandered for forty miles through swampland and sub-tropical jungle, connected with a series of lakes and eventually provided an outlet into Barataria Bay, a body of water shielded by Grand Terre Island.

Barataria was an excellent harbor rendezvous. It provided shelter from the Gulf storms and isolation from prying customs officers, yet possessed an easy route to the lucrative New Orleans market. To it came the brotherhood of West Indian pirates, buccaneers, freebooters and privateersmen, whose numbers had multiplied rapidly after the outbreak of the European war. Many of them had earlier obtained French letters of marque and made Martinique their headquarters, from which they warred against Spanish shipping. In 1806 Great Britain captured that island.

Casting about for an inviting refuge, the freebooters found it in the isolation of Grand Terre Island and Barataria Bay. Venezuela had revolted from Spanish rule and the flag of Cartagena became available as a protection behind which they might ply the Caribbean secure from seizure as pirates.¹

Beginning as the sales representatives in New Orleans of the Barataria fraternity, the Lafitte brothers progressed until Jean was elected captain of the colony. Both were made immensely wealthy by transporting Negroes and smuggling British goods during the period of the embargo. Whether or not they were pirates was never determined by an American court. They have been dealt with so sympathetically by many of the writers of the period that a great deal of sentimentality has been wasted over the eventual loss of their fortune at sea in 1817; yet little if any of their wealth appears to have been acquired by legal means and the suggestion that they were pirates in every respect except the flying of a black flag is strong.

Defenders of the Lafitte brothers have insisted that the charge of piracy was never supported by direct evidence and that only one bit of circumstantial evidence was brought out against them—jewelry found in their possession when their rendezvous was raided was identified as property which had belonged to a Creole lady who seven years previously had sailed away from New Orleans and been heard of no more.² It was not customary for

jewelry of such nature to be washed up on the Barataria beach. Jean probably did not force prisoners to walk the plank, but he kept a heavy volume of other people's goods flowing into New Orleans.³

After abortive efforts had been made to reach the Lafittes under the customs laws, a New Orleans grand jury on July 28, 1814, returned an indictment for piracy against some of the Baratarians. Pierre Lafitte was named as abettor both before and after the fact. He was arrested, denied bail and confined in the city jail. Lodged with him in the calaboose was one of his best captains, Dominique You.

Jean Lafitte, seeing that public opinion was turning against him, was preparing to vacate Barataria for a more remote and congenial locality when a series of events unfolded that opened new opportunities. A gun sounded off Grand Terre Island and he with some oarsmen went through the inlet and saw a British warship at anchor. She put off a gig with three officers in Navy blue and one in Army scarlet. They were the mission from Lieutenant Colonel Nicholls in Pensacola, sent to bring the Baratarians under the British flag.

Accompanying them toward the shore, Lafitte at first concealed his identity, then conceded he was the individual sought. The British naval officer, Captain Nicholas Lockyer, gave Lafitte a bundle of documents, which consisted of the proclamation issued by Nicholls, a notice to the Baratarians that if they did not join Great Britain their headquarters would be destroyed, a captain's commission for Jean Lafitte if he should join the British, and finally, instructions for the capture of Mobile should the Baratarians respond to the British invitation.

While Lafitte was considering the documents after the party reached the shore, the fierce Baratarians held the British officers and were preparing to knife them when Lafitte returned. He admonished his men and escorted the officers to their boat. He told them he would give an answer in two weeks. Lockyer said he would return to Barataria in fifteen days.⁴

Lafitte now saw an opportunity in which he might turn to his advantage the loyalty to America which motivated him when the

laws were convenient to his ends. He sent the British papers to an acquaintance, Jean Blanque, a member of the Louisiana legislature, and with them enclosed a letter of explanation in which he said of his adopted country, "I will never miss an occasion of serving her, or of proving that she has never ceased to be dear to me." He pointed out that the British had employed persuasion on him which few men would have resisted:

They represented to me a brother in irons, a brother who is very dear, whose deliverer I might become, and I declined the proposal, well persuaded of his innocence. I am free from apprehension as to the issue of the trial, but he is sick, and not in a place where he can receive the assistance he requires.

He ventured that his service in turning over the British letters might result in "some amelioration of the situation of an unhappy brother."⁵

There is no official record about what happened in Pierre's case, but on the following day it was made known that he had escaped from prison. A reward of \$1,000 was offered for his apprehension, but he was not taken. Jean Lafitte wrote Governor Claiborne: "I am a lost sheep wishing to return to the sheepfold." He explained that the Baratarian position was important to the protection of New Orleans, and offered his men for its defense.

Claiborne called a meeting of his council to get an opinion as to whether the documents were genuine, and, if so, whether intercourse should be established with Lafitte. The council concluded that the letters attributed to the British were forgeries and with little dissent decided not to deal with Lafitte. An expedition already in preparation under Commodore Daniel T. Patterson of the U. S. Navy and Colonel George T. Ross, commanding the Regular Army garrison at New Orleans, was given further impetus by Lafitte's bargaining. With gunboats and regulars, it dropped down the Mississippi and on September 16, 1814, entered Barataria Bay, captured the rendezvous on Grand and Grand Terre islands, and seized the fleet flying the flag of Cartagena.

The fleet consisted of seven cruisers and three schooners which had long been capturing merchant ships on the seas. Bara-

tarians at first considered resistance; they had their guns in position on the beach and stood by with lighted matches. They have been credited with deciding against resistance when they saw the American flag. Undoubtedly the power of Patterson's squadron when it was observed entering the inlet was even more persuasive. They held their fire and surrendered.

Rich stores of property were loaded on both the captured and the naval vessels and taken to New Orleans, where the money, merchandise and ships were claimed as prizes by the expedition. The Lafitte settlement was burned and leveled. After Patterson's departure only ruins remained. The captured Baratarians were brought to New Orleans in irons and put in the city jail. Meanwhile the fifteen days passed and Captain Lockyer, by then occupied on the Florida coast, did not return.

Lafitte had supplied New Orleans with a warning against a possible British attack by Captain Percy with his two or three vessels. Lafitte knew nothing of any more extensive operations against New Orleans. Because Nicholl's plan had been to use the Baratarians first against Mobile, Lafitte's information was not of particular value and did not give as clear a picture of the British plans as what Monroe was able to piece together from the intelligence he was receiving in Washington.

Governor Claiborne sent copies of the Lafitte letter to Jackson at Mobile. Jackson at once issued his own proclamation denouncing the "calumnies which that vain-glorious boaster, Colonel Nichols [*sic*], had proclaimed in his insidious address" and continuing with reference to the Baratarians as "a hellish banditti." ⁶

3.

Jackson was not interested at the moment in New Orleans. His eyes were turned in the opposite direction. In correspondence with Manrique, the governor of Pensacola, he accused the Spaniard of bad faith. Finally, concluding that he was not a note writer, Jackson broke it off with the notice that he would talk thereafter with weapons:

In future I beg you to withhold your insulting charges against my government for one more inclined to listen to slander than I

am; nor consider me any more a diplomatic character unless so proclaimed from the mouth of my cannon.⁷

Before he could begin operations Jackson had to wait until Tennessee could send him an army.⁸ Most of the men had gone home after finishing the Creeks at the Horseshoe. Not only was he too weak to take the offensive against the combination of British, Spaniards and red-uniformed Indians in Pensacola, but he was in grave danger of attack in Mobile. He could place only 130 men in Fort Bowyer, a small earthen fortification, situated thirty miles below Mobile, on the sand point on the eastern side of the entrance to Mobile Bay. Fortunately, one of the best officers in the Army, Major William Lawrence, was at hand to command the little garrison. Lawrence was one of the few whom Winfield Scott excepted when before the war he appraised the Regular Army and decided most of its officers were slothful or intemperate.

Although disappointed that Captain Lockyer did not return to Pensacola with the Baratarians, Nicholls and Percy decided to pick up Fort Bowyer as the first step toward the capture of Mobile. Most of Fort Bowyer's twenty guns were small Spanish pieces, but Lawrence gave them the best positions for a defense against a combination land and water attack. On September 12, 1814, Percy appeared with five ships having a total of seventy-eight guns and Nicholls landed with 130 marines and 600 Indians. Major Lawrence took his war cry from another Lawrence and urged his men: "Don't give up the fort!" With his officers, he entered into a compact never to surrender.⁹

The British observed the fort for three days before attacking, then sailed in line to a position within musket range, the flagship *Hermes*, twenty-four guns, in the lead. Lawrence had two 24-pounders and began the battle by opening on the *Hermes*, which promptly replied. It was 4:30 P.M. when the British ships began a full-scale bombardment. The land army, menacing chiefly in appearance because Indians in red coats were no more serviceable in frontal assaults than Indians in deerskins and feathers, approached to accept the surrender. A British shot had hit the flagpole and brought down the colors, causing Nicholls to believe

the garrison had struck. A discharge of grape drove back the British marines and scattered the Indians.

On the water side, the flag of the *Hermes* was shot down and Lawrence ceased firing until he could ascertain whether the ship had struck. A broadside from one of the other vessels, the *Carron* showed him the battle was still in progress and he renewed his fire. It was soon apparent that the American gunners were inflicting the only punishment. The *Hermes*, her cable cut by a shot, drifted toward the fort and was raked by almost the full armament of the Americans. Soon she ran into shoal water, where her commander set her on fire and blew her to bits.

The loss of the *Hermes* virtually ended the attack. Few actions in the war caused the British greater humiliation. Against 130 men in a mud fort they had employed five vessels and 1,300 men, yet had been beaten off with ease. Lawrence won Jackson's thanks and praise and, from Washington, a promotion. His men inflicted casualties almost double their own number. The British loss was 232, of whom 162 were killed. The American loss was four killed and four wounded. The British fleet sailed and the land force marched back to Pensacola.

4.

All was now in order for Jackson to move on Pensacola. The repulse of the British at Fort Bowyer had caused most of the Indians to return home. Troops had arrived from Tennessee and were concentrated at Fort Montgomery, in Alabama. Coffee, Jackson's greatest reliance, was at hand. Jackson, commanding 4,000 men, advanced. On November 6, 1814, he was two miles from the city. He had no orders from Washington authorizing his invasion of Spanish territory,¹⁰ and took full responsibility. He did salve the feelings of the Spanish governor by saying he meant only to possess the forts until the Spanish were in sufficient force to hold them against the British. That explanation the governor peremptorily rejected.

Negotiations might have been continued, but Jackson was not temperamentally suited for long parleys. At dawn on the following morning he marched with 3,000 men down the beach to

Pensacola.¹¹ When the sand became so heavy the men could not drag the guns, he ordered an infantry charge into the city. A Spanish battery on the main street opened with two guns. An American company rushed it and captured it. The troops were greeted with firing from the houses. Then the governor appeared in front of his headquarters with a white flag. He capitulated with the request that the Americans spare the town.

Fort St. Michael soon surrendered and as Jackson approached Fort Barrancas, six miles distant on the other side of the bay, the Spaniards blew it up. The British fleet sailed out of the harbor. Jackson's only remaining problem was the scolding he might get from Washington for invading Spanish territory, and he did not worry about that.¹² He feared that the British might try to capture Mobile during his absence and marched without delay. He reached Mobile on the evening of November 11.

By instructions from Monroe dated September 25, 1814, Jackson was notified that he commanded troops being raised in Tennessee and Georgia for the defense of New Orleans. The Secretary of War indicated that that city would be attacked. Ten days later Monroe again cautioned Jackson that a British force had left Ireland in early September for an attack on the Gulf Coast. Now that he had cleared his rear of the British in Pensacola, Jackson was in a better position to heed Monroe's warnings.

James Monroe began his service of the United States as a lieutenant fighting at Trenton and ended it with an administration as President that has scarcely been rivaled for internal harmony and progress and the maintenance of a firm and clearly defined policy in international affairs. But it is doubtful that any other achievement of this modest, intelligent, firm man quite approached in consequences to the country that of sending Andrew Jackson as the American general to defend New Orleans.

On reaching Mobile November 11, Jackson found letters from Edward Livingston, chairman of a New Orleans citizens' committee, urging him to come to the defense of the city.¹³

Livingston was a brother of Robert R. Livingston, the entrepreneur, politician and diplomat, and a brother-in-law of the

recent Secretary of War, John Armstrong. He was a lawyer of ability and speaking power. He had come to New Orleans to carve out a new life after having difficulties with his accounts when he was serving as United States attorney at the same time he was mayor of New York City.

It has been offered in his behalf that the financial entanglements were no more than a confusion in the accounts of the district attorney's office and that the fault rested with a clerk. But the responsibility was Livingston's. He had been one of the early ardent Republicans whose public conduct was supposed to be faultless. Yet he had held two offices that were almost certain, if well conducted, to present a conflict of duties and interests, and he was also a defaulter. He had to assign his property to a trustee to satisfy the debts and claims against him, and leave for the Southwest.

The new Louisiana was not so much interested in where a man had been as where he was going. Livingston's legal ability was soon apparent and his list of wealthy clients long. John Randolph reputedly said of Livingston, when the latter was serving as Secretary of State under Jackson: "He is a man of splendid abilities but utterly corrupt. He shines and stinks like a rotten mackerel by moonlight."

Among Livingston's clients was the freebooter Jean Lafitte.¹⁴ When Lafitte sent in the British documents, Livingston trusted his client; he judged at once that the papers were genuine and that New Orleans was threatened. He addressed a meeting of citizens held at the St. Louis Exchange on September 16, 1814, and took the leadership of the local defense committee. He wrote Jackson and worked with the civilians urging energetic measures. Governor Claiborne called a special session of the legislature, which produced no money or troops.

But troops were moving toward the Mississippi. Monroe had stirred Tennessee and Kentucky into action. Jackson started Coffee on the long overland march. Carroll departed down the Cumberland River from Nashville. The Kentuckians were on their flatboats. Finally, on November 22, Jackson, with a small staff, mounted in Mobile and rode toward New Orleans.

The Hartford Convention

In the midst of the recrudescent nationalism that followed the burning of Washington, the ominous threats of secession were heard loudly in New England.

More the rumble of discordant leadership than the swelling voice of the people, the Hartford Convention signaled, not the approach, but the dying gasp of disunion. If held in 1812 or 1813, it might have taken some of the New England states temporarily out of the Union. During those years the antiwar leadership was in vigorous control. By 1814 most of the people had become embittered against Great Britain and wanted to win, not evade, the war. The leaders who still schemed for secession in late 1814 were like retired generals, grumbling over strategy and unaware that their soldiers were no longer behind them but were marching with new captains intent on a fresh campaign.

Even the old zealots, who were motivated principally by an intemperate hatred of Jefferson and, in course, Madison, were not present at Hartford. Those who took control were moderate men who had watched the country unite in an hour of great peril. They cannot be commended, for their secret meetings in time of war had all the aspects of sedition. The balance of the country never forgave them. The Federalist party died behind the closed doors at Hartford. Yet what these men undertook was to evolve a compromise between the war party and the irascible secessionists blinded by long prejudice.

The Hartford Convention had been in a formative process for fourteen years. Among New England Federalists were some who were not good losers—politicians who had not yet come to understand the niceties of majority rule. They distrusted in other hands the power they would so gladly wield themselves. A rejection of

democratic processes runs through every line of the letter Timothy Pickering wrote George Cabot in January 1804. Embittered because the times were sweeping past him unheedingly, he hated Republicanism more for its successes, than for any excesses of which he complained:

Apostacy and original depravity are the qualifications for official honors and emoluments while men of sterling worth are displaced and held up to popular contempt and scorn. And shall we sit still, until this system shall universally triumph; until even in the Eastern States the principles of genuine Federalism shall be overwhelmed? . . .

The principles of our Revolution point to a remedy—a separation. This can be accomplished, and without spilling one drop of blood, I have little doubt. One thing I know, that the rapid progress of innovation, of corruption, of oppression, forces the idea upon many a reflecting mind.

The people of the East cannot reconcile their habits, views and interests with those of the South and West. The latter are beginning to rule with a rod of iron. . . . I do not believe in the practicability of a long-continued union. A Northern confederacy would unite congenial characters and present a fairer prospect of public happiness; while the Southern States, having a similarity of habits, might be left “to manage their own affairs in their own way.”¹

Pickering went on to say that Connecticut and New Hampshire would welcome the proposition of separation, but New York would have to be brought in. New Jersey, Vermont and Rhode Island, he believed, would follow.

The plotting was definitely subversive. No one would have thought of approaching John Adams with such a proposition. But many New Englanders of standing and intelligence allowed themselves to be persuaded that secession would be a wholesome and meritorious course.

It was Pickering of whom it was said, when he was elevated in the cabinet, that Washington had “spoiled a good Postmaster General in order to make a bad Secretary of State.”² By the time of the war with Britain, Pickering, morose with disappointment and debt, was occupying more of the House’s time than any

other member. And as has been the case with some of the most talkative members at other periods in Congressional history, he was contributing the least to the main task before the country, the winning of the war. Charles Jared Ingersoll, who gave Pickering the reputation of "a consistent, upright man who lived and died by his convictions," quoted a high point of his oratory in opposition to the 1814 loan bill. Pickering had declaimed: "I stand on a rock from which . . . not all democracy, *and hell to boot*, can move me—the rock of integrity and truth."³

Senator William Plumer of New Hampshire, who was later to turn Republican, favored Pickering's separatist notions in 1804, as did Fisher Ames, who jocularly referred to his own infirmities by saying: "If Jacobinism makes haste, I may yet live to be hanged."⁴ Senator Uriah Tracy and Representative Roger Griswold of Connecticut shared Pickering's views. George Cabot of Massachusetts lacked the resolution to face the question of disunion and dispose of it one way or another. His cautious reply to Pickering's letter said he preferred to await the time "when our loyalty to the Union is generally perceived to be the instrument of debasement and impoverishment."

This round-robin correspondence and whispered consultation soon were known to Republican leaders, and then the whole people. Those who conducted them came to be termed the "Essex Junto."⁵

Although the prevailing judgment was that talk of secession was premature, Pickering and his principal associates decided that the only thing lacking was a leader. Casting about, they hit upon Aaron Burr. His brother-in-law, Judge Reeve, who conducted the Litchfield, Connecticut, law school, was sympathetic to Pickering's plotting. Burr was candidate for governor of New York. A crafty campaigner, he made no commitments, but his ambition and easy political morals were well understood. Pickering and Griswold campaigned for him in New York and tried to line up Federalist votes. The whole country saw the possibility that the Republic would be split if Burr were elected. His defeat in 1804 brought an end to the Essex Junto plotting.

I.

Disunion lived and flourished in New England. Scarcely a week passed but that it was thrown as a threat at the other sections, either by New Englanders in Congress or by the Federalist press. The *Connecticut Courant* nourished it with article and ditty. The much quoted ultimatum of Josiah Quincy in the House at a time when the admittance of Louisiana into the Union was being debated, was no more than a scintillating example of a common assertion. Acceptance of Louisiana would void the federal compact, he declared in menacing terms: With Louisiana a state it would be "the right of all, as it would become the duty of some, to prepare definitely for separation—amicably if they might, violently if they must."⁶

Quincy and Pickering were the two pillars of New England secession, although Quincy moved into the background after he quit national politics in disgust in 1812. He was perhaps the only individual who saw the British soldiers on Boston Common before the Revolutionary War and survived to watch the Massachusetts volunteers march off for the War between the States—to oppose the disunion he had so earnestly threatened in his younger days.⁷

One wonders what emotions were aroused in any who, in April, 1861, might have read the letter Quincy wrote to his wife just fifty years earlier, after this Louisiana debate:

You have no idea how these Southern demagogues tremble at the word "separation" from a Northern man; and yet they are riding the Atlantic States like a nightmare. I shall not fail to make their ears tingle with it whenever they attempt, as in this instance, grossly to violate the Constitution of my country.⁸

The nature of the argument for separation is indicated by a letter published in August 1812 by the *Boston Centinel*. The letter, described as "from a gentleman in a neighboring state to his friend in Boston," said:

You ask my opinion on a subject which is so much talked of—a dissolution of the Union. On this subject I differ from my fellow-citizens generally, and therefore I ought to speak and write

with diffidence. I have for many years considered the Union of the southern and northern states, as *not essential to the safety and very much opposed to the interests of both sections*. The extent of territory is too large to be harmoniously governed by the same representative body.

The writer went on to say a despotic prince could govern wide areas having different interests, for "his will controls their jealousies and different interests," but where states decide for themselves "no harmony can be expected."⁹

The *National Intelligencer* of July 25, 1812, reported the town meeting "of some 4,000 Tories," held in Faneuil Hall in Boston. Of the resolutions adopted at the meeting the *Intelligencer* said:

They could not in plainer language have declared that the states were separated. Their object in resorting to such violent measures is apparent. They wish to dissolve the Union; they want a pretence to attempt it; their policy is to goad the general government by such outrageous acts to adoption of some specific measures against them; they would rally under the cry of "persecution," "domestic tyranny," etc., and persuade the people that their liberties were in danger . . . and that it would be as righteous to oppose our own government and separate the states as it was in '76 to oppose England.

Information that went to the *London Times* after the 1812 balloting, and published by the *Times* February 16, 1813, was described as abounding "in predictions of the sinister effects of Mr. Madison's re-election." It continued:

Inhabitants of the eastern states say Mr. Madison is not their president but a Ruler forced on them by the slaves of Virginia and the Frenchmen of Louisiana. . . . The number of votes is calculated on the whole population, thus Massachusetts which contains many thousand more freemen than Virginia has fewer votes for the election of President.

Enumeration of three fifths of the slave population for purposes of representation in the House, as provided by the Constitution, was a sore spot, indeed, for New England. Under the 1800 census, it gave the slave states a bonus of fifteen representatives in the House, which was more than the size of the combined

delegates of Connecticut, Rhode Island and New Hampshire. An effort by Massachusetts to repeal the slave representation by means of a constitutional amendment failed in 1804 because it was held to violate the compact which won acceptance of the Constitution.

A timely curb to the spread of secessionist sentiment in New England was the appearance in the Thirteenth Congress, at the special session beginning in May 1813, of a young representative from New Hampshire. The newcomer had a "dark complexion, sunk and searching eye, prominent brow, voluminous head and well-sized person."¹⁰ Thus was Daniel Webster aptly described by his fellow Congressman, Ingersoll, who entered the House at the same time. Webster, who later removed to Massachusetts, threw his great power into the cause of national solidarity, although, in order to get the record straight, he did insist on an investigation of the French assurances that the Berlin and Milan decrees had been revoked.

In 1812, a year before his election to the House, Webster had won acclaim although he was only thirty years old and still obscure nationally. In Portsmouth, New Hampshire, he had delivered a Fourth of July address so stirring that the *New York Evening Post* commented that Webster was "distinguished in the state of New Hampshire for the superiority of his talents," and reprinted the text, part of which read:

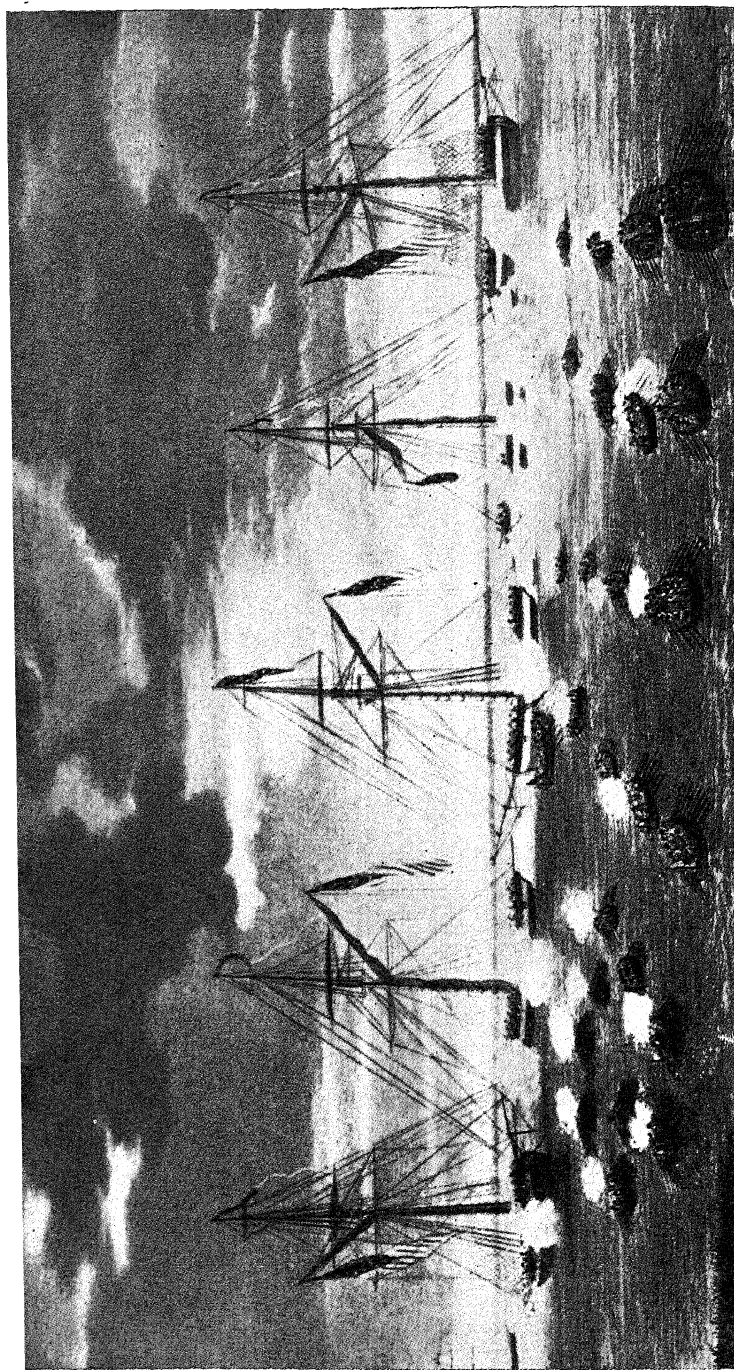
With respect to the war in which we are now involved, the course which our principles require us to pursue cannot be doubtful. It is now the law of the land, and as such we are bound to regard it. Resistance and insurrection form no parts of our creed. The disciples of Washington are neither tyrants in power nor rebels out. If we are taxed to carry on this war, we shall disregard certain distinguished examples, and shall pay. If our personal services are required, we shall yield them to the precise extent of our constitutional liability.¹¹

Webster declared that there was no abrogation of the duty of opposition against any "pernicious measures," but asserted that the best remedy available was exercise of the constitutional right of suffrage. He was a leading factor in restraining New Hamp-



Courtesy Library of Congress

THE DEATH OF ROSS, AT BALTIMORE



Courtesy Naval History Division, Office of Chief of Naval Operations

THE CAPTURE OF AMERICAN GUNBOATS ON LAKE BORGNE, BEFORE THE BATTLE OF NEW ORLEANS

shire from any official connection with the Hartford Convention.

The Thirteenth Congress, in which Webster first served, was notable in that New York sent the largest number of House members; whereas Virginia had led in earlier Congresses. Pennsylvania also passed Virginia. The respective delegations were New York, twenty-seven; Pennsylvania, twenty-three; Virginia, twenty-two. Madison and the cause of national solidarity greatly benefited by the character of the minority Senate leadership, which was held by the Federalist Rufus King, of New York, a man of long and distinguished public service. His opposition leadership was tempered by a respect for Madison. It was free of the personal abuse employed by many other Congressmen and by the press.¹² His standing made it clear that New York Federalists would touch no secessionist projects.

2.

Although the separatists talked of principles, it was a money matter that brought the question of disunion to a head and provoked the Hartford Convention.

The money problem was: which government—state or national—should pay for freeing the coast of Maine, then a part of Massachusetts, from British invasion.

New England, spared in the early stages of the war, came under more spirited British naval attack in 1814. On July 5, 1814, Sir Thomas Hardy captured Eastport, Maine, established British rule and went through the procedure of annexing the area of Passamaquoddy Bay to the British crown. Seven days were allowed for the residents to pledge allegiance and a majority of them took the oath to Great Britain.¹³ If they did not comply they were to be transported as prisoners to Halifax. Hardy set up a British customhouse, strengthened the fortifications and extended British jurisdiction, which continued until the treaty of peace. The inhabitants were in no position to oppose the 800 men he left to hold the region in subjugation.

Hardy went on to a whimsical bombardment of Stonington, Connecticut, but on August 26, 1814, the British conquest of Maine was resumed. Lieutenant General Sir John Coape Sher-

brooke, governor of Nova Scotia, and Major General Gerard Gosselin came down with nearly 4,000 troops and a fleet of twenty-four ships, entered Penobscot Bay, took possession of Castine and sent troops against Belfast and Hampden. At Hampden the sailors of the corvette *John Adams*, a twenty-four which was being repaired and had her guns on shore, set her on fire to prevent her from falling to the British. Bangor and Machias were captured. Thus the Maine coast from the Penobscot Bay to Passamaquoddy Bay passed under British rule and was formally annexed by a proclamation issued by Sherbrooke. The pretext for the original annexation, that the Passamaquoddy area had not been ceded by Great Britain in 1783, could not have applied to the region of the Penobscot.

What the British had in mind was made clear in the *London Times*¹⁴ in a summation of the results of the American blockade:

The coasting trade of the United States suffers exceedingly from the activity of British cruisers; to copy the Boston marine list of captures would exceed the limits of this paper. British operations are not confined to the sea; our sailors and marines now and then make dashes on shore, to the great annoyance of the coast, and have lately made themselves masters of the important military position of Eastport in the bay of Passamaquoddy.

This place can at small expense be fortified so as to bid defiance to the enemy, if defended by 5 or 600 men, and may be converted into an extensive mercantile spot.

When a sufficient number of troops arrive on the coast it is probable that a part of them will occupy that portion of the district of Maine between Penobscot and St. John's Rivers; a tract of country double the extent of the surveyed part of the district of Three Rivers. This, too, like the western territory, was shamefully ceded to the United States in 1783, as a present that was never looked for; but which it is hoped will be attended to in the next treaty of peace. The district we speak of is the most valuable in the United States for fishing establishments; and has a coast of 60 leagues abounding in excellent harbors, from whence much lumber is sent to Europe and the West Indies.

Some of the Cape Cod towns were placed under contribution by British ships and chose to pay cash rather than face destruction. Governor Strong called the Massachusetts legislature to

meet in extra session on October 5, 1814. In his address he pointed out that under the Constitution the federal government was supposed to provide defense; that they had resigned to that Government the revenues of the state with the expectation that this object would not be neglected; that the government had declared war on the most powerful maritime nation in the world, and that the state was not being defended.¹⁵

Strong failed to remember that when Madison wanted militia in 1812, he was the principal obstacle. Neither Massachusetts nor Connecticut responded to the militia call. Strong, a veteran of the Revolutionary War, had seen the militia of Virginia, Pennsylvania and other states at Cambridge in 1775. He nevertheless referred Madison's request to the Supreme Court of Massachusetts. That tribunal, although presided over by learned and respected judges, held that the governor had the right to decide whether a call for militia was constitutional and that the militia could not be commanded by other than its own officers, who were state appointees.

In Connecticut, Governor Roger Griswold, who had participated with Pickering in the Essex Junto, paid no attention to Madison's militia request because he regarded it as unconstitutional. His position was that under the Constitution there are but three purposes for which the militia may be called: to repel invasion, to put down insurrection, or to execute the laws of the United States. He concluded there was no invasion, no insurrection, and no defiance of the laws of the United States. Griswold called the council of state which supported his views, and then the legislature, which concurred. The legislature added that the obligations of the governor were as real as those of the President. Rhode Island took the position of Massachusetts and Connecticut.

Governor Strong now found the militia urgently needed. British soldiers were patrolling the Maine coast and threatening Portland, Boston, Salem and all coastal points. The legislature provided for 10,000 volunteers and authorized a loan of \$1,000,000, yet the governor still had no intention of turning the troops over to the federal government. He retained state officers, then asked the War Department whether it would defray the costs.

Monroe was now in control of the War Department and was putting vigorous new policies into effect. He had no sympathy with those who might quibble over helping the central government in such a war, the outcome of which was still very doubtful. His flaming republicanism and his memory of the ardor of the soldiers of revolutionary France put him out of patience with an Army system that produced insubordination and poltroonery among the troops. He intended to give effective executive supervision and expected a responsive Army in return. His answer to Governor Strong was "No."

Monroe's first need was to get soldiers. The volunteer militia system was not producing them, so he proposed a draft. This would force a showdown on the question of who was supporting the war.

Madison had left many matters of local defense to the governors of the states involved, as, in Ohio, to Governor Meigs; Virginia, to Governor Barbour; and in Tennessee to Governor Blount. In the southern New England states, however, all military measures were retained under the direct authority of Washington. This was a reasonable course, for if the states would not turn over the militia units to the federal government, it was not to be expected that the federal government would turn over regular soldiers or the militia units of other states to the uncooperative governors.

Monroe wrote a letter to Governor Strong in which he clearly expressed his unwillingness to allocate money to Massachusetts for its defense by the militia it withheld. The action angered Massachusetts authorities. A joint committee of the legislature studied the question and delivered a report implying that if the state were not to be protected by the federal government, it ought in right to employ for its own purposes the money it was paying in federal taxes—money which, the joint committee held, the federal government felt disposed to expend for the protection of other states.

Secessionist sentiment persisted in Massachusetts, Connecticut and Rhode Island into 1814 but apparently was not embraced by anything like a majority of the people. The enthusiastic manner

in which the American naval victories were celebrated in Boston manifested the existence of a strong war party.

When, in an effort to promote discord, claims were circulated that Commodore Perry, the hero of the war, was a Federalist, the partisan gossips met with a stern and justifiable rebuke. Said the *Albany Register*: "America shares the glory of his exploit—and let no time-serving or bigoted politician attempt to limit the area of his country's fame to the narrow boundaries of a party."

Nantucket, which was a part of the Boston district represented in Congress by Artemas Ward, son of the first commander of the American Army in the Revolution, had announced "neutrality" between the United States and Great Britain. When the blockade cut off her supplies with the mainland, her selectmen, rendered desperate, bargained off her American allegiance to Admiral Cochrane for a boatload of food and clothing. Some wanted and many others expected this "neutrality" to be extended to all of Massachusetts.

3.

Over sharp minority protests in both houses, the Massachusetts legislature asked that a convention of New England states be called to discuss "public grievances and concerns" and suggest constitutional amendments, notably to obtain a "basis of fair representation." While the vote in the House seemed sweeping—260 ayes to ninety nays—only about half of the members was present.¹⁶ The minority of ninety, affronted when the House refused to receive their report, walked out before the matter ended. This report suggested that other states would detect and resent in the legislature's motion an attitude that "Massachusetts shall govern the administration or the government shall not be administered in Massachusetts."¹⁷ The legislature, brushing opposition aside, went on to appoint twelve delegates to represent Massachusetts.

Governor Strong invited the other New England states. Connecticut accepted immediately and, by official legislative action, named eight delegates. But it instructed them to do nothing inconsistent with the state's obligations to the federal union. Rhode Island also told her four delegates to remain consistent with the

state's obligations. Vermont by unanimous legislative vote declined the invitation, and New Hampshire did not reply.

Madison was no dupe. As the date for the convention, December 15, 1814, approached, he had Monroe drop a regiment into Hartford for recruiting duty. It happened to be Lieutenant Colonel Thomas Sidney Jesup's 25th Infantry, one of the best regiments in the service, which had cut through the British at Chippewa and flanked Drummond at Lundy's Lane.¹⁸

The delegates, who included some of the most estimable men in New England, devoted the first day to organizing. George Cabot was elected president. He was sixty-five years old and a man who would have dignified any cause other than a quarrel with the central government in wartime. He had been to Harvard and he had been to sea. He had commanded a trading vessel in foreign ports before attaining his majority. He had gone up from common tar to be the first Secretary of the Navy when John Adams established the Department. His eloquence had made him an outstanding senator. No one had been more influential in winning ratification by Massachusetts of the Federal Constitution. He was a student of political economy and current affairs. But the Boston malcontents could have written off the convention as a failure the moment he took the chair. He was a delayer. He would never believe the time was ripe for drastic action.

Theodore Dwight, the editor who had enlivened the columns of the *Connecticut Mirror* with spicy jabs at the Republicans, and later established the *Daily Advertiser* in New York, was a well-qualified member of the club of young poets and authors known as the "Hartford Wits." With his trenchant pen he could dig under the skin of any Jeffersonian. Nineteen years after the event he wrote his *History of the Hartford Convention*. Along with the revelations of Harrison Gray Otis, his was the principal effort to set the record straight and show that secession was the last thing anyone had thought of.¹⁹

Otis was the ablest individual present. Had he not been there, he might, on the basis of talents, have reached any office in the land. John Quincy Adams wrote of him:

In the course of 30 years that I have known him, it has not fallen my lot to meet a man more skilled in the useful art of entertaining friends. His graceful deportment, his sportive wit, his quick intelligence, his eloquent fluency, always made a strong impression upon my mind, while his warm domestic affection, his active friendship and his generosity always commanded my esteem.²⁰

Adams later engaged Otis in a heated pamphlet battle over the Hartford Convention. Otis became the public defender of the unpopular meeting, although his defense cost him his national prestige. He had opposed such a meeting until late 1814. Then, as he explained it, the meeting was needed for defense, for mollification of an enraged section and for prevention of excesses during a period of public excitement.

Another representative from Massachusetts was Nathan Dane, "Father of the Northwest Territory," who had inserted the anti-slavery clause into the Ordinance of 1787. William Prescott, son of the Massachusetts colonel who commanded at Bunker Hill, and father of the historian, also attended for the Bay State. In addition, Massachusetts sent Congressman Stephen Longfellow, Jr., father of the poet, of Portland, Maine; Joshua Thomas, distinguished judge, of Plymouth; Timothy Bigelow, lawyer and former speaker of the Massachusetts House; and Hodijah Baylies, veteran of the Revolutionary Army. Samuel Ward of Rhode Island, who had marched with Arnold on Quebec in 1775, Nathaniel Smith and Roger Minot Sherman of Connecticut, and numerous others were respected in their states. As the meeting opened, two men sent by Grafton and Cheshire counties in New Hampshire were at the door. They were lawyers Benjamin West and Mills Olcott, who were seated but could not be regarded official state delegates. Olcott was the son of the chief justice of New Hampshire. Later, William Hall, Jr., of Vermont, was seated. He had been selected by a convention in his home county.²¹

The moderates were in control and laid out agenda dealing with broad public questions. They did not consider how ridiculous it was to propose constitutional amendments during a war in which Perry sloshed across bloody decks to keep the flag

flying and Andrew Jackson was filling his empty stomach with acorns on the march. The public had to wait nine years to read the journal of the meetings. Among the main agenda points were discussion of the failure of the federal government to pay the militia of certain states; the question of who should determine if the militia could be properly called; the matter of the draft; the advisability of spending money on offensive operations in nearby enemy provinces; the failure of the central government to provide for defense and the means by which the states might supply it. Otis drafted the report, which was the only official information the public had about the meeting. It was adopted and the convention adjourned January 5, 1815, subject to call at the discretion of its president.

The public did not approve the secrecy of the meeting, abundant as were the precedents for it. The Continental Congress had met in secret. That was understandable in a revolutionary movement, in which punitive measures might be taken against the leaders. The meetings of the Constitutional Convention were held behind closed doors. Congress debated the War of 1812 in executive session. Some members wanted the Congressional secrecy continued, but on executive sessions the *National Intelligencer* commented: "They are valueless, and experience has convinced the nation that Congress has never kept a secret one week." Not so with the Hartford Convention—its members did not talk. Perhaps because of their secrecy, what they did was thought to be much more treasonable than was indicated by the mild report.

The language of the report made a wide saddle that would accommodate any rider. At first glance it is a declaration against a disruption of the Constitution, or consideration of such a step in wartime. Yet it justified a severance by any state in case of "absolute necessity," and many in New England thought they were up against just such necessity. This paragraph, the heart of the declaration, said:

Finally, if the Union be destined to dissolution by reason of the multiplied abuses of bad administration, it should if possible be the work of peaceful times and deliberate consent. Some new

form of confederacy should be substituted among those states which shall intend to maintain a federal relation to each other; but a severance from the Union by one or more states, against the will of the rest, and especially in a time of war, can be justified only by absolute necessity. These are among the principal objections [to] precipitate measures tending to dissolve the states, and, when examined in connection with the farewell address of the Father of his Country, they must, it is believed, be deemed conclusive." ²²

The seven amendments suggested for the Constitution were for these changes:

1. Representation and direct taxes should be apportioned on the basis of the number of free persons. Thus, three fifths of the slaves would not be included in the enumeration by which representation from the slave states was calculated. Therefore the number of Southerners in the House would be reduced.

2. A two-thirds vote of both Houses would be required for the admittance of new states.

3. No embargo by Congress would extend more than sixty days.

4. Two thirds of both Houses must consent to any interdiction of commerce with a foreign country.

5. Except in case of invasion, two thirds of both Houses would be required to declare war.

6. Only native-born citizens—excluding those already naturalized—would be permitted to serve in Congress, or to hold civil office.

7. No President could be elected for more than one term and no state could have two Presidents in succession.

There was nothing subversive in such ideas. An outstanding grievance of New England was the train of Presidents from Virginia. Virginia had held the Presidency twenty-two of the twenty-six years of the republic and Madison had two years yet to serve. Anyone in late 1814 could discern that Monroe was in the best position to succeed Madison.

Among recommendations made to the states was one advising that they ask Congress to allow the states to set up their own defenses and use a portion of the federal taxes to cover the costs. The convention favored state armies, even after the lessons gained from the militia system during the war. It wanted a de-

centralized Army, such as never won a battle. Another provision was that if matters of defense could not be worked out with the federal government, another convention should be held in Boston the following June.

A people busy celebrating victories by Brown, Scott and Macdonough and eagerly awaiting word from Jackson at New Orleans was not much concerned about academic suggestions emanating from disgruntled Federalists at Hartford. Massachusetts appointed three representatives and Connecticut two, for delivery of the complaints and recommendations to Washington. These men called themselves "ambassadors." But before they reached the Potomac the whole matter had become grotesque. En route they were suddenly confronted by a merry nation on an emotional frolic unparalleled in its twenty-six years of national life. Intelligence had come from Andrew Jackson at New Orleans. When they arrived in Washington they learned that the war was over.

Peace had been signed at Ghent. The capital was busy. Commerce was reviving. New England itself was driving ahead with its great, new manufacturing opportunity, which soon enriched it beyond its most fantastic dreams. The West was open and the vast tide of migration was setting in. No one paid any attention to the "ambassadors" from New England²³—none except chagrined Timothy Pickering, who went through the motion of submitting the recommendations to the House, which referred them to a committee, where they remain.

Peace That Lasted

On December 24, 1814, representatives of the United States and Great Britain signed at Ghent what Henry Clay, one of the American commissioners, called "a damned bad treaty." Yet no treaty in history ever led to a better peace.

One by one the sore spots in the controversy between the two nations were passed over, and the stubborn and unyielding adherence to positions, which diplomats call a *sine qua non*, was laid aside. In the end, the nations simply agreed to stop fighting and to resume their old situations. Apart from minor frictions and misunderstandings and occasional insulting remarks usually exchanged to relieve home tensions, harmony, strengthened often into deep friendship and sympathy, has since prevailed.

Negotiations at Ghent were protracted. An even longer period was wasted by American commissioners waiting in Europe for the British ministry to make up its mind about whether it was ready to negotiate. The good judgment of Wellington broke the deadlock and opened the way for an understanding.

Emperor Alexander of Russia had offered in early 1813 to mediate between the United States and Great Britain. Madison accepted and named Secretary of the Treasury Albert Gallatin and James Asheton Bayard to go to St. Petersburg and join John Quincy Adams, the American minister there, as American commissioners. Bayard was a prodigy who had been graduated from Princeton at the age of seventeen, had become an eminent lawyer in Wilmington, Delaware, and had already, at the age of forty-five, served three terms in the House and one full and one partial term in the Senate. A Federalist who had opposed the war before it was declared, he supported it fully once hostilities began.

Great Britain declined to enter the negotiations through the agency of a third power, and the matter was shunted aside while most of Europe was intensifying its efforts against Napoleon. Meanwhile the Americans knocked about Europe, stopped at Amsterdam and went on to London. In London, Gallatin witnessed the great celebration attending Napoleon's downfall, saw preparation being made to subjugate America and wrote Madison warnings of what might be expected. The Prince Regent had suggested that negotiations might be opened in London or Gothenburg, yet it was manifest to Gallatin and Bayard that the British wanted to make a more determined trial of arms in North America before talking peace.

Meanwhile Madison, acting on the Prince Regent's word transmitted through Russia, sent to the Senate nominations of a new peace commission. He retained the three members of the first commission and added Henry Clay and Jonathan Russell.¹

Russell had served as *chargé d'affaires* at London and Paris. Madison had just appointed him minister to Sweden. He and Clay sailed on the sloop of war *John Adams* and landed at Gothenburg.² Castlereagh, the British foreign minister, continued to dally while awaiting word about how the British campaign was progressing in America. It was not until August 6 that the two peace commissions met at Ghent, which the British had substituted for Gothenburg. The British commission was headed by Lord Gambier, who had come to hold an unenviable place in the current affairs of that day. He had been the commander of the Baltic fleet which bombarded Copenhagen in 1807 and forced the small nation of Denmark to surrender her fleet. Even those who regarded it a wise precaution conceded it was a ruthless act.³

The sessions began at the Hotel des Pays-Bas on August 8, 1814. Adams and Gallatin had declined peremptorily to go to the British legation to negotiate. It soon appeared there was no basis for negotiation whatever. The Americans came to talk about impressments, blockades and the rights of neutrals—the explicit issues involved. The British laid down demands for the creation of an Indian buffer state, the southern border of which would run from Sandusky, Ohio, to Kaskaskia, Illinois; for absolute

British control of the Great Lakes; for the cession of much of Maine; for the dismantling of the American border forts, and for other exactions equally humiliating. The American commissioners made ready to depart. But Adams did request that the British demands be written down. After studying them he toiled through the night to write, with the aid of the others, a masterly answer.

The British appeared to believe that Adams had the better of the note battle. Both Castlereagh and Lord Bathurst stepped in with new instructions and saved the negotiations from collapse. Finally a point was reached where the British were contending for the *status uti possidetis*—the state of possession at the conclusion of fighting—and the Americans, who had received from Monroe permission to drop the impressment issue,⁴ stood for the *status ante bellum*—or the condition existing before the war.

The London *Times* in mid-October thought it necessary to stiffen the cabinet against magnanimity:

The fancied conquerors of Canada will be mighty glad to come on their knees and cry, *poenitet. Miserere nostrum!* but we hope their hypocritical lamentations will not be considered by our Ministers as a reason for excusing them from one iota of the amends they ought to pay. Low and humble, and penitent as the scoundrels now appear for their offenses, they will shortly revenge themselves, by a double portion of audacity and insolence.

When news came from America, the ministry was confronted, not with British triumphs, but with repulses at Plattsburg, Baltimore and on the Niagara border. The British public was sick of war. The universal demand was for a reduction of taxes. The warehouses were glutted with the manufactured articles that had ordinarily been sold to the United States, and the plants were idle. The cabinet faced the decision of making peace or of sending many more troops to Canada, at a cost of at least ten million pounds. That would mean continued high taxes. England had memories of the long-drawn Revolutionary War that bled her for eight years. There would be hazard in sending a large army so far from home when the state of Europe was still unsettled.

The cabinet at last turned to Wellington and asked him to take

command in Canada. His surprising answer was that, although he would obey orders, he would not expect to succeed in Canada. The need was control of the lakes, not more soldiers or another general. He gave the opinion that the state of war in North America did not justify an insistence by the British commissioners on any cession of territory by the United States.

Wellington's opinion at the moment was the controlling factor in British foreign affairs. The great man had spoken and the cabinet promptly adopted his view. The British asked the Americans to prepare the draft of a treaty. The one remaining loose point was a clash of interests among the American commissioners themselves. The Treaty of 1783 gave the British the right to free navigation of the Mississippi. It was signed at a time when the Mississippi River was supposed to rise in Canada and the Canadians were therefore allowed its free use. Clay was resolutely opposed to any recognition of that right.

On the other hand, Adams had no intention of sacrificing the compensating right which the Americans gained to the fisheries off Labrador and Newfoundland. This was important to New England. His father, John Adams, had secured the right in the Treaty of 1783 and he would not see it abandoned. Gallatin acted as mediator and eventually persuaded Clay to consent to the continuation of the debated provision. In the end, the commissioners of the two countries agreed there should be no mention of either of these old privileges. If anything ever came up about them, it would have to be handled later.

When news that the treaty had been signed reached the United States the public appeared to be little concerned about its contents. It brought peace and it involved no humility—that was sufficient. There was wild celebration. Madison finally smiled. It was the first smile seen on his countenance since Ross and Cockburn had burned the Capitol.⁵

The hairline question of who won the war has perplexed writers ever since the signing of the Treaty of Ghent, and over that question historians of the two sides have battled lengthily and almost as savagely as the armies. The treaty represented a draw, and perhaps neither side could rejoice in victory. But beyond

doubt, if the newspaper reaction may be used as a gauge, the greater satisfaction with the peace was felt by the Americans.

Contrasted with the American rejoicing was the dour comment in the London *Times*,⁶ which published an "Advertisement Extraordinary" sarcastically alleged to come from the Public Printer, that said:

WANTED—The spirit that animated the conduct of
Elizabeth, Oliver and William.

LOST—All idea of national Dignity and Honour.

FOUND—That any insignificant State may insult *that* which
used to call herself Mistress of the Waves.

Again the London *Times* found little cause for pride in the achievement of British arms in North America. "The war—to speak tenderly of it—has not been a very glorious one," it said.

In the discussion of the approach of peace, the British, who had been extending financial aid to Continental governments with a lavish hand, showed concern about the reaction of Europe to the terms. The *Times* quoted the Prince Regent about a week after the treaty had been signed:

If any of the powers who have received our subsidies or have been rescued from destruction by our courage and example, have had the baseness to turn against us, it is morally certain that the Treaty of Ghent will confirm them in their resolution. They will reflect that we have attempted to force our principles on Americans and have failed. Nay, that we have retired from combat with the stripes yet bleeding on our backs. . . . To make peace at such a moment, they will think, betrays a deadness to the feelings of honour and shows a humility of disposition inviting further insult. . . .

The inevitable consequences are . . . the speedy growth of an American navy and the recurrence of a new and much more formidable American war. . . . Better is it that we should grapple with a young lion when he is first fleshed with the taste of our flock than await until in the maturity of his strength he bears away at once both sheep and shepherd.⁷

The stated causes of the war grew out of the conflict between Great Britain and Napoleon. When that conflict ended the causes no longer existed, and the treaty did not deal with them. The Federalists, in their dying struggles as a party, scoffed at the

terms. Yet to the average citizen there was no point in negotiating a treaty providing guarantees against matters that had ceased to exist. The things the treaty did not contain caused no deep public concern. It was unnecessary to prohibit impressments when there were no impressments. The Indians in the West and South were subdued, and the areas that had agitated the war were free from the menace of the tomahawk and therefore satisfied.

Madison shared the public's attitude, and when he finally transmitted the text of the treaty to Congress he termed the pact "highly honorable to the nation." He said:

The late war, although reluctantly declared by Congress, had become a necessary resort to assert the rights and independence of the nation. It has been waged with a success which is the natural result of the wisdom of the legislative councils, of the patriotism of the people, of the public spirit of the militia, and of the valor of the military and naval forces of the country. Peace, at all times a blessing, is peculiarly welcome, therefore, at a period when the causes for the war have ceased to operate, when the Government has demonstrated the efficiency of its powers of defense, and when the nation can review its conduct without regret and without reproach.⁸

The Treaty of Ghent was successful, and the question of how successful and enduring a peace can be is one that has entered infrequently into more modern treaty making. The treaty after the War of 1812 left no Alsace-Lorraine, no Danzig Corridor, no divided Korea. It was essentially the same kind of termination of a war as that between Grant and Lee, where the officers retained their side arms and the men took their cavalry mounts home for the spring plowing—a settlement like that Lincoln sought, free from a spirit of vengeance. The Treaty of Ghent demonstrated that after a bitter, vengeful, brutal war, a just and abiding peace is achievable. In that respect, the little, scoffed-at treaty was a major document in the history of international affairs.⁹

But across the water, where no one yet knew the war was over, on the same day the treaty was signed—December 24, 1814—Andrew Jackson was just beginning the construction of his trenches along the old Rodriguez Canal and Sir Edward Pakenham was hurrying to join his men for the attack on New Orleans.

The Battle of New Orleans

I.

Into the city of New Orleans, which had known ornately garbed grandees of Castile and lace and silk-bedecked governors and generals of the later French courts, rode, on the morning of December 2, 1814, an individual whom almost everyone in the city was awaiting.

He was a gaunt man in dusty, worn, almost shabby garments. His appearance conveyed the impression of emaciation and ill health. His clothing seemed almost threadbare to a cosmopolitan city long acquainted with elegance. His short, blue, Spanish coat was frayed. His high cavalry boots had rarely encountered polish. His little leather cap, without plume or ornament, had neither style nor military significance. At the house where he stopped, in the outskirts of the city, a Creole woman who had come in to assist with the meal, stormed at the host:

“You asked me to get your house in order to receive a great general. Now I find all my labor is thrown away on an ugly, old Kaintuck flatboatman.”¹

Yet, after the first glance, few New Orleans residents ever noticed what kind of a garb Andrew Jackson happened to be wearing.

His flashing gray eyes shone from beneath a great shock of gray-
ing hair. The intense vitality that radiated from his thin body and hawklike face seemed to surcharge those around him with his own energy and enthusiasm. Everything about him was alive and dynamic.

For the next thirty-seven days he was to become the impelling force in what had been a leisurely city, set on a patch of firm

ground amid the swamps and bayous of the mighty river that swept by it majestically to the sea.

Never did a newcomer have a more cordial welcome than Jackson, although New Orleans was then, as it ever since has been, noted for its warmth and hospitality to strangers. Jackson was sorely needed. Despite speeches by Livingston, meetings of the legislature, sincere efforts of the governor, and calls for volunteers that had gone from Washington to the other states, the nature of the New Orleans defenses was an open invitation for a descent by any active British force, whether it approached by land, lake or river.

Alexander Walker, one of the early biographers of Jackson, was acquainted with the New Orleans of a century ago; he knew and talked with many of the participants of the campaign against the British. Walker described the depressed state of the city before Jackson's arrival:

Indeed, never was a city so defenseless, so exposed, so weak, so prostrate, as New Orleans in the fall of 1814. There was not sufficient time to obtain aid from the West. There was no naval force in the port or adjacent waters; not a regiment of armed men in the city. The resources of the whole state were scarcely adequate to the production and organization of two militia regiments. The population of the city was a new and mixed one, composed of people of all nations and races, who had been too recently admitted into the Union to feel that strong attachment to the government and flag, which characterizes an old and homogeneous community. Besides, there was a vast amount of valuable property, merchandise and produce accumulated in the storehouses, which would be in danger of destruction in case of an attempt to repel an invader. To save this property would be a strong inducement to a surrender and capitulation of the city. Few, indeed, were there who could look these perils and difficulties in the face, and entertain the idea of a serious defense of the city against any well-organized and well-conducted expedition.²

So much calm assurance and firmness were reflected in Jackson's manner that his arrival with a small mounted escort lifted the city as much as a trained division. Back and forth among the people passed the words "Jackson has come!"³ Where there had been conversation and inertia, Jackson brought action. The mili-

tia companies had been depleted. Quickly he had them drilling with filled ranks: the Carabiniers d'Orléans, the Hulans, the Foot Dragoons, the Francs, the Louisiana Blues, and the Chasseurs. Together they formed a battalion of 385 men under the Creole major, Jean B. Plauché.

Jackson summoned all of the engineers of the city and region to bring together every scrap of information they possessed about the topography of the territory. From this intelligence he studied, in turn, each approach which might be exploited by an invading army. Numerous bayous, originating near the Mississippi, wound their ways into the surrounding lakes and provided approaches by water. Jackson had Governor Claiborne assemble details of citizens to fell timber and fill the mouths of some of the more important bayous with trees and earth. He inspected the forts. He strengthened Fort St. Philip, which guarded the city from any approach up the river from the Gulf, and gave it the men and equipment needed to repel any squadron that might breast the current of the Mississippi.

The work of making New Orleans more secure was carried on with some expectation, but no certainty, of an attack. All rumors were vague. No one in either New Orleans or Washington knew yet the nature of the powerful army Great Britain was assembling for her compelling blow against the soft underbelly of America.⁴

2.

On the other side of the Atlantic, the ministry had been occupied in bringing together at Plymouth an expeditionary force under Major General John Keane. Now, in the serenity of a mellow English autumn, the troops were coming in.

One of Keane's regiments, the 93rd Highlanders, was, with its colorful tartans and kilts and high caps of yellow and scarlet, a show piece of the British service. These men were from the counties of Sutherland and Ross at the north of Scotland, where Ben More rises beyond Loch Shin and the sun sinks across the Minch into the Hebrides. They were tall men, recruited for uniform height. Eleven years had elapsed since they had set foot on Scottish

soil—for two they were on garrison duty in England and for nine at the new colony they had cut out with their bayonets for Great Britain at the far end of Africa.

In 1814, after the frenzy of effort of the Peninsular War subsided, the War Office remembered them in their distant post and ordered them to Plymouth. They paraded with new tartans and thought of the nearness of the Highlands. One thousand men, drilled meticulously during their long garrison duty, passed in review before the Prince of Orange and his staff. They composed perhaps the finest-appearing regiment in the British service. Yet there was no view of Scotland for the 93rd. The transports came into Plymouth harbor and their Colonel Dale, proud of the showing they made as they briefly touched the home island, took them on board.⁵

At Plymouth the 93rd Highlanders were joined by the 95th Rifles, units of artillery, sappers and rocket men, and a squadron of cavalry, all of whom had served in the Peninsular War. The command of the expedition went to Major General John Keane, a young Irish soldier who had begun his Army career alongside Robert Ross under Sir Ralph Abercromby in Egypt. He rose from a subaltern in Egypt to the command of a brigade under Wellington.

Keane's brigade on the Peninsula included the 27th, or Enniskillen regiment, which won an outstanding record fighting against Marshal Suchet. A story told about Keane indicates a disposition quite different from that of General Ross. When some of Suchet's soldiers tried to lure the Enniskillens into turning against the British because they were Irish, Keane organized a ruse, enticed the Frenchmen forward to fraternize, then suddenly ordered the regiment to charge and bayonet the unsuspecting Frenchmen.⁶

When the convoy left Plymouth its destination was a closely guarded secret, but there was no one who doubted that he was sailing for America, where Keane would serve as second-in-command to Ross. Out of the harbor that had watched the departure of Howard, Drake and Nelson, the fleet sailed on September 18, 1814, to bring Louisiana under the British crown.

The expedition against New Orleans, regarded a natural development of the war, became an active project of the War Office when Cochrane sent a report to Bathurst that 3,000 British soldiers, aided by Indians and Spaniards, could mop up the entire Gulf Coast from Mobile to New Orleans.⁷ Cochrane was misled. He judged the conduct of the American militia by the brief view of their heels the British had got at Bladensburg. Bathurst eagerly accepted the advice of an admiral of Cochrane's standing and experience and sent orders to General Ross to proceed to Jamaica and fit out an expedition against the American Gulf Coast

Bathurst's instructions to Ross, issued in August, gave him two duties. The first was to gain control of the mouth of the Mississippi River and bottle up the states using the river as their outlet for commerce. The second was to take territory that Great Britain might claim under the *uti possidetis* (keep what you have) principle at the peace conference.

It has so often been asserted that the Battle of New Orleans was indecisive in American history—because it was fought after the treaty of peace had been signed—that the true conditions of the battle should be recalled. When it occurred, the treaty had not been endorsed by the British Parliament or monarch—measures required to render it effective—nor by the President and United States Senate. It had no binding effect. Technically it was not peace, but a suggestion of conditions for peace. In consideration of Bathurst's orders to Ross, it is no vague conjecture to say that on the outcome of the battle depended the future ownership of the lower Mississippi Valley and, in turn, of Texas and the Southwest. The Battle of New Orleans was, indeed, one of the most significant of American history. Madison made clear in his message to the Senate, February 15, 1815, that the war had not yet ended on that date. In this message, submitting the treaty signed at Ghent, he stated that “the termination of hostilities depends upon the time of the ratification of the treaty by both parties.”⁸

Ross was dead before Bathurst's orders reached America. Keane consequently was left as the ranking Army officer of the expedition. When intelligence of the death of Ross reached London, the ministry in late October sent Major General Sir Edward

Pakenham to command the expedition.⁹ The rendezvous was Negril Bay, Jamaica, where Keane's force of 4,400 men out of Plymouth joined the 3,100 troops of the army Ross had commanded in the Chesapeake.

Pakenham, thirty-eight years old, was Wellington's brother-in-law. During the Peninsular War he had served under the Duke's immediate direction. He was a soldier of the finest sensibilities and most chivalric disposition, admired by his Peninsular War associates and credited with keen military insight. It has been accepted that he was one of Wellington's ablest lieutenants, and any effort to probe into the origin of his high military reputation might seem superfluous. Yet it was formed almost entirely during the brief period in which he led Sir Thomas Picton's famous 3rd Division at the Battle of Salamanca, when Picton was too ill to keep the saddle.

That battle was one in which Wellington, sparring with Marmont, suddenly found the French Marshal with his left flank exposed and a great gap in his center. Pakenham commanded the British column that pierced the French army. He led the charge that "beat forty thousand Frenchmen in forty minutes." Most of his other service was staff duty under Wellington. Although he was personally as brave as any general that ever wore the red uniform, he had never commanded his own army. It is true that Wellington did not recommend him for command of the troops in America, and no valid charge of nepotism can be advanced. Yet in this instance as in that of the Lake Champlain campaign, a pertinent question was why the assignment did not go to Hill, Beresford, Hope or Picton. Perhaps it was because the experiment with Ross, who had not commanded independently, had proved so successful that the cabinet believed the top British generals would not be required.¹⁰

Pakenham had been wounded at different times and his case was so singular that it has been cited in medical works on gunshot wounds. When a major with the 23rd Light Dragoons in 1796, he led an attacking column on St. Lucia, in the West Indies. He was severely wounded by a musket ball through the neck. When the wound healed it drew his head to the side, caus-

ing him to carry it in a slanting position. Ten years later he commanded the 7th Fusiliers in the attack on Martinique, where he was again wounded in the neck. The second injury restored his head to the original, erect position.

On November 26, 1814, Cochrane's squadron sailed from Negril Bay for the American shore. His majestic fleet with white sails spread was a magnificent sight on the blue Caribbean. The sixty ships included some of the best-known names in the British Navy: the *Tonnant*, bearing Cochrane's flag; the *Royal Oak*, *Bedford*, *Norge*, *Ramillies* and *Asia*, all seventy-fours; the *Sea-horse*, *Dictator*, *Diomedé*, *Gorgon*, *Annide*, *Hydra* and a host of other powerful ships; frigates, sloops and gunboats. It was an armada that could almost flatten the waters with the concussion of a thousand guns.

There were numerous transports, some of which held individuals other than soldiers. These civilians marked the expedition as one for the permanent occupation of land, not merely a foray like that Ross had conducted against Washington. They included a contingent of Civil officers sufficient to govern the province. Britain appears to have forgotten some tea and stamp-act incidents in Boston harbor two generations earlier. One of the first officials she was sending to New Orleans had already been designated the collector of revenue. Appreciating the increasing power of the press, the ministry sent also an editor with complete printing press and font of type for the newspaper the British would set up in New Orleans. A number of merchant vessels in ballast sailed with the fleet to transport the valuable merchandise with which the city's warehouses were understood to be loaded.¹¹

In addition to the army, a force of 1,500 marines and sailors brought the total military strength of the contingent to 9,000 men.

The first vessels were off the Chandeleur Islands in heavy weather on December 8, and by the tenth the entire fleet was between Ship and Cat islands, at the entrance of Lake Borgne. There they were under observation by two small American gunboats of the flotilla commanded by Lieutenant Thomas ap Catesby Jones, a name now more reminiscent of the Confederate

ironclad *Merrimac*, and its battle with the *Monitor*, than of New Orleans.¹² Before sighting these gunboats, the British, ignorant of the warnings that had been sounded of their intentions, believed their expedition still to be a profound secret in the Western World. They hoped they might reach New Orleans before the city was aware of their approach. The Jones squadron, of five gunboats, was principally for observation but served as the first line of defense set up by Jackson and Commodore Patterson to intercept the British. It told the British that New Orleans was aware of their coming.

Cochrane had sufficient force to crush them unmercifully. He organized an attack party of sixty barges, launches and gigs, mounting carronades and long guns. With them he sent 1,000 marines and sailors commanded by Captain Charles Lockyer. The American boats mounted twenty-three guns and the crews aggregated 182 men. Jones had a vain notion he might lure the British within range of coastal guns, but his boats were becalmed and soon overtaken by the British oarsmen. He put up a gallant fight. It required an hour's time to sink his little fleet. At the end Jones was wounded and a prisoner. The British suffered 300 casualties and lost a number of barges; the American loss was six killed and thirty-five wounded. The small naval engagement took place on the morning of December 14, 1814.¹³

Lake Borgne, the front door to New Orleans, was now open to the British fleet, which moved in by Pass Christian. When the larger vessels began to ground, the men were put into lighter draft ships and conveyed to Pea Island at the mouth of Pearl River. There, Keane, who still commanded, organized and paraded them for an advance on the city. Some of the Spanish residents of Louisiana, sympathetic to the British who had just cleared their home country of the French, made their way to Cochrane's fleet to tell how he might approach close to the city by boats.¹⁴ The route was across Lake Borgne to its extreme northwest shore, thence by the Bayou Bienvenu, which extends to within a short distance of the Mississippi. The meanderings of the numerous bayous in the region were such that whole

armies might lose themselves in subtropical fens, and guidance was needed.

Cochrane ordered a thorough reconnaissance of the route by two of his junior officers. They passed fifty miles west of Pea Island to the mouth of the bayou, which in earlier days had been called the St. Francis River, and had been used as a shipping route. In 1814 it was a hunting and fishing wilderness.

They traveled up the bayou, past a fishing village where they put on blue shirts and tarpaulins customarily worn by the fishermen, and on through Villeré's Canal to its head. From there they walked to the banks of the Mississippi and satisfied their fancies by drinking water from the great stream, nine miles below the city of New Orleans. They talked with some slaves, learned and observed all they could of the country, then returned by means of the bayou to Cochrane's fleet. The route they had explored could be employed for the stealthy advance of the army to a position by which the city might be taken by surprise, or by a *coup de main* such as was so successfully employed against Washington.

Cochrane assembled the small boats, barges, tenders, the gunboats captured from Jones, and all of the shallow-draft craft he could find or rent from fishermen. But the complete collection was insufficient for the transport of more than one third of the British army. Haste was of the gravest importance. Keane decided to move what he could. Colonel William Thornton, who had led the attack at Bladensburg, had a high reputation as an assault officer, and an advance party of 1,800 men was placed under his command and loaded in the small boats. On the morning of December 22 the first element of the British army was off for the Mississippi, guided by sympathizers who lived in the fishermen's village and served as British spies.

Keane and his staff accompanied the advance on its cold, rainy, voyage across the ruffled lake. Pakenham had not yet arrived. The men were crowded so closely they could not stretch and soon they were stiff and drenched. Late in the day the rain ceased and a chill wind blew from the north. Orders had to be issued

for a pause in which the men lighted charcoal pans and warmed their numb hands. All night they rowed and at daylight they saw the hazy outline of the Louisiana shore.

Groping along the coast, the guides found the mouth of the desired bayou, twelve miles from New Orleans. The fishermen's village, a quarter of a mile up the bayou, had been virtually deserted by its inhabitants, who were renting boats to the British. It had been occupied in their absence by an American picket of eight men. Taken by surprise, these scouts hid in a house. Most of them were picked up by the British and the others fled to the canebrakes without being able to give the alarm. One of the prisoners from the picket, named Joseph Rodolphe Ducros, a magnificent fabricator, was taken down the bayou to a boat containing Admiral Cochrane and General Keane. The British commanders learned little from him, but listened with interest to his imaginative tale that New Orleans was defended by an army of from twelve to fifteen thousand. This caused them to doubt the earlier information obtained from the residents of the fishermen's village, who had told of a city meagerly defended, the approaches of which were like an open gate.

The boats pressed up the bayou until they could make progress only by punting. When the craft grounded the soldiers found a solid pathway along the bayou, on which they marched single file, Thornton at the head, until they emerged from the gloom of the cypress swamp and came suddenly into the level, open ground and orange groves of the Villeré plantation. At the plantation house they surprised and arrested the two Villeré brothers, Gabriel and Célestin, put them in a room under guard. At 10:30 o'clock on the morning of December 23, the British were still undetected and within nine miles of the city.¹⁵ Yet their movement had been slowed by the misinformation given to them by the wily Creole Ducros. Now, when they might have marched into New Orleans before Jackson could organize an effective resistance, when a large part of his expected army was coming down the Mississippi on flatboats, or was patrolling the difficult roads and water routes leading to New Orleans, they halted.

Imprisoned in a room of his plantation house, Major Gabriel Villeré was like a magician in a strait jacket. A Creole, he did not want to lend credence to the stories that his people were unsympathetic to the Americans. He had been in charge of the picket that had been surprised at the fishermen's village and was humiliated by their failure and his own to signal the British advance. With British soldiers all about him, he suddenly leaped through the window and was off like a swamp fox across the flatlands and into the fens. Bullets cut the air above his head, groups shouted behind him, Thornton called for the soldiers to catch him or kill him but by no means to let him go.

Villeré reached the stands of cypress and was soon in the bogs, yet the British dared to follow. He hid in the limbs of a great live oak, where his forsaken setter found and almost exposed him. He left the tree for a moment to beat out the poor dog's brains.¹⁶ When all was safe, he circled, reached the Mississippi, obtained a boat and rowed to the opposite shore. There he borrowed horses and rode up the opposite bank. Keane watched from the east side of the river as Villeré sped off with the news that the city was endangered. Opposite New Orleans he got another boat, recrossed the river and rushed to Jackson's headquarters. Another Creole, young Augustin Rousseau, was already in Jackson's room with intelligence from the fishermen's village. Villeré told his story. Jackson jumped to his feet and struck his fist on the table.

"By the Eternal," he exclaimed, "they shall not sleep on our soil!"

A crowd of officers and leading citizens was in the house. Jackson gave them information and orders: "Gentlemen, the British are below. We must fight them tonight."

Not "Tomorrow"; not "When better ready"; not "How will we retreat?" But "*fight them now!*" Coffee was still five miles upstream, after marching 800 miles through the wilderness.¹⁷ Carroll had landed from the flatboats a day earlier. Nothing had been heard from the Kentuckians. Plauché with his New Orleans militia and Lacoste with his free Negro battalion were watching the approaches outside the city, miles away. Only the 44th In-

fantry was at hand, stationed at the city barracks. A signal gun was fired. The Tennessee boys beat the drums that had rolled at Talladega and the Horseshoe. The city shook itself. Messengers sped in all directions. One hour after Villeré had rushed into Jackson's headquarters an army was on the march. Jackson would not await the coming of the British. He would find them and fight.

Behind Jackson moved troops in leather jerkins and homespun; New Orleans militia units in resplendent dress uniforms, some already with traditions of service; drilled soldiers in the blue of the United States regulars; United States marines; bands of men in flashy silk sashes of the buccaneer, a first sprinkling of the "hellish banditti" of the coast. Whites, Negroes, mulattoes, frontiersmen, Creoles, Frenchmen, Dominicans marched in a common cause. Probably it was the most heterogeneous army that ever battled under the Stars and Stripes. But it was one of the best—made so, if for no other reason, by the fire that burned in one man's breast. The British were not merely fighting American militia. They were fighting Jackson.¹⁸

3.

Keane, with the knowledge that his approach had been detected by the Americans, decided to await reinforcements and then move on to New Orleans under cover of darkness. He sent a Negro into the city to distribute a proclamation printed in advance on shipboard. It was addressed to "Louisianians" and told them to remain quietly in their homes, that their slaves would be preserved and their property protected. "We make war only on Americans." At the northern edge of Villeré's plantation, eight miles from the city, Keane laid out a line and threw out scouts. Already precious hours had been lost while Major Villeré was making his circuitous journey into New Orleans. By a prompt movement Keane might have arrived at approximately the same time and found Jackson with his forces scattered. Instead the afternoon was frittered away in scouting, foraging and reflecting.

More boats had been assembled and 400 men joined Keane

from the fleet, giving him an army of 2,300 men. He mounted his three cannon at the Villerés' sugar works and made ready for resistance as well as advance. He overruled Thornton, who urged an immediate attack on New Orleans. He deployed two regiments facing the city—the 85th and 95th British foot—and one, the 4th, or King's Own, along the Villeré Canal which connected with the Bayou Bienvenu and thus maintained communications with the fleet on Lake Borgne.

As darkness gathered, the quietness was unbroken. The flatlands about him appeared to be deserted, and the great river rolled on without a sign of hostile craft. At this point the solid ground between river and cypress swamp was a mile in breadth. It made a strong position. That Keane was irresolute might be seen from the fact that as night fell he made no preparation for breaking his bivouac and heading toward the city.

It was two o'clock in the afternoon when Major Villeré reached Jackson. By three o'clock the American army was on the march. At 4:30 P.M. darkness ended one of the shortest days of the year. A cold moon shone intermittently between the racing clouds. Deep night had settled over the country when at 7:30 P.M. the American schooner *Carolina* came abreast the British and fired at Keane's soldiers the shot that was the signal for Jackson's attack.

Jackson had an army of 2,050. His left, under Coffee, had orders to try to get between the British and the cypress swamp. The right, which he commanded in person near the river, was composed of the regular infantry, a detachment of marines and Plauché's and D'Aquin's New Orleans brigades. Carroll was in reserve, with his own and Louisiana troops.¹⁹ Major Villeré and Colonel Denis de La Ronde, whose plantation was near Villeré's, marched with Jackson and served as guides. Great fires signaled the position of the British camp. The Americans struck the British outposts and drove them in.

As soon as Keane heard the musketry he sent reinforcements to his front line and quickly a violent fight was raging in the darkness. Jackson had two fieldpieces which he advanced along the levee at the riverbank. When they opened, the British made a

determined charge to capture them. Jackson rushed up to the fighting, shouting, "Save the guns, boys, at any sacrifice!"

The regulars and New Orleans militia promptly charged the British who were attacking the American artillery, and drove them back to their original position. They might have gone farther but their commander, Colonel George T. Ross, restrained them in the darkness.

Meanwhile the fire of the *Carolina* enfiladed the British and caused havoc in the camp. As the schooner dropped down the river, the British regiment occupying the levee heard distinctly the orders on board: "Now then, give it to them for the honor of America!" A broadside of grape cleaned the levee of British troops. Keane brought two cannon and his rocket tubes into play and fired at the flashes of the *Carolina's* guns, but in the deep darkness it was random shooting. The *Carolina's* gunners were more fortunate, for they could aim at the campfires, until these were scattered into dead embers.

Now, at the other end of the British line, the heavy fire of the Tennessee rifles sounded. Coffee dismounted and launched his attack with a volley, then charged the British, and for the next two hours one of the strangest battles of the war raged from the cypress swamp to the river, without further reference to either army's lines. The moon appeared at sufficient intervals to give the officers some control, yet it was chiefly hand-to-hand fighting between groups and mobs, and the weapon which in the end proved most effective was the long Tennessee hunting knife which the British had not encountered in their progress with Wellington through Estremadura and Leon.

Desperate, shouting, cursing men grappled one another in individual combat. One of Coffee's units, Beale's riflemen, worked its way with the bayonet, long knife and rifle butt to the Villeré plantation house, immediately in the center of the British position, and slashed and slugged at double their numbers. Confused in the pitch-black night, some of them found themselves in the middle of a British regiment, where they were forced to surrender.

The grave danger of such fighting was that the American regiments, being the assailants, were very likely to attack one

another. Coffee managed to press the British toward the river and, despite a resolute counterattack by Thornton with the 85th Regiment, he finally made them take cover behind the levee. Toward eleven o'clock a heavy fog spread out from the river. The moon went into final retirement. Jackson believed he had won a victory but considered it too dangerous to prolong the bludgeoning and cutting. The last shots were fired by Louisiana militia under General David Morgan who had heard the battle from a distance and marched to the sound of the cannon.

The Americans suffered 213 casualties, the British 277. Among the British wounded was Lieutenant Colonel de Lacy Evans who had commanded the detail that burned the United States Capitol.

The Americans, leaving mounted scouts between themselves and the British, moved back three miles to a line Jackson was preparing between swamp and river. By firelight Jackson's men cleaned their rifle barrels, wiped the blood from their knives and made ready for more fighting. All knew this was no more than a beginning.

On December 24 the armies faced each other. Off at Ghent, the disappointed Clay, the contented Gallatin and the other delegates were signing the peace treaty. From the Mississippi the *Carolina* tossed shot into the British camp. On a dreary Christmas a shot hit into a British mess. A soldier "was fairly cut in two at the lower portion of the belly," according to Lieutenant Gleig. Jackson ordered the levee cut below him, yet it proved more advantageous to the British, for it filled the canals and gave them easier water communication with Lake Borgne. General Morgan was commanded to take a position opposite Jackson on the west bank of the Mississippi, to guard against a crossing by the British.

4.

Important new elements were about to appear in both armies. Coming by way of Lake Borgne and Bayou Bienvenu, Sir Edward Pakenham arrived to take command of the British force. He was like a warming Gulf breeze blowing up the cold river.

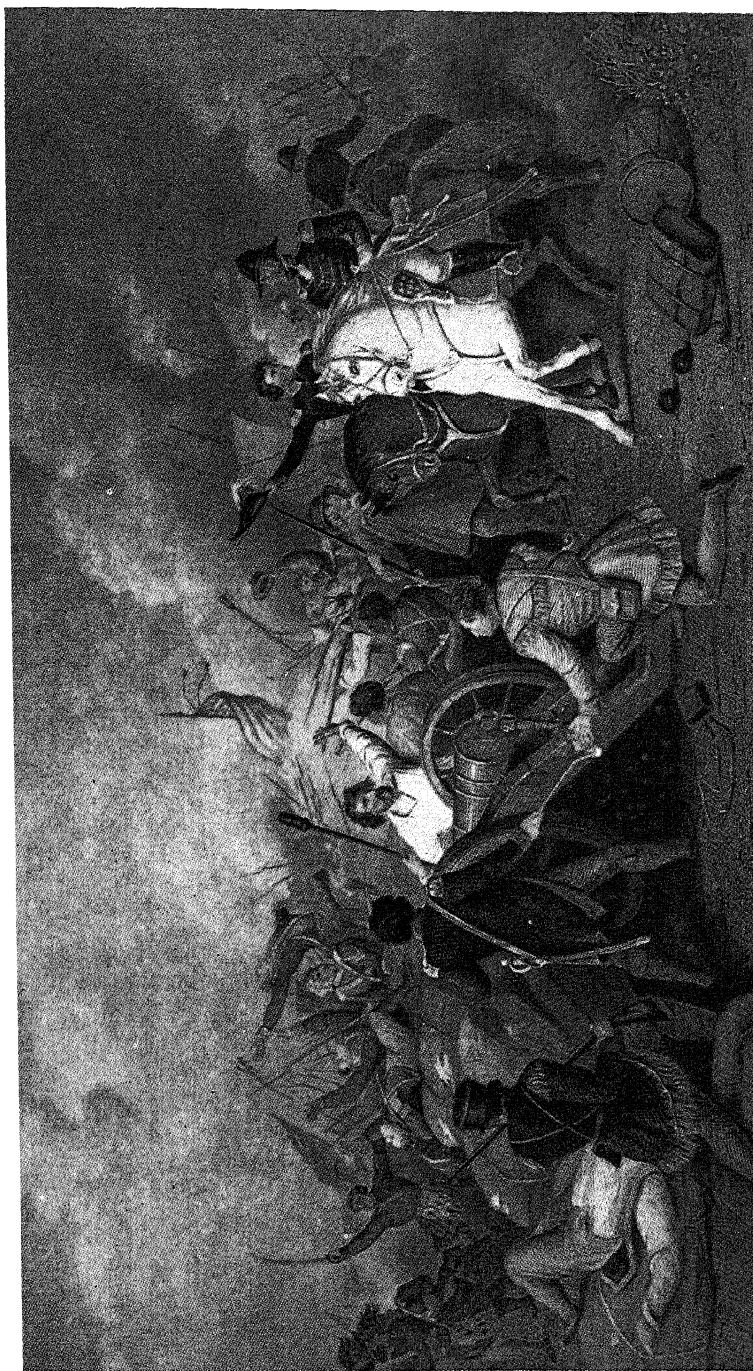
Young, handsome, confident, Irish-born, he lifted the army out of the gloom that had surrounded it ever since its surprise

approach was detected and it had been slugged and butchered in an impetuous night attack. Pakenham looked over the regimental lists and saw with satisfaction that all of the regiments except the 93rd, the "Praying Highlanders," and a regiment of West Indian Negroes, had served under Wellington in Spain. The balance of his army was coming up the bayou. What he did not yet understand was that the approach to New Orleans selected by Cochrane and Keane, while it brought the army near to the city by water, left that army in a pinched position on what amounted to little more than an isthmus between river and swamp. Unless the army crossed the river and moved up the shore opposite New Orleans, or went back to the fleet and made some new approach, there was one way, and one way only, by which it could reach the city. That was directly up the riverbank, on the breast of the isthmus—a neck of land sunk below the level of the river. And immediately in its path was Jackson's army.

The new element for Jackson was the approach of the Kentuckians. The call for soldiers had been heard again across the dark and bloody ground. Kentucky troops had been discharged after the Battle of the Thames. But this stanch state had never yet shunned the fighting. The division of 2,200 men was commanded by Major General John Thomas, who loaded it on Ohio River flatboats and started on the long journey.

Ahead of Thomas went Brigadier General John Adair, who had been Harrison's aide at the Thames. Adair had resigned from the Senate because he had been tainted with the friendship and confidence of Aaron Burr, but he had later been elected to the House and was now remaking a career that would both return him almost at will to Congress and give him the governorship of his state. Association with Burr was no dishonor in Jackson's eyes. Adair's arrival heartened him because it showed that some of the country beyond Tennessee and Louisiana was interested in the fate of New Orleans. When General Thomas sickened from his journey, Adair took command of the Kentucky troops. The last of them joined Jackson on January 4, 1815.

Some of the Kentuckians came without arms. They left hur-



Courtesy Library of Congress

THE BATTLE OF NEW ORLEANS

riedly and thought that after the country had been more than two years at war, equipment would be furnished. Those who bore their own guns, the majority, were armed with rifles.²⁰

5.

Pakenham, after his initial reconnaissance, decided to strike. His first task was to dispose of the *Carolina*. It was worse than a hostile regiment on his flank. For two nights his men worked silently on a battery on the riverbank and mounted new guns brought up from the fleet. Day began to break at seven o'clock on the morning of December 27 and with it the British opened their bombardment of the American schooner. They fired nine fieldpieces, two howitzers and a mortar, and threw shells and red-hot shot into her. She replied for a time, then burst into flames, exploded and sank.

Pakenham was now in a position to feel out Jackson's position. The Americans had labored day and night on their defensive line.²¹ It ran from the river to the cypress swamp, along the old Rodriguez Canal, now a dry ditch four feet deep. Immediately behind it Jackson dug breast-high trenches. The line was as straight as a rifle barrel and strong as a maple stock. Jackson, according to his December 28 returns, had 3,282 men.

After darkness on December 27 Pakenham moved his army to within 600 yards of the Americans. In the morning, as the thin fog lifted, he approached in two columns. Major General Gibbs commanded the right. His flank regiment of light infantry was under one of the most dashing, determined officers in the army, Colonel Robert Rennie. Rennie's orders were to reach the rear of the Americans in and near the swamp. Keane led the left column of the British, moving along the river. Pakenham and a guard of dragoons took a position in the center of the plain.

Before the British could approach, Jackson ordered the farmhouses in the front of his position destroyed so his field of fire would be clear. The artillery blew them up.

While the British were forming to attack in front, the approach of an unidentified body of men was seen in Jackson's immediate rear. Some apprehension passed along the American

line. Then, as the strangers neared the position, they were easily identifiable by their distinctive dress. They wore red shirts and sashes and had fierce mustaches. Some carried cutlasses and nearly all had the desperate appearance of "hellish banditti," scourges of the coast. They were the Baratarians, released from jail, sent out by Lafitte. They were under their two leaders, Beluche and Dominique You.²²

Jackson gave them a position in the center of his line, with a 24-pounder to handle, about the servicing of which they were indeed very well informed. The mouths of twenty cannon looked out from Jackson's earthworks, none better manned than that of the fraternity that had never operated before in America except under the Cartagenian flag.

As the British columns advanced, the corvette *Louisiana*, Jackson's only remaining ship, took the flank position formerly occupied by the *Carolina* and scattered grape and explosives across the moving ranks. The American infantry began a galling fire. The cannon behind the entrenchments spoke with the rapidity of Navy guns.

It was clear to Pakenham that Keane's assault in column would not be successful. He ordered the regiments deployed and told the men to hit the ditches. Two British fieldpieces were abandoned on the river road. On the other end of the line, Gibbs, seeing Keane tarry, held back Rennie as he was getting into action against Carroll. One of Carroll's detachments undertook to get behind Rennie but went too far and was worsted. Its colonel, Henderson, was killed.

Pakenham was disappointed over the results of what he termed a reconnaissance in force. He ordered his army back to nurse wounds inflicted chiefly by the American artillery, but he did not retreat to the *Villérés*. For three days his men lay out of range in the open, facing Jackson's entrenchments. They were waiting for the great naval guns to come across Lake Borgne from the British fleet. Pakenham intended to blast Jackson out, for by now he knew he could not dislodge the Americans by parading his army on the plain.

Lying in the open without tents in late December was a rigor-

ous test for Pakenham's men. The commissary service was not set up for such a campaign and the food supply was irregular. The cattle had already been cleaned from the neighborhood. Dysentery broke out among the troops, who had nothing but improvised latrines. For protection some made frail shelters of reeds and cane.

As the British army thus bivouacked in the cold, a few hundred yards from Jackson's line, waiting as the Navy guns came up, the old year of 1814 slipped into history.

6.

The *National Intelligencer* published a letter from an officer at New Orleans. It, in contrast with the brash letters written by officers and men from the Niagara frontier in the early stages of the conflict, reveals the circumspection and discipline that existed in the American Army. It said merely:

On the 1st of the present month [January] was the greatest cannonading that has been known in America. I dare not write much in detail about the army. That alone properly belongs to General Jackson.²³

The cannonading of January 1 was unquestionably what this officer stated: the greatest, to that time, in the country's history.

On New Year's Eve the British Navy completed its transport and handed over to Pakenham twenty long 18-pounders and ten 24-pounders and sufficient ammunition for a bombardment of six hours. Then the British army was divided; half was to maintain the line and the other half was to advance in the darkness to within 400 yards of Jackson's position. In the utmost silence, to guard against another night attack, they dug emplacements and redoubts for the heavy ordnance. The work was conducted by Pakenham's chief engineering officer, who bore a name reminiscent of an earlier invasion of America, Sir John Burgoyne.²⁴ Hogsheads of sugar were placed upright for some of the parapets.²⁵ Before daylight the work was completed. As the fog lifted late on New Year's Day, the American army looked out on thirty great guns distributed along their front. Behind the guns were Navy gunners. The British army had withdrawn to about

200 yards behind the guns and stood ready to charge into the first breach.

Pakenham had placed his guns at point-blank range and opened with them simultaneously. New Year's festivities were in progress along the American line. Visitors had come out from the city. A parade was being held in their honor. The first roar, with its sickening concussion, sent the visitors flying, and caused the soldiers to hurry to their positions. British observers gained the impression the Americans were frenzied with fright.

Jackson was at Macarté's plantation house, his headquarters behind the center of his line, where from either the spacious porch or a third-story window he could command the entire field with his telescope. Rockets screamed and shells fell about him. One hundred missiles hit the house in ten minutes. He felt the front lines would be more comfortable and with his staff walked forward. Stopping to inspect each battery, he moved along the entire length of the line. Everywhere the men cheered him. Rockets fell near by.

"Don't mind these rockets," said Jackson. "They are mere toys to amuse children."²⁶

Then the Americans opened. Down the line the guns roared in reply: those of Humphrey; Dominique You; Spotts, from the *Louisiana*; Norris; and Garriques Flaageac, the old French veteran of Italy and Egypt. On toward the swamp Carroll's artillery support spoke. The British had the early advantage in the artillery duel. The American fortifications were more easily hit and few British shots went astray. They scored direct hits on some of the American guns, You's, Crawley's, Garriques Flaageac's. They exploded two caissons of powder and set fire to fifty cotton bales that had been thrown off a boat to form an embrasure for a Navy gun. The burning cotton flew in the breeze and threatened the powder kegs, and Plauché's men had to go over the parapet to extinguish the bales. Because of the casualties suffered Jackson ceased using cotton in his defenses at New Orleans.²⁷

The Americans waited anxiously after wind puffs to see the effect of their guns on the British demilunes. The hogshad bas-

tions were splintered. Sugar was little better than cotton. After an hour and a quarter the British fire slackened.

The American fire held and soon the British redoubts were level with the plain. The infantrymen who had awaited the breaches in the American lines again went into the ditches. Three fourths of the British gunners were killed or wounded. Finally, all of the British cannon were silenced. At noon the firing died away. Pakenham's plan to blast out Jackson had failed completely. A feeling of dejection ran through the British Army, composed of men who under Wellington had known only victory and who in their six years of Spanish campaigning had encountered nothing like this bottled-up fighting on a low, barren plain between swamp and river.

7.

Pakenham had a final recourse—a direct frontal assault on the American lines. Possibly he was goaded by Cochrane's assertion that he could drive out the American rabble with a thousand sailors from the fleet.²⁸ Who was he to pit his opinion against that of the white-haired admiral? Yet the assault plan he developed was his own.

First, he would extend his lines in order to advance on both sides of the river. To get boats to the Mississippi it was necessary to dig out the old Villeré Canal to form a connection between the Bayou Bienvenu and the Mississippi. Then a wing of his army would be carried to the west bank of the river, from which it could command Jackson's entrenchments by an enfilade fire across the river. As the British advance went up the west bank, the main army would attack the entrenchments in its front on the east bank.

The British soldiers toiled at the connecting canal eagerly, although some thought ships might be put on rollers, as the big guns had been, and hauled across from bayou to river. The digging required six days. On January 7, 1815, as the work was completed, Pakenham's spirits were buoyed up by the arrival of reinforcements under Major General John Lambert, who had sailed from England with 2,500 additional Peninsular War vet-

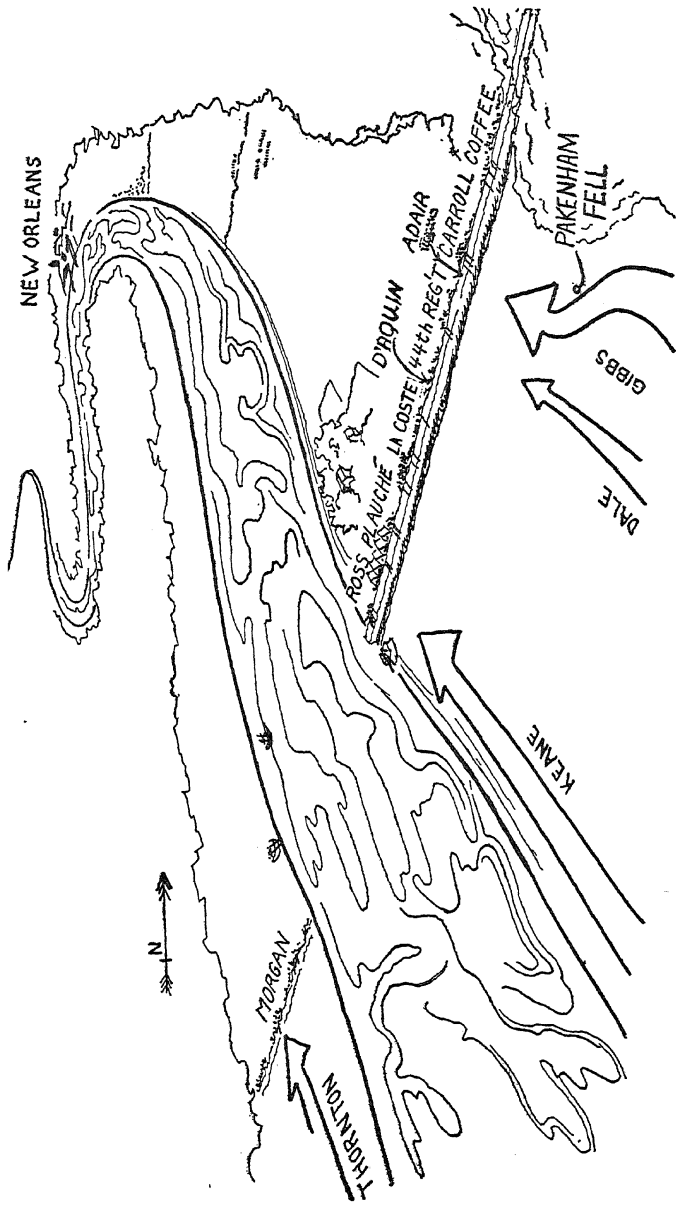
erans. The matter which most heartened Pakenham was that the fresh contingent included his old regiment, the 7th Fusiliers, which he had commanded at Martinique. The reinforcements brought his army to 11,000 effectives.

Pakenham's plan was keyed to the movement up the west side of the Mississippi, to command which he assigned Colonel William Thornton. Thornton would advance in the darkness and rush the more weakly held works opposite Jackson. The sound of Thornton's guns would be notice for the main attack on the east side of the river. The assault would move out in two columns. Major General Sir Samuel Gibbs was on the British right with the 44th, 21st and 4th Regiments, the main part of the army that had captured Washington. He would move against the American left, on the swamp, when Pakenham flashed a rocket through the early morning sky.

The tall, graceful, black-mustached Irishman, General John Keane, would command the left of the British army on the east bank, and would attack along the levee and up the river road. He would move on the second rocket. The force assigned him consisted of the 95th, elements of the 7th and 43rd, the West Indian corps, and the 93rd Highlanders, who would move in the center. Most of the division of General Lambert, newly arrived, would remain a reserve for the entire army.

Meanwhile Jackson ascertained that the British were digging the canal and judged the plan would be to attack on both banks. Yet he was never confused about where the main attack would fall. He, too, had devoted the first seven days of the year to preparations.

His army occupied a straight line of entrenchments which lacked uniformity in height, but averaged five feet. The irregularity in height suggested they had been thrown up chiefly by townsmen rather than Army engineers. The line extended a mile and a half from river into swamp.²⁹ At the river was Colonel Ross with the 7th Infantry and a corps of New Orleans riflemen. Next to Ross was the New Orleans militia under the Creole, Major Jean B. Plauche, who was born in the city he was defending and representative of its culture and wealth. Left of Plauché were La-



The Battle of New Orleans

coste's battalion of 280 men and D'Aquin's battalion of 150, both composed of free men of color, many Dominicans who had fought well with L'Ouverture. Then came 800 Kentuckians under John Adair. They bore long rifles, with richly inlaid stocks, which at 150 yards were of deadly accuracy. Beyond Adair was Carroll with 1,000 Tennessee veterans. At the far left of the line, extending into the swamp, was Coffee with 500 dismounted men. Coffee's Tennesseans stood in the water and at night slept on floating logs lashed together into crude rafts and tied to the cypress trees. Coffee had fought Indians; he made certain that no human could pass the left flank.

Jackson's batteries were much as they had been during the artillery duel on January 1. Two guns manned by the marine corps had been transferred to Carroll's line, and a new battery had been set up at the river by naval personnel to take the place of the corvette *Louisiana*, which was stripped of her guns.

As a general reserve in the rear of his army, Jackson had merely one small unit of Mississippi dragoons. As a precaution, he had prepared two other lines of defense, one at the edge of the city.

On the opposite shore, General David Morgan had a nine-gun battery of the *Louisiana's* ordnance and three fieldpieces. The Navy guns were placed by Commodore Patterson to sweep the plain in front of Jackson and the east bank, and the ship itself served as a powder magazine. Morgan had 800 militia. If criticism could be directed at Jackson, it is that he gave little attention to the west, or right, bank of the river; he was confident that any British activity there would be a feint. Morgan's soldiers—500 Louisianians, to whom 300 Kentuckians were added at the last minute—were poorly armed and stood behind a simple mud breastwork easy to breach. The artillery they could employ against a direct assault consisted of the three fieldpieces, two 6-pounders and one 12-pounder, with Navy gunners.

The intelligence which finally confirmed for Jackson his belief that the British would concentrate their attack on his own side of the river was the report of their night work as they again

dug emplacements for their guns and reared the demilunes the Americans had flattened on New Year's Day.

Jackson had 5,500 men in his army. On the east bank were 4,698. He had twenty-eight guns, sixteen on the east bank and twelve on the west bank under General Morgan, including Commodore Patterson's naval guns. Jackson's east bank forces were in two wings, the right being under the command of the Regular Army colonel, George T. Ross, and the left under General William Carroll.

At the Macarté house Jackson slept in his threadbare uniform on the night of January 7. His aides were scattered about him on the floor, his army in the trenches held to their guns and Coffee's frontiersmen rested on their crude log pallets. All knew the decisive moment of the British invasion was at hand. It was one o'clock in the morning of January 8 when a messenger came from Commodore Patterson with a plea that Morgan would need more men.

Jackson got out of bed. "Hurry back and tell General Morgan that he is mistaken," he said. "The main attack will be on this side of the river, and I have no men to spare. He must maintain his position at all hazards."³⁰

Jackson then called to those about him. "Gentlemen," he said, "we have slept enough. The enemy will be upon us in a few minutes. I must go and see Coffee." The entire army was soon astir, and the Kentuckians, who had come last, were fitted into the line. At four o'clock in the morning Jackson's army was ready.

The British were having difficulty. Pakenham projected an early attack and for that reason began to form his army in the middle of the night. Thornton, through no fault of his own, was not ready. He had 1,500 men, of the 85th Regiment, West Indians, and British marines, with artillery and rocket supports. He moved to the Mississippi, but the boats that were to come through the canal to transport him across the river had not arrived. The banks of the new canal caved in and the dirt had to be shoveled laboriously.³¹ Finally the sailors were forced to drag the boats slowly through the slime. It was three o'clock in the morn-

ing when Thornton, leaving his cannon behind, got 700 men on the Mississippi. Ahead of him was still the most delaying factor in his movement. The boatmen, inexperienced with the river, did not allow sufficiently for the current flowing at five miles an hour, and the boats were carried downstream two miles below the landing Thornton designated. He had to march in the dark along a difficult shore before he could attack.

Pakenham's officers were making ready. Gibbs was to head the main attack, close to the swamp, on Jackson's left. A deserter gave information it was the weak point. The information was correct, except that an attack here pitted the British against the Tennessee and Kentucky riflemen. The 44th Regiment had a crucial role. It was ordered by Pakenham to bring up the fascines and scaling ladders by which the other regiments could cross the dry ditch in front of Jackson and mount the earthworks. Mullens, colonel of the 44th, was displeased and grumbling.

"My regiment," he said, "has been ordered to execution. Their dead bodies are to be used as a bridge for the rest of the army to march over."³²

It would have been well for Pakenham if he could have heard Mullens, and cashiered him on the spot. Brave Colonel Dale of the 93rd was made of other stuff.

His regimental physician asked him, "What do you think of it?"

Dale made no direct answer. He took from his pocket his watch and a letter. "Give these to my wife," he said. "I shall die at the head of my regiment."³³

8.

The hour had come for action. Pakenham could wait no longer on the signal from Thornton across the river. Soon it would be daylight. He rode to Gibbs and told him to move forward. Gibbs explained that the 44th did not have the fascines and ladders at the proper place at the head of the column. Pakenham sent a major, Sir John Tylden, to learn what was the matter with the 44th. Tylden found it leaving a redoubt in "irregular and unsoldierlike" fashion.³⁴ Obviously the attitude of Colonel Mullens

had been communicated to the men. Tylden after a time went back to Pakenham with the information, yet told him hopefully that by then the regiment must have reached its proper station at the head of the column.

At this point Pakenham made a critical decision. He gambled. He did not make sure about the 44th. He ordered the rocket fired that would signal the main attack of the British Army.

The first traces of dawn were breaking across the sky as Gibbs led out his soldiers. Then came the second rocket, telling Keane to deliver the supporting attack on the left.

The American pickets and outposts were pushed back to their entrenchments. Across the wide plain, in the river haze, moved the British regiments in solid front, their red and white uniforms giving a bold touch of color to the somber lowlands. It was a sight that only a few men in Jackson's army—the old Frenchman, Flaueac, and others who had fought with Bonaparte—had ever before witnessed. A shout broke from Carroll's troops and was taken up by the Kentuckians. No one could tell whether it was a shout of confidence or one of delight over the spectacle presented by the advancing columns. They came silently, without drumbeat, without firing, into artillery range. Jackson's left batteries, numbered six, seven and eight, fired simultaneously. The gaps that appeared in the British lines were filled at once and the column did not waver. In their very front was their major general, Gibbs.

At a range of 200 yards, Carroll gave his order to the riflemen. A sheet of yellow flame spurted from the top of the parapet along Jackson's left and mowed down the British soldiers unmercifully. Now they were approaching the ditch, and in the increasing daylight a ghastly fact was apparent to every soldier: the 44th was not there with the fascines and ladders.

"Where is the Forty-fourth?" some of the officers shouted.

"Here comes the Forty-fourth! Here comes the Forty-fourth," Gibbs answered them. Then he added in a lower tone that if he survived he would hang Mullens on the morrow.³⁵

In front of the entrenchments, unable to fire on the Americans, unable to cross the ditch and scale the wall, stood troops

that had won scores of battles. Now they were helplessly trapped. The American rifle fire wasted them away. By this time Gibbs had lost half his command. Every regimental commander had fallen. Pakenham rode to the front line. On his way he encountered straggling parties of the 44th, some with fascines, some firing at the American lines, others running toward the rear.

"For shame!" he shouted. "Remember that you are British soldiers. *This* is the road you ought to take."

He pointed toward the enemy. The soldiers of the 44th were deaf to orders. The plain ahead was a raging furnace of flame. More than a leaden hail, it was a leaden hell. Pakenham was uncomprehending, shocked. At the front he reached Gibbs, who was as aghast as his commander. Gibbs said pitifully, "I am sorry we have to report to you that the troops will not obey me. They will not follow me."

No man in either army had more personal bravery than Pakenham. He took off his hat and placed himself at the front line of his hapless troops. He cheered and waved to his men. A rifle ball hit his right arm and it fell limply. He did not seem to mind. His horse fell from beneath him, killed by a ball. He mounted a black Creole pony that had been ridden by his aide, Captain Duncan McDougall. His men were now falling back and he tried by every means to rally them—by word, by action, by entreaty. They retired and halted 300 yards from the Americans. There they took off their packs, reformed and again seemed in spirit. With Gibbs and Pakenham at their head, they turned once more toward the Americans.

Scarcely had Pakenham moved forward, not far from the fringe of the cypress swamp, when a discharge of grape hit into his small group. A ball shattered his thigh; another killed his second horse. As he plunged backward he fell into the arms of Captain McDougall, the arms that had caught General Ross when he fell at North Point. The captain supported the general and was preparing to remove him to the rear when another ball hit Pakenham in the groin. He was immediately unconscious. He was carried to the shade of a live oak. An artery had been severed

and he bled profusely. Within a few minutes, without recovering consciousness he died under a canopy of Spanish moss.

Just after Pakenham was hit, Gibbs fell mortally wounded. Cursing and embittered, he was carried back. On the following night he died.

On this second advance a handful of soldiers under Major Wilkinson and Lieutenant Lavack reached the American entrenchments. Wilkinson mounted to the top and turned to call his men.

"The day is our own," he shouted. "Why don't the troops come on?" He had no troops. His brave men were lying dead in the ditch. As he called to them he was riddled with bullets and fell forward. The admiring Tennessee and Kentucky troops took him to their major.

"Bear up, my dear fellow," said the American officer. "You are too brave to die."

"I thank you from my heart," Wilkinson said. "It is all over with me. You can render me a favor. Tell my commander that I fell on your parapet, and died like a soldier and an Englishman."

Lavack called on the Americans to surrender, then was amazed to find himself alone. It was he who was the prisoner. Gibbs's other units tried no farther advance after their commander fell.

Above the cypress swamp, out of the waters of Lake Borgne, a great red sun lighted up the carnage and desolation of the battlefield. It pierced through the smoke that hung along the American redoubts. It burned off the morning mist above the Mississippi. Its beams, slanting across the flatland, unveiled for the waiting Americans one of the extraordinary spectacles of the North American wars. The Highlanders were advancing to attack the American redoubt in the center of Carroll's riflemen.

A thrill passed through both armies as the men of the 93rd Regiment—the men who had brought South Africa into the British Empire and now sought to add Louisiana—stepped into the sunlight of the cold, new day. They marched in close rank, heads erect, arms swinging jauntily, confident that if men could penetrate the American line, their regiment would have the honor.

Their bagpipes told of the distant Scottish hills. They were strong men, beautiful men, all six feet or more tall, and not one hesitated as he moved over the plain.

The American rifle fire caught them. Their ranks were thinned but still they came forward. Colonel Dale was at their head. Now, at 100 yards, the Tennessee and Kentucky troops concentrated their full fire. Quickly the regiment wilted down, like wheat before the mower. The sound of the pibroch was stilled. In five awful minutes 795 officers and men, of the 925 who marched forward with such high courage, were struck down by the deadly fire. When there were scarcely more than a hundred remaining, the men in utter abandonment broke and fled.

That night the thoughts of the regimental physician were back in the Highlands. He took the watch and letter from his pocket and arranged them in a package he would give to Mrs. Dale.³⁶

On the British left, Keane's assault column of 1,000 men, commanded by the intrepid Colonel Rennie, who had been pulled back from his attack on the American left during Pakenham's reconnaissance in force on December 28, pushed directly to the American lines. Rennie's thrust was bold and sudden. He drove in an American advance party and followed it impetuously. He mounted the ramparts immediately behind it before the Americans could give him their fire. Two other officers followed him to the top of the parapet. Like Wilkinson, he shouted back, "Hurrah, boys, the day is ours!" The words were his last. His companions fell with him, hit by numerous bullets.

With Rennie's fall, his attacking column, pounded by the American's artillery, retired and reached the rear by taking cover behind the levee. Keane was severely wounded and carried from the field with a bullet in his neck. The repulse of the attack on the American right occurred almost instantaneously with the defeat of Gibbs on the left. Only a small bugler remained in a tree, still sounding the charge as Keane's soldiers finally retired.

The battle on the east side of the river had been in progress only twenty-five minutes, yet nothing like it had happened to the British Army in its modern history. Of the splendid regiments that went into action, 2,036 men were dead or wounded on the

field. Five hundred others were captured as the army withdrew. The victorious Americans were appalled by the scene of death and suffering in front of them. The men did not cheer—they watched silently as the battered, worsted enemy straggled back.

Jackson did not follow, for across the river the belated Thornton was coming into action. While his fellow officers had been fighting Jackson, he had marched with all speed to attack the American entrenchments on the west bank.

To delay and harass Thornton, General Morgan threw forward two companies, aggregating 300 men. One was of the Louisiana militia commanded by Major Tessier and the other, some poorly armed Kentuckians under Colonel Davis. When Thornton landed downstream, at 4:40 A.M., they took a position in his path extending from the levee to a swamp. The British, with their larger numbers, and assisted by three gunboats attacked both companies in unison in the dawn and quickly dislodged them. Tessier's men sought safety in the swamp, while Davis retired to Morgan. Pushing after them, Thornton extended his line to his left beyond that of Morgan, sent his sailors and marines up the levee on his right and struck the American center with the 85th Regiment. The Kentucky militia unit broke, followed in better order by the Louisianians.⁸⁷ Morgan barely had time to spike his guns. Three hundred yards behind his line, Patterson's battery, which had been playing on the British advance across the river, was left exposed. The Navy gunners hastily spiked their guns and reached their ship, the *Louisiana*, which headed into the river.

From the left bank Jackson observed the flight of Morgan's command and raged in anger. It was a moment he never forgot. His first thought was to send reinforcements, and 400 were immediately dispatched farther upstream. His own lines could be swept by any long-range guns on the other shore. Properly armed, Thornton could easily march up the west side of the Mississippi and hold New Orleans at his mercy with cannon. Fortunately, none of the cannon he seized were serviceable. Through occasional breaks in the smoke clouds, it could be seen that Thornton tarried. He had been wounded severely again, as

at Bladensburg. His successor, Colonel Gubbins, sent a dispatch addressed to Pakenham announcing the British victory on the west bank. It was now ten o'clock in the morning, two hours after the firing had ended on the east side of the river.³⁸

In view of the defeat of the other British columns, Thornton's success was spectacular; yet it was valueless. The lack of artillery prevented command of the other shore. Among the spiked guns, one bore the inscription, "Taken at the Surrender of Yorktown, 1781." A commanding general of unusual tenacity might have used Thornton's success to advantage. Conceivably, he could have reinforced Thornton and given him artillery for a march toward New Orleans that would have forced Jackson from his entrenchments. With all their losses, the British still had an advantage in numbers. If Thornton were given guns, Jackson's line might still be made untenable in an enfilade fire.

But John Lambert, the remaining British general, was benumbed by the terrible defeat. His ranks were swept almost clean of leaders. Depressing and restraining above all else was the loss of officers. The list showed three major generals, eight colonels or lieutenant colonels, six majors, eighteen captains, and fifty-four subalterns dead or wounded. As the *National Intelligencer* later said, "The annals of history scarcely bear testimony of such another reception of an enemy."³⁹

One could have walked a quarter of a mile forward from the American line on the bodies of British soldiers. Some were in close lines, indicating that squads had died together. All were clean-shaven to make a neat appearance on their entry into the city.

As the firing died away in front of Jackson and the nature of the victory was apparent, the army overcame its first sense of awe and a wave of relief and gratification passed through the ranks. Jackson walked the length of the line congratulating the men. He stopped at each regiment or battery with affectionate thanks and received cheers. The band that had played sporadic airs in the center of Jackson's line during the engagement, struck up "Hail, Columbia," the nearest approach to a national anthem. Messengers rode forth with tidings of the battle that would

cause the newspaper extras to proclaim in bold headlines, MOST INCREDIBLE VICTORY.⁴⁰

At noon General Lambert sent a flag requesting an armistice for the burial of the dead. Jackson granted it, restricted to Lambert's own side of the river.⁴¹ In the distance, down the plain, the Americans could see the red coats of Lambert's reserve division, the men prone on the ground, ready to fight should Jackson attempt an offensive.

Jackson understood that while his troops could give the best account of themselves in their lines, they were not suited for pursuit against a more numerous army of disciplined regulars.

"The nature of the troops under my command," he reported, "mostly militia, rendered it too hazardous to attempt offensive movements in an open country, against a numerous and well disciplined army."

Although Jackson had artillery, the Battle of New Orleans was essentially a victory of small arms, the fire of which was "incessant." "I cannot speak sufficiently in praise of the firmness and deliberation with which my whole line received their approach—more could not have been expected of veterans inured to war," Jackson said. He also paid a tribute to the bravery of Pakenham's troops by saying their columns continued to advance with a steadfastness that reflected on them the greatest credit. The column on his left, that of Gibbs, advanced three times, he commented, after being repulsed by General Carroll, General Coffee and the Kentucky militia. "At length, however, cut to pieces, they fled in confusion from the field, leaving it covered with their dead and wounded."

For ten days a sullen, broken British army lay at Villerés' plantation, looking at the Americans. Thornton was withdrawn. On January 18, prisoners were exchanged. That night the thoughts of the troops turned to English downs and Scottish hills. On the morning of January 19, 1815, the Americans looked out from their entrenchments on an empty plain.

The last of the British invaders of America had gone home.

NOTES

Chapter Twenty-one—"MIST-TAKING CANADA"

¹ Boyd, who had appeared to be a competent officer at Tippecanoe, was disappointing in command of the Chrysler's Farm action. Major General Morgan Lewis, the former governor of New York, described him as "a compound of ignorance, vanity, and petulance, with nothing to recommend him but that species of bravery in the field which is vaporing, boisterous, stifling reflection, blinding observation, and better adapted to the bully than the soldier." Lewis to Armstrong, War Department Archives. Cited in Henry Adams, *A History of the United States of America*, VII, 162.

Hampton's delay at Outard Creek in this campaign can be understood by the orders sent by Armstrong, who instructed him to build huts sufficient to house 10,000 men for the winter. This made it clear that Armstrong did not expect Wilkinson to pass the winter in Montreal. Before Wilkinson left Henderson Bay on his expedition down the St. Lawrence, Armstrong thought the campaign would end "with the disgrace of doing nothing." John Bach McMaster, *A History of the People of the United States from the Revolution to the Civil War*, IV, 52.

The failure of the campaign caused Hampton to resign. He wrote Armstrong on November 1, 1813: "Events have had no tendency to change my opinion of the destiny intended for me, nor my determination to retire from a service where I can neither feel security nor expect honor." The statement makes it plain that he expected to be made a scapegoat in any Wilkinson-Armstrong enterprise.

² *New York Gazette*, January 9, 1814.

³ Because of the heavy loss the Americans looked on the capture of Fort Niagara as a butchery, but a contrary view existed on the other side of the border, which up to that time had been feeling the principal distress from a heartless war. The storming of Fort Niagara has been called "the most brilliant exploit of the War of 1812." William Kirby, *Annals of Niagara*, p. 187.

McClure's burning of Newark, in turn, did not sit well with some of his men. According to an item in the *New York Post*, a major carried out McClure's orders and burned a woman's house, probably that of Mrs. Dickson. The major then reported to the general: "Sir, you will please receive my commission. The act I have just done is the most abhorrent one of my life and I can serve with you no longer." *New York Post*, August 27, 1814. Kirby says two churches, St. Mark's and St. Andrew's, were burned. Kirby, p. 182.

⁴ January 3, 1814.

⁵ Erie dispatch of May 19, published in the *New York Spectator* June 1, 1814.

⁶ Orders of Vice Admiral Cochrane, July 18, 1814; Mss. Canadian Archives; cited in Adams, *History*, VIII, 126.

⁷ August 4, 1814.

⁸ The refrain, "This is true terrapin war," went around the country. It aptly described the creeping transportation. Oxen made the passage from Charleston, South Carolina, to Philadelphia in a month and a half. Transportation charges mounted so that for some products they were four times the cost of production.

⁹ Prevost's letter said: "In fact, my Lord, two thirds of the army in Canada are at this moment eating beef provided by American contractors, drawn principally from the states of Vermont and New York. This circumstance, as well as the introduction of large sums in specie into this province, being notorious in the United States, it is to be expected that Congress will take steps to deprive us of these resources; and under that apprehension large droves are daily crossing the lines coming into Lower Canada." Prevost to Bathurst, August 27, 1814; cited in Adams, *History*, VIII, 94.

Less than a month earlier, on July 31, 1814, General Izard, commanding at Plattsburg, wrote Armstrong about the cattle crossing the border: "Like herds of buffaloes, they press through the forests, making paths for themselves. Were it not for these supplies, the British force in Canada would soon be suffering from famine, or their government be subjected to the enormous expense for their maintenance." McMaster, IV, 66.

Smugglers had obtained experience in this Northern-border work during the embargo. Seven hundred sleighs were counted on one roadway in January 1809 between Vermont and Montreal.

¹⁰ August 11, 1814.

¹¹ A review of the newspapers at this period shows that President Madison had to contend with perhaps the most ill-tempered criticism ever meted out to a President. Undoubtedly the press and platform were more caustic in complaints about the first four Presidents than any chief executives of our present day, who usually have had to confront criticism couched in only the most gentle and seemly terms. While Lincoln was subjected to much conversational abuse, newspaper criticism was unquestionably less vicious.

A friend asked Madison, when one of the early sessions of Congress adjourned, whether he would seek re-election. Madison replied, "Not I. I would rather be in an insane hospital." Charles Jared Ingersoll, *Historical Sketch of the Second War between the United States and Great Britain*, I, 261. In the same vein was the remark of John Adams: "If I were to go over my life again, I would be a shoemaker rather than an American statesman." Mary Caroline Crawford, *Romantic Days in the early Republic*, p. 167. The statements are an indication of the strain Madison was under at the time when the Canadian invasion was collapsing. This no doubt contributed to his severe illness in the late spring of 1814, which kept him at Montpelier. Even during the illness, the Federalist press could not bring itself to be respectful. From an unnamed "Boston federal paper" the *National Intelligencer*, July 16, 1814, quoted the following: "During the illness of the President a gentleman from Washington observed to a member of Congress from Massachusetts 'that the President was very ill—that he had puked up something as black as a crow.' The gentleman from Massachusetts suggested it might have been his conscience."

French cuisine did not enjoy its present reputation, as was shown by the item in the Baltimore *American*, about which the *National Intelligencer*, in coming to the President's defense, scolded: "They have the vulgar and un-

blushing impudence to denounce the executive and Republican members of Congress as a set of Frenchmen and French cooks."

Ingersoll observed, "No one had been more abused than Madison. But not only did it all die away, but died before he died."

¹² Republished by the *New York Post*, June 15, 1814.

¹³ *Boston Advertiser*, July 27, 1814.

¹⁴ One of John Randolph's complaints had been that when the Army was not fighting it should be employed in constructive work. His speech, as quoted by the *Intelligencer*, January 11, 1812, involved an anachronism. Randolph said: "The boast of the Roman legions was that Roman soldiery was as well versed in the use of the pickaxe and spade as the firelock." The mention of firelocks was no doubt a slip, for Randolph was a well-informed man. He declared he was surprised that the United States should be paying such immense sums in all parts of the country "whilst the soldiery which annually draws millions from our treasury are kept in a state of perfect idleness leading to depravity and dissoluteness of manners." He wanted those not actually campaigning to be used in the construction of roads, canals and other public utilities.

¹⁵ Published in the *New York Gazette*, January 9, 1814.

¹⁶ Monroe to Madison, December 27, 1813; Monroe Mss., State Department Archives. Cited in Adams, *History*, VII, 412.

¹⁷ When at Montpelier, Madison had decided on the appointment of Jackson and told Armstrong he would not make it until he could consult with the Secretary on his return to Washington in a few days. When Armstrong received this letter, and before Madison could return, he wrote Jackson notifying him of the appointment: "Since the date of my letter of the 24th Major-General Harrison has resigned his commission in the army, and thus is created a vacancy in that grade, which I hasten to fill with your name." Cited in Adams, *History*, VII, 410f. Madison was indignant that Armstrong had not waited.

Chapter Twenty-two—A WAR ON CREDIT

¹ One of the arguments Representative Macon of North Carolina made in the House during the war debates was that war would give the United States two undesirable permanencies, or what he called "setfasts"—an industry and a navy. Cf. Chapter Four.

² Most of the treasury, tax and customs figures are from Ingersoll, I, 224ff. He gives a table, I, 256, showing internal-revenue receipts and loans for the war years.

³ Ingersoll, I, 61f.

⁴ The Federalists said the Secretary's initials, G.W.C., really stood for "Government Wants Cash."

⁵ The *New York Spectator*, June 29, 1812, printed a résumé of manufacturing in the United States. It stated that the country had 190 paper mills and 100,000 spindles worked by 330 water or horse mills. Printing businesses had been started. Connecticut was making straw bonnets valued at \$569,228 annually. Copper was being worked in Tennessee and Vermont. A thriving business was

conducted in maple sugar, of which the country produced nearly 7,000,000 pounds: Ohio produced 3,033,805 pounds; Kentucky, 2,471,647; Vermont, 1,200,000; East Tennessee, 162,000. Kentucky led the country in the production of saltpeter, apparently from the bat droppings in Mammoth Cave. Other works were in horn, ivory and shell. The *Spectator* was endeavoring to present an impressive picture, but the account shows manufacturing had not made much progress by 1812, even under the urgency of the embargo, to which it owed its first growth.

Chapter Twenty-three—THE CREEK WAR

¹ Alexander Walker, *Life of Andrew Jackson*, p. xxxv.

² Blount to Secretary of War; cited in Marquis James, *Andrew Jackson: The Border Captain*, p. 152.

³ Walker, p. xxxi.

⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. xxxii f.

⁵ Probably the colloquial form of this letter (used in part by Marquis James, p. 30, and taken from W. H. Sparks, *The Memories of Fifty Years*, p. 147) is more nearly as Mrs. Jackson gave it, but the version here is one that has been widely circulated, and is on my desk in the form of an ornamental scroll prepared by the Dan River Mills of Danville, Virginia. It is taken from the account by Thomas Butler, Jackson's godson. A. C. Buell, *A History of Andrew Jackson*, p. 56; cf. Marquis James, p. 376 n. 23.

⁶ Marquis James, pp. 138f.

⁷ Cited in James Parton, *Life of Andrew Jackson*, I, 372.

⁸ Jackson in Richmond, Virginia, publicly called Wilkinson "a double traitor," and said "pity the sword that dangles from his felon's belt, for it is doubtless of honest steel." Cited in Buell, I, 206; Marquis James, p. 138.

⁹ Cited in Benjamin Lossing, *The Pictorial Field-Book of the War of 1812*, p. 744n.

¹⁰ Parton, *Andrew Jackson*, I, 380.

¹¹ Parton says the name was not a sudden inspiration but a growth. *Andrew Jackson*, I, 382. Stimpson says the first known printed mention of the name is in Samuel Putnam Waldo's *Memoirs of Andrew Jackson*, printed in Hartford, Connecticut, in 1818. Waldo uses it as uncomplimentary rather than as a name of affection. Stimpson also gives another version, attributed to Jackson's neighbor, William Allen. It is that Jackson, tentless on the campaign, used hickory bark to cover himself on a cold night, and a drunk the next morning called to him, "Hello, Old Hickory! Come out of your bark. . . ." George Stimpson, *A Book about American Politics*, pp. 81-84. The Parton version is usually accepted.

¹² Jackson was prosecuted for amounts that would have ruined him but the claims were deferred until he could hear from Washington. Lossing, p. 744.

¹³ Benton's service in the Natchez campaign, in which he saw no fighting, and his later slight service in Alabama caused him to be suggested and to suggest himself to President Polk for appointment as lieutenant general in

the Mexican War. For an account of Benton's efforts to win the appointment, cf. Robert Selph Henry, *The Story of the Mexican War*, p. 169.

¹⁴ George Cary Eggleston, *Red Eagle and the Wars with the Creek Indians of Alabama*, p. 89.

¹⁵ Parton said: "John Coffee, as one of his friends observed to me, was a great soldier without knowing it. So the world never knew it. He was a giant in stature and nobly proportioned; in demeanor taciturn and totally void of pretense; a man to do his duty, and let anyone else have the glory of it who wanted that airy commodity." Parton, *Andrew Jackson*, I, 435.

Jackson, a man of intense likes and hatreds, had no warmer friend than Coffee. When President, Jackson wrote the epitaph for Coffee's gravestone in the family plot near Florence, Alabama. It said: "Sacred to the memory of Gen. John Coffee, who departed this life on the 7th day of July, 1833, aged 61 years. As a husband, parent, and friend, he was affectionate, tender and sincere. He was a brave, prompt and skillful general, a disinterested and sagacious patriot, an unpretending, just and honest man."

¹⁶ Parton, *Andrew Jackson*, I, 425.

¹⁷ Some historians have placed Tecumseh's visit with the Creeks in the winter of 1811-1812 and others as in the winter of 1812-1813. It is clear that he made journeys to the South during both winters. His departure down the Wabash in August 1811 was witnessed and reported by residents of Vincennes. The first visit kept him absent while the Prophet was fighting at Tippecanoe. It was on this trip that he aroused the Seminole. Parton apparently erroneously places Tecumseh's visit to the Seminole in the spring of 1811, rather than in the autumn, as it must have been. Tecumseh visited also the Cherokee and returned by way of Missouri, where he worked among the Des Moines tribe.

Pickett, Parton, Lossing—all of whom talked with survivors of the war—place Tecumseh among the Creeks again in the winter of 1812-1813. This is confirmed also by his prediction of the earthquake that would signal to the Creeks his return to Detroit. He would not have been returning to Detroit in the winter of 1811-1812, for the city was then still in American hands. In the winter of 1811-1812 he did return to the Wabash, and he called on Harrison at Vincennes.

¹⁸ Adams, *History*, VII, 221.

¹⁹ Parton, *Andrew Jackson*, I, 409.

²⁰ Although Indian Agent Benjamin Hawkins referred to the tribe as the *Alabamas*, the spelling of the Bureau of American Ethnology is *Alibamu*. *Handbook of American Indians*, Government Printing Office, 1907. The book gives a long list of variations of the name of this tribe. McKenney and Hall use *Alibam*.

²¹ The story of the Creeks is taken largely from George Eggleston, pp. 28ff.

²² George Eggleston, p. 60. Marquis James, p. 165, says a brother, John Weatherford, chose to be Caucasian and nothing was ever heard of him again.

²³ Eggleston described McGillivray's empire and says the secretary of state "lived like a prince." George Eggleston, p. 37f.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 44.

²⁶ Adams, *History*, VII, 225.

²⁷ Parton, *Andrew Jackson*, I, 411.

²⁷ On the day Fort Mims was attacked at noon, Beasley at 10 A.M. finished a letter to Claiborne stating that the fort was impregnable and the garrison safe. Parton, *Andrew Jackson*, I, 413. Adams says the reason for the attack was that Beasley and Captain Dixon Bailey, both half-breeds who had participated in the Battle of Burnt Corn, were in the fort. Adams, *History*, VII, 230.

²⁸ Although the dinner drum had sounded, there were still dancing and card playing when the Indians attacked. Beasley had weakened his garrison by sending guards to other forts. George Eggleston, p. 89.

²⁹ The second Negro was tied for the whipping when the Indians rushed in. Parton, *Andrew Jackson*, I, 413. While still tied to the post he was killed by the Indians during the fighting.

³⁰ Lossing, p. 756; George Eggleston, pp. 146f.

³¹ George Eggleston, p. 79.

³² Ten days after the massacre Claiborne sent Major Kennedy with a detachment to bury the white dead. In his report Kennedy said: "Indians, Negroes, white men, women and children lay in one promiscuous ruin. All were scalped; and the females of every age were butchered in a manner which neither decency nor language will permit me to describe. The main building was burned to ashes, which were filled with bones. The plains and the woods around were covered with dead bodies. All the houses were consumed by fire except the block-house and a part of the pickets. The soldiers and officers, with one voice, called on Divine Providence to revenge the death of our murdered friends." Cited in Albert James Pickett, *History of Alabama*, II, 282. Kennedy said when he arrived the air was filled with buzzards, and hundred of dogs were gnawing at the bodies.

³³ John F. H. Claiborne, *The Life and Times of General Sam Dale, the Mississippi Partisan*, p. 128; cited in Lossing, p. 757.

³⁴ The note was later found in Weatherford's house. Parton, *Andrew Jackson*, I, 419f.

³⁵ Parton quotes from an eyewitness an account of the way the country appeared after the massacre at Fort Mims. "Never in my life," said the unidentified witness, "did I see a country given up before without a struggle. Here are the finest crops my eyes ever beheld made and almost fit to be housed, with immense herds of cattle, Negroes and property, abandoned by their owners, almost on the first alarm." Parton pointed out that inside the stockades disease raged and hundreds of families "unable to get within those enclosures, lay around the walls, squalid, panic-stricken, sick and miserable." Parton, *Andrew Jackson*, I, 419.

³⁶ *Annual Report*, Bureau of American Ethnology, 1897-1898, I, 88.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 97.

³⁸ Parton, *Andrew Jackson*, I, 428.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 426-427.

⁴⁰ Adams, who viewed the Creek War with a critical eye, quoted Coffee's report: "Not one of the warriors escaped to tell the news,—a circumstance unknown heretofore." Using Coffee's estimate that the village contained 284 Indians of both sexes and all ages, Adams deduces that if one third could

be calculated as bearing arms, there would be less than 100 warriors in the town. Adams continued: "Coffee's men after the battle counted one hundred and eighty-six dead Indians, and estimated the total loss at two hundred. In every attack on an Indian village a certain number of women and children were necessarily victims, but the proportion at Talishatchee [*sic*] seemed large." Adams, *History*, VII, 237.

⁴¹ Jackson found before the fighting began that his principal difficulty would be with supplies. An army entering a forest territory had to carry its provisions. On October 19, at Thompson Creek, he wrote General Cocke, Judge Hugh L. White of East Tennessee, the governors of Tennessee and Georgia, Indian agents among the Cherokee and Choctaw, and friendly Indian chiefs, begging for food. He said: "There is an enemy whom I dread much more than I do the hostile Creeks." It was starvation. Parton, *Andrew Jackson*, I, 431f.

⁴² Parton tells how a chief in Talladega put on the skin of a big hog and rooted about the field until clear of the besieging Indian lines, then sped away to notify Jackson and ask his help. Although his soldiers were famished, Jackson did not hesitate an instant to give his orders. Parton, *Andrew Jackson*, I, 441.

⁴³ John Henry Eaton, *Life of Andrew Jackson*, p. 66; Marquis James, p. 171.

⁴⁴ In order to soften this incident the explanation has been made that Jackson's gun was an old, rusty flintlock that could not have been discharged. Walker says: "The piece which General Jackson had seized was too much out of order to be fired, and his arm was so weak he could not aim it with any precision; but the men before him knew nothing of this. . . ." Walker, p. lv. Walker, a newspaper editor, was not easily misled, but the story sounds apocryphal. There was no point to having an old, rusty piece so handy when out fighting Indians. If there is one verity that moves through the whole Creek War it is that Jackson was a partisan. He saw only one side. He was intensely right. Such conviction makes great men and at times relentless men. There is no doubt that Jackson was a fighter—if need be, a killer. He had deliberately put a bullet through Dickinson and no doubt he would have shot down the first soldier to cross the line. The explanation of Jackson's ability to rule the tough frontier militia is that he was the toughest of the lot.

Parton takes a somewhat different view. He says: "The manner, appearance and language of General Jackson on occasions like this were literally *terrific*. Few common men could stand before the ferocity of his aspect and the violence of his words. His ability in swearing amounted to a talent. Volleys of the most peculiar and original oaths, ejected with a violence that cannot be imagined, scared and overwhelmed the object of his wrath. Aware of his powers in this respect, he would feign a fury that he did not feel, and obtain his ends through the groundless terror of his opponents. That was particularly the case in his dealings with Spaniards." Parton, *Andrew Jackson*, I, 463.

The picture showing Jackson mounted on his horse quelling the mutiny was published in Amos Kendall's *Life of Jackson*, with which Jackson was familiar. It is unlikely that it is a serious distortion of the scene, although the soldiers are garbed in much more attractive uniforms than the Tennessee militia customarily wore. The picture shows Jackson aiming a rifle or musket from

the shoulder, not resting it across his horse's neck. It also indicates he was sufficiently recovered from the Benton affray to fire a piece. In most respects, it seems that the story has not been exaggerated by the Jackson writers, but rather moderated by friends to give his character a softer touch, possibly for political campaign purposes.

⁴⁵ Nominally Cocke was subordinate to Jackson, his commission as major general of Tennessee militia bearing a later date. But he had tried to maintain an independent status ostensibly because of the difficulty with supplies. The result was one of the most ghastly misunderstandings of the war and of American history—the massacre of the Hillabees.

⁴⁶ Short-term enlistments compelled Jackson to make only short campaigns against the Creeks. His original dispute with his men was over the term of the enlistment and this brought on the first incipient mutiny. The men were enlisted for the Natchez campaign for one year. They began their service December 10, 1812, and calculated that they would be subject to discharge on December 10, 1813. But Jackson, whose whole thought was to win the Creek War, insisted the time they had spent at home between the return from Natchez and the departure to Alabama should not be regarded a part of the enlistment period. He demanded a year of active service, and not stand-by time, from the men. The men had not been on duty between May and October and therefore had served actively for only about seven months. Although Jackson prevented their unauthorized departure he eventually had to yield to their interpretation of their enlistment, and most of them marched back to Tennessee on December 12, 1813. Cocke's men held Fort Strother until January 12, 1814, when their enlistments for a term of three months expired. Two days later Jackson received some fresh recruits enlisted for a term of three months and therefore was able to maintain his position.

Cocke meanwhile, January 17, 1814, was bringing down a new division from Knoxville, enlisted for six months. When his men learned the West Tennesseans under Jackson had been accepted for only three months, the men mutinied. Cocke addressed them but his speech of pacification apparently was too friendly to suit Jackson, who ordered the arrest of every officer, of whatever rank, found exciting the men to mutiny. This order resulted in the arrest of Cocke, who was deprived of his sword and unnecessarily humiliated. He was tried by court-martial in Nashville and acquitted.

Jackson dealt firmly with a company of Tennessee infantry that tried to bargain with him to serve either three months or no time whatever. They sent their commander ahead to obtain Jackson's agreement, and when he declined they returned home. Jackson ordered the entire company arrested as deserters. He then moderated his severity by sending a pardon to every man who came to serve the three-month term. The company reassembled and joined the remainder of the army at Fort Strother. Parton, *Andrew Jackson*, I, 467-478; Adams, *History*, VII, 252-253.

⁴⁷ Pickett, II, 301.

⁴⁸ Floyd's report. Lossing describes the affair at Auttose as a "massacre." Lossing, p. 769.

⁴⁹ Lossing, p. 769.

⁵⁰ Cited in Pickett, II, 320.

⁵¹ The bodies of the three prophets were found on the field after the fighting.

⁵² Pickett says the horse was purchased from Benjamin Baldwin of Macon County, Alabama, a short time before hostilities began. Pickett, II, 324.

⁵³ *Ibid.*

⁵⁴ Adams says the Creeks lost their single opportunity in the war by allowing Jackson to escape from Emuckfau. Adams, *History*, VII, 248.

⁵⁵ Adams treats Calebee Creek as a defeat for Floyd. He says Floyd's loss of twenty-two killed and 147 wounded was the largest that had been suffered by the whites in the Creek War. Adams, *History*, VII, 250.

⁵⁶ The 39th U. S. Infantry Regiment had been authorized by Congress on January 29, 1813, and recruited largely in Tennessee. The Department commander, Major General Pinckney, ordered the regiment on December 23, 1813, to join Jackson, which it did February 6, 1814. Jackson was delighted, for he believed the regiment would "give strength to my arm and quell mutiny." Adams, *History*, VII, 251-252.

⁵⁷ Pickett, II, 328; Lossing, pp. 780-781n.

⁵⁸ Pickett says the Indians fought at great disadvantage because they were fired on from the rear and the front after the breastworks were captured. "None of them begged for quarter, but every one sold his life at the dearest rate. . . . Being desirous not to destroy this brave race, Jackson sent a messenger toward them, who assured them of the clemency of the general, provided they would surrender. They answered by discharges from their guns and shouts of defiance." Pickett, II, 589.

In his letter to Pinckney, Jackson said he was "determined to exterminate them." Cited in Adams, *History*, VII, 255.

⁵⁹ The Horseshoe Bend battlefield remains essentially as it was when the battle was fought. No buildings have been erected on the site, which is removed from main highways. When I visited the field in January 1954 the area of the horseshoe was in corn stalks. Gravel was being taken from a pit where the left wing of Jackson's army rested along the river. The natural advantages of the position which attracted the Creek warriors were apparent. Although it was the custom in that period to entrench at the military crest of a hill, the Creeks skillfully built their fortification at the base of the rising ground in their front (a custom that was more generally adopted as a protection against artillery in World War I). The intent obviously was to compel Jackson to bring his artillery into close musketry range of the fortification before he could employ it. The weakness of the position is also apparent in that the Tallapoosa River in the rear, while formidable, would not be impassible for an enterprising army. The Creeks imprudently neglected their rear.

Adams gives Jackson's complete loss, including the friendly Indians, as fifty-one killed and 148 wounded. The principal loss to the whites was in the 39th Regiment. Adams places the loss to the Cherokee fighting with Jackson at eighteen killed and thirty-five wounded; the friendly Creeks, five killed and eleven wounded. He quotes Coffee's statement that "the slaughter was greater than all we had done before" and "we killed not less than eight hundred and fifty or nine hundred of them, and took about five hundred squaws and children prisoners." Jackson expressed regret that two or three women and children were killed by accident. Adams, *History*, VII, 256.

Adams adds: "Jackson's policy of extermination shocked many humane Americans, and would perhaps have seemed less repulsive had the Creeks shown more capacity for resistance. The proportion between two hundred casualties on one side and seven or eight hundred killed on the other would have been striking in any case, but was especially so where the advantages of position were on the side of the defence." *History*, II, 257.

Something of the same thought must have been with Major General Thomas Pinckney, the Department commander, when he forwarded a report of Jackson's victory. "While the sigh of humanity," he said, "will escape for this profuse effusion of human blood, which results from the savage principle of our enemy, neither to give nor accept quarter, [without it women would be] exposed to indiscriminate havoc of the tomahawk and all the horrors of savage warfare." Published in the *New York Spectator*, April 20, 1814.

The news of Jackson's victory was published under the head EXTRA by the *National Intelligencer* in Washington, but received minor play in the *New York newspapers*.

⁹⁰ The *New York Spectator*, May 25, 1814, carried a statement by Jackson dated April 12, from his camp at the junction of the Coosa and Tallapoosa. Jackson reported: "The Talapoosee [*sic*] king has been arrested, and is here in confinement. The Toatahatchee [*sic*] king of the Hickory Ground tribe has delivered himself up. Weatherford has been with me and I did not confine him. He will be with me again in a few days. Peter McQuin [*sic*] has been taken, but escaped. He must be taken again. Hillinhagee, their great prophet, has also absconded, but he will be found. They were the instigators of the war, and such is their situation."

Pickett in later years met one of the chiefs who survived the Horseshoe and described him: "Manowa, one of the bravest chiefs that ever lived, was literally shot to pieces. He fought as long as he could. He saved himself by jumping into the river where the water was four feet deep. He held to a root and thus kept himself beneath the waves, breathing through the long joint of a cane, one end of which he held in his mouth, while the other end came above the surface of the water. When night set in, the brave Manowa rose from his watery bed, and made his way to the forest, bleeding from many wounds. Many years after the war we conversed with the chief and learned from him the particulars of his remarkable escape. His face, limbs, and body, at the time we conversed with him, were marked with scars of many horrible wounds." Pickett, II, 343.

⁹¹ This account is from Pickett and is followed by George Eggleston. It was given by Weatherford to Colonel Robert James of Clark and William Sisemore of Little River, Alabama, and is contained in Pickett, II, 349-350. Other versions of the meeting vary in some details, but are to the same general effect.

⁹² Weatherford could not live in his old Hickory Ground territory because, he said, the hostile Creeks, his old comrades, ate his cattle from starvation, the peace party ate them for revenge and the squatters because he was "a damned Red-skin." Therefore, he said, "I have come to live among gentlemen." Claiborne, p. 129; cited in Lossing, p. 782n.

⁹³ George Eggleston, p. 337f.; Pickett says Weatherford "maintained an ex-

cellent character and was much respected by the American citizens for his bravery, honor and strong native sense." Pickett, II, 351.

⁴Pickett, II, 351. Weatherford was survived by a number of children, whose families were assimilated with the whites.

Chapter Twenty-four—AN "ALLY" FALLS

¹Serurier to De Bassano, October 25, 1813; cited in Adams, *History*, VII, 392.

²*Ibid.*

³New York *Gazette*, May 16, 1814. The editor of the New York *Spectator* read avidly through the foreign newspapers, filled with the sensational French news, and on May 18 commented: "We have not discovered in them any notice of the affairs of America."

⁴The New York *Spectator*, June 4, headed the Charleston account GREAT AND IMPORTANT NEWS—IF TRUE. The story caused the proadministration *Columbian* to put out a handbill on the night of June 3, but the *Spectator*, by ingeniously tracing the course of the ship that had entered Charleston, decided the story could not be true.

⁵*Commercial Advertiser*, June 4, 1814.

⁶June 10, 1814. The *Spectator* republished the statement June 11, 1814.

⁷The quotations are from different newspapers whose comments were republished by the New York press. During the late spring and early summer of 1814 American newspapers dropped most of their domestic news and, with the rest of the country, kept their eyes on Europe. The armies did not fight battles.

⁸The Charleston *Courier*, June 28, 1814, in an account republished by the New York *Spectator* July 9, 1814, said "rough characters" of the city threatened the Reverend Mr. Cloriviere, the Catholic priest, when he announced the services. He paid no attention to these menacing sympathizers with Napoleon and the result was a great attendance. "The citizens at large," said the *Courier*, "deserve every credit for the promptness with which they attended to prevent all outrage, and notwithstanding the threats held out to prevent people from going to the church, we were happy to notice crowds of the most respectable inhabitants, of all persuasions, flocking to the Catholic place of worship."

⁹Portland, Maine, *Gazette; Spectator*, June 11, 1814.

¹⁰The *Spectator*, June 18, 1814, said: "The title which Mr. Harper gave to the Russian Emperor, 'ALEXANDER THE DELIVERER' will be handed down to remotest posterity." The paper quoted the title from the *Federal Republican*. The *Spectator* might have looked back through its own files to the issue of January 5, 1814, when in commenting on the Battle of Leipzig, it said: "The repose and happiness of Europe will be associated in history with the name of 'Alexander the Deliverer.'"

¹¹Republished in the *Spectator*, June 18, 1814. That the Bourbon Restoration revived the interest of New York is seen by publication in the *Commercial Advertiser*, June 15, 1814, of the following: "Many citizens of New York must have noticed a black man who traverses the streets of the city with

a hat under his arm containing apparatus for shaving and hair cutting. Whatever the weather his head is uncovered. We were informed he had 'in better times' been employed about the person of Louis XVI, and during the horrors of the Revolution he became a voluntary exile. From respect to the memory of the French king he has constantly gone with his head uncovered, declaring his intention never to wear a hat until the restoration of the throne." Anyone might have told him the restoration of the Bourbons had been known to New York a full month.

¹² The Boston celebration was described by the *Boston Gazette*, June 16, 1814; the account was republished in the *Spectator*, June 22, 1814.

¹³ The *Spectator*, June 13, 1814, discussed Napoleon's abdication and said Napoleon for three weeks had been almost continually on horseback. His limbs were so swollen that he could not dismount and he had to be lifted to fresh horses as they were required. "Had the contest been a few days longer he would not have survived." In order to get him aboard the ship to Elba his escort avoided the big towns "so the people would not tear him to pieces."

¹⁴ Republished in the *Spectator*, June 22, 1814.

¹⁵ Some cities had celebrated earlier, as did Albany on the liberation of Holland from the Bonaparte yoke. The *New York Spectator*, February 26, 1814, told of the Albany celebration held February 20. It explained that the Albany territory was settled by the Dutch and the language was not extinct, and that Holland for nineteen years had suffered "a grinding depression." Stephen Van Rensselaer presided at the magnificent dinner at the Eagle Inn. Among the numerous toasts was one "To the land of our fathers—a land of republicans, whose invincible spirit and devotion of soul, overpowered the mightiest monarchs of Europe."

¹⁶ *Newburyport Herald*, June 17, 1814; *New York Spectator*, June 22, 1814.

¹⁷ Letter dated June 8, 1814, published in the *New York Spectator* June 18, 1814.

¹⁸ The *Spectator*, July 2, 1814, commented similarly: "A number of democratic papers in different parts of the Union, mortified and exasperated at the destiny of their idol, Bonaparte, are daily levelling their malignant spleen at the men who think proper to celebrate the emancipation of Europe from military despotism. Of these jacobin papers, the *Columbian* of this city stands pre-eminently conspicuous—the vilest of the vile. . . . It has denounced every American, who rejoices in the downfall of the French tyrant, as a traitor to our country, rejoicing in the victories of our enemy. In spite however of this pitiful slander . . . the honest citizens of this country will rejoice with the rescued and exulting Nations of Europe."

¹⁹ *New York Spectator*, July 2, 1814.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, July 6, 1814.

²¹ Madison returned to Washington, after his severe illness and recuperation at Montpelier, on October 25, 1813.

²² *National Intelligencer*, June 17, 1814.

²³ *New York Spectator*, June 22, 1814.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, June 18, 1814.

²⁵ The *Spectator*, June 18, 1814, copied from the *Baltimore Federal Gazette* a story based on a letter by Lord Liverpool saying 15,000 troops were im-

mediately to embark at Bordeaux for Canada. This was but one of the numerous stories warning against the oncoming of British reinforcements.

²⁶ Published also in the *New York Spectator*, June 8, 1814.

²⁷ For a period after the abdication of Napoleon virtually every issue of an American newspaper contained some rumor of the approach of peace.

²⁸ The *London Times*, June 4, 1814, published the letter sent by the Princess Caroline, wife of the Prince Regent, to the House of Commons. She protested her exclusion from court and thereby focused attention again on the old question of the paternity of her daughter, Princess Charlotte, whom the Prince Regent disclaimed. She said if her own feelings were not to be considered, those of her daughter, the heir apparent, should be. Whitehead expressed the wearied exasperation of Parliament: "If ever there was a period when advisors of the Crown should wish to exhibit the Royal Family of England in harmony and concord, in conjugal and domestic felicity, it is now when so many august and Royal Personages are daily expected."

²⁹ *London Times*, August 2, 1814. All quotations dealing with the London peace celebration are from the *Times* of the summer of 1814.

³⁰ For the Emperor of Russia and the King of Prussia most sumptuous quarters had been provided, and London was awed by the guests' reactions. With flourish and fanfare, the activities of the visiting royalty were spread over the issues of the *Times* from June 7 to June 24. Acclamations rent the air. A tide of dazzled admiration swept through accounts of levees, illuminations, theatrical parties, the grand civic festival and the presentation of swords and medals. The single note of austerity was that the monarchs of Russia and Prussia asked that their sumptuous beds be moved out and that the Emperor be brought a simple, straw paillasse. The King of Prussia substituted a leather mattress from his camp equipment. It brought to the memory of older residents the rugged style in which Frederick the Great had campaigned.

³¹ The *Corsair* was played for the first time August 1, 1814.

³² The *London Times*, July 1, 1814, told of the rumor that "before many months we may see Bonaparte at the head of the Austrian armies" but expressed its doubts.

³³ The *London Times*, August 2, 1814, devoted two full pages of type to the festivities.

³⁴ *London Times*, August 2, 1814.

³⁵ *Ibid.*

³⁶ *Ibid.*

³⁷ *Ibid.*, August 6, 1814.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, August 11, 1814. About Clay the *Times* continued: "If he can exhibit some noses, eyes and ears as trophies of his courage and skill in the art of biting and gouging . . . he is sure of a seat in Congress."

Chapter Twenty-five—HOSTAGES EXCHANGED

¹ British court precedents covering matters of citizenship and expatriation went back to the reign of the boy-king Edward VI during a chaos of religious

conflict. Edward Seymour was advancing the reformed church. Dr. John Story, an ardent Catholic, regius professor of civil law at Oxford, member of Commons from Hindon, objected to the bill establishing the new English liturgy. He caused a sensation in the House when he shouted, "Woe to the land whose king is a child!" He was committed to the Tower where he remained three months. On his release he left England and moved to Louvain. When Mary became Queen, Dr. Story returned as the Queen's agent and Bonner's chancellor; he was also Queen's proctor at the trial of Archbishop of Canterbury Cranmer. He was obstreperous again against the dignity of Parliament but was pardoned with a censure in consideration of his religious zeal.

Elizabeth became Queen and Dr. Story spoke in justification of the executions in Mary's reign and got into prison again. He escaped to Flanders, swore allegiance to Philip II of Spain, became an intimate of the Duke of Alva and was appointed to battle heresy by keeping English books out of Flemish ports, which required that he search the ships. Young English merchants arranged a trap. They appeared in a vessel at Bergen op Zoom and asked Dr. Story to examine the cargo. When he was in the hold they clamped down the hatches and sailed for England.

An English grand jury indicted Dr. Story for treason, charging that he incited the Duke of Alva to project an invasion of England. Alva and the Spanish ambassador spoke for King Philip in demanding his release. He explained to the justices that he could not plead to a charge of treason in England because Spain was his country: he had moved to its territory, transferred his allegiance, taken the oath, become a subject of His Catholic Majesty. He was no longer affiliated with Elizabeth nor by any manner of reasoning was he an Englishman. The court heard, and decided: "Once an Englishman, always an Englishman."

With Dr. Story's execution, the Queen's law was written. Precedents accumulated, British, Virginian, and others. Isaac Williams, a Yankee sailor, in 1799 was brought into circuit court before Oliver Ellsworth, chief justice of the Supreme Court of the American Republic, charged with having accepted a commission as a privateer from the French Republic, serving aboard the *Jupiter*, a French seventy-four, and committing hostile acts against the friendly power Great Britain, contrary to American law and treaties. Williams had removed to France, been naturalized there, taken the oath of allegiance and renounced affiliation with other powers—with especial emphasis on America. American warships had been fighting French frigates and the French service was unpopular. The decision was that although Isaac Williams had turned his back on America and undertaken to be naturalized in France, he remained an American citizen. Citizens were bound to the nation by a tie which could not be severed by one party alone, the compact being that the nation would defend the individual and the individual in turn would be faithful to the nation. It was not the nation's error, if the individual took on conflicting obligations.

By these precedents, restrictive on the individual's rights as they appear today, the British government might disclaim the right of Irish-born subjects to take on a conflicting allegiance. The fact that the precedents ran afoul of British custom of granting British citizenship to aliens was not taken into consideration any more than it was during the controversy over impressments.

The question was at the very heart of the War of 1812 dispute and no understanding on the conflicting viewpoints was reached during the war.

²Undoubtedly the main fear of the British in American waters was the torpedo, with which American amateurs were experimenting. Fulton's earlier work was well known to the British Navy and caused the British to use discretion near the American shore. The work of an unidentified experimenter, possibly Penny, was discussed by the *National Intelligencer*, July 15, 1813:

"We understand a gentleman at Norwich has invented a Diving Boat which by means of paddles he can propel under the water at a rate of three miles an hour and ascend and descend at pleasure. He has made a number of experiments and has been three times under the bottom of the *Ramillies* off New England. In the first attempt after remaining some time he came to the top of the water like a porpoise, for air, and as luck would have it, came up but a few feet from the stern of the *Ramillies* and was observed by sentries on deck, who sang out 'Boat Ahoy—,' immediately on hearing which the boat descended without making a reply. An alarm gun was fired on board the ship and all hands called to quarters. The cable was cut and the ship got under way, expecting every moment to be blown up by a torpedo.

"In the third attempt he came up directly under the *Ramillies*, fastened himself and his boat to her keel, where he remained half an hour, and succeeded in perforating a hole through her copper, and while engaged in screwing a torpedo to her bottom, the screw broke and defeated his object for that time. So great was the alarm and fear on board the *Ramillies* of some such stratagem being played on them that Commodore Hardy has withdrawn his force from New London and keeps his ships under way all the time instead of lying at anchor as formerly."

A letter from New England, dated "later," but published in the same issue of the *Intelligencer*, July 15, 1813, said the dauntless experimenter went under the *Ramillies* a fourth time and had not been heard of since. Either this letter was in error or the experimenter was someone other than Penny, who was not reported missing and was working later under Decatur.

The torpedo was a powerful potential weapon from which the Americans obtained little advantage in the War of 1812. Great Britain had rejected it after the Thames experiments mainly because she did not want to promote a device that would tend to nullify her naval superiority. Fulton's invention consisted of a charge of gunpowder that could be brought under a warship by the tide and exploded with a time fuse. He had abandoned his earlier experiments with a nautilus, or undersea craft, the type of submarine torpedo used by Penny. Fulton apparently always believed the torpedo more important than the steamboat because the torpedo would render warships valueless. On August 22, 1807, after the famous and successful passage of the steamboat *Clermont* up the Hudson, he wrote to Joel Barlow: "However, I do not admit that it is half so important as the torpedo system of defense and attack, for out of it will grow the liberty of the seas, an object of infinite importance to the welfare of America and every civilized country. But thousands of witnesses have now seen the steamboat in rapid movement, and believe; they have never seen a ship of war destroyed by a torpedo, and they do not believe." Cited in Lossing, p. 241.

³ Monroe wrote the Governor of Pennsylvania asking authority to confine military prisoners in the Pennsylvania penitentiary on Arch Street, Philadelphia. Both houses of the legislature acted quickly and the governor approved the law granting the authority. Published in the New York *Spectator*, March 7, 1814. The *Spectator* of April 27, 1814, told that eighteen of the prisoners had escaped. With a small file they cut a window bar and wiggled through a hole nine inches by fifteen inches, then let themselves to the ground with blankets and sheets. Seven of the prisoners were recaptured.

⁴ Monroe's statement to Congress, reported in the *Spectator*, April 27, 1814, said he had no information to show whether the twenty-three original hostage prisoners were native-born or naturalized citizens of the United States. The *Federal Republican* pointed out that this was not as Madison had stated the facts, for he had announced that the prisoners sent to England had emigrated and become citizens "long prior to the war."

⁵ Luther Martin was called "Lawyer Brandy Bottle" in a handbill issued after his successful defense of Aaron Burr. McMaster, III, 87.

⁶ After obtaining Madison's views, Winder stopped in Baltimore for a final visit with his family before returning to Quebec. His son, John Henry Winder, was studying preparatory to entering the military academy at West Point. There, after his graduation, he became the instructor in military tactics who taught Jefferson Davis. As an elderly man, he went with the South in the War between the States, being condemned in the North because of his services as supervisor of Andersonville and Libby prisons.

Before Winder's departure from Baltimore his friends gave him a testimonial dinner at Barney's Inn, held on the last day of February, 1814, with a number of the city's leaders present. *Niles' Register*, March 5, 1814. The toastmaster, Judge J. H. Nicholson, proposed a toast to Winder: "May he soon be restored to that career of glory from which he was untimely snatched by one of those accidents which no human foresight can prevent." The judge did not explain that it was really lack of sight instead of foresight that made Winder prisoner at Stoney Creek when he wandered into the British lines, and the gathering did not feel Winder was discredited by the conditions of his capture. When the glasses were restored to the table, the Baltimore citizens applauded enthusiastically. This brought Winder to his feet. He told of the emotions aroused in him by the scene "and more particularly by the last toast." They were too powerful, he said, to permit him to express the strong sensibility with which he received the confidence of his fellow townsmen, but he promised: "If the opportunity may again be afforded me (which I ardently pray may be soon) I shall exert all my industry and such powers as I have, to justify the expectations which have been indulgently entertained by my friends."

Major George Armistead caught in his toast the spirit that was stirring the country: "To our officers and soldiers in captivity—an eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth!" On that, General Winder spoke again, saying his country might be called upon to carry into effect for him the principle contained in Major Armistead's toast, and adding: "Such sentiments will assist me in supporting myself, in the bitterest moments, as becomes a soldier." Winder departed to spend the remainder of the evening at his home and Judge Nicholson con-

cluded the banquet with a final toast to Winder, "The American Regulus returning to the modern Carthage!"

⁷ On May 1, 1814, a committee of businessmen from Washington, Alexandria and Georgetown visited Madison and mentioned a number of points which in their opinion should be fortified. Madison said he would discuss the question with his cabinet, which he did on the day following. The cabinet took no action, but in June he asked Secretary Armstrong to prepare a report on the troops available for the defense of the district, which proved to be 2,154 men, scattered from Baltimore to Norfolk. The next cabinet meeting produced what became known as the July First defense plan, which Congress was to discuss endlessly in later months. The plan was designed to give the city of Washington an army of 93,500 militia. Although the bulk of this army was to remain subject to call, a force of 16,600 would be under arms ready for prompt mobilization, while a corps of from 2,000 to 3,000 would be concentrated midway between the Potomac and Baltimore and held actively in the field for observation and training.

The main features of the plan were: (1) quotas for militia drafts would be given the states for the 93,500 men; (2) portions of the quotas from three neighboring states—6,000 from Maryland, 5,000 from Pennsylvania and 2,000 from Virginia—should be held in reserve in the respective states ready to march immediately on the call of the commanding general in Washington; (3) between 2,000 and 3,000 of these drafts should move immediately to the position between the Potomac and Baltimore, where, with the militia of the District of Columbia and the companies of regular infantry and troops of dragoons at the capital, they would constitute a corps disposable at all times under the direction of the commanding general.

The plan left the capital dependent for security upon a citizen soldiery. It entrusted the assembly of these soldiers to Secretary Armstrong, who did nothing about it other than to pass the responsibility along to the Department commander, with admonitions for him not to call more than were needed at the immediate moment.

⁸ On July 2 the Washington area was organized into the Tenth Military Department, a documentary transaction which appeared from press comments to inspire confidence throughout the country, and Brigadier General William Henry Winder was officially appointed to the command. Amid the patriotic festivities of the Fourth of July, while most of the country was celebrating the downfall of Bonaparte, requisitions were ordered on the states for the 93,500 soldiers. On July 5 Winder, fresh from a Fourth of July oration in Baltimore, arrived in Washington and assumed his new duties. With its labors completed and the defense of the city given over to the Baltimore barrister, the cabinet breathed more freely and adjourned.

⁹ A Maryland farmer saw Winder thus engaged. The farmer had read a book about farming and had followed its instructions about the advantages of deep plowing, with the result that he hit gravel, and his land would no longer hold its fertilizer, making it worthless for tobacco.

"He'll be whipped," the farmer commented, when he saw Winder with his papers.

"Why?" a neighbor asked.

"Because he's going to book-fight the British, just like we've been book farming." Lossing, p. 919n.

Chapter Twenty-six—BRITISH INVASION PLANS

¹ "The Capture of Washington by the English in 1814," in *Genealogical Magazine: A Journal of Family History, Heraldry, and Pedigrees*, I (May 1897-April 1898), 132.

² Benjamin Smyth emphasizes Ross's rigid discipline and unrelenting drill schedules. At the end of 1799, Ross had the regiment at Minorca, in the Balearics, under enlistment conditions restricting it to European service. Sir Ralph Abercromby then was fitting out his expedition against the army Napoleon had left in Egypt. Ross prevailed upon the men to volunteer for African duty and led the regiment at the capture of Alexandria, and when the French had been driven from Egypt and Napoleon's vision of an empire fashioned after that of Alexander the Great had been blasted by British muskets, took it to garrison duty at the newly acquired island of Malta. Benjamin Smyth, *History of the Twentieth Regiment, 1688-1888*, p. 114.

There the troops who had expected a life of loitering found that the colonel had other intentions. It was blazing hot under the midsummer Mediterranean sun, yet Ross turned the regiment out for eight hours of drill daily. According to one of the officers, Ross "exercis[ed] it indefatigably." He practiced not only the customary close-order evolutions which might win parade-ground prizes, but trained the companies also in the skirmishing informalities which had entered warfare during the American Revolution and were being adopted extensively by Napoleon; harassed phantom enemy columns; and simulated attacks across the fields and over the Maltese stone fences. Smyth, p. 114.

³ Cited in Smyth, p. 342.

⁴ As Ross prepared for his embarkation he described proudly, in a personal letter that found its way into the 20th Regiment annals (cf. Smyth, p. 343), the self-reliance his wife manifested when he was hit at Orthez, in southern France. It was the day on which Wellington, too, was felled by a rifle ball. The Duke's injury was superficial, the bullet striking his sword hilt and driving it into his hip. Ross, wounded more severely, was evacuated to Army headquarters at St.-Jean-de-Luz, eighty or ninety miles across the Pyrenees from Bilbao, where his wife was then stopping. It was late February and heavy snows lay in the mountains, but immediately upon receipt of word of her husband's injury "this brave lady . . . mounted her mule and in the midst of rain, hail and mud and all other accomplishments of bad weather," journeyed "a distance of eighty and ninety miles over snowy mountains and bad roads" to reach him. "The Capture of Washington," p. 235.

⁵ The *London Times*, May 25, 1814, reported that Lord Hill "is said to have accepted" command of the troops to act against the United States.

⁶ *London Times*, June 7, 1814. The *Clinker* reached Portsmouth on June 4 with information that the embarkations from Bordeaux consisted of these regiments: 6th; 27th; 28th; 40th; 44th (2nd Battalion); 57th Light Infantry;

60th (5th Battalion); 80th; 87th (2nd Battalion); and 88th, under Brigadier Generals Kempt, Ross and Robinson.

The London *Times*, June 2, 1814, said: "The proceedings at Ghent will not for a moment delay those in the Potomac. Baltimore is already threatened and we trust ere long the British flag will fly on the capitol at Washington."

⁷ Harry Smith, *Autobiography*, pp. 54f. The story has been made into a novel, *The Spanish Bride*, by Georgette Heyer.

⁸ Harry Smith was one of Great Britain's main tools for empire building during the Victorian expansion. Victoria kept Smith's sword as one of her treasured mementos. He was active in the British Army in the campaigns against Washington and New Orleans in the War of 1812.

⁹ After all preparations were completed, the expedition was thrown into temporary confusion because the dispatches from the War Office giving final authority for the disposition of the troops and naming the general officers to command them had not arrived. General Gosselin, who had brought British detachments from the Mediterranean, where they had been released from garrison service by the peace with France, was senior to General Ross and therefore would lead the Chesapeake expedition unless directed elsewhere; yet Ross had been advised before sailing from Bordeaux that he would have an independent command. It was finally discovered that the orders had arrived, after all, and were lying unnoticed on one of the transports. Gosselin was assigned to co-operate with the fleet off New England and Ross to attack the middle American seaboard.

¹⁰ The description of George III at this period is from J. Heneage Jesse, *Life and Reign of George III*, III, 572-595. The girl of his vision was Lady Elizabeth Spencer, Countess of Pembroke, whom Jesse describes as "a lady of spotless virtue and stately loveliness" for whom "during some period of his youth the King had conceived a passionate admiration." There were no means of ascertaining "whether the King had ever permitted his passion to come to her knowledge" but "the deep impression which her youthful loveliness had formerly made upon him remained indelible in his memory." She was present in the King's visions during his malady in 1789 and returned in 1811, and the delusion of her nearness remained with him until his death. Lady Pembroke was twenty-two at the time of accession of George III. Four years earlier she had become the wife of Henry, Earl of Pembroke. Jesse, III, 560-561.

Chapter Twenty-seven—WASHINGTON THREATENED

¹ The number of scribes grew and complaints were made that the press could not follow the debates. The *National Intelligencer*, which had lost its rostrum place, said the correspondents had to guess at the sentiments "of every member not blessed with the lungs of a Danton or the liquid tones of a Randolph." Clay gave the correspondents a reserved space.

² The New York *Spectator*, March 16, 1814, referred to Gales as "the Englishman who conducts that paper."

³ At the moment when everyone in Washington was incensed over Arm-

strong's indifference, his Department came under sensational attack from William Simmons, the War Department accountant whom Armstrong had dismissed. Simmons had been appointed by President Washington and had occupied his post since almost the establishment of the government. He had become a thorough bureaucrat and, according to some of the newspaper writers, was habitually arrogant with those who had business with the Department. The letter he addressed to the Senate and House charging profligacy and corruption by Armstrong in the administration of the Department was popular reading for the Secretary's large following of enemies. Madison ordered an investigation and Armstrong denied *in toto* the alleged irregularities.

On July 20, 1814, the New York *Spectator* republished a story from the Salem, Massachusetts, *Gazette*. It said Simmons "is the same officer who detected and exposed the prodigality and enormous waste of public money committed by Wilkinson when he demanded payment at the treasury for all his 'capers, sugar-plums, cigars,' etc., etc. It seems Gen. Armstrong, as well as Wilkinson, has a great lurch to put in his ladle and help himself from the treasury, as from a public cistern; for while he was commanding Gen. at New York he purchased a large quantity of MAHOGANY furniture for his own use, and then, brave as a hero! demanded that 'we the people' should pay the bill! Now the disclosure of this fact excites no surprise in the minds of those who are acquainted with the sordid and unprincipled characters of the cormorants who rest upon the treasury. Notwithstanding all the enormous expense of Madison's Cabinet Furniture, your Ebony and Mahogany and wooden men who fill the niches of public office, the nation cares not and is quiet; it is a fact that the people, like a cow with full and distended udders, *loves to be milked.*"

The *National Intelligencer*, July 18, 1814, gave little attention to the charges and said Simmons' writing could be found conspicuously displayed in the "Common Sewer," by which it meant Hanson's *Federal Republican*.

An indication of the state of War Department accounting could be seen after a resolution inquiring about some Northwestern claims had been introduced by Senator Worthington of Ohio. Armstrong replied on March 24, 1814, saying: "The claims in question no doubt make part of a mass amounting to *many millions*, which remain unsettled, and I believe *unlooked at* in those offices." The italics were those of the *Spectator* which published the letter on May 11, 1814.

⁴ August 8, 1814.

⁵ Wilkinson proved an engaging writer; it was commented that he seemed to succeed better with the pen than in his invasion of Canada.

⁶ The desultory war in the Chesapeake had been waged by Cockburn for more than a year. It was estimated that during the spring and summer of 1814 he deprived Maryland farmers of tobacco worth \$1,500,000. The stories that reached Baltimore and Washington about the admiral's shore parties uniformly carried the theme of wanton destructiveness, which was inflicted with greater vindictiveness on former residents of Britain who had emigrated to America or anything else smacking of British origin. In the Patuxent-Potomac region one Marylander had a lane bordered on either side by English-walnut trees. Although England could claim no native sovereignty over this variety of wal-

nut, which had been introduced to Britain from Persia by the Romans, the English hewed down the entire lane. In one community everyone fled except the little tailor, who probably thought himself too inconspicuous for the attention of the Army of England. But the British marines improvised an old-fashioned ducking stool and doused him.

Winder's corps of observation was supposed to protect the southern Maryland country. One of the units was Major George Peter's battery, which included young men from leading Georgetown families and workers in Georgetown and Washington stores. Among them was a nineteen-year-old dry-goods clerk, George Peabody, who in later years accumulated a vast fortune in England and became one of the world's leading philanthropists. Another member was Francis Scott Key, who had asserted to Randolph: "I will not fight the poor, unoffending Canadians." Cockburn's freebooting in the Chesapeake had made Key a lieutenant and quartermaster in Peter's battery. The battery, in turn, became, in July 1814 the principal force in Winder's corps of observation. It moved to the Wood Yard, twelve miles from Washington toward the Patuxent, and then to that river. Of this campaign Key remarked that he was "hit in the face by no more than a piece of salt pork." Winder reviewed the battery, together with other District of Columbia troops under Colonel Magruder, on July 23, and released them from active duty with a general order that the enemy appeared to be content with merely continuing their "shameful depredations" in the remote sections of Maryland. Thus the defending army which looked so formidable on paper in the July First plan passed into history before the month ended. Some scatterings of regulars remained in Washington under arms.

⁷ George Robert Gleig gives a description of the arrival in America in the early sections of his two books, *Narratives of the Campaigns of the British Army at Washington and New Orleans* and *A Subaltern in America*. Harry Smith also describes the arrival and was charmed with the country. Smith said the voyage up the Patuxent was through a beautiful forest. He complained, however, about the bad maps. *Autobiography*, p. 197.

Gleig discusses the difficulty the ships had in getting up the shallow Patuxent River toward Benedict, which he called St. Benedicts. The anchorage of the fleet was finally made eight miles below the town and the troops were taken to the landing in boats. *Subaltern*, pp. 6-7.

George Robert Gleig was one of Ross's subalterns, who amused the army by composing songs and squibs on American campaigning. He turned to the ministry after Waterloo and ultimately became chaplain-general of the British armies. His pithy writings became more verbose and his historical publications were voluminous. He lived to the age of ninety-six years, the last survivor among the Peninsular soldiers of the 85th Regiment and probably the last of the British invaders of America. He kept until his death, suspended over his pulpit in the Chelsea Hospital chapel, the American flag he captured at the Battle of Bladensburg.

⁸ General Wilkinson in Washington wrote a letter to former Governor Bowie of Maryland, August 19, saying, "There can be no doubt Barney's flotilla is the first object of attack, and will of course be destroyed as no adequate defense can be made against such numbers. . . . A considerable degree

of alarm prevails—more we think than the occasion justifies." Published in the *New York Spectator*, August 27, 1814. In his *Memoirs* Wilkinson was critical. He wrote: "Cockburn, with his barges, pursued Barney's flotilla, which had, by order of President Madison, been unfortunately abandoned, and was without resistance blown up, when it will be apparent to every competent judge, that, from the narrowness of the channel, the Commodore could have defended himself, and repulsed any floating force the enemy could have brought against him, and his flanks were well secured by the extent of the marshes on both sides of the river. Thus the primary object of the enemy would have been baffled. . . ." Wilkinson, I, 766.

⁹ The first reports in New York were not alarming. The British had not begun their march. The *Evening Post* published on August 24 news of the landing at Benedict and said: "The militia have collected in such numbers in and near the capital as to ensure the safety of that place, should the British make an attempt upon it."

¹⁰ The British lack of cavalry was critical. The only information Ross could get was what his scouts gathered by walking, which told him nothing of probable concentrations at a distance, or even beyond a radius of a few miles. He gave orders that all horses found along the route should be seized. As the troops entered the more populous district around Upper Marlboro, forty animals were brought into the British camp. Bridles were improvised and where saddles were unobtainable, blankets were folded. The artillery drivers who had been marching with the infantry were mounted in this fashion. Most of the animals were of poor quality, but the general was able to improve his reconnaissance and give the army much greater security against surprise. The mounts were so miserable that the British soldiers jestingly called the scouts "Cossacks," a term which was carried into Washington and adopted by the residents there as descriptive of the entire invading force.

¹¹ Judge E. W. Watson, who knew Monroe intimately, said Monroe did not take off his clothing for ten days and nights and was in the saddle the greater part of the time preceding and during the British occupation of Washington. Daniel Gilman, *James Monroe*, p. 186.

The *New York Evening Post*, August 25, printed a letter from one of the cavalry officers with Monroe, written twelve miles from Benedict at 3 P.M. August 21. "I am now with Mr. Monroe; we have this morning reconnoitered the enemy in every direction, and collected every information which the neighborhood affords. At ten o'clock A.M. this day, we had full view of all their shipping which lay from Benedict to about 8 miles below. I counted 23 ships, several brigs and some few small craft. . . . The barges and a number of schooners and three large vessels (say frigates) had proceeded up the river toward Nottingham before we got our stand. They have also a heavy force marching on this side of the river toward Nottingham, no doubt to cooperate with the shipping against Barney. Some state the land force at 3,000 on the march; others at less, and others again at much more. From the best information I can get I believe the whole force landed at Benedict is about 6,000. . . . The distress of the neighborhood is inconceivable."

¹² Not having been a party to the selection of Winder, Armstrong apparently considered himself under no obligation to assist in the campaign. His publica-

tions after the war gave a plausible explanation of his course through the campaign. He did make recommendations from time to time. His chief suggestion was that the Capitol be garrisoned and defended much as the Chew mansion had been by the British at Germantown during the Revolutionary War.

Armstrong might have contributed to Winder's strength by the exercise of a bit of foresight. Colonel Duncan L. Clinch, a Regular Army officer who served effectively against the British on the border and later against the Seminole, was encamped in Washington in late June 1814 with 500 regulars enlisted in North Carolina. These men looked like troops of good quality and undoubtedly would have proved a valuable addition to the defense of the capital. They had been getting drill from Clinch. But while the War Department was presumed to be beating the bushes for an army for the capital, it sent Clinch and his North Carolinians to the Canadian border.

¹³ *New York Spectator*, August 27, 1814. In his orders Winder said: "Let no man allow his private opinions, his prejudices or caprices in favor of this or that particular arm or weapon of annoyance be pretended excuse for deserting his post, but seize on those which can be furnished him, or he can command himself resolutely to encounter the enemy, and prove that the bravery of free-men fighting for their families; their liberties; can render every weapon formidable."

¹⁴ August 23, 1814.

¹⁵ A report reached Washington and New York that on this reconnaissance Winder narrowly escaped capture, although he was mounted and did not get close to the enemy. Letter to *New York Spectator*, published August 27, 1814.

¹⁶ Wilkinson stated that "not a single bridge was broken, not a causeway destroyed, not an inundation attempted, not a tree fallen, not a rod of the road obstructed, nor a gun fired at an enemy in a march of nearly forty miles." Wilkinson, I, 759. He was slightly in error about the firing. Before leaving Washington Winder sent Tilghman's volunteer dragoons and Caldwell's District of Columbia horse to molest the enemy and, although Ross had no cavalry, to "destroy his forage." Some of these troops were in Upper Marlboro when the British approached. They fired two ineffectual volleys and retired.

¹⁷ Harry Smith tells of two of these spies with whom he maintained contact. One, "the most awful spectacle of a man," named Calder, was "covered with leprosy" which was "probably why he turned traitor." Another was a young man named Brown who acted as guide for the British. Brown came under suspicion from the Americans; as the British were departing for their ships, Calder came to Smith and reported excitedly that Brown was going to be hanged. "Now if I could hear General Ross say, 'If I catch that rascal Brown I will hang him like carrion' he may be saved." Ross reluctantly consented to this mummery and Calder hurried back to Washington to tell the Americans that Ross wanted to hang Brown. Smith judged Calder was successful in saving his fellow spy. Before the ships sailed he had a message from Calder saying, "All's right you may reckon." Harry Smith, pp. 197-198.

Ingersoll said, "A young Scotchman of idle and vicious habits accompanied the enemy's advance."

Washington was so filled with spy stories after the British invasion that it is

difficult to determine which were authentic. One of Ross's officers was recognized at the boardinghouse as a person who had been in the city and talked there with Postmaster General Meigs. Another was supposed to have visited Mrs. Madison in the disguise of a woman. Dr. Albert K. Hadel, *Maryland Historical Society Magazine*, 1903, said: "Their officers disguised easily made their way into the city, mingled with the people, frequented the hotels and taverns and passed in and out of the city at pleasure."

The *Intelligencer* had an article denouncing the spies after the invasion. The *Intelligencer*, August 31, 1814, said, "The enemy was conducted through the city by a former resident . . . who with other detected traitors is now in confinement."

¹⁸ Statement to Congressional investigating committee; published in the *National Intelligencer*, December 5, 1814. This was a difficult night for most of the cabinet members, who slept little, and especially for Monroe, who was in the saddle all night trying to maintain contact between divided American forces and also to keep in touch with the advancing British. Monroe's perception showed him that if a battle were to be fought, it would be fought at Bladensburg. On August 22 Monroe notified Serurier, the French ambassador, that the hope of saving Washington depended on an engagement at Bladensburg. Serurier to Talleyrand, August 22, 1814; cited in Adams, *History*, VIII, 134. Monroe had already cautioned Madison to remove the records, indicating his doubt, which he also reflected to Serurier, that the capital could be saved by the kind of campaign being conducted.

¹⁹ Gales and Seaton of the *National Intelligencer* were with Winder's army on alternate days and sent back stories. The one who sent the dispatch for the August 23 *Intelligencer* reported the army was "in high spirits and full of confidence." I have not been able to learn of any previous instance in which a newspaper reporter actively covered the campaign of an American army in war and therefore judge that Joseph Gales and William Seaton must be considered the first two war correspondents of American journalism accompanying an American army in the field.

²⁰ Colonel McKenney wrote a pamphlet on his scouting activities and told of the questioning of prisoners by the President.

²¹ *New York Spectator*, August 27, 1814.

²² *Ibid.*

²³ Letter by Pleasanton, August 7, 1848; cited in Lossing, p. 923n.

²⁴ This fire, some of the Republicans contended, was kindled by departing Federalists to cover their tracks, but few took the charge seriously.

²⁵ At this juncture the American troops were without a commander. Winder had ridden to Bladensburg to see Stansbury of the Baltimore militia. Smith formed the District of Columbia militia for combat. Colonel McKenney, who had been scouting with Monroe, arrived at this time and Smith told him he did not want to take the responsibility for a battle with Winder absent. McKenney rushed off and found Winder eight miles toward Bladensburg and told him to hurry back. During Winder's absence the District of Columbia militia began a movement to elect Smith commander in place of Winder. Word that Smith was actually elected spread over south Maryland and reached Monroe at Bladensburg, causing much confusion there.

²⁸ Ross moved a brigade to his left down the road leading to Fort Washington. It was impossible for him to reach the capital in that direction without crossing the East Branch of the Potomac, for which he had no pontoons. The Americans could readily have defended the one bridge. But Winder thought from the dust cloud that the entire British army was moving toward Fort Washington or against his right. When he rejoined the army his first words were, "The manifest object of the enemy is to attack us in the night. We have not the material for a night fight." The memory of his surprise at Stoney Creek was still heavy in his memory.

²⁹ Smith made this comment: "Thus terminated the four days of service of the troops of this District. They had been under arms, with but little intermission, the whole of the time, both night and day; had traveled . . . a considerable tract of country, exposed to the burning heat of a sultry sun by day, and many of them to the cold dews of the night, uncovered. They had in this period drawn but two rations, the requisition therefor in the first instance being only partially complied with, and it being afterward almost impossible to procure the means of transportation." Published in the *National Intelligencer*; cited in Lossing, p. 925.

³⁰ The Congressional committee which investigated the campaign stated in its report, "The march of the army was extremely rapid and precipitate; and orders were occasionally given to the captains to hurry on the men, who were extremely fatigued and exhausted, before they reached the camping ground near the Eastern Branch bridge." Published in the *National Intelligencer*, December 5, 1814. John Law, a large Washington property holder who was in the campaign, said the retreat "literally became a run of eight miles." State Papers, Military Affairs, I, 583; cited in Adams, *History*, VIII, 136.

³¹ The suggestion has been ridiculed, but it might have prevented a farther march by Ross if any concerted action by the Americans could have been obtained. With so small a force Ross could not have ventured far from his fleet in the face of enterprising opposition. There was no officer of Monroe's capacity in the American Army. Probably he, certainly Jackson, Brown or Scott, could have stopped the British at or in front of Bladensburg.

³² It is impossible to tell what was in the President's mind about the command of the Army on the morning of August 24. Lossing quotes a letter written in 1848 by Jacob Barker of New Orleans who was in Washington during the battle. Barker wrote, "The President left Washington about 9 A.M. in great haste, to recall General Armstrong, who had preceded him about an hour with the President's order to supersede General Winder in the defense of the capital." Rush said the President informed him the reason he was going to Bladensburg was to see that Armstrong got the chief command. Lossing, p. 926 and 926n.

³³ The British soldiers suffered excessively from the heat on this rapid march. According to the Baltimore *Patriot*, August 29, 1814, twelve bodies, without wound marks, were buried in a single field. The deaths apparently were from sunstroke. Ross was trying to reach Bladensburg before Winder marched his army from the Navy Yard to unite with Stansbury. The Baltimore *Patriot*, August 29, said that as the British passed through Bladensburg to attack "their mouths were open gasping for breath."

Chapter Twenty-eight—DEFEAT AT BLADENSBURG

¹ Ingersoll says, "Several gentlemen, among the rest, Mr. Francis S. Key, [were] not only recommending, but showing where they thought the troops ought to be posted, riding to the spots designated and confounding the outset." Ingersoll, II, 174.

² Stansbury was on the alert for interference by officers of the District of Columbia militia, believing his rank superior to that of Smith, but he was either inattentive or indifferent to this early assistance by civilians.

³ Captain J. I. Stull commanded a Georgetown rifle company, organized in 1811, and drilled with rifled "Indian squirrel guns" borrowed from the superintendent of Indian affairs, but unserviceable for combat. In 1814 Stull made numerous requisitions for new rifles, but could not get the order passed by Armstrong. The company finally had to take muskets, but not until after they had marched out with Winder and served one day armed only with tomahawks. The rifles Armstrong withheld from the company were destroyed when the Washington arsenal was burned a few days later. Statement by Stull; cited in Colonel McKenney's pamphlet, pp. 24-26.

⁴ Beall's troops coming into Bladensburg were supposed at first to be Ross's advance. Ingersoll, II, 174.

⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 175.

⁶ Letter of William Simmons, State Papers, Military Affairs, I, 596. Cited in Adams, *History*, VIII, 140.

⁷ The bearing of Monroe's action on the outcome of the battle has been a point of dispute for many writers, some of whom have attributed the American defeat largely to his interference. Ingersoll says Monroe was "indefatigable and anxious, resolved, as he said, to spill the last drop of blood to defend every inch of ground." Monroe was one of the few present who had demonstrated fully his personal courage in fighting the British. He could see then that "although some seven thousand men were present, nothing deserving the name of an army existed." Adams, *History*, VIII, 141.

Ingersoll describes Monroe's change of the line as follows: "Colonel Monroe deranged the front rank, by an injudicious alteration, condemned by Stansbury, Sterrett and Pinkney, scarcely owned by Monroe himself, and which General Armstrong stigmatized as the blunder of a busy tactician; for which, however, indubitably brave and invariably kind, Monroe was not much blamed, though that derangement of the front rank was a primary cause of its exposure naked and consequent instantaneous flight. He removed Sterrett's regiment nearly a quarter of a mile from where it originally stood, placing it behind an orchard which favored the enemy, out of supporting distance, to cover the drafted militia, thus left almost alone in front, with two or three companies of artillerists and a few of Pinkney's rifle battalion, one company of whom Colonel Monroe also took away from their original station." Ingersoll, II, 174.

There are additional points which should be considered. These officers and Winder as well were on the field, presumably with their men, where

they should have been, and if they objected to Monroe's change they should have done so on the spot, and not after it had been made or after the battle had been lost. Again, had there been serious objection, there was time to rectify it before the British struck. An even more important consideration is that Winder moved the 5th Baltimore twice after Monroe had placed it, and therefore Monroe's temporary shift could have had no bearing on the outcome. Finally, anyone who remembers this field before the modern roads were constructed and Bladensburg grew into a larger community will recall the flat bottom land of the East Branch which did not possess any natural advantages of defense for raw troops. The 5th Baltimore was in an apple orchard, on which the fruit had ripened. Monroe took them behind the orchard, depriving them of the shelter of the trees, which was the principal complaint. Yet they were not assailed from the front, where the British tarried to eat apples, but on the flank, and they could have been flanked as easily in the orchard as in the final position given them by Winder. Stansbury, a fine citizen who lived to the age of ninety-three and served long in his state legislature, had been at Bladensburg longer than any other officer, but appeared to select the least attractive position for his line. He might have defended Lowndes Heights to the southeast of Bladensburg, or he might have destroyed the bridge and defended the line of the river. If he abandoned the line of the river, then he or Winder after him should have selected one of the ridges between the river and the District of Columbia line, such as Barney did later for his defense.

During this campaign Monroe had been witnessing a series of blunders and was censurable only because he did not have the authority, and not because he did not possess the capacity to deploy the army. Steele makes no mention of Monroe's part but attributes the loss of the battle to the British flanking movement. Matthew Fornay Steele, *American Campaigns* (War Department Document No. 325), pp. 73-80.

There is the final question of whether President Madison had any part in this shift of positions, or consented to it at Monroe's request. Hadel, *Maryland Historical Society Magazine*, 1903, says Monroe rode forward, examined the position carefully, retired to the side of the President, conversed in a low voice and then rode away rapidly. This conversation, he said, resulted in moving the 5th Maryland. It is probable that Monroe's conversation was on another subject, for Madison only a few minutes earlier had issued his orders to leave to the military functionaries "the discharge of their own duties on their own responsibility."

Ingersoll thought Monroe's indiscretion led to that of others. "Aggravating this cardinal error," he said, "numerous self-constituted contributors of advice, suggesters of position, and intermeddlers with command; gentlemen of respectability and good will; committees, a whole democracy of commanders, industriously helped to mar all singleness of purpose and unity of action." Where were Winder and Stansbury, indeed!

⁸ Cited in Ingersoll, II, 174.

⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 175.

¹⁰ Cockburn said in his report: "The British troops, almost exhausted with fatigue, and but a small proportion having got up, did not hesitate to attack

immediately the American position of great strength and commanding attitude." Ross said: "On the opposite side of the river the enemy were posted on very commanding heights. Artillery covered the bridge over which the British army had to pass." Cited in Ingersoll, II, 175.

¹¹ Ingersoll, II, 175, gives slightly different wording.

¹² Steele says: "General Winder and his army never stopped in their flight, until they had gone sixteen miles beyond Washington." Steele, I, 73.

¹³ Reports that Maryland slaves were plotting a revolt were published in the Fredericktown *Herald*, August 20, 1814, and copied by the New York *Spectator*, August 27. No revolt developed. On August 30, 1845, Alvan Stewart wrote a letter relating a conversation he had with General Smith of the District of Columbia militia when he and Smith were riding through Bladensburg in 1818. Smith told him, he said, that "the secret of our disgraceful flight was that a story had been circulated through the District and adjacent counties in the two states, that on that day the slaves were to rise and assert their liberty, and that each man more feared the enemy he had left behind, in the shape of a slave in his own house or plantation, than he did anything else. The officers and soldiers had their minds distracted with the possibility of this insurrection and therefore fled to their homes before an inferior force, and left Washington to the mercy of its captors." Cited in Lossing, p. 938. The difficulties with this story are that the apprehensions about the revolt did not creep over the militiamen until the exact moment the rockets began to fly, and that they did not affect Barney's men from the water front, who may not have had slaves, but did have homes.

¹⁴ Ingersoll, II, 176. Ingersoll describes the flight: "Brave freemen, many of them gentlemen who would not hesitate to risk their lives in deadly combat, without spectators or the excitement of combat, on a point of honor or trifle of controversy; athletic and independent mechanics, artisans or yeomen, like the stampede of a herd of buffaloes or wild horses in the prairie, snuffing or dreading distant, imaginary danger, took to their heels with the swiftness of delirium, and ran till overcome by the fatigue which exhausted and arrested them."

¹⁵ Published in the New York *Spectator*, August 31, 1814.

¹⁶ This regiment, which had possessed a splendid record and reputation, was humiliated by the experience. The story in the Baltimore *Patriot* on the evening of August 27 showed the reticence of the Baltimore troops to discuss the battle: "Many of those who were in the engagement at Bladensburg have arrived in the city," the *Patriot* said. "No satisfactory account of the affair is received, as each was too much engaged at the time, and too much exhausted since, with fatigue and extraordinary privations, to give a distinct account."

¹⁷ The first account of the battle to reach New York, published on August 27 in an extra of the *Commercial Advertiser*, was ludicrously confused: "At 1 o'clock P.M. on Wednesday last, the British troops, consisting of 9,000 infantry under the command of Generals Ross and Picton, and 4,000 artillery under Lord Hill, in person, entered Bladensburg and commenced a battle which continued four hours, when our army fell back, and retreated to Washington. Gen. Stansbury, it is said, was killed; Major Sterett wounded; Major Pinkney mortally wounded and taken prisoner; and the 5th Baltimore regiment, com-

posed of fine young men, almost entirely destroyed. The stage Passengers add, that an Express from Baltimore arrived at Philadelphia, at eleven o'clock last evening, announcing that the City of Washington was in the hands of the enemy." The *Spectator* on the following day added: "The mail this morning has too abundantly confirmed this news, with additional facts far more disastrous."

¹⁸ Armstrong had told Winder, "By no means risk a field fight, but . . . retire on the Capitol and defend that to the last." He added: "Your men will do well under cover—badly in the field. The enemy is not now prepared for seige or investment, being without cannon, baggage or provision train. What he does, must be done at once, and by storm. Resist his first attack and he is beaten, and may be routed and captured." Armstrong's pamphlet reply to John Quincy Adams, *Notice of Mr. Adams' Eulogism on the Life and Character of James Monroe* (printed from the manuscripts of General John Armstrong, 1832), p. 7.

On the Bladensburg field and in Washington the British possessed themselves of ample cannon and all other equipment needed to blow up the Capitol. If Armstrong's plan had any merit at the start of the campaign, it did not when he again proposed it after the battle.

¹⁹ Winder naïvely recorded his own flight from the field he was supposed to command when he stated in his report written in Baltimore August 27, "It is not for me to report the conduct of Commodore Barney and his command, nor can I speak from observation, being too remote."

²⁰ Colonel Beall "could not prevent his men from deserting an eminence, the possession of which was vital to the issue, and where they were posted far above and out of reach of every danger, excessively fatigued, but not too much so to run away at the gleam of a British musket, in spite of all their brave old Colonel could say or do to prevail on them to stand fast." Ingersoll, II, 174.

²¹ In his report Barney said: "I reserved our fire. In a few minutes the enemy again advanced, when I ordered an eighteen-pounder to be fired, which completely cleared the road; shortly after a second and third attempt was made by the enemy to come forward, but all were destroyed." Barney's statement on the destruction of his flotilla was printed in the *National Intelligencer*, November 3, 1814, and his letter on the conduct of the Battle of Bladensburg in the issue of December 20, 1814.

²² Barney died in Pittsburgh on the journey to Kentucky after the war. He intended to settle on land he owned there. The musket ball flattened next to the bone in his thigh and caused lumbago which with an inflamed throat brought on his death. He fought in seventeen battles in the Revolutionary War and nine in the War of 1812, most of them being naval actions. The biographical information about Barney I have taken principally from William Frederick Adams and the biographical study by his daughter-in-law, Mary Barney.

²³ Gleig said some of Barney's men were bayoneted at their guns and Adams quotes this version. *History*, VIII, 143. Barney published his denial in the *Intelligencer* after his exchange. The *United States Gazette*, August 27, 1814, said Barney fought his guns until the British were within five paces of the

muzzles. The *Federal Republican* joined in the applause of Barney and said, August 30: "Great praise is due to Barney's men, who fought with desperation, as did the marine corps."

* Ignatius Weller, *Unwelcome Visitors to Early Washington, August 24th, 1814*, p. 70.

Chapter Twenty-nine—REDCOATS ON THE AVENUES

¹ New York *Commercial Advertiser*, August 29, 1914. The Baltimore *Federal Gazette*, September 27, said a French barber fired on Ross.

² Ingersoll says no such overture as Armstrong suggested was possible because of the absence of Madison. Ingersoll, II, 184.

³ Ingersoll, II, 185. Gleig, in late life, denied the volley when asked by Horatio King. Articles and correspondence in *Magazine of American History*, 1885.

⁴ Letter written by McDougall to Lossing in 1861; cited in Lossing, p. 933.

⁵ Conversations with Dr. James Ewell, at whose home Ross made his headquarters while in Washington. Ewell lived in Carroll Row, at First and A streets, Southwest, facing directly across the fields toward the Capitol. He must have talked incessantly with Ross and Cockburn, and his account is the best source of information on the general's reactions while in Washington. Dr. Ewell came to Washington as a protégé of Jefferson, who was his father's classmate at William and Mary College. He published a household medical guide called *Planters' and Mariners' Medical Companion*, for which he wrote an article on bilious fever as he observed it during the War of 1812. In this paper, which appeared in the third edition of the *Companion* in 1817, Dr. Ewell made an extensive digression to tell about Ross and Cockburn and to answer criticisms of fraternizing with the enemy made against him. He said he had "no fear of offending my virtuous countrymen by exhibiting even in an enemy strokes of refinement and generosity." Dr. Ewell's article has been published with a discussion of the doctor in Weller, pp. 55-118.

⁶ II, 185.

⁷ "Copenhagen" Jackson wrote his wife October 7, 1809: "I put up a covey of partridge about three hundred yards from the House of Congress, yclept the Capitol." Cited in Adams, *History*, V, 118.

⁸ The most appropriate description of early Washington was that of Abigail Adams: "It is a beautiful spot, capable of every improvement." Cited in Crawford, p. 163. The physical aspects of the city had not changed greatly by 1814, except for the shade trees planted by Jefferson. The 1810 census showed Washington, 8,208; Georgetown, 4,948; Alexandria, 7,227; all were then in the District of Columbia.

⁹ Ingersoll says a Capitol clerk removed one cartload of papers. "But for the most part the halls of legislation, with their appurtenances, were derelict, without superintendent, occupant or care." Ingersoll, II, 185. Minor's Virginia regiment bivouacked in the House chamber the night before the battle but did not reach the field because of the length of time required by quartermaster routine to issue equipment and flints for the muskets.

¹⁰ New York *Spectator*, September 23. McGruder resigned before the next meeting of Congress.

¹¹ San Sebastian fell to Wellington September 9, 1813, and was fired in the course of the attack.

¹² Ingersoll, describing the scene at the Navy Yard before the departure of Madison and cabinet members for Bladensburg before the battle, ironically said: "The Secretary of the Navy (Mr. Jones) bent on departmental suicide, remained to complete his darling project of destroying everything at the navy yard, as Barney's flotilla, by his order, had, in like manner, been saved from the enemy two days before." Ingersoll, II, 174.

¹³ Ingersoll, writing his history in 1848, said it had never been learned who took the pictures. They have never been replaced. Ingersoll, II, 185.

¹⁴ The only loss of life in this advance of the British to the heart of the capital was the death of John Lewis, grandnephew of George Washington on Washington's mother's side. He had been impressed by the British and once flogged. Condemned to receive 500 lashes, he was relieved of half the sentence. Niles said he was discharged February 10, 1812. Ingersoll described Lewis as an "assailant" of the British and as "perhaps inflamed by drink." Ingersoll, II, 188. He approached British sentries armed with pistols. Shots were exchanged and he fell. His body lay in the street all night.

¹⁵ Cf. the New York *Spectator*, August 31, 1814.

¹⁶ Published in the New York *Commercial Advertiser*, August 26, 1814.

¹⁷ Cockburn had received warnings against poisoned whisky when in lower Maryland, but no efforts at poisoning were made. The British in Washington were afraid of poisoned water and food. Ingersoll, II, 185.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 187.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*

²⁰ Madison's impressions about the battle would have been of historical interest had they been preserved, but they probably conveyed no information to the British. Madison was one of the few Presidents who used shorthand. He developed his own system and employed it for taking notes. Stimpson, *American Politics*, p. 484. Usually he repressed the personal, and therefore much of the dramatic, in his comments.

²¹ Ingersoll called Nardin a "drunken Frenchman" who kept a small beer house. Ingersoll, II, 187.

²² Serurier to Talleyrand, August 27, 1814; cited in Adams, *History*, VIII, 146.

²³ Ingersoll (II, 186) says his information came from Mrs. Suter, whose two sons had been in the battle; one was wounded fighting with Barney. She had but one helping woman with her when the British arrived. The McLeod Tavern facing south on Pennsylvania Avenue just east of the turn at the Treasury was highly regarded at this period. It was opened September 24, 1812, with a party, given much local publicity, at which the mayor presided. These were the main boardinghouses in the neighborhood of the President's house.

²⁴ New York *Spectator*, August 31, 1814.

²⁵ New York Historical Society *Quarterly*, VIII (1924), 80-83.

²⁶ The poem was issued as a small pamphlet, "Printed for the Purchaser" in 1816, with an introductory statement: "Probably it is not generally known,

that the flight of MAHOMET, the flight of JOHN GILPIN, and the flight of Bladensburg, all occurred on the *twenty-fourth of August.*"

The author may have obtained his idea for the poem from the New York *Post* remark, August 30, 1814: "Should some Walter Scott in the next century write a poem and call it . . . the Battle of Bladensburg, we would suggest the following lines for the conclusion

Fly, Monroe, fly! run, Armstrong, run!!
Were the last words of Madison."

Second Assistant Postmaster General William H. Dundas, a wag in the Department before the War between the States, is said to have teased a clerk, John Smith, by asserting: "The British got the best of things at the start but the Americans beat them in the *long run.*"

¹⁷ William Wirt wrote to his wife on October 14, 1814: "I went to look at the ruins of the President's house. The rooms which you saw, so richly furnished, exhibited nothing but unroofed naked walls, cracked, defaced and blackened with fire. . . . I called on the President. He looks miserably shattered and woebegone. In short, he looked heart broken. His mind is full of New England sedition."

¹⁸ The spelling is that of Dr. Irving Brant, who uses *Dolley* as did Mrs. Madison herself.

¹⁹ Ingersoll, II, 187. This does not include the value of Madison's excellent private library, which was lost.

²⁰ Dolley had written her cousin, Edward Coles, May 12, 1813, that she had "always been an advocate for fighting when assailed, though a Quaker. I therefore keep the old Tunisian sabre within reach." *Memoirs and Letters of Dolly Madison*, edited by L. B. Cutts, p. 91. The letter about French John is found in Cutts, p. 109.

²¹ Cf. Lossing, p. 936, who says: "Snatching up the precious parchment on which was written the Declaration of Independence and the autographs of the signers, which she had resolved to save also, she hastened to the carriage. . . ." Stimpson points out that the original draft of the Declaration of Independence was never preserved, possibly having been destroyed by the printer after setting the type and having the proofs corrected. Jefferson's draft, with changes in the hands of Franklin and Adams, as well as changes apparently made by the Congress, was discovered among Jefferson's papers after his death and consequently would not have been in the President's house in Madison's administration. This copy, long kept at the Library of Congress, was transferred to the Archives Building in 1952. It was not the copy from which the printer set his type. The peculiar situation was that the voting and signing were on different occasions and, as Stimpson points out, all who voted for it did not sign it and some who signed did not vote for it. An engrossed copy was ordered and signed August 2, 1776, and again later, the last signature being affixed in 1781. This is regarded as the original copy of the Declaration as distinguished from Jefferson's copy, or the original copy which was adopted July 4, 1776, and from which the type was set by the printer Dunlap. The engrossed copy, which before its transfer to the

Library of Congress in the 1930s was under State Department custodianship, presumably was sent to Virginia by the State Department clerk Pleasanton. There is, however, a possibility that this is the copy Dolley Madison saved. George Stimpson, *Popular Questions Answered*, pp. 78-80.

³² Lossing, writing in the 1860s, said the portrait of Washington saved by Dolley Madison then hung in the Blue Room of the Presidential mansion. This writer remembers it in the basement corridor in the 1920s.

³³ Lossing, p. 936, from an oral statement made to him by Baker.

³⁴ Adams says Madison crossed the Potomac intending to join Mrs. Madison at Montpelier. Adams, *History*, VIII, 150.

³⁵ Some writers have tended to question the Jennings story. From the nature of his writing he was obviously devoted to the Madisons. At the time of the British invasion he was in his youth, and such an event as the British occupation would have impressed itself lastingly on his memory. His report of this incident was obtained from others of the Madison household. The story is easily accepted because President Madison also encountered unpleasant personal affront on his flight.

³⁶ Cited in Weller, p. 70.

³⁷ Dr. Ewell tells that Mrs. Ewell, who had been frightened and fled when the British appeared, returned home while Cockburn was there. Cockburn paid his respects and "in his apparently rough way" asked her: "Pray, madam, what could have alarmed you so? Do you take us for savages?" Before she could reply he continued, "Ay, madam, I can easily account for your terror. I see from the files in your house that you are fond of reading those papers which delight to make devils of us." Cited in Weller, pp. 69-70.

³⁸ Ingersoll, II, 189.

³⁹ *National Intelligencer*, August 31, 1814.

⁴⁰ Dr. Ewell says forty-seven were "most horribly mangled" by the explosion, in addition to the dead. Cited in Weller, p. 77.

⁴¹ Cockburn gave Dr. Ewell six gold doubloons which the doctor used to help the British wounded, "the greater part of whom would certainly have perished," he said, "as the Government made no provision for them until after the third day." He said the admiral's gold "by immediate transmutation into sugar, coffee, tea, milk, rice, arrow-root, bread, meats, vegetables and fruits, was early applied to sustain their exhausted frames." Weller, p. 23.

⁴² Some of the British ships were allegedly cast on beam end by the storm. Harry Smith, p. 202.

⁴³ Smith says the British captured so much flour in Washington they could not transport it, so the barrelheads were knocked in and the soldiers were told to help themselves. "Soldiers are greedy fellows and many filled their haversacks. During a tedious night march through the woods as dark as chaos, they found the flour far from agreeable to carry and threw it away by degrees." If it had not been for the flour making a track, the rear elements of the column would have lost the road, he said. According to Smith, half of the soldiers were sick with dysentery. "However owing to want of knowledge of war, the enemy on this occasion allowed us to get back to our boats perfectly unmolested." Harry Smith, p. 202.

"On January 24, 1815, Prevost notified Canada "that as a just retribution, the proud capital at Washington, has experienced a similar fate to that inflicted by an American force on the seat of government in Upper Canada."

Chapter Thirty—BIRTH OF A SONG

¹Lossing, p. 958n., says the song was first sung by Charles Durang in a Baltimore restaurant next to the Holiday Street Theater and nightly thereafter in the theater. For many of the facts about the writing of the song, I am indebted to Edward S. Delaplaine, *Francis Scott Key*.

²The casualties in the fort were twenty-eight, of whom four were killed. The British withdrew, according to Cochrane's report, because "the capture of the town would not have been a sufficient equivalent to the loss which might probably be sustained in storming the heights." William James, *A Full and Correct Account of the Military and Naval Occurrences of the Late War between Great Britain and the United States*, II, 514. The condition of Baltimore's defenses shows the capture would have been difficult, if at all possible.

³The opposition speaker, Mr. Whitebread, said of Ross: "It was happy for humanity and the credit of the empire that the extraordinary order upon that occasion had been entrusted to an officer of so much moderation and justice." Ross's moderation was such that the ministry, in instructions that never reached him, suggested he press less lightly on Baltimore, should he capture that city.

⁴Law in earlier life had been associated with Lord Cornwallis in India. It was told of him that he had to carry a piece of dough to knead as he talked or he would lose the thread of his story. Crawford, p. 165. He married Mrs. Washington's granddaughter, Anne Custis, and was one of the best-known figures in the early life of the capital.

Chapter Thirty-one—"DON'T GIVE UP THE SOIL"

¹*Niles' Register*, October 15, 1814.

²August 31, 1814.

³The House by a vote of eighty-eight to fifty-five offered one hundred acres of land to any deserter from the British Army during the war. *Niles' Register*, October 1, 1814.

⁴*Ibid.*, October 27, 1814.

⁵Pierre M. Irving, *Life and Letters of Washington Irving*, I, 311.

⁶Near the end of August a camp was established at Kennett Square, Pennsylvania. A brigade, under Brigadier General Thomas Cadwalader, kept a watch around Wilmington until November 30, 1814. An army of nearly 10,000 men was collected at Marcus Hook, and in September General E. P. Gaines, who had served with distinction on the border, took command. This camp was continued until early December. Lossing, p. 967.

⁷September 10, 1814.

⁸The War of 1812 made significant contributions to the development of

American naval power, despite the reluctance with which the Navy was supported at the beginning of the war. One of the most important by-products, Navywise, was the launching of the first steam warship, which was described in the October 29 column of the New York *Spectator*, November 2, 1814:

"This morning [October 29] at 20 minutes before 9 o'clock, the Steam Battery Fulton, was Launched from the ship yard of Adam and Noah Brown. She entered her destined element in the most majestic style, in the view of perhaps twenty thousand spectators—We congratulate our fellow citizens on this formidable acquisition to our means of defence. From the well known enterprise, activity and perseverance of Messrs. Browns [*sic*] there is no doubt she will be fit for service in the course of a very short time: Wo, to the ship of the line, that engages this bullet proof and bomb proof *non-descript*."

The boat, known as *Fulton the First*, was not an ironside, but ironclads were being discussed. Thomas Gregg of Pennsylvania obtained in March 1814 a patent on a proposed steam-propelled ironclad. Lossing, pp. 975-976.

One of the most famous episodes in our naval history, the voyage of the *Essex*, resulted from the use of privateers. This was the most distant and celebrated cruise made by any of the frigates built and sent out in the name of the government by private citizens. This fleet ship of thirty-two guns, which had been an offering to the federal government by the people of Salem and the near-by country, was more representative of the spirit of Essex County, Massachusetts, than the junto which sought disunion. When France threatened war in 1798 and the government was hard-pressed, Salem citizens decided to build a frigate for the United States. The master shipwrights sent out appeals for all who had white-oak trees to bring them to the yards. Axes rang and the big trees were felled, trimmed and dragged by oxen through the streets. Everything that went into the ship was from Salem—iron, sail-cloth, cordage, hempen cables. At times it was brought to the shipyard accompanied by the fife piping "Yankee Doodle" and by rolling drums. The war clouds with France lifted before the *Essex* struck the waves but she served in the Tripolitan War and in 1812 became a rover of the seas. Her exploits give her a place in history with such detached commerce raiders as the *Alabama* of the Confederate States and the German *Emden* of World War I.

She was commanded by David Porter. One of the most interesting and articulate members of her crew was a thirteen-year-old midshipman, David Farragut, who was to become the last great captain of the wooden ships. Porter, who had served conspicuously in Tripolitan waters, missed his rendezvous with Bainbridge and Lawrence in late 1812 and, because he was under orders allowing him discretion, decided to make for the Pacific, where no American warship had ever sailed. He passed Cape Horn and on March 14, 1813, reached Valparaiso, Chile, which had just thrown off Spanish rule. He took on supplies and sailed for the Galápagos Islands, a center of British whale fishing.

Through 1813 and early 1814 Porter ruled the Pacific. He captured twelve British whalers or merchant ships, some of which he sent back as prizes, while others were made a part of his fleet. One he strengthened with additional

guns and named the *Essex Junior*, commanded by Lieutenant John Downes. After the Galápagos Islands and a visit along the mainland of South America he headed for the Marquesas Islands to refit at leisure. His voyage had been singularly successful at a time when most other American warcraft were blockaded in Atlantic coast harbors. The South Pacific had been swept clean of British ships.

The stay at the Marquesas Islands proved to be something like a sojourn among the lotus-eaters, for the sailors became enamored with the native girls and threatened to mutiny when Porter got them back on board and told them it was time to go home. The South Sea sirens came to the water's edge when the ship made ready, and dipped salt water to their eyes to show their tears of grief. Porter mustered his crew and told the loyal sailors to step to the starboard, which all did, although he felt it necessary to leave the leader of the mutiny behind. On December 12, 1813, after almost a year in the Pacific, he turned back toward Valparaiso.

But word about so notable a raid upon British shipping would be brought back, even from such distant seas. At Rio de Janeiro it reached Captain James Hillyar of the British frigate, *Phoebe*, thirty-six guns, and Captain Thomas Tudor Tucker, of the British *Cherub*, eighteen guns. They sailed at once to intercept the American at Valparaiso. The *Essex* reached there January 12, 1814, and on February 8, 1814, the British ships appeared to end Porter's Pacific supremacy. A battle in the harbor seemed likely but both sides respected the neutrality of Chile and the British drew back to take posts outside the harbor. When the *Essex* decided to run for it after being blockaded six weeks, a squall blew away her main-topmast as she cleared the headland. Keen-eyed midshipman Farragut thought she could still have run before the wind and outsailed the British; Porter, unable to regain the harbor because of the wind, ran along the coast in neutral waters. But her attempt to escape had made her fair prey for the *Phoebe* and *Cherub*, which with their longer guns stayed out of range and pounded the *Essex* into submission. Porter finally struck his colors, but his cruise won him much applause in America. The British recaptured the *Essex Junior* and the prizes which the Americans had not sunk.

⁹ October 6, 1814.

¹⁰ The only jarring note at the time resulted from the appointment of an able Secretary of the Treasury to succeed Campbell. Alexander J. Dallas, a Jamaican-born Scotchman educated in Edinburgh, was the new Secretary. Dallas had settled in Philadelphia after the close of the Revolutionary War. As soon as he took office he began energetic measures to put the revenues in sounder shape and proved again, as had Gallatin, that good Secretaries of the Treasury are not popular. His plan involved some peculiar tax suggestions. One was doubling the postal rate; another was taxing lawyers. The Ways and Means Committee had as its chairman John W. Eppes, Jefferson's son-in-law, who had moved to Randolph's district as a "colonizing" measure of Virginia Republicans and had defeated Randolph for the term beginning in 1813, the only term Randolph lost. Administration proposals were consequently expected to have a favorable reception in the House committee.

Something of the public reaction is seen from the New York *Spectator*

article of October 26, 1814: "The project of adding 100 per cent on the existing rate of postage, instead of doubling the revenue derived from that source, will probably lessen it, by putting a stop, except in urgent cases, on the transmission of letters and packages by mail. The plan of levying a special tax on Counsellors and Attornies at Law appears to us at least very extraordinary. We know not on what principle this distinction among our citizens is intended to be justified—Perhaps no class of our citizens already suffer more by the war, than the gentlemen of the Bar. They are stript of more than half their practice; they must necessarily pay their full proportion of every other kind of tax; and still it seems a distinct and extraordinary burden is to be imposed upon them. Why the Hon. Secretary, who is himself a Lawyer, has exhibited this marked hostility to the Bar, we are at a loss to conjecture."

¹¹ The minor excursion of Sir Peter Parker with the British frigate *Mene-laus* to the Maryland east shore ended in the sharp repulse of the British and the death of Sir Peter. On the night of August 30 Sir Peter and his officers danced and drank and began a quest for adventure. Told of a militia gathering near Georgetown crossroads, Sir Peter marched 200 men inland and was met by a Revolutionary War veteran, Colonel Read. Sir Peter fell at the first volley, an artery in his leg severed. His men were repulsed and he bled to death while being carried back to the ship in a litter. Lord Byron, his first cousin, wrote in October 1814 a poetic eulogy in his memory.

¹² An interesting summation of Winder's generalship is given by Adams: "Neither William Hull, Alexander Smyth, Dearborn, Wilkinson, nor Winchester showed such incapacity as Winder either to organize, fortify, fight or escape. When he might have prepared defenses, he acted as scout; when he might have fought, he still scouted; when he retreated, he retreated in the wrong direction; when he fought, he thought only of retreat; and whether scouting, retreating, or fighting, he never betrayed an idea." Adams, *History*, VIII, 153.

¹³ *National Intelligencer*, August 31, 1814. The *Federal Republican* August 30, 1814, said Madison was taken in by a member of the Society of Friends, having "rode [*sic*] thirty miles since breakfast, as he stated, over a dreadful road without any dinner."

¹⁴ New York *Spectator*, September 10, 1814. In this issue telling of Armstrong's resignation the *Spectator* printed in an editorial vein the following: "In our present contest, it is our imperious duty, that all private political sentiments should yield to a general and consolidated union for defense: so assemblies for prayer should be held without regard to particular religious denominations. And who can tell, but that the Lord will answer and assure us as he did Jerusalem, 'I will defend this city to save it, for mine own sake.' Kings XIX:34."

Chapter Thirty-two—HONOR AT NIAGARA

¹ Major Jesup, when a general, gave Lossing a manuscript, "Memoir of the Campaign on the Niagara." In it Jesup said that under Scott's direction he kept the 25th Infantry under arms in instruction from seven to ten hours

daily, as did commanders of the other units. "The consequence was, that when we took the field in July our corps maneuvered in action and under fire of the enemy's artillery with the accuracy of parade." Lossing, p. 802n.

² Lossing tells a story that a woman who ate with Red Jacket did not know he had lost all his children and inquired about them. The old chief replied sadly: "Red Jacket was once a great man and in favor with the Great Spirit. He was a lofty pine among the smaller trees of the forest. But, after years of glory, he degraded himself by drinking the fire-water of the white man. The Great Spirit has looked down upon him in his anger, and his lightning has stripped the pine of its branches." Lossing, p. 803n.

³ The story of how the gray uniforms came to West Point was told to Lossing by Scott. Lossing, p. 806n.

⁴ Cited in Adams, *History*, VIII, 41.

⁵ Steele, I, 78. Steele adds: "Still the fault of attacking superior numbers, and attacking vigorously, as Scott always did, is one seldom to be censured in a leader. Scott, like all courageous, dashing leaders, had the quality of inspiring his men with something of his own spirit."

⁶ *The Spirit of Our Times*, Montreal, March 16, 1861; cited in Lossing, p. 811n.

⁷ An extra issued by the *Buffalo Gazette* July 8, 1814, shows that the new conduct of the American troops was immediately appreciated: "The battle is said to have raged with great fury—and most unquestionably was the best fought action since the declaration of war." A little later the *New York Spectator*, July 27, published a July 12 dispatch from Montreal showing the Canadian reaction: "The gallantry of our officers and men in this unequal contest was highly conspicuous but they were under the necessity of retreating from such an immense disparity of numbers to Chippewa, and we regret to find with considerable loss." The story went on to say that reinforcements were expected for the British troops in Canada.

Adams stresses the importance of the battle. "The Battle of Chippawa [*sic*] was the only occasion during the war when equal bodies of regular troops met face to face, in extended lines on an open plain in broad daylight, without advantage of position; and never again after that combat was an army of American regulars beaten by British troops. Small as the affair was, and unimportant in military results, it gave the United States army a character and pride it never before possessed." Adams, *History*, VIII, 45.

The account of Adams is not inconsistent with the Canadian dispatch. Brown had a larger army available for action, although the forces which met, under Scott and Riall, were substantially equal.

⁸ The soldiers felt that defeat and victory were measured by the number of casualties. The *New York Spectator*, July 20, 1814, published this extract of a letter from a captain to his brother in Carlisle, Pennsylvania: "Adjutant Poe told me this moment it is supposed we have nearly killed double the number of the enemy which they have killed of our troops—the total killed on both sides is supposed to be about 130 to 150."

⁹ The *New York Spectator*, July 20, 1814, reported the arrival of veteran British troops in Canada.

¹⁰ Under the heading ANOTHER GREAT BATTLE, the *New York Spectator*, August

3, 1814, described the engagement. It began about 5 P.M. "The two armies fought desperately until 8 o'clock, during which time Gen. Brown captured 9 pieces of cannon and drove Riall from his strong position. About this hour Lt. Gen. Drummond came up with a reenforcement of 2,500 men: the action was then renewed with redoubled vigor, and continued until half past ten, when both parties retired, leaving on the field *twenty four hundred* killed and wounded.

"The action was fought, as you will perceive, by night: the moon shone with resplendent brightness, and every object was visible.

"It is stated that only *four hundred* of Scott's brigade survived the engagement."

An aide to General Brown, Captain Austin, wrote to Nathan Williams in Utica: "A long, desperate and sanguinary engagement took place." He said the Americans held possession of the ground for three hours and retired to their camp in good order. Letter dated July 27, 1814, published in the *New York Spectator*, August 3, 1814.

¹¹ A "gentleman in Buffalo" who wrote the *New York Spectator*, August 3, 1814, saw the significance: "The action furnishes another evidence, that Americans have skill and valor to conquer upon land as well as upon the ocean."

¹² Brown said the British had 5,000, the Americans 4,000. *New York Spectator*, August 6, 1814. In consideration of the numbers engaged, the loss was unusually heavy, marking the battle as one of the most sharply fought in American history. All factors considered, it must be rated a draw.

Chapter Thirty-three—NORTHERN INVASION

¹ That the British plan of 1814 was based on tradition may be seen from the fact that the invasion moved down the New York side of Lake Champlain, by way of Plattsburg, which the Americans had made a strong point by their forts, rather than down the Vermont side. The Vermont route was not strongly defended. It would have given British troops the shipbuilding center of Vergennes and allowed them to cross to the Hudson River and take Albany just as readily. In discussing Burgoyne's campaign in 1777, Steele points out that the British ministry was influenced by the example of earlier French invasions that went by way of the Richelieu River and Lake Champlain. Steele, I, 38. The precedent of the New York side was even more thoroughly established in 1814. An advance by St. Albans and Burlington, Vermont, would have passed over the same kind of terrain and would have forced the Americans to abandon Plattsburg and fight without forts. Adams suggests that the British kept to the New York side out of contempt for the American defenders; they thought the British veteran army was strong enough to make success certain. Adams, *History*, VIII, 103.

² Adams, who is usually generous in his comments about Armstrong, says Armstrong's policy of removing defenses from the main line of British advance never received explanation, and suggests Armstrong invited the invasion of New York to "renew the scene of Saratoga," the hope he had earlier expressed to Wilkinson. Adams, *History*, VIII, 101.

³ Representative Cyrus King from the Maine district of Massachusetts said in the House, "Sir, this administration never intended to conquer Canada." *The Annals of Congress of the United States*, 13th Cong., I Sess., p. 1073.

⁴ Izard to Armstrong, August 11, 1814; Izard's Correspondence.

⁵ The total British force available for service at Lake Champlain, apart from Canadian militia, was 15,770, according to the calculation of Adams, VIII, 102. Every brigade was well equipped and the army had ample horses. William James, II, 206, says not less than 11,000 and an excellent artillery train crossed the border.

⁶ Undoubtedly the ministry had made no diligent study of the North American war, involving those expeditions, such as the attack on Sackets Harbor, which Prevost had commanded personally. Had it done so, amid the more pressing European questions, it could not have left him in command of so large and important an operation. The ministry appeared unable to distinguish between administrative and military ability, the one more frequently calling for caution, the other audacity.

⁷ This was an unusual battle in that it was carried on between the American ships and British infantry lining the banks of the river, with grape against musketry. The *Eagle* was sunk, however, by a 24-pound shot fired by a British galley, which ripped out a plank under the water. Theodore Roosevelt, *The Naval War of 1812*, p. 282.

⁸ While much has been made of the skirmishing in front of the British army, the British advance did not form a line of battle at any time. In his report Macomb said of the militia: "The British troops did not deign to fire on them except by their flankers and advanced patrols. So undaunted was the enemy that he never deployed in his whole march, always pressing on in column." Report of September 15, 1814; published in Niles, VII, 50. Cited in Adams, *History*, VIII, 103.

⁹ The American public and those interested in Canada were kept well informed of the progress of Macdonough's shipbuilding at Vergennes. The *New York Spectator*, May 14, 1814, published a dispatch dated May 4 from Rutland, Vermont, which said: "A letter from Vergennes of April 23rd informs, that on that day four row galleys were launched, and two had been previously launched at that place; and that the naval forces nearly ready for sea, amounted to four sloops, carrying three to twelve guns each; six row galleys and several gun boats. The new brig (as it is called) is in a state of forwardness. It will carry 24 and 32 pounders, and is almost as large as the *General Pike* on Lake Ontario. It is probable the fleet will be ready to sail (if the guns and rigging arrive in season) in about four weeks. The sailors and carpenters tell of being ready in ten days."

¹⁰ Robert Christie, *Military and Naval Operations in the Canadas*, II, 212.

¹¹ The danger of sudden gales on Lake Champlain in the late season was one reason Macdonough fought at anchor. He knew the British would have to seek him in order to gain naval superiority. By deciding to fight at anchor he was able to make preparations with kedges and hawsers for maneuvering the ships when becalmed inside the bay, where he was fairly certain to have a no more than light wind. Roosevelt, p. 387.

¹² Prevost had been in front of Plattsburg for five days before Downie's fleet appeared.

¹³ Commodore Samuel L. Breese, who commanded the gunboat *Netley*, and James Sloan, Macdonough's clerk, told the historian Lossing that the game cock had been obtained "by hook or crook." Lossing, p. 867n.

¹⁴ Although the havoc of the first broadside was appalling, the majority of those felled were able to regain their feet shortly and continue fighting. This blast was only indicative of the fury of the fighting. One of the British marines who had fought with Nelson said Trafalgar was "a mere flea bite" compared with Plattsburg. Lossing, p. 871n.

¹⁵ The delight on shore is shown by a letter from Joseph W. Moulton, of Malone, dated Peru, September 11, published by the *Troy Register*: "This is a memorable day—Rejoice: The British Fleet is in our possession after a battle of two hours and a half, in Cumberland Bay, opposite Plattsburg, which I had the pleasure to witness—The British force consisted of a 36-gun frigate, one brig mounting 22 guns—two sloops of 10 guns each, and three or four galleys, surrendered to Commodore Macdonough and the force under his command.

"The conflict was sanguinary and decisive. It is said the enemy had ten guns more than McDonough commanded. The action has just closed, and while I write there is a tremendous cannonading and discharge of musketry heard in the direction of Plattsburg. The British troops are engaged with ours. The issue is doubtful. The attack of the British on land commenced at the time of that on water. Their force is much superior—but our gallant little band will give them a warm reception. We momentarily expect information from the forts." Republished in the *New York Spectator*, September 17, 1814.

¹⁶ Another eyewitness story came from the Vermont side of the lake. The *Boston Centinel*, September 21, published an extract from a letter from Burlington, Vermont, dated September 13: "I was an eye witness, at a distance, of the glorious naval action of the 11th, and my feelings on the result can be more readily conveyed than description. Much honor and praise are due our great good Commodore! Notwithstanding the rage of exaggeration and extenuation, I am confident the British force was superior in cannon, and infinitely so in numbers of men: But Macdonough was as infinitely so in discipline, coolness, and precision.

"General Prevost was a spectator of the glorious battle, and frequently, during it, predicted the capture of our whole fleet. He has proved as poor a prophet as he is a General. He has been waiting with an army 12,000 strong, for the capture of Macdonough's fleet to convey him into the country, without doing anything toward effecting it: And as soon as he found the boot to be on the other leg, he ordered his tents to be struck, and that army to run away with a precipitance, which looked like panic. I have seen two or three officers of the 33rd, who have been made prisoners. They are fine fellows and speak most contemptuously of Sir George. One of them at dinner remarked, that 'he had long been a candidate for a grannyship and now he ought to have an unanimous vote.'"

¹⁷ Claims were immediately made for credit for the militia. The *New York*

Spectator published, September 23, 1814, an extract from a letter dated Vergennes, Vermont, September 11, which said: "A British army will never venture again 50 miles into the northern part of the United States. No man has heretofore entertained more contemptuous notions of the militia than myself, but facts must demonstrate truths. The British forces under General Prevost were driven back by Vermont and New York militia, with a heavy loss; they have now retreated within their own territory. The northern part of the state of New York, and the whole of Vermont have been in motion. The roads thronged with Vermont Volunteers. Neither ancients or moderns ever broke forth from their different domestic pursuits with a warmer or nobler spirit. They moved on silently but rapidly to the battle, without that vanity and noisiness that attended us in all our particular efforts."

¹⁸ The New York *Commercial Advertiser*, September 16, 1814, put a qualifying note in its enthusiasm. It called September 14 "a general day of good news from all quarters following news of melancholy aspect, casting gloom over every countenance. *Let us rejoice with trembling.*"

¹⁹ Macdonough's home state gave its praise. The Delaware *Gazette* said of him: "Without the patronage of friends, our young hero advanced by his courage and conduct from the humble berth of a midshipman to a command which covered the heart of the nation; a command by the experience of former wars proved to be of vital importance—where every thing was to be created by his genius and protected by his vigilance. In a very gloomy moment he answered the hopes of his countrymen, and in a radiance of glory dispelled the menacing storm." Republished in the New York *Commercial Advertiser*, September 29, 1814.

²⁰ At least one Canadian newspaper spoke out for Prevost. The Quebec *Gazette*, September 29, said: "By a rare strength of mind, inconceivable to those who think only of themselves, he sacrificed his personal advantage to his ideas of the good of the service. He knew that he would have to encounter the irritated feelings and honest prejudices of the bravest soldiery in the world; he knew that personally he would have to encounter all the calumny which the malice of the factious and disappointed could invent, all that ignorance and prejudice could be made to believe. He knew all this; and despised it all for the service of Sovereign and Country. His example is lost on his calumniators."

Chapter Thirty-four—CLEANING THE GULF COAST

¹ Much of the information about the Lafitte brothers comes from Walker, pp. 31-61, and from a news story of the New York *Spectator*, October 26, 1814, apparently the first item on the Lafittes in Eastern newspapers. The *Spectator* spells the name La Fitte. Although Laffite is the preferred spelling today, I have chosen to use Lafitte, the spelling used most frequently in contemporary New Orleans and early histories.

² Walker, p. 47.

³ The *Spectator*, October 26, 1814, gave the account of the sparring between Jean Lafitte and Governor Claiborne. "The chief of this horde, like Charles De Moor, had mixed with his many vices some transcendent virtues. In the

year 1813, this party had from its turpitude and boldness claimed the attention of the Governor of Louisiana; and, to break up the establishment, he thought proper to strike at the head. He therefore offered a reward of 500 dollars for the head of Monsieur La Fitte, who was well known to the inhabitants of New Orleans for his immediate connexion [*sic*], and his once having been a fencing master in that city of great reputation, which art he had learned in Bonaparte's army, where he was a captain. The reward, which was offered by the Governor for the head of La Fitte, was answered by the offer of a reward from the latter of 5000 dollars for the head of the Governor."

⁴ Reaching the Baratarians involved dangers, the main one being surprise. The *Spectator*, October 26, 1814, tells of the officer sent out by Claiborne with a company to bring the banditti to the city. "The company . . . approached very near to the fortified island before he [the leader] saw a man or heard a sound, until he heard a whistle not unlike a boatswain's call. Then it was he found himself surrounded by armed men who had emerged from the secret avenues which led into the bayou. Here it was that this modern Charles De Moor developed his few noble traits; for to this man, who had come to destroy his life and all that was dear to him, he not only spared his life, but offered him that which would have made the honest soldier easy for the remainder of his days, which was indignantly refused!"

⁵ Walker, pp. 43-44. Lafitte also wrote Governor Claiborne saying, "I am the stray sheep wishing to return to the sheepfold," and offered to defend his section of Louisiana in return for cessation of the prosecutions and "an act of oblivion for all that has been done hitherto."

⁶ Walker, pp. 52-53.

⁷ Cited in Lossing, p. 1019.

⁸ In calling for fresh volunteers, Governor Blount of Tennessee said: "It is currently reported in Pensacola that the Emperor of Russia has offered his Britannic Majesty fifty thousand of his best troops for the conquest of Louisiana, and that this territory will fall a prey to the enemy before the expiration of one month." Cited in Adams, *History*, VIII, 320.

⁹ Paine says, "This was Andrew Jackson's way." He makes the point that the men feared Jackson more than they did the enemy. Ralph D. Paine, *The Fight for a Free Sea*, p. 207.

¹⁰ Orders restraining Jackson from attacking Pensacola were en route, but there is a strong impression that they were face-saving. Monroe never appeared to send restraining orders by the fleetest messengers. Jackson wrote the War Department for permission to take Pensacola in July. He moved against it in November. An anxious War Department would have had plenty of time to hold him back.

¹¹ Dispatches from New Orleans to the New York *Spectator* invalidate the criticisms that Jackson allowed himself to be diverted to Pensacola when he should have been in New Orleans and that he was urgently called by the populace. Obviously New Orleans thought the capture of Pensacola necessary for the protection of the Gulf coast. On October 26, 1814, the *Spectator* had a New Orleans dispatch saying little was to be expected in the way of any enemy because Jackson would soon have Pensacola. Later the paper printed a letter from New Orleans to a New York commercial house: "There is little or no doubt but Gen. Jackson will be in possession of Pensacola in two

or three days. He was transporting troops across the bay to Mobile for that purpose, on the 26th inst.; his force is ample, having upward of 1000 Indians attached to his army. With Pensacola in our possession and the point of Mobile well fortified, we have little to fear from the enemy in this quarter."

¹²How the capture of Pensacola was regarded in Washington is shown by the announcement of the *National Intelligencer*, the administration organ, on December 10, 1814. After the headline news the paper added this carefully worded comment: "We have heard it said, and perhaps correctly, that orders had been issued some days ago by government [*sic*] forbidding the expedition; which, however, if so issued, will not reach the army, until long after it has abandoned the place, if, as private accounts intimate, it be Gen. Jackson's design immediately to return. Pensacola has been notoriously a harbor of the enemy, British as well as Indians, for a long time past, and in so far, it appears to us, had entirely forfeited its neutral character. It had become to all intents and purposes, an enemy post, whatever it may have been nominally. Indeed, the enemy was found and driven by our force on Spanish soil. We were therefore not at all surprised to hear of the expedition against it, the result of which we never doubted, though we could not have hoped it would have been attended with so little loss."

This statement of justification, especially the earlier part, is so similar in style to Madison's manner of expression, that one is entitled to wonder whether the President himself did not dictate it to Editor Joe Gales.

¹³Washington was becoming concerned about the projected attack against New Orleans, but Jackson was not a general to deal with future enemies when real ones were immediately at hand. He wrote Monroe from Mobile October 10, 1814: "As soon as security is given to this section of my district, which is first indispensably necessary, I shall hasten to New Orleans." Adams, *History*, VIII, 325. It appears from the news dispatches that Livingston was more alarmed than the ordinary citizen of New Orleans and it was not to be expected that Tennessee would provide the city with a defending army until that state's soldiers had cleared the British from the nearer waters of Mobile and Pensacola.

¹⁴Walker, p. 52.

Chapter Thirty-five—THE HARTFORD CONVENTION

¹Cited in Simeon E. Baldwin, "The Hartford Convention," in *Great Events by Famous Historians*, edited by Rossiter Johnson, XV, 327.

²Ingersoll, I, 60.

³*Ibid.*, p. 61.

⁴Baldwin, p. 330.

⁵*Essex Junto* was the term first used for the group in Essex County, Massachusetts, who opposed the royal governor before the Revolutionary War. John Adams revived the term in 1797 for the George Cabot, Fisher Ames, Timothy Pickering clique, which responded to Hamilton's rather than his own leadership. Stimpson, *American Politics*, p. 29.

⁶Baldwin, p. 332.

⁷ Lossing, p. 229. Lossing quotes in a footnote a speech by Quincy delivered in his ninetieth year, on June 29, 1861, to the Coast Guard at Quincy, Massachusetts: "With what pride and joy would the founders of this Republic have hailed the events of our day—a whole people rising as one man, with one mind and one heart, in support of the Constitution and the Union."

⁸ Cited in Baldwin, p. 333.

⁹ Republished by *National Intelligencer*, August 20, 1812.

¹⁰ Ingersoll, I, 64.

¹¹ New York *Evening Post*, July 21, 1812.

¹² Ingersoll, I, 67.

¹³ McMaster says a majority; Lossing, p. 890, says two thirds took the oath.

¹⁴ September 21, 1814.

¹⁵ John S. Barry, "The Hartford Convention," in *Great Events*, XV, 335-336.

¹⁶ Barry, p. 338. Barry goes on to say that had the other half voted there is no certainty the majority would have been lessened.

¹⁷ McMaster, IV, 248, quotes the minority protest signed by seventy-six members. The House judged this report disrespectful.

¹⁸ Lossing, p. 1013.

¹⁹ Noah Webster said he was present at the first meeting, held in Northampton, Massachusetts, that suggested the Hartford Convention. The meeting was on January 19, 1814. "The thought of dissolving the union never entered the head of any of the projectors," he said. Noah Webster, "The Origin of the Hartford Convention," in *Collection of Papers on Political, Literary and Moral Subjects*, p. 315.

²⁰ Cited in *DAB*.

²¹ Brief biographies of all of the delegates are given in a footnote by Lossing, p. 1016. Barry, pp. 339-340, gives a similar summary.

²² Cited in Baldwin, p. 335.

²³ The *National Intelligencer* had predicted the convention would end abortively. On January 15, 1815, the paper said: "It has so terminated—mentioned but once on the floor of Congress that we recollect—and then only jocosely."

Chapter Thirty-six—PEACE THAT LASTED

¹ Gallatin stood closest to Madison and could speak most clearly the administration viewpoint, but Adams headed the delegation. This was because Gallatin had failed of Senate confirmation when the original, three-man commission was appointed. Only when he reached St. Petersburg did he learn he had been rejected, yet the Senate acted not in distaste for Gallatin personally, but because he took the peace commission assignment and remained Secretary of the Treasury *in absentia*. The Senate, with the punctiliousness about such matters that then existed, doubted he could serve the public interest in two exacting and time-consuming jobs. When Madison appointed the second commission Gallatin resigned from the Treasury, yet at such a time that his name was last on the list.

The intellectual stature of the commission was as great as any that ever spoke for the United States in a foreign negotiation, which probably explains

the simplicity and lasting nature of its work. The Britons could not look down their noses at the American delegation if they had desired, as at first seemed their inclination. It was a working commission, Clay along with the others, even though he was attracted by the social charm and night gaieties of the old world quite as much as by the day labors at the peace commission. Russell appeared to lean more toward Clay than Gallatin or Adams, perhaps in realization that the Kentuckian was one to whom a man might readily attach his political prospects. There was a dignity in the manner in which this peace commission conducted its business; it reflected a credit on the American nation in its youth and displayed it even then as a world power that would have to be reckoned with not only because of its mounting population and vast geographical extent, but also because of the capacity of the men being brought to the top by the republican form of government, as contrasted with the hereditary or the more purely democratic or French communal processes.

*The *Boston Gazette* and *New York Spectator*, March 12, 1814, published an extract from a letter, dated Washington, February 21, 1814, that gives an interesting sidelight on the speculation of the day: "Before the nomination of Clay, the President sent for him and observed, there is a proposal from the British government to negotiate, and we must have peace. You have *driven* me into this war, what can you do to help me out of it? And it was finally concluded that with a view to conciliate the southern and western people to peace, that Clay was to go to Gottenburgh and make a treaty, in which no mention was to be made about the right of impressment, but enter into the best arrangement they could about the practice. Clay was to stand and bluster about it at first, but eventually agree to the treaty with the other commissioners—In the meantime the warlike attitude was to be kept up and preparations made as if for a vigorous campaign. Clay gave this information himself gratuitously—and I have it from a gentleman upon whom I can place the greatest reliance, and have not the least doubt about the fact." This story, published nine months in advance of the signing of the treaty, cannot be brushed aside as idle capital gossip, because the part of it relating to the negotiations is almost precisely what occurred. According to the present-day accuracy test of Washington correspondents, the story "stood up."

²Alexander of Russia called the attack on Denmark an "outrage in which history, so replete with acts of violence, has no equal." Edwin Emerson, *A History of the Nineteenth Century Year by Year*, I, 224.

⁴*New York Spectator*, October 29, 1814. Under the heading, THE OBJECT OF THE WAR OBTAINED, the paper quoted the letter from Monroe: "The United States, having resisted by war, the practice of impressment, and continued the war until that practice had ceased, by a Peace in Europe, their object has been essentially obtained for the present."

⁵O. H. Smith gives the story John Quincy Adams told Robert C. Winthrop of Boston. A grand musical entertainment was proposed at Ghent to celebrate the peace and the chief musician called on the American delegation to ascertain their national song. Some were for "Hail, Columbia," others for "Yankee Doodle." The latter won the vote of the American commission, but no one could give the air. Adams said he had never sung or whistled a tune in his life. Clay, Bayard and the others did not know how the music went. Clay

then called John, his colored man. "John," he said, "whistle 'Yankee Doodle' for this gentleman." As John whistled, the musician wrote down the air with a pencil and the next day the band played "Yankee Doodle" "in splendid harmony, to the admiration and delight" of those present. "This," Smith said, "establishes forever 'Yankee Doodle' as our national song and air." O. H. Smith, *Early Indiana Trials and Sketches*, p. 282.

⁶ December 30, 1814.

⁷ December 30, 1814; cited in the *New York Herald*, February 15, 1815.

⁸ *A Compilation of the Messages and Papers of the Presidents of the United States, 1789-1897*, edited by James Richardson, I, 552.

⁹ The New York stock and bond market, which in 1814 consisted of the trading under the shade trees along Wall Street, and was referred to only during unusual events, had been temperamental during the closing period of the war. Stocks dropped three to four points when Clay was made a member of the peace commission, but skyrocketed with the news of peace. The *New York Herald*, February 12, 1815, said: "We give [a picture] of the effects of the prospects of peace even before ratification. Our markets of every kind experienced a sudden and to many a shocking change. Sugar fell from twenty-six \$ per cnt. to 12.50. Tea, which sold at 2 dol. 25 cts on Saturday yesterday was purchasable at 1 dol. Specie, which had got up to the enormous rate of 22 per cent premium, dropped down to two. The article in particular of Tin fell from 80 dollars the box to 25. Six per cents rose from 76 to 86. 10 per cents and Treasury notes rose from 92 to 98 per cent.

"*Sailors Rights* beat time to the sound of the hammer at every wharf and *Free Trade* looked briskly up; no longer did it live in toasts alone."

Chapter Thirty-seven—BATTLE OF NEW ORLEANS

¹ Walker, p. 15.

² *Ibid.*, p. 73.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 74.

⁴ Good judgment suggested the British might march overland to capture New Orleans. Mobile would then be a key position. It was necessary for Jackson to divide his regular troops. He left more than half of them, the 2nd, 3rd and 19th regiments, in Mobile, which had been assigned to General James Winchester, the commander who lost at the River Raisin. Jackson wrote Monroe an opinion of how a resourceful enemy would approach New Orleans: "A real military man . . . would first possess himself of that point [Mobile], draw to his standard the Indians, and march direct to the walnut Hills [now Vicksburg, Mississippi] . . . and being able to forage on the country, support himself, cut off all supplies from above and make this country an easy conquest." Marquis James, p. 207. Monroe did not believe the British were interested in Mobile. Adams, *History*, VIII, 331.

⁵ For the story of the review and embarkation of the 93rd, cf. Walker, pp. 77ff.

⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 82.

⁷ Adams, *History*, VIII, 311.

⁸The significance of the Battle of New Orleans has very recently been defended by Robert Selph Henry in an address (*Tennesseans and Territory*) presented before the Tennessee Society of St. Louis on January 10, 1953; published in the *Tennessee Historical Quarterly*, XII (September 1953), 195-203. Henry said: "The idea that New Orleans was an unnecessary battle fought two weeks after the War of 1812 was over . . . is as erroneous as it is common. . . . There is good ground to believe that, treaty or no treaty, a British victory at New Orleans would have profoundly changed the actual outcome of what is now justly regarded as a successful Second War of American Independence."

Henry points out that the signing of the treaty did not formally conclude the war and that, in fact, the British insisted the treaty should not take effect until it had been ratified by both England and America. The ratification was completed on February 17, 1815, over a month after New Orleans was fought.

Henry discusses the British insistence on delaying the cease-fire in this way: "The most apparent purpose was to allow time for carrying out the British design against New Orleans. This expedition—the most formidable sent out during the war—was not set on foot until six weeks after British commissioners to negotiate peace had been named. Detailed instructions were not issued to the commander of the expedition until a month after the British and American commissioners had had their first meeting and begun their protracted negotiations.

"At the very least, the New Orleans expedition was intended to affect the peace negotiations by seizure of a vital point. But the instructions of September 6, 1814, went beyond mere strengthening of the hands of the British commissioners. The commander of the expedition was instructed to 'rescue the whole province of Louisiana from the United States' if he should find the inhabitants favorable to such a move 'either with the view of establishing themselves as an independent people or of returning under the dominion of the Spanish Crown.'"

There is evidence that Great Britain was not only planning to separate Louisiana from the United States, but also to take over and rule it as a colony.

Henry states the signal importance of the Battle of New Orleans in decisive terms: "It was Jackson's victory and not the treaty of Ghent which settled the question for good and all.

"The Treaty of Ghent, in itself, settled nothing. It secured none of the objects for which the United States had professedly gone to war. . . .

"How decisive the victory was may be estimated from consideration of what might have happened had the result been otherwise. To Thomas Jefferson, the New Orleans threat was a matter of grave apprehension. He expected that the place must fall and that if it did, the British would hold it indefinitely. On the other hand, the extreme Federalists of New England felt, as one of them wrote, that if the British should succeed at New Orleans, as he had no doubt they would, the Union might be considered as severed and the way cleared for a separate New England Confederation.

"Such questions were forever set at rest by Jackson's great victory. . . ."

⁹Pakenham was accompanied by Harry Smith, who had carried Ross's dispatches from the Chesapeake to England. Smith explains the lateness of their

arrival: "Our Captain Swaine . . . was of the old school and made everything snug for the night by shortening sail to the great amusement of the crew. But for this we should have been off the mouth of the Mississippi for the rendezvous." Harry Smith, p. 228.

¹⁰ As in the case of the Northern Army, there was discussion in England that Wellington should command the attack on New Orleans. One of Wellington's letters says the troops he had seen embark at Bordeaux would have to be badly managed if they could not win any contest in which they were engaged in America. Cited in Walker, p. 209.

¹¹ Walker, p. 93. Walker goes on to say: "It was indeed regarded an expedition to occupy, rather than invade a defenseless country, as a pleasure party and speculative adventure more than a serious warlike enterprise. . . . Music, dancing, and even dramatic entertainments, aided by the wives of the officers, who in considerable numbers accompanied the expedition, varied the monotony of the voyage."

¹² Lieutenant Catesby ap R. Jones, nephew of the War of 1812 officer, commanded the Confederate ram *Merrimac* in the battle with the *Monitor*, after the wounding of Commodore Franklin Buchanan early in the engagement.

¹³ The loss of the gunboats was the signal for feverish activity in New Orleans. Jackson declared martial law when the legislature seemed to him dilatory in following his recommendation that it suspend the writ of habeas corpus. He rushed orders for Coffee, Carroll and the Kentuckians to hasten.

¹⁴ Walker calls them "deserters, traitors and refugees from New Orleans, who left the city in full confidence that it would not and could not be defended. . . . In justice to Louisiana, be it said that these individuals were ex-officials of the old Spanish Government in Louisiana and Florida, who had never acquiesced in the transfer of the country to the United States." Walker, p. 118.

¹⁵ Adams is most critical of Jackson for permitting the British thus to approach undetected: "The record of American generalship offered many examples of misfortune, but none so complete as this. Neither Hull nor Harrison, neither Winder nor Samuel Smith, had allowed a large British army, heralded long in advance, to arrive within seven miles unseen and unsuspected, and without so much as an earthwork, a man, or a gun between them and their object. The disaster was unprecedented, and could be repaired only by desperate measures." Again, Adams says: "Jackson was even slower than Winder to see the point of danger or to concentrate his forces." Adams, *History*, VIII, 339-340.

But the country around New Orleans admitted more readily of a covert approach. At Washington the British had to pass Bladensburg which they could not turn without leaving a hostile army between them and their fleet. At New Orleans they had a selection of six or more eligible avenues of approach, to guard which Jackson, with the troops available, could only post pickets. He had to hold his main body in the city ready to defend any avenue the British might select. On this point Walker says: "Let it not be imagined that this success of the British was due to any want of vigilance or care on the part of Jackson. The bayou Bienvenu had early attracted Jackson's attention, and Major Villeré, whose father's plantation was situated at

the head of the bayou, had been ordered to send a picket to the Fisherman's Village, to watch the entrance of this inlet." Walker, p. 122. Good judgment would not have allowed Jackson to decide the British would advance by the bayou Bienvenu and to station his army there. It was, as the campaign developed, a good approach for a *coup de main*, on which the British faltered, but possibly the worst available for a battle.

¹⁶ Walker tells of interviewing Villeré: "Thirty-seven years had passed, and the gallant young Creole hero of this adventure, emaciated by long sickness, and prematurely old, surrounded by a family of gallant sons and lovely daughters, sat in that very gallery, and on the very spot on which he was surprised by the British, and related with graphic distinctness, with kindling eye and voice, hoarse with emotion, the painful sensation, the agonizing remorse which agitated his soul, when compelled to sacrifice his faithful dog to prevent the surprise of his native city and save his own honor." Walker, p. 129.

¹⁷ Coffee at this period "was a man of noble aspect, tall and herculean in frame, yet not destitute of a certain natural dignity and ease of manner. Though of great height and weight, his appearance on horseback, mounted on a fine Tennessee thoroughbred, was striking and impressive." Walker, p. 154.

¹⁸ Of the soldiers Jackson commanded at New Orleans, Roosevelt said: "Accustomed to the most lawless freedom, and to giving free rein to the full violence of their passions, defiant of discipline and impatient of the slightest restraint, caring little for God and nothing for man, they were soldiers who, under an ordinary commander, would have been fully as dangerous to themselves and their leaders as to their foes. But Andrew Jackson was of all men the one best fitted to manage such troops. Even their fierce natures quailed before the ungovernable fury of a spirit greater than their own: and their sullen, stubborn wills were bent at last before his unyielding temper and iron hand." Roosevelt, p. 463.

Walker describes Coffee's troops: "Their appearance . . . was not very military. In their woollen hunting-shirts, of dark or dingy color, and copperas-dyed pantaloons, made, both cloth and garments, at home, by their wives, mothers and sisters, with slouching wool hats, some composed of the skins of racoons and foxes . . . with belts of untanned deer-skin, in which were stuck hunting-knives and tomahawks—with their long unkempt hair and unshorn faces, Coffee's men were not calculated to please the eyes of the martinet, or one accustomed to regard neatness and primness, as essential virtues of the good soldier." Walker, p. 154.

¹⁹ William Carroll, on whom the brunt of the fighting at New Orleans was about to fall, had moved to Nashville from Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, and become the devoted follower of Jackson. Walker described him as being stout, compact and muscular, and of upright and soldierly bearing. He was, says James, "one of the best dressed sparks in Nashville." Marquis James, p. 160.

²⁰ Except to a limited degree on the Northern border, the British Army of 1814 had not contended seriously against the frontier rifle, made at small foundries and hand forges. Morgan's Virginians were armed with rifles when they marched north at the outbreak of the Revolutionary War. The period

between Saratoga and New Orleans was one of transition. The musket was a lighter weapon better suited at that time for infantry use. The rifle, with its long barrel, was heavy to carry on long marches. Continental soldiers still preferred the musket. The art of spiraling the barrel, centuries old, was accepted slowly. Following the American Revolution, rifles were introduced in the French Army but Napoleon thought they were inefficient. The British made slight use of them on the Peninsula. When the United States began the manufacture of rifles at Harper's Ferry they were worked into the Army during the War of 1812, the first conflict in which they were used extensively.

²¹ Jackson dug his trenches behind the old Rodriguez Canal on Christmas Day, interrupted once by artillery fire in the British line, which proved to be merely a salute greeting Pakenham. Jean Lafitte looked at Jackson's line. He did not have the temerity to make suggestions direct, but with the trained eye of one of Bonaparte's captains, did make an important contribution to the defense. He told Livingston the line could be turned at the cypress swamp and suggested it be extended. Livingston passed the word to Jackson and the general carried it into effect. Marquis James, p. 247.

²² Jackson at first was adamant against any bargains with the banditti. Finally Judge Dominick Hall of the United States district court, with the recommendation of the legislature and the district attorney, released the Baratarians from jail. Walker, p. 146. Jean Lafitte then called on Jackson, at 106 Royal Street, at night, and pleaded that the Baratarians be permitted to serve in Jackson's army. Marquis James, p. 229. Jackson accepted them and gave them assignments.

²³ Letter dated January 6, 1815; published February 4.

²⁴ Colonel John Burgoyne was the son of General John Burgoyne who surrendered to the Americans at Saratoga in 1777. In the Crimean War he directed construction of the British works at Sevastopol.

²⁵ Sugar casks were used because the troops in digging the emplacements hit water at a depth of eight inches. Harry Smith, p. 231.

²⁶ Walker, p. 257.

²⁷ This minor employment of cotton bales accounted for the tradition, often associated with the defense of New Orleans, that Jackson's troops used them for constructing their entire defensive line. Those that had been used earlier were removed before the main battle. Stimpson, *Popular Questions*, p. 297, says there was probably not a bale in Jackson's line when the final battle was fought.

²⁸ Walker, p. 212.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 311.

³⁰ James Parton, "The Battle of New Orleans," in *Great Events*, XV, 345.

³¹ Because he apprehended slides, Pakenham inspected the work frequently and questioned the engineers about the banks. According to Harry Smith he was assured the banks would hold. As he feared, they gave way at a critical moment.

³² Parton, "New Orleans," p. 347.

³³ *Ibid.*, p. 348.

³⁴ Smith said, "It was all very well to victimize old Mullens; the facines,

ladders, etc., could have been supplied by one word I will not name." Harry Smith, p. 233. As a footnote Smith's cousin, G. C. Moore Smith who edited the *Autobiography*, supplied, with a question mark, the word *pluck*.

⁸⁵ Parton, "New Orleans," p. 350.

⁸⁶ Although the 93rd was under Keane, who attacked close to the river, this regiment crossed to the support of Gibbs in front of Carroll and there met the deadly fire of the Tennessee riflemen. The regiment made its advance just as Pakenham fell. The standard-bearer of the 93rd felt something rub against his epaulet and through the smoke saw it was Pakenham's small black horse. "Hurrah, brave Highlanders!" shouted Pakenham, and then fell into McDougall's arms. Walker, p. 330.

⁸⁷ General Morgan commanded Davis to halt his men, but was told it was impossible. "Sir," stormed the general, "I have not seen you try." Walker, p. 353.

⁸⁸ The British advance on the west bank of the river was halted not by lack of artillery but by Lambert's orders. Thornton was assisted in dislodging Morgan by British gunboats armed with carronades.

⁸⁹ February 6, 1815.

⁹⁰ February 6, 1815.

⁹¹ The bodies of General Pakenham and some of the other officers were disemboweled and placed in casks of rum to be transported to England. Others were buried on the field. The viscera of Pakenham were buried beneath a pecan tree, which, according to Creole tradition, never again bore fruit. Walker, p. 361.

INDEX

Index

A

- Abercromby, Sir Ralph, 676, 726
Aberdeen, Scotland, 248
Adair, John, 336, 358, 688, 696
Adams, Abigail, 738
Adams, Henry, re Clinton, 384;
re Tecumseh, 442; re Barney,
532
Adams, John, 257, 475, 652, 662,
740; re declaration of war, 27-
28, 356-357; and John Ran-
dolph, 35; and "Hail Colum-
bia," 385; and Army leadership
(1798), 393; re life of states-
man, 710; and Essex Junto
(1797), 752
Adams, John Quincy, 40, 258,
362, 392; handclasp, 36; re
Clay, 36; Clay on, 62-63, 508;
and *Chesapeake* affair, 92;
minister to Russia, 283, 392;
on U. S. peace delegation, 483,
490, 667, 668, 669, 670, 753-
754; re H. G. Otis, 663; anec-
dote re national anthem, 754-
755
Adams, U. S. brig, 185, 378
Adams, U. S. frigate, 365
Alabama, 448, 454, 716; earth-
quake, 446
Alabama, Confederate vessel, 743
Alabama River, 442, 445, 449,
460, 467
Albany, N. Y., 303, 355, 375, 388,
598, 620, 747; Dearborn's head-
quarters, 26, 147, 179, 183, 202;
armistice negotiated at, 376,
377; honors Macdonough, 636;
and fall of Bonaparte, 720
Alexander I, of Russia, 28, 29,
471, 473, 481, 483, 484, 489-
490, 667, 719, 721, 751, 754
Alexandria, Va., 22, 296, 509,
516, 519, 523, 601, 725, 738
Alibamu Indians, 443-444, 713
Alien and Sedition Laws, 278
Allen, Col. John, 229, 386
Allen, Maj. W., 246
Allen, William, 712
Allen, Lt. William Henry, 92,
270-271
Allen, Lt. William Howard, 272
Allen Co., Ky., 386
Alverd, Dr. —, 420
Amelia Island, 131, 133
Ames, Fisher, 653, 752
Amherstburg, Can., 125, 154, 162,
338
Amiens, Treaty of, 42, 45
Anacreontic Society, 589-590
Andersonville prison, 724
Andrea Doria, U. S. brig, 512
Annapolis, Md., 170, 171, 259,
301, 515, 526, 536, 587
Annide, British vessel, 679
Apalachicola River, 447
Argus, U. S. brig, 210, 270, 271,
272, 365, 379
Ariel, U. S. schooner, 312, 322,
323, 324, 327
Arkansas River, 243
Armistead, Maj. George, 396,
525, 724
Armistead, Lewis A., 396
Armistead, Capt. Walker Keith,
396
Armstrong, Maj. Gen. John
(father of Secretary of War),
276-277
Armstrong, Brig. Gen. John, 203,

393, 496, 603; minister to France, 47, 279, 392; and Harrison, 223, 234, 349; Dearborn's report to re York, Can., 251, 253; appointed Secretary of War (1813), 275, 279-280, 284, 285; sketch of, 276-281; new aims, 280-281, 285; ordered to remain in Washington, 285-286; and Wilkinson, 286, 413-414, 417, 418, 511, 709, 747; J. Quincy re, 362; and Jackson's promotion, 429, 711; and Gallatin, 482; not consulted re head of Chesapeake Department, 499; tries to escape Madison's supervision, 414-415; and burning of Newark, Ont., 419, 428; and burning of New York frontier, 421; authority curbed, 428-429; Monroe re, 428, 429; and Jackson (1813), 439, 440; inactivity re Washington's defenses, 510-511, 725, 727-728, 734; desire to move U. S. capital, 510-511, 592; refuses to believe attack aimed at Washington, 518, 519, 520, 522, 527; reviews troops, 523; confers with Winder and President, 529, 530; wants command, 531, 532-533, 733; and Bladensburg, 541, 542, 568, 569, 572, 603, 734, 740; suggests defending Capitol, 542, 730-731, 737; re contact between Ross and Thornton, 553-554, 738; during British occupation of capital, 560, 562, 574; return to Washington, 603; resignation (1814), 604, 745; strips Lake Champlain area of trained troops (1814), 621, 623, 624, 747; and canard re administration's attitude toward Canada, 622-623; *Notices of the War of 1812*, and *Spectator*, 622;

ignores Jackson's letter re Pensacola, 640; brother-in-law of Robert R. Livingston, 650; Izard to (1814), 710
 Arnold, Benedict, 55, 145, 146, 380, 663
 Arnold, Peggy Shippen, 145
Asia, British vessel, 679
 Askew, John (John Askin, Jr.), 160, 376
 Asquith's rifle corps, 591
 Astor, John Jacob, 23-24, 108, 153, 355, 375, 432, 433
 Auglaize River, 226
 Augusta, Ga., 134
 Austerlitz, Battle of, 28, 45, 46
 Austin, Capt. —, 747
 Austria, 29, 283
 Auttose, 458, 716
 Aux Canards River, 156, 157, 158, 338

B

Badajoz, Spain, 80, 505
 Bailey, Chester, 561, 566
 Bailey, Capt. Dixon, 450, 451, 714
 Bainbridge, Master Commandant Joseph, 390
 Bainbridge, Commodore William, 177-178, 260, 600, 743
 Baker, —, secretary of British legation, 182
 Baker, Jacob, 573, 574
 Baker, Dr. William, 588
 Baldwin, Benjamin, 717
 Baltimore, Md., 26, 291, 300, 361, 368, 418, 473, 496, 498, 510, 511, 550, 588, 589, 725, 727; riot of July 1812 turns state to Federalists, 136-144, 374; collection for Havre de Grace, 295; defenses, 296, 396; militia, 396, 536, 541-542, 732, 736; ovation for Winder, 497, 499, 724-725; and Joseph Barney, 513; importance as shipping center, 515, 520; sends aid to

- Winder, 525-526; learns of seizure of Washington, 561; British attempt on (Aug. 1814), 549, 590-591, 669, 742; threat to British in Washington, 583; plans fleet of privateers to harry British Isles, 599
- Baltimore*, U. S. vessel, 89-90
- Bancroft, George, 325, 328, 367, 494
- Bangor, Me., 658
- Barataria Bay, 643, 644, 645
- Barataria Bay Islands, 641, 645
- Baratarians, 641, 642-646, 647, 689, 690, 750-751, 759
- Barbour, Gov. James, 63, 298, 299, 362, 660
- Barclay, Capt. Robert H., commands British fleet on Lake Erie, 314, 316, 317, 318, 321, 398; and Battle of Lake Erie, 322, 323, 324, 325, 326, 327, 337
- Bardstown, Ky., 232
- Barker, Jacob, quoted, 733
- Barlow, Joel, 77, 283, 366, 391, 723
- Barney, Maj. B., 139
- Barney, Commodore Joshua, sketch of, 512-513; activities on the Chesapeake, 511-512, 513-514, 515, 516-517; joins Winder, 522, 525, 528; flotilla destroyed, 522, 729-730, 737, 739; demands action, 531-532; at Battle of Bladensburg, 543-548, 735, 736, 737, 737-738; and Ross, 548-549, 549-550; seamen suspected of firing on Ross, 553; death, 737
- Barney, Mary Chase, 513
- Barney, William Bedford, 513
- Barney's Inn, 724
- Barron, Commodore James, 91, 92, 270, 368-369, 396, 626
- Barron, Joseph, 109
- Bartholomew, Col. Joseph, 115, 116, 119
- Barton, Capt. Robert C., 115, 116, 117, 118
- Bass, John W., 98
- Bass Islands, 320
- Bassano, — de, French minister of foreign affairs, 470
- Bath, N. Y., 418
- Bathurst, Lord, re America's debt to British Navy, 81; Brock reports to re capture of Detroit, 166; Provost reports to re American reprisals in prisoner-of-war controversy, 194; instructs Ross re slaves, 395, 515; informed of American sale of beef to Canadians, 425, 710; wants Washington buildings held for indemnity, 552; instructions re American military and naval stores, 555; and treaty negotiations, 669; orders re control of Mississippi and taking of territory, 677
- Baton Rouge, La., 127, 128, 129, 131
- Battery, the, 24-25, 471
- Battery Douglass, 617
- Bayard, James Asheton, 483, 490, 667, 668
- Baylies, Hodijah, 663
- Baynes, Col. Edward, 182, 496, 624, 637; quoted, 636
- Bayonne Decree, 46
- Bayou Bienvenu, 680, 681, 685, 687, 693, 757
- Bayou Sara, 129
- Beale's riflemen, 686
- Beall, Col. William D., 526, 536, 543, 544, 546, 547, 548, 734, 737
- Bean, Capt. William C., 115
- Beanes, Dr. William, 522, 585-589
- Beasley, Maj. Daniel, 449-450, 714
- Beath, —, Boston chemist, 295, 296
- Beauharnais, Hortense de, 52

- Beauport jail, 495
 Beaver Dams, 413
 Beckwith, Maj. Gen. Sir Sidney, 297, 298, 299, 300, 624
Bedford, British vessel, 679
 Beekmantown, N. Y., 627
 Belfast, Me., 658
 Beluche, —, Baratarian, 690
Belvidera, British frigate, 170, 379
 Ben, camp follower at Tippecanoe, 118
 Ben More, 675
 Benedict, Md., 516, 519, 584, 585, 587, 589, 729, 730
 Bennett, Capt. —, 98
 Bennett's Coffee House, 475
 Bennings Bridge, 529
 Bennington, Vt., 168, 382
 Bentley, —, Baltimore jailer, 140, 142
 Benton, Jesse, 440-441, 451, 454
 Benton, Thomas H., 365, 392, 438, 440, 441, 451, 454, 712-713, 716
 Beresford, Capt. John Poer, 177, 288-289
 Beresford, Gen. William Carr, 361, 624, 625, 678
 Berkeley, Adm. —, 92
 Berlin Decree, 46, 47, 49-50, 50-51, 79, 279, 360, 392; revocation, 656
 Bermuda, 177, 288, 289, 424, 503, 504, 586, 595
 Bibb, George Mortimer, 221
 Bibb, William Wyatt, 34
 Biddle, Capt. James, 177, 390
 Bienville, Gov. —, 467
 Bigelow, Timothy, 663
 Big Warrior, 442, 446, 447, 467
 Bill of Rights, 137, 138
 Black Bird, 218, 219
 Black Hawk, 217-218, 344, 345
 Black Partridge, 217
 Black Rock, N. Y., 21, 311, 317, 382, 419, 607
 Black Swamp of Maumee River, 151, 387
 Bladensburg, Md., Stansbury's forces at, 529, 732; Americans move to, 530, 531-533, 533-534; Battle of, 512, 526, 530, 535-551, 555, 571, 572, 603, 677, 704, 729, 734, 739-740, 757; British return through, 584
 Blaine, James G., 570
 Blair, Francis P., 508
Blanche, British vessel, 380
 Blanque, Jean, 645
 Bleeker, Maj. —, 389
 Blodget, Samuel, 577
 Blodget's Hotel, Washington, 577-578, 592-593
 Bloody Run, 154
 Bloomfield, Brig. Gen. Joseph, 22, 199, 203, 269
 Bloomfield, N. J., 596
 Blount, Gov. William, 436, 437, 438, 461, 660, 751
 Blue Jacket, Jim, 338
 Blue River, 347
 Blücher, Gen. Gebhard von, 471, 484
 Blyth, Capt. Samuel, 272
 Boerstler, Col. Charles G., 413
 Bois Blanc Island, 337
 Bolin, Jo, 572
 Bonaparte, Jérôme, 513
 Bonaparte, Joseph, 30, 297
 Bonaparte, Louis, 30, 52
 Bonaparte, Napoleon, 33, 127, 297, 356, 502, 642, 668, 759; position in 1812, 28-29, 30; British Orders in Council directed at, 42; institutes search for sugar substitute, 45; issues Berlin Decree, 46; and repeal of Berlin Decree, 49-50, 50-51, 52-53, 79, 360-361, 392; peace faction distrusts, 57-58; re Armstrong, 279, 392; and Cockburn, 289-290, 394-395; overthrow, effect on war be-

- tween Great Britain and America, 357; re Madison and beginning of War of 1812, 395; defeat celebrated in London, 483-485, 721; and Elizabeth Patterson, 513; U. S. learns of fall and abdication, 470-483, 611, 719-720; in Egypt, 726
- Bonner, Edmund, 722
- Bordeaux, France, 481, 502, 504, 509, 641, 721, 726
- Borodino, Battle of, 487
- Boston, Mass., 19, 171, 175, 210, 262, 295, 362, 503, 621; re-acton to declaration of war, 23; Henry spy affair, 72, 73, 75; Dearborn collector of port, 146; and British goods, 426; fears espionage, 427; becomes financial capital, 433; food prices, 433-434; and Napoleon's defeat, 470, 474-475; privateers, 599; defense activities, 600; separatist meeting (1812), 655; and British blockade, 658; British threaten, 659; and naval victories, 661
- Boston harbor, 264, 265, 388, 390
- Boston lighthouse, 266, 268
- Botetourt Co., Va., 184
- Bothwell Bridge, 504
- Bowers, Dr. —, 231
- Bowie, Robert, 585-586, 586, 729
- Boxer*, British brig, 272
- Boyd, Adam, 59
- Boyd, Brig. Gen. John P., 113, 120, 150, 203, 307, 416, 709
- Braddock's disaster, 277
- Brandywine, Battle of, 276
- Brant, John, 186, 189
- Brant, Joseph, 186
- Brantford, Can., 376
- Breese, Commodore Samuel L., 749
- Brent, Richard, 366
- Brent, Thomas, 366
- Bridgewater Mills, Battle of, *see* Lundy's Lane
- Brisbane, Brig. Gen. —, 624, 634, 636
- Brock, Gov.-Gen. Isaac, disavows urging on the Prophet, 126; learns war is declared, 153, 375-376; notifies frontier posts, 153, 159; and Hull's proclamation, 156, 161, 376; issues own proclamation, 161; measures to meet Hull's invasion, 161-162, 376, 377; confers with Tecumseh, 162, 377; ruse to deceive Hull, 165, 167, 377; forces at Detroit, 166, 167-168; Hull surrenders Detroit to, 166, 214; re Hull, 168; at Fort George, 183, 185, 186; killed at Queenston Heights, 188, 189, 204, 381; Tecumseh and, 338
- Brockville, Can., 198
- Broke, Capt. Philip Bowes Vere, 171, 263, 264-265, 265-266, 267-268, 270, 380, 390
- Brooke, Col. —, 547-591
- Brookline*, U. S. brig, 98-99
- Brooklyn Ferry, 595
- Brooklyn Heights, 595
- Brooks, Lt. John, 313, 326
- Brookville, Md., 602-603
- Broome, Lt. James, 268
- Brougham, Lord, 79, 80, 366-367, 530
- Brown, —, spy, 731
- Brown, Maj. —, 534
- Brown, Adam, 743
- Brown, Clarissa, 243
- Brown, Gen. Jacob, 666, 733; and New York militia, 183, 201, 202; sketch of, 256-257; defense of Sackets Harbor, 256, 257, 258; on Montreal campaign (1813), 416, 417; takes over Niagara command, 423, 424; disciplinarian, 606; plan for summer campaign (1814), 606, 616; forces under, 606-607; takes Fort Erie (July 3,

- 1814), 607-608; victory at Chippewa (July 5, 1814), 608, 609-611; wants Chauncey's co-operation, 611-612; and Battle of Lundy's Lane (July 25, 1814), 612-615, 616, 747; wounded, 615; and siege of Fort Erie, 616, 618; death (1835), 625; fort named for, 627
- Brown, Noah, 303, 304, 397, 743
- Brown, Rev. O. B., 579
- Brownstown, 158
- Brownsville, N. Y., 257
- Brownsville, Pa., 359
- Brunswick, House of, 483, 484, 485; *see also* Hanover, House of
- Brush, Capt. Henry, 158, 162, 165, 168
- Bryant, William Cullen, 68
- Buchanan, Commodore Franklin, 757
- Bucks Co., Pa., 256
- Budd, Lt. Charles, 628
- Buenos Aires, 54, 361
- Buffalo, N. Y., 148, 249, 305, 307, 383, 606, 607; encampment at, 183, 184, 189; American Regulars at, 184; Harrison at, 348, 349; burned (1813), 419, 420; rebuilding of, 498
- Buller, Sir Redvers, 506
- Bunch, Col. —, 465
- Bunker Hill, Battle of, 146, 246, 503, 663
- Burcham, James, 385
- Burgoyne, Sir John, 691, 759
- Burgoyne, Gen. John, 147, 277, 348, 522, 620, 747, 759
- Burlington, N. J., 259, 269
- Burlington, Ont., 341
- Burlington, Vt., 183, 199, 747, 749
- Burlington Heights, Ont., 309, 415, 606, 611, 616
- Burnet's Creek, Ind., 115, 118, 120, 126
- Burnt Corn Creek, Battle of, 448, 450, 469, 714
- Burr, Aaron, 120, 243, 286, 393, 394, 396, 724; Jackson witness for, 438; and Madison, 570, 616; and separatists, 653; and John Adair, 688
- Burrall, —, postmaster of Baltimore, Md., 561-562
- Burrows, Lt. William, 272
- Burwell, William Armisted, 55-56, 361
- Bush, Lt. William S., 173
- Butler, Thomas, 712
- Byron, Capt. Richard, 379, 380
- Byron, Lord, 484, 506, 745

C

- Cabot, George, 652, 653, 662, 752
- Cadore, Duc de, 50, 51, 97, 279, 392
- Cadwalader, Brig. Gen. Thomas, 742
- Calder, —, spy, 731
- Caldwell, Billy, 338
- Caldwell's District of Columbia forces, 731
- Calebee Creek, 462, 717
- Caledonia*, brig, 185, 186, 311, 318, 322, 323, 327
- Calhoun, John C., 365; hears of declaration of war, 20-21; War Hawk, 39, 53, 57; and Madison, 64, 622; for strong Navy, 68; re Clay, 355; Secretary of War, 378; Washington home, 593
- Caller, Col. James, 448
- Calvert Co., Md., 510
- Cambridge, Mass., 659
- Campbell, George Washington, 433, 530, 531, 544, 574, 711, 744
- Campbell, Capt. Hugh G., 132, 133
- Campbell, Col. John B., 227, 421, 421-424, 610
- Canada, hears war is declared,

- 24, 153, 355, 375-376; imports to, after declaration of war, 24, 425, 426, 710; annexation, talk of, 26, 54, 55-56, 58, 60, 62, 131, 361; drained by European conflict, 30; Henry spy affair, 72, 73; Americans want for security, 122; Dearborn plans four-point advance on, 146-147, 148, 393; Hull's invasion repelled, 154-169; American forays along St. Lawrence, 183, 198; Van Rensselaer's invasion of, 186; Smyth's attempted invasion, 194-196; public opinion re invasion of, 203-204, 204-205, 384; Clay and, 221-222, 223; militia, 239, 244, 245, 246, 247-248; raid on York, 242-256; disowns Chasseurs Britanniques, 297-298; slaves sent to, 395; border engagements (1813-1814), 413-423, 709; smuggling to U. S., 433; British reinforcements for (1814), 720-721; and prisoners of war, 495; Upper Canada invaded (summer of 1814), 606-619; canard re attitude of Madison's administration toward, 622-623, 748
- Canadians, 155-156, 159, 160, 161, 168, 182, 204-205
- Canandaigua, N. Y., 26
- Canning, William, 46, 80, 357
- Cape Cod, 658
- Carbiniers d'Orléans, 675
- Carden, Capt. John Surman, 211, 212-213
- Caribbean Sea, 643, 679
- Carleton, Gen. Sir Guy, 391
- Carlisle, Pa., 295, 511
- Carnatick*, British vessel, 89-90
- Carolina*, U. S. schooner, 685, 686, 687, 689, 690, 692
- Caroline of Brunswick, 721
- Carroll, Charles, 573, 603-604
- Carroll, Daniel, 21
- Carroll, William, appearance, 758; with Tennessee militia, 438; duel with Benton, 440-441; in Creek War, 461; and New Orleans expedition, 650, 683, 685, 690, 692, 696, 697, 699, 701, 705, 757, 760
- Carron*, British sloop, 641, 648
- Carson, Col. —, 460
- Cartagena, 643, 645, 690
- Cass, Lewis, on Tecumseh, 106; colonel Ohio militia, 149-150, 152; skirmish, Aux Canards, 156, 157; summons Meigs re Hull ouster, 165; not in Detroit at time of surrender, 165, 166; writes story of Detroit, 167, 169, 377; prisoner of war, 168; at Sandusky, 320; at Battle of Thames, 339; military governor of Michigan Territory, 348, 402
- Cassin, Lt. Commander Stephen, 628
- Castine, Me., 658
- Castlereagh, Lord, 28, 46, 80, 90, 98, 215, 381, 483, 489, 668, 669
- Castle William, 24, 472
- Catherine*, U. S. vessel, 79
- Cat Island, 679
- Cayuga, N. Y., 420
- Centipede*, Warren's barge, 298, 397
- Chambersburg, Pa., 418
- Champlain, N. Y., 623-624, 626, 635
- Champlin, Stephen, 324, 331
- Chandeleur Islands, 679
- Chandler, Brig. Gen. John, 199, 203, 309-311, 496
- Channing, Rev. William Ellery, 474
- Chapel Church, Boston, 474
- Charles Co., Md., 143, 510
- Charleston, S. C., 177, 202, 471, 473, 599, 600, 710, 719
- Charlotte Augusta, Princess, 721

- Chase, Mary, 513
 Chase, Samuel, 513
 Chasseurs Britanniques, 297, 300
 Chasseurs, the Louisiana, 675
 Chateaugay, N. Y., 415
 Chateaugay River, 415
 Chattahoochee River, 447, 458, 461, 462
 Chauncey, Commodore Isaac, commands Lake Ontario fleet, 242, 243-244, 245, 249, 252-253, 254, 255; asks for Perry's services, 302-303; base at Sackets Harbor, 306, 311; capture of Fort George, 306, 307-309; and Yeo, on Lake Ontario, 312-313; and Perry, misunderstanding re command on Lake Erie, 312, 313, 318-319; Perry appeals to, for men, 313, 314-315, 315-316, 320, 326; warns Perry to fight new fleet with great caution, 329; and prize money, 334; calls court-martial, Perry-Heath affair, 400; Brown wants co-operation of, 611-612
 Chazy, N. Y., 626
 Cheesekau, 104, 339
 Chelsea, Mass., 358
 Cherokee Co., Ala., 457
 Cherokee Indians, 102, 452-453, 453, 461, 462, 464, 715, 717
Cherub, British frigate, 744
Chesapeake, U. S. frigate, 365, 596, 626; and *Leopard*, 91-93, 97, 262, 270, 368-369; Lawrence assigned to, 262; ordnance, 262-263; and *Shannon*, 264-269, 272, 312
 Chesapeake Bay, 289-301, 368, 395, 499, 511, 512, 513-514
 Cheshire Co., N. H., 663
 Chester Co., Pa., 247
 Cheves, Langdon, 20, 39, 68-69, 348, 431
 Chewitt, Lt. Col. W., 246
 Chicago, Ill., 350
 Chicago massacre, 216-219
 Chicago River, 216
 Chickasaw, 447
 Chillicothe, Ohio, 103, 104, 149, 241, 370, 493
 Chippewa, Ont., 309, 606, 608, 609-611, 611-612, 616, 618, 662, 746
Chippewa, British schooner, 322-323, 324, 329-331
 Chippewa Creek, 608, 609, 610, 615, 618
 Chippewa Indians, 159, 160
 Choctaw Indians, 102, 459, 462, 715
 Chrysler, John, 416
 Chrysler's Farm, Battle of, 416, 709
 Chrystie, Lt. Col. John, 180, 186
Chub, British sloop, 625, 629, 630, 631, 632, 633
 Cincinnati, Ohio, 20, 127, 148, 149, 150, 225, 236, 243, 375, 601
 Cincinnati, Order of, 32, 600
 City Hotel, Nashville, 441
 Claiborne, Ferdinand L., 440, 449, 453, 458-461, 714
 Claiborne, William C. C., 129, 645, 646, 650, 674, 675, 750-751
 Clark, —, 344
 Clark, George Rogers, 103, 110, 241
 Clark, James Freeman, *History of the Campaign of 1812*, 378
 Clark, Thomas, 375
 Claus, W., 160
 Clay, Gen. Green, 236-239
 Clay, Henry, hears of declaration of war, 20, 21; expects cheap, safe war, 29; elected speaker, 34, 556, 727; political background, 35-36, 37-38, 358-359; appearance, 36, 38; J. Q. Adams on, 36; re use of British legal citations, 37, 359; introduction of Hereford cattle into U. S., 37; as public speaker,

- 38; duel, 38; leader of War Hawks, 39; champions free trade and seamen's rights, 54-55; re taking Canada, 56, 361; and Madison, 61-62, 66-67, 754; and J. Q. Adams, 62-63, 363; for strong Navy, 68; and impressment, 97-98; defense of Burr, 120; re Kemper affair, 128; and Gen. Smyth, 197; determination in face of early defeats, 221-222, 386; brother-in-law killed at Frenchtown, 232; Madison considers as Army commander, 283, 393; and Tecumseh razor-strop, 345, 490; Calhoun on, 355; re Lowndes, 359; re speaker's rulings, 359; and Niles, 361; peace commissioner, 359, 483, 490, 667, 668, 670, 687, 754, 754-755; and John Tyler, 363; re Perry's victory, 399; wants Dearborn dismissed, 413; London *Times* on, 490, 721; re Joe Gales, 508; and Dolley Madison, 570
- Clermont*, steamship, 69, 70, 723
- Cleveland, Ohio, 148, 153, 154, 168, 266, 350
- Clinch, Col. Duncan L., 731
- Clinker*, British vessel, 504, 726
- Clinton, DeWitt, 205-206, 279, 384
- Clinton, George, 205, 278-279, 509
- Cloriviere, Rev. Mr. —, 719
- Cobbett, William, 90
- Cochrane, Sir Alexander, succeeds Vice Adm. Warren, 301; orders re retaliation for American raids, 423-424; transports troops from Bermuda to American seaboard, 504-505, 507; squadron reaches Yorktown, 514-515; and Washington-Baltimore campaign, 515-516, 550-551, 601, 742; and Nantucket, 661; underestimates American strength on Gulf Coast, 677, 693; fleet sails for New Orleans, 679; crushes American gunboat squadron, 679, 680; sends small boats toward New Orleans, 680-682, 684-685, 688
- Cockburn, Adm. Sir George, 499, 670; sketch of, 289-290, 300; and Napoleon, 289-290, 394-395; blockades Chesapeake Bay (1813), 289-301; and Havre de Grace, 291-295, 395-396; use of rockets, 293, 295-296, 396; and Fredericktown and Georgetown, 296; conceives project of attack on Washington, 296; sack of Hampton, 299-300; sent south to Florida, 301; and Gales, 396, 508, 509; danger of raids by underestimated, 508, 510; activities in Chesapeake area (1814), 511-512, 513-514, 515, 728-729, 729-730; with Cochrane plans Washington-Baltimore campaign, 515-516; on Patuxent, 517; spies in Washington, 522; at Bladensburg, 547, 548, 550, 735-736; contrasted with Ross, 553, 555, 738; tradition re mock Congress and, 556; in Washington, 561, 563, 566-567, 575-576, 577, 739, 741; and *National Intelligencer* plant, 566-567, 579, 580-581; re Gen. Washington, 581; withdraws from Washington, 583-584; and Beanes affair, 587, 588, 589
- Cocke, Maj. Gen. John, 453, 457, 458, 715, 716
- Codrington, Capt. Edward, 505
- Coffee, Gen. John, commands Jackson's cavalry, 438; friendship with Jackson, 440, 441, 713; in Creek War, 453, 454,

- 456, 461, 462, 463, 464, 465, 714-715, 717; on Pensacola expedition, 648; ordered to New Orleans, 650; and New Orleans expedition, 683, 685, 686, 687, 696, 697, 705, 757, 758; characterized, 713; epitaph, 713
- Cold Creek, 219
- Collins, Lewis, 345
- Colored Man's Reminiscences of James Madison, A*, 564. *See also* Jennings, Paul
- Columbia*, British frigate, 98-99
- Combs, Md., 529, 530
- Concord, Mass., 146, 503, 600
- Conestoga, Pa., 371
- Confiance*, British frigate, 628, 630, 631, 632, 633, 634, 637
- Congress*, U. S. frigate, 210, 365
- Congreve, Sir William, 295, 296
- Connecticut, 179, 435, 652, 656, 659, 660-661, 662, 663, 666, 711
- Constellation*, U. S. frigate, 209, 297, 298, 365, 384
- Constitution* ("Old Ironsides"), U. S. frigate, 170-176, 177-178, 259, 260, 264, 365, 379, 379-380, 629
- Constitutional Convention, 63, 664
- Contee, Benjamin, 137
- Continental Congress, 137, 276, 391, 664
- Conway, Thomas, 276
- Cook's Mill, 618
- Cooper, James Fenimore, 266, 267, 272, 333, 390, 512
- Cooper, Prof. Thomas, 295
- Coosa River, 442, 444, 445, 454, 458, 462, 463, 467, 718
- Coosawda, 442, 445
- Copenhagen, Denmark, 295, 668
- Cornells, Lucy, 450
- Corni, Michael, 334
- Cornwall, Ont., 416
- Cornwallis, Lord, 742
- Cortez, Hernando, 443, 561
- Corunna, 501, 507
- Corwin, Thomas, 115
- Cozens, —, 20
- Crab Island, 631, 633, 634
- Crab Orchard, Ky., 341
- Craig, Sir James, 72, 73, 75, 76, 133, 204, 506
- Craig, William, 133
- Crane, Master Commandant William M., 390
- Craney Island, 298, 300, 509
- Cranmer, Archbishop —, 722
- Crawford, Maj. James, 123-124
- Crawford, William H., 270, 274-275, 283
- Crawley, —, 692
- Creek Indians, history, 102, 110, 443-444; Tecumseh visits (1811), 112; red clubs of war party, 369; incited to war, 442-443, 713; encroachment on territory, 446; visit Malden, 447; war and peace factions, 447-448; war party obtains arms from British fleet, 447-448, 459. *See also* Creek War
- Creek War, events leading to, 442-443, 444-448; Fort Mims massacre, 448-451, 714; reaction of other tribes, 452-453; engagements at Littefutchee and Tallasehatche, 454, 714-715; at Talladega, 454-455; problem of supplies, 454, 456, 716; prolonged by Hillabee misfortune, 457-458, 716; American successes under Floyd and Claiborne, 458-461, 462, 716, 717; Battle of Emuckfau, 461, 717; engagement at Horseshoe Bend, 463-466, 647, 717; chiefs come to terms with Jackson, 467-468, 640, 718
- Crillon, Count Edouard de, 72-73, 74, 77, 366
- Crittenden, John J., 336
- Crockett, Davy, 453

Croghan, George, 114, 239-241, 320, 372
 Crosby, Ebenezer, 398
 Crowninshield, Capt. George, Jr., 269
 Crutchfield, Maj. Stapelton, 299
 Culver's Hill, N. Y., 627
 Cumberland Bay, 749
 Cumberland Head, 623, 628, 630, 631, 636
 Cumberland River, 438, 650
 Cushing, Adj. Gen. Thomas, 203
 Custis, Anne, 742
 Custis, George Washington Parke, 144, 374
 Cutts, Anna, 63, 571, 573
 Cutts, Richard, 63, 572
 Cutts house, 569
Cuyahoga, schooner, 152, 153, 154

D

Dacres, Capt. James R., 170, 173, 174, 175, 380
 Dale, Col. —, 676, 698, 702
 Dale, Capt. Sam, 448
 Dallas, Alexander J., 433, 434, 744-745
 Dane, Nathan, 663
 Danville, Va., 712
 D'Aquin's brigade, 685, 696
 Dartmoor prison, 90
 Dartmouth College, 476, 606, 607
 Daviess, Col. Joseph H., 114, 115, 116, 119, 120, 372
 Davis, Col. —, 703, 760
 Davis, Jefferson, 724
 Dayton, Ohio, 103, 149, 152, 375
 Dearborn, Gen. Henry, 383, 496, 623, 745; called "Granny," 26, 146, 356, 427; appointed maj. gen. (1812), 146-147, 202; uncertainty on Niagara frontier, 161, 381; base at Albany, N. Y., 179; unable to help Hull, 181; armistice with Prevost, 181, 182-183, 376-377, 381, 624; ordered to fight, 182; ignores

Niagara border, 183; Montreal campaign a gesture, 198-199, 200, 417; and York raid, 242, 243, 246, 248, 249, 250, 251, 253, 254, 255, 256; assembles troops at Four Mile Creek, 306; and attack on Fort George, 307, 308; loses advantage, 309, 311; recalls men lent to Perry, 311; recalled (1813), 413; delay over prisoner-of-war situation, 495
 Dearborn, Mich., 378
 Decatur, Commodore Stephen, 400, 625, 723; captures *Macedonian*, 210-213, 385; and *Philadelphia*, 259, 625; outstanding ability, 263, 276; command (1812), 365; at New York harbor, 493, 596; death, 544
 Decker, Lt. Col. Luke, 115, 116, 118
 Declaration of Independence, 573, 740-741
 Decrès, —, French minister, 47
 Delaware, 288-289, 435, 750
 Delaware Bay, 287, 288-289
 Delaware Indians, 103, 109, 219, 370, 371
 Delaware River, 176, 259
 Demerara River, 260
 Denmark, 52, 283, 668, 754
 De Peyster, R. G. L., 573
 Desha, Joseph, 53, 77
 Des Moines Indians, 713
 Detroit, Mich., 320, 339, 350, 376, 396, 446, 625, 713; and invasion of Canada, 147; supply routes to, 147-148; Hull's surrender to Brock (Aug. 1812), 165-168, 185, 214, 221, 348, 378, 381, 386, 438, 442; Harrison ordered to recapture, 226, 227; attack on dependent on lake control, 306; recaptured by Americans (1813), 338; Indians repair to after Thames defeat, 348

- Detroit*, British brig (formerly American *Adams*), 185-186, 378
- Detroit*, new British brig, building of (1813), 314, 398; launched, 316, 317; in battle of Lake Erie, 322, 323-324, 325, 326, 327, 329, 330, 332
- Detroit River, 125, 153, 154, 156, 320, 338
- Dickinson, Charles, 451, 715
- Dickinson College, Pa., 295
- Dickson, William, 418-419
- Dickson, Mrs. William, 418-419, 709
- Dictator*, British vessel, 679
- Diomedea*, British vessel, 679
- District of Columbia, 533; clamors for defense, 510, 511; militia, 519, 520-521, 532, 534, 535, 536, 725, 729, 732, 733, 734, 736; committee to preserve capital city, 593; militia mutiny against Armstrong, 603-604
- Dobbins, Capt. Daniel, 167-168, 304, 378, 397-398, 398
- Dolphin*, U. S. privateer, 291
- Dominicans, 684, 696
- Donaldson, Henry, 87
- Dorchester, Lord, 125, 377
- Dorchester, Mass., 379
- Dorsey, —, 602
- Dover, Del., 176
- Downes, Lt. John, 744
- Downie, Capt. George, 628-632, 635, 636, 637, 749
- Dragon*, British man of war, 514
- Drake, Sir Francis, 485, 676
- Drummond, Lt. Gen. George Gordon, 421, 539, 612, 612-615, 616-618, 619, 662, 747
- Duane, Adj. Gen. William, 482
- Ducros, Joseph Rodolphe, 682
- Dudley, Col. William, 236-237
- Duke of Gloucester*, British vessel, 245
- Dundas, William H., quoted, 740
- Dungeness House, 301
- Dunlop, John, 740
- Du Pont family, 288-289, 599, 743
- Durang, Charles, 742
- Dwight, Theodore, *History of the Hartford Convention*, 662
- E
- Eagle*, U. S. brig, 628, 630, 631, 632, 633
- Eagle*, U. S. sloop, 625, 629, 748
- Eagle Inn, 720
- Early, Jubal, 537
- East Branch of Potomac River, 529, 601. *See also* Eastern Branch bridge
- East Florida, 130, 131-132, 132-133, 134-135, 385
- East Tennessee, 453, 457, 712, 715
- Easter, Steve, 117
- Eastern Branch bridge (Potomac), 528, 536, 537, 539, 540, 733, 735, 736
- Eastport, Me., 657, 658
- Econachaca, 459-461
- Edward VI, 721
- Eggleston, Edward, quoted, 344-345
- Egypt, 676, 726
- Eighth Line Regiment, British, 244
- Eightieth Regiment, British, 727
- Eighty-eighth Regiment, British, 727
- Eighty-fifth Light Infantry Regiment, British, with Ross, 503-504, 506, 517, 539-540, 546, 547, 555; at New Orleans, 685, 687, 697, 703; last survivor, 729
- Eighty-seventh Regiment (2nd Battalion), British, 727
- Elba, 482, 483
- Eleventh Infantry Regiment, U. S., 610
- Elizabeth of England, 722
- Elizabeth River, 298, 384
- Elizabethtown, Can., 198

- Elk River, 291
 Elkton, Md., 291
 Ellicott, Capt. —, 232
 Ellicott City, Md., 602
 Ellicott Mills, 142
 Elliott, Lt. Jesse D., 185-186, 320,
 324-325, 328-329, 334, 335, 399
 Ellsworth, Oliver, 722
 Embargo imposed Dec. 1813,
 425-426
 Embargo Act (1807), 642
Emden, German vessel, 743
 Emuckfau, Battle of, 461, 463,
 468, 717
 Encyclopedists, 62
 Enghien, Duc d', 58
 Enniskillen Regiment, *see*
 Twenty-seventh Regiment
 Enotachopco, 461
Enterprise, U. S. brig, 259, 272,
 365, 379, 400
 Eppes, John W., 744
 Erie, Pa., 148, 303-306, 307, 311,
 314, 316, 318, 321, 421. *See*
also Presqu' Isle
 Erskine, David Montague, 93
Essex, U. S. frigate, 28, 88, 357,
 365, 743-744
 Essex Co., Mass., 743, 752
Essex Junior, 744
 Essex Junto, 653, 659, 743, 752
 Etowah, Ga., 452
 Eustis, Dr. William, Secretary of
 War, 21, sketch of, 145-146,
 375; and expedition against the
 Prophet (1811), 372; informs
 Congress of British gifts to In-
 dians, 125; and Hull, 148, 169,
 337; dilatory methods, 153,
 381; and Canadian sentiment,
 205; dissatisfaction with, 223,
 226, 274-275; dropped as Sec-
 retary of War (Dec. 31, 1812),
 273-274; and Jackson's offer of
 services, 437-438; parsimony,
 526
 Evans, Sir George De Lacy, 506,
 554, 687
 Ewell, Dr. James, 575, 576, 582,
 583, 587, 588, 738, 741; *Plant-*
ers' and Mariners' Medical
Companion, 738
 Ewell, Mrs. James, 741
 Ewing, George W., 283
- F
- Fair American*, U. S. vessel, 471
 Fallen Timbers, Battle of, 104,
 125
 Faneuil Hall, Boston, 143, 655
 Farragut, David, 743, 744
 Fayetteville, Tenn., 452
 Federal Hill, Baltimore, 513
 Federalists, 176; in 1810 election,
 31; criticize Madison, 50, 51,
 222-223, 360-361; anti-French,
 56-57, 61, 360; and Henry spy
 affair, 72, 74, 75, 76, 77; oppose
 move to take over East Flor-
 ida, 130, 133; win Maryland af-
 ter Baltimore riot (1812), 136;
 have no candidate for Presi-
 dent (1812), 205; and Arm-
 strong, 284; and bill re em-
 ployment of foreign sailors,
 369; rejoice in Bonaparte's fall,
 472, 477; in Maryland, 499;
 and Hartford Convention, 651;
 scoff at peace treaty, 671-672
 Fells Point, Md., 138
 Fenton, Col. —, 421
 Ferdinand, King of Spain, 297
 Fernandina, Amelia Island, 131,
 132
 Fifteen Mile Creek, Ont., 611
 Fifth Baltimore Regiment, 536,
 541-542, 543, 735, 736-737. *See*
also Fifth Maryland Infantry
 Fifth Maryland Infantry, 526,
 735. *See also* Fifth Baltimore
 Regiment
 Fifth Regiment Kentucky Vol-
 unteers, 222, 228
 Fifty-seventh Light Infantry,
 British, 726

- Finch*, British sloop, 625, 629, 630, 631, 633, 634
 Findlay, Col. James, 149, 157, 165, 166, 167, 378
 Findlay, Ohio, 152
 Finnis, —, captain of *Queen Charlotte*, 325
 First Infantry Regiment, U. S., 614
 First U. S. Volunteers, 168
 Fisk, James, 66
 Fiske, Jonathan, 593
 Fitch, John, 578
 Fitzgibbon, Lt. James, 413
 Five Nations, 371
 Flaageac, Garriques, 692, 699
 Florence, Ala., 713
 Floridas, the, 54, 282, 370, 622.
See also East Florida, West Florida
 Flournoy, Brig. Gen. Thomas, 203, 449, 458
 Floyd, Catherine, 570
 Floyd, Maj. George R. C., 115, 117
 Floyd, Gen. John, 453, 458, 462, 716, 717
 Floyd, William, 570
 Folch, Gov. —, 129, 130
 Fonerden, Adam, 143
 Fontainebleau Decree, 46
 Forbes, Gen. John, 503
 Forestville, Md., 523
 Forlorn Hope, 343
 Forsyth, Maj. Benjamin, 183, 198, 244, 245, 247, 249, 251, 307, 417
 Fortieth Regiment, British, 726
 Forts, Armstrong, 458; Augustine, 438; Barrancas, 641, 649; Bowyer, 647-648; Brown, 627, 633; Claiborne, 459, 460; Dearborn, 216-219; Defiance, 226-227, 236; Duquesne, 503; Erie, 186, 309, 311, 396, 606, 607-608, 616-618, 618-619; Findlay, 152; George, 160, 161, 183, 185, 186, 188, 189, 242, 244, 306, 307-309, 311, 376, 413, 415, 418, 606, 611, 612, 616, 619; Green, 595; Harrison, 114, 220, 227; Jackson, 467, 640; Leavenworth, 610; McArthur, 152; McHenry, 396, 525, 590, 742; Mackinac, 159-160, 377, 378; Madison, 219; Meigs, 234, 236-239, 239, 315, 387; Miami, 237, 337; Mims, 448-451, 455, 457, 466, 467, 468, 714; Montgomery, 648; Moreau, 627, 633; Mulgrave, 289; Niagara, 188, 376, 419-420, 709; St. Joseph, 159; St. Michael, 641, 649; St. Philip, 675; Scott, 627, 633; Sewall, 493; Stephenson, 239-241, 315, 320, 372; Stevens, 537; Stoddard, 616; Strong, 600; Strother, 454, 455, 456, 457, 458, 461, 462, 463, 716; Toulouse, 467; Warburton, 296; Washington, 296, 509, 515, 516, 523, 528, 733, 601-602; Wayne, 109, 216, 217, 218, 219, 226
 Forty-first Regiment, British, 157, 162, 164, 191, 240, 341, 376, 401
 Forty-fourth Infantry, U. S., 683-684
 Forty-fourth Infantry Regiment, British, 503, 504, 541, 547, 551, 563, 694, 698, 699, 700, 726, 759-760
 Forty-ninth Regiment, British, 187, 413
 Forty-third Regiment, British, 694
 Foster, Augustus J., 28, 93, 182, 355
 Foster, Stephen C., 102
 Fourteenth Infantry, U. S., 413
 Fourth (King's Own) Regiment, British, 503, 504, 546, 547, 548, 685, 694
 Fourth Infantry, U. S., 113, 115,

- 119, 120, 150, 162, 164, 166,
168, 372, 378, 388
- Fox, —, 384-385
- France, aggressions, 23, 46-47,
51, 56, 79, 357, 369; appoint-
ment of French officers in
U. S. opposed, 25; invasion of
Russia, 29, 357; threat of war
with (1798), 39, 57, 71, 257,
359, 384, 393, 743; commercial
warfare with Great Britain, 42-
47; Armstrong minister to, 47,
279, 392; and Monroe, 52, 52-
53, 360; peace faction distrusts,
56-58, 61; Crawford succeeds
Barlow as minister to, 283; and
Spain, 357; and neutral ship-
ping (1854), 359-360; citizen-
ship, 367; early fort at site of
Toronto, 388
- Francs, the, 675
- Frankfort, Ky., 221, 493
- Franklin, Benjamin, 274, 391,
512, 740
- Franklin, Tenn., 441
- Frederick the Great, 45, 360, 721
- Frederick of Prussia, 471, 483
- Fredericktown, Md., 91, 296,
368, 560, 574, 603
- Free Masons, 596
- Fremont, Ohio, 239
- French and Indian War, 397
- French John, *see* Sioussa, Jean P.
- French Mills, N. Y., 416
- French Revolution, 136
- Frenchtown, Md., 291, 395
- Frenchtown, River Raisin, 153,
158, 162, 165, 168, 228-234,
235, 348, 386
- Friedland, Battle of, 28
- Friends, Society of, 102
- Frolic*, British sloop, 176-177,
288
- Fuller, Archbishop —, 249
- Fulton, Robert, 69-70, 492, 723
- Fulton the First*, steam warship,
743
- Funk, Capt. Peter, 114
- Fusiliers, 622. *See also* Royal
Scots Fusiliers, Seventh Fusi-
liers

G

- Gage, Gen. Thomas, 503
- Gaines, Gen. Edmund P., 130,
337, 615-616, 616-618, 742
- Galápagos Islands, 743, 744
- Gales, Joseph, editor of *National
Intelligencer*, 201, 480, 481,
752; and Cockburn, 396, 508,
509; sketch of, 508-509; citi-
zenship, 509, 727; and defense
of Washington, 521, 732;
Intelligencer plant destroyed,
566-567, 580-581, 602
- Gales, Sarah Juliana Lee, 509
- Gallatin, Albert, Secretary of
Treasury, 21; loan policy, 25,
356, 432-433; and Whisky Re-
bellion, 25, 284, 393; re em-
bargo, 48; and Henry spy af-
fair, 74; budget message (Nov.
1811), 78-79, 366; advances
troop payments, 180; per-
suaded to remain in cabinet,
274; citizenship, 356; J. Quincy
re, 362; and Secretary Smith,
392; leaves Treasury Depart-
ment, 482, 753; on U. S. Peace
delegation, 482-483, 490, 667,
668, 687, 753-754; home in
Washington, 552
- Gallatin, Mrs. Albert, 274
- Galloway, James, 104
- Galloway, Rebecca, 104-105
- Gambier, Lord, 668
- Gamble, Peter, 631
- Gananoque, Can., 198
- Ganges*, U. S. vessel, 259
- Gardenier, Barent, 531, 544
- Gardner, William, 420
- Garland, Lt. —, 327
- Garonne River, France, 481, 502,
504
- Gates, Gen. Horatio, 276, 277,
278, 286

- Geiger, Col. Frederick, 114, 118
 Genalga, 457
General Monk, British sloop, 512
General Pike, U. S. vessel, 257, 748
 Genet, Edmond Charles Edouard (Citizen), 478
 George III, 484, 506-507, 512, 727
 George Augustus Frederick, *see* Prince Regent
 Georgetown, S. C., 138, 143, 144, 296, 521, 554, 572, 574, 578, 583, 587, 588, 725, 729; asks protection, 511; confusion in, 526-527; rifle company, 536, 734; Americans retreat to, 540, 542; population (1810), 738
 Georgetown Ferry, 574
 Georgetown Heights, 572
 Georgia, 445, 446, 451, 452, 453, 625, 649; fears British attack through Florida, 131; volunteers move into East Florida, 131-133; and East Florida, 134-135, 385; honors Perry, 334; and blockade, 395; militia, 458, 462
 Gerard, François, 33
 Germain, Lord George, 620
 Germantown, Pa., 592, 731
 Gerry, Gov. Elbridge, 33, 73, 205
 Gerrymander bill, 33, 358
 Gettysburg, Pa., 396
 Ghent, Treaty of, 569, 727; American commissioners appointed (1813), 482-483, 489-490; 667, 668; Alexander I offers to mediate (1813), 483, 667; England disinterested, 497, 489-490, 668; repulse of Ross at Baltimore affects negotiations, 591, 637; England wants strip of East coast, 621, 658; Macdonough's victory influences negotiations, 637; Gambier heads British commission, 668; and impressment issue, 668, 669, 754; signing of (Dec. 24, 1814), 666, 667, 670, 687; negotiations, 667, 668-670, 754; Madison names new commission (1814), 668, 753-754; American reception of, 670, 672, 755; British reception of, 671; and Battle of New Orleans, 677, 756; submitted to U. S. Senate (Feb. 15, 1815), 677; ratification completed (Feb. 17, 1815), 756
 Gibbs, Maj. Gen. Sir Samuel, 689, 690, 694, 698, 699, 700, 701, 702, 705, 760
 Gibson, John, 219
 Gildersleeves, Rev. —, 596
 Giles, William B., 363
 Girard, Stephen, 432, 433
 Gironde River, 504
Gleaner, British ketch, 182
 Gleig, Lt. George Robert, re Washington campaign, 516, 517, 533-534, 539, 541; re Ross and white flag, 553; re burning of Capitol, 559; re banquet in Madison's home, 563-564; re Washington buildings, 576; re Washington tornado, 584; re Beanes, 586; re Ross, 591, 592; *Narratives of the Campaigns . . . at Washington and New Orleans and A Subaltern in America*, 729; sketch of, 729
 Glengary fencibles, 244
Gloucester, U. S. vessel, 257
 Goldsborough, Charles W., 574
 Goldsborough, Mrs. Charles W., 395-396
 Golightly, Thomas, 87
 Gordon, Capt. Charles, 390
 Gordon, Capt. James A., 516, 581, 583, 601, 603
Gorgon, British vessel, 679
 Gosport Navy Yard, Va., 297
 Gosselin, Maj. Gen. Gerard, 658, 727

- Gothenburg, Sweden, 668, 754
 Gough, Sir Hugh, 506
 Gourlay, Robert Fleming, *Statistical Account of Upper Canada*, 253-254, 254-255
 Gouverneur, Maria (nee Monroe), 392
 Gouverneur, Samuel L., 392
 Governor's Island, 71, 471
 Grafton, Capt. —, 254, 255
 Grafton, Co., N. H., 663
 Graison, Robert, 457
 Grand Island, 307
 Grand Isle, 645
 Grand Terre Island, 643, 644, 645
 Grandpre, Gov. —, 129
 Granger, Gideon, 273-274
 Grant, Ulysses S., 672
 Graves, Maj. —, 231-232
 Great Britain, U. S. declares war on, 19; drained by war with France, 29; Orders in Council, discussed, 42-53 *passim*; commercial warfare with France, 42-47; doctrine of "inner sea," 43; Rule of 1756, 44-55, 360; public clamor against Orders, 47; refuses to repeal Orders, 50-53; seizure of 389 U. S. vessels, 52; and Spain, 54, 130; fleet strength, 61, 365; plots alienation of New England and New York, 70-77; bewildered at American antagonism, 77-79; Orders in Council repealed too late, 80-81, 97, 182, 366-367, 379, 381; underestimates war pressures in U. S., 82; and fur trade, 108; relations between agents and Northwest Indians as war cause, 122-126; holds forts after 1783 treaty, 125; blow at U. S. through Florida feared, 130-131; foresee American plans, 148, 375; public interest in North American war, 151-152; seizure of Irish-born prisoners of war, 192-193; controls territory north and west of Wabash and Maumee, 219; parsimonious about Navy powder, 265; and Broke's victory over Lawrence, 270; channel shipping harried by *Argus*, 271; cabinet under criticism, 287; blockade of Chesapeake and Delaware bays (1813), 287-301, 395; and the Northwest, 350; and neutral shipping in Crimean War, 359-360; blockades American coast, Maine to Louisiana, 424, 425-426, 432, 608, 658, 661, 710; celebrates Bonaparte's defeat, 483-485; turns to chastisement of U. S., 485-490, 501, 502-503; designs on Louisiana, 489, 751, 756; merchant shipping destroyed by U. S. privateers, 599-600; attempts to detach New England, 620-639, 747-750; annexes part of Maine coast (1814), 658; and peace treaty, 667-672, 677. *See also* Impressment
 Great Lakes, 100, 122, 489, 669, 670
 Great Smoky Mountains, 452
 Greenbush, N. Y. 179, 199, 200
 Greene, Gen. Nathanael, 301
 Greenleaf, James, 593
 Greenleaf's Point, 579, 582-583, 588
 Green Mountains, Vt., 628
 Greensburg, Pa., 422
 Greenville, Ohio, 106, 110
 Gregg, Andrew, 363
 Gregg, Thomas, 743
 Grey, "Cold Steel," 247
 Griffin, Thomas, 299
 Griswold, Roger, 653, 659
 Growler, U. S. sloop, 625, 629
 Grundy, Felix, 20, 40, 53, 56, 68, 134, 359, 465
 Gubbins, Col. —, 704

- Guerrière*, British frigate, 93, 170-176, 210, 212, 379-380
- Guerrillas, Harry New York-Canadian border, 197-198
- H
- Hagerstown, Md., 520
- Haldimand, Gov. Frederick, 123-124
- Halifax, Nov. Sc., 171, 379, 622, 638; *Chesapeake* taken as prize to, 268; funerals of Lawrence and Ludlow, 269; prisoners sent to, 492, 586, 587, 588, 657; Ross buried at, 591; only land outlet from Montreal to England, 621
- Hall, Judge Dominick, 759
- Hall, James, 369
- Hall, Dr. John E., 142
- Hall, Col. William, 438
- Hall, William, Jr., 663
- Hallet, Étienne Sulpice, 578
- Halsey's Corners, N. Y., 627
- Hamilton, Lt. —, 210, 384
- Hamilton, Alexander, 257, 278, 283, 288, 391-392, 393, 752
- Hamilton, Ont., 612
- Hamilton, Paul, 132, 210, 273, 274, 275, 384, 302
- Hamilton*, U. S. brig, 309
- Hamilton societies, 479
- Hampden, Me., 658
- Hampton, Brig. Gen. Wade, 203, 225; and Eustis, 274; commands Norfolk District, 298, 396; and Wilkinson, 414-415, 416; and Montreal campaign, 414-415, 415-416, 622, 709; discredited, 427; resignation, 709
- Hampton, Lt. Gen. Wade, 298
- Hampton, Va., 298-300, 624
- Hampton Roads, 298, 299; naval station, 365
- Hanchett, Capt. —, 397
- Hancock, Gov. John, 474
- Hanks, Lt. Porter, 159-160, 377
- Hanover, House of, 483, 484, 721. *See also* Brunswick, House of
- Hanover, N. H., 476, 606
- Hanson, Alexander Contee, 22, 136-144, 426-427, 477
- Hanson, John, 136-137
- Hardy, Sir Thomas, 492, 657, 723
- Harmar, Gen. Josiah, 104
- Harper, John A., 40, 53; quoted, 56
- Harper, Robert Goodloe, 473, 719
- Harper's Ferry, 71, 759
- Harrisburg, Pa., 27
- Harrison, Lt. —, 378
- Harrison, Benjamin, 224
- Harrison, William Henry, 33, 156, 185, 614, 688; aide to Wayne, 104; Vincennes meeting with Tecumseh (1810), 105, 109-111, 371; (1811), 112, 713; first fears of Indian confederation, 108; Fort Wayne Treaty (1809) fought by Tecumseh, 108-111; attitude toward Indians, 111-112, 371; expedition against Prophet's town authorized, 113-114, 372; builds blockhouses, 114; and Tippecanoe, 115-121, 372-373; re British gifts to Indians, 125; uses militia effectively, 151; medical student, 202; and Western volunteers, 223, 386; and Madison administration, 223, 225, 226, 349-350; commissioned major general Kentucky volunteers, 224; sketch of, 224-225; Indian treaty negotiator, 225; and Winchester, 225, 226; given command of Western Army, 226-227; Proctor fears pursuit by, 231; moves to Maumee Rapids, 234, 387; and siege of Fort Meigs, 234, 236-239, 387; and Croghan, 239-240; awaits aid from Perry,

- 306, 313, 314, 315, 318; confers with Perry, 320; hears of Perry's victory, 331; offers Shelby command, 336; advance on Malden, 336-337, 337-338, 400-401; restraining order re fallen enemies, 337; pursues Proctor to Thames, 338, 339, 347; victory at Thames (Oct. 1813), 339-343, 344, 347-348, 348-349, 415, 425; and slavery, 371-372; and Tecumseh's death, 402; to Vincent, re use of Indians, 349; assigned to Cincinnati area, 349, 350; resigns, 349-350, 711; praise from McArthur and Perry, 349; and Dolley Madison, 350; Wilkinson distrusts, 414; jingle re, 427; raises detachment of dragoons, 601; compared with Jackson, 757
- Hart, Capt. Nathaniel G. T., 232
- Hartford, Conn., 23, 475
- Hartford Convention, discussed, 651-666, 752-753; dying gasp of disunion, 651; background, 651-656, 753; money question, provokes, 657-660; states invited, 661-662; delegates and proceedings, 662-664; report, 664-666
- "Hartford Wits," 662
- Hartley's Point, 337
- Harvard College, 35, 294, 662
- Harvey, Henry, 102, 110, 347
- Hatch, Col. —, 370
- Havana, Cuba, 130, 357, 448
- Havre de Grace, Md., 291-295, 395-396, 513, 514
- Hawkins, Col. Benjamin, 442, 443, 447, 713
- Hay, Mrs. George, 392
- Hazard, Oliver, 397
- Heald, Capt. Nathan, 216, 217, 218, 219
- Heath, Capt. John, 335, 400
- Henderson, Col. —, 690
- Henderson, Judge —, 469
- Henderson Bay, 709
- Henley, Capt. Robert, 628, 632
- Henry, John, 496
- Henry, John, 70-77, 133, 365-366
- Henry, Patrick, 138, 199
- Henry Co., Ohio, 151
- Herkimer, N. Y., 419
- Hermes*, British sloop, 641, 647, 648
- Hickory Ground, 445, 447, 467
- Hicks, Lt. William, 629
- High Head Jim, 446, 448
- Hill, Lord Rowland, 502, 520, 526, 529, 624, 678, 726, 736
- Hill, Dr. William, 586
- Hillabee Creeks, 456-458, 716
- Hillnhagee, 718
- Hillyar, Capt. James, 744
- Hoffman, David, 139
- Hog Island, 154
- Hohenlinden, Battle of, 356
- Holland, 30, 283, 317, 720
- Holmes, Dr. Thomas G., 451
- Holmes Hole, 261
- Holy Ground, Battle of the, 459-460
- Hope, Gen. John, 624-678
- Hopkins, Gen. Samuel, 227, 275, 386
- Hopkinson, Joseph, 384
- Hornet*, U. S. brig, 259, 260, 263, 365, 389-390
- Horseshoe Bend, Battle of, 453, 462, 463-466, 684, 717
- House, Col. James, 472
- House of Commons, 721
- Houston, Sam, 465-466
- Howard, Adm. Sir John, 485, 676
- Howe, Lord, 90, 503, 620
- Hudson River, 598, 723
- Hulans, the, 675
- Hull, Capt. A. F., 153, 164, 167
- Hull, Isaac, 379
- Hull, Capt. Isaac, 170, 171, 172, 173, 174, 175, 209, 264, 379-380, 385

Hull, Lt. Joseph, 379
 Hull, Richard, 379
 Hull, William, governor Michigan Territory, includes Shawnee in treaty, 110, 371; characterized, 147, 375, 378-379, 401, 745, 757; confers with Madison, 147, 148; brigadier general in Regular Army, 148, 203, 223; joins Ohio troops and moves toward Detroit, 150-154; unable to handle militia effectively, 151; builds forts, 152; loses equipment and records, 152, 153, 154, 275; receives word (July 2, 1812) of beginning of war, 153-154, 375; authorized to attack Malden, 154; futile expedition into Canada, 154-159, 376-377; proclamation to Canadians, 155-156, 159, 160, 161, 168, 376, 641; returns to Detroit, 159; orders Miller to meet supply convoy, 162; officers consider means of ousting, 164-165, 377-378; vacillation and surrender of Detroit (1812), 165-168, 181, 214, 216, 221, 348, 376-377, 378, 438; court-martial (1814), 153, 169, 276, 378, 427; attempts at vindication, 169, 378-379; instructions to Heald at Fort Dearborn, 216; *Memoirs*, 378; adopted son, 379; failure charged to Madison, 622-623
 Humphrey, —, 692
 Humphreys, Capt. —, 92
Hunter, British vessel, 153, 322, 323
 Hunter, Dr. —, 530
 Hunter, Mrs. Mary, 567
 Huntsville, Ala., 454, 462
 Huron River, 158
 Hutchinson, Sgt., 588, 589
Hyder-Ally, U. S. vessel, 512
Hydra, British vessel, 679

I

Ida, brig, 470, 471
 Illinois, 121, 214, 219, 227
 Impressments, 668, 669; one of main causes of war, 42, 82-83, 97-98; British press gangs, 84, 97, 99; British and American citizenship laws, 85-86, 367; careless use of American identification or protection papers, 86-88, 90, 367; numbers of Americans and British involved, 88, 90, 90-91, 95, 96; early instances, 89-90, 91-93; British attitude, 90, 94, 97, 368; American attitude, 91, 182, 368, 369, 381; Congressional bills re, 94-95; Massachusetts investigates, 95-96; London pamphlet re, 96; U. S. seizes American deserter in Canada, 98; war fails to end, 98-99; Madison's inaugural (1813) re, 207; and *Siren*, 626; and Treaty of Ghent, 669, 754
 Indiana, anti-British feeling, 37; militia, 113, 114, 115, 118, 119, 226, 385; fears Indian raid, 113, 214, 371, 372, 385; legislature lauds Harrison, 121; and course of war, 219; war spirit, 222; Shawnee and, 370; and slavery, 371-372
 Indiana Supreme Court, 225
 Indians, conspiracies in West, 33; threat to frontiers a war cause, 54, 55, 122-126, 362; British agents provoke agitations among, 82; need of justice for, 111-112, 371; relationship between British and Northwest Indians as cause of war, 122-126; incitement by Spaniards in Florida feared, 131; Niagara district wants them controlled, 147; Michigan settlers want protection from, 148; follow

- Hull's army, 152; in Malden area, 156, 158, 376; at Queens-
ton, 186, 189, 192; employment
by British denounced by Madi-
son, 206, 208; take heart at
Hull's defeat, 214; population
east of Mississippi River, 215;
reason for British alliance with,
215; as soldiers, 215-216, 385;
massacre at Chicago, 216-219;
frontier raids, 219-220; Hatti-
son's treaties with, 108-111,
225; expedition against, in
West, 227; at River Raisin,
228-233; "are excellent doc-
tors," 231; at Fort Meigs,
234, 236-239; at York, 244;
Harrison tries to wean from
British, 320; learn of Perry's
victory, 337; desert to Hatti-
son, 339; at Malden and
Thames, 339, 341, 343, 347,
348, 400, 402; cause for repub-
lic dies with Tecumseh, 347;
sue for peace after Thames,
348; at St. David's, 413; at
Chrysler's Farm, 416; ravage
Niagara frontier (1813), 419,
420; and founding of Dart-
mouth, 607; serve with Porter,
607; at Battle of Chippewa
(1814), 609; Pensacola's in-
fluence on, 640, 641; at Fort
Bowyer, 647, 648; Great Brit-
ain wants Indian buffer state,
668; and outcome of war, 672;
on Gulf Coast, 677. *See also*
names of tribes
- Ingersoll, Charles Jared, 273-274,
413, 431, 556, 571, 653, 656,
711
- Inglis, Lt. George, 327, 329
- Ipswich, Mass., 493
- Ireland, 184, 193, 649
- Irvin, John, 28, 88, 357
- Irving, Washington, on Madison,
64; and Perry, 333, re Wash-
ington, 518; and Dolley Madi-
son, 570-571; on patriotism,
598
- Isaacs, 447
- Isaacs, Col. —, 561
- Izard, Gen. George, 538, 539,
618-619, 621, 622, 623-624,
625, 627, 710
- ## J
- Jackson, Andrew, 62, 243, 666,
733; recruits militia, 20; hand-
clasp, 36; and militia, 151, 201,
202, 203, 758; nicknames
Dearborn, 356; major general,
429, 711; and Sevier, 436-437;
sketch of, 436-438, 452; offers
services (1812), 436, 437-438;
letter from his mother, 437,
712; futile expedition to
Natchez, 438-440, 452, 716;
offers to take army to Mal-
den, 439; Armstrong dismisses,
439; "Old Hickory," 440, 712;
difficulty re troop payments,
440, 712; injured in brawl with
Bentons, 440-442, 451, 454,
716; friendship with Coffee,
440, 713; duel with Dickinson,
451; leads Tennesseans against
Creeks, 452; and discipline,
453-454, 456, 715-716, 716; at
Huntsville, Ala., 454; and Lin-
coyer, 454; need of supplies,
454, 715; builds Fort Strother,
454; victory at Talladega, 454-
455, 456, 458; prevents mutiny,
456, 715-716; and acorns, 456,
664; and Hillabees, 456-457,
458; Cocke's forces join, 458;
Claiborne warns re British aid
to Creeks, 459; campaign from
Fort Strother to Emuckfau
(1814), 461-462, 717; new
forces arrive (Feb. 1814), 462,
717; victory at Horseshoe
Bend, 463-466, 717-718; and
Sam Houston, 466; builds Fort
Jackson, 467; generous terms

- to Indians, 467-468; and Joe Gales, 508; Pensacola his objective in Creek War, 640; treaty with Creeks, 640; at Mobile, 640, 646-647; and Baratarians, 646, 690, 759; accuses Manrique of bad faith, 646; waits for new army, 647, 751; and Maj. Lawrence, 648; moves on Pensacola (Nov. 7, 1814), 648-649, 751-752; returns to Mobile, 649; starts for New Orleans, 650, 752; and Battle of New Orleans, 672, 673-705; arrival in New Orleans, 673-675; studies possible approaches of British, 675, 755, 757-758; loses first line of defense, 680, 757; warned of British approach, 683, 757; moves with forces available, 683-684, 685; engagement at Villeré's plantation, 685-687; reinforced, 687-689; holds against British reconnaissance in force, 689-691; holds his own in artillery duel (Jan. 1, 1815), 691-693; disposes forces, 694-697; victory (Jan. 8, 1815), 697-705; godson, 712; re Wilkinson, 712; characterized, 715-716
- Jackson, Elizabeth Hutchinson, 437, 712
- Jackson, Francis James, 93
- Jackson, Rachel, 454
- Jamaica, Island of, 677, 678
- James, Col. Robert, 718
- James, William, 252, 345
- James River, 55, 299, 515, 549
- Java*, British frigate, 177-178
- Jay's treaty (1796), 159, 278
- Jefferson, Thomas, 220, 303, 356, 358, 393, 473, 475, 579, 738; and Madison administration, 32, 55; re House of Representatives, 34; and term "War Hawk," 39, 359; adopts Non-importation, embargo, and Nonintercourse acts, 48; Louisiana Purchase, 57-58, 127, 489; and Madison, 61, 62, 65, 67, 133, 281, 602; plants poplars, Washington, 66, 518, 738; sees war as last extremity, 67, 363; "Jefferson's Rock," 71; *Notes on Virginia*, 71; re common interest with Great Britain, 78; and *Chesapeake* affair, 92; and Monroe-Pinkney commercial treaty, 97; re Indian problem, 101, 347; re the Prophet, 107; and Dearborn, 146; and Pike, 243; letter from Dr. Strachan, 250, 255; and Du Ponts, 288; Wilkinson re, 360; re taking Canada, 384; re cabinet friction, 391-392; dislike of Jackson, 437-438, 441; British view of relation to war, 488; re choice of generals, 498-499; library of, 557-558; and importance of New Orleans, 756; and Declaration of Independence, 740
- Jefferson Co., N. Y., 257
- Jena, Battle of, 46
- Jennings, Paul, 66, 363, 375; *A Colored Man's Reminiscences of James Madison*, 564, 572, 575, 741
- Jereame, Jean B., 231
- Jesup, Maj. Thomas Sidney, 610, 613, 662; "Memoir of the Campaign on the Niagara," 745-746
- Jewit, Charles, 110, 370
- John Adams*, U. S. vessel, 365, 658, 668
- Johnson, Edward, 136, 138, 139, 140, 142, 143
- Johnson, Lt. Col. James, 340-341
- Johnson, Lt. Littleton, 440
- Johnson, Richard M., War Hawk, 39; re Canada, 56; not interested in Navy, 68; speaker at Clay dinner, 241; commands

- mounted infantry, 336; enters Detroit, 338; at Thames, 340-341, 341-343, 348, 401; and death of Tecumseh, 343-344, 345
- Johnston, John, 370, 402
- Jomini, Henri, 561
- Jones, Col. —, 579
- Jones, Lt. Catesby ap R., 757
- Jones, Capt. Jacob, 176, 177, 209, 390
- Jones, John Paul, 259, 512
- Jones, Lt. Thomas ap Catesby, 679, 680, 681, 757
- Jones, William, 303, 319; Chauncey's report to, 253; becomes Secretary of Navy, 275; Perry reports victory to, 331-332; orders Barney's flotilla destroyed, 522, 739; and invasion of Washington, 530, 531, 532, 559-560, 739
- Josiah Francis, 446, 448, 459
- Jourdan, Marshal Jean Baptiste, 539
- Julian*, U. S. vessel, 79
- Junaluska, 453
- Junon*, British vessel, 298
- Junot, Marshal Andoche, 30
- Jupiter*, French vessel, 722
- K
- Kaskaskia, Ill., 668
- Keane, Maj. Gen. John, heads British expeditionary force, 675, 676, 677-678, 680, 681, 682, 683, 684-685; proclamation to Louisianians, 684; engagement at Villeré's plantation, 685-687; superseded by Pakenham, 689; repulsed (Dec. 28), 689, 690; and battle of Jan. 8, 694, 699, 702, 760
- Kemper, Nathan, 127-128, 373
- Kemper, Reuben, 127-128, 129-130, 373
- Kemper, Samuel, 127, 128, 129, 130, 373
- Kempt, Brig. Gen. —, 727
- Kennebec River, 146
- Kennedy, Maj. —, quoted, 714
- Kennedy, John P., 549
- Kennett Square, Pa., 742
- Kenton, Ohio, 152
- Kentucky, 625; welcomes war, 19-20, 62; anti-British flare-up (1808), 37; sends troops to Tippecanoe, 114, 118, 120; legislature lauds Harrison, 121; and course of war, 219; war spirit, 222, 223, 357, 386; militia, 223, 224, 226-227, 228, 229, 233, 234, 236, 237, 320-321, 326, 361, 386; enthusiasm for Harrison, 224; gathers men for advance on Canada, 336; wants revenge for River Raisin, 337; troops at Thames, 339-343, 348; inhabitants invited into British service, 641; men at New Orleans, 650, 688-689, 696, 698, 699, 701, 702, 757; maple sugar and saltpeter, 712
- Kentucky Live Stock Improvement Association, 359
- Key, Francis Scott, 199, 296, 535, 587, 588-590, 729, 734
- Kickapoo Indians, 109, 227
- Kilgore, Charles, 140
- King, Cyrus, quoted, 748
- King, David, 345
- King, Horatio, 738
- King, Rufus, 478-479, 596, 657
- King, Maj. William, 246, 247
- King, William Rufus, 39
- Kings Mountain, N. C., 221
- King's Own Regiment, *see* Fourth Regiment, British
- Kingston, Can., 124, 242, 244, 245, 381, 414, 611, 616, 637
- Kinzie, John, 217
- Kirby, —, 299
- Knox Co., Ind., 113
- Knoxville, Tenn., 716
- Kumskaukau, 370

L

- Labbadie, Medard, 386
 La Colle Mill, 417
 La Colle River, 199, 417
 Lacoste's battalion, 683, 694-696
Lady of the Lake, U. S. pilot ship, 307
Lady Prevost, British schooner, 322, 323, 327, 329, 332
 Lafayette, Ind., 120
 Lafayette, Marquis de, 396
 Lafitte, Jean, career of, 641-642, 642-644, 750-751; offered captaincy by British, 644; seized by Americans, 645-646; warning of British attack finally believed, 650; Battle of New Orleans, 684, 689-690, 759; and Jackson, 759
 Lafitte, Pierre, 641-644; 645
 Lake Borgne, 679, 680, 685, 687, 690, 701
 Lake Champlain, 147, 380, 414, 498, 620; and "neutral" shipping, 426; naval action on (1813), 625; area stripped of American troops, 621, 623-624; Battle of (Sept. 11, 1814), 627-634, 635, 748-749; and British invasion plan, 747
 Lake Erie, 113, 125, 153, 183, 338; question of naval control of, 147-148, 157, 169, 239, 242, 313; building of fleet for, 303-306, 397-398; British fleet on, 314-315, 316, 317; Battle of (Sept. 10, 1813), 321-335, 425, 451, 493, 627; Campbell's expedition to Long Point Bay (1814), 421-424
 Lake Michigan, 113, 159, 219
 Lake Ontario, 147, 242, 303, 306-311, 312-313, 415, 612
 Lake St. Clair, 338, 376
 Lake St. Francis, 183
 Lambert, Capt. Henry, 178
 Lambert, Maj. Gen. John, 693, 694, 704, 705, 760
 Lancaster, Pa., 425, 578
 Lancaster Fusiliers, *see* Twentieth Regiment
 Lang, Jack, 177
 La Ronde, Col. Denis de, 685
 Lauderdale, Earl of, 80
 Laulewasikaw, *see* Prophet, the
 Lavack, Lt. —, 701
 Laval, Maj. —, 530, 542-543
 Lavie, Sir Thomas, 380
 Law, Anne, nee Custis, 742
 Law, John, 543, 593, 733, 742
 Lawrence, Capt. James, 596, 626, 743; sketch of, 259-260, 263; sinks *Peacock*, 260-262, 389-390; made captain, 261, 390; commands *Chesapeake*, 92, 262-263, 264-265, 266-267, 390; death and burial, 267, 269, 270, 312; "Don't give up the ship!" 267, 269, 321, 390; Perry names ship for, 312
 Lawrence, John, 269
 Lawrence, Maj. William, 647-648
Lawrence, U. S. brig, 320, 628; Perry's ship, 312; dedication of, 316; first salute, 317; lifted over bar into lake, 317; in Battle of Lake Erie, 321, 322, 323, 324, 325-327, 328, 329, 331, 332-333, 398, 638
 Lear, Col. Tobias, 498
 Leavenworth, Maj. Henry, 610
 Lee, Gen. Henry ("Light-Horse Harry"), 136-144, 374, 509
 Lee, Robert Edward, 137-138, 509, 672
 Lee, Sarah Juliana, 509
 Leesburg, Va., 527
 Leib, Michael, 363
 Leipzig, 295, 470, 487
 L'Enfant, Pierre Charles, 601-602
Leopard, British vessel, 91-93, 97, 262, 270, 368
 Lewes, Del., attack on, 288-289
 Lewis, John, 739

- Lewis, Maj. Gen. Morgan, 203, 362, 709
 Lewis, Col. William, 222, 228, 229-230
 Lewiston, N. Y., 183, 186, 194, 249, 419, 420, 612
 Lexington, Ky., 19, 20, 221, 223, 232, 359
 Lexington, Mass., 146, 503
 Libby prison, 724
 Library of Congress, 72-75, 557-558, 576, 740, 741
 Light Brigade, British, 517
 Lincoln, Abraham, 243, 537
 Lincoln, Mass., 600
 Lincoyer, 454
 Lingan, Gen. James, 136, 138, 141, 143, 144, 374
Linnet, British vessel, 629, 630, 631, 633, 634, 635, 637
 Litchfield, Conn., 21, 653
 Litchfutchee, Ala., 454
Little Belt, British sloop, 93-94, 323, 331
 Littlejohn, Rev. —, 527
 Little Ackfuske, 457
 Little River, Ala., 718
 Little Turtle, 100, 104, 216, 350
 Little Warrior, 446-447, 458
 Lively, Robert, 299
 Liverpool, Lord, 72, 73, 74, 75, 80, 488-489, 502, 720
 Livingstone, Alida, 278
 Livingston, Edward, 278, 649-650, 674, 752, 759
 Livingston, Robert R., 278, 279, 649
 Lloyd, Sen. —, 68
 Lockyer, Capt. Charles, 644, 646, 647, 680
 Logan, George, 359
 London, Eng., 638, 668; receives news of *Macedonian's* capture, 212-213; and Bonaparte's fall, 483-485, 721; celebrates anniversary of House of Brunswick, 483-487; learns of Battle of Lake Champlain, 636-637.
See also Newspapers
 London, Conference of (1908), 359
 Long Old Fields, 523, 524-525, 526
 Long Point Bay, 162, 165, 316, 318, 377; Campbell's raid on (1814), 421-422, 423
 Longfellow, Stephen, Jr., 663
 Lookout Mountain, Tenn., 462
 Lopez, Don Justo, 132
 Lord Dunmore's War, 103, 134, 436
 Lorient, France, 270, 472
 Louis XVI, 281, 282, 560
 Louis XVIII, 472, 481, 482
 Louisiana, 446, 451; purchase of, 57-58, 127, 129, 489; admitted as state, 131, 654; Great Britain hopes to acquire, 489, 641, 751, 756; militia, 685, 687, 696, 703
Louisiana, U. S. corvette, 690, 696, 703
 Louisiana Blues, 675
 Louisville, Ky., 150, 386
 L'Ouverture, Toussaint, 696
 Love, Mrs. —, 574
 Low, John E., 420
 Lowell, John, 23
 Lower Sandusky, 239
 Lowndes, William, 39-40, 68, 359, 431
 Lowndes Hill, 533, 537, 538, 735
 Ludlow, Lt. Augustus, 267, 269
 Lundy's Lane, Ont., Battle of (July 25, 1814), 612-616, 617, 662, 746-747
 Lynnhaven Bay, 91, 290, 296

M

- Macarté's plantation house, 692, 697
 McArthur, Brig. Gen. Duncan, with Hull's expedition, 149, 151, 156, 157-158, 165, 379; raid into Canada (1814), 156,

- 376; prisoner of war, 168; at Sandusky with Harrison, 320; with Harrison in Canada, 336; recaptures Detroit (1813), 338; brigade detached to serve under Wilkinson, 348; praise of Harrison, 349; re Tecumseh's birthplace, 370
- McCall, Lt. Edward R., 272
- McClure, Brig. Gen. George, 415, 418, 419, 421, 709
- McComas, Henry, 591
- McDonnell, —, Brock's adjutant, 188
- Macdonough, Lt. Thomas, 666; outstanding ability, 263; sketch of, 625-626; victory on Lake Champlain (Sept. 11, 1814), 628-634, 635, 637, 748-750; honored, 635, 636, 750; compared with Perry, 625, 626, 638-639; shipbuilding (1814), 628, 748
- McDougall, Sir Duncan, 555, 590, 591, 700, 760
- Macedonian*, British frigate, 210-213, 270-271, 384
- McGillivray, Alexander, 444, 445, 467, 713
- McGirth's plantation, 449
- McGruder, Patrick, 558, 739
- Machias, Me., 658
- McIntosh, William, 225
- McIntosh, William, Creek chief, 447, 458
- McKee, Samuel, 59
- McKenney, Col. Thomas L., 369, 525, 604, 732
- McKerrell, Robert, 366
- Mackgowan's Hotel, 34, 560, 566, 576
- McKim, Alexander, 499, 535
- McLeod Tavern, 562, 739
- McNeil, Maj. John, 610, 614
- Macomb, Brig. Gen. Alexander, 202, 416, 625, 626-627, 634, 635, 636, 637, 748
- Macon, Nathaniel, 33-34, 59, 209, 358, 362, 383-384, 431, 435
- Macon Co., Ala., 717
- McQueen, Peter, 448, 718
- Mad River, 103, 149, 370, 445
- Madison, Dolley, and Washington Irving, 64; receives *Macedonian's* flag, 209-210; and Mrs. Gallatin, 274; and Harrison, 350; dress, 363, 384; re Cockburn, 563; notes from Madison at Bladensburg, 564, 565; and Washington crisis, 568, 571-574, 740-741; sketch of, 569-571; and Ross, 576; return to Washington, 603; and spy, 732; spelling of name, 740
- Madison, Maj. George, 230, 232
- Madison, James, 25, 55, 384, 665; war message (June 1, 1812), 19, 53, 82-84, 126, 355, 367, 488; signs declaration of war (June 18), 19, 20, 152; strict constructionist, 19, 62-63, 67; visits department heads, 21, 355; physical characteristics, 21, 64-65, 66, 355, 362; "Mr. Madison's War," 23, 222; expects cheap, safe war, 29, 357; convenes Twelfth Congress (1811), 31; distrust of Federalists, 32; and John Randolph, 35, 64; scholarship, 36; and Lowndes, 40; negotiations with Great Britain and France re orders and decrees, 49-51; and repeal of Berlin and Milan decrees, 50-51, 79, 96-97, 360-361, 392; and Clay, 61-62; sketch of, 61-67, 362-363, 570-571; and slaves, 66, 146, 564, 572; nomination for second term and war issue, 66-67; gradual move toward war, 67-68, 363-364, 395; and Henry spy letters, 70, 73, 74-75, 76, 365-366; and *Chesapeake-Leopard* affair, 92-93; and *President-Little Belt* affair,

93-94; Tecumseh and, 112, 121; sends troops to Vincennes, 113, 372; procrastination on West Florida issue, 129; appoints commissioners to treat with East Florida, 130; criticized for Florida moves, 133; and Baltimore riot (1812), 136; and Bill of Rights, 138; confers with Dearborn and Hull, 146-147; spares Hull's life, 169; concerned by Army inaction, 180, 393; and Dearborn's armistice, 182-183, 381; reprisals for British seizure of Irish prisoners of war, 194; Quincy ridicules, 203-204; re-election (1812), 205-206, 655; second inaugural address, 206-207; at Navy function (1812), 209-210; re Decatur, 212; and nepotism, 220, 385; and early defeats, 221; and Harrison, 223, 225, 226, 349-350; re Lawrence, 261-262; reorganizes cabinet, 273-275; appoints William Jones Secretary of Navy, 275; appoints Armstrong Secretary of War (1813), 275, 279-280, 284, 285; Ingersoll re, 273; and Monroe, 281, 282, 392, 602; need for generals, 283; inspects military rocket, 295; and "Rule of 1756," 360; "Prince of the Potomack," 361; J. Quincy re, 362; and cabinet friction, 391; asked to dismiss Dearborn, 413; and burning of New York frontier, 421; criticism of (1814), 426-427, 710-711; promotion of Jackson, 429, 711; curbs Armstrong, 428-429, 728; vetoes early moves for national bank, 434; and Tennessee militia pay, 440; and Bonaparte, 470-471; "Dear James" letters, 473; Rufus

King's toast to, 479; and Bonaparte's fall, 479-480, 481; illness at Montpellier (1814), 480, 710, 720; as viewed by British public, 487, 488; and prisoner-of-war question, 492, 493, 497-498, 724; puts Winder in charge of Chesapeake Department, 498-499, 725; criticism of, re Chesapeake's unpreparedness, 509, 511; Monroe reports to re British Army, 519; and Wilkinson, 520; reviews troops before Washington, 523-524; interviews British prisoners, 525; and preservation of records, 527, 732; holds council of war, 529, 530, 531; and Barney, 531-532, 730; puts Winder in command, 532-533, 733; at Bladensburg, 537, 735; and Federalists, 554; during British occupation of capital, 560, 568, 573, 574, 575, 741, 745; notes to Dolley from Bladensburg, 564; flight from Bladensburg, 568-569, 574, 574-575, 739-740; and Patent Office, 579; and Beanes affair, 587; public attitude toward after seizure of Washington, 595, 598, 602, 651; affected by seizure of capital, 602, 740; returns to Washington, 603; appoints Monroe Secretary of War (Sept. 1814), 605; appoints Story to Supreme Court (1811), 607; and canard re administration attitude toward Canada, 622-623; honors Maccomb, 636; and Hartford Convention (1814), 662; appoints peace commissioners, 667, 753, 754; Gallatin warns that England will continue war, 688; and peace treaty, 670, 671; submits treaty to Senate (Feb. 15, 1815), 677; re Presidency,

- 710; shorthand system, 739; private library destroyed, 740; and Jackson's capture of Pensacola, 752
- Madison*, U. S. vessel, 244
- Madison Co., Ind., 112, 371
- Magraw, —, Madison's gardener, 573, 574
- Magruder, Col. —, 729
- Maidstone*, British frigate, 395
- Maine, 621, 657-658, 669, 752
- Maine District, 146
- Main Poe, 217
- Malden, Can., 414, 439, 442; British agents at, incite Indians against U. S., 122, 124; likely point of U. S. attack, 148; notified re war, 153; Hull fails to attack, 154-159; British force at, 157; prisoners of war taken to, 220, 231; winter campaign against given up, 227; Proctor retreats to, 239; shipyards, 314, 316, 338; British fleet base, 320, 321, 332; Proctor's army leaves, 337-338, 400-401; Creek Indians visit, 447
- Malone, N. Y., 749
- Mammoth Cave, Ky., 426, 712
- Manchester, N. Y., 419
- Manowa, 718
- Manrique, Gov. —, 646, 648, 649
- Mansfield, Ohio, 219
- Mantua, 289
- Marblehead, Mass., 264, 358, 493
- Marcus Hook, Pa., 742
- Marengo, Battle of, 28
- Marie Antoinette, 512, 560
- Marietta, Ohio, 158
- Marion, Francis, 298
- Marion, Ind., 227
- Marlborough, Duke of, 483
- Marquesas Islands, 744
- Mars, Stephen, 117
- Marshall, Humphrey, 38, 372-373
- Marshall, John, 120, 137, 205, 396, 557
- Martin, Luther, 496, 724
- Martinique, 289, 643, 679, 694
- Maryland, 496, 499; Baltimore riot, 1812, turns state to Federalists, 136, 374; militia, 290-291, 292, 500, 525-526, 546, 583, 590, 591, 725, 737; petitions for Madison's abdication, 426; clamors for defense, 510; harassed by Cockburn, 728-729
- Mason, Elizabeth Champlain, 331
- Mason, Gen. John, 532, 587, 588, 589, 602-603
- Massachusetts, 379; opposed to war, 23, 27; legislature investigates impressment, 95-96; anti-French, 95-96; recruiting slow, 179, 659; bank deposits, 434; manufactures, 435; British want a strip of coast, 621; representation, 655, 656; secessionist sentiment (1814), 660-661; and Hartford Convention (1814), 661, 662-663, 666, 753
- Mathews, Brig. Gen. George, 131-134, 373
- Maumee, Ohio, 152
- Maumee Bay, 153
- Maumee Rapids, 152, 226-228, 234
- Maumee River, 151, 219, 226, 234, 236, 239
- Mead, Maj. Gen. David, 316
- Meigs, Return Jonathan, governor of Ohio, 149; calls Ohio militia, 149-150; sends Hull supplies, 158; summoned by Hull's officers, 165, 181; efforts in recruiting, 223; and local defense, 660; postmaster general, 732
- Melampus*, British vessel, 91
- Menelaus*, British frigate, 506, 516, 745
- Mercer, —, 139
- Mercer, Gen. Hugh, 277
- Merrimac*, 680, 757

- Merritt, William Hamilton, quoted, 375
- Merry, Anthony, 564
- Methoatske, 103
- Mexican War, 186, 616, 713
- Mexico, 394
- Mexico, Gulf of, 100
- Mexico City, 394, 610
- Miami Indians, 109, 125
- Miami River, 103, 110, 149
- Miani, Battle of, 299
- Michigan, 110, 166, 168, 219, 348, 371
- Michilimackinac Island, 159, 165, 216, 348, 397
- Middle Sister Island, 336-337
- Milan Decree, 46, 52, 79, 279, 360, 392; revocation of, 656
- Milfort, Le Clerc, 443, 445
- Militia, record of first year, 199-203; cost of substitutes, 428; pay, 440, 452, 659-660, 664; dress, 534, 587, 758; character of, 151, 179-180, 383, 705, 758; Jackson re, 705; terms of enlistment, 716. *See also* names of states, militia
- Milledgeville, Ga., 385
- Miller, Col. James, 150, 156-157, 162, 164, 165, 167, 375, 377-378, 614
- Miller, Capt. Samuel, 536, 543, 544, 547, 550
- Milwaukee, Wis., 350
- Mims, —, builder of Fort Mims, 449
- Minnesota, 219
- Minor, Mrs. —, 575
- Minorca, 507, 726
- Minor's Virginia regiment, 738
- Minute Men, 503
- Miranda, Francisco, 30
- Mississinewa towns, Ind., 227
- Mississinewa River, 421, 438
- Mississippi, 127, 221
- Mississippi River, 70, 100, 128, 243, 610, 642, 645, 650; British right of free navigation of, 670; and New Orleans campaign, 675, 677, 680, 681, 682, 683, 686, 687, 693, 694, 697, 698, 701, 703, 757
- Mississippi Territory, 448, 453, 459, 460
- Mississippi Valley, 677
- Missouri River, 113, 444
- Mitchell, David B., 134
- Mitchell, Maj. G. S., 246
- Mobile, Ala., 438, 445, 449, 458; passes from Spanish to U. S. control, 129-130; Spaniards hope to recapture, 451; Jackson at, 640, 646-647, 649, 752; British hope to capture, 644, 646, 677; Jackson leaves troops at, 650, 755
- Mobile Bay, 647
- Monguaga, 163, 164, 614
- Monroe, James, Secretary of State, 63, 258; and Lowndes, 40; Washington re, 52, 360; supports War Hawks, 52-53, 363; re Canada, 60; and Henry spy affair, 71, 72, 74, 75, 366; minister to St. James's (1803-1807), 78; and Pinkney, negotiate commercial treaty (1806), 97; correspondence with Folch, 130; instructs commissioners to East Florida, 131-132, 134; and the Constitution, 138; and Harrison, 223, 226; disapproves of Secretaries Eustis and Hamilton, 273; supervises War Department, 275, 283; Revolutionary War veteran, 277; and Armstrong, 278, 428, 429; sketch of, 281-284, 392; and nepotism, 281, 392; and State Department, 282-283; considers Army command, 283-284, 285, 393, 733; attacks Washington's policies in *View of the Conduct of the Executive in . . . Foreign Affairs . . .*, 284, 392-393; J.

- Quincy re, 362; and impressment, 381; Clay to (Aug., 1812) re Kentucky reaction to defeat at Detroit, 386; daughters, 392; and Perry slapping incident, 400; "benign administration," 434; absent from Serurier dinner, 481; report on prisoners of war, 493-494, 724; scouts British position, 518-519, 730, 732; and preservation of records, 527, 732; advises Stansbury re defense of Washington, 528, 529; at Bladensburg, 530, 535, 537, 538, 568, 569, 734-735, 740; re defense of Capitol, 542; retires to Tennallytown, 574; rejoins Madison, 575; with army at Montgomery Court House, 602; returns to Washington, 603; given War Department (Sept. 1814), 605; sense of honor, 623; and Gulf situation, 646, 751; sends Jackson to defend New Orleans, 649, 755; and payment of militia, 659-660; proposes draft, 660; and Hartford Convention, 662; likely to succeed Madison, 665; and peace commissioners, 669; and impressment issue, 754
- Monroe, Mich., 153, 228
- Monroe Co., Ala., 459, 469
- Montagu, British vessel, 260
- Montezuma, Ind., 114
- Montgomery, Ala., 465
- Montgomery, John, 374
- Montgomery, Lemuel Purnell, 465
- Montgomery, Gen. Richard, 55, 465
- Montgomery Co., Ala., 465
- Montgomery Court House (Rockville, Md.), 22, 519, 540, 574, 575, 602
- Monticello, Va., 499
- Montpelier, Madison's Home, 64, 222, 480, 710, 711, 720, 741
- Montpelier, Vt., 594
- Montreal, British vessel, 628
- Montreal, Can., 72, 76; attack on planned, 147, 148, 361, 376, 393; difficulties in way of expedition to, 180, 242; prisoners taken to, 192; Dearborn campaign against (1812), 198-199; campaign against (1813), 414, 415-418, 709; and trade with U. S., 426, 710; base for invasion of New York, 620, 635; land outlet needed, 621
- Mooers, Maj. Gen. Benjamin, 626
- Moore, Sir John, 501
- Moore, Thomas, 577, 589-590
- Moore, Dr. William A., 345
- Moravian towns, 156, 339, 347, 376
- Morgan, Gen. David, 687, 696, 697, 703, 760
- Morgan's Virginians, 758
- Morris, Capt. Charles, 390
- Morris, Gouverneur, 281, 477-478
- Morristown, Can., 198
- Morristown, N. J., 597
- Morristown, N. Y., 475
- Morro Castle, 130
- Morse, Robert, 593
- Moulton, Joseph W., quoted, 749
- Mount Vernon, Va., 581-582
- Muir, Maj. —, 164
- Mullens, Col. —, 698, 699, 759-760
- Mumma, —, Baltimore butcher, 141
- Munroe, —, editor *Baltimore Patriot*, 561
- Murray, Daniel, 139, 141
- Musgrove, Maj. —, 141
- Muskingum River, 339
- Muskogee Indians, 443-444

N

- Nannahubba Island, 449
- Nantucket, Mass., 661

- Napier, Lt. Col. Charles, 299, 506
 Napier, Sir William Francis Patrick, 299
 Naples, Italy, 52, 79
 Nardin, Frenchy, 564, 739
 Narrows, the, 471
 Nashville, Tenn., 20, 454, 456, 650, 758; hears of declaration of war (June 26, 1812), 436; Tennessee army assembles at (1812), 438; Tennessee army returns to (1813), 439, 440; demands expedition against Creeks, 451-452
 Nashville Inn, 441, 451
 Natchez, Miss., 438, 439, 452, 716
Nautilus, U. S. brig, 365
 Navarino Bay, 505
 Negril Bay, Jamaica, 678, 679
 Negroes, 57, 118; Madison's slaves, 66, 146, 564, 572; servant's comment on birth of Lawrence, 269; slave, re Monroe, 282; slaves and Cockburn, 290, 395; at Hampton, 299; slaves plan uprising, 301; slavery question in Indiana, 371-372; Ross's instructions re, 395, 515; false rumors of slave insurrection near Washington, 540, 736; warn Fort Mims, 449, 450, 451, 714; armed and drilled, with Cockburn, 515, 579; in Washington, 531, 532, 553, 565; and Lafitte, 642, 643; slaves at New Orleans, 681; free Negro battalion at New Orleans, 683, 696; West Indian Negroes with British, 688
 Nehaaseemoo, 370
 Nelson, Lord, 44, 45, 86, 289, 295, 321, 483, 485, 504, 627, 676, 749
Netley, U. S. gunboat, 749
 Netta Chaptoa, 457
 New Brunswick, Can., 621, 638
 New England, reaction to declaration of war, 23, 27; grows rich on commerce, 45; effect of embargo on, 48, 425-426; and Henry spy affair, 70-71, 72, 75, 76; Shay's Rebellion, 145; recruiting slow, 179; in 1812 election, 205, 206; exempted from early British blockade, 287, 433-434; opposes war loans, 432; manufactures, 433, 434-435, 666; Great Britain hopes to reclaim, 489; attitude toward government, 606; British plan of 1777 to isolate, 620; secessionist sentiment, 620-621, 740, 756; and Hartford Convention, 651-666; grievance over many Virginia Presidents, 665
 New Hampshire, 652, 656, 656-657, 662, 663
 New Haven, Conn., 379
 New Jersey, 22, 206, 359, 596, 652
 New London, Conn., 25, 723
 New Market, Va., 396
 New Orleans, La., news of war reaches, 20; and trade, 55; Wilkinson at, 277, 286, 438; naval station, 365; Liverpool's plans for, 489; and the Lafittes, 641, 642, 643, 644, 645, 646; garrison commanded by Col. G. T. Ross, 645; and Jackson's move on Pensacola, 646, 751-752; plans for defense of, 649, 650; welcomes Jackson, 673-674, 674-675; defense problem, 674, 675, 680, 682, 687, 689, 692, 694, 696, 755, 757, 759; militia, 674, 674-675, 683, 684, 685, 686, 694; British forces (1814-1815), 591, 675-676, 678, 679; British campaign plan, 677; British plans for governing of, 679, 757; Battle of, significance, 677, 756; British approach, 679-683, 684-685, 688,

- 757; defense at Villeré's plantation, 685-687; British reconnaissance repulsed, 689-691; artillery attack on fails, 691-693; Jackson's victory (Jan. 8, 1815), 549, 693-705
- New Orleans Foot Dragoons, 675
- New York, N. Y., 19, 55, 256, 270, 279, 304, 357, 392, 427, 482, 492, 561, 728; reaction to declaration of war, 24-25, 26-27; celebrates *Constitution's* victory, 176; dinner for *Hornet's* crew, 261; funeral of James Lawrence, 270; exemption from early British blockade, 287; celebrates Perry's victory, 333-334; welcomes Harrison after Thames, 349; and trade with enemy, 426; celebrates Bonaparte's fall, 472, 477-479, 719-720; defenses, 595-596; militia, 596; Woodworth poem re defenses, 597; privateers, 599; hears of Bladensburg, 736-737; reaction to burning of Washington, 594-596; honors Macdonough, 636; Livingston mayor of, 650
- New York, state of, reaction to embargo, 48; and Henry spy affair, 70-71, 72, 76; militia, 179-180, 183-185, 186, 191, 192, 194, 195, 197, 199, 257, 279, 349, 381, 415, 418, 438, 598, 607, 608, 609, 626-627, 748, 750; slow assembly of forces in, 179, 181-182, 376; guerrilla groups in, 197-198; Clinton carries (1812) 206; manufactures, 435; British invasion by Lake Champlain, 620-639; sword for Macomb, 636; land grant to Macdonough, 636; and early New England separatist movements, 652, 653; Burr's candidacy for governor, 653; and Hartford Convention, 657; representation, 657; trade with Canada, 710
- New York harbor, 93, 369, 493, 595
- New York Navy Yard, 262
- Newark, N. J., 596
- Newark, Ont., 418-419, 424, 709
- Newburgh, N. Y., 27, 186, 268, 475
- Newburgh letters, 276, 277, 280, 284, 285, 391
- Newburyport, Mass., 113, 475
- Newcastle, Del., 625
- Newfoundland, 670
- Newfoundland fencibles, 157
- Newport, Ky., 336, 493
- Newport, R. I., 302, 398
- Newport, Va., 211-212
- Newport harbor, 211
- Newspapers, for annexation of Canada, 55; strong Northern papers Federalist, 201; indiscreet coverage of war news, 387; oppose purchase of government bonds, 432; British plan for, New Orleans, 679; peace rumors (1814), 721; *Albany Argus*, 420; *Albany Register*, 661; *Alexandria (Va.) Gazette*, 22, 356; *Baltimore American*, 590, 710-711; *Baltimore Federal Gazette*, 473, 585; *Baltimore Patriot*, 561, 590, 736; *Baltimore Whig*, 136, 137; *Boston Advertiser*, 426; *Boston American Statesman*, 378; *Boston Centinel*, 201, 358, 600-601, 654-655, 749; *Boston Gazette*, 133, 600; *Boston Patriot*, 60, 475; *Buffalo Gazette*, 746; *Burlington (Vt.) Gazette*, 624; *Canandaigua Repository*, 383; *Charleston Courier*, 719; *Connecticut Courant*, 23, 25, 223, 654; *Connecticut Herald*, 180; *Connecticut Mir-*

- ror, 201, 204, 622; Cumberland (Md.) *Register*, 295; *Delaware Gazette*, 473, 750; *Federal Republican*, 22, 136-144, 374, 426-427, 477; Fredericktown (Md.) *Herald*, 91, 368; Greensburg (Pa.) *Gazette*, 421-422; Herkimer (N. Y.) *American*, 427; *Kentucky Gazette*, 222; *Lexington Reporter*, 124; *London Commercial Appeal*, 94; *London Gazette*, 80; *London Statesman*, 365; *London Times*, 47, 77-78, 79, 80, 81, 94, 142, 148, 152, 154-155, 156, 168, 174-175, 188, 192, 200, 212, 213, 275-276, 287, 361, 374, 377, 380, 382, 425-426, 486, 490, 624, 636, 637, 655, 658, 669, 671, 721, 727; *National Advocate*, 300; *National Intelligencer*, 27-28, 123, 124, 143, 192, 197, 222-223, 223, 269, 306, 310-311, 332-333, 348, 361, 434-435, 435; 480, 508, 509, 521, 550, 566-567, 579, 580-581, 655, 691, 704, 723, 752, 753; *New York Columbian*, 479, 720; *New York Commercial Advertiser*, 22, 25, 88, 206, 355, 361, 420, 479, 480-481, 482, 624, 719-720, 736-737; *New York Daily Advertiser*, 662; *New York Evening Post*, 25, 26, 133, 201, 355, 356, 357-358, 361, 363, 383, 424-425, 511, 562, 581, 595, 596, 597, 621-622, 656, 709; *New York Gazette*, 472; *New York Herald*, 180; *New York Spectator*, 22, 26-27, 55, 96, 256, 355, 378, 383, 419-420, 421, 422, 594-595, 711, 719, 720, 743, 745, 748, 750; *New York The War*, 193; *New York World*, 399; *Niles' Weekly Register*, 57, 70, 98, 124-125, 193, 361, 426, 434, 492, 582, 592; *Ontario Repository*, 250; *Philadelphia Daily Advertiser*, 133; *Philadelphia Democratic Press*, 357; *Pittsburgh Mercury*, 229, 230, 322, 233-234, 422-423; *Quebec Gazette*, 750; *Raleigh Register*, 508; *Rhode Island American*, 428, 477; *Richmond Patriot*, 514; *St. Louis Missouri Gazette*, 218; *St. Paul Pioneer Express*, 399; *Salem Gazette*, 475, 728; *the Shamrock*, 193; *Trenton Federalist*, 474; *Troy Post*, 382; *Troy Register*, 749; *United States Gazette*, 22-23, 378; *Washington City Gazette*, 521; *Washington Globe*, 508
 Newton, Mass., 378
 Ney, Marshal Michel, 77, 327
 Niagara, Battle of, *see* Lundy's Lane
 Niagara, U. S. brig, 312, 317, 318, 320, 321, 322, 323, 324-325, 327, 328, 329, 331, 332, 628
 Niagara Falls, 187, 612, 613
 Niagara Falls, Canadian town, 375
 Niagara frontier, status in July 1812, 161, 381; defense left to New York, 183, 415; Dearborn's plan re, 242; activity along, summer of 1813, 413, 414, 415, 418-421; U. S. redeems itself in summer of 1814, 606-619; British repulsed on, 669
 Niagara River, 147, 148, 183, 303, 307, 309, 311, 378, 418, 424, 606, 607, 608, 609, 610, 611, 612, 616, 619
 Nicholls, Lt. Col. Edward, 641, 644, 646, 647
 Nicholson, —, model maker, 579
 Nicholson, —, Pike's aide, 245
 Nicholson, J. H., 396, 590, 724, 724-725

Niemen River, 28, 29, 488
 Niles, Hezekiah, 361
 Ninety-fifth Regiment, British
 foot, 685, 694
 Ninety-fifth Rifles, British, 676
 Ninety-third Highlanders, 675-
 676, 688, 694, 698, 701-702,
 755, 760
 Noble, James, 112
 Nonintercourse Act, 48, 49, 50-
 51
 Norfolk, Va., 297-298, 384, 396-
 397, 499, 725
Norge, British vessel, 679
 Norris, —, 692
North American Review, 294
 Northampton, Mass., 753
 North Carolina, 33, 336, 362, 452,
 508, 625, 731
 North Point, 590, 591
 Northwest Territory, 149
 Northwest Trading Company,
 159, 160
 Nottingham, Md., 519, 584, 730
 Norwich, Conn., 25
 Nova Scotia, 621, 658
 Nye, Capt. Ansel, 23

O

Octagon House, 565, 578
 Ogdensburg, N. Y., 24, 198, 255,
 257, 415
 Ohio, militia, 148-151, 154, 157,
 166, 168, 226; and course of
 war, 219-220; war spirit, 222-
 223; Proctor invades, 234-241;
 Indian treaties, 370, 371; local
 defense, 660; maple sugar, 712
Ohio, U. S. schooner, 311, 321
 Ohio River, 100, 148, 149, 222,
 444, 447
 Olcott, Mills, 663
 "Old Ironsides," *see Constitution*
 Oldenburgh, Duchess of, 471
Olive Branch, French brig, 472
 One hundred second Infantry
 Regiment, British, 297

One hundredth Regiment, Brit-
 ish, 608
 O'Neil, John, 292, 293, 395
 Orange, Prince of, 676
 Orange Co., Va., 220
 Ordinance of 1787, 371, 372, 663
 Ore, Maj. James, 452
Ornela, U. S. brig, 365
 Osage River, 347
 Oswego, N. Y., 183, 249
 Ottawa Indians, 159, 160, 370,
 371
 Otis, Harrison Gray, 663, 664
 Otis, Samuel A., 558
 Otter River, 628
 Ouisconsin River, 219
 Outard Creek, 415, 709
 Owen, Col. Abraham, 114, 117-
 118

P

Pakenham, Maj. Gen. Sir Ed-
 ward, 549, 672; sketch of, 678;
 commands New Orleans expe-
 dition, 677-678, 681, 687-688,
 689-691, 756-757, 759; recon-
 naissance in force, 689-691;
 cannonading of American
 works, 691-693; plans frontal
 assault, 693, 694; reinforced,
 693-694; last battle, 697-701,
 759, 760
 Paoli massacre, 247
 Paris, France, 391, 470, 471, 484,
 668
 Parish, David, 432, 433
 Parker, Gen. Moses, 499
 Parker, Adm. Sir Peter, 211, 506
 Parker, Sir Peter, 506, 516, 745
 Parliament, 591, 592
 Parton, James, 37, 39, 441-442,
 442-443, 460, 715
 Passamaquoddy Bay, 657, 658
 Pass Christian, Miss., 680
 Patapsco River, 396, 515, 589
 Patterson, Commodore Daniel T.,
 645, 646, 680, 696, 697, 703
 Patterson, Edgar, 527

- Patterson, Elizabeth, 513
 Patuxent River, 500, 515, 516, 519, 558, 595, 728, 729
 Paulus Hook, 141
 Payne, John Howard, 138
 Peabody, George, 729
 Peace negotiations, *see* Ghent, Treaty of
 Peacock, British brig, 260-262, 389-390
 Peacock, U. S. sloop, 599
 Pea Island, 680, 681
 Pearce, Col. Cromwell, 246, 247
 Pearl River, 130, 680
 Peel, Robert, 74, 75
 Pelican, British brig, 271-272
 Pembroke, Earl of, 727
 Peninsular War, 425, 501, 502, 676, 678, 693, 759, *passim*
 Penn, William, 371
 Pennington, William S., 596
 Pennsylvania, 276, 278, 359; vote (1812) decides election, 206; militia, 226, 304, 316, 326, 421, 422, 500, 599, 607, 659, 725; medals for Perry and fleet, 334; legislative resolution re prisoners of war, 493; representation, 657; housing of prisoners of war, 724; camps at Kennett Square and Marcus Hook, 742
 Penny, Joshua, 492-493, 723
 Penobscot Bay, 658
 Penobscot River, 658
 Pensacola, Fla., 463; Spanish in, 129, 445, 451; Jackson offers to move against, 428; British fleet base at, and Creeks, 447-448; Claiborne re, 459; objective of Jackson in Creek War, 640; British occupy, 640; Spanish governor accused of bad faith, 646; Jackson marches on (Nov. 7, 1814), 648-649
 Peoria Lake, 227
 Perceval, Prime Minister Spencer, 73, 79-80, 81
 Percy, Lord, 244, 503
 Percy, Sir William H., 641, 646, 647
 Perdido River, 129
 Perry, Alexander, 303, 326, 327
 Perry, Elizabeth C. Mason, 331
 Perry, Matthew C., 549
 Perry, Oliver Hazard, 186, 242, 390, 663; sketch of, 263, 302, 305, 398; builds Lake Erie fleet, 303-306, 311-312, 628; lack of men, 304, 311, 312, 313, 314-315, 315-316, 319-320, 320-321, 332; and capture of Fort George, 306-309, 311, 398; takes five ships back to Erie, 311; health, 311-312, 315, 320, 321; names ships, 312; and command of Erie fleet, 312-313, 318-319; lifting of ships over bar, 312, 316-317, 398; ordered to aid Harrison, 313, 313-314, 315; request for re-assignment denied, 319; takes fleet to meet Harrison, 320; prepares for battle, 321-322, 398; Don't Give up the Ship flag, 321, 323, 328; victory (Sept. 10, 1813), 322-324, 325-335, 399, 425, 451, 493, 627; painting of, in U. S. Capitol, 328; remembers wife in battle, 331; prize money, 334; Elliott challenges, 335; slapping incident, 335, 400; transports Harrison's army to Detroit, 336, 338; takes fleet to Thames, 338; volunteer aide to Harrison's staff, 338, 339; praise of Harrison, 349; re Barron, 368; name, 397; compared with Macdonough, 625, 626, 638-639; attempt to capitalize on politics of, 661
 Peru, Maine, 749
 Peter, Maj. George, 528, 535, 729
 Petersburg, Va., 202

- Philadelphia, Pa., 71, 224, 275, 277, 304, 305, 361, 561, 570, 608, 620, 710; celebrates *Constitution's* victory, 176; gives silver urn to Biddle, 177; sword for O'Neil, 293, 395; ovation for Harrison, 349; and Bonaparte's fall, 477; proposed as U. S. capital, 592; affect on, of seizure of Washington, 599; privateers, 599; housing of military prisoners, 724
- Philip II, of Spain, 722
- Phillips, Billy, 20
- Phoebe*, British frigate, 744
- Pickering, Timothy, 90-91, 651-652, 653, 654, 659, 666, 752
- Pickett, Gen. George Edward, 396
- Picton, Sir Thomas, 520, 622, 678, 736
- Pig Point, 516, 532
- Pigeon Roost massacre, 219
- Pike*, U. S. flagship, 318
- Pike, Zebulon, 388
- Pike, Brig. Gen. Zebulon M., 180, 199, 243, 243-244, 245, 251, 256, 307, 387-388
- "Pike's Pikes," 387
- Pinckney, Maj. Gen. Thomas, 202, 383-384, 717, 718
- Pinkney, William, 74, 97, 274, 526, 536, 539, 540, 571, 734, 736
- Pinckney, Mrs. William, 395
- Pinxit, Chapin, 387
- Piqua, Ohio, 103, 225, 226
- Pitt, William, 46, 492
- Pittsburgh, Pa., 69, 113, 149, 229, 305, 393, 503, 737, 758
- Pittsfield, Mass., 435
- Plattsburg, N. Y., 384, 417, 493, 498; Dearborn at, 183, 198; British concentrate north of, 621; new works at, 623, 627, 747; Maccomb in command, 625; raids on, 625; British advance on (1814), 626-627, 629-630, 634, 749; British withdraw from, 635, 637, 669, 749, 750; honors Macdonough and Maccomb, 635, 636; trade with British, 710
- Plattsburg Bay, 628, 629, 636
- Plauché, Jean B., 675, 683, 685, 692, 694
- Pleasanton, S., 527, 558, 741
- Plumer, William, 653
- Plymouth, Eng., 674, 676, 678
- Plymouth, Mass., 663
- Poictiers*, British vessel, 177, 288-289
- Poindexter, George, 221
- Point Lookout, Md., 518
- Poker, 61, 362
- Polk, James K., 570, 712
- Popham, Adm. Sir Home, 361
- Poplar Island, 509
- Porcupine*, U. S. schooner, 312, 322, 323
- Portage River, 336
- Port Dover, Can., 316, 398, 422, 423
- Porter, Capt. David, 357, 400, 743-744
- Porter, Peter B., hears of declaration of war, 21; War Hawk, 40; chairman House foreign relations committee, 53, 147; report re Orders in Council, 53, 68, 77, 78, 98, 364-365; recruits New York forces, 195; quarrel with Smyth, 195, 196; forces raid St. David's, Ont., 424-425; quartermaster general, New York militia, 607; at Battle of Chippewa, 609
- Portland, Me., 272, 607, 659, 663
- Port Tobacco, Md., 510
- Portsmouth, N. H., 146, 656
- Portugal, 30, 80, 283
- Potawatomi Indians, 109, 216, 217, 218, 370, 371
- Potomac River, 71, 509, 515, 516, 518, 519, 528, 592, 595, 725, 727, 728

- Poughkeepsie, N. Y., 598
 Powell, Mrs. Grant, 389
 Power, Brig. Gen. —, 624, 636
 Prairie du Chien, 219
 Preble, Commodore Edward, 259, 260, 379
Preble, U. S. vessel, 628, 630, 631, 633, 634
 Prescott, William, 663
President, U. S. frigate, 93-94, 210, 262, 294, 365, 379
President Adams, U. S. vessel, 209, 259
 Presqu' Isle, 303, 304, 397
 Prevost, Gov.-Gen. Sir George, 26, 153, 161, 166, 384, 502; armistice with Dearborn, 181, 376-377; and prisoner-of-war quarrel, 194; importance of, 204, 205, 638, 750; Proctor calls on for troops, 234; criticized for dividing forces, 242-243; fails to capture Sackets Harbor, 256, 257, 748; and Irish, 309; re devastation of New York frontier, 421; and Long Point Bay expedition, 423; re Canadian army and American beef, 425, 710; expeditionary force for, 489; and prisoners of war, 491-492, 494-495; two British regiments join, 504; and vengeance for York, 584, 742; forces in Champlain invasion, 624-625, 748; advance on Plattsburg, 626-627, 629-630, 634, 749; withdrawal from Plattsburg, 635, 636, 637, 637-638, 749, 750; death, 638
 Prince George Co., Md., 143, 587
 Prince Regent, 166, 341, 346, 481, 491, 494, 557, 563, 592, 638, 668, 671, 721
 Princeton College, 63, 64, 232, 277, 363, 531, 667
 Pring, Capt. Daniel, 629, 637
 Pringle house, 396
 Prisoners of war, American sailors, 91; at Detroit, 166, 168, 169; at Queenston, 192; British hold Irish-born for trial, 192-193, 194, 491, 492, 497, 497-498, 722; citizenship question, 192-194, 382, 491-492, 494, 721-723; hostage problem ends exchanges of, 192, 194, 491-492; American, threatened with massacre, 208; at River Raisin, 229, 230, 231-233, 386; at Fort Meigs, 237; Lawrence and, 261; Broke and, 268; Havre de Grace, 293, 395; Chasseurs Britanniques, 297-298; Battle of Thames, 493; special hostages, 492-493; accommodations for, 493, 495; U. S. military prisons, 493; treatment of hostages, 493-494, 495, 724; Americans sent to England, 495; Winder's activities re, 496-497, 724; conventions for exchange, 497, 498, 587; Bladensburg, 548-549, 588; Washington arsenal explosion, 583, 587-588, 741; Beanes affair, 585-589; civilians, 587; Lundy's Lane, 613; New Orleans, 680, 682, 686, 701, 703, 705
 Proctor, Gen. Henry A., 442; Tecumseh and, 105, 237-238, 337, 338, 339; Proctor, sent to Malden, 161-162; ruse against Hull, 165; victory at River Raisin, 229, 230, 231, 232, 233; attacks Fort Meigs, 234, 236-239; second invasion of Ohio, 239-241, 313, 321; retreat from Malden to Thames, 337, 338, 339, 400-401; defeat at Thames, 339-341, 401, 415, 425, 611
 Prophet, the (Laulewasikaw, Tenskwautawaw), 105-108, 113-114, 117, 118, 120, 126, 370, 371, 372

- Prophet's Town, 108, 112, 113-115, 120, 216
 Providence, R. I., 425
 Prussia, 29, 45, 46, 283
 Prussia, King of (Frederick William III), 484, 721
 Puckeshinowan, 103
 Pulitzer, Joseph, 399
 Pultowa, Battle of, 43
 Purdy, Col. Robert, 415
 Put-in-Bay, 320, 321, 322, 399
- Q
- Quebec, Can., 72, 146, 160-161, 192, 199, 221, 309, 377, 495, 496, 497, 510, 663, 724
 Queen Anne, Md., 586
Queen Charlotte, British vessel, 322, 323, 325, 326, 327, 329, 332
 Queenston, Can., 186, 187, 189, 192, 244, 381, 424, 611, 612
 Queenston Heights, Can., 186, 187, 188, 189, 191-192, 309, 627
 Quids, 57, 61, 281, 361-362
 Quincy, Josiah, 21, 35, 41, 203-204, 284, 285, 362, 393, 654, 753
 Quincy, Mass., 753
- R
- Radnor, Pa., 397
 Ragan, Col. —, 536, 538, 575
 Raglan, Lord, 506
 Rambouillet Decree, 46
Ramillies, British vessel, 492, 493, 679, 723
 Randolph, John, and "Tonson" letters, 22, 355; denounces Napoleon, 28; minority House leader, 35; and Madison, 35, 64; Indian blood, 35, 358; and Ways and Means Committee, 39; and Quids, 57, 361-362; heads peace faction, 57-60, 61; re right of seizure, 96; and Kemper affair, 128; coiner of phrases, 137; supports Monroe (1808), 281; re new territory, 351; and antislavery provision in Ordinance of 1787, 372; and Aaron Burr, 396; re Bonaparte, 473; re Secretary of Treasury Campbell, 531; re R. R. Livingston, 650; "liquid tones," 727; re use of soldiers on public works, 711; defeated by Eppes, 744
 Rappahannock River, 291
 Raymond, Ethel T., 106
 Read, Col. —, 745
 Read, Lt. George C., 173-174
Recourse, British vessel, 289
 Red Eagle, *see* William Weatherford
 Red Hook, N. Y., 278
 Red Jacket, 607, 609, 746
 Red River, 243
 "Red Stick" confederacy, 369. *See also* Tecumseh
 Reeve, Judge —, 653
 Reid, Col. John, 397
 Rennie, Col. Robert, 689, 690, 702
 Republican party, 31-32, 56-57, 136, 205-206, 285, 361-362, 374. *See also* War Hawks
 Revolutionary War, 40, 131, 141, 145, 146, 147, 202, 221, 222, 227, 298, 336, 363, 375, 379, 436, 452, 473, 496, 499, 503, 525, 607, 625, 654, 659, 661, 663, 669, 731, 752, 758-759; influence of veterans declines, 32, 33, 41; and Canada, 55; British bounties for scalps, 126; heroes attacked in Baltimore riot, 136-144; and Creek Indians, 444; flag incidents, 512, 513; war songs and verses, 512, 513; records saved, 527. *See also* Newburgh letters
 Rhea, John, 56, 124
 Rhode Island, 302, 303, 319, 334, 365, 397, 652, 656, 659, 660, 661, 663

- Riall, Sir Phineas, 424, 607, 608, 609-611, 612-613, 615, 746, 747
- Richardson, Maj. —, 233
- Richelieu River, 747
- Richmond, Va., 55, 434, 438, 574, 712
- Ringgold, Tench, 574
- Ripley, Eleazar Wheelock, 606-608, 609, 611, 613-618
- River Raisin, 153, 158, 228-234, 337, 442
- Roane, Gov. —, 436
- Robb, —, 119
- Roberts, Capt. Charles, 159, 160, 165
- Robespierre, 282, 288
- Robinson, Capt. —, 512
- Robinson, Maj. Gen. —, 624, 637, 727
- Rodgers, Commodore John, 93, 210, 294, 312, 365, 379
- Rodgers, John, 586
- Rodgers, Mrs. John, 294, 395
- Rodney, Adm. Sir George, 485
- Rodriguez Canal, 672, 689, 759
- Rome, King of, 33
- Rome, N. Y., 427
- Roosevelt, Theodore, 62, 263, 272, 373, 379-380
- Ross, Col. George T., 645, 686, 694, 697
- Ross, Gen. Robert, 670, 676, 700, 756; instructions re Negroes, 395, 515; sketch of, 501-502, 726; harasses Atlantic Coast, 502-504, 505, 727; and Harry Smith, 505-506; leaves Bermuda for America, 507; proceeds toward Washington, 516, 517, 519, 522, 526, 729, 730, 731; forbids pillage of private houses, 516; advances to Bladensburg, 533-534, 733; victory at Bladensburg, 539-540, 541, 543, 546, 547, 548, 736; and Joshua Barney, 548; establishes communication with fleet, 550-551; fired on in Washington, 552-553, 738; seeks parley, 552, 553; and burning of Capitol, 554, 555-556, 738; protects private property, 561, 575, 579, 581; at Mrs. Suter's boardinghouse, 562-563, 566; and French minister, 565-566; destroys Treasury and War buildings, 576-577; and arsenal destruction, 583; withdraws from Washington, 583-585, 741; and Beanes affair, 586, 587, 588-589; death in move on Baltimore, 590-591, 592, 637, 742; orders re Gulf Coast, 677; army at New Orleans, 678, 694
- Ross, Mrs. Robert, 502, 726
- Rossie, U. S. schooner, 513
- Rouge River, 164
- Round Head, 230
- Rousseau, Augustin, 683
- Royal Marines, 297
- Royal Newfoundland Regiment, 244
- Royal Oak, British vessel, 679
- Royal Scots Fusiliers, 504, 551.
See also Fusiliers
- "Rule, Britannia," 324
- Rush, Benjamin, 224, 355, 535
- Rush, Richard, re Madison, 355; re death of Lawrence, 390; Attorney General, 481, 482; reviews troops, 523; confers re Washington's defense, 530, 531, 532, 733; at Bladensburg, 535-536, 537; flight from Bladensburg, 568, 569, 574
- Russell, —, editor *Boston Centinel*, 358
- Russell, Col. Gilbert C., 459
- Russell, Jonathan, 283, 483, 490, 668, 754
- Russell, Gen. William, 227
- Russia, 28-29, 283, 357, 367
- Ryason, —, 398
- Ryland, Henry W., 72, 73

S

- Sabine River, 394
 Sackets Harbor, N. Y., 183, 249, 277, 349; and invasion of Canada, 147; Dearborn concentrates forces at, 242; Brown's defense of, 256, 257, 258, 389, 748; Lake Ontario fleet at, 303, 311; Wilkinson's headquarters, 414, 415, 417; Gaines and Izard leave, 615, 618; Izard ordered to, 621, 623
 St. Albans, Vt., 635, 747
 St. Augustine, Fla., 132-133
 St. Clair, Gen. Arthur, 104, 118, 125
 St. Clair Co., Ill., 113
 St. David's Ont., 413, 424-425
 St. Eustatius, W. I., 512
 St. Francis River, *see* Bayou Bienvenu
 St. Francisville, Miss., 129
 St. George, Col. —, 153, 157, 161, 233
 St. George's Channel, 271
 St. Helena, 289, 290
 St. John, E., 420
 St. John's River, 658
 St. *Lawrence*, British schooner, 514
 St. Lawrence, Gulf of, 171
 St. Lawrence River, 147, 183, 198, 248, 393, 414, 415, 416, 417, 621, 625, 638, 709
 St. Louis, Mo., 219
 St. Lucia, W. I., 678
 St. Marys River, 131, 132
 St. Mary's Co., Md., 510
 St. Petersburg, Russia, 392, 667
 Salamanca, Battle of, 678
 Salem, Mass., 79, 269-270, 599, 659, 743
 Salisbury, Mass., 358
Salmagundi, 598
 Salmon River, 416
 San Antonio, Tex., 130
 Sands, Joshua, 87
 Sands, Samuel, 590
 Sandusky, Ohio, 148, 151, 320, 668
 Sandusky River, 239
 Sandwich, Can., 154, 156, 338
 Sandy Hook, 379, 471
 San Sebastian, 559, 739
 Saranac River, 627, 632, 634
 Saratoga, N. Y., 146, 168, 277, 284, 286, 382
Saratoga, U. S. flagship, 628, 629, 630, 631, 632, 633, 634, 635
 Sargeant, L. M., 474
 Sassafras River, 296
 Savannah, Ga., 134, 425
 Sawyer, Adm. —, 379
 Schlosser, N. Y., 307, 419, 612
 Schutz, —, 536, 538
 Schuylkill River, 277
 Scioto River, 100, 152
Scorpion, U. S. cutter, 513
Scorpion, U. S. schooner, 312, 322, 323, 324, 327, 331
 Scott, Gov. Charles, 224
 Scott, Lt. Col. William, 536
 Scott, Brig. Gen. Winfield, 647, 666, 733; and *Chesapeake* affair, 92; on Niagara front, 184-185, 187, 189, 191, 192, 201; prisoners of war, 192-193; and British seizure of Irish prisoners, 192-193, 194, 491; law background, 202; re Regular Army, 224; re Wilkinson, 286, 394; and capture of Fort George, 307, 308-309; and Montreal expedition (1813), 415, 418; at Campbell court-martial, 423; and hostages, 491; re Winder, 496; commands brigade under Brown, 606, 745; at capture of Fort Erie, 607-608; at Battle of Chippewa, 608, 609-611, 746; leadership, 610, 623, 625, 746; at Lundy's Lane, 612-615, 747; fort named for, 627
 Scott Co., Ind., 219

- Seahorse*, British frigate, 516, 679
 Seaton, William W., 508, 732
 Second Infantry Regiment, U. S., 191, 307
 Second U. S. Volunteers, 168
 Sehoy, 445
 Seminole Indians, 468, 713
 Seminole War, 186, 616, 731
 Seneca Indians, 123, 124
 Serurier, M. —, 73, 240, 282, 283, 481, 565-566, 732
 Seventeen Fires, 100-126, 214, 370, 371
 Seventeenth Infantry, U. S., 239
 Seventh Fusiliers, 679, 694
 Seventh Infantry, U. S., 694
 Sevier, Capt. Alexander, 544
 Sevier, John, 40, 436-437
 Sewall, Robert, 552
 Seymour, Edward, 722
 Shane, Anthony, 344
Shannon, British frigate, 170, 263-270, 312, 390
 Sharp's Island, 509
 Shaubena, 344
 Shawnee Indians, 102-103, 109, 110, 247, 370, 371, 402
 Shay's Rebellion, 145
 Sheaffe, Maj. Gen. Roger H., 186, 188, 189, 191, 192, 244, 245, 250, 251
 Sheffield, Lord, 360, 367
 Shelby, Gov. Isaac, 40, 221, 234, 236, 336, 338, 340, 341, 343, 348
 Shelbyville, Ky., 386
 Shelton, Conn., 379
 Shenandoah River, 71
 Sherbrooke, Sir John Coape, 657-658
 Sherman, Roger Minot, 663
 Ship, Lt. Edmund, 240
 Ship Island, 679
 Sholes, Capt. Stanton, quoted, 401
 Short, Lt. Col. —, 240
 Shubrick, J. T., 260
 Shutberg, Dr. Richard, 388
 Silver Creek Massacre, 386
 Simcol, Gov. —, 388
 Simmons, William, 728
 Sinquista, 446, 459
 Sioussa, Jean P. (French John), 564, 571, 573, 740
 Sioux Indians, 160
Siren, U. S. vessel, 365, 626
 Sisemore, William, 718
 Six Nations, 382, 607, 609
 Sixth Infantry, U. S., 98
 Sixth Regiment, British, 726
 Sixtieth Regiment (5th Battalion), British, 727
 Sixty-fourth Infantry Regiment, British, 269
 Sixty-second Regiment, British, 504
 Skinner, John S., 587, 588, 589
 Sloan, James, 749
 Smith, Lt. Col. —, in Georgia troops, 385
 Smith, Lt. Col. —, British, in Revolution, 503
 Smith, Buckingham, 388
 Smith, Harry, 505-506, 727, 729, 731; quoted, 741, 756-757, 759-760
 Smith, Jim, 530, 572
 Smith, John, 740
 Smith, John Stafford, 589
 Smith, Nathaniel, 663
 Smith, Oliver H., 112
 Smith, Robert, Secretary of State, 52, 391
 Smith, Gen. Samuel, 396, 525-526, 757
 Smith, Samuel Harrison, 602, 603
 Smith, Lt. Sidney, on Lake Champlain, 625, 748
 Smith, Brig. Gen. Walter, 521, 523, 525, 532, 536, 537-538, 542, 558, 603-604, 732, 734, 736
 Smyrna, Del., 176
 Smyth, Brig. Gen. Alexander, 184-185, 189, 194, 195-196,

- 196-197, 203, 275, 382, 383,
622, 641, 745
Snake Hill, 608, 617
Snelling, Josiah, 119, 157, 378
Snyder, Gov. Simon, 341
Somers, U. S. schooner, 311, 322,
323, 329
Somerset Co., Md., 496
Sorbonnet, *see* Crillon, de
Sorel River, 625, 628
Soul, Marshal Nicolas Jean de
Dieu, 33, 502
South America, 44, 259, 260, 744
Southampton, British frigate,
357
South Carolina, 272, 452; naval
station, 363
Spain, and Bonaparte, 29; threat
to frontiers through Floridas,
54; and Great Britain, 54, 80,
357, 361, 622, 677; and West
Florida, 127-129, 130, 131; and
Indians, 131, 446, 447, 451, 640;
American ministry to vacant,
283; Wilkinson and, 286, 393-
394; and East Florida, 131-135;
British sympathizers re New
Orleans, 680, 682, 757
Spanish America, 30, 357
Spanish Peninsula, *see* Peninsular
War
Sparks, Jared, 293-294, 393
Spencer, Judge Ambrose, 275
Spencer, Lady Elizabeth, 727
Spencer, Capt. Spier, 117, 119
Spesutie Island, 291
Spotts, —, 692
Springfield, N. J., 596
Springfield, Ohio, 103
Standish, Myles, 607
Stansbury, A. J., 64
Stansbury, Gen. Tobias E., 526,
528-529, 535, 536, 537-538,
540, 541, 543, 732, 733, 734-
735, 736
"Star-Spangled Banner," 589-590,
742
Stephen, Sir James, 80
Sterett, Col. Samuel, 526, 538,
542, 734, 736
Stevens, —, 24
Stewart, Alvan, quoted, 623
Stokes, Lt. —, 325
Stone, Lt. Col. Isaac W., 424-
425
Stoney Creek, Can., 310, 311,
398, 496, 499, 523, 724, 733
Stonington, Conn., 657
Stony Creek, 231
Story, Dr. John, 722
Story, Joseph, 269-270, 607
Strachan, Dr. John, 246, 247,
247-248, 248-249, 249-250, 251,
255
Street's Creek, 608, 609, 610, 611
Stricker, Gen. John, 136, 139,
140, 142, 143, 374, 526, 541,
543, 546, 591
Strong, Gov. Caleb, 95, 600, 658-
659, 660, 661
Stuart, Gilbert, 358, 573
Stull, Capt. J. I., 536, 734
Suchet, Marshal Louis Gabriel,
676
Sukey, Dolley Madison's slave,
572
Sumter, Thomas, 298
Surratt, Mrs. Mary E., 593
Susquehanna River, 291
Suter, Mrs. —, 562-563, 566,
739
Suwanee River, 102
Swaine, Capt. —, 757
Swannanoa River, 102
Sweden, 283, 668
Symmes, Judge John Cleves, 224
- T
- Table Rock, 612
Tagus River, 29, 426
Talladega, 454-455, 456, 458, 461,
468, 684, 715
Tallahassee River, 448
Tallapoosa Co., Ala., 463
Tallapoosa River, 442, 445, 458,
463, 466, 467, 717, 718

- Tallasehatche, 454, 468, 714-715
 Talleyrand, Charles Maurice, 483, 565
 Tammany Society, 479, 595, 596
 Tarbell, Capt. Joseph, 298
 Tattnell, Josiah, 397
 Tayloe, Col. John B., 578
 Taylor, —, 323
 Taylor, Brig. Gen. Robert B., 298, 396
 Taylor, Zachary, 220-221, 385
 Tecumapease, 103, 346
 Tecumseh (Tecumthâ), 227, 350; and "Red Stick" confederacy, 100-101, 106-107, 107-108, 109-110, 121, 122, 225, 446; against "firewater," 101, 107, 377; Shawnee heritage, 102; birth and youth, 103-104, 105-106, 370, 445; against torture, 104, 105, 237, 238, 370, 387; and Rebecca Galloway, 104-105; rejects whites' methods, 105, 106, 215, 377, 443, 444; appearance, 105-106, 370, 377; visits Vincennes (1810), 105, 109-111, 371; (1811), 112; (1812), 121, 713; confederacy spurred by embargoes and treaties, 108-109; Harrison re, 113; disgusted with Prophet, 121; turns to British, 121-122; handles Indians at Malden, 158; confers with Brock, 162, 377; defeated at Monguaga, 164; and fall of Detroit, 166, 377; prestige restored, 214; not at River Raisin, 233; at Fort Meigs, 234, 236-239; name, 369; portrait and painting of, 377, 387; challenges Harrison, 387; and Proctor, 237-238, 337, 338, 339, 340; tries to ambush-cade Fort Meigs, 239; nostalgia for the Wabash, 338, 346; premonition of death, 338-339; sword, 338-339; son, 338-339, 346, 401; re Brock, 377; name proposed for Indiana's capital city, 346; brigadier general in British Army, 377; size of army, 385; death, 105, 343; mystery surrounding, 343-345, 401, 401-402; effect of, 347, 401; tributes to, 346, 401, 402; incites Creeks to war, 442-443, 444-445, 447, 713; and Cherokee, 452, 713; razor strop, 490
 Tennallytown, Md., 540, 560, 574
 Tennessee, 359, 446, 451, 496, 531; welcomes war, 21; militia, 436, 437-438, 439, 440, 452, 453-454, 454-455, 456, 684, 686, 696, 698, 701, 702, 715, 716; angered at treatment of Jackson, 440; authorizes expedition against Creeks, 451-452; recruits second army for Jackson, 462, 717; supplies new forces for Jackson, 647, 648, 650, 758; and local defense, 660; copper, 711
 Tennessee River, 452
 Tensaw Lake, 448
 Tenth Military Department, 725
 Tenth Royal Veteran Battalion, 160
 Terrapin War, 68, 710
 Tessier, Maj. —, 703
 Texas, 677
 Thames River, Can., 156; Battle of, 339-340, 348, 350-351, 401
 Theobald, Dr. Samuel, 344
 Third Infantry, U. S., 459, 755
 Third Regiment York militia, 246
 Thirteen Fires, 106
 Thirteenth Infantry, U. S., 627
 Thirteenth Regiment, British, 637
 Thirty-ninth Infantry, U. S., 462, 717
 Thirty-third Regiment, British, 749

- Thomas, Joshua, 663
 Thomas, Maj. Gen. John, 688
 Thompson, Capt. Henry, 541, 543, 546
 Thompson, John, 141, 142
 Thompson, Richard W., 64
 Thompson Creek, 715
 Thornton, Capt. —, 519
 Thornton, Col. William, 506; Chesapeake campaign, 517; at Bladensburg, 547, 549; and New Orleans expedition, 549, 681, 682, 683, 684, 687, 694, 697-698, 703, 704, 705, 760
 Thornton, Dr. William, 65, 553-554, 577-578, 578-580, 581, 603
Ticonderoga, U. S. schooner, 628, 630, 631, 633
 Tiffin, Ohio, 336
Tigress, U. S. schooner, 311, 322, 323
 Tilghman's dragoons, 731
 Tingey, Commodore Thomas, 259, 559
 Tippecanoe, Battle of, 59, 115-121, 122, 150, 378, 448, 709
 Tippecanoe Battleground, 372
 Tippecanoe River, 126
 Tipton, John, 118, 119, 372
 Todd, Dr. —, 231, 232
 Todd, John, 570
 Tohopeka, *see* Horseshoe Bend
 Tombigbee River, 130, 444, 449
 Tompkins, Gov. Daniel D., 179, 183-184, 257, 275, 381, 598, 605
Tonnant, British flagship, 504, 507, 514, 679
 "Tonson" letters, 22, 355
 Tookabatcha, 442
 Toronto, 242, 388. *See also* York
 Towson, Maj. Nathan, 610
 Tracy, Uriah, 653
 Trafalgar, Battle of, 44, 45, 86, 270, 314, 505, 627, 749
 Treaty of 1783, 670
 Trenton, N. J., 277, 283
 Tripoli, 259, 260, 263, 624, 743
Trippe, U. S. sloop, 311, 322, 323, 324, 331
 Troup, George M., 59
 Troy, N. Y., 183, 187, 426
 Tucker, Capt. Thomas Tudor, 744
 Turkey Creek, 156
 Turkeytown, Ala., 454
 Tuscarora Village, N. Y., 419
 Tuskegee, 447
 Tuskegee Warrior, 447
 Tustin, A. G., 232-233
 Tweeddale, Marquis of, 608
 Twentieth Regiment (Lancaster Fusiliers), 501, 507, 584, 726
 Twenty-eighth Regiment, British, 726
 Twenty-fifth Infantry Regiment, U. S., 610, 613, 662
 Twenty-first Infantry Regiment, U. S., 607, 614
 Twenty-first Regiment, British, 504, 694. *See also* Royal Scots Fusiliers
 Twenty-ninth Regiment, British, 504, 622
 Twenty-ninth Regiment, U. S., 755
 Twenty-seventh Infantry, U. S., 340
 Twenty-seventh (Enniskillen) Regiment, 676, 726
 Twenty-third Light Dragoons, 678
 Tylden, Maj. Sir John, 698, 699
 Tyler, John, 363

U

- Underhill, Isaac, 98
 United States, threat of war with France (1798), 39, 57, 71; manufactures, 44, 288-289, 435, 711-712, 743; position re neutral shipping, 45, 48, 360; vessels seized under Orders and Decrees, 52; and annexation of Floridas, 127, 129, 130

- United States*, U. S. frigate, 210-213, 262, 272, 365
- U. S. Army, and French officers, 25, 356; increase authorized, 68, 364; two major generals authorized, 146; demarcation between regular and volunteer troops, 151; leadership, 202, 283, 393; list of high officers (Oct. 1, 1812), 202-203; first snow brigade, 243, 387; importance to, of Battle of Chippewa, 746; Secretaries of War, *see* Armstrong, John; Eustis, William; Monroe, James. *See also* Militia
- U. S. Bank, 391, 434
- U. S. Congress, and declaration of war, 19, 22-23, 80-81, 355; criticism of, 27, 357-358; and Nonintercourse Act (1810-1811), 49; special session on international affairs, 53; preparedness measures, 68; and Henry spy letters, 70, 74-75; bills re impressment, 88, 94-95, 369; authorizes loan, 366; informed of British gifts to Indians, 125; bill re Mississippi border, 128; authorizes President to take over East Florida, 130, 134; authorizes major generals, 146; and awards to naval and military heroes, 176, 177, 241, 334, 335, 636; Smyth's petition to, 196-197; grants Navy more funds, 209; action re Irish prisoners of war, 194; special session (1813), 431-432; act establishing U. S. Bank, 434; and location of U. S. capital, 511, 592, 593; investigates Winder, 528, 733; temporary quarters, 578, 592-593; and national anthem (1931), 590; Embargo Act (1807), 642; Webster's influence, 656; secret debates, 664; proposed amendment re slave representation (1804), 656; and Hartford Convention, 753
- U. S. Constitution, 356, 659, 665
- U. S. Department of State, 282-283. *See also* Monroe, James; Smith, Robert
- U. S. House of Representatives, 31-34, 35, 53, 77, 78, 98, 221-222, 358, 413, 655-656
- U. S. Marine Corps, 268
- U. S. Merchant Marine, development, 44, 45, 360; and British and French interference, 45, 46-47, 47-48, 49, 50, 51-52, 369; and embargo, 48; pay, 85, 367; and British deserters, 85, 88, 91, 368; bill re foreign sailors in, 94-95, 369; act for protection of seamen, 367
- U. S. Military Academy, 202, 396, 608-609, 625, 724, 746
- U. S. Naval Academy, 263
- U. S. Navy, weaknesses, 68-70, 365; coast-defense plan, 69; successful engagements (1812), 170-178; new victories, 209-213; Naval Ball (1812), 209-210; Lawrence and, 259, 269; promotions (Mar. 1813), 261, 390; strength compared with British (1812), 365; advance in power, 742-744; Secretaries of Navy, *see* Hamilton, Paul; Jones, William
- U. S. Senate, 34, 356, 365, 493-494, 509, 657, 677, 724, 727
- U. S. Treasury, 25, 356, 432-433, 434, 596; Secretaries of, *see* Campbell, George W.; Dallas, Alexander J.; Gallatin, Albert
- Upham, Col. Timothy, 416
- Upper Marlboro, Md., 522, 525, 526, 550, 584, 585, 586, 587, 730, 731
- Upper Sandusky, Ohio, 228, 336, 387

Urbana, Ohio, 150, 151, 152, 158,
162, 336
Ustanili, 452
Utica, N. Y., 180, 415

V

Van Buren, 36, 206, 280, 359,
401
Vanderlyn, John, 282
Van Horne, Maj. Thomas B.,
158, 162
Van Ness, John P., 520-521
Van Rensselaer, Col. Solomon,
184, 186, 187-188, 189
Van Rensselaer, Maj. Gen. Ste-
phen, 183-184, 185, 186, 187,
189, 191, 192, 194, 195, 244,
275, 381, 382, 623, 720
Varnum, Joseph B., 33
Vergennes, Vt., 628, 747, 748
Vermillion River, 114
Vermont, 23, 72, 183, 199, 594,
636, 652, 662, 711-712, 747,
750
Vicksburg, Miss., 755
Victoria, Queen, 727
Vienna, Congress of, 483
Villeré, Célestin, 682
Villeré, Gabriel, 682, 683, 684,
685, 757-758
Villeré Canal, 681, 685, 693
Villeré plantation, 682, 684, 685-
687, 705
Vincennes, Ind., 105, 108, 109-
111, 112, 121, 219, 227, 372,
713
Vincent, Col. —, 233
Vincent, Gen. John, 309, 310-
311, 349, 419-420
Viper, U. S. brig, 365
Virginia, 138, 226, 298, 299-300,
366, 395, 583, 655, 657, 659,
660, 725
Vixen, U. S. brig, 365

W

Wabash River, 33, 103, 110, 113,
219, 338, 370, 448, 713

Wabash Valley, 215
Wadsworth, Col. Decius, 532,
537
Wadsworth, Brig. Gen. William,
189, 191-192
Wagner, Jacob, 137, 138, 139
Walker, Alexander, quoted, 674
Wallace, Capt. Robert, 153, 155,
164, 378-379
War between the States, 186,
593, 654
Ward, Artemas, 661
Ward, Samuel, 663
War Hawks, 31-34, 39-41, 49,
53-55, 67-68, 137, 359, 363
War of 1812, declaration signed
(June 18, 1812), 19; U. S. re-
action to declaration, 26-28;
finances, 25, 78-79, 356, 366,
430-433; first hostile act, 27;
world background, 28-30
Causes: impressments, 42,
82-99, 668; Orders in Coun-
cil, 42, 45-47; 80-81, 364-365,
668; frontier insecurity, 54-55,
122-126, 373; Randolph re, 58-
59; Henry spy affair, 70-77,
365-366; citizenship question,
192-194, 382, 721-723; French
pressure, 357.
"Set fasts," 59, 209, 711;
Madison's reluctance to enter,
61-81, *passim*; "Terrapin War,"
68, 710; naval engagements
(1812), 170-178; record of first
year, 199-203; first war of
U. S. as a nation, 201; extent
of British control (late 1812),
219; public sentiment, 222,
357-358, 492, 561, 594-601,
635, 651; military rockets in-
troduced, 293, 295-296, 396,
493, 540, 541, 686, 692; and
phrase "Uncle Sam," 382; close
relationships between Cana-
dians and Americans near
border, 389; course of, to
spring of 1814, 425; cost,

- 433; stimulates manufactures in U. S., 434-435, 711-712; use of torpedo, 492-493, 723; and West Point uniforms, 608-609; American method of loading muskets, 611; and phrase "Damned Yankee," 617; and steam vessels, 628, 743; draft, 660, 664; date of close, 677, 756; contributions to American naval power, 742-743; frontier rifle, 696, 758-759; diving boat, 723.
- Flag incidents: flag of *Macedonian* presented to Dolley Madison, 210; banner of the cross on Perry's ship, 316; Porter's Free Trade and Sailors Rights flag, 357; Perry's Don't Give up the Ship flag, 321, 323, 328; Ross's white flag at Washington, 552; Fort McHenry, 589; American flag at Bladensburg, 729.
- War doggerel: re invasion of Canada, 168, 204; re *United States* and *Macedonian*, 211; re Tecumseh's death, 343; re Wilkinson, 418; re trade with enemy, 426; re disgraced generals, 427; re Madison on battlefield, 537; re Bladensburg, 569, 739-740.
- War songs: "Hail Columbia," 210, 384-385, 704, 754; "Yankee Doodle," 246, 338, 384, 388, 754-755; "Star-Spangled Banner, 296, 589-590, 742; Rule, Britannia" 324.
- Slogans: Free Trade and Sailors Rights, 357. *See also* Creek War.
- Warren, John Borlase, British vice-admiral, 499; supervises blockade, 288, 290, 293, 296, 395; vice-president of Halifax Bible Society, 290, 297, 300-301; attack on Norfolk, 297, 298; returns to Bermuda and England 301; "Spoiler of the Chesapeake," 301; at Halifax, 381.
- Wasegoboah, 346
- Washington, D. C., 146, 147, 280, 413, 414, 470, 497, 498, 675, 681; and declaration of war, 20-22, 26; Jefferson's poplars, 66; defenses, 296, 297, 301; receives news of Lawrence's death, 390; fears espionage and sedition, 427, 731-732; and new manufactures, 435; and Bonaparte's fall, 479-481; possibility of attack on considered, 482; defense of, 499-450, 725-726, 729, 730; threatened, 508-534; apathy re defenses, 508, 509; Cochrane and Cockburn place advance on, 515-516; warned of British approach, 518, 520; exodus of citizens, 519-520, 526; removal of government records, 523, 526, 527; militia, 520-521, 536, 543, 572, 725; spies in, 522; confusion in, 528, 529-530; Stansbury's forces run for, 540-541; Winder's army retreats to, 542; Armstrong suggests garrisoning Capitol, 542; British occupation, 552-584, 738-742; Sewall house burned, 553; Ross seizes ammunition and cannon, 555; Capitol destroyed by fire, 554-559, 560, 635, 687; Congressional records destroyed, 558, 738; President's house and the British invasion, 563-566, 571-572, 576-577, 578, 740; Octagon House spared, 565; Treasury burned, 566, 576; cabinet records saved by Dolley Madison, 571, 573; War Department burned, 576; Blodget's Hotel saved, 577-578, 578-579; Patent Office

- records saved, 577, 578-580; capital remains at, 578, 592-593; arsenal destroyed, 582-583, 734, 741; tornado, 583-584; British withdrawn, 583-584, 741; burning of unites country, 594-601, 651, 745; Abigail Adams re, 738; population (1810), 738
- Washington, George, 21, 35, 63, 91, 137, 138, 141, 143, 146, 257, 270, 277, 280, 282, 498, 503, 601, 652, 665, 728, 739; re Monroe's attitude toward France, 52, 360; and Newburgh letters, 276, 391; policies attacked in Monroe's *View of the Conduct of the Executive in . . . Foreign Affairs . . .*, 284, 392-393; and Madison, Monroe, and Gallatin, 362; portrait of saved by Dolley Madison, 573-574, 741; British respect for, 581-582; circular re Army discipline, 597-598
- Washington, Martha, 742
- Washington*, U. S. sloop, 23
- Washington Guards, 479
- Washington Hall, New York, 478
- Washington Navy Yard, 209, 390, 526, 529, 530, 531, 532, 539, 544, 572, 733; destroyed, 559-560, 739
- Wasp*, U. S. vessel, 176-177, 288, 365
- Waters, Maj. —, 577, 579
- Watertown, N. Y., 257
- Watson, Lt. —, 271
- Watson, Elkanah, 27, 435
- Watson, James E., 383
- Watts, Lt. —, 268
- Waxhaw settlement, 437
- Wayne, Gen. Anthony, 104, 110, 125, 184, 224, 234, 247, 397, 449
- Weatherford, Charles, 445, 467
- Weatherford, John, 713
- Weatherford, William (Red Eagle), 444-446, 467; leads Creek war faction, 444-445, 448; Fort Mims, massacre, 450-451, 451, 467-468; leaves coastal communities untouched, 451, 714; at Battle of the Holy Ground, 459-460; and gray horse, 460, 717; at Calebee Creek, 462; not at Horseshoe Bend, 463; surrenders, 467-468, 718; later years, 469, 718-719
- Weatherford's Leap, 460
- Webster, —, 396
- Webster, Daniel, 38, 225, 363, 656-657
- Webster, Noah, 753
- Weems, Philip, 586
- Wellesley, Lord, 50, 90
- Wellington, Duke of, 30, 43, 80, 83, 333, 425, 481, 483, 501, 505, 539, 686, 726, 739; re Harry Smith, 506; veterans sent to America, 502, 504, 510, 607, 622, 676, 688, 693-694, 757; and Treaty of Ghent, 667, 669-670; brother-in-law of Pakenham, 678
- Wells, Daniel, 591
- Wells, Gen. Samuel, 114, 115, 116, 117, 119, 228
- Wells, Capt. William, 216, 218, 385
- West, Benjamin, 663
- West, Richard E., 587
- Westchester Co., N. Y. 435
- Westcott, —, 257
- West Farms, N. Y., 435
- West Florida, status after Louisiana Purchase, 127; Kempers take Baton Rouge, 129; Madison claims to Perdido River, 129; final incorporation, 130-131; Wilkinson and, 394. *See also* East Florida
- West Indian Corps, 688, 694, 697
- West Indian pirates, 643
- West Indies, 44, 45, 55, 357
- Westphall, Lt. G. A., 293, 396

- West Point Military Academy,
See U. S. Military Academy
- Westport, Ky., 219
- Wheelock, Eleazar, 606-607
- Whinyates, Capt. Thomas, 177
- Whisky Rebellion, 25, 137, 284,
393
- White, Judge Hugh L., 715
- White, Brig. Gen. James, 453,
454, 457-458
- Whitebread, —, 592, 742
- Whitehall, N. Y., 635
- White Loon, 117
- White River, 370
- Whitley, Col. William, 341, 343,
345, 402
- Wildcat Creek, 120
- Wilkinson, Maj. —, 701
- Wilkinson, James, 298, 745; oc-
cupies Mobile (1812), 130;
brigadier general, 203; in Rev-
olution, 277, 286; involved with
Burr and Spain, 286, 393-394;
and Armstrong, 286, 414, 417,
418, 511, 747; McArthur's
brigade to serve under, 348;
re Jefferson's policies, 360;
made commander of Northern
armies (1813), 413-414, 622;
and Hampton, 414-415, 416;
Montreal Campaign, 415-418,
709; discredited, 427; com-
mander, Southwestern Depart-
ment (1812), 438, 449; and
Jackson, 438-439, 712; trip to
Washington, 498; offers serv-
ices in defense of Washington,
520; waste of public money,
728; re Burney's flotilla, 729-
730; re defense of Washington,
731
- William III, 503
- William and Mary College, 114,
241, 441, 738
- Williams, Col. —, 637
- Williams, Maj. —, 604
- Williams, Rev. —, 596
- Williams, Isaac, 722
- Williams, Col. John, 465
- Williams, Nathan, 747
- Williams, Roger, 305
- Williams, Samuel L., 398-399
- Williamsburg, Ont., 416
- Wilmington, Del., 288-289, 599,
667, 742
- Wilson, Lt. —, 128
- Wilson, John, 92
- Wilson, Woodrow, 62
- Winamac (Catfish), 216
- Winchester, James, 314, 401, 745;
brig. gen. 203; Revolutionary
War veteran, 222; and Harrison
Rapids, 226-227, 227-228; de-
feat at River Raisin, 228, 229,
230, 233, 234, 386, 387, 442;
prisoner of war, 230, 233;
commands at Mobile (1814),
755
- Winder, John Henry, 724
- Winder, Gov. Levin, 374, 499,
500
- Winder, William Henry, 554,
572, 593, 622, 757; on Niagara
front, 195, 383; brig. gen. 203;
at Fort George, 308; pursuit of
Vincent and capture at Stoney
Creek, 309-310, 311; heads
Chesapeake Department, 374,
498-500, 725; sketch of, 496;
and prisoner-exchange prob-
lem, 496-497, 724; inactivity,
510; attempts at defensive
measures, 500, 518, 519, 520-
521, 725-726, 729, 731; moves
to meet British, 522-526, 731,
732, 734; forces retire to capi-
tal, 528, 529, 733; confers with
Madison, 529-530; orders
troops to Bladensburg, 530;
retains command, 533; routed
at Battle of Bladensburg, 536,
537, 538, 539, 541, 542, 542-
543, 544, 574, 603, 735, 736,
737; during British occupation
of capital, 560, 562; and

- Beanes affair, 587; takes army toward Baltimore, 602; characterized, 745
 Winnebago Indians, 160, 216
 Winnemac, 117
 Winthrop, Robert C., 359, 754
 Wirt, William, 396, 740
 Wisconsin, 219
 Wolfe, Maj. Gen. James, 243, 501, 510
 Wood, Capt. E. D., quoted, 387
 Wood, Norman B., 238, 345
 Woodbury, N. J., 259
 Wood Co., Ohio, 151
 Wood Yard, 510, 522, 587, 729
 Woodworth, Samuel, 596-597
 Wool, Maj. John E., 186-187, 189, 627
 Worthington, Sen. —, 728
 Wyandot Indians, 108, 120, 370
 Wyoming Valley, 103
 Wythe, Judge George W., 36-37
- X
- Xenia, Ohio, 103
- Y
- Yale College, 21, 149
- "Yankee Doodle," 246, 247
 Yarnell, Lt. John J., 326, 327, 328, 398
 Yeo, Sir James Lucas, 242, 312-313, 357, 672, 638
 York (now Toronto), Can., 161, 375; Dearborn's raid on, 242, 243-246, 389; surrender terms, 246-250; burning of Parliament buildings, 250-255, 419, 424, 555, 584, 592, 742, 618; mace from Parliament hall, 252, 253, 254, 389; St. James Church plundered, 255; victory gives Americans 10-gun brig, 256; early history of, 388
 York, Pa., 142
 York River, 514, 515
 Yorktown, Va., 146, 246, 514, 704
 You, Dominique, 644, 690, 692
 Youngstown, N. Y., burned (1813), 419
 Yrujo, —, Spanish minister, quoted, 349
- Z
- Zanesville, Ohio, 149

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