



**Front Cover:** Richard Welling's ancestors had purchased Rhode Island land from Narraganset chief Miantonomi, so Welling, with the aid of a Harvard anthropologist, costumed himself as the chief for Mrs. Martin's gala.  
*Mrs. H. Bradley Martin Collection*  
 See: "After the Ball"

**Left:** Ottawas were among the tribesmen who followed the Shawnee brothers Tecumseh and the Prophet into battle against William Henry Harrison's soldiers.  
*Mackinac State Historic Parks, Michigan*  
 See: "Caesar and the Conquest of the Northwest Territory"

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**PREPRESS**  
 Dwight Yaeger Typographer, Inc.  
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**PRINTING**  
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**PAPER**  
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TIMELINE (ISSN 0748-9579) (Vol.14/No. 5) is published every two months by the Ohio Historical Society; Editorial and Executive Offices, 1982 Velma Avenue, Columbus, Ohio 43211. Correspondence about subscriptions should be sent to TIMELINE, 1982 Velma Avenue, Columbus, Ohio 43211. Annual subscription is \$25.00 (6 issues); single copies of this issue are \$6, plus \$1 per order to cover handling and postage; Ohio residents please add sales tax of \$0.35 per copy.

Periodicals postage paid at Columbus, Ohio, and additional entry offices; USPS Number 737-830.

Postmaster: Please send address changes to TIMELINE, 1982 Velma Avenue, Columbus, Ohio 43211-2497.

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# TIMELINE

*A Publication of the Ohio Historical Society*  
 September • October 1997 • Volume 14/Number 5

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# CAESAR AND THE CONQUEST OF THE NORTHWEST TERRITORY

## The Second Harrison Campaign, 1813

This article is the final installment in a three-part series on the military conquest of the Old Northwest.

by Allan R. Millett

**T**HE CLOUDS OF WAR AND WINTER rolled over the woodlands of Ohio and Indiana and blanketed the trees, creek bottoms, and fallow fields in the domain of Territorial Governor William Henry Harrison. He himself survived the winter of 1811–12 at Grouseland, his Vincennes estate, and North Bend, his wife's home near Cincinnati. The victor of Tippecanoe spent much time in writing; answering the critics of his generalship, managing his complex business affairs, and warning the War Department that the Indiana Territory lay open to the attacks of Tecumseh's warriors. His agents brought alarming news of British arms and powder flowing into the villages throughout northern Indiana, Illinois, and Michigan.

Harrison followed the news from Washington in letters he received from Secretary of War William Eustis, a political gossip of modest administrative skill, and in the newspapers. The new Congress, which assembled in November 1811, showed little interest in negotiating any settlement with Great Britain over a number of issues that indicated a general British disdain for American sovereignty. Harrison's old friend Henry Clay of Kentucky led the congressional "war hawks," who voted to triple the size of the regular army and to provide sponsorship for state volunteers if necessary. The Army Bill of January 1812 also provided for new generals, which interested Harrison, but not enough for him to resign his governorship. He wondered, in fact, if he could command regulars with confidence.



Following the Tippecanoe campaign, Governor William Henry Harrison alternated his time between estates at Vincennes, Indiana, and North Bend, just west of Cincinnati. *Ohio Historical Society*



An accurate picture of Indian women is difficult to glean from the historic record. This image illustrated an eighteenth-century European book. Mackinac State Historic Parks, Michigan

The governor believed war had become inevitable as the winter dragged on, punctuated by the news of isolated raids and murders of white settlers in central Illinois and Indiana. Harrison had seen the emerging pattern before: the growing violence, the weakening grasp of the peace chiefs, and the accelerated activity of British agents. His gaze fell on Amherstburg and nearby Fort Malden, the British outpost at the mouth of the Detroit River, a magnet for tribal encampments on both sides of the border that billeted thousands of warriors. Harrison doubted that Detroit could be held without Ameri-

can naval superiority on Lake Erie — the British had a small squadron near Malden, the U.S. Navy had none anywhere.

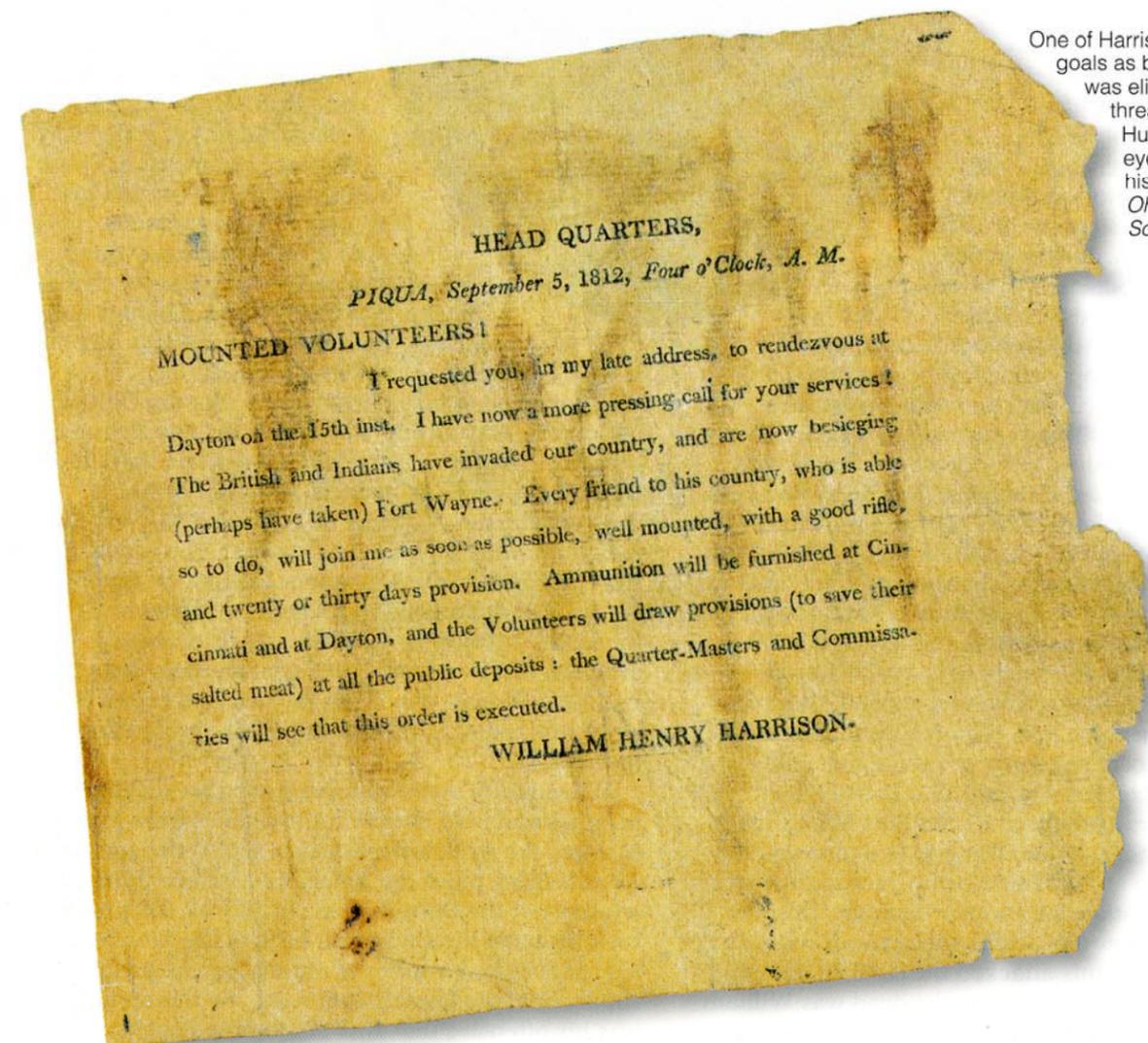
In his more reflective moments, Harrison may have returned to his library. His letters show that his love for the classics had not waned since he and Anthony Wayne had discussed Caesar's *Commentaries*. With his nation again on the eve of war with Great Britain and the Shawnee Tecumseh's zeal for a pan-tribal confederation undiminished, the classics offered much food for thought for a regional leader with national aspirations. Harrison might

have read Titus Livius, *The History of Rome*, as well as Polybius and Tacitus. He almost certainly read Flavius Vegetius Renatus, *Epitoma rei militaris*, which had been available in translation since 1767 and among military readers enjoyed a status equal to the *Commentaries*. He would have found special meaning in Consul Lucius Armilius Paulus's address on generalship when he challenged his critics in Rome: "If, therefore, anyone thinks himself qualified to give advice respecting the war which I am to conduct,...let him come to Macedonia with me."

As the likelihood of war increased, Harrison wondered who would go to Detroit, let alone Macedonia. Governor William Hull of Michigan Territory wanted an army brigadier and regular troops assigned to his imperiled post. Although the U.S. Fourth Infantry was ordered north, the post of military commander went unfilled until the reluctant Hull accepted the commission himself in April 1812. Fifty-nine that year, he had not been in uniform since he helped crush Shays's Rebellion as a militia general in 1786.

Harrison's reluctance to don a general's uniform waned in the spring of 1812. He could accept Hull's appointment, but he bridled when the Madison administration turned to another relic of the Revolution, James Winchester, a Tennessean of sixty, to organize an army in Ohio to support Hull. Harrison marveled at Winchester's appointment since he was little known in Ohio and Kentucky, the states he would depend upon for troops. With a population of 406,000, Kentucky was the cradle of soldiers, with the state of Ohio a distant second with 231,000 citizens. The territories of Michigan, Illinois, and Indiana counted only 40,000, and many of them, especially the French, could hardly be called ardent patriots.

Angered by the Madison administration's minimal interest in western defense problems, Harrison again looked to Kentucky to defend Indiana. He had little doubt that he would out-recruit Winchester there. The Tennessean did not know the Kentuckians,



One of Harrison's primary goals as brigadier general was eliminating the threat to Fort Wayne. Hundreds of Buckeyes responded to his call to arms. Ohio Historical Society

and “they never did nor never will perform anything brilliant under a stranger.” Harrison argued with acting war secretary James Monroe that only he knew the men who could recruit a Kentucky army and find supplies for it, a task that eluded the War Department. Harrison had special “knowledge of the country in which I have risen from the youngest ensign in my regt. to command of an army.” While Harrison fretted and the Kentuckians, who had appointed him acting major general of militia, mobilized, Congress declared war on Great Britain (June 18, 1812) and with bold talk cast its eyes on Canada. But while the Americans talked, the British acted, and Detroit fell.

The outer glacis of the old Northwest Territory crumbled throughout the summer of 1812, and one of the prime pushers needed no introduction to Harrison and the Long Knives: Tecumseh! Bitterly disappointed by the demoralizing impact of the Battle of Tippecanoe on the northern tribal confederation, Tecumseh turned his frustration into rebuilding Prophetstown and calling for the other tribes to rally to him. He understood that British aid would be related directly to the loyalty and belligerence of the northern tribes. Despite infusions of arms and provisions by Matthew Elliott, the British Indian agent at Malden, Tecumseh probably divined that his war would be Great Britain’s least important in Canada. The security of the St. Lawrence River Valley came first, the safety of Lake Ontario from Kingston to the Niagara frontier second. Western Upper Canada came last, but it still rated some assistance if local actions promised quick and significant victories. On July 17 a British-North Lakes warriors expedition forced Fort Michilimackinac to surrender. When General Hull ordered the small garrison at Fort Dearborn (Chicago) to evacuate, he set the stage for another disaster. Despite promises to allow a peaceful withdrawal, Withered Hand’s Potawatomis attacked the column, killing and taking prisoners. Among the dead was William Wells, who had carried Hull’s withdrawal message



Born in southwestern Pennsylvania, raised in Kentucky, captured as a teenager, and adopted by a Miami Indian family, William Wells was the son-in-law of the Miami war chief Little Turtle and was an influential figure on the Ohio Valley frontier. His death at Fort Dearborn in 1812 left the Miamis open to manipulation by the Shawnee brothers Tecumseh and the Prophet.  
*Chicago Historical Society*

from Fort Wayne. He perished fighting in his old identity, dressed and armed as a Miami war chief.

In the meantime, the American position on the Detroit frontier deteriorated. Hull started north from Urbana, Ohio, on June 10 with three regiments of Ohio volunteer infantry, raised by Governor Return Jonathan Meigs and commanded by three inexperienced but eager colonels, Duncan McArthur, James Findlay, and Lewis Cass. Hull had predictable problems

with a volunteer army, which was careless in discipline and supply conservation, but the Ohio regiments successfully built roads and small forts as ordered. The three Ohio colonels worked hard and well, as did Hull’s brigade major (chief of staff), Captain Thomas S. Jesup, an officer on the verge of a distinguished regular army career. The arrival of the U.S. Fourth Infantry, under Lieutenant Colonel James Miller, brought Hull’s army to more than two thousand, further supplemented by U.S. Army artillery, borrowed navy cannons, and Michigan militia at Detroit. Knowing the war had begun (the news reached him on June 26), Hull invaded Canada on July 12.

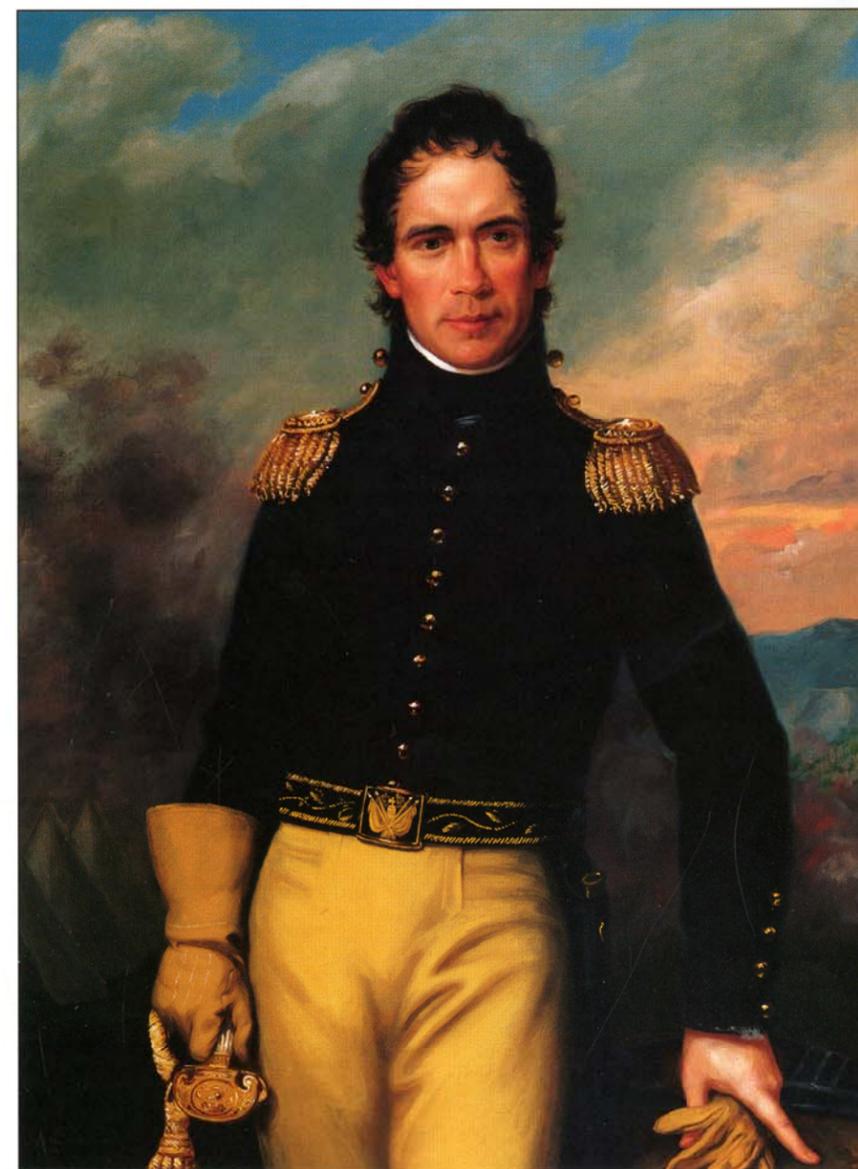
When Hull’s invasion force stalled for want of supplies and bold direction three miles from Fort Malden, the British-tribal forces seized the initiative. After helping blunt the American advance down the left bank of the Detroit River on July 19, Tecumseh took his most loyal warriors back to the American side and started a series of ambushes along Hull’s supply line, the Frenchtown road. So threatening was his offensive that Hull shifted the Fourth

Infantry and two Ohio regiments back across the river and started an ill-managed and ill-fated campaign to keep the road open.

On August 13 the governor of Upper Canada, Major General Isaac Brock, arrived with more British regulars and Canadian volunteers, which shifted the numerical advantage against Hull’s army. An offensive marked by deception and tactical deftness bluffed the pitiable Hull into surrender on August 16. Hull surrendered not only his forces at Fort Detroit, but also the regulars and volunteers still locked in indecisive combat with the warriors all the way to Frenchtown. If classic analogies applied, Brock and Tecumseh seemed to be two Hannibals poised to march on Rome. Their nemesis, William Henry Harrison, had not yet taken the field.

In August 1812, Secretary of War James Monroe appointed Harrison a brigadier general, U.S. Army, and gave him command of all the American forces from the Niagara frontier to the lost posts in Michigan and Illinois. Monroe issued Harrison predictable marching orders: destroy the tribal confederation and retake Detroit. Harrison was already dealing with an immediate problem — a siege of Fort Wayne — that clearly lay within his jurisdiction as governor of Indiana and major general of Kentucky militia.

Pulling together a force of volunteers from Kentucky, southern Ohio, and Indiana, and the U.S. Seventeenth Infantry, Harrison reached Fort Wayne on September 12 and found the garrison in little danger. The predominately Shawnee war party



*General Thomas Sidney Jesup* by Charles Bird King. Oil on canvas, 44 x 34 inches, circa 1818. Cathedral of Saints Peter and Paul, Washington, D.C.

Jesup was a Cincinnati resident in 1808 when he was commissioned as an officer in the Seventh Infantry. He became chief of staff and acting adjutant general of General William Hull’s army and was captured at the surrender of Detroit. After being exchanged, Jesup commanded Fort Huntington near Cleveland and oversaw the construction of transports used by Harrison in the invasion of Canada. Jesup was brevetted for gallantry at the Battles of Niagara and Lundy’s Lane and was made quartermaster general of the army in 1818.



David R. Barker, Photographer

An early-nineteenth-century officer hung his sword from this belt. *Ohio Historical Society, Fort Meigs State Memorial*

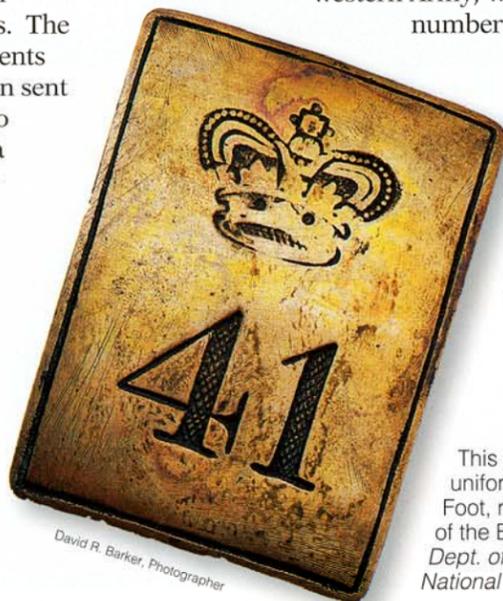
The uniforms of Ohio militiamen borrowed many features from the regular army. The leather cockade was worn on Private Joseph Osborn's hat while he served with Hull's army. *Ohio Historical Society*



against Detroit and Fort Malden. Pressured to use his troops or to see them demobilized or transferred to the Niagara frontier, he, nevertheless, had to keep a major portion of his army moving north toward Lake Erie. Against his better judgment, Harrison ordered General Winchester and an army of around two thousand to brave the Lake Erie winter and start construction of a fort near the Maumee rapids. Winchester's force was composed predominately of Kentucky volunteers and part of the Seventeenth Infantry, a new regiment raised in Kentucky and commanded by Colonel Samuel Wells, U.S. Army. Although his new North-western Army, which Monroe thought might

number ten thousand men, drew together units from as far east as Pennsylvania and Virginia, Harrison wanted his new legion tied to the heritage of Anthony Wayne and Tippecanoe.

With his ill-clad and ill-fed troops restless in their



David R. Barker, Photographer

This cross-belt plate was part of the uniform of the Forty-first Regiment of Foot, regulars who were the backbone of the British forces in Upper Canada. *Dept. of Canadian Heritage, Fort Malden National Historic Site*

withdrew, having accomplished the secondary objective of drawing American defenders away from other targets throughout Indiana and Illinois. One that had been struck was Fort Harrison (Terre Haute), but its garrison, commanded by Captain Zachary Taylor, threw back the warriors. The battle along the line of forts and settlements raged on until December, when Harrison sent a seven-hundred-man combined force to burn the villages along the Mississinewa River in northern Indiana. Before completing its arson, this force survived a surprise attack that killed ten men and convinced Harrison that frostbite and dead horses had brought an end to the expedition. It also cooled Harrison's ardor for more winter village hunts, something that appealed more to Monroe than to the men in the field.

Although his autumn retaliatory raids kept the warriors north of the largest settlements, Harrison wanted to husband his forces for the main event, an 1813 campaign

role as labor troops and before the position on the Maumee could be secured, Winchester learned that Frenchtown on the River Raisin stood open for a coup. Against Wells's counsel, he took two regiments of Kentucky volunteers and two Seventeenth Infantry companies north, seized the town, and then fell prey to a force of British, Wyandots, and Ottawas. The British brought two cannons, and Winchester had not fortified the village. The British and warriors attacked at first light on January 22, 1813, and overwhelmed the outposts; despite desperate resistance by much of his force, Winchester, captured by British regulars, surrendered. After three days of episodic massacre of the wounded and the stragglers, the survivors marched into captivity. Winchester had lost a substantial part of Harrison's army. The disaster found Harrison on the Maumee, pulling more troops after him. When he heard of Winchester's debacle, he quickly announced to Monroe that there could be no more moves against Detroit until conditions changed dramatically — and that would take time.

Like Caesar and Anthony Wayne, William Henry Harrison would not be hurried into a slipshod campaign that might end in a battle he had little chance of winning. Harrison's army in January 1813 could hardly be called menacing, built as it was around the remnants of the Seventeenth Infantry, less than one thousand short-service Pennsylvania and Virginia volunteers, Kentucky survivors, and the advance elements of two U.S. artillery companies. Notable among the first garrison of what became Fort Meigs were three first-class volunteer companies: the Pittsburgh Blues, commanded by Captain Thomas Butler, the son of the general who had perished in St. Clair's rearguard; the Greensburg (Pennsylvania) Rifles; and the Petersburg (Virginia) Volunteers. The first reinforcements brought two regiments of Ohio militia and one of Kentucky militia into Harrison's camp. Their weapons would be picks and shovels, and these tools of war would start Harrison toward victory.

The general faced two fundamental challenges of frontier campaigning: how to build and protect a system of forts along his line of communications from Fort Meigs to his depots at Urbana, Dayton, and Cincinnati and how to garrison those posts without losing all his capability for offensive, mobile warfare. His unique challenge was how to open Lake Erie as a supply route back to Presque Isle (Erie, Pennsylvania) and some eastern Ohio harbors, at the same time denying the lake to the British, who surely would use it to deploy heavy artillery against Fort Meigs. As he opened an unpleasant and extended correspondence with John Armstrong, the new secretary of war and a Pennsylvanian with a fixation on his personal political

fortunes and the Niagara frontier, Harrison could see that Armstrong intended to give him as little support as possible.

Harrison could count on Governor Meigs and the citizens of Ohio to do all they could in his support. The Ohio militia would bear much of the responsibility for guarding the line of communications. Other Ohioans, including the women of the frontier, rolled emergency cartridges, sewed winter clothes, and packed supplies. Ohio farms would feed Harrison's army. Kentucky would have to provide the manpower margin that would give Harrison an offensive capability. Governor Shelby had already sent three short-term regiments north for ninety days' service, and he promised to order out three more when Harrison could guarantee that they could be supplied and wisely used. He appointed Brigadier General Green Clay to organize a four-regiment brigade of infantry to assemble at Newport in April. The pride of the Bluegrass State had taken the field in September 1812: the Kentucky mounted rifles, a full regiment of more than twelve hundred officers and men. Except at the Battle of Fallen Timbers, where they had not been needed, the Kentucky mounted rifles had never mustered in such numbers and with such fervor to kill Shawnees, Wyandots, Ottawas, Kickapoos, and Potawatomis. Popular acclaim and shrewd politics gave Congressman Richard Mentor Johnson, a stocky dandy of thirty-two, the regimental command.

During the operational pause that followed the River Raisin battle and massacre, the British and warrior force had marshaled its own strength for the coming campaign to control the Maumee River Valley. The defenders of the Detroit-Amherstburg region had their own problems: short supplies, limited reinforcements, the competing needs of Captain Robert Barclay's Lake Erie squadron and the army for ordnance and powder, and the fear of treachery among some of the tribes and Canadians. The major problem, however, was the British commander, Brigadier General Henry Procter.

Described by one of his own officers as "one of the meanest looking men I ever saw," Procter had a personality to match. His contemporaries judged him cowardly, venal, and abusive, a commander who invariably put his own safety and comfort before his troops' welfare. Procter spread his contempt equally among the regulars of his own Forty-first Foot, the Canadians, and the tribes. He even sneered at Tecumseh.

Procter's army numbered about fifteen hundred regulars; the county militia companies could put another five hundred men in the field. Indian fighting men, representing as many as fifteen different tribes, might vary from one to four thousand, depending upon their mood, their material

Concerned about the concentration of Miamis on the Mississinewa River in northern Indiana, Harrison sent a combined force of horse and foot against them in the early winter of 1812. Led by Lieutenant Colonel John Campbell, the expedition left Franklinton in November and proceeded through Xenia, Dayton, and Greenville. At Dayton, many of the volunteer troops in the Mississinewa expedition were armed as cavalry. This 40-inch saber's size made it practical only for someone fighting on horseback. David R. Barker, Photographer Ohio Historical Society, Fort Meigs State Memorial



Having destroyed the Miami villages, the troops were attacked by a force of Miamis and Delawares. After fighting off the assault, they returned to Greenville on Christmas Eve in a state of near exhaustion, suffering from both hunger and frostbite. This officer of United States dragoons, a detachment of which served with Campbell, was sketched by a British officer in 1816. *Houghton Library, Harvard University*

needs, their rapport with the British agents, and the persuasiveness of their war chiefs. The warriors frightened the British. While the Detroit surrender had been bloodless, Procter and his officers had abandoned captives and wounded at Frenchtown to the tribesmen, whose conventions of warfare were decidedly un-European. Murder of prisoners, torture, dismemberment, and ritual cannibalism made the tribesmen allies to be appeased and despised — at least from the perspective of Procter

and his senior officers. It was not a great foundation for an alliance in stress.

In late April, a combined British-Indian force of about twenty-two hundred men invested the American post at the Maumee rapids. Procter and Tecumseh, surrounded by their separate retainers, rode to a hill above the north bank of the river to watch British artillerymen roll out their heavy guns, including two long-range twenty-four-pounders taken from the Americans, into positions from

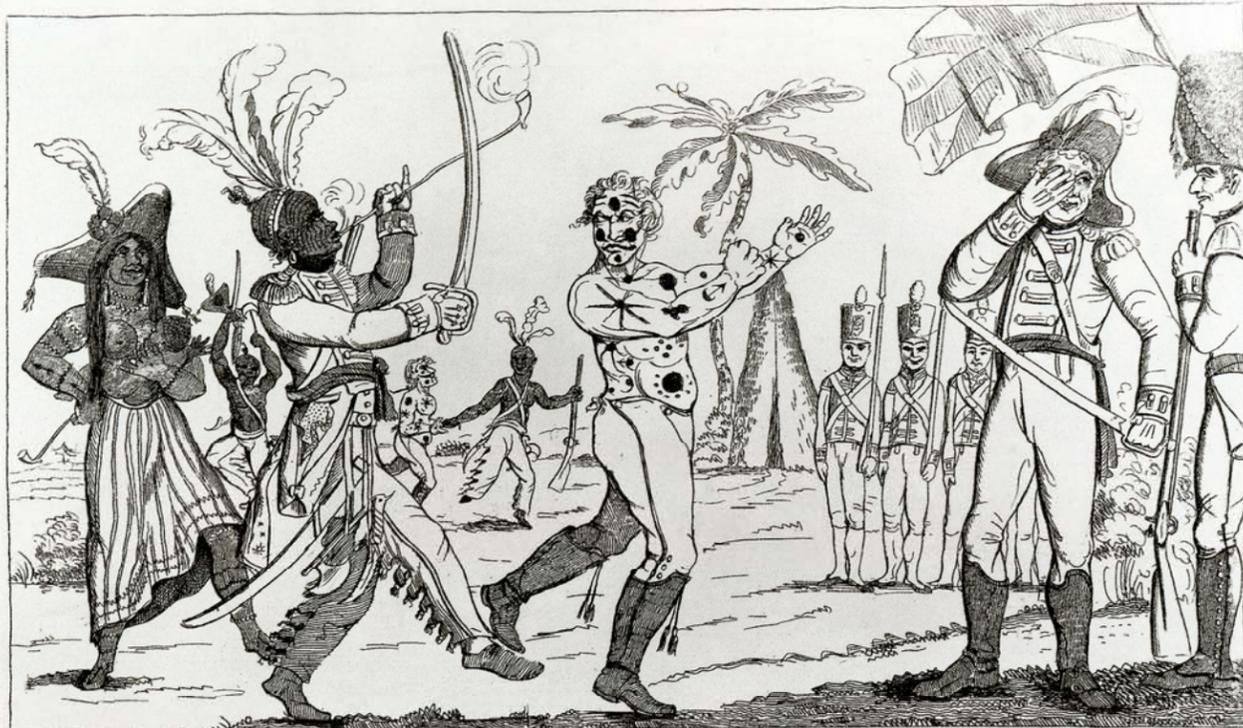


The murder by Indians of wounded prisoners from General James Winchester's army inspired this propaganda piece, obviously meant to inflame American passions. In the eyes of most frontiersmen, British General Henry Procter shared in the guilt because he failed to restrain the Indians. *William L. Clements Library*

which they could shell Fort Meigs. Below them, the fort seemed to stretch out into a distant wood. Harrison's engineers, Captains Charles Gratiot and Eleazar D. Wood, had built a ten-acre compound protected by a wall of fifteen-foot timbers, eight reinforced blockhouses, and four battery positions. Inside the wall, the American militiamen had dug a well and two below-ground magazines with reinforced roofs. The Americans had mounted thirty-four cannons, dug the obligatory ditch, fabricated an abatis of brush and sharpened sticks, and cleared the glaciais for musket fire. By frontier standards, Fort Meigs was substantial. Only the twenty-four-pounders seemed to give the attackers a chance, provided the defenders made no major errors. Alerted by spies that the Lake Erie ice would break

early in April, General Harrison arrived at Fort Meigs on April 12, two weeks before Procter and Tecumseh, to see that no one made fatal mistakes. Most of the Virginia and Pennsylvania militiamen left the fort as their enlistments expired, but Butler's Pittsburgh Blues, the Petersburg Volunteers, and the Greensburg Rifles honored their twelve-month enlistment and remained in the garrison with seven small companies of the Seventeenth and Nineteenth Infantry, Major James V. Ball's light dragoon squadron, Major Amos Stoddard's artillery battalion, and an orphaned Ohio-Kentucky militia battalion. Counting all the support personnel, the garrison might have numbered fifteen hundred, but only eleven hundred counted as active defenders.

The British bombardment opened on May 1, relying for effectiveness on the twenty-four-pounder battery and an eight-inch howitzer, all capable of hammering the fort hard and perhaps scoring a lucky hit on the two American magazines. Procter's three twelve-pound guns inflicted much less damage.



**A VIEW OF WINCHESTER IN NORTH AMERICA DEDICATED TO MR. PRESIDENT MADISON!!**  
*Extract from the Morn. Chronicle Apr. 23, 1813. It appears from one of the Halifax Papers, it was the famous Wyandot Chief ROUNDHEAD, who took Gen. Winchester prisoner: The Indian, according to his notion of the Laws of Nations, & Courtesy due to Prisoners of War, stripped the American Commander of his Fine Coat, Waistcoat, & Shirt, & then Bedaubed his Sign with Paint; In this ludicrous state having dressed himself in his Regimentals, he presented him to Col. Proctor, who with difficulty succeeded in getting the Discomfited Gen. his Coat, Sword & back.*  
*Pub. by J. Knight, Swindon; Alley Court, London, May 3<sup>d</sup>, 1813.*

Winchester's debacle made him the target of a London satirist. The Wyandot chief Roundhead, who headed Procter's Indian contingent in Tecumseh's absence, had the American stripped to the waist and presented to Procter, who covers his face in mock embarrassment.  
 Dept. of Canadian Heritage, Fort Malden National Historic Site

A mixed light battery placed in a woods three hundred yards from the fort was protected by a screen of tree-climbing Shawnee snipers. Other tribesmen under Tecumseh's command encircled the fort with more snipers. Harrison had a limited capacity for counterbattery fire since his eighteen-pound guns had fewer than four hundred rounds of all sorts; he offered a gill of whiskey to any soldier who recovered a British twelve-pound round shot. Digging, however, proved decisive over firepower. The critical engineering defenses lay within the outer walls, a system of deep trenches and traverses, or dirt walls, as much as twenty feet thick and ten feet high. Harrison manned his walls and batteries with only about one-third of his force while the remainder, protected from round shot and fragments by the traverses, huddled in the muddy

trenches. Three days' bombardment produced only twenty American casualties, the most important being Major Stoddard, who died on May 11 of tetanus from a splinter wound. Moreover, Harrison had already sent for Green Clay's Kentucky infantry brigade, assembled at Fort Winchester (Defiance, Ohio), thirty miles upstream on the Maumee.

One of Harrison's officers managed to leave the fort with an order for the Kentuckians to come to Meigs, and another found the convoy of eighteen large flatboats, each loaded with fifty to sixty men and ample supplies, five miles above the fort on the morning of May 4. The second messenger, Captain John Hamilton, carried Harrison's attack orders to General Clay: send a force of eight hundred men to the north bank of the river and assault the British batteries, spiking the guns and destroying the magazine and ordnance equipment. Following this coup de main, the force should reembark and cross the river to Fort Meigs, protected by an American cannonade. In the meantime, the remainder of Clay's force would land on the south bank and

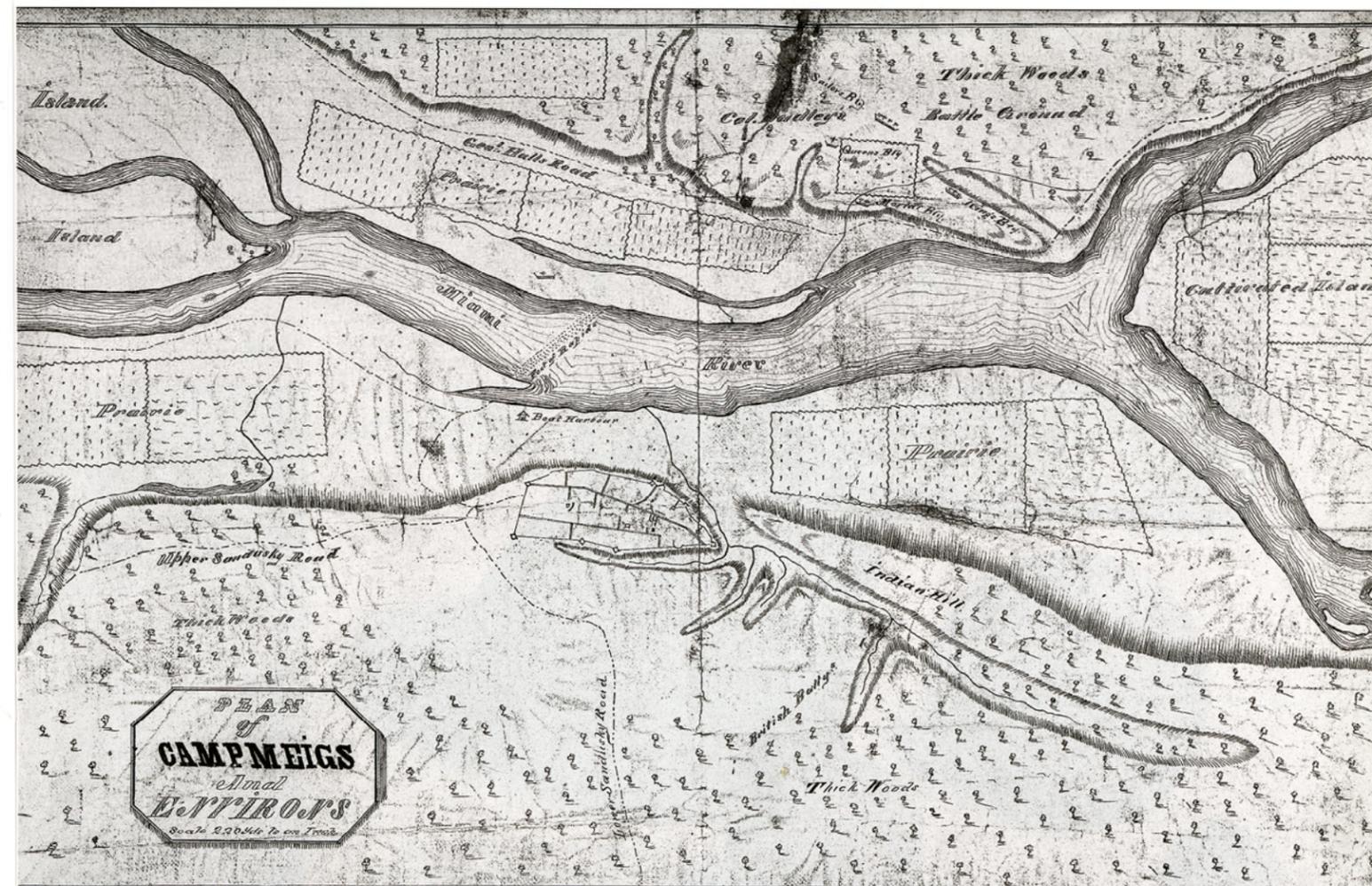
march quickly to the fort, creating a diversion by attacking the warriors from the rear. Harrison planned to meet it with one of his own battalions.

From his observation post on the western grand battery, William Henry Harrison watched another of his battles flirt with ruin, and what became known as "Dudley's defeat" was really his, largely because he could not influence the action north of the river. Colonel William Dudley of the Tenth Kentucky led the assault, dividing his command into three parallel columns. Dudley's attack worked as planned up to the point at which he seized the batteries without serious resistance. His three columns converged on the battery and created a mob scene in which spiking the guns and blowing the powder were neglected. Then a screening company ran into a group of warriors, and the battle that was to be avoided began. Before it ended two

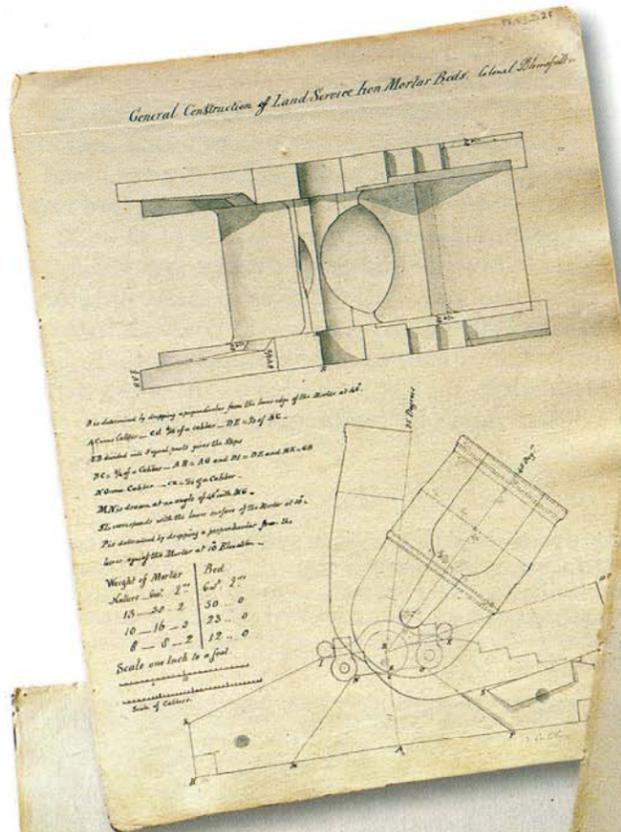
hours later, Dudley had committed his force piecemeal into a killing zone that drew more warriors. The British counterattacked along the river. In the woods, now choked with smoke, the Kentuckians broke and ran for their boats, except where pockets of veterans held out. Chaotic defeat does not lend itself to a close rendering of accounts, but Harrison's burial parties later found the remains of 45 to 50 men, including the mutilated Dudley, and 150 to 170 survivors either crossed the river to safety or retreated to Fort Winchester. The rest of Dudley's force (approximately 630) became prisoners.

Meanwhile, the battle swirled on the south bank as William Boswell's regiment fought its way to the

In the summer of 1813, Lieutenant Joseph Larwill, an experienced surveyor, prepared this map. Larwill, who had assisted Gratiot in laying out the fort walls, included the positions of the five British batteries and the battlefield of Dudley's defeat. *Maumee Valley Historical Society and Toledo-Lucas County Public Library*

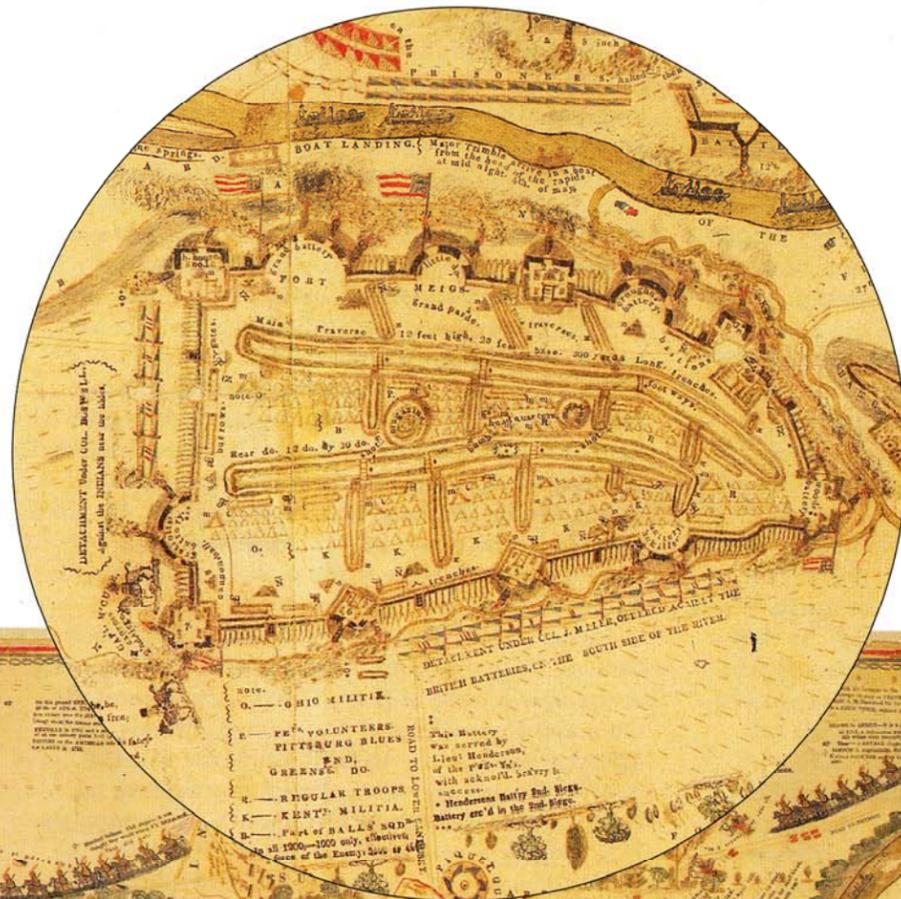
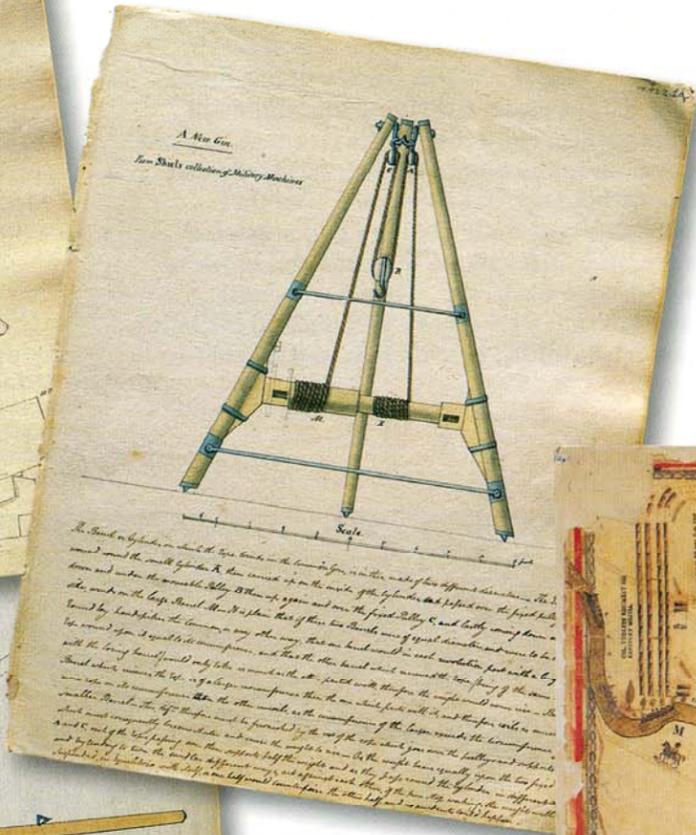


*Surveyed July 17, 1813 by Joseph H. Larwill 1st Lieut. U.S. Artillery*

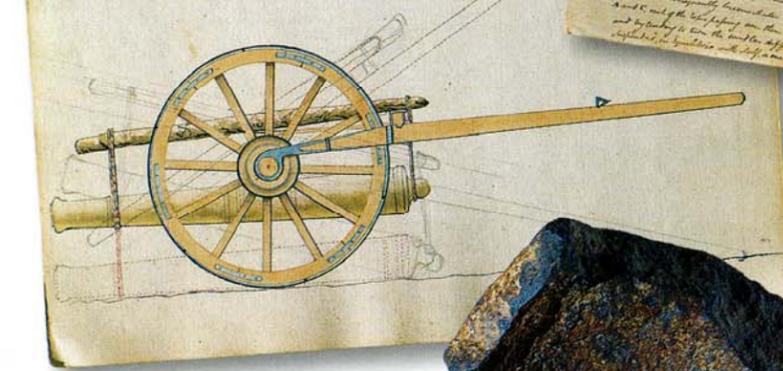


Procter established a mortar battery on the north side of the Maumee River to lob explosive shells into the interior of the American fort.  
Dept. of Canadian Heritage, Fort Malden National Historic Site

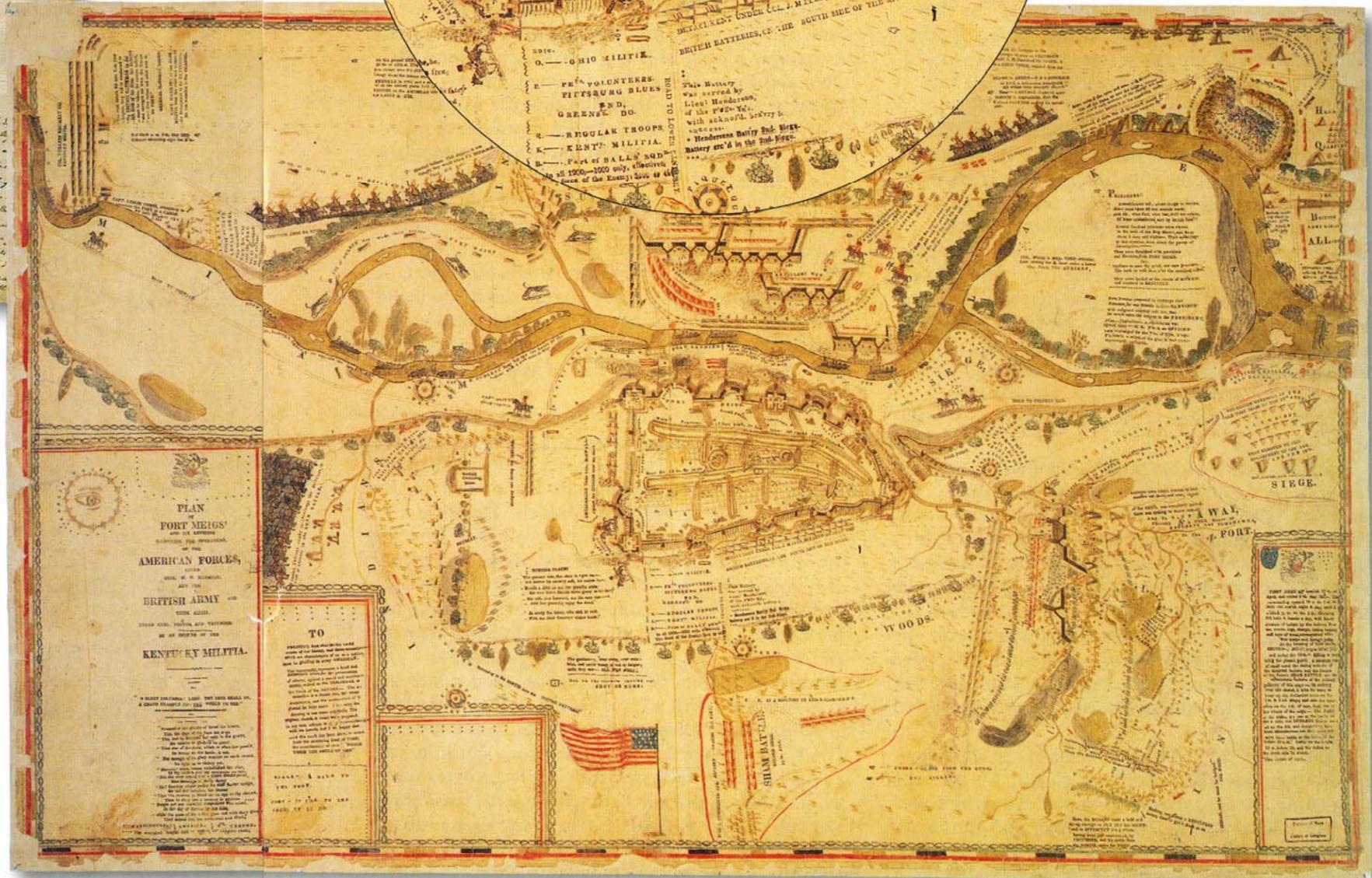
A gin to raise and lower gun tubes was indispensable equipment for the British gunners.  
Dept. of Canadian Heritage, Fort Malden National Historic Site



William Sebree was a captain in the Kentucky militia that participated in the counterattack on the British battery on the south side of the river. His map shows his version of events from both sieges. A detail (left) shows his portrayal of the fort itself.  
Library of Congress



Procter's army used special limbers to maneuver heavy bronze cannon tubes into position before beginning the bombardment.  
Dept. of Canadian Heritage, Fort Malden National Historic Site



Years after the British cannonade, solid shot and shell fragments were recovered at Fort Meigs.  
Ohio Historical Society, Fort Meigs State Memorial

fort. The relief force sortied in time to extract the Kentuckians, but not without loss. Harrison could see that many warriors had crossed the river to join the slaughter of Dudley's regiment or abandoned the fight to loot the flatboats. He then ordered Colonel John Miller, Nineteenth Infantry, to attack a concentration of warriors and the British howitzer and mortar position just east of the fort. Miller's battalion of regulars, the Pennsylvania-Virginia volunteer battalion, and some Kentuckians captured the position (taking 41 British prisoners), but also had to fight hard to fend off a counterattack. The fighting around Fort Meigs alone cost Harrison around 70 dead and 170 wounded. No sound estimate of enemy losses survived the day, but they were far fewer than the Americans on both banks of the Maumee.

The battle of May 4 could only have been judged a tactical defeat — certainly Harrison did not claim otherwise — but it helped turn the siege into a moral and strategic victory for the Long Knives. As they had at Frenchtown, the Lakes tribes, especially the Chippewas, could not resist slaughtering prisoners, and British officers, including Procter, made no effective move to prevent it. Only Tecumseh's enraged intervention ended the bloody merriment. Such atrocities inflamed the army and the people of Kentucky. More directly, many of the tribesmen now had what they had come for: scalps, booty, weapons, and more tales of killing Long Knives. Even before Procter decided to abandon the siege on May 9, many of his warriors left for their villages. Many of his Canadian militiamen had also departed to tend their farms. Part of Procter's problem, however, was that even his most dedicated collaborators had lost confidence in his leadership. However limited his own success, Harrison had shown himself the better general, even in the battles of May 4.

Harrison retained his faith in the martial spirit of Kentucky's soldiers, but he hoped that their fearlessness could be transformed into effectiveness. The ardor for killing tribesmen was "the source of all their misfortunes; they appear to think that valor alone can accomplish everything." He wrote to Isaac Shelby that he regretted the loss of two-thirds of Clay's brigade, but he and his principal subordinates still thought the plan for May 4 was sound. Tippecanoe had made the romantic legend, but the defense of Fort Meigs proved that Harrison could command in the worst of times.

Time turned to favor the Americans as Harrison hoped it would. Procter did not give up his concept of spoiling attacks, and he still could move by water. He returned to Fort Meigs on July 21 and conducted a desultory siege with a shadow of his former army, mostly Ohio tribesmen, including Tecumseh, and

Canadian militiamen. This time he brought no heavy artillery since his big guns had gone aboard Barclay's vessels. Fort Meigs, however, still had all its guns, even more ordnance and supplies, and a garrison large enough in numbers and far wiser. Procter broke off the investment and took another force, principally British regulars, and assaulted Fort Stephenson on the Sandusky River. The fort commander, the ever-pugnacious George Croghan, refused to obey Harrison's orders to retreat and greeted his attackers with a hail of grapeshot and musketry. With only eight casualties, Croghan's 180-man garrison from the Seventeenth Infantry blasted back four times their number and put 96 British regulars out of the war. The losses included the best officers and men of the Forty-first Foot. Again, the British headed back to Canada, this time spurred by the news that the Americans had won battles on the Niagara frontier and had finally put a naval squadron onto Lake Erie.

Leaving Fort Meigs after the first siege, Major General William Henry Harrison assessed his forces in the new Eighth Military District, composed of Ohio and Kentucky and the Indiana, Illinois, and Missouri territories. In addition to the two U.S. Army infantry regiments already committed, he could call on two new twelve-month regiments (the U.S. Twenty-fourth and Twenty-seventh Infantry) forming with recruits from the Ohio Valley. The prospect of wide-scale summer campaigning subsided, as Harrison's scouts and patrols found few villages outside the Detroit-Amherstburg region. There, Tecumseh, Withered Hand, and Roundhead had again pulled together thirty-six hundred warriors from the Lakes and Ohio tribes, aided by the herculean efforts and fast talk of Matthew Elliott and other agents.

Hectorated by Secretary Armstrong to be aggressive in action and cautious in spending, Harrison focused on building a secure line of posts, well-supplied for the mobile army he hoped to bring north for the final campaign against Fort Malden. Harrison's relations with Armstrong soured over their differing interpretations of frontier conditions and the control of Richard Johnson's Kentucky mounted rifles regiment, the largest cohesive and mobile force in the Eighth District. Reinforced by friendly Shawnee and Delaware scouts, Johnson's regiment had conducted raids out of Fort Wayne, then ridden east to rendezvous with a force Harrison had assembled to relieve Forts Meigs and Stephenson in late July. The Kentucky horsemen, reduced to eight hundred by hard service, rode into Meigs after Procter had left and scared the garrison witless with their shrieks and celebratory shooting. Armstrong then ordered the regiment to ride all the way to Illinois before its enlistment expired in September. Harrison, who

was moved to lecture the secretary on the effects of a grainless diet on the performance of Kentucky horseflesh, received permission to send Johnson's regiment home first to remount and recruit. In the meantime, Harrison strengthened his posts with detachments of regular and Ohio militia, relying on Ball's U.S. dragoon squadron and James Simrall's Kentucky dragoon squadron as a mobile force.

Even before Procter's last thrust, Armstrong and Harrison worked out the plans for a great expedition against Fort Malden. When the second siege of Fort Meigs provided an immediate crisis, Harrison turned one last time to Governor Isaac Shelby to rally Kentucky for another campaign. Drawing upon analogies from the Second Punic War, Harrison (Scipio Africanus) offered to relinquish command to Shelby if the governor himself — "Old King's Mountain" — wanted to command the expeditionary force, thus capping a lifetime of frontier war that began in 1774 when he led the Fincastle County militia to Point Pleasant. The sixty-two-year-old Shelby graciously declined the high command, but, in his July 31 call for volunteers, he promised that he would ride before his fellow citizens to complete the reckoning: "I will lead you to the field of battle and share with you the danger and honors of the campaign." Shelby called for an August 31 rendezvous at Newport; his army assembled thirty-five hundred strong in eleven regiments, far more men than he or Harrison anticipated. Two weeks later, the Kentucky army reached Urbana and prepared for war.

During the same exciting weeks in the Bluegrass State, Richard Johnson rebuilt the mounted rifles and returned to Fort Meigs. Unlike Shelby's army of callow youths and ambitious country lawyers, Johnson's force attracted hardened veterans. Johnson's adjutant and chief of scouts, the Reverend Major James Suggett, found parallels between the Israelites and the mounted rifles in the blood-

soaked books of Jeremiah and Isaiah. In one company rode Private (former lieutenant colonel) William Whitley, age sixty-four, the survivor of seventeen battles and eleven children; he was a rabid Anglophobe — "makes Indians and Torys fall" was inscribed on his powderhorn. Company commander Leslie Combs had survived both the River Raisin and Dudley's debacle. So enthusiastic was Shelby's call to arms that Harrison had to reject a similar force from Ohio because of shortages of food and forage along the road to Canada.

As his host assembled, Harrison received more good news. Although undermanned, Master Commandant Oliver Hazard Perry, U.S. Navy, had brought his seven-ship squadron over the protective bar at Presque Isle harbor and had eluded Barclay's loose blockade. After August 4, the Americans could at least contest control of Lake Erie. After the Battle of Put-in-Bay on September 10, the U.S. Navy ruled the waves, and those waves lapped against Procter's beleaguered defenses at Fort Malden.\* Only time and wind stood between the Americans and the British-tribal army in Upper Canada.

Henry Procter could hardly wait to reach more hospitable neighborhoods near Lake Ontario. He knew that Harrison had rendezvoused with Perry at Portage (Port Clinton, Ohio) and prepared to embark his invasion force. Aware that Procter was planning to abandon Fort Malden, the enraged Tecumseh made his last, great public speech on September 18, 1813, in the Amherstburg municipal building.

Surrounded by his most loyal followers, Tecumseh reviewed British perfidy back to the day in 1794 when support from Fort Miamis had been denied after the Battle of Fallen Timbers. Now British behavior reminded Tecumseh of a "fat animal that carries its tail upon its back, but when affrighted, he drops it between his legs and runs off." With his usual condescension, Procter promised he would make only a tactical withdrawal along the road that followed the Thames River eastward so he could be sure he would not be cut off by an American



While Fort Meigs was under construction, a Pennsylvania militiaman reported spearing fish from the banks of the Maumee River using twelve-foot gigs. Random thrusts often lanced two or more fish at a time, and catches of ninety- to one-hundred-pound sturgeon and catfish were not uncommon. This iron point of a large gig turned up during excavations at the fort. *Ohio Historical Society, Fort Meigs State Memorial*

\* See TIMELINE, April 1989

landing from Lake Saint Clair to the north. The army would defeat Harrison near Chatham where the terrain would favor an ambush of the Americans. Tecumseh said he would honor the plan, but he warned that many warriors would leave if Procter did not stand at Fort Malden, and indeed the warrior forces were halved when Procter abandoned the Detroit frontier.

Island-hopping from the Ohio shoreline, the Harrison-Perry invasion fleet of sixteen vessels and ninety barges arrived off Canada on September 26, and Harrison and Major Wood scouted the shoreline and Fort Malden by small boat before drafting a careful landing order. Perhaps Harrison thought about Titus Flavius Vespasianus's landing in England in A.D. 43. For once, Harrison felt that the

forces were with him: the veteran U.S. Nineteenth Infantry, the U.S. Rifle Regiment, the new U.S. Twenty-seventh Infantry from Ohio, Wood's field artillery battalion, two squadrons of dismounted dragoons, and Shelby's Kentucky volunteers. Wood put the strength of the army at seven thousand. The second Northwest Army had now fulfilled its promise.

In the meantime, Johnson's Kentucky mounted rifles, augmented by Shawnee and Wyandot scouts, marched north from Fort Meigs. The regiment reached the Detroit frontier on September 30 without opposition and found Harrison's army, which had landed three days earlier, established on the Canadian shore. Harrison paused only to reorganize his pursuit of Procter's army, which had abandoned the frontier on September 23.

If William Henry Harrison had been simply a general in the service of the United States, the campaign to redeem the Detroit frontier and to destroy Fort Malden would have ended in victory on October 1, 1813. Harrison had accomplished the mission assigned the Northwest Army by his Washington superiors. But this was not a campaign in behalf of some distant government, but for all the citizens of the old Northwest Territory. In a private meeting on October 1, Isaac Shelby persuaded Harrison (who needed little) that the campaign could not end without the destruction of the tribal confederation. If that meant a simultaneous defeat of a British army, so much the better. Press on, Shelby urged, despite the rains and the chill of October that had turned the Ontario woods into a flame of red and gold. Secure control of the Detroit River and Lake Saint Clair with the navy and the regulars, and let the Long Knives finish their war of forty years against the irreconcilable Shawnees, even if they were only a pathetic remnant rallied around Tecumseh. Harrison called a council of his generals and announced that the war had not ended.

The army that Harrison took to the Thames River road on October 2 may have been physically headed for Chatham, where Harrison thought Procter might stand, but in spirit it became the legions of Rome marching on the road to Zama and the destruction of Carthage. Caesar, after all, had been a general of limited war, and Harrison now threw this model aside and became a relentless Scipio. He left the Detroit frontier under the command of Brigadier General Duncan McArthur and the regulars; only

Four Legs, a Winnebago chief, joined Tecumseh's forces. He probably was present when the two armies met on the Thames River. *Ohio Historical Society*



Fort Meigs State Memorial, located on State Route 65 near Perrysburg, features reconstructed earthworks, stockade, and blockhouses as well as exhibits on the campaign and the lives of the soldiers. For information on this Ohio Historical Society site, including hours of operation, please call 1-800-283-8916.

Tom Root, Photographer



David R. Barker, Photographer

This powder horn is attributed to Francis Tansel, a private with the Kentucky militia during the siege. The horn apparently was made for fellow Kentuckian James Arnold, who also served at the fort. *Ohio Historical Society, Fort Meigs State Memorial*

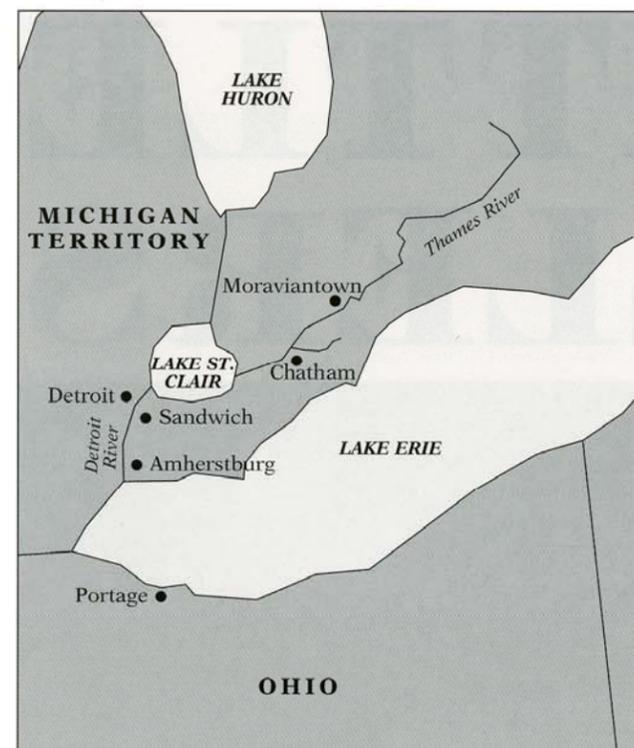
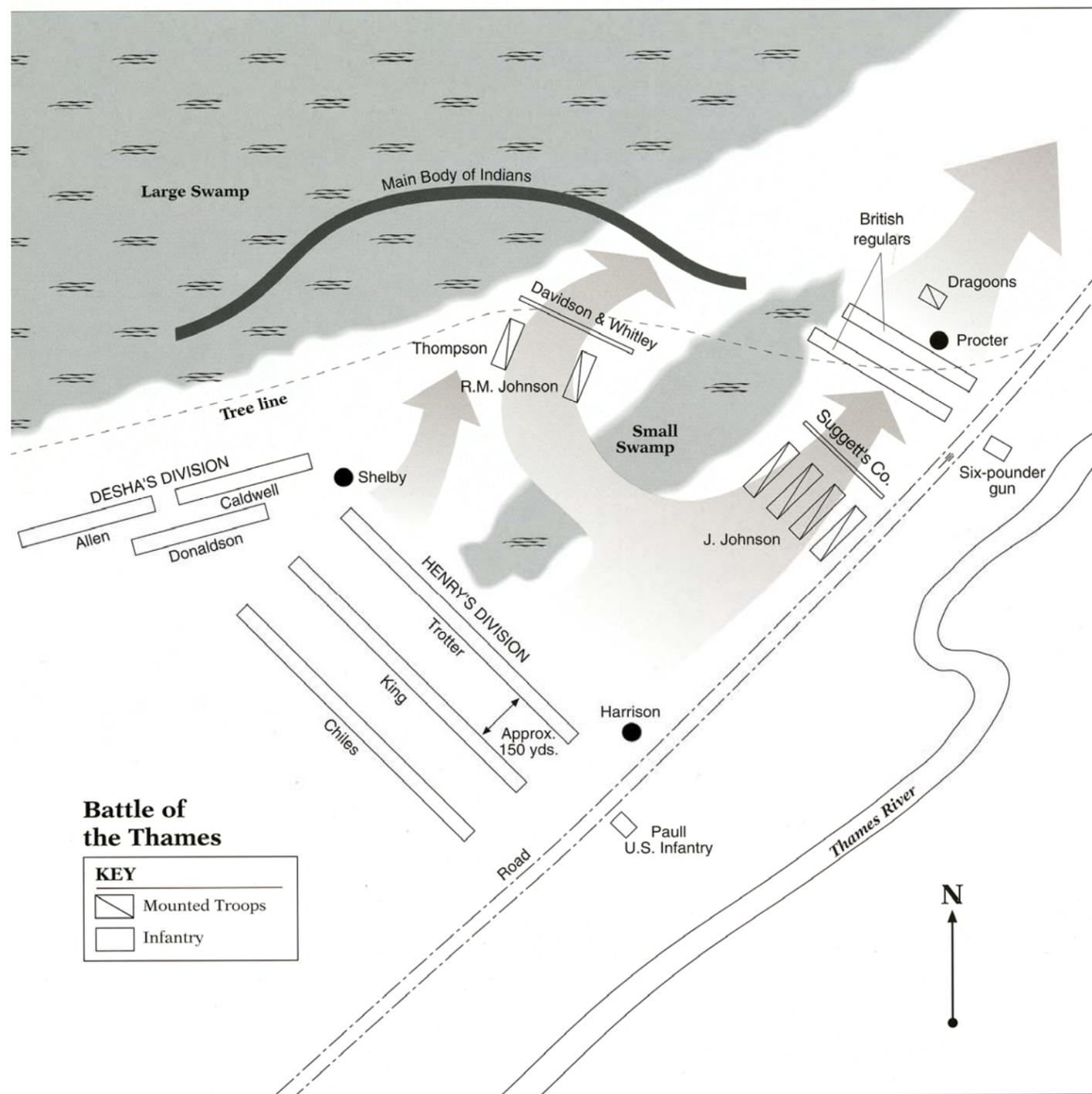
The Fort Meigs State Memorial incorporates reconstructions of the earthworks, stockade, and blockhouses built by Harrison's army. *Photographer's Collection*



two of Wood's cannons with their crews and Colonel George Paull's Twenty-seventh Infantry joined the pursuit. Most of Harrison's force of three thousand came from Kentucky: Johnson's mounted rifles became the advance guard, and Shelby's two divisions marched as the main body.

Making contact with Procter's rearguard on October 3, Harrison's army pressed hard to bring Tecumseh's warriors and Procter's regulars, a

combined force that had shrunk to fourteen hundred, to decisive battle. In each skirmish, the warriors fought with the determination of the damned, but the British failed to destroy crucial bridges or do much else to check the pursuit. The signs were ominous. On October 4 Tecumseh took a bullet in his left arm, and the next day William Whitley killed and scalped his thirteenth warrior. Instead of standing at Chatham, Procter



ordered another retreat to Moraviantown, the home of white and Delaware refugees from the destroyed Ohio missions. Tecumseh again protested, but most of the Lakes tribes had given up the fight, and for the first time his warriors numbered fewer than the British. Tecumseh, by the force of personality alone, rallied the remnants of the Shawnees, the Wyandots of Roundhead, and some diehard Miamis and Potawatomis. Tecumseh armed himself for battle and painted his face for death.

On October 6, Procter chose ground to make a last stand about two miles short of Moraviantown. His own incompetence and the defeatism of his subordinates, however, limited the terrain's advantages. Some six hundred British regulars barred the river road with their flank anchored on a small swamp; the line continued through a woods held by Tecumseh and Roundhead and their best braves. The rest of the warriors took positions in a larger swamp that ran parallel to the road and provided an enfilade position to the open field that bordered the road. Tecumseh's immediate war party of one hundred or so included his only son, his most trusted aide, Charcoal Burner, and his gallant brother-in-law, Stands Firm. Tecumseh told his intimates that he might die in the battle.

Under Richard Johnson's persuasive argument that Shelby's foot force should not make the main attack, Harrison organized an unconventional assault that allowed the Kentucky mounted rifles

to decide the battle of the Thames with stunning suddenness. On the right, James Johnson's mounted battalion rode forward behind the Reverend Suggett's advance guard. Although the first British volley disorganized the van, James Johnson ordered a charge. The Kentuckians rode over the Forty-first Foot, thinly deployed and not in square, and scattered the Canadian dragoons and Tenth Royal Veteran Volunteers, who got off only a feeble second volley. British resistance collapsed in about a minute. British killed and wounded numbered less than forty, and more than six hundred surrendered. Procter fled by carriage with his escort.

While Harrison watched James Johnson rout the British, Isaac Shelby and Richard Johnson closed on Tecumseh's war party. The first Shawnee volley downed much of the advance guard, and, in the subsequent melee, William Whitley and Roundhead probably killed each other. Richard Johnson surged into the battle and became the immediate target of the warriors' fire. Amid the roar of battle, all heard Tecumseh's familiar war cry: "Be brave! Be brave!" The North American Horatius shot, cut, and hatched his way into the Kentucky riflemen until a bullet stopped his great heart and voice. It has long been claimed that Richard Johnson fired the fatal shot, or it may be that his killer was an obscure Kentucky private named David King, who used Whitley's unfired rifle. At the same moment, Governor Shelby ordered one of his small regiments into the fray, and the warriors broke off the action, leaving more than thirty-three dead on the field, after about thirty minutes.

Almost twenty years after his first battle at Fallen Timbers, William Henry Harrison, at a cost of twenty-nine dead and wounded, had delivered a death blow to Native American resistance east of the Mississippi. With the exception of the Creek disturbance of 1836-37 and Black Hawk's pathetic uprising in Illinois in 1832, only the Seminoles of Florida resisted the flood of white settlement that followed the end of the War of 1812. Just eight days after the Battle of Moraviantown, Harrison met delegations from the Miamis, Wyandots, Ottawas, Potawatomis, and Chippewas at Detroit and dictated terms to them that ensured their neutrality and the release of any surviving white captives. He ordered them to return to their traditional hunting areas to await further treaties that would eventually strip the rest of their lands from them. The remnants of Tecumseh's band, led by Charcoal Burner and including Tecumseh's son and the Prophet, remained in Canada, close to the secret grave of their fallen leader. Although the fighting and dying in Harrison's theater went on until 1815, the war that mattered in the old Northwest Territory ended on the banks of the Thames. ■

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## Notes

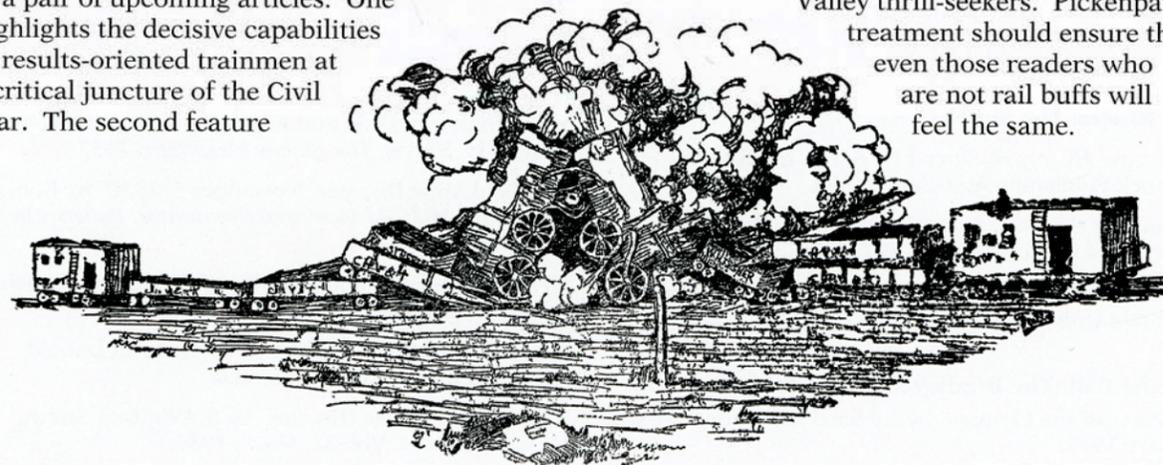
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## In Future Issues

As Noble County historian Roger Pickenpaugh has demonstrated in previous issues, the American zest for railroading is of long standing. Pickenpaugh will pursue that theme further in a pair of upcoming articles. One highlights the decisive capabilities of results-oriented trainmen at a critical juncture of the Civil War. The second feature

will introduce a can-do opportunist of the P.T. Barnum stripe who staged a train wreck, shown in this contemporary newspaper cut, that was worth the price of admission to Hocking Valley thrill-seekers. Pickenpaugh's treatment should ensure that even those readers who are not rail buffs will feel the same.



## We Appreciate...

...the continuing generosity of the Gerlach family and Maj. Gen. and Mrs. Raymond E. Mason Jr. in support of TIMELINE. We are grateful, as well, to the magazine's corporate sponsors.

## Acknowledgments

Helping to illustrate this issue were: Richard Jay Hutto; Tom Root; Linnea Andrea, Mackinac State Historic Parks; Pat Darsi and David Meschutt, West Point Museum; Brian Dunnigan, William L. Clements Library; Dr. Wallace Dailey, Jennie Rathbun, and Tom Ford, Houghton Library, Harvard University; Bob Gareia, Fort Malden Historic Park; Jim Marshall, Toledo-Lucas County Public Library; Anna Selfridge, Allen County Museum; Susan Wyngaard, Ohio State University Libraries; Linda Bailey, Cincinnati Museum Center; Robin Feldman and Eileen Kennedy, Museum of the City of New York; Kathleen Young Shady, Sagamore Hill; Dale

Neighbors, New-York Historical Society; Jim Hunter and Linda Deitch, *Columbus Dispatch*; George Bain and Shep Black, Ohio University Special Collections; and our OHS colleagues, Melinda Knapp and Ellice Ronsheim. Thanks to all! A special note of appreciation goes to Larry Nelson and Dave and Lauren Marriott at Fort Meigs State Memorial for their efforts during our on-site photography.

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