THE INVASIONS OF OHIO IN 1813
DURING THE WAR OF 1812

A Thesis
Presented in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements
for the Degree Master of Arts

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1956

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Preface

Much has been written about the wars in which the United States has been engaged, but the War of 1812 has not had the full benefit of close study. Attention has been focused on the glamorous sea battles of the war while the fierce struggle for the Northwest has gone almost unnoticed. Twice, British and Indian forces invaded the State of Ohio, and twice, they were forced to retire. This paper attempts to tell the story of those two invasions and how they were repulsed.

The author is indebted to Dr. E. H. Roseboom for his assistance and valuable suggestions. Thanks are due to Mr. Richard Knopf, a historian with the Anthony Wayne Parkway Board, who transcribed the Harrison Papers and who was always eager to lend a helping hand. Gratitude is extended also to the staff of the Ohio State Museum Library for their assistance and hospitality.
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Introduction

When the United States declared war on England on June 18, 1812, the news was scarcely a surprise to any group in either country. For years the relations between the two nations had been maintained in a precarious state. Successive crises had arisen from maritime grievances, but these had been weathered safely. Other factors, however, served to intensify the feeling against England. In the western section of the United States the anti-British feelings increased as the Indian troubles increased. The British were blamed for the Prophet's and Tecumseh's activities and for the Indians' growing determination to sell no more lands. Out of the desire to crush the Indian resistance grew the determination to conquer Canada.

As part of the three pronged invasion of Canada General William Hull's Northwestern Army was to cross the Detroit River and take Malden and Amherstburg. Amherstburg because of its fort, dockyards, and fleet of war vessels was the key to the control of Lake Erie. From this point Hull was to turn eastward through Canada, effect a junction with the two other invading armies and sweep on to Toronto, Montreal, and Quebec to complete the conquest of Canada.

On August 16, 1812, General Hull, surrounded by British and Indians at Detroit, was induced to surrender. The frontier from north-central Ohio to the Mississippi River was now open to Indian raids and British invasion.

American efforts aimed at the capture of Detroit as a block against invasion. From Detroit a campaign into Upper Canada could
be launched. On September 17, 1812, President James Madison placed William Henry Harrison in command of the Northwestern Army with instructions to recover Detroit and invade Upper Canada.

Despite the fact that September had almost passed and that the rainy season was drawing near, Harrison did not hesitate to open an offensive campaign at once. Problems of supply, food, transportation and troops constantly hindered his progress. In October Harrison declared that he could take Detroit at any time, but insisted that without further operations against Malden, the possession of Detroit would be a strategic error rather than an advantage. By December he thought it would be wiser to abandon the winter campaign, dismiss the larger part of the troops, and devote the money thus saved to the creation of a fleet with which to get control of Lake Erie.

On January 22, Brigadier-General James Winchester ended any hopes of a winter campaign. After taking Frenchtown on the River Raisin, Winchester exposed his army and was caught when the British appeared suddenly in force.

To add to Harrison's difficulties the weather turned warm and the ice-hardened roads turned into muddy mires. Then, too, most of the troops had enlisted for only six months, and the Kentuckians' and Ohioans' terms of service were to expire shortly. There was no recourse but to place the remainder of the troops in winter quarters and await the coming of spring before beginning the invasion of Canada.

In March, 1813, Harrison left Fort Meigs to recruit a new army in the interior of Ohio. The Ohio troops had left Fort Meigs on February 20, and the Virginia and Pennsylvania troops were scheduled to leave
between the middle of March and the first days of April.

Brigadier-General Henry A. Procter, commander of the British forces of Upper Canada, had not attempted an invasion of the United States in the autumn of 1812. He had been faced by shortages in supplies and troops and a delicate political situation in England. Had Procter attacked in March or early April, with Harrison gone and the garrison small, Fort Meigs would have fallen. But Procter delayed for various reasons including the failure of Tecumseh and his warriors to arrive on time.

Harrison returned to Fort Meigs and reinforcements soon arrived to strengthen the garrison and prepare for the invasion they knew was coming.
Chapter I

The First Siege of Fort Meigs

An invasion of the frontier at some point was expected daily. Harrison hoped that the enemy would strike at Fort Meigs. "The attack on this post would now be desirable."\(^1\) Indications were that his wishes would be granted. On April 25, 1813, a company of scouts discovered two enemy gunboats and a sloop on the margin of Lake Erie. The next morning a group of British officers appeared across the Maumee River. They surveyed the fort and decided on the locations for their batteries.\(^2\)

At noon, April 27, the British force consisting of 522 regulars and 462 Canadian militia, and 1200 Indians under Tecumseh and Roundhead left Swan Creek (now Toledo) and made their new camp about four miles below the old British fortification, Fort Miami.\(^3\) Brigadier-General Henry A. Procter was in command.

Expecting the cannonading that would come, Harrison ordered traverses dug and a main embankment erected to receive cannonballs. Hidden from the enemy's view by tents, the American troops labored at

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\(^1\) Logan Esarey, *Messages and Letters of William Henry Harrison, I*, (1801-1811), *Governors Messages and Letters, Indiana Historical Collections, VII*, (Indianapolis, 1922), Harrison to Armstrong, April 21, 1813, 422; referred to hereafter as Esarey.


their digging. On the evening of April 27, Harrison sent Scout William Oliver with a message to General Green Clay who was advancing with a force of Kentucky militia. Harrison had about 1200 effectives at Fort Meigs and he felt he needed Clay's men and supplies.

The construction of Fort Meigs had been started in early February when Harrison advanced his force after he had withdrawn to the Portage River following General James Winchester's defeat at the River Raisin on January 22, 1813. The fort was situated upon a high plateau one hundred and fifty yards from the banks of the Maumee River. Lying near the foot of the Rapids, Fort Meigs was of great strategic value. From here Harrison could springboard his army into Upper Canada. It served, defensively, as the keystone of the frontier protective system.

Laboring in snow a foot deep, Harrison's army had cleared away hundreds of trees, dug great ditches for drainage and tossed up thick embankments out of the frozen earth.

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1 Robert B. McFiee, *History of the Late War in the Western Country*, (Lexington, 1816), 78; referred to hereafter as McFiee.

5 It was also Oliver's task to warn the settlements in the interior. Harrison to Armstrong, April 28, 1813, Esarsy, I, 130; dispatch from Harrison, April 28, 1813, William Henry Harrison Papers, Library of Congress, IV, 170; Esarsy, II, 428-9.

6 Harrison to Armstrong, March 27, 1813, Harrison Papers, IV, 112-17.

Fort Meigs, named in honor of Return Jonathan Meigs, then governor of Ohio, was an immense fortification for those days covering approximately nine acres of ground. Under the careful supervision of Major Eleazor Darby Wood, a competent military engineer with West Point training, timber fifteen feet long and about twelve inches thick was set three feet into the ground to form the picketing. The fort was in the shape of an irregular ellipse. At the angles of the fort were erected eight two-story blockhouses of double timber. Four large elevated batteries held the heavy artillery while the blockhouses were equipped with smaller cannon. On the western side of the fort were located a magazine, forges, repair shops, storehouses and the officers quarters.

By April 20 the construction work was generally completed. Double ties of staunch timbers with rawhides placed between were used to roof the magazines. During the latter part of April when Indians were frequently being discovered in small parties about the fort and a siege seemed imminent, timber for fuel, to repair the breaches, and to make bombproofs was brought into the fort.

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9 Maps and diagrams are in the Ohio State Museum Library.

10 Oullum, "Wood's Journal", 382; Harrison Papers, IV, 122.
On the morning of April 28 the British boats could be seen from Fort Meigs as the enemy made their new camp at Fort Miami. Rain fell as the British artillerymen and engineers toiled to unload the ordnance. Two hundred men using teams of oxen laboriously dragged the artillery through mud two feet deep up to the high embankment just opposite Fort Meigs. Two of the British 24-pounders had been surrendered by General Hull at Detroit the summer before.

The ordnance unloaded, Proctor directed the boats to transport Tecumseh's warriors across the Maumee River to secure the investing of Fort Meigs. Inside the fort Harrison seeking to conserve the strength of the troops who had been digging during the heavy fall of rain, kept only one third of the men on duty, relieving them every three hours.

The Indians now became extremely troublesome, for "There was not a stump, bush, or log, within musket shot of the camp, but what shielded its man, and some of them two or three." Some Indians

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11McAfee, 280; "Chambers to Freer", loc. cit., 290.
12John Richardson, Richardson's War of 1812, 138, (rev., Toronto, 1902) referred to hereafter as Richardson's War. Richardson served with the British 11st Regiment from July 9, 1812 until he was captured at Moraviantown on October 5, 1813.
13Ibid., 148.
climbed into the surrounding trees from which they poured a "prodigious shower of musketry" into the camp.\textsuperscript{15}

Throughout April 29 and 30 the fort's 18-pounders continued a "partial fire" on the Indians and on the British workers toiling to install the artillery.\textsuperscript{16}

At 2:00 A.M. on May 1, the two British gunboats opened fire on the fort. None of the thirty shots fired throughout the night did any damage. Just before daylight the boats slowly moved back down the river.\textsuperscript{17}

During the early morning of that day the traverse was completed. The main traverse was near the middle of the camp on the most elevated ground and was three hundred yards long, twelve feet high and twenty feet wide at the base.\textsuperscript{18} Five 18-pounders, four iron 12-pounders, one brass 12-pounder, ten 6-pounders and several howitzers stood ready for action.\textsuperscript{19} The largest artillery emplacement in the fort was the Grand Battery. It was constructed mainly of earth and surrounded by an abbatiss of felled trees with their branches pointing towards the river. Four 18-pounders made up the fire power of the Grand Battery.

\textsuperscript{15}Ibid., 387.

\textsuperscript{16}Harrison to Armstrong, May 5, 1813, Esarey II, 431.

\textsuperscript{17}Harlow Lindley, ed., Captain Cushing in the War of 1812, 102, contains an orderly book and diary kept by Cushing, to be referred to hereafter as "Cushing's Orderly Book" or "Cushing's Diary"; "Chambers to Freer", loc. cit., 290.

\textsuperscript{18}McAfee, 283.

\textsuperscript{19}"Cushing's Diary", loc. cit., 88, 99.
On the opposite shore the British artillerists were preparing the ordinance for firing. Seeing this Harrison ordered the tents to be struck and carried to the rear. General Procter's plan to "smoke the Americans out of the fort and into the hands of the Savages" did not now seem to spell success.\textsuperscript{20} As Major Wood exulted, "...That beautiful prospect of beating up our quarters...fled, and in its place suddenly appeared an immense shield of earth, obscuring...every tent, every horse...and every creature belonging to our camp."\textsuperscript{21}

At 10:00 A.M. the British gunboat \textit{Myers} fired the signal for the opening attack. Two 24-pounders, three 12-pounders, one 8-inch howitzer and one 5 l/2-inch mortar poured fire upon the pickets of Fort Meigs and into the man-made embankment.\textsuperscript{22} Perched in the treetops the Indians applauded and yelled as balls plunged through the picketing and tossed high the dirt.\textsuperscript{23}

The American troops, inspired and in good spirits, now began excavating lodgings in the traverses using planks and loose earth. These shelters proved to be safe unless a bomb rolled into the mouth of the "cave."\textsuperscript{24}

\textsuperscript{20}Charles E. Slocum, \textit{The Ohio Country Between the Years 1783 and 1815}, (New York, 1910), 233-4.

\textsuperscript{21}Cullum, "Wood's Journal", 389-90.

\textsuperscript{22}"Chambers to Freer," \textit{loc. cit.}, 290.

\textsuperscript{23}"...whenever great or material damage was supposed to have been done by an explosion, they were sure to express their approbation by yelping,""Cullum, \textit{Wood's Journal}, 394.

\textsuperscript{24}Henry Howe, \textit{Historical Collection's of Ohio}, (Cincinnati, 1904), I, 531. There are three volumes.
The fort's guns were used sparingly. At the commencement of the siege the magazine keeper had but 360 18-pound shot and less than that amount for the 12-pounders. A proper supply of shot had not been sent with the artillery from Pittsburgh. In an effort to remedy this shortage a gill of whiskey was offered for every enemy cannonball that would fit the guns of the fort. Soldiers dug into the embankment and searched outside the walls at night. The British had no 18-pound guns but their 12-pounders supplied the men with sufficient barter for a thousand gills of whiskey before the end of the siege.

At dawn of May 2 all the British batteries opened on the fort with cannonade and bombs. From the south shore the heavy fire of musketry and rifles resumed. During the course of the day the British artilleryists discovered the roof of one of the fort's two magazines. The fire of the 24-pounder was directed at the magazine as troops rushed to throw more earth upon the heavily-timbered roof to protect it from the red-hot shot.

The rain that had been falling continued with 300 men suffering from cold and exposure, Harrison ordered the tents pitched behind the dirt wall.


28The third battery of three 12-pounders was completed on the night of May 1.

29Richardson's War, 149; Cullum, "Wood's Journal", 391.
In the first two days of shelling, 690 missiles had fallen within the fort but only seven men had been killed and eighteen injured.\textsuperscript{30}

No word had arrived from Captain William Oliver or General Green Clay. The last Harrison had heard of Clay he was at Piqua, waiting for ammunition to arrive from Urbana.\textsuperscript{31}

The daily routine within the fort went on. The men dug deeper into their shelters and played cards or napped while off duty. Occasionally those digging would break into one of the popular songs of the war:

"Freemen, no longer bear such slaughter,  
Avenge your country's cruel woe,  
Arouse and save your sons and daughters,  
Arouse and expel the faithless foe."

Chorus:  
Scalps are bought at stated prices,  
Malden pays the price in gold."\textsuperscript{32}

Whenever the fire was not too brisk, the troops would show themselves above the entrenchments and, swinging their hats in the air, give the British gunners three cheers.\textsuperscript{33} When enemy shot came over

\textsuperscript{30}"Cushing's Diary", loc. cit., 102-3.

\textsuperscript{31}Clay had also been held up in Cincinnati in his efforts to procure packhorses. He finally gathered 115 horses, many of which were "feeble and almost useless." Clay to Harrison, April 18, 1813, Harrison Papers, IV, 156. It was difficult to obtain horses even when the army resorted to requisitioning. See Robert Leslie Jones, "The Horse and Mule Industry in Ohio to 1865", Mississippi Valley Historical Review, XXXIII, No. 1, (June, 1946), p. 61 and Clement L. Hartzoll, ed., "The Autobiography of Thomas Ewing", Ohio Archaeological and Historical Publications, XXII, (January, 1913), p. 155.

\textsuperscript{32}Howe, Historical Collections, II, 577.

\textsuperscript{33}McAfee, 286.
the walls those nearest would shout a warning and throw themselves on
the ground or squat down in the traverses. One militiaman took a
position on the embankment and began warning his fellows of every
shot. It is recorded that he soon became so skillful that he could,
"in almost every case," predict the destination of the ball. Some-
times he would shout, "blockhouse number one," or "lookout, main
battery." His friends pleaded for him to climb down from the embank-
ment, but he refused. Finally there came a shot that seemed to defy
all his calculations. He stood silent—motionless—perplexed! "In
the same instant he was swept into eternity." 35

At ten o'clock on the morning of May 3, a battery situated in a
small ravine 250 yards from the right rear angle of the fort com-
manded a blistering fire from one 6-pounder, a 5 1/2-inch howitzer,
and a 5 1/2-inch mortar. 36 The 18-pounder from Major Eleanor Wood's
battery on the eastern point of the fort answered with a barrage that
forced the British battery back to "a more respectful distance." 37

The use of additional batteries had been anticipated and another
traverse, parallel with the first but only 100 yards long, had been
started. The two main traverses were to be connected by several short

34E. A. Saliers, "Siege of Fort Meigs", Ohio Archaeological and

35Howe, Historical Collections, II, 567.

36"Cushing's Diary", loc. cit., 103; "Chambers to Freer", loc. cit.,
290-1; McAfee, 281.

37Harrison to Armstrong, May 5, 1813, Esarey II, 431.
ones. The cross-fire shelling forced Harrison to order the tents struck and the men were driven back into their muddy shelters.

The shouting Indians took up their positions in the surrounding trees as round after round of shot poured into the fort. Despite the heavy cannonading only seven men were killed and one wounded.\textsuperscript{40} The firing decreased as evening came, but through the night shells and red-hot shot could be traced through the darkness.

On Tuesday, May 4, "The enemy neither opened his battery so early...nor did he fire them with his usual activity."\textsuperscript{41} It had rained until 9:00 A. M. and the British firing did not start until two hours later. Only 207 shots fell during this day.\textsuperscript{42}

After endless digging, long night watches and sleep interrupted by shellfire, the men were tired out and the sick list was increasing. Again in their muddy shelters, the soldiers were suffering from colds, fever and ague.\textsuperscript{43} Lack of medical supplies added to the death toll.

\textsuperscript{38}Gullum, "Wood's Journal", 391.

\textsuperscript{39}There are different tallies presented by diarists concerning this, the heaviest day of cannonading, but all agree that over 500 missiles were hurled at the fort.

\textsuperscript{40}A letter from a participant, The Fredonian, Chillicothe, May 25, 1813.

\textsuperscript{41}Gullum, "Wood's Journal", 393.

\textsuperscript{42}Account in The Fredonian, May 25, 1813.

\textsuperscript{43}Gullum, "Wood's Journal", 393.
of the wounded who were placed on rails in the trenches in an effort to keep them out of the water.\textsuperscript{44}

Near midnight of May 4,\textsuperscript{*} Captain William Oliver and Major David Trimble with fifteen of Clay's Kentucky militiamen slipped into the fort with news that Brigadier-General Green Clay and a force of 1200 were descending the Maumee River.\textsuperscript{45}

Following Harrison's earlier instructions, Clay had left his horses and some of his baggage at St. Mary's and Fort Amanda to descend the Auglaize River in flatboats.\textsuperscript{46} The eighteen boats arrived at Defiance on May 3. It was here that Captain William Oliver reached Clay with the news of the siege.\textsuperscript{47} The cannonading could be heard at Defiance as the force departed in the late evening of May 4. Oliver, Trimble, and fifteen men had left earlier.

By the time Clay's force had arrived at the head of the Rapids, eighteen miles above the fort, the moon had gone down, and because of the darkness and rain, Clay's pilot refused to move on before morning.\textsuperscript{48}

\textsuperscript{44}Account in \textit{The Fredonian}, May 25, 1813.
\textsuperscript{45}Harrison to Armstrong, May 5, 1813, Harrison Papers, V, 11.
\textsuperscript{46}Harrison to Clay, April 24, 1813, Harrison Papers, IV, 162.
\textsuperscript{47}On May 1, Oliver arrived at Fort Amanda at 2:00 P. M. carrying news of the siege. He left Fort Amanda at 4:00 P. M. for Defiance to find Clay. "Journal of Ensign William Schillinger, A Soldier of the War of 1812", \textit{Ohio Archaeological and Historical Publications}, XII, (1932), p. 70.
\textsuperscript{48}McAfee, 286.

\textsuperscript{*}Note: Most of the secondary sources carry accounts of Procter demanding that Harrison surrender on May 4. None of the primary sources mention this occurrence.
Harrison determined to launch a general sally against the British. He dispatched Captain John Hamilton, of the Ohio Militia, and a subalter with the necessary orders for General Clay. Bearing a canoe on their shoulders and spikes for the British cannon the two men slipped into the rainy darkness.\textsuperscript{19}

At 8:00 A.M. of May 5, Hamilton met Clay about five miles above the fort and delivered his verbal orders from Harrison. Clay was to land some 800 men about a mile and a half above the fort on the opposite shore and with Captain Hamilton acting as guide, storm and seize the batteries. As soon as the Kentuckians had spiked the cannon and cut down the carriages, they were to "return to their boats and cross over to the fort." The balance of the force was to land opposite the first landing and fight their way into Fort Meigs. The subaltern was to act as guide for the men landing on the south shore.\textsuperscript{50}

The remainder of Harrison's plan called for a simultaneous attack from the fort on the British guns on the American side of the river.

Clay, who was in the thirteenth boat, now directed Hamilton to go to Colonel William Dudley who was in the lead boat, with orders to take the twelve front boats and execute the plan on the left bank.

A high wind and a rapid current interfered with navigation and the four boats following Clay were driven ashore long enough to put them "three quarters of a mile in the rear." Clay's boat attempted to land opposite Dudley's landing, but failing to find the subaltern,

\textsuperscript{19}Callum, "Wood's Journal", 394.

\textsuperscript{50}Clay to Harrison, May 9, 1813, Esarey, II, 440-41; McAfee, 287.
Clay attempted to cross the river to join Dudley. In this attempt he failed because of the high waves, so he returned to the south shore where he landed amidst a brisk fire from the Indians in the woods.

Colonel William E. Boswell, commanding the four boats that had fallen behind saw Clay attempt to cross to the north shore. Boswell got his boats across, but Captain Hamilton immediately ordered him to the south shore "to fight his way through to the garrison."

Boswell then recrossed the river where he met Indian fire. The Kentuckians were protected by the puncheons built on their flatboats and their volleys soon scattered the Indians. Captain Shaw, sent from the front by Harrison, met the troops as they were landing and they prepared to march to the fort.

Clay's boat had finally landed and was met by two American soldiers. Leaving the baggage Clay's servants were loaded "with cannon balls which they bore to the fort" through "mud and water, knee-deep."

Rain was still falling as Dudley's soldiers leaped from their boats. Water poured from gun muzzles brought down from the shoulders. After moving in from the shore for some distance the troops

51 "...our guide sent from the Fort having become panic struck remained with the troops then forming on the beach under Col. Dudley." J. H. Hawkins to J. J. Crittenden, August 6, 1813, Henry Clay Collection, Box VI, Ohio State Museum Library.

52 Clay to Harrison, May 1, 1813, Esarey, II, 140-2; Hawkins to Crittenden, Aug. 6, 1813, Clay Collection.

were formed into three columns. The two-mile march to the battery was conducted in good order, but as the left column moved to cut off the batteries, the two other columns still several hundred yards from the batteries, raised "a most tremendous yell" and charged at full speed. The few artilleryists manning the guns fled and the assault was accomplished without a single loss.54

The British flag was cut down as the soldiers watching from the walls of Fort Meigs shouted and cheered. Harrison, standing on the Grand Battery, signalled for the men to return to their boats.55 Harrison had placed four 18-pounders, a 12-pounder, and a 6-pounder in position to cover Dudley's retreat.56 Instead of withdrawing, the Kentuckians viewed "the curiosities of the place" without destroying the carriages and magazines, or even spiking all of the cannon. His signals obviously useless, Harrison leaped down from the Grand Battery and offered a reward to any person who would cross the river and order the retreat. Lieutenant James Campbell volunteered, but he failed to cross the river.57

Colonel Boswell's force of 292 men was, meanwhile, caught in a heavy fire from the Indians on the south bank. Harrison, therefore, sent Major Alexander's battalion, with parts of Major John T. Johnson's battalion and companies under Captain Ashel Nearing, to aid Boswell.

54McAfee, 292-3.
56Harrison to Armstrong, May 13, 1813, Esarey, II, 442-7.
57McAfee, 292.
This force soon joined Boswell and began driving the Indians about half a mile into the woods.

Through his field glass, Harrison saw a body of British and Indians moving along the edge of the woods towards the rear and left of the unsuspecting American force. He immediately dispatched Quartermaster James E. Eubank on one of Harrison's own horses to warn Alexander and Boswell. After a dramatic ride which included "a monstrous leap" over a ditch, Eubanks reached the troops and the reluctant retreat was commenced. Thirty casualties were suffered as the Indians harassed the troops almost to the gates of Fort Meigs. 58

Now Harrison ordered the sortie that he had intended to be simultaneous with the seizing of the batteries on the opposite shore. Colonel John Miller of the 19th United States Regiment with a 340-man force of regulars, volunteers, and militia moved out of the right wing of Fort Meigs. 59 The force moved along a small ravine flanking the fort. They had strict instructions not to fire until the order was given.

Supporting the British batteries situated at the right rear angle of the fort were two companies of the British 11st Regiment numbering 130 rank and file. 60

58 Harrison to Tipton, Dec. 6, 1833, Esarey, II, 747.
59 The regulars were of the 17th and 19th Regiments of the United States Army. Captain George Croghan of the 17th Regiment, later to become the hero of Fort Stephenson, commanded a company of regulars.
The American regulars left the protective ravine, reached the summit first and came under the heavy fire of the British defenders. Miller was forced to halt the advancing troops to close his ranks. Within fifty yards of the guns the command to fire was given. A concerted volley was then poured into the British lines and the force charged at top speed.

The British defense collapsed. Forty-one regulars and two officers of the 11st Regiment were made prisoners. The guns were spiked as Lieutenant David Gwynne and some of the regulars moved to aid the volunteers and Kentucky militiamen who had flung themselves upon an Indian force on the flanks.61

As Miller moved his men back to the fort, two companies of Canadian militia, numbering 130 rank and file, advanced with about 300 Indians. These, with the help of the remnant of the regular force, pressed hard on the retreating Americans until they arrived near the breastwork. The engagement had lasted a few minutes but thirty of Harrison's soldiers were killed and ninety wounded.62

While Colonel John Miller had been conducting his successful sortie, Dudley's men, on the opposite shore, remained near the captured batteries for about thirty minutes.63 By that time Major Shelby's left column had drawn fire from a group of Indians. Dudley


62 Cullum, "Wood's Journal", 400; Hannay, who takes the British side in his War of 1812, sets the casualties lower than Wood at 28 killed, 25 wounded.

63 Cullum, "Wood's Journal", 396.
then gave orders to reinforce Shelby and most of the right and center
columns rushed into the woods to the rear and left of the batteries. 64

The British artillery men who had fled had given the alarm. Three
companies of the 11st Regiment, several companies of militia and a
body of Indians hurried through knee-deep mud from the encampment a
mile and a half away. 65 The small group of Dudley's men left at the
battery resisted momentarily, then collapsed. Some fled to the boats,
some were taken prisoners, while the remainder raced into the thickly
wooded ravines where the main body was skirmishing about in wild dis-
order.

With the British on their rear and the Indians closing in,
Dudley's force was caught in a deadly vise. Dudley and several of
the leading officers fell and "the men stood as if they could not
help themselves and got shot (sic) down very fast." 66

Private Thomas Christian, an eye-witness, later related:

"Louder and louder, nearer and nearer came the savage
yells of the bloodthirsty foe from every quarter and
fainter grew the resistance offered by our thinned
and despirited ranks,....?67

64 Col. Wm. Dudley's Defeat Opposite Fort Meigs; Official Report from
Captain Leslie Coombs to General Green Clay, (Cincinnati, 1869),
p. 6.

65 Richardson's War, 149-50.

66 Narrative of four Shawnee chiefs on the capture of four of their
young men, Brig.-General John Wingate to Harrison, June 15, 1813,
Harrison Papers, V, 30-3.

67 "Narrative of T. Christian", loc. cit., 5. An account of Dudley's
Defeat appeared in The Redonian, Chillicothe, May 18, 1813. See
also Joseph R. Underwood's narrative in Howe, Historical Collections,
II, 568-72.
A violent rain continued as the Kentuckians raced wildly through the mud firing "until our guns got so dirty, that at last the balls would not go any more from our guns." After a time Indians were "in our very midst, the deafening demoniac yells drowned out all other sounds save the coarse, broad command 'ground your arms, surrender!' pronounced by British officers banishing all hope of successful resistance." The command was repeated, "ground your arms, or you will be slain,..." Rifles dropped into the mud and water and in some cases surreptitious feet pressed them down and "...added their exit from further service,..."

Several of the prisoners were immediately tomahawked by Indians. The British were too few to control their allies. The prisoners were hurried toward Fort Miami, their clothing and money seized along the way. Near the fort a gauntlet was prepared for the Kentuckians. Knives, tomahawks and clubs descended upon the racing prisoners. A British regular attempted to stop the bloodletting and was slain.

When all the prisoners were within the enclosures, the Indians "rudely shoved the British sentinels aside, and with unearthly yells..."

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68 Wingate to Harrison, June 15, 1813, Harrison Papers, V, 30-3.
70 Ibid., 6.
71 Richardson's War, 154. A returned prisoner verified the story of the British soldier who was killed in endeavoring to stop the massacre. Harrison to Armstrong, May 18, 1813, Esarey, II, 542-3. The Shawnee warriors captured by the British also confirmed the slaying, Wingate to Harrison, June 15, 1813, Harrison Papers, V, 30-3.
poured in upon us, killing and scalping....”\textsuperscript{72} For two hours the carnage continued. More than twenty prisoners had been slain when Tecumseh galloped on the scene at full speed. He had helped fight off Miller’s sortie on the south bank, then had swum the Maumee River and aided in the retaking of the batteries. “With the fury of a mad man,...” he dared anyone to attempt to murder another American. Rent with passion he exclaimed, “Oh! what will become of my Indians.”\textsuperscript{73} When order was restored he confronted Brigadier-General Procter and asked why the massacre had not been stopped. When Procter protested that the Indians could not be commanded, Tecumseh retorted, “Begone, you are unfit to command,...”\textsuperscript{74}

Of Dudley’s command of 866 men, 15\textsuperscript{4} had escaped to the fort,\textsuperscript{75} between forty-five and fifty had fallen during the brief battle,\textsuperscript{76} forty had been slain after the surrender,\textsuperscript{77} and, according to Procter’s official report, 627 prisoners remained and “there are a


\textsuperscript{73}Benjamin Drake, Life of Tecumseh and of His Brother The Prophet; With a Historical Sketch of the Shawnee Indians, (Cincinnati, 1852), 161-2.

\textsuperscript{74}Ibid., 182.

\textsuperscript{75}Clay’s Report of May 9, 1813, Harrison Papers.

\textsuperscript{76}Harrison to Armstrong, May 13, 1813, Esarey, II, h45.

\textsuperscript{77}Harrison to Armstrong, May 18, 1813, Esarey, II, h52. This estimate was made by several of the prisoners.
number...not yet come in who are in the Possession of the Indians, but they are bringing them in daily."  

A few of the Kentuckians escaped up the south side of the Maumee, as Harrison had suspected, and made their way to Fort Winchester.

Dudley's battle had ended near noon. Within a short time British artillerists were manning their pieces again and had fired a few missiles toward the besieged fort.

In the afternoon the firing stopped and Major Peter L. Chambers of the British 11th Regiment approached under a white flag. At the gate of Fort Meigs he was blindfolded and taken to General Harrison.

Chambers bore General Procter's request for a capitulation of the fort "to spare the effusion of blood." Harrison found the demand "a most extraordinary one." Chambers pointed out the size of the British force saying, "there is with him (Procter) a larger body of Indians
than has ever before been embodied." Harrison replied that he had "a
very correct idea" of Procter's numbers, but that the fort would not
be surrendered on any terms.81 The surrender offer settled, talks
were begun concerning a prisoner exchange.

On the north shore of the Maumee River Brigadier-General Henry
Procter had a set of problems to contend with. He had planned to
attack Fort Meigs the first week of April when the fort was under-
manned and short of supplies. "...Necessary Preparations and some
untoward Circumstances" had delayed him.85 Continuous rain had
hampered his operations throughout the siege. To service his three
main batteries he needed three artillery officers. Early in the siege
his only artillery officer fell ill.

The fort had proved to be stronger than Procter had expected.
He found the Americans "so completely entrenched and covered...as to
render unavailing every Effort of our Artillery..."87

Most of his troops encamped near Fort Miami had no shelter and
"few even of the officers had tents to shield them from the weather."88
Dysentery and the ague prevailed in the British camp.

81 The Fredonian, Chillicothe, June 1, 1813; Howe, Historical
Collections, II, 564.
85 Procter to Prevost, May 14, 1813; Wood, Select British Docu-
ments, II, 33.
86 Ibid., 33-34.
87 Ibid., 34.
88 Richardson's War, 160.
The Indians, who had shown dissatisfaction over the ineffectiveness of the British guns, began to drift away on the evening of May 5. They did not like this mode of warfare for, as Tecumseh said later, "It is hard to fight people who live like groundhogs." The plunder from Dudley's boats had not been sufficient to satisfy and besides, it was customary for Indians, after a battle of consequence, to return to their villages with their wounded and prisoners. They had seen the white flags pass but no surrender had followed. By the evening of May 8, only Tecumseh, twenty chiefs and less than 400 warriors remained.

Even the Canadian militia had started to drift off on the night of May 5. Last year's crop had been poor and for them to fail to put in corn and spring wheat would mean a famine. More than half had left before the siege was lifted. To add to Procter's woes he had received a dispatch that York had fallen. He now envisioned a large American force moving to cut him off from Amherstburg.

During May 6 and 7 no guns were fired as white flags "passed to and from each camp." Harrison found Procter's original basis for the

89 Speech of Tecumseh, Amherstburg, Sept. 18, 1813, Esarey, II, 511-3.
90 Procter to Prevost, May 14, 1813, Wood, Select British Documents, II, 35. The Sioux of South Dakota received word that their homes were menaced by a threatened attack from the tribes of the west. Doane Robinson, "South Dakota and the War of 1812", South Dakota Historical Collections, XII, (1924), p. 94.
91 Richardson's War, 160.
92 Procter to Prevost, May 14, 1813, Wood, Select British Documents, II, 35.
prisoner exchange to be "a most extraordinary proposition." Procter proposed that Harrison "send out of the American Lines, the Wyandots, Senecas, and Delawares of Sandusky in exchange for an equal Number of Kentucky Militia." Harrison politely replied that he would refer Procter's proposition to the government "at an early date."

Major Levi Hukill served as Harrison's envoy to Procter and on one occasion Major Fletcher accompanied Hukill to the Fort Miamis encampment at the request of General Clay "for the purpose of making such enquiries relatively to the prisoners of that Corps...."

As the negotiations began Harrison sent out some men to bring in the supplies that had been left in the boats used by Clay and Bostwell. Inside Fort Meigs the men tried to make their muddy shelters livable as the rain continued to fall.

On Friday, May 7, an agreement for the exchange of prisoners was reached. The Kentucky militia prisoners would be transported down Lake Erie to the Huron River where they would be released on the condition that they not serve again during the war.

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94 Harrison to Armstrong, May 9, 1813, Esarey, II, 448.


96 Harrison to Procter, May 8, 1813, Harrison Papers, V, 12.

97 Richardson's War, 153. Colonel Wood's version: "Flags were now passing between the two armies upon the subject of an exchange of prisoners, which ceremony the Indians soon availed themselves of by hoisting a white shirt or towel on a stick, and then prowling along before us with heavy loads of plunder, and in a most impudent manner." Cullum, "Wood's Journal", 401.
The regulars from both armies were exchanged that evening. Captain Samuel Price and twenty United Stated Army regulars returned as the two British lieutenants and forty-one regulars were escorted to the Fort Miami encampment. All regulars exchanged were to be restricted to garrison duty for one month.98

During the evening of May 7 and the morning of May 8 Harrison sent several boats to aid in the transporting of the prisoners to Huron. He also sent provisions and blankets for the men.99

During the rainy Saturday of May 8, few Indians were observed by the soldiers on the Fort Meigs parapets. Across the Maumee River the British "appear to be making preparations to decamp."100 All through the night the stirrings in the British camp could be heard and some of the besieged suspected that perhaps "they are laying some deep plan to annoy us."101

But as Sunday, May 9, dawned, British artillerists were seen laboring to dismount their ordnance. The sloops and gunboats were brought up and the artillery was put on board amidst a light fire from the fort. At 10:00 A. M. the British colors were taken down to the accompaniment of American cheers. Two hours later the boats, now loaded, moved off down the Maumee River.102

99 Hawkins to Crittenden, Aug. 6, 1813, Clay Collection.
100 "Cushing's Diary", loc. cit., 101.
101 Ibid., 104.
102 Harrison to Armstrong, May 9, 1813, Esarey II, 438.
In the five days of bombardment from May 1 to May 5, nearly 1700 shot and shell had been discharged against Fort Meigs.\textsuperscript{103} Casualties suffered within the walls and during the sorties were placed at 80 killed and 190 wounded.\textsuperscript{104} Of these numbers 64 had been killed and 124 wounded on the sorties from the fort.\textsuperscript{105} British losses had been slight. Fifteen were killed and 45 wounded.\textsuperscript{106}

\textsuperscript{103} Cushing sets the number at 1676. Cushing to Snow Baker, June 8, 1813, Lindley, \textit{op. cit.}, 127.

\textsuperscript{104} Eaton's Compilation, National Archives MSS, No. 94, Ohio State Museum Library; McAtee lists 81 killed and 189 wounded.

\textsuperscript{105} "Return of Killed and Wounded in the Siege of Camp Meigs and the Several Sorties on the 5th Inst.", \textit{Western Intelligencer}, Worthington, June 9, 1813.

Chapter II

Activities Preceding the Second Invasion

While the guns boomed along the Maumee River the people of Ohio voiced their faith:

"We have...so much confidence in General Harrison and his men, as to believe the fort will not be surrendered, while a single gun can be brought to bear upon the enemy, and ammunition can be had to charge it with."\(^1\)

The men at Fort Findlay failed to share the citizen's confidence. They could hear the cannonading and, caught in a panic of fear, five of the fort's eighty defenders deserted on the night of May 3. Confused and frightened, Fort Findlay's commanding officer did not know what to do with the cannonballs that were to be forwarded to Fort Meigs.\(^2\)

Communication between Fort Meigs and the interior had been cut off.\(^3\) But Governor Return Jonathan Meigs, Jr. had taken precautionary measures as early as April 19, when he detached companies of militia to Lower Sandusky and Upper Sandusky and to Franklin.\(^4\) When Captain Oliver delivered Harrison's dispatch of April 28, in which Harrison said "the enemy...are now in sight...,"\(^5\) Meigs began active exertions to relieve the fort with a force of militia.

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\(^1\)Western Intelligencer, Worthington, May 5, 1813.

\(^2\)"Extract of a Letter from an Officer in the Northwestern Army; dated Fort Findlay, May 2", The Fredonian, Chillicothe, May 11, 1813.

\(^3\)Dayton Journal, May 12, 1813.

\(^4\)The Supporter, Chillicothe, April 21, 1813.

\(^5\)Harrison to Meigs, April 28, 1813, Esarey, II, 428-9.
The response to the governor's proclamation was immediate.

"All who could get horses, rode, but many have slung their knapsacks and set out, stormy as it was on foot...."6

Chillicothe, Ohio responded with "upwards of 300 men" and reported that "several thousand men are now on the march."7

Begrimed and dirty men climbed out of the ditches of Fort Meigs to squint at "the first fair day we have experienced in eight days."8 The day was Monday, May 10.

Water had been scarce during the siege, the only source being three small wells, and hands, faces, and linen had not been washed, so that the tattered men "presented the appearance of so many scarecrows."9

First thoughts were for the wounded who had been lying exposed to the damp ground and the rain. Dispirited as the able men were, they busied themselves clearing the guns and stores from some of the blockhouses and converting them into temporary hospitals.10 Lack of medical supplies or competent personnel added to the "pitiable conditions."11

6Western Intelligencer, Worthington, May 5, 1813.
7The Supporter, Chillicothe, May 12, 1813.
8"Cushing's Diary", loc. cit., 105.
9Howe, Historical Collections, I, 566-7.
11Harrison complained to Armstrong and was promised an increase of medical personnel. Armstrong to Harrison, May 31, 1813, Harrison Papers, V, 24.
A party of men crossed the river to reconnoiter Dudley's battleground. On that trip and the one the following day forty-five bodies were found and buried.\(^{12}\)

The men also discovered "a number of Cannon Ball, a new Ellignant Sling carriage for Cannon and other valuable articles" that had been abandoned by the British. These cannonballs, together with the missiles retrieved after being fired at the fort, gave the magazine keeper more shot than he had when the siege had begun.\(^{13}\)

On Wednesday, May 12, General Harrison with 200 dragoons departed for Lower Sandusky across the Black Swamp route. Brigadier-General Clay was left in command at Fort Meigs. Harrison was anxious to have arms sent to the prisoners who would be released at the mouth of the Huron River. To further secure their safety he sent out parties to comb the area from Lower Sandusky to Lake Erie for Indians.\(^{14}\)

Governor Meigs, leading 1000 men arrived at Lower Sandusky on the evening of May 13. Messengers were immediately dispatched to stem the flow of Ohioans who had sprung to their arms.\(^{15}\) Harrison publicly expressed his "warmest gratitude" but was forced to order the greatest number to disband.\(^{16}\)

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12: Harrison to Armstrong, May 13, 1813, Esarey, II, \(\text{hl}3\); "...between forty-five and fifty...." Hawkins to Crittenden, Aug. 6, 1813, Clay Collection.


14: Harrison to Armstrong, May 13, 1813, Esarey, II, \(\text{hl}3\).

15: Harrison to Armstrong, May 18, 1813, Esarey, II, \(\text{hl}50-1\); McAfee, 303.

16: General Orders, May 16, 1813, Esarey, II, \(\text{hl}9\).
had been limited by the War Office. Uncertain as to where the
British might launch their next attack, Harrison ordered militia de-
tachments to reinforce Cleveland and two companies to remain at Lower
Sandusky. The remainder were sent home and "their high hopes of mili-
tary glory cut off at a strike."  

Mail had been held up during the siege, so Harrison found five
letters from Secretary of War Armstrong at Lower Sandusky. In a
letter dated April 14, Armstrong wrote, "Col. Procter is not in con-
dition to carry on any distant or formidable expedition--." He added:
"My own opinion is that so long as Malden is menaced...the enemy will
be confined to its defense." In the letter of April 18 Armstrong
said that "...it would be desirable that Col. Procter should make an
attempt to dislodge or to invest you. ...His field train consists of
six or eight pounders."  

At Fort Meigs the men busied themselves repairing the blockhouse
roofs and the powder magazine that had been damaged during the siege.
Others made barrels so that salted meat could be stored, while still

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17 Armstrong to Harrison, March 5, 1813, Esarey, II, 378-80; Armstrong
to Harrison, April 3, 1813, Esarey, II, 413.

18 Samuel Williams, "Two Western Campaigns in the War of 1812", Ohio
Valley Historical Series Miscellanies, (Cincinnati, 1871), p. 140.

19 Armstrong to Harrison, April 14, 1813, Harrison Papers, IV, 147.

20 Armstrong to Harrison, April 18, 1813, Harrison Papers, IV, 157.
others made cartridges and repaired the gun carriages.

The weather was drier and the health of the men improved. During off-duty hours small gardens of peas, onions, beans, lettuce and radishes were cultivated. Fishing, too, was a diversion. The white bass in the Maumee River were plentiful. 21

Some of the storehouses containing flour, salted beef and pork had been damaged by the British artillery. No immediate shortage resulted, but many of the stores were ruined by the continuous rain. 22

The supply system that Harrison had installed during the winter of 1812-13 began to function again as the siege ended. Provisions from Cincinnati and the surrounding Miami country moved up the Miami River, across the portage to the Auglaize River and St. Marys River to Fort Defiance; then down the Maumee River to Fort Meigs. Some supplies were transported by wagons to St. Marys and Fort Amanda where boats were built to carry the supplies the rest of the way. 23

Flour was purchased principally in the Chillicothe vicinity and transported in oxen-drawn wagons by way of Franklinton, Delaware, Norton, Upper Sandusky to Lower Sandusky. 24

Southern Ohio and Kentucky became the horn of plenty for the Northwestern Army. Cattle, hogs and flour moved along the dirt roads.

22 Harrison to Armstrong, May 13, 1813, Esarey, II, 445.
23 Harrison to Bostis, Nov. 15, 1812, Harrison Papers, I, 85-6.
24 "I wish to make contracts for the delivery of four thousand bushels of wheat immediately. Those who have it to spare will oblige me by an early application." Ad in The Supporter, Chillicothe, April 21, 1813.
and wilderness trails in vast quantities.

The Franklintown-Lower Sandusky route and Hull's Trace from Urbana were the best routes for the driving of live cattle and hogs. In the early stages of the war Piqua furnished much of the beef, flour and whiskey that moved up Hull's newly cut road.

Shoes, jackets, trousers and blankets had to be ordered from Philadelphia. From Pittsburgh these materials travelled the same route as the artillery did, that is, via Canton, Wooster, Mansfield, Lower Sandusky. Pittsburgh also furnished much of the army's whiskey supply, but everything else could be purchased more cheaply at Franklintown.

There were no settlements north of Piqua and the forest stretched unbroken to the lake. In the spring and autumn rain turned most of the forest into a swamp. General Hull on his march to Detroit, had

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25 Harrison to Eustis, Oct. 15, 1812, Harrison Papers, I, 72; "Four thousand and forty-eight large fat hogs have been driven from this neighborhood...destined...for the use of the Northwestern Army. The Supporter, Chillicothe, Dec. 19, 1812.


27 Harrison to Eustis, Sept. 27, 1812, Harrison Papers, I, 61.

28 Harrison to Eustis, Oct. 15, 1812, Harrison Papers, I, 67.

29 Swamps and marshland of varying degrees of wetness covered nearly all of northwestern Ohio. The largest swamp was called the Black Swamp which was an irregular strip about thirty miles wide, lying parallel to the east bank of the Maumee River from Lake Erie southwest to New Haven, Indiana. It was 1500 square miles in extent. See Martin R. Kaatz, "The Settlement of the Black Swamp of Northwestern Ohio: Early Days", Northwestern Ohio Quarterly, XXV, No. 1, (1952-3), pp. 23-36.
cut a road through the swampy Ohio wilderness. Harrison improved Hull's Trace and built new connecting roads. The new roads connected St. Marys with Defiance, Upper Sandusky with Fort Meigs, Lower Sandusky with Fort Meigs, Mansfield with Lower Sandusky. Rain made the roads impassable in spring and fall and Harrison attempted to have them causewayed, but the work progressed at a slow pace.

Water routes were used when it was possible but often the water level was too low and in the winter the boats were frozen fast.

Harrison had reason to say that "the great defect is in the means of transportation." Pack horses were used when the roads became too muddy for wagons, but forage was scarce in the wilderness and expensive to buy. Bad roads and careless drivers destroyed the horses rapidly and Harrison began to employ oxen to pull the wagons and sleds.

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30 The trace was the width of a wagon track and pushed through some of the worst morasses in northwestern Ohio. Hull's route coincides for the most part with modern U. S. Highway 68, passing through or near the towns of Kenton, Findlay and Bowling Green. North of Bowling Green Hull's Trace veered to the west crossing at a point nearly midway between the towns of Waterville and Maumee.

31 Harrison to Eustis, Oct. 26, 1812, Harrison Papers, I, 77.

32 Thomas Bodley to Harrison, Dec. 11, 1812, Esarey, I, 238-40.

33 Harrison to Eustis, Nov. 15, 1812, Harrison Papers, I, 83.

34 Of 4000 horses used during the winter of 1812-13, only 800 were fit for service in the spring. James A. Green, William Henry Harrison, His Life and Times, (Richmond, Va., 1911), p. 165. "...two trips from McArthur's block house (to Fort Meigs) will completely destroy a Brigade of Pack Horses." Harrison to Eustis, Dec. 12, 1812, Harrison Papers, I, 98. See also Samuel Brown, Views of the Campaigns of the Northwestern Army, (New York, 1814). Brown was a sutler with the Northwestern Army.
To protect his supply lines Harrison had built forts at strategic locations. Some of the forts used in the Indian Wars (1790-95) were enlarged and pressed into service. Fort St. Marys, Fort Amanda, Fort Logan, Fort Jennings, Fort Brown, and Fort Winchester formed a protective chain along the river routes. This work had been done during the winter of 1812-13. Now the supply machinery, interrupted by the siege, began to function again.

Early in June, Harrison returned to Franklintown where problems pertaining to militia discipline and the status of the Ohio Indians awaited his attention. On June 23 a dispatch arrived from General Clay at Fort Meigs. A Frenchman and one of Colonel Dudley's privates had arrived from Detroit with word that a new attack on Fort Meigs was being planned. Clay wrote, "The Frenchman states that the Indians had for some time been urging Genl. Procter to renew the attack." Harrison did not feel that Fort Meigs was the real target for attack on this occasion, but "...the attack will be upon Lower Sandusky, Cleveland or Erie." To Armstrong he wrote, "Their great objects are to get provisions and destroy our vessels before they are ready for service.

Harrison sent orders to Colonel R. M. Johnson, in the vicinity of

35 Freeman's Chronicle, Franklintown, June 25, 1813; The Predonian, Chillicothe, June 29, 1813.
36 Clay to Harrison, June 20, 1813, Esarey, II, 474.
37 Harrison to Governor Meigs, June 23, 1813, Esarey, II, 476.
38 Harrison to Armstrong, June 21, 1813, Esarey, II, 478.
Fort Winchester, to hurry to Fort Meigs. Other dispatches were sent to Presque Isle to warn Captain Oliver H. Perry who was hurriedly constructing a fleet.\(^{39}\)

Colonel Samuel Wells was dispatched to Lower Sandusky with orders "to take command of it and should the British approach it in force to destroy the stores and the fort and retire towards Upper Sandusky...."\(^{40}\) Harrison reasoned that small Fort Stephenson could not be defended against the heavy artillery that could be brought by the enemy up the Sandusky River.

Harrison then hastened to Fort Meigs over roads that were mud "up to the horses' knees." Twenty miles below Upper Sandusky he had overtaken Colonel Anderson's 24th Regiment. Harrison selected 300 men and moved on "with all possible expedition."\(^{41}\) He arrived at the fort at 3:00 P. M. where he was welcomed with "great joy and firing of cannon."\(^{42}\)

Colonel R. M. Johnson's Mounted Infantry had reached the fort on June 23. This force of 800 men strengthened the garrison, which had been reduced to 500 effectives by measles, mumps, and dysentery.\(^{43}\) A few hours after Harrison's arrival the remainder of the 24th Regiment came in.

\(^{39}\)Harrison to Armstrong, June 23, 1813, Esarey, II, \(177\).

\(^{40}\)Harrison to Armstrong, June 24, 1813, Esarey, II, \(178\).

\(^{41}\)Harrison to Armstrong, July 2, 1813, Esarey, II, \(180\).


\(^{43}\)Harrison to Armstrong, June 11, 1813, Esarey, II, \(171-2\).
On June 29 Harrison sent Colonel Johnson and 200 mounted men to the River Raisin to reconnoiter and to procure "fresh information" concerning the enemy's "movements and designs." Late the next night Johnson returned with two Frenchmen who said that they had heard of no reinforcement of British troops arriving at Malden, but that the Indians were pressing General Procter to make another attack on Fort Meigs.\(^44\)

Satisfied with the strength of the fort, Harrison, with an escort of 100 of Johnson's mounted riflemen, left Fort Meigs at 9:00 A. M. on July 1. He waited at Lower Sandusky for Colonel James V. Ball's squadron. Ball arrived the next day and on July 3 Harrison and Ball's troopers departed for Cleveland.\(^45\) Johnson's men were sent to the Huron River for new horses.\(^46\)

Harrison arrived at Cleveland the morning of July 6. He wanted to strengthen the defenses there and, if possible, discover the cause of Perry's delay. Only 170 men stood by ready to defend "the mere nucleus of a village" that had steadily grown in strategic importance.\(^47\)

The general plan for the forthcoming campaign had been outlined in March by Secretary of War John Armstrong. His plan closely resem-

\(^{44}\)Harrison to Armstrong, July 2, 1813, Esarey, II, 480-1; "Cushing's Diary", loc. cit., 115.

\(^{45}\)"The McAfee Papers", loc. cit., XXVI, No. 76, p. 17.

\(^{46}\)Harrison to Armstrong, July 2, 1813, Esarey, II, 481.

\(^{47}\)"Memoir of Luther Harvey", Michigan Pioneer and Historical Society Collections, I, (1874-6), p. 408.
bled the proposals submitted by Harrison during the preceding December and January. Armstrong proposed that the Americans should first obtain control of Lake Erie, and that the army should then be transported by boat for an attack against Malden.

It was now nearly midsummer, two months past the time set for the advance of the fleet. Harrison believed that no offensive could be launched unless Perry gained control of the lake, and if Perry could bring out his fleet immediately, a second British invasion would be warded off. "Is it not indeed the intention of the Government to bring to speedy issue the contest for the naval superiority upon this lake?"

On the tenth of July the vessels in question were at anchor in Presque Isle Bay. The ships were armed, rugged, and equipped, but the total number of men under Perry was not enough to man one of his new brigs. On July 19 Perry received a dispatch from Harrison begging him to sail as soon as possible. For weeks Perry had been asking for crews, and to Harrison he had to reply that he would sail when he had enough men to man his ships.

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48 Harrison to Monroe, Jan. 4, 1813, Harrison Papers, III, 3-16; Harrison to Monroe, Jan. 6, 1813, Harrison Papers, III, 18-29.
49 Armstrong to Harrison, March 5, 1813, Esarey, II, 387-80.
50 Harrison to Armstrong, July 6, 1813, Esarey, II, 484.
52 Ibid., 98. "The want of seamen is astonishing," Armstrong to Harrison, July 11, 1813, Harrison Papers, V, 42.
Perry continued to plead for men from his superior, Commodore Isaac Chauncey, while Harrison added pressure on Armstrong, "I beg leave to recommend that the vessels be fully manned. ...a consideration of this kind ought to govern all our preparations for the reduction of Malden."  

Unable to do much more for the unfortunate Perry, Harrison strengthened Cleveland's defenses and hurried back to Lower Sandusky.

Captain Oliver Hazard Perry's efforts to build a fleet had not gone unnoticed by the enemy. In early June the British commanders planned an attack on Presque Isle and Cleaveland "for the purpose of destroying this Fleet at Presque Isle,..." But Brigadier-General Henry Procter would not attempt the strike without first obtaining a reinforcement of regulars. Captain R. H. Barclay, the British naval commander on Lake Erie, joined Procter in efforts to have the regulars sent from the east.

Major Robert Dickson was more successful in his recruiting drive. By June 23, Dickson had gathered 1,400 warriors at Michilimackinac and Detroit. Menominees, Winnebagoes, Chippewas, Sioux, Ottawas and Foxes had been brought under the British colors. But as the weeks passed,

53Harrison to Armstrong, July 12, 1813, Esarey, II, 490.


55Prevost to Procter, June 20, 1813, Wood, Select British Documents, II, 248.

56Barclay to Vincent, June 17, 1813, Wood, Select British Documents, II, 245-6.
Procter found his supplies running short. Many of the warriors had brought their families and together they consumed 14,000 rations daily. The supplies that trickled in from the east were not enough.

Procter's requests were answered bluntly: "The... stores you require must be taken from the Enemy whose resources on Lake Erie must become yours--" Without a reinforcement of regulars Procter refused to launch an attack on Presque Isle, but by July 11 he had decided to "make some Attempt on Sandusky,..." Two days later a small fraction of the regulars that Procter had pleaded for finally arrived, but the British general had new difficulties: "I have the Mortification to find that my Indian Force, is not a disposable one,... [They] must be immediately employed, and I am necessitated to yield to their unanimous Desire of going to the Miami [Maumee] instead of Sandusky."

The stage was set for the second invasion of Ohio.

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58 Procter to McDouall, July 4, 1813, Wood, Select British Documents, II, 41.

59 Prevost to Procter, July 11, 1813, ibid., 251.

60 Procter to Prevost, July 11, 1813, ibid., 254.

61 Procter to Prevost, July 13, 1813, ibid., 256.
Chapter III

The Second Invasion of the State of Ohio

On July 20 Major-General Procter left Amherstburg to begin the invasion. Three hundred and fifty men of the 11st Regiment and some Indians embarked in sloops and small craft. Most of the Indians, which numbered between 3000 and 4000 moved by land around the head of the lake.¹

At sundown a scouting party from Fort Meigs saw the sails of the British ships coming up the river. "...The British and Indians are coming to pay us another visit."²

Indians had been active around the fort for several weeks and reports of a full scale attack had put the garrison on the alert. Trees had been cut down in a wider circumference and the British gun emplacements covered with dirt. Supplies had poured in during June and July. Colonel William Anderson's 24th Regiment of 600 men provided new spirit to the veterans of the first siege.

At dawn of Wednesday, July 21, a force of Indians fell upon the picket guard leaving the east wing. Six of the troops were killed and several were taken prisoner. Forty oxen and about as many horses were driven off by the attackers.³

Most of the men busied themselves digging the traverses and securing the magazines. The balance of the defenders manned the

¹Lake Erie Court Martial Papers, Wood, Select British Documents, II, 290.
²"Cushing's Diary", loc. cit., 119.
³Hawkins to Crittenden, Aug. 6, 1813, Clay Collection; The Fredonian, Chillicothe, Aug. 3, 1813.
pickets to give battle to the Indians. Occasionally a few of the
fort's 18-pounders and 12-pounders opened on the Indians in the woods.

After midnight Brigadier-General Clay sent several messengers to
carry word of the new attack to Harrison. Two-thirds of the garrison
remained on duty through the night while the remainder slept close to
their rifles.

Captain McCune of the Ohio militia had left the fort a few hours
before Captain Oliver. McCune reached Lower Sandusky at 10:00 P.M.
on the evening of July 22, with Clay's message to Harrison. Clay
expected the enemy batteries to open on the fort, but "we...are fully
prepared to meet them in any manner they make the attack." The troops
were in high spirits and "most woefully will the enemy be deceived in
their anticipations of conquest."  

Harrison left some of the 300 regulars at Lower Sandusky with
Major George Croghan and with the balance of the force departed for
Seneca, nine miles to the south. Oliver reached him en route with
more details of the siege.

Harrison felt that Procter's move against Fort Meigs might have
been made with the intention of drawing American forces to that sector
while the real objective was Lower Sandusky or Cleveland. Harrison
regarded Lower Sandusky with its small Fort Stephenson as untenable
and had made arrangements to withdraw the garrison if an attack be-
came imminent.

As for the new siege, Harrison wrote"...I have little appre-

1Clay to Harrison, July 22, 1813, Esarey, II, 493-4.
hension for the safety of Fort Meigs [but] Should it appear to be in
danger...I will endeavor to break through...with two or three hundred
picked men."5

At Fort Meigs the small arms fire, "which did not in any instance
prove fatal," continued as the days passed. The defenders grew in-
different to the sound of bullets even when the missiles passed
through the tents. "...if a man has his glass of grog shattered as he
passes it to his lips it is treated with derision."6

On Saturday morning, July 24, as the fog cleared, boats could be
seen carrying most of the enemy force over to the south bank.7 Every
night the fort expected the attack to come, but the three loaded
rifles by each picket's post remained unused.

At 7:00 A. M. on Monday, July 26, Captain McCune returned to the
fort with a message from Harrison. "I have no doubts of yrs. [yours?] per-
formance to defend the fort. Your means are ample. I am collect-
ing troops...Govr. Meigs is collecting the Militia rapidly--I shall
make no attempt to relieve you, but wait the arrival of the fleet--
Every Thing was ready for their sailing excepting some seamen...."8

Believing that McCune had brought word of the coming of rein-
forcements, Tecumseh put forward his plan to reduce the American fort.
The Indians would stage a sham battle along the Lower Sandusky road

5Harrison to Armstrong, July 24, 1813, Esarey, II, 496.
6Hawkins to Crittenden, Aug. 6, 1813, Clay Collection.
7Clay to Harrison, July 26, 1813, Esarey, II, 499.
8Harrison to Clay, July 26, 1813, Harrison Papers, V, 48.
leading the defenders of the fort to believe that Harrison, advancing a reinforcement, had been ambushed. A rescue party would sally out of the fort. When the party crossed the open ground between the fort and the woods, the British regulars would attack their rear and simultaneously rush the fort before the gates could be secured.9

At 4:00 P. M. the heavy firing of two distinct parties commenced along the Sandusky road about half a mile to the rear of the fort.10 Many of the garrison lined the ramparts and looked anxiously in the direction of the firing, but the gates remained closed. The musketry and the "horrid savage yells" became so animated that the British themselves were "half in doubt...whether the battle was sham or real."11

Commotion began to reign within the fort. Clay was having difficulty restraining the men from making "the Battle a real one."12 The sham struggle lasted nearly an hour. Just as it stopped "there came up the heaviest thunder shower that I ever experienced."13 The rain "completely inundated" the camp in the fort, but, more important, it further discouraged the Indian besiegers, many of whom began to return home that night.

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9Richardson's War, 177-8.
10"Cushing's Diary", loc. cit., 121.
11Richardson's War, 178.
12Clay to Harrison, July 26, 1813, Esarey, II, 499.
13"Cushing's Diary", loc. cit., 121.
Little was seen of the enemy the next day but on Wednesday, July 28, "they set sail...with great precipitation..." Wrote Clay, "They were in full view and displayed two schooners and about one hundred and fifty sail. Small craft apparently all filled with men."\(^{11}\)

Procter, who had against his own judgement laid the siege, had hoped that Harrison would attempt to relieve the fort. Most of the Indians gathered by Dickson began to return to Detroit and Amherstburg.\(^{15}\) Tecumseh, his Indian force still numbering 2000, urged Procter to move on to Lower Sandusky. The main body of Indians proceeded by land across the Black Swamp, while the British re-embarked in the boats, descended the Maumee River to Lake Erie and headed for the mouth of the Sandusky River.\(^{16}\)

The dispatch from Clay told Harrison of the lifting of the siege. Suspecting the enemy move, Harrison reinforced Fort Erie at Upper Sandusky and sent reconnoitering parties to the west to watch for the Indians.\(^{17}\)

The problem of Fort Stephenson remained. Harrison called a council of war and the officers agreed that the fort was "untenable against heavy artillery." Since it was an unimportant post containing only

\(^{11}\)Clay to Harrison, July 28, 1813, Esarey, II, 500.

\(^{15}\)Procter to Prevost, Aug. 9, 1813, Wood, Select British Documents, II, 44-5; Doane Robinson, "South Dakota and the War of 1812", South Dakota Historical Collections, XII, (1924), p. 95.

\(^{16}\)Richardson's War, 178-9.

\(^{17}\)Harrison to Armstrong, July 28, 1813, Esarey II, 501.
200 barrels of flour, they agreed that the garrison be withdrawn and
the fort burned. To Major George Croghan, commanding 160 men at
Fort Stephenson, went this message: "Immediately on receiving this
letter, you will abandon Fort Stephenson, set fire to it, and repair
with your command this night to headquarters...." \(^1\)8

The messenger to Croghan got lost in the woods and did not reach
Fort Stephenson until 10:00 A.M. on July 30. Croghan now called a
council of war where it was decided that it was too late to conduct a
retreat with safety. Back to Seneca went the messenger with Croghan's
reply: "I have just received yours of yesterday (29), 19:00 P.M.
ordering me to destroy this place and make good my retreat, which was
received too late to be carried into execution. We have determined
to maintain this place, and by heavens we can." \(^1\)9

The messenger reached Seneca at sundown of July 30. Disturbed
at Croghan's insolence, Harrison sent Colonel Samuel Wells under an
escort of dragoons to relieve Croghan. Colonel James V. Ball arrested
the young major and brought him to Seneca the following day. "Major
Croghan, how came you to send me that insolent letter?" asked
Harrison. \(^2\)0

Croghan replied that the wording of the letter was strong because
of the possibility of its falling into the enemy's hands. The messen-

\(^1\)8 McAfee, 347-9. See also Thomas W. Parsons, "George Croghan and the

\(^1\)9 McAfee, 348.

\(^2\)0 Alfred Brunson, A Western Pioneer; or Incidents of the Life and
Volumes.
ger, "The damned rascal," had failed to explain Croghan's purpose to Harrison. Satisfied with the explanation Harrison restored Croghan to his command. The twenty-one-year-old major left for Fort Stephenson the next morning, with written orders similar to those he had received before.21

The reconnoitering party Harrison had sent to the shores of Lake Erie, about twenty miles north of Fort Stephenson, discovered the approach of the British by water on the evening of July 31. The party passed Fort Stephenson at noon of August 1 as they hurried to headquarters at Camp Seneca.22

Fort Stephenson was situated in the center of what is now the city of Fremont at the head of navigation on the Sandusky River. The fort, enclosing an acre of ground, was built there during the summer of 1812 and strengthened by blockhouses the following summer.23 There was higher ground within 100 yards on two sides of the fort and it was completely commanded by a hill on the opposite bank of the river.24

Since taking command on July 23, Croghan had worked his small garrison in further fortifying the post. A ditch was dug four feet deep and six feet wide around the fort outside of the stockade. The area for 200 yards around the fort was clear of timber and brush.

21McAfee, 349-50.
22Harrison to Armstrong, Aug. 4, 1813, Esarey, II, 507.
23"General Wadsworth's Division in the War of 1812" Western Reserve and Northern Ohio Historical Society Publications, No. 51, (December, 1879), p. 121.
24The Fredonian, Chillicothe, August 21, 1813.
Bags of sand and barrels of flour were placed against the pickets. Pins were placed near the top of the pickets from which twenty to thirty foot logs could be tilted easily by one man "to sweep everything before them." 25

At Camp Seneca, too, the men worked feverishly to fortify their position. 26 Harrison expected reinforcements hourly, and if the British should decide to swing up the lake towards Erie, Harrison was ready to race to Cleveland. A letter had arrived from Perry who still needed men before he could attack the four British vessels lying off Presque Isle Bay. 27

As evening approached on August 1, the Indian vanguard appeared around Fort Stephenson. Thirty minutes later the British gunboats came into sight and drew the fire of the fort's solitary artillery piece, a 6-pounder. The British landed and crossed the plain and entered the woods to situate their batteries.

Soon Major Peter Chambers and Major Robert Dixon approached under a white flag. Ensign Shipp, a veteran of the first Fort Meigs siege, advanced to meet them. Chambers demanded the surrender of the fort "to spare the effusion of human blood." Shipp replied that the commandant and the garrison were determined to defend the post to the last extremity. Dickson then remarked that the Indians, numbering about 500,

25 "Joseph Duncan to General C. F. Mercer", Illinois State Historical Society Transactions, No. 26, (1919), p. 120.

26 "Letter from Lt. A. Battles dated July 31, 1813", Western Intelligencer, Worthington, Aug. 11, 1813.

27 Harrison to Armstrong, Aug. 1, 1813, Esarey, II, 507.
might not be restrained should the fort fall. "When the fort shall be taken," retorted Shipp, "there will be none to massacre. It will not be given up while a man is able to resist."28 As the young ensign returned to the fort, Croghan shouted, "Come in Shipp and we will blow them all to hell."29

The British then opened fire from their 6-pounders in the gunboats and the 5 1/2-inch howitzer on shore. The fire continued "with little intermission throughout the night."30 Early the next morning the three 6-pounders that had been installed at the edge of the woods added to the fire power of the British. Croghan occasionally answered with his solitary 6-pounder which he moved around the fort "to induce a belief that he had more than one piece."31

Except for the commissary store, which had been mistaken for a magazine and soon shattered, the fort withstood the cannonading with little damage. Bags of sand and flour were placed where the pickets had taken hits. As the afternoon passed the British artillerists concentrated their fire against the northwestern angle of the fort. Croghan had his 6-pounder moved to the blockhouse from which it could


29"Address of Charles W. Fairbanks", ibid., 28.

30Croghan to Harrison, Aug. 5, Esarey, II, 514.

31McAfee, 351.

rake that angle. The embrasure was masked and the piece loaded with a half charge of powder, and a double charge of slugs and grapeshot. Procter did not want to assault the fort, but his staff convinced him of its necessity. "...unless the Fort was stormed we should never be able to bring an Indian warrior into the Field with us" and so Procter "was obliged to yield to Circumstances I could not possibly have prevented." The bugles sounded the charge.

Two feints were made towards the southern angle as three columns of 120 men each trotted toward the northwestern angle of the fort. Through the heavy smoke of the cannonading advanced the columns until they were within twenty paces of the pickets. The 120 effectives of Fort Stephenson now poured a concentrated fire of musketry upon the regulars. After some confusion the British were rallied and moved to the brink of the ditch surrounding the fort. After a momentary pause they leaped into the ditch and attempted to scale the pickets that had been reinforced by sand. British axemen chopped vainly at the timbers. Soon the ditch was full and the embrasure masking Croghan's 6-pounder was kicked open. At such close range the single blast of the cannon "poured such destruction among them, that but few who had entered the ditch were fortunate enough to escape."

After thirty minutes the British bugles sounded the cease fire.

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33McAfee, 351-2.
34Procter to Prevost, Aug. 9, 1813, Wood, Select British Documents, II, 145.
35Richardson's War, 179-80.
36McAfee, 352.
Procter felt "A more than adequate Sacrifice having been made to Indian Opinion, I drew off the brave Assailants...." 37

The Indians had been of little aid. "...they had scarcely come within range of fire... before they ran away in dismay." 38 One Indian leader climbed a tree and called out to his warriors that they should not advance until they saw the white flag hoisted, and that then they would rush the fort. 39 Procter had grounds for saying, "The Indian Force is seldom a disposable one, never to be relied on, in the Hour of Need;...." 40

As night came on the wounded in the ditch moaned and cried for help. Water was lowered in buckets over the pickets by the Americans. 41 Later some of the wounded made their way back to the boats.

The British listed twenty-six men killed, forty-one wounded, and twenty-nine missing. 42 Twenty-six had been made prisoners; of these, fourteen were badly wounded. 43 The defenders of Fort Stephenson had few casualties: one killed and seven wounded. 44

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37Procter to Prevost, Aug. 9, 1813, Wood, Select British Documents, II, 46.
38Ernest Alexander Cruikshank, "Robert Dickson, The Indian Trader", Wisconsin State Historical Society Collections, XII, (1892), p. 147.
40Procter to Prevost, Aug. 9, 1813, Wood, Select British Documents, II, 46.
41The Fredonian, Chillicothe, Aug. 17, 1813.
43Harrison to Armstrong, Aug. 4, 1813, Esarey, II, 513.
44Croghan to Harrison, Aug. 5, 1813, ibid., 515.
At about 3:00 A. M. the British boarded their boats and departed for Amherstburg. So hurried was their departure that a sail-boat containing clothing and military stores was left behind.

Earlier in the evening of August 2 the men at the parapets of Fort Stephenson had seen the activity at the boats. Croghan dispatched a messenger with the news of the retreat. Harrison immediately set out with his force of dragoons from Camp Seneca, leaving orders for the reinforcements from Upper Sandusky to follow. At Fort Stephenson Harrison learned from the British prisoners that Tecumseh and 2000 warriors were still in the swamps somewhere between Fort Meigs and Seneca. Procter's boats were nowhere to be seen, so Harrison called off his advance guard. Fearing a possible attack by Tecumseh, he sent word to have the reinforcements fall back to protect the supplies at Seneca and Upper Sandusky.15

Harrison's precautions were unnecessary. The British and Indians retained no offensive designs. They retired to Malden and Amherstburg to await Harrison's advance. On September 10, 1813, Perry met and defeated the British fleet, and sent Harrison the famous message, "We have met the enemy and they are ours."16

Five days later Harrison, with the Kentucky militia under Shelby and the regulars under Lewis Cass, was encamped on Lake Erie at the mouth of the Portage River, ready to embark for Malden. Despite Harrison's desire to reach Canada as soon as possible, various delays

15Harrison to Armstrong, Aug. 4, 1813, Esarey, II, 510-12.
16Perry to Harrison, Sept. 10, 1813, Esarey, II, 579.
intervened. Not until September 27 did the boats strike the beach three miles below Malden.

On October 5, 1813, Harrison caught up with the fleeing Procter near Moraviatown and thoroughly defeated the British and Indian force. This virtually ended the war in the Northwest.
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