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## The Making of Imperishable Honor: Charles S. Todd in the War of 1812

By Sherry K. Jelsma

Charles Stewart Todd's life was defined by the War of 1812. The contacts he made during the conflict would direct his choices and influence his career decisions for the rest of his life. Todd's war, the so-called Second War for American Independence, is often regarded as a problematic misadventure, filled with battlefield disasters and uncertain outcomes. But for the personal careers of many Kentuckians, including young Todd, military service rewarded them with reputations for bravery and honor, plus that lifetime key to open any door in antebellum Kentucky, a military title.

Indeed, the war identified Todd as a member of Kentucky leadership. It also enabled him to build a national network of men with values similar to his own: a sense of responsibility to serve the state and nation, loyalty to family, the pursuit and affirmation of a proper classical education, and Christian virtues. Though Charles was born into a respected, landed, and educated family, and married Letitia Shelby, daughter of Isaac Shelby, Kentucky's first governor, his post-1815 acceptance and success in politics and society was rooted in his war experience.

Charles and Letitia Todd, though often in debt, were considered wealthy and members of the elite in Kentucky, because of their families' histories of public service and reputations for honesty and loyalty. The Todds' lifestyle followed the model set earlier by the educated class of Virginia; they built a Federal-style mansion on a large farm, raised hemp and blooded cattle, and owned slaves to provide field and house labor. After the

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war, Charles was appointed Kentucky secretary of state in 1816, elected to the Kentucky house of representatives in both 1816 and 1817, and was later appointed to U.S. ambassadorships in South America (1820-24) and Russia (1841-46). He led his state as president of the Kentucky Agricultural Society, as well as a leader of the Whig Party, the Freemasons, and the Presbyterian Church. He protected his family, supported his twelve children, and defended his father-in-law posthumously from political attacks in the press. His faithfulness to the past also included the men he knew in the War of 1812; during his tenure in Russia, he went so far as to recommend an engineer from the old Northwest Army for a post designing a railroad from St. Petersburg to Moscow.<sup>1</sup> When his former commander, William Henry Harrison, ran for the presidency in 1840, Todd left his home and family to coordinate the campaign. The War of 1812 offered the opportunity for imperishable honor in his culture, and Colonel Charles S. Todd achieved it. He is known even today as the commonwealth's first "Kentucky Colonel."<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> For the role of elite families like the Todds in the early nineteenth century, see Lorri Glover, *Southern Sons: Becoming Men in the New Nation* (Baltimore, 2007). Histories of the many Todd families in the United States include George Horntice Edwards, *Historic Sketches of the Edwards and Todd Families and Their Descendants*, 1523-1895 (Lexington, 1964); Ann Todd Rubey et al., *Speaking of Families: The Todds of Caroline County, Virginia, and Their Kin* (Columbus, Mo., 1960); Stephen Berry, *House of Abraham: Abraham Lincoln and the Todds, a Family Divided by War* (Boston, 2007); "Todd Family Genealogy," Access Genealogy (<http://www.accessgenealogy.com/surnames/todd/>). For analyses of other families prominent in antebellum Kentucky, see James C. Klotter, *The Breckinridges of Kentucky, 1760-1981* (Lexington, 1986); Andrea Watkins, "Paternal Politics: Robert Wickliffe and His Family in Antebellum Kentucky" (PhD. diss., University of Kentucky, 1999); June Lee McFarland Kinkade, *Our Kentucky Pioneer Ancestry: A History of the Kinkade and Marshall Families* . . . (Baltimore, 1992). See also Thomas Marshall Green, *Historic Families of Kentucky* (Cincinnati, 1889).

<sup>2</sup> Following the Americans' successful campaign in the Northwest in 1813, Governor Isaac Shelby asked Todd to serve as an aide-de-camp with the rank of colonel on the gubernatorial staff in Frankfort. Kentucky colonels no longer perform such protective services, and the title has become an honorific awarded for civil distinction and achievement, as well as the appellation for members of a charitable organization. Honorable Order of Kentucky Colonels, *Honorable Order of Kentucky Colonels 61st Annual Dinner* (n.p., 1964); "Since 1813," Honorable Order of Kentucky Colonels (<http://kycolonels.org/index.cgi?id=52>); Kentucky Colonels, Executive, Kentucky Secretary of State (<http://www.sos.ky.gov/executive/kentuckycolonels.htm>); John E. Kleber, ed., *Kentucky Encyclopedia* (Lexington, 1992), s.v. "Kentucky Colonels" (hereafter *Ky. Ency.*). The information accompanying current certificates of colonelcy describes Shelby's appointment of Todd. No documentation of this appointment has been found.



*Courtesy of the Library of Congress,  
Prints and Photographs Division*  
Charles S. Todd in full uniform at the time when  
he served as inspector general and aide-de-camp to  
General William Henry Harrison in the War of 1812.

Following the unwritten and unyielding code for the antebellum upper class, Charles was well educated. He was an 1809 graduate of William and Mary College, obtained his law license after postgraduate study in Connecticut, and then established practice in Lexington, Kentucky. When he was at college, his father, Kentucky's first U.S. Supreme Court justice, Thomas Todd, taught him that duty to one's state and country, including good performance in his studies, was his primary responsibility. The justice wrote, "I hope to hear that you . . . will be your country's boast." Charles quickly enrolled in the college's volunteer uniform company and was elected ensign. The young man not only had a responsibility to the nation, but

also an obligation to defend the new West as an intellectual equal to the established cities in the Northeast, and a duty to maintain both good academic performance and honorable conduct. The justice wrote: "Recollect the honor, the character & reputation of your Country for talent & Genius is in some measure resting on you—pride, ambition, nay duty, demands of you an education. Show the proud Virginian that a child of the forest in the wilds of Kentucky can vie with him in mental acquirements, that nature is as fond & endows, her sons of the West, as liberally, as those of the East."<sup>3</sup>

In 1811, when Charles's mother died, Justice Todd instructed his son to remain at law school in Litchfield, Connecticut, rather than return home for the funeral. His presence at home could "render no service" and could not change what had happened. Instead, Charles was told to continue his studies; it was his first "duty and privilege" to stay at school, pursue knowledge, and "achieve a place for himself and his family." Families in Kentucky and Tennessee were determined that their sons get the education necessary for them to advance. Managing a large Kentucky estate was a coveted vocation of the elite, but it was not the self-contained life of a plantation owner in the Deep South. Young men like Charles in the Border States, where agricultural holdings did not match the size and clout of plantations farther south, often pursued a law degree. Legal acumen thus allowed them to advance in politics or business independently, but rarely far removed from, the management of land and cattle operations.<sup>4</sup>

In 1812, Justice Todd wrote Charles, now a young attorney in Lexington discouraged at losing his first legal case, to keep trying; perseverance was the path to "respectability, eminence and fame. Your own reasoning and reflections will convince you

<sup>3</sup> Isaac Shelby's Frankfort store ledger, 1813, Shelby Family Papers, Box 5546, Filson Historical Society, Louisville, Kentucky (hereafter FHS); T. Todd to C. S. Todd, March 9, 1808, "Letters of Judge Thomas Todd, of Kentucky, to His Son at College," *William and Mary Quarterly*, ser. 1, 22 (1913): 21 (hereafter letter, date, *W&MQ*, page); "Charles S. Todd," *American Phenological Journal* 10 (1848): 45 (hereafter *APJ*); Watkins, "Patriarchal Politics," 125-26; T. Todd to C. S. Todd, September 25, 1808, *W&MQ*, 26.

<sup>4</sup> T. Todd to C. S. Todd, February 17, 1811, Book 2, Todd Collection, FHS; Glover, *Southern Sons*, 4-5.

of this truth and your pride and ambition will stimulate you to excel." Justice Todd wrote from the Supreme Court offices in Washington City that people were talking about war and he had "no doubt" that soon America would declare against the British.<sup>5</sup> However, Congress was still divided on the subject when President Madison reluctantly called for war. It was the unstoppable representative from Kentucky, Henry Clay, who obtained the necessary votes for war from the House on June 14.

Kentucky strongly supported the war. Here was an opportunity for Charles's generation to be worthy of their sires as well as a time to earn individual glory and even wealth. Charles closed the doors of his law practice and enlisted in Captain Stewart W. Megowan's company of Kentucky volunteers. On August 15, 1812, Todd joined the swarm of men who reported at Georgetown, Kentucky, with a horse, if they had one, and a rifle. Charles and most of the others mustered in for a two-month tour, thinking they would dispatch the British and be home long before Thanksgiving. They brought no winter clothes or supplies. Indeed, these patriotic Kentuckians refused to wear shirts and trousers of imported British cloth, creating their own militia uniforms from homespun flax or wool. As a result, their attire "varied widely in pattern, color, quality and texture." Only the hunting shirt "showed a uniformity that betokened Kentucky."<sup>6</sup> This militia thought it was going to fight as most Kentucky volunteers had since the earliest days of the frontier—without training or a troublesome logistical support network, lightly equipped and armed, and loosely disciplined—but brimming with war fever and patriotism for state and nation.

The next day, House Speaker Henry Clay was at the muster

<sup>5</sup> T. Todd to C. S. Todd, February 18, 1812, Book 2, Todd Collection, FHS.

<sup>6</sup> Megowan's company was part of Lt. Col. William Lewis's Fifth Regiment, which also included the companies of captains Nathaniel G. T. Hart, Hamilton, and Megowan from Fayette County and other companies from Jessamine, Montgomery, and Clark counties. They assembled in Lexington on August 14 to march to the general rendezvous at Georgetown the next day. Craig Thompson Friend, *Along the Maysville Road: The Early American Republic and the Trans-Appalachian West* (Knoxville, 2005), 186-90; G. Glenn Clift, *Remember the Raisins: Kentucky and Kentuckians in the Battle and Massacre at Frenchtown, Michigan Territory, in the War of 1812 . . .* (Frankfort, 1961), 202; *Report of the Adjutant General of the State of Kentucky: Soldiers of the War of 1812* (Frankfort, 1891; Baltimore, 1969), 108-110; Works Progress Administration, *Military History of Kentucky* (Frankfort, 1939), 80 (both quotes).



*KHS Collections*  
Henry Clay made a rousing speech in Georgetown, Kentucky, to Todd and other recruits on August 16, 1812, as they prepared to join the war against the British.

ground and made a rousing speech to Charles and the other recruits who believed they were leaving soon to reinforce General William Hull. The *Kentucky Gazette* estimated the crowd at twenty thousand. The streets were packed and people leaned out of windows and crowded into doorways to cheer. In his speech, Clay pointed out that the British had called the Americans "savages" and that this was the time to "avenge" themselves of the insult, "not only by a salutary vengeance," but by showing the British the character of Americans. This was a character of Christian virtues; "not only brave, but humane and merciful when circumstances permitted." Clay urged the young men to realize their responsibilities: "You have the double char-

acter of the Americans and Kentuckians to sustain." The honor of Kentucky was held in the hands of the recruits; reputations were at stake. On August 19, Charles and the other recruits marched away to the waving of flags and the hurrahs of the crowds. Years later, historian Benson J. Lossing employed high rhetoric to describe the emotions that inflamed old pioneers as well as young, would-be warriors:

The total of society bordering upon the Ohio River heaved, like a storm-smitten ocean in its wrath, with patriotic emotions. . . . Christian civilization, national pride, and an enlightened patriotism . . . pleaded vindication . . . [and] every class and condition of life—farmers, merchants, lawyers, physicians and young men innumerable—flocked to the recruiting stations. Tenfold more men than were needed might have been mustered in Kentucky alone.<sup>8</sup>

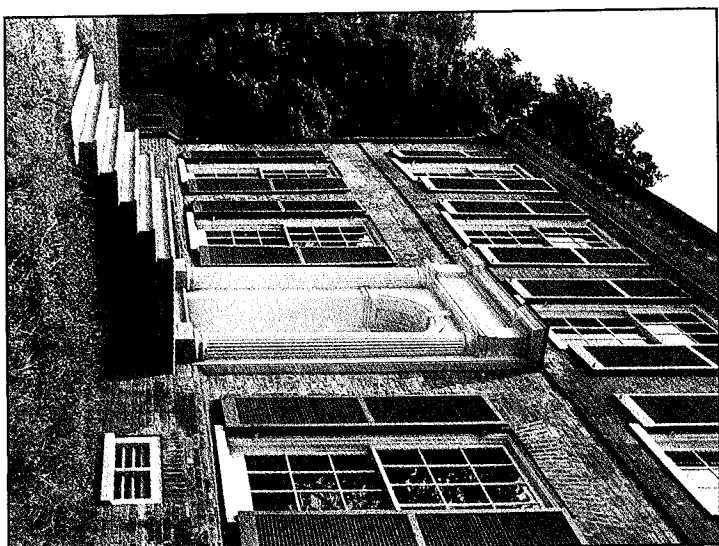
On August 25, the last day of his term, Governor Charles Scott called together the cream of Kentucky's statesmen, all members of the landed gentry, in Frankfort. This group included Justice Todd, and his cousin, federal court judge Harry Innes, governor-elect Isaac Shelby, former governor Christopher Greennup, state senator Samuel Hopkins and congressmen Henry Clay and Richard M. Johnson. Also present at the meeting was William Henry Harrison, beloved in the West for his 1811 victory over the Indians at Tippecanoe and himself a member of Indiana Territory's landed gentry. The conferees agreed that Harrison must lead the Northwest Army. To effect this, there would have to be some political quick stepping, but these experienced men were equal to the task.<sup>9</sup>

<sup>7</sup> Speech to Troops at Georgetown, Kentucky, August 16, 1812, in James P. Hopkins and Mary W. M. Hargreaves, eds., *The Papers of Henry Clay*, vol. 1: *The Rising Statesman, 1797-1814* (Lexington, 1959), 715; *Kentucky Gazette*, August 18, 1812.

<sup>8</sup> Lossing, *The Pictorial Field Book of the War of 1812* (New York, 1868), 321-22.

<sup>9</sup> This impromptu conference of leaders, all in Frankfort for the inauguration of Isaac Shelby's second term as governor the next day, represented a remarkable assemblage of military experience and political skill. Outgoing governor Charles Scott (1739-1813), a brigadier general in the Revolutionary War, was respected for his military judgment. Thomas Todd (1765-1826) had served as Kentucky's chief justice as well as a justice on the U.S. Supreme Court. Harry Innes (1752-1816), first federal district judge in Kentucky, was widely influential in the commonwealth's politics.

Before and after Kentucky attained statehood, well-educated, wealthy landowners had made laws and then interpreted them so that both the pioneers and landowners were well served. Historian Stephen Aron credits the "gentry stewards of republican Kentucky" for "smothering fires before they blazed out of control." Membership in the ruling elite was open "to men of exceptional talent and rising fortunes" and the constitutionally sanctioned power of adult white male voters and jurors "alleviated the sources of [enough] frustrations . . . to save the system." This benevolent authority avoided internal strife and allowed the orderly growth of the state.<sup>10</sup> These leaders knew



KHS Collections

During a meeting held at the end of August 1812, in what is now the Old Governor's Mansion, an impressive array of Kentucky's elite appointed William Henry Harrison major general in the state's militia.

that the Kentucky militia would respect Harrison, and they worked the law accordingly. As historian C. Edward Skeen phrased it, despite the facts that "Harrison was not a citizen of the state, that only one major general was authorized to lead the Northwest Army, and that the position was already filled," they brevetted the Hoosier as a major general in the Kentucky militia.<sup>11</sup> Charles's father wrote him concerning this meeting:

<sup>11</sup> Skeen, *Citizen Soldiers in the War of 1812* (Lexington, 1999), 83. Harrison's command eventually included not only the Kentucky volunteers, but also the militias from Indiana and Illinois, plus several regiments of U.S. Army regulars, in effect virtually the entire western theatre.

Governor-elect Isaac Shelby (1750-1826) had achieved national fame as one of the heroes of the battle of King's Mountain (1781); he now lobbied to have William Henry Harrison made commander of the western theatre. Christopher Greenup (1750-1818) had served terms in the U.S. Congress, the state legislature, state courts, and was elected unopposed to the governorship (1804-8). Samuel Hopkins (1752-1819) had served as a state representative, presidential elector, state senator, and U.S. congressman. Henry Clay (1777-1852), then Speaker of the U.S. House of Representatives, had, as a leader of the "war hawk" faction in the House, strongly agitated for war with Great Britain. Richard Mentor Johnson (1781-1850), a former state representative, was then a U.S. congressman and had voted for war with the British. Later credited with killing the Indian leader Tecumseh in battle, Johnson would be elected U.S. vice-president in 1837, partly on his reputation gained in the War of 1812. SCOTT: Lowell H. Harrison, ed., *Kentucky's Governors: Updated Edition* (1985; Lexington, 2004), 16-20 (hereafter KC); Ky. Ency., 803-4; *American National Biography*, 19: 484-85 (hereafter ANB, vol., page); Harry M. Ward, "Charles Scott and the Spirit of '76" (Charlottesville, Va., 1988); TODD: Ky. Ency., 888; ANB, 21: 721-22; Edward C. O'Rear, "Justice Thomas Todd," *Register of the Kentucky Historical Society* 38 (1940): 112-19 (hereafter *Register*); INNIS: Harry Inniss Papers, Filson Historical Society, Louisville; Ky. Ency., 452-53; Mary K. Bonstedt Tachau, *Federal Courts in the New Republic: Kentucky, 1789-1816* (Princeton, 1978); SHELBY: KC, 1-6; Ky. Ency., 815-16; ANB, 19: 777-78; Sylvia Wrobel and George Grider, *Isaac Shelby: First Governor of Kentucky and Hero of Three Wars* (Danville, 1974); Paul W. Bestley, "The Life and Times of Isaac Shelby" (PhD. diss., University of Kentucky, 1969); GREENUP: KC, 12-15; Ky. Ency., 388-89; ANB, 9: 550-51; Orlando Brown, "The Governors of Kentucky (1792-1825)," *Register* 49 (1951): 102-6; HOPKINS: Ky. Ency., 439; ANB, 11: 186-87; H. Levin, *The Lawyers and Lawmakers of Kentucky* (Chicago, 1897), 353-54; James W. Hammack, *Kentucky and the Second American Revolution: The War of 1812* (Lexington, 1976), 19; CLAY: Robert V. Remini, *Henry Clay: Statesman for the Union* (New York, 1991); Clement Eaton, *Henry Clay and the Art of American Politics* (Boston, 1957); Glyndon Van Deusen, *The Life of Henry Clay* (Boston, 1937); JOHNSON: Leland W. Meyer, *The Life and Times of Colonel Richard M. Johnson* (New York, 1932); Ky. Ency., 475; ANB, 12: 118-20; HARRISON: Robert M. Owen, Mr. Jefferson's Hammer: William Henry Harrison and the Origins of American Indian Policy (Norman, Okla., 2007); ANB, 10: 223-36; Norma Lois Peterson, *The Presidencies of William Henry Harrison and John Tyler* (Lawrence, Kans., 1989); Freeman Cleaves, *Old Tippecanoe: William Henry Harrison and His Times* (1939; Newtown, Conn., 2000).

<sup>10</sup> Bertram Wyatt-Brown, *Southern Honor: Ethics and Behavior in the Old South* (New York, 1982), 114; Stephen Aron, *How the West Was Lost: The Transformation of Kentucky from Daniel Boone to Henry Clay* (Baltimore, 1996), 101.

A caucus was held at the government House [probably the governor's residence] and it was unanimously determined that the Governor should appoint Harrison a Major General, which has been done. . . . Harrison's presence will give confidence to the army . . . he will lead them on to victory and conquest. I mentioned you to Harrison and requested him to take a fatherly care of you—he desired me to write to you to apply to him should you stand in need of anything and that he would provide for you—Your Uncle Innes also mentioned you to him in high terms, through WSH [Wm. S. Hunter] you can procure an introduction and access to the General. I have no doubt he will confirm any appointment you now hold or give you any that offers, consistent with propriety—rest confident that your conduct will be such (in every situation in which the fortunes of War may place you) as will reflect honor on yourself and afford pleasure and satisfaction to your friends.<sup>12</sup>

Charles, by his graduation from college with an approved thesis and a postgraduate law license, was qualified for membership in the elite. By virtue of his father, he immediately gained entrance to Kentucky's highest political and social networks, the systems that kept the elect in leadership positions and maintained the antebellum power structure.<sup>13</sup> As the caucus predicted, the Kentucky public was delighted with the appointment of Harrison as general of the Kentucky militia. The *Kentucky Gazette's* headline for September 8 cheered, "Hurra for the Hero of Tippecanoe." Twenty-eight years later, Charles wrote, "the people of the west looked up to [Harrison] as the soldier who was to protect their homes and repel invasion."<sup>14</sup> Kentuckians saw Harrison as a father figure, or in antebellum terms, the legitimate protector of family and country.

<sup>12</sup> T. Todd to C. S. Todd, August 28, 1812, Book 1, Folder 2, Todd Collection, FHS. For this important meeting and the negotiations between Kentucky and Washington that resulted in Harrison's command of the Kentucky volunteers, see Henry Clay to Secretary of State James Monroe, August 25, 1812, *The Rising Statesman*, 719-21, 721n3, 726-28; Cleaves, *Old Tippecanoe*, 116; Hammack, *Kentucky & the Second American Revolution*, 33-39; Clift, *Remember the Raisin*, 23.

<sup>13</sup> Wyatt-Brown, *Southern Honor*, 6.

<sup>14</sup> Charles S. Todd, *Sketches of the Civil and Military Services of William Henry Harrison* (Cincinnati, 1840), 40.

Justice Todd wrote to inform President Madison, his old friend and new family connection, how the caucus's decision was received: "Harrison is now with the army making active preparations to retrieve our losses . . . the officers and soldiers in high spirits." After appointing Harrison head of the Kentucky militia, Shelby, Todd, and Clay then successfully applied pressure to President James Madison to appoint Harrison general of the Northwest Army. With Shelby as governor, and Harrison already leader of the Kentucky militia, Kentucky's recruiting goal for militia volunteers was easily met. Two thousand men went from Kentucky to the northwest in June, and five thousand followed them during the first months of Shelby's term. Moreover, six of Kentucky's congressmen even left Washington to join the march to war.<sup>15</sup>

As a cold autumn approached, Charles S. Todd slogged through deep mud with the troops along the edge of Ohio's Black Swamp toward Fort Defiance near Lake Erie. October brought plummeting temperatures, incessant rain, and, for Todd, the legal end of his commitment to the militia. His fellow recruits were freezing in linen shirts and homespun pants; they had thought the war would be won before frost. However, those volunteers like Charles, who had signed on for only two months, could now begin the long walk home. Others simply walked away, deserters. This same October, Charles was transferred to the quartermaster general's department and gained the title of acting quartermaster of the Left Wing of the Northwest Army.<sup>16</sup>

In November, Harrison moved his headquarters to Franklin (near Columbus), taking his new quartermaster with him.

<sup>15</sup> Justice Todd married President Madison's sister-in-law, Lucy Payne, on March 31, 1812. His wife, Elizabeth Harris, had died on February 1, 1811, after years of illness. Hammack, *Kentucky & the Second American Revolution*, 35; Wrobel, *Isaac Shelby: Kentucky's First Governor*, 110-11; Loring, *War of 1812*, 320; Bennett H. Young, *Battle of the Thames* (Louisville, 1903), 15; John Simpson and William P. Duwall became captains; Sam McKee and Thomas Montgomery, privates; Samuel Hopkins, major general of the Kentucky militia, and Colonel R. M. Johnson led his mounted volunteers. Hammack, *Kentucky & the Second American Revolution*, 19.

<sup>16</sup> C. S. Todd was enrolled as an ensign from August 14, 1812, to October 4, 1812. He was transferred to the quartermaster general's department in October 1812. Clift, *Remember the Raisin*, 202.

Charles left the horror of the swamp that the Kentuckians serving under General James Winchester continued to endure. Justice Todd wrote that two of the horses Charles had taken to war had been safely returned to Lexington: "the black entirely worn down; Prince in good condition tho' a little lame when he returned. If you want a fresh horse write me and I will endeavor to send one on to you."<sup>17</sup>

With his commitment to the militia completed, Charles's next step was to decide whether to join the regular army, which would provide opportunity for military advancement, remain in the militia, or return home and reopen his law practice. Justice Todd stood ready to provide introductions and pave the way for army advancement, if that was his son's decision.<sup>18</sup>

I presume my dear Charles that ere this you have made a sufficient experiment in campaigning that you have experienced something of the hardships of famine if not of battle, so that you can decide whether you prefer a military career to the dull pursuit of civil life. If you intend continuing in the army, you had better procure certificates from officers of high grade as to your qualifications and deportment since you have been with the army and forward them to me and state the appointment you wish. I will then take the proper measure to procure it. [Because General Harrison and Colonel John Morrison had agreed to help Charles,] there are certain circumstances as to these gentlemen which I will at some other time communicate to you that makes me very confident they will accord you every service which gratitude or friendship can dictate.<sup>19</sup>

On December 3, Charles was promoted to judge advocate and began acting as aide to General Harrison.<sup>20</sup> Harrison had

<sup>17</sup> T. Todd to C. S. Todd November 8, 1812, Book 1, Folder 2, Todd Collection, FHS.

<sup>18</sup> Southern sons were encouraged to make decisions after hearing their fathers' opinions. This was to prepare them for leadership and decision making on the plantation. Charles's father employed guilt, direction, and support, but always allowed Charles to make his own choice. Clover, *Southern Sons*, 158-60.

<sup>19</sup> T. Todd to C. S. Todd, November 8, 1812, Book 1, Folder 2, Todd Collection, FHS.

<sup>20</sup> Colonel Morrison was "a revolutionary officer and quartermaster general" in the war. He wrote a letter defending the military strategies of General Harrison. Todd, *Sketches*, 64; William H. Harrison to Secretary of War William Eustis, Dec. 3, 1812, in Logan Esarey, ed., *Messages and Letters of William Henry Harrison*, 2 vols. (Indianapolis, 1922), 2: 246.

indeed taken him under his wing just as the justice had promised.

In mid-December Harrison moved his headquarters to Lower Sandusky (now Fremont, Ohio). Here Harrison ordered Charles to deliver an important strategic order to General Winchester at Fort Defiance. It was to be delivered orally, so that the order would remain secure even if Charles were captured or killed. Charles was to tell Winchester to accumulate twenty days of provisions and prepare to move toward the rapids. There he was to build sleds for the trip to Fort Malden and at the same time build huts to convince the enemy that the army was staying at the rapids for the winter. When the ice on the Detroit River was strong enough, Winchester must proceed to Malden. Charles rode out in the ice and snow, "accompanied by two gentlemen of the Michigan Territory and three Wyandot Indians. The six traveled a hundred miles through the great swampland from headquarters at Lower Sandusky to Winchester's camp. His biographer recorded that Todd "performed the hazardous journey with a secrecy and dispatch highly creditable to his enterprise."<sup>21</sup> Military service was establishing a reputation for Charles, one that the Lexington law practice could not offer.

Winchester ultimately chose not to obey the verbal order delivered by Charles. He sent an aide to inform Harrison that he had left Fort Defiance and was moving toward the rapids. On January 10, Winchester and his troops were camped at the rapids when representatives from Frenchtown, a town on the River Raisin, came to beg for protection from the British and Indians. Winchester agreed to help the people. The regiment's leader, Colonel William Lewis, rallied the men with Clay's words at Georgetown: "You have the double character of Americans and Kentuckians to sustain." The excited militiamen shouted their approval and rushed out of the camp to save Frenchtown. One

<sup>21</sup> G. W. Griffin, *Memoir of Colonel Charles S. Todd* (Philadelphia, 1873), 22. *APJ*, 46; Robert B. McAtee, *History of the Late War in the Western Country* (1816; Columbus, Ohio, 1919), 219. McAtee became lieutenant governor of Kentucky in 1820. He wrote that Charles S. Todd had access to the journal of Colonel Wood of the engineers, and he was indebted to both Colonel Todd and Colonel Croghan for this source. He noted, "Many of these papers will remain in the possession of Colonel C. S. Todd."

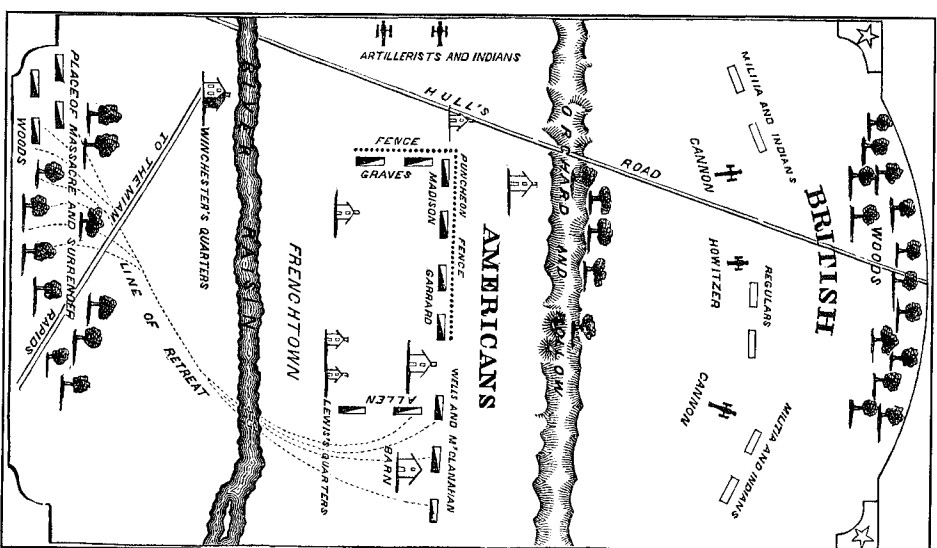


recruit recorded in his journal that an old Indian sitting in a nearby house, on hearing the commotion, commented, "Ho, de 'Merican come' and came to his door to watch the men. But when the men rushed forward with their battle shouts, the man yelled, "Kentuck, by God," and picked up his gun and ran."<sup>22</sup> In this anecdote, Kentucky becomes an entity, almost its own nationality. This sense of Kentucky's identity was also a notion the militia and Charles had implicitly endorsed, as signified by their voluntary presence in a war underscoring that concept. The conflict was offering their twenty-year-old state a stage on which to demonstrate its patriotism and worth to the nation.

On January 18, 1813, in several hours, the Americans won victory; afterwards, the troops ate Frenchtown food, slept soundly, and let down their guard. Four days later, on January 22, while the troops were still resting, the British from Fort Malden attacked and soundly defeated the Americans. On the night of the surrender, January 22-23, the Indians left to guard about eighty American wounded, who were awaiting transports from Frenchtown to Malden, found a store of liquor and during a drunken victory celebration, massacred forty to sixty-five Americans and burned the houses where they were sheltered. It is unclear whether Charles was at headquarters in Lower Sandusky or with Harrison at the camp at Upper Sandusky, but he definitely was involved in the aftermath. Three weeks after the massacre, Charles was at the "camp at the foot of the Rapids." In his position as judge advocate, Charles recorded a report from an eyewitness, Medaroe Labbadie, who stated that after the Americans had surrendered at Frenchtown, the Canadian militia had promised the Indians "a frolick" with whiskey for all. Soon the drunken Indians "commenced killing the Wounded then set fire to the Houses the Wounded were in and consumed them."<sup>23</sup> From this atrocity came the Kentucky war cry that

<sup>22</sup> McAfee, *Late War*, 200; "A Journal of Kentucky Volunteers Commanded by General Winchester in 1812-1813-1814," quoted in WPA, *Military History of Kentucky*, 95.

<sup>23</sup> C. S. Todd to [Return J.] Meigs [Jr.], February 11, 1813, in Richard C. Knopf, ed., *Return Jonathan Meigs, Jr. and the War of 1812*, vol. 2, *Document Transcriptions of the War of 1812 in the Northwest*, (Columbus, Ohio, 1957) (online at [www.ohiohistory.org/online/doc/war1812/meigs/0075.cfm](http://www.ohiohistory.org/online/doc/war1812/meigs/0075.cfm)). Labbadie said in his affidavit that he saw "about 60 or 80" wounded Americans killed. For scholarly accounts of the battles and massacre, see Clift, *Remember the Raisin*; Hammack, *Kentucky & the Second American*



Lossing, *Pictorial Field-book of the War of 1812* (1869)  
Movements at Frenchtown.

would in coming months fuel recruiting, campaigns, revenge, and victory: "Remember the Raisin!"

Before the winter ice brought Harrison's campaign to a bitter halt, Charles's father wrote on Christmas Day, 1812, "You state an intention of applying for the Office of Regular Aid to the General." General's aides are taken from "the line of regulars and to secure that appointment, a commission in the line is necessary," and his father reminded him that he would

help. Then he added that Charles's law practice in Lexington was as he left it or worse. His partner, Mr. Crockett, was not going to retire as he had said, and Charles could not expect an automatic promotion in the office. His father also wrote of the rewards of service to the country: "Anticipating the revolutions which are to convert a howling wilderness into a delightfully cultivated country[.] . . . [h]e who shall act a conspicuous and noble part in bringing them about is rendering the abode and haunt of the savage barbarian, the seat of security where the blessings of liberty, ease and every luxury can be enjoyed . . . will perhaps enjoy the retrospect with still more pleasure."<sup>24</sup> As Charles read the letter, he likely realized that the closer he worked with General Harrison and other officers, the closer the excitement and glory of the war would be; he determined to follow a path that would bring him reward and honor.

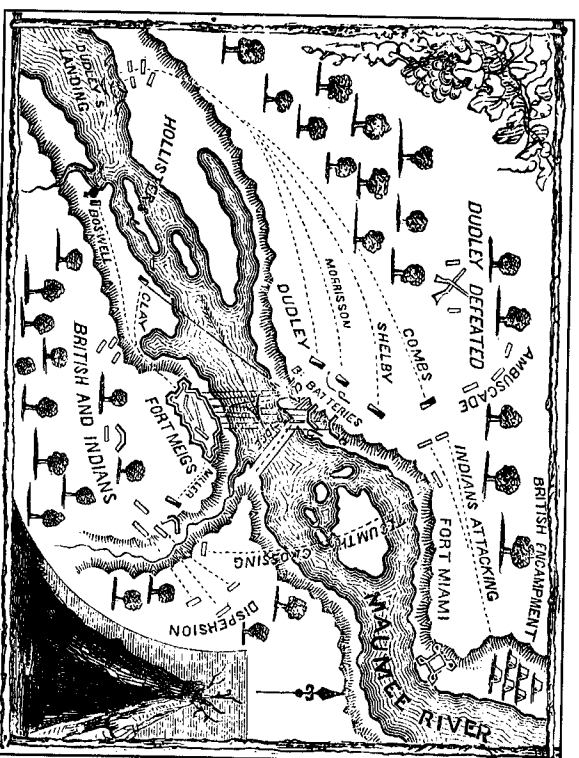
Governor Shelby demanded victories in the spring. On April 30, 1813, the British and Indians attacked Fort Meigs. Harrison met the troops there and reminded them that they fought for freedom and their country:

Can the citizens of a free country . . . think of submitting to an army composed of mercenary soldiers, reluctant Canadians goaded to the field by the bayonet, and of wretched, naked savages? Can the . . . American soldier, be influenced by any other feelings than the hope of glory? . . . to your posts then, fellow-citizens, and remember that the eyes of your country are upon you.<sup>25</sup>

Instead of victory for the Americans, the battle at Fort Meigs was a ghastly massacre. Militia emotions and mismanagement ruled, and the British and Indians overcame the Americans. Shelby aimed his fury at Harrison. He wrote Henry Clay, "A more careless inconsiderate waste of human blood cannot be found upon the annals of North America," and did not excuse Harrison's behavior. Shelby believed Harrison had simply

<sup>24</sup> T. Todd to C. S. Todd, December 25, 1812, Book 1, Folder 2, Todd Collection, FHS. Justice Todd wrote that Mr. C. was not going to marry "Miss H." and retire because "Miss H" had "gifted" Mr. C.

<sup>25</sup> Todd, *Sketches*, 73.



Siege at Fort Meigs.   
 *Lossing, Pictorial Field-book of the War of 1812* (1869)

"shouted orders across half mile river to recall the men. [No] rational man believes . . . that any calls . . . could be heard." For his part, Harrison was angry with the militia: "It rarely occurs that a general has to complain of the excessive ardor of his men—yet such appears always to be the case when the Kentucky militia are engaged. . . . They appear to think that valor can alone accomplish any thing."<sup>26</sup>

In early June 1813, Charles received a letter from his father, which likely referred to comments Charles had written to him regarding Harrison's behavior at Fort Meigs. The justice stated: "If your information as to the conduct of General Harrison is correct, I shall suspect him of either wanting candor and sincerity or going with the current. Should the Senate not approve of the appointments, I advise you to relinquish all idea

<sup>26</sup> Isaac Shelby to Henry Clay, May 16, 1813, Shelby Family Papers, 67M213, King Library, University of Kentucky (first quote); Skeen, *Citizen Soldiers in the War of 1812*, 89; McAfee, *Late War*, 275 (second quote). See also Larry L. Nelson, "Dudley's Defeat and the Relief of Fort Meigs in the War of 1812," *Register* 104 (2006): 5-42, esp. 39-40, on Harrison's and Shelby's post-battle recriminations.

of military tactics and resume the dull pursuits of civil life." General Harrison had recommended to Secretary of War James Monroe that Ensign Charles S. Todd be promoted as a reward for his bravery in the war. He wrote that Charles "combine[d] the ardor of youth with the maturity of age." So Justice Todd's fears were not realized, and Charles received the rank of captain in the U.S. Army in May 1813. Now Charles's course was clear. In the egalitarian climate of the new nation, the men of the militia would become the new middle class, the self-made men of Young America.<sup>27</sup> But Charles knew the militia could not offer what he wanted; for elite status in society, he needed to assiduously build a war record as part of the regular army.

A few months later, in early August 1813, a clear example occurred of how military careers and social class interacted, when one of Charles's friends from childhood and college, General George Croghan of the regular army, saved Fort Stephenson in a successful, and therefore wildly popular, action. Croghan's disregard of Harrison's earlier order to abandon the fort embarrassed "Old Tippecanoe." And Kentucky militiamen like diarist William B. Northcutt recorded Croghan's defiance of both the enemy and Harrison with words of approval.<sup>28</sup> Croghan's membership in the social and military elite, plus public opinion, must have helped him gain pardon when he conferred with Harrison concerning the Fort Stephenson action, for Croghan escaped censure. Even in wartime, members of the landed gentry like Harrison worked with their peers—including disobedient subordinates such as Croghan—to bend the rules for the good of both their class and the common people.<sup>29</sup>

<sup>27</sup> T. Todd to C. S. Todd, June 8, 1813, Book 1, Folder 2, Todd Collection, FHS; Milo Quaife, "Governor Shelby's Army in the River Thames Campaign," *Filson Club History Quarterly* 10 (1936): 135-65, esp. 146; Lossing, *War of 1812*, 547-48, 548n3; Friend, *Along the Maysville Road*, 190.

<sup>28</sup> Glenn Clift, ed., "War of 1812 Diary of William B. Northcutt," *Register*, 56 (1958): 165-67. Harrison ordered Croghan to explain his action. He did so and was given permission to proceed. Harry L. Coles, *The War of 1812* (Chicago, 1965), 121. Troubled by "intemperance" in later life, Croghan was defended by Andrew Jackson who stated that the victory at Fort Stephenson entitled the man "to be drunk for the rest of his life." Hammack, *Kentucky & the Second American Revolution*, 78.

<sup>29</sup> Both Charles and John Croghan received A.B. degrees from William and Mary in 1809. George Croghan, John's brother, received his degree in 1810. Only five members of the twenty-nine member class of 1809 received degrees. *Provisional List of Alumni*

Americans wanted the war in the Northwest theatre to be won. The next battle with British general Henry Proctor would be defining, and to win, Harrison knew he needed an infusion of troops and patriotism. He wrote Governor Shelby:

To make this last effort, why not, my dear sir, come in person.... I have such confidence in your wisdom that you in fact should "be the guiding Head and I the hand.... Sipio, the conqueror of Carthage, did not disdain to act as a Lieutenant of his younger and less experienced brother Lucius."<sup>30</sup>

Energized, Shelby printed handbills posting a call for more volunteers than Harrison requested. He promised the recruits, "I will meet you there in person. I will lead you to the field of battle and share with you the dangers and honors of the campaign." As historian Craig Thompson Friend observed, for Shelby and the militia volunteers there was "much more than a war going on." The honor of each man and the independence of Kentucky would be tested.<sup>31</sup>

In August, one year after his son had joined the militia, Justice Todd wrote to him of Shelby's handbill, stating that if it were successful, the turnout would be enormous. Shelby expected over three thousand to report. On just thirty days notice thirty-five hundred men, two thousand more than Harrison requested, came to the Newport, Kentucky, rendezvous, most mounted and with rifles. Charles, in his position as judge advocate, commanded the "recruiting rendezvous" for the Seventeenth Regiment.<sup>32</sup>

Justice Todd wrote to his son at the Newport rendezvous: "The delay at the war department I fear augurs ill as to the staff

*Commonwealth School Students, Members of the Faculty, and Members of the Board of Visitors of the College of William and Mary in Virginia from 1693 to 1888*, Special Collections, Earl Gregg Swem Library, College of William and Mary; T. Todd to C. S. Todd, June 4, 1808, Todd Collection, FHS.

<sup>30</sup> William Henry Harrison to Isaac Shelby, July 20, 1813, quoted in Wrobel, *Isaac Shelby: Kentucky's First Governor*, 116.

<sup>31</sup> Friend, *Along the Maysville Road*, 158.

<sup>32</sup> T. Todd to C. S. Todd, August 1, 1813, Book 1, Folder 2, Todd Collection, FHS; Isaac Shelby to Thomas Hart Shelby, August 6, 1813, Shelby Family Papers, King Library. The rifle became very closely associated with Kentuckians, and after the War of 1812 was called the "Kentucky rifle." WPA, *Military History of Kentucky*, 101; AP, 46; Ky. Ency., 509.

appointment and the fastidiousness of the Senate produces some doubts as to your appointment in the line. Was it to rest on reason alone, I should not care a quid about it, but feelings will in some degree obtrude. However these things may terminate, you still have the resource of applying to your professions." The justice concluded: "The responsibility of your present situation is great. . . . Let nothing be wanting that attention and industry can perform and let no money pass through your hands without proper authority and receiving vouchers which will be passed to your credit."<sup>33</sup> It was important to justice Todd that Charles, young, full of war excitement and his advancements in rank, pay attention to his responsibilities. There should be no scandal or cause for dishonor in his behavior.

At Newport, the young adjutant was likely selling his excellent Kentucky horses to the militia and making a profit. His father wrote that he had sent Osage to him at \$150; Trafalgar, \$70; and Flash, \$80. If Charles did not want Osage, he should send him back as soon as possible, so the justice could get him in shape to sell in Kentucky. He realized that Charles made a profit on Flash. As adjutant, it was Charles's responsibility to establish a value for each horse. When a horse was lost in battle (except for the reason of neglect), the army reimbursed the owner. Private William B. Northcutt wrote in his diary that at Newport the men's horses were "valued into the service . . . by two Kentuckians at pretty high figures."<sup>34</sup>

Todd was reassigned to the Twenty-eighth Infantry attached to the brigade under General Lewis Cass at the rendezvous, and despite his father's worries, became acting aide-de-camp to Harrison.<sup>35</sup> Therefore, he left the rendezvous with Shelby's troops on August 31 and began his second march through Ohio and Michigan to Lake Erie to meet Harrison at the Lower Sandusky headquarters.

When he arrived at Harrison's headquarters, he was ordered to locate Commodore Oliver Hazard Perry at Lake Erie, to dis-

cover if his fleet had been victorious over the British navy, and to return to Harrison's camp with the news. Earlier, Harrison had sent Perry 130 men from his infantry regiments, including some Kentucky militiamen, for the naval battle.<sup>36</sup>

On September 9, the Americans engaged the British fleet in Lake Erie with cannon and musket until Perry's ship, the *Lawrence*, was a floating wreck: sails shattered by grape and ball, masts broken and hull blasted, every one of her twenty guns disabled, decks slimy with the blood of a mangled crew. When the British struck their flags, 80 percent of the *Lawrence* crew was dead or wounded.<sup>37</sup> Among the skilled riflemen—none of them sailors—Perry ordered up the masts of his second brig, *Niagara*, were a number of Kentucky militiamen, who soon proved themselves deadly. The Americans had fought against all odds for their families and their country and in that short battle, Perry became a hero.

Todd and the deputy inspector general, Major L. Hukell, sailed out in an open boat into Lake Erie to find the commodore. They met him and his command as he was bringing his prisoners to the mouth of Portage River. Likely, he and the major rejoiced with shouts and handshakes as they congratulated Perry. Then, they escorted him to Harrison's tent and celebrated the victory. Many years later, Charles's account of the tent fete clearly shows that he considered the little gathering a high point in his life.<sup>38</sup>

On September 19, Charles received his formal appointment as aide to Harrison. A week later he was with the general, Colo-

<sup>36</sup> Perry, age twenty-seven, and his thirteen-year-old brother Alexander had been ordered to build a squadron of nine ships for the American navy on Lake Erie. His commander, Isaac Chauncey, planned to command the fleet after Perry had overseen the construction. Many of the riflemen sent to Perry came from regular regiments: "From Fort Meigs, Fort Stephenson and Camp Seneca they volunteered: men from the 17<sup>th</sup> U.S., 19<sup>th</sup> U.S., 24<sup>th</sup> U.S., 26<sup>th</sup> U.S., 27<sup>th</sup> U.S., and 28<sup>th</sup> U.S. Infantry Regiments." C. S. Forester, *The Age of Fighting Sail: The Story of the Naval War of 1812* (Boston, 1956), 180.

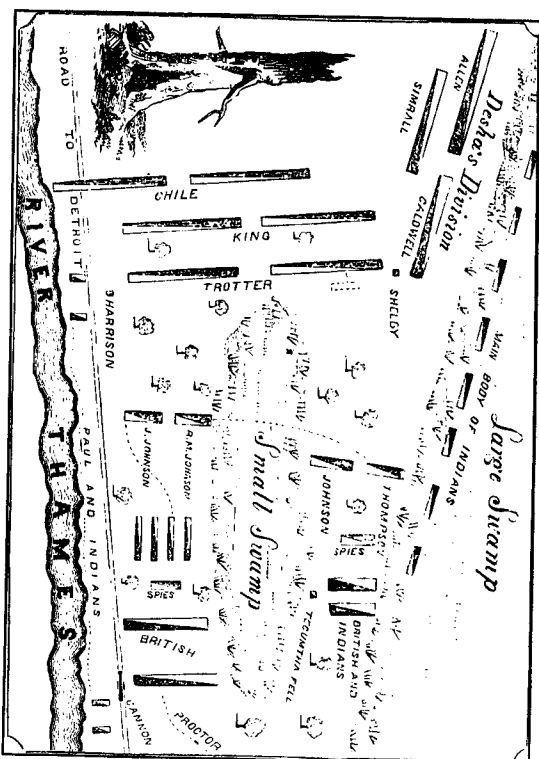
<sup>37</sup> Young, *Battle of the Thames*, 50. The exact number of Kentuckians in the battle is not now known; the records are incomplete. For a current accounting, see John M. Trowbridge, "To Meet the Enemy on Any Element: The Kentucky Militia in the Battle of Lake Erie," *Kentucky Ancestors* 42 (2006): 2-13.

<sup>38</sup> *APJ*, 46; Charles S. Todd, "Memoir of Governor Shelby" quoted in Griffin, *Memoir of C. S. Todd*, 171.

<sup>33</sup> T. Todd to Capt. C. S. Todd, August 1, 1813, Book 1, Folder 2, Todd Collection, FHS.

<sup>34</sup> T. Todd to C. S. Todd, August 1, 1813, Book 1, Folder 2, Todd Collection, FHS; Glenn Clift, ed., "Diary of William B. Northcutt," *Register* (1958): 168.

<sup>35</sup> *APJ*, 46.



Battle of the Thames.

Lossing, *Pictorial Field-book of the War of 1812* (1869)

nel R. M. Johnson, and Governor Shelby and their thirty-five hundred men in Amhurstburg. After his role as judge advocate, Charles had gained General Harrison's favor, and now he found himself in the center of the strategic planning of the battle. The Kentuckians knew that their final test was taking form.<sup>39</sup>

Harrison welcomed Johnson's regiment of one thousand mounted volunteers to Detroit. Charles and Commodore Perry, now acting as an aide to Harrison, directed the transport of the forty-five hundred infantrymen in Perry's ships to Fort Malden on the Canadian shore. There they saw the British had burned everything: docks, storehouses, and blockhouses. The horses were gone. The British had moved north. Harrison then sent Charles with orders to Johnson that his men and their one thousand horses must cross the river; the pursuit of the British would begin immediately.<sup>40</sup>

Scouts soon discovered that the British troops had chosen

<sup>39</sup> The order was addressed to the headquarters camp at Portage River and signed by Colonel E. P. Cairns, adjutant general. Quate, "Shelby's Army," 146.

<sup>40</sup> Perry had decided to leave his ships with his officers and serve for a time with Harrison. Lossing, *War of 1812*, 13-14.

a battleground with their infantry set in two double lines in "open" formation among trees between the Thames River and a tangle of swamp and woods. Charles delivered this news to Harrison and then took Harrison's new orders to Governor Shelby, who commanded the infantry reserve on the American left. He was to hold until Harrison could determine where help was needed. Then Charles with Lewis Cass, O. H. Perry, and John O'Fallon "assisted" in forming the infantry (mostly Kentucky militia). Charles stayed with Shelby and participated in the battle there.<sup>41</sup> As Colonel Richard M. Johnson and one battalion of his mounted volunteers led the advance of the infantry into the swamp, Shelby's troops moved forward in support. The old governor wore his familiar hunting jacket, a proud settler of Kentucky always; he would not wear an army uniform.

Colonel Johnson's horsemen crashed through the low underbrush and routed the British troops deployed, like their comrades near the river, throughout the trees. Hit by heavy rifle fire from Indians hidden in the impenetrable, wooded bog on their left, Colonel Johnson and the "Forlorn Hope," a twenty-man suicide squad, purposefully drew fire that disclosed enemy positions. Fifteen of the stalking squad died, and four were wounded. Johnson received two wounds. But the Indian strong points were revealed. Johnson's battalion, now dismounted in woods too thick for horses, rushed the Indian positions, and, soon joined by reserve militiamen, continued fighting Indians at close quarters, both sides often wielding tomahawks and knives. In the melee, Johnson was wounded three more times and in one-to-one combat killed an Indian chief then assumed to be Tecumseh.

Suddenly, the Indians vanished into the woods beyond the swamp. Tecumseh, it was soon rumored across the battlefield, had indeed been killed. Moreover, the headlong charge of Lieutenant Colonel James Johnson, Richard's brother, and the other battalion of mounted Kentucky volunteers raised and trained by the sibling commanders, had meanwhile killed or scattered all British infantry on the Americans' right. When the

<sup>41</sup> "McAfee Papers—Book and Journal of Robt. B. McAfee's Mounted Company in Col. Richard M. Johnson's Regiment," *Register* 26 (1928):127, *APJ*, 46.

remnants of the British command realized that the Indians had disappeared and that the Kentucky horsemen had destroyed the British infantry on the field, General Procter and his men made a panicky retreat. Charles, with Major Eleazer D. Wood of the Engineers, aide John Chambers, and three unnamed privates, pursued Procter and captured his sword, papers, and carriage.<sup>42</sup> At one point, Todd had a rifle leveled at him by one of the captured but still mounted and armed British officers, but Major Wood struck down the officer with his sword.<sup>43</sup> Horses carrying Indians and frantic British thundered through the country, with the Americans in hot pursuit. Procter finally escaped, but Charles and his fellows took sixty-three prisoners.

The Kentucky militia received great praise from the public for their heroics in this battle that lasted less than an hour. Almost three decades later Todd summed up the battle of the Thames in the Cincinnati *Republician*: "An entire British army [was] captured and two thousand Indians defeated, with an immense loss of life, by less than fifteen hundred Americans, whose loss was less than thirty killed and forty wounded."<sup>44</sup> The battle of the Thames and the death of Tecumseh put an end to the war in the Northwest and secured America's northwestern boundary. The honor of the state had been saved and new heroes created.<sup>45</sup>

<sup>42</sup> Johnson stated that he did not know whether he killed the famous Indian chief, Wabek, *Isaac Shelby, Kentucky's First Governor*, 124, *Ky. Entry*, 475. C. S. Todd was told at a later date by Chief Black Hawk that the body of Tecumseh was carried away by his own tribesmen. *Lossing, War of 1812*, 556. E. D. Wood was a graduate of West Point and was responsible for building Fort Meigs. Henry Adams, *The War of 1812*, ed. Harvey A. DeWeerd (Washington, 1944), 55. The chapters in this book are from Adams's nine-volume *History of the United States, 1801-1817* (New York, 1917-18), *AVI*, 46; Griffin, 24.

<sup>43</sup> Statement signed by Charles Henry Todd, son of C. S. Todd, Book 1, Folder 8, Todd Papers, and Cincinnati Historical Society. Todd related that C. S. Todd loaned Procter's sword to the Cincinnati Historical Society in 1840. The sword was destroyed when the Society office burned in the 1860s.

<sup>44</sup> The American loss was fifteen killed and thirty wounded and the British loss was twelve killed, thirty-six wounded, and 477 taken prisoner. The battle lasted less than an hour. Adams, *War of 1812*, 75.

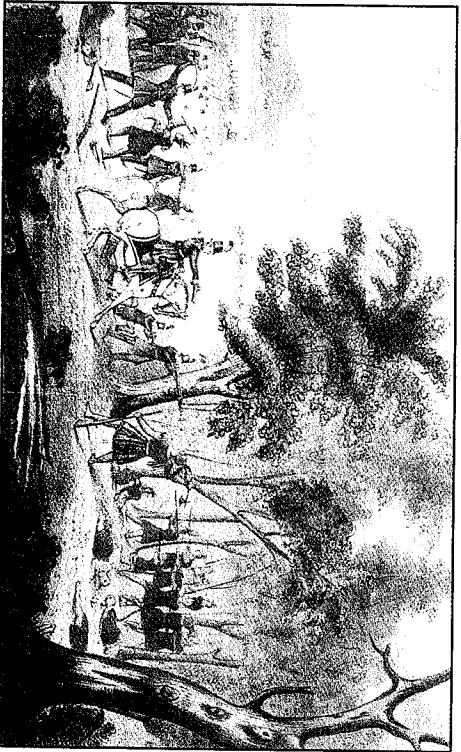
<sup>45</sup> In 1976, James W. Hammack Jr. concluded that twelve hundred dead, 64 percent of the total killed in the war, were Kentuckians. Hammack, *Kentucky & the Second American Revolution*, 112. Using Donald Hickey's numbers, Kentucky claimed 53 percent of the war's dead. Hickey points out that possibly two-and-a-half times more deaths resulted from disease (typhus, dysentery, pneumonia, malaria) than from



*KHS Collections*  
Governor Isaac Shelby's leadership in the battle of the Thames was the crowning glory of the latter part of his career.

As a result of the Thames, Charles was made deputy inspector general and adjutant general of the Eighth Military District and gained the rank of major. General Harrison wrote to a "member of President Madison's cabinet," that "Colonel Todd was equal in bravery and superior in intelligence to any officer of his rank in the army." Harrison wrote to the secretary of war that, "My aides de camp, Lt. O'Fallon and Capt. Charles

battles. Adding 205 who were executed for desertion, the total of American dead climbs to almost twenty thousand. See Donald R. Hickey, *The War of 1812: Forgotten Conflict* (Urbana, 1989), 302. James Russell Harris concluded that the exact number of troops from Kentucky and the exact number of Kentuckians killed has been lost as a result of haphazard record keeping during the war, differing definitions of "killed" (from disease, only on the battlefield, from wounds, from execution) and missing muster rolls. James Russell Harris, "Kentuckians in the War of 1812: A Note on Numbers, Losses and Sources," *Register* 82 (1984): 277-86.



*Courtesy of the Library of Congress, Prints and Photographs Division*  
In the battle of the Thames, Colonel Richard M. Johnson killed an American Indian chief, then assumed to be Tecumseh, in one-to-one combat. Tecumseh's death and Kentucky's victory in the battle proved to be important turning points for the Americans in the war.

5. Todd of the line . . . have rendered me the most important services from the opening of the Campaign."<sup>46</sup>

Charles stayed with Harrison and they sailed with Perry's fleet down the lakes to New York. At Buffalo, he watched as Harrison and Perry respectfully helped the wounded British naval general Robert Heriot Barclay from the ship down the road to his hotel, almost a half-mile from the ship. From this point, Todd continued with Harrison, in Commodore Chauncey's fleet, to Sackett's Harbor and then by land to New York and Washington. On December 23, 1813, Todd, John O'Fallon, and John Chambers escorted Harrison on the stagecoach from Washington to Pittsburgh. The group arrived in Cincinnati on January 9, 1814, and, finally, at the army headquarters at Chillicothe.<sup>47</sup> Charles had proven himself in war and was now

<sup>46</sup> Quailé, "Shelby's Army," 146; *APJ*, 47. Charles replaced Major Hukell. Richard H. Collins, *History of Kentucky*, 2 vols. (Covington, 1874), 2: 712; Esarey, ed., *Harrison Messages and Letters*, 58.

<sup>47</sup> *APJ*, 47; Cleaves, *Old Tipton*, 214; Lossing states that sometime between November 1813, and February 1814, Charles provided "kind and skillful nursing" to

a member of the network closest to General Harrison.

Sometime in the spring of 1814, Harrison ordered Captain C. S. Todd to Frankfort with a message for Governor Shelby. Charles traveled the hundreds of miles from Ohio with an escort of dragoons and friendly Indians. When he arrived at the governor's mansion, likely looking quite dashing in his uniform, he met Shelby's youngest daughter, the beautiful, dark-haired, fifteen-year-old, Letitia. After Charles returned to his regiment, he immediately applied for a furlough, which was denied. He then wrote Miss Shelby what he described to his war companion and fellow aide O'Fallon as an "open letter enclosed to her father," which the governor "saw proper to withhold."<sup>48</sup> Still, Letitia accidentally discovered the letter and was delighted by it. After she explained her feelings to her father, he eventually relented and allowed the young soldier to write her.

Charles also confided to O'Fallon that the letter had been "untimely." Although Charles had met with "King's Mountain" as soon as the governor returned to Frankfort, the old warrior had refused to let Charles talk with Letitia, saying she was too young to make her own decisions. (It was customary at this time for parents to control the timing of marriage and allow the marriage of a son or daughter only to someone from a family of the same educated, reputable, landowning class.)<sup>49</sup> Todd continued after the proprieties had been observed: "[Shelby said] I was welcome to visit her and family at any time with a view to future motives. That's what I wanted—the siege was raised and now there is nothing but flags passing." Charles wrote that he would "make hay while the sun shines. If I supposed that the general wanted me in my own department I should start immediately, but I expect it is to do the duties of Adj. Genl and shall leave the honor of it to you. . . . You will not see me before the last of the month. . . . a dying man always wants breath." The couple was married two years later. They chose June 18,

Colonel Johnson. Lossing, *War of 1812*, 557.

<sup>48</sup> C. S. Todd to Col. John O'Fallon, April 12, 1814, O'Fallon Family Papers, FHS.

<sup>49</sup> "Old King's Mountain" was Kentucky's affectionate nickname for Shelby. It arose from his success at the battle of King's Mountain in the Revolutionary War. Antebellum culture had the patriarchal expectation that the father would protect his family and its honor. Clover, *Southern Sons*, 115.

the anniversary of the declaration of the War of 1812, as their wedding date, and became the first couple to be married in the governor's palace, as his residence was called.<sup>50</sup>

Both courtship and marriage were born from the war. Although Justice Todd and Governor Shelby worked together on many political and legal projects, the young couple met and fell in love as a direct result of Charles's war duties. From this marriage to Letitia Shelby, Charles gained a loyal, intelligent, and able wife, as well as land, reputation, and political status—exactly what the antebellum society required for success.<sup>51</sup> Both the Shelys and Todds believed in loyalty to family. Until they died, both his father-in-law and his father gave wise and constant advice concerning his business investments and political appointments.

At this time, Secretary of War John Armstrong was interfering with Harrison's orders, causing the general to consider resignation. Charles wrote Governor Shelby and urged him to notify the president lest "the services of the only *Regular* General who has done anything will be lost." Shelby took Charles's advice and wrote Madison within the week. It arrived too late. On May 31, 1814, Harrison's resignation was accepted.<sup>52</sup>

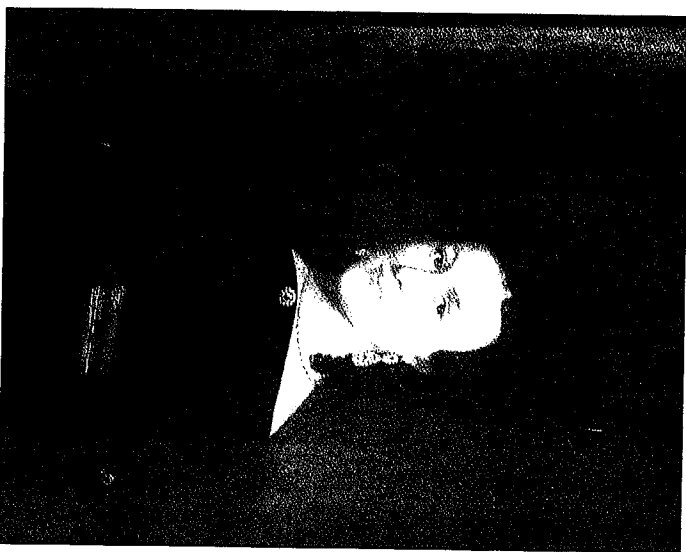
Yet within two months, duty again called Charles. President Madison had determined to end the Pottawatamie Indian raids on the settlements around Lake Michigan by sending several expeditions into Canada to crush the Indians. On July 18, Charles had a notice printed in the *Kentucky Gazette*:

All non-commissioned officers and privates of the artillery, 1<sup>st</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> regiments of infantry, prisoners of war in this district, will repair without delay to this place and report to the officer

<sup>50</sup> C. S. Todd to Col. John O'Fallon, April 12, 1814, O'Fallon Family Papers, FHS; Statement signed by Charles Henry Todd, Folder 8, Todd Family Papers, Cincinnati Historical Society; Thomas D. Clark and Margaret A. Lane, *The People's House: The Governor's Mansion of Kentucky* (Lexington, 2002), 6.

<sup>51</sup> For another example of an antebellum family that gained prestige and status through matrimonial ties, see Peter J. Schlingner, *Kentucky's Last Cavalier, General William Preston, 1816-1887* (Frankfort, 2004), 11.

<sup>52</sup> C. S. Todd to Isaac Shelby, May 9, 1814, quoted in Cleaves, *Old Tippecanoe*, 221.



Courtesy of the McDowell House Museum, Danville, Kentucky  
Todd's marriage to Isaac Shelby's youngest daughter, Letitia, on June 18, 1814, enhanced his position as a member of Kentucky's social and military elite.

superintending the recruiting service.  
By Command,  
C. S. Todd  
Act. Adjutant Gen.<sup>53</sup>

Secretary of War John Armstrong replaced Harrison with General Duncan McArthur as commander of the Eighth Military District. In August he ordered McArthur to assist Major General Jacob Brown by leading one thousand mounted men on an expedition to Canada to destroy the Indians' crops and

<sup>53</sup> *Kentucky Gazette*, July 18, 1814.



homes and burn mills that were making flour for the British militia.<sup>54</sup> Justice Todd wrote Charles at that time:

I do not see the necessity of your going on either in a subordinate capacity or to play the deputy. I should remain where you are, unless positively ordered on or you are promoted with in the staff or line. Besides if the brilliant successes of General Brown continue he will leave no laurels to be gathered and you will be exposed to fatiguing marches, unwholesome climate, and camp fare (perhaps more dangerous than battles) without sharing any glory which may attend the campaign.<sup>55</sup>

It was clear that the justice agreed with most Kentuckians and believed the war and its opportunities were over.

Charles, however, did not agree with his father, nor did the five hundred Kentuckians, easily recruited, who arrived in Urbana, August 20. During August 24 and 25, the British burned the White House and much of Washington. Three days later they captured Alexandria, Virginia. With all this excitement and danger raging, Charles was not about to leave the army and return to his law practice in Lexington. Military service was still full of glory.

During McArthur's three-month expedition, five hundred Canadian militiamen were defeated, and only one American was lost. Charles had the responsibilities for training the raw militiamen, settling their disputes, dealing with the villagers, and likely for leading various groups of men to locate and burn the mills. The expedition was routine, but Charles's reputation continued to grow. McArthur valued Charles: "I have the support of all the troops . . . in assuring you that to the military talents, activity and intelligence of major Todd, who acted as my adjutant general, much of the fortunate progress and issue of the expedition is attributable. . . . His various merits justly entitle him to the notice of the government."<sup>56</sup> The Canadian

campaign cemented the honorable reputation Charles had earned earlier.

Yet on December 1, a letter arrived that threatened to poison public opinion regarding Charles's honor. Colonel Anthony Butler wrote Justice Todd from the temporary troop headquarters near Lexington to inform him of an incident that occurred during a court-martial of Colonel Thomas D. Owings. This man was "so violently hostile toward Major Todd that he means to proceed . . . to Washington City and effect . . . the injury and dismissal of the Major from service." Owings threatened to publish his accusation that Charles and some other "gentlemen of the army" had him arrested from "personal motives," to persecute him. Colonel Butler warned Justice Todd that Owings was dangerous and that he would contact the Todds' friends in Washington warning them of Owings's plot.<sup>57</sup>

The justice wrote Charles from Frankfort on December 18, 1814, and included the letter from Colonel Butler. Justice Todd believed the charges made by Owings were "of unclear substance." Nevertheless, the justice took action to make certain there would be letters from "the General" [likely Harrison] that would at least paralyze any attempts to slander Charles. The justice advised Charles not to resign from the military until his name was cleared. Public opinion was critical to the honor of a man and to his future success in politics or business. This slur could neither be tolerated nor ignored.

Justice Todd wrote Charles of positive reactions to the Canadian expedition: "The elements, if not the God of battles, were in your favour. The rise in the Grand River saved your army, for had you crossed and attempted to make your way to Erie, you must inevitably have been cut off. Major Dudley and Pendleton informed me of your health and exertions during the campaigning. T. Song gives you the credit of preserving the Army." It was likely that the letters from Charles and his father's network nullified Owings's complaints. The following March, Colonel Todd was brevetted a colonel of the cavalry.<sup>58</sup>

<sup>54</sup> McAtee, *Little War*, 414.

<sup>55</sup> T. Todd to C. S. Todd, August 10, 1814, Book 1, Folder 2, Todd Collection, FHS.

<sup>56</sup> Anderson Chennault Quisenberry, *Kentucky in the War of 1812* (Frankfort, 1915), 116; McAtee, *Little War*, 453 (quote).

<sup>57</sup> A. Butler to T. Todd, December 1, 1814, Book 1, Folder 4, Todd Collection, FHS. This letter likely refers to Colonel Thomas D. Owings.

<sup>58</sup> T. Todd to C. S. Todd, December 18, 1814, Book 1, Folder 2, Todd Collection, FHS. The exact date in March is not known. Both the *APJ*, 47, and Collins, *History*

Although the army provided Charles with recognition, it had not brought the wealth he wanted. He had made some money selling his horses; his father had encouraged him to buy land several times. In December, his father cautioned him against selling the land he owned just below Columbus. It would grow in value when the state government moved there. "I am apprehensive you are too much like the boy who has a goose that laid golden eggs—you are too anxious to be a good speculator."<sup>59</sup> Wealth was not as easy to secure as military rank; it would have to come later.

After four months in Chillicothe at a desk, Charles apparently agreed with his father that there was no more opportunity for glory in the war. For soon after the president signed the formal declaration of the end of the war on February 17, 1815, Colonel Charles Stewart Todd, inspector general of the Eighth Military District and colonel of the cavalry, mustered out of the army in March 1815.

In coming years, the war held more meaning for Charles than the realm in which he successfully searched for honor. For example, in his speech to the veterans of the War of 1812, at Put-in-Bay in 1865 on the fifty-second anniversary of the battle of Lake Erie, Charles stated:

The second war of Independence aided essentially in making us a commanding power among the nations of the earth. . . . The generations which have grown up since that war should know that the war of the Revolution led to separation from the mother country, while the war of 1812 was a war for our nationality . . . the war for real independence.<sup>60</sup>

For the people of Kentucky, the war brought a unity and confidence in their state. Those who fought in the war were remembered with gratitude and respect and were rewarded

with political office.<sup>61</sup> Moreover, the War of 1812 provided tests to measure a man's worth and the stage for public hearings as to a man's performance. The war also gave Charles respect, national recognition, a place at leadership tables in Kentucky and Washington, and a steppingstone to political appointments and elected office. It led him to his wife, her inheritance of land and wealth, and her family's strong political network. The hard days in the Northwest were portentous. As his father had held the Revolutionary War as his key to respect, Charles could point just as proudly to his own experience in the War of 1812 as the gateway to honor.

<sup>59</sup> *of Kentucky*, 712, state that in March 1815, Todd was promoted with the brevet rank of colonel of cavalry. Lossing, *War of 1812*, 547-48, states that Todd in March 1815, "was Inspector General in the U.S. army with rank of Colonel."

<sup>60</sup> T. Todd to C. S. Todd, December 18, 1814, Book 1, Folder 2, Todd Collection, FHS.

<sup>61</sup> C. S. Todd, September 1865, Annual Address to the Perry Monument Association at Put-in-Bay Island on the 50th Anniversary of the 1813 Battle of Lake Erie, quoted in Griffin, *Memoir of C. S. Todd*, 140.

<sup>61</sup> Matthew G. Schoenbachler, "The Origins of Jacksonian Politics: Central Kentucky, 1790-1840" (PhD. diss., University of Kentucky, 1996), 111. Elected officials who served in the battle of the Thames included President William H. Harrison; Vice-President Richard M. Johnson; Kentucky governors John Adair, Joseph Desha, John Crittenden, and Charles A. Wickliffe; lieutenant governors William T. Barry and Robert McAfee; U.S. Senators William T. Barry, John Crittenden, and Richard M. Johnson; and twenty congressmen.



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## Search for Asylum: The Mormons Petition the Kentucky Governor, 1845

edited by Roger D. Launius

In May 1845, a messenger arrived in Frankfort carrying a letter for Kentucky governor William Owsley. Dated April 30, it was written from Nauvoo, Illinois, by Brigham Young and other Mormon leaders. "In behalf of a disfranchised and long afflicted people," the letter asked if Owsley would consider convening a special session of the general assembly to "furnish us an asylum, where we can enjoy our rights of conscience and religion unmolested." It was a desperate appeal from a despairing people who had been driven out of Missouri and were facing expulsion from Illinois. Although the letter appears to have gone unanswered and certainly was not acted upon, the story behind it gives Kentucky some connection to a defining period in the history of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints.<sup>1</sup>

In the winter of 1838-39, the Mormons had entered western Illinois as religious refugees from Missouri.<sup>2</sup> They had fled that

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<sup>1</sup> The letter is in Special Collections, Kentucky Historical Society, Frankfort. The Owsley papers at the Kentucky Department for Libraries and Archives give no indication that the letter was answered, and the Mormon archives show no letter received. Since the letter was delivered by messenger, it is possible that Owsley gave a verbal response.

<sup>2</sup> Two excellent overviews of Mormon history are James B. Allen and Glen M. Leonard, *The Story of the Latter-day Saints* (1976, 2d ed., rev., Salt Lake City, 1992); Leonard J. Arrington and Davis Bitton, *The Mormon Experience: A History of the Latter-day Saints* (1979, 2d ed., Urbana, 1992). The early Latter Day Saints (LDS) believed they were commissioned from among the world to help usher in the triumphal second coming of Christ and the advent of the millennial reign by building a community from which Christ could rule the world. Accordingly, during the 1830s and 1840s, they had established Mormon communities to serve as utopian centers, places that were a refuge