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"We Lay There Doing Nothing": John Jackson's Recollection of the War of 1812

Edited by
*Jeff L. Patrick**

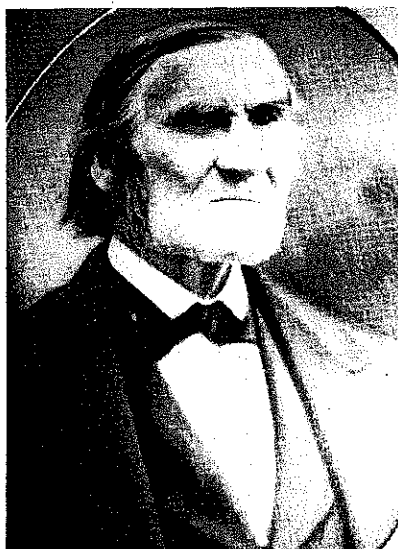
The War of 1812 spilled bloodily across the Old Northwest, bringing American military success and failure.¹ Many of the works written about the campaigns against the British and their Indian allies focus on the larger picture and on the military and political leaders. There are only a few good accounts by the participants themselves, particularly by those who served as rank and file militiamen. John Jackson's memoir of his militia service in 1812 and 1813 provides a rare and fascinating window into the daily life of an ordinary soldier. Jackson reminds readers, for example, of the importance of food for men at war, as he describes roasting potatoes over a fire and eating too much corn. He tells of the diversions necessary to pass long, uneventful days and of the challenges of breaking through ice on a hard winter march. All this Jackson later remembered and wrote in a straightforward manner, without false embellishment or pride and in a voice that rings true and clear to later generations.

Jackson was born on July 2, 1790, in Hardy County, Virginia (now West Virginia). At the age of nine he moved west with his parents to Chillicothe, Ross County, Ohio, where he married in 1811.² The following year, as war with Great Britain was declared, Jackson embarked on his career with the Ohio militia.

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¹ A good general overview is Donald R. Hickey, *The War of 1812* (Urbana, Ill., 1989).

² H. S. K. Bartholomew, "Colonel John Jackson," *Indiana Magazine of History*, 30 (June, 1934), 161; Adjutant General of Ohio, *Roster of Ohio Soldiers in the War of 1812* (Columbus, Ohio, 1916), 52, 143; Higgins, Belden, & Co. *An Illustrated*



JOHN JACKSON

Courtesy Elkhart County Historical Society, Bristol, Indiana.

Tracing Jackson's military service through extant Ohio muster rolls for 1812 is difficult. Jackson's first enlistment was certainly as a lieutenant in Captain Philip McNemar's company, Ohio militia, from August 14 or 15, 1812, to February 14 or 15, 1813.³ State muster rolls indicate that he served only until October, 1812, but Jackson's pension file clearly shows service through the beginning of the following year. His final enlistment was as captain in his own Ross County company from July 24 or 28 to August 12 or 15, 1813, again depending on whether

the pension records or Ohio records are consulted.⁴

Jackson served through some of the most exciting and difficult months of the War of 1812. At the time of his enlistment a large American army at Detroit was under siege by British and Indian forces and soon surrendered. Likewise, the capitulation or evacuation of American posts at Mackinac and Chicago also resulted in disasters for American arms. The United States post at Fort Wayne was one of the few garrisons left, and quickly that small force found itself surrounded by Britain's Indian allies. By the end of 1812, thanks to the small regular army and thousands of militia volunteers like Jackson, the situation improved markedly for the Americans. General William Henry Harrison led an army, of which Jackson was a member, to lift the siege of Fort Wayne and

³ This officer's name has several spellings in contemporary records. He is listed as Phillip McNeme, Philip MacNemar, and Philip McNemar. See Adjutant General of Ohio, *Roster of Ohio Soldiers*, 143; Pension File of John Jackson, War of 1812 (National Archives, Washington, D.C.); unless otherwise indicated, all pension records relating to John Jackson were secured in the form of photocopies from the National Archives and Records Service, Washington, D.C. Richard C. Knopf, *Document Transcriptions of the War of 1812 in the Old Northwest* (10 vols., Columbus, Ohio, 1958), V, pt. 1, p. 152. This company is listed as part of Colonel James Renick's 2nd Regiment, Ohio Militia, in the *National Intelligencer*.

⁴ This unit is noted as the 2nd Company, 2nd Battalion, 2nd Regiment, 3rd Brigade, 2nd Division, Ohio Militia. Pension file of John Jackson, War of 1812 (National Archives, Washington, D.C.).

cing Jackson's service through Ohio muster rolls is difficult. Jackson's enlistment was as a lieutenant in Philip McCarty's company, Ohio, from August 14, 1812, to February 1, 1813.³ State records indicate that he was only until October 2, but Jackson's file clearly shows he was through the beginning of the following year. His final enlistment was in his own infantry company from August 24 to August 15, 1813, again raising the question of whether

ing and difficult to obtain a large number of British and Indian prisoners or evacuation also resulted in a post at Fort Wayne that small number of soldiers. By the end of the war, thousands of militia were needed for the defense of an army, of Fort Wayne and

records. He is listed as Adjutant General in the War of 1812 and, all pension records, copies from the I. C. Knopf, Documents, Columbus, Ohio, Colonel James Ren-

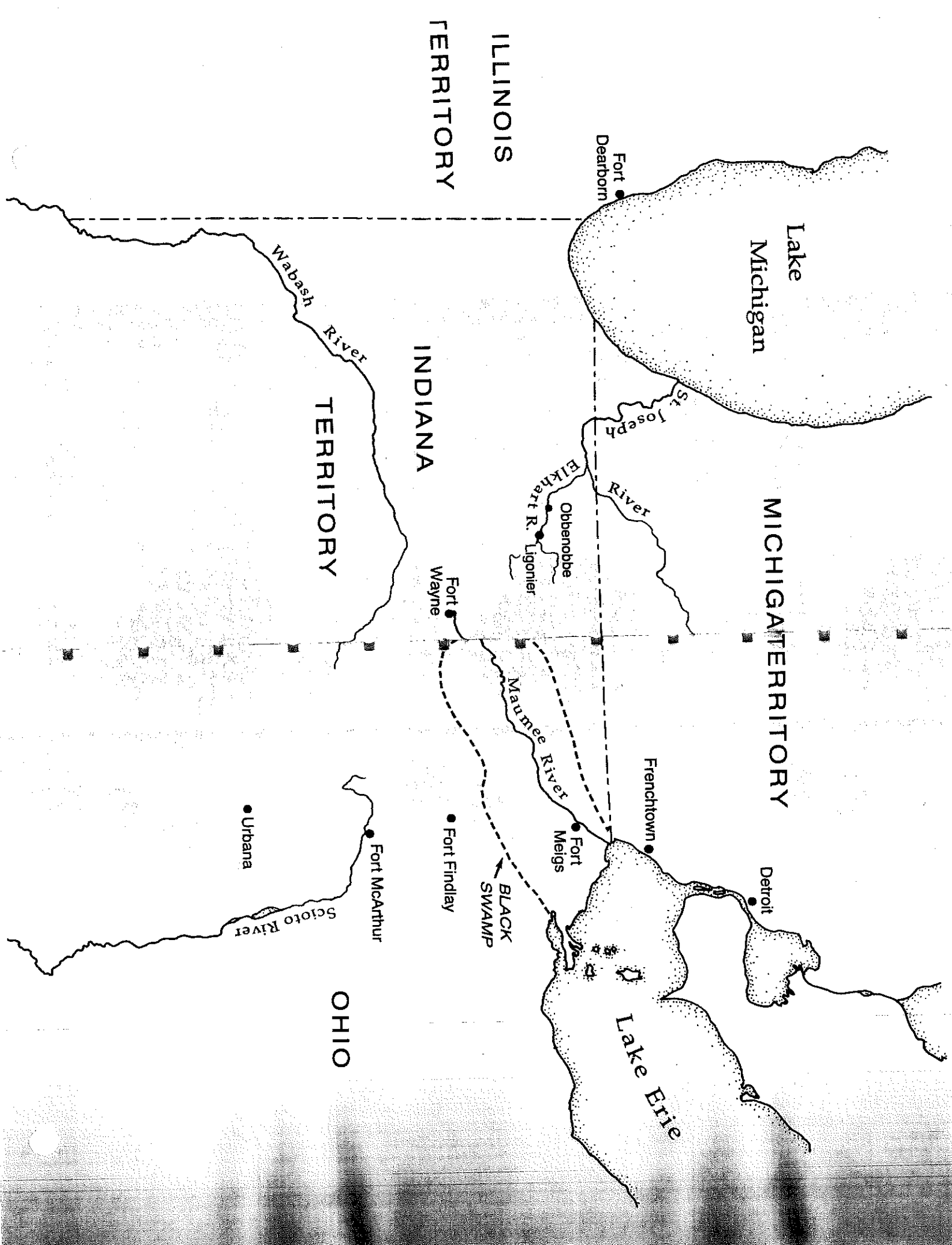
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destroy the surrounding Indian villages. There followed a long period of relative inactivity as Harrison gathered his forces and built Fort Meigs in northwest Ohio in preparation to retake Detroit and invade Upper Canada. During the winter Jackson and his fellow militiamen endured months of camp life in a separate area, punctuated by a small skirmish with the British and Indians. By the time they rejoined Harrison's main force in early 1813, their enlistments had expired, and they went home only weeks before Harrison's force came under siege at Fort Meigs. Later, when the fort came under attack a second time, Jackson once more returned to the army but was too late to take part in any fighting.

Following the war Jackson remained in Ross County until 1829, when he moved to southeastern Elkhart County, Indiana, as one of its first white residents. He quickly became a leader in his new home, helping to organize the county and establish Goshen as the county seat. He was one of several investors who advanced funds to start the *Goshen Democrat*, one of the first newspapers in the area. In addition, Jackson served as justice of the peace (1830 and 1840), representative in the Indiana House on two occasions (1836-1837 and 1842-1843), postmaster (1830-1835), county commissioner (1831-1832), and colonel in the Indiana militia. His only major political setback occurred when he was defeated for a third term as state representative in 1850. By the 1870s Jackson had few responsibilities and wrote stories and memoirs for the local paper while reflecting on a very active public life. He died on July 9, 1873, at the age of eighty-three.⁵

Jackson's narrative of his experiences in the war of 1812 was published in the *Goshen Democrat* in seven installments from January 10 to April 17, 1872. His desire to record his personal history has provided later generations an entertaining and highly valuable look into the life of one of the soldiers who followed "Old Tippecanoe." His writings give personal views of little known events and details of life in the American militia from descriptions of living conditions to stories of officers and enlisted men and impressions of a first taste of battle. When read with accounts of life in the regular United States army of this period, the contrast becomes readily apparent. Although, by and large, the militiamen seemed less "military," less disciplined and trained than the regulars, often they experienced many of the same hardships and adventures, showed the same bravado, and shared similar feelings about home and the war.

⁵ Bartholomew, "Colonel John Jackson," 161; Higgins, Belden & Co., *Atlas of Elkhart County*, 24; *A Biographical Directory of Indiana General Assembly*, Vol. I, 203.



An Old Citizens' Recollection of the War of 1812¹

Mr. Editor:—I have been requested to write a short sketch of the part I had taken, and some of the incidents that transpired, in the War of 1812. If you should see fit to publish this, I may resume the narrative in another communication. Yours Respectfully, John Jackson.

At the commencement of the war, I resided in Ross county, Ohio. In August, 1812, there was a demand for troops to reinforce General Hull's army that was then at or near Detroit.² I was then a lieutenant in a rifle company in the Ohio militia. The whole company was ordered out together.³ We rendezvoused at Urbana, which was the headquarters of the troops being then raised. Governor Meigs and the Adjutant General of Ohio were there, receiving and organizing the militia as they came in.⁴ Whilst we were laying there, an express came from Fort Wayne to the Governor, informing him that the fort was besieged by Indians; that the inhabitants had all fled into the fort, and that they were likely to be starved out. Our company was a rifle company, and was armed with their own rifles, and each had a tomahawk and large knife attached to their belts; was uniformed with blue linsey pants and hunting shirts. The officers' hunting shirts (for distinction) was fringed with red. We made a respectable appearance when on parade. The Governor came to our captain and inquired whether our company would be willing to go to Fort Wayne, provided he would furnish us with horses to ride. The company cheerfully agreed to go. The next day about noon we were mounted on U.S. horses and pack saddles, with our knapsacks and blankets thrown over our saddles, we made a pretty grand show in the streets of Urbana. We went to Piqua where we met three volunteer mounted companies. We organized a battalion, and elected an old man by the name of

¹ In an effort to provide the most authentic reproduction possible, John Jackson's account is presented here much as it originally appeared, with only minor changes. Jackson's narrative of his experiences in the War of 1812 was published in the *Goshen Democrat* in seven installments from January 10 to April 17, 1872. Jackson addressed an introduction and closing to the *Goshen Democrat* editor with each installment. The first preamble and closing is included in the reproduction; all others are represented with an ellipsis of six dots. Spelling, grammar, and syntax have been transcribed exactly as written. Small portions of two issues of the *Democrat* were damaged, so the editor was compelled to piece together certain sentences. In these passages brackets appear around words which are conjectural. Errors that were clearly attributable to the *Democrat's* printing process were corrected.

² William Hull (1753–1825), was a United States brigadier general and governor of the Michigan Territory, who surrendered Detroit to the British on August 16, 1812. *Dictionary of American Biography*, see under "William Hull."

³ On August 15, 1812, McNemar's company left Pickaway County with seventy-five riflemen for Urbana. Later this company was referred to as the "Deer Creek volunteers." Richard C. Knopf, *Document Transcriptions of the War of 1812 in the Old Northwest* (10 vols., Columbus, Ohio, 1958), V, pt. 1, pp. 152, 186.

⁴ Return Jonathan Meigs (1764–1824) was governor of Ohio during the War of 1812. *Dictionary of American Biography*, see under "Jonathan Meigs."

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Adams to command. He lived somewhere in the Miami Valley; had been in some skirmishes with Indians and was said to be a good soldier. We then went on to "Shanescrooping," and the next day was joined by four other companies from different parts of Ohio. We there formed a regiment of two battalions. General Lytle,⁵ of Cincinnati, was appointed to command the first, Colonel Dunlap,⁶ of Chillicothe, the second battalion, and Colonel Adams⁷ to command the regiment.⁸ We then marched to Wilshire. At that place we heard that General Harrison was marching a military force from Kentucky to join Hull's army at Detroit, and concluded to go *via* Fort Wayne.⁹ He was expected here in two or three days, the officers were called together in counsel, to decide whether to march on to Fort Wayne immediately, or wait till General Harrison came on. There was two notable characters with us. Both had been in Indian wars, and both had been taken prisoner by them. The one was old General Simon Kenton,¹⁰ the other was Stephen Ruddell.¹¹ The officers were some what divided about whether to stay or go on. Kenton advised to stay, and Ruddell was for pushing on. The conclusion was to stay until Harrison came on. When the decision was made known, Ruddell got in a great rage, and said they were a set of damned cowards. He drew one of his pistols and we expected there would be blood shed, but some of his friends got him pacified. At this point I will state that Logan, the great Indian chief, was with us.¹² He was acquainted with Colonel Dunlap (our Major) and as Colonel Dunlap stayed mostly with our company, I

⁵ William Lytle (1779-1831) was a major general in the Ohio militia. Henry Howe, *Historical Collections of Ohio* (2 vols., Columbus, Ohio, 1889), I, 415.

⁶ James Dunlap, a native of Chillicothe, led a group of Ohio mounted riflemen to the siege of Fort Wayne and returned home in October, 1812. Knopf, *Document Transcriptions*, V, pt. 1, p. 185.

⁷ This is probably Major George Adams, who led a battalion of over three hundred Ohio militiamen to defend the frontier after Hull's surrender, then went on to the siege of Fort Wayne. Knopf, *Document Transcriptions*, V, pt. 1, p. 185.

⁸ In an earlier account Jackson states that his company was joined by seven other companies at Stone's Crossing on the St. Mary's River and that there they formed the battalion. *Ligonier National Banner*, September 28, 1870.

⁹ William Henry Harrison (1773-1841) was then a United States brigadier general who commanded the force that rescued Fort Wayne. He was subsequently promoted to major general in command of the Northwestern Army.

¹⁰ Simon Kenton (1755-1836) was a famous frontiersman and a brigadier general in the Ohio militia. *Dictionary of American Biography*, see under "Simon Kenton."

¹¹ Stephen Ruddell was once a white captive of the Shawnees and later a Baptist missionary to the Indians. R. David Edmunds, *The Shawnee Prophet* (Lincoln, Nebr., 1983), 60-61. Also see R. David Edmunds, *Tecumseh and the Quest for Indian Leadership* (Boston, 1984), 23.

¹² Captain Johnny or John Logan, a Shawnee scout for the Americans, was killed in a skirmish with pro-British Indians in November, 1812. Benson J. Lossing, *Pictorial Field Book of the War of 1812* (New York, 1869), 345. Also see Bert J. Griswold, ed., *Fort Wayne: Gateway of the West, 1802-1813* (Indiana Historical Collections, Vol. XV; Indianapolis, 1927), 54-55.

got acquainted with Logan. He told us *there*, that he could not go any further with us, and his reason was this: he said he was an Indian, and the war would not last always, and after peace was made he would still be with the Indians, and if they knew that he fought against them they never would be friendly towards him. He was a fine, sensible man, and I was sorry to hear how he was foolishly murdered.

We marched on with General Harrison to Fort Wayne. The night before we got there the Indians viewed our camp, and we were under alarm mostly all night.¹³ The Indians found that we were "too much melish," and the next morning they scampered off in all directions. We marched in the next morning, and found them all fled. And some of the incidents that transpired, in the War of 1812; also circumstances that transpired in the first settlement of Elkhart County. If you should think it worth publishing in your paper, you may do so, if not, you can throw it aside without injuring my feelings.

.....
On our arrival at Fort Wayne we found the place in a deplorable situation—the inhabitants that had settled promiscuously around, had all fled within the Fort. There were some small improvements, and they had raised some grain. Their cabins were all burnt, likewise most of their fences, also their grist mill had been burned. Their horses were all stolen; their cattle and hogs all killed or driven off; and everything that could be, was destroyed. The Fort consisted of four log long cabins built in a square and picketed in all around. They had been closely besieged for a number of days; had got nearly out of firewood, when one foggy morning a party was sent out with guns and axes to procure some wood. This party was discovered by Indians, and had to retreat, being fired on and two men killed before they reached the Fort. The Indians did not venture up to scalp them, and they were taken into the Fort and placed in rough boxes, and in the evening taken out and buried with the honors of war.¹⁴ These were the first soldiers we saw buried.—We encamped that night in a hollow square around the Fort. Sometime after dark, one of the sentinels on guard, down the river (Maumee,) reported that he saw Indians crossing the river below on our side, and the officer on guard sent into camp for reinforcements. I was sent with about twenty men.

¹³ Twice on the night of September 11 the camp was alarmed by the firing of sentinels. Elias Darnall, *Journal containing an Accurate and Interesting Account of the Hardships, Sufferings, Battles, Defeat and Captivity of those heroic Kentucky volunteers and regulars, commanded by General Winchester in the years 1812-1813* (Paris, Ky., 1813), 13-14.

¹⁴ Actually, three members of the garrison were killed (an assistant factor at the Indian agency and two soldiers), none of whom were going for wood. Griswold, *Fort Wayne*, 57-61.

We doubled the line of sentinels and gave strict orders to watch diligently, but no discoveries were made on that line during the night.¹⁵ The next day General Harrison sent off three attachments in pursuit of the Indians, two of which went to Indian towns on the Wabash, the third being sent to Elkhart Prairie. We (the Ohio troops) went, together with a battalion of regular troops commanded by Major Davenport,¹⁶ Colonel Wells,¹⁷ brother to Captain Wells¹⁸ that was massacred at or near Chicago, commanded the whole. We marched out a few miles in the evening and encamped on Spy Run. Our horses having been taken from us at the Fort, we were now on foot, and marched on until the second night afterwards, encamping on Perry's Prairie.¹⁹ The following day we came to Elkhart River, where Benton now stands, and now being within two miles of the Indian town known as Obbenobbe or Five Medals Town;²⁰ we were formed into two lines, the right wing led by Col. Wells with the Regulars, the left by Adrian,²¹ a Frenchman, who had been our guide from Fort Wayne. In this position we were to surround and attack the town, for which purpose we marched on and surrounded the town, but found "no-body at home." All had fled that morning. The fires still burned in their wigwams, in one of which was a kettle of pumpkin or squashes, boiled soft, which we supposed to be poisoned, and no one dare eat of it. They had a

¹⁵ On the night of September 13 the army was formed into line of battle in response to an alarm. Darnall, *Journal*, 13-16.

¹⁶ Richard Davenport was part of the 17th United States Infantry Regiment. Charles K. Gardner, *A Dictionary of all officers, who have been commissioned, or have been appointed and served in the Army of the United States* (New York, 1853), 139.

¹⁷ Samuel Wells was a veteran of the Battle of Tippecanoe and commanding officer of the 17th United States Infantry Regiment. *Ibid.*, 476.

¹⁸ William Wells was the Indian agent at Fort Wayne for several years prior to the War of 1812. He was killed in the Chicago massacre in August, 1812, while evacuating the Fort Dearborn garrison. Griswold, *Fort Wayne*, 19, 56. See also Paul A. Hutton, "William Wells: Frontier Scout and Indian Agent," *Indiana Magazine of History*, LXXIV (September, 1978), 183-222.

¹⁹ Perry's Prairie was in the area of modern Ligonier, Indiana. In an account to a friend Jackson related that the American force divided into left and right wings in order to surprise an Indian village there. Some Indians fled from the village, so the Americans reunited their column and gave chase. The pursuit lasted until they were near Five Medals' village, the army's target, when a truce of some sort was arranged, undoubtedly to prevent the Indians from giving warning to Five Medals of the Americans' approach. Ligonier *Banner*, February 10, 1898.

²⁰ Five Medals, a prominent Potawatomi leader, was present at a parley with the American commander of Fort Wayne at the start of the siege. After the siege he fled to Detroit where he was given food, arms, and ammunition by the British. When the latter evacuated that post in September, 1813, Five Medals sued for peace with the Americans. He died sometime before 1829, but his wife and children continued to live at the old village in Elkhart County when Jackson arrived there that year. Goshen *Democrat*, March 2, 1858, March 21, 1866.

²¹ This was possibly Peter Audrain, who worked in the Fort Wayne area, but more likely James Audrain, who later helped scout for the American army at the Battle of Mississinewa. Griswold, *Fort Wayne*, 258, 451. For James Audrain, see John B. Dillon, *History of Indiana* (Indianapolis, 1859), 513.

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quantity of corn (for Indians), some of which was found buried, some hung up to dry, and a quantity on the stalk. They had also a quantity of potatoes, pumpkins and squashes. Most all of their valuable property had been taken away. Col. Wells ordered the wigwams to be set on fire, and in a few minutes they were all in flames. Our provision being likely to become scarce, as we had nothing along except what was in our knapsacks, which had become very light, the men were ordered to take as much potatoes and corn as they could carry. We then marched back to Elkhart Prairie, and encamped. This was on the 11th day of September, 1812, lacking only a few months of 60 years, since I first saw Elkhart Prairie.²² Some sport was made that night trying to roast potatoes. Every person knows that it requires hot ashes and coals, which we had not, and the method that some undertook was to put down leaves and dirt, and then build a fire over them. When it was thought they were roasted, they were taken out, and the skin found burnt as black as a coal and the inside as raw as it ever was, and after having a good laugh over it, we went to parching corn for our supper. The next morning we could roast our potatoes right. We started in the morning and made a hard days march to Blue river, and that night one of the men died with cholic, having eaten too much corn.²³ In the morning he was wrapped in his blanket and laid beside a log, and covered with chunks and poles, after which we continued our march to Fort Wayne and arrived there in the afternoon, pretty well fatigued. We had no Rail Roads then, and had to put down flatly, every mile that we travelled.—The other attachments that was sent after the Indians, met with the same success that we had, they found none at home.

.....
When we returned to Fort Wayne, the Ohio volunteers disbanded and went home, having only volunteered for the relief of Fort Wayne. Our company was under different circumstances, we were mustered into the U.S. service for six months. I was sent by our Captain to General Harrison to state our circumstances, and ask what we should do? He said that we must go back to Urbana and take our place in General Tupper's Brigade, and he gave us an order to draw rations on the route.²⁴ The next morning we put [out] for Urbana and took our position in the brigade.

²² In another account Jackson stated that they arrived at the village (or large town) at 2:00 p.m. He is slightly in error about the date, however. The Americans left Fort Wayne on September 14, arrived at the village on the 16th, and returned to Fort Wayne on the 18th. *Ligonier National Banner*, September 28, 1870. Logan Esarey, *Messages and Letters of William Henry Harrison*, Vol. II, 1812-1816 (*Indiana Historical Collections*, Vol. VIII; Indianapolis, 1922), 143-47.

²³ This was most likely in present-day northeastern Whitley County, near modern Churubusco, Indiana.

²⁴ Edward Tupper (1771-1823) was a brigadier general in the Ohio militia. He organized a militia brigade consisting of three regiments from southern Ohio counties in July and August, 1812, rendezvoused them at Urbana, and led them through the early months of 1813.

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The men were anxious to go home, and Capt. McNemar went to General Tupper, who gave the whole company a furlough for two weeks. We left our arms and accoutrements with the Quartermaster, and took our clothes in our knapsacks in order to have them washed at home, and started for our homes. Towards evening we agreed to scatter groups, and not too many stop at one house. We were received very kindly by the inhabitants, and treated as well as it was in their power to do. We all arrived safely at our homes. The men that had families to enjoy the privilege of being with them, and the young men with their sweethearts, and all enjoyed themselves well, until it was time for us to start back. We did not go back in a body, a number being conveyed a considerable part of the way by their friends, in buggies and on horseback. Several of the men hired substitutes; they could readily be had for from 40 to 60 dollars. When we got to Urbana General Tupper's Brigade had been ordered to march out to the frontier, and take a stand at some suitable point and to act as frontier guard.

General Hull had surrendered his army to the British, and General Harrison's army, that we left at Fort Wayne, had marched down the Maumee and on the Raisin, and there, under General Winchester's command had been defeated and inhumanly massacred.²⁵ So at that we had no troops, at that time, in the North. There were a number of soldiers that had been furloughed that had returned there, who with several wagons loaded with provisions, were about to start to the army. We all formed a Company under the command of Capt. McNemar, as an escort for the teams, and took our march to follow after the Brigade.

There was a company of mounted Rangers (as they were called) under command of Captain Manary, that was stationed on the frontier to watch the movement of the Indians, his place of rendezvous was on the route that Gen. Tupper had marched, it was called Manary's block-house.²⁶ We got there in the afternoon and concluded to remain there until the next morning.—There was a banter from the rangers to shoot at a mark with our boys, which was quickly taken up, as our boys boasted on their use of the rifle.—Judges were appointed, and they were to shoot alternately,

²⁵ On January 22, 1813, an American army under General James Winchester was destroyed by British and Indian forces on the River Raisin at Frenchtown (now Monroe, Michigan). Among the units annihilated was the 17th United States Infantry, which had marched to Five Medals Village with Jackson. John R. Elting, *Amateurs, To Arms! A Military History of the War of 1812* (Chapel Hill, N.C., 1991), 59-63.

²⁶ The post was built by Captain James Manary of Ross County as a trading post prior to the War of 1812. It was located three miles north of Bellefontaine. The American army under General Hull passed it while marching on Detroit. Herbert T. O. Blue, *Centennial History of Hardin County, Ohio, 1833-1933* (Canton, Ohio, 1933), 160-76.

after having fired several rounds, the rangers had rather the better of our boys. We had a large awkward looking man in our Company by the name of Wingate Cannon; he had broke the lock of his rifle and had to take a U.S. musket,—they had rather quit shooting, when Cannon came up and said: "Gentlemen, will you let me take a shot?" "Oh! yes, fire away," he drew up his musket, fired away and drove the centre point blank. No other one had touched the centre. This raised a great shout.

Two or three of the boys perched him on their shoulders and hurrahed for Cannon. This broke up the shooting match. The next morning we marched forward, and in due time arrived at Gen. Tupper's encampment. It was on the head branches of the Scioto river, in thick-timbered land, principally beach. We took our place on the line of encampment, which was an oblong square, on tolerable high ground. It was first called Camp McArthur (in honor of Col. McArthur, one of the Regimental Commanders in Hull's army), and afterwards it got the name of Fort McArthur; but there was never a Fort built there, although two or three log houses were erected for the purpose of storing military stores.²⁷

We had no idea how long we would remain there. We at first lived in tents; but when the weather began to get cold we built log huts, covered with clapboards, some had chimneys and some had open fronts, with tent cloths hung up in front at night and in cold weather. Our hut was tolerably comfortable; we had a chimney and door, we also chinked and daubed it, and laid a puncheon floor, so that we lived in style, there was but three of us, Captain, myself and our cook. The ensign was discharged by reason of his having fits. Our bed was, to lay down one blanket and cover with the two; we had to lay spoon fashion and if one wished to turn over we had to make a frolic of it and all turn at once. We had easy, and tolerably comfortable times; plenty to eat, not much to do, only provide wood, cook our rations, wash our clothes and occasionally go on fatigue or guard. A great many diverting incidents transpired that winter, whilst we laid there.

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Whilst we lay at Camp McArthur, several circumstances transpired, some of which will be interesting, and some not much so, although the militia, when in service, are as strictly under the rules and articles of war as the regular soldiers are, yet the rules are not so strictly enforced. There is more sociability and familiarity between the officers and privates when off duty. A Major in our Brigade who was a foppish kind of a man, belonging to a well

²⁷ Fort or Camp McArthur was built in June, 1812, by Colonel Duncan McArthur as part of General Hull's advance on Detroit. The site is located on the Scioto River about three miles west of Kenton in Hardin County, Ohio. *Blue, Centennial History*, 160-76.

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known aristocratic family in Ohio, thought himself too good to associate with common soldiers, and all the men hated him, and played all kind of pranks upon him. It so happened that he was officer of the day, and I was officer of the guard at the same time.—The line of sentinels were placed on the opposite side of a small stream of water running alongside of the camp, and the sentinels had to cross it upon a few poles thrown across for that purpose in relieving guard. Rain of a short time previous had raised the stream considerably, and the boys had plotted to have some fun with the Major that night. It was cloudy and very dark, shortly after which the Major came to the guard and requested a sergeant and file of men to escort him over the grand rounds. The first sentinel they came to, was just on the opposite side of the stream so, soon as the sergeant had crossed over, he was hailed by the sentinel, "who comes there." The answer was "grand rounds."—"Stand fast grand rounds. Advance sergeant and give the countersign." By this time the Major had slipped off the poles and was floundering in the water near waist deep. The sentinel heard him splashing in the water, and called out aloud: "Stand fast, grand rounds, after which he crawled out of the water and passed on. We heard the splashing in the water, and from the tittering amongst the boys I was satisfied that it was a plot they had made up.—There was a sutler that had an establishment near camp, who sold coffee, sugar, butter and whiskey, &c. We had quite a number of men in the ranks that would drink too much whiskey if they could get it. Their rations of whiskey did not satisfy them, and when they had money they would go and buy of the sutler, and some of them would keep drunk nearly all the time. Gen. Tupper issued a general order prohibiting the sutler from selling whiskey to any soldier without a written or verbal permit from some commissioned officer. There were a few men in our company that still got whiskey and kept drunk. Our Captain was sick on furlough, and I had command of the company. I endeavored to find out how they got their whiskey, and at last one of our men told the whole secret. There was a man in lines that had a sword to sell for five dollars; the money was raised; the sword bought, and two or three of them would take the sword and canteen and go to the sutler and ask to buy a quart of whiskey—well where is your permit,—"I have got none, but here is our ensign. Ensign will you permit me to buy a quart of whiskey." "Yes sir, let that man have a quart of whiskey." This was the plan they had contrived to get whiskey, so we took the sword from them. Three of us concluded to go down the river a few miles to try and kill a deer or turkey. We started early one morning, and went down the stream on the same side that our camp was on; we discovered a gang of deers. They started off in different directions, two of them crossed over the stream, and made rather back towards our camp. I crossed over and followed them a

considerable distance, but could not get a shot. I could always see their tails before I could see their bodies, and I finally gave up the chase. I concluded as I had lost my companions, as they had gone down the stream, that I would not follow them, but would look round for some other game, and then follow the stream back to camp. I went down to the stream and followed it up until I was confident I had gone far enough. I concluded I would cross over and get into the road that led up to camp; but when I got to the stream I found it to be a small run with but little water in it. I was then satisfied that it was a branch of the stream that our camp was on, that I knew nothing about. It was cloudy and late in the day, and I was afraid to leave the stream for fear I would get lost, so I concluded to follow it around to camp. I followed on down until dark, when I found a large tree that had fallen. It had broke four or five feet from the ground, and was still attached to the stump. I gathered bark and leaves, and made a comfortable place to sit, with my back against the stump, and covered by the body of the tree which was not over two feet above my head. I set there all night, and although it rained, I kept quite dry, but did not sleep much. Nothing disturbed me except that I heard something run past, which alarmed me some. In the morning I started down the stream without any breakfast, and before I got to the forks of the stream, I heard the cannon boom. The boys that went with me had returned to camp, (having killed no game) and reported that Lieutenant Jackson was lost in the woods, and General Tupper had ordered the cannon to be fired at sun-rise, and every hour afterwards until I was found. I continued down the river to the forks, and crossed over, got into the road, and started up stream towards camp, I presently heard another boom. I continued on and soon met four of our men that had started to hunt for me.—They fired off their guns as a signal that I was found, and we returned to camp, and I felt very much like taking full rations. This was my last deer hunt during the war. During the time we remained at camp McArthur, the stream that we got water from, froze almost dry, and the general ordered a well to be dug inside the encampment. It was commenced large enough for two men to work in it at a time, and one day two of the men fell out and fought right in camp. They were court-marshaled and sentenced to dig in the well two days together, which sentence was put in force. When we first settled here at Elkhart Prairie, a man by the name of William Runyan settled here.²⁸ On conversation with him we found that we had been at camp McArthur together. I asked him if he remembered the circum-

²⁸ Corporal William Runyan was a member of Captain Abner Barrett's company and was probably from Champaign County, Ohio. He served from August 21 to October 12, 1812, and again from January 1 to February 24, 1813. Adjutant General of Ohio, *Roster of Ohio Soldiers*, 15.

stance of the two men fighting in camp, and having to dig in the public well together. He bursted out into a loud laugh and said he did well remember it, for he was one of the men. He went from here to Rolling Prairie and died there several years ago. He was an uncle to Peter L. Runyan.

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While at camp McArthur the friendly Indians often visited our camp, and would often times stay all night. At one time several came in from Upper Sandusky. Black-Hoop, one of the head chiefs was in company, and the old man stayed in General Tupper's Morgue.²⁹ About 10 o'clock at night he was sitting and talking with the General, (he could talk good English), when some person went to one corner of the Morgue, and parting the tent-cloth, presented and fired a pistol at the old chief's head, the ball striking his cheek bone near to his eyes, he fell and lay for some length of time. After a while he sat up and his face was all covered with blood which made him look frightful. Gen. Tupper called in the surgeons who examined the wound, extracted the ball, and pronounced the case not fatal, though a pretty bad wound. They did all they could to alleviate his sufferings. This circumstance occasioned great excitement in camp, and on the next morning a court martial was ordered, and every mess was called up, sworn and examined by the court, as to their whereabouts about the time of the shooting. The examination went all round the lines, every officer, private, and camp follower, being sworn and examined by the court, and everyone proved themselves clear. It was afterwards ascertained that there was three wagoners in camp that night, that started off early the next morning with their teams, and it was finally concluded that it was one of them that had done the mischief, as they did not return back to camp.—Black-hoop sent for an Indian doctor, who stayed and attended him until he was well enough to go home.³⁰

Whilst we were at camp McArthur, our spy company was continually roaving through the country making discoveries. They came into camp one day and reported that there was a body of Indians and some British Red-coats on the North side of the Maumee river at the foot of the rapids, and in their scout they found

²⁹ Black Hoop (or Hoof) was a Shawnee chief who resided near present day Wapakoneta, Ohio. He signed the Greenville Treaty in 1795 and remained friendly to the Americans throughout the War of 1812. Blue, *Centennial History*, 160-76.

³⁰ According to General Tupper, Black Hoop was wounded on January 25, 1813, at about 9:00 p.m. The shot was fired through the chinking in the back of a chimney, indicating that Tupper had a more substantial dwelling than the marquee or "morgue" Jackson refers to. The bullet hit the Indian in the left cheek. Although \$350 was offered as a reward by the American officers present to find the culprit and Tupper commenced a lengthy investigation as Jackson describes, the guilty party was never brought to justice. Black Hoop "appeared in misery" after the incident. Knopf, *Document Transcriptions*, II, 116.

an Indian and brought him into our camp a prisoner. This I think was in October, 1812.³¹—General Tupper concluded to go down and route them if possible, and ordered about two-thirds of our force to be ready with cooked rations, to march off early the next morning. We marched off, leaving about one-third behind to keep camp, and with a quick march we arrived at the head of the rapids late on the second evening. The spies had been despatched down the river about three miles, to discover the whereabouts of the enemy, and on their return reported that they were where they had seen them before, and that they were on a frolick, drumming and dancing. Gen. Tupper and the field officers, concluded to wade the river in the night, march down and attack them in the morning before day, each company to be divided into two platoons, each platoon to march in a breast across the river, which ran pretty swift on the rapids. We were formed and started to cross over. The night was pretty dark, when the foremost had got partly over, and those that were behind had swaged down stream to where the water was deeper. Some men had began to loose their feet, and an alarm was raised that some men were drowning, which throwed the line all into confusion. Those that were in front of the confusion marched on, and those in the rear turned back. The field officers rode in and rescued those that was likely to drown, and there we were, part on one side of the river and part on the other side. Some few lost their guns that were never found. Gen. Tupper ordered those that had got over to re-cross back, so that we were all where we started from. We then went a short distance from the river, built fires to dry our clothes, and bivouked on the ground until morning. Early in the morning the spy company was sent down the river, to ascertain if the enemy had discovered us, and to ascertain their movements; they saw no particular stir, but discovered a canoe loaded with a few Indians coming across the river. They lay in ambush, and when the canoe struck shore, and the Indians began to land, they fired on them, saw one Indian fall, and another crawl up to the fence seemingly in great pain. The spies then retreated and came and reported. We heard the firing, and was formed in line of battle and proceeded to march down the river. We had gone probably a mile when we heard the Indians in front of us yelling like savages. They had supposed that they had overtaken the spies that had fired on the canoe, and ran up to within a hundred yards of our line, before they discovered our force. They then fired and retreated as fast as they came, we returned the fire, but without doing them any injury. One of our men was shot in the hand. We

³¹ Jackson is again in error regarding the date. According to General Tupper's report the expedition left camp on November 10 and returned on the 16th or 17th. Esarey, *Messages and Letters*, II, 216-21.

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then marched down and formed a line on our side of the river, and the Indians and red-coats on the opposite side. The Queen Charlotte had brought up the troops from the lake, and was now lying at the foot of the rapids. She fired two guns, and started down the river, while the British paraded with drum and fife, and the Indians yelled all round. As our rations were nearly gone, and we had no way of crossing the river, Gen. Tupper concluded to return back to camp McArthur; so we proceeded up the river probably two miles, when one of the spies came running back and told the General, that the Indians were crossing the river just above us as thick as black-birds. We went with a quick march, or rather ran, until we got opposite to where they were crossing, and formed a line on the bank, which was probably about one hundred yards from the river. Some few Indians had got over, and the river was filled with them, and the woods on the other side also perfectly alive with them. We commenced firing on them, and they commenced retreating, every one fired off his gun, before starting back through the water. In the midst of the flurry it was discovered that a number of mounted red-coats had crossed the river somewhere and was about to attack our rear. A regiment was immediately ordered to meet them, and fired at them, when they retreated in quick time. It was not known how much damage they received, but they were seen to cross back with one empty horse.—Not one of our men was hurt as they shot over us. Three of our men had straggled off from our lines, who we heard afterwards was killed and scalped. We did not know at that time how many Indians were killed, but we afterwards learned that there was seven killed and some wounded. Some were seen to fall in the river. This was all the fighting that I participated in during the war. Although Gen. Tupper reported it as a battle, yet from what I read of, and what I heard my father tell of the battles that he was in, in the revolutionary war, I never called it but a 'slight skirmish.' I did not get to know fairly whether I would make a good soldier or not, but I always supposed that I would make about as good a soldier as the dutchman, when he got into a battle, he was heard to say 'plut for plut, I would shoost so soon lif as tie.' We then resumed our march towards camp McArthur. When we left where we had bivouked during the night, there was two men left, one was sick, and the other was not right well, who staid to take care of the sick man, we did not go back to where they were, but angled to the left so as to strike the road that we came on, some miles in advance. I did not know there was any persons left there until there was inquiries made along the lines that evening for two volunteers, to go back and ascertain what had become of the two men. I think ten dollars to each, was offered, one of our boys volunteered with another man to go, and they went back that night, and found them killed and scalped.—They covered them over with logs and brush, and it then being near morning,

they went a short distance, got into a thicket and stayed all day. At night they followed on, but did not overtake us until we got in camp. We lay there doing nothing, had a good deal of sickness, principally bilious fever and yellow jaundice, several deaths occurring.

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Some time in January, 1813, Gen. Harrison determined to make a stand at Fort Meigs (where Perrysburg now stands) and we were ordered to march to that place. The weather was very cold, and the snow quite deep, and through the Black swamp the ground was not frozen, which made it quite hard traveling.³² We started with a six pound cannon, and although four horses were put to the carriage, they could not draw it, so we had to leave it in the Black swamp. At night we could cut down a beach sapling, trim off the limbs, make a brush heap on top of the snow, cover it with a blanket, put our knapsacks down for a pillow, lie down on it, cover ourselves with two other blankets, and get up in the morning almost frozen. We marched on this way until we arrived at Fort Meigs.³³ Our spy company always on the alert, went down the Maumee river to the lake, and got information from some inhabitants there, that there was a party of Indians encamped some where in the neighborhood, and were killing and destroying the cattle and hogs belonging to the citizens. Gen. Tupper sent a detachment of about four companies (I think under command of Major Beasley,) to kill or destroy them.³⁴ They started down on the ice just in the evening and went to the settlement where they were reported to be, but the Indians had left, and the party returned that evening. None of our company had ever seen lake Erie, and after they returned, those of our company that did not go, was very inquisitive to know how the lake looked. One of the boys that went being a very dry kind of a chap, told them that the sky and the lake came so near together, that there did not seem to be room for a fellows hat between. In our passage out from where we had left the cannon, we had broke the road so that it froze pretty solid and was tolerable smooth. A party was sent back and brought it to camp. One day, whilst a number of us were sliding on the ice on

³² The Black Swamp was an area in northeastern Ohio that measured over a hundred miles long and forty miles wide. Practically every large army marching through this part of the state took pains to avoid the area. Alec R. Gilpin, *The War of 1812 in the Old Northwest* (East Lansing, Mich., 1958), 36.

³³ The Ohio troops probably arrived at Fort Meigs between February 2 and February 8, 1813. Tupper wrote that he started from Fort McArthur with 400 men fit for duty but had only half that number left by February 16. Esarey, *Messages and Letters*, II, 356-60; Knopf, *Document Transcriptions*, II, 117.

³⁴ Nehemiah Beasley was an officer in the 2nd Regiment, Ohio Militia. Esarey, *Messages and Letters*, II, 219, 367. Also see Adjutant General of Ohio, *Roster of Ohio Soldiers*, 42.

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the river, one of the boys in camp loaded the cannon and fired at a shanty on the opposite side of the river, where Maumee city now stands. The ball went whizzing over the boys heads, on the ice, and they knowing nothing about the camp of the shooting came scampering off of the river in quick time, being very much frightened. The first shot missed, but the second hit the shanty, and made the dust fly. It must have been nearly a mile distant.³⁵

In about ten days, troops commenced coming in from Virginia, Pennsylvania, Ohio and other parts. The Kentucky troops under Clay and Dudley, did not arrive until after we left.³⁶ We continued there in camp, until near the middle of February when the term of service of our Brigade expired; and Gen. Harrison wishing to deliver an address to his soldiers, had caused a four square rail pen to be built, ten feet high, and covered with flat rails, as there was no lumber there. We were formed into a hollow square around the rail pile, when Gen. Harrison crawled up like a coon, and stood up at least six feet high. He had a long Roman nose, a sharp keen eye that seemed to pierce through a person at the first glance, and his face looked as sharp as a broad axe. He rehearsed the situation of this part of our country; that Hull had surrendered our army: that the Kentucky troops were massacred at River Raisin; that we had to fall back to where we now were; that he did not know how soon the enemy might be upon us; that the troops that he had expected had not arrived, and that in view of all the circumstances, he requested that the troops whose term of service was about to expire, would volunteer to stay one month longer, and he would guarantee their pay. He said that it was only a request, as he had no authority to order them to stay. We were then dismissed at the evening parade, and the subject was discussed by our company. Some were for staying, and some for going home. We had suffered very much for the last month with cold and fatigue, and the men had become very home sick. It was left to a vote, and about two thirds voted to go home, some companies stayed, but a majority of our Brigade went home. I would willingly have stayed, but an officer dare not encourage any one to stay, for it would be thrown up to him that it was money that prompted him to stay, as he was getting high

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³⁵ The cannon shot referred to was perhaps fired on the evening of February 8 when an American eighteen pound gun fired from Fort Meigs into a house across the Maumee River. Two days later, Harrison sent part of the army out on the expedition referred to by Jackson. By February 13 the Ohio militia began to be discharged and leave the army. Harlow Lindley, ed., *Fort Meigs and the War of 1812* (Columbus, Ohio, 1975), 98-102.

³⁶ Major General Green Clay (1757-1826) and Colonel William Dudley (?-1813) were both officers in the Kentucky militia. Both led troops to the relief of the first siege of Fort Meigs. *Dictionary of American Biography*, see under "Green Clay" and "William Dudley." Also see Gilpin, *The War of 1812 in the Old Northwest*, 184-88.

wages. I was very glad to hear afterwards that the troops had all got on before they were attacked.³⁷

We received our discharge papers on the 15th day of February 1813, drew and cooked two days rations, and started for home. The weather had become warm, and rain following for the past two days, had melted the snow, and the ground was deluged with water.—On arriving at the black swamp, it was discovered to be all flooded with water, so we built log heaps of fire, and proposed to remain there all night. The weather in the evening had turned quite cold, and in the morning there was ice on the water, more than a half inch thick, but would not bear a man's weight. We were then hemmed up like the children of Israel at the Red Sea, and were forced to go forward, so we formed in double file, and the ice broke through at every step, and the water underneath being from six inches to a foot in depth. When the two men in front were pretty well tired out breaking the ice, they would step aside, and fall back to the rear, and let the next file go ahead, in this way we continued on until we found some high ground where there was no ice, then we would halt and take the bits of ice out of our shoes (we had no boots then) and after running and jumping, around for a few minutes to warm and keep our blood in circulation, we would continue our "wade" for several miles until we got through the swamp. We reached Fort Finley just at night.³⁸—Built large fires, changed our pants and socks, hung them up to dry, ate our rations, and prepared to remain there all night. We started early next morning, but had to wade through considerable ice and water, although not so much as the previous day. We continued on to Urbana, where we rested part of a day, and staid all night.—Here we drew two days rations and cooked it, and the next morning started for home. We kept together the first day and night, and the next morning we broke off into squares, the men becoming anxious to get home, those that could walk fastest going ahead.—The rest marched on just as they could stand it. Our feet had become very sore by the ice in our shoes. Some few got home late that night, but the most part did not get home until the next day. It so happened that not one of our company died during the campaign, but all got home alive. Thus ended my first campaign in the service.

³⁷ The last of the Ohio militiamen were discharged on February 24, 1813. Harrison told the secretary of war that although the militiamen would not stay for even one more month he was sure that if he was ready to advance into Canada they would follow him. As a gesture of their support, Tupper and some of the other Ohio militia officers signed a statement which spoke of their confidence in Harrison and approved of his actions. Esarey, *Messages and Letters*, II, 366-69.

³⁸ The post was constructed by Colonel James Findlay as part of Hull's march to Detroit in June, 1812. The site is on Blanchard's Fork, currently in downtown Findlay, Hancock County, Ohio. Warner, Beers and Company, *History of Hancock County, Ohio* (Chicago, 1886), pt. 1, pp. 319-22.

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In the fall of the same year, 1813, (as I have no dates but write from recollection), I think it was the latter part of September,³⁹ General Harrison's head quarters were at Fort Meigs, the British had landed a force at Sandusky Bay, and were about to invade the country in that quarter. All the troops that we had in that quarter, was a small command under Major Croghan, at Fort Stephenson.⁴⁰ Gen. Harrison fearing his forces were too weak to oppose the force that might come against him, sent an express to Governor Meigs to send him a reinforcement of troops immediately. Accordingly the Governor ordered out the militia in our part of the State, en- masse, to rendezvous at Circleville, and in a few days we were en- route for the scene of action. I in the meantime had been promoted to the Captaincy of an infantry company. We marched on, passing through where the City of Columbus now stands, when it was an unbroken forest. We continued our march to upper Sandusky, where we were met by Gen. Harrison and his staff, who ordered us to halt there, and go no further, as our services were not required. The British forces had attacked Fort Stephenson, and Major Croghan had whipped the whole force, and they had gone back to Canada. Gen. Harrison was accused at that time of being rather cowardly, of being scared before he was hurt, but I never believed there was any cowardice about him, although he acted cautiously. We lay at Upper Sandusky that night, and the next morning were paraded in line, six men deep. Gen. Harrison delivered a short ad- dress, thanked us for our promptness for coming to his relief, and the Adjutant General then mustered us out of service. It was said that there was between six and seven thousand of us together there. We then started for home, and arrived there safe, without the loss of a man. Thus ended my military service in the war of 1812.

³⁹ Again, Jackson remembers incorrectly. This company was enlisted from late July to mid-August, 1813. Adjutant General of Ohio, *Roster of Ohio Soldiers*, 52.

⁴⁰ George Croghan (1791-1849), a United States regular army officer, became famous for his successful defense of Fort Stephenson, Ohio, against a much larger British and Indian force in August, 1813. *Dictionary of American Biography*, see under "George Croghan."

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