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The Importance of Louisiana to the States

Title: The Importance of Louisiana to the States

Author: Thomas Jefferson

Date: April 1802

Source: America, Vol.4, pp.287-293

It is made plain in the accompanying letters from Jefferson to Robert R. Livingston, American Minister at Paris, and, the second, to M. du Pont de Nemours, a Delaware powder manufacturer with influential French connections, that the retention of Louisiana by France would lead to war with the United States. Both letters were written by our third President, in Washington, April, 1802, shortly after news reached this country that Spain, by a secret treaty, had retroceded Louisiana and the Floridas to France. Also that Spain had withdrawn the right of deposit secured to the inhabitants of the United States by the treaty of 1795, and that the delivery was to be made at an early date.

Jefferson desired and was determined, so far as lay in his power, to keep the United States a self-sustained nation. This, he saw, would be impossible if France possessed the outlet of Mississippi valley.

Jefferson, Importance of Louisiana to the States, America, Vol.4, p.287–p.288

THE cession of Louisiana and the Floridas by Spain to France, works most sorely on the United States. On this subject the Secretary of State has written to you fully, yet I cannot forbear recurring to it personally, so deep is the impression it makes on my mind. It completely reverses all the political relations of the United States, and will form a new epoch in our political course. Of all nations of any consideration, France is the one which, hitherto, has offered the fewest points on which we could have any conflict of right, and the most points of a communion of interests. From these causes, we have ever looked to her as our natural friend, as one with which we never could have an occasion of difference. Her growth, therefore, we viewed as our own, her misfortunes ours. There is on the globe one single spot, the possessor of which is our natural and habitual enemy. It is New Orleans, through which the produce of three-eighths of our territory must pass to market, and from its fertility it will ere long yield more than half of our whole produce, and contain more than half of our inhabitants.

Jefferson, Importance of Louisiana to the States, America, Vol.4, p.288

France, placing herself in that door, assumes to us the attitude of defiance. Spain might have retained it quietly for years. Her pacific dispositions, her feeble state, would induce her to increase our facilities there, so that her possession of the place would be hardly felt by us, and it would not, perhaps, be very long before some circumstance might rise, which might make the cession of it to us the price of something of more worth to her. Not so can it ever be in the hands of France: the impetuosity of her temper, the energy and restlessness of her character, placed in a point of eternal friction with us, and our character, which, though quiet and loving peace and the pursuit of wealth, is high-minded, despising wealth in competition with insult or injury, enterprising and energetic as any nation on earth; these circumstances render it impossible that France and the United States can continue long friends, when they meet in so irritable a position. They, as well as we, must be blind if they do not see this; and we must be very improvident if we do not begin to make arrangements on that hypothesis.

Jefferson, Importance of Louisiana to the States, America, Vol.4, p.289

The day that France takes possession of New Orleans, fixes the sentence which is to restrain her forever within her low-water mark. It seals the union of two nations, who, in conjunction, can maintain exclusive possession of the ocean. From that moment, we must marry ourselves to the British fleet and nation. We must turn all our attention to a maritime forced for which our resources place us on very high ground; and having formed and connected together a power which may render reinforcement of her settlements here impossible to France, make the first cannon which shall be fired in Europe the signal for the tearing up any settlement she may have made, and for holding the two continents of America in sequestration for the common purposes of the United British and American nations.

Jefferson, Importance of Louisiana to the States, America, Vol.4, p.289–p.290

This is not a state of things we seek or desire. It is one which this measure, if adopted by France, forces on us as necessarily, as any other cause, by the laws of nature, brings on its necessary effect. It is not from a fear of France that we deprecate this measure proposed by her. For however greater her force is than ours, compared in the abstract, it is nothing in comparison to ours, when to be exerted on our soil. But it is from a sincere love of peace, and a firm persuasion, that bound to France by the interests and the strong sympathies still existing in the minds of our citizens, and holding relative positions which insure their continuance, we are secure of a long course of peace. Whereas, the change of friends, which will be rendered necessary if France changes that position, embarks us necessarily as a belligerent power in the first war of Europe. In that case, France will have held possession of New Orleans during the interval of a peace, long or short, at the end of which it will be wrested from her. Will this short-lived possession have been an equivalent to her for the transfer of such a weight into the scale of her enemy? Will not the amalgamation of a young, thriving nation, continue to that enemy the health and force which are at present so evidently on the decline? And will a few years' possession of New Orleans add equally to the strength of France?

Jefferson, Importance of Louisiana to the States, America, Vol.4, p.290

She may say she needs Louisiana for the supply of her West Indies. She does not need it in time of peace, and in war she could not depend on them, because they would be so easily intercepted. I should suppose that all these considerations might, in some proper form, be brought into view of the government of France. Though stated by us, it ought not to give offense; because we do not bring them forward as a menace, but as consequences not controllable by us, but inevitable from the course of things. We mention them, not as things which we desire by any means, but as things we deprecate; and we beseech a friend to look forward and to prevent them for our common interest.

Jefferson, Importance of Louisiana to the States, America, Vol.4, p.290–p.291

If France considers Louisiana, however, as indispensable for her views, she might perhaps be willing to look about for arrangements which might reconcile it to our interests. If anything could do this, it would be the ceding to us the island of New Orleans and the Floridas. This would certainly, in a great degree, remove the causes of jarring and irritation between us, and perhaps for such a length of time, as might produce other means of making the measure permanently conciliatory to our interests and friendships. It would, at any rate, relieve us from the necessity of taking immediate measures for countervailing such an operation by arrangements in another quarter. But still we should consider New Orleans and the Floridas as no equivalent for the risk of a quarrel with France, produced by her vicinage.

Jefferson, Importance of Louisiana to the States, America, Vol.4, p.291

I have no doubt you have urged these considerations, on every proper occasion, with the government where you are. They are such as must have effect, if you can find means of producing thorough reflection on them by that government…. Every eye in the United States is now fixed on the affairs of Louisiana. Perhaps nothing since the Revolutionary War, has produced more uneasy sensations through the body of the nation. Notwithstanding temporary bickerings have taken place with France, she has still a strong hold on the affections of our citizens generally. I have thought it not amiss, by way of supplement to the letters of the Secretary of State, to write you this private one, to impress you with the importance we affix to this transaction. . .

Jefferson, Importance of Louisiana to the States, America, Vol.4, p.292

I THINK it safe to enclose you my letters for Paris…. I leave the letters for Chancellor Livingston open for your perusal…. I wish you to be possessed of the subject, because you may be able to impress on the government of France the inevitable consequences of their taking possession of Louisiana; and though, as I here mention, the cession of New Orleans and the Floridas to us would be a palliation, yet I believe it would be no more, and that this measure will cost France, and perhaps not very long hence, a war which will annihilate her on the ocean, and place that element under the despotism of two nations, which I am not reconciled to the more because my own would be one of them. Add to this the exclusive appropriation of both continents of America as a consequence.

Jefferson, Importance of Louisiana to the States, America, Vol.4, p.292–p.293

I wish the present order of things to continue, and with a view to this I value highly a state of friendship between France and us. You know too well how sincere I have ever been in these dispositions to doubt them. You know, too, how much I value peace, and how unwillingly I should see any event take place which would render war a necessary resource; and that all our movements should change their character and object. I am thus open with you, because I trust that you will have it in your power to impress on that government considerations, in the scale against which the possession of Louisiana is nothing. In Europe, nothing but Europe is seen, or supposed to have any right in the affairs of nations; but this little event of France's possessing herself of Louisiana, which is thrown in as nothing, as a mere make-weight in the general settlement of accounts,—this speck which now appears as an almost invisible point in the horizon, is the embryo of a tornado which will burst on the countries on both sides of the Atlantic, and involve in its effects their highest destinies. That it may yet be avoided is my sincere prayer; and if you can be the means of informing the wisdom of Bonaparte of all its consequences, you have deserved well of both countries. Peace and abstinence from European interferences are our objects, and so will continue while the present order of things in America remain uninterrupted….

How Napoleon Persisted in Selling Louisiana

Title: How Napoleon Persisted In Selling Louisiana

Author: Lucien Bonaparte

Date: [Not Given]

Source: America, Vol.4, pp.294-303

Lucien Bonaparte was a younger brother of Napoleon and Joseph, who participated in this account in his Memoirs, published in Paris in 1882. As ambassador to Spain Lucien had negotiated the secret treaty of 1800 by which Spain retroceded Louisiana to France.

Spain had possessed Louisiana since the treaty of 1763, which concluded the French and Indian War. In 1803 President Jefferson sent James Monroe to join Robert R. Livingston in Paris and negotiate with Napoleon for the island of New Orleans and the Floridas. To their astonishment Napoleon offered to sell the entire province.

$20,000,000 was asked, and $16,000,000 finally was accepted for the territory of over a million square miles, including $4,000,000 for the debts which the United States was to assume. Napoleon hastened the sale because he doubted his ability to hold Louisiana against England, with whom he was at war.

L. Bonaparte, How Napoleon Sold Louisiana, America, Vol.4, p.294

"HERE you are at last!" exclaimed my brother, "I was afraid you were not coming. It is a fine time to go to the theater; I come to tell you a piece of news which will not make you feel like amusing yourself."

L. Bonaparte, How Napoleon Sold Louisiana, America, Vol.4, p.294

Continuing in the same tone, Joseph, replying to my question: "Do make haste and tell me what is up" said to me:

L. Bonaparte, How Napoleon Sold Louisiana, America, Vol.4, p.294

"No; you will not believe it, and yet it is true. I give you a thousand guesses; the general (we still called Napoleon in that way), the general wishes to alienate Louisiana."

L. Bonaparte, How Napoleon Sold Louisiana, America, Vol.4, p.294

"Bah! who will buy it from him?"

L. Bonaparte, How Napoleon Sold Louisiana, America, Vol.4, p.294

"The Americans."

L. Bonaparte, How Napoleon Sold Louisiana, America, Vol.4, p.294

I was thunderstruck for a moment.

L. Bonaparte, How Napoleon Sold Louisiana, America, Vol.4, p.295

"The idea! if he could wish, the Chambers would not consent to it."

L. Bonaparte, How Napoleon Sold Louisiana, America, Vol.4, p.295

"And therefore he expects to do without their consent. That is what he replied to me when I said to him, as you do now, that the Chambers would not consent to it."

L. Bonaparte, How Napoleon Sold Louisiana, America, Vol.4, p.295

"What, he really said that to you? That is a little too much! But no, it is impossible. It is a bit of brag at your expense, as the other day on the subject of Bernadotte."

L. Bonaparte, How Napoleon Sold Louisiana, America, Vol.4, p.295

"No, no," insisted Joseph, "he spoke very seriously, and, what is more, he added to me that this sale would furnish him the first funds for war. .

L. Bonaparte, How Napoleon Sold Louisiana, America, Vol.4, p.295

We talked together for a considerable time about the little coup d'etat which seemed to us to exceed in arbitrariness everything that had been accomplished under the Convention and the Directory. . .

L. Bonaparte, How Napoleon Sold Louisiana, America, Vol.4, p.295

It had become late. The plan of going to the theater was given up, and we separated, not without having agreed that I first should go the next morning to pay a visit to the First Consul.

L. Bonaparte, How Napoleon Sold Louisiana, America, Vol.4, p.295–p.296

It was decided that Joseph should follow me pretty closely, without our seeming to have come to a mutual understanding, that I was not to take the initiative in regard to the sale in question, but wait until the Consul himself should mention it to me. In case he should ask me whether Joseph had spoken to me about it, I was authorized to say that he had done so, and even that he seemed to me alarmed about it. Up to that point, everything that I should deem fitting to add or to object, according to what the Consul should say to me, was left to my judgment. . .

L. Bonaparte, How Napoleon Sold Louisiana, America, Vol.4, p.296

I went over, decided upon, and modified one after the other my most convincing reasons to make the Consul renounce if not his plan of alienating the colony, at least that of not consulting the Chambers about it, more and more persuaded as I was by reflection that the discussion would end in the way that I desired….

L. Bonaparte, How Napoleon Sold Louisiana, America, Vol.4, p.296

I still believe firmly to-day that if the plan of the Consul had been submitted to the Chambers, it would have been rejected by a very large majority; for after all what worse thing could happen to us, in case of sacrifices necessary to obtain peace, if we were at war with the English, or with any other government, than to cede one of our finest colonies for eighteen millions?

L. Bonaparte, How Napoleon Sold Louisiana, America, Vol.4, p.296

It was on this way of considering the renunciation projected that I founded the greatest probability of the success of our opposition. These eighteen millions seemed to me besides, as I still think them to-day, after so many years, a miserable and pitiable compensation. . .

L. Bonaparte, How Napoleon Sold Louisiana, America, Vol.4, p.296

The next morning I betook myself to the Tuileries, where I was immediately shown up to my brother, who had just got into his bath. I found him in excellent humor. He began by speaking to me of the first night at which he had been present, astonished and sorry that we had not gone to join him. . .

L. Bonaparte, How Napoleon Sold Louisiana, America, Vol.4, p.297

It was almost time to leave the bath, and we had not discussed Louisiana any more than we had the year forty. I was vexed at it, but the nearer the last moment of speaking of it approached, the more I put off doing so. The body-servant was already holding the sheet and prepared to wrap his master in: I was about to leave the place, when Rustan scratched at the door like a cat.

L. Bonaparte, How Napoleon Sold Louisiana, America, Vol.4, p.297

"Let him come in," said the First Consul, "I will stay in the water a quarter of an hour longer."

L. Bonaparte, How Napoleon Sold Louisiana, America, Vol.4, p.297

It is known that he liked very much to stay there a long time, when there was no pressing business. I had time to make a sign to the newcomer that I had not yet spoken of anything, and I saw that he was himself embarrassed as to when and how he was to broach the subject, if our brother did not give him some pretext for it.

L. Bonaparte, How Napoleon Sold Louisiana, America, Vol.4, p.297

His irresolution and my suppositions did not last long, for all at once the Consul said to Joseph:

L. Bonaparte, How Napoleon Sold Louisiana, America, Vol.4, p.297

"Well, brother, so you have not spoken to Lucien?"

L. Bonaparte, How Napoleon Sold Louisiana, America, Vol.4, p.297

"About what?" said Joseph.

L. Bonaparte, How Napoleon Sold Louisiana, America, Vol.4, p.297

"About our plan in regard to Louisiana, you know?"

L. Bonaparte, How Napoleon Sold Louisiana, America, Vol.4, p.297

"About yours, my dear brother, you mean? You can not have forgotten that far from being mine"

L. Bonaparte, How Napoleon Sold Louisiana, America, Vol.4, p.297–p.298

"Come, come, preacher—But I have no need of discussing that with you: you are so obstinate—With Lucien I speak more willingly of serious matters; for though he sometimes takes it into his head to oppose me, he knows how to give in to my opinion, Lucien does, when I see fit to try to make him change his." . . .

L. Bonaparte, How Napoleon Sold Louisiana, America, Vol.4, p.298

Joseph was showing annoyance at our conversation, the tone of which was more friendly than anything else, when finally he said to the Consul, rather brusquely:

L. Bonaparte, How Napoleon Sold Louisiana, America, Vol.4, p.298

"Well, you still say nothing of your plan?"

L. Bonaparte, How Napoleon Sold Louisiana, America, Vol.4, p.298

"Oh! yes," said the Consul, "but it is late, and if Lucien will wait for me in my study with you, mister grumbler, I will join you soon: do me the favor to recall my body-servant, it is absolutely necessary for me to leave the bath. Know merely, Lucien, that I have decided to sell Louisiana to the Americans."

L. Bonaparte, How Napoleon Sold Louisiana, America, Vol.4, p.298

I thought I ought to show very moderate astonishment at this piece of news supposed to be unknown to me. Knowing very well that an opportunity would be given me to show more, I mean at his intention to dispose of it by his own will, without speaking of it to the Chambers, I contented myself with saying: "Ah! ah!" in that tone of curiosity which shows the desire to know the rest of what has been begun rather than it signifies approbation or even the contrary.

L. Bonaparte, How Napoleon Sold Louisiana, America, Vol.4, p.298

This apparent indifference made the first Consul say: "Well, Joseph, you see! Lucien does not make an outcry about that as you do. Yet he would almost have a right to do so, for his part; for after all Louisiana is his conquest." . .

L. Bonaparte, How Napoleon Sold Louisiana, America, Vol.4, p.298

"As for me, I assure you," replied Joseph, "that if Lucien says nothing, he thinks none the less."

L. Bonaparte, How Napoleon Sold Louisiana, America, Vol.4, p.299

"Truly? And why should he play the diplomat with me?"

L. Bonaparte, How Napoleon Sold Louisiana, America, Vol.4, p.299

Brought into prominence in a way that I did not expect, and as they say, at a standstill, I could not delay explaining myself, and, to tell the truth, I was not sorry for it. But, as the Consul did not ask my opinion upon the heart of the question, which was not the greater or less fitness of the sale, I contented myself with saying . . . that it was true that on this subject I thought as Joseph. "I flatter myself," I added in a tone which I tried to make the least hostile possible, "I flatter myself that the Chambers will not give their consent to it."

L. Bonaparte, How Napoleon Sold Louisiana, America, Vol.4, p.299

"You flatter yourself?" (This was said in a significant tone and air of surprise.) "That is fine, in truth," murmured the Consul lower, at the same time that Joseph was exclaiming with an air of triumph:

L. Bonaparte, How Napoleon Sold Louisiana, America, Vol.4, p.299

"And I too flatter myself so, and that is what I told the first Consul."

L. Bonaparte, How Napoleon Sold Louisiana, America, Vol.4, p.299

"And what did I answer you?" said my brother pretty sharply looking at us successively, as if that the expression of our faces might not escape him.

L. Bonaparte, How Napoleon Sold Louisiana, America, Vol.4, p.299

"You answered me that you would do without the consent of the Chambers: is not that it?"

L. Bonaparte, How Napoleon Sold Louisiana, America, Vol.4, p.299

"Precisely: that it what I have taken the great liberty of saying to Mr. Joseph, and what I repeat here to citizen Lucien, begging him to tell me his opinion about it also, himself, apart from his paternal tenderness for his diplomatic conquest." . . .

L. Bonaparte, How Napoleon Sold Louisiana, America, Vol.4, p.300

The discussion perhaps would have stopped there to our great regret, and we were about to start for the door, to leave the Consul free to come out of his bath; he had already made a movement to do so and his body-servant was still holding his sheet spread out, ready to receive his master and to dry him by wrapping him in it, when this master, changing his mind all at once, said to us loud enough to make us turn round:

L. Bonaparte, How Napoleon Sold Louisiana, America, Vol.4, p.300

"And then, gentlemen, think what you please about it, but give this affair up as lost both of you; you, Lucien, on account of the sale in itself, you, Joseph, because I shall get along without the consent of any one whomsoever, do you understand?"

L. Bonaparte, How Napoleon Sold Louisiana, America, Vol.4, p.300

I admit that in the presence of the body-servant I felt hurt at this profession of faith on so delicate a subject, and that there escape from me a smile of astonishment at least, which, I have reason to believe, betrayed my thought, and perhaps even more than my thought of the moment, and in spite of the absolute silence which I maintained, was perhaps the distant or preparatory cause of the tempest which was brewing, not in a tea-pot, according to the proverb, but rather in the bathtub of him who was beginning to make all the sovereigns of Europe quake.

L. Bonaparte, How Napoleon Sold Louisiana, America, Vol.4, p.300–p.301

It was Joseph who furnished the final cause, to continue to speak like the disciples of Aesculapius, of the development of this tempest, because, in reply to this really very inconsiderate affirmation on the part of the chief magistrate of the Republic, followed by his "do you understand," Joseph said to him approaching the bathtub again:

L. Bonaparte, How Napoleon Sold Louisiana, America, Vol.4, p.301

"And you will do well, my dear brother, not to expose your plan to parliamentary discussion, for I declare to you that I am the first one to place himself, if it is necessary, at the head of the opposition which can not fail to be made to you."

L. Bonaparte, How Napoleon Sold Louisiana, America, Vol.4, p.301

I was preparing to support Joseph on the same side, if in a tone not so vehement, when the more than Olympian bursts of laughter of the first Consul checked all at once the word on my lips. Since this laugh was evidently forced, it did not last long, and Joseph, become redder and redder from anger and almost stuttering, said:

L. Bonaparte, How Napoleon Sold Louisiana, America, Vol.4, p.301

"Laugh, laugh, laugh, then! None the less I will do what I say, and although I do not like to mount the tribune, this time they shall see me there."

L. Bonaparte, How Napoleon Sold Louisiana, America, Vol.4, p.301

At these words, the Consul, lifting himself half way out of the bath-tub in which he had sunk down again, said to him in a tone which I will call energetically serious and solemn:

L. Bonaparte, How Napoleon Sold Louisiana, America, Vol.4, p.301

"You will have no need to stand forth as orator of the opposition, for I repeat to you that this discussion will not take place, for the reason that the plan which is not fortunate enough to obtain your approbation, conceived by me, negotiated by me, will be ratified and executed by me all alone, do you understand? By me who snap my fingers at your opposition."

L. Bonaparte, How Napoleon Sold Louisiana, America, Vol.4, p.301–p.302

After these words, the Consul sank down tranquilly in the waves whitened with Cologne-water of his bath-tub. But Joseph, in the tone of the greatest anger, with which his very handsome face seemed inflamed, replied to him immediately:

L. Bonaparte, How Napoleon Sold Louisiana, America, Vol.4, p.302

"Very well! I tell you, general, that you, I, all of us, if you do what you say, may get ready to go and rejoin in a short time the poor innocent devils whom you have so legally, so humanely, above all so justly caused to be transported to Sinnamary."

L. Bonaparte, How Napoleon Sold Louisiana, America, Vol.4, p.302

The blow was struck hard. Useless and silent censurer of this scene between my two elder brothers, I wished and did not dare to leave it. I may say that I felt painfully the offense of these severe and only too just words for him to whom they were addressed. However, I did not have time to linger over it, for there followed an aquatic explosion from which I was luckily protected by my position somewhat distant from the bath-tub, an explosion which had been caused by the rising first and then the sudden sinking down again of the Consul in his bath-tub, the whole accompanied by these words addressed only to Joseph:

L. Bonaparte, How Napoleon Sold Louisiana, America, Vol.4, p.302

"You are an insolent fellow! I ought———"

L. Bonaparte, How Napoleon Sold Louisiana, America, Vol.4, p.302–p.303

I did not hear the rest, and I believe that nothing followed this beginning of a sentence. I observed only then that following the difference existing between the two characters, exasperated, as it seemed to me, to the same pitch, the paleness of the Consul contrasted singularly with the redness of Joseph; and finding myself by my sort of silent neutrality in the midst of sharp or offensive remarks, which had been exchanged, as it were raised to the height of the role of peacemaker, and yet not wishing to pose as one, I tried to attain this end, by seeming to take what was going on as a sort of joke, and I quoted rather gaily, with a bombastic accent, the famous "Quos ego . . ." of Vergil; for in fact the image of Neptune rebuking the waves let loose in spite of him had seemed to my mind just a little ludicrous, and the "I ought" of the Neptune of the bath-tub alone reaching my ear completed for me in action at least in parody the literary translation of the celebrated reticence, the first subject of admiration for young Latinists. It is of course understood that it was only to the unsuccessful rebellion of the winds that I was supposed to compare that of my brother Joseph, while I decreed the honor of the irritated divinity to the proper person, that which each one besides understood perfectly well.

L. Bonaparte, How Napoleon Sold Louisiana, America, Vol.4, p.303

The scene had changed its aspect, or rather it had, so to speak, collapsed. Joseph, splashed to the extent of the immersion of his clothes and his face, had received all over him the most copious injection. But apparently, the nature of this perfumed flood had calmed his anger, which, in him, was never more than superficial and shortlived, for he contented himself with letting himself be sponged and dried off by the body-servant, who, to my great regret, had remained a witness of this serious folly between such actors.

Treaty with France, 1803

Title: Treaty with France

Author: The U.S. and French Governments

Date: 1803

Source: Harvard Classics, Vol.43, pp.267-272

By a treaty concluded in 1795, Spain had agreed to allow to the United States the use of New Orleans or an equivalent port on the Mississippi; but in 1802 she violated this agreement by closing the Mississippi, and ceding all Louisiana to France. The United States, realizing the danger of having such a power as France holding the natural outlet for a large proportion of the produce of the country, appropriated $2,000,000 to purchase New Orleans. Livingston and Monroe concluded with Napoleon the purchase of the whole Louisiana territory for $15,000,000; their action was ratified; and the United States took possession on December 20, 1805.

Treaty with France, Harvard Classics, Vol.43, p.267

TREATY WITH FRANCE FOR THE CESSION OF LOUISIANA, CONCLUDED AT PARIS, APRIL 30, 1803; RATIFICATION ADVISED BY SENATE, OCTOBER 20, 1803; RATIFIED BY PRESIDENT OCTOBER 21, 1803; RATIFICATIONS EXCHANGED AT WASHINGTON OCTOBER 21, 1803; PROCLAIMED OCTOBER 21, 1803.

Treaty with France, Harvard Classics, Vol.43, p.267–p.268

THE President of the United States of America, and the First Consul of the French Republic, in the name of the French people, desiring to remove all source of misunderstanding relative to objects of discussion mentioned in the second and fifth articles of the convention of the 8th Vendemiaire, an 9 (30th September, 1800) relative to the rights claimed by the United States, in virtue of the treaty concluded at Madrid, the 27th of October, 1795, between His Catholic Majesty and the said United States, and willing to strengthen the union and friendship which at the time of the said convention was happily re-established between the two nations, have respectively named their Plenipotentiaries, to wit: the President of the United States, [of America,] by and with the advice and consent of the Senate of the said States, Robert R. Livingston, Minister Plenipotentiary of the United States, and James Monroe, Minister Plenipotentiary and Envoy Extraordinary of the said States, near the Government of the French Republic; and the First Consul, in the name of the French people, Citizen Francis Barbe Marbois, Minister of the Public Treasury; who, after having respectively exchanged their full powers, have agreed to the following articles:

ARTICLE I

Treaty with France, Harvard Classics, Vol.43, p.268

Whereas by the article of the third of the treaty concluded at St. Idelfonso, the 9th Vendemiaire, an 9 (1st October, 1800,) between the First Consul of the French Republic and His Catholic Majesty, it was agreed as follows: "His Catholic Majesty promises and engages on his part, to cede to the French Republic, six months after the full and entire execution of the conditions and stipulations herein relative to His Royal Highness the Duke of Parma, the colony or province of Louisiana, with the same extent that it now has in the hands of Spain, and that it had when France possessed it, and such as it should be after the treaties subsequently entered into between Spain and other States." And whereas, in pursuance of the treaty, and particularly of the third article, the French Republic has an incontestable title to the domain and to the possession of the said territory: The First Consul of the French Republic desiring to give to the United States a strong proof of his friendship, doth hereby cede to the said United States, in the name of the French Republic, forever and in full sovereignty, the said territory, with all its rights and appurtenances, as fully and in the same manner as they have been acquired by the French Republic, in virtue of the above-mentioned treaty, concluded with His Catholic Majesty.

ARTICLE II

Treaty with France, Harvard Classics, Vol.43, p.268

In the cession made by the preceding article are included the adjacent islands belonging to Louisiana, all public lots and squares, vacant lands, and all public buildings, fortifications, barracks and other edifices which are not private property. The archives, papers, and documents, relative to the domain and sovereignty of Louisiana and its dependences, will be left in the possession of the commissaries of the United States, and copies will be afterwards given in due form to the magistrates and municipal officers of such of the said papers and documents as may be necessary to them.

ARTICLE III

Treaty with France, Harvard Classics, Vol.43, p.269

The inhabitants of the ceded territory shall be incorporated in the Union of the United States, and admitted as soon as possible, according to the principles of the Federal Constitution, to the enjoyment of all the rights, advantages, and immunities of citizens of the United States; and in the meantime they shall be maintained and protected in the free enjoyment of their liberty, property, and the religion which they profess.

ARTICLE IV

Treaty with France, Harvard Classics, Vol.43, p.269

There shall be sent by the Government of France a commissary to Louisiana, to the end that he do every act necessary, as well to receive from the officers of His Catholic Majesty the said country and its dependences, in the name of the French Republic, if it has not been already done, as to transmit it in the name of the French Republic to the commissary or agent of the United States.

ARTICLE V

Treaty with France, Harvard Classics, Vol.43, p.269

Immediately after the ratification of the present treaty by the President of the United States, and in case that of the First Consul shall have been previously obtained, the commissary of the French Republic shall remit all military posts of New Orleans, and other parts of the ceded territory, to the commissary or commissaries named by the President to take possession; the troops, whether of France or Spain, who may be there shall cease to occupy any military post from the time of taking possession, and shall be embarked as soon as possible, in the course of three months after the ratification of this treaty.

ARTICLE VI

Treaty with France, Harvard Classics, Vol.43, p.270

The United States promise to execute such treaties and articles as may have been agreed between Spain and the tribes and nations of Indians, until, by mutual consent of the United States and the said tribes or nations, other suitable articles shall have been agreed upon.

ARTICLE VII

Treaty with France, Harvard Classics, Vol.43, p.270

As it is reciprocally advantageous to the commerce of France and the United States to encourage the communication of both nations for a limited time in the country ceded by the present treaty, until general arrangements relative to the commerce of both nations may be agreed on; it has been agreed between the contracting parties, that the French ships coming directly from France or any of her colonies, loaded only with the produce and manufactures of France or her said colonies; and the ships of Spain coming directly from Spain or any of her colonies, loaded only with the produce or manufactures of Spain or her colonies, shall be admitted during the space of twelve years in the port of New Orleans, and in all other legal ports of entry within the ceded territory, in the same manner as the ships of the United States coming directly from France or Spain, or any of their colonies, without being subject to any other or greater duty on merchandize, or other or greater tonnage than that paid by the citizens of the United States.

Treaty with France, Harvard Classics, Vol.43, p.270

During the space of time above mentioned, no other nation shall have a right to the same privileges in the ports of the ceded territory; the twelve years shall commence three months after the exchange of ratifications, if it shall take place in France, or three months after it shall have been notified at Paris to the French Government, if it shall take place in the United States; it is however well understood that the object of the above article is to favor the manufactures, commerce, freight, and navigation of France and of Spain, so far as relates to the importations that the French and Spanish shall make into the said ports of the United States, without in any sort affecting the regulations that the United States may make concerning the exportation of the produce and merchandize of the United States, or any right they may have to make such regulations.

ARTICLE VIII

Treaty with France, Harvard Classics, Vol.43, p.271

In future and forever after the expiration of the twelve years, the ships of France shall be treated upon the footing of the most favoured nations in the ports above mentioned.

ARTICLE IX

Treaty with France, Harvard Classics, Vol.43, p.271

The particular convention signed this day by the respective ministers, having for its object to provide for the payment of debts due to the citizens of the United States by the French Republic prior to the 30th Septr., 1800, (8th Vendemiaire, an 9,) is approved, and to have its execution in the same manner as if it had been inserted in this present treaty; and it shall be ratified in the same form and in the same time, so that the one shall not be ratified distinct from the other.

Treaty with France, Harvard Classics, Vol.43, p.271

Another particular convention signed at the same date as the present treaty relative to a definitive rule between the contracting parties is in the like manner approved, and will be ratified in the same form, and in the same time, and jointly.

ARTICLE X

Treaty with France, Harvard Classics, Vol.43, p.271

The present treaty shall be ratified in good and due form, and the ratifications shall be exchanged in the space of six months after the date of the signature by the Ministers Plenipotentiary, or sooner if possible.

Treaty with France, Harvard Classics, Vol.43, p.271

In faith whereof, the respective Plenipotentiaries have signed these articles in the French and English languages; declaring nevertheless that the present treaty was originally agreed to in the French language; and have thereunto affixed their seals.

Treaty with France, Harvard Classics, Vol.43, p.272

Done at Paris the tenth day of Floreal, in the eleventh year of the French Republic, and the 30th of April, 1803.

 ROBT. R. LIVINGSTON [L. S.]

 JAS. MONROE [L. S.]

 F. BARBE MARBOIS [L. S.]

Decatur Captures and Burns the "Philadelphia"

Title: Decatur Captures and Burns the "Philadelphia"

Author: James Fenimore Cooper

Date: 1804

Source: America, Vol.5, pp.17-27

Cooper, from whose early authoritative "History of the Navy of the United States" is taken this spirited account of an act which Admiral Nelson, the hero of Trafalgar, pronounced "the most daring of the age, was singularly well qualified to describe such an exploit. He himself had been a midshipman in the early American Navy, and had seen service in the Mediterranean, where Decatur immortalized himself on February 16, 1804, during our war with Tripoli.

This was the last struggle by Europeans or Americans with the notorious corsairs or pirates of North Africa, who had made war on commerce in the Mediterranean for several centuries. Their depredations had become particularly bold and atrocious in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, merchant ships being subject to capture unless tribute had been paid.

In 1815 Decatur negotiated a treaty with the North African States which ended the enslaving of Americans.

Cooper, Decatur Captures and Burns the "Philadelphia", America, Vol.5, p.17–p.18

AT half-past eleven, Tripoli then being in plain sight, distant a little more than a league, satisfied that he could neither overtake the chase, nor force her ashore, Captain Bainbridge, of the Philadelphia, ordered the helm a-port, to haul directly off the land into deep water. The next cast of the lead, when this order was executed, gave but eight fathoms, and this was immediately followed by casts that gave seven, and six and a half. At this moment, the wind was nearly abeam, and the ship had eight knots way on her. When the cry of "half-six" was heard, the helm was put hard down, and the yards were ordered to be braced sharp up. While the ship was coming up fast to the wind, and before she had lost any of her way, she struck a reef forward, and shot up on it, until she lifted between five and six feet.

Cooper, Decatur Captures and Burns the "Philadelphia", America, Vol.5, p.18

This was an appalling accident to occur on the coast of such an enemy, at that season of the year, and with no other cruiser near! It was first attempted to force the vessel ahead, under the impression that the best water was to seaward; but on sounding around the ship, it was found that she had run up with such force as to lie nearly cradled on the rocks; there being only 14 feet of water under the fore-chains, while the ship drew, before striking, 18 1/2 feet forward. Astern there were not 18 feet of water, instead of 20 1/2 which the frigate needed….

Cooper, Decatur Captures and Burns the "Philadelphia", America, Vol.5, p.18–p.19

The ship had no sooner struck than the gunboats run down alongside of her, and took possession. The barbarians rushed into the vessel, and began to plunder their captives. Not only were the clothes which the Americans had collected in their bags and bundles, taken from them, but many officers and men were stripped half-naked. They were hurried into boats, and sent to Tripoli, and even on the passage the business of plundering went on. The officers were respected little more than the common men, and, while in the boat, Captain Bainbridge himself was robbed of his epaulets, gloves, watch, and money. His cravat was even torn from his neck. He wore a miniature of his wife, and of this the Tripolitans endeavored to deprive him also, but, a youthful and attached husband, he resisted so seriously that the attempt was relinquished….

Cooper, Decatur Captures and Burns the "Philadelphia", America, Vol.5, p.19

Means had been found to communicate with Captain Bainbridge; and several letters were received from that officer, pointing out different methods of annoying the enemy. In a letter of the date of the 5th of December, 1803, Captain Bainbridge suggested the possibility of destroying the Philadelphia, which ship was slowly fitting for sea, there being little doubt of her being sent out as a cruiser, as soon as the mild season should return. Commodore Preble listened to the suggestion, and being much in the society of the commander of the vessel that was most in company with the Constitution, Lieutenant Stephen Decatur, he mentioned the project to that spirited officer. The expedition was just suited to the ardor and temperament of Decatur, and the possession of the prize at once afforded the means of carrying it into effect….

Cooper, Decatur Captures and Burns the "Philadelphia", America, Vol.5, p.19

It is scarcely necessary to say that the accommodations were none of the best, with so many persons cooped up in a vessel of between forty and fifty tons; and to make the matter worse, it was soon found that the salted meat put on board was spoiled, and that there was little besides bread and water left to subsist on. The weather, however, was pleasant, and the wind favorable, and the two vessels got in sight of Tripoli on the afternoon of the 9th. To prevent suspicions, the Intrepid now went ahead of the Siren.

Cooper, Decatur Captures and Burns the "Philadelphia", America, Vol.5, p.19–p.20

The orders of Lieutenant-Commander Decatur were clear and simple. The spar-deck was first to be carried, then the gun-deck; after which a distribution of the party was made, in order to set fire to the ship….

Cooper, Decatur Captures and Burns the "Philadelphia", America, Vol.5, p.20

As the ketch drew in with the land, the ship became visible. She lay not quite a mile within the entrance, riding to the wind, and abreast of the town. Her foremast, which had been cut away while she was on the reef, had not yet been replaced, her main and mizzentopmasts were housed, and her lower yards were on the gunwales. Her lower standing rigging, however, was in its place, and, as was shortly afterward ascertained, her guns were loaded and shotted. Just within her lay two corsairs, with a few gunboats, and a galley or two….

Cooper, Decatur Captures and Burns the "Philadelphia", America, Vol.5, p.20

About 10 o'clock the Intrepid reached the eastern entrance of the bay, or the passage between the rocks and the shoal. The wind was nearly east, and, as she steered directly for the frigate, it was well abaft the beam. There was a young moon, and as these bold adventurers were slowly advancing into the hostile port all around them was tranquil and apparently without distrust. For near an hour they were stealing slowly along, the air gradually failing, until their motion became scarcely perceptible.

Cooper, Decatur Captures and Burns the "Philadelphia", America, Vol.5, p.20–p.21

Most of the officers and men of the ketch had been ordered to lie on the deck, where they were concealed by low bulwarks, or weather-boards, and by the different objects that belong to a vessel. As it is the practice of those seas to carry many men even in the smallest craft, the appearance of ten or twelve would excite no alarm, and this number was visible. The commanding officer himself stood near the pilot, Mr. Catalano, who was to act as interpreter. The quartermaster at the helm was ordered to stand directly for the frigate's bows, it being the intention to lay the ship aboard in that place, as the mode of attack which would least expose the assailants to her fire.

Cooper, Decatur Captures and Burns the "Philadelphia", America, Vol.5, p.21

The Intrepid was still at a considerable distance from the Philadelphia, when the latter hailed. The pilot answered that the ketch belonged to Malta, and was on a trading voyage; that she had been nearly wrecked, and had lost her anchors in the late gale, and that her commander wished to ride by the frigate during the night. This conversation lasted some time, Decatur instructing the pilot to tell the frigate's people with what he was laden, in order to amuse them, and the Intrepid gradually drew nearer, until there was every prospect of her running foul of the Philadelphia, in a minute or two, and at the very spot contemplated. But the wind suddenly shifted, and took the ketch aback. The instant the southerly puff struck her, her head fell off and she got a stern-board; the ship, at the same moment, tending to the new current of air. The effect of this unexpected change was to bring the ketch directly under the frigate's broadside, at the distance of about forty yards, where she lay perfectly becalmed, or, if anything, drifting slowly astern, exposed to nearly every one of the Philadelphia's larboard guns.

Cooper, Decatur Captures and Burns the "Philadelphia", America, Vol.5, p.22

Not the smallest suspicion appears to have been yet excited on board the frigate, though several of her people were looking over the rails, and notwithstanding the moonlight. So completely were the Turks deceived, that they lowered a boat, and sent it with a fast, Some of the ketch's men, in the mean time, had got into her boat, and had run a line to the frigate's forechains. As they returned, they met the frigate's boat, took the fast it brought, which came from the after part of the ship, and passed it into their own vessel. These fasts were put into the hands of the men, as they lay on the ketch's deck, and they began cautiously to breast the Intrepid alongside of the Philadelphia, without rising. As soon as the latter got near enough to the ship, the Turks discovered her anchors, and they sternly ordered the ketch to keep off, as she had deceived them; preparing, at the same time, to cut the fasts. All this passed in a moment, when the cry of "Amerikanos" was heard in the ship. The people of the Intrepid, by a strong pull, brought their vessel alongside of the frigate, where she was secured, quick as thought. Up to this moment, not a whisper had betrayed the presence of the men concealed. The instructions had been positive to keep quiet until commanded to show themselves; and no precipitation, even in that trying moment, deranged the plan.

Cooper, Decatur Captures and Burns the "Philadelphia", America, Vol.5, p.22–p.23

Lieutenant-Commandant Decatur was standing ready for a spring, with Messrs. Laws and Morris quite near him, As soon as close enough, he jumped at the frigate's chain-plates, and while clinging to the ship himself, he gave the order to board. The two midshipmen were at his side, and all the officers and men of the Intrepid arose and followed. The three gentlemen named were in the chains together, and Lieutenant-Commandant Decatur and Mr. Morris sprang at the rail above them, while Mr. Laws dashed at a port. To the latter would have belonged the honor of having been first in this gallant assault, but wearing a boarding-belt, his pistols were caught between the gun and the side of the port. Mr. Decatur's foot slipped in springing, and Mr. Charles Morris first stood upon the quarter-deck of the Philadelphia. In an instant, Lieutenant-Commandant Decatur and Mr. Laws were at his side, while heads and bodies appeared coming over the rail and through the ports in all directions.

Cooper, Decatur Captures and Burns the "Philadelphia", America, Vol.5, p.23–p.24

The surprise appears to have been as perfect as the assault was rapid and earnest. Most of the Turks on deck crowded forward, and all ran over to the starboard side, as their enemies poured in on the larboard. A few were aft, but as soon as charged they leaped into the sea. Indeed, the constant plunges into the water gave the assailants the assurance that their enemies were fast lessening in numbers by flight. It took but a minute or two to clear the spar-deck, though there was more of a struggle below. Still, so admirably managed was the attack, and so complete the surprise, that the resistance was trifling. In less than ten minutes Mr. Decatur was on the quarter-deck again in undisturbed possession of his prize.

Cooper, Decatur Captures and Burns the "Philadelphia", America, Vol.5, p.24

There can be no doubt that this gallant officer now felt bitter regrets that it was not in his power to bring away the ship he had so nobly recovered. Not only were his orders on this point peremptory, however, but the frigate had not a sail bent, nor a yard crossed, and she wanted her foremast. It was next to impossible, therefore, to remove her, and the command was given to pass up the combustibles from the ketch.

Cooper, Decatur Captures and Burns the "Philadelphia", America, Vol.5, p.24

The duty of setting fire to the prize appears to have been executed with as much promptitude and order, as every other part of the service. The officers distributed themselves, agreeably to the previous instructions, and the men soon appeared with the necessary means. Each party acted by itself and as it got ready. So rapid were they all in their movements, that the men with combustibles had scarcely time to get as low as the cock-pit and after storerooms, before the fires were lighted over their heads. When the officer entrusted with the duty last mentioned had got through he found the after-hatches filled with smoke from the fire in the ward-room and steerage, and he was obliged to make his escape by the forward ladders.

Cooper, Decatur Captures and Burns the "Philadelphia", America, Vol.5, p.24–p.25

The Americans were in the ship from twenty to twenty-five minutes, and they were literally driven out of her by the flames. The vessel had got to be so dry in that low latitude that she burned like pine; and the combustibles had been as judiciously prepared, as they were steadily used. The last party up were the people who had been in the store-rooms, and when they reached the deck they found most of their companions already in the Intrepid. Joining them, and ascertaining that all was ready, the order was given to cast off. Notwithstanding the daring character of the enterprise in general, Decatur and his party now ran the greatest risk they had incurred that night. So fierce had the conflagration already become, that the flames began to pour out of the ports, and the headfast having been cast off, the ketch fell astern, with her jigger flapping against the quarter-gallery, and her boom foul. The fire showed itself in the window at this critical moment; and beneath was all the ammunition of the party, covered with a tarpaulin. To increase the risk, the stern-fast was jammed. By using swords, however, for there was not time to look for an ax, the hawser was cut, and the Intrepid was extricated from the most imminent danger by a vigorous shove. As she swung clear of the frigate, the flames reached the rigging, up which they went hissing, like a rocket, the tar having oozed from the ropes, which had been saturated with that inflammable matter. Matches could not have kindled with greater quickness.

Cooper, Decatur Captures and Burns the "Philadelphia", America, Vol.5, p.25–p.26

The sweeps were now manned. Up to this moment, everything had been done earnestly, though without noise, but as soon as they felt that they had got command of their ketch again, and by two or three vigorous strokes had sent her away from the frigate, the people of the Intrepid ceased rowing, and as one man they gave three cheers for victory. This appeared to arouse the Turks from their stupor; for the cry had hardly ended when the batteries, the two corsairs, and the galley poured in their fire. The men laid hold of the sweeps again, of which the Intrepid had eight of a side, and favored by a light air, they went rapidly down the harbor.

Cooper, Decatur Captures and Burns the "Philadelphia", America, Vol.5, p.26

The spectacle that followed is described as having been both beautiful and sublime. The entire bay was illuminated by the conflagration, the roar of cannon was constant, and Tripoli was in a clamor. The appearance of the ship was, in the highest degree, magnificent; and to add to the effect, as her guns heated, they began to go off. Owing to the shift of wind, and the position into which she had tended, she, in some measure, returned the enemy's fire, as one of her broadsides was discharged in the direction of the town, and the other toward Fort English. The most singular effect of this conflagration was on board the ship, where the flames having run up the rigging and masts, collected under the tops, and fell over, giving the whole the appearance of glowing columns and fiery capitals. . .

Cooper, Decatur Captures and Burns the "Philadelphia", America, Vol.5, p.26–p.27

The success of this gallant exploit laid the foundation of the name which Decatur subsequently acquired in the navy. The country generally applauded the feat; and the commanding officer was raised from the station of a lieutenant to that of a captain. Most of the midshipmen engaged were also promoted, and Lieutenant-Commandant Decatur received a sword.

Cooper, Decatur Captures and Burns the "Philadelphia", America, Vol.5, p.27

In the service the enterprise has ever been regarded as one of its most brilliant achievements; and to this day it is deemed a high honor to have been one among the Intrepid's crew. The effect on the squadron then abroad can scarcely be appreciated; as its seamen began to consider themselves invincible, if not invulnerable, and were ready for any service in which men could be employed.

Why and How Burr Killed Hamilton

Title: Why and How Burr Killed Hamilton

Author: Alexander Hamilton

Date: 1804

Source: America, Vol.5, pp.28-37

A short time before the Hamilton-Burr duel was fought on July 11, 1804, Alexander Hamilton wrote the first of the accompanying statements, taken from his biography by Allan McLane Hamilton (Scribner's). The second document is Hamilton's opinion of Aaron Burr, expressed in a confidential letter to a friend, John Rutledge, dated January 4, 1801. Hearing of this, Burr demanded of Hamilton a "prompt unqualified acknowledgment or denial," and to the latter's reply Burr rejoined: "Having considered you letter attentively, I regret to find in it nothing of that sincerity and delicacy which you profess to value. Political opposition can never absolve gentlemen from the necessity of a rigid adherence to the laws of honor and the rules of decorum."

Hamilton's letter to his wife was dated a week before the duel, of which the final document is a report in the New York Evening Post of July 12, 1804.

Hamilton's Position—From His Private Correspondence

Why And How Burr Killed Hamilton, America, Vol.5, p.28

ON MY expected interview with Colonel Burr, I think it proper to make some remarks explanatory of my conduct, motives and views.

Why And How Burr Killed Hamilton, America, Vol.5, p.28

I was certainly desirous of avoiding this interview for the most cogent reasons.

Why And How Burr Killed Hamilton, America, Vol.5, p.28

1. My religious and moral principles are strongly opposed to the practice of duelling, and it would ever give me pain to be obliged to shed the blood of a fellow creature in a private combat forbidden by the laws.

Why And How Burr Killed Hamilton, America, Vol.5, p.28

2. My wife and children are extremely dear to me, and my life is of the utmost importance to them, in various views.

Why And How Burr Killed Hamilton, America, Vol.5, p.28–p.29

3. I feel a sense of obligation towards my creditors; who in case of accident to me, by the forced sale of my property, may be in some degree sufferers. I did not think myself at liberty as a man of probity, lightly to expose them to this hazard.

Why And How Burr Killed Hamilton, America, Vol.5, p.29

4. I am conscious of no ill will to Colonel Burr, distinct from political opposition, which, I trust, has proceeded from pure and upright motives.

Why And How Burr Killed Hamilton, America, Vol.5, p.29

Lastly, I shall hazard much, and can possibly gain nothing by the issue of the interview.

Why And How Burr Killed Hamilton, America, Vol.5, p.29

But it was, as I conceive, impossible for me to avoid it. There were intrinsic difficulties in the thing, and artificial embarrassments, from the manner of proceeding on the part of Colonel Burr.

Why And How Burr Killed Hamilton, America, Vol.5, p.29

Intrinsic, because it is not to be denied, that my animadversions on the political principles, character, and views of Colonel Burr have been extremely severe; and on different occasions, I, in common with many others, have made very unfavorable criticisms on particular instances of the private conduct of this gentleman.

Why And How Burr Killed Hamilton, America, Vol.5, p.29–p.30

In proportion as these impressions were entertained with sincerity, and uttered with motives and for purposes which might appear to me commendable, would be the difficulty (until they could be removed by evidence of their being erroneous) of explanation or apology. The disavowal required of me by Colonel Burr, in a general and indefinite form, was out of my power, if it had really been proper for me to submit to be so questioned; but I was sincerely of opinion that this could not be, and in this opinion, I was confirmed by that of a very moderate and judicious friend whom I consulted. Besides that, Colonel Burr appeared to me to assume, in the first instance, a tone unnecessarily peremptory and menacing, and in the second, positively offensive. Yet I wished, as far as might be practicable, to leave a door open to accommodation. This, I think, will be inferred from the written communications made by me and by my direction, and would be confirmed by the conversations between Mr. Van Ness and myself, which arose out of the subject.

Why And How Burr Killed Hamilton, America, Vol.5, p.30

I am not sure whether, under all the circumstances, I did not go further in the attempt to accommodate, than a punctilious delicacy will justify. If so, I hope the motives I have stated will excuse me.

Why And How Burr Killed Hamilton, America, Vol.5, p.30

It is not my design, by what I have said, to affix any odium on the conduct of Colonel Burr, in this case. He doubtless has heard of animadversions of mine, which bore very hard upon him; and it is probable that as usual they were accompanied with some falsehoods. He may have supposed himself under a necessity of acting as he has done. I hope the grounds of his proceeding have been such as ought to satisfy his own conscience.

Why And How Burr Killed Hamilton, America, Vol.5, p.30–p.31

I trust, at the same time, that the world will do me the justice to believe that I have not censured him on light grounds, nor from unworthy inducements. I certainly have had strong reasons for what I may have said, though it is possible that in some particulars, I may have been influenced by misconstruction or misinformation. It is also my ardent wish that I may have been more mistaken than I think I have been, and that he, by his future conduct, may show himself worthy of all confidence and esteem, and prove an ornament and blessing to the country.

Why And How Burr Killed Hamilton, America, Vol.5, p.31

As well because it is possible that I may have injured Colonel Burr, however convinced myself that my opinions and declarations have been well founded, as from my general principles and temper in relation to similar affairs, I have resolved, if our interview is conducted in the usual manner, and it pleases God to give me the opportunity, to reserve and throw away my first fire, and I have thoughts of even reserving my second fire—and thus giving a double opportunity to Colonel Burr to pause and to reflect.

Why And How Burr Killed Hamilton, America, Vol.5, p.31

It is not, however, my intention to enter into any explanations on the ground. Apology from principle, I hope, rather than pride, is out of the question.

Why And How Burr Killed Hamilton, America, Vol.5, p.31

To those who, with me, abhorring the practice of duelling, may think that I ought on no account to have added to the number of bad examples, I answer that my relative situation, as well in public as private, enforcing all the considerations which constitute what men of the world denominate honor, imposed on me (as I thought) a peculiar necessity not to decline the call. The ability to be in future useful, whether in resisting mischief or effecting good, in those crises of our public affairs which seem likely to happen, would probably be inseparable from a conformity with public prejudice in this particular.

HAMILTON'S OPINION OF BURR

Why And How Burr Killed Hamilton, America, Vol.5, p.32

HE [Burr] is in every sense a profligate; a voluptuary in the extreme, with uncommon habits of expense; in his profession extortionate to a proverb; suspected on strong grounds of having corruptly served the views of the Holland Company, in the capacity of a member of our Legislature; and understood to have been guilty of several breaches of probity in his pecuniary transactions. His very friends do not insist upon his integrity.

Why And How Burr Killed Hamilton, America, Vol.5, p.32

2. The fair emoluments of any station, under our government, will not equal his expenses in that station; still less will they suffice to extricate him from his embarrassments. He must therefore from the necessity of his station have recourse to unworthy expedients. These may be a bargain and sale with some foreign power, or combinations with public agents in projects of gain by means of the public moneys; perhaps and probably, to enlarge the sphere—a war.

Why And How Burr Killed Hamilton, America, Vol.5, p.32

3. He is without doubt insolvent for a large deficit. All his visible property is deeply mortgaged, and he is known to owe other large debts for which there is no specific security. Of the number of these is a judgment in favor of Mr. Angerstien for a sum which with interest amounts to about 80,000 dollars.

Why And How Burr Killed Hamilton, America, Vol.5, p.32–p.33

4. He has no pretensions to the station from services. He acted in different capacities in the last war finally with the rank of Lieutenant Colonel in a regiment, and gave indications of being a good officer; but without having had the opportunity of performing any distinguished action. At a critical period of the war he resigned his commission, assigning for cause ill-health, and went to repose at Paramus in the State of New Jersey. If his health was bad he might without difficulty have obtained a furlough and was not obliged to resign. He was afterwards seen in his usual health. The circumstance never projected nor aided in producing a single measure of important public utility.

Why And How Burr Killed Hamilton, America, Vol.5, p.33

5. He has constantly sided with the party hostile to Federal measures before and since the present Constitution of the United States. In opposing the adoption of this Constitution he was engaged covertly and insidiously; because, as he said at the time "it was too strong and too weak," and he has been uniformly the opposer of the Federal administration.

Why And How Burr Killed Hamilton, America, Vol.5, p.33

6. No mortal can tell what his political principles are. He has talked all round the compass. At times he has dealt in all the jargon of Jacobinism; at other times he has proclaimed decidedly the total insufficiency of the Federal government and the necessity of changes to one far more energetic. The truth seems to be that he has no plan but that of getting power by any means and keeping it by all means. It is probable that if he has any theory it is that of a simple despotism. He has intimated that he thinks the present French Constitution not a bad one.

Why And How Burr Killed Hamilton, America, Vol.5, p.34

7. He is of a temper bold enough to think no enterprise too hazardous and sanguine enough to think none too difficult. He has censured the leaders of the Federal party as wanting in vigor and enterprise, for not having established a strong government when they were in possession of the power and influence.

Why And How Burr Killed Hamilton, America, Vol.5, p.34

8. Discerning men of all parties agree in ascribing to him an irregular and inordinate ambition. Like Catiline, he is indefatigable in courting the young and the profligate. He knows well the weak sides of human nature, and takes care to play in with the passions of all with whom he has intercourse. By natural disposition, the haughtiest of men, he is at the same time the most creeping to answer his purposes. Cold and collected by nature and habit, he never loses sight of his object and scruples no means of accomplishing it. He is artful and intriguing to an inconceivable degree. In short all his conduct indicates that he has in view nothing less than the establishment of supreme power in his own person. Of this nothing can be a surer index than that having in fact high-toned notions of government, he has nevertheless constantly opposed the Federal and courted the popular party. As he never can effect his wish by the aid of good men, he will court and employ able and daring scoundrels of every party, and by availing himself of their assistance and of all the bad passions of society, he will in all likelihood attempt an usurpation.

Why And How Burr Killed Hamilton, America, Vol.5, p.35

8. [sic] Within the last three weeks at his own table, he drank these toasts successively 1—The French Republic, 2—The Commissioners who negotiated the convention, 3—Bonaparte, 4—Lafayette: and he countenanced and seconded the positions openly advanced by one of his guests that it was the interest of this country to leave it free to the belligerent powers to sell their prizes in our ports and to build and equip ships for their respective uses; a doctrine which evidentally aims at turning all the naval resources of the United States into the channel of France; and which by making these states the most pernicious enemy of Great Britain would compel her to go to war with us.

Why And How Burr Killed Hamilton, America, Vol.5, p.35

9. Though possessing infinite art, cunning and address, he is yet to give proofs of great or solid abilities. It is certain that at the bar he is more remarkable for ingenuity and dexterity, than for sound judgment or good logic. From the character of his understanding and heart it is likely that any innovation which he may effect will be such as to serve the turn of his own power, not such as will issue in establishments favorable to the permanent security and prosperity of the nation-founded upon the principles of a strong free and regular government.

ALEXANDER HAMILTON TO HIS WIFE

ELIZABETH HAMILTON

Why And How Burr Killed Hamilton, America, Vol.5, p.36

THIS letter, my very dear Eliza, will not be delivered to you unless I shall first have terminated my earthly career, to begin, as I humbly hope, from redeeming grace and divine mercy, a happy immortality.

Why And How Burr Killed Hamilton, America, Vol.5, p.36

If it had been possible for me to have avoided the interview, my love for you and my precious children would have been alone a decisive motive. But it was not possible, without sacrifices which would have rendered me unworthy of your esteem. I need not tell you of the pangs I feel from the idea of quitting you, and exposing you to the anguish which I know you would feel. Nor could I dwell on the topic lest it should unman me.

Why And How Burr Killed Hamilton, America, Vol.5, p.36

The consolations of Religion, my beloved, can alone support you; and these you have a right to enjoy. Fly to the bosom of your God and be comforted.

Why And How Burr Killed Hamilton, America, Vol.5, p.36

With my last idea I shall cherish the sweet hope of meeting you in a better world.

Why And How Burr Killed Hamilton, America, Vol.5, p.36

Adieu best of wives—best of women.

Why And How Burr Killed Hamilton, America, Vol.5, p.36

Embrace all my darling children for me.

A CONTEMPORARY ACCOUNT

OF THE HAMILTON-BURR DUEL

Why And How Burr Killed Hamilton, America, Vol.5, p.37

IT WAS nearly seven in the morning when the boat which carried General Hamilton, his friend Mr. Pendleton, and the surgeon mutually agreed on, Doctor Hosack, reached that part of the Jersey shore called the Weahawk. There they found Mr. Burr and his friend Mr. Van Ness, who, as I am told, had been employed since their arrival, with coats off, in clearing away the bushes, limbs of trees, etc., so as to make a fair opening. The parties in a few moments were at their allotted situations. When Mr. Pendleton gave the word, Mr. Burr raised his arm slowly, deliberately took his aim, and fired. His ball entered General Hamilton's right side. As soon as the bullet struck him, he raised himself involuntarily on his toes, turned a little to the left (at which moment his pistol went off), and fell upon his face. Mr. Pendleton immediately called out for Dr. Hosack, who in running to the spot, had to pass Mr. Van Ness and Colonel Burr; but Van Ness had the cool precaution to cover his principal with an umbrella, so that Dr. Hosack should not be able to swear that he saw him on the field.

The Lewis and Clark Expedition

Title: The Lewis and Clark Expedition

Author: Reuben Gold Thwaites

Date: 1804

Source: America, Vol.5, pp.38-49

Thwaites, the American historian, has written the best general account of this famous exploring expedition, based upon the journals kept by Captains Meriwether Lewis and William Clark, who were sent by President Jefferson, authorized by Congress, in 1804, to explore the Louisiana Territory recently purchased by France. This account is taken from Thwaites' "Rocky Mountain Explorations," published by D. Appleton & Company.

Starting from St. Louis, Missouri, on May 14, 1804, the party of thirty-five men and one woman (Sacajawea) did not get back to the Mississippi River until September, 1806, having traveled 8,500 miles to and from the Pacific coast.

In recognition of the exploit, Captain Lewis, who had been Jefferson's secretary, received a grant of land and was appointed Governor of Louisiana. Clark, who was a brother of George Rogers Clark, the Revolutionary frontiersman, became Governor of the Northwest Territory.

Thwaites, Lewis and Clark Expedition, America, Vol.5, p.38–p.39

AT FOUR in the afternoon of the fourteenth of May, 1804, "all in health and readiness to set out," the expedition left camp at River Dubois, "in the presence of many of the neighboring inhabitants, and proceeded on under a jentle brease up the Missouri." Clark was in charge of the embarkation, for Lewis was attending to the last business details in St. Louis. The flotilla consisted of three craft—a keel boat fifty-five feet long, drawing three feet of water, carrying a sail, propelled by twenty-two oars, with both forecastle and cabin, and the center guarded by a breastwork, for attacks from Indians were feared, especially on the lower reaches of the Missouri; a pirogue or open boat with seven oars, and another with six, both of them carrying sails. The party comprised, in addition to Clark, three sergeants (Ordway, Pryor, and Floyd), twenty-three privates, two interpreters (Drouillard and Charbonneau), Charbonneau's Indian squaw Sacajawea, and the negro York.

Thwaites, Lewis and Clark Expedition, America, Vol.5, p.39

Lewis had not expected Clark to leave until the fifteenth, but the latter's plans were perfected a day ahead of time, and he was anxious to be off. Arriving the following noon at St. Charles, then a French hamlet of some four hundred and fifty inhabitants—"pore, polite, and harmonious," his journal aptly describes them—he lay there until the twentieth, when his friend joined him, the latter having been accompanied twenty-four miles overland from St. Louis by several citizens of that place, and a small knot of United States military officers, who had but recently taken part in the territorial transfer from France. At their head was Captain Stoddard, serving as military governor of Upper Louisiana, pending its reorganization by Congress.

Thwaites, Lewis and Clark Expedition, America, Vol.5, p.39–p.40

The people of St. Charles hospitably entertained the visitors, and on the following day the expedition set out "under three Cheers from the gentlemen on the bank." During the succeeding two or three days many settlers flocked to the shores to watch the little fleet toiling up the great muddy stream, and good-naturedly to wish the company joy in their undertaking. On the twenty-fifth of May the explorers passed La Charette, the last white settlement on the river—the home of Daniel Boone, still a vigorous hunter at a ripe, old age. Upon the sixth of June buffalo signs were seen; on the eleventh they first shot bears….

Thwaites, Lewis and Clark Expedition, America, Vol.5, p.40

Rapids were now frequently met with, necessitating the use in the swift water of towing-lines and kedge-anchors, a work much impeded by heavy growths, along the banks, of bushes and gigantic weeds. "Ticks and musquiters," and great swarms of "knats," begin to be "verry troublesome, necessitating smudge fires and mosquito-bars. The men frequently suffer from snake-bites, sunstroke and stomach complaints. Both Lewis and Clark now play the part of physicians, and administer simple, though sometimes drastic, remedies for these disorders; the journals make frequent mention of strange doses and vigorous bleeding. Sometimes storms drench them in their rude camp; or, suddenly bursting upon their craft in open river, necessitate great ado with anchors and cables until the flurry is over.

Thwaites, Lewis and Clark Expedition, America, Vol.5, p.40

Two days later (August 20th) occurred the first and only death. Sergeant Charles Floyd, a man of firmness and resolution, being "taken verry bad all at once with a Biliouse Chorlick…. Died with a great deal of composure." This event took place a short distance below the present Sioux City, about 850 miles above the mouth of the Missouri….

Thwaites, Lewis and Clark Expedition, America, Vol.5, p.40–p.41

The explorers were now in a paradise of game. Great herds of buffaloes, sometimes 5,000 strong, were grazing in the plains, the fattest of them falling easy victims to the excellent aims of the hunters. Elk, deer, antelopes, turkeys, and squirrels were abundant, and gave variety to their meals, for which the navigators generally tied up at the bank and joined the land party around the huge campfires. Prairie dogs, whose little burrows punctured the plains in every direction, interested the explorers. One day there was a general attempt to drown out one of these nimble miners; but, although all joined for some time in freely pouring water down the hole, the task was finally abandoned as impracticable. Prairie wolves nightly howled about their camps in surprising numbers and in several varieties.

Thwaites, Lewis and Clark Expedition, America, Vol.5, p.41–p.42

Worn by the fatigue of a day's hard work at the oars or the towing-line or pushing-pole, or perhaps by long hours of tramping or hunting upon the rolling plains, which were frequently furrowed by deep ravines, each member of the party earned his night's rest. But as they lay under the stars, around the generous fires of driftwood, great clouds of mosquitoes not infrequently robbed them of sleep. The two great leaders were possessed of mosquito-bars, which generally enabled them to rest with comparative comfort, although sometimes even these were ineffectual; but apparently none of the others enjoyed these luxuries, and buried their heads within their blankets, almost to the point of suffocation. Once they had camped upon a sand-bar, in mid river. By the light of the moon the guard saw the banks caving in above and below. Alarming the sleepers, they had barely time to launch and board their boats before the very spot where they had lain slipped into the turbid current. In the upper reaches of the river, the following year, grizzly bears and stampeded buffalo herds were added to the list of night terrors….

Thwaites, Lewis and Clark Expedition, America, Vol.5, p.42

The principal Mandan village was on a bluff overlooking the Missouri, above the present Bismarck, N. D. Three miles below, "on the north side of the river, in an extensive and well-timbered bottom," the expedition settled itself for the winter within huts of cottonwood logs, surrounded by a stout palisade of the same timber, the establishment being named, "in honor of our friendly neighbors," Fort Mandan. In reaching this point, 1,600 miles above the mouth of the Missouri, they had occupied, including delays of every sort, 173 days, thus making an average progress of a trifle over nine miles a day.

Thwaites, Lewis and Clark Expedition, America, Vol.5, p.42–p.43

During the five months spent at Fort Mandan the leaders were never free from care, for their position was one involving danger and the necessity for exercising both tact and firmness. At first the Mandans, while nominally friendly, quite naturally suspected the motives of these newcomers. With the French trappers and traders who either dwelt or frequently sojourned among them in behalf of the British fur companies, they were on intimate terms; and the Scotch, Irish, and English agents of these organizations were received upon their periodical visits with much consideration. The aims of these white men from the north were similar to their own—the preservation of the wilderness as a great hunting-ground, the only exploitation permissible being that which contributed to the market for pelts.

Thwaites, Lewis and Clark Expedition, America, Vol.5, p.43

The chiefs were plainly told that the United States now owned the country, that loyalty to the Great Father at Washington was henceforth obligatory, and that they must no longer receive medals and flags from the British. At the same time, they were informed that the exploration had no other object than to acquaint the Great Father with his new children, and that upon its return arrangements would be made for sending traders into the country, with better goods and fairer treatment than had hitherto been obtained from the Canadian companies. Long before the close of the winter Lewis and Clark had gained a fair degree of popularity among these simple people, and the British agents were correspondingly discomfited….

Thwaites, Lewis and Clark Expedition, America, Vol.5, p.43

A week out from Fort Mandan (April 14th) the expedition reached the mouth of what the leaders named Charbonneau Creek. This was the highest point on the Missouri, to which whites had thus far ascended, except that two Frenchmen, having lost their way, had proceeded a few miles farther up. All beyond was unknown to civilized men. On the twenty-sixth the mouth of the Yellowstone was reached. Here, Lewis in his journal recommends that a trading-post be established—eight hundred yards above the junction, on a high, well-timbered plain, overlooking a lake-like widening of the Missouri.

Thwaites, Lewis and Clark Expedition, America, Vol.5, p.44

In these upper regions, where signs of coal were frequently seen, and in places alkali whitened the ground like snow, "game is very abundant and gentle"; two hunters could, Lewis thinks, "conveniently supply a regiment with provisions." Big-horns, monster elk, black and grizzly bears, antelopes, and great herds of buffaloes are daily met; they feast on beavers, Lewis thinking "the tale a most delicious morsel," and wondering greatly at the industry of these animals, which in some spots fell for their numerous dams many acres of timber as thick as a man's body; wolves increase, and the nimble coyotes begin to interest them.

Thwaites, Lewis and Clark Expedition, America, Vol.5, p.44

The huge and savage grizzly was, in some respects, the most formidable obstacle encountered by the intrepid explorers; compared with these bulky, ferocious beasts, Indians occasioned small alarm. By the time the party were a month out from the Mandans, Lewis could write: "I find that the curiosity of our party is pretty well satisfyed with rispect to this anamel. . . (he) has staggered the resolution (of) several of them." A few days later came a disagreeable experience with a grizzly, in which he and seven of his men, as yet unable to locate the vulnerable parts, found it impossible to kill the creature save after a persistent fusillade from their short-range rifles. "These bear," he says, "being so hard to die reather intimeadates us all; I must confess that I do not like the gentlemen and had reather fight two Indians than one bear." . . .

Thwaites, Lewis and Clark Expedition, America, Vol.5, p.45

Once, at the dead of night, a large buffalo bull invaded their camp. Apparently attracted by the light, he swam the river, and climbing over their best pirogue—but fortunately not seriously injuring it—he charged the fires at full speed, passing within a few inches of the heads of the sleeping men, and made for Lewis and Clark's tent. Lewis's dog, his constant companion throughout the expedition, caused the burly beast to change his course, and he was off in a flash; all this, before the sentinel could arouse the camp, which was now in uproar, the men rushing out with guns in hand, inquiring for the cause of the disturbance….

Thwaites, Lewis and Clark Expedition, America, Vol.5, p.45

The third of June they came to where the river "split in two," and were greatly puzzled to know which way to go. To take the wrong branch, that did not lead toward the Columbia, would lose them the whole of the season, and probably so dishearten the party that the expedition might have to be abandoned. The utmost circumspection was necessary in order to arrive at the right decision. Both streams were carefully investigated by advance parties, being measured as to width, depth, and character, and velocity of current. The men thought the north or right-hand fork the larger of the two, and therefore the main Missouri; but Lewis and Clark were satisfied that the other was the true channel, and by common consent this was chosen. On this, as on many other occasions, the joint judgment of the captains proved to be superior to that of their assistants….

Thwaites, Lewis and Clark Expedition, America, Vol.5, p.46

On the fourth of August, Lewis came to where the Jefferson forks into three streams. At first puzzled to know which to take, he decided to follow the middle one, and left the usual note to Clark on a pole at the junction. But when Clark arrived with his boats there was no pole, for being green, the beavers had carried it off; whereupon he ascended the northwest fork, not being able to judge so well as Lewis, who had the advantage of hill-top views. But the difficulties of passage up this rapid stream were so great, that after a day's rough travel Clark returned to the forks, there finding Lewis awaiting him. Naming the northwest fork Wisdom, and the southwest Philanthropy—virtues which they ascribed to President Jefferson—they regarded the middle stream as the Jefferson, and continued its ascent. Lewis kept on his way afoot, while Clark—suffering from "the rageing fury of a tumer on my anckle musle"—followed with the craft.

Thwaites, Lewis and Clark Expedition, America, Vol.5, p.46

The river now passed for much of the way under perpendicular cliffs of rocks, infested by rattlesnakes. The mountains were not high, yet covered with snow, showing that the altitude was great, although the ascent had been scarcely perceptible. "I do not believe," writes Lewis, "that the world can furnish an (other) example of a river running to the extent which the Missouri and Jefferson rivers do through such mountainous country, and at the same time so navigable as they are." . . .

Thwaites, Lewis and Clark Expedition, America, Vol.5, p.47

The following day (August 12th), Lewis reached the source of the Missouri—a spring of ice-cold water issuing from the base of a low mountain or hill." Two miles below this, "McNeal had exultingly stood with a foot on each side of this little rivulet, and thanked his God that he had lived to bestride the mighty & heretofore deemed endless Missouri." A little later in the day, the captain crossed the divide and reached "a handsome, bold, running creek of cold, clear water, where I first tasted the water of the great Columbia river"; this was the Lemhi, an upper tributary of the Columbia….

Thwaites, Lewis and Clark Expedition, America, Vol.5, p.47

They thereupon struck off to the northward, seeking "the great river which lay in the plains beyond the mountains." The route taken was over the heavily timbered Bitterroot Mountains, which are slashed by deep gorges, down which rush torrential streams. This formidable region, "a perfect maze of bewildering ridges," was then and still is traversed by the Lolo or Northern Nez Perce trail, followed from time immemorial by Indians traveling between the upper waters of the Missouri and those of the Columbia.

Thwaites, Lewis and Clark Expedition, America, Vol.5, p.47–p.48

Having left the region of game, the party were soon pressed for provisions, and were obliged to kill several of their horses for food. Blinding snowstorms in mid-September greatly impeded progress; the sides of the mountains were steep and rocky, with insecure foothold, especially during the frequent showers of sleet; the nights were cold, raw, and often wet; great areas strewn with fallen timber sometimes appeared almost impassable barriers; and not infrequently the rude path was dangerously near the edges of steep precipices, from which men or horses were in constant fear of being dashed to pieces. Thus they toiled on, through the dense and gloomy forests of pine, sometimes scaling steep ridges, at others descending rocky slopes at the peril of their lives, or threading the thick timber of marshy bottoms. Some of their horses fell through exhaustion, to be at once used as food; and the men themselves were so disheartened that Clark found it necessary to forge ahead with a party of hunters to find level country and game, by way of "reviving ther sperits." . . .

Thwaites, Lewis and Clark Expedition, America, Vol.5, p.48

After safely braving the formidable Short Narrows of the Columbia—"swelling, boiling & whorling in every direction"—they passed camps of savages who were more familiar with white men, many of them being clad in civilized clothing obtained from the coast traders; if possible, these were even more tricky than their fellows above, and like them, dwelt in mortal fear of the Snakes and Shoshoni whom Lewis and Clark had met upon the sources of the river.

Thwaites, Lewis and Clark Expedition, America, Vol.5, p.48–p.49

On the first of November they reached Pacific tidewater, and soon were amid rich bottom-lands and abundant elk, deer, and other game, among which were sea-otters; and dense fogs frequently veiled the pleasing landscape. On the fourth, the natives at one village came in state to see them, tricked out in scarlet and blue blankets, sailor jackets, overalls, shirts and hats, in addition to their usual costume—assuming, disagreeable, thievish fellows, freely laying their hands on small things about the camp, but treated by the diplomatic explorers "with every attention and friendship." Three days later (the 7th), breakers could be heard during a storm, and Clark exultingly writes: "Great joy in camp—we are in view of the Ocian." The river was here from five to seven miles wide, with bold, rocky shores, and "The Seas roled and tossed the Canoes in such a manner this evening that Several of our party were sea sick."

Thwaites, Lewis and Clark Expedition, America, Vol.5, p.49

Finally, after being weather-bound for six days, in a dismal niche scarcely largely to contain us, our baggage half a mile from us," and canoes weighted down with stones to prevent their dashing against the rocks, the wind lulled, they proceeded (November 15th) around a blustery point, and there found a "butifull Sand beech thro which runs a Small river from the hills."

Thwaites, Lewis and Clark Expedition, America, Vol.5, p.49

The continent had at last been spanned by American explorers.

Eliphalet Nott on the Death of Hamilton, Eliphalet Nott, July 9, 1804

Eliphalet Nott on the Death of Hamilton

Title: Eliphalet Nott on the Death of Hamilton

Author: Eliphalet Nott

Date: July 9, 1804

Source: The World's Famous Orations, Vol.8, pp.174-185

From a sermon delivered in Albany on July 9, 1804—one of several sermons delivered by prominent preachers at that time, and having for their immediate purpose the breaking up of the custom of dueling. Doctor Nott's sermon was the most notable of the series. It was widely read and exerted much influence. Parts of it have long been familiar as a declamation for schoolboys.

Born in 1773, died in 1866; for a few years Pastor of Presbyterian churches; made President of Union College, Schenectady, in 1804, filling the place until 1866.

Nott on the Death of Hamilton, Famous Orations, Vol.8, p.174

BEFORE such an audience and on such an occasion I enter on the duty assigned me with trembling. Do not mistake my meaning. I tremble indeed—not, however, through fear of failing to merit your applause, for what have I to do with that when addressing the dying and treading on the ashes of the dead; not through fear of failing justly to portray the character of that great man who is at once the theme of my encomium and regret. He needs not eulogy. His work is finished, and death has removed him beyond my censure, and I would fondly hope, through grace, above my praise.

Nott on the Death of Hamilton, Famous Orations, Vol.8, p.174

You will ask then why I tremble? I tremble to think that I am called to attack, from this place, a crime, the very idea of which almost freezes one with horror—a crime, too, which exists among the polite and polished orders of society, and which is accompanied with every aggravation; committed with cool deliberation, and openly in the face of day! But I have a duty to perform: and difficult and awful as that duty is, I will not shrink from it.

Nott on the Death of Hamilton, Famous Orations, Vol.8, p.175

Would to God my talents were adequate to the occasion. But such as they are, I devoutly proffer them to unfold the nature and counteract the influence of that barbarous custom which, like a resistless torrent, is undermining the foundations of civil government, breaking down the barriers of social happiness, and sweeping away virtue, talents, and domestic felicity in its desolating course. Another and an illustrious character—a father—a general—a statesman—the very man who stood on an eminence and without a rival among sages and heroes, the future hope of his country in danger—this man, yielding to the influence of a custom which deserves our eternal reprobation, has been brought to an untimely end.

Nott on the Death of Hamilton, Famous Orations, Vol.8, p.175

The Hero, called from his sequestered retreat, whose first appearance in the field, tho a stripling, conciliated the esteem of Washington, our good old father. Moving by whose side, during all the perils of the Revolution, our young chieftain was a contributor to the veteran's glory, the guardian of his person, and the copartner of his toils.

Nott on the Death of Hamilton, Famous Orations, Vol.8, p.175

The Conqueror, who, sparing of human blood when victory favored, stayed the uplifted arm and nobly said to the vanquished enemy, "Live!"

Nott on the Death of Hamilton, Famous Orations, Vol.8, p.176

The Statesman, the correctness of whose principles and the strength of whose mind are inscribed on the records of Congress and on the annals of the council chamber; whose genius impressed itself upon the Constitution of his country; and whose memory the government—illustrious fabric, resting on this basis—will perpetuate while its lasts; and shaken by the violence of party should it fall, which may Heaven avert, his prophetic declarations will be found inscribed on its ruin.

Nott on the Death of Hamilton, Famous Orations, Vol.8, p.176

The Counselor, who was at once the pride of the bar and the admiration of the court; whose apprehensions were quick as lightning, and whose development of truth was luminous as its path; whose argument no change of circumstances could embarrass; whose knowledge appeared intuitive; and who, by a single glance, and with as much facility as the eye of the eagle passes over the landscape, surveyed the whole field of controversy; saw in what way truth might be most successfully defended and how error must be approached; and who, without ever stopping, ever hesitating, by a rapid and manly march, led the listening judge and the fascinated juror, step by step, through a delightsome region, brightening as he advanced, till his argument rose to demonstration, and eloquence was rendered useless by conviction; whose talents were employed on the side of righteousness; whose voice, whether in the council chamber, or at the bar of justice, was virtue's consolation; at whose approach oppressed humanity felt a secret rapture, and the heart of injured innocence leaped for joy.

Nott on the Death of Hamilton, Famous Orations, Vol.8, p.177

Where Hamilton was, in whatever sphere he moved, the friendless had a friend, the fatherless a father, and the poor man, tho unable to reward his kindness, found an advocate. It was when the rich oppressed the poor; when the powerful menaced the defenseless; when truth was disregarded or the eternal principles of justice violated—it was on these occasions that he exerted all his strength; it was on these occasions that he sometimes soared so high and shone with a radiance so transcendent, I had almost said, so "heavenly, as filled those around him with awe and gave to him the force and authority of a prophet."

Nott on the Death of Hamilton, Famous Orations, Vol.8, p.177

The Patriot, whose integrity baffled the scrutiny of inquisition; whose manly virtue never shaped itself to circumstances; who, always great, always himself, stood amid the varying tides of party, firm, like the rock which, far from land, lifts its majestic top above the waves and remains unshaken by the storms which agitate the ocean.

Nott on the Death of Hamilton, Famous Orations, Vol.8, p.177

The Friend, who knew no guile; whose bosom was transparent and deep; in the bottom of whose heart was rooted every tender and sympathetic virtue; whose various worth opposing parties acknowledged while alive, and on whose tomb they unite, with equal sympathy and grief, to heap their honors.

Nott on the Death of Hamilton, Famous Orations, Vol.8, p.178

I know he had his failings. I see, on the picture of his life—a picture rendered awful by greatness, and luminous by virtue—some dark shades. On these let the tear that pities human weakness fall; on these let the veil which covers human frailty rest. As a hero, as a statesman, as a patriot, he lived nobly: and would to God I could add, he nobly fell. Unwilling to admit his error in this respect, I go back to the period of discussion. I see him resisting the threatened interview. I imagine myself present in his chamber. Various reasons, for a time, seem to hold his determination in arrest. Various and moving objects pass before him and speak a dissuasive language. His country, which may need his counsels to guide, and his arm to defend, utters her veto. The partner of his youth, already covered with weeds, and whose tears flow down into her bosom, intercedes! His babes, stretching out their little hands and pointing to a weeping mother, with lisping eloquence, but eloquence which reaches a parent's heart, cry out, "Stay, stay, dear papa, and live for us!"

Nott on the Death of Hamilton, Famous Orations, Vol.8, p.178

But I have said, and I repeat it, there are those whom I can not forgive. I can not forgive that minister at the altar who has hitherto forborne to remonstrate on this subject. I can not forgive that public prosecutor who, entrusted with the duty of avenging his country's wrongs, has seen those wrongs, and taken no measures to avenge them. I can not forgive that judge upon the bench, or that governor in the chair of state, who has lightly passed over such offenses. I can not forgive the public, in whose opinion the duelist finds a sanctuary. I can not forgive you, my brethren, who till this late hour have been silent while successive murders were committed.

Nott on the Death of Hamilton, Famous Orations, Vol.8, p.179

No; I can not forgive you that you have not in common with the freemen of this State, raised your voice to the powers that be and loudly and explicitly demanded an execution of your laws; demanded this in a manner which, if it did not reach the ear of government, would at least have reached the heavens and pleaded your excuse before the God that filleth them—in whose presence as I stand I should not feel myself innocent of the blood that crieth against us had I been silent. But I have not been silent. Many of you who hear me are my witnesses—the walls of yonder temple, where I have heretofore addressed you, are my witnesses, how freely I have animadverted upon this subject in the presence both of those who have violated the laws and of those whose indispensable duty it is to see the laws executed on those who violate them.

Nott on the Death of Hamilton, Famous Orations, Vol.8, p.179

A short time since, and he who is the occasion of our sorrows was the ornament of his country. He stood on an eminence, and glory covered him. From that eminence he has fallen—suddenly, for ever fallen. His intercourse with the living world is now ended; and those who would hereafter find him must seek him in the grave. There, cold and lifeless, is the heart which just now was the seat of friendship. There, dim and sightless, is the eye whose radiant and enlivening orb beamed with intelligence; and there, closed for ever, are those lips on whose persuasive accents we have so often and so lately hung with transport! From the darkness which rests upon his tomb there proceeds, methinks, a light in which it is clearly seen that those gaudy objects which men pursue are only phantoms. In this light, how dimly shines the splendor of victory; how humble appears the majesty of grandeur! The bubble which seemed to have so much solidity has burst; and we again see that all below the sun is vanity.

Nott on the Death of Hamilton, Famous Orations, Vol.8, p.180

True, the funeral eulogy has been pronounced; the sad and solemn procession has moved; the badge of mourning has already been decreed, and presently the sculptured marble will lift up its front, proud to perpetuate the name of Hamilton and rehearse to the passing traveler his virtues. Just tributes of respect! And to the living, useful. But to him, moldering in the narrow and humble habitation, what are they? How vain! how unavailing!

Nott on the Death of Hamilton, Famous Orations, Vol.8, p.180

Approach, and behold while I lift from his sepulcher its covering! Ye admirers of his greatness, ye emulous of his talents and his fame, approach, and behold him now. How pale! How silent! No martial bands admire the adroitness of his movements; no fascinating throng weep, and melt, and tremble at his eloquence! Amazing change! A shroud! a coffin! a narrow, subterraneous cabin! This is all that now remains of Hamilton! And is this all that remains of him? During a life so transitory, what lasting monument, then, can our fondest hopes erect!

Nott on the Death of Hamilton, Famous Orations, Vol.8, p.181

My brethren? we stand on the borders of an awful gulf, which is swallowing up all things human. And is there, amid this universal wreck, nothing stable, nothing abiding, nothing immortal, on which poor, frail, dying man can fasten? Ask the hero, ask the statesman, whose wisdom you have been accustomed to revere, and he will tell you. He will tell you, did I say? He has already told you from his deathbed, and his illumined spirit still whispers from the heavens, with well-known eloquence, the solemn admonition: "Mortals! hastening to the tomb, and once the companions of my pilgrimage, take warning and avoid my errors; cultivate the virtues I have recommended; choose the Savior I have chosen; live disinterestedly; live for immortality; and, would you rescue anything from final dissolution, lay it up in God."

Nott on the Death of Hamilton, Famous Orations, Vol.8, p.181

Thus speaks, methinks, our deceased benefactor, and thus he acted during his last sad hours. To the exclusion of every other concern, religion now claims all his thoughts. Disburdened of his sorrows, and looking up to God, he exclaims: "Grace, rich grace!" "I have," said he, clasping his dying hands, and with faltering tongue, "I have a tender reliance on the mercy of God in Christ." In token of this reliance, and as an expression of his faith, he receives the holy sacrament; and having done this, his mind becomes tranquil and serene. Thus he remains, thoughtful indeed, but unruffled to the last, and meets death with an air of dignified composure and with an eye directed to the heavens.

Nott on the Death of Hamilton, Famous Orations, Vol.8, p.182

This last act, more than any other, sheds glory on his character. Everything else death effaces. Religion alone abides with him on his death-bed. He dies a Christian. This is all which can be enrolled of him among the archives of eternity. This is all that can make his name great in heaven. Let not the sneering infidel persuade you that this last act of homage to the Savior resulted from an enfeebled state of mental faculties or from perturbation occasioned by the near approach of death. No; his opinions concerning the divine mission of Jesus Christ and the validity of the holy Scriptures had long been settled, and settled after laborious investigation and extensive and deep research. These opinions were not concealed. I knew them myself. Some of you, who hear me, knew them; and had his life been spared it was his determination to have published them to the world, together with the facts and reasons on which they were founded.

Nott on the Death of Hamilton, Famous Orations, Vol.8, p.183

Who was it that, overleaping the narrow bounds which had hitherto been set to the human mind, ranged abroad through the immensity of space, discovered and illustrated those laws by which the Deity unites, binds, and governs all things? Who was it, soaring into the sublime of astronomic science, numbered the stars of heaven, measured their spheres, and called they by their names? It was newton. But Newton was a Christian. Newton, great as he was, received instruction from the lips and laid his honors at the feet of Jesus. Who was it that developed the hidden combination, the component parts of bodies? Who was it dissected the animal, examined the flower, penetrated the earth, and ranged the extent of organic nature? It was Boyle. But Boyle was a Christian. Who was it that lifted the veil which had for ages covered the intellectual world, analyzed the human mind, defined its powers, and reduced its operations to certain and fixed laws? It was Locke. But Locke, too, was a Christian.

Nott on the Death of Hamilton, Famous Orations, Vol.8, p.183

What more shall I say? For time would fail me to speak of Hale, learned in the law; of Addison, admired in the schools; of Milton, celebrated among the poets; and of Washington, immortal in the field and the cabinet. To this catalog of professing Christians, from among, if I may speak so, a higher order of beings, may now be added the name of Alexander Hamilton—a name which raises in the mind the idea of whatever is great, whatever is splendid, whatever is illustrious in human nature; and which is now added to a catalog which might be lengthened—and lengthened—and lengthened, with the names of illustrious characters whose lives have blessed society and whose works form a column high as heaven; a column of learning, of wisdom, and of greatness, which will stand to future ages, an eternal monument of the transcendent talents of the advocates of Christianity, when every fugitive leaf from the pen of the canting infidel witlings of the day shall be swept by the tide of time from the annals of the world and buried with the names of their authors in oblivion.

Nott on the Death of Hamilton, Famous Orations, Vol.8, p.184

Everything else is fugitive; everything else is mutable; everything else will fail you. But this, the citadel of the Christian's hopes, will never fail you. Its base is adamant. It is cemented with the richest blood. The ransomed of the Lord crowd its portals. Embosomed in the dust which it encloses, the bodies of the redeemed "rest in hope." On its top dwells the Church of the first-born, who in delightful response with the angels of light chant redeeming love. Against this citadel the tempest beats, and around it the storm rages and spends its force in vain. Immortal in its nature, and incapable of change, it stands, and stands firm, amid the ruins of a moldering world, and endures for ever.

Nott on the Death of Hamilton, Famous Orations, Vol.8, p.185

Thither fly, ye prisoners of hope!—that when earth, air, elements, shall have passed away, secure of existence and felicity, you may join with saints in glory to perpetuate the song which lingered on the faltering tongue of Hamilton, "Grace—rich Grace." God grant us this honor. Then shall the measure of our joy be full, and to His name shall be the glory in Christ.

Crossing the Great Divide

Title: Crossing the Great Divide

Author: Meriwether Lewis

Date: August 17, 1805

Source: America, Vol.5, pp.50-55

In this vivid record of one of the most dramatic stages of their journey from the Mississippi River to the Pacific Ocean, Captain Lewis, writing in his journal on August 17, 1805, tells of his and Captain William Clark's experiences in crossing the Rocky Mountains. That feat accomplished, the party started down the Columbia River on October 16, and on November 7 came in sight of the Pacific Ocean, on the shores of which they spent the winter of 1805-6.

Both Lewis and Clark kept elaborate and valuable journals which, however, were not published during their lifetime. A paraphrase by Nicholas Biddle, a friend of Jefferson's, appeared in 1814 and has run through several editions. Not until 1903 were these historic treasures published in complete form, the accompanying extract begin a part of the first authentic record of the expedition.

Lewis, Crossing the Great Divide, America, Vol.5, p.50–p.51

THIS morning I arose very early and dispatched Drewyer and the Indian down to the river. Sent Shields to hunt. I made McNeal cook the remainder of our meat which afforded a slight breakfast for ourselves and the chief. Drewyer had been gone about two hours when an Indian who had straggled some little distance down the river returned and reported that the white men were coming, that he had seen them just below. They all appeared transported with joy, and the chief repeated his fraternal hug. I felt quite as much gratified at this information as the Indians appeared to be. Shortly after Captain Clark arrived with the interpreter Charbono, and the Indian woman, who proved to be a sister of the Chief Cameahwait. The meeting of those people was really affecting, particularly between Sah-cah-gar-we-ah [Sacajawea] and an Indian woman, who had been taken prisoner at the same time with her and who, had afterwards escaped from the Minnetares and rejoined her nation. At noon the canoes arrived, and we had the satisfaction once more to find ourselves all together, with a flattering prospect of being able to obtain as many horses shortly as would enable us to prosecute our voyage by land should that by water be deemed unadvisable.

Lewis, Crossing the Great Divide, America, Vol.5, p.51–p.52

We now formed our camp just below the junction of the forks on the larboard side in a level smooth bottom covered with a fine turf of greensward. Here we unloaded our canoes and arranged our baggage on shore; formed a canopy of one of our large sails and planted some willow brush in the ground to form a shade for the Indians to set under while we spoke to them, which we thought it best to do this evening. Accordingly about 4 P. M. we called them together and through the medium of Labuish, Charbono and Sah-cah-gar-we-ah, we communicated to them fully the objects which had brought us into this distant part of the country, in which we took care to make them a conspicuous object of our own good wishes and the care of our government. We made them sensible of their dependence on the will of our government for every species of merchandise as well for their defense and comfort; and apprised them of the strength of our government and its friendly dispositions towards them. We also gave them as a reason why we wished to penetrate the country as far as the ocean to the west of them was to examine and find out a more direct way to bring merchandise to them. That as no trade could be carried on with them before our return to our homes that it was mutually advantageous to them as well as to ourselves, that they should render us such aids as they had it in their power to furnish in order to hasten our voyage and of course our return home, that such were their horses to transport our baggage without which we could not subsist, and that a pilot to conduct us through the mountains was also necessary if we could not descend the river by water, but that we did not ask either their horses or their services without giving a satisfactory compensation in return, that at present we wished them to collect as many horses as were necessary to transport our baggage to their village on the Columbia where we would then trade with them at our leisure for such horses as they could spare us.

Lewis, Crossing the Great Divide, America, Vol.5, p.52–p.53–p.54–p.55

They appeared well pleased with what had been said. The chief thanked us for friendship towards himself and nation and declared his wish to serve us in every respect, that he was sorry to find that it must yet be some time before they could be furnished with firearms but said they could live as they had done heretofore until we brought them as we had promised. He said they had not horses enough with them at present to remove our baggage to their village over the mountain, but that he would return to-morrow and encourage his people to come over with their horses and that he would bring his own and assist us. This was complying with all we wished at present. We next inquired who were chiefs among them. Cameahwait pointed out two others whom he said were chiefs. We gave him a medal of the small size with the likeness of Mr. Jefferson the President of the United States in relief on one side and clasp hands with a pipe and tomahawk on the other, to the other chiefs we gave each a small medal which were struck in the president of George Washington Esq. We also gave small medals of the last description to two young men whom the first chief informed us were good young men and much respected among them. We gave the first chief a uniform coat, shirt, a pair of scarlet leggings, a carrot of tobacco and some small articles. To each of the others we gave a shi[r]t, legging[s], handkerchief, a knife, some tobacco and a few small articles. We also distributed a good quantity paint, moccasins, awles, knives, beads, looking-glasses, &c. among the other Indians and gave them a plentiful meal of lyed corn which was the first they had ever eaten in their lives. They were much pleased with it. Every article about us appeared to excite astonishment in their minds; the appearance of the men, their arms, the canoes, our manner of working them, the black man York, and the sagacity of my dog were equally objects of admiration. I also shot my air-gun which was so perfectly incomprehensible that they immediately denominated it the great medicine. The idea which the Indians mean to convey by this appellation is something that emanates from or acts immediately by the influence or power of the Great Spirit; or that, in which, the power of God is manifest by its incomprehensible power of action. Our hunters killed 4 deer and an antelope this evening of which we also gave the Indians a good proportion. The ceremony of our council and smoking the pipe was in conformity of the custom of this nation performed barefoot. On those occasions points of etiquette are quite as much attended to by the Indians as among civilized nations. To keep Indians in a good humor you must not fatigue them with too much business at one time. Therefore after the council we gave them to eat and amused them a while by showing them such articles as we thought would be entertaining to them, and then renewed our inquiries with respect to the country. The information we derived was only a repetition of that they had given me before and in which they appeared to be so candid that I could not avoid yielding confidence to what they had said. Captain Clark and myself now concerted measures for our future operations, and it was mutually agreed that he should set out to-morrow morning with eleven men furnished with axes and other necessary tools for making canoes, their arms, accoutrements and as much of their baggage as they could carry; also to take the Indians, Charbono and the Indian woman with him; that on his arrival at the Shoshone camp he was to leave Charbono and the Indian woman to hasten the return of the Indians with their horses to this place, and to proceed himself with the eleven men down the Columbia in order to examine the river and if he found it navigable and could obtain timber to set about making canoes immediately. In the meantime I was to bring on the party and baggage to the Shoshone camp, calculating that by the time I should reach that place that he would have sufficiently informed himself with respect to the state of the river &c. as to determine us whether to prosecute our journey from thence by land or water. In the former case we should want all the horses which we could purchase, and in the latter only to hire the Indians to transport our baggage to the place at which we made the canoes. In order to inform me as early as possible of the state of the river he was to send back one of the men with the necessary information as soon as he should satisfy himself on this subject. This plan being settled we gave orders accordingly and the men prepared for an early march. The nights are very cold and the sun excessively hot in the day. We have no fuel here but a few dry willow brush and from the appearance of the country I am confident we shall not find game here to subsist us many days. These are additional reasons why I conceive it necessary to get under way as soon as possible. This morning Captain Clark had delayed until 7 A. M. before he set out just about which time Drewyer arrived with the Indian; he left the canoes to come on after him, and immediately set out and joined me as has been before mentioned. The spirits of the men were now much elated at the prospect of getting horses.

The "Bird-Woman" Who Guided Lewis and Clark

Title: The "Bird-Woman" Who Guided Lewis and Clark

Author: Grace Raymond Hebard

Date: 1804-1806

Source: America, Vol.5, pp.56-65

Sacajawea, which is the Indian name for Bird-Woman, was a Shoshone guide whom Lewis and Clark refer to in the journals as the only woman who accompanied them on their famous expedition in 1804-06. This account of her, by Grace Raymond Hebard, Librarian of the University of Wyoming, taken from the Journal of American History, is based upon the Lewis and Clark records and other authentic sources recently come to light.

Several memorials have been erected to Sacajawea. The first was through an appropriation from the Wyoming Legislature to erect a monument over her grave at the Shoshone Agency, Wyoming. There Sacajawea is believed to have died in 1884, at the age of one hundred and sixteen years.

On one occasion at the risk of her life Sacajawea rescued from a swamped canoe the records of the expedition and other articles of great value to the explorers.

Hebard, Bird-Woman Who Guided Lewis and Clark, America, Vol.5, p.56

TO have one's deeds extolled after a century has passed, when they were hardly recognized when executed, has been the common fate particularly of that class of individuals known as explorers; for the service rendered must be subjected to the test of time and the benefits derived as a result of exploration must be carefully weighed before applause may be adequately given.

Hebard, Bird-Woman Who Guided Lewis and Clark, America, Vol.5, p.56–p.57

The only woman who accompanied Lewis and Clark across the continent to the Pacific Coast during the seasons of 1804-6, did not in her lifetime receive any personal recognition of the services she rendered these explorers during their unparalleled journey to the then unknown Northwest. But the century that has passed since that event has brought a keener appreciation of her services from those who have taken interest to examine and unravel records of her deeds as a genius of a guide. This woman was a Shoshone Indian who was known by the name of Sacajawea. As she was a wife of a French interpreter, Touissant Charboneau, conventionality might demand that she be known as Mrs. Charboneau; but we prefer to call her more familiarly by her tribal name, because it was her native instincts and intelligence that gave her a place in history rather than that she was the wife of an interpreter The story of the part that Sacajawea played in this continental expedition is as fascinating as a piece of knighthood fiction; that it is history adds to the charm.

Hebard, Bird-Woman Who Guided Lewis and Clark, America, Vol.5, p.57

Wyoming was not traversed by these explorers either on the journey to the coast or on the return, yet it claims the distinction of having had this Indian woman guide a resident within its borders for many years and holds now all that is mortal of this "native born American." The facts leading to the establishment beyond doubt of the identity of the Wyoming woman with that of the woman guide are presented in detail now for the first time. This statement of identity has been met with ridicule, doubt, suspicion, denial. Ridicule has been turned to consideration; doubt to belief; suspicion to admission; denial to acceptance for fact after fact has been presented and corroborated by those of unquestioned integrity.

Hebard, Bird-Woman Who Guided Lewis and Clark, America, Vol.5, p.58

Sacajawea's life has two periods: that about which we know; that about which nothing can be learned. It is this latter period that has been the stumbling block, "the winter of our discontent." We see her in the vigor of her splendid young womanhood; she disappears as mysteriously as she appeared; when she again is visible it is as the aged Sacajawea, white-haired and well preserved, whose fatal ailment could only be attributed to "old age."

Hebard, Bird-Woman Who Guided Lewis and Clark, America, Vol.5, p.58–p.59

When Lewis and Clark with their party of men, in the fall of 1804, reached the Mandan Indian Villages, not far from the present site of Bismarck, North Dakota, they engaged an Indian interpreter who was to accompany them in the spring on their farther western voyage. This French Canadian interpreter, Charboneau, had at that time at least two wives, Sacajawea, the younger, having been sold to him as a slave when she was a child of five years. When he made her his wife she was about fourteen years old. The following year, February 11th, 1805, she gave birth to a son who was destined to occupy a unique position in the expedition which continued its western journey on the seventh of April of that same year. Sacajawea strapped her little papoose, not yet two months old, on her back and practically carried him in this cuddled position, with his view of the surrounding country limited to what he could see from over his mother's shoulder, to the coast and return, a distance of over 5,000 miles. This youthful traveler has been known as "Little Touissant, Little Charboneau," but he was called "Baptiste" by Clark and also at various other times when, grown older, he in his turn acted as guide, for he possessed the native instincts and cleverness characteristic of his mother. It is as "Baptiste" that he was known at the time of his death and his children have taken this as their family name.

Hebard, Bird-Woman Who Guided Lewis and Clark, America, Vol.5, p.59

A century ago the Shoshone Indians made their home around and along the Snake river in Idaho, just west of the Bitter Root Mountains, or, as they are now called, the Rockies. It was in this locality that the Minnetarees, or Blackfeet, swept down and, in mighty battle, slew many of the Shoshones, taking others into captivity. At this time Sacajawea, with a girl friend, was stolen and taken over the mountains toward the East. The girl friend escaped but Sacajawea was forced to the Mandan Village and sold. In journeying west with Lewis and Clark from the Mandans, in the spring of 1805, Sacajawea became more and more conscious that the country over which they were going was that over which she had been taken when in captivity five years previous, and when, after traveling many days, no one of the expedition knew where he was or the true direction to pursue, the party depended entirely upon the instincts and guidance of the Indian woman. The homing bird knew the direction was right, but intelligence had not yet awakened.

Hebard, Bird-Woman Who Guided Lewis and Clark, America, Vol.5, p.59–p.60

At this time Sacajawea was not only helpful as a guide, but also rendered invaluable service on May fourteenth, when her husband, through his clumsiness, turned over the canoe containing all of the papers, instruments, medicine and almost every other article indispensable to the journey, without which it would have been impossible to proceed. Had these properties been lost it would have been necessary to retrace three thousand miles in order to replenish the destroyed goods, which requirement in itself would have postponed the journey for at least a year. At the risk of her own life and that of her child, Sacajawea plunged into the stream, righted the boat, rescued the papers and packages that already were floating down the stream. Several days after this when a new river was discovered, Lewis and Clark named it after her. It is now known as Crooked Creek.

Hebard, Bird-Woman Who Guided Lewis and Clark, America, Vol.5, p.60–p.61

In the summer of 1805 the party camped on the exact spot, the junction of the Jefferson, Madison and Gallatin rivers, where Sacajawea had been captured. From this point on she recognized familiar landmarks and the path to the West became more and more a matter of memory rather than of instinct. She found for Clark the pass in the mountain through which the party went, on the other side encountering what threatened to be hostile Indians. These Indians, the Shoshones, thought their old enemy, the Blackfeet, had returned to renew their war. Lewis advanced on horseback alone, having discovered an Indian chief with bow and arrows on an elegant horse without saddle. This Indian proved to be a Cameahwait, the chief of the Shoshone tribe. Lewis took his blanket which he had in his knapsack and after holding it up with both hands by two corners, threw it over his head unfolded so to appear as if he were trying to spread it on the ground. This was a signal of peace to signify that it was to serve as a seat for a distinguished guest and is the usual sign of friendliness among Indians of the West. At the same time Lewis kept calling "tabba bone," which, as taught to them by Sacajawea, signifies "white man." While doing these things he rolled up his sleeves to show the white skin of his arms, for the many months of sun and weather had tanned both face and hands to the color of an Indian.

Hebard, Bird-Woman Who Guided Lewis and Clark, America, Vol.5, p.61–p.62

A few days after this event Clark, who with Charboneau and Sacajawea had explored another region, made his appearance; upon his approach toward the Indians, Sacajawea commenced to dance with joy and excitement and sucked her fingers which was to indicate that the warriors in place of being hostile were of her own tribe. She at once discovered her treasured girl friend whom she embraced with the most "tender affection" and to her infinite delight recognized in the chief her long-lost brother. The Lewis and Clark Journals speak of the most ardent manner in which the feelings of the brother and sister were expressed. Sacajawea threw her blanket over him and with her head on his shoulder "wept profusely." Here she learned that all of her family had died except two brothers and a son of her eldest sister, "a small boy, who was immediately adopted by her." This last fact, insignificant as it may appear, proves a strong point in establishing Sacajawea's identity. There is no record to show what became of this boy after adoption, whether he went on with the party or whether on its return he went with his adopted mother to the Mandan villages. No record can be traced of him from that time until recent years when we find him living as the brother of Baptiste and son of Sacajawea, he being known as Bazil.

Hebard, Bird-Woman Who Guided Lewis and Clark, America, Vol.5, p.62

Sacajawea was home again, not to stay, however, for she never hesitated in her choice to continue with the white man's party rather than to be reunited with her tribe. The expedition at this point purchased horses which were absolutely necessary for the continuance of the journey, as the canoes which had done service to this point now had to be abandoned and the journey made overland until the waters of the Columbia became navigable. Sacajawea discovered a plot which was to drive the horses away that had been purchased from her brother and leave the expedition stranded, with the alternate of having to return by boat or press forward on foot, an impossible task owing to the scarcity of food. Here again she made herself valuable by giving information to Lewis and Clark, even though she had to testify to the treachery of her own brother and his people.

Hebard, Bird-Woman Who Guided Lewis and Clark, America, Vol.5, p.62–p.63

Charboneau was the interpreter, she the guide, though many times she had to come to his rescue. One interesting circumstance will illustrate this important service. There was a controversy in which two chiefs were implicated over some horses, at a time when the possession of horses meant success or failure. These chiefs, Twisted-Hair and Neeshnepahkeeook (Cut Nose), were of the Chopunn tribe. One of Lewis and Clark's men took the wording of the trial in English and turned the English into French for Charboneau, who translated this French into Hidatsa for Sacajawea, while Sacajawea gave this Hidatsa in Shoshone to the Shoshone prisoner, who in turn adapted this Shoshone to Chopunnish for the contesting Indian chiefs. A recital of all of the service that this Indian woman rendered to the expedition would require a daily extract from the Lewis and Clark Journals, for it was as constant as it was unselfish.

Hebard, Bird-Woman Who Guided Lewis and Clark, America, Vol.5, p.63–p.64

How Lewis and Clark who selected all of the men who were to accompany them for varied and special qualifications which would best and most miscellaneously serve the expedition, failed to include some one of the medical profession or one skilled in surgical science is a matter quite beyond comprehension. Along these lines, however, Sacajawea added to her value, for her native and secret knowledge of medicinal herbs and plants and their curative properties was of extreme worth in time of sickness. Again it is difficult to imagine when starvation seemed to be the only outcome what would have been the result if she had not concocted messes made from seeds and plants and had not known of the riches stored away in the prairie dog holes where were found artichokes as valuable as potatoes. The coast was finally reached December 7, 1805, where the party made winter quarters at Clatsop, four thousand, one hundred and thirty-five miles from St. Louis, the starting point.

Hebard, Bird-Woman Who Guided Lewis and Clark, America, Vol.5, p.64

March, 1806, found the party ready to retrace the many weary miles. The entire party that left Mandan reached that point in August of this same year. At this point we must abandon the exploring party and confine ourselves to the movements of the actors who are most vitally connected with the history of our Indian Princess, for such a title she could hake rightfully claimed through her royal blood. Charboneau received from Lewis and Clark for his services the sum of $500 and a few odd cents. There is no record to show that Sacajawea received any compensation by gift or word. It is true we find the following in the journal: "This man (Charboneau) has been very serviceable to us, and his wife particularly useful among the Shoshones Indeed she has borne with a patience truly admirable the fatigues of so long a route incumbered with the charge of an infant, who is even now only nineteen months old. She was very observant. She had a good memory, remembering locations not seen since her childhood. In trouble she was full of resources, plucky and determined. With her helpless infant she rode with the men, guiding us unerringly through mountain passes and lonely places. Intelligent, cheerful, resourceful, tireless, faithful, she inspired us all."

Hebard, Bird-Woman Who Guided Lewis and Clark, America, Vol.5, p.65

The finding of letters written a hundred years ago shows that Sacajawea was more keenly appreciated than we had been led to believe. This evidence was first made public by an article in the Century Magazine, the letter having been written August 20, 1806, by Clark on his voyage down the river after leaving Mandan.

Hebard, Bird-Woman Who Guided Lewis and Clark, America, Vol.5, p.65

"Charbono:

You have been a long time with me and have conducted yourself in such a manner as to gain my friendship. Your woman who accompanied you that long, dangerous and fatiguing route to the Pacific Ocean and back diserved a greater reward for her attention and services on the route that we had in our power to give her at the Mandans."

John Randolph on the Offensive War with England, John Randolph, 1806

John Randolph on the Offensive War with England

Title: John Randolph on the Offensive War with England

Author: John Randolph

Date: 1806

Source: The World's Famous Orations, Vol.8, pp.186-195

Delivered in the House of Representatives on March 6, 1806. Owing to differences with Great Britain it had been proposed that British manufacturers be excluded from importation. Abridged.

Born in 1773, died in 1833; Member of Congress in 1790-1813; in 1815-17, and in 1819-25; United States Senator in 1825-27; Member of Congress in 1827-29; Minister to Russia in 1830: again elected to Congress in 1832.

Randolph on the Offensive War with England, Famous Orations, Vol.8, p.186

I AM perfectly aware that upon entering on this subject we go into it manacled, handcuffed, and tongue-tied. Gentlemen know that our lips are sealed in subjects of momentous foreign relations which are indissolubly linked with the present question, and which would serve to throw a great light on it in every respect relevant to it. I will, however, endeavor to hobble over the subject as well as my fettered limbs and palsied tongue will enable me to do it.

Randolph on the Offensive War with England, Famous Orations, Vol.8, p.186

I am not surprised to hear this resolution discussed by its friends as a war measure. They say, it is true, that it is not a war measure; but they defend it on principles which would justify none but war measures, and seem pleased with the idea that it may prove the forerunner of war. If war is necessary, if we have reached this point, let us have war. But while I have life I will never consent to these incipient war measures which in their commencement breathe nothing but peace, tho they plunge us at last into war.

Randolph on the Offensive War with England, Famous Orations, Vol.8, p.187

Do gentlemen remember the capture of Cornwallis on land because De Grasse maintained the dominion of the ocean? To my mind no position is more clear than that if we go to war with Great Britain, Charleston and Boston, the Chesapeake and the Hudson, will be invested by British squadrons. Will you call on the Count de Grasse to relieve them? or shall we apply to Admiral Gravina, or Admiral Villeneuve, to raise the blockade?

Randolph on the Offensive War with England, Famous Orations, Vol.8, p.187

What is the question in dispute? The carrying trade. What part of it? The fair, the honest, and the useful trade that is engaged in carrying our own production to foreign markets and bringing back their productions in exchange? No, sir; it is that carrying trade which covers enemy's property and carries the coffee, the sugar, and other West India products to the mother country.

Randolph on the Offensive War with England, Famous Orations, Vol.8, p.187

No, sir; if this great agricultural nation is to be governed by Salem and Boston, New York and Philadelphia, and Baltimore and Norfolk and Charleston, let gentlemen come out and say so; and let a committee of public safety be appointed from those towns to carry on the government.

Randolph on the Offensive War with England, Famous Orations, Vol.8, p.187

I, for one, will not mortgage my property and my liberty to carry on this trade. The nation said so seven years ago; I said so then, and I say so now. It is not for the honest carrying trade of America, but for this mushroom, this fungus of war—for a trade which, as soon as the nations of Europe are at peace, will no longer exist; it is for this that the spirit of avaricious traffic would plunge us into war.

Randolph on the Offensive War with England, Famous Orations, Vol.8, p.188

But we are asked, are we willing to bend the neck to England; to submit to her outrages? No, sir; I answer that it will be time enough for us to tell gentlemen what we will do to vindicate the violation of our flag on the ocean when they shall have told us what they have done in resentment of the violation of the actual territory of the United States by Spain, the true territory of the United States—not your new-fangled country over the Mississippi, but the good old United States—part of Georgia, of the old thirteen States, where citizens have been taken, not from our ships, but from our actual territory. When gentlemen have taken the padlock from our mouths I shall be ready to tell them what I will do relative to our dispute with Britain on the law of nations, on contraband, and such stuff.

Randolph on the Offensive War with England, Famous Orations, Vol.8, p.188

France is at war with England; suppose her power on the continent of Europe no greater than it is on the ocean. How would she make her enemy feel it? There would be a perfect non-conductor between them. So with the United States and England; she scarcely presents to us a vulnerable point. Her commerce is carried on, for the most part, in fleets; where in single ships, they are stout and well armed—very different from the state of her trade during the American War, when her merchantmen became the prey of paltry privateers. Great Britain has been too long at war with the three most powerful maritime nations of Europe not to have learnt how to protect her trade. She can afford convoy to it all; she has eight hundred ships in commission: the navies of her enemies are annihilated.

Randolph on the Offensive War with England, Famous Orations, Vol.8, p.189

Thus this war has presented the new and curious political spectacle of a regular annual increase (and to an immense amount) of her imports and exports, and tonnage and revenue, and all the insignia of accumulating wealth, while in every former war, without exception, these have suffered a greater or less diminution. And wherefore? Because she has driven France, Spain, and Holland from the ocean. Their marine is no more. I verily believe that ten English ships of the line would not decline a meeting with the combined fleets of those nations.

Randolph on the Offensive War with England, Famous Orations, Vol.8, p.189

But this is not my only objection to entering upon this naval warfare. I am averse to a naval war with any nation whatever. I was opposed to the naval war of the last administration, and I am as ready to oppose a naval war of the present administration should they meditate such a measure. What! shall this great mammoth of the American forest leave his native element and plunge into the water in a mad contest with the shark? Let him beware that his proboscis is not bitten off in the engagement. Let him stay on shore, and not be excited by the mussels and periwinkles on the strand, or political bears, in a boat to venture on the perils of the deep.

Randolph on the Offensive War with England, Famous Orations, Vol.8, p.190

Gentlemen say, Will you not protect your violated rights? and I say, Why take to water, where you can neither fight nor swim? Look at France; see her vessels stealing from port to port on her own coast; and remember that she is the first military power of the earth, and as a naval people second only to England. Take away the British navy, and France to-morrow is the tyrant of the ocean.

Randolph on the Offensive War with England, Famous Orations, Vol.8, p.190

This brings me to the second point. How far it is politic in the United States to throw their weight into the scale of France at this moment?—from whatever motive to aid the views of her gigantic ambition—to make her mistress of the sea and land—to jeopardize the liberties of mankind. Sir, you may help to crush Great Britain—you may assist in breaking down her naval dominion, but you can not succeed to it. The iron scepter of the ocean will pass into his hands who wears the iron crown of the land. You may then expect a new code of maritime law. Where will you look for redress?

Randolph on the Offensive War with England, Famous Orations, Vol.8, p.190

But, sir, I have yet a more cogent reason against going to war for the honor of the flag in the narrow seas, or any other maritime punctilio. It springs from my attachment to the principles of the government under which I live. I declare, in the face of day, that this government was not instituted for the purposes of offensive war. No; it was framed, to use its own language, for the common defense and the general welfare, which are inconsistent with offensive war.

Randolph on the Offensive War with England, Famous Orations, Vol.8, p.191

I call that offensive war which goes out of our jurisdiction and limits, for the attainment or protection of objects not within those limits and that jurisdiction. As in 1798 I was opposed to this species of warfare because I believer it would raze the Constitution to the very foundation, so in 1806 I am opposed to it, and on the same grounds. No sooner do you put the Constitution to this use—to a test which it is by no means calculated to endure, than its incompetency to such purposes becomes manifest and apparent to all. I fear, if you go into a foreign war for a circuitous, unfair carrying trade, you will come out without your Constitution. Have you not contractors enough in this House? Or do you want to be overrun and devoured by commissaries and all the vermin of contract?

Randolph on the Offensive War with England, Famous Orations, Vol.8, p.191

For my part I never will go to war but in self-defense. I have no desire for conquests—no ambition to possess Nova Scotia; I hold the liberties of this people at a higher rate. Much more am I indisposed to war when among the first means for carrying it on I see gentlemen propose the confiscation of debts due by government to individuals. Does a bona fide creditor know who holds his paper? Dare any honest man ask himself the question? 'Tis hard to say whether such principles are more detestably dishonest than they are weak and foolish. What, sir; will you go about with proposals for opening a loan in one hand and a sponge for the national debt in the other?

Randolph on the Offensive War with England, Famous Orations, Vol.8, p.192

But the gentleman has told you that we ought to go to war, if for nothing else, for the fur trade. Now, sir, the people on whose support he seems to calculate, follow, let me tell him, a better business; and let me add that while men are happy at home reaping their own fields, the fruits of their labor and industry, there is little danger of their being induced to go sixteen or seventeen hundred miles in pursuit of beavers, raccoons or opossums—much less of going to war for the privilege. They are better employed where they are.

Randolph on the Offensive War with England, Famous Orations, Vol.8, p.192

This trade, sir, may be important to Britain, to nations who have exhausted every resource of industry at home—bowed down by taxation and wretchedness. Let them, in God's name, if they please, follow the fur trade. They may, for me, catch every beaver in North America. Yes, sir, our people have a better occupation—a safe, profitable, honorable employment.

Randolph on the Offensive War with England, Famous Orations, Vol.8, p.192

Gentlemen may take notes if they please; but I will never, from any motives short of self-defense, enter upon war. I will never be instrumental to the ambitious schemes of Bonaparte, nor put into his hands what will enable him to wield the world; and on the very principle that I wished success to the French arms in 1793. And wherefore? Because the case is changed. Great Britain can never again see the year 1760. Her Continental influence is gone for ever. Let who will be uppermost on the continent of Europe, she must find more than a counterpoise for her strength. Her race is run. She can only be formidable as a maritime power; and even as such perhaps not long. Are you going to justify the acts of the last administration, for which they have been deprived of the government, at our instance? Are you going back to the ground of 1798-9?

Randolph on the Offensive War with England, Famous Orations, Vol.8, p.193

But, sir, as French is the fashion of the day, I may be asked for my projet. I can readily tell gentlemen what I will not do. I will not propitiate any foreign nation with money. I will not launch into a naval war with Great Britain, altho I am ready to meet her at the Cowpens or Bunker's Hill. And for this plain reason.

Randolph on the Offensive War with England, Famous Orations, Vol.8, p.193

We are a great land animal, and our business is on shore. I will send her no money, sir, on any pretext whatsoever, much less on pretense of buying Labrador or Botany Bay, when my real object was to secure limits which she formally acknowledged at the peace of 1783. I go further—I would (if anything) have laid an embargo. This would have got our own property home and our adversary's into our power. If there is any wisdom left among us the first step toward hostility will always be an embargo. In six months all your mercantile megrims would vanish. As to us, altho it would cut deep, we can stand it. Without such a precaution, go to war when you will, you go to the wall. As to debts, strike the balance to-morrow and England is, I believe, in our debt.

Randolph on the Offensive War with England, Famous Orations, Vol.8, p.194

I hope, sir, to be excused for proceeding in this desultory course. I flatter myself I shall not have occasion again to trouble you; I know not that I shall be able—certainly not willing, unless provoked in self-defense. I ask your attention to the character of the inhabitants of that southern country on whom gentlemen rely for the support of their measure. Who and what are they? A simple agricultural people, accustomed to travel in peace to market with the produce of their labor. Who takes it from us?

Randolph on the Offensive War with England, Famous Orations, Vol.8, p.194

Another people devoted to manufactures—our sole source of supply. I have seen some stuff in the newspapers about manufacturers in Saxony, and about a man who is no longer the chief of a dominant faction. The greatest man whom I ever knew—the immortal author of the letters of Curtius—has remarked the proneness of cunning people to wrap up and disguise, in well-selected phrases, doctrines too deformed and detestable to bear exposure in naked words; by a judicious choice of epithets to draw the attention from the lurking principle beneath and perpetuate delusion. But a little while ago, and any man might be proud to be considered as the head of the Republican party. Now, it seems, 'tis reproachful to be deemed the chief of a dominant faction.

Randolph on the Offensive War with England, Famous Orations, Vol.8, p.195

Mr. Chairman, I am sensible of having detained the committee longer than I ought—certainly much longer than I intended. I am equally sensible of their politeness, and not less so, sir, of your patient attention. It is your own indulgence, sir, badly requited indeed, to which you owe this persecution. I might offer another apology for these undigested, desultory remarks—my never having seen the treasury documents. Until I came into the House this morning I have been stretched on a sick bed.

Testimony from the Trial of Aaron Burr

Title: Testimony from the Trial of Aaron Burr

Author: Jacob Allbright

Date: 1807-1808

Source: America, Vol.5, pp.71-77

This is the testimony on which the prosecution mainly depended to convict Colonel Burr at his third and last trial at Richmond, Virginia, in 1807-8. Burr had been previously arrested at Frankfort, Kentucky, and had been successfully defended by Henry Clay in an exciting trial. He was again arrested at Natchez, Mississippi, in January, 1807, but was released by the Grand Jury, and in February of that year he was arrested the third time, charged with both treason and a misdemeanor. To convict him of treason, proof of an overt act was necessary. To establish such proof, reliance was placed chiefly on Allbright's testimony. Burr was not convicted.

The real purpose of his attempted western expedition has never been satisfactorily explained, but it certainly was not politically honorable.

Allbright, Testimony from the Trial of Aaron Burr, America, Vol.5, p.71

MR. HAY.—Our object is to prove by his testimony the actual assemblage of men on Blennerhassett's island, and it goes of course to prove directly the overt act.

Allbright, Testimony from the Trial of Aaron Burr, America, Vol.5, p.71

Jacob Allbright.—The first I knew of this business was, I was hired on the island to help to build a kiln for drying corn, and after working some time, Mrs. Blennerhassett told me, that Mr. Blennerhassett and Colonel Burr were going to lay in provisions for an army for a year. I went to the mill, where I carried the corn to be ground after it had been dried. I worked four weeks on that business in the island. Last fall (or in September) after Blennerhassett had come home (he had been promising me cash for some time) I stepped up to him. He had no money at the time;but would pay me next day, or soon. Says he, "Mr. Allbright, you are a Dutchman." But he asked me first and foremost, whether I would not join with him and go down the river? I told him, I did not know what they were upon; and he said, "Mr. Allbright, we are going to settle a new country." And I gave him an answer, that I would not like to leave my family. He said, he did not want any families to go along with him. Then he said to me, "You are a Dutchman, and a common man; and as the Dutch are apt to be scared by high men, if you'll go to New Lancaster, where the Dutch live, and get me twenty or thirty to go with us, I will give you as many dollars." New Lancaster was some distance off. I went home then, and gave him no answer upon that. In a few days after the boats came and landed at the island. The snow was about two or three inches deep, and I went out a hunting. I was on the Ohio side; I met two men; I knew they belonged to the boats, but I wanted to find out; and they asked me whether I had not given my consent to go along with Blennerhassett down the river? As we got into a conversation together they named themselves Colonel Burr's men, belonging to the boats, landed at the island. When they asked me, whether I had not consented to go down with Blennerhassett, I put a question to them. I told them I did not know what they were about; and one of the gentlemen told me, they were going to take a silver mine from the Spanish. I asked the gentlemen, whether they would not allow, that this would raise war with America? They replied, no. These were only a few men; and if they went with a good army, they would give up the country and nothing more said about it. I had all this conversation with the two men. These men showed me what fine rifles they had, going down the river with them. Then I went to the island and Blennerhassett paid me off in Kentucky notes. People however didn't like these notes very well, and I went over to the bank at Kanhawa to change them. I got two of the notes changed; and one, a ten dollar note, was returned to my hand, for which I wished to get silver from Blennerhassett. I went to the island the day the proclamation came out. But before I went to Blennerhassett's house, I heard he was not at home, but at Marietta. I went on the Virginia side, where I met three other men, belonging to the boats, with three complete rifles. They made a call upon me, to take them to the island in my canoe, and I accepted [excepted?] to it; but afterwards I carried the third man, who stood close by my canoe, over to the island. After being some time on the island, I went down to the four boats. Blennerhassett was not at home yet; and I met some of the boat people shooting at a mark. They had a fire between the bank and boats. I saw this in the day time.

Allbright, Testimony from the Trial of Aaron Burr, America, Vol.5, p.73

Mr. Hay.—How many boats were there? Answer. Four.

Allbright, Testimony from the Trial of Aaron Burr, America, Vol.5, p.73–p.74–p.75–p.76

I waited at the house till Blennerhassett came home. He appeared very much scared. One of the boatmen came up to him for something, and he told him, "Don't trouble me, I have trouble enough already." He went up to his chamber; and I saw no more of him. I asked an old gentleman who was there, and with whom I was well acquainted, to go up to his chamber, and change my note for silver. He did go, and brought me silver. By and by I heard that they were going to start that night. Thinks I, "I'll see the end of it." This was the night of the very day that Blennerhassett got back from Marietta. He got back before night. When night came on, I was among the men and also in the kitchen; and saw the boat-men running bullets. One of them spoke out to the others, "Boys, let's mould as many bullets, as we can fire twelve rounds." After that, I saw no more till after twelve o'clock at night. Then Blennerhassett came down from the chamber, and called up some of his servants; he had four or five trunks. There were not trusty hands enough to carry them to the boats; and some person called after my name, and asked me to help them; and I carried one of the trunks and moved along with them. When we got down, some person, I don't particularly know who, but think it was Blennerhassett himself, asked me to stand by the trunks, till they were put in the boats. When the last of them went off, I saw men standing in a circle on the shore. I went up to them; perhaps they were five or six rods from me. The first thing that I noticed, was their laying plans and consulting how Blennerhassett and Comfort Tyler should get safe by Galliopolis. One Nahum Bennett was called forward, and when he came, Blennerhassett asked him, whether he had not two smart horses? Nahum Bennett answered no; he had but one. Then Blennerhassett told him to go to Captain Dennie, and get his sorrel horse; and Nahum Bennett told him, that the sorrel horse had no shoes on; and Blennerhassett said, the roads were soft and would not hurt the horse. Blennerhassett told Nahum Bennett to meet him and Comfort Tyler with the horses, somewhere about Galliopolis: Bennett inquired how he was to find him out, should he inquire for him? "No." "Have you no friends there?" "No." Mrs. Blennerhassett then came forward, and she told Blennerhassett and Comfort Tyler, that they must take a canoe and get into it before they got to Galliopolis, and sail down the stream of the Ohio; for nobody would mind a couple of men going down the stream. She said she'd pay for the canoe. Blennerhassett told Nahum Bennett to take the two horses and pass round Galliopolis before day, and then they might surround [go round] Galliopolis. After that, a man by the name of Tupper, laid his hands upon Blennerhassett, and said, "Your body is in my hands, in the name of the commonwealth." Some such words as that he mentioned. When Tupper made that motion, there were seven or eight muskets leveled at him. Tupper looked about him and said, "Gentlemen, I hope you will not do the like." One of the gentlemen who was nearest, about two yards off, said, "I'd as lieve as not." Tupper then changed his speech, and said he wished him to escape safe down the river, and wished him luck. Tupper before told Blennerhassett he should stay and stand his trial. But Blennerhassett said no; that the people in the neighborhood were coming down next day to take him, and he would go. Next day after, I saw the Wood county militia going down. The people went off in boats that night about one.

Allbright, Testimony from the Trial of Aaron Burr, America, Vol.5, p.76

Question. All?

Answer. All but one, who was a doctor. All belonging to the boats had some kind of arms. Some of the boats were on the shore and some not.

Allbright, Testimony from the Trial of Aaron Burr, America, Vol.5, p.76

Mr. Hay.—How many men were there in all?

Answer. About twenty or thirty: I did not, however, count them. Every man belonging to the boats that I took notice of, had arms.

Allbright, Testimony from the Trial of Aaron Burr, America, Vol.5, p.76

Mr. Coleman (one of the jury). What day, month, or year, was this?

Answer. In the fall of the year. I don't recollect the month or particular time, but there was snow on the ground.

Allbright, Testimony from the Trial of Aaron Burr, America, Vol.5, p.76

Mr. Hay.—Do you recollect whether it snows in September?

Answer. I do not know.

Allbright, Testimony from the Trial of Aaron Burr, America, Vol.5, p.76

Mr. Sheppard (one of the jury). Was Tupper a magistrate or officer?

Answer. I know not.

Allbright, Testimony from the Trial of Aaron Burr, America, Vol.5, p.76

Question. Where had Blennerhassett been?

Answer. In Kentucky.

Allbright, Testimony from the Trial of Aaron Burr, America, Vol.5, p.76

Mr. Wirt.—Had you seen Colonel Burr on the island?

Answer. Yes.

Allbright, Testimony from the Trial of Aaron Burr, America, Vol.5, p.77

Question. Was he there before Blennerhassett went to Kentucky?

Answer. He was….

Allbright, Testimony from the Trial of Aaron Burr, America, Vol.5, p.77

Question. Did the boats quit the island at the time of hearing about the proclamation?

Answer. Yes.

Allbright, Testimony from the Trial of Aaron Burr, America, Vol.5, p.77

Question. Did the Wood county militia go there next day?

Answer. Yes.

Allbright, Testimony from the Trial of Aaron Burr, America, Vol.5, p.77

Question by Mr. Parker (one of the jury)…. How long did Aaron Burr remain on the island?

Answer. I do not recollect.

Allbright, Testimony from the Trial of Aaron Burr, America, Vol.5, p.77

Question by the same. How long had he been there before the departure of the boats?

Allbright, Testimony from the Trial of Aaron Burr, America, Vol.5, p.77

To this question, he first answered, that he did not know; and that Mr. Burr never returned back to the island: but after some reflection he said, that he had been there about six weeks before the departure of the boats.

The Chesapeake Outrage

Title: The Chesapeake Outrage

Author: Vice-Admiral B. C. Berkeley and Commodore James Barton

Date: June 1, April 7, and June 22, 1807

Source: America, Vol.5, pp.78-85

The first of these documents is the order issued June 1, 1807, by Admiral Berkeley, commander-in-chief of the British squadron in American waters, to his subordinates to search the Chesapeake for deserters. The second document is the American Commodore Barron's report of April 7, 1807, to the Navy Department about the deserters in question, and the third is his report of the attack made upon his ship June 22, 1807, by the British frigate Leopard.

The additional communications passed between the Leopard and Chesapeake the day of the fight.

This attack and search of the Chesapeake, three of whose crew were killed and eighteen wounded, resulted in the British reclaiming four deserters found aboard the ship. It was one of the chief occurences that led up to the War of 1812. Eventually the British government repudiated the action, restored the seamen and also paid an indemnity.

Chesapeake Outrage, America, Vol.5, p.78–p.79

WHEREAS, many seamen, subjects of His Brittanic Majesty, and serving in His Majesty's ships and vessels . . . while at anchor in the Chesapeake, deserted and entered on board the United States' frigate the Chesapeake, and openly paraded the streets of Norfolk, in sight of their officers, under the American flag, protected by the magistrates of the town, and the recruiting officer belonging to the above-mentioned American frigate; which magistrates and naval officer refused giving them up, although demanded by His Britannic Majesty's consul, as well as the captains of the ships from which the said men had deserted; the captains and commanders of His Majesty's ships and vessels under my command are, therefore, hereby required and directed, in case of meeting with the American frigate Chesapeake at sea, and without the limits of the United States, to show to the captain of her this order, and to require to search his ship for the deserters from the before-mentioned ships, and to proceed and search for the same. And, if a similar demand should be made by the American, he is permitted to search for deserters from their service, according to the customs and usages of civilized nations, on terms of peace and amity with each other.

G. C. BERKELEY.

Chesapeake Outrage, America, Vol.5, p.79

I HAVE the honor to enclose you the result of my inquiries relating to the men mentioned in your letter of yesterday….

Chesapeake Outrage, America, Vol.5, p.79

William Ware, pressed from on board the brig Neptune, Captain Crafts, by the British frigate Melampus, in the Bay of Biscay, and has served on board the said frigate fifteen months.

Chesapeake Outrage, America, Vol.5, p.79

William Ware is a native American; born on Pipe creek, Frederick county, State of Maryland, at Bruce's Mills, and served his time at said Mills; he also lived at Ellicott's mills, near Baltimore, and drove a wagon several years between Hagerstown and Baltimore; he also served eighteen months on board the United States' frigate Chesapeake, under the command of Commodore Morris and Captain James Barron; he is an Indian looking man.

Chesapeake Outrage, America, Vol.5, p.79–p.80

Daniel Martin was pressed at the same time and place; he is a native of Westport, in Massachusetts, about thirty miles to the eastward of Newport, Rhode Island; served his time out of New York with Captain Marrowby in the Caledonian; refers to Mr. Benjamin Davis, merchant, and Mr. Benjamin Corce, of Westport; he is a colored man.

Chesapeake Outrage, America, Vol.5, p.80

John Strachan, born on the Eastern Shore of Maryland, Queen Anne's county, between Centreville and Queen's town; refers to Mr. John Price and —— Pratt, Esq., on Kent island, who know his relations; Strachan sailed in the brig Martha Bland, Captain Wivill, from Norfolk to Dublin, and from thence to Liverpool; he there left the brig, and shipped on board an English Guineaman; he was pressed on board the Melampus, off Cape Finisterre; to better his situation he consented to enter, being determined to make his escape when opportunity offered; he served on board the frigate two years; he is a white man, about five feet seven inches high.

Chesapeake Outrage, America, Vol.5, p.80

William Ware and John Strachan have protections; Daniel Martin says he lost his after leaving the frigate.

Chesapeake Outrage, America, Vol.5, p.80

John Little, alias Francis, and Ambrose Watts, escaped from the Melampus at the same time; known to the above persons to be Americans, but have not been entered by my recruiting officer.

Chesapeake Outrage, America, Vol.5, p.80–p.81

William Ware, Daniel Martin, and John Strachan, state that, some time in February last, there was an entertainment on board the Melampus, lying then in Hampton Roads; that while the officers of —— were engaged, and all the ship's boats, except the captain's gig, being hoisted in, themselves, and the two other men mentioned, availed themselves of a moment to seize the gig and row off; that, as soon as they had got into the boat, they were hailed to know what they were going to do; they replied they were going ashore; a brisk fire of musketry instantly commenced from the ship; that, in defiance of balls, and the hazard of their lives, they continued to pull, and finally effected their escape to land, namely, Lowell's Point; that they then carefully hauled up the boat on the beach, rolled up the coat, and placed that and the oars in the boat, gave three cheers, and moved up the country.

Chesapeake Outrage, America, Vol.5, p.81–p.82

YESTERDAY at 6., A. M., the wind became favorable, and knowing your anxiety that the ship should sail with all possible despatch, we weighed from our station in Hampton Roads and stood to sea. In Lynnhaven Bay we passed two British men of war, one of them the Bellona, the other the Melampus; their colors flying, and their appearance friendly. Some time afterwards, we observed one of the two line-of-battle ships that lay off Cape Henry to get under way, and stand to sea; at this time the wind became light, and it was not until near four in the afternoon that the ship under way came within hail. Cape Henry then bearing northwest by west, distance three leagues, the communication, which appeared to be her commander's object for speaking the Chesapeake, he said he would send on board; on which I ordered the Chesapeake to be hove to for his convenience.

Chesapeake Outrage, America, Vol.5, p.82

On the arrival of the officer he presented me with the enclosed paper (No. 1.) from the captain of the Leopard, and a copy of an order from Admiral Berkeley, which another officer afterwards took back, to which I gave the enclosed answer, (No. 2.) and was waiting for his reply. About this time I observed some appearance of a hostile nature, and said to Captain Gordon that it was possible they were serious, and requested him to have his men sent to their quarters with as little noise as possible, not using those ceremonies which we should have done with an avowed enemy, as I fully supposed their arrangements were more menace than anything serious. Captain Gordon immediately gave the orders to the officers and men to go to quarters, and have all things in readiness; but before a match could be lighted, or the quarter-bill of any division examined, or the lumber on the gun-deck, such as sails, cables, &c., could be cleared, the commander of the Leopard hailed; I could not hear what he said, and was talking to him, as I supposed, when she commenced a heavy fire, which did great execution.

Chesapeake Outrage, America, Vol.5, p.82–p.83

It is distressing to me to acknowledge, that I found from the advantage they had gained over our unprepared and suspicious state, did not warrant a longer opposition; nor should I have exposed this ship and crew to so galling a fire had it not been with the hope of getting the gun-deck clear, so as to have made a more formidable defense; consequently our resistance was but feeble. In about twenty minutes after I ordered the colors to be struck, and sent Lieutenant Smith on board the Leopard to inform her commander that I considered the Chesapeake her prize. To this message I received no answer; the Leopard's boat soon after came on board, and the officer who came in her demanded the muster book. I replied the ship and books were theirs, and if he expected to see the men he must find them. They called on the purser who delivered his book, and the men were examined; and the three men demanded at Washington, and one man more, were taken away. On their departure from the ship I wrote the commander of the Leopard the enclosed, (No. 3,) to which I received the answer, (No. 4) On finding that the men were his only object, and that he refused to consider the ship his prize, and the officers and crew his prisoners, I called a council of our officers, and requested their opinion relative to the conduct it was now our duty to pursue. The result was that the ship should return to Hampton Roads, and there wait your further orders. Enclosed you have a list of the unfortunate killed and wounded, as also a statement of the damage sustained in the hull, spars, and rigging of the ship….

Chesapeake Outrage, America, Vol.5, p.83

With great respect, I have the honor to be, sir, your obedient servant,

JAMES BARRON.

Non. Robert Smith, Secretary of the Navy, Washington.

Chesapeake Outrage, America, Vol.5, p.84

No. 1

The captain of His Britannic Majesty's ship Leopard has the honor to enclose the captain of the United States' ship Chesapeake an order from the honorable Vice Admiral Berkeley, commander-in-chief of His Majesty's ships on the North American station, respecting some deserters from the ships (therein mentioned) under his command, and supposed to be now serving as part of the crew of the Chesapeake.

Chesapeake Outrage, America, Vol.5, p.84

The captain of the Leopard will not presume to say anything in addition to what the commander-in-chief has stated, more than to express a hope that every circumstance respecting them may be adjusted in a manner that the harmony subsisting between the two countries may remain undisturbed.

Chesapeake Outrage, America, Vol.5, p.84

To the Commander of the U. S. S. Chesapeake.

Chesapeake Outrage, America, Vol.5, p.84

No. 2

I know of no such men as you describe. The officers that were on the recruiting service for this ship were particularly instructed by the Government, through me, not to enter any deserters from His Britannic Majesty's ships, nor do I know of any being here. I am also instructed never to permit the crew of any ship that I command to be mustered by any other but their own officers. It is my disposition to preserve harmony, and I hope this answer to your despatch may prove satisfactory.

JAMES BARRON.

To the Commander of His Britannic Majesty's Ship Leopard.

Chesapeake Outrage, America, Vol.5, p.85

No. 3

I consider the frigate Chesapeake your prize, and am ready to deliver her to any officer authorized to receive her. By the return of the boat I shall expect your answer….

JAMES BARRON.

To the Commander of His Britannic Majesty's Ship Leopard.

Chesapeake Outrage, America, Vol.5, p.85

No. 4

Having to the utmost of my power fulfilled the instructions of my commander-in-chief, I have nothing more to desire, and must in consequence proceed to join the remainder of the squadron, repeating that I am ready to give you every assistance in my power, and do most sincerely deplore that any lives should have been lost in the execution of a service which might have been adjusted more amicably not only with respect to ourselves, but the nations to which we respectively belong….

S. P. HUMPHREYS.

To the Commander of the United States' Ship Chesapeake.

Fulton Writes About His First Trip To Albany

Title: Fulton Writes About His First Trip To Albany

Author: Robert Fulton

Date: September 1807, 1856

Source: America, Vol.5, p.86-91

Fulton wrote the first of these two letters to the American Citizen, in September, 1807, the day the Clermont returned to New York from Albany on its first trip up and down the Hudson, proving that a steamboat could travel five miles or more an hour. The second letter was to his friend Joel Barlow, the poet, with whom he had lived in Paris while making his preliminary experiments.

Fulton did not actually invent the steamboat, but his was the first one that "worked," and his success was due largely to the help he received from Robert R. Livingston. Thurston, the engineer-historian says, "Fulton's service cannot be overestimated…. He placed steam navigation on a saft and permanent basis."

Following these Fulton letters is one by H. Freeland, an eye-witness of the event which immortalized Fulton and revolutionized marine travel. It is a reminiscence written in 1856.

Fulton Writes About First Trip To Albany, America, Vol.5, p.86

I ARRIVED this afternoon at four o'clock in the steamboat from Albany. As the success of my experiment gives me great hopes that such boats may be rendered of great importance to my country, to prevent erroneous opinions and give some satisfaction to my friends of useful improvements, you will have the goodness to publish the following statement of facts:

Fulton Writes About First Trip To Albany, America, Vol.5, p.86–p.87

I left New York on Monday at one o'clock and arrived at Clermont, the seat of Chancellor Livingston, at one o'clock on Tuesday: time, twenty-four hours; distance, one hundred and ten miles. On Wednesday I departed from the Chancellor's at nine in the morning, and arrived at Albany at five in the afternoon: distance, forty miles; time, eight hours. The sum is one hundred and fifty miles in thirty-two hours, equal to near five miles an hour.

Fulton Writes About First Trip To Albany, America, Vol.5, p.87

On Thursday, at nine o'clock in the morning, I left Albany, and arrived at the Chancellor's at six in the evening. I started from thence at seven, and arrived at New York at four in the afternoon: time, thirty hours; space run through, one hundred and fifty miles, equal to five miles an hour. Throughout my whole way, both going and returning, the wind was ahead. No advantage could be derived from my sails. The whole has therefore been performed by the power of the steam-engine.

Fulton Writes About First Trip To Albany, America, Vol.5, p.87

MY steamboat voyage to Albany and back has turned out rather more favorably that I had calculated. The distance from New York to Albany is one hundred and fifty miles. I ran it up in thirty-two hours, and down in thirty. I had a light breeze against me the whole way, both going and coming; and the voyage has been performed wholly by the power of the steam-engine. I overtook many sloops and schooners beating to windward, and parted with them.

Fulton Writes About First Trip To Albany, America, Vol.5, p.87–p.88

The power of propelling boats by steam is now fully proved. The morning I left New York there were not perhaps thirty persons in the city who believed that the boat would ever move one mile an hour or be of the least utility; and, while we were putting off from the wharf, which was crowded with spectators, I heard a number of sarcastic remarks. This is the way in which ignorant men compliment what they call philosophers and projectors.

Fulton Writes About First Trip To Albany, America, Vol.5, p.88

Having employed much time, money, and zeal in accomplishing this work, it gives me, as it will you, great pleasure to see it answer my expectations. It will give a cheap and quick conveyance to the merchandise on the Mississippi, Missouri and other great rivers, which are now laying open their treasures to the enterprise of our countrymen; and, although the prospect of personal emolument has been some inducement to me, yet I feel infinitely more pleasure in reflecting on the immense advantage my country will derive.

Fulton Writes About First Trip To Albany, America, Vol.5, p.89

THE FIRST VOYAGE OF THE CLERMONT

Fulton Writes About First Trip To Albany, America, Vol.5, p.89

IT WAS the early autumn of the year 1807 that a knot of villagers was gathered on a high bluff just opposite Poughkeepsie, on the west bank of the Hudson, attracted by the appearance of a strange, dark looking craft, which was slowly making its way up the river. Some imagined it to be a sea monster, while others did not hesitate to express their belief that it was a sign of the approaching judgment. What seemed strange in the vessel was the substitution of lofty and straight black smoke-pipes rising from the deck, instead of the gracefully tapered masts that commonly stood on the vessels navigating the stream, and, in place of the spars and rigging, the curious play of the working-beam and pistons and the slow turning and splashing of the huge and naked paddle-wheels met the astonished gaze. The dense clouds of smoke, as they rose wave upon wave, added still more to the wonderment of the rustics.

Fulton Writes About First Trip To Albany, America, Vol.5, p.89

This strange looking craft was the Clermont on her trial trip to Albany, and of the little knot of villagers mentioned above, the writer, then a boy in his eighth year, with his parents, formed a part; and I well remember the scene, one so well fitted to impress a lasting picture upon the mind of a child accustomed to watch the vessels that passed up and down the river.

Fulton Writes About First Trip To Albany, America, Vol.5, p.90

The forms of four persons were distinctly visible on the deck as she passed the bluff,—one of whom, doubtless, was Robert Fulton, who had on board with him all the cherished hopes of years, the most precious cargo the wonderful boat could carry.

Fulton Writes About First Trip To Albany, America, Vol.5, p.90

On her return trip the curiosity she excited was scarcely less intense; the whole country talked of nothing but the sea monster belching forth fire and smoke. The fishermen became terrified and rowed homewards, and they saw nothing but destruction devastating their fishing grounds, while the wreaths of black vapor and the rushing noise of the paddle-wheels, foaming with the stirred up waters, produced great excitement among the boatmen, until it was more intelligent than before; for the character of that curious boat, and the nature of the enterprise which she was pioneering, had been ascertained.

Fulton Writes About First Trip To Albany, America, Vol.5, p.90–p.91

From that time, Robert Fulton, Esq., became known and respected as the author and builder of the first steam packet, from which we plainly see the rapid improvement in commerce and civilization. Who can doubt that Fulton's first packet boat has been the model steamer? Except in finer finish and greater size, there is no difference between it and the splendid steamships now crossing the Atlantic. Who can doubt that Fulton saw the meeting of all nations upon his boats, gathering together in unity and harmony, that the "freedom of the seas would be the happiness of the earth"? Who can doubt that Fulton saw the world circumnavigated by steam, and that his invention was carrying the messages of freedom to every land, that no man could tell all its benefits, or describe all its wonders? What a wonderful achievement! What a splendid triumph!

How Jefferson's Embargo Paralyzed Trade

Title: How Jefferson's Embargo Paralyzed Trade

Author: Josiah Quincy

Date: 1807

Source: America, Vol.5, pp.92-95

Josiah Quincy was one of the most prominent of the extreme Federalists who opposed Jefferson and Madison. He was the spokesman in Congress of New England interests that joined with the Southern tobacco planters in denouncing the Embargo of 1807 which forbade the sailing of American vessels with cargoes for foreign ports, and the Enforcement Act of 1808 which put heavy penalties on the violation of the embargo. These retaliatory acts were provoked by England and France, then at war, whose navies were harassing neutral American ships, the crews of which were being impressed into British service.

Bryant's poem is now the best known expression of the feeling the Embargo aroused in New England. Without having accomplished its object, the act was repealed in 1809.

Quincy was one of the earliest to denounce slavery in Congress, and declared in a speech made in 1811 that the purchase of Louisiana was a sufficient cause for the dissolution of the Union.

Quincy, How Jefferson's Embargo Paralyzed Trade, America, Vol.5, p.92–p.93

A WHOLE people is laboring under a most grievous oppression. All the business of the nation is deranged. All its active hopes are frustrated. All its industry stagnant. Its numerous products hastening to their market, are stopped in their course. A dam is thrown across the current, and every hour the strength and the tendency toward resistance is accumulating. The scene we are now witnessing is altogether unparalleled in history. The tales of fiction have no parallel for it. A new writ is executed upon a whole people. Not, indeed, the old monarchial writ, ne exeat regno, but a new republican writ, ne exeat republica. Freemen, in the pride of their liberty, have restraints imposed on them which despotism never exercised. They are fastened down to the soil by the enchantment of law; and their property vanishes in the very process of preservation. It is impossible for us to separate and leave such a people at such a moment as this, without administering some opiate to their distress. Some hope, however distant, of alleviation must be proffered; some prospect of relief opened. Otherwise, justly might we fear for the result of such an unexampled pressure. Who can say what counsels despair might suggest, or what weapons it might furnish? . . .

Quincy, How Jefferson's Embargo Paralyzed Trade, America, Vol.5, p.93

The embargo power, which now holds in its palsying grip all the hopes of this nation, is distinguished by two characteristics of material import, in deciding what control shall be left over it during our recess. I allude to its greatness and its novelty.

Quincy, How Jefferson's Embargo Paralyzed Trade, America, Vol.5, p.93–p.94

As to its greatness, nothing is like it. Every class of men feels it. Every interest in the nation is affected by it. The merchant, the farmer, the planter, the mechanic, the laboring poor—all are sinking under its weight. But there is this that is peculiar to it, that there is no equality in its nature. It is not like taxation, which raises revenue according to the average of wealth; burdening the rich and letting the poor go free. But it presses upon the particular classes of society, in an inverse ratio to the capacity of each to bear it. From those who have much, it takes indeed something. But from those who have little, it takes all. For what hope is left to the industrious poor when enterprise, activity, and capital are proscribed their legitimate exercise? The regulations of society forbid what was once property to be so any longer. For property depends on circulation, on exchange; on ideal value. The power of property is all relative. It depends not merely upon opinion here, but upon opinion in other countries. If it be cut off from its destined market, much of it is worth nothing, and all of it is worth infinitely less than when circulation is unobstructed.

Quincy, How Jefferson's Embargo Paralyzed Trade, America, Vol.5, p.94–p.95

This embargo power is, therefore, of all powers the most enormous in the manner in which it affects the hopes and interests of a nation. But its magnitude is not more remarkable than its novelty. An experiment, such as is now making, was never before—I will not say tried—it never before entered into the human imagination. There is nothing like it in the narrations of history or in the tales of fiction. All the habits of a mighty nation are at once counteracted. All their property depreciated. All their external connections violated. Five millions of people are engaged. They can not go beyond the limits of that once free country; now they are not even permitted to thrust their own property through the grates. I am not now questioning its policy, its wisdom, or its practicability: I am merely stating the fact. And I ask if such a power as this, thus great, thus novel, thus interfering with all the great passions and interests of a whole people, ought to be left for six months in operation, without any power of control, except upon the occurrence of certain specified and arbitrary contingencies? Who can foretell when the spirit of endurance will cease? Who, when the strength of nature shall outgrow the strength of your bonds? Or if they do, who can give a pledge that the patience of the people will not first be exhausted.

Tecumseh to Governor Harrison at Vincennes, Tecumseh, 1810

Tecumseh to Governor Harrison at Vincennes

Title: Tecumseh to Governor Harrison at Vincennes

Author: Tecumseh

Date: 1810

Source: The World's Famous Orations, Vol.8, pp.14-15

Delivered to Governor Harrison to in council at Vincennes on August 12, 1810. Large tracts of land in Tecumseh's absence had been sold by the Indians on both sides of the Wabash River.

Born about 1768, died in 1813; a Chief of the Shawnee and twin brother of Elskwatawa, who was defeated by Harrison at Tippecanoe; joined the British in the War of 1812; fought in several battles in Canada; commanded the right wing of the allied Indian and British forces, who were defeated in the Battle of the Thames by General Harrison.

Tecumseh to Governor Harrison at Vincennes, Famous Orations, Vol.8, p.14

It is true I am a Shawnee. My forefathers were warriors. Their son is a warrior. From them I take only my existence; from my tribe I take nothing. I am the maker of my own fortune; and oh! that I could make of my own fortune; and oh! that I could make that of my red people, and of my country, as great as the conceptions of my mind, when I think of the Spirit that rules the universe. I would not then come to Governor Harrison to ask him to tear the treaty and to obliterate the landmark; but I would say to him: "Sir, you have liberty to return to your own country."

Tecumseh to Governor Harrison at Vincennes, Famous Orations, Vol.8, p.14

The being within, communing with past ages, tells me that once, nor until lately, there was no white man on this continent; that it then all belonged to red men, children of the same parents, placed on it by the Great Spirit that made them, to keep it, to traverse it, to enjoy its productions, and to fill it with the same race, once a happy race, since made miserable by the white people, who are never contented but always encroaching. The way, and the only way, to check and to stop this evil, is for all the red men to unite in claiming a common and equal right in the land, as it was at first, and should be yet; for it never was divided, but belongs to all for the use of each. For no part has a right to sell, even to each other, much less to strangers—those who want all, and will not do with less.

Tecumseh to Governor Harrison at Vincennes, Famous Orations, Vol.8, p.15

The white people have no right to take the land from the Indians, because they had it first; it is theirs. They may sell, but all must join. Any sale not made by all is not valid. The late sale is bad. It was made by a part only. Part do not know how to sell. All red men have equal rights to the unoccupied land. The right of occupancy is as good in one place as in another. There can not be two occupations in the same place. The first excludes all others. It is not so in hunting or traveling; for there the same ground will serve many, as they may follow each other all day; but the camp is stationary, and that is occupancy. It belongs to the first who sits down on his blanket or skins which he has thrown upon the ground; and till he leaves it no other has a right.

American Ways of Life in 1811

Title: American Ways of Life In 1811

Author: John Melish

Date: 1812

Source: America, Vol.5, pp.96-104

John Melish was a Scotch textile manufacturer who visited this country for the purpose of collecting considerable sums of money owed him by mercantile customers. His "Travels in the United States of America," from which the accompanying observations are taken, was published in two volumes in Philadelphia, in 1812. His chief interest was in American trade and economic conditions.

Among those with whom he reports conversations was President Jefferson, who believed Norfolk, Virginia, would soon outstrip New York and Boston, and rival New Orleans, as as American seaport. Melish also reports Jefferson as stating that turnpike roads would be general throughout the country in less than twenty years. The introductory article describes a Fourth of July celebration at Louisville, Georgia, in 1811.

Melish, American Ways of Life In 1811, America, Vol.5, p.96

THIS being the anniversary of American Independence, the day was ushered in by the firing of great guns; and military companies had collected in Louisville [Georgia] from the whole country round. On my return to the tavern, I found a considerable number of the military assembled there. I was waited on by a committee of the artillery company, and received a very polite invitation to dine with them, which I accepted with pleasure, being anxious to observe the mode of celebrating this day, so important in the annals of America.

Melish, American Ways of Life In 1811, America, Vol.5, p.96–p.97

About 3 o'clock we sat down to dinner. The captain took his place at the head of the table, the oldest lieutenant at the foot; the committee gave the different orders, and all were on an equal footing. Several of the State officers dined with them.

Melish, American Ways of Life In 1811, America, Vol.5, p.97

After dinner they drank Madeira wine to a series of toasts, one for each State, which had been previously prepared. Among the number were "The Day We Celebrate;" "The Land We Live In;" "The President of the United States;" "Memory of General Washington;" "Memory of Benjamin Franklin;" "Memory of John Pierce," etc. Each toast was followed by a discharge of artillery, and the music played an appropriate air. A number of excellent songs were sung, and the afternoon was spent with great conviviality and good humor.

Melish, American Ways of Life In 1811, America, Vol.5, p.97–p.98

Having several calls to make in the town, I left the table early, but returned again in the evening, when I found that the cordial drop had added greatly to the elevation of the animal spirits of the company. They had also received an addition to their number, by several military officers high in command, among whom was Major-General Jackson. Having occasion to give a toast, I availed myself of that opportunity to impress them with favorable sentiments towards my native country. America had been long regarded with a jealous eye by the councils of Britain, and an almost total alienation of affection was the consequence. I knew that Mr. Fox's administration was favorably disposed towards America, and I was inclined, as far as I had opportunity, to impress the Americans with that belief. Accordingly, after thanking the company for the honor they had conferred upon me, and assuring them of my own friendly regard for the country, I proposed as a toast, "Mr. Fox, and the independent Whigs of Britain. May their joint endeavors with the government of the United States be the means of reconciling the differences between the two countries; and to the latest prosperity may Americans and Britons hail one another as brothers and as friends." This was cordially received, and drank accordingly; and immediately after I was introduced to and politely received by the visiting officers.

Melish, American Ways of Life In 1811, America, Vol.5, p.98

A BACKWOODS BREAKFAST

AS I proposed to ride to New Philadelphia, 36 miles from Coshocton, and the road was altogether new to me, and often crossed the river, I was anxious to be gone as soon as possible, and urged the landlady to make all the haste she could. She said she would have the breakfast ready in a minute; but the first indication I saw of dispatch was a preparation to twist the necks of two chickens. I told her to stop, and she gave me a look of astonishment.

Melish, American Ways of Life In 1811, America, Vol.5, p.98–p.99

"Have you any eggs?" said I. "Yes, plenty," replied she, still keeping in a stooping posture, with the chicken in her hand. "Well," said I, "just boil an egg, and let me have it, with a little bread and tea, and that will save you and I a great deal of trouble." She seemed quite embarrassed, and said she never could set down a breakfast to me like that. I assured her I would take nothing else. "Shall I fry some ham for you along with the eggs?" said she. "No," said I, "not a bit." "Well, will you take a little stewed pork?" "No." . . . "Preserve me, what will you take, then?" "A little bread and tea, and an egg. "Well, you're the most extraordinary man that I ever saw; but I can't set down a table that way."

Melish, American Ways of Life In 1811, America, Vol.5, p.99

I saw that I was only to lose time by contesting the matter farther; so I allowed her to follow her own plan as to the cooking, assuring her that I would take mine as to eating. She detained me about half an hour, and at last placed upon the table a profusion of ham, eggs, fritters, bread, butter and some excellent tea. All the time I was at breakfast she kept pressing me to eat; but I kept my own council, and touched none of the dishes, except the bread, tea and an egg. She affected great surprise, and when I paid her the ordinary fare, a quarter of a dollar, she said it was hardly worth anything. I mention the circumstance to show the kind of hospitality of the landlady, and the good living enjoyed by the backwoods people.

Melish, American Ways of Life In 1811, America, Vol.5, p.99

DOWN THE OHIO FROM MARIETTA TO CINCINNATI

WE started at 6 o'clock; the morning was cloudy, the temperature of the air was 70 degrees, of the water 75 degrees. We had got well accustomed to traveling by water, and found it easy and agreeable. Our boatman, Peter, answered our purpose remarkably well, and could row about three miles an hour. The water was low, and we found the current assisted us very little. In order to relieve the boatman, and to give ourselves exercise, we frequently took a turn at the oars, and we generally made from 30 to 36 miles a day. We had found by this time, that the settlers on the Ohio side were, by far, in the most comfortable circumstances; and we never failed in an application for lodging or victuals on that side. On the Virginia side, we had of late made frequent attempts, but were always unsuccessful. On stopping there, we generally found a negro, who could give us no answer, or a poor-looking object in the shape of a woman, who, "moping and melancholy," would say, "we have no way."

Melish, American Ways of Life In 1811, America, Vol.5, p.100

I never saw the bad effects of slavery more visible than in this contrast. On the Virginia side, they seemed generally to trust to the exertions of the negroes, and we found them, as might be expected, miserable, and wretched, and poor, and almost naked." On the Ohio side, they trusted to the blessing of God, and to their own exertions; and "God helps them that help themselves," as poor Richard says, in his almanac. We found them increasing in wealth, population and domestic comfort; and we resolved hereafter to apply on the right bank only for accommodation.

Melish, American Ways of Life In 1811, America, Vol.5, p.100

Our general rule was to look out for a settlement at sunset, and stop at the first we came to thereafter; and it was hardly ever necessary to make a second call. As soon as we had engaged lodgings we ordered supper, and along with it two chickens to be cooked for next day's fare. The boatman got supper along with us, and then returned to the skiff, where he slept all night. I always found the people with whom we stopped very obliging, and ready to answer all my inquiries, so that it gave me real pleasure to travel on this delightful river, and to converse with the friendly settlers on its banks. Our traveling too was very cheap, for the whole did not amount to more than a dollar a day, boatman's hire included. In the morning, when we started, we carried our broiled chickens, with some bread, cheese and milk in the skiff; on which we made very comfortable repasts, without stopping.

Melish, American Ways of Life In 1811, America, Vol.5, p.101–p.102

LIFE IN CENTRAL NEW YORK STATE

FARMERS and mechanics are best adapted to the country, and, if they are industrious they are sure to succeed. A farmer can get a quarter section of land, 160 acres, for 560 dollars, with eight years to pay it. If he is industrious, he may have the whole cleared and cultivated like a garden by the end of that time; when, in consequence of the rise on property, by the increase of population, and the cultivation by his individual industry, his land may be worth 50 dollars per acre, or 8,000 dollars; besides his stock of cattle, etc., which may be worth half as much more. Mechanics are well paid for their labor; carpenters have 1 dollar per day and their board; if they board themselves, 1 dollar 25 cents. Other trades have in proportion, and living is cheap. Flour is about 5 dollars per barrel; beef 4 cents per lb.; fowls 12 1/2 cents each; fish are plentiful and cheap. A mechanic can thus earn as much in two days as will maintain a family for a week, and by investing the surplus in houses and lots, in a judicious manner, he may accumulate money as fast as the farmer, and both may be independent and happy.

Melish, American Ways of Life In 1811, America, Vol.5, p.102–p.103

Indeed, these two classes cannot too highly prize the blessings they enjoy in this country, nor be sufficiently grateful to the Almighty Disposer of all events, for casting their lot in a land where they have advantages so far transcending what the same classes have in any other. I know there are many who hold a different opinion, but I must take the liberty to dissent from it, and the reader who has traveled with me thus far, will allow that my opinion is not founded either on a partial or prejudiced view of the subject; it is deduced from plain, unvarnished facts, which no reasoning can set aside, nor sophistry invalidate. What would the farmers, and mechanics, and manufacturers in Britain give to be in the same situation? There (I speak particularly of Scotland) a farmer pays from 7 to 28 dollars per acre, yearly, for the use of his farm, besides the taxes and public burdens. He gets, in many instances, a lease of 19 years, and is bound to cultivate the ground in a certain way, prescribed by the tenure of his lease. If he improves the farm, the improvements are for another, not for him; and, at the end of the lease, if another is willing to give one shilling more than he, or if the proprietor has a favorite, or wishes to turn two or more farms into one, or has taken umbrage at his politics, or his religion, or anything else regarding him or his family, he will not get a renewal of the lease. Many a family have I known who have been ruined in this way. Being turned out of a farm, they retire to a town or city, where their substance is soon spent, and they pine away in poverty, and at last find a happy relief in the cold grave. Nor is there any remedy; the lands are nearly all entailed on the great families, and the lords of the soil are the lords of the law; they can bind the poor farmer in all cases whatsoever.

Melish, American Ways of Life In 1811, America, Vol.5, p.103

Compare this with the situation of the American farmer. He cultivates his own soil, or if he has none, he can procure it in sufficient quantity for 200 or 300 dollars. If he has no money he can get credit, and all that is necessary to redeem his credit is to put forth his hand and be industrious. He can stand erect on the middle of his farm, and say, "This ground is mine. From the highest canopy of heaven down to the lowest depths, I can claim all that I can get possession of within these bounds; fowls of the air, fish of the seas, and all that pass through the same." And, having a full share of consequence in the political scale, his equal rights are guaranteed to him. None dare encroach upon him; he can sit under his own vine and under his own fig tree, and none to make him afraid.

Melish, American Ways of Life In 1811, America, Vol.5, p.104

Look at the mechanic and manufacturer; in America they can earn from 6 to 9 dollars per week, and have provisions so reasonable, that they have their wheat-bread and roast-beef, or roast-pork, or fowl every day, and accumulate property for old age and their offspring. In Britain they can earn from a dollar and a half to three dollars per week, and pay at the rate of 14 or 15 dollars for a barrel of flour, and from 16 to 22 cents per lb. for beef. But, why do I talk of flour and beef? Small, indeed, is the portion of these that fall to their lot. No; they are doomed to drag out a miserable existence on potatoes and oat-meal, with this further curse entailed upon them, that, by the mandate of the powers that be, they are bound to the soil; they cannot, they dare not leave their country, except by stealth!

The Battle of Tippecanoe

Title: The Battle of Tippecanoe

Author: General William Henry Harrison

Date: December 13, 1811

Source: America, Vol.5, pp.105-115

General Harrison made this report of his victory at Tippecanoe to Governor Scott, of Kentucky, from Vincennes, December 13, 1811. It was published simultaneously in the Frankfort Argus, the Kentucky Gazette and the Lexington Reporter. The battle had been fought on November 7.

Harrison's victory over the Shawnees, led by The Prophet, brother of the better known Indian chief, Tecumseh, made him famous and did much to make him the ninth President of the United States in the memorable "Tippecanoe and Tyler too" campaign.

Under Harrison was an American force of 800 men, opposed to 5,000 or 6,000 Indians. Less than 200 whites were killed and wounded. The number of Indian fatalities, though undoubtedly large, is not definitely known. At the time of the battle Tecumseh was in the South trying to persuade the Creeks, Choctaws and Cherokees to join in his protected federation.

Harrison, Battle of Tippecanoe, America, Vol.5, p.105

I HAD the pleasure to receive your favor of the 27th ult. by the mail of Wednesday last; and I beg you to accept my sincere thanks for the friendly sentiments it contains.

Harrison, Battle of Tippecanoe, America, Vol.5, p.105–p.106–p.107

You wish me to give you some account of the late action, that you "may be the better enabled to do me justice against the cavils of ignorance and presumption." I would do this with great pleasure, but the Legislature of the Territory being about to close its session, and having an unusual pressure of business, I am unable to give you such an account as would be satisfactory. There is, however, the less need of this as my official account to the government will probably reach you nearly as soon as this letter. It appears to me from some of the hints contained in some of your newspapers, that the charge of error in the planning or execution of the late expedition, has been more particularly aimed at the President than myself. I most sincerely thank these gentlemen for placing me in such good company; and it is hardly necessary to inform you, that the charge against the administration is as unfounded in this instance as in all the others, which have flowed from the same source. The orders of the government with regard to the expedition, evince as much wisdom as humanity. It was determined to protect its citizens, but if possible, to spare the effusion of human blood—this last object was prevented; but by whom? Why, in a great measure by those very persons who are now complaining because a battle could not be won without loss. At least in this Territory, the clamor is confined to those who opposed the expedition to the utmost of their power, and by whose exertions in circulating every falsehood, that malice and villainy could invent: the militia were prevented from turning out; and instead of a force of from 12 to 1,500 men which I expected to have had, I was obliged to march from Fort Harrison with less than 800: my personal enemies have united with the British agents in representing that the expedition was entirely useless, and The Prophet as one of the best and most pacific of mortals, a perfect Shaker in principle, who shuddered at the thought of shedding blood. Every one of his aggressions upon us was denied or palliated and excused with as much eagerness as is the conduct of Great Britain by this same description of people in the Atlantic States. A party sent by The Prophet fired upon and wounded one of our sentinels, upon our own ground; the fact was at first boldly denied, "the man was shot by one of your own people" and I believe it was even asserted that he shot himself. When the whole circumstance was brought to light, these indefatigable gentry, shifted their ground and asserted that "the poor Indian fired in his own defence, and that he was merely gratifying an innocent curiosity in creeping to see what was going on in our camp, and that if he had not shot the sentry, the sentry would have shot him."

Harrison, Battle of Tippecanoe, America, Vol.5, p.107–p.108

I regret exceedingly that the friends of Colonel Daviess should think it was necessary to his fame to suppose a difference of opinion between him and myself, which never existed; that I had slighted advice from him which was never given, and that to give color to this they had listened to stories with regard to the operations of the army that were absolutely without foundation. If the utmost cordiality and friendship did not exist between the Colonel and myself from the time of his joining the army until his death, I have been very much deceived; if our military opinions were not almost always in unison, those which he expressed (and no man who knew him will accuse him of hypocrisy,) were not his own; the Colonel's messmates, Major G. R. C. Floyd and Captain Piatt, are well acquainted with the entire confidence which subsisted between us; they are acquainted with circumstances which indisputably established the fact; and they and others know that I was the object of his eulogy, to an extent which it would be indelicate in me to repeat. Colonel Daviess did indeed advise me as to measures the day before the action, in which he was joined by all the officers around me—whether the advice was good or bad is immaterial to the present discussion, since it was followed to the extent that it was given. It is not necessary to express my opinion of the Colonel's merits at this time, since it will be found in my official letter, and I have no doubt that it will be satisfactory to his friends.

Harrison, Battle of Tippecanoe, America, Vol.5, p.108

With regard to my own conduct, my dear Sir, it is not in my power to enter into a defence of it, unless I were to know in what particular it has been arraigned. However I may with safety rely for my defence upon the opinion of my army. Believing most sincerely that you do feel that "lively interest in my fame and fortune" which you profess, I am sure you will peruse with interest the inclosed declaration, signed by all the field officers of the army, (one only who was absent,) and the resolutions entered into by the militia of this country who served upon the expedition; the testimony of men who fought and suffered by my side, ought, I should suppose, to be conclusive.

Harrison, Battle of Tippecanoe, America, Vol.5, p.108–p.109

An idea seems to prevail in your State, that in the action of the 7th the whole army was completely sur prised, and that they were placed in a situation where bravery only decided the contest, and where there was no opportunity whatever for the exercise of military skill of any kind; this was, however, far from being the case. It is true that the two companies forming the left angle on the rear line, (Barton's and Geiger's) were attacked before they were formed, and that some of the men were killed in coming out of their tents; but it is equally true that all the other companies were formed before they were fired on, and that even those two companies lost but very few men before they were able to resist. Notwithstanding the darkness, the order of battle, (such as had been previously prescribed) was taken by all the troops—the officers were active, the men cool and obedient, and perhaps, there never was an action where (for the number of men engaged) there were so many changes of position performed; not in disorder and confusion, but with military propriety—the companies, both regulars and militia, were extended, or contracted, wheeled, marched, and made to file up by word of command. My orders (and they were not a few) were obeyed with promptitude and precision. And if I am not most grossly deceived, that mutual dependence which ought to exist between a commander and his army was reciprocally felt.

Harrison, Battle of Tippecanoe, America, Vol.5, p.109–p.110

It has been said that the Indians should have been attacked upon our arrival before their town, on the evening of the 6th. There were two reasons which prevented this, first, that the directions which I received from the government, made it necessary that I should endeavor, if possible, to accomplish the object of the expedition (the dispersion of the Prophet's force) without bloodshed, and, secondly, that the success of an attack by day upon the town was very problematical.

Harrison, Battle of Tippecanoe, America, Vol.5, p.110–p.111–p.112–p.113

I certainly did not understand my instructions to mean that I should jeopardize the safety of the troops, by endeavoring to bring about accommodation without fighting. But if I had commenced an attack upon them, after they had sent a chief to inform me that they were desirous of an accommodation, and that they had three days before sent a deputation to me for that purpose, who can doubt but that a much greater clamor would have ben raised than exists at present; the cruelty of attacking those innocent people would have been portrayed in the strongest colors; the administration would have been represented as murderers, and myself as their wretched instrument. But the army were exposed to the "nightly incursions" of the Indians. It has been well observed by a writer in The Argus, that if a "nightly incursion was really so much to be dreaded by the army, it had no business there. But the author of those objections perhaps will be still more surprised when he learns that a "nightly incursion," was precisely what I wished, because from such a one only could I hope for a close and decisive action. If they had attacked us by day they would certainly have done it upon ground favorable to their mode of fighting; they would have killed (as in General Wayne's action) a number of our men, and when pressed they would have escaped, with a loss comparatively trifling. In night attacks discipline always prevails over disorder, the party which is able to preserve its order longest, must succeed. I had with me 250 regulars that were highly disciplined, and my militia had been instructed to form in order of battle to receive the enemy in any direction, with facility and precision. But in the immediate neighborhood of the enemy, "why were not the troops made to continue under arms through the night?" I answer, that troops can only bear a certain portion of fatigue, and when in the presence of the enemy it is a matter of calculation with the commander, when they should be kept under arms and when permitted to rest. Upon this occasion, I must acknowledge that my calculations were erroneous. In common with the whole army, I did believe that they would not attack us that night. If it was their intention to attack, why had they not done it upon our march, where situations favorable to them might easily have been found? Indeed within three miles of the town we passed over ground so broken and disadvantageous to us that I was obliged to change the position of the troops several times in the course of a mile. They had fortified their town with care and with astonishing labor for them, all indicating that they were meant to sustain the shock. It was the scene of those mysterious rites which were so much venerated, and the Prophet had taught his followers to believe that both his person and his town were equally inviolable to us. I expected that they would have met me the next day to hear my terms, but I did not believe, however, that they would accede to them—and it was my determination to attack and burn the town the following night. It was necessary therefore that the troops should be refreshed as much as possible. But, although the men were not made to remain all night under arms, every other precaution was used as if attack was certain. In fact the troops were placed precisely in that situation that is called by military men "lying upon their arms;" the regular troops lay in their tents with their accoutrements on, and their arms by their sides—the militia had no tents, they slept with their pouches on, and their arms under them to keep them dry. The order of encampment was the order of battle for a night attack, and as every man slept opposite to his post in the line, there was nothing for them to do but to rise and take their post a few steps in the rear of the fires, and the line was formed in an instant. So little time was required for this operation that if the guard on its left flank had done its duty as well as the rest of the army, the troops on that flank would have been formed before the Indians came near them. It was customary every evening as soon as the army halted, to examine the ground of the encampment and surroundings, and afterwards to call together the field officers of the army, and give them their directions for the night. At these meetings (where every one was required freely to express their sentiments) every contingency that was likely to happen was discussed. The orders that were proper to be given to them, were then by the field officers repeated to the captains. Every one being by these means possessed of my intentions there was no room left for mistake or confusion. The orders given on the night of the 6th were solely directed to a night attack, the officers were directed in case of such an attack, to parade their men in the order in which they were encamped, and that each corps should maintain itself upon its own ground until other orders were given. With regulations such as these, and with such a state of discipline as we claim, you must allow, my dear Sir, that we had no reason to dread "a night incursion, more than an attack by day. Indeed it was preferable, because in no other way could it have been so completely decisive. In the latter we might have lost as many men as we did lose, without having killed a third as many of the enemy.

Harrison, Battle of Tippecanoe, America, Vol.5, p.113

In my letter to the Secretary it is asserted that the Indians had penetrated to the center of the encampment. I believe, however, that not more than two Indians got within the lines—men were certainly killed near the center of the camp, but it must have been from balls fired from without.

Harrison, Battle of Tippecanoe, America, Vol.5, p.113–p.114

From this letter and my official despatch to the Secretary of War, you will be enabled, my dear General, to form a correct opinion of the battle of Tippecanoe. When an action is over, and we have time to meditate upon the circumstances that attended it, there is no great judgment necessary to discover some error in the conduct of it, some thing that was done, which might have been better done, or something that was omitted, which if done might have produced great advantage. I believe the greatest generals have admitted that they could fight a second battle upon the same ground, much better than the first. If this is true with respect to them ought it not to be a motive to shield me from the severity of criticism with which some of my fellow citizens are desirous of scanning my conduct.

Harrison, Battle of Tippecanoe, America, Vol.5, p.114

A victory has been gained, and the army which gained it impute it in part at least to the measures of the commander,—but this is not sufficient—it should have been achieved without loss on our side. There is certainly no man more fully impressed with the exalted merits of those brave men who fell in the action, than I am—among them were many for whom I felt the warmest regard and friendship—but they were exposed to no dangers but what were common to the whole army, and if they were selected by divine providence, as the price of our important victory, there is nothing left us but to honor their memory, and bow submissively to a decree which we can not alter.

Harrison, Battle of Tippecanoe, America, Vol.5, p.114–p.115

It would, however, imbitter the remaining part of my life, if I could suppose that their fate was produced by any misconduct of mine. But upon this subject I have nothing to accuse myself. I am satisfied that all my weak powers were exerted to the utmost, for the safety and glory of my troops. In deed no commander had ever greater reason to do so, for none ever received greater confidence and attachment from any army, than I—many of the corps forgetful of their own danger, seemed only anxious for me—and a sentiment springing from personal attachment alone was imputed by them to a belief that their fate was intimately connected with mine. For such troops it was impossible that I should not be willing to shed the last drop of my blood.

Harrison, Battle of Tippecanoe, America, Vol.5, p.115

Your friendship, my dear General, will pardon the egotism contained in this letter—perhaps I ought to disregard the idle tales that have been circulated to my prejudice; knowing as I do that there are not ten persons who served under me upon the late expedition that will not be ready to contradict them; I have sufficient stoicism, however, to rest easy under unmerited reproach, and with the consciousness of having rendered some service to my country, I can not bear to be deprived of the good opinion of my fellow-citizens.

Harrison, Battle of Tippecanoe, America, Vol.5, p.115

P. S. I should have covered my troops every night with a breast work of trees, but axes were so scarce (after having procured every one that the Territory afforded) that it was with difficulty that a sufficiency of wood could be procured to make the men comfortable; and the militia were without tents, and many of them without blankets. The story which has been circulated in some of the papers, of officers fighting without any clothes but their shirts, is absolutely false.

The Battle Between the Constitution and the Guerriere

Title: The Battle Between the Constitution and the Guerriere

Author: Theodore Roosevelt

Date: 1812

Source: Great Epochs in American History, Vol.5, pp.11-17

Roosevelt, Battle Between the Constitution and the Guerriere, Great Epochs, Vol.5, p.11

On August 2 the Constitution made sail from Boston and stood to the eastward, in hopes of falling in with some of the British cruisers. She was unsuccessful, however, and met nothing. Then she ran down to the Bay of Fundy, steered along the coast of Nova Scotia, and thence toward Newfoundland, and finally took her station off Cape Race in the Gulf of St. Lawrence, where she took and burned two brigs of little value. On the 15th she recaptured an American brig from the British ship-sloop Avenger, tho the latter escaped; Capt. Hull manned his prize and sent her in. He then sailed southward, and on the night of hte 18th spoke a Salem privateer which gave him news of a British frigate to the south; thither he stood, and at 2 P.M. on the 19th, in lat. 41° 30' N. and 55° W., made out a large sail bearing E.S.E. and to leeward, which proved to be his old acquaintance, the frigate Guerriere, Captain Dacres.

Roosevelt, Battle Between the Constitution and the Guerriere, Great Epochs, Vol.5, p.11

It was a cloudy day and the wind was blowing fresh from the northwest. The Guerriere was standing by the wind on the starboard tack, under easy canvas; she hauled up her courses, took in her topgallantsails, and at 4:30 backed her maintopsail. Hull then very deliberately began to shorten sail, taking in topgallantsails, staysails, and flying jib, sending down the royal-yards and putting another reef in the topsails. Soon the Englishman hoisted three ensigns, when the American also set his colors, one at each masthead, and one at the mizzen-peak.

Roosevelt, Battle Between the Constitution and the Guerriere, Great Epochs, Vol.5, p.12

The Constitution now ran down with the wind nearly aft. The Guierriere was on the starboard tack, and at five o'clock opened with her weatherguns, the shot falling short, then wore round and fired her port broadside, of which two shots struck her opponent, the rest passing over and through her rigging. As the British frigate again wore to open with her starboard battery, the Constitution yawed a little and fired two or three of her port bow guns. Three or four times the Guerriere repeated this maneuver, wearing and firing alternate broadsides, but with little or no effect, while the Constitution yawed as often to avoid being raked, and occasionally fired one of her bow guns. This continued nearly an hour, as the vessels were very far apart when the action began, hardly any loss or damage being inflicted by either party. At 6:00 the Guerriere bore up and ran off under her topsails and jib, with the wind almost astern, a little on her port quarter; when the Constitution set her maintopgallantsail and foresail, and at 6:05 closed within half pistol-shot distance on her adversary's port beam.

Roosevelt, Battle Between the Constitution and the Guerriere, Great Epochs, Vol.5, p.12

Immediately furious cannonade opened, eachship firing as the guns bore. By the time the ships were fairly abreast, at 6:20, the Constitution shot away the Guerriere's mizzen-mast, which fell over the starboard quarter, knocking a large hole in the counter, and bringing the ship round against her helm. Hitherto she had suffered very greatly and the Constitution hardly at all. The latter, finding that she was ranging ahead, put her helm aport and then luffed short round her enemy's bows, delivering a heavy raking fire with the starboard guns and shooting away the Guierriere's mainyard. Then she wore and again passed her adversary's bows, raking with her port guns. The mizzenmast of the Guerriere, dragging in the water, had by this time pulled her bow round till the wind came on her starboard quarter; and so near were the two ships that the Englishman's bowsprit passed diagonally over the Constitution's quarter-deck, and as the latter ship fell off it got foul of her mizzen-rigging, and the vessels then lay with the Guerriere's starboard-bow against the Constitution's port, or lee quarter-gallery. The Englishman's bow guns played havoc with Captain Hull's cabin, setting fire to it; but the flames were soon extinguished by Lieutenant Hoffmann. On both sides the boarders were called away; the British ran forward, but Captain Dacres relinquished the idea of attacking when he saw the crowds of men on the American's decks.

Roosevelt, Battle Between the Constitution and the Guerriere, Great Epochs, Vol.5, p.13

Meanwhile, on the Constitution, the boarders and marines gathered aft, but such a heavy sea was running that they could not get on the Guerriere. Both sides suffered heavily from the closeness of the musketry fire; indeed, almost the entire loss on the Constitution occurred at this juncture. As Lieutenant Bush, of the marines, sprang upon the taffrail to leap on the enemy's decks, a British marine shot him dead; Mr. Morris, the first lieutenant, and Mr. Alwyn, the master, had also both leapt on the taffrail, and both were at the same moment wounded by the musketry fire. On the Guerriere the loss was far heavier, almost all the men on the forecastle being picked off. Captain Dacres himself was shot in the back and severely wounded by one of the American mizzen-topmen, while he was standing on the starboard forecastle hammocks cheering on his crew; two of the lieutenants and the master were also shot down.

Roosevelt, Battle Between the Constitution and the Guerriere, Great Epochs, Vol.5, p.14

The ships gradually worked round till the wind was again on the port quarter, when they separated, and the Guierriere's foremast and mainmast at once went by the board, and fell over on the starboard side, leaving her a defenseless hulk, rolling her main-deck guns into the water. At 6:30 the Constitution hauled aboard her tacks, ran off a little distance to the eastward, and lay to. Her braces and standing and running rigging were much cut up and some of the spars wounded, but a few minutes sufficed to repair damages, when Captain Hull stood under his adversary's lee, and the latter at once struck, at 7:00 P.M., just two hours after she had fired the first shot. On the part of the Constitution, however, the actual fighting, exclusive of six or eight guns fired during the first hour, while closing, occupied less than 30 minutes….

Roosevelt, Battle Between the Constitution and the Guerriere, Great Epochs, Vol.5, p.14

The Constitution had, about 456 men aboard while the Guerriere's crew, 267 prisoners, were received aboard the Constitution; deducting 10 who were Americans and would not fight, and addingthe 15 killed outright, we get 272; 28 men were absent in prizes.

COMPARATIVE FORCE

 Comparative

 Comparative Loss

 Tons Guns Broadside Men Loss Force Inflicted

Constitution 1576 27 684 456 14 1.00 1.00

Guerriere 1338 25 556 272 79 .70 .18

Roosevelt, Battle Between the Constitution and the Guerriere, Great Epochs, Vol.5, p.15

The loss of the Constitution included Lieutenant William S. Bush, of the marines, and six seamen killed, and her first lieutenant, Charles morris, Master, John C. Alwyn, four seamen, and one marine, wounded. Total, seven killed and seven wounded. Almost all this loss occurred when the ships came foul, and was due to the Guerriere's musketry and the two guns in her bridle-ports.

Roosevelt, Battle Between the Constitution and the Guerriere, Great Epochs, Vol.5, p.15

The Guerriere lost 23 killed and mortally wounded, including her second lieutenant, Henry Ready, and 56 wounded severely and slightly, including Captain Dacres himself, the first lieutenant, Bartholomew Kent, Master, Robert Scott, two master's mates, and one midshipman….

Roosevelt, Battle Between the Constitution and the Guerriere, Great Epochs, Vol.5, p.15

The British laid very great stress on the rotten and decayed condition of the Guerriere; mentioning in particular that the mainmast fell solely because of the weight of the falling foremast. But it must be remembered that until the action occurred she was considered a very fine ship. Thus, in Brighton's "Memoir of Admiral Broke," it is declared that Dacres freely exprest the opinion that she could take a ship in half the time the Shannon could. The fall of the mainmast occurred when the fight was practically over; it had no influence whatever on the conflict. It was alsoasserted that her powder was bad, but on no authority; her first broadside fell short, but so, under similar circumstances, did the first broadside of the United States.

Roosevelt, Battle Between the Constitution and the Guerriere, Great Epochs, Vol.5, p.16

None of these causes account for the fact that her shot did not hit. Her opponent was of such superior force—nearly in the proportion of 3 to 2—that success would have been very difficult in any event, and no one can doubt the gallantry and pluck with which the British ship was fought; but the execution was very greatly disproportioned to the force. The gunnery of the Guerriere was very poor, and that of the Constitution excellent; during the few minutes the ships were yard-arm and yard-arm, the latter was not hulled once, while no less than thirty shot took effect on the former's engaged side, five sheets of copper beneath the bends. The Guerriere, moreover, was out-maneuvered; "in wearing several times and exchanging broadsides in such rapid and continual changes of position, her fire was much more harmless than it would have been if she had kept more steady." The Constitution was handled faultlessly; Captain Hull displayed the coolness and skill of a veteran in the way in which he managed, first to avoid being raked, and then to improve the advantage which the precision and rapidity of his fire had gained.

Roosevelt, Battle Between the Constitution and the Guerriere, Great Epochs, Vol.5, p.16

The disparity of force, 10 to 7, is not enough to account for the disparity of execution, 10 to 2. Of course, something must be allowed for the decayed state of the Englishman's masts, altho I really do not think it had any influence on the battle, for he was beaten when the mainmast fell; and it must be remembered, on the otherhand, that the American crew was absolutely new, while the Guerriere was manned by old hands. So that, while admitting and admiring the gallantry, and, on the whole, the seamanship, of Captain Dacres and his crew, and acknowledging that he fought at a great disadvantage, especially in being short-handed, yet all must acknowledge that the combat showed a marked superiority, particularly in gunnery, on the part of the Americans. Had the ships not come foul, Captain Hull would probably not have lost more than three or four men; as it was, he suffered but slightly.

Roosevelt, Battle Between the Constitution and the Guerriere, Great Epochs, Vol.5, p.17

That the Guerriere was not so weak as she was represented to be can be gathered from the fact that she mounted two more main-deck guns than the rest of her class; thus carrying on her maindeck 30 long 18-pounders in battery to oppose to the 30 long 24's, or rather (allowing for the short weight of shot) long 22's, of the Constitution. Characteristically enough, james, tho he carefully reckons in the long eighteens mounted through the bridle-ports on the Guerriere's main-deck. Now, as it turned out, these two bow guns were used very effectively, when the ships got foul, and caused more damage and loss than all of the other main-deck guns put together.

The Causes of the War of 1812

Title: The Causes of the War of 1812

Author: James Madison

Date: May 25, 1812

Source: America, Vol.5, pp.116-119

Our second war with Great Britain was declared on June 18, 1812. Its immediate causes are set forth in this correspondence between President Madison and ex-President Jefferson, the first letter being dated May 25, 1812. Madison had been Secretary of State in Jefferson's Cabinet. Like Jefferson he was essentially a man of peace, and was not successful in his management of the war.

His argument that France had respected our rights and that England should therefore withdraw her orders in council, was untenable. Moreover, Madison did not, as he admits, have a united country behind him, for most of the New Englanders preferred the British to the French. The War of 1812 lasted through almost half of Madison's second term.

Madison, Causes of the War of 1812, America, Vol.5, p.116–p.117

FRANCE has done nothing towards adjusting our differences with her. It is understood that the Berlin and Milan Decrees are not in force against the United States, and no contravention of them can be established against her. On the contrary, positive cases rebut the allegation. Still, the manner of the French Government betrays the design of leaving Great Britain a pretext for enforcing her orders in council. And in all other respects, the grounds for our complaints remain the same…. In the meantime, the business is become more than ever puzzling. To go to war with England and not with France arms the Federalists with new matter, and divides the Republicans, some of whom, with the Quids, (extreme Democrats,) make a display of impartiality. To go to war against both presents a thousand difficulties; above all, that of shutting all the ports of the continent of Europe against our cruisers, who can do little without the use of them. It is pretty certain, also, that it would not gain over the Federalists, who would turn all those difficulties against the administration. The only consideration of weight in favor of this triangular war, as it is called, is, that it might hasten through a peace with Great Britain or France; a termination, for a while, at least, of the obstinate questions now depending with both.

Madison, Causes of the War of 1812, America, Vol.5, p.117

But even this advantage is not certain. For a prolongation of such a war might be viewed by both belligerents as desirable, with as little reason for the opinion as has prevailed in the past conduct of both.

Madison, Causes of the War of 1812, America, Vol.5, p.117

[June 22.] I inclose a paper containing the declaration of war. . . It is understood that the Federalists in Congress are to put all the strength of their talents into a protest against the war, and that the party at large are to be brought out in all their force….

Madison, Causes of the War of 1812, America, Vol.5, p.117

[July 25.] The conduct of the nation against whom this resort has been proclaimed left no choice but between that and the greater evil of a surrender of our sovereignty on the element on which all nations have equal rights, and in the free use of which the United States, as a nation whose agriculture and commerce are so closely allied, have an essential interest.

Madison, Causes of the War of 1812, America, Vol.5, p.117–p.118

The appeal to force in opposition to the force so long continued against us had become the more urgent, as every endeavor short of it had not only been fruitless, but had been followed by fresh usurpations and oppressions. The intolerable outrages committed against the crews of our vessels, which, at one time, were the result of alleged searches for deserters from British ships of war, had grown into a like pretension, first, as to all British seamen, and next, as to all British subjects; with the invariable practice of seizing on all neutral seamen of every nation, and on all such of our own seamen as British officers interested in the abuse might please to demand.

Madison, Causes of the War of 1812, America, Vol.5, p.118–p.119

The blockading orders in council, commencing on the plea of retaliating injuries indirectly done to Great Britain, through the direct operation of French decrees against the trade of the United States with her, and on a professed disposition to proceed step by step with France in revoking them, have been since bottomed on pretensions more and more extended and arbitrary, till at length it is openly avowed as indispensable to a repeal of the orders as they affect the United States, that the French decrees be repealed as they affect Great Britain directly, and all other neutrals, as well as the United States. To this extraordinary avowal is superadded abundant evidence that the real object of the orders is, not to restore freedom to the American commerce with Great Britain, which could, indeed, be little interrupted by the decrees of France, but to destroy our lawful commerce, as interfering with her own unlawful commerce with her enemies. The only foundation of this attempt to banish the American flag from the highway of nations, or to render it wholly subservient to the commercial views of the British government is the absurd and exploded doctrine that the ocean, not less than the land, is susceptible of occupancy and dominion; that this dominion is in the hands of Great Britain; and that her laws, not the law of nations, which is ours as well as hers, are to regulate our maritime intercourse with the rest of the world.

Madison, Causes of the War of 1812, America, Vol.5, p.119

When the United States assumed and established their rank among the nations of the earth, they assumed and established a common sovereignty on the high seas, as well as an exclusive sovereignty within their territorial limits. The one is as essential as the other to their character as an independent nation. However conceding they may have been on controvertible points, or forbearing under casual and limited injuries, they can never submit to wrongs irreparable in their kind, enormous in their amount, and indefinite in their duration; and which are avowed and justified on principles degrading the United States from the rank of a sovereign and independent power. In attaining this high rank, and the inestimable blessings attached to it, no part of the American people had a more meritorious share than the people of New Jersey. From none, therefore, may more reasonably be expected a patriotic zeal in maintaining by the sword the unquestionable and unalienable rights acquired by it….

The Seeds of War

Title: The Seeds of War

Author: John Quincy Adams

Date: 1812

Source: America, Vol.5, pp.120-128

It is in his biography of James Madison that John Quincy Adams, sixth President of the United States and son of our second President, discusses the origin of the War of 1812 and reviews its long period of brewing. American grievances had been accumulating steadily since Trafalgar.

More than 900 American ships had been seized by the British and more than 550 by the French, while, as Carl Schurz records, in his "Life of Henry Clay," who was John Quincy Adams's Secretary of State, "the number of American citizens impressed as British seamen, or kept in prison if they refused to serve, was reported to exceed 6,000." It was estimated that "as many more had been impressed of whom no information had been obtained." Remonstrances made by the American government "had been treated with haughty disdain."

Adams, Seeds of War, America, Vol.5, p.120–p.121

IN the first wars of the French revolution Great Britain had begun by straining the claim of belligerent, as against neutral rights, beyond all the theories of international jurisprudence, and even beyond her own ordinary practice. There is in all war a conflict between the belligerent and the neutral right, which can in its nature be settled only by convention. And in addition to all the ordinary asperities of dissension between the nation at war and the nation at peace, she had asserted a right of man-stealing from the vessels of the United States. The claim of right was to take by force all sea-faring men, her own subjects, wherever they were found by her naval officers, to serve their king in his wars. And under color of this tyrant's right, her naval officers, down to the most beardless midship man, actually took from the American merchant vessels which they visited, any seaman whom they chose to take for a British subject. After the treaty of November, 1794, she had relaxed all her pretensions against the neutral rights, and had gradually abandoned the practice of impressment till she was on the point of renouncing it by a formal treaty stipulation.

Adams, Seeds of War, America, Vol.5, p.121

At the renewal of the war, after the Peace of Amiens, it was at first urged with much respect for the rights of neutrality, but the practice of impressment was soon renewed with aggravated severity, and the commerce of neutral nations with the colonies of the adverse belligerent was wholly interdicted on the pretense of justification, because it had been forbidden by the enemy herself in the time of peace. This pretension had been first raised by Great Britain in the Seven Years' War, but she had been overawed by the armed neutrality from maintaining it in the war of the American Revolution.

Adams, Seeds of War, America, Vol.5, p.121–p.122

In the midst of this war with Napoleon, she suddenly reasserted the principle, and by a secret order in council, swept the ocean of nearly the whole mass of neutral commerce. Her war with France spread itself all over Europe, successively involving Spain, Italy, the Netherlands, Prussia, Austria, Russia, Denmark and Sweden. Not a single neutral power remained in Europe—and Great Britain, after annihilating at Trafalgar the united naval power of France and Spain, ruling thenceforth with undisputed dominion upon the ocean, conceived the project of engrossing even the commerce with her enemy by intercepting all neutral navigation. These measures were met by corresponding acts of violence, and sophistical principles of national law, promulgated by Napoleon, rising to the summit of his greatness, and preparing his downfall by the abuse of his elevation.

Adams, Seeds of War, America, Vol.5, p.122

Through this fiery ordeal the administration of Mr. Jefferson was to pass, and the severest of its tests were to be applied to Mr. Madison. His correspondence with the ministers of Great Britain, France and Spain, and with the ministers of the United States to those nations during the remainder of Mr. Jefferson's administration, constitute the most important and most valuable materials of its history. His examination of the British doctrines relating to neutral trade will hereafter be considered a standard treatise on the law of nations; not inferior to the works of any writer upon those subjects since the days of Grotius, and every way worthy of the author of Publius and Helvidus. There is indeed, in all the diplomatic papers of American statesmen, justly celebrated as they have been, nothing superior to this dissertation, which was not strictly official. It was composed amid the duties of the Department of State, never more arduous than at that time—in the summer of 1806. It was published unofficially, and a copy of it was laid on the table of each member of Congress at the commencement of the session in December, 1806.

Adams, Seeds of War, America, Vol.5, p.122–p.123

The controversies Of conflicting neutral and belligerent rights continued through the whole of Mr. Jefferson's administration, during the latter part of which they were verging rapidly to war. He had carried the policy of peace perhaps to an extreme. His system of defense by commercial restrictions, dry-docks, gunboats and embargoes, was stretched to its last hair's breadth of endurance. Far be it from me to speak of this system or of its motives with disrespect. If there be a duty, binding in chains more adamantine than all the rest the conscience of a Chief Magistrate of this Union, it is that of preserving peace with all mankind—peace with the other nations of the earth—peace among the several States of this Union—peace in the hearts and temper of our own people. Yet must a President of the United States never cease to feel that his charge is to maintain the rights, the interests and the honor no less than the peace of his country—nor will he be permitted to forget that peace must be the offspring of two concurring wills; that to seek peace is not always to ensure it.

Adams, Seeds of War, America, Vol.5, p.123–p.124

He must remember, too, that a reliance upon the operation of measures, from their effect on the interests, however clear and unequivocal of nations, can not be safe against a counter-current of their passions; that nations, like individuals, sacrifice their peace to their pride, to their hatred, to their envy, to their jealousy, and even to the craft, which the cunning of hackneyed politicians not unfrequently mistakes for policy; that nations, like individuals, have sometimes the misfortune of losing their senses, and that lunatic communities, which can not be confined in hospitals, must be resisted in arms, as a single maniac is sometimes restored to reason by the scourge; that national madness is infectious, and that a paroxysm of it in one people, especially when generated by the Furies that preside over war, produces a counter-paroxysm in their adverse party. Such is the melancholy condition as yet of associated man. And while in the wise but mysterious dispensations of an overruling Providence, man shall so continue, the peace of every nation must depend not alone upon its own will, but upon that concurrently with the will of all others.

Adams, Seeds of War, America, Vol.5, p.124

And such was the condition of the two mightiest nations of the earth during the administration of Mr. Jefferson. Frantic, in fits of mutual hatred, envy and jealousy against each other; meditating mutual invasion and conquest, and forcing the other nations of the four quarters of the globe to the alternative of joining them as allies or encountering them as foes. Mr. Jefferson met them with moral philosophy and commercial restrictions, with dry-docks and gunboats—with non-intercourses and embargoes, till the American nation were told that they could not be kicked into a war, and till they were taunted by a British statesman in the imperial Parliament of England, with their five fir frigates and their striped bunting.

Adams, Seeds of War, America, Vol.5, p.124–p.125

Mr. Jefferson pursued his policy of peace till it brought the nation to the borders of internal war. An embargo of fourteen months' duration was at last reluctantly abandoned by him, when it had ceased to be obeyed by the people, and State courts were ready to pronounce it unconstitutional. A non-intercourse was then substituted in its place, and the helm of State passed from the hands of Mr. Jefferson to those of Mr. Madison, precisely at the moment of this perturbation of earth and sea threatened with war from abroad and at home, but with the principle definitely settled that in our intercourse with foreign nations, reason, justice and commercial restrictions require live oak hearts and iron or brazen mouths to speak, that they may be distinctly heard, or attentively listened to, by the distant ear of foreigners, whether French or British, monarchical or republican.

Adams, Seeds of War, America, Vol.5, p.125

The administration of Mr. Madison was, with regard to its most essential principles, a continuation of that of Mr. Jefferson. He, too, was the friend of peace, and earnestly desirous of maintaining it. As a last resource for the preservation of it, an act of Congress prohibited all commercial intercourse with both belligerents, the prohibition to be withdrawn from either or both in the event of a repeal by either of the orders and decrees in violation of neutral rights. France ungraciously and equivocally withdrew hers. Britain refused, hesitated, and at last conditionally withdrew hers when it was too late—after a formal declaration of war had been issued by Congress at the recommendation of President Madison himself.

Adams, Seeds of War, America, Vol.5, p.126

Of the necessity, the policy or even the justice of this war, there were conflicting opinions, not yet, perhaps never to be, harmonized. This is not the time or the place to discuss them. The passions, the prejudices and the partialities of that day have passed away. That it was emphatically a popular war, having reference to the whole people of the United States, will, I think, not be denied. That it was in a high degree unpopular in our own section of the Union, is no doubt equally true; and that it was so, constituted the greatest difficulties and prepared the most mortifying disasters in its prosecution.

Adams, Seeds of War, America, Vol.5, p.126

Party spirit and party feeling ran high throughout the Union, and the declaration of war was very differently received in different sections of the Union. In the city of Boston, in full view of the old Temple of Liberty, the flags of the shipping were hoisted at half-mast, in token of mourning; while at Baltimore, a Federal editor was mobbed, his office in great part demolished, one of his friends killed, and he, with others, including Henry Lee, a distinguished officer of the Revolution, but a most bitter and vindictive Federal partisan, seriously injured, for having the hardihood to utter his sentiments through the columns of his paper.

Adams, Seeds of War, America, Vol.5, p.126–p.127

In the eastern States the opposition to the war was marked and virulent. Every one who dared to speak in defense of the administration was denounced in the most unmeasured terms, and curses and anathemas were liberally hurled from the pulpit on the heads of all those who aided, directly or indirectly, in carrying on the war. In the middle and southern States, public opinion was divided, though a large majority approved the measures adopted by Congress. But in the West there was only one sentiment: love of country sparkled in every eye, and animated every heart. The importing merchants, the lawyers in the principal cities, some planters, and the clergy for the most part, were numbered in the ranks of the opposition; and the war found its most ardent and enthusiastic advocates among the farmers and the planters, the mechanics, the mariners, and the laboring men.

Adams, Seeds of War, America, Vol.5, p.127

The war itself was an ordeal through which the Constitution of the United States, as the government of a great nation, was to pass. Its trial in that respect was short but severe. In the intention of its founders, and particularly of Mr. Madison, it was a Constitution essentially pacific in its character, and for a nation, above all others, the lover of peace—yet its great and most vigorous energies, and all its most formidable powers, are reserved for the state of war—and war is the condition in which the functions allotted to the separate States sink into impotence compared with those of the general government.

Adams, Seeds of War, America, Vol.5, p.127–p.128

The war was brought to a close without any definitive adjustment of the controverted principles in which it had originated. It left the questions of neutral commerce with an enemy and his colonies, of bottom and cargo, of blockade and contraband of war, and even of impressment, precisely as they had been before the war. With the European war all the conflicts between belligerent and neutral rights had ceased. Great Britain, triumphant as she was after a struggle of more than twenty years' duration—against revolutionary, republican and imperial France, was in no temper to yield the principles for which in the heat of her contest she had defied the power of neutrality and the voice of justice. As little were the Government or people of the United States disposed to yield principles in the defense of the rights of neutrality, and of conceding too much to the lawless pretensions of naval war.

Adams, Seeds of War, America, Vol.5, p.128

The extreme solicitude of the American government for the perpetuity of peace, especially with Great Britain, induced Mr. Madison to institute with her negotiations after the peace of Ghent, for the adjustment of all these questions of maritime collisions between the warlike and the pacific nation.

The Surrender of Detroit

Title: The Surrender of Detroit

Author: William Hull

Date: August 16, 1812

Source: America, Vol.5, pp.135-145

Following the declaration of war in 1812, General Hull marched his troops into Canada. There he remained inactive while the British gathered their forces and when they made an attack he surrendered.

Hull had evidently been much shaken by the recent massacre of detachments of his troops, and historians are inclined to lighten the blame given to him at the time, but there is no doubt that in surrendering his command he left a vast territory defenseless.

This letter from General Hull to the Secretary of War was dated at Fort George, August 16th, 1812,—ten days after the surrender for which he was court-martialed and sentenced to death. This, however, was commuted because of his age.

The disfavor in which Hull was held by his fellow officers is shown by the report to the War Department made a few weeks later by Lewis Cass (see the following document) who became Governor of the territory in 1813 and later Secretary of War and Minister to France.

Hull, Surrender of Detroit, America, Vol.5, p.135

ENCLOSED are the articles of capitulation, by which the Fort of Detroit has been surrendered to major general Brock, commanding his Britannic majesty's forces in Upper Canada, and by which the troops have become prisoners of war. My situation at present forbids me from detailing the particular causes which have led to this unfortunate event. I will, however, generally observe, that after the surrender of Michilimakinac, almost every tribe and nation of Indians, excepting a part of the Miamies and Delawares, north from beyond Lake Superior, west from beyond the Mississippi, south from the Ohio and Wabash, and east from every part of Upper Canada, and from all the intermediate country, joined in open hostility, under the British standard, against the army I commanded, contrary to the most solemn assurances of a large portion of them to remain neutral: even the Ottawa chiefs from Arbecrotch, who formed the delegation to Washington the last summer, in whose friendship I know you had great confidence, are among the hostile tribes, and several of them distinguished leaders. Among the vast number of chiefs who led the hostile bands, Tecumseh, Marpot, Logan, Walk-in-the-Water, Split Log, &c., are considered the principals. This numerous assemblage of savages, under the entire influence and direction of the British commander, enabled him totally to obstruct the only communication which I had with my country. This communication had been opened from the settlements in the state of Ohio, two hundred miles through a wilderness, by the fatigues of the army, which I marched to the frontier on the river Detroit. The body of the lake being commanded by the British armed ships, and the shores and rivers by gun boats, the army was totally deprived of all communication by water. On this extensive road it depended for transportation of provisions, military stores, medicine, clothing, and every other supply, on pack horses—all its operations were successful until its arrival at Detroit, and in a few days it passed into the enemy's country, and all opposition seemed to drop before it. One month it remained in possession of this country, and was fed from its resources. In different directions, detachments penetrated sixty miles in the settled part of the province, and the inhabitants seemed satisfied with the change of situation, which appeared to be taking place; the militia from Amherstburg were daily deserting, and the whole country, then under the control of the army, was asking for protection. The Indians, generally, in the first instance, appeared to be neutralized, and determined to take no part in the contest. The fort of Amherstburg was eighteen miles below my encampment. Not a single cannon or mortar was on wheels suitable to carry before this place. I consulted my officers, whether it was expedient to make an attempt on it with the bayonet alone, without cannon, to make a break in the first instance. The council I called was of the opinion it was not. The greatest industry was exerted in making preparation, and it was not until the 7th of August, that two 24 pounders, and three howitzers were prepared. It was then my intention to have proceeded on the enterprise. While the operations of the army were delayed by these preparations, the clouds of adversity had been for some time and seemed still thickly to be gathering around me. The surrender of Michilimackinac opened the northern hive of Indians, and they were swarming down in every direction. Reinforcements from Niagara had arrived at Amherstburg under the command of Colonel Proctor. The desertion of the militia ceased. Besides the reinforcements that came by water, I received information of a very considerable force under the command of Major Chambers, on the river Le French, with four field pieces, and collecting the militia on his route, evidently destined for Amherstburg; and in addition to this combination, and increase of force, contrary to all my expectations, the Wyandots, Chippewas, Ottawas, Pottawatamies, Munsees, Delawares, &c., with whom I had the most friendly intercourse, at once passed over to Amherstburg, and accepted the tomahawk and scalping knife. There being now a vast number of Indians at the British post, they were sent to the river Huron, Brownstown, and Maguago to intercept my communication. To open this communication, I detached Major Van Horn of the Ohio volunteers, with two hundred men, to proceed as far as the river Raisin, under an expectation he would meet Captain Brush with one hundred and fifty men, volunteers from the state of Ohio, and a quantity of provision for the army. An ambuscade was formed at Brownstown, and Major Van Horn's detachment defeated and returned to camp without effecting the object of the expedition.

Hull, Surrender of Detroit, America, Vol.5, p.138–p.139–p.140–p.141–p.142

In my letter of the 7th instant you have the particulars of that transaction, with a return of the killed and wounded. Under this sudden and unexpected change of things, and having received an express from General Hall, commanding opposite the British shore on the Niagara river, by which it appeared that there was no prospect of a cooperation from that quarter, and the two senior officers of the artillery having stated to me an opinion that it would be extremely difficult, if not impossible, to pass the Turkey river and river Aux Cannard, with the 24 pounders, and that they could not be transported by water, as the Queen Charlotte, which carried eighteen 24 pounders, lay in the river Detroit above the mouth of the river Aux Cannard; and as it appeared indispensably necessary to open the communication to the river Raisin and the Miami, I found myself compelled to suspend the operation against Amherstburg, and concentrate the main force of the army at Detroit. Fully intending at that time, after the communication was opened, to re-cross the river, and pursue the object at Amherstburg, and strongly desirous of continuing protection to a very large number of the inhabitants of Upper Canada, who had voluntarily accepted it under my proclamation, I established a fortress on the banks of the river, a little below Detroit, calculated for a garrison of 360 men. On the evening of the 7th, and morning of the 8th instant, the army, excepting the garrison of 250 infantry, and a corps of artillerists, all under the command of Major Denny of the Ohio volunteers, re-crossed the river, and encamped at Detroit. In pursuance of the object of opening the communication, on which I considered the existence of the army depending, a detachment of 600 men, under the command of Lieutenant Colonel Miller, was immediately ordered. For a particular account of the proceedings of this detachment, and the memorable battle which was fought at Maguago, which reflects the highest honor on the American arms, I refer you to my letter of the 13th of August instant, a duplicate of which is enclosed, marked G. Nothing however but honor was acquired by this victory; and it is a painful consideration, that the blood of seventy-five gallant men could only open the communication, as far as the points of their bayonets extended. The necessary care of the sick and wounded, and a very severe storm of rain, rendered their return to camp indispensably necessary for their own comfort. Captain Brush, with his small detachment, and the provisions being still at the river Raisin, and in a situation to be destroyed by the savages, on the 13th instant in the evening, I permitted Colonels McArthur and Cass to select from their regiment four hundred of their most effective men, and proceed an upper route through the woods, which I had sent an express to Captain Brush to take, and had directed the militia of the river Raisin to accompany him as a reinforcement. The force of the enemy continually increasing, and the necessity of opening the communication, and acting on the defensive, becoming more apparent, I had, previous to detaching Colonels McArthur and Cass on the 11th instant, evacuated and destroyed the fort on the opposite bank. On the 13th, in the evening, General Brock arrived at Amherstburg about the hour that Colonels McArthur and Cass marched, of which at that time I had received no information. On the 15th I received a summons from him to surrender Fort Detroit, of which the paper marked A is a copy. My answer is marked B. At this time I had received no information from Colonels McArthur and Cass. An express was immediately sent, strongly escorted, with orders for them to return. On the 15th, as soon as General Brock received my letter, his batteries opened on the town and fort, and continued until evening. In the evening all the British ships of war came nearly as far up the river as Sandwich, three miles below Detroit. At daylight on the 16th (at which time I had received no information from Colonels McArthur and Cass, my expresses, sent the evening before, and in the night having been prevented from passing by numerous bodies of Indians) the cannonade re-commenced, and in a short time I received information, that the British army and Indians, were landing below the Spring Wells, under the cover of their ships of war. At this time the whole effective force at my disposal at Detroit did not exceed eight hundred men. Being new troops, and unaccustomed to a camp life; having performed a laborious march; having been engaged in a number of battles and skirmishes, in which many had fallen, and more had received wounds, in addition to which a large number being sick, and unprovided with medicine, and the comforts necessary for their situation; are the general causes by which the strength of the army was thus reduced. The fort at this time was filled with women, children, and the old and decrepit people of the town and country; they were unsafe in the town, as it was entirely open and exposed to the enemy's batteries. Back of the fort, above or below it, there was no safety for them on account of the Indians. In the first instance the enemy's fire was principally directed against our batteries; towards the close, it was directed against the fort alone, and almost every shot and shell had their effect.

Hull, Surrender of Detroit, America, Vol.5, p.142–p.143–p.144–p.145

It now became necessary either to fight the enemy in the field; collect the whole force in the fort; or propose terms of capitulation. I could not have carried into the field more than six hundred men, and left any adequate force in the fort. There were landed at that time of the enemy a regular force of much more than that number, and twice the number of Indians. Considering this great inequality of force I did not think it expedient to adopt the first measure. The second must have been attended with a great sacrifice of blood, and no possible advantage, because the contest could not have been sustained more than a day for the want of powder, and but a very few days for the want of provisions. In addition to this, Colonels McArthur and Cass would have been in a most hazardous situation. I feared nothing but the last alternative. I have dared to adopt it. I well know the high responsibility of the measure, and take the whole of it on myself. It was dictated by a sense of duty, and a full conviction of its expediency. The bands of savages which had then joined the British force were numerous beyond any former example. Their numbers have since increased, and the history of the barbarians of the north of Europe does not furnish examples of more greedy violence than these savages have exhibited. A large portion of the brave and gallant officers and men I commanded would cheerfully have contested until the last cartridge had been expended, and the bayonets worn to the sockets. I could not consent to the useless sacrifice of such brave men, when I knew it was impossible for me to sustain my situation. It was impossible in the nature of things that an army could have been furnished with the necessary supplies of provision, military stores, clothing and comforts for the sick, or pack horses, through a wilderness of two hundred miles, filled with hostile savages. It was impossible, sir, that this little army, worn down by fatigue, by sickness, by wounds, and deaths, could have supported itself not only against the collected force of all the northern nations of Indians; but against the united strength of Upper Canada, whose population consists of more than twenty times the number contained in the territory of Michigan, aided by the principal part of the regular forces of the province, and the wealth and influence of the north-west and other trading establishments among the Indians, which have in their employment, and under their entire control, more than two thousand white men. Before I close this despatch, it is a duty I owe to my respectable associates in command, Colonels McArthur, Findlay, Cass, and Lieutenant Colonel Miller, to express my obligations to them for the prompt and judicious manner they have performed their respective duties. If aught has taken place during the campaign, which is honorable to the army, these officers are entitled to a large share of it. If the last act should be disapproved, no part of the censure belongs to them. I have likewise to express my obligation to General Taylor, who has performed the duty of quarter master general, for his great exertions in procuring everything in his department which it was possible to furnish for the convenience of the army; likewise to Brigade Major Jessup for the correct and punctual manner in which he has discharged his duty; and to the army generally for their exertions, and the zeal they have manifested for the public interest. The death of Dr. Foster soon after he arrived at Detroit, was a severe misfortune to the army; it was increased by the capture of the Chachago packet, by which the medicine and hospital stores were lost. He was commencing the best arrangements in the department of which he was the principal, with the very small means he possessed. I was likewise deprived of the necessary services of Captain Partridge by sickness, the only officer of the corps of engineers attached to the army. All the officers and men have gone to their respective homes, excepting the 4th United States' regiment, and a small part of the 1st, and Captain Dyson's company of artillery. Captain Dyson's company was left at Amherstburg, and the others are with me prisoners—they amount to about three hundred and forty. I have only to solicit an investigation of my conduct, as early as my situation and the state of things will admit; and to add the further request, that the government will not be unmindful of my associates in captivity, and of the families of those brave men who have fallen in the contest.

Hull, Surrender of Detroit, America, Vol.5, p.145

I have the honor to be, very respectfully,

Your most obedient servant,

WM. HULL.

Cass Describes Hull's Ignominy

Title: Cass Describes Hull's Ignominy

Author: Lewis Cass

Date: 1812

Source: America, Vol.5, pp.145-153

The following report by Lewis Cass describes the disfavor with which General William Hull was regarded by his feloow officers after the surrender of Detroit (see the preceeding document). Cass became Governor of the territory in 1813 and later Secretary of War and Minister to France.

Cass Describes Hull's Ignominy, America, Vol.5, p.145

HAVING been ordered on to this place by Colonel McArthur, for the purpose of communicating to the government such particulars respecting the expedition lately commanded by Brigadier General Hull and its disastrous result, as might enable them correctly to appreciate the conduct of the officers and men, and to develop the causes which produced so foul a stain upon the national character, I have the honor to submit to your consideration the following statement:

Cass Describes Hull's Ignominy, America, Vol.5, p.145–p.146–p.147

When the forces landed in Canada, they landed with an ardent zeal, and stimulated with the hope of conquest. No enemy appeared within view of us, and had an immediate and vigorous attack been made upon Malden, it would doubtless have fallen an easy victory. I knew General Hull afterwards declared he regretted this attack had not been made, and he had every reason to believe success would have crowned his efforts. The reasons given for delaying our operations was to mount our heavy cannon, and to afford to the Canadian militia time and opportunity to quit an obnoxious service. In the course of two weeks the number of their militia who were embodied, had decreased by desertion, from six hundred to one hundred men; and, in the course of three weeks, the cannon were mounted, the ammunition fixed, and every preparation made for an immediate investment of the fort. At a council, at which were present all the field officers, and which was held two days before our preparations were completed, it was unanimously agreed to make an immediate attempt to accomplish the object of the expedition. If by waiting two days we could have the service of our heavy artillery, it was agreed to wait; if not, it was determined to go without it and attempt the place by storm. This opinion appeared to correspond with the views of the general, and the day was appointed for commencing our march. He declared to me that he considered himself pledged to lead the army to Malden. The ammunition was placed in the wagons; the cannon were embarked on board the floating batteries, and every requisite article was prepared. The spirit and zeal, the ardor and animation displayed by the officers and men on learning the near accomplishment of their wishes, were a sure and sacred pledge, that in the hour of trial they would not be found wanting in duty to their country and themselves. But a change of measures, in opposition to the wishes and opinions of all the officers, was adopted by the general. The plan of attacking Maiden was abandoned, and instead of acting offensively, we broke up our camp, evacuated Canada, and recrossed the river in the night, without even the shadow Of an enemy to injure us. We left to the tender mercy of the enemy, the miserable Canadians who had joined us, and the protection we afforded them was but a passport of vengeance. This fatal and unaccountable step dispirited the troops, and destroyed the little confidence which a series of timid, irresolute and indecisive measures had left in the commanding officer.

Cass Describes Hull's Ignominy, America, Vol.5, p.147

About the 10th of August, the enemy received a reinforcement of four hundred men. On the 12th, the commanding officers of three of the regiments (the fourth was absent) were informed through a medium which admitted of no doubt, that the general had stated, that a capitulation would be necessary. They on the same day addressed to Governor Meigs, of Ohio, a letter, of which the following is an extract:

Cass Describes Hull's Ignominy, America, Vol.5, p.147

"Believe all the bearer will tell you. Believe it, however it may astonish you, as much as if told by one of us. Even a c—— is talked of by the—— The bearer will fill the vacancy."

Cass Describes Hull's Ignominy, America, Vol.5, p.147–p.148

The doubtful fate of this letter rendered it necessary to use circumspection in its details, and therefore the blanks were left. The word "capitulation" will fill the first, and "commanding general" the other. As no enemy was near us, and as the superiority of our force was manifest, we could see no necessity for capitulating, nor any propriety in alluding to it. We therefore determined in the last resort to incur the responsibility of divesting the general of his command. This plan was eventually prevented by two of the commanding officers of regiments being ordered upon detachments.

Cass Describes Hull's Ignominy, America, Vol.5, p.148

On the 13th, the British took a position opposite to Detroit, and began to throw up works. During that and the two following days, they pursued their object without interruption, and established a battery for two 18 pounders and an 8 inch howitzer. About sunset on the evening of the 14th, a detachment of 350 men, from the regiments commanded by Colonel McArthur and myself, was ordered to march to the river Raisin, to escort the provisions, which had some time remained there protected by a party under the command of Captain Brush.

Cass Describes Hull's Ignominy, America, Vol.5, p.148

On Saturday, the 15th, about 1 o'clock, a flag of truce arrived from Sandwich, bearing a summons from General Brock, for the surrender of the town and Fort of Detroit, stating he could no longer restrain the fury of the savages. To this an immediate and spirited refusal was returned. About 4 o'clock their batteries began to play upon the town. The fire was returned and continued without interruption and with little effect till dark—their shells were thrown till 11 o'clock.

Cass Describes Hull's Ignominy, America, Vol.5, p.148–p.149

At daylight the firing on both sides recommenced; about the same time the enemy began to land troops at the Spring Wells, three miles below Detroit, protected by two of their armed vessels. Between 6 and 7 o'clock they had effected their landing, and immediately took up their line of march; they moved in a close column of platoons, twelve in front, upon the bank of the river.

Cass Describes Hull's Ignominy, America, Vol.5, p.149

The 4th regiment was stationed in the fort; the Ohio volunteers and a part of the Michigan militia, behind some pickets, in a situation in which the whole flank of the enemy would have been exposed. The residue of the Michigan militia were in the upper part of the town to resist the incursions of the savages Two 24 pounders loaded with grape shot were posted on a commanding eminence, ready to sweep the advancing column. In this situation, the superiority of our position was apparent, and our troops, in the eager expectation of victory, awaited the approach of the enemy. Not a sigh of discontent broke upon the ear; not a look of cowardice met the eye. Every man expected a proud day for his country, and each was anxious that his individual exertion should contribute to the general result.

Cass Describes Hull's Ignominy, America, Vol.5, p.149–p.150

When the head of their column arrived within about five hundred yards of our line, orders were received from General Hull for the whole to retreat to the fort, and for the twenty-four pounders not to open upon the enemy. One universal burst of indignation was apparent upon the receipt of this order. Those, whose conviction was the deliberate result of a dispassionate examination of passing events, saw the folly and impropriety of crowding 1100 men into a little work, which 300 could fully man, and into which the shot and shells of the enemy were continually falling. The fort was in this manner filled; the men were directed to stack their arms, and scarcely was an opportunity afforded of moving. Shortly after a white flag was hung out upon the walls. A British officer rode up to enquire the cause. A communication passed between the commanding generals, which ended in the capitulation submitted to you. In entering into this capitulation, the general took counsel from his own feelings only. Not an officer was consulted. Not one anticipated a surrender till he saw the white flag displayed. Even the women were indignant at so shameful a degradation of the American character, and all felt as they should have felt, but he who held in his hands the reins of authority.

Cass Describes Hull's Ignominy, America, Vol.5, p.150

Our morning report of that morning made our effective men present fit for duty 1060, without including the detachment before alluded to, and without including 300 of the Michigan militia on duty. About dark on Sunday evening the detachment sent to escort the provisions received orders from General Hull to return with as much expedition as possible. About ten o'clock the next day they arrived within sight of Detroit. Had a firing been heard, or any resistance visible, they would have immediately advanced and attacked the rear of the enemy. The situation in which this detachment was placed, although the result of accident, was the best for annoying the enemy and cutting off his retreat that could have been selected. With his raw troops enclosed between two fires and no hopes of succor, it is hazarding little to say, that very few would have escaped.

Cass Describes Hull's Ignominy, America, Vol.5, p.151

I have been informed by Colonel Findley, who saw the return of the quarter master general the day after the surrender, that their whole force of every description, white, red and black, was 1030. They had twenty-nine platoons, twelve in a platoon, of men dressed in uniform. Many of these were evidently Canadian militia. The rest of their militia increased their white force to about seven hundred men.

Cass Describes Hull's Ignominy, America, Vol.5, p.151

The number of their Indians could not be ascertained with any degree of precision; not many were visible. And in the event of an attack upon the town and fort, it was a species of force which could have afforded no material advantage to the enemy.

Cass Describes Hull's Ignominy, America, Vol.5, p.151

In endeavoring to appreciate the motives and to investigate the causes which led to an event so unexpected and dishonorable, it is impossible to find any solution in the relative strength of the contending parties, or in the measures of resistance in our power. That we were far superior to the enemy; that upon any ordinary principles of calculation, we could have defeated them, the wounded and indignant feelings of every man there will testify.

Cass Describes Hull's Ignominy, America, Vol.5, p.151

A few days before the surrender, I was informed by General Hull, we had 400 rounds of 24 pound shot fixed, and about 100,000 cartridges made. We surrendered with the fort 40 barrels of powder and 2500 stand of arms.

Cass Describes Hull's Ignominy, America, Vol.5, p.151–p.152

The state of our provisions has not been generally understood. On the day of the surrender we had fifteen days of provisions of every kind on hand. Of meat there was plenty in the country, and arrangements had been made for purchasing and grinding the flour. It was calculated we could readily procure three months' provisions, independent of 150 barrels of flour, and 1300 head of cattle which had been forwarded from the state of Ohio, which remained at the river Raisin under Captain Brush, within reach of the army.

Cass Describes Hull's Ignominy, America, Vol.5, p.152

But had we been totally destitute of provisions, our duty and our interest undoubtedly was to fight. The enemy invited us to meet him in the field.

Cass Describes Hull's Ignominy, America, Vol.5, p.152–p.153

By defeating him the whole country would have been open to us, and the object of our expedition gloriously and successfully obtained. If we had been defeated we had nothing to do but to retreat to the fort, and make the best defense which circumstances and our situation rendered practicable. But basely to surrender without firing a gun—tamely to submit without raising a bayonet—disgracefully to pass in review before an enemy as inferior in the quality as in the number of his forces, were circumstances, which excited feelings of indignation more easily felt than described. To see the whole of our men flushed with the hope of victory, eagerly awaiting the approaching contest; to see them afterwards dispirited, hopeless and desponding, at least 500 shedding tears, because they were not allowed to meet their country's foe, and to fight their country's battles, excited sensations, which no American has ever before had cause to feel, and which, I trust in God, will never again be felt, while one man remains to defend the standard of the union.

Cass Describes Hull's Ignominy, America, Vol.5, p.153

I am expressly authorized to state, that Colonel McArthur and Colonel Findley, and Lieutenant Colonel Miller, view this transaction in the light which I do. They know and feel, that no circumstance in our situation, none in that of the enemy, can excuse a capitulation so dishonorable and unjustifiable. This too is the universal sentiment among the troops; and I shall be surprised to learn, that there is one man, who thinks it was necessary to sheath his sword, or lay down his musket.

Cass Describes Hull's Ignominy, America, Vol.5, p.153

I was informed by general Hull the morning after the capitulation, that the British forces consisted of 1800 regulars, and that he surrendered to prevent the effusion of human blood. That he magnified their regular force nearly five fold, there can be no doubt. Whether the philanthropic reason assigned by him is a sufficient justification for surrendering a fortified town, an army and a territory, is for the government to determine. Confident I am, that had the courage and conduct of the general been equal to the spirit and zeal of the troops, the event would have been as brilliant and successful as it now is disastrous and dishonorable.

I have the honor to be yours, &c.,

LEWIS CASS.

The "Constitution" Captures the "Guerriere"

Title: The "Constitution" Captures the "Guerriere"

Author: Captain Isaac Hull

Date: August 19, 1812

Source: America, Vol.5, pp.154-156

Captain Hull drafted this report to the Secretary of the Navy of the capture of the English frigate Guerriere by the Constitution ("Old Ironsides") while he was bringing his prize into Boston harbor on August 19, 1812, eleven days after the engagement. In this, as in most of the naval battles of the War of 1812, the gunnery of the Americans was far superior to that of the British. However, this was the first time for many years that a British man-of-war had surrendered to about equal force.

Soon after the famous action, which occurred off Cape Race, Captain Hull generously resigned his command of the Constitution in order to give other naval officers a chance, there being more men than ships.

Captain Orme, whose report follows that of Captain Hull, was an American officer who had been captured by the Guerriere off Newfoundland only a few days before the battle with the Constitution.

Hull, "Constitution" Captures the "Guerriere", America, Vol.5, p.154

I HAVE the honor to inform you, that on the 19th inst. at 2 P.M. being in Lat. 41° 42' and Long. 55° 48', with the Constitution under my command, a sail was discovered from the masthead bearing E. by S. or E. S. E. but at such a distance we could not tell what she was. All sail was instantly made in chase, and soon found we came up with her. At 3 P.M. could plainly see, that she was a ship on the starboard tack under easy sail, close on a wind; at half past 3 P.M. made her out to be a frigate; continued the chase until we were within about three miles, when I ordered the light sails to be taken in, the courses hauled up, and the ship cleared for action.

Hull, "Constitution" Captures the "Guerriere", America, Vol.5, p.155

At this time the chase had backed his maintop-sail, waiting for us to come down. As soon as the Constitution was ready for action, I bore down with intention to bring him to close action immediately; but on our coming within gun-shot she gave us a broadside and filled away, and wore, giving us a broadside on the other tack, but without effect; her shot falling short. She continued wearing and maneuvering for about three quarters of an hour, to get a raking position, but finding she could not, she bore up, and ran under her top-sails and jib, with the wind on her quarter. I immediately made sail to bring the ship up with her, and five minutes before 6 P.M. being alongside within half pistol-shot, we commenced a heavy fire from all our guns, double shotted with round and grape, and so well directed were they, and so warmly kept up, that in 15 minutes his mizzenmast went by the board and his main yard in the slings, and the hull, rigging, and sails very much torn to pieces. The fire was kept up with equal warmth for 15 minutes longer, when his mainmast and foremast went, taking with them every spar, excepting the bowsprit. On seeing this vie ceased firing, so that in thirty minutes after, we got fairly alongside the enemy; she surrendered, and had not a spar standing, and her hull below and above water so shattered, that a few more broadsides must have carried her down.

Hull, "Constitution" Captures the "Guerriere", America, Vol.5, p.155–p.156

After informing you, that so fine a ship as the Guerriere, commanded by an able and experienced officer, had been totally dismasted, and otherwise cut to pieces so as to make her not worth towing into port, in the short space of thirty minutes, you can have no doubt of the gallantry and good conduct of the officers and ship's company I have the honor to command; it only remains therefore for me to assure you that they all fought with great bravery; and it gives me great pleasure to say, that from the smallest boy in the ship to the oldest seaman, not a look of fear was seen. They all went into action, giving three cheers, and requested to be laid close alongside the enemy.

Hull, "Constitution" Captures the "Guerriere", America, Vol.5, p.156

Enclosed I have the honor to send you a list of killed and wounded on board the Constitution [total, 141, and a report of the damages she has sustained; also a list of killed and wounded on board the enemy [total 77, and 24 missing], with his quarter bill, &c….

How the "Guerriere" was Outfought

Title: How the "Guerriere" was Outfought

Author: William Orme

Date: August 19, 1812

Source: America, Vol.5, pp.157-159

Orme, How the "Guerriere" was Outfought, America, Vol.5, p.157

I COMMANDED the American brig Betsey, in the year 1812, and was returning home from Naples, Italy, to Boston. When near the western edge of the Grand Bank of Newfoundland, on the 10th of August, 18' 12, I fell in with the British frigate Guerriere, Captain Dacres, and was captured by him. Myself and a boy were taken on board of the frigate; the remainder of my officers and men were left in the Betsey, and sent into Halifax, N. S., as a prize to the Guerriere.

Orme, How the "Guerriere" was Outfought, America, Vol.5, p.157

On the 19th of the same month, the wind being fresh from the northward, the Guerriere was under double-reefed topsails during all the forenoon of this day. At 2 P.M. we discovered a large sail to windward, bearing about north from us. We soon made her out to be a frigate. She was steering off from the wind, with her head to the southwest, evidently with the intention of cutting us off as soon as possible.

Orme, How the "Guerriere" was Outfought, America, Vol.5, p.157–p.158

Signals were soon made by the Guerriere, but as they were not answered, the conclusion of course was, that she was either a French or an American frigate. Captain Dacres appeared anxious to ascertain her character, and after looking at her for that purpose, handed me his spy-glass, requesting me to give him my opinion of the stranger. I soon saw from the peculiarity of her sails, and from her general appearance, that she was, without doubt, an American frigate, and communicated the same to Captain Dacres. He immediately replied, that he thought she came down too boldly for an American, but soon after added, "The better he behaves, the more honor we shall gain by taking him."

Orme, How the "Guerriere" was Outfought, America, Vol.5, p.158

The two ships were rapidly approaching each other, when the Guerriere backed her maintopsail, and waited for her opponent to come down, and commence the action. He then set an English flag at each masthead, beat to quarters, and made ready for the fight. When the strange frigate came down to within two or three miles distance, he hauled upon the wind, took in all his light sails, reefed his topsails, and deliberately prepared for action. It was now about five o'clock in the afternoon, when he filled away and ran down for the Guerriere. At this moment, Captain Dacres politely said to me: "Captain Orme, as I suppose you do not wish to fight against your own countrymen, you are at liberty to go below the water-line." It was not long after this before I retired from the quarter-deck to the cockpit.

Orme, How the "Guerriere" was Outfought, America, Vol.5, p.158–p.159

Of course I saw no more of the action until the firing ceased, but I heard and felt much of its effects; for soon after I left the deck, the firing commenced on board the Guerriere, and was kept up almost constantly until about six o'clock, when I heard a tremendous explosion from the opposing frigate. The effect of her shot seemed to make the Guerriere reel and tremble as though she had received the shock of an earthquake. Immediately after this, I heard a tremendous crash on deck, and was told the mizzenmast was shot away. In a few moments afterward the cockpit was filled with wounded men.

Orme, How the "Guerriere" was Outfought, America, Vol.5, p.159

At about half-past six o'clock in the evening, after the firing had ceased, I went on deck, and there beheld a scene which it would be difficult to describe; all the Guerriere's masts were shot away, and as she had no sails to steady her, she lay rolling like a log in the trough of the sea. The decks were covered with blood, the gun tackles were not made fast, and several of the guns got loose, and were surging to and fro from one side to the other.

Orme, How the "Guerriere" was Outfought, America, Vol.5, p.159

Some of the petty officers and seamen, after the action, got liquor, and were intoxicated; and what with the groans of the wounded, the noise and confusion of the enraged survivors on board of the ill-fated ship, rendered the whole scene fearful beyond description.

The Battle Between the Chesapeake and Shannon

Title: The Battle Between the Chesapeake and Shannon

Author: Theodore Roosevelt

Date: 1813

Source: Great Epochs in American History, Vol.5, p.21-27

Roosevelt, Battle Between the Chesapeake and Shannon, Great Epochs, Vol.5, p.21

At midday of June 1, 1812, the Chesapeake weighed anchor, stood out of Boston Harbor, and at 1 P.M. rounded the Lighthouse. The Shannon stood off under easy sail, and at 3:40 hauled up and reefed topsails. At 4 P.M., she again bore away with her foresail brailed up, and her maintopsail braced flat and shivering, that the Chesapeake might overtake her. An hour later, Boston Lighthouse bearing west distant about six leagues, she again hauled up, with her head to the southeast, and lay to under topsails, topgallantsails, jib, and spanker. Meanwhile, as the breeze freshened the Chesapeake took in her studdingsails, topgallant sails, and royals, got her royal-yards on deck, and came down very fast under topsails and jib. At 5:30, to keep under command and be able to wear if necessary, the Shannon filled her maintopsail and kept a close luff, and then again let the sail shiver.

Roosevelt, Battle Between the Chesapeake and Shannon, Great Epochs, Vol.5, p.21

At 5:25 the Chesapeake hauled up her foresail, and, with three ensigns flying, steered straight for the Shannon's starboard quarter. Broke was afraid that Lawrence would pass under the Shannon's stern, rake her, and engage her on the quarter; but either overlooking or waiving this advantage, the American captain luffed up within fifty yards upon the Shannon's starboard quarter, and squared his main-yard. On board the Shannon the captain of the 14th gun, William Mindham, had been ordered not to fire till it bore into the second main-deck port forward; at 5:50 it was fired, and then the other guns in quick succession from aft forward, the Chesapeake replying with her whole broadside. At 5:53 Lawrence, finding he was forging ahead, hauled up a little. The Chesapeake's broadsides were doing great damage, but she herself was suffering even more than her foe; the men in the Shannon's tops could hardly see the deck of the American frigate through the cloud of splinters, hammocks, and other wreck that was flying across it. Man after man was killed at the wheel; the fourth lieutenant, the master, and the boatswain were slain; and at 5:56, having had her jib sheet and foretop-sail tie shot away, and her spanker brails loosened so that the sail blew out, the Chesapeake came up into the wind somewhat, so as to expose her quarter to her antagonist's broadside, which beat in her stern-ports and swept the men from the after guns. One of the arm-chests on the quarter-deck was blown up by a hand-grenade thrown from the Shannon.

Roosevelt, Battle Between the Chesapeake and Shannon, Great Epochs, Vol.5, p.22

The Chesapeake was now seen to have sternway on and to be paying slowly off; so the Shannon put her helm a-starboard and shivered her mizzentopsail, so as to keep off the wind and delay the boarding. But at that moment her jibstay was shot away, and her headsails becoming becalmed, she went off very slowly. In consequence, at 6 P.M. the two frigates fell aboard, the Chesapeake's quarter pressing upon the Shannon's side just forward the starboard main-chains, and the frigates were kept in this position by the fluke of the Shannon's anchor catching in the Chesapeake's quarter port.

Roosevelt, Battle Between the Chesapeake and Shannon, Great Epochs, Vol.5, p.23

The Shannon's crew had suffered severely, but not the least panic or disorder existed among them. Broke ran forward, and seeing his foes flinching from the quarter-deck guns, he ordered the ships to be lasht together, the great guns to cease firing, and the boarders to be called. The boatswain, who had fought in Rodney's action, set about fastening the vessels together, which the grim veteran succeeded in doing, tho his right arm was literally hacked off by a blow from a cutlass. All was confusion and dismay on board the Chesapeake. Lieutenant Ludlow had been mortally wounded and carried below; Lawrence himself, while standing on the quarter-deck, fatally conspicuous by his full-dress uniform, and commanding stature, was shot down, as the vessels closed, by Lieutenant Law of the British marines. He fell dying, and was carried below, exclaiming: "Don't give up the ship"—a phrase that has since become proverbial among his countrymen. The third lieutenant, Mr. W.S. Cox, came on deck, but utterly demoralized by the aspect of affairs, he basely ran below without staying to rally the men, and was court-martialled afterward for so doing.

Roosevelt, Battle Between the Chesapeake and Shannon, Great Epochs, Vol.5, p.23

At 6:02 Captain Broke stepped from the Shannon's gangway rail on to the muzzle of the Chesapeake's aftermost carronade, and thence over the bulwark on to her quarter-deck, followed by about twenty men. As they came aboard, the Chesapeake's foreign mercenaries and the raw natives of the crew deserted their quarters; the Portuguese boatswain's mate removed the gratings of the berthdeck, and he ran below, followed by many of the crew, among them one of the midshipmen named Deforest. On the quarter-deck almost the only man that made any resistance was the chaplain, Mr. Livermore, who advanced, firing his pistol at Broke, and in return nearly had his arm hewed off by a stroke from the latter's broad Toledo blade. On the upper deck the only men who behaved well were the marines, but of their original number of 44 men, fourteen, including Lieutenant James Broom and Corporal Dixon, were dead, and twenty, including Sergeants Twin and Harris, wounded, so that there were left but one corporal and nine men, several of whom had been knocked down and bruised, tho reported unwounded.

Roosevelt, Battle Between the Chesapeake and Shannon, Great Epochs, Vol.5, p.24

There was thus hardly any resistance, Captain Broke stopping his men for a moment till they were joined by the rest of the boarders under Lieutenants Watt and Falkiner. The Chesapeake's mizzentopmen began firing at the boarders, mortally wounding a midshipman, Mr. Samwell, and killing Lieutenant Watt; but one of the Shannon's long nines was pointed at the top and cleared it out, being assisted by the English maintopmen, under Midshipman Coshnahan. At the same time the men in the Chesapeake's maintop were driven out of it by the fire of the Shannon's foretopmen, under Midshipman Smith. Lieutenant George Budd, who was on the main-deck, now for the first time learned that the English had boarded, as theupper-deck men came crowding down, and at once called on his people to follow him; but the foreigners and novices held back, and only a few of the veterans followed him up.

Roosevelt, Battle Between the Chesapeake and Shannon, Great Epochs, Vol.5, p.25

As soon as he reached the spar-deck, Budd, followed by only a dozen men, attacked the british as then came along the gangways, repulsing them for a moment, and killing the British purser, Aldham, and captain's clerk, Dunn; but the handful of Americans were at once cut down or dispersed, Lieutenant Budd being wounded and knocked down the main-hatchway. "The enemy," writes Captain Broke, "fought desperately, but in disorder." Lieutenant Ludlow, already mortally wounded, struggled up on deck, followed by two or three men, but was at once disabled by a saber cut. On the forecastle a few seamen and marines turned to bay. Captain Broke was still leading his men with the same brilliant personal courage he had all along shown. Attacking the first American, who was armed with a pike, he parried a blow from it, and cut down the man; attacking another he was himself cut down, and only saved by the seaman Mindham, already mentioned, who slew his assailant. One of the American marines, using his clubbed musket, killed an Englishman, and so stubborn was the resistance of the little group that for a moment the assailants gave back, having lost several killed and wounded; but immediately afterward they closed in and slew their foe to the last man.

Roosevelt, Battle Between the Chesapeake and Shannon, Great Epochs, Vol.5, p.25

The British fired a volley or two down the hatchway, in response to a couple of shots fired up; all resistance was at an end, and at 6:05, just fifteen minutes after the first gun had been fired, and notfive after Captain Broke had come aboard, the colors of the Chesapeake were struck. Of her crew of 379 men, 61 were killed or mortally wounded, including her captain, her first and fourth lieutenants, the lieutenant of marines, the master (White), boatswain (Adams), and three midshipmen, and 85 severely and slightly wounded, including both her other lieutenants, five midshipmen, and the chaplain; total, 148; the loss falling almost entirely upon the American portion of the crew.

Roosevelt, Battle Between the Chesapeake and Shannon, Great Epochs, Vol.5, p.26

Of the Shannon's men, 33 were killed outright or died of their wounds, including her first lieutenant, purser, captain's clerk, and one midshipman, and 50 wounded, including the captain himself and the boatswain; total, 83.

Roosevelt, Battle Between the Chesapeake and Shannon, Great Epochs, Vol.5, p.26

The Chesapeake was taken into Halifax, where Captain Lawrence and Lieutenant Ludlow were both buried with military honors. Captain Broke was made a baronet, very deservedly, and Lieutenants Wallis and Falkiner were both made commanders.

Roosevelt, Battle Between the Chesapeake and Shannon, Great Epochs, Vol.5, p.26

The British writers accuse some of the American crew of treachery; the Americans in turn accuse the British of revolting brutality. Of course in such a fight things are not managed in urbane courtesy, and, moreover, writers are prejudiced. Those who would like to hear one side are referred to James; if they wish to hear the other, to the various letter from officers published in "Niles' Register," especially Vol, V, p. 142.

Roosevelt, Battle Between the Chesapeake and Shannon, Great Epochs, Vol.5, p.26

Neither ship had lost a spar, but all the lower masts, especially the two mizzenmasts, were badly wounded. The Americans at that period were fond of using bar shot, which were of very questiona-ble benefit, being useless against a ship's hull, tho said to be sometimes of great help in unrigging an antagonist from whom one was desirous of escaping, as in the case of the President and Endymion.

Roosevelt, Battle Between the Chesapeake and Shannon, Great Epochs, Vol.5, p.27

It is thus seen that the Shannon received from shot alone only about half the damage the Chesapeake did; the latter was thoroughly beaten at the guns, in spite of what some American authors say to the contrary. And her victory was not in the slightest degree to be attributed to, tho it may have been slightly hastened by accident. Training and discipline won the victory, as often before; only in this instance the training and discipline were against us.

Perry's Victory on Lake Erie

Title: Perry's Victory on Lake Erie

Author: Fenimore Cooper

Date: 1813

Source: Great Epochs in American History, Vol.5, p.28-36

Cooper, Perry's Victory on Lake Erie, Great Epochs, Vol.5, p.28

In the course of the winter of 1812-13, Captain O. H. Perry, then a young master and commander at the head of the flotilla of gunboats, at Newport, Rhode Island, finding no immediate prospect of getting to sea in a sloop of war, volunteered for the lake service. Captain Perry brought on with him a number of officers, and a few men, and Commodore Chauncey gladly availed himself of the presence of an officer of his rank, known spirit, and zeal, to send him on the upper lakes, in command, where he arrived in the course of the winter. From this time, until the navigation opened, Captain Perry was actively employed, under all the embarrassments of his frontier position, in organizing and crating a force, with which he might contend with the enemy for the mastery of those important waters. Two large brigs, to mount twenty guns each, were laid down at Presque Isle, and a few gun-vessels, or schooners, were also commenced. The spring passed in procuring guns, shot, and other supplies; and, as circumstances allowed, a draft of men would arrive from below, to aid in equipping the different vessels.

Cooper, Perry's Victory on Lake Erie, Great Epochs, Vol.5, p.29

As soon as the squadron of Commodore Chauncey appeared off the mouth of Niagara, Captain Perry, with some of his officers, went to join it, and the former was efficiently employed in superintending the disembarkation of the troops. The fall of Fort George produced that of Fort Erie, when the whole of the Niagara frontier came under the control of the American army.

Cooper, Perry's Victory on Lake Erie, Great Epochs, Vol.5, p.29

Captain Perry now repaired to his own command, and with infinite labor, he succeeded in getting the vessels that had so long been detained in the Niagara, by the enemy's batteries, out of the river. This important service was effected by the 12th of June, and preparations were immediately commenced for appearing on the lake. These vessels consisted of the brig Caledonia (a prize), and the schooners Catherine, Ohio, and Amelia; with the sloop Contractor. The Catherine was named the Somers, the Amelia the Tigress, and the Contractor the Trippe. At this time, the enemy had a cruising force under the orders of Captain Finnis, which consisted of the Queen Charlotte, a ship of between three and four hundred tons, and mounting 17 guns; the Lady Prevost, a fine warlike schooner, of about two hundred tons, that mounted 13 guns; the brig Hunter, a vessel a little smaller, of 10 guns, and three or four lighter cruisers. He was also building, at Malden, a ship of near five hundred tons measurement, that was to mount 19 guns, and which was subsequently called the Detroit.

Cooper, Perry's Victory on Lake Erie, Great Epochs, Vol.5, p.29

It was near the middle of June before Captain Perry was ready to sail from the outlet of Lake Erie, for Presque Isle. There being no intention

to engage the enemy, and little dread of meeting him in so short a run, as she came in sight of her port each vessel made the best of her way. The enemy had chosen this moment to look into Presque Isle, and both squadrons were in view from the shore, at the same time, tho, fortunately for the Americans, the English did not get a sight of them until they were too near the land to be intercepted. As the last vessel got in, the enemy hove in sight, in the offing. The two brigs laid down in the winter, under the directions of Commodore Chauncey, had been launched toward the close of May, and were now in a state of forwardness. They were called the Lawrence and the Niagara.

Cooper, Perry's Victory on Lake Erie, Great Epochs, Vol.5, p.30

Presque Isle, or, as the place is now called, Erie, was a good and spacious harbor; but it had a bar on which there was less than seven feet of water. This bar, which had hitherto answered the purposes of a fortification, now offered a serious obstruction to getting the brigs on the lake. It lay about half a mile outside, and offered great advantages to the enemy for attacking the Americans while employed in passing it. So sensible was Captain Perry of this disadvantage, that he adopted the utmost secrecy in order to conceal his intentions, for it was known that the enemy had spies closely watching his movements….

Cooper, Perry's Victory on Lake Erie, Great Epochs, Vol.5, p.30

The American squadron now consisted of the Lawrence, 20, Captain Perry; Niagara, 20, Captain Elliott; Caledonia, 3, Mr. McGrath, a purser; Ariel, 4, Lieutenant Packett; Trippe, 1, Lieutenant Smith; Tigress, 1, Lieutenant Conklin; Somers, 2, Mr. Alney; Scorpion, 2, Mr. Champlin; Ohio, 1, Mr. Dobbins; and Porcupine, 1, Mr. Senatt. On the 18th of August this force sailed from Erie, andoff Sandusky, a few days later, it chased, and was near capturing, one of the enemy's schooners. The squadron cruised for several days, near the entrance of the strait, when Captain Perry was taken ill with the fever peculiar to these waters, and shortly after the vessels went into Put-in Bay, a harbor, among some islands that lay at no great distance….

Cooper, Perry's Victory on Lake Erie, Great Epochs, Vol.5, p.31

While in port, on this occasion, Captain Perry contemplated an attack on the enemy's vessels, by means of boats; and orders were issued accordingly, to drill the people with muffled oars. The squadron was still lying at Put-in Bay on the morning of the 10th of September, when, at daylight, the enemy's ships were discovered at the northwest from the mast-head of the Lawrence. A signal was immediately made for all the vessels to get under way….

Cooper, Perry's Victory on Lake Erie, Great Epochs, Vol.5, p.31

The English vessels presented a very gallant array, and their appearance was beautiful and imposing. Their line was compact, with the heads of the vessels still to the southward and westward; their ensigns were must opening to the air; their vessels were freshly painted, and their canvass was new and perfect. The American line was more straggling. The order of battle required them to form within half a cable's length of each other, but the schooners astern could not close with the vessels ahead, which sailed faster, and had more light canvass, until some considerable time had elapsed.

Cooper, Perry's Victory on Lake Erie, Great Epochs, Vol.5, p.31

A few minutes before twelve, the Detroit threw a twenty-four-pound shot at the Lawrence, then on her weather quarter, distant between one and two miles. Captain Perry now passed an orderby trumpet, through the vessels astern, for the line to close to the prescribed order; and soon after the Scorpion was hailed, and directed to begin with her long gun. At this moment, the American vessels in line were edging down upon the English, those in front being necessarily nearer to the enemy than those more astern, with the exception of the Ariel and Scorpion, which two schooners had been ordered to keep well to windward of the Lawrence. As the Detroit had an armament of long guns, Captain Barclay manifested his judgment in commencing the action in this manner; and in a short time, the firing between that ship, the Lawrence, and the two schooners at the head of the American line, got to be very animated.

Cooper, Perry's Victory on Lake Erie, Great Epochs, Vol.5, p.32

The Lawrence now showed a signal for the squadron to close, each vessel in her station, as previously designated. A few minutes later the vessels astern began to fire, and the action became general but distant. The Lawrence, however, appeared to be the principal aim of the enemy, and before the firing had lasted any material time, the Detroit, Hunter, and Queen Charlotte were directing most of their efforts against her. The American brig endeavored to close, and did succeed in getting within reach of canister, tho not without suffering materially, as she fanned down upon the enemy. At this time, the support of the two schooners ahead, which were well commanded and fought, was of the greatest moment to her; for the vessels astern, tho in the line, could be of little use in diverting the fire, on account of their positions and the distance. After the firing had lasted some time, the Niagara hailed the Caledonia, and directed the latter to make room for the formerto pass ahead. Mr. Turner put his helm up in the most dashing manner, and continued to near the enemy, until he was closer to his line, perhaps, than the commanding vessel; keeping up as warm a fire as his small armament would allow. The Niagara now became the vessel next astern of the Lawrence….

Cooper, Perry's Victory on Lake Erie, Great Epochs, Vol.5, p.33

Captain Perry, finding himself in a vessel that had been rendered nearly useless by the injuries she had received, and which was dropping out of the combat, got into his boat, and pulled after the Niagara, on board of which vessel he arrived at about half-past 2. Soon after, the colors of the Lawrence were hauled down, that vessel being literally a wreck….

Cooper, Perry's Victory on Lake Erie, Great Epochs, Vol.5, p.33

When the enemy saw the colors of the Lawrence come down, he confidently believed that he had gained the day. His men appeared over the bulwarks of the different vessels and gave three cheers. For a few minutes, indeed, there appears to have been, sa if by common consent, nearly a general cessation in the firing, during which both parties were preparing for a desperate and final effort. The wind had freshened, and the position of the Niagara, which brig was now abeam of the leading English vessel, was commanding; while the gun-vessels astern, in consequence of the increasing breeze, were enabled to close very fast.

Cooper, Perry's Victory on Lake Erie, Great Epochs, Vol.5, p.33

At 45 minutes past 2, or when time had been given to the gun-vessels to receive the order mentioned, Captain Perry showed the signal from the Niagara, for close action, and immediately bore up, under his foresail, topsails, and topgallantsail. As the American vessels hoisted their answering flags, this order was received with threecheers, and it was obeyed with alacrity and spirit. The enemy had attempted to wear round, to get fresh broadsides to bear, in doing which his line got into confusion, and the two ships for a short time were foul of each other, while the Lady Prevost had so far shifted her berth as to be both to the westward and to the leeward of the Detroit.

Cooper, Perry's Victory on Lake Erie, Great Epochs, Vol.5, p.34

At this critical moment, the Niagara came steadily down, within half pistol-shot of the enemy, standing between the Chippewa and Lady Prevost, on one side, and the Detroit, Queen Charlotte, and Hunter, on the other. In passing, she poured in her broadsides, starboard and larboard, ranged ahead of the ships, luffed athwart their bows, and continued delivering a close and deadly fire. The shrieks from the Detroit proclaimed that the tide of battle had turned. At the same moment, the gun-vessels and Caledonia were throwing in close discharges of grape and canister astern. A conflict so fearfully close, and so deadly, was necessarily short. In fifteen or twenty minutes after the Niagara bore up, a hail was passed among the small vessels, to say that the enemy had struck, and an officer of the Queen Charlotte appeared on the taffrail of that ship, waving a white handkerchief, bent to a boarding-pike….

Cooper, Perry's Victory on Lake Erie, Great Epochs, Vol.5, p.34

In this decisive action, so far as their people were concerned, the two squadrons suffered in nearly an equal degree, the manner in which the Lawrence was cut up being almost without an example in naval warfare. It is understood that when Captain Perry left her she had but one gun on her starboard side, or that on which she was engaged, which could be used, and that gallant officer is said to have aided in firing it in person thelast time it was discharged. Of her crew, 22 were killed and 61 wounded, most of the latter severely. When Captain Perry left her, taking with him his own brother and six of his people, there remained on board but 14 sound men. The Niagara had 2 killed, and 25 wounded, or about one-fourth of all at quarters. This was the official report; but, according to the statement of her surgeon, her loss was 5 killed and 27 wounded. The other vessels suffered relatively less….

Cooper, Perry's Victory on Lake Erie, Great Epochs, Vol.5, p.35

It is not easy to make a just comparison between the forces of the hostile squadrons on this occasion. In certain situations the Americans would have been materially superior, while in others the enemy might possess the advantage in perhaps an equal degree. In the circumstances under which the action was actually fought, the peculiar advantages and disadvantages were nearly equalized, the lightness of the wind preventing either of the two largest of the American vessels from profiting by its peculiar mode of efficiency, until quite near the close of the engagement, and particularly favoring the armament of the Detroit; while the smoothness of the water rendered the light vessels of the Americans very destructive as soon as they could be got within a proper range. The Detroit has been represented, on good authority, to have been both a heavier and stronger ship than either of the American brigs, and the Queen Charlotte proved to be a much finer vessel than had been expected; while the Lady Prevost was found to be a large, warlike schooner. It was, perhaps, unfortunate for the enemy that the armaments of the two last were not available under the circumstances which rendered the Detroit so efficient, as it destroyed theunity of his efforts. In short, the battle, for near half its duration, appears to have been fought, so far as efficiency was concerned, by the long guns of the two squadrons. This was particularly favorable to the Detroit and to the American gun-vessels; while the latter fought under the advantages of smooth water, and the disadvantages of having no quarters. The sides of the Detroit, which were unusually stout, were filled with shot that did not penetrate….

Cooper, Perry's Victory on Lake Erie, Great Epochs, Vol.5, p.36

For his conduct in this battle, Captain Perry received a gold medal from Congress. Captain Elliott also received a gold medal. Rewards were bestowed on the officers and men generally, and the nation has long considered this action one of its proudest achievements on the water.

Why America Had To Fight

Title: Why America Had To Fight

Author: Henry Clay

Date: 1813

Source: America, Vol.5, pp.129-135

At the time Henry Clay made his speech in Congress, in 1813, he was Speaker of the House of Representatives and dominated the party that overcame President Madison's reluctance to declare war against Great Britain. As far back as 1806 Clay had shown his hostility to England by introducing in the Kentucky Legislature a resolution that its members wear no clothing made in foreign countries—a proposal that a Federalist member stigmatized as demagogic. A duel followed in which both principals were wounded.

Clay supported the War of 1812 with all his eloquence, in and out of Congress, and became known in consequence as the "War Hawk." His advocacy of a bigger army and better navy aroused nation-wide enthusiasm. When the war seemed nearly a failure, he was one of the commissioners to arrange terms, resigning the Speakership in January, 1814.

Clay, Why America Had To Fight, America, Vol.5, p.129

THE war was declared because Great Britain arrogated to herself the pretension of regulating foreign trade, under the delusive name of retaliatory Orders in Council—a pretension by which she undertook to proclaim to American enterprise, "Thus far shalt thou go, and no farther." Orders which she refused to revoke after the alleged cause of their enactment had ceased; because she persisted in the act of impressing American seamen; because she had instigated the Indians to commit hostilities against us; and because she refused indemnity for her past injuries upon our commerce….

Clay, Why America Had To Fight, America, Vol.5, p.129

. . . But it is said, that the Orders in Council are done away, no matter from what cause; and, that having been the sole motive for declaring the war, the relations of peace ought to be restored. . .

Clay, Why America Had To Fight, America, Vol.5, p.130

. . . I have no hesitation then in saying, that I have always considered the impressment of American seamen as much the most serious aggression. But, sir, how have those orders at last been repealed? Great Britain, it is true, has intimated a willingness to suspend their practical operation, but she still arrogates to herself the right to revive them upon certain contingencies, of which she constitutes herself the sole judge. She waives the temporary use of the rod, but she suspends it in terrorem over our heads. Supposing it was conceded to gentlemen that such a repeal of the Orders in Council, as took place on the 23d of June last, exceptionable as it is, being known before the war, would have prevented the war, does it follow that it ought to induce us to lay down our arms without the redress of any other injury? Does it follow, in all cases, that that which would have prevented the war in the first instance should terminate the war? By no means. It requires a great struggle for a nation, prone to peace as this is, to burst through its habits and encounter the difficulties of war. Such a nation ought but seldom to go to war. When it does, it should be for clear and essential rights alone, and it should firmly resolve to extort, at all hazards, their recognition….

Clay, Why America Had To Fight, America, Vol.5, p.130–p.131

And who is prepared to say that American seamen shall be surrendered the victims to the British principle of impressment? . . . It is in vain to assert the inviolability of the obligation of allegiance It is in vain to set up the plea of necessity, and to allege that she cannot exist without the impressment of her seamen. The truth is, she comes, by her press gangs, on board of our vessels, seizes our native seamen, as well as naturalized, and drags them into her service. It is the case, then, of the assertion of an erroneous principle, and a practice not conformable to the principle—a principle which, if it were theoretically right, must be forever practically wrong…. If Great Britain desires a mark by which she can know her own subjects, let her give them an ear mark. The colors that float from the mast-head should be the credentials of our seamen. There is no safety to us, and the gentlemen have shown it, but in the rule that all who sail under the flag (not being enemies) are protected by the flag. It is impossible that this country should ever abandon the gallant tars who have won for us such splendid trophies….

Clay, Why America Had To Fight, America, Vol.5, p.131–p.132

The gentleman from Delaware sees in Canada no object worthy of conquest…. Other gentlemen consider the invasion of that country as wicked and unjustifiable. Its inhabitants are represented as unoffending, connected with those of the bordering States by a thousand tender ties, interchanging acts of kindness, and all the offices of good neighborhood. Canada innocent! Canada unoffending! Is it not in Canada that the tomahawk of the savage has been moulded into its deathlike form? From Canadian magazines, Malden, and others, that those supplies have been issued which nourish and sustain the Indian hostilities? . . . What does a state of war present? The united energies of one people arrayed against the combined energies of another; a conflict in which each party aims to inflict all the injury it can, by sea and land, upon the territories, property, and citizens of the other, subject only to the rules of mitigated war practiced by civilized nations. The gentlemen would not touch the continental provinces of the enemy, nor I presume, for the same reason, her possessions in the West Indies. The same humane spirit would spare the seamen and soldiers of the enemy. The sacred person of His Majesty must not be attacked, for the learned gentlemen on the other side are quite familiar with the maxim, that the King can do no wrong. Indeed, sir, I know of no person on whom we may make war, upon the principles of the honorable gentlemen, except Mr. Stephen, the celebrated author of the Orders in Council, or the Board of Admiralty, who authorize and regulate the practice of impressment.

Clay, Why America Had To Fight, America, Vol.5, p.132–p.133

The disasters of the war admonish us, we are told, of the necessity of terminating the contest. If our achievements upon the land have been less splendid than those of our intrepid seamen, it is not because the American soldier is less brave. On the one element, organization, discipline, and a thorough knowledge of their duties, exist on the part of the officers and their men. On the other, almost everything is yet to be acquired. We have, however, the consolation that our country abounds with the richest materials, and that, in no instance, when engaged in an action, have our arms been tarnished…. It is true, that the disgrace of Detroit remains to be wiped off…. With the exception of that event, the war, even upon the land, had been attended by a series of the most brilliant exploits, which, whatever interest they may inspire on this side of the mountains, have given the greatest pleasure on the other….

Clay, Why America Had To Fight, America, Vol.5, p.133

What cause, Mr. Chairman, which existed for declaring the war has been removed? We sought indemnity for the past and security for the future. The Orders in Council are suspended, not revoked; no compensation for spoliations; Indian hostilities, which were before secretly instigated, now openly encouraged; and the practice of impressment unremittingly persevered in and insisted upon. Yet Administration has given the strongest demonstrations of its love of peace. On the 29th June, less than ten days after the declaration of war, the Secretary of State writes to Mr. Russell, authorizing him to agree to an armistice, upon two conditions only; and what are they? That the Orders in Council should be repealed, and the practice of impressing American seamen cease, those already impressed being released…. When Mr. Russell renews the overture, in what was intended as a more agreeable form to the British Government, Lord Castlereagh is not content with a simple rejection, but clothes it in the language of insult….

Clay, Why America Had To Fight, America, Vol.5, p.133–p.134–p.135

The honorable gentleman from North Carolina (Mr. Pearson) supposes, that if Congress would pass a law, prohibiting the employment of British seamen in our service, upon condition of a like prohibition on their part, and repeal the act of non-importation, peace would immediately follow. Sir, I have no doubt if such a law were passed, with all the requisite solemnities, and the repeal to take place, Lord Castlereagh would laugh at our simplicity. No, sir, Administration has erred in the steps which it has taken to restore peace, but its error has been not in doing too little but in betraying too great a solicitude for that event. An honorable peace is attainable only by an efficient war. My plan would be to call out the ample resources of the country, give them a judicious direction, prosecute the war with the utmost vigor, strike wherever we can reach the enemy, at sea or on land, and negotiate the terms of a peace at Quebec or Halifax. We are told that England is a proud and lofty nation that disdaining to wait for danger, meets it half-way. Haughty as she is, we once triumphed over her, and if we do not listen to the councils of timidity and despair we shall again prevail. In such a cause, with the aid of Providence, we must come out crowned with success; but if we fail, let us fail like men—lash ourselves to our gallant tars, and expire together in one common struggle, fighting for "seamen's rights and free trade."

Capture and Destruction of the "Java"

Title: Capture and Destruction of the "Java"

Author: Commodore William Bainbridge

Date: 1813

Source: America, Vol.5, pp.160-165

The reputation Bainbridge possessed when the United States Navy was organized in 1798, enhanced by his conduct in the war with Tripoli, in which his ship, the Philadelphia, ran aground while chasing corsairs, secured him a prominent naval position in the War of 1812. Early in the struggle he was put in command, as commodore, of a squadron consisting of the Constitution, Essex and Hornet, all of which rendered valiant service.

On December 29, 1812, when his flagship, the famous Constitution, encountered the English frigate Java off Bahia, Brazil, the Hornet and Essex were cruising to the north and had no part in the action.

In 1815 Bainbridge was made commander of a squadron of twenty sails fitted out against Algiers, but the war was averted. Later, as chief of the board of naval commissioners, he acquitted himself on shore with the distinction that had marked his career at sea.

Bainbridge, Capture and Destruction of the Java, America, Vol.5, p.160

AT 9 A.M. discovered two strange sails on the weather bow. At 10, discovered the strange sails to be ships, one of them stood in for the land, and the other stood off shore in a direction towards us. At 10.45, we tacked ship to the northward and westward, and stood for the sail standing towards us. At 11 A.M. tacked to the southward and eastward, hauled up the mainsail and took in the royals. At 11.30, made the private signal for the day, which was not answered, and then set the mainsail and royals to draw the strange sail off from the neutral coast, and separate her from the sail in company.

Bainbridge, Capture and Destruction of the Java, America, Vol.5, p.160–p.161

Wednesday, 30th Dec., 1812—(Nautical time)—In lat. 13 deg, 6m. S and long. 38 W. 10 leagues from the coast of Brazil.—Commences with clear weather and moderate breezes from E. N. E. hoisted our ensign and pendant. At 15 minutes past meridian, the ship hoisted her colors, an English ensign, having a signal flying at her main—red, yellow, red.

Bainbridge, Capture and Destruction of the Java, America, Vol.5, p.161–p.162–p.163

At 1.26 P.M. being sufficiently from the land, and finding the ship to be an English frigate, took in the mainsail and royals, tacked ship and stood for the enemy. At 1.50 P.M. the enemy bore down with an intention of raking us, which we avoided by wearing. At 2 P.M. the enemy being within half a mile of us, and to windward, and having hauled down his colors, except an Union Jack at the mizen-masthead, induced me to give orders to the officer of the 3d division to fire one gun ahead of the enemy to make him show his colors, which being done, brought on a fire from us of the whole broadside, on which the enemy hoisted his colors and immediately returned our fire. A general action with round and grape then commenced, the enemy keeping at a much greater distance than I wished, but could not bring him to close action without exposing ourselves to several rakes. Considerable maneuvers were made by both vessels to rake and avoid being raked. The following minutes were taken during the action:

At 2.10 P.M.

Commenced the action within good grape and cannister distance, the enemy to windward (but much further than I wished).

At 2.30 our wheel was shot entirely away.

2.40 determined to close with the enemy, notwithstanding his raking—set the fore and mainsail, and luff'd up to him.

2.50 the enemy's jib-boom got foul of our mizenrigging.

3.00 the head of the enemy's bowsprit and jibboom shot away by us.

3.05 shot away the enemy's foremast by the board.

3.15 shot away his main-top-mast just above the cap.

3.40 shot away gaff and spanker-boom.

3.55 shot away his mizen-mast nearly by the board.

4.05 having silenced the fire of the enemy completely, and his colors in the main rigging being down, supposed he had struck, then hauled aboard the courses to shoot ahead to repair our rigging, which was extremely cut, leaving the enemy a complete wreck; soon after, discovered the enemy's flag was still flying—hove to, to repair some of our damage.

4.20 the enemy's main-mast went nearly by the board.

4.50 wore ship and stood for the enemy.

5.25 got very close to the enemy in a very effectual raking position, athwart his bows, and was at the very instant of raking him, when he most prudently struck his flag, for had he suffered the broadside to have raked him, his additional loss must have been extremely great, as he laid an unmanageable wreck upon the water. After the enemy had struck, wore ship and reefed the topsails, then hoisted out one of the only two remaining boats we had left out of eight, and sent Lieutenant Parker, first of the Constitution, to take possession of the enemy, which proved to be his Britannic majesty's frigate Java, rated 38 but carrying 49 guns, and manned with upwards of 400 men, commanded by Captain Lambert, a very distinguished officer, who was mortally wounded.

Bainbridge, Capture and Destruction of the Java, America, Vol.5, p.163–p.164

The action continued from the commencement to the end of the fire, one hour and fifty-five minutes. The Constitution had 9 killed and 25 wounded. The enemy had 60 killed and 101 certainly wounded; but by a letter written on board the Constitution by one of the officers of the Java, and accidentally found, it is evident the enemy's wounded must have been considerably greater than as above stated, and must have died of their wounds previously to their being removed. The letter states 60 killed and 170 wounded. The Java had her own complement of men complete, and upwards of 100 supernumeraries, going to join the British ships of war in the East Indies, also several officers, passengers, going out on promotion. The force of the enemy in number of men, at the commencement of the action, was no doubt considerably greater than we have been able to ascertain, which is upwards of 400 men. The officers were extremely cautious in discovering the number. By her quarter bill she had one man more stationed to each gun than we had.

Bainbridge, Capture and Destruction of the Java, America, Vol.5, p.164

The Constitution was very much cut in her sails and rigging, and many of her spars injured. At 7 P.M. the boat returned with Lieutenant Chads, the first lieutenant of the enemy's frigate, and Lieutenant-General Hislop (appointed Governor of Bombay), Major Walker and Captain Wood belonging to his staff.

Bainbridge, Capture and Destruction of the Java, America, Vol.5, p.164

Captain Lambert of the Java was too dangerously wounded to be removed immediately. The cutter returned on board the prize for the prisoners, and brought Captain Marshall, master and commander of the British navy, who was a passenger on board, as also several other naval officers destined for ships in the East Indies.

Bainbridge, Capture and Destruction of the Java, America, Vol.5, p.164–p.165

The Java was an important ship, fitted out in the completest manner to carry Lieutenant-General Hislop and his staff to Bombay, and several naval officers for different ships in the East Indies; and had despatches for St. Helena, Cape of Good Hope, and every British establishment in the India and China seas. She had on board copper for a 74 and two brigs building at Bombay, and I expect a great many other valuables; but every thing was blown up in her, except the officers' baggage, when we set her on fire at 3 P.M. on the 1st of January, 1813, (nautical time).

The Engagement of the "Chesapeake" and the "Shannon"

Title: The Engagement of the "Chesapeake" and the "Shannon"

Author: George Budd

Date: June 15, 1813

Source: America, Vol.5, pp.166-168

The 40-gun frigate Chesapeake, in 1807 under Captain Barron, had been overhauled and searched by officers of the 52-gun British flagship Leopard. Six years later, armed with 50 guns, and under Captain Lawrence, she fights with the Shannon, under Captain Broke, an engagement that had all the punctiliousness of a duel. The Shannon had a consort-ship; Broke sent her away, to make the odds even, and after the equivalent of courteous challenge, Lawrence accepted battle.

His crew, however, were unequal in experience to Barron's men (the most of whom had been for seven years under the same officers) and though they made fierce resistance, the Chesapeake was obliged to strike her colors.

This report of the engagement between the Chesapeake and the Shannon to the Secretary of the Navy is dated from Halifax, June 15, 1813.

Budd, Engagement of the Chesapeake and the Shannon, America, Vol.5, p.166

THE unfortunate death of Captain James Lawrence, and Lieutenant Augustus C. Ludlow has rendered it my duty to inform you of the capture of the late United States' frigate Chesapeake.

Budd, Engagement of the Chesapeake and the Shannon, America, Vol.5, p.166

On Tuesday, June 1st, at 8 A.M. we unmoored ship, and at meridian got under weigh from President's Roads, with a light wind from the southward and westward, and proceeded on a cruise. A ship was then in sight in the offing, which had the appearance of a ship of war, and which, from information received from pilot-boats and craft, we believed to be the British frigate Shannon. We made sail in chase, and cleared ship for action. At half past 4 P. M. she hove to with her head to the southward and eastward. At 5 P. M. took in the royals and top-gallant sails, and at half past 5, hauled the courses up. About 15 minutes before 6 P. M. the action commenced within pistol shot. The first broadside did great execution on both sides, damaged our rigging, killed, among others, Mr. White the sailing master, and wounded Captain Lawrence. In about 12 minutes after the commencement of the action, we fell on board of the enemy, and immediately after, one of our arm chests on the quarterdeck was blown up by a hand-grenade thrown from the enemy's ship. In a few minutes, one of the captain's aids came on the gun-deck to inform me that the boarders were called. I immediately called the boarders away, and proceeded to the spar-deck, where I found that the enemy had succeeded in boarding us, and gained possession of our quarter-deck. I immediately gave orders to haul on board the fore-tack, for the purpose of shooting the ship clear of the other, and then made an attempt to regain the quarter-deck, but was wounded and thrown down on the gun-deck. I again made an effort to collect the boarders, but in the meantime the enemy had gained complete possession of the ship. On my being carried down in the cockpit, I there found Captain Lawrence and Lieutenant Ludlow, both mortally wounded; the former had been carried below, previously to the ship's being boarded; the latter was wounded in attempting to repel the boarders Among those who fell early in the action, was Mr. Edward J. Ballard, the 4th Lieutenant, and Lieutenant James Broom, of marines.

Budd, Engagement of the Chesapeake and the Shannon, America, Vol.5, p.168

I herein enclose you a return of the killed and wounded, by which you will perceive that every officer, upon whom the charge of the ship would devolve, was either killed or wounded, previously to her capture. The enemy report the loss of Mr. Watt, their first lieutenant, the purser, the captain's clerk, and 23 seamen killed; and Captain Broke, a midshipman, and 56 seamen wounded.

Budd, Engagement of the Chesapeake and the Shannon, America, Vol.5, p.168

The "Shannon" had, in addition to her full complement, an officer and 16 men belonging to the "Belle Poule," and a part of the crew belonging to the "Tenedos."

I have the honor be, &c.,

GEORGE BUDD.

The Hon. William Jones,

Secretary of the Navy, Washington.

Perry's Own Account of the Battle of Lake Erie

Title: Perry's own account of the Batter of Lake Erie

Author: Oliver Hazard Perry

Date: 1813

Source: America, Vol.5, pp.169-180

The first and second of these letters, dated at Erie, July 19 and 23, 1813, were written by Captain Oliver Hazard Perry to Commodore Chauncey at Sackett's Harbor, Lake Ontario. They are followed by two communications from Perry to General William Henry Harrison in Ohio, the second communication being the famous dispatch of September 10, 1813, briefly informing Harrison of the victory.

The concluding documents are Perry's official account of the battle, addressed from Put-in-Bay on September 13 to the Secretary of the Navy; and the report of Captain R. H. Barclay, the British commander, who had served under Nelson at Trafalgar, dated September 12 from Lake Erie.

Not only do these documents give a vivid account of the historic battle, but they record the great exertions Perry made to build and man the squadron which furthered the conquest of Upper Canada.

Letter from Perry at Erie to Commodore Chauncey

at Sackett's Harbor, Lake Ontatio, July 19th, 1813

Perry's Account of Battle of Lake Erie, America, Vol.5, p.169

THE enemy's fleet of six sail are now off the bar of this harbor. What a golden opportunity if we had men! Their object is no doubt either to blockade or attack us, or to carry provisions and reinforcements to Malden. Should it be to attack us, we are ready to meet them. I am constantly looking to the eastward; every mail and every traveler from that quarter is looked to as the harbinger of the glad tidings of our men being on their way. I am fully aware how much your time must be occupied with the important concerns of the other lake. Give me men, sir, and will acquire both for you and myself honor and glory on this lake, or perish in the attempt. Conceive my feelings; an enemy within striking distance, my vessels ready, and not men enough to man them. Going out with those I now have is out of the question. You would not suffer it were you here. I again ask you to think of my situation: the enemy in sight, the vessels under my command more than sufficient, and ready to make sail, and yet obliged to bite my fingers with vexation for want of men. I know, my dear sir, full well, you will send me the crews for the vessels as soon as possible; yet a day appears an age. I hope that the wind or some other cause will delay the enemy's return to Malden until my men arrive, and I will have them.

Letter from Perry at Erie to Commodore Chauncey

at Sackett's Harbor, July 23d, 1813

Perry's Account of Battle of Lake Erie, America, Vol.5, p.170–p.171

I have this moment had the very great pleasure of receiving yours by Mr. Champlin, with the seventy men. The enemy are now off this harbor with the Queen Charlotte, Lady Prevost, Chippeway, Erie and Friend's Good Will. My vessels are all ready. For God's sake, and yours, and mine, send me men and officers, and I will have them all in a day or two. Commodore Barclay keeps just out of the reach of our gunboats. I am not able to ship a single man at this place. I shall try for volunteers for our cruise. Send on the commander, my dear sir, for the Niagara. She is a noble vessel. Woolsey, Brown, or Elliott I should like to see amazingly. I am very deficient in officers of every kind. Send me officers and men, and honor is within our grasp. The vessels are all ready to meet the enemy the moment they are officered and manned. Our sails are bent, provisions on board, and, in fact, everything is ready. Barclay has been bearding me for several days; I long to have at him. However anxious I am to reap the reward of the labor and anxiety I have had on this station, I shall rejoice, whoever commands, to see this force on the lake, and surely I had rather be commanded by my friend than by any other. Come, then, and the business is decided in a few hours. Barclay shows no disposition to avoid the contest.

Letter from Perry at Erie to General William Henry

Harrison on the Sandusky, Ohio, August 5th

Perry's Account of Battle of Lake Erie, America, Vol.5, p.171

I have had the honor to receive your letter of the twenty-eighth of July this morning, and hasten, in reply, to inform you that I have succeeded in getting one of the sloops-of-war over the bar. The other will probably be over to-day or to-morrow. The enemy is now standing for us with five sail. We have seven over the bar; all small, however, except the Lawrence. I am of opinion that in two days the naval superiority will be decided on this lake. Should we be successful, I shall sail for the head of the lake immediately to cooperate with you, and hope that our joint efforts will be productive of honor and advantage to our country. The squadron is not much more than half manned; but, as I see no prospect of receiving reenforcements, I have determined to commence my operations. I have requested Captain Richardson to dispatch an express to you the moment the issue of our contest with the enemy is known. My anxiety to join you is very great, and, had seamen been sent to me in time, I should now, in all probability, have been at the head of the lake, acting in conjunction with you.

Perry's Account of Battle of Lake Erie, America, Vol.5, p.172

[Postscript.] Thank God, the other sloop-of-war is over. I shall be after the enemy, who is now making off, in a few hours. I shall be with you shortly.

To General Harrison, Sept. 10, 1813

Perry's Account of Battle of Lake Erie, America, Vol.5, p.172

Dear General,

We have met the enemy, and they are ours. Two ships, two brigs, one schooner, and one sloop. Yours, with very great respect and esteem,

O. H. PERRY.

Perry's Official Account

To the Secretary of the Navy

Perry's Account of Battle of Lake Erie, America, Vol.5, p.172

ON the morning of the tenth instant at sunrise, the enemy were discovered from Put-in-Bay, where I lay at anchor with the squadron under my command. We got under way, the wind light at southwest and stood for them. At ten A.M. the wind hauled to southeast and brought us to windward; formed the line and bore up. At fifteen minutes before twelve, the enemy commenced firing; at five minutes before twelve, the action commenced on our part. Finding their fire very destructive, owing to their long guns, and its being mostly directed at the Lawrence, I made sail, and directed the other vessels to follow, for the purpose of closing with the enemy. Every brace and bowline being soon shot away, she became unmanageable, notwithstanding the great exertions of the sailing master. In this situation she sustained the action upwards of two hours, within canister shot distance, until every gun was rendered useless, and a greater part of the crew either killed or wounded.

Perry's Account of Battle of Lake Erie, America, Vol.5, p.173–p.174

Finding she could no longer annoy the enemy, I left her in charge of Lieutenant Yarnall, who, I was convinced, from the bravery already displayed by him, would do what would comport with the honor of the flag. At half-past two, the wind springing up, Captain Elliott was enabled to bring his vessel, the Niagara, gallantly into close action; I immediately went on board of her, when he anticipated my wish by volunteering to bring the schooners, which had been kept astern by the lightness of the wind, into close action. It was with unspeakable pain that I saw, soon after I got on board the Niagara, the flag of the Lawrence come down, although I was perfectly sensible that she had been defended to the last, and that to have continued to make a show of resistance would have been a wanton sacrifice of the remains of her brave crew. But the enemy was not able to take possession of her, and circumstances soon permitted her flag again to be hoisted. At forty-five minutes past two, the signal was made for "close action." The Niagara being very little injured, I determined to pass through the enemy's line, bore up and passed ahead of their two ships and a brig, giving a raking fire to them from the starboard guns, and to a large schooner and sloop, from the larboard side, at half pistol-shot distance. The smaller vessels at this time having got within grape and canister distance, under the direction of Captain Elliott, and keeping up a well directed fire, the two ships, a brig, and a schooner, surrendered, a schooner and sloop making a vain attempt to escape.

Perry's Account of Battle of Lake Erie, America, Vol.5, p.174–p.175

Those officers and men who were immediately under my observation evinced the greatest gallantry, and I have no doubt that all others conducted themselves as became American officers and seamen. Lieutenant Yarnall, first of the Lawrence, although several times wounded, refused to quit the deck. Midshipman Forrest (doing duty as lieutenant) and Sailing Master Taylor were of great assistance to me. I have great pain in stating to you the death of Lieutenant Brooks of the marines, and Midshipman Laub, both of the Lawrence, and Midshipman John Clark, of the Scorpion; they were valuable and promising officers. Mr. Hambleton, purser, who volunteered his services on deck, was severely wounded late in the action. Midshipmen Claxton and Swartwout, of the Lawrence, were severely wounded. On board the Niagara, Lieutenants Smith and Edwards and Midshipman Webster (doing duty as sailing master) behaved in a very handsome manner. Captain Brevoort, of the army, who acted as a volunteer, in the capacity of a marine officer, on board that vessel, is an excellent and brave officer, and with his musketry did great execution. Lieutenant Turner, commanding the Caledonia, brought that vessel into action in the most able manner, and is an officer that in all situations may be relied upon. The Ariel, Lieutenant Packett, and Scorpion, Sailing Master Champlin, were enabled to get early into action, and were of great service. Captain Elliott speaks in the highest terms of Mr. Magrath, purser, who had been dispatched in a boat on service, previous to my getting on board the Niagara; and, being a seaman, since the action has rendered essential service in taking charge of one of the prizes. Of Captain Elliott, already so well known to the Government, it would be almost superfluous to speak. In this action he evinced his characteristic bravery and judgment, and since the close of the action has given me the most able and essential assistance.

Perry's Account of Battle of Lake Erie, America, Vol.5, p.175

I have the honor to enclose you a return of the killed and wounded, together with a statement of the relative force of the squadrons. The captain and first lieutenant of the Queen Charlotte, and first lieutenant of the Detroit, were killed. Captain Barclay, senior officer, and the commander of the Lady Prevost, severely wounded. The commanders of the Hunter and Chippeway slightly wounded. Their loss in killed and wounded I have not yet been able to ascertain; it must, however, have been very great.

British Official Account of the Battle of Lake Erie

The Report of Captain Barclay

Perry's Account of Battle of Lake Erie, America, Vol.5, p.176

THE last letter, dated the 6th instant, informed you that, unless certain intimation was received of more seamen being on their way to Amherstburg, I should be obliged to sail with the squadron, deplorably manned as it was, to fight the enemy (who blockaded the port), to enable us to get supplies of provisions and stores of every description; so perfectly destitute of provisions was the port that there was not a day's flour in store, and the crews of the squadron under my command were on half allowance of many things, and, when that was done, there was no more. Such were the motives which induced Major-General Proctor (whom by your instructions I was directed to consult, and whose wishes I was enjoined to execute, as far as related to the good of the country) to concur in the necessity of a battle being risked, under the many disadvantages which I labored, and it now remains for me, the most melancholy task, to relate to you the unfortunate issue of that battle, as well as the many untoward circumstances that led to that event. No intelligence of seamen having arrived, I sailed on the 9th instant, fully expecting to meet the enemy next morning, as they had been seen among the islands; nor was I mistaken.

Perry's Account of Battle of Lake Erie, America, Vol.5, p.176–p.177–p.178

Soon after daylight they were seen in motion in Put-in-Bay, the wind then at south-west and light, giving us the weather gauge, I bore up with them, in hopes of bringing them to action among the islands, but that intention was soon frustrated by the wind suddenly shifting to the southeast, which brought the enemy directly to windward. The line was formed according to a given plan, so that each ship might be supported against the superior force of the two brigs opposed to them. About ten the enemy had cleared the islands and immediately bore up, under easy sail, in a line abreast, each brig being also supported by the small vessels. At a quarter before 12 I commenced the action by a few long guns; about a quarter past, the American Commodore, also supported by two schooners, one carrying four long 12 pounders, the other a long 32 and 24 pounder, came close to action with the Detroit; the other brig of the enemy, apparently destined to engage the Queen Charlotte, supported in like manner by two schooners, kept so far to windward as to render the Queen Charlotte's 20 pounder carronades useless, while she was, with the Lady Prevost, exposed to the heavy and destructive fire of the Caledonia, and four other schooners, armed with heavy and long guns, like those I have already described. Too soon, alas! was I deprived of the services of the noble and intrepid Captain Finnis, who soon after the commencement of the action fell, and with him fell my greatest support; soon after Lieutenant Stokes, of the Queen Charlotte, was struck senseless by a splinter, which deprived the country of his services at this very critical period. As I perceived the Detroit had enough to contend with, without the prospect of a fresh brig, provincial Lieutenant Irvine, who then had charge of the Queen Charlotte, behaved with great courage, but his experience was much too limited to supply the place of such an officer as Captain Finnis, hence she proved of far less assistance than I expected.

Perry's Account of Battle of Lake Erie, America, Vol.5, p.178–p.179

The action continued with great fury until half past two, when I perceived my opponent drop astern, and a boat passing from him to the Niagara (which vessel was at this time perfectly fresh), the American Commodore seeing that as yet the day was against him (his vessel having struck soon after he left her) and also the very defenseless state of the "Detroit," which ship was now a perfect wreck, principally from the raking fire of the gun boats, and also that the Queen Charlotte was in such a situation that I could receive very little assistance from her, and the Lady Prevost being at this time too far to leeward, from her rudder being injured, made a noble, and alas! too successful an effort to regain it, for he bore up, and, supported by his small vessels, passed within pistol shot, and took a raking position on our bow, nor could I prevent it, as the unfortunate situation of the Queen Charlotte prevented us from wearing; in attempting it we fell on board her; my gallant first Lieutenant, Garland, was now mortally wounded, and myself so severely that I was obliged to quit the deck. Manned as the squadron was, with not more than 50 British seamen, the rest a mixed crew of Canadians and soldiers, and who were totally unacquainted with such a service, rendered the loss of officers more sensibly felt, and never in any action was the loss more severe, every officer commanding vessels, and their seconds, was either killed or wounded so severely as to be unable to keep the deck.

Perry's Account of Battle of Lake Erie, America, Vol.5, p.179–p.180

Lieutenant Buchan, in the Lady Prevost, behaved most nobly, and did everything that a brave and experienced officer could do in a vessel armed with 12 pound carronades, against vessels carrying long guns. I regret to state that he was severely wounded. Lieutenant Bignal, of the Dover, commanding the Hunter, displayed the greatest intrepidity; but his guns being small (two four and six pounders) he could be of much less service than he wished. Every officer in the Detroit behaved in the most exemplary manner. Lieutenant Inglis showed such calm intrepidity, that I was fully convinced that, on leaving the deck, I left the ship in excellent hands; and for an account of the battle after that I refer you to his letter, which he wrote me for your information.—Mr. Hoffmeister, purser of the Detroit, nobly volunteered his services on the deck, and behaved in a manner that reflects the highest honor on him. I regret to add that he is very severely wounded in the knee. Provincial Lieutenant Purvis, and the military officers, Lieutenants Garden, of the Royal Newfoundland Rangers, and O'Keefe of the 41st regiment, behaved in a manner which excited my warmest admiration; the few British seamen I had, behaved with their usual intrepidity, and as long as I was on deck the troops behaved with a calmness and courage worthy of a more fortunate issue to their exertions.

Perry's Account of Battle of Lake Erie, America, Vol.5, p.180

The weathergage gave the enemy a prodigious advantage, as it enabled them not only to choose their position, but their distance also, which they did in such a manner as to prevent the carronades of the Queen Charlotte and Lady Prevost from having much effect; while their long guns did great execution, particularly against the Queen Charlotte. Captain Perry has behaved in a most humane and attentive manner, not only to myself and officers, but to all the wounded. I trust that, although unsuccessful, you will approve of the motives that induced me to sail under so many disadvantages, and that it may be hereafter proved that under such circumstances the honor of His Majesty's flag has not been tarnished. I enclose the list of killed and wounded.

The Battle of the Thames

Title: The Battle of the Thames

Author: Henry M. Breckenridge

Date: 1813

Source: America, Vol.5, pp.181-189

This account of the battle fought on the Thames River in Ontario, thirty miles east of Detroit, in which the celebrated Indian chief Tecumseh was killed, is from Breckenridge's "History of the War of 1812." During the war the author was a U. S. Judge of Louisiana.

The battle was fought on October 5, 1813, between an American force of about 3,000 under General William Henry Harrison, of Tippecanoe fame, and a British force of about 700 under General Proctor, aided by Tecumseh and 2,000 redskins.

The American cavalry was commanded by Colonel Richard M. Johnson, who is credited with having personally killed Tecumseh. Proctor was soon afterwards disgraced for his conduct during the battle.

Following this account of the Battle of the Thames is Tecumseh's speech to Proctor, shortly before the battle. It was found among Proctor's papers, and printed in the "National Intelligencer" in 1813.

Breckenridge, Battle of the Thames, America, Vol.5, p.181–p.182

ON the 5th of October they reached the place where the enemy had encamped the night before. Colonel Wood was now sent forward by the commander-in-chief to reconnoiter the British and Indian forces; and he very soon returned with information that they had made a stand a few miles distant and were ready for action. General Proctor had drawn up his regular forces across a narrow strip of land covered with beech trees, flanked on one side by a swamp, and on the other by the river; their left rested on the river supported by the larger portion of their artillery, and their right on the swamp. Beyond the swamp, and between it and another morass still further to the right, were the Indians under Tecumseh. This position was skillfully chosen by Proctor, with regard to locality, and the character of his troops; but he committed an irreparable oversight in neglecting to fortify his front by a ditch, and in drawing up his troops "in open order, that is, with intervals of three or four feet between the files"—a mode of array which could not resist a charge of cavalry. His whole force consisted of about eight hundred regular soldiers and two thousand Indians.

Breckenridge, Battle of the Thames, America, Vol.5, p.182

The American troops, amounting to something more than three thousand men, were now disposed in order of battle. General Harrison had at first ordered the mounted men to form in two lines, opposite to the Indians; but he soon observed that the underwood here was too close for cavalry to act with any effect. He was aware of the egregious error committed by Proctor as above mentioned, and well knew the dexterity of backwoodsmen in riding, and in the use of the rifle, in forest ground, so he immediately determined that one battalion of the mounted regiment should charge on the British regulars. The other was left to confront the Indians.

Breckenridge, Battle of the Thames, America, Vol.5, p.182–p.183

The requisite arrangements were made, and the army had moved forward but a short distance, when the enemy fired. This was the signal for our cavalry to charge; and, although the men and horses in the front of the column at first recoiled, they soon recovered themselves, and the whole body dashed through the enemy with irresistible force. Instantly forming in the rear of the British, they poured on them a destructive fire, and were about to make a second charge, when the British officers, finding it impossible, from the nature of the ground and the panic which prevailed, to form their broken ranks, immediately surrendered.

Breckenridge, Battle of the Thames, America, Vol.5, p.183

On the left, the battle was begun by Tecumseh with great fury. The galling fire of the Indians did not check the advance of the American columns; but the charge was not successful, from the miry character of the soil and the number and closeness of the thickets which covered it. In these circumstances, Colonel Johnson ordered his men to dismount, and leading them up a second time, succeeded after a desperate contest in breaking through the line of the Indians and gaining their rear. Notwithstanding this, and that the colonel now directed his men to fight them in their own mode, the Indians were unwilling to yield the day; they quickly collected their principal strength on the right and attempted to penetrate the line of infantry. At first they made an impression on it; but they were soon repulsed by the aid of a regiment of Kentucky volunteers led on by the aged Shelby, who had been posted at the angle formed by the front line and Desha's division.

Breckenridge, Battle of the Thames, America, Vol.5, p.183

The combat now raged with increasing fury; the Indians, to the number of twelve or fifteen hundred, seeming determined to maintain their ground to the last. The terrible voice of Tecumseh could be distinctly heard, encouraging his warriors; and although beset on every side except that of the morass, they fought with more determined courage than they had ever before exhibited. An incident, however, now occurred which eventually decided the contest. The gallant Colonel Johnson having rushed toward the spot where the Indians, clustering around their undaunted chief, appeared resolved to perish by his side, his uniform, and the white horse which he rode, rendered him a conspicuous object. In a moment his holsters, dress and accouterments were pierced with a hundred bullets, and he fell to the ground severely wounded. Tecumseh, meanwhile, was killed in the melee. After the rescue and removal of the wounded colonel, the command devolved on Major Thompson. The Indians maintained the fight for more than an hour; but when they no longer heard the voice of their great captain, they at last gave way on all sides. Near the spot where this struggle took place, thirty Indians and six whites were found dead.

Breckenridge, Battle of the Thames, America, Vol.5, p.184–p.185

Thus fell Tecumseh, one of the most celebrated warriors that ever raised the tomahawk against us; and with him faded the last hope of our Indian enemies. This untutored man was the determined foe of civilization, and had for years been laboring to unite all the Indian tribes in resisting the progress of our settlements to the westward. Had such a man opposed the European colonists on their first arrival, this continent might still have been a wilderness. Tecumseh fell respected by his enemies as a great and magnanimous chief. Although he seldom took prisoners in battle, he was merciful to those who had been taken by others; and, at the defeat of Dudley, actually put to death a chief whom he found engaged in the work of massacre. He had been in almost every engagement with the whites since Harmer's defeat in 1791, although at his death he scarcely exceeded forty years of age.

Breckenridge, Battle of the Thames, America, Vol.5, p.185–p.186

Tecumseh had received the stamp of greatness from the hand of nature; and had his lot been cast in a different state of society, he would have shone as one of the most distinguished of men. He was endowed with a powerful mind, and with the soul of a hero. There was an uncommon dignity in his countenance and manners; by the former he could easily be discovered, even after death, among the rest of the slain, for he wore no insignia of distinction. When girded with a silk sash, and told by General Proctor that he was made a brigadier-general in the British service for his conduct at Brownstown and Magagua, he refused the title. Born without title to command, such was his native greatness that every tribe yielded submission to him at once, and no one ever disputed his precedence. Subtle and fierce in war, he was possessed of uncommon eloquence. Invective was his chief merit, as we had frequent occasion to experience. He gave a remarkable instance of its power in the reproaches which he applied to General Proctor, in a speech delivered a few days before his death; a copy of which was found among the papers of the British officers. His form was uncommonly elegant. His stature was about six feet, and his limbs were perfectly proportioned.

Breckenridge, Battle of the Thames, America, Vol.5, p.186

In this engagement the British loss was nineteen regulars killed, fifty wounded, and about six hundred taken prisoners. The Indians left one hundred and twenty on the field. The American loss, in killed and wounded, amounted to upward of fifty. Several pieces of brass cannon, the trophies of our Revolution, and which had been surrendered by Hull at Detroit, were once more restored to our country. General Proctor had basely deserted his troops as soon as the charge was made; and though hotly pursued, was enabled, by means of swift horses and his knowledge of the country, to escape down the Thames. His carriage with his private papers, however, was taken.

Breckenridge, Battle of the Thames, America, Vol.5, p.187

TECUMSEH'S SPEECH TO GENERAL PROCTOR,

SHORTLY BEFORE THE BATTLE OF THE THAMES

FATHER, listen to your children! you have them now all before you. The war before this our British father gave the hatchet to his red children, when old chiefs were alive. They are now dead. In that war our father was thrown on his back by the Americans, and our father took them by the hand without our knowledge; and we are afraid that our father will do so again at this time.

Breckenridge, Battle of the Thames, America, Vol.5, p.187

Summer before last, when I came forward with my red brethren, and was ready to take up the hatchet in favor of our British father, we were told not to be in a hurry, that he had not yet determined to fight the Americans.

Breckenridge, Battle of the Thames, America, Vol.5, p.187

Listen! When war was declared, our father stood up and gave us the tomahawk, and told us that he was ready to strike the Americans; that he wanted our assistance, and that he would certainly get us our lands back, which the Americans had taken from us.

Breckenridge, Battle of the Thames, America, Vol.5, p.187–p.188

Listen! You told us, at that time, to bring forward our families to this place, and we did so:—and you promised to take care of them, and that they should want for nothing, while the men would go and fight the enemy. That we need not trouble ourselves about the enemy's garrison's; that we knew nothing about them, and that our father would attend to that part of the business. You also told your red children that you would take good care of your garrison here, which made our hearts glad.

Breckenridge, Battle of the Thames, America, Vol.5, p.188

Listen! When we were last at the Rapids, it is true we gave you little assistance. It is hard to fight people who live like ground-hogs.

Breckenridge, Battle of the Thames, America, Vol.5, p.188

Father, listen! Our fleet has gone out; we know they have fought: we have heard the great guns: but know nothing of what has happened to our father with one arm. Our ships have gone one way, and we are much astonished to see our father tying up everything and preparing to run away the other, without letting his red children know what his intentions are. You always told us to remain here and take care of our lands. It made our hearts glad to hear that was your wish. Our great father, the King, is the head, and you represent him. You always told us that you would never draw your foot off British ground; but now, father, we see you are drawing back, and we are sorry to see our father doing so without seeing the enemy. We must compare our father's conduct to a fat animal that carries its tail upon its back, but when affrighted, it drops it between its legs and runs off.

Breckenridge, Battle of the Thames, America, Vol.5, p.188

Listen, Father! The Americans have not yet defeated us by land; neither are we sure that they have done so by water—we therefore wish to remain here and fight our enemy, should they make their appearance. If they defeat us, we will then retreat with our father.

Breckenridge, Battle of the Thames, America, Vol.5, p.189

At the battle of the Rapids, last war, the Americans certainly defeated us; and when we retreated to our father's fort in that place, the gates were shut against us.—We were afraid that it would now be the case, but instead of that, we now see our British father preparing to march out of his garrison.

Breckenridge, Battle of the Thames, America, Vol.5, p.189

Father! You have got the arms and ammunition which our great father sent for his red children. If you have an idea of going away, give them to us, and you may go and welcome, for us. Our lives are in the hands of the Great Spirit. We are determined to defend our lands, and if it is his will, we wish to leave our bones upon them.

Jackson's Defeat of the Creek Indians

Title: Jackson's Defeat of the Creek Indians

Author: James Parton

Date: 1814

Source: Great Epochs in American History, Vol.5, pp.42-53

Parton, Jackson's Defeat of the Creek Indians, Great Epochs, Vol.5, p.42

The news of the massacre at Fort Mims was thirty-one days in reaching New York. It is a proof how occupied were the minds of the people in the Northern States with great events, that the dread narrative appeared in the New York papers only as an item of war news of comparatively small importance. The last prodigious acts in the drama of Napoleon's decline and fall were watched with absorbing interest. The news of Perry's victory on Lake Erie had just thrilled the nation with delight and pride, and all minds were still eager for every new particular. Harrison's victory on the Thames over Proctor and Tecumseh soon followed. The lamentable condition of the Southern country was therefore little felt at the time beyond the States immediately concerned. Perry and Harrison were the heroes of the hour. Their return from the scene of their exploits was a continuous triumphal fete.

Parton, Jackson's Defeat of the Creek Indians, Great Epochs, Vol.5, p.43

In a room at Nashville, a thousand miles from these splendid scenes, lay a gaunt, yellow-visaged man, sick, defeated, prostrate, with his arm bound up and his shoulders bandaged, waiting impatiently for his wounds to heal and his strength to return. Who then thought of him in connection with victory and glory? Who supposed that he, of all men, was the one destined to cast into the shade those favorites of the nation, and shine out as the prime hero of the war?

Parton, Jackson's Defeat of the Creek Indians, Great Epochs, Vol.5, p.43

The news of the massacre produced everywhere in Tennessee the most profound impression. Pity for the distrest Alabamans, fears for the safety of their own borders, rage against the Creeks, so long the recipients of governmental bounty, united to inflame the minds of the people. But one feeling pervaded the State. With one voice it was decreed that the entire resources and the whole available force of Tennessee should be hurled upon the savage foe, to avenge the massacre and deliver the Southern country.

Parton, Jackson's Defeat of the Creek Indians, Great Epochs, Vol.5, p.43

The day named for the rendezvous at Fayetteville was exactly one month from that on which the commanding general received his wounds inthe affray with the Bentons. He could not mount his horse without assistance when the time came for him to move toward the rendezvous. His left arm was bound and in a sling. he could not wear his coat-sleeve; nor, during any part of his military career, could he long endure on his left shoulder the weight of an epaulet. Often, in the crisis of a maneuver, some unguarded movement would send such a thrill of agony through his attenuated frame as almost to deprive him of consciousness. It could not have been a pleasant thought that he had squandered in a paltry, puerile, private contest, the strength he needed for the defense of his country. Grievous was his fault, bitter the penalty, noble the atonement. Traveling as fast as his healing wounds permitted, General Jackson reached Fayetteville on the 7th of October.

Parton, Jackson's Defeat of the Creek Indians, Great Epochs, Vol.5, p.44

Twenty-five hundred men and thirteen hundred horses were on a bluff of the Tennessee, on the borders of civilization, about to plunge into pathless woods, and march, no one knew how far, into the fastnesses and secret retreats of a savage enemy! Such a body will consume ten wagon-loads of provisions every day. For a week's subsistence they require a thousand bushels of grain, twenty tons of flesh, a thousand gallons of whisky, and many hundredweight of miscellaneous stores….

Parton, Jackson's Defeat of the Creek Indians, Great Epochs, Vol.5, p.44

Talluschatches was thirteen miles from General Jackson's camp. On the 2d of November came the welcome order to General Coffee (he had just been promoted) to march with a thousand mounted men to destroy this town. Late in the same day the detachment were on the trail, accompanied by a body of friendly Creeks wearing white feathers and white deers' tails, to distinguish them fromtheir hostile brethren. The next morning's sun shone upon Coffee and his men preparing to assault the town.

Parton, Jackson's Defeat of the Creek Indians, Great Epochs, Vol.5, p.45

On the evening of the same day, General Coffee, having destroyed the town, killed two hundred of the enemy, and buried five of his own men, led his victorious troops back to Jackson's camp, where he received from his general and the rest of the army the welcome that brave men give to brave men returning from triumph. Along with the returning horsemen, joyful with their victory, came into camp a sorrowful procession of prisoners, all women or children, all widows or fatherless, all helpless and destitute. They were humanely cared for by the troops, and soon after sent to the settlements for maintenance during the war.

Parton, Jackson's Defeat of the Creek Indians, Great Epochs, Vol.5, p.45

On the bloody field of Talluschatches was found a slain mother still embracing her living infant. The child was brought into camp with the other prisoners, and Jackson, anxious to save it, endeavored to induce some of the Indian women to give it nourishment. "No," said they, "all his relations are dead; kill him, too." This reply appealed to the heart of the general. He caused the child to be taken to his own tent, where, among the few remaining stores, was found a little brown sugar. This, mingled with water, served to keep the child alive until it could be sent to Huntsville, where it was nursed at Jackson's expense until the end of the campaign, and then taken to the Hermitage. Mrs. Jackson received it cordially; and the boy grew up in the family, treated by the general and his kind wife as a son and favorite….

Parton, Jackson's Defeat of the Creek Indians, Great Epochs, Vol.5, p.45

At one o'clock in the morning of November 8th, eight hundred horsemen and twelve hundred foot, under command of General Jackson, stood on the bank of the Coosa, one mile above Fort Strother, ready to cross. The river was wide, but fordable for horsemen. Each of the mounted men, taking behind him one of the infantry, rode across the river and then returned for another. This operation consumed so long a time that it was nearly four o'clock in the morning before the whole force was drawn up on the opposite bank prepared to move. A long and weary march through a country wild and uninhabited brought them about sunset within six miles of Talladega. There the general thought it best to halt and give repose to the troops, taking precautions to conceal his presence from the enemy.

Parton, Jackson's Defeat of the Creek Indians, Great Epochs, Vol.5, p.46

There was no repose for the general that night. Till late in the evening he remained awake, receiving reports from the spies sent out to reconnoiter the enemy's position, and making arrangements for the morrow's work. At midnight an Indian came into the camp with a dispatch from General White, announcing, to Jackson's inexpressible astonishment and dismay, that, in consequence of positive orders from General Cocke, he would not be able to protect Fort Strother, but must return and rejoin his general immediately. No other explanation was given. Jackson was in sore perplexity. To go forward, was to leave the sick and wounded at Forth Strother to the mercy of any strolling party of savages. To retreat, would bring certain destruction upon the friendly Creeks, and probably the whole besieging force upon his own rear. In this painful dilemma he resolved upon the boldest measures and the wisest—to strike the foe in his front at the dawn of day, and, having delivered the inmates of the fort, hasten from the battle-field to the protection of Fort Strother.

Parton, Jackson's Defeat of the Creek Indians, Great Epochs, Vol.5, p.47

Before four in the morning the army was in full march toward the enemy. A sudden and vigorous attack soon put to flight the besieging host, and set free the loyal Creeks, whose delight at their escape is described to have been affecting in the extreme. Besides being nearly dead from thirst, they were anticipating an assault that very day, and had no knowledge of Jackson's approach until they heard the noise of the battle. Fifteen minutes after the action became general the savages were flying headlong in every direction and falling fast under the swords of the pursuing troops. The delivered Creeks ran out of the fort, and, having appeased their raging thirst, thronged around their deliverer, testifying their delight and gratitude….

Parton, Jackson's Defeat of the Creek Indians, Great Epochs, Vol.5, p.47

Jackson soon saw the effect of his brilliant success at Talladega. The Hillabee warriors, who had been defeated in that battle, at once sent a messenger to Forth Strother to sue for peace. Jackson's reply was prompt and characteristic. His Government, he said, had taken up arms to avenge the most gross depredations, and to bring back to a sense of duty a people to whom it had shown the utmost kindness. When those objects were attained the war would cease, but not till then. "Upon those," he continued, "who are disposed to become friendly, I neither wish nor intend to make war, but they must afford evidences of the sincerity of their professions; the prisoners and property they have taken from us and the friendly Creeks must be restored; the instigators of the war, and the murderers of our citizens, must be surrendered; the latter must and will be made to feel the force of our resentment. Long shall they remember Fort Mims in bitterness and tears."

Parton, Jackson's Defeat of the Creek Indians, Great Epochs, Vol.5, p.48

The Hillabee messenger, who was an old Scotchman, long domesticated among the Indians, departed with Jackson's reply. It was never delivered. Before the message reached the Hillabees an event occurred which banished from their minds all thought of peace, changing them from suppliants for pardon into enemies the most resolute and deadly of all the Indians in the Southern country. General White, of East Tennessee, totally unaware of the state of feeling among the Hillabees, nay, supposing them to be inveterately hostile, marched rapidly into their country, burning and destroying. On his way he burned one village of thirty houses, and another of ninety-three. The principal Hillabee town, whence had proceeded the messenger to Jackson asking peace, and whither that messenger was to return that day, General White surprized at daybreak, killed sixty warriors, and captured two hundred and fifty women and children. Having burned the town, he returned to General Cocke, supposing that he had done the State some service.

Parton, Jackson's Defeat of the Creek Indians, Great Epochs, Vol.5, p.48

The feelings of the Hillabee tribe may be imagined. This, then, is General Jackson's answer to our humble suit? Thus does he respond to friendly overtures! They never knew General Jackson's innocence of this deed. From that time to the end of the war it was observed that the Indians fought with greater fury and persistence than before, for they fought with the blended energy of hatred and despair. There was no suing for peace, no askingfor quarter. To fight as long as they could stand, and as much longer as they could sit or kneel, and then as long as they had strength to shoot an arrow or pull a trigger, were all that they supposed remained to them after the destruction of the Hillabees….

Parton, Jackson's Defeat of the Creek Indians, Great Epochs, Vol.5, p.49

We left General Jackson at Fort Strother, giving out his last biscuit to his hungry troops and appeasing his own appetite with unseasoned tripe. Then followed ten long weeks of agonizing perplexity, during which, tho the enemy was unmolested by the Tennessee troops, their general appeared in a light more truly heroic than at any other part of his military life. His fortitude, his will, alone saved the campaign. His burning letters kept the cause alive in the State; his example, resolution, activity, and courage preserved the conquests already achieved, and prepared the way for others that threw them into the shade. The spectacle of a brave man contending with difficulties is one in which the gods were said to take delight. Such a spectacle was exhibited by Andrew Jackson during these weeks of enforced inaction.

Parton, Jackson's Defeat of the Creek Indians, Great Epochs, Vol.5, p.49

In circumstances like these revolt ripens apace. Ten days of gnawing hunger and inaction at Fort Strother brought all the militia regiments to the resolution of marching back in a body to the settlements, with or without the consent of the commanding general, and a day was fixt upon for their departure. Jackson heard of it in time. On the designated morning the militia began the homeward movement; but they found a lion in the path. The general was up before them, and had drawn up on the road leading to the settlements the whole body of volunteers, with orders to pre-vent the departure of the militia, peaceably if they could, forcibly if they must. The militia, in this unexpected posture of affairs, renounced their intention, and, obeying the orders of the general, returned to their position and their duty….

Parton, Jackson's Defeat of the Creek Indians, Great Epochs, Vol.5, p.50

The manner, appearance, and language of General Jackson on occasions like this were literally terrific. Few common men could stand before the ferocity of his aspect and the violence of his words. On the present occasion, I presume that the mutineers were put to flight as much by the terrible aspect of the general as by the armed men who were with him. We can fancy the scene—Jackson in advance of Coffee's men, his grizzled hair bristling up from his forehead, his face as red as fire, his eyes sparkling and flashing; roaring out with the voice of a Stentor and the energy of Andrew Jackson, "By the immaculate God! I'll blow the damned villains to eternity if they advance another step!"

Parton, Jackson's Defeat of the Creek Indians, Great Epochs, Vol.5, p.50

The excursion over, and the new levies from Tennessee approaching, Jackson dismissed his victorious troops, whose term of service was about to expire. He bade them farewell in an address abounding in kind and flattering expressions; and they left him feeling all that soldiers usually feel toward the general who has led them to victory.

Parton, Jackson's Defeat of the Creek Indians, Great Epochs, Vol.5, p.50

Six weeks of intense labor on the part of the general and his army were required to complete the preparations for the decisive movement. The middle of March had arrived. The various divisions of the army were assembled at Fort Strother, and the requisite quantity of provisions had been accumulated. A system of express had been established for the conveyance of information to General Pinckney and Governor Blount. With much difficulty, one man had been found competent to beat the ordinary calls on the drum, and this one drum was the sole music of the army. Deducting the strong guards to be left at the posts against the enemy amounted to about three thousand men.

Parton, Jackson's Defeat of the Creek Indians, Great Epochs, Vol.5, p.51

Jackson was eleven days in marching his army the fifty-five miles of untrodden wilderness that lay between Fort Strother and the Horseshoe Bend explored, boats waited for and rescued from the shoals, high ridges crossed, Fort Williams built and garrisoned to keep open the line of communication and numerous other difficulties overcome, before he could penetrate to the vicinity of the bend. It was early in the morning of March 27th that, with an army diminished by garrisoning the posts to two thousand men, he reached the scene and prepared to commence operations.

Parton, Jackson's Defeat of the Creek Indians, Great Epochs, Vol.5, p.51

Perceiving at one glance that the Indians had simply penned themselves up for slaughter, his first measure was to send General Coffee with all the mounted men and friendly Indians to cross the river two miles below, where it was fordable, to take a position on the bank opposite the line of canoes, and so cut off the retreat. This was promptly executed by General Coffee, who soon announced by a preconcerted signal that he had reached the station assigned him. Jackson then planted his two pieces of cannon—one a three—the other a six-pounder—upon an eminence eighty yards from the nearest point of the breastwork, whence, at half-past ten in the morning, he openedfire upon it. His sharpshooters also were drawn up near enough to get an occasional shot at an Indian within the bend….

Parton, Jackson's Defeat of the Creek Indians, Great Epochs, Vol.5, p.52

Not an Indian asked for quarter, nor would accept it when offered. From behind trees and logs, from clefts in the river's banks, from among the burning huts, from chance log-piles, from temporary fortifications, the desperate red men fired upon the troops. A large number plunged into the river and attempted to escape by swimming, but from Coffee's men on one bank and Jackson's on the other a hailstorm of bullets flew over the stream, and the painted heads dipt beneath its blood-stained ripples. The battle became at length a slow, laborious massacre. From all parts of the peninsula resounded the yells of the savages, the shouts of the assailants, and the reports of the firearms, while the gleam of the uplifted tomahawk was seen among the branches….

Parton, Jackson's Defeat of the Creek Indians, Great Epochs, Vol.5, p.52

The carnage lasted as long as there was light enough to see a skulking or a flying enemy. It was impossible to spare. The Indians fought after they were wounded, and gave wounds to men who sought to save their lives, for they thought that if spared they would be reserved only for a more painful death. Night fell at last, and recalled the troops from their bloody work to gather wounded comrades and minister to their necessities. It was a night of horror. Along the banks of the river, all around the bend, Indians—the wounded and the unhurt—were crouching in the clefts, under the brushwood, and in some instances under the heaps of slain, watching for an opportunity to escape. Many did escape, and some lay until the morning, fearing to attempt it. One noted chief, covered with wounds, took to the water in the evening and lay beneath the surface, drawing his breath through a hollow cane until it was dark enough to swim across. He escaped, and lived to tell his story and show his scars many years after to the historian of Alabama, from whom we have derived the incident. In the morning, parties of the troops again scoured the peninsula and ferreted from their hiding-places sixteen more warriors, who, refusing still to surrender, were added to the number of the slain.

Parton, Jackson's Defeat of the Creek Indians, Great Epochs, Vol.5, p.53

Upon counting the dead, five hundred and fifty-seven was found to be the number of the fallen enemy within the peninsula. Two hundred more, it was computed, had found a grave at the bottom of the river. Many more died in the woods attempting to escape. Jackson's loss was fifty-five killed and one hundred and forty-six wounded, of whom more than half were friendly Indians. The three prophets of the Creeks, fantastically drest and decorated, were found among the dead. One of them, while engaged in his incantations had received a grape-shot in his mouth, which killed him instantly.

Parton, Jackson's Defeat of the Creek Indians, Great Epochs, Vol.5, p.53

The war was over. The power of the Creeks was broken; half their warriors were dead, the rest were scattered and subdued in spirit. Fort Mims was indeed avenged. Jackson's amazing celerity of movement, and particularly his last daring plunge into the wilderness, and his triumph over obstacles that would have deterred even an Indian force, quite baffled and confounded the unhappy Creeks.

The Burning of Washington

Title: The Burning of Washington

Author: Richard Hildreth

Date: 1814

Source: Great Epochs in American History, Vol.5, pp.69-76

Hildreth, The Burning of Washington, Great Epochs, Vol.5, p.69

News reached Washington that a new and large British fleet had arrived in the Chesapeake. This was Cochrane, from Bermuda, with General Ross on board, and a division, some four thousand strong, of Wellington's late army. To this fleet Cockburn's blockading squadron soon joined itself, adding to Ross's force a thousand marines, and a hundred armed and disciplined negroes, deserters from the plantations bordering on the Chesapeake. As the ships passed the Potomac some of the frigates entered that river, but the main fleet, some sixty vessels in all, stood on for the Patuxent, which they ascended to Benedict, where the frith begins to narrow. There, some fifty miles from Washington, the troops were landed without a sign of opposition, tho there were several detachments of Maryland militia, under State orders, at points not far distant. As Ross had no horses, his men, some four thousand five hundred in all, were organized into a light infantry corps. Three pieces of light artillery were dragged along by a hundred sailors. As many more transported munitions. The soldiers carried at their backs eighty rounds of ammunition and three days' provisions.

Hildreth, The Burning of Washington, Great Epochs, Vol.5, p.70

Enervated as the troops had been by the close confinement of the voyage, and wilting under the burning sun of that season, it was with difficulty, at first, that they staggered along. Nothing but the constant efforts of their officers prevented them from dissolving into a long train of stragglers. The felling of a few trees, where the road crossed the frequent streams and swamps, would have seriously delayed, if not effectually have stopt, them. But in that part of Maryland, a level region of corn-fields and pine forests, the slave population exceeded the whites, and the frightened planters thought of little except to save their own throats from insurgent knives, and their human property from English seduction.

Hildreth, The Burning of Washington, Great Epochs, Vol.5, p.70

In the slaves the British had good friends and sure means of information. With the trained negroes in front, they advanced cautiously, the first day only six miles, but still without encountering the slightest opposition, feeling their way up the left bank of the Patuxent—a route which threatened Barney's squadron in front, Alexandria and Washington on the left, and Annapolis and Baltimore on the right. Cockburn accompanied the army, and from his dashing, buccaneering spirit, and long experience in that neighborhood, became the soul of the enterprise.

Hildreth, The Burning of Washington, Great Epochs, Vol.5, p.70

At the first alarm of the appearance of the British fleet Winder had sent off his requisitionsfor militia; but, even had the quotas of Virginia and Pennsylvania been embodied and ready to march, and had the swiftest expresses been employed instead of the slow course of the mail, it was already too late for effectual aid from that quarter. The District militia, summoned to arms, marched to a point some eight miles east of Washington, where they were joined by the regulars, who fell back from a more advanced position which they had occupied for some time at Marlborough.

Hildreth, The Burning of Washington, Great Epochs, Vol.5, p.71

Stansbury's brigade of Maryland drafted militia, fourteen hundred strong, marching from the neighborhood of Baltimore, on the night of the 22d encamped, just in advance of Bladensburg, six miles north of Washington; here they were joined the next day, while the President was reviewing the District army, by a regiment esteemed the flower of the Baltimore city militia, by some companies of artillery and a battalion of city riflemen, led by Pinckney, the late ambassador to London. This Maryland army now amounted to some twenty-one hundred men; but the city part, that most relied upon, had little experience in field service, having suddenly changed the comforts of their homes for the bare ground and rations of bad salt beef and musty flour, which they did not even know how to cook….

Hildreth, The Burning of Washington, Great Epochs, Vol.5, p.71

The Eastern Branch of the Potomac, deep enough opposite Washington to float a frigate, dwindles at Bladensburg to a shallow stream. A few houses occupy the eastern bank. Abandoning the village and the bridge, Stansbury had posted his men on an eminence on the Washington side of the river, with his right on the Washington road, in which were planted two pieces of artillery, tosweep the bridge. Pinckney's riflemen lined the bushes which skirted the river bank. The Baltimore regiment had been originally posted nearest the bridge, but, by Monroe's orders, who rode up just before the battle began, they were thrown back behind an orchard, leaving Stansbury's drafted men to stand the first brunt of attack. As Winder reached the front, other military amateurs were busy in giving their advice, the enemy's column just then beginning to show itself on the opposite bank….

Hildreth, The Burning of Washington, Great Epochs, Vol.5, p.72

The British soldiers, by the time they reached Blandensburg, were almost ready to drop, so excessive was the heat; and so formidable was the appearance of the American army that Ross and his officers, reconnoitering from one of the highest houses of the village, were not a little uneasy as to the result. But it was now too late to hesitate. The column was again put in motion, and after a momentary check it dashed across the bridge. Some discharges of Congreve rockets put the Maryland drafted militia to flight. They were followed by the riflemen, Pinckney getting a broken arm in the tumult, and by the artillerymen, whose pieces had scarcely been twice discharged. As the British came up, the Baltimore regiment fled also, sweeping off with them the general, the President, and the Cabinet officers.

Hildreth, The Burning of Washington, Great Epochs, Vol.5, p.72

Encouraged by this easy victory, the enemy pushed rapidly forward, till Barney's artillery opened upon them with severe effect. After several vain efforts, during which many fell, to advance in face of this fire, advantage was taken of the shelter of a ravine to file off by the right and left. Those who emerged on the left encountered the Annapolis regiment, which fled after a single fire. Those on the right fell in with some detachments of regulars, forming an advanced portion of the second line. They retired with equal promptitude, as did the militia behind them; and the enemy having thus gained both flanks, the sailors and marines were obliged to fly, leaving their guns and their wounded commanders in the enemy's hands.

Hildreth, The Burning of Washington, Great Epochs, Vol.5, p.73

Such was the famous Battle of Bladensburg, in which very few Americans had the honor to be either killed or wounded, not more than fifty in all; and yet, according to the evidence subsequently given before a Congressional committee of investigation, everybody behaved with wonderful courage and coolness, and nobody retired except by orders or for want of orders.

Hildreth, The Burning of Washington, Great Epochs, Vol.5, p.73

The British loss was a good deal larger, principally in the attack on the sailors and marines. Several had dropt dead with heat and fatigue; and the whole force was so completely exhausted that it was necessary to allow them some hours' rest before advancing on Washington.

Hildreth, The Burning of Washington, Great Epochs, Vol.5, p.73

The Maryland militia, dispersing as they fled in every direction, soon ceased to exist as an embodied force. The District militia kept more together; the Virginians had at last obtained their flints; and Winder had still at his command some two thousand men and several pieces of artillery. Two miles from Washington a momentary stand was made, but the retreating troops soon fell back to the Capitol. Armstrong wished to occupy the two massive, detached wings of that building (the central rotunda and porticos having not then been built), and to play the part of the British in Chew's house at the Battle of Germantown. But, if able to withstand an assault, how long could they hold out without provisions or water?

Hildreth, The Burning of Washington, Great Epochs, Vol.5, p.74

It was finally decided to abandon Washington, and to rally on the heights of Georgetown.

Hildreth, The Burning of Washington, Great Epochs, Vol.5, p.74

Simultaneously with this abandonment of their homes by an army that retired but did not rally, fire was put at the navy-yard to a new frigate on the stocks, to a new sloop-of-war lately launched, and to several magazines of stores and provisions, for the destruction of which ample preparations had been made. By the light of this fire, made lurid by a sudden thundergust, Ross, toward evening, advanced into Washington, at that time a straggling village of some eight thousand people, but, for the moment, almost deserted by the male part of the white inhabitants.

Hildreth, The Burning of Washington, Great Epochs, Vol.5, p.74

From Gallatin's late residence, one of the first considerable houses which the column reached, a shot was fired which killed Ross's horse, and which was instantly revenged by putting fire to the house. After three or four volleys at the Capitol, the two detached wings were set on fire. The massive walls defied the flames, but all the interior was destroyed, with many valuable papers, and the library of Congress—a piece of vandalism alleged to be in revenge for the burning of the Parliament House at York. An encampment was formed on Capitol Hill; but meanwhile a detachment marched along Pennsylvania Avenue to the president's house, of which the great hall had been converted into a military magazine, and before which some cannon had been placed. These cannon, however, had been carried off. Mrs. Madison had fled also with her plate and valuablesloaded into a cart obtained not without difficulty, having first stript from its frame and provided for the safety of a valuable portrait of Washington, which ornament the principal room.

Hildreth, The Burning of Washington, Great Epochs, Vol.5, p.75

The President's house, and the offices of the Treasury and State Departments near by, were set on fire; Ross and Cockburn, who had forced themselves as unwelcome guests upon a neighboring boarding-house woman, supping by the light of the blazing buildings. Fortunately by the precaution of Monroe, the most valuable papers of the State Department had been previously removed; yet here, too, some important records were destroyed. The next morning the War Office was burned. The office of the National Intelligencer was ransacked, and the types thrown into the street, Cockburn himself presiding with gusto over this operation, thus revenging himself for its severe strictures on his proceedings in the Chesapeake. The arsenal at Greenleaf's Point was fired, as were some rope-walks near by.

Hildreth, The Burning of Washington, Great Epochs, Vol.5, p.75

Several private houses were burned, and some private warehouses broken open and plundered; but, in general, private property was respected, the plundering being less on the part of the British soldiers than of the low inhabitants, black and white, who took advantage of the terror and confusion to help themselves.

Hildreth, The Burning of Washington, Great Epochs, Vol.5, p.75

 The only public building that escaped was the General Post Office and Patent Office, both under the same roof, of which the burning was delayed by the entreaties and remonstrances of the superintendent, and finally prevented by a tremendous tornado which passed over the city and for a while completely dispersed the British column, the sol-diers seeking refuge where they could, and several being buried in the ruins of the falling buildings.

The Battles of Chippewa and Lundy's Lane

Title: The Battles of Chippewa and Lundy's Lane

Author: General Winfield Scott

Date: 1814

Source: America, Vol.5, pp.190-205

An interesting feature of this account of two important battles in the War of 1812 is that Scott was seventy-eight years old when he wrote it in his autobiography, fifty years after the battles were fought. That of Chippewa occurred on July 5, 1814, followed by Lundy's Lane on July 25. Scott, although a brigadier-general, was only twenty-eight years old.

At that time Major-General Jacob Brown was chief in command of our forces at Niagara, but credit for the Chippewa victory belongs to Scott. Incidentally, his men wore gray uniforms owing to a scarcity of blue cloth. In compliment to the Battle of Chippewa, gray uniforms were adopted for our military cadets.

The action at Lundy's Lane, Ontario—a mile and a half from Niagara Falls—was first directed by Scott and then by Brown, both of whom were wounded. The British force numbered 4,500, the American about 2,600.

Scott, Battles of Chippewa and Lundy's Lane, America, Vol.5, p.190

EARLY in the march, a little above Blackrock, a considerable body of the enemy was discovered. It proved to be a corps of observation under the command of the Marquis of Tweedale. All hearts leaped with joy at the chance of doing something worthy of the anniversary, and to cheer our desponding countrymen at home—something that might ever, on that returning day—

"Be in their flowing cups,

freshly remembered."

Scott, Battles of Chippewa and Lundy's Lane, America, Vol.5, p.190

The events of the day, however, proved most tantalizing. An eager pursuit of sixteen miles ensued. The heat and dust were scarcely bearable; but not a man flagged. All felt that immortal fame lay within reach, The enemy, however, had the start in the race by many minutes; but his escape was only insured by a number of sluggish creeks in the way, each with an ordinary bridge, and too much mud and water to be forded near its mouth. The floors of those bridges were, in succession, thrown off by the marquis, but he was never allowed time to destroy the sleepers. Taking up positions, however, to retard the relaying the planks, obliged Scott to deploy a part of his column and to open batteries. The first bridge, forced in that way, the chase was renewed, and so was the contest at two other bridges, precisely in the manner of the first and with the same results. Finally, toward sunset, the enemy were driven across the Chippewa River behind a strong tete de pont, where they met their main army under Major-General Riall.

Scott, Battles of Chippewa and Lundy's Lane, America, Vol.5, p.191

This running fight, of some twelve hours, was remarkable in one circumstance: in the campaigns of the autobiographer, it was the first and only time that he ever found himself at the head of a force superior to that of the enemy in his front: their relative numbers being, on this occasion, about as four to three.

Scott, Battles of Chippewa and Lundy's Lane, America, Vol.5, p.191

The Marquis of Tweedale, a gallant soldier, on a visit to the United States soon after peace, made several complimentary allusions to the prowess of our troops in the war, and particularly to the events of the 4th of July, 1814, on the Niagara—among them, that he could not account for the impetuosity of the Americans, in that pursuit, till a late hour, when some one called out—"it is their National Anniversary!"

Scott, Battles of Chippewa and Lundy's Lane, America, Vol.5, p.192

The proximity of Riall reversed the strength of the antagonists, and Scott, unpursued, fell back a little more than a mile, to take up a strong camp behind Street's Creek, to await the arrival of the reserve under Major-General Brown. The junction took place early in the morning of the 5th.

Scott, Battles of Chippewa and Lundy's Lane, America, Vol.5, p.192

Brown lost no time in giving orders to prepare the materials for throwing a bridge across the Chippewa, some little distance above the village and the enemy at its mouth. (There was no traveling pontoon with the army.) The work was put under the charge of our able engineers, McRee and Wood—the wise counselors of the general-in-chief. This was the labor of the day. In the meantime the British militia and Indians filled the wood to our left and annoyed the pickets posted in its edge. Porter's militia were ordered to dislodge the enemy, and much skirmishing ensued between the parties.

Scott, Battles of Chippewa and Lundy's Lane, America, Vol.5, p.192

The anniversary dinner cooked for Scott's brigade, with many extras added by him in honor of the day, happily came over from Schlosser on the 5th, and was soon dispatched by officers and men, who had scarcely broken fast in thirty-odd hours.

Scott, Battles of Chippewa and Lundy's Lane, America, Vol.5, p.192–p.193

To keep his men in breath, he had ordered a parade for grand evolutions in the cool of the afternoon. For this purpose there was below the creek, a plain extending back from the Niagara of some hundreds of yards in the broader part, and a third narrower lower down. From the dinner, without expecting a battle, though fully prepared for one, Scott marched for this field. The view below from his camp was obstructed by the brushwood that fringed the creek; but when arrived near the bridge at its mouth, he met Major-General Brown, coming in at full gallop, who, in passing, said with emphasis, "You will have a battle!" and, without halting, pushed on to the rear to put Ripley's brigade in motion—supposing that Scott was perfectly aware of the near approach of the entire British army and going out expressly to meet it.

Scott, Battles of Chippewa and Lundy's Lane, America, Vol.5, p.193

The head of his (Scott's) column had scarcely entered the bridge before it was met by a fire, at an easy distance, from nine field guns. Towson's battery quickly responded with some effect. The column of our infantry, greatly elongated by the diminution of front, to enable it to pass the narrow bridge, steadily advanced, though with some loss, and battalion after battalion when over formed line to the left and front, under the continued fire of the enemy's battery. When Scott was seen approaching the bridge, General Riall, who had dispersed twice his numbers the winter before, in his expedition on the American side, said: "It is nothing but a body of Buffalo militia!" But when the bridge was passed in fine style, under his heavy fire of artillery, he added with an oath, "Why, these are regulars!" The gray coats at first deceived him, which Scott was obliged to accept, there being no blue cloth in the country. Two hostile lines were now in view of each other, but a little beyond the effective range of musketry.

Scott, Battles of Chippewa and Lundy's Lane, America, Vol.5, p.194

It has been seen that the model American brigade, notwithstanding the excessive vigor and prowess exerted the day before, had failed in the ardent desire to engraft its name, by a decisive victory, on the great national anniversary. The same corps again confronting the enemy, but in an open field, Scott, riding rapidly along the line, threw out a few short sentences—among them, alluding to the day before, was this: "Let us make a new anniversary for ourselves!" Not finding his name in the official paper (Gazette) after his handsome services at the capture of Bastia and Calvi, early in his career, Nelson, with the spirit of divination upon him, said: "Never mind; I will have a Gazette of my own." A little arrogance, near the enemy, when an officer is ready to suit the action to the word, may be pardoned by his countrymen. And it has often happened, if not always, when Fourths of July have fallen on Sundays, that Chippewa has been remembered at the celebrations of Independence on the 5th of July.

Scott, Battles of Chippewa and Lundy's Lane, America, Vol.5, p.194–p.195

The brigade had scarcely been fully deployed, when it was perceived that it was outflanked by the enemy on the plain, besides the invisible force that had just driven Porter and the militia out of the wood. Critical maneuvering became necessary on the part of Scott; for the position and intentions of Brown, with Ripley and Porter, were, and remained entirely unknown to him till the battle was over. The enemy continuing to advance, presented a new right flank on the widened plain, leaving his right wing in the wood which Scott had caused to be confronted by Jesup's battalion, the 25th Infantry, which leaped the fence, checked and soon pushed the enemy toward the rear.

Scott, Battles of Chippewa and Lundy's Lane, America, Vol.5, p.195

At the same time having ordered that the right wing of the consolidated battalion (9th and 22d Infantry) commanded by Leavenworth, should be thrown forward, with Towson's battery on the extreme right, close to the Niagara, Scott flew to McNeil's battalion, the 11th Infantry, now on the left, and assisted in throwing forward its left wing. The battalions of Leavenworth and McNeil thus formed, pointed to an obtuse angle in the center of the plain, with a wide interval between them, that made up for deficiency of numbers. To fire, each party had halted more than once, at which the Americans had the more deadly aim. At an approximation to within sixty or seventy paces, the final charge (mutual) was commenced. The enemy soon came within the obliqued battalions of Leavenworth and McNeil. Towson's fire was effective from the beginning.

Scott, Battles of Chippewa and Lundy's Lane, America, Vol.5, p.195–p.196

At the last moment, blinded by thick smoke, he was about to lose his most effective discharge, when Scott, on a tall charger, perceiving that the enemy had come within the last range of the battery, caused a change that enfiladed many files of the opposing flank. The clash of bayonets, at each extremity, instantly followed, when the wings of the enemy being outflanked, and to some extent doubled upon, were moldered away like a rope of sand. It is not in human nature that a conflict like this should last many seconds. The enemy's whole force broke in quick succession and fled, leaving the field thickly strewn with his dead and wounded. The victory was equally complete in front of Jesup. A hot pursuit was continued to within half gunshot of the batteries at Chippewa Bridge, to gather up prisoners and with good success. Returning, Scott met Major-General Brown coming out of the forest, who, with Ripley's regulars and the rallied militia of Porter, had made a wide circuit to the left, intending to get between the enemy and the Chippewa, and this might have been effected if the battle had lasted a half hour longer; but suppose that Scott in the meantime had been overwhelmed by superior numbers! . . .

Scott, Battles of Chippewa and Lundy's Lane, America, Vol.5, p.196

Few men now alive are old enough to recall the deep gloom, approaching to despair, which about this time oppressed the whole American people—especially the supporters of the war. The disasters on the land have been enumerated, and now the New England States were preparing to hold a convention—it met at Hartford—perhaps to secede from the Union—possibly to take up arms against it. Scott's brigade, nearly all New England men, were most indignant, and this was the subject of the second of the three pithy remarks made to them by Scott just before the final conflict at Chippewa. Calling aloud to the gallant Major Hindman, he said: "Let us put down the Federal convention by beating the enemy in front. There's nothing in the Constitution against that."

Scott, Battles of Chippewa and Lundy's Lane, America, Vol.5, p.196–p.197

History has recorded many victories on a much larger scale than that of Chippewa; but only a few that have wrought a greater change in the feelings of a nation. Everywhere bonfires blazed; bells rung out peals of joy; the big guns responded, and the pulse of Americans recovered a healthy beat.

Scott, Battles of Chippewa and Lundy's Lane, America, Vol.5, p.197

The enemy being again in the strong position behind the Chippewa, the preparation of materials for the bridge was renewed early on the 6th, but before they were quite ready, Major-General Riall de-camped; sent reenforcements to his works at the mouth of the Niagara, struck off to the left at Queenstown and returned with the remainder of his army to Burlington Heights at the head of Lake Ontario. So it turned out, as we learned, in a day or two. Scott's brigade was again dispatched in pursuit. He crossed the Chippewa Bridge early on the 7th and reported from Queenstown the ascertained movements of Riall.

Scott, Battles of Chippewa and Lundy's Lane, America, Vol.5, p.197

Major-General Brown determined to attack the forts (George and Messassauga) at the mouth of the river, and accordingly marched his whole force upon them—Scott always in the lead. Perhaps it had been better, after masking those works, to have moved at once upon Riall. But arrangements had been made between the general-in-chief and Commodore Chauncey for siege guns to be brought up by our ships of war; for the Niagara army had not a piece heavier than an eighteen-pounder. The forts were invested: Messassauga, built since McClure evacuated George, the year before.

Scott, Battles of Chippewa and Lundy's Lane, America, Vol.5, p.198

Major-General Brown, thinking it would be more difficult to find than to beat Riall in the Highlands about the head of the lake, now resolved to try the effect of a stratagem to draw him out of his snug position. Accordingly, the Americans on the morning of the 24th assumed a panic; broke up camp and retreated rapidly up the river. There was only a moment's halt at Queenstown—to throw the sick across into hospital at Lewiston, until all were securely encamped above the Chippewa. The following was to be a day of rest and to give Riall time to come down in pursuit. It was further arranged that Scott's brigade, reenforced, should early in the morning of the 26th return rapidly upon Queenstown, and if the stratagem proved a failure, then to trace up Riall and attack him wherever found. Consequently, it was intended that the 25th of July should be to the army a day of relaxation—without other duties than cleaning of arms, the washing of clothes, and bathing, except that Scott's troops were ordered to fill their haversacks with cooked provisions.

Scott, Battles of Chippewa and Lundy's Lane, America, Vol.5, p.198–p.199

While all were thus unbuttoned and relaxed, a militia colonel, whose regiment occupied several posts on the American side of the river, sent a specific report to Major-General Brown that the enemy had thrown across, from Queenstown to Lewiston, a strong body of troops, and as it could not be to disturb the small hospital at the latter place, Brown concluded the movement had in view the destruction of our magazines at Schlosser, and stopping the stream of supplies descending from Buffalo. Of course, Riall must have come down from the Highlands; but as one of our brigades had beaten his entire force, twenty days before, it was difficult to believe he had risked a division of his weakened army so near to the superior numbers of Brown; for not a rumor had reached the latter that Riall had been reenforced. Indeed, it was only known, from Chauncey, at Sackett's Harbor, that Sir James Yeo had possession of the lake; for Brown's means of secret intelligence, if any, were of no avail. In this state of ignorance, but confidence in the report received, Brown ordered Scott, with his command, to march below, to find the enemy and to beat him. It was now in the afternoon, and all had dined. In less than thirty minutes the splendid column-horse, artillery, and infantry—had passed the bridge at the village of Chippewa, and was in full march for Queenstown (nine miles below), intending no halt short of that point. But "l'homme propose et Dieu dispose." Turning the sweep the river makes a mile or two above the Falls, a horseman in scarlet was from time to time discovered peeping out from the wood on the left, and lower down, the advance guard, with which Scott rode, came upon a house (Forsyth's) from which two British officers fled just in time to escape capture. Only two inhabitants had been seen in the march, and these, from ignorance or loyalty, said nothing that did not mislead. The population was hostile to Americans.

Scott, Battles of Chippewa and Lundy's Lane, America, Vol.5, p.200

From such indications it seemed evident that there was a corps of observation in the neighborhood, and Scott so reported to headquarters; but from the information on which he had advanced, it could only be a small body, detached from an inferior army that had committed the folly of sending at least half of its numbers to the opposite side of the river. There was, therefore, no halt and no slackening in the march of the Americans. Passing a thick skirt of wood that crossed the road nearly opposite to the Falls, the head of the column emerged into an opening on the left in full view, and in easy range of a line of battle drawn up in Lundy's Lane, more extensive than that defeated at Chippewa.

Scott, Battles of Chippewa and Lundy's Lane, America, Vol.5, p.200

Riall's whole force was in the lane; for, it turned out not only not a man had been thrown over the river, but that the night before Lieutenant-General Sir Gordon Drummond had arrived by the lake with a heavy reenforcement, and had pushed forward his battalions (sixteen miles) as they successively landed. One was already in line of battle, and the others were coming up by forced marches.

Scott, Battles of Chippewa and Lundy's Lane, America, Vol.5, p.200

The aches in broken bones feelingly remind the autobiographer of the scene he is describing, and after the lapse of nearly fifty years he can not suppress his indignation at the blundering, stupid report made by the militia colonel to his confiding friend Major-General Brown….

Scott, Battles of Chippewa and Lundy's Lane, America, Vol.5, p.200–p.201

By standing fast, the salutary impression was made upon the enemy that the whole American reserve was at hand and would soon assault his flanks. Emboldened, however, a little by its nonarrival, an attempt was made to turn Scott's left. The 11th, that occupied that position, threw forward (under cover of a clump of trees) its right, and drove the enemy beyond reach.

Scott, Battles of Chippewa and Lundy's Lane, America, Vol.5, p.201

Jesup, too, on our right, had brilliant success. In making the sweep around the enemy's left flank he captured Major-General Riall and cut off a segment of his line. Sir Gordon Drummond, also, was for a moment a prisoner, but he contrived to escape in the dusk of the evening. Hindman's artillery, Brady's battalion, consolidated with Leavenworth's, had suffered and inflicted great losses under a direct fire, unremitted, till dusk. The 11th, partially covered, suffered less.

Scott, Battles of Chippewa and Lundy's Lane, America, Vol.5, p.201–p.202

At this moment Major-General Brown and staff came up a little ahead of the reserve—of course, each with the bandage of night on his eyes; for it was now dark—after nine o'clock in the evening. Scott gave the general the incidents of the battle, and the positions of the hostile forces on the field. It was known from prisoners that further reenforcements, from below, were soon expected. Not a moment was to be lost. By desire, Scott suggested that the heaviest battalion in the reserve, the 21st, which he had instructed at Buffalo, and was now commanded by Colonel Miller, should, supported by the remainder of Ripley's brigade, charge up the lane, take the enemy in flank, and roll his whole crumbled line back into the wood.

Scott, Battles of Chippewa and Lundy's Lane, America, Vol.5, p.202

To favor this important movement, Scott, with the added force of Jesup, now back in line, ordered the attack, in front, to be redoubled; guided Brown, with Miller, through the darkness, to the foot of the lane, and then rejoined his own forces. Here he was assisted by the fresh batteries which came up with the reserve. The enemy, thus furiously assailed in front, remained ignorant of Miller's approach till the bayonets of his column began to be felt. The rout was early and completed a battery captured, and many prisoners made.

Scott, Battles of Chippewa and Lundy's Lane, America, Vol.5, p.202–p.203

Positions on the field had become reversed. The American line, reformed, now crossed that originally occupied by the enemy at right angles, and facing the wood, with backs to the river. Here it took a defensive stand. The British slowly rallied at some distance in front. Being again in collected force and in returning confidence, they cautiously advanced to recover the lost field and their battery—the horses of which had been killed or crippled before the retreat. By degrees the low commands, "halt," "dress," "forward," often repeated, became more and more audible in the awful stillness of the moment. At length a dark line could be seen, at a distance, perhaps, of sixty paces. Scott resolved to try an experiment. Leaving his brigade on the right, in line, he formed a small column of some two hundred and fifty men, and, at its head, advanced rapidly to pierce the advancing enemy's line, then to turn to the right, and envelop his extreme left, If pierced, in the dark, there seemed no doubt the whole would fall back, and so it turned out. Scott explained his intentions and forcibly cautioned his own brigade, and Ripley's on his left, not to fire upon the little column; but the instant the latter come in conflict with, and broke the enemy, Ripley's men opened fire upon its rear and left flank, and caused it to break without securing a prisoner. The column resumed its place in line, and another pause in the battle ensued.

Scott, Battles of Chippewa and Lundy's Lane, America, Vol.5, p.203

After a while a second advance of the enemy was made with the same slowness as before. When within short musket-shot, there was an unexpected halt, instantly followed by the crack of small arms and the deafening roar of cannon. Each party seemed resolved to rest the hope of victory on its fire. The welkin was in a blaze with shells and rockets. Though both armies suffered greatly, the enemy suffered most. The scene, perhaps, including accessories, has never been surpassed. Governor Tompkins, with a keen perception of its splendor, said, in presenting a sword of honor to Scott: "The memorable conflict on the plains of Chippewa, and the appalling night-battle on the Heights of Niagara, are events which have added new celebrity to the spots where they happened, heightening the majesty of the stupendous cataract by combining with its natural all the force of the moral sublime."

Scott, Battles of Chippewa and Lundy's Lane, America, Vol.5, p.204

It was impossible that this conflict should be endured for more than a very few minutes. The lines at some points were separated by only eight or ten paces. Nothing but a deep, narrow gully intervened in front of the 25th Infantry. Scott, inquiring of the commander (Jesup) about a wound (in the hand) heard a call in the ranks, "Cartridges!" At she same moment a man reeling to the ground, responded, "Cartridges in my box!" The two commanders flew to his succor. The noble fellow had become a corpse as he fell. In the next second or two Scott, for a time, as insensible, lay stretched at his side, being prostrated by an ounce musket-ball through the left shoulder-joint. He had been twice dismounted and badly contused, in the side, by the rebound of a cannon-ball, some hours before. Two of his men discovering that there was yet life, moved him a little way to the rear, that he might not be killed on the ground, and placed his head behind a tree—his feet from the enemy. This had scarcely been done when he revived and found that the enemy had again abandoned the field. Unable to hold up his head from the loss of blood and anguish, he was taken in an ambulance to the camp across the Chippewa, when the wound was stanched and dressed.

Scott, Battles of Chippewa and Lundy's Lane, America, Vol.5, p.204–p.205

On leaving the field he did not know that Major-General Brown, also wounded, had preceded him. By seniority, the command of the army now devolved on Brigadier-General Ripley. It must then have been about midnight. Ripley, from some unknown cause, became alarmed, and determined, in spite of dissuasion, to abandon the field, trophies, and all. The principal officers dispatched a messenger to bring back Scott, but found him utterly prostrate. Toward day some fragments of the enemy, seeking the main body, crossed the quiet field, and learning from the wounded that the Americans had flown, hastened to overtake Lieutenant-General Sir Gordon Drummond below, who returned, bivouacked on the field, and claimed the victory!

The Burning of Washington

Title: The Burning of Washington

Author: "Dolly" Madison

Date: August 23, 1814

Source: America, Vol.5, pp.206-211

"Dolly" Madison, wife of President James Madison, wrote this letter to her sister, Anna, on August 23, 1814, the day before the City of Washington was burned by the British forces commanded by General Ross and Admiral Cockburn. The portrait of George Washington, to which she refers, was painted partly by Gilbert Stuart, and completed by Winstanley, with Colonel Smith, son-in-law of President John Adams, as a model for the unfinished body and limbs. As she was fleeing the city, she encountered her husband, and they spent a sleepless night at the home of a friend near Georgetown, Virginia, "gazing at the flames, which looked as if nothing could stop them in their mad fury."

Supplementing this document is an account by a British soldier, who was present at the capture and burning of Washington. He published, after the war, "A Narrative of the Campaign of the British Army at Washington and New Orleans."

Madison, Burning of Washington, America, Vol.5, p.206–p.207

MY husband left me yesterday morning to join General Winder. He inquired anxiously whether I had courage or firmness to remain in the President's house until his return on the morrow, or succeeding day, and on my assurance that I had no fear but for him, and the success of our army, he left, beseeching me to take care of myself, and of the Cabinet papers, public and private. I have since received two dispatches from him, written with a pencil. The last is alarming, because he desires I should be ready at a moment's warning to enter my carriage, and leave the city; that the enemy seemed stronger than had at first been reported, and it might happen that they would reach the city with the intention of destroying it. I am accordingly ready; I have pressed as many Cabinet papers into trunks as to fill one carriage; our private property must be sacrificed, as it is impossible to procure wagons for its transportation. I am determined not to go myself until I see Mr. Madison safe, so that he can accompany me, as I hear of much hostility towards him. Disaffection stalks around us. My friends and acquaintances are all gone, even Colonel C. with his hundred, who were stationed as a guard in this inclosure. French John (a faithful servant), with his usual activity and resolution, offers to spike the cannon at the gate, and lay a train of powder, which would blow up the British, should they enter the house. To the last proposition I positively object, without being able to make him understand why all advantages in war may not be taken.

Madison, Burning of Washington, America, Vol.5, p.207

Wednesday Morning, twelve o'clock.—Since sunrise I have been turning my spy-glass in every direction, and watching with unwearied anxiety, hoping to discover the approach of my dear husband and his friends; but, alas! I can descry only groups of military, wandering in all directions, as if there was a lack of arms, or of spirit to fight for their own fireside.

Madison, Burning of Washington, America, Vol.5, p.207–p.208

Three o'clock.—Will you believe it, my sister? we have had a battle, or skirmish, near Bladensburg, and here I am still, within sound of the cannon! Mr. Madison comes not. May God protect us! Two messengers, covered with dust, come to bid me fly; but here I mean to wait for him…. At this late hour a wagon has been procured, and I have had it filled with plate and the most valuable portable articles, belonging to the house. Whether it will reach its destination, the "Bank of Maryland," or fall into the hands of British soldiery, events must determine. Our kind friend, Mr. Carroll, has come to hasten my departure, and in a very bad humor with me, because I insist on waiting until the large picture of General Washington is secured, and it requires to be unscrewed from the wall. This process was found too tedious for these perilous moments; I have ordered the frame to be broken, and the canvas taken out. It is done! and the precious portrait placed in the hands of two gentlemen of New York, for safe keeping. And now, dear sister, I must leave this house, or the retreating army will make me a prisoner in it by filling up the road I am directed to take. When I shall again write to you, or where I shall be to-morrow, I cannot tell!

Madison, Burning of Washington, America, Vol.5, p.209

A BRITISH ACCOUNT OF THE BURNING OF WASHINGTON

TOWARD morning a violent storm of rain, accompanied with thunder and lightning, came on, which disturbed the rest of all those who were exposed to it. Yet, in spite of the disagreeableness of getting wet, I can not say that I felt disposed to grumble at the interruption, for it appeared that what I had before considered as superlatively sublime still wanted this to render it complete. The flashes of lightning seemed to vie in brilliancy with the flames which burst from the roofs of burning houses, while the thunder drowned the noise of crumbling walls, and was only interrupted by the occasional roar of cannon, and of large depots of gunpowder, as they one by one exploded….

Madison, Burning of Washington, America, Vol.5, p.209–p.210

The consternation of the inhabitants was complete, and to them this was a night of terror. So confident had they been of the success of their troops, that few of them had dreamed of quitting their houses, or abandoning the city; nor was it till the fugitives from the battle began to rush it, filling every place as they came with dismay, that the President himself thought of providing for his safety. That gentleman, as I was credibly informed, had gone forth in the morning with the army, and had continued among his troops till the British forces began to make their appearance. Whether the sight or his enemies cooled his courage or not I can not say, but, according to my informer, no sooner was the glittering of our arms discernible than he began to discover that his presence was more wanted in the Senate than with the army; and having ridden through the ranks, and exhorted every man to do his duty, he hurried back to his own house, that he might prepare a feast for the entertainment of his officers, when they should return victorious. For the truth of these details I will not be answerable; but this much I know, that the feast was actually prepared, though, instead of being devoured by American officers, it went to satisfy the less delicate appetites of a party of English soldiers. When the detachment, sent out to destroy Mr. Madison's house, entered his dining parlor, they found a dinner-table spread, and covers laid for forty guests….

Madison, Burning of Washington, America, Vol.5, p.210

They sat down to it, therefore, not indeed in the more orderly manner, but with countenances which would not have disgraced a party of aldermen at a civic feast; and having satisfied their appetites with fewer complaints than would have probably escaped their rival gourmands, and partaken pretty freely of the wines, they finished by setting fire to the house which had so liberally entertained them.

Madison, Burning of Washington, America, Vol.5, p.210–p.211

But, as I have just observed, this was a night of dismay to the inhabitants of Washington. They were taken completely by surprise; nor could the arrival of the flood be more unexpected to the natives of the antediluvian world, than the arrival of the British army to them. The first impulse of course tempted them to fly, and the streets were in consequence crowded with soldiers and senators, men, women, and children, horses, carriages, and carts loaded with household furniture, all hastening toward a wooden bridge which crosses the Potomac. The confusion thus occasioned was terrible, and the crowd upon the bridge was such as to endanger its giving way. But Mr. Madison, having escaped among the first, was no sooner safe on the opposite bank of the river than he gave orders that the bridge should be broken down; which being obeyed, the rest were obliged to return, and to trust to the clemency of the victors.

Madison, Burning of Washington, America, Vol.5, p.211

In this manner was the night passed by both parties; and at daybreak next morning the light brigade moved into the city, while the reserve fell back to a height about half a mile in the rear. Little, however, now remained to be done, because everything marked out for destruction was already consumed. Of the senate-house, the President's palace, the barracks, the dockyard, etc., nothing could be seen, except heaps of smoking ruins; and even the bridge, a noble structure upward of a mile in length, was almost wholly demolished. There was, therefore, no farther occasion to scatter the troops, and they were accordingly kept together as much as possible on the capitol hill.

The Battle of Lake Champlain

Title: The Battle of Lake Champlain

Author: James Fenimore Cooper

Date: 1814

Source: America, Vol.5, pp.212-222

Had this naval battle on Lake Champlain not been fought and won by the Americans under Captain Thomas Macdonough off the town of Plattsburg, September 11, 1814, a British army of 11,000 men would in all probability have invaded New York and the War of 1812 might have been indefinitely prolonged. As a result of this victory, the plan of invasion by land was abandoned, and the British forces under Sir George Prevost retreated into Canada.

Cooper, from whose "History of the Navy of the United States" this account is taken, became a midshipman in 1808 and saw various forms of service before resigning in 1811, and becoming in later years not only a distinguished historian, but the greatest pioneer American novelist.

This engagement made Macdonough famous as "The Hero of Lake Champlain." He received a gold medal from Congress and an estate on Cumberland Head, near Plattsburg, from the Legislature of Vermont.

Cooper, Battle of Lake Champlain, America, Vol.5, p.212–p.213

IN the autumn of 1814 the enemy contemplated an invasion of the northern and least populous counties of New York, with a large force, following the route laid down for General Burgoyne, in his unfortunate expedition of 1777. It was most probably intended to occupy a portion of the northern frontier, with the expectation of turning the circumstance to account in the pending negotiations, the English commissioners soon after advancing a claim to drive the Americans back from their ancient boundaries, with a view to leaving Great Britain the entire possession of the lakes. In such an expedition the command of Champlain became of great importance, as it flanked the march of the invading army for more than a hundred miles, and offered so many facilities for forwarding supplies, as well as for annoyance and defense. Until this season neither nation had a force of any moment on that water, but the Americans had built a ship and a schooner, during the winter and spring; and when it was found that the enemy was preparing for a serious effort the keel of a brig was laid. Many galleys, or gunboats, were also constructed….

Cooper, Battle of Lake Champlain, America, Vol.5, p.213

On the 6th of September Captain Macdonough ordered the galleys to the head of the bay, to annoy the English army, and a cannonading occurred which lasted two hours. The wind coming on to blow a gale that menaced the galleys with shipwreck, Mr. Duncan, a midshipman of the Saratoga, was sent in a gig to order them to retire. It is supposed that the appearance of the boat induced the enemy to think that Captain Macdonough himself had joined his galleys; for he concentrated a fire on the galley Mr. Duncan was in, and that young officer received a severe wound, by which he lost the use of his arm. Afterward one of the galleys drifted in, under the guns of the enemy, and she also sustained some loss, but was eventually brought off.

Cooper, Battle of Lake Champlain, America, Vol.5, p.213–p.214

Captain Macdonough had chosen an anchorage a little to the south of the outlet of the Saranac. His vessels lay in a line parallel to the coast, extending north and south, and distant from the western shore nearly two miles. The last vessel at the southward was so near the shoal as to prevent the English from passing that end of the line, while all the ships lay so far out toward Cumberland Head as to bring the enemy within reach of carronades, should he enter the bay on that side.

Cooper, Battle of Lake Champlain, America, Vol.5, p.214

The total force of the American present consisted of fourteen vessels, mounting eighty-six guns and containing about 850 men, including officers and a small detachment of soldiers, who did duty as marines, none of the corps having been sent on Lake Champlain. To complete his order of battle, Captain Macdonough directed two of the galleys to keep inshore of the Eagle, and a little to windward of her, to sustain the head of the line; one or two more to lie opposite to the interval between the Eagle and Saratoga; a few opposite to the interval between the Saratoga and Ticonderoga; and two or three opposite the interval between the Ticonderoga and Preble. The Americans were, consequently, formed in two lines, distant from each other about forty yards; the large vessels at anchor, and the gallery under their sweeps.

Cooper, Battle of Lake Champlain, America, Vol.5, p.214

The force of the enemy was materially greater than that of the Americans. His largest vessel, the Confiance, commanded by Captain Downie in person, had the gundeck of a heavy frigate, mounting on it an armament similar to that of the Constitution or United States, or thirty long twenty-fours…. The whole force of Captain Downie consisted of sixteen or seventeen vessels, as the case may have been, mounting in all, ninety-five or ninety-six guns, and carrying about one thousand men….

Cooper, Battle of Lake Champlain, America, Vol.5, p.215

The guard-boat of the Americans pulled in shortly after the sun had risen, and announced the approach of the enemy. As the wind was fair, a good working breeze at the northward and eastward, Captain Macdonough ordered the vessels cleared, and preparations mad to fight at anchor. Eight bells were striking in the American squadron as the upper sails of the English vessels were seen passing along the land, in the main lake, on their way to double Cumberland Head….

Cooper, Battle of Lake Champlain, America, Vol.5, p.215

The enemy was now standing in, close-hauled, the Chubb looking well to windward of the Eagle, the vessel that lay at the head of the American line, the Linnet laying her course for the bows of the same brig, the Confiance intending to fetch far enough ahead of the Saratoga to lay that ship athwart hawse, and the Finch, with the gunboats, standing for the Ticonderoga and Preble.

Cooper, Battle of Lake Champlain, America, Vol.5, p.215–p.216

As the enemy filled the American vessels sprung their broadsides to bear, and a few minutes were passed in the solemn and silent expectation, that, in a disciplined ship, precedes a battle. Suddenly the Eagle discharged, in quick succession, her four long eighteens. In clearing the decks of the Saratoga some hen-coops were thrown overboard, and the poultry had been permitted to run at large. Startled by the reports of the guns, a young cock flew upon a gunslide, clapped his wings and crowed. At this animating sound the men spontaneously gave three cheers. This little occurrence relieved the usual breathing time between preparation and the combat, and it had a powerful influence on the known tendencies of the seamen.

Cooper, Battle of Lake Champlain, America, Vol.5, p.216

Still Captain Macdonough did not give the order to commence, although the enemy's galleys now opened; for it was apparent that the fire of the Eagle, which vessel continued to engage, was useless. As soon, however, as it was seen that her shot told, Captain Macdonough himself sighted a long twenty-four, and the gun was fired. This shot is said to have struck the Confiance near the outer hawse-hole, and to have passed the length of her deck, killing and wounding several men, and carrying away the wheel. It was a signal for all the American long guns to open, and it was soon seen that the English commanding ship, in particular, was suffering heavily. Still the enemy advanced, and in the most gallant manner, confident if he could get the desired position, that the great weight of the Confiance would at once decide the fate of the day. But he had miscalculated his own powers of endurance. The anchors of the Confiance were hanging by the stoppers, in readiness to be let go, and the larboard bower was soon cut away, as well as a spare anchor in the larboard fore-chains….

Cooper, Battle of Lake Champlain, America, Vol.5, p.216–p.217

The English vessels came to in very handsome style, nor did the Confiance fire a single gun until secured; although the American line was now engaged with all its force. As soon as Captain Downie had performed this duty, in a seamanlike manner, his ship appeared a sheet of fire, discharging all her guns at nearly the same instant, pointed principally at the Saratoga. The effect of this broadside was terrible in the little ship that received it. After the crash had subsided Captain Macdonough saw that nearly half his crew was on the deck, for many had been knocked down who sustained no real injuries. It is supposed, however, that about forty men, or near one-fifth of her complement, were killed and wounded on board the Saratoga by this single discharge. The hatches had been fastened down, as usual, but the bodies so cumbered the deck that it was found necessary to remove the fastenings and to pass them below. The effect continued but a moment, when the ship resumed her fire as gallantly as ever. Among the slain was Mr. Peter Gamble, the first lieutenant. By this early loss but one officer of that rank, Acting Lieutenant Lavallette, was left in the Saratoga. Shortly after, Captain Downie, the English commanding officer, fell also….

Cooper, Battle of Lake Champlain, America, Vol.5, p.217–p.218

The rear of the American line was certainly its weakest point; and having compelled the little Preble to retreat, the enemy's galleys were emboldened to renew their efforts against the vessel ahead of her, which was the Ticonderoga. This schooner was better able to resist them, and she was very nobly fought. Her spirited commander, Lieutenant-Commandant Cassin, walked the taffrail, where he could watch the movements of the enemy's galleys, and showers of canister and grape, directing discharges of bags of musket-balls, and other light missiles, effectually keeping the British at bay. Several times the English galleys, of which many were very gallantly fought, closed quite near, with an intent to board; but the great steadiness on board the Ticonderoga beat them back, and completely covered the rear of the line for the remainder of the day. So desperate were some of the assaults, notwithstanding, that the galleys have been described as several times getting nearly within a boathook's length of the schooner, and their people as rising from the sweeps in readiness to spring.

Cooper, Battle of Lake Champlain, America, Vol.5, p.218

While these reverses and successes were occurring in the rear of the two lines, the Americans were suffering heavily at the other extremity. The Linnet had got a very commanding position, and she was admirably fought; while the Eagle, which received all her fire, and part of that of the Confiance, having lost her springs, found herself so situated as not to be able to bring her guns fairly to bear on either of the enemy's vessels. Captain Henley had run his topsailyards, with the sails stopped, to the mastheads, previously to engaging, and he now cut his cable, sheeted home his topsails, cast the brig, and running down, anchored by the stern, between the Saratoga and Ticonderoga, necessarily a little inshore of both. Here he opened fire afresh, and with better effect, on the Confiance and galleys, using his larboard guns. But this movement left the Saratoga exposed to nearly the whole fire of the Linnet, which brig now sprung her broadside in a manner to rake the American ship on her bows.

Cooper, Battle of Lake Champlain, America, Vol.5, p.219

Shortly after this important change had occurred at the head of the lines, the fire of the two ships began materially to lessen, as gun after gun became disabled; the Saratoga, in particular, having had all her long pieces rendered useless by shot, while most of the carronades were dismounted, either in the same manner, or in consequence of a disposition in the men to overcharge them. At length but a single carronade remained in the starboard batteries, and on firing it the navel-bolt broke, the gun flew off the carriage, and it actually fell down the main hatch. By this accident the American commanding vessel was left in the middle of the battle, without a single available gun. Nothing remained but to make an immediate attempt to wind the ship.

Cooper, Battle of Lake Champlain, America, Vol.5, p.219–p.220

The stream anchor suspended astern was let go accordingly. The men then clapped on the hawser that led to the starboard quarter, and brought the ship's stern up over the kedge; but here she hung, there not being sufficient wind, or current, to force her bows round. A line had been bent to a bight in the stream cable, with a view to help wind the ship, and she now rode by the kedge and this line, with her stern under the raking broadside of the Linnet, which brig kept up a steady and well-directed fire. The larboard batteries having been manned and got ready, Captain Macdonough ordered all the men from the guns, where they were uselessly suffering, telling them to go forward. By rowsing on the line the ship was at length got so far round that the aftermost gun would bear on the Confiance, when it was instantly manned, and began to play. The next gun was used in the same manner, but it was soon apparent that the ship could be got no farther round, for she was now nearly end-on to the wind. At this critical moment Mr. Brum, the master, bethought him of the hawser that had led to the larboard quarter. It was got forward under the bows, and passed aft to the starboard quarter, when the ship's stern was immediately sprung to the westward, so as to bring all her larboard guns to bear on the English ship, with fatal effect.

Cooper, Battle of Lake Champlain, America, Vol.5, p.220–p.221

As soon as the preparations were made to wind the Saratoga, the Confiance attempted to perform the same evolution. Her springs were hauled on, but they merely forced the ship ahead, and having borne the fresh broadside of the Americans, until she had scarcely a gun with which to return the fire, and failing in all her efforts to get round, about two hours and a quarter after the commencement of the action, her commanding officer lowered his flag. By hauling again upon the starboard hawser the Saratoga's broadside was immediately sprung to bear on the Linnet, which brig struck about fifteen minutes after her consort. The enemy's galleys had been driven back, nearly or quite half a mile, and they lay irregularly scattered, and setting to leeward, keeping up a desultory firing. As soon as they found that the large vessels had submitted, they ceased the combat, and lowered their colors. At this proud moment, it is believed, on authority entitled to the highest respect, there was not a single English ensign, out of sixteen or seventeen, that had so lately been flying, left abroad in the bay!

Cooper, Battle of Lake Champlain, America, Vol.5, p.221

In this long and bloody conflict the Saratoga had 28 men killed and 29 wounded, or more than a fourth of all on board her; the Eagle, 13 killed and 20 wounded, which was sustaining a loss in nearly an equal proportion; the Ticonderoga, 6 killed and 6 wounded; the Preble, 2 killed; while on board the ten galleys only 3 were killed and 3 wounded. The Saratoga was hulled fifty-five times, principally by twenty-four-pound shot; and the Eagle thirty-nine times.

Cooper, Battle of Lake Champlain, America, Vol.5, p.221

According to the report of Captain Pring, of the Linnet, dated on the 12th of September, the Confiance lost 41 killed and 40 wounded. It was admitted, however, that no good opportunity had then existed to ascertain the casualties. At a later day the English themselves enumerated her wounded at 83. This would make the total loss of that ship 124; but even this number is supposed to be materially short of the truth….

Cooper, Battle of Lake Champlain, America, Vol.5, p.221–p.222

Captain Macdonough, who was already very favorably known to the service for his personal intrepidity, obtained a vast accession of reputation by the results of this day. His dispositions for receiving the attacks were highly judicious and seamanlike. By the manner in which he anchored his vessels, with the shoal so near the rear of his line as to cover that extremity, and the land of Cumberland Head so near his broadside as necessary to bring the enemy within reach of his short guns, he made all his force completely available. The English were not near enough, perhaps, to give to carronades their full effect; but this disadvantage was unavoidable, the assailing party having, of course, a choice in the distance. All that could be obtained, under the circumstances, appears to have been secured, and the result proved the wisdom of the actual arrangement. The personal deportment of Captain Macdonough in this engagement, like that of Captain Perry in the battle of Lake Erie, was the subject of general admiration in his little squadron. His coolness was undisturbed throughout all the trying scenes on board his own ship, and although lying against a vessel of double the force and nearly double the tonnage of the Saratoga, he met and resisted her attack with a constancy that seemed to set defeat at defiance….

Cooper, Battle of Lake Champlain, America, Vol.5, p.222

The consequences of this victory were immediate and important. During the action Sir George Prevost had skirmished sharply in front of the American works, and was busy in making demonstrations for a more serious attack. As soon, however, as the fate of the British squadron was ascertained, he made a precipitate and unmilitary retreat, abandoning much of his heavy artillery, stores, and supplies, and from that moment to the end of the war the northern frontier was cleared of the enemy.

What Inspired "The Star-Spangled Banner", 1814

Title: What Inspired "The Star-Spangled Banner"

Author: Francis Scott Key

Date: 1814

Source: America, Vol.5, pp.223-227

It is curious that Francis Scott Key, in this letter to his friend John Randolph, of Roanoke, describing the circumstances which moved him to write "The Star-Spangled Banner," should make no mention of the hymn itself. The letter appears in a biography of Key by a descendant, Francis Scott Key-Smith, who supplements the letter with his own historical observations.

It is known that the hymn had its birth amid the gunfire of the British attack upon the defenses near Baltimore on September 13, 1814. Its author, a lawyer who at one time was District Attorney of the District of Columbia, was on an errand, under a flag of truce, to the British fleet, but was detained while the bombardment of Fort McHenry was taking place. Nightlong he watched the progress of the fight and in the morning, seeing the Stars and Stripes still waving triumphantly, conceived the patriotic song which he completed that evening.

Key, What Inspired The Star-Spangled Banner, America, Vol.5, p.223

YOU will be surprised to hear that I have spent eleven days in the British fleet. I went with a flag to endeavor to save poor old Dr. Beans a voyage to Halifax, in which we fortunately succeeded. They detained us until after their attack on Baltimore, and you may imagine what a state of anxiety I endured. Sometimes when I remembered it was there the declaration of this abominable war was received with public rejoicings, I could not feel a hope that they would escape; and again when I thought of the many faithful whose piety lessens that lump of wickedness I could hardly feel a fear.

Key, What Inspired The Star-Spangled Banner, America, Vol.5, p.223–p.224

To make my feelings still more acute, the Admiral had intimated his fears that the town must be burned, and I was sure that if taken it would have been given up to plunder. I have reason to believe that such a promise was given to their soldiers. It was filled with women and children. I hope I shall never cease to feel the warmest gratitude when I think of this most merciful deliverance. It seems to have given me a higher idea of the "forbearance, long suffering, and tender mercy" of God, than I had ever before conceived.

Key, What Inspired The Star-Spangled Banner, America, Vol.5, p.224

Never was a man more disappointed in his expectations than I have been as to the character of British officers. With some exceptions they appeared to be illiberal, ignorant and vulgar, and seem filled with a spirit of malignity against everything American. Perhaps, however, I saw them in unfavorable circumstances….

Key, What Inspired The Star-Spangled Banner, America, Vol.5, p.224

Between two and three o'clock in the morning the British, with one or two rocket and several bomb-vessels manned by 1,200 picked men, attempted, under cover of darkness, to slip past the fort and up the Patapsco, hoping to effect a landing and attack the garrison in the rear.

Key, What Inspired The Star-Spangled Banner, America, Vol.5, p.224

Succeeding in evading the guns of the fort, but unmindful of Fort Covington, under whose batteries they next came, their enthusiasm over the supposed success of the venture gave way in a derisive cheer, which, borne by the damp night air to our small party of Americans on the Minden, must have chilled the blood in their veins and pierced their patriotic hearts like a dagger.

Key, What Inspired The Star-Spangled Banner, America, Vol.5, p.225

Fort Covington, the lazaretto, and the American barges in the river now simultaneously poured a galling fire upon the unprotected enemy, raking them fore and aft, in horrible slaughter. Disappointed and disheartened, many wounded and dying, they endeavored to regain their ships, which came closer to the fortifications in an endeavor to protect the retreat. A fierce battle ensued. Fort McHenry opened the full force of all her batteries upon them as they repassed, and the fleet responding with entire broadsides made an explosion so terrific that it seemed as though mother earth had opened and was vomiting shot and shell in a sheet of fire and brimstone.

Key, What Inspired The Star-Spangled Banner, America, Vol.5, p.225

The heavens aglow were a seething sea of flame, and the waters of the harbor, lashed into an angry sea by the vibrations, the Minden rode and tossed as though in a tempest. It is recorded that the houses in the city of Baltimore, two miles distant, were shaken to their foundations. Above the tempestuous roar, intermingled with its hubbub and confusion, were heard the shrieks and groans of the dying and wounded. But alas! they were from the direction of the fort. What did it mean? For over an hour the pandemonium reigned. Suddenly it ceased—all was quiet, not a shot fired or sound heard, a deathlike stillness prevailed, as the darkness of night resumed its sway. The awful stillness and suspense were unbearable….

Key, What Inspired The Star-Spangled Banner, America, Vol.5, p.225–p.226

[I turned my] eyes in the direction of the fort and its flag, but the darkness had given place to a heavy fog of smoke and mist which now enveloped the harbor and hung close down to the surface of the water….

Key, What Inspired The Star-Spangled Banner, America, Vol.5, p.226

Sometime must yet elapse before anything definite might be ascertained. At last it came. A bright streak of gold mingled with crimson shot athwart the eastern sky, followed by another and still another, as the morning sun rose in the fullness of his glory, lifting "the mists of the deep," crowning a "Heaven-blest land" with a new victory and grandeur.

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Key, What Inspired The Star-Spangled Banner, America, Vol.5, p.226

ON his own account Mr. Key-Smith writes that his ancestor, the author of "The Star-Spangled Banner," "was soon able to see the American flag through a vista in the smoke and vapor. As it caught 'The gleam of the morning's first beam,' and, 'in full glory reflected shone in the stream' his proud and patriotic heart knew no bounds; the wounds inflicted 'by the battle's confusion' were healed instantly as if by magic; a new life sprang into every fiber, and his pent-up emotions burst forth with an inspiration in a song of praise, victory, and thanksgiving as he exclaimed:

"'Tis the Star-Spangled Banner, Oh! long may it wave,

O'er the land of the free and the home of the brave."

Key, What Inspired The Star-Spangled Banner, America, Vol.5, p.227

"As the morning's sun arose, vanquishing the darkness and gloom; lifting the fog and smoke and disclosing his country's flag, victorious, bathed in the delicate hues of morn, only an inspiration caught from such a sight can conceive or describe, and so only in the words of his song can be found the description.

Key, What Inspired The Star-Spangled Banner, America, Vol.5, p.227

"The first draft of the words were emotionally scribbled upon the back of a letter which he carried in his pocket and of which he made use to jot down some memoranda of his thoughts and sentiments."…

Key, What Inspired The Star-Spangled Banner, America, Vol.5, p.227

"Copies of the song were struck off in handbill form, and promiscuously distributed on the street. Catching with popular favor like prairie fire it spread in every direction, was read and discussed, until, in less than an hour, the news was all over the city.

Key, What Inspired The Star-Spangled Banner, America, Vol.5, p.227

"Picked up by a crowd of soldiers assembled, some accounts put it, about Captain McCauley's tavern, next to the Holiday Street Theater, others have it around their tents on the outskirts of the city, Ferdinand Durang, a musician, adapted the words to the old tune of 'Anacreon in Heaven,' and, mounting a chair, rendered it in fine style.

Key, What Inspired The Star-Spangled Banner, America, Vol.5, p.227

"On the evening of the same day it was again rendered upon the stage of the Holiday Street Theater by an actress, and the theater is said to have gained thereby a national reputation. In about a fortnight it had reached New Orleans and was publicly played by a military band, and shortly thereafter was heard in nearly, if not all, the principal cities and towns throughout the country."

Jackson's Defeat of the Creeks

Title: Jackson's Defeat of the Creeks

Author: Andrew Jackson

Date: March 28, 1814

Source: America, Vol.5, pp.237-241

General Andrew Jackson made this offical report of the Battle of Horseshoe Bend on the Tallapoosa River, on March 28, 1814, to his superior officer, Major General Thomas Pinckney. His victory over the Creeks, a powerful Indian confederation, was in retaliation for the Fort Mims massacre instigated by the English. They were completely crushed in three decisive battles, which made Jackson a national hero.

He distinguished himself in these military operations by his great display of energy. Besides the foe, Jackson had to contend with discord among his officers, insubordination among his men, and scarcity of provisions. Following this battle, the Creeks sued for peace, which was granted only on their submission to a peremptory demand for the surrender of more than half their ancient territory. Eventually they migrated to their present habitat in Oklahoma.

Jackson's Defeat of the Creeks, America, Vol.5, p.237–p.238

I FEEL particularly happy in being able to communicate to you the fortunate eventuation of my expedition to Talapoosie. I reached the head near Emucfau (called by the whites Horse Shoe) about 10 o'clock on the forenoon of yesterday, where I found the strength of the neighboring towns collected; expecting our approach, they had gathered in from Oakfuskee, Oakehoga, New Yorcau, Hillibees, the Fish Pond, and Eufalee towns, to the number it is said of 1,000. It is difficult to conceive a situation more eligible for defense than the one they had chosen, or one rendered more secure by the skill with which they had erected their breastwork. It was from 5 to 8 feet high, and extended across the point in such a direction, as that a force approaching it would be exposed to a double fire, while they lay in perfect security behind. A cannon planted at one extremity could have raked it to no advantage.

Jackson's Defeat of the Creeks, America, Vol.5, p.238–p.239

Determined to exterminate them, I detached General Coffee with the mounted, and nearly the whole of the Indian, force, early on the morning of yesterday, to cross the river about two miles below their encampment, and to surround the bend in such a manner, as that none of them should escape by attempting to cross the river. With the infantry I proceeded slowly and in order along the point of land which led to the front of their breastwork; having planted my cannon, (one six and one three pounder) on an eminence at the distance of 150 to 200 yards from it, I opened a very brisk fire, playing upon the enemy with the muskets and rifles when ever they showed themselves beyond it; this was kept up, with short interruptions, for about two hours, when a part of the Indian force and Captain Russell's, and Lieutenant Bean's companies of spies, who had accompanied General Coffee, crossed over in canoes to the extremity of the bend, and set fire to a few of the buildings which were there situated; they then advanced with great gallantry towards the breastwork, and commenced a spirited fire upon the enemy behind it. Finding that this force, notwithstanding the bravery thus displayed, was wholly insufficient to dislodge them, and that General Coffee had entirely secured the opposite bank of the river, I now determined to take their works by storm. The men by whom this was to be effected had been waiting with impatience to receive the order, and hailed it with acclamation. The spirit which animated them was a sure augury of the success which was to follow. The history of warfare I think furnishes few instances of a more brilliant attack; the regulars led on by their intrepid and skillful commander, Colonel Williams, and by the gallant Major Montgomery, soon gained possession of the works in the midst of a most tremendous fire from behind them, and the militia of the venerable General Doherty's brigade accompanied them in the charge with a vivacity and firmness which would have done honor to regulars. The enemy was completely routed. Five hundred and fifty-seven were left dead on the peninsula, and a great number were killed by the horsemen in attempting to cross the river. It is believed that not more than twenty have escaped.

Jackson's Defeat of the Creeks, America, Vol.5, p.239

The fighting continued with some severity about five hours, but we continued to destroy many of them, who had concealed themselves under the banks of the river, until we were prevented by the night. This morning we killed sixteen who had been concealed. We took about 250 prisoners, all women and children except two or three. Our loss is 106 wounded, and 25 killed. Major M'Intosh, the Cowetau, who joined my army with a part of his tribe, greatly distinguished himself. When I get a leisure hour I will send you a more detailed account.

Jackson's Defeat of the Creeks, America, Vol.5, p.240

According to my original purpose, I commenced my return march to Fort Williams to-day, and shall, if I find sufficient supplies there, hasten to the Hickory ground. The power of the Creeks is I think forever broken.

Jackson's Defeat of the Creeks, America, Vol.5, p.240

AFTER THE BATTLE OF THE HORSE SHOE GENERAL JACKSON MADE THE FOLLOWING ADDRESS TO THE ARMY, MARCH 28, 1814.

SOLDIERS.—You have entitled yourselves to the gratitude of your country and your General. The expedition, from which you have just returned, has, by your good conduct, been rendered prosperous, beyond any example in the history of our warfare: it has redeemed the character of your state, and of that description of troops, of which the greater part of you are.

Jackson's Defeat of the Creeks, America, Vol.5, p.240–p.241

You have, within a few days, opened your way to the Tallapoosie, and destroyed a confederacy of the enemy, ferocious by nature, and grown insolent from impunity. Relying on their numbers, the security of their situation, and the assurances of their prophets, they derided our approach, and already exulted, in anticipation of the victory they expected to obtain. But they were ignorant of the influence of government on the human powers, nor knew what brave men, and civilized, could effect By their yells, they hoped to frighten us, and with their wooden fortifications to oppose us. Stupid mortals! their yells but designated their situation the more certainly; while their walls became a snare for their own destruction. So will it ever be when presumption and ignorance contend against bravery and prudence.

Jackson's Defeat of the Creeks, America, Vol.5, p.241

The fiends of the Tallapoosie will no longer murder our women and children, or disturb the quiet of our borders. Their midnight flambeaux will no more illumine their council-house, or shine upon the victim of their infernal orgies. In their places, a new generation will arise, who will know their duty better. The weapons of warfare will be exchanged for utensils of husbandry; and the wilderness, which now withers in sterility, and mourns the desolation which overspreads her, will blossom as the rose, and become the nursery of the arts. But before this happy day can arrive, other chastisements remain to be inflicted. It is indeed lamentable, that the path to peace should lead through blood, and over the bodies of the slain: but it is a dispensation of Providence, to inflict partial evils that good may be produced.

Jackson's Defeat of the Creeks, America, Vol.5, p.241

Our enemies are not sufficiently humbled; they do not sue for peace. A collection of them awaits our approach, and remains to be dispersed. Buried in ignorance, and seduced by their prophets, they have the weakness to believe they will still be able to make a stand against us. They must be undeceived, and made to atone for their obstinacy and their crimes, by still further suffering. The hopes which have so long deluded them, must be driven from their last refuge. They must be made to know that their prophets are impostors, and that our strength is mighty, and will prevail. Then, and not till then, may we expect to make with them a peace that shall be lasting.

The Battle of New Orleans

Title: The Battle of New Orleans

Author: Theodore Roosevelt

Date: Jan. 8, 1815

Source: Great Epochs in American History, Vol.5, pp.102-112

Roosevelt, Battle of New Orleans, Great Epochs, Vol.5, p.102

In the morning Sir Edward Packenham put his army in motion, and marched on New Orleans. When he had gone nearly three miles he suddenly, and to his great surprize, stumbled on the American army. Jackson's men had worked like beavers, and his breastworks were already defended by over three thousand fighting men, and by half a dozen guns, and moreover were flanked by the corvette Louisiana, anchored in the stream. No sooner had the heads of the British columns appeared than they were driven back by the fire of the American batteries; the field pieces, mortars, and rocket guns were then brought up, and a sharp artillery duel took place. The motley crew of the Louisiana handled their long ship guns with particular effect; the British rockets proved of but little service; and after a stiff fight, in which they had two field-pieces and a light mortar dismounted, the British artillerymen fell back on the infantry. Then Packenham drew off his whole army out of cannon shot, and pitched his camp facing the intrenched lines of the Americans. For the next three days the British battalions lay quietly in front of their foe, like wolves who have brought to bay a gray boar, and crouch just out of reach of his tusks, waiting a chance to close in….

Roosevelt, Battle of New Orleans, Great Epochs, Vol.5, p.103

New Year's day dawned very misty. As soon as the haze cleared off the British artillerymen opened with a perfect hail of balls, accompanied by a cloud of rockets and mortar shells. The Americans were taken by surprize, but promptly returned the fire, with equal fury and greater skill. Their guns were admirably handled; some by the cool New England seamen lately forming the crew of the Carolina, others by the fierce creole privateersmen of Lafitte, and still others by the trained artillerymen of the regular army. They were all old hands, who in their time had done their fair share of fighting, and were not to be flurried by any attack, however unexpected. The British cannoneers plied their guns like fiends, and fast and thick fell their shot; more slowly but with surer aim, their opponents answered them. The cotton bales used in the American embrasures caught fire, and blew up two powder caissons; while the sugar hogsheads of which the British batteries were partly composed were speedily shattered and splintered in all directions. Tho the British champions fought with unflagging courage and untiring energy, and tho they had long been versed in war, yet they seemed to lack the judgment to see and correct their faults, and most of their shot went too high.

Roosevelt, Battle of New Orleans, Great Epochs, Vol.5, p.104

On the other hand, the old sea-dogs and trained regulars who held the field against them, not only fought their guns well and skilfully from the beginning, but all through the action kept coolly correcting their faults and making more sure their aim. Still, the fight was stiff and well contested. Two of the American guns were disabled and thirty-four of their men were killed or wounded. But one by one the British cannon were silenced or dismounted, and by noon their gunners had all been driven away, with the loss of seventy-eight of their number….

Roosevelt, Battle of New Orleans, Great Epochs, Vol.5, p.104

For a week after this failure the army of the invaders lay motionless facing the Americans. In the morning and evening the defiant, rolling challenge of the English drums came throbbing up through the gloomy cypress swamps to where the grim riflemen of Tennessee were lying behind their log breastworks, and both day and night the stillness was at short intervals broken by the sullen boom of the great guns which, under Jackson's orders, kept up a never-ending fire on the leaguering camp of his foes. Nor could the wearied British even sleep undisturbed; all through the hours of darkness the outposts were engaged in a most harassing bush warfare by the backwoodsmen, who shot the sentries, drove in the pickets, and allowed none of those who were on guard a moment's safety or freedom from alarm.

Roosevelt, Battle of New Orleans, Great Epochs, Vol.5, p.104

But Packenham was all the while steadily preparing for his last and greatest stroke. He had determined to make an assault in force sa soon as the expected reenforcements came up; nor, in the light of his past experience in conflict with foes of far greater military repute than thosenow before him, was this a rash resolve. He had seen the greatest of Napoleon's marshals, each in turn, defeated once and again, and driven in headlong flight over the Pyrenees by the Duke of Wellington; now he had under him the flower of the troops who had won those victories; was it to be supposed for a moment that such soldiers who, in a dozen battles, had conquered the armies and captured the forts of the mighty French emperor, would shrink at last from a mud wall guarded by rough backwoodsmen?

Roosevelt, Battle of New Orleans, Great Epochs, Vol.5, p.105

That there would be loss of life in such an assault was certain; but was loss of life to daunt men who had seen the horrible slaughter through which the stormers moved on to victory at Ciudad Rodrigo, Badajos, and San Sebastian? At the battle of Toulouse an English army, of which Packenham's troops then formed part, had driven Soult from a stronger position than was now to be assailed, tho he held it with a veteran infantry. Of a surety, the dashing general who had delivered the decisive blow on the stricken field of Salamanca, who had taken part in the rout of the ablest generals and steadiest soldiers of Continental Europe, was not the man to flinch from a motley array of volunteers, militia, and raw regulars, led by a grizzled old bush-fighter, whose name had never been heard of outside of his own swamps, and there only as the savage destroyer of some scarcely more savage Indian tribes….

Roosevelt, Battle of New Orleans, Great Epochs, Vol.5, p.105

Packenham had under him nearly 10,000 fighting men; 1,500 of these, under Colonel Thornton were to cross the river and make the attack on the west bank. Packenham himself was to superintend the main assault, on the east bank, which was to be made by the British right under General Gibbs, while the left moved forward under General Keane, and General Lambert commanded the reserve. Jackson's position was held by a total of 5,500 men. Having kept a constant watch on the British, Jackson had rightly concluded that they would make the main attack on the east bank, and had, accordingly, kept the bulk of his force on that side. His works consisted simply of a mud breastwork, with a ditch in front of it, which stretched in a straight line from the river on his right across the plain, and some distance into the morass that sheltered his left. There was a small, unfinished redoubt in front of the breastworks on the river bank. Thirteen pieces of artillery were mounted on the works. On the right was posted the Seventh regular infantry, 430 strong; then came 740 Louisiana militia (both French creoles and men of color, and comprising 30 New Orleans riflemen, who were Americans), and 240 regulars of the Forty-fourth regiment; while the rest of the line was formed by nearly 500 Kentuckians and over 1,600 Tennesseeans, under Carroll and Coffee, with 250 creole militia in the morass on the extreme left, to guard the head of a bayou. In the rear were 230 dragoons, chiefly from Mississippi, and some other troops in reserve; making in all 4,700 men on the east bank. The works on the west bank were farther down stream, and were very much weaker. . .

Roosevelt, Battle of New Orleans, Great Epochs, Vol.5, p.106

All through the night of the 7th a strange, murmurous clangor arose from the British camp, and was borne on the moist air to the lines of their slumbering foes. The blows of pickax and spadeas the ground was thrown up into batteries by gangs of workmen, the rumble of the artillery as it was placed in position, the measured tread of the battalions as they shifted their places or marched off under Thornton—all these and the thousand other sounds of warlike preparation were softened and blended by the distance into one continuous humming murmur, which struck on the ears of the American sentries with ominous foreboding for the morrow.

Roosevelt, Battle of New Orleans, Great Epochs, Vol.5, p.107

By midnight Jackson had risen and was getting everything in readiness to hurl back the blow that he rightly judged was soon to fall on his front. Before the dawn broke his soldiery was on the alert. The bronzed and brawny seamen were grouped in clusters around the great guns. The creole soldiers came of a race whose habit it has ever been to take all phases of life joyously; but that morning their gayety was tempered by a dark undercurrent of fierce anxiety. They had more at stake than any other men on the field. They were fighting for their homes; they were fighting for their wives and their daughters. They well knew the fell destruction and nameless woe that awaited their city should the English take it at the sword's point. They feared not for themselves; but in the hearts of the bravest and most careless there lurked a dull terror of what that day might bring upon those they loved. The Tennesseeans were troubled by no such misgivings. In saturnine, confident silence they lolled behind their mud walls, or, leaning on their long rifles, peered out into the gray fog with savage, recklesseyes. So, hour after hour, the two armies stood facing each other in the darkness, waiting for the light of day.

Roosevelt, Battle of New Orleans, Great Epochs, Vol.5, p.108

At last the sun rose, and as its beams struggled through the morning mist they glinted on the sharp steel bayonets of the English, where their scarlet ranks were drawn up in battle array, but four hundred yards from the American breastworks. There stood the matchless infantry of the island king, in the pride of their strength and the splendor of their martial glory; and as the haze cleared away they moved forward, in stern silence, broken only by the angry, snarling notes of the brazen bugles.

Roosevelt, Battle of New Orleans, Great Epochs, Vol.5, p.108

At once the American artillery leaped into furious life; and, ready and quick, the more numerous cannon of the invaders responded from their hot, feverish lips. Unshaken amid the tumult of that iron storm the heavy red column moved steadily on toward the left of the American line, where the Tennesseeans were standing in motionless, grim expectancy. Three-fourths of the open space was crossed, and the eager soldiers broke into a run. Then a fire of hell smote the British column. From the breastwork in front of them the white smoke curled thick into the air, as rank after rank the wild marksmen of the backwoods rose and fired, aiming low and sure. As stubble is withered by flame, so withered the British column under that deadly fire; and, aghast at the slaughter, the reeling files staggered and gave back. Packenham, fit captain for his valorous host, rode to the front, and the troops, rallying round him, sprang forward with ringing cheers.

Roosevelt, Battle of New Orleans, Great Epochs, Vol.5, p.108

But once again the pealing rifle-blast beat intheir faces; and the life of their dauntless leader went out before its scorching and fiery breath. With him fell the other general who was with the column, and all of the men who were leading it on; and, as a last resource, Keane brought up his stalwart Highlanders; but in vain the stubborn mountaineers rushed on, only to die as their comrades had died before them, with unconquerable courage, facing the foe, to the last. Keane himself was struck down; and the shattered wrecks of the British column, quailing before certain destruction, turned and sought refuge beyond reach of the leaden death that had overwhelmed their comrades.

Roosevelt, Battle of New Orleans, Great Epochs, Vol.5, p.109

Nor did it fare better with the weaker force that was to assail the right of the American line. This was led by the dashing Colonel Rennie, who, when the confusion caused by the main attack was at its height, rushed forward with impetuous bravery along the river bank. With such headlong fury did he make the assault, that the rush of his troops took the outlying redoubt, whose defenders, regulars and artillerymen, fought to the last with their bayonets and clubbed muskets, and were butchered to a man.

Roosevelt, Battle of New Orleans, Great Epochs, Vol.5, p.109

Without delay Rennie flung his men at the breastworks behind, and, gallantly leading them, sword in hand, he, and all around him, fell, riddled through and through by the balls of the riflemen. Brave tho they were, the British soldiers could not stand against the singing, leaden hail, for if they stood it was but to die. So in rout and wild dismay they fled back along the river bank, to the main army. For some time afterward the British artillery kept up its fire, but was gradu-ally silenced; the repulse was entire and complete along the whole line; nor did the cheering news of success brought from the west bank give any hope to the British commanders, stunned by their crushing overthrow.

Roosevelt, Battle of New Orleans, Great Epochs, Vol.5, p.110

Meanwhile Colonel Thornton's attack on the opposite side had been successful, but had been delayed beyond the originally intended hour. The sides of the canal by which the boats were to be brought through to the Mississippi caved in, and choked the passage, so that only enough got through to take over a half of Thornton's force. With these, seven hundred in number, he crossed, but as he did not allow for the current, it carried him down about two miles below the proper landing-place. Meanwhile General Morgan, having under him eight hundred militia whom it was of the utmost importance to have kept together, promptly divided them and sent three hundred of the rawest and most poorly armed down to meet the enemy in the open. The inevitable result was their immediate rout and dispersion; about one hundred got back to Morgan's lines. He then had six hundred men, all militia, to oppose to seven hundred regulars. So he stationed the four hundred best disciplined men to defend the two hundred yards of strong breastworks, mounting three guns, which covered his left; while the two hundred worst disciplined were placed to guard six hundred yards of open ground on his right, with their flank resting in air, and entirely unprotected. This truly phenomenal arrangement ensured beforehand the certain defeat of his troops, no matter how well they fought; but, as it turned out, they hardly fought at all. Thornton, pushingup the river, first attacked the breastwork in front, but was checked by a hot fire; deploying his men he then sent a strong force to march round and take Morgan on his exposed right flank. There, the already demoralized Kentucky militia, extended in thin order across an open space, outnumbered, and taken in flank by regular troops, were stampeded at once, and after firing a single volley they took to their heels. This exposed the flank of the better disciplined creoles, who were also put to flight; but they kept some order and were soon rallied. In bitter rage Patterson spiked the guns of his water-battery and marched off with his sailors, unmolested. The American loss had been slight, and that of their opponents not heavy, tho among their dangerously wounded was Colonel Thornton.

Roosevelt, Battle of New Orleans, Great Epochs, Vol.5, p.111

This success, tho a brilliant one, and a disgrace to the American arms, had no effect on the battle. Jackson at once sent over reenforcements under the famous French general, Humbert, and preparations were forthwith made to retake the lost position. But it was already abandoned, and the force that had captured it had been recalled by Lambert, when he found that the place could not be held without additional troops. The total British loss on both sides of the river amounted to over two thousand men, the vast majority of whom had fallen in the attack on the Tennesseeans, and most of the remainder in the attack made by Colonel Rennie. The Americans had lost but seventy men, of whom but thirteen fell in the main attack. On the east bank, neither the creole militia nor the Forty-fourth regiment had taken any part in the combat.

Roosevelt, Battle of New Orleans, Great Epochs, Vol.5, p.112

The English had thrown for high stakes and had lost everything, and they knew it. There was nothing to hope for left. Nearly a fourth of their fighting men had fallen; and among the officers the proportion was far larger. Of their four generals, Packenham was dead, Gibbs dying, Keane disabled, and only Lambert left. Their leader, the ablest officers, and all the flower of their bravest men were lying, stark and dead, on the bloody plain before them; and their bodies were doomed to crumble into moldering dust on the green fields where they had fought and had fallen. It was useless to make another trial.

Secession Threatened in New England

Title: Secession Threatened in New England

Author: James Schouler

Date: 1815

Source: America, Vol.5, pp.228-236

Attended by delegates from Massachusetts, headed by Harrison Gray Otis, its originator; Connecticut and other New England States, the Memorable Hartford Convention was in session from December 15, 1814, to January 5, 1815. Its deliberations were secret, and it has been charged with being treasonable in designing the dissolution of the Union. As a fact, the object of the Convention was to devise means not only of defense against foreign powers, but for safeguarding the rights of the separate States against alleged encroachments of the Federal government. No treasonable intention could be proved.

This account is from Schouler's "History of the United States" (Dodd, Mead & Company), the best and fullest narrative of the period in American history between the Revolution and the Civil War.

Following it are the resolutions adopted by the Hartford Convention, which were submitted to the Legislatures of the States represented.

Schouler, Secession Threatened in New England, America, Vol.5, p.228–p.229

WHEN the invader appears honest citizens must choose sides. Forced at length to defend their own homes and firesides, Massachusetts and Connecticut now felt the recoil of unpatriotic behavior. Instead of trusting their governors with the local defense as the administration had done with States which upheld the war, the President now insisted upon retaining the exclusive control of military movements. Because Massachusetts and Connecticut had refused to subject their militia to the orders of the War Department, Monroe declined to pay their expenses. The cry was raised by peace men in consequence that the National government had abandoned New England to the common enemy. Upon this false assumption—for false, candor must pronounce it, inasmuch as government was maturing all the while a consistent plan of local defense—the Massachusetts leaders made hasty proclamation that no choice was left between submitting to the enemy, which could not be thought of, and appropriating to the defense of the States the revenues derived from her people, which had hitherto been spent elsewhere. The Massachusetts Legislature appropriated $ 1,000,000 to support a State army of 10,000 men. And Otis, who inspired these measures, brought Massachusetts to the point of instituting a delegate convention of Eastern States—this convention to meet at Hartford. A Hartford convention was no new project to Otis's own mind.

Schouler, Secession Threatened in New England, America, Vol.5, p.229–p.230

The day for assembling was fixed at December 15th. Twelve delegates were appointed by the Massachusetts Legislature, men of worth and respectability, chief of whom were Cabot and Otis. In Connecticut, whose Legislature was not slow to denounce Monroe's conscription plan as barbarous and unconstitutional, a congenial delegation of seven was made up—Goodrich and Hillhouse, hoary men of national renown, at the head. Rhode Island's Legislature added four more to the list. So deep-rooted, however, was the national distrust of this movement that Vermont and New Hampshire shrank from giving the Convention a public sanction. New Hampshire had a Republican council; while in Vermont the Plattsburg victory stirred the Union spirit; Chittenden himself having changed in official tone after the war became a defensive one. Violent county conventions representing fractions of towns chose, however, three delegates, two in New Hampshire and one in Vermont, whose credentials being accepted by the convention, the whole number of delegates assembled at Hartford was twenty-six.

Schouler, Secession Threatened in New England, America, Vol.5, p.230

This Hartford Convention remains famous in American history only as a powerful menstruum in national politics. What its most earnest projectors had hoped for was left but half done; but that half work condemned to political infamy twenty-six gentlemen highly respectable. Lawyers, they were, of State eminence, for the most part, and all of high social character, but inclined, like men of ability more used to courts than conventions, to treat constituencies like clients, and spend great pains over phraseology. Perhaps, indeed, these had been selected purposely to play the lion's part, that moderate fellow-citizens, Unionists at heart, whose conversion was essential, might not quake at the roar of the Convention….

Schouler, Secession Threatened in New England, America, Vol.5, p.230–p.231

What bold measures were possible? one may ask. Pickering's Confederacy of 1804 would have embraced New York, perhaps Pennsylvania. But these Eastern Federalists, with that clannishness at which Hamilton himself had marveled, were now circumscribed within the limits of New England, and of that section, moreover, but three States out of five had delegations at Hartford worthy of the name. The first effort to assemble a New England convention was, we have seen, in 1808-9. The second, if John Quincy Adams may be believed, was in 1812, immediately after the declaration of war against Great Britain, and that project Dexter defeated by a speech in Faneuil Hall. The third, and present, though partially successful, by bringing delegates into conference, was, like the Stamp Act Congress, or the Annapolis Conference of 1786, an instrument necessarily for later and riper designs. The American Confederacy, the American Union, are each the product of begetting conventions; nor without prudence were States now forbidden to enter into agreements or compacts with one another without the consent of Congress. The Hartford Convention may well have justified dire forebodings, for it did not dissolve finally, as a mass-meeting might have done, upon a full report, but contingently adjourned to Boston.

Schouler, Secession Threatened in New England, America, Vol.5, p.231–p.232

Organized on the appointed day in Hartford, then a town of four thousand inhabitants, by the choice of George Cabot as president, and Theodore Dwight as secretary, the present convention remained in close session for three continuous weeks. Of irregular political assemblies the worst may be suspected when proceedings are conducted in secrecy; and never, certainly, were doors shut more closely upon a delegate, and professedly a popular convention, than upon this one; not even doorkeeper or messenger gaining access to the discussion. Inviolable secrecy was enjoined upon every member, including the secretary, at the first meeting, and once more before they dispersed, notwithstanding the acceptance of their final report. The injunction was never removed. Not before a single State legislature whose sanction of this report was desired, not to any body of those constituents whose votes were indispensable to the ultimate ends, if these ends were legally pursued, was that report elucidated. Four years afterward, when the Hartford Convention and its projectors bent under the full blast of popular displeasure, Cabot delivered to his native State the sealed journal of its proceedings, which had remained in his exclusive custody; but that when opened was found to be a meager sketch of formal proceedings, and no more; making no record of yeas and nays, stating none of the amendments offered to the various reports, attaching the name of no author to a single proposition, in fine, carefully suppressing all means of ascertaining the expression or belief of individual delegates.

Schouler, Secession Threatened in New England, America, Vol.5, p.232–p.233

Casual letters of contemporaries are preserved sufficient to show that representative Federalists labored with these delegates to procure a separation of the States, but how many more of the same strain President Cabot may have torn up one can only conjecture. That twenty-six public men should have consented to leave no ampler means of vindicating to their own age, and to posterity, themselves and their motives, may evince a noble disinterestedness, sublime confidence in the rectitude of their own intentions, a comforting reliance upon "the Searcher of Hearts," but certainly an astonishing ignorance of human nature in this our inquisitive republic. Assembling amid rumors of treason and the execration of all the country west of the Hudson, its members watched by an army officer who had been conveniently stationed in the vicinity, the Hartford Convention, hardening into stone, preserves for all ages a sphinxlike mystery.

Schouler, Secession Threatened in New England, America, Vol.5, p.233–p.234

The labors of this convention, whatever they were, ended with a report and resolutions, signed by the delegates present, and adopted on the day before final adjournment. Report and resolutions disappointed, doubtless, both citizens who had wished a new declaration of independence, and citizens who had feared it. Neither Virginia nor Kentucky could, with propriety, condemn the heresies of State sovereignty which supplied the false logic of this report, and an imperfect experience of this Federal Union may excuse in Otis and his associates theoretical errors which Jefferson and Madison while in the opposition had first inculcated. Constitutional amendments were here proposed which, not utterly objectionable under other circumstances, must have been deemed at this time an insult to those officially responsible for the national safety, and only admissible as a humiliation of the majority. It requires little imagination to read, in report and resolutions, a menace to the Union in its hour of tribulation, a demand for the purse and sword, to which only a craven Congress could have yielded, and a threat of local armies which, with the avowed purpose of mutual aid, might in some not remote contingency be turned against foes American not less than British.

Schouler, Secession Threatened in New England, America, Vol.5, p.234

HARTFORD CONVENTION RESOLUTIONS

RESOLVED, that it be, and hereby is, recommended to the Legislatures of the several States represented in this Convention to adopt all such measures as may be necessary effectually to protect the citizens of said States from the operation and effects of all acts which have been or may be passed by the Congress of the United States, which shall contain provisions subjecting the militia or other citizens to forcible drafts, conscriptions, or impressments not authorized by the Constitution of the United States.

Schouler, Secession Threatened in New England, America, Vol.5, p.234–p.235

Resolved, That it be, and hereby is, recommended to the said Legislatures to authorize an immediate and earnest application to be made to the government of the United States, requesting their consent to some arrangement whereby the said States may, separately or in concert, be empowered to assume upon themselves the defense of their territory against the enemy; and a reasonable portion of the taxes, collected within said States, may be paid into the respective treasuries thereof, and appropriated to the payment of the balance due said States and to the future defense of the same. The amount so paid into the said treasuries to be credited, and the disbursements made as aforesaid to be charged to the United States.

Schouler, Secession Threatened in New England, America, Vol.5, p.235

Resolved, That it be, and hereby is, recommended to the Legislatures of the aforesaid States to pass laws (where it has not already been done) authorizing the governors or commanders-in-chief of their militia to make detachments from the same or to form voluntary corps, as shall be most convenient and conformable to their constitutions, and to cause the same to be well armed, equipped, and disciplined, and held in readiness for service; and upon the request of the governor of either of the other States to employ the whole of such detachment or corps, as well as the regular forces of the State, or such part thereof as may be required and can be spared consistently with the safety of the State, in assisting the State, making such request to repel any invasion thereof which shall be made or attempted by the public enemy.

Schouler, Secession Threatened in New England, America, Vol.5, p.235

Resolved, That the following amendments of the Constitution of the United States be recommended to the States represented as aforesaid, to be proposed by them for adoption by the State Legislatures, and in such cases as may be deemed expedient by a convention chosen by the people of each State.

Schouler, Secession Threatened in New England, America, Vol.5, p.235

And it is further recommended that the said States shall persevere in their efforts to obtain such amendments until the same shall be effected.

Schouler, Secession Threatened in New England, America, Vol.5, p.235–p.236

First. Representatives and direct taxes shall be apportioned among the several States which may be included within this Union, according to their respective numbers of free persons, including those bound to serve for a term of years, and excluding Indians not taxed and all other persons.

Schouler, Secession Threatened in New England, America, Vol.5, p.236

Second. No new State shall be admitted into the Union by Congress, in virtue of the power granted by the Constitution, without the concurrence of two-thirds of both Houses.

Schouler, Secession Threatened in New England, America, Vol.5, p.236

Third. Congress shall not have power to lay any embargo on the ships or vessels of the citizens of the United States, in the ports or harbors thereof, for more than sixty days.

Schouler, Secession Threatened in New England, America, Vol.5, p.236

Fourth. Congress shall not have power, without the concurrence of two-thirds of both Houses, to interdict the commercial intercourse between the United States and any foreign nation, or the dependencies thereof.

Schouler, Secession Threatened in New England, America, Vol.5, p.236

Fifth. Congress shall not make or declare war, or authorize acts of hostility against any foreign nation, without the concurrence of two-thirds of both Houses, except such acts of hostility be in defense of the territories of the United States when actually invaded.

Schouler, Secession Threatened in New England, America, Vol.5, p.236

Sixth. No person who shall hereafter be naturalized shall be eligible as a member of the Senate or House of Representatives of the United States, nor capable of holding any civil office under the authority of the United States.

Schouler, Secession Threatened in New England, America, Vol.5, p.236

Seventh. The same person shall not be elected President of the United States a second time, nor shall the President be elected from the same State two terms in succession.

The Battle of New Orleans

Title: The Battle of New Orleans

Author: Major Arsene Lacarriere Latour

Date: 1815

Source: America, Vol.5, pp.242-251

Major Latour is regarded as the most, if not only, trustworthy contemporary historian of the Louisiana campaign conducted by General Jackson. His position as Jackson's chief engineer made him well qualified for his task, and he has treated the subject without bias. The battle took place January 8, 1815, fifteen days after the Treaty of Ghent was signed. Of the 7,000 veterans of the Napoleonic wars who fought at New Orleans under General Pakenham, one of Wellington's commanders, 2,500 were shot down, including Pakenham himself and Generals Gibbs and Keane. The American loss was 8 killed and 13 wounded. The attention the Battle of New Orleans attracted in Europe added enormously to American prestige.

Gleig, who gives the British side, was an Oxford man who had served as volunteer under Wellington before embarking for America. His account of the engagement in which he took part is considered the most trustworthy written from the English side.

Latour, Battle of New Orleans, America, Vol.5, p.242–p.243

A LITTLE before daybreak, our outpost came in without noise, having perceived the enemy moving forward in great force. At last dawn discovered to us the enemy occuring two-thirds of the pace between the wood and the Mississippi. Immediately a Congreve rocket went off from the skirt of the wood, in the direction of the river. This was the signal for the attack. At the same instant, the twelve-pounder of battery No, 6, whose gunners had perceived the enemy's movement, discharged a shot. On this all his troops gave three cheers, formed in close column of about sixty men in front, in very good order, and advanced nearly in the direction of battery No. 7, the men shouldering their muskets, and all carrying fascines, and some with ladders. A cloud of rockets preceded them, and continued to fall in showers during the whole attack. Batteries Nos. 6, 7 and 8, now opened an incessant fire on the column, which continued to advance in pretty good order, until, in a few minutes, the musketry of the troops of Tennessee and Kentucky, joining their fire with that of the artillery, began to make an impression on it, which soon threw it into confusion.

Latour, Battle of New Orleans, America, Vol.5, p.243

It was at that moment that was heard that constant rolling fire, whose tremendous noise resembled rattling peals of thunder. For some time the British officers succeeded in animating the courage of their troops, and making them advance, obliquing to the left, to avoid the fire of battery No. 7, from which every discharge opened the column, and mowed down whole files, which were almost instantaneously replaced by new troops coming up close after the first: but these also shared the same fate, until at last, after twenty-five minutes continual firing, through which a few platoons advanced to the edge of the ditch, the column entirely broke, and part of the troops dispersed, and ran to take shelter among the bushes on the right. The rest retired to the ditch where they had been when first perceived, four hundred yards from our lines.

Latour, Battle of New Orleans, America, Vol.5, p.243–p.244

There the officers with some difficulty rallied their troops, and again drew them up for a second attack, the soldiers having laid down their knapsacks at the edge of the ditch, that they might be less encumbered. And now, for the second time, the column, recruited with the troops that formed the rear, advanced. Again it was received with the same rolling fire of musketry and artillery, till, having advanced without much order very near our lines, it at last broke again, and retired in the utmost confusion….

Latour, Battle of New Orleans, America, Vol.5, p.244

The attack on our lines had hardly begun, when the British commander-in-chief, the honorable Sir Edward Pakenham, fell a victim to his own intrepidity, while endeavoring to animate his troops with ardor for the assault. Soon after his fall, two other generals, Keane and Gibbs, were carried off the field, dangerously wounded. A great number of officers of rank had fallen: the ground over which the column had marched, was strewed with the dead and the wounded. Such slaughter on their side, with no loss on ours, spread consternation through their ranks, as they were now convinced of the impossibility of carrying our lines, and saw that even to advance was certain death. In a word, notwithstanding the repeated efforts of some officers to make the troops form a third time, they would not advance, and all that could be obtained from them, was to draw them up in the ditch, where they passed the rest of the day….

Latour, Battle of New Orleans, America, Vol.5, p.244–p.245

I deem it my indispensable duty to do justice to the intrepid bravery displayed in that attack by the British troops, especially by the officers…. The British soldiers showed, on this occasion, that it is not without reason they are said to be deficient in agility. The enormous load they had to carry contributed indeed not a little to the difficulty of their movement. Besides their knapsacks, usually weighing nearly thirty pounds, and their musket, too heavy by at least one third, almost all of them had to carry a fascine from nine to ten inches in diameter, and four feet long, made of sugar-canes perfectly ripe, and consequently very heavy, or a ladder from ten to twelve feet long.

Latour, Battle of New Orleans, America, Vol.5, p.245

The duty of impartiality, incumbent on him who relates military events, obliges me to observe that the attack made on Jackson's lines, by the British, on the 8th of January, must have been determined on by their generals without any consideration of the ground, the weather or the difficulties to be surmounted, before they could storm lines defended by militia indeed, but by militia whose valor they had already witnessed, with soldiers bending under the weight of their load, when a man, unencumbered and unopposed, would that day have found it difficult to mount our breastwork at leisure and with circumspection, so extremely slippery was the soil….

Latour, Battle of New Orleans, America, Vol.5, p.246

THE BRITISH SIDE AT NEW ORLEANS

IT was evident that the longer an attack was delayed, the less likely was it to succeed; that something must be done immediately every one perceived, but how to proceed was the difficulty. If we attempted to storm the American lines, we should expose ourselves to almost certain destruction from their artillery; to turn them, seemed to be impossible; and to draw their troops by any maneuvering from behind their entrenchments, was a thing altogether out of the question….

Latour, Battle of New Orleans, America, Vol.5, p.246

It was determined to divide the army, to send part across the river, who should seize the enemy's guns, and turn them on themselves; while the remainder should at the same time make a general assault along the whole entrenchment….

Latour, Battle of New Orleans, America, Vol.5, p.246

According to the preconcerted plan, Colonel Thornton's detachment was to cross the river immediately after dark. They were to push forward, so as to carry all the batteries, and point the guns before daylight; when, on the throwing up of a rocket, they were to commence firing upon the enemy's line, which at the same moment was to be attacked by the main of our army….

Latour, Battle of New Orleans, America, Vol.5, p.246–p.247

. . . But, unfortunately, the loss of time nothing could repair. Instead of reaching the opposite bank, at latest by midnight, dawn was beginning to appear before the boats quitted the canal . . . day had already broken, and the signal rocket was seen in the air, while they were yet four miles from the batteries, which ought hours ago to have been taken.

Latour, Battle of New Orleans, America, Vol.5, p.247

In the meantime, the main body armed and moved forward some way in front of the pickets. There they stood waiting for daylight, and listening with the greatest anxiety for the firing which ought now to be heard on the opposite bank. But this attention was exerted in vain, and day dawned upon them long before they desired its appearance. Nor was Sir Edward Pakenham disappointed in this part of his plan alone. Instead of perceiving everything in readiness for the assault, he saw his troops in battle array, indeed, but not a ladder or fascine upon the field. The 44th, which was appointed to carry them, had either misunderstood or neglected their orders; and now headed the column of attack, without any means being provided for crossing the enemy's ditch, or scaling his rampart.

Latour, Battle of New Orleans, America, Vol.5, p.247

The indignation of poor Pakenham on this occasion may be imagined, but cannot be described. Galloping towards Colonel Mullens, who led the 44th, he commanded him instantly to return with his regiment for the ladders, but the opportunity of planting them was lost, and though they were brought up, it was only to be scattered over the field by the frightened bearers. For our troops were by this time visible to the enemy. A dreadful fire was accordingly opened upon them, and they were mowed down by hundreds, while they stood waiting for orders.

Latour, Battle of New Orleans, America, Vol.5, p.248–p.249

Seeing that all his well-laid plans were frustrated, Pakenham gave the word to advance, and the other regiments, leaving the 44th with the ladders and fascines behind them, rushed on to the assault. On the left, a detachment of the 95th, 21st, and 4th, stormed a three gun battery and took it. Here they remained for some time in the expectation of support; but none arriving, and a strong column of the enemy forming for its recovery, they determined to anticipate the attack, and pushed on. The battery which they had taken was in advance of the body of the works, being cut off from it by a ditch, across which only a single plank was thrown. Along this plank did these brave men attempt to pass; but being opposed by overpowering numbers, they were repulsed; and the Americans, in turn, forcing their way into the battery, at length succeeded in recapturing it with immense slaughter. On the right, again, the 21st and 4th being almost cut to pieces and thrown into some confusion by the enemy's fire, the 93rd pushed on and took the lead. Hastening forward, our troops soon reached the ditch; but to scale the parapet without ladders was impossible. Some few, indeed, by mounting one upon another's shoulders, succeeded in entering the works, but these were instantly overpowered, most of them killed, and the rest taken; while as many as stood without were exposed to a sweeping fire, which cut them down by whole companies. It was in vain that the most obstinate courage was displayed. They fell by the hands of men whom they absolutely did not see; for the Americans, without so much as lifting their faces above the rampart, swung their fire-locks by one arm over the wall, and discharged them directly upon their heads. The whole of the guns, likewise, from the opposite bank, kept up a well directed and deadly cannonade upon their flank; and thus were they destroyed without an opportunity being given of displaying their valor, or obtaining so much as revenge.

Latour, Battle of New Orleans, America, Vol.5, p.249

Poor Pakenham saw how things were going, and did all that a general could do to rally his broken troops. Riding towards the 44th which had returned to the ground, but in great disorder, he called out for Colonel Mullens to advance; but that officer had disappeared, and was not to be found. He, therefore, prepared to lead them on himself, and had put himself at their head for that purpose, when he received a slight wound in the knee from a musket ball, which killed his horse. Mounting another, he again headed the 44th, when a second ball took effect more fatally, and he dropped lifeless into the arms of his aide-de-camp.

Latour, Battle of New Orleans, America, Vol.5, p.249–p.250

Nor were Generals Gibbs and Keane inactive. Riding through the ranks, they strove by all means to encourage the assailants and recall the fugitives; till at length both were wounded, and borne off the field. All was now confusion and dismay. Without leaders, ignorant of what was to be done, the troops first halted and then began to retire; till finally the retreat was changed into a flight, and they quitted the ground in the utmost disorder. But the retreat was covered in gallant style by the reserve. Making a forward motion, the 7th and 43d presented the appearance of a renewed attack; by which the enemy were so much awed, that they did not venture beyond their lines in pursuit of the fugitives.

Latour, Battle of New Orleans, America, Vol.5, p.250

While affairs were thus disastrously conducted in this quarter, the party under Colonel Thornton had gained the landing place. On stepping ashore, the first thing they beheld was a rocket thrown up as a signal that the battle was begun. This unwelcome sight added wings to their speed. Forming in one little column, and pushing forward a single company as an advanced guard, they hastened on, and in half an hour reached a canal along the opposite brink of which a detachment of Americans was drawn up. To dislodge them was the work of a moment…. This, however, was only an outpost. The main body was some way in the rear, and amounted to no fewer than 1500 men.

Latour, Battle of New Orleans, America, Vol.5, p.250

It was not long, however, before they likewise presented themselves. Like their countrymen on the other side, they were strongly entrenched, a thick parapet with a ditch covering their front; while a battery upon their left swept the whole position, and two field pieces commanded the road. Of artillery, the assailants possessed not a single piece, nor any means, beyond what nature gave, of scaling the rampart. Yet nothing daunted by the obstacles before them, or by the immense odds to which they were opposed, dispositions for an immediate attack were made. . .

Latour, Battle of New Orleans, America, Vol.5, p.251

The sailors raising a shout, rushed forward, but were met by so heavy a discharge of grape and cannister, that for an instant they paused. Recovering themselves, however, they again pushed on; and the 85th dashing forward to their aid, they received a heavy fire of musketry, and endeavored to charge. A smart firing was now for a few minutes kept up on both sides, but our people had no time to waste in distant fighting, and accordingly hurried on to storm the works; upon which, a panic seized the Americans, they lost their order, and fled, leaving us in possession of their tents, and of eighteen pieces of cannon….

Latour, Battle of New Orleans, America, Vol.5, p.251

When in the act of storming these lines, the word was passed through our ranks, that all had gone well on the opposite bank. This naturally added to the vigor of the assault; but we had not followed our flying enemy above two miles, when we were commanded to halt. The real state of the case had now reached us, and the same messenger who brought the melancholy news, brought likewise an order to return….

Latour, Battle of New Orleans, America, Vol.5, p.251

. . . General Lambert, on whom the chief command had devolved, very prudently determined not to risk the safety of his army by another attempt upon works evidently so much beyond their strength. He considered, and considered justly that his chances of success were in every respect lessened by the late repulse…. A retreat, therefore, while yet the measure appeared practicable, was resolved upon, and towards that end were all our future operations directed.

The Treaty of Ghent, Concluding the War of 1812

Title: The Treaty of Ghent, Concluding the War of 1812

Author: The U.S. and British Governments

Date: 1815

Source: America, Vol.5, pp.252-262

The Peace of Ghent, which formally ended the War of 1812, was a peace without victory. It was only brought about through a drastic elimination from the treaty of all important questions in dispute. It was signed on December 24, 1814, ratified by the Senate on February 17, 1815, and was proclaimed by President Madison on the following day.

The American commissioners were John Quincy Adams, whose accompanying report (see the following document) of the negotiations appears in his "Memoirs"; Albert Gallatin, Henry Clay, James A. Bayard and Jonathan Russell. The British representatives were Lord Gambier, Henry Goulburn and William Adams.

The Treaty, mainly the handiwork of Gallatin, failed to mention the impressment of American seamen, the chief cause of the war, or the Newfoundland fishery claims recognized in the Treaty of 1783; or the question as to naval forces on the Great Lakes, or the rights of neutrals. All these were subjects of much subsequent negotiation.

Treaty of Ghent, America, Vol.5, p.252

HIS Britannic Majesty and the United States of America, desirous of terminating the war which has unhappily subsisted between the two countries, and of restoring, upon principles of perfect reciprocity, peace, friendship and good understanding between them, have, for that purpose, appointed their respective Plenipotentiaries, that is to say:

Treaty of Ghent, America, Vol.5, p.252–p.253

His Britannic Majesty, on his part, has appointed the Right Honorable James Lord Gambier, late Admiral of the White, now Admiral of the Red Squadron of His Majesty's fleet, Henry Goulburn, Esquire, a member of the Imperial Parliament, and Under Secretary of State, and William Adams, Esquire, Doctor of Civil Laws; and the President of the United States, by and with the advice and consent of the Senate thereof, has appointed John Quincy Adams, James A. Bayard, Henry Clay, Jonathan Russell, and Albert Gallatin, citizens of the United States;

Treaty of Ghent, America, Vol.5, p.253

Who, after a reciprocal communication of their respective full powers, have agreed upon the following articles:

Article I.

Treaty of Ghent, America, Vol.5, p.253–p.254

There shall be a firm and universal peace between His Britannic Majesty and the United States, and between their respective countries, territories, cities, towns and people, of every degree, without exception of places and persons. All hostilities, both by sea and land, shall cease as soon as this treaty shall have been ratified by both parties, as hereinafter mentioned. All territory, places and possessions whatsoever, taken by either party from the other during the war, or which may be taken after the signing of this treaty, excepting only the islands hereinafter mentioned, shall be restored without delay, and without causing any destruction or carrying away any of the artillery or other public property originally captured in the said forts or places, and which shall remain therein upon the exchange of the ratifications of this treaty, or any slaves or other private property. And all archives, records, deeds and papers, either of a public nature or belonging to private persons, which, in the course of the war, may have fallen into the hands of the officers of either party, shall be, as far as may be practicable, forthwith restored and delivered to the proper authorities and persons to whom they respectively belong. Such of the islands in the Bay of Passamaquoddy as are claimed by both parties, shall remain in the possession of the party in whose occupation they may be at the time of the exchange of the ratifications of this treaty, until the decision respecting the title to the said islands shall have been made in conformity with the fourth article of this treaty. No disposition made by this treaty as to such possession of the islands and territories claimed by both parties shall, in any manner whatever, be construed to affect the right of either.

Article II.

Treaty of Ghent, America, Vol.5, p.254–p.255

Immediately after the ratifications of this treaty by both parties, as hereinafter mentioned, orders shall be sent to the armies, squadrons, officers, subjects and citizens of the two Powers to cease from all hostilities. And to prevent all causes of complaint which might arise on account of the prizes which may be taken at sea after the said ratifications of this treaty, it is reciprocally agreed that all vessels and effects which may be taken after the space of twelve days from the said ratifications, upon all parts of the coast of North America, from the latitude of twenty-three degrees north to the latitude of fifty degrees north, and as far eastward in the Atlantic Ocean as the thirty-sixth degree of west longitude from the meridian of Greenwich, shall be restored on each side: that the time shall be thirty days in all other parts of the Atlantic Ocean north of the equinoctial line or equator, and the same time for the British and Irish Channels, for the Gulf of Mexico, and all parts of the West Indies; forty days for the North Seas, for the Baltic, and for all parts of the Mediterranean; sixty days for the Atlantic Ocean south of the equator, as far as the latitude of the Cape of Good Hope; ninety days for every other part of the world south of the equator; and one hundred and twenty days for all other parts of the world, without exception.

Article III.

Treaty of Ghent, America, Vol.5, p.255

All prisoners of war taken on either side, as well by land as by sea, shall be restored as soon as practicable after the ratifications of this treaty, as hereinafter mentioned, on their paying the debts which they have contracted during their captivity. The two contracting parties respectively engage to discharge, in specie, the advances which may have been made by the other for the sustenance and maintenance of such prisoners.

Article IV.

Treaty of Ghent, America, Vol.5, p.255–p.256–p.257–p.258

Whereas it was stipulated by the second article in the treaty of peace of one thousand seven hundred and eighty-three, between His Britannic Majesty and the United States of America, that the boundary of the United States should comprehend all islands within twenty leagues of any part of the shores of the United States, and lying between lines to be drawn due east from the points where the aforesaid boundaries, between Nova Scotia on the one part, and East Florida on the other, shall respectively touch the Bay of Fundy and the Atlantic Ocean, excepting such islands as now are, or heretofore have been, within the limits of Nova Scotia; and whereas the several islands in the Bay of Passamaquoddy, which is part of the Bay of Fundy, and the Island of Grand Menan, in the said Bay of Fundy, are claimed by the United States as being comprehended within their aforesaid boundaries, which said islands are claimed as belonging to His Britannic Majesty, as having been, at the time of and previous to the aforesaid treaty of one thousand seven hundred and eighty-three, within the limits of the Province of Nova Scotia; In order therefore, finally to decide upon these claims, it is agreed that they shall be referred to two Commissioners to be appointed in the following manner, viz: One Commissioner shall be appointed by His Britannic Majesty, and one by the President of the United States, by and with the advice and consent of the Senate thereof; and the said two Commissioners so appointed shall be sworn impartially to examine and decide upon the said claims according to such evidence as shall be laid before them on the part of His Britannic Majesty and of the United States respectively. The said Commissioners shall meet at St. Andrews, in the Province of New Brunswick, and shall have power to adjourn to such other place or places as they shall think fit. The said Commissioners shall, by a declaration or report under their hands and seals, decide to which of the two contracting parties the several islands aforesaid do respectively belong, in conformity with the true intent of the said treaty of peace of one thousand seven hundred and eighty-three. And if the said Commissioners shall agree in their decision, both parties shall consider such decision as final and conclusive. It is further agreed that, in event of the two Commissioners differing upon all or any of the matters so referred to them, or in the event of both or either of the said Commissioners refusing, or declining, or willfully omitting to act as such, they shall make, jointly or separately, a report or reports, as well to the Government of His Britannic Majesty as to that of the United States, stating in detail the points on which they differ, and the grounds upon which their respective opinions have been formed, or the grounds upon which they, or either of them, have so refused, declined, or omitted to act. And His Britannic Majesty and the Government of the United States hereby agree to refer the report or reports of the said Commissioners to some friendly sovereign or State, to be then named for that purpose, and who shall be requested to decide on the differences which may be stated in the said report or reports, or upon the report of one Commissioner, together with the grounds upon which the other Commissioner shall have refused, declined or omitted to act, as the case may be. And if the Commissioner so refusing, declining or omitting to act, shall also willfully omit to state the grounds upon which he has so done, in such manner that the said statement may be referred to such friendly sovereign or State, together with the report of such other Commissioner, then such sovereign or State shall decide ex parte upon the said report alone. And His Britannic Majesty and the Government of the United States engage to consider the decision of such friendly sovereign or State to be final and conclusive on all the matters so referred.

Article V.

Treaty of Ghent, America, Vol.5, p.258–p.259

Whereas neither that point of the highlands lying due north from the source of the River St. Croix, and designated in the former treaty of peace between the two Powers as the northwest angle of Nova Scotia, nor the northwesternmost head of Connecticut River, has yet been ascertained; and whereas that part of the boundary line between the dominions of the two Powers which extends from the source of the River St. Croix directly north to the above-mentioned northwest angle of Nova Scotia, thence along the said highlands which divide those rivers that empty themselves into the river St. Lawrence from those which fall into the Atlantic Ocean to the northwesternmost head of Connecticut River, thence down along the middle of that river to the forty-fifth degree of north latitude; thence by a line due west on said latitude until it strikes the river Iroquois or Cataraquy [St. Lawrence], has not yet been surveyed: it is agreed that for these several purposes two Commissioners shall be appointed,…[etc. as in Article IV].

Article VI.

Treaty of Ghent, America, Vol.5, p.259

Whereas by the former treaty of peace that portion of the boundary of the United States from the point where the forty-fifth degree of north latitude strikes the river Iroquois or Cataraquy to the Lake Superior, was declared to be "along the middle of said river into Lake Ontario, through the middle of said lake, until it strikes the communication by water between that lake and Lake Erie, thence along the middle of said communication into Lake Erie, through the middle of said lake until it arrives at the water communication into the Lake Huron, thence through the middle of said lake to the water communication between that lake and Lake Superior;" and whereas doubts have arisen what was the middle of the said river lakes and water communications, and whether certain islands lying in the same were within the dominions of His Britannic Majesty or of the United States: In order, therefore, finally to decide these doubts, they shall be referred to two Commissioners, to be appointed, . . . [etc. as in Article IV].

Article VII.

Treaty of Ghent, America, Vol.5, p.260

It is further agreed that the said two last-mentioned Commissioners, after they shall have executed the duties assigned to them in the preceding article, shall be, and they are hereby, authorized upon their oaths impartially to fix and determine, according to the true intent of the said treaty of peace of one thousand seven hundred and eighty-three, that part of the boundary between the dominions of the two Powers which extends from the water communication between Lake Huron and Lake Superior, to the most northwestern point of the Lake of the Woods, to decide to which of the two parties the several islands lying in the lakes, water communications and rivers, forming the said boundary, do respectively belong, in conformity with the true intent of the said treaty of peace of one thousand seven hundred and eighty-three; and to cause such parts of the said boundary as require it to be surveyed and marked, . . . [etc. as in Article IV].

Article VIII.

Treaty of Ghent, America, Vol.5, p.260

[Stipulations regarding the expenses, proceedings, etc., of the commissions; and for the validity of land grants made by either party in territory adjudged to the other.]

Article IX.

Treaty of Ghent, America, Vol.5, p.261

The United States of America engage to put an end, immediately after the ratification of the present treaty, to hostilities with all the tribes or nations of Indians with whom they may be at war at the time of such ratification; and forthwith to restore to such tribes or nations, respectively, all the possessions, rights and privileges which they may have enjoyed or been entitled to in one thousand eight hundred and eleven, previous to such hostilities: Provided always that such tribes or nations shall agree to desist from all hostilities against the United States of America, their citizens and subjects, upon the ratification of the present treaty being notified to such tribes or nations, and shall so desist accordingly. And His Britannic Majesty engages, on his part, to put an end immediately after the ratification of the present treaty, to hostilities with all the tribes or nations of Indians with whom he may be at war at the time of such ratification, and forthwith to restore to such tribes or nations respectively all the possessions, rights and privileges which they may have enjoyed or been entitled to in one thousand eight hundred and eleven, previous to such hostilities: Provided always that such tribes or nations shall agree to desist from all hostilities against His Britannic Majesty, and his subjects, upon the ratification of the present treaty being notified to such tribes or nations, and shall so desist accordingly.

Article X.

Treaty of Ghent, America, Vol.5, p.262

Whereas the traffic in slaves is irreconcilable with the principles of humanity and justice, and whereas both His Majesty and the United States are desirous of continuing their efforts to promote its entire abolition, it is hereby agreed that both the contracting parties shall use their best endeavors to accomplish so desirable an object.

Article XI.

Treaty of Ghent, America, Vol.5, p.262

This treaty, when the same shall have been ratified on both sides, without alteration by either of the contracting parties, and the ratifications mutually exchanged, shall be binding on both parties, and the ratifications shall be exchanged at Washington, in the space of four months from this day, or sooner if practicable.

Discussing the Terms of Peace

Title: Discussing the Terms of Peace

Author: John Quincy Adams

Date: December 12, 1814 to January 5, 1815

Source: America, Vol.5, pp.263-270

The following document is the report by John Quincy Adams of the negotiations that formed the Treaty of Ghent (see the preceeding document). The American representatives in the negotiations were Adams, Albert Gallatin, Henry Clay, James A. Bayard and Jonathan Russell. The British representatives were Lord Gambier, Henry Goulburn and William Adams.

Adams, Discussing the Terms of Peace, America, Vol.5, p.263

DECEMBER 12, 1814.—Lord Gambier said that they did not consider the fisheries within their jurisdiction as rights, but merely as privileges granted.

Adams, Discussing the Terms of Peace, America, Vol.5, p.263

Dr. Adams said that it would be very easy to draw a proviso by which it should be agreed to negotiate upon the two subjects, and yet without implying an abandonment on the part of the United States of their claim.

Adams, Discussing the Terms of Peace, America, Vol.5, p.263

I said, if he thought it so easy, I would thank him to undertake it. I did not believe it possible. We had drawn up, and now proposed, a general article founded on a precedent in the Treaty of 1794, engaging to negotiate upon all the subjects of difference unadjusted, which would include those of the Mississippi navigation, and the fisheries within the British jurisdiction.

Adams, Discussing the Terms of Peace, America, Vol.5, p.263

They read our article, and immediately rejected it, finding the word commerce in it.

Adams, Discussing the Terms of Peace, America, Vol.5, p.263

Mr. Gallatin proposed to leave that word out.

Adams, Discussing the Terms of Peace, America, Vol.5, p.263–p.264

Adams and Goulburn still rejected the article. Adams still sad we might draw a proviso reserving our construction of the Treaty of 1783 and agreeing to negotiate on the two subjects; and added that he mentioned it because he believed that if the other question about the islands could be got rid of, the British government would be disposed to some accommodation upon this.

Adams, Discussing the Terms of Peace, America, Vol.5, p.264

Mr. Bayard drew a proviso for the purpose, and handed it over the table.

Adams, Discussing the Terms of Peace, America, Vol.5, p.264

They read it, and Lord Gambier immediately said, "I, for one, can never agree to that."

Adams, Discussing the Terms of Peace, America, Vol.5, p.264

Mr. Bayard asked what the object of the article, as proposed by the British Plenipotentiaries, was.

Adams, Discussing the Terms of Peace, America, Vol.5, p.264

Adams and Goulburn said it was sent to them from England; they were not to account for the motive of their Government in proposing that or any other article.

Adams, Discussing the Terms of Peace, America, Vol.5, p.264

Mr. Bayard said he did not ask them for the motive of their Government, but for the object of the article. He supposed gentlemen would at least be authorized to explain that.

Adams, Discussing the Terms of Peace, America, Vol.5, p.264

Dr. Adams said they had sent us the article as they had received it, and we must construe it for ourselves; he had only said (and it was merely his individual opinion; he would not wish to be understood as pledging the opinion of his Government, or even of his colleagues), but he had said he thought we might easily agree to an article with a proviso reserving our claim to the right by the Treaty of 1783.

Adams, Discussing the Terms of Peace, America, Vol.5, p.264

Mr. Gallatin asked, if we could find any expedient to come to an agreement upon the other article, whether the British Plenipotentiaries were authorized to accede to any modification of this, so that we might sign the treaty, without another reference to England.

Adams, Discussing the Terms of Peace, America, Vol.5, p.264–p.265

Mr. Goulburn said they did not know. We had sent them three alternatives for their last paragraph of the eighth article. One of these alternatives had been adopted in England, and sent back to them, modified into this article. We had offered them the navigation of the Mississippi, clogged with conditions which would render it of no effect, confining their access to a single point, and upon a payment of full duties upon merchandise intended merely to pass through our territories for exportation.

Adams, Discussing the Terms of Peace, America, Vol.5, p.265

Mr. Gallatin said that had not been our intention. The access would be given sufficient for all the purposes of transporting the merchandise, and by our laws a drawback from the duties was allowed upon the exportation of goods—the benefit of which would be allowed, of course, to the merchandise only passing through for exportation. "But surely," said he, you could not expect to introduce into the United States your goods and merchandise duty free."

Adams, Discussing the Terms of Peace, America, Vol.5, p.265

"And," said Mr. Clay, "as you had drawn the first paragraph, you might have gone from Quebec through any part of our territories."

Adams, Discussing the Terms of Peace, America, Vol.5, p.265

Mr. Goulburn said, "No, that was not their intention."

Adams, Discussing the Terms of Peace, America, Vol.5, p.265

Mr. Gallatin then took the Mississippi and fisheries article, proposed some alterations to it, and, Mr. Goulburn hesitating upon them, Gallatin said that we labored under great inconvenience and disadvantage in the negotiation. We had no opportunity of communicating with our Government, and were continually obliged to take responsibility upon ourselves, while they referred to their Government for every detail….

Adams, Discussing the Terms of Peace, America, Vol.5, p.266

22d…. As soon as I came into my chamber, Mr. Gallatin brought me the [British] note. It agrees to be silent upon the navigation of the Mississippi and the fisheries, and to strike out the whole of the eighth article….

Adams, Discussing the Terms of Peace, America, Vol.5, p.266–p.267

Mr. Clay soon after came into my chamber, and, on reading the British note, manifested some chagrin. He still talked of breaking off the negotiation, but he did not exactly disclose the motive of his ill humor, which was, however, easily seen through. He would have much preferred the proposed eighth article, with the proposed British paragraph, formally admitting that the British right to navigate the Mississippi, and the American right to the fisheries within British jurisdiction, were both abrogated by the war. I think his conversation with Lord Gambier on the subject last week, at their dinner, the day before we sent our note, had the tendency to induce the British to adhere to their paragraph, and that Clay is disappointed at their having given it up; and he has so entire an ascendency over Mr. Russell, though a New England man and claiming to be a Massachusetts man, that Russell repeatedly told me last week, when I assured him that I would not sign the treaty with an article admitting that our right to any part of the fisheries was forfeited, that he should be sorry to sign a treaty without me, but that he did not think that part of the fisheries an object for which the war should be continued; that he was for insisting upon it as long as possible, but for giving it up at last, if the British would not sign without it. We agreed to meet at half-past seven o'clock this evening….

Adams, Discussing the Terms of Peace, America, Vol.5, p.267

24th…. A few mistakes in the copies were rectified, and then the six copies were signed and sealed by the three British and the five American Plenipotentiaries. Lord Gambier delivered to me the three British copies, and I delivered to him the three American copies, of the treaty, which he said he hoped would be permanent; and I told him I hoped it would be the last treaty of peace between Great Britain and the United States. We left them at half-past six o'clock….

Adams, Discussing the Terms of Peace, America, Vol.5, p.267

25th. Christmas-day. The day of all others in the year most congenial to proclaiming peace on earth and good will to men….

Adams, Discussing the Terms of Peace, America, Vol.5, p.267

We received shortly after dinner a note from the Intendant, informing us that he had just received an official communication of the conclusion of the peace, and inviting us to dine with him on Wednesday next, to celebrate the event….

Adams, Discussing the Terms of Peace, America, Vol.5, p.267

27th…. Mr. Gallatin had suggested . . . that we ought to make to the British Government an official communication of our full power to negotiate a treaty of commerce. The proposition was now renewed, and after some discussion it was agreed that Mr. Gallatin should make a draft of a note for that purpose….

Adams, Discussing the Terms of Peace, America, Vol.5, p.267–p.268

[28th.] Lord Gambier told me that . . . he heard we were to send them a note, proposing the negotiation of a treaty of commerce. Mr. Clay had met this morning Mr. Goulburn and Dr. Adams, and given them the information. Dr. Adams said that their powers were expired, and he doubted whether they could even receive the note….

Adams, Discussing the Terms of Peace, America, Vol.5, p.268

[January 5, 1815.] . . . Another important question arose, how we were to dress for the banquet of this day. To settle it, Mr. Smith, at my request, called upon Mr. Goulburn, and enquired how he proposed to go. He answered, in uniform, and we accordingly all went in uniform. The banquet was at the Hotel de Ville, and was given by subscription by the principal gentlemen of the city. We sat down to table about five o'clock, in the largest hall of the building, fitted up for the occasion with white cotton hangings. The American and British flags were intertwined together under olive-trees, at the head of the hall. Mr. Goulburn and myself were seated between the Intendant and the Mayor, at the center of the crosspiece of the table. There were about ninety persons seated at the table. As we went into the hall, "Hail Columbia" was performed by the band of music. It was followed by "God Save the King," and these two airs were alternately repeated during the dinnertime, until Mr. Goulburn thought they became tiresome. I was of the same opinion.

Adams, Discussing the Terms of Peace, America, Vol.5, p.268–p.269–p.270

The Intendant and the Mayor alternately toasted "His Britannic Majesty," and "the United States," "the Allied Powers," and "the Sovereign Prince," "the Negotiators," and "the Peace." I then remarked to Mr. Goulburn that he must give the next toast, which he did. It was "the Intendant and the Mayor; the City of Ghent, its prosperity; and our gratitude for their hospitality and the many acts of kindness that we had received from them." I gave the next and last toast, which was, "Ghent, the city of peace; may the gates of the temple of Janus, here closed, not be opened again for a century!"…

How American Success in the War Imprest Europe

Title: How American Success in the War Imprest Europe

Author: Henry Adams

Date: 1816

Source: Great Epochs in American History, Vol.5, p.113-122

Adams, How American Success in the War Imprest Europe, Great Epochs, Vol.5, p.113

The American declaration of war against England, July 18, 1812, annoyed those European nations that were gathering their utmost resources for resistance to Napoleon's attack. Russia could not but regard it as an unfriendly act, equally bad for political and commercial interest. Spain and Portugal, whose armies were fed largely if not chiefly on American grain imported by British money under British protection, dreaded to see their supplies cut off. Germany, waiting only for strength to recover her freedom, had to reckon against one more element in Napoleon's vast military resources. England needed to make greater efforts in order to maintain the advantages she had gained in Russia and Spain. Even in America no one doubted the earnestness of England's wish for peace; and if Madison and Monroe insisted on her acquiescence in their terms, they insisted because they believed that their military position entitled them to expect it. The reconquest of Russia and Spain by Napoleon, an event almost certain to happen, could hardly fail to force from England the concessions, not in themselves unreasonable, which the United States required.

Adams, How American Success in the War Imprest Europe, Great Epochs, Vol.5, p.114

This was, as Madison to the end of his life maintained, "a fair calculation;" but it was exasperating to England, who thought that America ought to be equally interested with Europe in overthrowing the military despotism of Napoleon, and should not conspire with him for gain. At first the new war disconcerted the feeble Ministry that remained in office on the death of Spencer Perceval: they counted on preventing it, and did their utmost to stop it after it was begun. The tone of arrogance which had so long characterized government and press disappeared for the moment. Obscure newspapers, like the London Evening Star, still sneered at the idea that Great Britain was to be "driven from the proud preeminence which the blood and treasure of her sons have attained for her among the nations, by a piece of striped bunting flying at the mastheads of a few fir-built frigates, manned by a handful of bastards and outlaws"—a phrase which had great success in America—but such defiances exprest a temper studiously held in restraint previous to the movement when the war was seen to be inevitable….

Adams, How American Success in the War Imprest Europe, Great Epochs, Vol.5, p.114

The realization that no escape could be found from an American war was forced on the British public at a moment of much discouragement. Almost simultaneously a series of misfortunes occurred which brought the stoutest and most intelligent Englishmen to the verge of despair. In Spain Wellington, after winning the battle of Salamanca in July, occupied Madrid in August, and obliged Soult to evacuate Andalusia; but his siege of Burgos failed, and as the French generals concentrated their scattered forces, Wellington was obliged to abandon Madrid once more. October 21st he was again in full retreat on Portugal. The apparent failure of his campaign was almost simultaneous with the apparent success of Napoleon's; for the Emperor entered Moscow September 14th, and the news of this triumph, probably decisive of Russian submission, reached England about October 3d. Three days later arrived intelligence of William Hull's surrender at Detroit; but this success was counterbalanced by simultaneous news of Isaac Hull's startling capture of the Guerriere, and the certainty of a prolonged war.

Adams, How American Success in the War Imprest Europe, Great Epochs, Vol.5, p.115

In the desponding condition of the British people—with a deficient harvest, bad weather, wheat at nearly five dollars a bushel, and the American supply likely to be cut off; consols at 57 1/2, gold at 30 per cent. premium; a Ministry without credit or authority, and a general consciousness of blunders, incompetence, and corruption—every new tale of disaster sank the hopes of England and called out wails of despair. In that state of mind the loss of the Guerriere assumed portentous dimensions. The Times was especialy loud in lamenting the capture:

Adams, How American Success in the War Imprest Europe, Great Epochs, Vol.5, p.115

"We witnessed the gloom which that event cast over high and honorable minds…. Never before in the history of the world did an English frigate strike to an American; and tho we can not say that Captain Dacres, under all circumstances, is punishable for this act, yet we do say there are commanders in the English navy who would a thousand times rather have gone down with their colors flying than have set their fellow sailors so fatal an example."

Adams, How American Success in the War Imprest Europe, Great Epochs, Vol.5, p.116

No country newspaper in America, railing at Hull's cowardice and treachery, showed less knowledge or judgment than the London Times, which had written of nothing but war since its name had been known in Englnad. Any American could have assured the English press that British frigates before the Guerriere had struck to American; and even in England men had not forgotten the name of the British frigate Serapis, or thta of the American Captain Paul Jones. Yet the Times's ignorance was less unreasonable than its requirement that Dacres should have gone down with his ship—a cry of passion the more unjust to Dacres because he fought his ship as long as she could float. Such sensitiveness seemed extravagant in a society which had been hardened by centuries of warfare; yet the Times reflected fairly the feelings of Englishmen….

Adams, How American Success in the War Imprest Europe, Great Epochs, Vol.5, p.116

Society soon learned to take a more sensible view of the subject; but as the first depression passed away, a consciousness of personal wrong took its place. The United States were supposed to have stabbed England in the back at the moment when her hands were tied, when her existence was in the most deadly peril and her anxieties were most heavy. England never could forgive treason so base and cowardice so vile. That Madison had been from the first a tool and accomplice of Bonaparte was thenceforward so fixt an idea in British history that time could not shake it. Indeed, socomplicated and so historical had the causes of war become that no one even in America could explain or understand them, while Englishmen could see only that America required England as the price of peace to destroy herself by abandoning her naval power, and that England preferred to die fighting rather than to die by her own hand. The American party in England was extinguished; no further protest was heard against the war; and the British people thought moodily of revenge.

Adams, How American Success in the War Imprest Europe, Great Epochs, Vol.5, p.117

This result was unfortunate for both parties, but was doubly unfortunate for America, because her mode of making the issue told in her enemy's favor. The same impressions which silenced in England open sympathy with America, stimulated in America acute sympathy with England. Argument was useless against people in passion, convinced of their own injuries. Neither Englishmen nor Federalists were open to reasoning. They found their action easy from the moment they classed the United States as an ally of France, like Bavaria or Saxony; and they had no scruples of conscience, for the practical alliance was clear, and the fact proved sufficiently the intent….

Adams, How American Success in the War Imprest Europe, Great Epochs, Vol.5, p.117

The loss of two or three thirty-eight-gun frigates on the ocean was a matter of trifling consequence to the British Government, which had a force of four ships-of-the-line and six or eight frigates in Chesapeake Bay alone, and which built every year dozens of ships-of-the-line and frigates to replace those lost or worn out; but altho American privateers wrought more injury to British interests than was caused or could be caused by the American navy, the pride of England cared little about mercantile losses, and cared immensely for itsfighting reputation. The theory that the American was a degenerate Englishman—a theory chiefly due to American teachings—lay at the bottom of British politics. Even the late British Minister at Washington, Foster, a man of average intelligence, thought it manifest good taste and good sense to say of the Americans in his speech of February 18, 1813, in Parliament, that "generally speaking, they were not a people we should be proud to acknowledge as our relations." Decatur and Hull were engaged in a social rather than in a political contest, and were aware that the serious work on their hands had little to do with England's power, but much to do with her manners. The mortification of England at the capture of her frigates was the measure of her previous arrogance….

Adams, How American Success in the War Imprest Europe, Great Epochs, Vol.5, p.118

Instantly after the loss of the Guerriere the English discovered and complained that American gunnery was superior to their own. They explained their inferiority by the length of time that had elapsed since their navy had found on the ocean an enemy to fight. Every vestige of hostile fleets had been swept away, until, after the battle of Trafalgar, British frigates ceased practice with their guns. Doubtless the British navy had become somewhat careless in the absence of a dangerous enemy, but Englishmen were themselves aware that some other cause must have affected their losses. Nothing showed that Nelson's line-of-battle ships, frigates, or sloops were, as a rule, better fought than the Macedonian and Java, the Avon and Reindeer. Sir Howard Douglas, the chief authority on the subject, attempted in vain to explain British reverses by the deterioration of British gunnery. His analysis showed only that American gunnery was extraordinarily good….

Adams, How American Success in the War Imprest Europe, Great Epochs, Vol.5, p.119

None of the reports of former British victories showed that the British fire had been more destructive at any previous time than in 1812, and no report of any commander since the British navy existed showed so much damage inflicted on an opponent in so short a time as was proved to have been inflicted on themselves by the reports of British commanders in the American war. The strongest proof of American superiority was given by the best British officers, like Broke, who strained every nerve to maintain an equality with American gunnery….

Adams, How American Success in the War Imprest Europe, Great Epochs, Vol.5, p.119

Unwilling as the English were to admit the superior skill of Americans on the ocean, they did not hesitate to admit it, in certain respects, on land. The American rifle in American hands was affirmed to have no equal in the world. This admission could scarcely be withheld after the lists of killed and wounded which followed almost every battle; but the admission served to check a wider inquiry. In truth, the rifle played but a small part in the war. Winchester's men at the river Raisin may have owed their overconfidence, as the British Forty-first owed its losses, to that weapon, and at New Orleans five or six hundred of Coffee's men, who were out of range, were armed with the rifle; but the surprizing losses of the British were commonly due to artillery and musketry fire. At New Orleans the artillery was chiefly engaged. The artillery battle of January 1st, according to British accounts, amply proved the superiority of American gunnery on that occasion, which was probably the fairest test during the war. The battle of January 8th was also chiefly an artillery battle; the main British column never arrived within fair musket range; Packenham was killed by a grape-shot, and the main column of his troops halted more than one hundred yards from the parapet.

Adams, How American Success in the War Imprest Europe, Great Epochs, Vol.5, p.120

The best test of British and American military qualities, both for men and weapons, was Scott's battle of Chippewa. Nothing intervened to throw a doubt over the fairness of the trial. Two parallel lines of regular soldiers, practically equal in numbers, armed with similar weapons, moved in close order toward each other across a wide, open plain, without cover or advantage of position, stopping at intervals to load and fire, until one line broke and retired. At the same time two three-gun batteries, the British being the heavier, maintained a steady fire from positions opposite each other. According to the reports, the two infantry lines in the center never came nearer than eighty yards. Major-General Riall reported that then, owing to severe losses, his troops broke and could not be rallied. Comparison of official report showed that the British lost in killed and wounded four hundred and sixty-nine men; the Americans, two hundred and ninety-six. Some doubts always affect the returns of wounded, because the severity of the wound cannot be known; but dead men tell their own tale. Riall reported one hundred and forty-eight killed; Scott reported sixty-one. The severity of the losses showed that the battle wassharply contested, and proved the personal bravery of both armies. Marksmanship decided the result, and the returns proved that the American fire was superior to that of the British in the proportion of more than fifty per cent. if estimated by the entire loss, and of two hundred and forty-two to one hundred if estimated by the deaths alone.

Adams, How American Success in the War Imprest Europe, Great Epochs, Vol.5, p.121

The conclusion seemed incredible, but it was supported by the results of the naval battles. The Americans showed superiority amounting in some cases to twice the efficiency of their enemies in the use of weapons. The best French critic of the naval war, Jurien de la Graviere, said: "An enormous superiority in the rapidity and precision of their fire can alone explain the difference in the losses sustained by the combatants." So far from denying this conclusion, the British press constantly alleged it, and the British officers complained of it. The discovery caused great surprize, and in both British services much attention was at once directed to improvement in artillery and musketry. Nothing could exceed the frankness with which Englishmen avowed their inferiority. According to Sir Francis Head, "gunnery was in naval warfare in the extraordinary state of ignorance we have just described, when our lean children, the American people, taught us, rod in hand, our first lesson in the art." The English text-book on Naval Gunnery, written by Major-General Sir Howard Douglas immediately after the peace, devoted more attention to the short American war than to all the battles of Napoleon, and began by admitting that Great Britain had "entered with too great confidence on war with a marine much more expert than that of any of our Europeanenemies." The admission appeared "objectionable" even to the author; but he did not add, what was equally true, that it applied as well to the land as to the sea service.

Adams, How American Success in the War Imprest Europe, Great Epochs, Vol.5, p.122

No one questioned the bravery of the British forces, or the ease with which they often routed larger bodies of militia; but the losses they inflicted were rarely as great as those they suffered. Even at Bladensburg, where they met little resistance, their loss was several times greater than that of the Americans. At Plattsburg, where the intelligence and quickness of Macdonough and his men alone won the victory, his ships were in effect stationary batteries, and enjoyed the same superiority in gunnery. "The Saratoga," said his official report, "had fifty-five round-shot in her hull; the Confiance, one hundred and five. The enemy's shot passed principally just over our heads, as there were not twenty whole hammocks in the nettings at the close of the action."

Adams, How American Success in the War Imprest Europe, Great Epochs, Vol.5, p.122

The greater skill of the Americans was not due to special training; for the British service was better trained in gunnery, as in everything else, than the motley armies and fleets that fought at New Orleans and on the Lakes. Critics constantly said that every American had learned from his childhood the use of the rifle; but he certainly had not learned to use cannon in shooting birds or hunting deer, and he knew less than the Englishman about the handling of artillery and muskets. The same intelligence that selected the rifle and the long pivot-gun for favorite weapons was shown in handling the carronade, and every other instrument however clumsy.

Our First Protective Tariff

Title: Our First Protective Tariff

Author: John Randolph

Date: 1816

Source: America, Vol.5, pp.270-273

Randolph was a planter Congressman and Senator from Virginia. A proud and haughty descendant of Pocohontas, he was renowned for his eloquence, wit, sarcasm, invective and eccentricity. He seldom wrote or spoke without denouncing something or somebody. He opposed the War of 1812, and the Missouri Compromise, stigmatizing the Northern Members of Congress who voted for the latter as "doughfaces." Yet, in his will, he manumitted his 318 slaves, and provided for their maintenance in a free state.

After the War of 1812 Randolph was a firm advocate of States' rights, although he had earlier broken with Jefferson on that principle. In this speech, delivered in 1816, he denounces our first protective tariff measure as a blow aimed at the agricultural, as distinguished from the manufacturing, interests of the country. The economic conditions following the War of 1812 brought the tariff question before the country where it has remained for over a century.

Randolph, Our First Protective Tariff, America, Vol.5, p.270–p.271

MY honorable colleague (Mr. Sheffey) has said, that the case of the manufacturers is not fairly before the House. True! it is not fairly before the House. It never can be fairly before the House; whenever it comes before us, it must come unfairly, not as "a spirit of health—but a goblin damned"—not "bringing with it airs from Heaven, but blasts from Hell"—it ought to be exorcised out of the House: for, what do the principles about which such a contest is maintained amount to, but a system of bounties to manufacturers, in order to encourage them to do that which, if it be advantageous to do at all, they will do, of course, for their own sakes; a largess to men to exercise their own customary callings, for their own emolument; and Government devising plans, and bestowing premiums out of the pockets of the hard working cultivator of the soil, to mold the productive labor of the country into a thousand fantastic shapes; barring up, all the time, for that perverted purpose, the great, deep, rich stream of our prosperous industry.

Randolph, Our First Protective Tariff, America, Vol.5, p.271

Such a case, sir, I agree with the honorable gentleman, cannot be fairly brought before the House. It eventuates in this: whether you, as a planter will consent to be taxed, in order to hire another man to go to work in a shoemaker's shop, or to set up a spinning jenny. For my part I will not agree to it, even though they should, by way of return, agree to be taxed to help us to plant tobacco; much less will I agree to pay all, and receive nothing for it. No, I will buy where I can get manufactures cheapest; I will not agree to lay a duty on the cultivators of the soil to encourage exotic manufactures; because, after all, we should only get much worse things at a much higher price, and we, the cultivators of the country, would in the end pay all. Why do no gentlemen ask us to grant a bounty for the encouragement of making flour?—the reason is too plain for me to repeat it; then why pay a man much more than the value for it, to work up our own cotton into clothing, when, by selling my raw material, I can get my clothing much better and cheaper from Dacca.

Randolph, Our First Protective Tariff, America, Vol.5, p.271–p.272

Sir, I am convinced that it would be impolitic, as well as unjust, to aggravate the burdens of the people, for the purpose of favoring the manufacturers; for this government created and gave power to Congress, to regulate commerce and equalize duties on the whole of the United States, and not to lay a duty but with a steady eye to revenue. With my good will, sir, there should be none but an ad valorem duty on all articles, which would prevent the possibility of one interest in the country being sacrificed, by the management of taxation, to another.

Randolph, Our First Protective Tariff, America, Vol.5, p.272–p.273

What is there in those objects of the honorable gentleman's solicitude, to give them a claim to be supported by the earnings of the others? The agriculturists bear the whole brunt of the war and taxation, and remain poor, while the others run in the ring of pleasure, and fatten upon them. The agriculturists not only pay all, but fight all, while the others run. The manufacturer is the citizen of no place, or any place; the agriculturist has his property, his lands, his all, his household gods to defend; and, like that meek drudge, the ox, who does the labor, and ploughs the ground, and then, for his reward, takes the refuse of the farm yard, the blighted blades and the mouldy straw, and the mildewed shocks of corn for his support;—while the commercial speculators live in opulence, whirling in coaches, and indulging in palaces; to use the words of Dr. Johnson, coaches, which fly like meteors, and palaces, which rise like exhalations. Even without your aid, the agriculturists are no match for them. Alert, vigilant, enterprising, and active, the manufacturing interests are collected in masses, and ready to associate at a moment's warning, for any purpose of general interest to their body. Do but ring the fire bell, and you can assemble all the manufacturing interests of Philadelphia, in fifteen minutes. Nay, for matter of that, they are always assembled, they are always on the Rialto; and Shylock and Antonio meet there every day, as friends, and compare notes, and lay plans, and possess in trick and intelligence, what, in the goodness of God to them, the others can never possess.

Randolph, Our First Protective Tariff, America, Vol.5, p.273

It is the choicest bounty to the ox that he cannot play the fox or the tiger. So it is to one of the body of agriculturists that he cannot skip into a coffeehouse, and shave a note with one hand, while with the other he signs a petition to Congress, portraying the wrongs and grievances and sufferings he endures, and begging them to relieve him; yes, to relieve him out of the pockets of those whose labors have fed and enriched, and whose valor has defended them. The cultivators, the patient drudges of the other orders of society, are now waiting for your resolution. For, on you it depends, whether they shall be left further unhurt, or be, like those in Europe reduced, gradatim, and subjected to another squeeze from the hard grasp of power. Sir, I have done.

The Meaning of the Monroe Doctrine

Title: The Meaning of the Monroe Doctrine

Author: Admiral A. T. Mahan

Date: 1817—1823

Source: Great Epochs in American History, Vol.5, p.133-143

Mahan, Meaning of the Monroe Doctrine, Great Epochs, Vol.5, p.133

The formulation of the Monroe Doctrine, as distinguished from its origin, resulted, as is universally understood, from the political conditions caused by the revolt of the Spanish colonies in America. Up to that time, and for centuries previous, the name Spain had signified to Europe in general not merely the mother-country, but a huge colonial system, with its special economical and commercial regulation; the latter being determined through its colonial relations, upon the narrowest construction of colonial policy then known, which was saying a great deal. Spain stood for the Spanish empire, divisible primarily into two chief components, Spain and Greater Spain—the mother-country and the colonies. The passage of time had been gradually reversing the relative importance of the two in the apprehension of other European states.

Mahan, Meaning of the Monroe Doctrine, Great Epochs, Vol.5, p.133

In Sir Robert Walpole's day it was believed by many beside himself that Great Britain could not make head against France and Spain combined. The naval power of Spain, and consequently her political weight, still received awed consideration; a relic of former fears. This continued, tho in a diminished degree, through the War of American Independence; but by the end of the century, while it may be too much to affirm that such apprehension had wholly disappeared—that no account was taken of the unwieldy numbers of ill-manned and often ill-officered ships that made up the Spanish navy—it is true that a Spanish war bore to British seamen an aspect rather commercial than military. It meant much more of prize money than of danger; and that it did so was due principally to the wealth of the colonies.

Mahan, Meaning of the Monroe Doctrine, Great Epochs, Vol.5, p.134

This wealth was potential as well as actual, and in both aspects it appealed to Europe. To break in upon the monopoly enjoyed by Spain, and consecrated in international usage both by accepted ideas and long prescription, was an object of policy to the principal European maritime states. It was so conspicuously to Great Britain, on account of the preeminence which commercial considerations always had in her councils. In the days of William III the prospective failure of the Spanish royal house brought up the questions of what other family should succeed and to whom should be transferred the great inheritance won by Columbus, Cortez, and Pizarro. Thenceforth the thought of dividing this spoil of a decadent empire—the "sick man" of that day—remained in men's memory as a possible contingency of the future, even tho momentarily out of the range of practical politics. The waning of Spain's political andmilitary prestige was accompanied by an increasing understanding of the value of the commercial system appended to her in her colonies. The future disposition of these extensive regions, and the fruition of their wealth, developed and undeveloped, were conceived as questions of universal European policy. In the general apprehension of European rulers they were regarded as affecting the balance of power.

Mahan, Meaning of the Monroe Doctrine, Great Epochs, Vol.5, p.135

It was as the opponent of this conception, the perfectly natural outcome of previous circumstances and history, that the Monroe Doctrine entered the field; a newcomer in form, yet having its own history and antecedent conditions as really as the conflicting European view. Far more than South America, which had seen little contested occupation, the northern continent had known what it was to be the scene of antagonistic European ambitions and exploration. There had been within her territory a balance of power, in idea, if not in achievement, quite as real as any that had existed or been fought for in Europe. Canada in the hands of France, and the mouth of the Mississippi in alien control ,were matters of personal memory to many, and of very recent tradition to all Americans in active life in 1810. Florida then was still Spanish, with unsettled boundary questions and attendant evils Not reason only, but feeling, based upon experience of actual inconvenience, suffering, and loss—loss of life and loss of wealth, political anxiety and commercial disturbance—conspired to intensify opposition to any avoidable renewal of similar conditions. To quote the words of a distinguished American Secretary of State, speaking twenty years ago: "Thissentiment is properly called a 'doctrine,' for it has no prescribed sanction, and its assertion is left to the exigency which may invoke it." This accurate statement places it upon the surest political foundation, much firmer than precise legal enactment or international convention, that of popular conviction. The sentiment had existed beforehand; the first exigency which invoked its formulated expression in 1823 was the announced intention of several great powers to perpetuate by force the European system, whether of colonial tenure or balance of power, of monarchical forms in the Spanish colonies; they being then actually in revolt against the mother-country and seeking, not other political relations to Europe, but simply their own independence….

Mahan, Meaning of the Monroe Doctrine, Great Epochs, Vol.5, p.136

The American declaration against "the extension of the system of the allied powers to any portion of this hemisphere" was welcomed as supporting the attitude of Great Britain; for the phrase, in itself ambiguous, was understood to apply not to the quintuple alliance for the preservation of existing territorial arrangements in Europe, to which Great Britain was a party, but to the Holy Alliance, the avowed purpose of which was to suppress by external force revolutionary movements within any State—a course into which she had refused to be drawn. But the complementary declaration in the President's message, that "the American continents are henceforth not to be considered as subjects for future colonization by any European power," was characterized in the Annual Register for 1823 as "scarcely less extravagant than that of the Russian ukase by which it was elicited" and which forbade any foreignvessel from approaching within a hundred miles of the Russian possession now known as Alaska. The British Government took the same view; and in the protocol to a conference held in 1827 expressly repudiated this American claim.

Mahan, Meaning of the Monroe Doctrine, Great Epochs, Vol.5, p.137

There was therefore between the two countries at this moment a clear opposition of principle, and agreement only as to a particular line of conduct in a special case. With regard to the interventions of the Holy Alliance in Europe, Great Britain, while reserving her independence of action, stood neutral for the time, but from motives of her own policy showed unmistakably that she would resist like action in Spanish American. The United States, impelled by an entirely different conception of national policy, now first officially enunciated, intimated in diplomatic phrase a similar disposition. The two supported each other in the particular contingency, and doubtless frustrated whatever intervention any members of the Holy Alliance may have entertained of projecting to the other side of the Atlantic their "union for the government of the world." In America, as in Europe, Great Britain deprecated the intrusion of external force to settle internal convulsions of foreign countries; but she did not commit herself, as the United States did, to the position that purchase or war should never entail a cession of territory by an American to a European state, a transaction which would be in so far colonization. In resisting any transfer of Spanish-American territory to a European power, Great Britain was not advancing a general principle, but maintaining an immediate interest. Her motive, in short, had nothing in common with the Monroe Doctrine. Such principles as were involved had been formulated long before, and had controlled her action in Europe as in America.

Mahan, Meaning of the Monroe Doctrine, Great Epochs, Vol.5, p.138

The United States dogma, on the contrary, planted itself squarely on the separate system and interests of America. This is distinctly shown by the comments of the Secretary of State, John Quincy Adams, in a dispatch to the American Monroe's message. Alluding to Canning's most decisive phrase in a recent dispatch, "Great Britain could not see any part of the colonies transferred to any other power with indifference," he wrote. "We certainly do concur with her in this position; but the principles of that aversion, so far as they are common to both parties, resting only upon a casual coincidence of interests, in a national point of view selfish on both sides, would be liable to dissolution by every change of phase in the aspects of European politics. So that Great Britain, negotiating at once with the European alliance and with us concerning America, without being bound by any permanent community of principle, would still be free to accommodate her policy to any of those distributions of power and partitions of territory which for the last half century have been the ultima ration of European arrangements."

Mahan, Meaning of the Monroe Doctrine, Great Epochs, Vol.5, p.139

For this reason, Adams considered that recognition of the independence of the revolted colonies, already made by the United States, in March, 1822, must be given by Great Britain also, in order to place the two States on equal terms of cooperation. From motives of European policy, from which Great Britain could not dissociate herself, she delayed this recognition until 1825; and then Canning defined his general course toward the Spanish colonies in the famous words: "I called the New World into existence to redress the balance of the Old. I resolved that, if France had Spain, it should not be Spain with the Indies." His coincidence with the policy of the United States is thus seen to be based, and properly, upon British interests involved in the European system, but that, so far from being the Monroe Doctrine, is almost the converse of it.

Mahan, Meaning of the Monroe Doctrine, Great Epochs, Vol.5, p.139

Nor was it only in direction that the impulse of the two States differed. They were unequal in inherent vital strength. The motive force of the one was bound to accumulate, and that of the other to relax, by the operation of purely natural conditions. An old order was beginning to yield to a new. After three centuries of tutelage America was slipping out of European control. She was reaching her majority and claiming her own. Within her sphere she felt the future to be hers. Of this sense the Monroe Doctrine was an utterance. It was a declaration of independence, not for a single nation only, but for a continent of nations, and it carried implicitly the assertion of all that logically follows from such independence. Foremost among the conditions insuring its vitality was propinquity, with its close effect upon in-terest. Policy, as well as war, is a business of positions. This maxim is perennial; a generation later it was emphasized in application, but not originated, by the peopling of the Pacific coast, the incidental discovery of gold in California, and the consequent enhanced importance of the Isthmus of Panama to the political strategy of nations. All this advanced the Monroe Doctrine on the path of development, giving broader sweep to the corollaries involved in the original proposition; but the transcendent positional interest of the United States no more needed demonstration in 1823 than in 1850, when the Clayton-Bulwer Treaty was made, or than now, when, not the Pacific coast only, but the Pacific Ocean and the Farther East, lend increased consequence to the isthmian communications.

Mahan, Meaning of the Monroe Doctrine, Great Epochs, Vol.5, p.140

The case of the United States is now stronger, but it is not clearer. Correlatively, the admission of its force by others has been progressive; gradual and practical, not at once or formal. Its formulation in the Monroe Doctrine has not obtained the full legislative sanction even of the country of its origin; and its present development there rests upon successive utterances of persons officially competent to define, but not of full authority to commit the nation to their particular expressions. So, too, international acquiescence in the position now taken has been a work of time, nor can there be asserted for it the final ratification of international agreement. The Monroe Doctrine remains a policy, not a law, either municipal or international; but it has advanced in scope and in acceptance. The one progress, as the other has been the result of growing strength—strength of numbers and of resources. Taken with position, these factors constitute national power as they do military advantage, which in the last analysis may always be resolved into two elements, force and position.

Mahan, Meaning of the Monroe Doctrine, Great Epochs, Vol.5, p.141

In the conjunction of these two factors is to be found the birth of the Monroe Doctrine and its development up to the present time. It is a product of national power dependent upon population and resources. These are the permanent factors of the Monroe Doctrine; and it cannot be too strongly realized by Americans that the permanence of the doctrine itself, as a matter of international consideration, depends upon the maintenance of both factors. To this serious truth record is borne by history, the potent mother of national warning and national encouragement. That the doctrine at its first enunciation should not at once have obtained, either assent or influence, even in its most limited expression, was entirely natural. Altho not without an antecedent history of conception and occasional utterance by American statesmen, and occasional utterance by American statesmen, its moment of birth was the announcement by Monroe; and it had then all the weakness of the new-born, consequent upon a national inadequacy to the display of organized strength which had been pathetically manifested but ten years before.

Mahan, Meaning of the Monroe Doctrine, Great Epochs, Vol.5, p.141

After the destruction of the rule of Spain in her colonies, except in Cuba and Porto Rico, Great Britain remained the one great nation besides the United States possest of extensive territory in America. She also was the one state that had had experience of us as an enemy, and known the weakness of our military system for offensive action. What more natural than that she should have welcomed the first promulgation of the doctrine, in its original scope directed apparently merely against a combination of Continental powers, the purposes of which were offensive to herself, and yet failed to heed a root principle which in progress of time should find its application to herself, contesting the expansion of her own influence in the hemisphere, as being part of the European system and therefore falling under the same condemnation? Yet even had she seen this, and fully appreciated the promise of strength to come, it was to be expected that she should for the meantime pursue her own policy, irrespective of the still distant future. It may be advantageous to retard that which must ultimately prevail; and at all events men who head the movements of nations are not able at once to abandon the traditions of the past and conform their action to new ideas as yet unassimilated by their people.

Mahan, Meaning of the Monroe Doctrine, Great Epochs, Vol.5, p.142

There is, then, this distinguishing feature of the Monroe Doctrine, which classifies it among principles of policy which are essentially permanent. From its correspondence to the nature of things, to its environment, it possest from the first a vitality which insured growth and development. Under such conditions it could not remain in application at the end of a half century just what it had been in terms at the beginning. Apprehended in leading features by American statesmen, and by them embraced with a conviction which the people shared—tho probably not fully understanding—it received from time to time, as successive exigencies arose to invoke assertion, definitions which enlarged its scope; sometimes consistently with its true spirit, sometimes apparently in excess of evident limitations, more rarely in defect of them….

Mahan, Meaning of the Monroe Doctrine, Great Epochs, Vol.5, p.143

It is vain to argue narrowly concerning what the Monroe Doctrine is, from the precise application made of it to any one particular emergency. Nor can there be finality of definition, antecedent to some national announcement, formally complete, which it is to be hoped will never be framed; but which, if it were, would doubtless remain liable to contrary interpretations, sharing therein a fate from which neither the enactments of legislatures nor the bull of a pope can claim exemption. The virtue of the Monroe Doctrine, without which it would die deservedly, is that, through its correspondence with the national necessities of the United States, it possesses an inherent principle of life, which adapts itself with the flexibility of a growing plan to the successive conditions it encounters. One of these conditions, of course, is the growing strength of the nation itself. As Doctor Johnson ungraciously said of taxing Americans for the first time, "We do not put a calf to the plow: we wait till he is an ox."

Mahan, Meaning of the Monroe Doctrine, Great Epochs, Vol.5, p.143

For these reasons it is more instructive, as to the present and future of the Monroe Doctrine, to consider its development by successive exhibitions in the past, than to strive to cage its free spirit within the bars of the definition attempted at any one moment.

Arrangement as to the Naval Force to Be Respectively

Maintained on the American Lakes

Title: Arrangement as to the Naval Force to Be Respectively

Maintained on the American Lakes

Author: Charles Bagot

Date: 1817

Source: Harvard Classics, Vol.43, pp.283-285

The following letters contain the standing agreement between Great Britain and the United States as to the naval force to be maintained by either country in the Great Lakes.

Bagot, Arrangement as to the Naval Force, Harvard Classics, Vol.43, p.283

Mr. Bagot to Mr. Rush.

WASHINGTON, April 28th, 1817.

THE undersigned, His Britannic Majesty's Envoy Extraordinary and Minister Plenipotentiary, has the honour to acquaint Mr. Rush, that having laid before His Majesty's Government the correspondence which passed last year between the Secretary of the Department of State and the undersigned upon the subject of a proposal to reduce the Naval Force of the respective countries upon the American Lakes, he has received commands of His Royal Highness, the Prince Regent, to acquaint the Government of the United States, that His Royal Highness is willing to accede to the proposition made to the undersigned by the Secretary of the Department of State in his note of the 2d of August last.

Bagot, Arrangement as to the Naval Force, Harvard Classics, Vol.43, p.283

His Royal Highness acting in the name and on the behalf of His Majesty, agrees, that the Naval force to be maintained upon the American Lakes by His Majesty and the Government of the United States shall henceforth be confined to the following vessels on each side. That is:—

Bagot, Arrangement as to the Naval Force, Harvard Classics, Vol.43, p.283

On Lake Ontario to one vessel not exceeding one hundred Tons burthen and armed with one eighteen pound cannon.

Bagot, Arrangement as to the Naval Force, Harvard Classics, Vol.43, p.284

On the upper lakes to two vessels not exceeding like burthen each and armed with like force.

Bagot, Arrangement as to the Naval Force, Harvard Classics, Vol.43, p.284

On the waters of Lake Champlain to one vessel not exceeding like burthen and armed with like force.

Bagot, Arrangement as to the Naval Force, Harvard Classics, Vol.43, p.284

And His Royal Highness agrees that all other armed vessels on these Lakes shall be forthwith dismantled, and that no other vessels of war shall be there built or armed.

Bagot, Arrangement as to the Naval Force, Harvard Classics, Vol.43, p.284

His Royal Highness further agrees that if either Party should hereafter be desirous of annulling this stipulation and should give notice to that effect to the other Party, it shall cease to be binding after the expiration of six months from the date of such notice.

Bagot, Arrangement as to the Naval Force, Harvard Classics, Vol.43, p.284

The undersigned has it in command from His Royal Highness, the Prince Regent, to acquaint the American Government, that His Royal Highness has issued orders to His Majesty's officers on the lakes directing that the Naval force so to be limited shall be restricted to such services as will in no respect interfere with the proper duties of the armed vessels of the other Party.

Bagot, Arrangement as to the Naval Force, Harvard Classics, Vol.43, p.284

The undersigned has the honour to renew to Mr. Rush the assurances of his highest consideration. CHARLES BAGOT.

Bagot, Arrangement as to the Naval Force, Harvard Classics, Vol.43, p.284

Mr. Rush to Mr. Bagot.

DEPARTMENT OF STATE,

April 29th, 1817.

The undersigned, acting Secretary of State, has the honor to acknowledge the receipt of Mr. Bagot's note of the 28th of this month informing him that, having laid before the Government of His Britannic Majesty, the correspondence which passed last year between the Secretary of State and himself upon the subject of a proposal to reduce the naval force of the two countries upon the American Lakes, he had received the commands of His Royal Highness, The Prince Regent, to inform this Government that His Royal Highness was willing to accede to the proposition made by the Secretary of State in his note of the second of August last.

Bagot, Arrangement as to the Naval Force, Harvard Classics, Vol.43, p.284–p.285

The undersigned has the honor to express to Mr. Bagot the satisfaction which the President feels at His Royal Highness, The Prince Regent's having acceded to the proposition of this Government as contained in the note alluded to. And in further answer to Mr. Bagot's note, the undersigned, by direction of the President, has the honor to state, that this Government, cherishing the same sentiments expressed in the note of the second of August, agrees, that the naval force to be maintained upon the Lakes of the United States and Great Britain shall henceforth, be confined to the following vessels on each side—that is:

Bagot, Arrangement as to the Naval Force, Harvard Classics, Vol.43, p.285

On Lake Ontario to one vessel not exceeding One Hundred Tons burden and armed with an eighteen pound cannon. On the Upper Lakes to two vessels not exceeding the like burden each, and armed with like force, and on the waters of Lake Champlain to one vessel not exceeding like burden and armed with like force.

Bagot, Arrangement as to the Naval Force, Harvard Classics, Vol.43, p.285

And it agrees that all other armed vessels on these Lakes, shall be forthwith dismantled, and that no other vessels of war shall be there built or armed. And it further agrees, that if either party should hereafter be desirous of annulling this stipulation and should give notice to that effect to the other party, it shall cease to be binding after the expiration of six months from the date of such notice.

Bagot, Arrangement as to the Naval Force, Harvard Classics, Vol.43, p.285

The undersigned, is also directed by The President to state, that proper orders will be forthwith issued by this Government to restrict the naval force thus limited to such services as will in no respect interfere with the proper duties of the armed vessels of the other party.

Bagot, Arrangement as to the Naval Force, Harvard Classics, Vol.43, p.285

The undersigned, eagerly avails himself of this opportunity to tender to Mr. Bagot the assurances of his distinguished consideration and respect.

RICHARD RUSH.

The Building of the Erie Canal

Title: The Building of the Erie Canal

Author: William H. Seward

Date: 1818-1825

Source: America, Vol.6, pp.13-24

Seward, at the time of the building of the Erie Canal (1818-25), was a lawyer in Auburn, New York. As the agent of what was known as the Holland Land Company, he laid the foundation of a comfortable fortune. In 1838 he was elected Governor of New York as a Whig, and served a second term. Going to the United States Senate in 1849, he at once took a prominent place in the Whig party councils, being a formidable candidate for President at the Chicago Convention which nominated Lincoln in 1860.

As early as 1850 Seward vigorously denounced slavery on the floor of the Senate, and startled the opposition by declaring that "there is a higher law than the Constitution."

He served in the Lincoln Cabinet as Secretary of State, continuing in that office during the administration of Andrew Johnson. He negotiated many important treaties with foreign governments, and directed the State Department over a critical period of American history.

Seward, Building of the Erie Canal, America, Vol.6, p.13

HISTORY will assign to Gouverneur Morris the merit of first suggesting a direct and continuous communication from Lake Erie to the Hudson. In 1800 he announced this idea from the shore of the Niagara River to a friend in Europe, in the following enthusiastic language:

Seward, Building of the Erie Canal, America, Vol.6, p.13–p.14

"Hundreds of large ships will, in no distant period, bound on the billows of these inland seas. Shall I lead your astonishment to the verge of incredulity? I will! Know then that one-tenth part of the expense borne by Britain in the last campaign would enable ships to sail from London through the Hudson into Lake Erie. As yet we only crawl along the outer shell of our country. The interior excels the part we inhabit in soil, in climate, in everything. The proudest empire of Europe is but a bauble compared with what America may be, must be."

Seward, Building of the Erie Canal, America, Vol.6, p.14

The praise awarded to Gouverneur Morris must be qualified by the fact that the scheme he conceived was that of a canal with a uniform declination, and without locks, from Lake Erie to the Hudson. Morris communicated his project to Simeon De Witt in 1803, by whom it was made known to James Geddes in 1804. It afterward became the subject of conversation between Mr. Geddes and Jesse Hawley, and this communication is supposed to have given rise to the series of essays written by Mr. Hawley, under the signature of "Hercules," in the Genesee Messenger, continued from October, 1807, until March, 1808, which first brought the public mind into familiarity with the subject. These essays, written in a jail, were the grateful return, by a patriot, to a country which punished him with imprisonment for being unable to pay debts owed to another citizen. They bore evidence of deep research and displayed singular vigor and comprehensiveness of thought, and traced with prophetic accuracy a large portion of the outline of the Erie Canal.

Seward, Building of the Erie Canal, America, Vol.6, p.14–p.15

In 1807 Albert Gallatin, then Secretary of the Treasury, in pursuance of a recommendation made by Thomas Jefferson, President of the United States, reported a plan for appropriating all the surplus revenues of the general government to the construction of canals and turnpike roads; and it embraced in one grand and comprehensive view, nearly without exception, all the works which have since been executed or attempted by the several States in the Union. This bold and statesmanlike, though premature, conception of that eminent citizen will remain the greatest among the many monuments of his forecast and wisdom.

Seward, Building of the Erie Canal, America, Vol.6, p.15

In 1808 Joshua Forman, a representative in the New York Assembly from Onondago County, submitted his memorable resolution:

Seward, Building of the Erie Canal, America, Vol.6, p.15

"Resolved, if the honorable the Senate concur herein, That a joint committee be appointed to take into consideration the propriety of exploring and causing an accurate survey to be made of the most eligible and direct route for a canal, to open a communication between the tide-waters of the Hudson River and Lake Erie, to the end that Congress may be enabled to appropriate such sums as may be necessary to the accomplishment of that great national object."

Seward, Building of the Erie Canal, America, Vol.6, p.15

In pursuance of a recommendation by the committee, a resolution unanimously passed both houses, directing the surveyor-general, Simeon De Witt, to cause an accurate survey to be made of the various routes proposed for the contemplated communication. But how little the magnitude of that undertaking was understood may be inferred from the fact that the appropriation made by the resolution to defray the expenses of its execution was limited to the sum of six hundred dollars.

Seward, Building of the Erie Canal, America, Vol.6, p.15

There was then no civil engineer in the State. James Geddes, a land surveyor, who afterward became one of our most distinguished engineers, by the force of native genius and application in mature years, leveled and surveyed under instructions from the surveyor-general, with a view to ascertain, first, whether a canal could be made from the Oneida Lake to Lake Ontario, at the mouth of Salmon Creek; secondly, whether navigation could be opened from Oswego Falls to Lake Ontario, along the Oswego River; thirdly, what was the best route for a canal from above the Falls of Niagara to Lewiston; and, fourthly, what was the most direct route, and what the practicability of a canal from Lake Erie to the Genesee River, and thence to the waters running east to the Seneca River. The topography of the country between the Seneca River and the Hudson was at that time comparatively better known.

Seward, Building of the Erie Canal, America, Vol.6, p.16–p.17

Mr. Geddes's report showed that a canal from Lake Erie to the Hudson was practicable, and could be made without serious difficulty. In 1810, on motion of Jonas Platt, of the Senate, who was distinguished throughout a pure and well-spent life by his zealous efforts to promote this great undertaking, Gouverneur Morris, De Witt Clinton, Stephen Van Rensselaer, Simeon De Witt, William North, Thomas Eddy, and Peter B. Porter were appointed commissioners "to explore the whole route for inland navigation from the Hudson River to Lake Ontario, and to Lake Erie." Gadwallader D. Colden, a contemporary historian, himself one of the earliest and ablest advocates of the canals, awards to Thomas Eddy the merit of having suggested this motion to Mr. Platt, and to both these gentlemen that of engaging De Witt Clinton's support, he being at that time a member of the Senate. Another writer commemorates the efficient and enlightened exertions, at this period, of Hugh Williamson. The canal policy found, at the same time, earnest and vigorous supporters in the American and Philosophical Register, edited by Dr. David Hosack and Dr. John W. Francis.

Seward, Building of the Erie Canal, America, Vol.6, p.17

The commissioners in March, 1811, submitted their report written by Gouverneur Morris, in which they showed the practicability and advantages of a continuous canal from Lake Erie to the Hudson, and stated their estimate of the cost at five million dollars, a sum which they ventured to predict would not exceed 5 per cent. of the value of the commodities which, within a century, would be annually transported on the proposed canal. We may pause here to remark that the annual value of the commodities carried on the canals, instead of requiring a century to attain the sum of one hundred millions, reached that limit in twenty-five years….

Seward, Building of the Erie Canal, America, Vol.6, p.17–p.18

The ground was broken for the construction of the Erie Canal on July 4, 1817, at Rome, with ceremonies marking the public estimation of that great event. De Witt Clinton, having just before been elected to the chief magistracy of the State, and being president of the Board of Canal Commissioners, enjoyed the high satisfaction of attending, with his associates, on the auspicious occasion….

Seward, Building of the Erie Canal, America, Vol.6, p.18

In 1819 Governor Clinton announced to the Legislature that the progress of the public works equaled the most sanguine expectations and that the canal fund was flourishing. He recommended the prosecution of the entire Erie Canal. Enlarging upon the benefits of internal navigation, he remarked that he looked to a time, not far distant, when the State would be able to improve the navigation of the Susquehanna, the Allegheny, the Genesee, and the St. Lawrence; to assist in connecting the waters of the Great Lakes and the Mississippi; to form a junction between the Erie Canal and Lake Ontario through the Oswego River; and to promote the laudable intention of Pennsylvania to unite Seneca Lake with the Susquehanna, deducing arguments in favor of such enterprises, from the immediate commercial advantages of extended navigation, as well as from its tendency to improve the condition of society and strengthen the bonds of the Union….

Seward, Building of the Erie Canal, America, Vol.6, p.18–p.19

On October 23, 1819, the portion of the Erie Canal between Utica and Rome was opened to navigation, and on November 24th the Champlain Canal admitted the passage of boats. Thus in less than two years and five months one hundred twenty miles of artificial navigation had been finished, and the physical as well as the financial practicability of uniting the waters of the western and northern lakes with the Atlantic Ocean was established to the conviction of the most incredulous.

Seward, Building of the Erie Canal, America, Vol.6, p.19

Governor Clinton announced these gratifying results to the Legislature in 1820, and admonished that body that while efforts directly hostile to internal improvements would in future be feeble, it became a duty to guard against insidious enmity; and that in proportion as the Erie Canal advanced toward completion would be the ease of combining a greater mass of population against the further extension of the system. Attempts, he remarked, had already been made to arrest the progress of the Erie Canal west of the Seneca River, and he anticipated their renewal when it should reach the Genesee. But the honor and prosperity of the State demanded the completion of the whole of the work, and it would be completed in five years if the representatives of the people were just to themselves and to posterity….

Seward, Building of the Erie Canal, America, Vol.6, p.19–p.20

In November, 1820, Governor Clinton congratulated the Legislature upon the progress of the public works. He urged the adoption of plenary measures to complete the Erie Canal within three years, enforcing the recommendation by the consideration than Ohio would thereby be encouraged to pursue her noble attempt to unite the waters of Lake Erie with the Ohio River. The canal commissioners showed in their report that the Erie Canal was navigable from Utica to the Seneca River, a distance of ninety-six miles, and that its tolls during four months had amounted to five thousand two hundred forty-four dollars….

Seward, Building of the Erie Canal, America, Vol.6, p.20

On January 1, 1823, the Government went into operation under the new State constitution, Joseph C. Yates having been elected to the office of governor. The constitution declared that rates of toll not less than those set forth by the canal commissioners in their report of 1821 should be collected on the canals, and that the revenues then pledged to the canal fund should not be diminished nor diverted before the complete payment of the principal and interest of the canal debt, a pledge which placed the public credit on an impregnable basis.

Seward, Building of the Erie Canal, America, Vol.6, p.20–p.21

It appeared at the commencement of the session of the Legislature in 1823 that the public debt amounted to five million four hundred twenty-three thousand five hundred dollars, of which the sum of four million two hundred forty-three thousand five hundred dollars was for moneys borrowed to construct the canals. The commissioners reported that boats had passed on the Erie Canal a distance of more than two hundred twenty miles, and that as early as July 1st ensuing that channel would be navigable from Schenectady to Rochester. The tolls collected in 1822 upon the Erie Canal were sixty thousand, and upon the Champlain Canal three thousand six hundred twenty-five dollars. The improvements of the outlet of Onondaga Lake had been completed, and the Glens Falls feeder was in course of rapid construction. Among the benefits already resulting from the Erie Canal, the commissioners showed that the price of wheat west of the Seneca River had advanced 50 per cent. To appreciate this result, it is necessary to understand that wheat is the chief staple of New York, and that far the largest portion of wheat-growing in this State lies west of the Seneca River. Attempts were again made in both branches to provide for collecting the local tax. The proposition was lost in the Senate by a vote of nineteen to ten, and in the Assembly by a division of sixty-five to thirty-one.

Seward, Building of the Erie Canal, America, Vol.6, p.21

The Legislature expressed by resolution a favorable opinion of the inland navigation which New Jersey proposed to establish between the Delaware and Hudson rivers. A loan of one million five hundred thousand dollars was authorized for canal purposes, a survey of the Oswego River was directed to be made, and estimates of the expense of completing the canal from Salina to Lake Ontario. An association to construct such a canal was incorporated, and authority given to the commissioners to take the work when completed, leaving the use of its surplus waters to the corporators; and the eastern termination of the Erie Canal was fixed at Albany.

Seward, Building of the Erie Canal, America, Vol.6, p.21

The canal commissioners reported in 1824 that the Champlain Canal was finished; that both canals had produced revenues during the previous year of one hundred fifty-three thousand dollars; and that the commissioners had decided that the Erie Canal ought to be united with the Niagara River at Black Rock and terminate at Buffalo….

Seward, Building of the Erie Canal, America, Vol.6, p.22

On the reassembling of the Legislature in January, 1825, De Witt Clinton, who, in November of the preceding year, had been again called to the office of governor, congratulated the Legislature upon the prospect of the immediate completion of the Erie Canal, and the reasonable certainty that the canal debt might soon be satisfied, without a resort to taxation, without a discontinuance of efforts for similar improvements, and without staying the dispensing hand of government in favor of education, literature, science, and productive industry. Earnestly renewing his recommendation that a board of internal improvement should be instituted, he remarked that the field of operations was immense, and the harvest of honor and profit unbounded, and that, if the resources of the State should be wisely applied and forcibly directed, all proper demands for important avenues of communication might be satisfied.

Seward, Building of the Erie Canal, America, Vol.6, p.22–p.23

The primary design of our system of artificial navigation, which was to open a communication between the Atlantic and the Great Lakes, was already, he observed, nearly accomplished, but would not be fully realized until Lake Ontario should be connected with the Erie Canal and with Lake Champlain, and the importance of these improvements would be appreciated when it was understood that the lake coast, not only of this State, but of the United States, was more extensive than their seacoast. The next leading object, he remarked, should be to unite the minor lakes and secondary rivers with the canals and to effect such a connection between the bays on the seacoast as would insure the safety of boat navigation against the tempests of the ocean in time of peace, and against the depredations of an enemy in time of war.

Seward, Building of the Erie Canal, America, Vol.6, p.23

The public debt for canals in 1825 amounted to seven and a half million dollars—all of which, it must be recorded to the honor of the State and the country, had been borrowed of American capitalists—and the annual interest thereon, to three hundred seventy-six thousand dollars. The governor estimated that the tolls for the year would exceed three hundred ten thousand dollars; that the duties on salt would amount to one hundred thousand dollars, and that these, with the other income of the canal fund, would produce a revenue exceeding, by three hundred thousand dollars, the interest on the canal debt. He stated also that ten thousand boats had passed the junction of the canals near tide-water during the previous season. Remarking that the creative power of internal improvement was manifested in the flourishing villages which had sprung up or been extended; in the increase of towns; and, above all, in the prosperity of the city of New York. And noticing the fact that three thousand buildings had been erected in that city during the preceding year, Clinton predicted that in fifteen years its population would be doubled, and that in thirty years that metropolis would be the third city in the civilized world, and the second, if not the first, in commerce….

Seward, Building of the Erie Canal, America, Vol.6, p.24

On October 26, 1825, the Erie Canal was in a navigable condition throughout its entire length, affording an uninterrupted passage from Lake Erie to tide-water in the Hudson. Thus in eight years artificial communications four hundred twenty-eight miles in length had been opened between the more important inland waters and the commercial emporium of the State. This auspicious consummation was celebrated by a telegraphic discharge of cannon, commencing at Lake Erie, and continued along the banks of the canal and of the Hudson, announcing to the city of New York the entrance on the bosom of the canal of the first barge that was to arrive at the commercial emporium from the American Mediterraneans.

xxxThe Emancipation of South America, Henry Clay, March 24, 1818

The Emancipation of South America

Title: The Emancipation of South America

Author: Henry Clay

Date: March 24, 1818

Source: The World's Famous Orations, Vol.9, pp.76-86

Henry Clay Born in 1777, died in 1852; elected to the United States Senate in 1806, and again in 1810; elected to Congress in 1811-21, and again in 1823-25, serving three terms as Speaker; Peace Commissioner at Ghent in 1814; defeated for the Presidency in 1824; Secretary of State in 1825; elected United States Senator in 1831 and again in 1849; defeated for the Presidency in 1832 and in 1844; chief author of the compromises of 1820 and 1850.]

This document is taken from a speech made in the House of Representatives, March 24, 1818.

Clay, The Emancipation of South America, Famous Orations, Vol.9, p.76

SPAIN has undoubtedly given us abundant and just cause for war. But it is not every cause of war that should lead to war. War is one of those dreadful scourges that so shakes the foundation of society, overturns or changes the character of governments, interrupts or destroys the pursuits of private happiness, brings, in short, misery and wretchedness in so many forms, and at last is, in its issue, so doubtful and hazardous that nothing but dire necessity can justify and appeal to arms. If we are to have war with Spain, I have, however, no hesitation in saying that no mode of bringing it about could be less fortunate than that of seizing, at this time, upon her adjoining province. There was a time, under certain circumstances, when we might have occupied East Florida with safety; had we then taken it, our posture in the negotiation with Spain would have been totally different from what it is.

Clay, The Emancipation of South America, Famous Orations, Vol.9, p.77

But we have permitted that time, not with my consent, to pass by unimproved. If we were now to seize upon Florida after a great change in those circumstances, and after declaring our intention to acquiesce in the procrastination desired by Spain, in what light should we be viewed by foreign powers—particularly Great Britain? We have already been accused of inordinate ambition, and of seeking to aggrandize ourselves by an extension, on all sides, of our limits. Should we not, by such an act of violence, give color to the accusation? No, Mr. Chairman; if we are to be involved in a war with Spain, let us have the credit of disinterestedness. Let us put her yet more in the wrong. Let us command the respect which is never withheld from those who act a noble and generous part. I hope to communicate to the committee the conviction which I so strongly feel, that the adoption of the amendment which I intend to propose would not hazard, in the slightest degree, the peace of the country. But if that peace is to be endangered, I would infinitely rather it should be for our exerting the right appertaining to every State, of acknowledging the independence of another State, than for the seizure of a province, which sooner or later we must acquire.

Clay, The Emancipation of South America, Famous Orations, Vol.9, p.78

In contemplating the great struggle in which Spanish America is now engaged, our attention is fixed first by the immensity and character of the country which Spain seeks again to subjugate. Stretching on the Pacific ocean from about the fortieth degree of north latitude to about the fifty-fifth degree of south latitude, and extending from the mouth of the Rio del Norte (exclusive of East Florida), around the Gulf of Mexico and along the South Atlantic to near Cape Horn, it is nearly five thousand miles in length, and in some places nearly three thousand in breadth. Within this vast region we behold the most sublime and interesting objects of creation, the richest mines of the precious metals, and the choicest productions of the earth. We behold there a spectacle still more interesting and sublime—the glorious spectacle of eighteen millions of people struggling to burst their chains and to be free. When we take a little nearer and more detailed view, we perceive that nature has, as it were, ordained that this people and this country shall ultimately constitute several different nations.

Clay, The Emancipation of South America, Famous Orations, Vol.9, p.78

Leaving the United States on the north, we come to New Spain, or the viceroyalty of Mexico on the south; passing by Guatemala, we reach the viceroyalty of New Granada, the late captain-generalship of Venezuela, and Guiana, lying on the east side of the Andes. Stepping over the Brazils, we arrive at the united provinces of La Plata, and crossing the Andes we find Chili on their west side, and, further north, the viceroyalty of Lima, or Peru. Each of these several parts is sufficient in itself in point of limits to constitute a powerful State; and, in point of population, that which has the smallest contains enough to make it respectable. Throughout all the extent of that great portion of the world which I have attempted thus hastily to describe, the spirit of revolt against the dominion of Spain has manifested itself. The Revolution has been attended with various degrees of success in the several parts of Spanish America. In some it has been already crowned, as I shall endeavor to show, with complete success, and in all I am persuaded that independence has struck such deep root, that the power of Spain can never eradicate it. What are the causes of this great movement?

Clay, The Emancipation of South America, Famous Orations, Vol.9, p.79

Three hundred years ago, upon the ruins of the thrones of Montezuma and the Incas of Peru. Spain erected the most stupendous system of colonial despotism that the world has ever seen—the most vigorous, the most exclusive. The great principle and object of this system have been to render one of the largest portions of the world exclusively subservient, in all its faculties, to the interests of an inconsiderable spot in Europe. To effectuate this aim of her policy, she locked up Spanish America from all the rest of the world, and prohibited, under the severest penalties, any foreigner from entering any part of it. To keep the natives themselves ignorant of each other and of the strength and resources of the several parts of her American possessions, she next prohibited the inhabitants of one viceroyalty or government from visiting those of another; so that the inhabitants of Mexico, for example, were not allowed to enter the viceroyalty of New Granada. The agriculture of those vast regions was so regulated and restrained as to prevent all collision with the agriculture of the peninsula. Where nature, by the character and composition of the soil, has commanded, the abominable system of Spain has forbidden, the growth of certain articles. Thus the olive and the vine, to which Spanish America is so adapted, are prohibited wherever their culture can interfere with the olive and the vine peninsula.

Clay, The Emancipation of South America, Famous Orations, Vol.9, p.80

The commerce of the country, in the direction and objects of the exports and imports, is also subjected to the narrow and selfish views of Spain, and fettered by the odious spirit of monopoly existing in Cadiz. She has sought, by scattering discord among the several castes of her American population, and by a debasing course of education, to perpetuate her oppression. Whatever concerns public law or the science of government, all writings upon political economy, or that tend to give vigor and freedom and expansion of the intellect, are prohibited. Gentlemen would be astonished by the long list of distinguished authors whom she proscribes, to be found in Depon's and other works. A main feature in her policy is that which constantly elevates the European and depresses the American character. Out of upward of seven hundred and fifty viceroys and captains-general, whom she has appointed since the conquest of America, about eighteen only have been from the body of her American population. On all occasions, she seeks to raise and promote her European subjects, and to degrade and humiliate the Creoles. Wherever in America her sway extends, everything seems to pine and wither beneath its baneful influence. The richest regions of the earth, man, his happiness and his education, all the fine faculties of his soul, are regulated and modified and molded to suit the execrable purposes of an inexorable despotism.

Clay, The Emancipation of South America, Famous Orations, Vol.9, p.81

Such is the brief and imperfect picture of the state of things in Spanish America in 1808, when the famous transactions of Bayonne occurred. The king of Spain and the Indies (for Spanish America has always constituted an integral part of the Spanish Empire) abdicated his throne and became a voluntary captive. Even at this day one does not know whether he should most condemn the baseness and perfidy of the one party, or despise the meanness and imbecility of the other. If the obligation of obedience and allegiance existed on the part of the Colonies to the king of Spain, it was founded on the duty of protection which he owed them. By disqualifying himself for the performance of this duty, they became released from that obligation. The monarchy was dissolved, and each integral part had a right to seek its own happiness by the institution of any new government adapted to its wants. Joseph Bonaparte, the successor de facto of Ferdinand, recognized this right on the part of the Colonies, and recommended them to establish their independence.

Clay, The Emancipation of South America, Famous Orations, Vol.9, p.82

Thus upon the ground of strict right, upon the footing of a mere legal question, governed by forensic rules, the Colonies, being absolved by the acts of the parent country from the duty of subjection to it, had an indisputable right to set up for themselves. But I take a broader and a bolder position. I maintain that an oppressed people are authorized, whenever they can, to rise and break their fetters. This was the great principle of the English Revolution. It was the great principle of our own. Vattel, if authority were wanting, expressly supports this right. We must pass sentence of condemnation upon the founders of our liberty, say that you were rebels, traitors, and that we are at this moment legislating without competent powers, before we can condemn the cause of Spanish America. Our Revolution was mainly directed against the mere theory of tyranny. We had suffered but comparatively little; we had, in some respects, been kindly treated; but our intrepid and intelligent fathers saw, in the usurpation of the power to levy an inconsiderable tax, the long train of oppressive acts that were to follow. They rose; they breasted the storm; they achieved our freedom. Spanish America for centuries has been doomed to the practical effects of an odious tyranny. If we were justified, she is more than justified.

Clay, The Emancipation of South America, Famous Orations, Vol.9, p.83

In the establishment of the independence of Spanish America, the United States have the deepest interest. I have no hesitation in asserting my firm belief that there is no question in the foreign policy of this country, which has ever arisen, or which I can conceive as ever occurring, in the decision of which we have had or can have so much at stake. This interest concerns our politics, our commerce, our navigation. There can not be a doubt that Spanish America, once independent, whatever may be the form of government established in its several parts, these governments will be animated by an American feeling, and guided by an American policy. They will obey the laws of the system of the new world, of which they will compose a part, in contradistinction to that of Europe. Without the influence of that vortex in Europe, the balance of power between its several parts, the preservation of which has often drenched Europe in blood, America is sufficiently remote to contemplate the new wars which are to afflict that quarter of the globe, as a calm if not a cold and indifferent spectator. In relation to those wars, the several parts of America will generally stand neutral. And as, during the period when they rage, it will be important that a liberal system of neutrality should be adopted and observed, all America will be interested in maintaining and enforcing such a system. The independence of Spanish America, then, is an interest of primary consideration.

Clay, The Emancipation of South America, Famous Orations, Vol.9, p.84

But it is sometimes said that they are too ignorant and too superstitious to admit of the existence of free government. This charge of ignorance is often urged by persons themselves actually ignorant of the real condition of that people. I deny the alleged fact of ignorance; I deny the inference from that fact, if it were true, that they want capacity for free government. And I refuse assent to the further conclusion if the fact were true, and the inference just, that we are to be indifferent to their fate. All the writers of the most established authority, Depons, Humboldt, and others, concur in assigning to the people of Spanish America great quickness, genius, and particular aptitude for the acquisition of the exact sciences, and others which they have been allowed to cultivate. In astronomy, geology, mineralogy, chemistry, botany, and so forth, they are allowed to make distinguished proficiency. They justly boast of their Abzate, Velasques, and Gama, and other illustrious contributors to science. They have nine universities, and in the City of Mexico, it is affirmed by Humboldt, there are more solid scientific establishments than in any city even of North America. I would refer to the message of the supreme director of La Plata, which I shall hereafter have occasion to use for another purpose, as a model of fine composition of a State paper, challenging a comparison with any, the most celebrated, that ever issued from the pens of Jefferson or Madison.

Clay, The Emancipation of South America, Famous Orations, Vol.9, p.85

It is the doctrine of thrones that man is too ignorant to govern himself. Their partizans assert his incapacity, in reference to all nations; if they can not command universal assent to the proposition, it is then demanded to particular nations; and our pride and our presumption too often make converts of us. I contend, that it is to arraign the dispositions of Providence Himself, to suppose that He has created beings incapable of governing themselves, and to be trampled on by kings. Self-government is the natural government of man, and for proof I refer to the aborigines of our own land. Were I to speculate in hypotheses unfavorable to human liberty, my speculations should be founded rather upon the vices, refinements, or density of population. Crowded together in compact masses, even if they were philosophers, the contagion of the passions is communicated and caught, and the effect too often, I admit, is the overthrow of liberty. Dispersed over such an immense space as that on which the people of Spanish America are spread, their physical, and I believe, also, their moral condition, both favor their liberty.

Clay, The Emancipation of South America, Famous Orations, Vol.9, p.85

With regard to their superstition, they worship the same God with us. Their prayers are offered up in their temples to the same Redeemer whose intercession we expect to save us. Nor is there anything in the Catholic religion unfavorable to freedom. All religions united with government are more or less inimical to liberty. All, separated from government, are compatible with liberty. If the people of Spanish America have not already gone as far in religious toleration as we have, the difference in their condition from ours should not be forgotten. Everything is progressive; and, in time, I hope to see them imitating in this respect our example. But grant that the people of Spanish America are ignorant and incompetent for free government, to whom is that ignorance to be ascribed? Is it not to the execrable system of Spain, which she seeks again to establish and to perpetuate? So far from chilling our hearts, it ought to increase our solicitude for unfortunate brethren. It ought to animate us to desire the redemption of the minds and bodies of unborn millions from the brutifying effects of a system whose tendency is to stifle the faculties of the soul and to degrade man to the level of beasts. I would invoke the spirits of our departed fathers. Was it for yourselves only that you nobly fought? No, no! It was the chains that were forging for your posterity that made you fly to arms, and, scattering the elements of these chains to the winds, you transmitted to us the rich inheritance of liberty.

Defining the Powers of the Federal Government

Title: Defining the Powers of the Federal Government

Author: John Marshall

Date: 1819

Source: America, Vol.5, pp.297-304

In writing the decision in the celebrated bank case of McCulloch vs. Maryland, from which this extract is taken, Chief Justice Marshall clearly defines the relations between the State and Federal governments. Holding to Federalist theories, this most famous of American jurists has never been excelled in the capacity to present a legal proposition from every angle, resolving an argument by the most subtle analysis into its ultimate principles, and applying them to the decision of the case in question.

As Chief-Justice for thirty-four years, he so expounded the Constitution as to make clear for the first time the nature of the National government and to forecast the lines along which, in actual development as well as in judicial interpretation, the nation was to proceed. The case in which Marshall delivered this decision was argued in 1819.

Marshall, Defining the Powers of Federal Government, America, Vol.5, p.297

THE first question made in the cause is, has Congress power to incorporate a bank?…

Marshall, Defining the Powers of Federal Government, America, Vol.5, p.297

This government is acknowledged by all to be one of enumerated powers….

Marshall, Defining the Powers of Federal Government, America, Vol.5, p.297–p.298

Among the enumerated powers, we do not find that of establishing a bank or creating a corporation. But there is no phrase in the instrument which, like the Articles of Confederation, excludes incidental or implied powers; and which requires that every thing granted shall be expressly and minutely described…. A Constitution, to contain an accurate detail of all the subdivisions of which its great powers will admit, and of all the means by which they may be carried into execution, would partake of the prolixity of a legal code, and could scarcely be embraced by the human mind. It would probably never be understood by the public. Its nature, therefore, requires, that only its great outlines should be marked, its important objects designated, and the minor ingredients which compose those objects be deducted from the nature of the objects themselves. That this idea was entertained by the framers of the American Constitution, is not only to be inferred from the nature of the instrument, but from the language. Why else were some of the limitations, found in the 9th section of the 1st article, introduced? It is also, in some degree warranted by their having omitted to use any restrictive term which might prevent its receiving a fair and just interpretation. In considering this question, then, we must never forget, that it is a Constitution we are expounding.

Marshall, Defining the Powers of Federal Government, America, Vol.5, p.298

Although, among the enumerated powers of government, we do not find the word "bank," or "incorporation," we find the great powers to lay and collect taxes; to borrow money; to regulate commerce; to declare and conduct a war; and to raise and support armies and navies. The sword and the purse, all the external relations, and no inconsiderable portion of the industry of the nation, are intrusted to its government.

Marshall, Defining the Powers of Federal Government, America, Vol.5, p.298–p.299

It can never be pretended that these vast powers draw after them others of inferior importance, merely because they are inferior. Such an idea can never be advanced. But it may, with great reason, be contended, that a government, intrusted with such ample powers, on the due execution of which the happiness and prosperity of the nation so vitally depends, must also be intrusted with ample means for their execution. The power being given, it is the interest of the nation to facilitate its execution. It can never be their interest, and cannot be presumed to have been their intention, to clog and embarrass its execution by withholding the most appropriate means. Throughout this vast Republic, from the St. Croix to the Gulf of Mexico, from the Atlantic to the Pacific, revenue is to be collected and expended, armies are to be marched and supported. The exigencies of the nation may require, that the treasure raised in the North should be be transported to the South, that raised in the East conveyed to the West, or that this order should be reversed. Is that construction of the Constitution to be preferred which would render these operations difficult, hazardous, and expensive? Can we adopt that construction, (unless the words imperiously require it,) which would impute to the framers of that instrument, when granting these powers for the public good, the intention of impeding their exercise by withholding a choice of means? . . .

Marshall, Defining the Powers of Federal Government, America, Vol.5, p.299–p.300

It is not denied, that the powers given to the government imply the ordinary means of execution. That, for example, of raising revenue, and applying it to national purposes, is admitted to imply the power of conveying money from place to place, as the exigencies of the nation may require, and of employing the usual means of conveyance. But it is denied that the government has its choice of means; or, that it may employ the most convenient means, if, to employ them, it be necessary to erect a corporation….

Marshall, Defining the Powers of Federal Government, America, Vol.5, p.300

. . . The power of creating a corporation is never used for its own sake, but for the purpose of effecting something else. No sufficient reason is, therefore, perceived, why it may not pass as incidental to those powers which are expressly given, if it be a direct mode of executing them.

Marshall, Defining the Powers of Federal Government, America, Vol.5, p.300

But the Constitution of the United States has not left the right of Congress to employ the necessary means, for the execution of the powers conferred on the government, to general reasoning. To its enumeration of powers is added that of making "all laws which shall be necessary and proper, for carrying into execution the foregoing powers, and all other powers vested by this Constitution, in the government of the United States, or in any department thereof."

Marshall, Defining the Powers of Federal Government, America, Vol.5, p.300

The counsel for the State of Maryland have urged various arguments, to prove that this clause, though in terms a grant of power, is not so in effect; but is really restrictive of the general right, which might otherwise be implied, of selecting means for executing the enumerated powers….

Marshall, Defining the Powers of Federal Government, America, Vol.5, p.300–p.301

But the argument on which most reliance is placed, is drawn from the peculiar language of this clause. Congress is not empowered by it to make all laws, which may have relation to the powers conferred on the government, but such only as may be "necessary and proper" for carrying them into execution. The word "necessary" is considered as controlling the whole sentence, and as limiting the right to pass laws for the execution of the granted powers, to such as are indispensable, and without which the power would be nugatory. That it excludes the choice of means, and leaves to Congress, in each case, that only which is most direct and simple.

Marshall, Defining the Powers of Federal Government, America, Vol.5, p.301

Is it true, that this is the sense in which the word "necessary" is always used? Does it always import an absolute physical necessity, so strong, that one thing, to which another may be termed necessary, cannot exist without that other? We think it does not…. It is essential to just construction, that many words which import something excessive, should be understood in a more mitigated sense—in that sense which common usage justifies. The word necessary is of this description . . . in its construction, the subject, the context, the intention of the person using them, are all to be taken into view.

Marshall, Defining the Powers of Federal Government, America, Vol.5, p.301–p.302

Let this be done in the case under consideration. The subject is the execution of those great powers on which the welfare of a nation essentially depends. It must have been the intention of those who gave these powers, to insure, as far as human prudence could insure, their beneficial execution. This could not be done by confining the choice of means to such narrow limits as not to leave it in the power of Congress to adopt any which might be appropriate, and which were conducive to the end. This provision is made in a constitution intended to endure for ages to come, and, consequently, to be adapted to the various crises of human affairs. To have prescribed the means by which government should, in all future time, execute its powers, would have been to change, entirely, the character of the instrument, and give it the properties of a legal code. It would have been an unwise attempt to provide, by immutable rules, for exigencies which, if foreseen at all, must have been seen dimly, and which can be best provided for as they occur. To have declared that the best means shall not be used, but those alone without which the power given would be nugatory, would have been to deprive the legislature of the capacity to avail itself of experience, to exercise its reason, and to accommodate its legislation to circumstances. If we apply this principle of construction to any of the powers of the government, we shall find it so pernicious in its operation that we shall be compelled to discard it….

Marshall, Defining the Powers of Federal Government, America, Vol.5, p.302–p.303

Take, for example, the power "to establish post-offices and post-roads." This power is executed by the single act of making the establishment. But, from this has been inferred the power and duty of carrying the mail along the post-road, from one postoffice to another. And, from this implied power, has again been inferred the right to punish those who steal letters from the post-office, or rob the mail. It may be said, with some plausibility, that the right to carry the mail, and to punish those who rob it, is not indispensably necessary to the establishment of a post-office and post-road. This right is, indeed, essential to the beneficial exercise of the power, but not indispensably necessary to its existence….

Marshall, Defining the Powers of Federal Government, America, Vol.5, p.303

If this limited construction of the word "necessary" must be abandoned in order to punish, whence is derived the rule which would reinstate it, when the government would carry its powers into execution by means not vindictive in their nature? If the word necessary means "needful, requisite, essential," "conducive to," in order to let in the power of punishment for the infraction of law, why is it not equally comprehensive when required to authorize the use of means which facilitate the execution of the powers of government without the infliction of punishment? . . .

Marshall, Defining the Powers of Federal Government, America, Vol.5, p.303

But the argument which most conclusively demonstrates the error of the construction contended for by the counsel for the State of Maryland, is founded on the intention of the convention, as manifested in the whole clause. To waste time and argument in proving that, without it, Congress might carry its powers into execution, would be not much less idle than to hold a lighted taper to the sun….

Marshall, Defining the Powers of Federal Government, America, Vol.5, p.303–p.304

The result of the most careful and attentive consideration bestowed upon this clause is, that if it does not enlarge, it cannot be construed to restrain the powers of Congress, or to impair the right of the legislature to exercise its best judgment in the selection of measures, to carry into execution the constitutional powers of the government. If no other motive for its insertion can be suggested, a sufficient one is found in the desire to remove all doubts respecting the right to legislate on that vast mass of incidental powers which must be involved in the constitution, if that instrument be not a splendid bauble.

Marshall, Defining the Powers of Federal Government, America, Vol.5, p.304

We admit, as all must admit, that the powers of the government are limited, and that its limits are not to be transcended. But we think the sound construction of the Constitution must allow to the national legislature that discretion, with respect to the means by which the powers it confers are to be carried into execution, which will enable that body to perform the high duties assigned to it, in the manner most beneficial to the people. Let the end be legitimate, let it be within the scope of the Constitution, and all means which are appropriate, which are plainly adapted to that end, which are not prohibited, but consist with the letter and spirit of the Constitution, are constitutional.

Opinion of Chief Justice Marshall in the Case of

McCulloch vs. the State of Maryland

Title: Opinion of Chief Justice Marshall in the Case of

McCulloch vs. the State of Maryland

Author: John Marshall

Date: 1819

Source: Harvard Classics, Vol.43, p.222

John Marshall (1755-1835), third Chief Justice of the Supreme Court of the United States, and the greatest of American judges, laid down in the following opinion certain principles which have come to be accepted as fundamental in all questions touching the respective powers of the Federal government and the State legislatures. In 1816, Congress had incorporated the Bank of the United States; and in 1818, the legislature of Maryland had passed a law taxing "all Banks, or branches thereof, in the State of Maryland, not chartered by the legislature." The purpose of this law was to prevent the United States Bank from doing business in the State. McCulloch, the Cashier of the Baltimore branch, refused to pay the tax, was sued in the State courts, and lost. The case was appealed to the United States Supreme Court, where the Maryland decision was unanimously reversed. Chief Justice Marshall, in writing the opinion of the court, is regarded as having established certain principles on which depend "the stability of our peculiar dual system of national and local governments."

Marshall's Opinion in McCulloch v. Maryland, Harvard Classics, Vol.43, p.222

MR. Chief Justice Marshall delivered the opinion of the Court.

Marshall's Opinion in McCulloch v. Maryland, Harvard Classics, Vol.43, p.222–p.223

In the case now to be determined, the defendant, a sovereign State, denies the obligation of a law enacted by the legislature of the Union, and the plaintiff, on his part, contests the validity of an act which has been passed by the legislature of that State. The constitution of our country, in its most interesting and vital parts, is to be considered; the conflicting powers of the government of the Union and of its members, as marked in that constitution, are to be discussed; and an opinion given, which may essentially influence the great operations of the government. No tribunal can approach such a question without a deep sense of its importance, and of the awful responsibility involved in its decision. But it must be decided peacefully, or remain a source of hostile legislation, perhaps of hostility of a still more serious nature; and if it is to be so decided, by this tribunal alone can the decision be made. On the Supreme Court of the United States has the Constitution of our Country devolved this important duty.

Marshall's Opinion in McCulloch v. Maryland, Harvard Classics, Vol.43, p.223

The first question made in the cause is, has Congress power to incorporate a bank?

Marshall's Opinion in McCulloch v. Maryland, Harvard Classics, Vol.43, p.223

It has been truly said, that this can scarcely be considered as an open question, entirely unprejudiced by the former proceedings of the nation respecting it. The principle now contested was introduced at a very early period of our history, has been recognised by many successive legislatures, and has been acted upon by the judicial department, in cases of peculiar delicacy, as a law of undoubted obligation.

Marshall's Opinion in McCulloch v. Maryland, Harvard Classics, Vol.43, p.223

It will not be denied that a bold and daring usurpation might be resisted, after an acquiescence still longer and more complete than this. But it is conceived that a doubtful question, one on which human reason may pause, and the human judgment be suspended, in the decision of which the great principles of liberty are not concerned, but the respective powers of those who are equally the representatives of the people, are to be adjusted; if not put at rest by the practice of the government, ought to receive a considerable impression from that practice. An exposition of the Constitution, deliberately established by legislative acts, on the faith of which an immense property has been advanced, ought not to be lightly disregarded.

Marshall's Opinion in McCulloch v. Maryland, Harvard Classics, Vol.43, p.223–p.224

The power now contested was exercised by the first Congress elected under the present Constitution. The bill for Incorporating the bank of the United States did not steal upon an unsuspecting legislature, and pass unobserved. Its principle was completely understood, and was opposed with equal zeal and ability. After being resisted, first in the fair and open field of debate, and afterwards in the executive cabinet, with as much persevering talent as any measure has ever experienced, and being supported by arguments which convinced minds as pure and as intelligent as this country can boast, it became a law. The original act was permitted to expire; but a short experience of the embarrassments to which the refusal to revive it exposed the government, convinced those who were most prejudiced against the measure of its necessity, and induced the passage of the present law. It would require no ordinary share of intrepidity to assert that a measure adopted under these circumstances was a bold and plain usurpation, to which the Constitution gave no countenance.

Marshall's Opinion in McCulloch v. Maryland, Harvard Classics, Vol.43, p.224

These observations belong to the cause; but they are not made under the impression that, were the question entirely new, the law would be found irreconcilable with the Constitution.

Marshall's Opinion in McCulloch v. Maryland, Harvard Classics, Vol.43, p.224

In discussing this question, the counsel for the State of Maryland have deemed it of some importance, in the construction of the Constitution, to consider that instrument not as emanating from the people, but as the act of sovereign and independent States. The powers of the general government, it has been said, are delegated by the States, who alone are truly sovereign; and must be exercised in subordination to the States, who alone possess supreme dominion.

Marshall's Opinion in McCulloch v. Maryland, Harvard Classics, Vol.43, p.224

It would be difficult to sustain this proposition. The Convention which framed the Constitution was indeed elected by the Stat' legislatures. But the instrument, when it came from their hands, was a mere proposal, without obligation, or pretensions to it. It was reported to the then existing Congress of the United States, with a request that it might "be submitted to a Convention of Delegates, chosen in each State by the People thereof, under the recommendation of its Legislature, for their assent and ratification." This mode of proceeding was adopted; and by the Convention, by Congress, and by the State Legislatures, the instrument was submitted to the people. They acted upon it in the only manner in which they can act safely, effectively, and wisely, on such a subject, by assembling in Convention. It is true, they assembled in their several States—and where else should they have assembled? No political dreamer was ever wild enough to think of breaking down the lines which separate the States, and of compounding the American people into one common mass. Of consequence, when they act, they act in their States. But the measures they adopt do not, on that account, cease to be the measures of the people themselves, or become the measures of the State governments.

Marshall's Opinion in McCulloch v. Maryland, Harvard Classics, Vol.43, p.225

From these Conventions the Constitution derives its whole authority. The government proceeds directly from the people; is "ordained and established" in the name of the people; and is declared to he ordained, "in order to form a more perfect union, establish justice, ensure domestic tranquillity, and secure the blessings of liberty to themselves and to their posterity." The assent of the States, in their sovereign capacity, is implied in calling a Convention, and thus submitting that instrument to the people. But the people were at perfect liberty to accept or reject it; and their act was final. It required not the affirmance, and could not be negatived, by the State governments. The Constitution, when thus adopted, was of complete obligation, and bound the State sovereignties.

Marshall's Opinion in McCulloch v. Maryland, Harvard Classics, Vol.43, p.225

It has been said, that the people had already surrendered all their powers to the State sovereignties, and had nothing more to give. But, surely, the question whether they may resume and modify the powers granted to government does not remain to be settled in this country. Much more might the legitimacy of the general government be doubted, had it been created by the States. The powers delegated to the State sovereignties were to be exercised by themselves, not by a distinct and independent sovereignty, created by themselves. To the formation of a league, such as was the confederation, the State sovereignties were certainly competent. But when, "in order to form a more perfect union," it was deemed necessary to change this alliance into an effective government, possessing great and sovereign powers, and acting directly on the people, the necessity of referring it to the people, and of deriving its powers directly from them, was felt and acknowledged by all.

Marshall's Opinion in McCulloch v. Maryland, Harvard Classics, Vol.43, p.225

The government of the Union, then, (whatever may be the influence of this fact on the case,) is, emphatically, and truly, a government of the people. In form and in substance it emanates from them. Its powers are granted by them, and are to be exercised directly on them, and for their benefit.

Marshall's Opinion in McCulloch v. Maryland, Harvard Classics, Vol.43, p.226

This government is acknowledged by all to be one of enumerated powers. The principle, that it can exercise only the powers granted to it, would seem too apparent to have required to be enforced by all those arguments which its enlightened friends, while it was depending before the people, found it necessary to urge. That principle is now universally admitted. But the question respecting the extent of the powers actually granted, is perpetually arising, and will probably continue to arise, as long as our system shall exist.

Marshall's Opinion in McCulloch v. Maryland, Harvard Classics, Vol.43, p.226

In discussing these questions, the conflicting powers of the general and State governments must be brought into view, and the supremacy of their respective laws, when they are in opposition, must be settled.

Marshall's Opinion in McCulloch v. Maryland, Harvard Classics, Vol.43, p.226

If any one proposition could command the universal assent of mankind, we might expect it would be this—that the government of the Union, though limited in its powers, is supreme within its sphere of action. This would seem to result necessarily from its nature. It is the government of all; its powers are delegated by all; it represents all, and acts for all. Though any one State may be willing to control its operations, no State is willing to allow others to control them. The nation, on those subjects on which it can act, must necessarily bind its component parts. But this question is not left to mere reason: the people have, in express terms, decided it, by—saying, "this constitution, and the laws of the United States, which shall be made in pursuance thereof," "shall be the supreme law of the land," and by requiring that the members of the State legislatures, and the officers of the executive and judicial departments of the States, shall take the oath of fidelity to it.

Marshall's Opinion in McCulloch v. Maryland, Harvard Classics, Vol.43, p.226

The government of the United States, then, though limited in its powers, is supreme; and its laws, when made in pursuance of the Constitution, form the supreme law of the land, "anything in the Constitution or laws of any State to the contrary notwithstanding."

Marshall's Opinion in McCulloch v. Maryland, Harvard Classics, Vol.43, p.226–p.227

Among the enumerated powers, we do not find that of establishing a bank or creating a corporation. But there is no phrase in the instrument which, like the Articles of Confederation, excludes Inc,—dental or implied powers; and which requires that every thing granted shall be expressly and minutely described. Even the 10th amendment, which was framed for the purpose of quieting the excessive jealousies which had been excited, omits the word "expressly," and declares only that the powers "not delegated to the United States, nor prohibited to the States, are reserved to the States or to the people;" thus leaving the question, whether the particular power which may become the subject of contest has been delegated to the one government, or prohibited to the other, to depend on a fair construction of the whole instrument. The men who drew and adopted this amendment had experienced the embarrassments resulting from the insertion of this word in the Articles of Confederation, and probably omitted it to avoid those embarrassments. A constitution, to contain an accurate detail of all the subdivisions of which its great powers will admit, and of all the means by which they may be carried into execution, would partake of the prolixity of the legal code, and could scarcely be embraced by the human mind. It would probably never be understood by the public. Its nature, therefore, requires, that only its great outlines should be marked, its important objects designated, and the minor ingredients which compose those objects be deduced from the nature of the objects themselves. That this idea was entertained by the framers of the American Constitution, is not only to be inferred from the nature of the instrument, but from the language. Why else were some of the limitations, found in the ninth section of the 1st article, introduced? It is also, in some degree, warranted by their having omitted to use any restrictive term which might prevent its receiving a fair and just interpretation. In considering this question, then, we must never forget, that it is a constitution we are expounding.

Marshall's Opinion in McCulloch v. Maryland, Harvard Classics, Vol.43, p.227–p.228

Although, among the enumerated powers of government, we do not find the word "bank" or "incorporation," we find the great powers to lay and collect taxes; to borrow money; to regulate commerce; to declare and conduct a war; and to raise and support armies and navies. The sword and the purse, all the external relations, and no inconsiderable portion of the industry of the nation, are entrusted to its government. It can never be pretended that these vast powers draw after them others of inferior importance, merely because they are inferior. Such an idea can never be advanced. But it may with great reason be contended, that a government, entrusted with such ample powers, on the due execution of which the happiness and prosperity of the nation so vitally depends, must also be entrusted with ample means for their execution. The power being given, it is the interest of the nation to facilitate its execution. It can never be their interest, and cannot be presumed to have been their intention, to clog and embarrass its execution by withholding the most appropriate means. Throughout this vast republic, from the St. Croix to the Gulf of Mexico, from the Atlantic to the Pacific, revenue is to be collected and expended, armies are to be marched and supported. The exigencies of the nation may require that the treasure raised in the north should be transported to the south, that raised in the east conveyed to the west, or that this order should be reversed. Is that construction of the Constitution to be preferred which would render these operations difficult, hazardous, and expensive? Can we adopt that construction, (unless the words imperiously require it,) which would impute to the framers of that instrument, when granting these powers for the public good, the intention of impeding their exercise by withholding a choice of means? If, indeed, such be the mandate of the Constitution, we have only to obey; but that instrument does not profess to enumerate the means by which the powers it confers may be executed; nor does it prohibit the creation of a corporation, if the existence of such a being be essential to the beneficial exercise of those powers. It is then, the subject of fair inquiry, how far such means may be employed.

Marshall's Opinion in McCulloch v. Maryland, Harvard Classics, Vol.43, p.228

It is not denied that the powers given to the government imply the ordinary means of execution. That, for example, of raising revenue, and applying it to national purposes, is admitted to imply the power of conveying money from place to place, as the exigencies of the nation may require, and of employing the usual means of conveyance. But it is denied that the government has its choice of means; or, that it may employ the most convenient means; if, to employ them, it be necessary to erect a corporation.

Marshall's Opinion in McCulloch v. Maryland, Harvard Classics, Vol.43, p.229

On what foundation does this argument rest? On this alone: The power of creating a corporation, is one appertaining to sovereignty, and is not expressly conferred on Congress. This is true. But all legislative powers appertain to sovereignty. The original power of giving the law on any subject whatsoever, is a sovereign power; and if the government of the Union is restrained from creating a corporation, as a means for performing its functions, on the single reason that the creation of a corporation is an act of sovereignty; if the sufficiency of this reason be acknowledged, there would be some difficulty in sustaining the authority of Congress to pass other laws for the accomplishment of the same objects.

Marshall's Opinion in McCulloch v. Maryland, Harvard Classics, Vol.43, p.229

The government which has a right to do an act, and has imposed on it the duty of performing that act, must, according to the dictates of reason, be allowed to select the means; and those who contend that it may not select any appropriate means, that one particular mode of effecting the object is excepted, take upon themselves the burden of establishing that exception.

Marshall's Opinion in McCulloch v. Maryland, Harvard Classics, Vol.43, p.229–p.230

The creation of a corporation, it is said, appertains to sovereignty. This is admitted. But to what portion of sovereignty does it appertain? Does it belong to one more than to another? In America, the powers of sovereignty are divided between the government of the Union, and those of the States. They are each sovereign, with respect to the objects committed to it, and neither sovereign with respect to the objects committed to the other. We cannot comprehend that train of reasoning which would maintain, that the extent of power granted by the people is to be ascertained, not by the nature and terms of the grant, but by its date. Some State constitutions were formed before, some since that of the United States. We cannot believe that their relation to each other is in any degree dependent upon this circumstance. Their respective powers must, we think, be precisely the same as if they had been formed at the same time. Had they been formed at the same time, and had the people conferred on the general government the power contained in the Constitution, and on the States the whole residuum of power, would it have been asserted that the government of the Union was not sovereign with respect to those objects which were entrusted to it, in relation to which its laws were declared to be supreme? If this could not have been asserted, we cannot well comprehend the process of reasoning which maintains, that a power appertaining to sovereignty cannot be connected with the vast portion of it which is granted to the general government, so far as it is calculated to subserve the legitimate objects of that government. The power of creating a corporation, though appertaining to sovereignty, is not, like the power of making war, or levying taxes, or of regulating commerce, a great substantive and independent power, which cannot be implied as incidental to other powers, or used as a means of executing them. It is never the end for which other powers are exercised, but a means by which other objects are accomplished. No contributions are made to charity for the sake of an incorporation, but a corporation is created to administer the charity; no seminary of learning is instituted in order to be incorporated, but the corporate character is conferred to subserve the purposes of education. No city was ever built with the sole object of being incorporated, but is incorporated as affording the best means of being well governed. The power of creating a corporation is never used for its own sake, but for the purpose of effecting something else. No sufficient reason is, therefore, perceived, why it may not pass as incidental to those powers which are expressly given, if it be a direct mode of executing them.

Marshall's Opinion in McCulloch v. Maryland, Harvard Classics, Vol.43, p.230

But the Constitution of the United States has not left the right of Congress to employ the necessary means, for the execution of the powers conferred on the government, to general reasoning. To its enumeration of powers is added that of making "all laws which shall be necessary and proper, for carrying into execution the foregoing powers, and all other powers vested by this Constitution, in the government of the United States, or in any department thereof."

Marshall's Opinion in McCulloch v. Maryland, Harvard Classics, Vol.43, p.230

The counsel for the State of Maryland have urged various arguments, to prove that this clause, though in terms a grant of power, is not so in effect; but is really restrictive of the general right, which might otherwise be implied, of selecting means for executing the enumerated powers.

Marshall's Opinion in McCulloch v. Maryland, Harvard Classics, Vol.43, p.231

In support of this proposition, they have found it necessary to contend, that this clause was inserted for the purpose of conferring on Congress the power of making laws. That, without it, doubts might be entertained, whether Congress could exercise its powers in the form of legislation.

Marshall's Opinion in McCulloch v. Maryland, Harvard Classics, Vol.43, p.231

But could this be the object for which it was inserted? A government is created by the people, having legislative, executive, and judicial powers. Its legislative powers are vested in a Congress, which is to consist of a Senate and House of Representatives. Each house may determine the rule of its proceedings; and it is declared that every bill which shall have passed both houses, shall, before it becomes a law, be presented to the President of the United States. The 7th section describes the course of proceedings, by which a bill shall become a law; and, then, the 8th section enumerates the powers of Congress. Could it be necessary to say, that a legislature should exercise legislative powers, in the shape of legislation? After allowing each house to prescribe its own course of proceeding, after describing the manner in which a bill should become a law, would it have entered into the mind of a single member of the Convention, that an express power to make laws was necessary to enable the legislature to make them? That a legislature, endowed with legislative powers, can legislate, is a proposition too self-evident to have been questioned.

Marshall's Opinion in McCulloch v. Maryland, Harvard Classics, Vol.43, p.231

But the argument on which most reliance is placed, is drawn from the peculiar language of this clause. Congress is not empowered by it to make all laws, which may have relation to the powers conferred on the government, but such only as may be "necessary and proper for carrying them into execution. The word "necessary" is considered as controlling the whole sentence, and as limiting the right to pass laws for the execution of the granted powers, to such as are indispensable, and without which the power would be nugatory. That it excludes the choice of means, and leaves to Congress in each case, that only which is most direct and simple.

Marshall's Opinion in McCulloch v. Maryland, Harvard Classics, Vol.43, p.232

Is it true, that this is the sense in which the word "necessary" is always used? Does it always import an absolute physical necessity, so strong, that one thing, to which another may be termed necessary, cannot exist without that other? We think it does not. If reference be had to its use, in the common affairs of the world, or in approved authors, we find that it frequently imports no more than that one thing is convenient, or useful, or essential to another. To employ the means necessary to an end, is generally understood as employing any means calculated to produce the end, and not as being confined to those single means, without which the end would be entirely unattainable. Such is the character of human language, that no word conveys to the mind, in all situations, one single definite idea; and nothing is more common than to use words in a figurative sense. Almost all compositions contain words, which, taken in their rigorous sense, would convey a meaning different from that which is obviously intended. It is essential to just construction, that many words which import something excessive, should be understood in a more mitigated sense in that sense which common usage justifies. The word "necessary" is of this description. It has not a fixed character peculiar to itself. It admits of all degrees of comparison; and is often connected with other words, which increase or diminish the impression the mind receives of the urgency it imports. A thing may be necessary, very necessary, absolutely or indispensably necessary. To no mind would the same idea be conveyed, by these several phrases. This comment on the word is well illustrated, by the passage cited at the bar, from the 10th section of the 1st article of the Constitution. It is, we think, impossible to compare the sentence which prohibits a State from laying "imposts, or duties on imports or exports, except what may be absolutely necessary for executing its inspection laws," with that which authorizes Congress "to make all laws which shall be necessary and proper for carrying into execution" the powers of the general government, without feeling a conviction that the convention understood itself to change materially the meaning of the word "necessary," by prefixing the word "absolutely." This word, then, like others, is used in various senses; and, in its construction, the subject, the context, the intention of the person using them, are all to be taken into view.

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Let this be done in the case under consideration. The subject is the execution of those great powers on which the welfare of a nation essentially depends. It must have been the intention of those who gave these powers, to insure, as far as human prudence could insure, their beneficial execution. This could not be done by confiding the choice of means to such narrow limits as not to leave it in the power of Congress to adopt any which might be appropriate, and which were conducive to the end. This provision is made in a constitution intended to endure for ages to come, and consequently, to be adapted to the various crises of human affairs. To have prescribed the means by which government should, in all future time, execute its powers, would have been to change, entirely, the character of the instrument, and give it the properties of a legal code. It would have been an unwise attempt to provide, by immutable rules, for exigencies which, if foreseen at all, must have been seen dimly, and which can be best provided for as they occur. To have declared that the best means shall not be used, but those alone without which the power given would be nugatory, would have been to deprive the legislature of the capacity to avail itself of experience, to exercise its reason, and to accommodate its legislation to circumstances. If we apply this principle of construction to any of the powers of the government, we shall find it so pernicious in its operation that we shall be compelled to discard it. The powers vested in Congress may certainly be carried into execution, without prescribing an oath of office. The power to exact this security for the faithful performance of duty, is not given, nor is it indispensably necessary. The different departments may be established; taxes may be imposed and collected; armies and navies may be raised and maintained; and money may be borrowed, without requiring an oath of office. It might be argued, with as much plausibility as other incidental powers have been assailed, that the Convention was not unmindful of this subject. The oath which might be exacted—that of fidelity to the Constitution—is prescribed, and no other can be required. Yet, he would be charged with insanity who should contend, that the legislature might not superadd, to the oath directed by the Constitution such other oath of office as its wisdom might suggest.

Marshall's Opinion in McCulloch v. Maryland, Harvard Classics, Vol.43, p.234

So, with respect to the whole penal code of the United States: whence arises the power to punish in cases not prescribed by the Constitution? All admit that the government may, legitimately, punish any violation of its laws; and yet, this is not among the enumerated powers of Congress. The right to enforce the observance of law, by punishing its infraction, might be denied with the more plausibility, because it is expressly given in some cases. Congress 15 empowered "to provide for the punishment of counterfeiting the securities and current coin of the United States," and "define and punish piracies and felonies committed on the high seas, and offences against the law of nations." The several powers of Congress may exist, in a very imperfect state to be sure, but they may exist and be carried into execution, although no punishment should be inflicted in cases where the right to punish is not expressly given.

Marshall's Opinion in McCulloch v. Maryland, Harvard Classics, Vol.43, p.234

Take, for example, the power "to establish post offices and post roads." This power is executed by the single act of making the establishment. But, from this has been inferred the power and duty of carrying the mail along the post road, from one post office to another. And, from this implied power, has again been inferred the right to punish those who steal letters from the post office, or rob the mail. It may be said, with some plausibility, that the right to carry the mail, and to punish those who rob it, is not indispensably necessary to the establishment of a post office and post road. This right is indeed essential to the beneficial exercise of the power, but not indispensably necessary to its existence. So, of the punishment of the crimes of stealing or falsifying a record or process of a Court of the United States, or of perjury in such Court. To punish these offences is certainly conducive to the due administration of justice. But courts may exist, and may decide the causes brought before them, though such crimes escape punishment.

Marshall's Opinion in McCulloch v. Maryland, Harvard Classics, Vol.43, p.235

The baneful influence of this narrow construction on all the operations of the government, and the absolute impracticability of maintaining it without rendering the government incompetent to its great objects, might be illustrated by numerous examples drawn from the Constitution, and from our laws. The good sense of the public has pronounced, without hesitation, that the power of punishment appertains to sovereignty, and may be exercised whenever the sovereign has a right to act, as incidental to his constitutional powers. It is a means for carrying into execution all sovereign powers, and may be used, although not indispensably necessary. It is a right incidental to the power, and conducive to its beneficial exercise.

Marshall's Opinion in McCulloch v. Maryland, Harvard Classics, Vol.43, p.235

If this limited construction of the word "necessary" must be abandoned in order to punish, whence is derived the rule which would reinstate it, when the government would carry its powers into execution by means not vindictive to their nature? If the word "necessary" means "needful," "requisite, essential," "conducive to," in order to let in the power of punishment for the infraction of law; why is it not equally comprehensive when required to authorize the use of means which facilitate the execution of the powers of government without the infliction of punishment?

Marshall's Opinion in McCulloch v. Maryland, Harvard Classics, Vol.43, p.235

In ascertaining the sense in which the word "necessary" is used in this clause of the Constitution, we may derive some aid from that with which it is associated. Congress shall have power "to make all laws which shall be necessary and proper to carry into execution" the powers of the government. If the word "necessary" was used in that strict and rigorous sense for which the counsel for the State of Maryland contend, it would be an extraordinary departure from the usual course of the human mind, as exhibited in composition, to add a word, the only possible effect of which is to qualify that strict and rigorous meaning; to present to the mind the idea of some choice of means of legislation not straitened and compressed within the narrow limits for which gentlemen contend.

Marshall's Opinion in McCulloch v. Maryland, Harvard Classics, Vol.43, p.235

But the argument which most conclusively demonstrates the error of the construction contended for by the counsel for the State of Maryland, is founded on the intention of the Convention, as manifested in the whole clause. To waste time and argument in proving that, without it, Congress might carry its powers into execution, would be not much less idle than to hold a lighted taper to the sun. As little can it be required to prove, that in the absence of this clause, Congress would have some choice of means. That it might employ those which, in its judgment, would most advantageously effect the object to be accomplished. That any means adapted to the end, any means which tended directly to the execution of the constitutional powers of the government, were in themselves constitutional. This clause, as construed by the State of Maryland, would abridge, and almost annihilate this useful and necessary right of the legislature to select its means. That this could not be intended, is, we should think, had it not been already controverted, too apparent for controversy. We think so for the following reasons:

Marshall's Opinion in McCulloch v. Maryland, Harvard Classics, Vol.43, p.236

1st. The clause is placed among the powers of Congress, not among the limitations on those powers.

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2nd. Its terms purport to enlarge, not to diminish the powers vested in the government. It purports to be an additional power, not a restriction on those already granted. No reason has been, or can be assigned for thus concealing an intention to narrow the discretion of the national legislature under words which purport to enlarge it. The framers of the Constitution wished its adoption, and well know that it would be endangered by its strength, not by its weakness. Had they been capable of using language which would convey to the eye one idea, and after deep reflection, impress on the mind another, they would rather have disguised the grant of power, than its limitation. If, then, their intention had been, by this clause, to restrain the free use of means which might otherwise have been implied, that intention would have been inserted in another place, and would have been expressed in terms resembling these. "In carrying into execution the foregoing powers, and all others," &c. "no laws shall be passed but, such as are necessary and proper." Had the intention been to make this clause restrictive, it would unquestionably have been so in form as well as in effect.

Marshall's Opinion in McCulloch v. Maryland, Harvard Classics, Vol.43, p.237

The result of the most careful and attentive consideration bestowed upon this clause is, that if it does not enlarge, it cannot be construed to restrain the powers of Congress, or to impair the right of the legislature to exercise its best judgment in the selection of measures to carry into execution the constitutional powers of the government. If no other motive for its insertion can be suggested, a sufficient one is found in the desire to remove all doubts respecting the right to legislate on that vast mass of incidental powers which must be involved in the Constitution, if that instrument be not a splendid bauble.

Marshall's Opinion in McCulloch v. Maryland, Harvard Classics, Vol.43, p.237

We admit, as all must admit, that the powers of the government are limited, and that its limits are not to be transcended. But we think the sound construction of the Constitution must allow to the national legislature that discretion, with respect to the means by which the powers it confers are to be carried into execution, which will enable that body to perform the high duties assigned to it, in the manner most beneficial to the people. Let the end be legitimate, let it be within the scope of the Constitution, and all means which are appropriate, which are plainly adapted to that end, which are not prohibited, but consist with the letter and spirit of the Constitution, are constitutional.

Marshall's Opinion in McCulloch v. Maryland, Harvard Classics, Vol.43, p.237

That a corporation must be considered as a means not less usual, not of higher dignity, not more requiring a particular specification than other means, has been sufficiently proved. If we look to the origin of corporations, to the manner in which they have been framed in that government from which we have derived most of our legal principles and ideas, or to the uses to which they have been applied, we find no reason to suppose that a constitution, omitting, and wisely omitting, to enumerate all the means for carrying into execution the great powers vested in government, ought to have specified this. Had it been intended to grant this power as one which should be distinct and independent, to be exercised in any case whatever, it would have found a place among the enumerated powers of the government. But being considered merely as a means, to be employed only for the purpose of carrying into execution the given powers, there could be no motive for particularly mentioning it.

Marshall's Opinion in McCulloch v. Maryland, Harvard Classics, Vol.43, p.238

The propriety of this remark would seem to be generally acknowledged by the universal acquiescence in the construction which has been uniformly put on the 3rd section of the 4th article of the Constitution. The power to "make all needful rules and regulations respecting the territory or other property belonging to the United States," is not more comprehensive, than the power "to make all laws which shall be necessary and proper for carrying into execution" the powers of the government. Yet all admit the constitutionality of a territorial government, which is a corporate body. If a corporation may be employed indiscriminately with other means to carry into execution the powers of the government, no particular reason can be assigned for excluding the use of a bank, if required for its fiscal Operations. To use one, must be within the discretion of Congress, if it be an appropriate mode of executing the powers of government. That it is a convenient, a useful, and essential instrument in the prosecution of its fiscal operations, is not now a subject of controversy. All those who have been concerned in the administration of our finances, have concurred in representing its importance and necessity; and so strongly have they been felt, that statesmen of the first class, whose previous opinions against it had been confirmed by every circumstance which can fix the human judgment, have yielded those opinions to the exigencies of the nation. Under the confederation, Congress, justifying the measure by its necessity, transcended perhaps its powers to obtain the advantage of a bank; and our own legislation attests the universal conviction of the utility of this measure. The time has passed away when it can be necessary to enter into any discussion in order to prove the importance of this instrument, as a means to effect the legitimate objects of the government.

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But, were its necessity less apparent, none can deny its being an appropriate measure; and if it is, the degree of its necessity, as has been very justly observed, is to be discussed in another place. Should Congress, in the execution of its powers, adopt measures which are prohibited by the Constitution; or should Congress, under the pretext of executing its powers, pass laws for the accomplishment of objects not entrusted to the government; it would become the painful duty of this tribunal, should a case requiring such a decision come before it, to say that such an act was not the law of the land. But where the law is not prohibited, and is really calculated to effect any of the objects entrusted to the government, to undertake here to inquire into the degree of its necessity, would be to pass the line which circumscribes the judicial department, and to tread on legislative ground. This court disclaims all pretensions to such a power.

Marshall's Opinion in McCulloch v. Maryland, Harvard Classics, Vol.43, p.239

After this declaration, it can scarcely be necessary to say, that the existence of State banks can have no possible influence on the question. No trace is to be found in the Constitution of an intention to create a dependence of the government of the Union on those of the States, for the execution of the great powers assigned to it. Its means are adequate to its ends; and on those means alone was it expected to rely for the accomplishment of its ends. To impose on it the necessity of resorting to means which it cannot control, which another government may furnish or withhold, would render its course precarious, the result of its measures uncertain, and create a dependence on other governments, which might disappoint its most important designs, and is incompatible with the language of the Constitution. But were it otherwise, the choice of means implies a right to choose a national bank in preference to State banks, and Congress alone can make the election.

Marshall's Opinion in McCulloch v. Maryland, Harvard Classics, Vol.43, p.239

After the most deliberate consideration, it is the unanimous and decided opinion of this Court, that the act to incorporate the Bank of the United States is a law made in pursuance of the Constitution, and is a part of the supreme law of the land.

Marshall's Opinion in McCulloch v. Maryland, Harvard Classics, Vol.43, p.239

The branches, proceeding from the same stock, and being conducive to the complete accomplishment of the object, are equally constitutional. It would have been unwise to locate them in the charter, and it would be unnecessarily inconvenient to employ the legislative power in making those subordinate arrangements. The great duties of the bank are prescribed, those duties require branches; and the bank itself may, we think, be safely trusted with the selection of places where those branches shall be fixed; reserving always to the government the right to require that a branch shall be located where it may be deemed necessary.

Treaty with Spain, 1819

Title: Treaty with Spain

Author: The U.S. and Spanish Governments

Date: 1819

Source: Harvard Classics, Vol.43, pp.286-295

While in the hands of Spain, Florida was the source of much annoyance to the Southern States. Fugitive slaves took refuge there; the white population was largely of a lawless character; and the Seminole Indians often made incursions into Georgia. After the United States had been forced to invade the territory and take possession of part of it, Spain ceded it by the treaty of 1819.

Treaty with Spain, Harvard Classics, Vol.43, p.286

TREATY OF AMITY, SETTLEMENT, AND LIMITS BETWEEN THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA AND HIS CATHOLIC MAJESTY, CONCLUDED AT WASHINGTON, FEBRUARY 22, 1819; RATIFICATION ADVISED BY SENATE, FEBRUARY 24, 1819; RATIFIED BY PRESIDENT; RATIFIED BY THE KING OF SPAIN, OCTOBER 24, 1820; RATIFICATION AGAIN ADVISED BY SENATE, FEBRUARY 19, 1821; RATIFIED BY PRESIDENT, FEBRUARY 22, 1821; RATIFICATIONS EXCHANGED AT WASHINGTON, FEBRUARY 22, 1821; PROCLAIMED, FEBRUARY 22, 1821.

Treaty with Spain, Harvard Classics, Vol.43, p.286

THE United States of America and His Catholic Majesty, desiring to consolidate, on a permanent basis, the friendship and good correspondence which happily prevails between the two parties have determined to settle and terminate all their differences and pretensions, by a treaty, which shall designate, with precision, the limits of their respective bordering territories in North America.

Treaty with Spain, Harvard Classics, Vol.43, p.286–p.287

With this intention, the President of the United States, has furnished with their full powers, John Quincy Adams, Secretary of State of the said United States; and His Catholic Majesty has appointed the Most Excellent Lord Don Luis De Onis, Gonzales, Lopez y Vara, Lord of the town of Rayaces, Perpetual Regidor of the Corporation of the city of Salamanca, Knight Grand Cross of the Royal American Order of Isabella the Catholic, decorated with the Lys of La Vendee, Knight Pensioner of the Royal and Distinguished Spanish Order of Charles the Third, Member of the Supreme Assembly of the said Royal Order; of the Council of His Majesty; His Secretary, with Exercise of Decrees, and His Envoy Extraordinary and Minister Plenipotentiary near the United States of America;

Treaty with Spain, Harvard Classics, Vol.43, p.287

And the said Plenipotentiaries, after having exchanged their powers, have agreed upon and concluded the following articles:

ARTICLE I

Treaty with Spain, Harvard Classics, Vol.43, p.287

There shall be a firm and inviolable peace and sincere friendship between the United States and their citizens and His Catholic Majesty, his successors and subjects, without exception of persons or places.

ARTICLE II

Treaty with Spain, Harvard Classics, Vol.43, p.287

His Catholic Majesty cedes to the United States, in full property and sovereignty, all the territories which belong to him, situated to the eastward of the Mississippi, known by the name of East and West Florida. The adjacent islands dependent on said provinces, all public lots and squares, vacant lands, public edifices, fortifications, barracks, and other buildings, which are not private property, archives and documents, which relate directly to the property and sovereignty of said provinces, are included in this article. The said archives and documents shall be left in possession of the commissaries or officers of the United States, duly authorized to receive them.

ARTICLE III

Treaty with Spain, Harvard Classics, Vol.43, p.287–p.288

The boundary line between the two countries, west of the Mississippi, shall begin on the Gulph of Mexico, at the mouth of the river Sabine, in the sea, continuing north, along the western bank of that river, to the 32d degree of latitude; thence, by a line due north, to the degree of latitude where it strikes the Rio Roxo of Nachitoches, or Red River; then following the course of the Rio Roxo westward, to the degree of longitude 100 west from London and 23 from Washington; then, crossing the said Red River, and running thence by a line due north, to the river Arkansas; thence, following the course of the southern bank of the Arkansas, to its source, in latitude 42 north; and thence, by that parallel of latitude, to the South Sea. The whole being as laid down in Melish's map of the United States, published at Philadelphia, improved to the first of January, 1818. But if the source of the Arkansas River shall be found to fall north or south of latitude 42, then the line shall run from the said source due south or north, as the case may be, till it meets the said parallel of latitude 42, and thence, along the said parallel, to the South Sea: All the islands in the Sabine, and the said Red and Arkansas Rivers, throughout the course thus described, to belong to the United States; but the use of the waters, and the navigation of the Sabine to the sea, and of the said rivers Roxo and Arkansas, throughout the extent of the said boundary, on their respective banks, shall be common to the respective inhabitants of both nations.

Treaty with Spain, Harvard Classics, Vol.43, p.288

The two high contracting parties agree to cede and renounce all their rights, claims, and pretensions, to the territories described by the said line, that is to say: The United States hereby to His Catholic Majesty, and renounce forever, all their rights, claims and pretensions, to the territories lying west and south of the above-described line; and, in like manner, His Catholic Majesty cedes to the said United States all his rights, claims, and pretensions to any territories east and north of the said line, and for himself, his heirs, and successors, renounces all claim to the said territories forever.

ARTICLE IV

Treaty with Spain, Harvard Classics, Vol.43, p.288–p.289

To fix this line with more precision, and to place the landmarks which shall designate exactly the limits of both nations, each of the contracting parties shall appoint a Commissioner and a surveyor, who shall meet before the termination of one year from the date of the ratification of this treaty at Nachitoches, on the Red River, and proceed to run and mark the said line, from the mouth of the Sabine to the Red River, and from the Red River to the river Arkansas, and to ascertain the latitude of the source of the said river Arkansas, in conformity to what is above agreed upon and stipulated, and the line of latitude 42, to the South Sea: they shall make out plans, and keep journals of their proceedings, and the result agreed upon by them shall be considered as part of this treaty, and shall have the same force as if it were inserted therein. The two Governments will amicably agree respecting the necessary articles to be furnished to those persons, and also as to their respective escorts, should such be deemed necessary.

ARTICLE V

Treaty with Spain, Harvard Classics, Vol.43, p.289

The inhabitants of the ceded territories shall be secured in the free exercise of their religion, without any restriction; and all those who may desire to remove to the Spanish dominions shall be permitted to sell or export their effects, at any time whatever, without being subject, in either case, to duties.

ARTICLE VI

Treaty with Spain, Harvard Classics, Vol.43, p.289

The inhabitants of the territories which His Catholic Majesty cedes to the United States, by this treaty, shall be incorporated in the Union of the United States, as soon as may be consistent with the principles of the Federal Constitution, and admitted to the enjoyment of all the privileges, rights, and immunities of the citizens of the United States.

ARTICLE VII

Treaty with Spain, Harvard Classics, Vol.43, p.289

The officers and troops of His Catholic Majesty, in the territories hereby ceded by him to the United States, shall be withdrawn, and possession of the places occupied by them shall be given within six months after the exchange of the ratifications of this treaty, or sooner if possible, by the officers of His Catholic Majesty to the commissioners or officers of the United States duly appointed to receive them; and the United States shall furnish the transports and escorts necessary to convey the Spanish officers and troops and their baggage to the Havana.

ARTICLE VIII

Treaty with Spain, Harvard Classics, Vol.43, p.290

All the grants of land made before the 24th of January, 1818, by His Catholic Majesty, or by his lawful authorities, in the said territories ceded by His Majesty to the United States, shall be ratified and confirmed to the persons in possession of the lands, to the same extent that the same grants would be valid if the territories had remained under the dominion of His Catholic Majesty. But the owners in possession of such lands, who, by reason of the recent circumstances of the Spanish nation, and the revolutions in Europe, have been prevented from fulfilling all the conditions of their grants, shall complete them within the terms limited in the Same, respectively, from the date of this treaty; in default of which the said grants shall be null and void. All grants made since the said 24th of January, 1818, when the first proposal, on the part of His Catholic Majesty, for the cession of the Floridas was made, are hereby declared and agreed to be null and void.

ARTICLE IX

Treaty with Spain, Harvard Classics, Vol.43, p.290

The two high contracting parties, animated with the most earnest desire of conciliation, and with the object of putting an end to all the differences which have existed between them, and of confirming the good understanding which they wish to be forever maintained between them, reciprocally renounce all claims for damages or injuries which they, themselves, as well as their respective citizens and subjects, may have suffered until the time of signing this treaty.

Treaty with Spain, Harvard Classics, Vol.43, p.290

The renunciation of the United States will extend to all the injuries mentioned in the convention of the 11th of August, 1802.

Treaty with Spain, Harvard Classics, Vol.43, p.290

(2) To all claims on account of prizes made by French privateers, and condemned by French Consuls, within the territory and jurisdiction of Spain.

Treaty with Spain, Harvard Classics, Vol.43, p.290

(3) To all claims of indemnities on account of the suspension of the right of deposit at New Orleans in 1802.

Treaty with Spain, Harvard Classics, Vol.43, p.290

(4) To all claims of citizens of the United States upon the Government of Spain, arising from the unlawful seizures at sea, and in the ports and territories of Spain, or the Spanish colonies.

Treaty with Spain, Harvard Classics, Vol.43, p.291

(5) To all claims of citizens of the United States upon the Spanish Government, statements of which, soliciting the interposition of the Government of the United States, have been presented to the Department of State, or to the Minister of the United States in Spain, since the date of the convention of 1802, and until the Signature of this treaty.

Treaty with Spain, Harvard Classics, Vol.43, p.291

The renunciation of His Catholic Majesty extends—

Treaty with Spain, Harvard Classics, Vol.43, p.291

(1) To all the injuries mentioned in the convention of the 11th of August, 1802.

Treaty with Spain, Harvard Classics, Vol.43, p.291

(2) To the sums which His Catholic Majesty advanced for the return of Captain Pike from the Provincias Internas.

Treaty with Spain, Harvard Classics, Vol.43, p.291

(3) To all injuries caused by the expedition of Miranda, that was fitted out and equipped at New York.

Treaty with Spain, Harvard Classics, Vol.43, p.291

(4) To all claims of Spanish subjects upon the Government of the United States arising from unlawful seizures at sea, or within the ports and territorial jurisdiction of the United States.

Treaty with Spain, Harvard Classics, Vol.43, p.291

Finally, to all the claims of subjects of His Catholic Majesty upon the Government of the United States in which the interposition of his Catholic Majesty's Government has been solicited, before the date of this treaty and since the date of the convention of 1802, or which may have been made to the department of foreign affairs of His Majesty, or to His Minister in the United States.

Treaty with Spain, Harvard Classics, Vol.43, p.291

And the high contracting parties, respectively, renounce all claim to indemnities for any of the recent events or transactions of their respective commanders and officers in the Floridas.

Treaty with Spain, Harvard Classics, Vol.43, p.291

The United States will cause satisfaction to be made for the injuries, if any, which, by process of law, shall be established to have been suffered by the Spanish officers, and individual Spanish inhabitants, by the late operations of the American Army in Florida.

ARTICLE X

Treaty with Spain, Harvard Classics, Vol.43, p.292

The convention entered into between the two Governments, on the 11th of August, 1802, the ratifications of which were exchanged the 21st December, 1818, is annulled.

ARTICLE XI

Treaty with Spain, Harvard Classics, Vol.43, p.292

The United States, exonerating Spain from all demands in future, on account of the claims of their citizens to which the renunciations herein contained extend, and considering them entirely cancelled, undertake to make satisfaction for the same, to an amount not exceeding five millions of dollars. To ascertain the full amount and validity of those claims, a commission, to consist of three Commissioners, citizens of the United States, shall be appointed by the President, by and with the advice and consent of the Senate, which commission shall meet at the city of Washington, and, within the space of three years from the time of their first meeting, shall receive, examine, and decide upon the amount and validity of all the claims included within the descriptions above mentioned. The said Commissioners shall take an oath or affirmation, to be entered on the record of their proceedings, for the faithful and diligent discharge of their duties; and, in case of the death, sickness, or necessary absence of any such Commissioner, his place may be supplied by the appointment, as aforesaid, or by the President of the United States, during the recess of the Senate, of another Commissioner in his stead. The said Commissioners shall be authorized to hear and examine, on oath, every question relative to the said claims, and to receive all suitable authentic testimony concerning the same. And the Spanish Government shall furnish all such documents and elucidations as may be in their possession, for the adjustment of the said claims, according to the principles of justice, the laws of nations, and the stipulations of the treaty between the two parties of 27th October, 1795; the said documents to be specified, when demanded, at the instance of the said Commissioners.

Treaty with Spain, Harvard Classics, Vol.43, p.292

The payment of such claims as may be admitted and adjusted by the said Commissioners, or the major part of them, to an amount not exceeding five millions of dollars, shall be made by the United States, either immediately at their Treasury, or by the creation of stock, bearing an interest of six per cent. per annum, payable from the proceeds of sales of public lands within the territories hereby ceded to the United States, or in such other manner as the Congress of the United States may prescribe by law.

Treaty with Spain, Harvard Classics, Vol.43, p.292

The records of the proceedings of the said Commissioners, together with the vouchers and documents produced before them, relative to the claims to be adjusted and decided upon by them, shall, after the close of their transactions, be deposited in the Department of State of the United States; and copies of them, or any part of them, shall be furnished to the Spanish Government, if required, at the demand of the Spanish Minister in the United States.

ARTICLE XII

Treaty with Spain, Harvard Classics, Vol.43, p.293

The treaty of limits and navigation, of 1795, remains confirmed in all and each one of its articles excepting the 2, 3, 4, 21, and the second clause of the 22d article, which having been altered by this treaty, or having received their entire execution, are no longer valid.

Treaty with Spain, Harvard Classics, Vol.43, p.293

With respect to the 15th article of the same treaty of friendship, limits, and navigation of 1795, in which it is stipulated that the flag shall cover the property, the two high contracting parties agree that this shall be so understood with respect to those Powers who recognize this principle; but if either of the two contracting parties shall be at war with a third party, and the other neutral, the flag of the neutral shall cover the property of enemies whose Government acknowledge this principle, and not of others.

ARTICLE XIII

Treaty with Spain, Harvard Classics, Vol.43, p.293

Both contracting parties, wishing to favour their mutual commerce, by affording in their ports every necessary assistance to their respective merchant-vessels, have agreed that the sailors who shall desert from their vessels in the ports of the other, shall be arrested and delivered up, at the instance of the Consul, who shall prove, nevertheless, that the deserters belonged to the vessels that claimed them, exhibiting the document that is customary in their nation: that is to say, the American Consul in a Spanish port shall exhibit the document known by the name of articles, and the Spanish Consul in American ports the roll of the vessel; and if the name of the deserter or deserters who are claimed shall appear in the one or the other, they shall be arrested, held in custody, and delivered to the vessel to which they shall belong.

ARTICLE XIV

Treaty with Spain, Harvard Classics, Vol.43, p.294

The United States hereby certify that they have not received any compensation from France for the injuries they suffered from her privateers, Consuls, and tribunals on the coasts and in the ports of Spain, for the satisfaction of which provision is made by this treaty; and they will present an authentic statement of the prizes made, and of their true value, that Spain may avail herself of the same in such manner as she may deem just and proper.

ARTICLE XV

Treaty with Spain, Harvard Classics, Vol.43, p.294

The United States, to give to His Catholic Majesty, a proof of their desire to cement the relations of amity subsisting between the two nations, and to favour the commerce of the subjects of His Catholic Majesty, agree that Spanish vessels, coming laden only with productions of Spanish growth or manufactures, directly from the ports of Spain, or of her colonies, shall be admitted, for the term of twelve years, to the ports of Pensacola and St. Augustine, in the Floridas, without paying other or higher duties on their cargoes, or of tonnage, than will be paid by the vessels of the United States. During the said term no other nation shall enjoy the same privileges within the ceded territories. The twelve years shall commence three months after the exchange of the ratifications of this treaty.

ARTICLE XVI

Treaty with Spain, Harvard Classics, Vol.43, p.295

The present treaty shall be ratified in due form, by the contracting parties, and the ratifications shall be exchanged in six months from this time, or sooner if possible.

Treaty with Spain, Harvard Classics, Vol.43, p.295

In witness whereof we, the underwritten Plenipotentiaries of the United States of America and of His Catholic Majesty, have signed, by virtue of our powers, the present treaty of amity, settlement, and limits, and have thereunto affixed our seals, respectively.

Treaty with Spain, Harvard Classics, Vol.43, p.295

Done at Washington this twenty-second day of February, one thousand eight hundred and nineteen.

JOHN QUINCY ADAMS [L. S.]

LUIS DE ONIS [L. S.]

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