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# MARYLAND

## HISTORICAL MAGAZINE

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1814: A Dark Hour Before the Dawn

**Harry L. Coles**

National Response to the Sack  
of Washington

**Paul Woehrmann**

Response to Crisis: Baltimore in 1814

**Frank A. Cassell**

Christopher Hughes, Jr. at Ghent, 1814

**Chester G. Dunham**



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# MARYLAND HISTORICAL MAGAZINE

*A Quarterly*

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## 1814: A DARK HOUR BEFORE THE DAWN

BY HARRY L. COLES

THE Treaty of Ghent, concluded on Christmas eve 1814, marked the completion of American independence. True, the famous declaration of 1776, out of a decent respect to the opinions of mankind, had set forth the reasons for assuming a separate and equal station, and after seven years of war England formally recognized the United States as a new nation. But it was one thing to declare independence and even to affirm it by force and quite another to develop viable institutions and the unity of spirit necessary to survive in a competitive, contentious, and cruel world.

In the period from 1776 to 1815 American statesmen often referred to the new nation as an "experiment," and even the most sanguine realized there would be substantial difficulties in making the experiment work. After 1815 the concept of "experiment" disappears, even from the vocabulary of America's hostile critics. A century of national expansion, economic growth, and political isolation followed the War of 1812.

There are of course no sharp breaks in history: the past is a continuum. But occasionally one can point to a particular year and say that during these twelve months or so certain contend-

ing forces, certain competing issues were brought to a resolution, and after this date things were never quite the same. In American history the years 1776, 1781, 1789, 1800 and 1814 would be examples of this sort of turning point.

If the year 1814 ended on a happy note, it began on a sad one. The twelve months preceding the Peace of Christmas Eve had been full of pitfalls and perils. The United States was at war with the greatest military power in the world and its capital had been sacked by the enemy. All the major ships of the United States Navy had been bottled up and the coast effectively blockaded from Maine to the mouth of the Mississippi. The treasury was empty and the government unable either through taxation or borrowing to raise enough money to finance the war. Though faced with invasion from the north, east, and south, Congress was powerless to raise an army adequate to the defense of the country. In desperation the Secretary of War suggested a draft but many, including ex-President Jefferson, who fervently supported the war, dismissed the notion as a dream. By November the nation was so war weary, exhausted, and divided that some New England Federalists talked openly of secession and a separate peace with the enemy.

The political and military state of the nation was indeed a sorry one but even so, from the point of view of Great Britain, the situation was far from promising. When in March the Allies victoriously entered Paris, Great Britain was at last free to turn her attention to the war in America and her leaders looked forward to "giving Jonathan a drubbing." Spending her treasure lavishly, England sent some of her best regiments and some of her best generals to achieve victory in America. One fine army of over 10,000 veterans of the European wars marched down from Canada at the end of August. When a British flotilla on Lake Champlain was defeated, General Prevost, unwilling to venture farther without naval control of the lake, marched back to Canada with a dispirited army. Farther west on the Canadian border the war had long since arrived at a condition of stalemate. In the vicinity of the Niagara River, at Chippewa and Lundy's Lane, American troops under first-rate leaders such as Jacob Brown and Winfield Scott fought like regulars and won local victories. But in the whole course of the War of 1812 neither side could achieve decisive results in a major cam-

paign. While General Prevost was retreating to Canada, other large British forces were assembling in Jamaica to attack New Orleans. They would be faced by General Andrew Jackson, who had already deprived the British of potential allies by defeating the Creek Indians. The British defeat at New Orleans did not come until after the peace treaty was signed, but even if it had been known in Whitehall, it would only have confirmed what British statesmen had already decided: the continuation of the war promised no gain commensurate with the cost. The last lingering doubts had been dispelled by the Duke of Wellington when he advised his government to make peace because "You can get no territory; indeed the state of your military operations however creditable does not entitle you to any." Since neither side was able to impose its will by military force, the negotiators meeting at Ghent decided to lay aside force and accept peace on the basis of *status quo ante bellum*.

To the people who lived through it the War of 1812 had a sobering effect. All the principal statesmen from President Madison on down realized by what a narrow margin the United States had escaped national ruin. Compared to China, India, or England the history of the United States is short and for the most part it is a success story. Reading so much of success and so little of tragedy, it is easy for students of American history to get a distorted vision of the human condition. Arnold Toynbee has reminded us that "Mankind does not so very much of its historical thinking in easy and prosperous times [but] . . . . When history duly overtakes us in our turn, as is bound to happen sooner or later, our own disagreeable experiences then goad us into beginning to think about human history and human destiny. . . ." The articles appearing in this issue on the *Quarterly* have particular value in reminding us that the American people have not been, and are not, exempt from the misfortunes, defeats, and tragedies that have afflicted mankind in the long course of his history.

# NATIONAL RESPONSE TO THE SACK OF WASHINGTON

BY PAUL WOHRMANN

ALEXIS DE TOCQUEVILLE, that oft cited nineteenth century observer of the United States, spoke of America's "irritable patriotism." Americans have never been known as a patient people. If sufficiently provoked by a foreign foe, they have lashed out in a righteous burst of nationalistic rhetoric and action.<sup>1</sup> The War of 1812 provides an instructive example of national irascibility in action. With her pride and self respect damaged and her international trade hampered and harassed by the Napoleonic World War, the United States struck back with the hope of enforcing free trade and sailor's rights. Both France and Great Britain were guilty of interfering with American trade. Each wished the benefits of neutral trade to the exclusion of the other. Unprepared Americans shrank from a double declaration of war and saw British provocation greater than French. The dominant national opinion, excluding New England, was that something stronger than economic coercion should be tried and that as a last resort, war might be the answer. It was only with difficulty that the war declaration of June 1812 was driven through Congress. Ironically, sufficient American impatience was mustered for a fight just at the moment Britain appeared ready to modify her policy.

It will be necessary to analyze the extent of national feeling as expressed in words or actions before the Sack so that a comparison may be made with the reaction to the event. In early 1812 the West seemed most impatient to strike the British and Indians for commercial violations and for Canadian based plots against the United States. Indeed, some deemed the acquisition of Upper Canada necessary to assure national integrity. Louisiana Governor W. C. C. Claiborne, whose state was more exposed to British attack than other western states, thought that war was the only possible way to preserve the nation and com-

<sup>1</sup> Yehoshua Arieli, *Individualism and Nationalism in American Ideology* (Baltimore, 1966), p. 9.

mand respect at home and abroad.<sup>2</sup> Patriots in the East, however, were less sanguine. Thomas McKean, former Pennsylvania Governor, feared that the loosely organized democracy would not survive a war. And soon after the declaration, outright opposition intensified partially because of military reverses and of federal inability to provide maritime protection.<sup>3</sup>

Defeat in the Northwest and Northeast in 1812 resulted in a reiteration of support for and opposition to the war.<sup>4</sup> General William Hull's surrender of Detroit, August 16, 1812, was a shock and a sober confirmation that taking Canada would be more than "a mere matter of marching." *The Farmer's Watch-Tower*, on the Ohio frontier at Urbana, referred to the "disaster" to American arms at Detroit and charged the people to "uphold and raise the national character and assure an early peace." The pro-administration *National Intelligencer* of Washington saw plans underway for "prosecuting the campaign with new vigor," following the "extraordinary and unexpected event." The *Scioto Gazette* (Chillicothe, Ohio) commented:

Well, we have lost an arm. But, thanks be to Him who gave us being and who will protect us, we have another. . . . We fight for liberty, for life, for wounded honor—and we will fight with desperation.

Secretary of State James Monroe saw a united nation rising from disgrace to avenge the defeat, possibly with enough impetus to take Canada.<sup>5</sup> Governor James Barbour of Virginia called 1500 Virginia troops to fight in the West to revenge the "wound" that the "character of [the] country" had sustained. This was to be done by fighting with a new western army under General William Henry Harrison.<sup>6</sup>

<sup>2</sup> Thomas M. Marshall, ed., *The Life and Papers of Frederick Bates* (St. Louis, 1926), II, pp. 215-216, 220; Dunbar Rowland, ed., *Official Letter Books of W. C. C. Claiborne* (Jackson, Mississippi, 1917), VI, p. 125.

<sup>3</sup> Charles Francis Adams, ed., *The Works of John Adams, Second President of the United States* (Boston, 1856) X, p. 14; Henry Adams, ed., *Documents Relating to New-England Federalism, 1800-1815* (Boston, 1905), p. 388; Lester J. Cappon, ed., *The Adams-Jefferson Letters* (Chapel Hill, 1959), II, p. 311.

<sup>4</sup> *Letters and Other Writings of James Madison* (Philadelphia, 1867), II, pp. 548, 550; *Warren-Adams Letters*, Vol. II, *Massachusetts Historical Society Collections* (Boston, 1925), LXXIII, p. 383.

<sup>5</sup> Stanislaus M. Hamilton, ed. *The Writings of James Monroe* (New York, 1901), V, pp. 217-221.

<sup>6</sup> Urbana, Ohio *The Farmers' Watch-Tower*, Oct. 28, 1812; Washington, D. C. *National Intelligencer*, Sept. 1 and 8, 1812; Worthington, Ohio *Western Intelligencer*, Sept. 4, 1812; Zanesville, Ohio *Muskingum Messenger*, Sept. 23, 1812.

When the West could not take Canada, attention shifted to the Niagara and Lake Champlain frontiers. The *Muskingham Messenger* (Zanesville, Ohio) sickened by the defeat of "granny Hull" rested its hopes on the Northeast. "*The monster must be cut in two,*" it declared. "If [General Henry] Dearborn does not immediately penetrate to their vital points, our heroism is nothing, and our name will be a reproach." After the ineffectual attack on Queenstown Heights the *Albany Register* still struck an optimistic note while calling for a change in leadership:

With rulers deserving the confidence of the people, what is there that our country cannot accomplish; What could stay her march to glory or prevent her from arriving at the acme of national prosperity and fame!

Richard Rush, comptroller of the Treasury perhaps reflected the chastened optimism of the time when he remarked "We must continue to live on what alone has supported us—hope. . . ." John Quincy Adams, distressed by the early American defeats, could only hope that God might use the disasters to "rouse the spirit of the nation." Few at this time saw the nation's peril to the extent that Adams did.<sup>7</sup>

Individual and collective military service in the war was encouraged and offered. Soldiers were urged into federal and state service. Volunteer groups did assemble and fight, but they were few. In some cases the militia refused to cross into Canada (the most hurtful example being at Queenstown), but most militiamen served (for a fixed term) outside of their state. Occasionally citizens, especially women's groups, would demonstrate their support for the war by voluntarily sending supplies.<sup>8</sup>

As the war dragged on there were increasing doubts about the fitness of the political and military leadership of the country. Such doubts were expressed in criticism of the genuine or

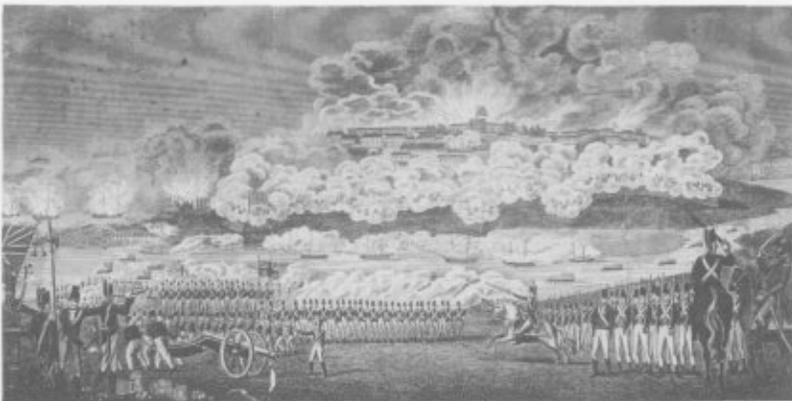
<sup>7</sup> *Muskingum Messenger*, Sept. 2, 1812; Steubenville, Ohio *The Western Herald*, Nov. 12, 1812; John H. Powell, *Richard Rush, Republican Diplomat, 1780-1859* (Philadelphia, 1942), p. 44; Allen Nevins, ed., *The Diary of John Quincy Adams, 1794-1845* (New York, 1951), p. 103.

<sup>8</sup> *Baltimore Niles' Weekly Register*, Dec. 26, 1812; *Writings of Madison*, II, p. 570; Hugh Hastings, ed., *Public Papers of Daniel D. Tompkins Governor of New York, 1807-1817* (Albany, 1902), III, pp. 211, 231; Leland W. Meyer, *The Life and Times of Colonel Richard M. Johnson of Kentucky* (New York, 1932), p. 94; Logan Esarey, ed., *Governor's Messages and Letters: Messages and Letters of William Henry Harrison* (Indianapolis, 1922), II, p. 157.

imagined organizational deficiencies of the administration. Attention focused on the President and his advisors. In 1813 W. C. C. Claiborne could still call for a vigorous and determined support of the war which was "essential to the honor, the safety—nay the existence of this nation," but characterized the President as "greatly unfortunate in the selection of his military Chiefs." Henry Clay, War Hawk Congressman and future peace commissioner, said:

It is . . . vain to conceal the fact . . . Mr. Madison is wholly unfit for the storms of War . . . for the rough and rude blasts which the conflicts of nations generate. Our hopes then for the future conduct of the War must be placed upon the vigor which he may bring into the administration.

Few publicly went as far as the *Western Spy* (Cincinnati) which advocated turning Madison out of office in 1812 for his indecisive leadership and poor choice of advisers. New England papers accused the administration of using Hull as a scapegoat for administrative failure and saw his defeat as the "folly and wickedness of those who administer our government," who, unprepared for war, gave in to the cries for action of the "Jacobins" in the South and West. Personal jealousies and resulting disruption were observed within the administration. These centered around the military aspirations of Monroe and Secretary of War John Armstrong. One responsible Federalist concluded



Representation of the Capture of the City of Washington by the British Forces under the command of Major Gen'l Ross and Rear Admiral I. Cockburn, August 24, 1814. Line engraving. *Library of Congress*

that in mid-1813 there seemed to be "little plan or concert in the management of public affairs." When Madison delivered his year-end message, Federalists claimed that he, leading to the unhealthy belief that the "war brings with it more good than evil, a conclusion not warranted [*sic*] . . . by fact," overemphasized victories.<sup>9</sup>

While some expected surrender to follow surrender, or doubted that the war could be won given the incapacity and inefficiency of those directly engaged in it and the hostility of a large number of the people, others, admitting that the situation was serious, cautioned against despair, but pointed to changes in leadership that hopefully would improve the outlook of the war.

Throughout the war there was considerable discussion as to whether criticism directed at the nation's political and military leaders or the war in general was patriotic or not. During the period before the Sack, the majority agreed that criticism was healthy and proper, but they maintained that any suggested or actual changes should be made within the existing constitutional framework. Few commentators offered as balanced a view as retired conservative John Jay when he said in late 1814:

Things being as they are, I think, we cannot be too perfectly united in a determination to defend our country, nor be too vigilant in watching and resolutely examining the conduct of the administration in all its departments, candidly and openly giving decided approbation or decided censure, according as it may deserve the one or the other.<sup>10</sup>

Much evidence exists of non-nationalistic attitudes during the first two years of the war. It is also clear that Americans were aware that these attitudes existed. Many of these feelings may

<sup>9</sup> John A. Schutz, *The Spur of Fame, Dialogues of John Adams and Benjamin Rush 1805-1813* (San Marino, Calif., 1966), p. 245; Rowland, *Letter Books of Claiborne*, VI, pp. 207, 209; Glyndon Van Deusen, *The Life of Henry Clay* (Boston, 1937), p. 92; Cincinnati *Western Spy*, Oct. 10, 17, and 24, 1812; Hartford *Connecticut Courant*, Sept. 1 and 15, 1812, and Oct. 6, 1812; *Memoirs of Jeremiah Mason* (Boston, 1917), pp. 61, 80; Clarence S. Brigham, "Letters of Abijah Bigelow to his wife, 1810-1815," *American Antiquarian Society Proceedings* (1930), XL, p. 370.

<sup>10</sup> Schutz, *Spur of Fame*, pp. 245, 275; Worthington C. Ford, *Writings of John Quincy Adams* (New York, 1914), IV, pp. 420-421; John A. Stebens, *Albert Gallatin* (Boston, 1899), p. 303; Robert L. Meriwether, ed., *The Papers of John C. Calhoun* (Columbia, S. C., 1959), I, p. 162; *Farmer's Watch-Tower*, Oct. 28, 1812; Henry P. Johnston, ed., *Correspondence and Public Papers of John Jay* (New York, 1895), IV, pp. 360, 378-379.

be categorized as highly individualistic or selfish. One of the first evidences of selfish (non-nationalistic) behavior was the intersectional exchange between the West and New England concerning the motivation for the attitudes and actions relating to the war which existed in these sections. The northeasterners accused the West of supporting the war for selfish purposes, and the West laid the nonsupport of the New Englanders to pernicious localism.<sup>11</sup>

As mentioned above, the behavior of some of the troops left much to be desired. Throughout the war the federal government could not obtain sufficient numbers of regular troops and therefore had to depend in part on the service of the state militias. Many militiamen refused to serve or deserted. Colonel Winfield Scott described in somewhat overblown language one of the earliest examples of this behavior at Queenstown:

[Militia General Stephan Van Rensselaer] found himself helpless in his camp by the machinations in the ranks of demagogues opposed to the Administration and the war. These vermin, who infect all republics, boastful enough at home, no sooner found themselves in sight of the enemy than they discovered that the militia . . . could not be constitutionally marched into a foreign country.

Isaac Van Horne, Adjutant General of the Ohio Militia, complained in late 1812 that in an atmosphere of political criticism of the military, abuse of recruiters, and soldierly inclination to desert because of family and business interest, the militia refused to march at all without extravagant logistical support.<sup>12</sup>

Such behavior of eastern and western troops or reports of same caused sectional and political bickering to intensify. John Adams compared the factionalism of the Republicans in 1812 to that of the Federalists in 1799 and claimed that in both cases

<sup>11</sup> Meriwether, *Calhoun Papers*, I, p. 177; *Western Spy*, March 7, 1813; *National Intelligencer*, Dec. 6, 1813; *Chillicothe Scioto Gazette*, Sept. 30, 1812; E. B. Washburne, ed., *The Edwards Papers* (Chicago, 1884), pp. 95-96; *Connecticut Courant*, Oct. 13, 1812; Charles R. King, ed., *Life and Correspondence of Rufus King* (New York, 1898), V, pp. 272-273; Brigham, "Letters of Bigelow," pp. 346, 368, 370; George H. Hayes, ed., *Letters of Samuel Taggart, Representative in Congress 1803-1814* (Worcester, Mass., 1924), p. 426.

<sup>12</sup> King, *Correspondence of Rufus King*, V, p. 309; Harry L. Coles, *The War of 1812* (Chicago, 1965), pp. 65, 68, 69; Winfield Scott, *Memoirs of Lieutenant-General Scott*, L. L. D. (New York, 1864), I, p. 63; Alfred B. Sears, *Thomas Worthington, Father of Ohio Statehood* (Columbus, 1958), p. 187.

the division resulted from the party becoming intoxicated with power and thus growing presumptuous and extravagant. Such division would continue, he felt, until the several sections and states recognized the national authority and vestigial colonialism ceased. Benjamin Rush expressed embarrassment over the "selfishness, ignorance, and party spirit" of Americans and questioned whether the nation was "*worth* a war." President Madison complained of the "seditious opposition in Massachusetts and Connecticut" and "intrigues elsewhere" which had "clogged the wheels of the war" and hampered the 1812 northeastern campaign. Monroe expressed a similar view.<sup>13</sup>

There continued to be geographical limits to patriotism and many partisan limits to nationalistic behavior were associated with geographical bounds. Numerous attitudes had as many or more political than geographical nuances, however. For example, Federalist New Englanders saw military reversals as proof that they had been right not to support the war. Cyrus King, brother of Rufus King, claiming that New Yorkers wanted a change in government in 1812, expressed fear over the seeming ability of the "Anti-commercial, restrictive Virginia system" to "predominate in our National Councils for four years longer." He felt that in the eyes of New Yorkers any alternative was preferable to the Republican administration. President Madison blamed the failure of the northeastern campaigns on particularistic politicians who frustrated the national government in its efforts to protect the Northeast. In addition to the governors of Massachusetts and Connecticut, he doubtlessly had in mind the Massachusetts legislature, which encouraged military non-cooperation, and individuals such as Timothy Pickering. Other sections exhibited parochial sentiment as well. John Randolph of Virginia urged that the Virginia upland militia ignore all but local interests for health reasons and defy the call of the President to march to Norfolk. Otherwise the militia would die in the inhospitable summer climate of the lowlands.<sup>14</sup> Such attitudes and actions in the face

<sup>13</sup> Adams, *Works of John Adams*, X, p. 23; Schutz, *Spur of Fame*, p. 219; Madison *Writings*, II, pp. 542-543; Hamilton, *Monroe Writings*, V, p. 224.

<sup>14</sup> Washburne, *Edwards Papers*, pp. 95-6; *National Intelligencer*, Dec. 11, 1813; King, *Correspondence of King*, V, pp. 290-291; James D. Richardson, ed., *A Compilation of the Messages and Papers of the Presidents, 1789-1902* (Washington, 1904), I, p. 516; *Mason Memoirs*, p. 81; Adams, *New England Federalism*, p. 393; John Randolph to John Gore, June 30 and July 2, 1813, Letters to Horatio Greenough, film 536, Joint University Library, Nashville, Tennessee.

of the administration's intentions of pursuing the war caused a few political leaders to fear for the Union. The factionalism doubtlessly encouraged the British, hard pressed in Europe, to hold on in Canada. Overoptimistic reports of the war by the administration in contrast with a mediocre battle record in 1813 and 1814 also contributed to the continued deep rooted apathy toward the war.<sup>15</sup>

Perhaps most striking among the evidences of a lack of national feeling was the failure of many to realize that defense in a democratic state was to a large extent the product of the general will. Citizens did not seem to understand that their government could only organize the human resources and materials that they would provide. The government, especially the President, was accused of not protecting a particular area or interest, without any mention of cooperation to that end on the part of the nation, the area, or the interest. *The Supporter* (Chillicothe, Ohio) demonstrated this lack of perception when it commented on Hull's retreat from Canada: "It is a fact well known, that the energies of the nation have not been exerted commensurate with the expectations of the people of this country." Shadrach Bond, Illinois Territorial Representative to Congress, complained to Territorial Governor Ninian Edwards about a supposed policy of Armstrong for no protection for the frontiers because he refused to organize companies of rangers. Bond implied that Armstrong would be to blame for Indian attacks which would be encouraged by this lack of protection. The organizational powers of the administration in the selection of officers and in the logistical support of the army in particular might be justly criticized, but the failure of citizens to realize that they were the government compromises this criticism.<sup>16</sup>

Since much of the debate over the war and its conduct was public, and since the British had American informants, Englishmen and their government received some picture of American discontent and division. The British attack on Washington was made partly in the belief that the United States would be further demoralized by the destruction of the capital.<sup>17</sup>

<sup>15</sup> King, *Correspondence of King*, V, p. 346.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*, V, p. 304; *Madison Writings*, II, p. 577; *Western Spy*, Oct. 24, 1812; *Connecticut Courant*, Sept. 1, 1812; Washburne, *Edwards Papers*, pp. 95-6, 111.

<sup>17</sup> George Cockburn to Alexander Cochrane, July 17, 1814. *Md. Hist. Mag.* (1911), VI, p. 16.

Another measure of national feeling would be the existing attitude of the citizens toward their national capital and the national buildings and records which were located there. In an effort to evaluate national feeling in America during the War of 1812 and to study what effect the British Sack of the American capital may have had on nationalistic feelings, it is necessary now to focus attention on Washington, D. C.

United States efforts to defend Washington from British attack prior to the Sack were weak and dilatory. Part of the reason for the lack of active preparations lay in the lack of war spirit, finances, and leadership that characterized the whole war effort. Somewhat unique in the case of Washington was divided opinion among the public, as well as responsible officials, concerning whether the British would attack Washington and thus to what extent defense of the city was necessary. In offensive action against the United States, the British strength clearly lay in using its nearly unchallenged fleet to support an assault on major East coast ports. Inland, or in a narrow waterway where a fleet might be bottled up by land based fire, British power diminished in proportion to the length of the lines back to the ocean going fleet. Washington, although inland, was in an area penetrated by rivers flowing into Chesapeake Bay. These rivers, open to small and medium sized vessels, placed Washington in the grey area of British access. By this standard, it was vulnerable to amphibious attack, but less so than New York, Philadelphia, Boston, Baltimore, or Charleston. Whether the commercial cities or the capital were most susceptible to attack depended largely on the aims of the British, which were best known to them.

Still it is difficult to see why Americans considered an attack on Washington so unlikely. A swift foray into enemy territory with resulting destruction of public and private property was not unknown in the war; the American raid on York, the capital of Upper Canada, was a prime example. Given this precedent, Americans might have expected a retaliatory attempt on their capital. Few however foresaw the nature of the British plan—a raid, destruction of the public buildings, and a hasty return to the ships. Indeed several commentators rejected such an attack. During the Congressional debates in 1811 John

Randolph had warned that to leave the seacoast unprotected while the army marched to Canada was folly.<sup>18</sup>

Few took the consequences of offensive warfare seriously. Before the British actually began their raids in the Chesapeake, apparently few thought that the East coast was in danger at all. When the British forays began in March, 1813, rumors of an attack on Washington began also. These did cause some temporary alarms with marches and countermarches of regular and militia troops chasing the reports. Monroe called for stronger defense and was ignored. The ambivalence of the people and the government caught in the midst of uneasiness about the course of the war, dislike of the war, and the trouble and expense of calling out the militia was reflected by Senator Jeremiah Mason of New Hampshire:

[The British] are now about forty miles down the [Potomac] river. Reports respecting their force and probable intention are various. I believe they intend to come here, but they have been so dilatory in their movements that they will not be able to effect their object. The people here have been greatly alarmed.<sup>19</sup>

There was even more reason for alarm in the spring of 1814. Napoleonic France surrendered to the Allies in April, thus freeing British troops for the American theater. In spite of war weariness, the British decided to make one more attempt to punish America. They conceived a three-part plan. The main thrust would be an attack down the Lake Champlain route, a foray which might detach partially disaffected New England from the Union. The seizure of New Orleans could bottle up American commerce after the war or at least could be a useful trading card in the peace negotiations. A diversionary attack on the East coast cities was also planned.

By the middle of February the British were in the Chesapeake Bay area. Madison heard of Napoleon's surrender in

<sup>18</sup> The *Connecticut Courant* predicted the raid on Aug. 27, three days after the Sack, but apparently without the intelligence that the British were approaching the capital. The *Courant* also predicted that a raid on Washington would be a lesson to other vulnerable cities. See also Henry Adams, ed., *The Writings of Albert Gallatin* (Philadelphia, 1879), I, p. 628; W. C. Bruce, *John Randolph of Roanoke* (New York, 1922), I, pp. 374-375; Kate Mason Rowland, *The Life of Charles Carroll of Carrollton, 1737-1832 with his Correspondence and Public Papers* (New York, 1898), II, p. 297.

<sup>19</sup> Brigham, "Letters of Bigelow," p. 367; Hamilton, *Monroe Writings*, V, p. 268; *Mason Memoirs*, pp. 61-62.

May. When he learned that Sir Alexander Cochrane, Vice-Admiral of the British fleet, had proclaimed a naval blockade from Maine to New Orleans and had encouraged a slave insurrection, he told Armstrong that "the seat of government cannot fail to be a favorite [object]" of the British. Armstrong could not be convinced that the capital was in danger, even when several sources confirmed by mid-June that the British were coming to the East coast in strength. In the face of danger from imminent attack, the House of Representatives considered a resolution which would have distributed arms to District of Columbia citizens willing to perform military service. The motion was negated as the majority felt that since the enemy had not followed up the 1813 raids in the area, they did not intend to strike Washington at all. The preamble, which pointed out the danger, was eliminated in secret session, and the resolution was referred to the military affairs committee which declared defense preparation sufficient.<sup>20</sup>



William H. Winder. Wood engraving from *The Pictorial Field-Book of the War of 1812* by Benson J. Lossing. Maryland Historical Society

Official Washington seemed confident that the British could be repulsed if they did come to the capital. Madison, who may have had reports from Ghent by June 26 that the British intended to attack Washington that summer, presented a plan for

<sup>20</sup> Irving Brant, "Madison and the War of 1812," *The Virginia Magazine of History and Biography* (January, 1966), LXXIV, p. 64; Hamilton, *Monroe Writings*, V, pp. 303-306; John S. Williams, *History of the Invasion and Capture of Washington and of the Events which Preceded and Followed* (New York, 1857), pp. 16, 35.

2,000-3,000 militia to be stationed between the Potomac and Patuxent; military stores were to be deposited there; while an additional 12,000-14,000 militia were to be held in readiness. The Cabinet approved the scheme, but nothing was done to implement it. On July 5, General William Winder was appointed commander of the 10th Military District of Washington, Baltimore and their environs. On paper Winder had about 1000 regulars and 500 seamen and could call on about 15,000 militia from the District of Columbia, Virginia, Maryland, and Pennsylvania.<sup>21</sup>

The repeated annoyances of the enemy and his refusal to make a concerted attempt on Washington outweighed the continued reports of large scale British reinforcements from Europe. Both the people and the government continued to drift in complacency. The *Intelligencer* generally commended what little was done as "prudential preparation." But the paper, claiming that there need be little worry over the fragmentary accounts of the enemy depredations to the south, downgraded the possibility of the British reaching Washington.<sup>22</sup> Although some locals felt the danger of attack was real and questioned the strength of local forces, their views had no appreciable influence. Laudatory comments from Winder as to the condition of the District militia did nothing to allay the false sense of security at Washington and elsewhere.<sup>23</sup>

After August 1, however, apprehension increased. "Philo" in the August 9 *Intelligencer* declared that he knew few who did not ". . . believe that the enemy will attempt to reach Washington as soon as his reinforcements, which I learn are on their way, shall enable him to do so with confidence. . . . The metropolis must be preserved from insult." He advocated closing the rivers and putting obstructions in the path of an enemy land march. The next day the rival *Daily Federal Republican*

<sup>21</sup> W. P. Cresson, *James Monroe* (Chapel Hill, 1946), p. 263; William James, *A Full and Correct Account of the Military Occurrences of the Late War Between Great Britain and the United States of America* (London, 1818), II, pp. 273; *National Intelligencer*, Dec. 9, 1814; Coles, *War of 1812*, p. 174.

<sup>22</sup> *National Intelligencer*, Aug. 6 and 9, 1814 and July 12, 15 and 27, 1814.

<sup>23</sup> Richard C. Knopf, trans., "Autobiography of Samuel Williams" (Columbus, 1957), I, pp. 216, 229; U. S. *Annals of Congress*, House of Representatives, 13th Congress, 3rd Sess. (Washington, 1854), pp. 306-307; *National Intelligencer*, Aug. 6 and 12, 1814; *Boston Patriot*, Aug. 27, 1814.

of Georgetown declared that despite visits to the President by concerned citizens nothing was being done. Perhaps Congress would do something, once it reconvened. Meanwhile, the paper blandly declared:

It is said to be the determination of many, keeping an eye on the heads of departments, that they shall not sulk off, should the hour of peril suddenly arrive. As they will do nothing for the defense, they should be held as hostages for the security of the citizens.<sup>24</sup>

After chasing a fleet of American gunboats up the Patuxent River the British landed at Benedict, Maryland on the 19th. Roger B. Taney, a Maryland lawyer, politician and later Chief Justice of the Supreme Court, had written to Winder five days before that Washington's defense was impossible unless the militia was purged of its political bickering and apathy. But on August 20 the *Intelligencer* remained unruffled and expressed confidence that Winder could muster the District militia. In his call for militia Winder referred to the need for "thousands animated by the warmest zeal for the honor, liberty and independence of their country" to "voluntarily flock to its standard" and defend the capital. Two days later the *Intelligencer* acclaimed Winder's "prompt and energetic measures" which were "rapidly progressing." Two brigades of District militia, Baltimore troops and others were ready. It admitted that the public was very anxious but predicted that "in a few hours, thousands of brave men will be prepared to resist the host of mercenaries that now threaten." Washington Mayor James H. Blake likewise issued a call to arms: "Affection for our Wives, Children and Homes—Patriotism and Interest—all demand our services in the best way we can render them," he told Washingtonians. He called all the able bodied to perform voluntary patrol to police the city, not letting strangers—potential spies—in or out of town "without a reasonable and lawful excuse."<sup>25</sup>

The picture of activity painted by the *Intelligencer* was not accurate. In Pennsylvania, Winder's call had not been acted

<sup>24</sup> *National Intelligencer*, Aug. 9, 1814; *Georgetown Daily Federal Republican*, Aug. 10, 1814.

<sup>25</sup> Roger B. Taney to General William Winder, August 14, 1814, Peter Force Transcripts, Library of Congress; *National Intelligencer*, Aug. 20, and 22, 1814.

upon. The legislature had allowed the militia law to expire, and the forces could not be legally reorganized until October 4. This "protraction," Pennsylvania officials admitted, "causes an almost total disorganization of our militia system." They expressed hope that the patriotism of the people would "obviate" the difficulty and that Governor Simon Snyder's call for volunteers would suffice. Winder's call for volunteers on the 18th was sent through the regular mail and reached Harrisburg the evening of the 23rd, less than twenty-four hours before the British and Americans fought for the capital and too late for aid to be sent.<sup>26</sup> The *Intelligencer* on August 11 had reported that in addition to 5000 Pennsylvania troops "who are already in readiness to march at a moment's notice," two Baltimore units would defend their city and the capital with the regulars. Since there were only about a thousand regulars available, the Baltimore contingent must have been large. Less than two weeks before Governor Levin Winder of Maryland had declared that "Baltimore . . . will be unwilling that any part of that force from which they are expected to derive aid, should be withdrawn from them." Winder was uncertain as to how many would volunteer to defend Washington.<sup>27</sup>

In spite of the British approach and the noncooperation of some of the neighboring militias, the administration continued to do little to strengthen the forces defending the capital. Armstrong remained convinced that the enemy would not attack Washington. Baltimore, a larger city and a base for American privateers, was a more worthwhile target. Madison felt that the British were more likely to attack in force than previously but deferred in part to Armstrong's views. Madison also hesitated to call out the militia because of the depleted federal treasury, which would be further strained by having to pay for more troops. A panic resulting from a call-up of militia could hurt

<sup>26</sup> U.S. *American State Papers, Military Affairs* (Washington, 1832), I, p. 551; *National Intelligencer*, Dec. 9, 1814; Samuel Perkins, *A History of the Political and Military Events of the Late War between the United States and Great Britain* (New Haven, 1825), p. 323.

<sup>27</sup> *National Intelligencer*, Aug. 11, 1814; U. S., *American State Papers, Military Affairs*, I, p. 551. At about the same time General Winder was complaining that the Maryland militia that did answer the call were not directly under his command. Winder to Armstrong July 27, 1814, Peter Force Transcripts.

bond sales. Nevertheless he expected the state militias to maintain themselves in readiness.<sup>28</sup>

Harassed by the enemy which was now within twenty miles of the capital in July and by increasing public dissatisfaction, Madison seemed to have left practical matters to Winder. The latter's organization of the forces was hampered by defects in the law and the existing attitude of administrators, but also by the effect of previous calls. Several militia groups from the



March of the British Army from Benedict Bladensburg. Wood engraving from *The Pictorial Field-Book of the War of 1812* by Benson J. Lossing. *Maryland Historical Society*

three counties in adjacent Maryland, admitted the *Intelligencer*, "have been so harassed by repeated calls upon them, frequently on false alarms, as not [to] be able to assemble, on

<sup>28</sup> Irving Brant, *James Madison, Commander in Chief, 1812-1836* (New York, 1961), p. 290; *Madison Writings*, II, pp. 583-584. See also C. Joseph Bernardo and Eugene H. Bacon, *American Military Policy: Its Development Since 1775* (Harrisburg, Pa., 1961), p. 133.

the actual landing of the enemy, in time to repel him." The *Intelligencer* said that farmer-soldiers were concerned about their crops, but did not indicate whether the basic difficulty was disgust with the repeated cries of "wolf," simple exhaustion, or parochialism. At virtually the same time "Veritas" exonerated Washington and blamed Maryland officials for allowing the same area to be repeatedly invaded. Almost to the day of the Sack, Winder expressed satisfaction with the District militia.<sup>29</sup> Yet Samuel Williams, a clerk in the General Land Office, found that only six or eight of his militia company mustered on August 19, none of them officers. When Winder, at last convinced that the British intended to attack the city, called for support, he asked for volunteers. He admitted that massing the potential military forces of the area through normal channels, especially through the militia organization, would be tardy and futile. Obviously even if a large number of volunteers turned up, their effective use was severely compromised by the lack of organization.<sup>30</sup>

By contrast, other East coast cities, fearful of attack and doubtful of sufficient federal aid, were making some concrete efforts to protect themselves. The *Connecticut Mirror* (Hartford) asserted that Portsmouth, Boston, Newport and New York offered tempting targets to the British and that the South was already in "terror and distress" because of British raids. The Administration, its supporters and specifically the *Intelligencer*, were accused of suppressing the dangers of invasion. Given the possibility of attack and the unlikelihood of federal assistance, volunteers had begun to construct defense works around New York. Virginia called out the militia to protect Richmond and the surrounding territory. Some preparations were also made elsewhere.<sup>31</sup>

When it was clear that the British would indeed attempt to take Washington, thoughts of retreat and then panic replaced complacency and disbelief as the dominant moods among the

<sup>29</sup> Adams, *Writings of Gallatin*, I, p. 529; *National Intelligencer*, July 23, 25, 28, 1814.

<sup>30</sup> Knopf, "Autobiography of Williams," p. 220; *National Intelligencer*, Aug. 20 and 22, 1814.

<sup>31</sup> *Hartford Connecticut Mirror*, Aug. 15 and 22, 1814; *New York, New York Gazette and General Advertiser*, Aug. 24, 1814; *National Intelligencer*, Aug 9, 1814.

noncombatants of the city. On August 20 it was known in Washington that the enemy had landed at Benedict, but it was not until the 22nd that Washington seriously considered itself a target. The leaders of the British force, General Robert Ross and Admiral George Cockburn, determined to try for Washington the next day after they knew that their immediate quarry, the gunboats of Commodore Joshua Barney stationed in the Bay, had been destroyed by the Americans to prevent their capture. On the 23rd and 24th there was a "general removal" from the capital, with many women and children leaving, some apparently greatly agitated. With the news on the afternoon of the 24th that the British had defeated and scattered the American army at Bladensburg, east of Washington, leaving the capital unprotected, many more fled carrying what goods they could. Doubtlessly more would have gone, had not the retreating troops clogged the roads from the battlesite to Washington, Georgetown, and Montgomery, Maryland. The refusal of Winder and his superiors to make a stand on Capitol Hill with the District Militia, which by and large had not been engaged at Bladensburg, caused this force to scatter. Many locals now thought only of saving their families and perhaps coming back to the ranks later in order to follow Winder's orders to retreat to Georgetown and Montgomery.<sup>32</sup>

The British, burning all of the public buildings except the Patent Office, occupied Washington twenty-four hours. Private property was generally respected. Initial local response in Washington was one of dismay and indignation—dismay over the Sack itself, and indignation directed both at the British for their actions and at the United States government for allowing the fiasco to occur. There was considerable interest in a renewed defense and concern as to why the old system had failed. A number of citizens solved the dilemma by moving out of the partially destroyed town, but most returned. Debate and action were carried out in an atmosphere of apprehension over a possible British return. Some of this fear was caused by the

<sup>32</sup> Brant, *Madison: Commander in Chief*, pp. 291, 293; Coles, *War of 1812*, pp. 175, 177; Gaillard Hunt, ed., *M. B. Smith: The First Forty Years of Washington Society* (London, 1906), pp. 98-99; Warren, *Ohio Trump of Fame*, Sept. 7, 1814; *Connecticut Courant*, August 26, 1814; "Letters of Elbridge Gerry," *Mass. Hist. Soc. Proceedings*, XLVII (October 1913-June 1914), p. 511; *American State Papers, Military Affairs*, I, p. 565; (New York, 1949), Francis F. Beirne, *The War of 1812* (New York, 1949), pp. 270-772.

proximity to the event, but anxiety over a British return was still being expressed as late as November.<sup>33</sup> Private contributions for the rebuilding and strengthening of Fort Washington on the Potomac and a larger effort to rebuild the Capitol, both pushed by local landowners, indicated a determination to "save" Washington. Some private citizens offered to aid in any defense project the government might begin.<sup>34</sup>

Another initial reaction in the capital was to call for a change in the military and civilian leadership. The President drew much of the original fire, but his demeanor upon returning to Washington as well as prompt action in defense of the capital and Baltimore caused a deflection of local public wrath to others. Fort Washington, the only obstruction to British advance up the Potomac, had been blown up by its commander when the British fleet appeared. Captain Samuel Dyson had received orders from Winder to destroy the fort in the face of a superior land force. As a result of his action, Dyson was cashiered. Winder, although allowed to retain nominal command during the defense of Baltimore, was in effect replaced by militia General Samuel Smith, when some Baltimoreans refused to serve under Winder. The administration acquiesced in the change. Monroe, who had assumed *de facto* charge of local defenses with Madison's approval on their return to the city ahead of Armstrong, hastily shipped Winder off to the northern frontier. Monroe continued to exercise control after the full cabinet returned.<sup>35</sup> Madison was visited by local citizens led by Alexander Hanson of the opposition *Daily Federal Republican*, who urged that Armstrong be replaced. When Armstrong visited the local militia in their camp on August 29, they refused to serve under him. Armstrong left Washington and resigned in Baltimore on September 4. He was replaced by Monroe. His "resignation" was generally well received, but a strong minor-

<sup>33</sup> *National Intelligencer*, Aug. 30, and Oct. 10, 1814; Brigham, "Letters of Bigelow," p. 397; Williamsburg, *Ohio Western American*, Sept. 17, 1814.

<sup>34</sup> *National Intelligencer*, Nov. 9, 1814; Glenn Tucker, *Poltroons and Patriots, A Popular Account of the War of 1812* (New York, 1954), II, p. 593; *Niles Weekly Register*, Oct. 29, 1814.

<sup>35</sup> *Boston New England Palladium*, Sept. 30, 1814; Madison's Notes, 1814, Madison Papers, Library of Congress; *National Intelligencer*, Aug. 30, 1814; Benson J. Lossing, *The Pictorial Field-Book of the War of 1812* (New York, 1869), p. 939; Henry Adams, *The Life of Albert Gallatin* (Philadelphia, 1880), p. 529; Monroe to Madison, September 3, 1814; James Monroe Papers, Library of Congress; Monroe to Winder, n.d. and Winder to Secretary of War, Sept. 23, 1814, Peter Force Transcripts.

ity, whether honestly or out of a narrow partisanship, felt him to be an administration scapegoat. The successful defense of Baltimore stifled some of the local criticism and lessened defense activity and anxiety over a British return.<sup>36</sup>



The Fall of Washington or Maddy in full flight. Etching. Library of Congress

Meanwhile outside the capital after the initial shock had passed, general confusion and alarm swept the Atlantic coast. Cities large and small feared that they would be struck next. One of the first reactions was to call out the militia. This was caused in part by the militia tradition but also by the realization that little help could be expected from the federal government. In nearby Virginia, Governor Barbour issued a proclamation announcing that the militia would defend the state and "their capital." Maryland strengthened defenses around Baltimore which was attacked in mid-September by the same force—

<sup>36</sup> Adams, *Life of Gallatin*, p. 530; John Spencer Bassett, ed., *Correspondence of Andrew Jackson* (Washington, 1927), II, p. 79; J. J. Astor to Monroe, Sept. 14, 1814, Monroe Papers.

now augmented—that had struck Washington. At last Governor Snyder of Pennsylvania managed to get the organized militia of some thirteen eastern counties into the field to aid Baltimore and in order to protect the home soil of Pennsylvania. It was conjectured that Philadelphia might be attacked after Baltimore. New York city and state officials also summoned large numbers of militia to Manhattan, where they were inspected, paraded and placed in the fortifications being erected about the city. In Massachusetts, Governor Caleb Strong ordered 6000 militia to Boston.<sup>37</sup>

More significant than the militia turnout was the extent of volunteer defense efforts. The degree of public alarm following the Sack was unprecedented in the war. Granted that many of the volunteer efforts were made in self defense, but much of the labor was wrapped in the rhetoric of wounded patriotism, revenge for the sack of an American city and of the capital specifically. In Boston the local town meeting seized the initiative. The selectmen met daily; advised the Governor on defense proposals; acted as a clearing house of information; and directed preparations for destroying bridges. They also solicited money for fortifications (over \$10,000 was collected) and instituted and administered a program of one-day volunteers for fortification construction. Even at the end of September, after the battles of Baltimore and Plattsburg, Boston reportedly appeared as an armed camp where the “noise of military preparations fill[ed] the streets.” Some of the defense measures were performed by militia called out by the Governor, but volunteers played a large part.<sup>38</sup>

Rufus King, historic state's righter and bitter opponent of the war, declared frankly that the Sack had “alarmed” New York. The nearby Newark, New Jersey *Centinal of Freedom* invoked the aid of heaven for “skill, fortitude and valour to

<sup>37</sup> *National Intelligencer*, Sept. 1 and 2, 1814; *Philadelphia United States Gazette for the Country*, Sept. 3, 1814; *New York Gazette and General Advertiser*, August 31, 1814; King, *Correspondence of King*, V, p. 414; Robert Ernst, *Rufus King American Federalist* (Chapel Hill, 1968), p. 335; Hastings, *Thompkins Papers*, III, pp. 540-541; Newport, R.I. *Newport Mercury*, Sept. 10, 1814.

<sup>38</sup> *Records Relating to the Early History of Boston*, Document 60, pp. 126-128, 132; Boston *The Repository*, Sept. 29, 1814; *New London Connecticut Gazette*, Sept. 7, 1814; Samuel Elliot Morison, *The Life and Letters of Harrison Gray Otis, Federalist 1765-1848* (Boston, 1913), II, pp. 96-97; *Boston Patriot*, Sept. 3, 6, 7, 10 and 14, 1814.

meet the present perilous and momentous crisis." The New York *National Advocate* declared:

The real negotiators of the British government are Cockburn and Ross . . . not Gambier nor Adam [sic]; the real place of negotiation is neither Gottenburgh nor Ghent—but Washington and *New York!* here's where they will expand the law of nations, here they will enforce impressment, here take Louisiana and the fisheries, here strip us of our maritime power—and leave us hardly the skeleton of independence.

In New York alarmed citizens were moved to action. Local and state government defense efforts were aided by the work of an *ad hoc* committee of safety appointed by the city council.<sup>39</sup> Convinced that little or no aid could be expected from the federal government, King and others raised a million dollar loan for defense works. Some anti-administration political clubs worked on the fortifications. Volunteer laborers were organized to help in building them. Special prayer meetings were urged in New York to invoke the aid of God. The committee of safety urged citizens to volunteer their money and labor and put aside considerations as to whether the war was just or unjust. The point was that "our country, our city, our property, our families are in danger." Militia, militia exempts, and tradesmen were prominent in raising earthworks across Manhattan and Brooklyn, some coming from far outside the city.<sup>40</sup>

In Philadelphia, publisher Matthew Carey credited the Sack with arousing Philadelphians to see the danger of their situation and the need to make local defense preparations. A citizen's defense committee was organized three days after the Sack. It directed the volunteer defense efforts which included volunteer military units that had been formed in late 1813 and early 1814 when the British had threatened the Delaware.<sup>41</sup> The state

<sup>39</sup> King, *Correspondence of King*, V, p. 414; Newark, *New Jersey Centinel of Freedom*, Sept. 13, 1814; New York *National Advocate*, Sept. 5, 1814; Lossing, *Pictorial Field-Book*, pp. 969-970.

<sup>40</sup> King, *Correspondence of King*, V, p. 413; John B. McMaster, *A History of the People of the United States From the Revolution to the Civil War* (New York, 1905), IV, p. 153; Lossing, *Pictorial Field-Book*, p. 969; Tucker, *Poltroons and Patriots*, II, p. 745; McMaster, *History*, IV, pp. 150-152.

<sup>41</sup> Matthew Carey, *The Olive Branch* (Philadelphia, 1817), p. 67; Gertrude MacKinney, ed., *Pennsylvania Archives*, Fourth Series, IV (1814-1816) (Harrisburg, 1931), 845ff; "September, 1814 Philadelphia Committee of Defense Meeting Minutes," *Memoirs of Historical Society of Pennsylvania* (Philadelphia, 1867), VIII, p. 14; Philadelphia *Poulson's American Daily Advertiser*, Aug. 28 (?), 1814.

officials supplied little but privately expressed views that the volunteers would suffice. The non-partisan committee raised \$500,000 for defense, organized volunteer soldiers and laborers and built fortifications, largely ignoring General Joseph Bloomfield, commander of the Fourth Military District that included the city, Governor Snyder who moved his headquarters to Philadelphia, and the city government.<sup>42</sup>

The capture of Washington also encouraged Baltimore citizens to work harder on their defenses. A committee of safety, which had a Revolutionary War precedent, was organized on the day of the Sack. As in Philadelphia, it exercised considerable independent authority. It was self-empowered to question, arrest, jail and expel those who expressed sentiments "inimical" to the American cause or the defense of Baltimore. It directed the building of earthworks, supported the position of General Smith against General Winder, placed artillery, sank ships to block navigation, prepared fire ships, fed the troops, and provided ambulance service during the British attack. After the danger of incursion passed, the committee had difficulty securing manpower to finish the fortifications.<sup>43</sup>

In other areas defense committees worked with regular authorities such as in the case of Newport, Rhode Island and Charleston, South Carolina in response to the Washington Sack and the possibility of attack in their own area.<sup>44</sup>

After the initial fear of attack had subsided, several states augmented their military establishments. New York, Connecticut, Massachusetts, Maryland, Virginia, South Carolina and Georgia either raised additional militia or monies for defense. Some Federalists, realizing that the Union was in greater danger of destruction through invasion than by subversion of the Constitution, railed against the national administration for

<sup>42</sup> Anne Castrodale Golovin, "William Wood Thackara, Volunteer in the War of 1812," *The Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography* (1967), XCI, p. 301; McKinney, *Pennsylvania Archives*, VI, p. 4042; Sanford W. Higgenbotham, *The Keystone in the Democratic Arch; Pennsylvania Politics 1800-1816* (Harrisburg, 1952), p. 295.

<sup>43</sup> Henry Adams, *History of the United States of America—During the Second Administration of James Madison* (New York, 1921), II, p. 166; Abigail Adams to J. Q. Adams, September 7, 1814, John Q. Adams Papers, Massachusetts Historical Society (Microfilm); Wm. D. Hoyt, ed., "Civilian Defense in Baltimore 1814-1815: Minutes of the Committee of Vigilance and Safety," *Md. Hist. Mag.* (Sept., 1944), XXXIX, pp. 199, 200-202, 216.

<sup>44</sup> *Connecticut Gazette*, Sept. 28, 1814; *Newport Mercury*, Sept. 24, 1814; *Charleston, South Carolina Courier*, Sept. 1 and 2, 1814.

failure to provide for the common defense, but assisted state Republicans in doing so.<sup>45</sup>

To rally public opinion in the wake of the Sack, Madison issued a proclamation on September 1 which exhorted citizens to greater war efforts. The President scored the British for their "wanton" destruction of government records, archives, and monuments, as well as private property. He rejected British assertions that the Sack was a just retaliation for previous supposed authorized American burnings in Canada. Perhaps Madison would have made a somewhat different statement if Cockrane had not issued a proclamation of his own after the event with a pre-Sack date, in which he offered not to retaliate for American destruction in Canada, if compensation were made. This proposal was probably published to embarrass Madison, and if so demanded an American counter.<sup>46</sup>



William C. Claiborne. Wood engraving from *The Pictorial Field-Book of the War of 1812*. Maryland Historical Society

Congress was summoned into special session to bolster national defense and to improve the government's financial posture. The legislators who convened in the Patent Office on September 19 were in a bad humor, which would have been worse had the outcome at Baltimore and Lake Champlain been ad-

<sup>45</sup> Hastings, *Tompkins Papers*, III, pp. 540-541; McMaster, *History*, IV, pp. 243, 245; *The Western Spy*, Nov. 12, 1814; Savannah, Georgia *The Republican and Savannah Evening Ledger*, Sept. 3, 6, and 13, and Oct. 11, 1814; King, *Correspondence of King*, V, pp. 413, 414, 419.

<sup>46</sup> *Niles Weekly Register*, Sept. 10, 1814; Brant, *Madison Commander in Chief*, pp. 318-320.

verse. A week later a House committee was appointed to "inquire into the expediency of removing the Seat of Government, during the present session of Congress, to a place of greater security and less inconvenience." Reasons for and against removing the capital exhibited both national and parochial motives. Philadelphia, Lancaster (Pa.) and Georgetown made offers of temporary and/or permanent homes for Congress and the administration. The Philadelphia offer coming from the city council was the most commanding. The unhealthiness of Washington, the high cost of living there, the possibility of another British attack and the remoteness of the capital from the rest of the population were cited as basic reasons for removal.<sup>47</sup>

Local interests favored keeping the capital at Washington. Realizing that removal would be a great loss to the merchantile, propertied and political interests of the District, Washington bankers countered outside offers by proffering loans to the government so that temporary and permanent buildings could be built. The *Alexandria Gazette*, expressing the attitude of other local papers, frankly admitted that removal would bring economic distress to the local populace. It opined that those who advocated temporary removal were only using it as a front for permanent removal. The *Gazette* declared that removal would bring about an instability of government, electioneering fraud, and intrigue. Only if Congress refused to defend the capital from enemy attack would it be best to "hide it in the woods and wilds of the Allegheny." Outside the Washington area, there was less support for keeping the capital there, although the *National Advocate* of New York made the most forceful and perhaps the most nationalistic case for remaining in Washington. It saw the keeping of the capital there as part of America's defiance of British power.<sup>48</sup>

<sup>47</sup> *Annals of Congress*, House of Representatives, 13th Congress, 3rd Sess., p. 312; Helen Nicolay, *Our Capital on the Potomac* (New York, 1924), p. 115; Thomas Leipard to Madison, August 29, 1814, Madison Papers; *New York Gazette and General Advertiser*, Sept. 21, 1814; *Poulson's American Daily Advertiser*, Sept. 19, and Oct. 5, 1814. Madison's summons is in *National Intelligencer*, Aug. 9, 1814; his initial message, which scores the British for the sack is in *ibid.*, Sept. 26, 1814.

<sup>48</sup> Constance McLaughlin Green, *Washington Village and Capital, 1800-1878* (Princeton, 1962), p. 64; *Alexandria, Virginia Alexandria Gazette*, Sept. 29, 1814; *Daily Federal Republican*, Sept. 28 and Oct. 17, 1814; *National Advocate*, Sept. 5, 1814.

On October 13, the House committee reported a temporary removal bill which provided for Congress and the Executive to leave Washington until the first Congressional session following the end of the war. Generally, support for the bill came from the northern and middle states and was opposed by the West and South.<sup>49</sup> Congressional argument reflected parochial interest and varied in validity. Initially, the contention that Washington was still threatened and that for Congress to remain invited attack was quite strong. This contention weakened, however, as the proximity of August 24 and the British amphibious force lessened. It was also asserted that since the British had used the Library of Congress as tinder to burn the Capitol, Congress lacked necessary reference aids which only a larger city could provide. On the other hand, it was asserted that the British could justly boast that they had driven Congress from its seat if removal took place. Others said that if the capital was once put on wheels, it would never stop.<sup>50</sup>

Washington, fearing removal would take place, seemed to hold its collective breath in early October as the controversy reached its climax. However on October 15 the bill failed its third reading by a vote of 74-83. The *Intelligencer*, politically loyal to Madison and a major government printer, was elated. The *Daily Federal Republican* congratulated local interest which had in its opinion prevented removal.<sup>51</sup>

Meanwhile, there was a second related debate going on in Congress. Public pressure doubtless reinforced legislative desire for an investigation of the Sack itself. The *New York Spectator* said that in the wake of the "shameful negligence" at Washington the people would only be satisfied with a full investigation and impartial censuring of those to blame. Something less than this was achieved. In contrast to the permissive handling of the removal issue, leading Madisonian Republicans seized the initiative when the Sack was investigated. Inquiry was inevitable and pro-administration members of Congress were successful in dominating the House investigating committee. Madison ordered the executive departments to co-

<sup>49</sup> *Annals of Congress*, House of Representatives, 13th Congress, 3rd Sess., p. 387.

<sup>50</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 311-313, 314, 318, 321-322.

<sup>51</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 396; *National Intelligencer* Oct. 18, 1814; *Daily Federal Republican*, Oct. 17, 1814.

operate. George W. Campbell, recently Secretary of the Treasury, blamed the surprising speed and daring tactics of the British, which he contrasted with the slow gathering of the American militia summoned to defend the capital. This was basically the conclusion of the committee report of November 29, which singled out no individual for blame.<sup>52</sup> Congress tacitly accepted the report and turned to other matters. In February 1815 further investigation was postponed indefinitely. At the same time Congress appropriated funds for constructing federal buildings. Keeping their pledge, Washingtonians erected a temporary meeting place for Congress. As far as Congress was concerned, the questions of responsibility for the Sack and removal of the capital were settled.<sup>53</sup>

Meanwhile, the war effort literally ran itself. Belated local defenses were effected at the cost of neglecting other theaters. Thousands of men were under arms at Boston, New York, Philadelphia, Baltimore, and Washington. Army contractors, security holders and the military went unpaid as banks closed after the Sack, suspending specie payment, and tying up government notes deposited across the country. The government had to borrow small sums daily in order to survive, often having to pay high interest rates. Government loans reflecting a shaken confidence in the government were undersubscribed and often made at a severe discount.<sup>54</sup>

The Sack of Washington also had its effect on the course of negotiations at Ghent. When the British learned of the burning of Washington on September 27, they insisted that peace be made on the basis of retention of territories actually held. The American commissioners were strong enough in their nationalistic faith to hold out for *status quo ante bellum*. John Quincy Adams termed the Sack a "catastrophe" and a "trial of

<sup>52</sup> New York, *New York Spectator*, Sept. 26, 1814; Brant, *Madison, Commander in Chief*, p. 328; *Annals of Congress*, House of Representatives, 13th Congress, 3rd. Sess., Appendix 1738 and 1540; *Connecticut Courant*, Dec. 12, 1814.

<sup>53</sup> *Annals of Congress*, House of Representatives, 13th Congress, 3rd. Sess., p. 1121; Green, *Washington, Village and Capital*, pp. 65, 67.

<sup>54</sup> Adams, *History of the U.S.*, II, pp. 163, 213; Brigham, "Letters of Abijah Bigelow," 388; Weymouth Jordan, *George Washington Campbell of Tennessee, Western Statesman* (Tallahassee, Fla., 1955), p. 127; *New England Palladium*, Sept. 6, 1814; King, *Correspondence of King*, V, p. 414; Kenneth W. Rowe, *Matthew Carey, A Study in American Economic Development* (Baltimore, 1933), p. 70; *The Republican and Savannah Evening Ledger*, Sept. 8, 1814; See also, *Mason Memoirs*, p. 93.

the national spirit," but at virtually the same time he felt that it was merely a "misfortune" and a "trifle." After more favorable news arrived from home, Adams insisted that the British were more disgraced than the United States.<sup>55</sup> Other negotiators were more pessimistic and concerned lest the British turn the victory into diplomatic advantage. A doubtlessly chastened Henry Clay wrote that he would make no comment on the "painful subject of Washington" but echoed Adams' belief that the British had disgraced themselves in the eyes of Europe by their conduct at Washington. Clay himself later admitted:

[The loss of public property] gives me comparatively no pain. What does wound me to the very soul is that a set of pirates and incendiaries should have been permitted to pollute our soil, conflagrate our Capital, and return unpunished to their ships.<sup>56</sup>

Albert Gallatin also felt European opinion disapproved of the British action, but admitted, after a sleepless night's wrestling with the Sack news, that continental estimates of American strengths and resolve had plummeted. But the news of American victories at Baltimore and Lake Champlain helped to stiffen American resistance to British demands. James Bayard, another commissioner, declared that these American victories mitigated the effect of the Sack.<sup>57</sup>

If the Administration thought that the Sack would evoke a positive political response either by itself or with subsequent American victories, the fall elections of 1814 and the meeting of the Hartford Convention gave contrary evidence. There was little over-all gain for the Republicans in Congress despite some important state victories. The Hartford Convention, which met at year's end, was a council of self-defense for New England in the absence of federal protection and a vehicle of political protest.<sup>58</sup>

<sup>55</sup> John Quincy Adams Letter Book, To William Crawford, October 5, 1814, and John Quincy Adams to Louisa Adams, October 4, 1814 in Adams Papers; Ford, *Writings of John Q. Adams*, V, p. 184.

<sup>56</sup> Clay to Monroe, Oct. 26, 1814, Monroe Papers; Henry Clay to William Crawford, Oct. 17, 1814; Letters to William Crawford, 1814-87, Library of Congress.

<sup>57</sup> John Q. Adams Diary, Oct. 1, 1814, Adams Papers; Gallatin to Monroe, Oct. 26, 1814, Monroe Papers; Elizabeth Donnan, ed., "Papers of James A. Bayard, 1796-1815," *American Historical Association, Annual Report for 1913* (Washington, 1915), II, p. 348.

<sup>58</sup> Adams, *History of the U.S.*, II, pp. 229, 237-238; *Otis's Letters in Defence of the Hartford Convention, and the People of Massachusetts* (Boston, 1824), pp. 21, 27.

Some Federalist oriented commentators were now willing to defend the Union (at least on a local level) but not the administration. Harrison Gray Otis, one of the moderates who directed the Hartford Convention, felt that only God and New Englanders themselves could be relied on for aid after the "catastrophies" of Washington and Alexandria. *The Supporter*, invoking the "first law of nature," that of self-preservation, declared that since the administration had neglected "its own" capital, New England had best defend itself.<sup>59</sup>

Other partisan criticism of the administration was accompanied by a change in attitude toward the war itself. Rufus King felt that the war effort had to be supported, given the invasion of the country, but that this did not remedy the unfitness of the administration to run the war:

Altho' the Declaration of war was unnecessary and highly inexpedient, the manner in which it has been prosecuted by the enemy, and the avowed purpose of waste and destruction that he proclaims have so changed the character of the war, that it has become the duty of all to unite in the adoption of vigorous measures to repel the invaders of the country and to protect its essential rights and honor.

King went on to say that the Federalists were always ready to defend the soil and sovereignty of the Nation, but that changes had to be made—in the heads of government departments at least. Stephen Van Rensselaer agreed that the war had changed to one of self defense as a result of multiple British attacks and that "our Soil & Sovereignty must be defended, notwithstanding the incompetency of our Rulers." The Governor of Vermont, Martin Chittenden, who had opposed the war and who had refused to commit his troops to offensive action against Canada, now stated publicly that the "war was assumed an entirely different character . . . a common, not a party concern."<sup>60</sup> *The Yankee* (Boston) echoed this simply by affirming that when the nation was invaded, it was the duty of all to sacrifice party feeling and rally around the national standard. The Mayor of New

<sup>59</sup> *Newport Mercury*, Sept. 10, 1814; *Otis's Letters in Defence of the Hartford Convention*, p. 27; Chillicothe, Ohio, *The Supporter*, Oct. 29, 1814.

<sup>60</sup> King, *Correspondence of King*, V, pp. 414, 417, 419, 423, 431. See also E. Beatty to Jacob Kingsbury, Sept. 16, 1814, Jacob Kingsbury Papers, Library of Congress; Andrew Tully, *When They Burned the White House* (New York, 1961), p. 221.

York city, DeWitt Clinton, who had been nominated for President by the anti-war Republicans in 1812, declared when dismissing a grand jury that whatever previous opinions had been held, all local and party considerations had to be suppressed and that "a nation of doers" not just "talkers" had to conduct a war of defense. Plainly, many, regardless of political stripe, had come to believe that all Americans had to share the honor of victory or the disgrace of defeat.<sup>61</sup>

Matthew Carey, political ally of the administration, was also ready to forget party in defense of country. In his first draft of *The Olive Branch*, started September 8, he stated that he was ready to swallow the "bitter pill" of a "total change" in government or of bringing leading Federalists into the administration "rather than have the country torn in pieces, as appeared probable, or to lie at the mercy of a foreign enemy." The "radical change" would occur through "resignation on the part of the incumbents" as an inducement to the Federalists to "unite their exertions to rescue the country from impending ruin."<sup>62</sup>

Of course there were those who called for an end to party quarreling *and* for faith in the administration. For example the *Spectator* said that "In our present contest, it is our imperious duty, that all private political sentiment should yield to a general and consolidated union for defense."<sup>63</sup>

There were many contemporary verbal assessments of the effect of the Sack on the national feelings of the citizens. Matthew Carey wrote *The Olive Branch* "in a moment of deep despondency . . . after the shameful defeat at Bladensburg and the Vandalic conflagration at Washington." He felt that he was not alone in his low spirits. "A deep and awful gloom pervaded

<sup>61</sup> Boston *The Yankee*, Sept. 2, 1814; *Connecticut Gazette*, Sept. 14, 1814; Pierre M. Irving, *The Life and Letters of Washington Irving* (Philadelphia, 1872), I, pp. 232-233.

<sup>62</sup> Matthew Carey, *Autobiography* (New York, 1942), p. 119; Carey, *Olive Branch*, p. 30; see also *Daily Federal Republican*, Sept. 1, 1814. Historians have briefly treated public reaction to the Sack. They range from the assertions of Henry Adams, who saw no strong reaction favoring the war following the Sack, to those of Henry Brackinridge, who saw "a glorious union" wrought by reaction to the Sack. Adams, *History of the U.S.*, II, pp. 229, 237-238; H. M. Brackinridge, *History of the Late War . . .* (Philadelphia, 1845), p. 264; J. T. Headly, *The Second War with England* (New York, 1853), II, p. 140.

<sup>63</sup> *Daily Federal Republican*, Sept. 1, 1814; *Richmond Virginia Argus*, Sept. 3, 1814; *The Spectator*, Sept. 10 1814.

the thinking part of the community," he claimed.<sup>64</sup> Edward Tiffin, head of the General Land Office, and his clerk, Samuel Williams, had retreated from the capital with the leaders "brood[ing] over their country's misfortune and disgrace." Some Federalists were nearly overcome also.<sup>65</sup>

Hezekiah Niles in his *Niles' Weekly Register* saw a nation, awakened by the Sack, springing to its defense. "*The Spirit of the Nation* is roused. If the barbarian warfare . . . would not have roused it our liberties had perished forever. . . . We must teach our fingers to fight. We must become [a military nation] or be slaves." The *Mercury* (Newport, R. I.) compared the Sack with the burning of Moscow and claimed that the former had inspired the Russians to drive the French away. "A nation of Freemen will not be less powerfully excited," it asserted. Both John Quincy Adams and Richard Rush likewise felt new energies—heretofore lacking—would be unleashed by the Sack. A correspondent of Secretary of the Navy William Jones thanked God that the "spirit of the nation" was rising to meet "the crisis." Thomas Jefferson declared the people "raised from apathy" by the Sack.<sup>66</sup>

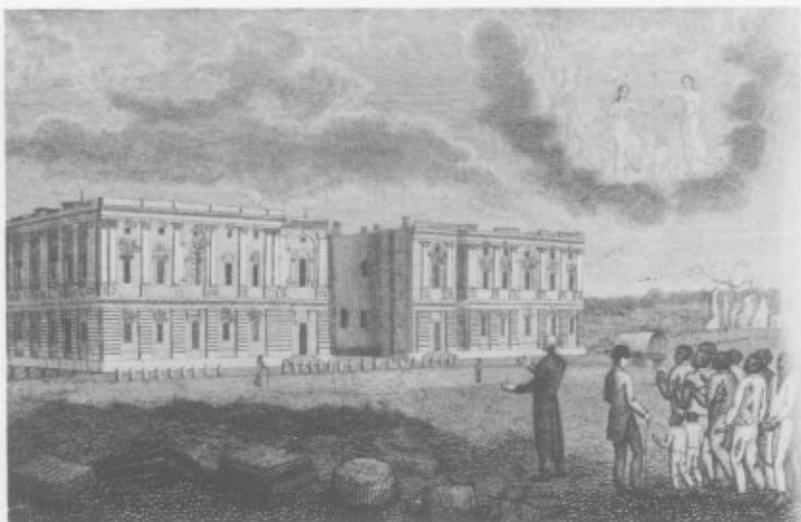
Not all Americans, however, were ready to view the situation from a national perspective and as a result their reaction to the Sack was partisan, parochial or individually selfish in nature. Such citizens took the Sack as another opportunity to criticize those in power. Government leaders collectively and individually were targets of this criticism.

The President was variously accused of incompetence or malicious action. The *Salem Gazette* (Massachusetts) conjectured that Madison was paralyzed in his efforts to defend the capital by a "philosophical indifference to the calamities of his people." "A PEACE ADVOCATE" in the *Connecticut Courant* (Hartford) called the President "a man who brought

<sup>64</sup> Carey, *Autobiography*, p. 119; Carey, *Olive Branch*, p. 29; see also John Quincy Adams Diary, Oct. 1, 1814, Adams Papers; Henry Clay to William Crawford, October 17, 1814, Letters to William Crawford; Ford, *Writings of John Q. Adams*, V, p. 160.

<sup>65</sup> Knopf, "Autobiography of Samuel Williams," p. 224; Brigham, "Letters of Bigelow," pp. 389, 397; E. Beatty to Kingsbury, Sept. 16, 1814, Kingsbury Papers.

<sup>66</sup> Tucker, *Poltroons and Patriots*, II, p. 599; *Newport Mercury*, Sept. 3, 1814; Ford, *Writings of John Quincy Adams*, V, p. 157; Richard Rush to John Adams, Sept. 5, 1814, Adams Papers; *National Intelligencer*, Oct. 13, 1814; Thomas Jefferson to Dabney Carr, n. d., Thomas Jefferson Papers, Library of Congress.



View of the Capitol of the United States after the Conflagration in 1814.  
Line engraving by Alexander Lawson. *Library of Congress*

down unmerited evils on his nation, and then had neither spirit nor the talent to meet them." The *Providence, Rhode Island Gazette and Country Journal* called for a change in "men and measures" as the "imbecile" administration could no longer be trusted. The Sack led *The Weekly Messenger* (Boston) to call for the impeachment of the administration which seemed indifferent to the fate of the capital, and perhaps more importantly, to commerce. It charged that a "scheming, intriguing government" had put the nation in the ridiculous position of going to war to protect commerce and then allowing the mercantile oriented coast to be pillaged.<sup>67</sup> The *Worcester, Massachusetts Gazette* claimed a government that left the country unprotected while its troops went on a foreign adventure was "worse than none." The *Connecticut Mirror* compared the administration's defense of Washington with the campaigns of William Hull and James Wilkinson and doubted that the incompetent Madison administration would be able to continue the fight. The *Connecticut Courant* asserted that the President

<sup>67</sup> Salem Massachusetts *Salem Gazette*, Sept. 9, 1814; *Connecticut Courant*, Oct. 1, 1814, *Providence Gazette and Country Journal*, Sept. 3, 1814; Boston *The Weekly Messenger*, Sept. 16, 1814.

and his entire cabinet had abandoned public interest "and sought personal safety in a rapid and distant flight." It also said that the President should announce the extent of "our disasters" and acknowledge his blunders.<sup>68</sup>

The New York *Spectator* also criticised the government and especially the President for failing to give an immediate account of the "humiliating circumstances of the defeat." Specifically the paper called for a presidential proclamation

if not to sooth the public mind under this extreme pressure of calamity and disgrace—at least to warn the people of their danger; to elevate their drooping spirits, to rouse their shrinking energies; and to call forth . . . Citizens . . . to a prompt and vigorous defense of their liberties and country.

When Madison did make his proclamation, he was accused of hypocrisy. The *Connecticut Mirror* found it "extraordinary" that the administration and its party could call for unity because of the Sack. How could the nation care for the capital when the administration, by its precipitate retreat from it, indicated that it did not? Madison and his associates had called for national unity only to save their popularity, the paper concluded. Madison was also accused of misrepresentation and suppression of important truths. One of the "truths" was that Madison's incitement of hatred against supposed British barbarians who destroyed Washington was compromised by the President's sending "fire, sword, and desolation" against Canada, the "peaceable and unoffending province of another nation." Madison was charged with glossing over the loss of Washington as he had done in statements about previous defeats. His alleged overemphasis of the significance of earlier victories was also mentioned. Private and public individuals warned against "domestic tyranny." The Massachusetts legislature called for Madison and his "ministers" to resign.<sup>69</sup>

More serious than charges of mere incompetence were the open or veiled accusations that political leaders had betrayed the country in the course of the Sack. The *Daily Federal Re-*

<sup>68</sup> Worcester, Massachusetts *Thomas's Massachusetts Spy, or Worcester Gazette*, Sept. 7, 1814; *Connecticut Mirror*, Sept. 5, 1814; *Connecticut Courant*, Sept. 6, 1814.

<sup>69</sup> *The Spectator*, Sept. 30, 1814; *Connecticut Mirror*, Sept. 26, 1814; *The Repertory*, Oct. 10, 1814; *Daily Federal Republican*, Sept. 22, 1814; *Worcester Gazette*, Sept. 28, 1814; Henry Cabot Lodge, *Life and Letters of George Cabot* (Boston, 1877), p. 535; *Baltimore Patriot and Evening Advertiser*, Sept. 10, 1814.

publican hinted darkly that after the invaders were expelled, then "traitors" could be dealt with. The Philadelphia *United States Gazette, for the Country* claimed the Sack demonstrated that those who opposed the war were the true patriots and those who led the country to war were the real "traitors." If these "truths" were not "acted upon," then there was "no hope for the salvation of the country." Some criticisms of the administration bordered on the irrational. The *Salem Gazette*, certainly one of the more radical New England Federalist papers, accused Madison of having secret satisfaction over the destruction of President Washington's namesake.<sup>70</sup>

Some criticism from a partisan or local viewpoint was in response to the assumption that the national government could not or would not do anything effective to defend the local areas. "Civis" in *The Republican and Savannah Evening Ledger* called "to ARMS, CITIZENS Prepare for defence . . . Apathy will prove fatal to us as [it] has to Washington . . . which is laid waste! . . . Let our city be placed in best possible defence." A later similar appeal was made solely in terms of self-interest. Farmers were urged to defend Savannah lest they lose their crops and slaves to occupiers of Savannah. The government was accused after the Sack (as before) of doing nothing to help the "people." As before, what such accusers forgot was that they were the government, or at least collectively responsible for it.<sup>71</sup> Individuals behaved in a partisan or parochial fashion also. Matthew Carey, despite his previously mentioned belief that many had been aroused by the Sack recognized this:

The national vessel is on the rocks and quicksands, and in danger of shipwreck. There is moreover, a larger and more formidable vessel preparing all possible means for her destruction. But, instead of efforts to extract her, the crew are distracted by a dispute how she came into that situation. [Part of the crew criticizes, part defends the pilot.] A few individuals, who see that both parties have contributed to produce this calamitous event . . . implore them to suspend all enquiry into the cause of the danger till the ship is extracted. . . .

At this awful moment, the horrible, the disorganizing, the jacobinical idea was not infrequently advance in our coffee house, in

<sup>70</sup> *Connecticut Gazette*, Sept. 21, 1814; *United States Gazette, for the Country*, Sept. 1, 1814; *Salem Gazette*, Sept. 9, 1814.

<sup>71</sup> *The Republican and Savannah Evening Ledger*, Sept. 3, 6 and 13, 1814.

the streets, in our newspapers . . . [that the Republicans had started the war and that they should finish it without any federalist help.]

Timothy Pickering had another use for the ship of state analogy: "Let the ship run aground," he urged. "The shock will throw the present pilots overboard, and then competent navigators will get her once more afloat, and conduct her safely into port." Pickering was more extreme when he advocated the nonpayment of federal taxes:

Abandoned by the general government, except for taxing us, we must defend ourselves [sic] so we ought to seize and hold fast the revenues indispensable to maintain the force necessary for our protection against the foreign enemy, and the still greater evil in prospect, domestic tyranny.<sup>72</sup>

Likewise, some Federalist newspapers urged readers to stand apart from Republican calls for unity. Federalists claimed to be patriots for opposing the war; conversely they claimed those who favored the conflict were traitors to the national interest. Other Federalists rejected responsibility for starting the war, or maintaining it, and thus the obligation for solving the resulting national problems. Few went as far as Pickering who was ready to let the nation dissolve so long as the Federalists controlled at least a portion of the remnants.<sup>73</sup>

There was some evidence of a simple lack of national feeling about the capital. Richrd Rush, certainly a nationalist, commented to John Adams after the Sack:

To a Bostonian, or a Philadelphian, Washington appears like what it really is, a meagre village, a place with a few bad houses, and extensive swamps, hanging upon the skirts of a thinly peopled, weak and barren country.

Abijah Bigelow asserted that there was "very little" in Washington "that I would fight for, were it proper." To Niles the Sack was important in that it opened the eyes of the people to the magnitude of the British threat, but that Washington itself was not important. "The present safety and future peace of the

<sup>72</sup> Carey, *Olive Branch*, p. 12; Adams, *New England Federalism*, p. 400; Lodge, *Letters of Cabot*, p. 535.

<sup>73</sup> New Bedford, Massachusetts *New Bedford Mercury*, Sept. 9, 1814; *United States Gazette, for the Country*, Sept. 1, 1814; see also John W. Eppes to Thomas Jefferson, Sept. 7, 1814, Jefferson Papers.

United States is cheaply purchased by the capture of Washington . . . a mere city [and] residence of the functionaries of government . . . of no importance in great scale of things." Matthew Carey said the "loss, although great, is undeserving of consideration. Placed beside the disgrace, it sinks into insignificance like a mole hill beside a mountain."<sup>74</sup>

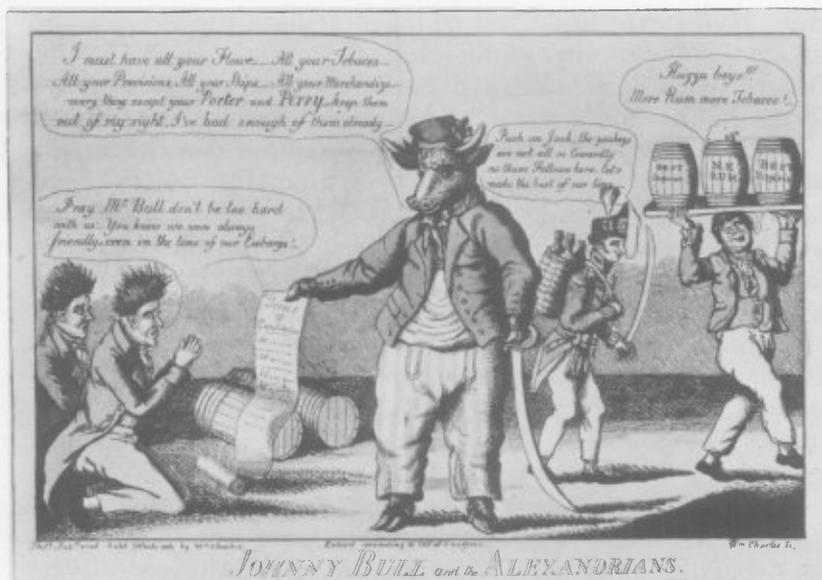
Little of the anti-administration and nonnational reaction to the Sack was directed against the military. The most prominent criticism regarding the military was for their failure to make a stand at the capital after the Bladensburg rout. To some, the military lacked discipline and/or national feeling. The leaders at Washington had forces to repel three times those employed by the British, the *New York Spectator* declared. "Decius" in the Charleston (S.C.) *Courier* essentially agreed, but felt that Americans should be undismayed and had to defend themselves in spite of incompetent military leadership. A few commentators postulated on crippling "intrigues" against the commanders of the defending forces.<sup>75</sup> Another reaction to the Sack was apathy. "Patriotic" citizens from all parts of the country rained criticism on the Washingtonians and the citizens of nearby Alexandria, who surrendered their city to the British fleet in the Potomac after the Sack. Censure came not only for failure to defend the capital but also for supposed apathy after the Sack. The *Norfolk Herald* in particular scored the "feeble" and dilatory defense. These charges were not without substance. The behavior of the military aside, a number of local citizens spoke of the Sack or a future attack in a matter-of-fact way. But this indifference was paralleled by nation-wide refusal to take immediate action to prevent a future attack on the capital.<sup>76</sup>

National feeling before the War of 1812 was not strong, given the little time that had passed since the founding of the republic, and therefore there was little opportunity for deep

<sup>74</sup> Richard Rush to John Adams, Sept. 5, 1814, Adams Papers; Brigham, "Letters of Bigelow," p. 397; *Niles Weekly Register*, Aug. 27, and Sept. 10, 1814; Carey, *Olive Branch*, p. 73.

<sup>75</sup> *Daily Federal Republican*, Sept. 10, 1814; Carey, *Olive Branch*, p. 74; *The Spectator*, Sept. 26, 1814; *Charleston Courier*, Sept. 15, 1814; Joseph H. Nicholson to Monroe, Sept. 1, 1814, Monroe Papers.

<sup>76</sup> *Niles Weekly Register*, Sept. 27, 1814; Ford, *Writings of John Quincy Adams*, V, pp. 166, 186; Adams, *Life of Gallatin*, pp. 529-530; *Norfolk, Virginia Norfolk Herald*, Aug. 30, 1814; Rowland, *Life of Charles Carroll*, II, p. 304; Brigham, "Letters of Bigelow," p. 397.



Johnny Bull and the Alexandrians. Etching by William Charles.  
Maryland Historical Society

national attitudes (other than anti-colonialism) to develop. Further, there was division as to the merits of the war, particularly between New England and the rest of the nation. Generally speaking, however, throughout the war, American military failures met with expressions of regret, discomfort, vows to do better, accusations of responsibility for failure, recriminations, and (a few) expressions of pleasure. Likewise American martial successes evoked joy, statements of vindication, and silence, which given the political quarter from which it came, was deafening. Specifically the losses of Michilimackinac, Fort Dearborn, and Detroit, defeat at River Raisen, the failure of the American invasions on the Niagara frontier, and British raids in the Chesapeake Bay region were reverses that elicited examples of the reactions listed above. Early victories included Lake Erie, recapture of Detroit, and the Battle of the Thames.

The significance of the Sack of Washington can not be assessed simply by the reaction to the event itself, but must be compared with reactions to other events of the war. Doubtlessly the greatest national shock before the Sack was the loss of De-

troit. Hull's expedition was in much of both the western and national popular mind as the means of securing Upper Canada. Instead Michilimackinac, and Forts Dearborn and Detroit fell to the British and Indians, and the northwestern frontier was exposed rather than expanded. As pointed out, Federalists and other anti-administration elements saw the fall of Detroit and later the Sack as confirmation that Madison's administration was incompetent. Both the western defeats and the Sack were said to reflect a lack or a loss of national character. In the case of Detroit, the most common national reaction was one of shock and disbelief which changed to denunciation of a pusillanimous Hull and quickly to be followed by a resolve to recover the lost ground.<sup>77</sup> Early western defeats had a significant impact on the public consciousness, but it was such that it tended to perpetuate the division of the national spirit rather than unify it, whereas the effect of the Sack was directly or indirectly to unify the national spirit. Although easterners were mainly interested in defending their own cities in the aftermath, there were numerous expressions of the idea that the nature of the war had changed and that party or local interests should now be abandoned in favor of national ones. Coast dwellers were outraged at the British action. By their defense of the nation in words and themselves in action, they reaffirmed the democratic experiment as it had developed to that time, which appeared to be in political and economic limbo—not colonial, but not fully national. Unlike the reaction to the fall of Detroit, response to the Sack of Washington was not largely limited to one section of the country. It might be well to point out at this time that the facts summarized above are evidence that there tended to be a greater national feeling throughout the war in the frontier areas, where there was less of a colonial tradition and more of a history of dependence on the national government than there was on the East Coast.<sup>78</sup> Following the fall of Detroit, western interests raised a new army, took the offensive, and more than

<sup>77</sup> Gayle Thornbrough and Dorothy Riker, eds., *Journals of the General Assembly of Indiana Territory, 1805-1815* (Indianapolis, 1950) 11, p. 493; Sears, *Thomas Worthington*, pp. 176, 186; Hamilton, *Writings of Monroe*, V, pp. 219-220; *Muskingum Messenger*, Sept. 2 and 23, 1812; Richardson, *Messages and Papers of the Presidents*, I, pp. 515-516; *Western Spy* (Extra), Sept. 29, 1812; *National Intelligencer*, Sept. 10, 1812; *Niles Weekly Register*, Sept. 26, 1812; James Hopkins and Mary Hargreaves, eds., *The Papers of Henry Clay* (Lexington, 1959), I, p. 750.

<sup>78</sup> *Connecticut Courant*, Nov. 26, 1813.

recovered lost ground. Allowance must also be made for the fact that in this case the westerners were reacting to defeat and a threat in their own locality just as the easterners were to do following the Sack.

As was seen, attitudes toward the war, in general, varied prior to the Sack. Even after a series of defeats some continued to forsee a new commitment to the war and subsequent "victory and conquest." Most, however, were not optimistic, and pessimism shaded all the way to predictions of an unending series of defeats and an end to the Republic.<sup>79</sup> Following the Sack a variety of outlooks still remained, but the optimists had gained over the pessimists. This was undoubtedly caused by the fact that some of the apathetic and pessimistic had been galvanized into action out of a need for national defense, colored by a desire for self-preservation. In spite of the criticism of Madison, it was through his actions and the actions of those loyal to him that a greater degree of unity was achieved. This does not mean that all Americans now favored the war. But Madison's quick return to the capital, his proclamation on the Sack, his call for a special Congress, loyal Republican control of the investigation, the subsequent removal of the issue, and finally the President's acquiescence in the change of military leadership and his publication of the British peace terms made for national unity rather than divisiveness. After the war Congress doubtlessly influenced by the Sack increased the peacetime military establishment and built Fortress Monroe at the entrance to the Chesapeake Bay. Both were nationalistic acts and served to deter a repetition of the Sack.

Following the American victories on Lake Champlain and at Baltimore, the effect of the Sack on national feeling was downgraded, then nearly eliminated in the popular mind as the victory of New Orleans was celebrated with perhaps more relief than actual boast.<sup>80</sup> Historians have since taken the cue. Forgotten was that the Washington disaster along with the publication of the original British territorial demands at Ghent convinced many Americans that the British were a serious enemy.

<sup>79</sup> Dayton, *Ohio Centinel*, Jan. 17, 1813; Bernard C. Steiner, *Life and Correspondence of James McHenry* (Cleveland, 1907), p. 601; Powell, *Richard Rush*, p. 45.

<sup>80</sup> Carey, *Olive Branch*, Appendix, 5.

These territorial demands had been made on the basis of past and expected military successes, including the Chesapeake operation. After the Sack the British, hoping that their actions would further demoralize and fractionalize their enemy, changed their demands to *uti possidetis*. Ironically the Sack and the territorial demands had the opposite effect.<sup>81</sup>

It can justifiably be said that the Sack of Washington caused an increase in the feelings of nationalism on the part of American citizens. This was true not only because to some the capital was a symbol of nationalism and its destruction a humiliating experience but also because it demonstrated to the stubborn opponents of the war that Britain could force her demands on the United States through military action if the nation did not unite in its own defense.

<sup>81</sup> See Frank A. Updike, *The Diplomacy of the War of 1812* (Gloucester, Mass., 1965), pp. 277-293.

## RESPONSE TO CRISIS: BALTIMORE IN 1814

BY FRANK A. CASSELL

THE Battle of Baltimore in September, 1814, has been retold so often that one might question the necessity and value of returning to such a familiar episode. Yet the historical literature on this event appears to be curiously incomplete. While scholars have dwelt upon the military aspects of the battle and carefully noted that the national anthem was written during the shelling of Fort McHenry, they have not addressed themselves to the question of why and how Baltimore was able successfully to resist the combined land-sea onslaught.<sup>1</sup> To say that Baltimore was saved because the British fleet could not break through the harbor defenses and the British army declined to attack the fortified American line on Hampstead Hill does not really answer the question. What is important is to determine why Baltimore was so well prepared. To solve this problem requires an understanding of the resources and leadership of Baltimore itself, for to a startling extent the defense of the city was exclusively in the hands of its inhabitants rather than those of the state or federal government. Of the three major cities attacked by the British in the War of 1812, New Orleans, Washington, and Baltimore, only the last did not rely heavily on non-citizens for protection. The factors responsible for the victory, therefore, are to be found in the context of the city. They may be defined generally as the great wealth acquired through trade, the strength and flexibility of local political institutions, and superb leadership exercised by an intelligent and aggressive business elite.

Located on the Patapsco River only a few miles from Chesapeake Bay, Baltimore would indeed have been a rich prize for the British. In 1814 the city had a population of around fifty

<sup>1</sup> See for example Charles G. Muller, *The Darkest Day: 1814* (Philadelphia, 1963), pp. 173-205; Neil H. Swanson, *The Perilous Fight* (New York, 1945); Reginald Horsman, *The War of 1812* (New York, 1969), pp. 204-208.

thousand and ranked third in size behind Philadelphia and New York. Because it was situated further to the west than its northern rivals, Baltimore had become the principle market for the wheat-growing regions of western Pennsylvania and Maryland. Baltimore's merchants grew rich by exporting wheat and flour to the West Indies and the Mediterranean and importing manufactured items for sale to eager American farmers.<sup>2</sup> The prosperity generated by foreign commerce had encouraged the growth of subsidiary industries such as flour-milling, iron-making, and ship-building. Economic institutions kept pace with the city's development. Banks, insurance companies, commercial exchanges, as well as retail stores and hotels appeared in great numbers after 1790. Physically, Baltimore reflected its thriving economy. Visitors uniformly praised the handsome red-brick homes that lined broad paved avenues. They also noted the imposing public buildings such as the Exchange and Court House. Few, however, made mention of the shacks and tenements that housed Baltimore's less affluent citizens.

As in all American cities political power was held by the merchants and the wealthy lawyers and manufacturers who were their allies. Although property qualifications for the vote were loosely enforced, office-holding remained the prerogative of the rich who had the leisure time as well as the money to afford public service. This is not to say, however, that the common citizens were of no political importance. On the contrary, the need for popular support to win elections forced candidates to adapt their appeals to popular sentiment. Those who ruled in Baltimore did so at the sufferance of the numerous artisans, small businessmen, and lesser professional men who made up the electorate. From the late 1790's Baltimore's voters had been overwhelmingly Republican in their sympathies and had consistently supported those candidates who espoused Jeffersonian principles.<sup>3</sup> Political unity was a necessary condition to the successful defense of Baltimore, and it was the Republican party organization which helped to provide that unity.

When the war with Britain began, the citizens of Baltimore

<sup>2</sup> For a description of Baltimore's economic growth in these years see James Weston Livingood, *The Philadelphia-Baltimore Trade Rivalry, 1780-1860* (Harrisburg, 1947).

<sup>3</sup> William Bruce Wheeler, "Urban Politics in Nature's Republic: The Development of Political Parties in the Seaport Cities in the Federalist Era" (unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, University of Virginia, 1967), pp. 147-151.

fully expected that their city would be attacked. In part this conviction derived from Revolutionary War experiences when British cruisers had continually harassed shipping even in the Patapsco River and on at least one occasion had threatened to assault the city. But more than this Baltimoreans could not believe that the enemy would not make some effort to destroy the government stores and naval vessels in the city. The many commercial ships anchored in the harbor, and the numerous warehouses crammed with goods also appeared to offer a tempting prize. Additionally, the port of Baltimore was a center of privateering activity. It was only reasonable to assume that the British would strike at the base of these troublesome raiders.<sup>4</sup>

Baltimore was not an easy city to defend. The Patapsco was deep enough to allow all but the biggest warships to sail within cannon-range of the city's center. Attack might also come by land. The extensive and entirely unfortified shores of Chesapeake Bay contained numerous places at which an army might debark and march against the city from virtually any direction. But geography was only one of the problems faced by those responsible for protecting Baltimore. Another, more serious difficulty was the total absence of any preparations for defense. In 1812 Fort McHenry, the main bastion guarding the water approaches to Baltimore, was a decaying wreck. Without sufficient cannon, its earthworks worn away by wind and water, and manned by an insignificant garrison, the fort was in no condition to withstand an assault. No other fortifications existed in the harbor area nor, for that matter, anywhere else around Baltimore.<sup>5</sup>

Baltimore's leaders soon discovered that they could expect little help in making their city ready for war. The federal government had few resources to spare for the defense of the Chesapeake. Almost every soldier and gun it could obtain was forwarded to the northern frontier where the major campaigns of the war were being waged. The state government of Maryland was also reluctant to provide large quantities of military supplies to the state's chief city. Besides Baltimore there were

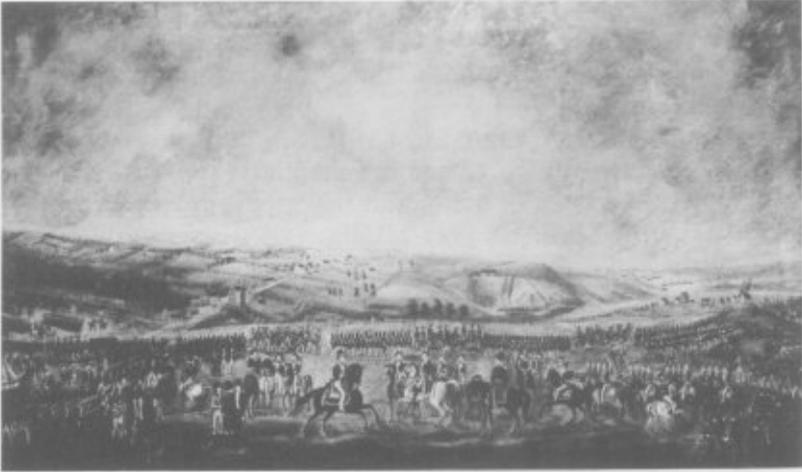
<sup>4</sup> Horsman, *War of 1812*, p. 204; Francis F. Beirne, *The War of 1812* (New York, 1949), p. 309; A. T. Mahan, *Sea Power in its Relations to the War of 1812* (2 vols.: New York, 1903), I, pp. 395-398, II, pp. 226-240; Glenn Tucker, *Poltroons and Patriots* (2 vols.: New York, 1954), II, p. 515.

<sup>5</sup> General Samuel Smith to Governor Robert Bowie, Sept. 23, 1812, Smith papers, Library of Congress.

dozens of settlements located on Chesapeake Bay or along the shores of adjacent rivers and streams that lay within reach of enemy raiding parties. Understandably, public officials in Annapolis felt some responsibility towards those citizens and found it difficult to deny them a portion of the meager stocks of guns, uniforms, tents, and powder located in state arsenals.<sup>6</sup> Thus, for all practical purposes, Baltimore was isolated from the rest of the United States. Its survival was almost entirely dependent on the decisions, the actions, and the discipline of its citizens.

From the moment war was declared Baltimore's fate was placed in the hands of Samuel Smith, Major General of Maryland's Third Militia Division. The choice was a fortunate one, for General Smith was a most remarkable man. Born in 1752 in Carlisle, Pennsylvania, Smith had arrived in Baltimore as a youth. Following in his father's footsteps, he had become a merchant. His firm, S. Smith & Buchanan, was among the largest in the city and had produced for him an immense personal fortune. Related by blood or marriage to many other important citizens of Baltimore, a director or stockholder in several local banks, Smith was counted among the foremost leaders of the city. At the age of forty he had commenced a career in national politics, serving as congressman from Baltimore in the years 1793 to 1803 and then moving to the Senate of which he was still a member at the time of the British attack in 1814. A Republican, General Smith had been a friend and advisor to Thomas Jefferson. The Virginian had once offered Smith a position in his Cabinet as secretary of the navy, but the General had preferred to keep his seat in Congress. In both the House and Senate the Marylander had exercised considerable influence. Because he was an expert on matters relating to commerce, banking, and the military, he was frequently called upon to draft legislation or to chair committees concerned with these matters. In 1812 the General's power in Congress was declining largely because of a long series of disagreements that he had with President Madison over foreign and domestic policies. Nevertheless, he was still a United States senator, a member of several committees dealing with military appropriations, and a

<sup>6</sup> Frank A. Cassell, "Baltimore in 1813: a Study of Urban Defense in the War of 1812," *Military Affairs*, XXXIII (Dec., 1969), p. 349.



Assembly of the Troops before the Battle of North Point by Thomas Ruckle (1776-1853). *Maryland Historical Society*

personal friend of many officials within the administration. The Marylander's position and contacts proved of value in his efforts to build up Baltimore's defenses.<sup>7</sup>

That Samuel Smith was also the principle military official in Maryland was no accident. His acquaintance with the military began during the Revolution when he had fought in most of the major battles of 1776 and 1777. As a young lieutenant colonel Smith had won national recognition and a congressional decoration for his tenacious defense of Fort Mifflin, a post located on Mud Island in the Delaware River below Philadelphia. Upon his retirement from the Continental Army in 1779, he was named a colonel in the Maryland militia and from that time had continuously been in charge of Baltimore's security. In 1794 he was promoted to major general and given command of the militia forces located in the Western Shore counties. Over the years Smith had proved to be a popular commander. The common militia soldiers respected his leadership while the

<sup>7</sup> For details of Smith's career see John Silas Pancake, "The General From Baltimore: A Biography of Samuel Smith," (unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, University of Virginia, 1947); Frank A. Cassell, "Samuel Smith: Merchant Politician, 1792-1812," (unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, Northwestern University, 1968).

officers, whom he had nominated to their positions, were often business associates or political allies. Indeed, the militia generally had been among Smith's most loyal supporters in his political campaigns.<sup>8</sup>

At the beginning of the War of 1812, Smith could claim only limited experience as a wartime commander. He had never led large bodies of troops in battle and his only acquaintance with fortifications had been at Fort Mifflin. His troops could claim even less familiarity with war. Not for two decades had the Maryland militia been called upon for any military service. In 1794 Smith and the Baltimore militia had marched against the Whiskey Rebels but never fired a shot in battle. An amateur general at the head of amateur troops was all that stood between the British and Baltimore in 1814.<sup>9</sup>

Much of the hard work that made the victory of 1814 possible was completed in the summer of 1813. With a British fleet operating in the Chesapeake the citizens of Baltimore were inspired to put their city in the highest possible state of readiness. In April and again in August, 1813, the Patapsco was blockaded, and the very real threat of invasion existed.<sup>10</sup> While General Smith did take some precautions against a land attack via Patapsco Neck, his attention was primarily focused on the harbor. Within a few months Smith had done much to rebuild Fort McHenry; fortifications were repaired, over sixty large cannon mounted, and several hundred militia were trained in the use of the big guns. Booms were erected around the fort to prevent assaults by small boats, and by the end of the summer several small batteries were constructed behind the fort to guard against attack from the rear. Batteries were also located on the Lazaretto across the ship-channel from Fort McHenry, and, as further insurance that the British would not reach the inner harbor, a line of hulks was made ready for sinking. In order to have the greatest amount of warning of approaching danger, Smith set up a complicated intelligence system. Lookouts were

<sup>8</sup> Cassell, "Samuel Smith," pp. 15-16.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 5-6; C. I. Bushnell, ed., *Memoirs of Samuel Smith, a Soldier of the Revolution, 1776-1786* (Baltimore, 1860).

<sup>10</sup> Walter Dorsey to S. Smith, April 13, 1813, Smith Orderbook Papers, Library of Congress; *Niles Register*, April 24, 1813; *Baltimore American & Commercial Daily Advertiser*, April 17, 1813; S. Smith to John Armstrong, July 7, 1813, War Department, Secretary of War, Letters Received, Registered Series, National Archives, Washington, D. C. (Hereafter cited as WD, LR, Registered Series).

posted near the tip of North Point and a string of guard boats stationed at intervals between North Point and the city. When British ships were spotted, the word was relayed from boat to boat by flag signals. The mechanism worked well in 1813 and was again employed a year later. Smith did one other thing of note: he used his influence in Washington to have the uncooperative Major Lloyd Beall replaced as commander of Fort McHenry by Major George Armistead.<sup>11</sup>

While work proceeded in the harbor, Smith was also busy training the troops under his command. The third division consisted of four brigades of which two, the second and ninth, were drawn from inland counties and of limited military value. The eleventh brigade, its ranks filled by militia from Baltimore County, was more promising, but in 1813 it lacked weapons and training. The finest military unit in Maryland was the third or City Brigade. Well-drilled by Smith for many years, the 4,500 men of the third constituted the city's most reliable defense force. Yet fully one-third of the brigade attended musters without weapons. Throughout the summer of 1813 Smith worked feverishly to improve the fitness of his troops. Begging, threatening, cajoling officials in Annapolis and Washington, he managed to secure enough arms to equip most of his militia. Training exercises sharpened the discipline of the troops. Smith gave particular attention to the eleventh brigade in issuing strict instructions to its commander, General Tobias Stansbury, to build up the morale and efficiency of his unit. By September Smith's energetic direction had successfully transformed the citizen-soldiers of Baltimore into a force capable of meeting regulars on the field of battle.<sup>12</sup>

General Smith's accomplishments in 1813 were only possible because of the united support of Baltimore's most influential citizens. The emergency conditions prevailing during the summer persuaded the city's leaders that the present structure of Baltimore's government was inadequate to meet the situation. Accordingly, on April 13, a new city agency named the Committee of Public Supply was created by the mayor and city council. Charged with the responsibility of providing for the city's defense, the Committee of Public Supply was in effect a war-time government. Its members, who were appointed rather

<sup>11</sup> Cassell, "Baltimore in 1813," pp. 351-353.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 357-359.

than elected, were entirely drawn from the business community and included General Smith's partner, James A. Buchanan, William Patterson and Samuel Sterett, who were related to the General by marriage, and Mayor Edward Johnson, a long-time political supporter of Smith's. Given these interrelationships, it was not surprising that the Committee and the commanding general enjoyed complete harmony in their dealings with each other. To carry on its work the city government granted the Committee of Public Supply an appropriation of \$20,000 and gave it permission to seek loans within the city. In practice the Committee acted as General Smith's purchasing agent. Both the state and federal governments promised supplies for the city but frequently failed to provide funds. The Committee of Public Supply remedied this deficiency by buying arms and other military necessities in the expectation that the money would later be repaid. Without this financial support Smith would not have been able to carry out his ambitious program of defensive preparations.<sup>13</sup>

In the fall of 1813 the British fleet left the Chesapeake to spend the winter in the West Indies. The citizens of Baltimore were relieved but convinced that their ordeal had not yet ended. There was every expectation that the spring would bring a renewal of British naval operations in the great bay. In the months since the first alarms had been sounded the city had moved with dramatic speed to erect its defenses. Confident that the harbor fortifications could withstand any attack and reassured by the presence of the well-armed, well-disciplined militia troops of the third brigade, Baltimoreans could afford to be more hopeful about their future.

The ships and men that would eventually attack Baltimore began to gather in Bermuda as early as January, 1814. In April command of British military operations on the Atlantic coast was transferred to Vice-Admiral Sir Alexander Cochrane who received orders to employ his forces in attacking coastal American settlements and destroying American naval power.<sup>14</sup> Before

<sup>13</sup> J. T. Scharf, *History of Maryland* (3 vols: Hatboro, Penn., 1967), III, p. 39; S. Smith to John Armstrong, April 15, 1813, WD, LR, Registered Series; S. Smith to Committee of Public Supply, April 13, April 15, April 18, April 19, and May 18, 1813; Cassell, "Baltimore in 1813," pp. 354-355.

<sup>14</sup> Admiralty Archives, Adm. 2/123, pp. 91-39, and Adm. 1/505, p. 434, and Secretary of the Admiralty John Croker to Admiral Cochrane, April 4, 1814, Ad. 2/1380, pp. 10-12, Public Record Office, London.

Cochrane could act, however, events in Europe drastically altered the situation. France and Napoleon had finally been defeated thus freeing thousands of British troops and large numbers of ships to descend on the United States. Plans were immediately laid in London to increase the tempo of the war in America by tightening the naval blockade and mounting a massive three-pronged attack along the northern frontier. Cochrane's command was substantially enlarged, and he was now told to attack targets of opportunity. He was to create a diversion that hopefully would draw American troops away from the Canadian border. To accomplish this mission Cochrane was given great latitude for action. His orders made mention of Washington and Baltimore as possible objectives, but he was to use his own judgment in determining whether those cities could be attacked "without too much risk."<sup>15</sup>

By August 12 Cochrane's armada had reached the Chesapeake. Pursuant to orders the fleet moved first against American naval forces in the area, which meant Commodore Joshua Barney's flotilla of gunboats. On August 19 the British had trapped Barney in the upper reaches of the Patuxent River. Troops were debarked to attack the shallow-draft gunboats and Barney was forced to destroy his vessels to avoid capture. The absence of strong American resistance convinced the British commanders that a thrust at nearby Washington was militarily feasible, and 4,200 troops under Major General Robert Ross and Rear-Admiral Sir George Cockburn were accordingly assigned the mission. On August 24 Ross's troops, many of them veterans of the European war, easily smashed a larger American force composed almost entirely of militia at the misnamed Battle of Bladensburg. While the terrified militiamen scattered over the countryside, the British entered Washington and leisurely burned most of the public buildings and the naval yard. From a distance President Madison and his advisors observed the nation's capital go up in smoke. Following the destruction of the city, Ross retreated to his ships where the troops rested and the chief officers conferred about their next move.<sup>16</sup>

<sup>15</sup> Secretary Croker to Vice-Admiral Sir Edward Pillow, April 15, 1814, Adm. 2/1380, pp. 25-27, 75, 123; Croker to Cochrane, May 19, 1814, Adm. 2/1380, pp. 142-146, *ibid.*; Earl of Liverpool to the Duke of Wellington, Sept. 27, 1814, printed in the *Md. Hist. Mag.*, 11 (1909), p. 112.

<sup>16</sup> Admiral Cockburn to Admiral Cochrane, Aug. 13, 1814, Adm. 1/507, pp. 119-120, Public Record Office, London; Horsman, *War of 1812*, pp. 194-204.



Commodore Joshua Barney. Portrait by Rembrandt Peale. *The Peale Museum*

News of the American defeat at Bladensburg and its aftermath shocked but did not panic Baltimore. There was pride that the 2,500 men of the third division who had fought at Bladensburg under General Stansbury's command had acquitted themselves well. There was also concern that the survivors would find their way back to the city in time to meet the British assault everyone expected. In the months before Bladensburg General Smith had certainly not relaxed his efforts to improve Baltimore's security. During April he had made efforts to rehabilitate the second and ninth brigades with indifferent success. On June 20 he had taken steps to put the harbor fortifications in a state of alert by recommending that Major

Armistead place booms across the entrance to the harbor at night to avoid the possibility of a sneak attack. Smith also urged Armistead to make use of the city-owned barges. These vessels, built by order of the Committee of Public Supply at Smith's request in 1813, were designed to patrol the Patapsco River and challenge smaller British vessels. Manned by the marine fencibles, sailors in the pay of the city, the barges would prove useful in September.<sup>17</sup> In July Smith was able to persuade the federal government to repair some of the booms anchored in front of Fort McHenry that had been damaged during the winter. After official word arrived that war had ended in Europe, Smith redoubled his exertions, putting men to work making 320,000 cartridges for the 5,000 men he estimated that it would take to defend Baltimore.<sup>18</sup>

From long experience Smith had known what to do when, on August 18, he received messages telling of a large British fleet ascending the bay towards Washington, Annapolis, and Baltimore. Not knowing that the British were actually in pursuit of Barney's flotilla, the General assumed that Baltimore was possibly the destination of the enemy fleet. Using the emergency powers vested in him as commanding general of the third division, Smith called out the city brigade and ordered it to appear fully equipped on the parade ground the next day. Even as the citizen-soldiers moved to their posts, the General was dispatching orders to the 1,500 men of the eleventh brigade not at Bladensburg with Stansbury. They were instructed to "march without delay by companies and Half companies" to Baltimore and rendezvous on Hampstead Hill. Smith also ordered General Thomas Forman, commander of the ninth brigade, to provide 500 men for the gathering army at Baltimore.<sup>19</sup>

On August 23, the day before the Bladensburg fiasco, the Committee of Vigilance and Safety commenced operations. The successor to the Committee of Public Supply, this new organization was even stronger and more efficient than its predecessor.

<sup>17</sup> Samuel Smith, Orders to the Third Division, April 14, 1814; Smith to Major Armistead, June 20, 1814, Smith Orderbook Papers.

<sup>18</sup> John Armstrong to S. Smith, July 8, 1814, Secretary of War, Letters Sent, Military Affairs, National Archives, Washington, D.C. (Hereafter cited as SW, LS, MA); S. Smith to Major Armistead, July 11, 1814, Smith Orderbook Papers.

<sup>19</sup> Gov. Levin Winder to S. Smith, August 18, 1814; Gen. William Winder to S. Smith, Aug. 18, 1814, Smith papers; S. Smith, Orders to the Third Division, Aug. 19, Aug. 20, and Aug. 23, 1814, Smith Orderbook Papers.

Its records reveal that it had total responsibility not only for defending the city but also for administering it during the crisis. Among other duties the committee raised money, built barracks, arrested suspected spies, purchased supplies of all sorts, and made provision for the city's sick and poor. It also undertook to represent Baltimore's interests before the state and federal governments. Like the Committee of Public Supply, the Committee of Vigilance and Safety was the indispensable mechanism necessary to free the city's resources and effectively utilize them. It differed, however, in that the committee members were elected by the citizens of Baltimore by wards rather than appointed by the mayor as had been the case in 1813. It thus had a broad popular constituency that insured its decisions would be respected. Although elected, the committee members were still drawn from the merchant-business classes and consequently had access to those groups in Baltimore controlling the wealth. Experience would show that the Committee of Vigilance and Safety was as loyal an ally to General Smith as the Committee of Public Supply had been.<sup>20</sup>

Following the "Bladensburg Races," as one wit described the American rout on August 24, and just as Baltimore appeared in the greatest danger, Samuel Smith's right to command was contested, and for a few anxious days at the end of August it seemed possible he would be relegated to a secondary status. Smith's challenger was Brigadier General William H. Winder, nephew to the governor of Maryland, friend of Secretary of State James Monroe, and the unfortunate commander of the American forces at Bladensburg. A native of Baltimore, Winder began his military career as a captain in Samuel Smith's third division. Enlisting in the regular army at the beginning of the war, he had risen rapidly through the ranks. In July, 1814, after having been captured and then paroled, Winder was named commander of the newly created tenth military district that included Maryland, the District of Columbia, and northern Virginia. It was in that capacity that he found himself at the head of a ragged, frightened mob of militia at Bladensburg.<sup>21</sup>

<sup>20</sup> Minutes of the Committee of Vigilance and Safety, Aug. 25, 1814, William D. Hoyt, Jr., ed., "Civilian Defense in Baltimore, 1814-1815," *Md. Hist. Mag.*, XXXIX (Sept., 1944), p. 204.

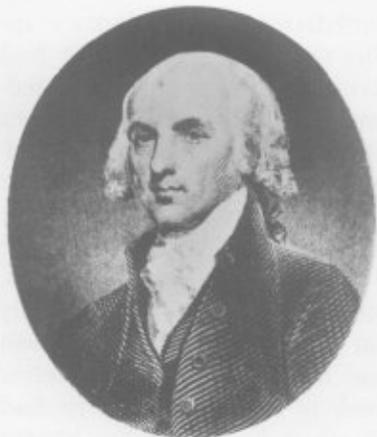
<sup>21</sup> John Armstrong to Gen. William Winder, July 2, 1814, SW, LS, MA.

General Smith had sensed immediately that Winder's appointment might conflict with his own. On July 20 he had written Secretary of War John Armstrong asking that the federal government grant him the same broad powers he had been given the previous year to call all the militia troops into federal service that he deemed necessary. Armstrong did not bother to reply. A week before the British troops landed in the Patuxent, General Winder had made inquiries as to whether he could on his own authority call out the Baltimore militia. Smith firmly answered that under the laws of Maryland only he could do that.<sup>22</sup> The question of command became even more acute after enemy troops had landed. In the same letter in which he informed the governor of Maryland that he had mobilized the city brigade, Smith asked for orders "to govern my authority in the event of an invasion of my Military District." Governor Levin Winder responded that he had long been concerned with the possibility of conflicting commands but felt only the federal government could make a final determination. He reminded Smith that in the past Secretary Armstrong had ruled that a regular army officer was superior to all ranks of militia officers unless such officers had been called into the actual service of the United States. By that interpretation William Winder was clearly the legitimate commander of Baltimore and its defenses.<sup>23</sup>

For a few days the momentous events at Bladensburg and Washington pushed the quarrel between Smith and Winder into the background. Winder's defeat and the British threats against Baltimore again made the argument one of primary importance. Unless one man or the other achieved undisputed control, the defense of Baltimore would be made infinitely more difficult. At this critical moment the Committee of Vigilance and Safety give Smith some much needed support. On August 25, the second full day of its existence, the committee publicly endorsed Smith. That an *ad hoc* committee should presume to advise the state and federal governments on such a matter is no more amazing than the events that preceded the

<sup>22</sup> S. Smith to John Armstrong, July 20, 1814; same to Gen. William Winder, Aug. 14, 1814, Smith Orderbook Papers; Gen. Winder to S. Smith, Aug. 12, 1814, Smith Papers.

<sup>23</sup> S. Smith to Gov. Levin Winder, Aug. 19, 1814, Smith Orderbook Papers; Gov. Winder to S. Smith, Aug. 19, 1814, Smith Papers.



James Madison. Line engraving.  
*Maryland Historical Society*

endorsement. Early on the morning of August 25 the committee received a personally delivered petition from Brigadier General John Stricker of the City Brigade, Commodore Oliver Hazard Perry, the hero of Lake Erie who was in Baltimore to take command of a new ship, Major George Armistead, the regular army officer in charge of Fort McHenry, and Master-Commandant Robert T. Spence of the United States Navy. As the top military officers in the city, these men took the highly unusual step of telling the city government that it was their "wish" that Smith command all forces stationed at Baltimore. The only explanation for such a procedure is that in the unusual circumstances that prevailed, with national authority temporarily neutralized, these officers felt that they must take some initiative to avoid serving under the incompetent Winder. It was also a tribute to Smith that their confidence in him was such that they would risk future official reprisals in order to keep him in command. There is no evidence Smith himself instigated the officer's petition, but there does appear to have been some collusion between the authors and the Committee of Vigilance and Safety. Only some previous understanding could explain why they made their plea to a quasi-legal governmental body in Baltimore rather than to the governor of Maryland or even the Secretary of War.<sup>24</sup>

<sup>24</sup> Declaration of the Committee of Vigilance and Safety, Aug. 25, 1814, Smith Papers.

Upon hearing the officers, the Committee of Vigilance and Safety voted to send a three-man delegation headed by Colonel John Eager Howard to Smith's headquarters. Howard was to convey the committee's request that the General "take upon himself the command of the Forces that may be called out for the defense of our city." A short time later Howard reported to the committee that Smith was "willing and would" accept the command if Governor Winder "sanctioned" it. Thereupon the committee drafted a letter to the Governor asking him to "invest Maj. Genl. Smith with powers in every respect commensurate to the present exigency."<sup>25</sup> While all that occurred might have been honest and above board, the episode, when viewed in the context of the prolonged contest between Smith and Winder, appears contrived. It had been made to appear, rightly or wrongly, that the people of Baltimore and the chief military officers on duty at that place were unanimous in their feelings that General Smith rather than General Winder was the man they trusted to defend the city regardless of military etiquette. It would have been very difficult for state or federal authorities to disregard the opinions of Baltimore on this matter. To force General Winder on an unwilling city might have meant catastrophe in the event of an attack.

In response to the communication of the Committee of Vigilance and Safety, Governor Winder awarded Smith the position of major general of the Maryland troops called into actual service by the federal government. To his angry nephew the Governor protested that this appointment did not make Smith overall commander at Baltimore. Winder still maintained that only the national government could make that decision. Technically the Governor was probably correct; the federal government could still name General Winder to the post. But it was hardly likely that a fugitive administration not yet returned to a burned capital city would place a lesser ranking officer who had just lost a major battle over a man who was now on the federal payroll and who seemingly was the most popular soldier in Baltimore. Smith wasted little time in exploiting his commission from the governor. To General Winder, who was marching towards Baltimore with the remains of his army, Smith sent a copy of the Governor's letter and informed him

<sup>25</sup> Minutes of the Committee of Vigilance and Safety, Aug. 25 and Aug. 26, 1814, Hoyt, "Civilian Defense," pp. 204-206.

that he had "in consequence assumed the command agreeably to my rank." Winder was ordered to report on the number of troops he had and to send ahead tents and other camp equipment belonging to Stansbury's brigade.<sup>26</sup> A day later Smith informed Secretary of War Armstrong that he was now in control at Baltimore. General Winder had finally reached Baltimore, Smith casually remarked to Armstrong, but "I have not yet seen him." Suddenly without troops or power William Winder was a pathetic figure. An appeal to his friend James Monroe, who had replaced Armstrong in the War Department while continuing as Secretary of State, brought no satisfaction. The national government was hardly more than a group of refugees and in no mood to play politics when the enemy was still in the vicinity. Winder was politely advised to obey Smith's orders.<sup>27</sup>

Having survived this ordeal, Smith focused his full attention on the military situation. Fortunately, from his point of view, the enemy was giving him time to perfect his plans. For reasons unknown to the Americans, Ross, Cochrane, and Cockburn kept the fleet in the Patuxent. Smith used this time well. The harbor fortifications required little attention since the labors of 1813 had put them in good order. The only major decision left was when to sink the hulks to block the ship channel. For advice on this and many other matters the General relied on Captain John Rodgers of the United States Navy, a tough veteran who knew how to handle men and cannons. With the harbor secure Smith concentrated his energies on preparing for a land attack against the city.

In 1813 a few earthworks had been thrown up on Hampstead Hill, and General Stansbury's brigade along with some artillery had been stationed both on the hill and along Patapsco Neck. Such precautions were obviously inadequate to ward off an attack by the sizable land force at the disposal of General Ross. As a first step Smith requested the Committee of Vigilance and Safety to mobilize Baltimore's citizens into work brigades to be used in a massive program of fortification building. On

<sup>26</sup> Gov. Levin Winder to S. Smith, Aug. 26 and Aug. 27, 1814, Smith Papers; S. Smith to General William Winder, Aug. 26, 1814, Smith Orderbook Papers.

<sup>27</sup> James Monroe to S. Smith, Sept. 11, 1814 and S. Smith to John Armstrong, Aug. 27, 1814, Smith Papers; James Monroe to S. Smith, Sept. 2, 1814, Smith Orderbook Papers.

August 27 the committee responded with a sweeping directive. Free Negroes and whites exempt from militia service were ordered to report the next morning at Hampstead Hill for assignment to labor details. Slave owners were asked to send their slaves for the same purpose. The entire city was divided into four sections. Each section was to provide labor crews one day out of four.<sup>28</sup> To help finance the construction as well as to purchase arms and food for the militia troops arriving in Baltimore, Smith asked the Committee of Vigilance and Safety to seek a \$100,000 loan from the city's banks. Within forty-eight hours the money was made available. Contemporary news accounts show that the committee obtained funds in other ways. Many individual citizens, local organizations, and even militia companies contributed money for the Committee's activities.<sup>29</sup>

Baltimore was a city-in-arms, straining every fiber in a gigantic effort to preserve its safety. Day after day witnessed purposeful confusion as the city's streets teemed with soldiers, sailors, workmen, artillery trains, wagons full of equipment, and galloping troops of cavalry. Everywhere there was evidence that the defense of Baltimore was a communal enterprise: women making bandages, old men manufacturing cartridges, gangs of men and boys who struggled to build crude shed-like barracks for the troops, and thousands of militiamen who endlessly drilled had committed themselves entirely to a higher purpose. Hardly a person was not enlisted somehow in the defense effort: housewives cooked provisions, doctors flocked to make-shift hospitals behind Hampstead Hill, and all citizens were warned by the public prints to report anyone whose actions were suspicious. The civilian and military leaders of the city continued to work in perfect harmony. General Smith met daily with the Committee of Vigilance and Safety to work out plans that were immediately implemented. Yet, in the final analysis, the authorities would have been helpless had it not been for the spirit of

<sup>28</sup> S. Smith, Orders to the Third Division, Aug. 27, Aug. 29, and Aug. 30, 1814; S. Smith to Committee of Vigilance and Safety, Aug. 28, Aug. 30, and Aug. 31, 1814; same to Thomas C. Worthington, Aug. 29, 1814, Smith Orderbook Papers; Minutes of Committee of Vigilance and Safety, Aug. 29, Aug. 31, Sept. 1, and Sept. 3, 1814, Hoyt, "Civilian Defense," pp. 209, 211, 212-213, 215-216.

<sup>29</sup> S. Smith to Committee of Vigilance and Safety, Aug. 31, 1814, Smith Orderbook Papers; Minutes of Committee of Vigilance and Safety, Aug. 31 and Sept. 1, 1814; Hoyt, "Civilian Defense," pp. 211-213; *Baltimore Patriot and Evening Advertiser*, Sept. 1, 1814.



the committee was able to honor General Smith's requests that a bridge of scows be built in the area of Fell's Point and that some fortifications be erected on North Point road about half way along Patapsco Neck.<sup>31</sup> The Hampstead Hill defenses were well advanced by September 10. Beginning at Fell's Point near the harbor, the line of earthworks, ditches, and redoubts stretched northward to where the hills ended and the land flattened out.<sup>32</sup>

The troops to fill these extensive fortifications poured into Baltimore throughout early September. Besides the third division, militia troops from Virginia, Pennsylvania, and Delaware were available to defend the city as well as a small number of regular army troops and the invaluable handful of United States Navy gunners. Altogether 15,000 troops stood ready to face the British should they attack. Of this number, however, relatively few possessed the weapons and training needed to fight effectively. Prudently Smith ordered most of the militia to be stationed on Hampstead Hill in the hopes that they would fight better from a protected position. Only the crack third brigade was kept in the city ready to move against the enemy when they should land.<sup>33</sup>

General Smith's most pressing problem was to obtain accurate information on the movements of the British. The look-out post at North Point was manned, but the General was determined to have the earliest possible warning of an attack. It was vital to know, for example, whether the British intended to march overland from Upper Marlborough to Baltimore. All of Smith's preparations had been based on the assumption that any enemy attack would involve landings at North Point where the water was deep enough to allow troop transports to maneuver close into shore. If General Ross decided to lead his forces cross country, then Smith would need time to redeploy his troops. As his chief intelligence officer, Smith chose Major William Barney, a trusted personal aide. On August 27 Barney was ordered to shadow the enemy fleet which had remained idle in

<sup>31</sup> Minutes of Committee of Vigilance and Safety, Sept. 5 and Sept. 7, 1814, Hoyt, "Civilian Defense," p. 217; S. Smith to Committee of Vigilance and Safety, Sept. 3, 1814, Smith Orderbook Papers.

<sup>32</sup> William M. Marine, *The British Invasion of Maryland, 1812-1815* (Baltimore, 1913), p. 132.

<sup>33</sup> S. Smith to James Monroe, Sept. 3, Sept. 4, Sept. 7, and Sept. 9, 1814, Smith Orderbook Papers.

the Patuxant. He was told to set up horse relays at ten mile intervals to speed his information back to Baltimore. Barney performed his task efficiently. By watching the fleet and interviewing British deserters and released American prisoners, he was able to give Smith a reasonably complete picture of the enemy's strength and plans.<sup>34</sup>

On Saturday, September 10, Barney reported that the British fleet was on the move and heading towards Baltimore, but contradictory reports from other sources caused General Smith to delay taking action. The next morning, however, a messenger arrived from an observation post that Smith had established at Herring Bay far to the south of Annapolis and Baltimore. The report confirmed Barney's observation that at least thirty ships were sailing rapidly northward. Smith had hardly finished reading this information when other riders brought news that the fleet was in view of the North Point observation station. The rapidity of the British advance obviously surprised the General, and he was forced to fire alarm guns in order to assemble the third brigade. Sometime during the afternoon General Stricker and 3,200 soldiers marched from Baltimore to the western end of Patapsco neck where, with the exception of several hundred skirmishers who were sent ahead, they bivouacked for the night.<sup>35</sup>

That the British were coming to Baltimore at all was largely due to Admiral Cockburn. Ruthless and belligerent, Cockburn had earned the hatred of all Marylanders by his devastating raids around the Chesapeake in 1813. Always anxious for combat, Cockburn had persisted until he overcame the reluctance of Cochrane and Ross to risk an attack on Baltimore. Indeed, until shortly before the fleet moved against Baltimore, Cochrane was telling his superiors in London that his plans did not include operations against the city. It is likely that Ross, at least, did not believe that he had sufficient troops for such an attack. Although the expedition began with over 7,000 soldiers, sickness and desertion had reduced that figure by nearly half. Nevertheless, he finally agreed with Cockburn that the defenses

<sup>34</sup> S. Smith to Major William Barney, Aug. 27 and Sept. 1, 1814; Barney to Smith, Aug. 30 and Sept. 1, 1814, Smith Papers.

<sup>35</sup> S. Smith to James Monroe, Sept. 23, 1814; William Barney to S. Smith, Sept. 10, 1814; James Monroe to S. Smith, Sept. 11, 1814, Smith Papers; S. Smith to James Monroe, Sept. 19, 1814, printed in the *Baltimore Patriot and Evening Advertiser*, Sept. 23, 1814.

of Baltimore should be tested. If they proved weak enough, then a full scale assault might be mounted.<sup>36</sup>

At 7 a.m. on Monday, September 12, Stricker learned that British troops were landing at North Point. Acting on Smith's orders and in accordance with a strategy that may have been decided on as much as a year earlier, he marched the City Brigade forward to the narrowest part of Patapsco Neck. Stricker was well acquainted with this terrain. In 1813 he along with Major Barney had been detailed by General Smith to make a survey of the peninsula. In that survey Barney had noted that the most defensible position was the strip of land between Back River on the north and Bear Creek on the south. It was at this point that Stricker now arranged the six regiments under his command, again taking the precaution of sending squads of riflemen ahead to harass the British. For the next few hours the clerks, carpenters, apprentices, blacksmiths, sailmakers, laborers, and businessmen who made up the third brigade leaned on their weapons and waited nervously for their first taste of combat.<sup>37</sup>

Meanwhile, General Ross, after stopping for breakfast at a farmhouse at North Point, led his 3,500 troops towards Baltimore at a leisurely pace. Without warning the British General and his aide suddenly confronted a few of Stricker's skirmishers who opened fire. Ross was killed instantly, a circumstance that seems to have severely depressed the rest of the army. The two young militiamen who allegedly shot Ross, Daniel Wells and Henry McComus, were shot down shortly after Ross's death. Colonel Arthur Brooke now assumed command and continued the march.<sup>38</sup> Between 2 p.m. and 3 p.m. the two armies came into view of each other and an artillery duel ensued. The spectacular but quite ineffective Congreve rockets that had frightened the American militia at Bladensburg failed to panic the disciplined Baltimore soldiers. For nearly one and a half hours Stricker's men behaved like regulars, matching the British veterans volley for volley. Stricker was finally forced to order

<sup>36</sup> *Baltimore Patriot and Evening Advertiser*, Sept. 1, 1814; Admiral Cochrane to Earl Bathurst, Aug. 28, 1814, War Office 1/141, pp. 27-30, Public Record Office, London; Report of a British officer on the Battle of Baltimore, Sept. 28, 1814, printed in the *Baltimore Patriot and Evening Advertiser*, Oct. 25, 1814.

<sup>37</sup> General Stricker to S. Smith, Sept. 15, 1814, printed in the *Baltimore Patriot and Evening Advertiser*, Sept. 23, 1814.

<sup>38</sup> Muller, *The Darkest Day*, pp. 187-188.

a retreat when large numbers of British troops threatened to turn his left flank by wading through a marsh. In attempting to counter this move, the American general had ordered one regiment to execute a maneuver that proved too difficult under fire. Confusion swept its ranks and the men finally broke and ran. Of more importance, the other regiments, leaving the field in good order and reforming around a prepared position, maintained their composure. Stricker had performed his assigned mission better than anyone had a right to expect. He had not been ordered to hold his position at all costs but merely to delay the enemy's advance as long as it was feasible to do so. His men had never been in battle before, and yet they had withstood with honor an attack by professional troops fresh from the battlefields of Europe.<sup>39</sup>

By the evening of September 12 Stricker had led the City Brigade back to Hampstead Hill where General Smith ordered them posted to the left and a half mile in front of the main fortifications. His intention appears to have been to keep his best troops mobile in order to prevent the British from flanking the American lines. Stricker was soon joined by General Winder and a force of Virginia militia. The British chose not to follow up their initial advantage. Disheartened by Ross's death and unused to physical exertion after long days in the cramped holds of the transports, the troops made camp near the site of the battle. British and American troops alike were thoroughly drenched by a heavy rain during the night from which they had no protection.<sup>40</sup>

At 10 a.m. on Tuesday, September 13, the British began their major movement against Baltimore. In the Patapsco, naval vessels moved to within two miles of Fort McHenry and began a twenty-five hour bombardment. At the same time Colonel Brooke marched his troops out of the Patapsco Neck woods and into full view of the American position on Hampstead Hill. From his command post General Smith could see a breath-

<sup>39</sup> British and American reports of this battle widely differ. The evidence seems to show, however, that the British exaggerated when they spoke of an American rout. See General Stricker to S. Smith, Sept. 15, 1814, printed in the *Baltimore Patriot and Evening Advertiser*, Sept. 23, 1814, and Admiral Cockburn to Admiral Cochrane, Sept. 15, 1814, Adm 1/507, pp. 95-100, Public Record Office, London.

<sup>40</sup> S. Smith to James Monroe, Sept. 19, 1814; General Stricker to S. Smith, Sept. 15, 1814, printed in the *Baltimore Patriot and Evening Advertiser*, Sept. 23, 1814.



Colonel George Armistead by Rembrandt Peale. *The Peale Museum*

taking panorama. To his right and left concealed behind the hastily built earthworks studded with over one hundred cannon crouched 11,000 men. To the north and east he could see the massed ranks of Stricker's and Winder's commands. In the distance, some two miles away, he could make out the red uniforms of the enemy. Later he would learn that one of the British regiments was made up of escaped American slaves. As the Americans waited, Colonel Brooke and Admiral Cockburn, who once again preferred to be with the army rather than the fleet, argued over strategy. Cockburn urged that the army be immediately launched against the American positions. Brooke maintained that a frontal assault would likely fail because, he believed, at least 20,000 men had to be manning the extensive

works he observed. Furthermore, the ground was wet from the recent rain and the footing on the side of the ridge would be treacherous. Although neither Brooke nor any other British officer verbalized it, there must have been some feeling that if the troops before them fought like Stricker's men had yesterday, there was little likelihood a victory could be won. In the end Brooke rejected Cockburn's advice and decided to try a less risky plan.<sup>41</sup>

Shortly before noon Brooke moved his army towards his right in an obvious effort to slip around the American left flank. The most critical moment in the defense of Baltimore had arrived. Should the American units under Winder and Stricker fail to block this movement the battle would be lost; the fortifications would be useless, the American army defeated, and Baltimore defenseless. But Winder and Stricker did not fail. On orders from Smith the two generals adapted "their movements to those of the enemy." Instead of a clear road into Baltimore, Brooke faced two brigades and a third in reserve. Worse yet, the British army now ran the risk of having its line of retreat cut should the Americans sally forth from their fortifications. Wisely Brooke marched his troops back to their original position but now at a distance of only one mile from Hampstead Hill. Having tried his way and having not succeeded, Brooke was apparently about to yield to Cockburn's scheme of storming the American lines.

For a man who had no experience in directing large bodies of troops in battle before, Smith was displaying unusual ability. Not waiting for the British to strike, the General ordered Stricker and Winder to arrange their men in a line at right angles to the left end of the American entrenchments. Now if Brooke attacked, his troops would be exposed to fire not only from Hampstead Hill, but also from their right flank. In that deadly crossfire the attackers would surely be cut to pieces and Brooke knew it. With orders that told him not to risk attacks that might be costly, heading an army less than a third as big as his adversary's and being confronted by an unknown but clever American general, Brooke could only retreat. His decision, reinforced by direct orders from Cochrane whose sea

<sup>41</sup> *Ibid.*; Admiral Cockburn to Admiral Cochrane, Sept. 15, 1814, Adm. 1/507, pp. 95/100, Public Record Office, London; Dr. James McCulloch to S. Smith, Aug. 25, 1814, Smith Papers.

attack had miscarried, came none too soon as Smith already was contemplating an attack of his own the next morning. At 1:30 a.m. on September 14 the British army slipped quietly away under cover of a rainstorm. Discovery of the British maneuver came too late to permit any serious harassment, and the British were undisturbed as they boarded the transports at North Point.<sup>42</sup>

While the British army was being frustrated, the navy was having its own troubles. Admiral Cochrane had hoped to smash through the river defenses into the inner harbor from where the city could easily be shelled. Should this not be possible he at least intended to get near enough to the scene of the land operations to support Brooke's army with his big naval guns. If the cannon at Fort McHenry and on the Lazaretto could be silenced, it would be an easy matter to wipe out the whole right flank of the Hampstead Hill line anchored at Fell's Point. But none of this could take place until the star-shaped bastion at the tip of Whetstone Point was destroyed. Cochrane's task was complicated by the fact that his largest vessels, the gigantic seventy-four gun ships-of-the-line were too big to enter the Patapsco. The British admiral thus had to rely on his frigates and bomb vessels. The latter carried two guns, each capable of firing a missile thirteen inches in diameter and weighing two hundred pounds. Cochrane could see that a mad rush past the fort was not practical because of the booms and sunken hulks clogging the ship channel. The only course open to the British fleet was to stand at a distance just beyond the range of Major Armistead's cannon and bombard the fortifications in the hopes of neutralizing them.

Cochrane opened his attack at the same time Brooke began his maneuvers in front of Hampstead Hill. From couriers who dashed between Fort McHenry and his command post Smith learned that hundreds of bombs and rockets had hit the fort and that Armistead and his thousand-man garrison could do nothing but huddle in their shelters. Around two in the after-

<sup>42</sup> S. Smith to James Monroe, Sept. 19, 1814, printed in the *Baltimore Patriot and Evening Advertiser*, Sept. 23, 1814; Admiral Cockburn to Admiral Cochrane, Sept. 15, 1814, Adm. 1/507, pp. 95-100, Public Record Office, London. S. Smith to Gen. Cadwallader, Sept. 17, 1814; Smith to Gov. Winder, Sept. 15, 1814, Smith Orderbook Papers; Marine, *Invasion of Maryland*, pp. 130-170; J. W. Fortescue, *A History of the British Army* (13 vols.: London, 1899-1930), X, pp. 146-149.

noon Cochrane sent his frigates in towards the fort to test its condition. Armistead's gunners quickly manned their 42-pounders and the ships veered away. The most serious threat to McHenry came that night even as Brooke's troops were preparing to retreat. Using darkness and rain as cover, several smaller British vessels and barges slipped into the Ferry Branch just south of the fort. Cochrane was planning to land troops behind McHenry and capture it, but Smith's arrangements made in 1813 stymied the British. Two batteries, Forts Covington and Babcock, had been constructed along the Ferry Branch to thwart such a plan. Manned by experienced gunners of the United States Navy, these batteries along with those guns that could be brought into play from Fort McHenry and the Lazaretto blasted the British flotilla. In a battle lasting nearly two hours one of the barges was sunk with the loss of all hands. The surviving vessels fled back down the river to the main fleet.<sup>43</sup>

Both on land and water the British had been repulsed. On September 14 the fleet lifted its siege of Fort McHenry and drifted down the Patapsco to North Point where they rejoined the troop transports. Before leaving the area Cochrane released several American civilians, including Francis Scott Key who carried with him a few precious scribbled lines of poetry. News of the victory at Baltimore lifted the spirits of many Americans still shocked by the burning of Washington. More substantively, the Battle of Baltimore when coupled with the simultaneous victory at Plattsburg on the northern frontier improved the bargaining position of the American negotiators at the peace talks in Ghent. No longer could the British seriously demand that the United States accept a loss of territory as the price of ending hostilities. The citizens of Baltimore could take justifiable pride in their accomplishments. Almost alone and unaided they had turned back a large, experienced, and well-equipped enemy force. They had succeeded because they had shown an ability to organize their resources of men and money. They also had been willing to experiment with new forms of

<sup>43</sup> S. Smith to James Monroe, Sept. 19, 1814, printed in the *Baltimore Patriot and Evening Advertiser*, Sept. 23, 1814; William Winder to S. Smith, Sept. 14, 1814, Smith Papers; S. Smith to ———, Sept. 14, 1814, Smith Orderbook Papers; Report of a British Officer on the Battle of Baltimore, Sept. 28, 1814, printed in the *Baltimore Patriot and Evening Advertiser*, Oct. 25, 1814.

political organization to meet the emergency situation. Above all they had selected competent civil and military leaders to whom they were willing to give their complete support. The victory of 1814, therefore, can be attributed to the spirit, the determination, and the resourcefulness of Baltimore's inhabitants. But in a larger sense the manner in which Baltimoreans went about organizing themselves was the product of two centuries of growing experience with local government in America. Only a people schooled in self-rule could have improvised so well.

# CHRISTOPHER HUGHES, JR. AT GHENT, 1814

BY CHESTER G. DUNHAM

CHRISTOPHER Hughes served the United States in various diplomatic capacities from 1814 to 1845, an uncommonly long career for American diplomats in the early nineteenth century. Born at Baltimore in 1786, he attended the College of New Jersey at Princeton and subsequently studied law. However, the drudgery of the legal profession did not appeal to the fun-loving Hughes. He sought some field of endeavor more appropriate to his gregarious nature. For a time, politics attracted him, and he worked as an eager henchman of Samuel Smith in his struggles against the Federalists. After the outbreak of the War of 1812, Hughes entered the military forces and was serving as a captain of artillery at Fort McHenry at the close of 1813. Meanwhile, with an eye to the future, he had applied to the Madison administration in Washington for a job with the federal government. Within weeks Hughes received the appointment which led him to Ghent and, eventually, to his career in diplomacy.

On February 2, 1814, President Madison sent a message to the Senate nominating Christopher Hughes to be "secretary of the joint mission for negotiating a treaty of peace and of commerce with Great Britain."<sup>1</sup> In a letter informing Hughes of the nomination, Secretary of State James Monroe mentioned that a number of young men had appeared qualified for the appointment but that the President had shown particular interest in him. Apparently, Hughes had favorably impressed Madison during a pleasant social evening at Montpelier in the summer of 1813. The Senate quickly approved the nomination, and Hughes eagerly accepted.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> U.S. Congress, Senate. *Journal of the Executive Proceedings of the Senate of the United States of America* (Washington: Duff Green, 1828) II, pp. 466-468.

<sup>2</sup> Monroe to Hughes, Feb. 2, 1814, Christopher Hughes Papers, William L. Clements Library, University of Michigan. Hughes to Adams, Nov. 17, 1827, AP reel 483, Adams Papers (owned by the Adams Manuscript Trust), Mass. Hist. Soc.



Christopher Hughes, Jr. (1786-1849) by Sir Martin Archer Shee R. A. London, 1832. *Maryland Historical Society*

He became a member of a mission which eventually included five "ministers plenipotentiary and extraordinary," an attaché who assisted with clerical duties on occasion, and a varying number of young men nominally employed as private secretaries by the ministers. Already in Europe were three ministers: John Quincy Adams, James A. Bayard, and Albert Gallatin. The other two ministers, Henry Clay and Jonathan Russell, were to meet Hughes and William Shaler, the attaché, in New York and sail for Europe on the United States Corvette *John*

*Adams*.<sup>3</sup> Because of hostilities and the unsettled conditions prevailing in much of Europe, the joint mission was to assemble at Gothenburg, Sweden, where the negotiations were expected to take place.

According to instructions from the Secretary of State, Hughes left Baltimore immediately in order to assume his new duties. Because of the tardiness of Russell and bad weather conditions, he had to tarry in New York for about two weeks. At last, the corvette sailed on February 25 with Hughes, Clay, Russell, and Shaler on board and arrived at Gothenburg on April 13.<sup>4</sup>

Nearly three months elapsed, however, before the joint mission finally assembled in one place, and that place was Ghent rather than Gothenburg. When the corvette arrived in Sweden with part of the mission, Adams was still in St. Petersburg as American minister to Russia, while Gallatin and Bayard had just arrived in London from Amsterdam for unofficial talks with the British. The latter, in view of the abdication of Napoleon and the more settled conditions in Europe, now preferred to negotiate in a place closer to London. Weeks passed while the American ministers communicated with each other, settled on Ghent as the site for negotiations, and then began to travel toward that city.<sup>5</sup>

Meanwhile, Hughes visited London. He carried letters and packages to Gallatin and Bayard, and he was also prepared to perform secretarial duties for them. However, his real reasons for making the visit were to admire the metropolis and to see his wife's sister Mary, who many years earlier had married an Englishman named Mansfield.<sup>6</sup> Arriving on May 9, he found

<sup>3</sup> Monroe to Russell, Feb. 2, 1814; copy of Presidential commission on peace issued to Adams, Bayard, Clay, and Russell, Jan. 18, 1814; copy of Presidential commission on commerce issued to Adams, Bayard, Clay, and Russell, Jan. 18, 1814; copies of similar Presidential commissions issued to Gallatin, Feb. 9, 1814; copy of Presidential commission issued to Hughes, Feb. 3, 1814; copy of Monroe to joint mission, undated, on Shaler; all in Russell Papers, Brown University Library.

<sup>4</sup> Clay to Monroe, Feb. 13, 1814 and Feb. 23, 1814; Clay and Russell to Bayard and Gallatin, April 14, 1814; all three in *The Papers of Henry Clay*, edited by James F. Hopkins and Mary W. M. Hargreaves (Lexington: University of Kentucky Press, 1959-), I, pp. 866, 869, and 875, respectively.

<sup>5</sup> Copy of Clay and Russell to Bayard and Gallatin, April 14, 1814; copy of Clay and Russell to Adams, April 14, 1814; copy of joint mission to Monroe, July 11, 1814; all three in Russell Papers.

<sup>6</sup> Clay to Bayard and Gallatin, May 2, 1814, and Clay to Russell, May 4, 1814, both in Hopkins and Hargreaves, *The Papers of Henry Clay*, I, pp. 891 and 893; John Quincy Adams diary, Jan. 4, 1817, AP reel 33, Adams Papers; Hughes to Gallatin, Jan. 19, 1827, Albert Gallatin Papers, New York Hist. Soc.

lodging in the same house where Bayard lodged. While the "immense mass of houses" and the "ostensible comfort" of London astonished him, he soon became ill in body and spirit and wanted to return to the United States.<sup>7</sup> Perhaps the refusal of the Mansfields to receive him contributed to his depressed spirit; they had not yet forgiven Hughes for marrying Laura Smith in defiance of her father. Toward the end of June, Hughes left London, spent a few pleasant days in Paris, and arrived at Ghent on July 7.<sup>8</sup>

After the arrival of Hughes, the members of the joint mission established a certain degree of organization and agreed to certain procedures in order to accomplish the tasks of negotiation which lay ahead. Adams regarded himself as first among five equals because his name appeared first in the commission issued by President Madison. Although Russell grumbled about the accidents of the alphabet, no one challenged Adams. Therefore, he invited the other ministers to a meeting in his hotel room at noon on July 9. The meeting lasted four hours. Although much of the discussion concerned the prospects for the negotiations and other substantive matters, the ministers dealt with procedural matters as well. They determined how Hughes should maintain the records of the mission and decided that Shaler should assist Hughes in copying documents. On July 11 the ministers held another meeting at which they discussed and approved the text of the first despatch of the mission to the Secretary of State. After this meeting, Adams gave Hughes the rough draft from which a fair copy was to be prepared. In this fashion, the joint mission organized itself and began to function.<sup>9</sup>

Although the Americans were ready to begin negotiations, they had to wait nearly a month for the British representatives

<sup>7</sup> Hughes to Clay, May 15, 1814, in Hopkins and Hargreaves, *The Papers of Henry Clay*, I, pp. 913-915.

<sup>8</sup> Adams diary, July 7, 1814, AP reel 26, Adams Papers; Adams to Louisa Catherine Adams, Aug. 1, 1814, in *Writings of John Quincy Adams* (7 vols.: New York, 1913-17), edited by Worthington Chauncey Ford, V, p. 69; Hughes to William Harris Crawford, Nov. 24, 1814, Crawford Papers, Duke University Library.

<sup>9</sup> Charles Francis Adams, ed., *Memoirs of John Quincy Adams, Comprising Portions of His Diary from 1795 to 1848*, (12 vols.: Philadelphia, 1874-77), II, pp. 656-657. Adams to Bayard, Clay, and Russell, Jan. 2, 1815, and Russell to Clay, Oct. 15, 1815, both in Hopkins and Hargreaves, *The Papers of Henry Clay*, II, pp. 1-2, and II, 72-78, respectively.

to arrive at Ghent. During this interval, the members of the mission decided to leave their temporary lodgings at the Hotel des Pays-Bas and occupy more comfortable lodgings on a monthly basis. After some search and much discussion, the five ministers rented a house in the Rue des Champs and moved into it on the last day of July. Although they would have been happy to have shared the house with the other members of the mission, Hughes, Shaler, and the private secretaries decided that they could find quarters more to their liking elsewhere in town.<sup>10</sup> Writing to his wife about Hughes, Adams commented that, "I regret the loss of his society, for he is lively and good-humored, smart at a repartee, and a thorough punster. . . ."<sup>11</sup> Nevertheless, Hughes and the other junior members of the mission usually dined with the ministers every day. While waiting for the British, the Americans associated with each other in perfect harmony.<sup>12</sup>

Also during this interval, Hughes became ill with a fever and was confined to his bed for about a week. At the height of the fever, Adams and several other members of the mission took turns sitting with the sick secretary. About this time, something like a father-son relationship began to develop between Adams and Hughes.<sup>13</sup>

The weeks of waiting ended for the American mission early in August. On the morning of the 7th, Anthony St. John Baker, secretary to the British commission, called on Bayard and informed him that three British commissioners had arrived the previous evening in Ghent and were prepared to begin negotiations. That afternoon, the American ministers sent Hughes to call on Baker and to propose that the first meeting between the British and American representatives be held the following day at one o'clock in the Hotel des Pays-Bas. The British agreed, and at the appointed hour the American ministers, accompanied by their secretary, arrived at the hotel. When the representatives of the two governments exchanged copies of

<sup>10</sup> Adams to Louisa Catherine Adams, July 19, 1814, in Ford, *Writings of John Quincy Adams*, V, p. 64; Adams diary, July 31, 1814, AP reel 32, Adams Papers.

<sup>11</sup> Adams to Louisa Catherine Adams, Aug. 1, 1814, in Ford, *Writings of John Quincy Adams*, V, p. 69.

<sup>12</sup> Adams to Louisa Catherine Adams, Aug. 12, 1814, in Ford, *Writings of John Quincy Adams*, V, p. 73; Adams, *Memoirs of John Quincy Adams*, II, p. 661.

<sup>13</sup> Adams diary, July 21-27, 1814, AP reel 26, Adams Papers.



John Quincy Adams. Line engraving.  
*Maryland Historical Society*

their full powers, they closed a long period of anticipation and opened an equally long period of arduous negotiation.<sup>14</sup>

While the American ministers debated sharply with each other in their regular strategy meetings and while they patiently and tenaciously upheld the interests of their country in a series of verbal and written exchanges with the British commissioners, Hughes busied himself with his burden of unexciting but important clerical duties. On August 8, he sat up with Adams and Gallatin until after midnight deciphering messages from the Secretary of State. On the 9th, after the ministers agreed on the text of a protocol describing the first encounter with the British, Adams asked him to prepare a fair copy. On the 12th, the ministers decided that Hughes should henceforth attend their regular strategy meetings in order to keep a record of the proceedings of the mission. In addition, Hughes had charge of the petty cash and paid for postage, bought despatch boxes, and made other disbursements. Although he was involved in great matters of state, he felt his relative insignificance and facetiously referred to himself as "the fly on the coach wheel."<sup>15</sup>

<sup>14</sup> Adams, *Memoirs of John Quincy Adams*, III, pp. 3-5; Hopkins and Hargreaves, *The Papers of Henry Clay*, I, pp. 952-953; Not expecting the British, Russell had gone on a pleasure trip to Dunkirk and missed this first meeting.

<sup>15</sup> Adams, *Memoirs of John Quincy Adams*, III, pp. 7 and 10; Adams diary, Aug. 12, 1814, AP reel 32, Adams Papers; Christopher Hughes manuscript notebook, Hughes Papers; Hughes to Adams, May 7, 1815, AP reel 423, Adams Papers.

Hughes was not a passive observer, however. He had much to learn about his duties, and he experienced difficult moments in his apprenticeship. Adams, as nominal chief of the mission, assumed primary responsibility for the instruction of Hughes and for ensuring that certain standards were maintained. Early in the negotiations, Hughes was instructed to prepare a fair copy of a sixteen-page note to the British. When he presented his hand-penned copy to Adams, the latter exploded, "Is this your *best*, Sir? We can't sign such a spot of work as that."<sup>16</sup> Thereupon, Hughes went to work to prepare a second copy. This, too, failed to meet the stern standards of Adams. Not until Hughes had copied the note for a third time did Adams grant his approval. Incidents such as this inspired Hughes and others to nickname their chief "Ignis Fatuus" or "Foolish Fire."<sup>17</sup> Nevertheless, Hughes apparently learned quickly, pleased his masters, prepared a steady stream of fair copies, and, after signature, delivered them to the British.<sup>18</sup>

Despite the nicknames, it was not all work and routine for the American mission at Ghent. On the contrary, interspersed between days of furious activity were weeks of waiting while the British commissioners communicated with their superiors in London. During these slack periods, the Americans found amusement and diversion where interest and opportunity led them.

Between July and October, Hughes made five trips away from Ghent, each trip lasting from two to five days. He visited Antwerp three times and Brussels twice. On one trip, Colonel George Milligan, Bayard's private secretary, accompanied him. On another trip, Hughes travelled with Clay and Russell. A third time, he accompanied Gallatin and Bayard. During this last trip, he joined the "chevalier," as Bayard was called among the Americans, for a side trip to Bergen op Zoom. If he did not travel anywhere with Adams, the reason probably was that the latter chose to remain in the city of Ghent during the whole period of the negotiations. While diverting, these excursions

<sup>16</sup> Hughes to Adams, June [?], 1833, AP reel 497, Adams Papers.

<sup>17</sup> Hughes to Russell, May 7, 1815, May 25, 1815, and Nov. 20, 1815, all three in Russell Papers, Brown University Library.

<sup>18</sup> Adams diary, Sept. 26, 1814 and Nov. 10, 1814, AP reel 32, Adams Papers; Adams, *Memoirs of John Quincy Adams*, III, pp. 58, 68-69, 99-100.



View of the City of Ghent. Wood engraving from *The Pictorial Field-Book of the War of 1812* by Benson J. Lossing. *Maryland Historical Society*

offered Hughes opportunities to become better acquainted with his associates.<sup>19</sup>

Social life in the city of Ghent also provided opportunities for Hughes to form acquaintanceships which endured for decades. On August 12 the American ministers invited all American citizens in the city for dinner; a total of twenty-two persons sat down at the table. The following evening, the American mission entertained the three British commissioners for dinner. Ten days later, the *intendant* of Ghent gave a dinner for twenty-five persons, including both the British and American missions. On the 27th, the British gave a dinner for the Americans. Several days later, the Americans gave a dinner

<sup>19</sup> Adams diary, July 13, 1814 to Oct. 21, 1814, AP reel 26; Adams diary, Aug. 22, 1814 to Oct. 23, 1814, AP reel 32, Adams Papers; Adams to Louisa Catherine Adams, Dec. 16, 1814, in Ford, *Writings of John Quincy Adams*, V, pp. 238-239.

<sup>20</sup> Adams, *Memoirs of John Quincy Adams*, 111, pp. 21-31. Adams to Louisa Catherine Adams, Aug. 16, 1814, in Ford, *Writings of John Quincy Adams*, V, p. 83. Russell diary, Aug. 12, 1814 and Aug. 13, 1814, in *The Gentleman's Annual Remembrancer for the Year, 1814*, Rare Book Collection, Brown University Library.

for thirty persons with band music, an illuminated garden, and card games later on.<sup>20</sup> Perhaps it was on some occasion such as this that Gallatin acquired the sobriquet "the ace of spades."<sup>21</sup> Other dinners followed, but social life acquired more variety as the members of the American mission became better established in the community.

In October, the intelligentsia of Ghent wanted to recognize the distinguished Americans who were laboring for peace with honor. The Society of Fine Arts and Letters and the Society of Agriculture and Botany drew lots to determine which Americans should be invited by the respective societies to become honorary members. As it turned out, Adams, Bayard, and Gallatin received invitations from the former society, while Clay, Russell, and Hughes received invitations from the latter. Although Russell felt somewhat affronted by this association with the lower-ranking secretary, the episode illustrates the friendly attitude of the people of Ghent toward their American visitors.<sup>22</sup>

Besides dining with the other members of the American mission on a more or less regular basis and besides accepting invitations to dine elsewhere, Hughes also gave small dinners occasionally in his own lodgings. At least twice in November and three times in December he gave such dinners and included, at one time or another, all five of the ministers for whom he worked.<sup>23</sup> In doing so, Hughes was laying the basis for the career which he eventually followed.

On November 27 the American ministers received a British note which led them to conclude that a peace treaty was not only possible but probable. Several consequences followed from this conclusion. The ministers decided to institute strict secrecy in order to safeguard the negotiations during this new and critical stage. They further decided that only Hughes, among the other members of the mission, had a need to be kept informed. Sensing these decisions, Shaler soon convinced himself that the

<sup>21</sup> Hughes to Russell, Aug. 6, 1816, Russell Papers.

<sup>22</sup> Adams, *Memoirs of John Quincy Adams*, III, pp. 58-59. Bayard to Richard Henry Bayard, Oct. 27, 1814, in "Papers of James A. Bayard, 1796-1815" edited by Elizabeth Donnan, in *Annual Report of the American Historical Association for the Year 1913* (2 vols.: Washington, 1915), II, pp. 349-350.

<sup>23</sup> Adams diary, Nov. 19, 1814, Dec. 2, 1814, and Dec. 15, 1814, AP reel 32, Adams Papers; Russell Diary, Nov. 15, 1814, Dec. 15, 1814, and Dec. 17, 1814, in *The Gentleman's Annual Remembrancer for the Year, 1814*.



James A. Bayard. Wood engraving from *The Pictorial Field-Book of the War of 1812* by Benson J. Lossing. Maryland Historical Society

ministers had lost confidence in him. Therefore, he requested and received permission to return to the United States. During the next few weeks, the negotiations moved briskly ahead.<sup>24</sup>

By December 23 the negotiators had come to an agreement on the text of a peace treaty between Great Britain and the United States. At a meeting on that day, they decided that each mission should prepare three fair copies of the treaty and that those copies should be signed and exchanged the following day. After the meeting on the 23rd, Hughes began preparing two fair copies while Clay undertook to prepare a third copy.

At four o'clock on the afternoon of December 24, the five American ministers with their secretary arrived at the residence of the British commissioners for the formal signing of the treaty. Two and a half hours later, the six copies of the treaty had been examined, compared, corrected, signed, sealed, and exchanged.<sup>25</sup>

The next problem facing the American mission was to transmit to Washington three copies of the treaty as quickly and as safely as possible. The ministers decided to send one copy with

<sup>24</sup> Adams, *Memoirs of John Quincy Adams*, III, pp. 70, 90-91. Adams to Louisa Catherine Adams, Nov. 29, 1814, in Ford, *Writings of John Quincy Adams*, V, pp. 219-220.

<sup>25</sup> Adams, *Memoirs of John Quincy Adams*, III, p. 126. Russell diary, Dec. 23-24, 1814, in *The Gentleman's Annual Remembrancer for the Year, 1814*.

Hughes, who was to depart early on December 26 for Paris and then proceed to Bordeaux to sail on the American ship *Transit*. Henry Carroll, Clay's private secretary, was to carry a second copy and depart later on the same day for England where he hoped to find speedy passage to the United States. The ministers expected to send a third copy by a vessel then at Amsterdam.<sup>26</sup>

Late on December 25 as Hughes was gathering together some of the despatches which he was to carry to the Secretary of State, the strain of the previous weeks disturbed his normally equable disposition. He had worked hard and well, and he had expected some kind of favorable mention in the despatches of the mission. When he found no such mention, he exclaimed to Adams and Bayard that the omission "takes away [a] great part of my satisfaction in being the bearer of the treaty."<sup>27</sup> Later in the evening when he said farewell to Clay, he broke down and wept because of his disappointment. Nevertheless, the next morning at four o'clock, Hughes, carrying the precious treaty and the latest despatches of the mission, set out on the road to Paris.<sup>28</sup>

After a brief pause in Paris with William Harris Crawford, the American minister, Hughes continued his journey to Bordeaux and arrived on January 1. Up to this point, he had pressed forward tirelessly in an effort to convey the good news of peace to his country, but henceforth Hughes was at the mercy of wind and weather. The schooner *Transit* did not sail for a week and, when she finally left the Garonne, made slow headway against tempestuous seas. With sails in tatters and food nearly gone, the ship arrived at New London, Connecticut, on March 1, 1815. Hughes soon discovered that Henry Carroll had delivered his copy of the treaty to Washington two weeks earlier and that the President had ratified it already. Eventually, Hughes arrived at the capital with his copy of the treaty together with the despatches from the mission. For ten days he had discussions with President Madison, with Secretary of

<sup>26</sup> Adams to Abigail Adams, Dec. 24, 1814; Adams to John Adams, Dec. 26, 1814; Adams to Louisa Catherine Adams, Dec. 27, 1814; all three in Ford, *Writings of John Quincy Adams*, V, pp. 247-255.

<sup>27</sup> Adams, *Memoirs of John Quincy Adams*, III, p. 128.

<sup>28</sup> Hughes to Clay, Nov. 27, 1844, in *Works of Henry Clay, Comprising his Life, Correspondence, and Speeches*, edited by Calvin Colton, (10 vols.: New York, 1904), V, pp. 503-506.

State Monroe, and with others concerning the negotiations and negotiators at Ghent. At last, Hughes returned to Baltimore. He had ended an episode in his life but had laid the foundation of a career.<sup>29</sup>

<sup>29</sup> Hughes to Russell, Jan. 6, 1815; Adams to Bayard, Clay, and Russell, Jan. 9, 1815; Hughes to Russell, May 7, 1815; all three in Russell Papers; Hughes to Adams, May 7, 1815, AP reel 423, Adam Papers; Fred L. Engelman, *The Peace of Christmas Eve* (New York: Harcourt, Brace and World, 1962) p. 287, asserts that Hughes sailed directly to Annapolis and arrived before Carroll. His assertion is at variance with the version given above and is unsupported by any citation of evidence.

# NOTES ON MARYLAND HISTORICAL SOCIETY MANUSCRIPT COLLECTIONS

BY NANCY G. BOLES, CURATOR OF MANUSCRIPTS  
THE BLADENSBURG AND WASHINGTON  
CAMPAIGNS

**B**ECAUSE Baltimore played such an active role in the War of 1812, it is natural to assume there are extensive holdings in the Society which concern the defense of Baltimore, Fort McHenry and the writing of "The Star-Spangled Banner." There are many interesting letters and even whole collections dealing with those momentous September days in 1814—in fact, a complete account of "The Star-Spangled Banner" including transcriptions and reproductions of many of the most fascinating manuscripts will soon be published by the Society. But we also have a considerable body of material describing and relating to the disastrous Battle of Bladensburg and the subsequent burning of the national capital.

As commander of the American troops at Bladensburg, Brigadier General William H. Winder (1775-1824) has been either scathingly denounced for complete incompetence or defended as the scapegoat for a bungling federal war department. One of Maryland's most eminent and respected lawyers and a delegate to the state legislature, Winder is remembered today almost solely for his short and disastrous military career. While it is true that Secretary of War John Armstrong was incredibly shortsighted in overlooking defenses for Washington and at long last provided only inexperienced militiamen, Brigadier General Winder must shoulder a lion's share of the blame for the fiasco. The Americans outnumbered the British at Bladensburg, but Winder positioned his troops so poorly that the British General Ross could engage them in three separate battles and either defeat them or force them into a hasty, unorganized retreat. It was no wonder that the battle came to be known aptly, if somewhat disrespectfully, as the Bladensburg Races. General Winder was removed from his command and discharged from the army ten months later, though a court of inquiry acquitted him of misconduct. While our manuscript holdings cannot offer enough proof to resolve the question of

his competence, we possess several collections which give a good picture of the frenetic, often frantic general, as well as American strategy and troop movements before, during, and after the battle on August 24.

The Winder Letter Book (MS. 918), July 7-August 18, 1814, in General Winder's own hand, covers the weeks and days just before the infamous skirmish and details various troop deployments and preparations. Winder's confident praise of his troops on August 12 and his urgent call for additional men on the 18, are ironical in light of the subsequent debacle.

The William H. Winder Papers (MS. 919), 1807-79, are a large collection of three boxes of letters and one of typed transcripts which contain the military and personal papers of Brigadier General Winder from 1807-24, and continue after his death with correspondence concerning him to his son. The papers include lists of officers, recruiting regulations, memorandums on supplying the troops, as well as much correspondence both to and from Winder on the deployment of his men, the operation and tactics of the campaign, and the movements of the British. There is correspondence to Winder from John Armstrong, Secretary of War, and James Monroe, Secretary of State. Some letters imply that the American effort was poorly planned and managed. For instance, a detachment with neither guns nor ammunition was ordered to report to Bladensburg, and since there were no arms to spare, they were sent away.

The Winder-Stuart Correspondence (MS. 1570), June 13-September 15, 1814, consists of seven informative letters from Levin Winder (1757-1819), a relative of the general, a Revolutionary War veteran, and the Federalist, anti-war governor of Maryland during the War of 1812, to General Philip Stuart (?-1830), also a hero of the Revolution and a Maryland general in the War of 1812. Governor Winder discusses the inefficiency of the cavalry and hints at other problems when he reassures Stuart that arms and supplies which had been sent to Marlborough by mistake instead of to his camp would soon reach him. Winder's letter of July 8 describes the strategy for the defense of Baltimore and the state. Levin Winder's Federalist bias against the administration in Washington—Madison had been much quicker to defend Jeffersonian Virginia than Federalist Maryland—should be taken into account when reading these letters.

Also noteworthy is the new War of 1812 Collection (MS. 1846). We have grouped together all manuscripts pertaining to the war years which were formerly scattered through the Vertical File of separate items. There are a dozen Levin Winder letters as well as interesting descriptions of the Battle of Baltimore and related topics.

The Stricker Papers (MS. 1435), 1814, a fine group of thirty letters, contain correspondence to General John Stricker (1758-1825), a soldier in both the Revolution and the War of 1812, during and after the British attack on Washington. It includes orders of General Samuel Smith (1752-1839) and reports from officers on duty near Bladensburg which give a vivid picture of the battle and the calamitous turn of events. Accounts by men on the scene and in the fray make those bleak days come alive.

As an interesting change of pace, the Thomas Beall Account Book (MS. 112), 1812-19, lists the personal and household expenses of a Georgetown merchant. The entry for August 24, 1814, deviates from the routine notations, for Thomas Beall succinctly describes the defeat at Bladensburg and the holocaust in Washington.

Anyone doing research on the military operations in the Chesapeake region, the disasters at Bladensburg and Washington, or the American command during the War of 1812, will find it profitable to examine the manuscript holdings of the Society.

ACCESSIONS OF THE MANUSCRIPT DIVISION SINCE  
THE PUBLICATION OF *MANUSCRIPT COLLECTIONS*  
*OF THE MARYLAND HISTORICAL SOCIETY*<sup>1</sup> IN  
AUGUST, 1968.

II

De la Roche, George, Journal (MS. 1715). Journal of de la Roche (in French) and log of the "Ploughboy" and a letter giving Maryland home medical remedies; 1 vol., 1802-03. Donor: Henry L. Page.

Denning, S. H. Clifton, Letterbook (MS. 1669). Letters of Mr. Denning, agent for the American Bicycle Co., to salesmen

<sup>1</sup> Indexed listing and description of 1724 of the Society's collections. Available from the Society for \$15.00.

and customers in the York, Pa., Philadelphia, Baltimore area, also bills and receipts; 1 vol., 1900-22. Donor: Carl L. Reier.

"Deutschland" Entry Paper (MS. 1661). Entry papers of this German submarine, including cargo manifests, inspectors' reports, etc.; 20 items, 1916-17. Donor: Anonymous.

Dorchester County Land Papers (MS. 1753). Plats, surveys, deeds, mortgages, copies of wills, bonds, etc., of Dorchester County; 86 items, 1698-1847. Donor: Mrs. E. Herrman Cohn.

Dorsey, Henrietta Maria Chew, Journal (MS. 1774). Lists accounts for and against the estate of Henrietta Maria Chew Dorsey; 1 vol., 1763-65. Donor: Johns Hopkins University Library.

Dorsey, Reuben Merriweather, Diary (MS. 1731). Notes local events, family news and weather in the Howard District of Anne Arundel County. Also accounts in a different hand; 1 vol., 1834-47. Donor: St. John's Church, Ellicott City.

Dorsey, Richard, Papers (MS. 1653). Business and personal papers of this Baltimore merchant; 9 boxes, 1799-1848. Donor: Mrs. Charles Gillette.

Dorsey, Richard, Papers (MS. 1764). Correspondence on family and financial matters, estate papers of Elizabeth and Rebecca Dorsey, patents, deeds, bills, receipts, etc.; 100 items, 1797-1848. Donor: Not known.

Dukehart Letters (MS. 1862). Civil War letters of Graham Dukehart of Baltimore who served in a New York regiment; 146 items, 1861-63. Donor: Mrs. Graham Dukehart.

Duvall, Judge Gabriel, Docket (MS. 1732). Docket of cases in Anne Arundel County Court; 1 vol., 1789-90. Donor: Mrs. Fred Hennighausen.

Ellicott, Thomas, Bank Book (MS. 1702). Bank book of the president of the Union Bank of Maryland; 1 vol., 1820-21. Donor: Not known.

Ellicott, William J., Stock Book (MS. 1712). Lists cloth and clothing with items and prices; 1 vol., 1846. Donor: Not known.

Ellicott Family Deeds and Land Papers (MS. 1825). 34 bonds and deeds concerning Ellicott family land purchases in Baltimore City and County, Anne Arundel and Howard Counties; 1 vol., 1782-1814. Exchange.

Eureka Mining & Operating Co. Letterbook (MS. 1664). Outgoing correspondence including business transactions, pur-

chase of supplies and payrolls; 1 vol., 1908-10. Donor: Not known.

Evangelical Reformed Church Papers (MS. 1752). Frederick, Maryland church papers including marriage license applications, treasurer's records, bills, pew rents, minutes, letters, etc.; 4 boxes, 1779-1866. Donor: Governing Board of Evangelical Reformed Church.

Flynn & Emrich Co. Records (MS. 1836). Business records of these Baltimore machinists; 60 vols., 1876-1959. Donor: Flynn & Emrich Co.

Fourth Maryland Regiment Account Book (MS. 1655). Lists accounts and daily receipts of company commanders, clothing requisitioned, gives a pay abstract; 1 vol., 1777. Purchase.

Gilmor, Robert, Memoir (MS. 1729). Ms. copy of memoir by Robert Gilmor, Jr.; correspondence from 1782, plans, etc. of Gilmor estates, Beech Hill and Glen Ellen, biographies of Gilmor's children; 1 vol., 1782-1813, 1908-34. Donor: Mrs. Thomas G. Buchanan.

Gittings, Richard & David S., Papers (MS. 1667). Correspondence of Richard Gittings, Baltimore merchant, and of his son, Dr. David S. Gittings, etc.; 31 items and 2 vols., 1815-96. Donor: Miss Victoria Gittings.

Hammer, Frederick, Letterbook (MS. 423.1). Letterbook of Baltimore merchant, Frederick Hammer. Correspondence with German contacts ordering glassware and with Maryland and Virginia merchants; 1 vol., 1801-06. Donor: Not known.

Hammond, Nathan, Account Book (MS. 429). Shows this Annapolitan's trade in rum, sugar, tobacco, spices, etc.; 1 vol., 1764-68, 1814. Donor: Peter Sahn.

Hanson, John, Letters (MS. 1785). Important letters to his son-in-law, Dr. Philip Thomas of Frederick, Maryland, concerning family matters and vivid descriptions of the progress of the Revolutionary War; 54 items, 1780-83. Donor: Mrs. Robert H. Stevenson.

Harford County Druggist's Record (MS. 1689). Shows sales of medicine, drugs, spices and tobacco; 1 vol., 1887-89. Donor: Not known.

Harford County Militia—Court Martial (MS. 1681). Depositions, letters, and petitions supporting Thomas Casper Stump in his court martial; 8 items, 1814-16. Donor: J. Gilman D'Arcy Paul.

## ANCESTRAL TABLE

1. Your Name \_\_\_\_\_  
Address \_\_\_\_\_  
City & State \_\_\_\_\_  
Date of Birth \_\_\_\_\_  
Place of Birth \_\_\_\_\_  
Date Married \_\_\_\_\_  
Place Married \_\_\_\_\_  
Name of Spouse \_\_\_\_\_  
Date of Birth \_\_\_\_\_  
Place of Birth \_\_\_\_\_  
Date of Death \_\_\_\_\_  
Place of Death \_\_\_\_\_
2. Father's Name \_\_\_\_\_  
Date of Birth \_\_\_\_\_  
Place of Birth \_\_\_\_\_  
Date of Death \_\_\_\_\_  
Place of Death \_\_\_\_\_  
Date Married \_\_\_\_\_  
Place Married \_\_\_\_\_
3. Mother's Name \_\_\_\_\_  
Date of Birth \_\_\_\_\_  
Place of Birth \_\_\_\_\_  
Date of Death \_\_\_\_\_  
Place of Death \_\_\_\_\_
4. Paternal Gr.father \_\_\_\_\_  
Date of Birth \_\_\_\_\_  
Place of Birth \_\_\_\_\_  
Date of Death \_\_\_\_\_  
Place of Death \_\_\_\_\_  
Date Married \_\_\_\_\_  
Place Married \_\_\_\_\_
5. Paternal Gr.mother \_\_\_\_\_  
Date of Birth \_\_\_\_\_  
Place of Birth \_\_\_\_\_  
Date of Death \_\_\_\_\_  
Place of Death \_\_\_\_\_

6. Maternal Gr.father \_\_\_\_\_  
Date of Birth \_\_\_\_\_  
Place of Birth \_\_\_\_\_  
Date of Death \_\_\_\_\_  
Place of Death \_\_\_\_\_  
Date of Marriage \_\_\_\_\_  
Place of Marriage \_\_\_\_\_
7. Maternal Gr.mother \_\_\_\_\_  
Date of Birth \_\_\_\_\_  
Place of Birth \_\_\_\_\_  
Date of Death \_\_\_\_\_  
Place of Death \_\_\_\_\_
8. Father of No. 4 \_\_\_\_\_  
Date of Birth \_\_\_\_\_  
Place of Birth \_\_\_\_\_  
Date of Death \_\_\_\_\_  
Place of Death \_\_\_\_\_  
Date Married \_\_\_\_\_  
Place Married \_\_\_\_\_
9. Mother of No. 4 \_\_\_\_\_  
Date of Birth \_\_\_\_\_  
Place of Birth \_\_\_\_\_  
Date of Death \_\_\_\_\_  
Place of Death \_\_\_\_\_
10. Father of No. 5 \_\_\_\_\_  
Date of Birth \_\_\_\_\_  
Place of Birth \_\_\_\_\_  
Date of Death \_\_\_\_\_  
Place of Death \_\_\_\_\_  
Date Married \_\_\_\_\_  
Place Married \_\_\_\_\_
11. Mother of No. 5 \_\_\_\_\_  
Date of Birth \_\_\_\_\_  
Place of Birth \_\_\_\_\_  
Date of Death \_\_\_\_\_  
Place of Death \_\_\_\_\_

## GENEALOGICAL NOTES

BY A. RUSSELL SLAGLE, CORRESPONDING SECRETARY  
GENEALOGY REPRESENTATIVE, LIBRARY COMMITTEE  
MARYLAND HISTORICAL SOCIETY

THE Maryland Historical Society is reviving one of the ideas of the Genealogical Committee of the 1930's and invites members interested in genealogy to send to the Society copies of work that they have done on their family trees. This will provide a basis for a central file of genealogical information of increasing value to all interested members and to local historians.

Members are urged to complete the Ancestral Table on the following pages. Additional generations may be submitted on a plain piece of paper. On the Ancestral Table No. 1 is you; No. 2 is your father; No. 3 your mother; No. 4 your paternal grandfather; No. 5 paternal grandmother; No. 6 your maternal grandfather; No. 7 your maternal grandmother. To assign a number to the father of any given individual multiply by two; to find the mother multiply by two and add one. (Even numbers are male and odd numbers female.)

Additional material about any ancestor—names of all children with dates of birth, death, and marriage, occupation, military service, etc. will be welcomed as a complement to the Ancestral Table and will be filed with it. Each Table will be catalogued and become immediately available to fellow genealogists.

All Ancestral Tables as well as any questions concerning this innovation should be addressed to Mrs. Mary K. Meyer, Genealogical Librarian, Maryland Historical Society, 201 West Monument Street, Baltimore, Maryland 21201, but because of the pressure of her existing duties, Mrs. Meyer will be unable to assist anyone in the compilation of their Ancestral Table.

The value of such a collection will be readily apparent to the genealogist within the Society's membership as well as to the historian. Your cooperation in this project will be greatly appreciated.

## RECENT GENEALOGICAL ACCESSIONS

- American Place Names.* By GEORGE R. STEWART. New York: Oxford U. P., 1970. Pp. 550. \$12.50.
- Bagwell Anderson Mason, 1788-1853, His Family and Descendants.* By E. R. AND H. E. MASON. Cody, Wyo.: The Authors, 1966. Pp. 50.
- The Bainbridges of Missouri.* By STANLEY FLETCHER PAT- TEN. La Jolla: The Author. 1970. Pp. 18 and charts.
- Carville Tudor Chalk and His Descendants, 1784-1970.* By REGINA Evans. 1970. Pp. 100.
- Catalogue or Bibliography of the Library of the Huguenot Society of America.* By JULIA P. M. MORAND. 2nd ed., repr. Balti- more: Genealogical Publ. Co., 1971. Pp. 351. \$10.
- Coppernoll Family in America, 1659-1970.* By ARLENE C. CUBA. Baltimore: Author. 1970. Pp. 160.
- Davises and Donaldsons of Lawyers Hill.* By MARGARET LIV- INGSTON SHAABER. 3 parts. 1965-1966.
- Descendants of Isaac Van Tuyl, Sr., and Mary McCarter of Bernards Township, Somerset County, New Jersey.* By MARY E. S. BOW- MAN. Baltimore: Gateway Press, 1970. Pp. 90. \$7.50.
- DOTTEN (.10) Family in the U.S.A. and Canada (a Genealogical Compilation).* By WILLIAM L. DUTTON. Noroton, Conn. 1970. Pp. 288 plus index.
- Family Tree of Daniel Perry, 1704-1970.* By HUBERT L. PERRY. Caldwell, Texas: The Author. Pp. 219. \$10.00.
- Freeland Quarterly and Allied Families.* Hillsboro, N.C., 1970. \$2.50.
- Genealogical Dictionary of First Settlers of New England.* By JAMES SAVAGE. Baltimore: Genealogical Publ. Co. 1969. repr. 4 vols. with two suppl. \$50.00.
- A Genealogical Register of the First Settlers of New England.* repr. with additions and corrections by Samuel G. Drake. By JOHN FARMER. Baltimore: Genealogical Publ. Co., 1969. Pp. 351. \$12.50.
- Hart Genealogy, with Collateral Family Lines.* By OWEN S. HART. West Hartford, Conn., 1970. From the Author. Pp. 521. \$25.
- The History of Five Southern Families. A Genealogical and His- torical Account of the Evans, Kelly, Nash, Hendricks and Blankenship Families.* By ETHEL EVANS ALBERT. Balti- more: Gateway Press, 1970. Pp. 248. \$15.00.

- History of the Aydelott Family in the United States.* Privately pr. 1959. Pp. 100.
- History of the Early Settlement of Bridgewater in Plymouth County, Massachusetts, Including an Extensive Family Register.* By NAHUM MITCHELL. repr. Baltimore: Gateway Press, 1970. Pp. 424. \$10.
- Lanphere and Related Families Genealogy.* By E. E. LANPHERE. Rev. Ed. Chapel Hill: The Author. Pp. 175.
- Memoirs of the Jesse and Elizabeth Preble Family.* By Brigadier HARRY ULYAT. Baltimore, 1967. Privately pr. Unpaged.
- Marriage Records of San Joaquin County, California, August 1850-December 1865.* Stockton: San Joaquin Genealogical Soc. 1969. Pp. 65. \$5.00.
- Notices from the New Hampshire Gazette, 1765-1800.* By OTIS G. HAMMOND. Lambertville, N.J., 1970. Pp. 246. \$10.
- Parish Register Copies. Pt. 2. Other Than the Society of Genealogists Collection.* Chichester: Phillimore. 1971. Pp. xi, 51, \$1.50.
- Pioneers of Massachusetts.* By CHARLES HENRY POPE. repr. Baltimore: Genealogical Publ. Co. 1969. Pp. 549. \$15.
- Prominent Families in America with British Ancestry.* repr. N.Y.: London & Maxwell (British Book Center). 1971. Pp. 482. \$25.
- Ray's Index and Digest to Hathaway's North Carolina Historical and Genealogical Register, with Genealogical notes and annotations.* By WORTH S. RAY. repr. Baltimore: Genealogical Publ. Co. 1971. Pp. 192. \$8.50.
- Records of the Direct Family Lines of Ulric Hutton, 1855-1929 and Mary Brocke (Janney) Hutton, 1864-1947 to December 31, 1969.* Compiled by S. JANNEY HUTTON. West Grove, Pa.: Sidney B. Hutton. 1970. Pp. 100. \$3.00.
- Records of the District of West Augusta, Ohio County, and Yohogania County, Virginia.* (Minutes of the courts, 1775-1780.) By RICHARD W. LOVELESS. Columbus, Ohio: Ohio State Univ. Pr. Dept. 1970. Pp. 600.
- Topographical Dictionary of 2885 English Emigrants to New England 1620-1650.* By CHARLES EDWARD BANKS. Ed. by E. E. Brownell. repr. Baltimore: Genealogical Publ. Co., 1969. Pp. 295. \$10.
- Tracing Your Ancestors.* By ANTHONY J. CAMP. New Corr. ed. Baltimore: Genealogical Publ. Co., 1971. Pp. 78. \$3.50.
- Virginia County Records.* Vols. 1,9,10; n.s. 1. Ed. WILLIAM ARMSTRONG CROZIER. repr. Baltimore: Genealogical Publ. Co., 1971. 4 vols. \$15; \$8.50; \$7.50; \$7.50.

## REVIEWS OF RECENT BOOKS

*Thomas Jefferson and the New Nation: A Biography.* By Merrill D. Peterson. (New York: Oxford University Press, 1970. Pp. x, 1072. Illustrations, bibliography, index. \$15.)

Ten years ago, when Merrill D. Peterson published his Bancroft-Prize-winning study, *The Jefferson Image in the American Mind*, he immediately explained that he had written "not a book on the history Thomas Jefferson made but a book on what history made of Thomas Jefferson." Now in another monumental work he completes his story, for this is, he writes, "a history of Jefferson in the making of the new nation." The result, in more than a thousand pages of text, is the definitive one-volume biography of Jefferson for our generation.

Quite obviously Professor Peterson commands an unparalleled mastery of both the primary and secondary sources for an entire era of American history. His purpose has been dual: to unravel the personal history of an extraordinarily accomplished and enigmatic man, and to relate his long public career to the birth and coming of age of a revolutionary new nation. In a peculiar way Jefferson embodied the highest aspirations of the nation whose statement of independence he made world famous. Without compressing his thought into artificial molds, Peterson denotes three major themes in Jefferson's intellectual heritage: democracy, nationality, enlightenment. Peterson subtly traces these motifs throughout Jefferson's career, showing at each phase how he manifested the dominant characteristics of the nation and age.

By any reckoning Professor Peterson has undertaken a mammoth task, and by any reckoning he has succeeded magisterially. The detail and scope of information presented is sometimes staggering. For comparison, his sections on the 1790's and then the presidential years are longer than the respective volumes in the *New American Nation* series. I know of no account of the intellectual background of the revolutionary era better than Peterson's chapter, "Philosopher of Revolution." His sections on Jefferson's religious and educational theories, the *Notes on Virginia*, "Science and Politics," and "Founding the University" are no less brilliant. Jefferson's poignant stint as war-time Governor of Virginia, his exciting diplomatic jaunt in France, his disquieting service as Secretary of State and later Vice President, his triumphant first and disastrous second administration, his last years as the revered Sage of Monticello—all are illuminated by Peterson's eloquently interpretative prose. His analysis of Jefferson's productive diplomacy of caution prior to the Louisiana Purchase is convincing, as is his discussion of the theo-

retical defense and result of the Embargo. At every juncture Peterson is forthright and honest while sympathetic to Jefferson.

Some might wish Peterson had not ended so abruptly with Jefferson's death, and instead had briefly summarized his transcendent aspirations and achievements. Surely most will bemoan the inexcusable absence of footnotes—scholars especially may call Peterson remiss. But in doing so none should overlook the virtues of a magnificent work of scholarship. Everyone even pretending an interest in the period should read this imaginative re-creation of Thomas Jefferson and the new nation.

*Towson State College*

JOHN B. BOLES

*The Earl of Louisiana.* By A. J. Liebling, Foreword by T. Harry Williams. (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1970. Pp. 252, cloth \$5.95, paper \$2.45.)

A. J. Liebling first wrote the articles which make up the present volume in the *New Yorker* magazine. They were first published in book form in the early 1960's. LSU Press has now re-issued the volume with a foreword by T. Harry Williams. Although Earl K. Long, brother of Huey, occupied the Governor's mansion three times, the volume under review covers the last years of Earl's life. Liebling has done a magnificent job.

*The Earl of Louisiana* is a delicious little book. Earl K. Long had all the attributes from which folk heroes are made. A. J. Liebling has written a classic volume documenting that fact. Documentation in the form of footnotes and bibliography is absent but the "gut" reaction of a first rate journalist makes up that discrepancy (if it is one). For the sheer flavor of Louisiana politics during the last days of Earl Long this volume will probably never be surpassed. Undoubtedly others will write learned tracts on the Earl K. Long years, but the flavor of Earl's brand of Longism will not be explained by the fact that Earl was responsible for black teachers earning the same amount of money as their white counterparts with equal qualifications. This will illustrate the policy of Earl on race, but Liebling in *The Earl of Louisiana* does so much better by quoting an exchange between Earl and a segregationist State Senator concerning the purging of black voters from the registration roles. In the discussion Earl mentioned that when the voters were purged the state senator would go back home "get up on his front porch, take off his shoes, wash his feet, look at the moon and get close to God. . . . And when you [the senator] do, you got to recognize that niggers is human beings." No amount of scholarly prose can say it better.

Earl's sloppy dressing appealed to the voters and could be used against political opponents such as Chep Morrison, smooth urbane Mayor of New Orleans. Earl would snap his suspenders and maintain that Morrison wore fifty dollar neckties and four hundred dollar suits. The voters got the message just as they did when Earl splashed Coke on himself after a stump speech in the hot Louisiana sun.

Liebling came to Louisiana to write about a man who had been elected in the first primary in 1956 but by 1960 had had a well publicized nervous collapse, talked his way out of a Texas mental institution, and finally managed to restore himself to the Governor's mansion. Under the clown and buffoon Liebling perceptively saw that the Longs were the closest item to genuine liberals existing in the state. Evidently he was more perceptive than many of the "better sort" in the state. They hung their heads in shame while their Governor made the front pages with his antics on a wild trip through the western states and into Mexico.

Liebling has furnished those who detested Earl with plenty of material to bequeath to their heirs. For those who enjoyed Earl's antics and agreed with his policy, Liebling has written the book which will be read over and over for the flavor of a past era.

If a reviewer may state as well as have prejudice, this reviewer remembers the first vote he ever cast for Governor in the State of Louisiana—that vote was cast for Earl K. Long. During Earl's troubles his antics were deplored but since his death a yearning for good old-fashioned political entertainment has existed. Campaigns since Earl's death have centered more on who got the block vote (a code term for Negro vote), and hate has taken the place of snapping suspenders and coke refreshing. Both Earl K. Long and A. J. Liebling recognized that substance is more important than semblance.

*The University of Southwestern Louisiana* ALLEN E. BEGNAUD

*Thurlow Weed: Wizard of the Lobby.* By Glyndon G. Van Deusen.  
(New York: DaCapo Press, 1969. Pp. xiv, 403. \$15.00.)

That this biography has been included in the DaCapo Press reprint series entitled, *The American Scene: Comments and Commentators*, seems to indicate that Mr. Van Deusen's work has withstood the test of time. No other author has seen fit to expand upon or duplicate Mr. Van Deusen's work which was first published twenty-three years ago.

Any single volume biography which treats with a figure of the stature of Thurlow Weed must, of necessity, eliminate some of the

minutia of the man's career. This book is no exception.

Weed's personal relationship with (as opposed to his political influence on) William H. Seward, is not described in as much detail as one may have desired. The same may be said about his grief at the dissolution of the "partnership" with Horace Greeley and the effectiveness of the Weed headquarters at the Astor in New York. Judging from the great wealth of manuscript material, in addition to numerous newspapers and secondary sources, one can only conclude that Mr. Van Deusen was faced with such a mass of material that it was impossible to cover in detail every aspect of Weed's long and active career.

It seems to me that Professor Van Deusen has described fairly and accurately all of the major events in Weed's life. In this biography we see Weed as a journalist, politician (without doubt his favorite occupation and the one he did best), humanitarian, patriot and fortune hunter. The author praises Weed when he has done a good deed or acted in the best interests of his fellow man and criticizes him when he has done differently.

While one usually expects the author of a biography to keep historical perspective in mind, I feel Professor Van Deusen has done a very good job of setting the scene for each chapter in a short introductory paragraph or two.

One very minor technical flaw exists in the book and one wonders why it was not corrected in this reprint. In giving chapter numbers for the footnotes, the first seventeen numbers are spelled out, whereas the last four are given in Roman numerals. To have corrected this would certainly not have been difficult.

Because Weed played so large a role in American politics in the nineteenth century (he was intimately involved in the formation of the Whig and Republican Parties, as well as the Union Party during the Civil War) one cannot completely interpret the history of that era without understanding Thurlow Weed. Professor Van Deusen's biography of the "Wizard of the Lobby" makes it possible for us to understand Weed. Hence, it must be considered a significant contribution to the historical literature of American nineteenth century political history.

*Marine Historical Association*

CHARLES R. SCHULTZ

*A Documentary History of the Union Trust Company of Maryland, Baltimore, and Its Predecessor Institutions, Bank of Baltimore and the National Bank of Baltimore: 1795-1969.* By Elliott T. Cooper. (Baltimore: The Union Trust Company of Baltimore, 1970. Pp. x, 281.)

This book presents a dilemma to the serious scholar. To judge it by critical standards seems unfair in the face of the modest objectives clearly set forth in the preface. Yet to praise it would be to endorse objectives which are far too limited. Claiming to be a documentary history, it is rather a chronological catalogue of events in the bank's development presented largely by paraphrasing and excerpting the minutes of the boards of directors and the executive committees, with a few documents reproduced *in toto*. In this manner the superficial workings of the institution are traced from the chartering of the Bank of Baltimore in 1795 to its conversion in 1865 to the National Bank of Baltimore and finally in 1900 to its merger with the Union Trust Company. An impersonal chronicle that stays on the surface of events, it moves evenly and rapidly from the elections of officers and directors to the appointment of lesser employees, the payment of dividends, mergers with other banks, opening of branches and the fluctuations of deposits. There is no attempt to analyze or evaluate the significance of any of this, as though the publication of undigested data on a fairly important institution is a justifiable end in itself. An attempt to give historical flavor merely results in such meaningless juxtapositions as the reporting of a birthday gift of flowers to an official of the bank and the election of Franklin D. Roosevelt to a third term. Neil Armstrong walks on the moon and in the next paragraph a new chairman of the board is elected.

The Union Trust Company was the third largest commercial bank in Maryland in 1969 and the eighth oldest in operation in the United States. Surely its tale is worthy of a more serious examination that would seek not only to examine more closely the bank's problems but also to relate its internal affairs to the economic development of Baltimore as well as the economic trends in the nation at large. Instead, what we have is a patently amateurish job with neither popular nor scholarly appeal.

Columbia University

ELEANOR S. BRUCHEY

*Guide to the Microfilm Edition of James Monroe Papers in Virginia Repositories.* Number 7 of the Microfilm Publications of the University of Virginia Library. Edited by Curtis W. Garrison with assistant editor David L. Thomas. (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Library, 1969. Pp. 86.)

Though a successful member of the Virginia dynasty, James Monroe has been a strangely neglected leader. The last collection of his writings, edited by Stanislaus Murray Hamilton, appeared in 1900. Though a new study by Harry Ammon, *James Monroe, the*

*Quest for National Identity* is forthcoming, the only two previous biographical works by Styron and Cresson appeared over twenty years ago. Even the *Autobiography of James Monroe*, edited by Stuart G. Brown and Donald G. Baker in 1959, closes in 1807. Consequently this microfilm edition of *James Monroe Papers in Virginia Repositories* is a welcome addition and needed complement to the microfilm collection of the Library of Congress.

Initiated by the late John Cook Wylie, Director of Libraries of the University of Virginia and completed by co-director Anne Freudenberg, the project was supported by a grant from the National Historical Publications Commission. Collected in this microfilm edition are Monroe materials from the State Archives, the Earl Gregg Swem Library of William and Mary, the Virginia Historical Society, the James Monroe Memorial Museum and Library at Fredericksburg, the University of Virginia Library, county court house records and documents from private owners and organizations.

Citing as their objective the collection of manuscripts from Monroe's early life and career in public service, particularly in Virginia, the editors evaluate the results as "unequal and unexpected." Particularly full are the records of Monroe as Governor, 1799-1802 and January-April, 1811. Described in the accompanying roll notes are Monroe's response to the slave insurrection of 1800, his difficulties in procuring supplies and staff for the militia, and his decisions on internal improvements. While the records and correspondence of Monroe's early years are cited as "uneven," the editors conclude: "These letters probably illustrate Monroe, the man, his problems, his family, his ideas and life, and his financial and business holdings as well or perhaps better than any comparable body of material."

In addition to the introduction, excellent index and roll notes, the editors have included a Monroe chronology and a genealogy compiled by George H. S. King.

Georgetown University

DOROTHY M. BROWN

*Guide to the Microfilm Edition of the Thomas Penn Papers.* By Nicholas Wainwright. (Historical Society of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia, 1970. Pp. 16.) *Guide to the Microfilm Edition of the Stevens Family Papers.* Ed. by M. V. Studley, C. F. Cummings and T. J. Krom. (New Jersey Historical Society, Newark, New Jersey. Pp. 32.)

These pamphlets are guides to be used with the microfilms. Both projects were sponsored by the National Historical Publications

Commission, and tribute for his help and advice is paid to its Assistant Executive Director Mr. Fred Shelley.

Thomas Penn born in Bristol, England, in 1701/2, was the son of Hannah Callowhill, William Penn's second wife. He and his brothers, John and Richard, inherited the proprietorship of Pennsylvania. Thomas came to Philadelphia in 1732 and returned to England in 1741, where he spent the rest of his life until his death in 1775. Most of the thousands of documents deal almost entirely with Pennsylvania, and through the correspondence an entirely different image of Penn is seen. He was regarded as narrow-minded, covetous, and interested only in himself (a picture mostly coming from the Quaker Party); but he strongly opposed the Stamp Act, and the papers show he was a powerful force affecting the Colonial history of Pennsylvania. The complete film is in 10 rolls, costing \$100. The pamphlet is included in this cost.

The Stevens Family Papers are of paramount importance in the study of American Colonial and Revolutionary history. The papers date from 1664 to recent times, starting with those of the influential Honorable John Stevens (1716-1792). The papers are in three main groups: manuscripts and related materials of the Stevens family; papers of the Hoboken Land and Improvement Society, a Stevens family corporation; and the papers collected or prepared by Colonel Basil M. Stevens. As would be expected there is a considerable body of material which refers to New York, particularly relating to the New York-New Jersey Boundary Dispute. The complete film is in 46 rolls, costing \$460. The pamphlet is included at cost, or can be bought separately for \$1.

*Maryland Historical Society*

P. W. FILBY

*A Canoe Voyage up the Minnay Sotor: With an Account of the Lead and Copper Deposits in Wisconsin; of Gold Regions in the Cherokee Country; and Sketches of Popular Manners.* By George W. Featherstonhaugh. With an Introduction by William E. Lass. (St. Paul: Minnesota Historical Society, 1970. Illustrations, photographs, maps, index. \$20.00.)

George Featherstonhaugh's *A Canoe Voyage up the Minnay Sotor* first appeared in England in 1847. The reprint edition, published by the Minnesota Historical Society, is a welcomed addition to the increasing number of travel accounts written by early nineteenth century foreign visitors which are now readily available to both the historian and the general reader. Featherstonhaugh, an Englishman, was not as well known as some of his fellow-countrymen who visited

the United States, but his impressions were equally perceptive and deserve greater attention than they have been given.

A geologist by profession, Featherstonhaugh came to the United States in 1807. Changing his original plans to return to England, he married Sara Duane, the daughter of a wealthy New York landowner. Through his marriage he became friendly with many of New York's leading families. With their support, he became actively involved in the initial efforts to construct a railroad system in New York.

Featherstonhaugh left for England in 1827 but returned to the United States the next year. After his wife's death, he moved to Philadelphia where he wrote and lectured. For a short time he edited the *Monthly American Journal*, a scientific publication devoted to advancing new developments in the field of geology. Although the journal failed, Featherstonbaugh's work was not all in vain. He attracted the attention of several influential politicians who were anxious to determine the potential mineral wealth of vast sections of the country which were still unexplored. Foremost in this group was Lieutenant Colonel John J. Albert, Chief of the Bureau of Topographical Engineers in the War Department. Albert had been using his position to convince Congress that it could and should sponsor geological surveys of the West. In 1834 he succeeded in obtaining the necessary appropriations.

Through his friendship with Albert, Featherstonhaugh became the first geologist to be employed by the United States government. In this capacity he made three separate expeditions between 1834 and 1837 into the interior of the United States. The first trip, a geological reconnaissance of the Ozarks, took him through Missouri, Arkansas, and Texas. In addition to his official report, he published in 1844 his observations in a two-volume literary edition entitled *Excursions Through the Slave States*.

*A Canoe Voyage up the Minnay Sotor* combines observations made by Featherstonhaugh on the other two expeditions he undertook for the government. In July 1835 he left Washington, D.C. traveling by canal boat and stagecoach through Maryland and Pennsylvania to Cleveland, Ohio. There he boarded a lake steamer for Mackinac. At Green Bay he purchased supplies and, following the route of Marquette and Joliet, he crossed Wisconsin to Fort Snelling, Minnesota. From Fort Snelling he proceeded up the Minnesota River to Coteau des Prairies, "the ridge that separates the watersheds of the Missouri and Minnesota rivers" (xxii). Returning to Fort Snelling, he proceeded by canoe to Galena, Illinois, where he boarded a steamboat for St. Louis. He arrived in Washington, D.C. in November 1835.

Featherstonhaugh began his third expedition in 1837. Again, he traveled west through Illinois and southwest Wisconsin. With brief stops at Galena, Prairie du Chien, and St. Louis he descended the Mississippi, headed for the Cherokee country in northwestern Georgia. He spent most of July and August in Tennessee, Georgia, and western Carolinas. When his work was completed, he returned to Washington by way of South Carolina.

Like a few other English visitors, Featherstonhaugh's impressions of early nineteenth century America were not always flattering. He was, as William Lass noted in his excellent Introduction, "repelled by what he derisively referred to as the 'Republican America' of the Jacksonian era with its mass democracy and cultural backwardness" (xvii). Influenced by his Tory prejudices, Featherstonhaugh felt the "sovereign people" were unfit to rule. In one particularly revealing passage he expressed his opinion on the American commitment to frequent elections, universal suffrage and equality.

The first [frequent elections] are constantly throwing all those who ought to be engaged in industrious pursuits into a frenzied agitation for or against men and measures they know nothing about; the second [universal suffrage] gives to the legionary idle, depraved, lawless scoundrels, the precious privileges that can only be safely confided to those comparatively few intelligent members of society who have a personal interest in maintaining order and good government; and the last [equality] only provoke them to offer every sort of insult and hindrance to those whom they perceive are not of their class. (2: 347)

Although Featherstonhaugh's descriptions of American life—travel, food, housing, and particularly frontiersmen—were often accurate, he made clear his disdain for people willing to live under such circumstances. He was repulsed by their "all-absorbing passion for money" (2: 97), their crudeness and vulgarity, their use of tobacco, and their drunkenness and obscenity. In his opinion, many frontiersmen were "scarce above the level of savages, either in manner or appearance" (2: 173). Obviously, Featherstonhaugh did not hold such a low opinion of all Americans. He greatly admired the "real gentry"—the wealthy and influential—and frequently went out of his way to establish contacts with them.

Some of Featherstonhaugh's most interesting observations concern the Indians. Although his views were often sympathetic, he recognized that the decline of the Indian was an inevitable consequence of the white man's advance. He vividly described the squalor and wretchedness in which Indians lived, placing much of the blame for these conditions on the whites. But as Lass suggests, he is also

critical of the Indians' short-sightedness in becoming too dependent upon traders.

Reading *A Canoe Voyage* is a rewarding experience. The book is well written, humorous and a valuable source for historical information. The editing job is excellent, and the Introduction by William E. Lass is exceptionally well done.

*University of Maryland*

RICHARD T. FARRELL

*The Church of the Brethren Past and Present.* Edited by Donald F. Durnbaugh. (Elgin, Illinois: The Brethren Press, 1971. Pp. 182. \$3.95.)

This volume of nine essays by eight different Church of the Brethren scholars is an excellent introduction to the history, beliefs, practices, and customs of that church. The editor, who is Professor of Church History at Bethany Theological Seminary, has contributed two chapters on the history of the church. He explains that Brethrenism roots in the radical pietist movement which was prevalent in Germany in the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries. Radical pietists were protestants, generally of Lutheran and Reformed background, who were dissatisfied with the "decadence of the institutionalized churches of their day" and who sought to establish a New Testament type church. Brethren historians date the German origin of their church from 1708; it was established in Pennsylvania in 1719. Throughout history the Brethren have been known by a variety of names including Brethren, New Baptists, German Baptists, and Dunkers. The official name, Church of the Brethren, was adopted in 1908.

The chapters on doctrine, polity, and liturgy discuss different emphases of the church. It is noted that the Church of the Brethren subscribes to no formal creedal statement. Professor Vernard Eller of La Verne College in California claims that "Brethren never have shown much interest in theologizing." Their central factor has been "a commitment to follow Christ." Certain distinctive features of Brethrenism, however, include trine immersion, observance of the love feast and feet washing, pacifism, and open membership. W. Dale Brown, Professor of Theology at Bethany Theological Seminary, explains that Brethren have been Protestant "in emphasizing baptism and the love feast" but "they have been similar to the Roman Catholics in adopting" such practices as "anointing and the laying on of hands."

During the last seventy-five years the church has placed greater emphasis on education, publication, mission activities, and ecumenism than it had in former years. The Brethren have also been

active in relief work in war torn areas, in regions devastated by the forces of nature, and in service to migrant workers and other disadvantaged groups. The statistical information included in the appendix will indicate the extent of the educational, mission, and benevolent programs of this denomination of approximately 211,000 persons.

Although all of the authors represented in this volume are members of the Church of the Brethren, no claim is made that what they have written should be interpreted as "official or authorized denominational statements." They have written as individuals, not as church officials, and each has expressed only his personal opinion. Despite the fact that there is some overlapping of information in a few of the chapters, this is a commendable collection. The items are free from partisan denominational flag waving. The contributors have written with restraint and judgement and with a concern for the facts—traits not always found in essays pertaining to church or to secular history.

*University of Richmond*

W. HARRISON DANIEL

*Trail of Samuel Chase.* (New York: Da Capo Press, 1970, Vol. I, Pp. 387; Vol. II, Pp. 495. Appendix. \$35.00.)

Da Capo Press' release of the two volume edition of the *Trial of Samuel Chase* coincides with a renewed interest in the use of impeachment as a political weapon. Justice Chase is the only Supreme Court Justice ever to have been impeached, and his trial constitutes the primary precedent for any similar arraignment. Since many of the same men who advocated and judged the various theories of impeachment recorded in the transcript of this trial had also written the Constitution, it further serves as an excellent source for students of constitutional law and history.

Samuel Chase, an aggressive, belligerent man, had been a member of the Continental Congress, had signed the Declaration of Independence, and had fought in the Revolutionary War. In 1791, while Chase was serving as Chief Justice of the state of Maryland, President George Washington appointed him to the nation's highest court. Like many other Federalists, Chase became alarmed at the growing threat of the Republican Party, and when Thomas Jefferson won the Presidency in 1800, Chase believed that the United States was on the verge of anarchy.

Although the Republicans had gained control of the executive and legislative branches, it was impossible for them to capture the judiciary. Before relinquishing his office, President John Adams, knowing that the Constitution guaranteed life tenure to his ap-

pointees, had packed the courts with Federalist judges. By initiating the concept of judicial review in *Marbury vs Madison* (1802), Chief Justice John Marshall further angered the Republicans since the nascent political party faced the possibility that Federalist judges would declare all of their legislation unconstitutional.

Protected by these legal guarantees, the ruddy-faced Chase dedicated himself to the task of thwarting Republican reforms and securing convictions of persons that he believed had violated the Alien and Sedition Acts. He promoted the selection of partisan jurors, intimidated defense counsel, and presented his personal political philosophy from the bench. The most stringent deviation from judicial ethics came while Chase was presiding over a grand jury in Baltimore, Maryland, in May, 1803. The jury, mostly farmers anxious to return to their work, said they could find no evidence which merited an indictment. They asked to be released, but Justice Chase was so angry that he refused to excuse them. Instead he subjected them to a furious tirade in which he attacked the idea of universal suffrage and asserted that the new government was undermining the freedom of the nation by flouting the law and by prohibiting the administration of justice.

The infuriated Republicans, led by the vitriolic John Randolph, incorporated these abuses into eight articles of impeachment. Since Randolph wanted a political weapon which could eventually be directed against the entire judiciary, he based one article on the fact that Chase had committed an unintentional error. If in the future a judge could be impeached for mere error of opinion, the Republican Party could hope to assume speedy control of all three branches of government.

The struggle to control the federal judiciary reached its apex during the impeachment trial of Justice Chase in 1805. From a description of the elaborately decorated Senate Chamber to the recording of the statement of acquittal, these books provide an accurate transcript of the proceedings of this momentous occasion. The Republican managers, being better politicians than lawyers, became immersed in complicated points of law and failed to elicit damaging testimony from their witnesses. On the other hand Luther Martin, Attorney General for the state of Maryland, presented a superb defense. Martin argued that a justice could be impeached only when he committed a crime which related directly to his office, explaining that a judge might be indicted for assault, but that this did not mean he could be impeached. Another of Chase's lawyers, Joseph Hopkinson, argued that when the Constitution provided that a judge could be impeached for high crimes and misdemeanors, it meant high crimes and high misdemeanors, and misdemeanor

used in its technical and legal sense included only offenses indictable by law.

By acquitting Justice Chase of the charges exhibited against him by the House of Representatives, the Senate discovered that impeachment was too cumbersome a procedure to be an effective political weapon. By giving high crimes and misdemeanors a legalistic interpretation, the Senate eliminated removal from office for error of opinion, inability, or lack of tact. The trial of Justice Chase is one of the cornerstones of our independent judiciary, and since these volumes are an unabridged republication of the first edition printed in Washington, D.C. in 1805, libraries would be well advised to obtain this record of its proceedings.

*University of Houston*

CLARE LYNN DUSEK

*Aboard the USS Florida: 1863-65.* Edited by Robert W. Daly. (Annapolis: U.S. Naval Institute, 1970. Pp. 252. \$13.00.)

To read this volume is like peering into a camera obscura focused on events taking place a century and more ago. Revealed with extreme clarity is a way of life aboard a naval blockading ship and ashore during the Civil War period of 1863-65. The second of the Naval letters series of the U. S. Naval Institute, this is a continuation of letters written by William F. Keeler to his wife while he served as Paymaster of the USS *Florida*. The first of that series consisted of letters written while he was aboard the USS *Monitor*.

Keeler was a businessman from LaSalle, Illinois, who volunteered for duty in 1861 and was assigned to the *Monitor* the following year. He was on that ironclad during her engagement with the CSS *Virginia* and when she foundered off the North Carolina coast. Shortly thereafter he was assigned to the USS *Florida* on which he was to serve primarily off the North Carolina coast to prevent blockade runners from England, Bermuda, and the West Indies from entering Wilmington with goods useful to the Confederacy and to try to keep them from departing with cotton cargoes. Some exciting chases and ransacking of the runners are brought out in the letters.

Attached to home and family but patriotic and determined to assist the Union, he retained his family ties through his faithful correspondence with his wife Anna. Most servicemen keep in touch with home through the mails. But apparently few have ever been as consistent in writing or as observant of their surroundings as Keeler. He would inform his wife of all his vessel's movements and activities. Under his scrutiny came the various personalities on his ship, its operation, descriptions of his visits ashore, and his opinions

on how the war was being misconducted. It is fortunate that censorship of mails was not in vogue while he was writing.

As the letters were edited for this book by Professor Robert W. Daly, U. S. Naval Academy, only the repetitious and intimate material was deleted. Keeler's spelling and grammar were retained and the solid pages of script broken into paragraphs. As a result the reader does not feel he is invading Keeler's privacy but instead is being enlightened by his first-hand observations.

The letters reveal much interesting information about the blockade not found in other sources. And human interest sidelights are brought out as Keeler asked his wife the sizes of her shoes, gloves, and hat so that when a blockade runner was plundered he could select the proper items from her cargo and send them home. He sent blankets, bolts of cloth and sewing articles, all booty from captured ships.

The only intrusion of the editor was to clarify or comment upon various statements made by Keeler. The comments directly follow the letters referred to so that there is no interruption in the reader's thoughts.

It is most fortunate that these letters were preserved by members of Keeler's family for over a century and the U. S. Naval Institute should be commended for publishing them in this handsomely printed volume.

*The Mariners Museum*

ROBERT H. BURGESS

## NOTES AND QUERIES

The Maryland Historical Society takes pleasure in announcing that it will be American distributor for a new book *Bermuda's Antique Furniture & Silver*, published by The Bermuda National Trust. The book was written by Bryden Bordley Hyde, A.I.A., of Baltimore, Past Vice President of the Society, whose wife Diana was born in Bermuda and is now on our Council. Her father, Sir Allan Smith, spoke to the Society upon the 350th anniversary of Bermuda, 1962. The book was written in memory of Sir Allan's mother, the late Mrs. Allan Frith Smith (1870-1964), a President of the Bermuda Historical Society. The book, with a 27 page introduction plus 198 pages of text and 460 illustrations, is the first comprehensive study of Bermudian furniture and silver and the craftsmen who made it (1612-1830). Bermuda was settled by the Virginia Company of London in 1612 and was our (600 mile) off-shore sister colony under British rule.

The book will be available in the fall at \$15.00 per copy.

### Information wanted:

On the participation of Blacks in the Oyster Industry of Maryland in the 19th and 20th Centuries and general sources on the Blacks of Worcester County.

Robert L. Schuyler  
Department of Anthropology  
City College  
New York, New York 10031

### Information needed:

Mrs. William Oscar Richey, Box 291, Boyce, Louisiana 71409: Desires the names of antecedents and descendants of Judge Jeremiah Williams, Calvert County, Maryland before and after 1668. Wife, children, dates of births, places, death and marriage dates. Parents of Beal Baker, born 9 February 1756 Baltimore County, Maryland. Rev. Soldier, died 31 August 1842 Hall County, Georgia.

The Eleutherian Mills Historical Library, Greenville, Delaware, will sponsor its fourth annual fall conference October 29, 1971, entitled "Patterns of Urban Interaction: the Philadelphia Area in the Nineteenth Century." Speakers will be Dr. Carol E. Hoffecker of the University of Delaware and Eleutherian Mills-Hagley Foundation, Dr. John Modell of the University of Minnesota and Mr. Robert Douglass of the University of Pennsylvania. For further information or to be placed on the conference mailing list write Regional Conference, Eleutherian Mills Historical Library, Greenville, Delaware 19807.

The Pennsylvania State University, with the endorsement of the National Historical Publications Commission, has undertaken the task of collecting, editing and publishing a selective edition of the Papers of Martin Van Buren. The headquarters for the Project is at the Ogontz Campus of the University in Abington, Pennsylvania, located within a few miles of Philadelphia. The Editor, Professor Walter L. Ferree, and his Advisory Board indicate that the Papers will be issued by series, one tentatively labeled Formal Writings, and the other Correspondence. The present plan calls for the issuing of an annotated edition of Van Buren's Autobiography as the initial volume of the first series. The Publishing will be done by the Pennsylvania State University Press.

The editors and staff of the Van Buren Papers are requesting information leading to the location of documents and any available financial assistance for the project. Information can be sent to: The Papers of Martin Van Buren, C/O Dr. Walter L. Ferree, The Pennsylvania State University. The Ogontz Campus, 1600 Woodland Road, Abington, Pennsylvania, 19001.

Cover: A view of the Bombardment of Fort McHenry. Aquatint by John Bower, *Maryland Historical Society*.

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