

Domestic.

OFFICIAL.

Copy of a letter from Lt. Col. Croghan to the Secretary of War, dated...

Sir—We left Fort Gratiot (head of the Straits St. Clair) on the 12th ult. and imagined that we should arrive in a few days at Malabash Bay. At the end of a week, however, the commodore from the want of pilots acquainted with that unfrequented part of the lake, despaired of being able to find a passage through the island into the bay; and made for St. Joseph's, where he anchored on the 20th day of July. After setting fire to the Ft. of St. Joseph, which seemed not to have been recently occupied, a detachment of infantry and artillery, under Major Holmes, was ordered to Sault St. Mary's, for the purpose of breaking up the enemy's establishment at that place. For particulars relative to the execution of this order, I beg leave to refer you to Major Holmes' report herewith enclosed. Finding on my arrival at Michilimackinac, on the 26th ult. that the enemy had strongly fortified the height overlooking the old Fort of Mackinac, I at once despaired of being able with my small force, to carry the place by storm, and determined, (as the only course remaining) on landing and establishing myself on some favorable position, whence I could be enabled to annoy the enemy by gradual and slow approaches, under cover of my artillery, in which I should have the superiority in point of metal. I was urged to adopt this step by another reason, not a little cogent: could a position be taken and fortified on the Island, I was well aware that it would either induce the enemy to attack me in my strong holds, or force his Indians and Canadians (his most efficient, and only disposable force) off the island, as they would be very unwilling to remain in my neighborhood after a permanent footing had been taken. On enquiry, I learned from individuals who had lived many years on the Island, that a position desirable as I might wish, could be found on the west end, and therefore immediately made arrangements for disembarking. A landing was effected on the 4th inst. under cover of the guns of the shipping, and the line being quickly formed, had advanced to the edge of the field spoken of for a camp, when intelligence was conveyed to me, that the enemy was ahead, and a few seconds more bro't us a fire from his battery, of 4 pieces firing shot and shells. After reconnoitering his position, which was well selected; his line reaching along the edge of the woods, at the further extremity of the field and covered by a temporary breastwork; I determined on changing my position, (which was now two lines, the militia forming the front) by advancing Major Holmes' battalion of regulars on the right of the militia, thus to outflank him, and by a vigorous effort to gain his rear. This movement was immediately ordered, but before it could be executed, a fire was opened by some Indians posted in a thick wood near our right, which proved fatal to Major Holmes and severely wounded Capt. Desha, [the next officer in rank.] This unlucky fire, by depriving us of the services of our most valuable officers, threw that part of the line into confusion from which the best exertions of the officers were not able to recover it. Finding it impossible to gain the enemy's left, owing to the impenetrable thickness of the woods, a charge was ordered to be made by the regulars immediately against the front. This charge altho' made in some confusion, served to drive the enemy back into the woods, from whence an annoying fire was kept up by the Indians.

Lieut. Morgan was ordered up with a light piece to assist the left, now particularly galled; the excellent practice of this piece bro't the enemy to fire at a longer distance. Discovering that this position, from whence the enemy had just been driven, (and which had been represented to me as so high and commanding) was by no means tenable, from being interspersed with thickets, and intersected in every way by ravines; I determined not longer to expose my force to the fire of an enemy deriving every advantage which could be obtained from numbers and a knowledge of the position, and therefore ordered an immediate retreat towards the shipping.

This affair, which has cost us many valuable lives, leaves us to lament the fall of that gallant officer Maj. Holmes, whose character is so well known to the War Department. Capt. Vankorn, of the 10th infantry, and Lt. Jackson of the 24th infantry, both brave intrepid young men, fell mortally wounded at the head of their respective commands. The conduct of all my officers on this occasion merits my approbation. Capt. Desha of the 24th infantry, altho' severely wounded continued with his command until forced to retire from faintness thro' loss of blood. Capt. Saunders, Hawkins and Sturgis, with every subaltern of that battalion, acted in the most exemplary manner. Ensign Bryan, 2d rifle regt. acting adjutant to the battalion, actively forwarded the wishes of the commanding officer. Lieuts. Aickman, 28th infantry, and Hyde of the U. S. marines, who commanded the reserve, claim my particular thanks for their activity in keeping that command in readiness to meet any exigency. I have before mentioned Lt. Morgan's activity; his two assistants, Lt. Pickett and Mr. Peters, conductor of artillery, also merit the name of good officers.

The militia were wanting in no part of their duty. Col. Colgrave, his officers and soldiers, deserve the warmest approbation. My Acting Assistant Adjutant Gen. Capt. N. H.

Moore, 28th infantry; with volunteer Adj. M'Comb, were prompt in delivering my orders. Capt. Gratiot of the engineers, who volunteered his services as Adjutant on the occasion, gave me valuable assistance.

On the morning of the 5th, I sent a flag to the enemy, to enquire into the state of the wounded (two in number) who were left on the field, and to request permission to bring away the body of Maj. Holmes, which was also left, owing to the unpardonable neglect of the soldiers in whose hands he was placed. I am happy in assuring you, that the body of Maj. Holmes is secured, and will be buried at Detroit with becoming honor.

I shall discharge the militia to-morrow, and will send them down, together with two regular companies to Detroit. With the remaining three companies I shall attempt to destroy the enemy's establishment in the head of Nawawasa-ga river, and if it be thought proper, erect a post at the mouth of that river.

Very respectfully, I have the honor to remain, sir, your obt' serv't.

G. CROGHAN, Lt. Col, 2d Rifle Regt. Hon. J. ARMSTRONG, Sec'y of War.

Copy of a letter from Lieut. Col. Croghan to Brig. Gen. M'Arthur, commanding 8th Military District, dated

Detroit, August 23, 1814.

DEAR SIR—I communicated in my report of the 11th inst. my intention of continuing on lake Huron with three companies, for the purpose of breaking up any depots which the enemy might have on the east side of the lake.

We were fortunate in learning that the only line of communication from York to Mackinaw, &c. was by the way of Lake Simcoe and Nautauwasaga river, which empties into lake Huron about 100 miles S. E. of Cabot's Head. To that river, therefore, our course was directed, in hope of finding the enemy's schr. Nancy, which was thought to be in that quarter. On the 13th inst. the fleet anchored off the mouth of that river, and my troops were quickly disembarked on the peninsula formed between the river and lake for the purpose of fixing a camp.

On reconnoitering the position thus taken, it was discovered that the schooner Nancy was drawn up in the river a few hundred yards above us, under cover of a block-house, erected on a commanding situation on the opposite shore.

Having landed with nothing larger than 4-pounders, and it being now too late in the evening to establish a battery of heavy guns, I determined on remaining silent until I could be able to open with effect.

On the following morning a fire for a few minutes was kept up by the shipping upon the block-house, but with little effect, as the direction towards it only could be given, a thin wood intervening to obscure the view. About 12 o'clock two howitzers (an 8-2 and 5-2 inch) being placed within a few hundred yards of the block-house, commence a fire which lasted but a few minutes, when the house blew up; at the same time communicated the fire to the Nancy, which was quickly so enveloped in flames, as to render any attempts which might have been made to save her unavailing. My first impression on seeing the explosion was, that the enemy, after having spiked his guns, had set fire to the magazine himself; but upon examination it was found to have been occasioned by the bursting of one of our shells; which, firing some combustible matter near the magazine, gave the enemy but barely time to escape before the explosion took place. The Commodore secured and brought off the guns which were mounted within the block-house (two 24-pound carronades and one long 6-pounder), together with some round shot, grape and canister. The enemy will feel sensibly the loss of the Nancy, her cargo consisting (at the time of her being on fire) of several hundred barrels of provisions, intended as a six months supply for the garrison at Mackinac.

Having executed (so far as my force could effect) the orders of the 2d of June, given me by the Secretary of War, I left Nautauwasaga on the 15th, and arrived on the 21st at the mouth of the river St. Clair with my whole force except a few soldiers of the 17th infantry, who were left as marines on board two small vessels, which still continue to cruise on that lake.

I am, most respectfully, sir, your most obedient humble servant,

GEORGE CROGHAN, Lieut. Col. 2d Rifle Regt. Brig. Gen. D. McARTHUR, Commanding 8th Military District.

Extract of a letter from Com. Chauncey to the Secretary of the Navy, dated on board the U. S. ship Superior, off Kingston, Aug. 10, 1814.

"I have been duly honored with your letters of the 19th and 24th July.

"I do assure you, sir, that I have never been under any pledge to meet Gen. Brown at the head of the Lake; but on the contrary when we parted at Sackett's Harbor, I told him distinctly, that I should not visit the head of the lake, unless the enemy's fleet did.

"I can ascribe the intimation of Gen. Brown, that he expected the co-operation of the fleet to no other motive, than a cautious attempt to provide an apology for the public, against any contingent disaster to which his army might be exposed.

"But, sir, if any one will take the trouble to examine the topography of the peninsula,

(the ascent of the General's operations) he will discover that this fleet could be of no more service to Gen. Brown, or his army, than it could to an army in Tennessee.

"Gen. Brown has never been able to penetrate nearer to Lake Ontario than Queens-town, and the enemy is in possession of all the intermediate country; so that I could not even communicate with the army, but by a circuitous route of 70 or 80 miles.

"Admitting Gen. Brown could have invested Fort George, the only service he could have derived from the fleet would be our preventing the supplies of the enemy from entering the Niagara river; for the water is so shallow that the large vessels could not approach within two miles of their works.

"Gen. Brown had therefore two abundantly sufficient reasons for not expecting the co-operation of this fleet; it was not promised to him—and was chimerical in itself.

"My fixed determination has always been to seek a meeting with the enemy the moment the fleet was ready, and, to deprive him of an apology for not meeting me, I have sent 4 guns on shore from the Superior, to reduce her armament in number to an equality with the Prince Regent's, yielding the advantage of their 68 pounders. The Mohawk mounts two guns less than the Princess Charlotte, and the Montreal and Niagara are equal to the General Pike and Madison. I have detached, on separate service, all the brigs; and am blockading his four ships, in the hope that this may induce him to come out."

Nat. Int.

Copy of a letter from Major Gen. Brown to Commodore Chauncey.

Head-Quarters, Queenstown July 13th, 1814.

MY DEAR SIR—I arrived at this place on the 10th, as I assured you, that with the blessing of God I would. All accounts agree that the force of the enemy in Kingston is very light—meet me on the Lake shore, north of Fort George with your fleet and we will be able, I have no doubt, to settle a plan of operation that will break the power of the enemy in Upper Canada, and that in the course of a short time. At all events let me hear from you; I have looked for your fleet with the greatest anxiety since the 10th. I do not doubt my ability to meet the enemy in the field and to march in any direction over his country; your fleet carrying for me the necessary supplies. We can threaten Forts George and Niagara, and carry Burlington Heights and York, and proceed direct to Kingston and carry that place. For God's sake let me see you; Sir James will not fight, two of his vessels are now in Niagara River.

If you conclude to meet me at the head of the Lake and that immediately, have the goodness to bring the guns and troops that I have ordered from the Harbor; at all events have the politeness to let me know what aid I am to expect from the fleet of Lake Ontario.

There is not a doubt resting in my mind, but we have between us the command of sufficient means to conquer Upper Canada within two months, if there is a prompt and zealous co-operation and a vigorous application of these means; now is our time before the enemy can be greatly reinforced.

Yours truly, (Signed) JACOB BROWN.

Com. CHAUNCEY.

Copy of a letter from Commodore Chauncey to Maj. Gen. Brown, dated

U. S. S. Superior, off Kingston, August 10, 1814.

Sir—Your letter of the 13th ult. was received by me on a sick bed, hardly able to hear it read, and entirely unfitted to reply to it. I, however, requested Gen. Gaines to acquaint you with my situation, the probable time of the fleet's sailing, and my views of the extent of its co-operation with the army.

From the tenor of your letter, it would appear that you had calculated much upon the co-operation of the fleet. You cannot surely have forgotten the conversation we held on this subject at Sackett's Harbor, previous to your departure for Niagara. I then professed to feel it my duty as well as inclination to afford every assistance in my power to the army, and to co-operate with it whenever it could be done without losing sight of this great object, for the attainment of which this fleet had been created, to wit—the capture or destruction of the enemy's fleet; but I then distinctly stated to you, that this was a primary object, and would be first attempted: and that you must not expect the fleet at the head of the lake, unless that of the enemy should induce us to follow him there.

I will not suffer myself to believe that this conversation was misunderstood or has since been forgotten. How then shall I account for the intimation thrown out to the public in your despatch to the Secretary of War, that you expected the fleet to co-operate with you? Was it friendly, or just, or honorable, not only to furnish an opening for the public, but thus to assist them, to infer that I had pledged myself to meet you on a particular day, at the head of the Lake, for the purpose of co-operation? and in case of disaster to your army, thus to turn their resentment from you, who are alone responsible, upon me, who could not by any possibility have prevented or retarded even your discomfiture. You well know, sir, that the fleet could not have rendered you the least service during your late incursion upon Upper Canada. You have not been able to approach lake Ontario on any point nearer than Queenstown, and the enemy were then in possession of all the country between that place & shore of Ontario; so that I could not even communicate with you without making a circuit of 70 or 80 miles. I would ask, of what possible use the fleet could have been to you either in threatening or investing Fort George, when the shallowness of the water alone would pre-

vented an approach with these ships within two miles of that Fort or Niagara. To pretend that the fleet could render the least assistance in your projected capture of Burlington Heights, for it is well known the fleet could not approach within nine miles of those Heights.

That you might find the fleet somewhat of a convenience in the transportation of provisions and stores for the use of the army, and an agreeable appendage to attend its marches, but, sir, the Secretary of the Navy has honored us with a higher destiny—we are intended to seek and to fight the enemy's fleet. This is the great purpose of the government in creating this fleet; and I shall not be diverted in my efforts to effectuate it by any sinister attempt to render us subordinate to or an appendage of the army.

We have one common object in the annoyance, defeat and destruction of the enemy; and I shall always cheerfully unite with any military commander in the promotion of that object.

I am, sir, with great consideration and respect, your most obedient servant,

I. CHAUNCEY.

Maj. Gen. Jacob Brown.

CAPITULATION OF ALEXANDRIA.

In some animadversions on the proclamation of the President, we noticed the cruel and taunting reference which was made to the inhabitants of Alexandria. Whatever of degradation attaches to the terms to which the hapless citizens of that place were compelled to submit, must be considered by the reflecting part of the community as more justly applicable to the Executive of the United States than to the inhabitants of Alexandria, who had no possible means of resistance whatever measured the enemy chosen to pursue. The fort, which constituted the sole defence of the town, all its military population being absent, had been basely destroyed, and it is the extreme of cruelty to charge those with cowardly submission, who possessed no means of annoying the force which was suffered to advance against them.

We have just received the following official papers, which, in justice, to the Alexandrians, ought to receive general circulation. When quiet shall be restored to that unfortunate town, we understand a full justification of the conduct of its citizens will be given to the public. In the mean time it is hoped that all acrimonious reproach will be avoided by those, who, possessing better means of defence, have properly determined to resist a similar attack on their property and character.—Fed. Rep.

In the Common Council of Alexandria.

The following order was unanimously concurred in by the Common Council of Alexandria, 28th August 1814.

The forts erected for the defence of the district, having been blown up by our men, [United States regular troops] and abandoned without resistance, and the town of Alexandria having been left without troops or any means of defence against the hostile force now within sight, the common council of Alexandria have with reluctance been compelled from regard to the safety of the inhabitants to authorise an arrangement with the enemy, by which it has been stipulated that during their continuance before the town they shall not be molested—no superior power having on the emergency appeared to defend or direct—the common council has considered itself authorised from extreme necessity to make the above stipulation—they consider it binding on themselves and the nation, and require a faithful observance of it from all the inhabitants of the town.

Resolved, That copies of the above resolution be transmitted to bring Gen. Winder, of the 10th military district, and to Gens. Young and Hungerford, with the request of the common council, that proper measures may be used to secure a strict observance of the public faith which the common council has been compelled to pledge. THOS. HERBERT, Pres't. J. HIRD, clerk pro tem.

In Common Council of Alexandria.

Resolved, That the Common Council of Alexandria, in assenting to the conditions offered by the commander of the British squadron now off the town, has acted from the impulse of irresistible necessity, and solely from a regard to the welfare to the town—that it considers the assent by it given only formal, inasmuch as the enemy already had it in their power to enforce a compliance with their demand by a seizure of the property required from us; and believing the safety of the persons of the inhabitants, of their dwellings, and of such property as is not comprehended within the requisition to depend entirely on the observance of the terms of it, the common council recommends to the inhabitants an acquiescence, at the same time it does expressly disclaim the power of doing any act in its part to enforce compliance, its authority in this particular being limited to recommendation only.

At a meeting of the common council of the town of Alexandria on the 29th day of August, 1814—Present,

Thomas Herbert, President; Henry Nicholson, Andrew Fleming, James Millan, Bunker Johnston, Anthony Rhodes, John Hunter, Wm. Veitch, Ezra Kenzie, Robert I. Taylor, and John Gird.

The above resolution was unanimously adopted.—It was also resolved, that in the opinion of the council the loss to be sustained by the deprivations of the enemy by the inhabitants ought to be equalized; but the council does not consider itself as possessing the powers necessary to pass any law to that effect, nor does it consider the present as a proper time to act on this subject:—

Resolved, That if any plan can be devised by which the loss to be sustained by the inhabitants can be equalized, it will meet with the approbation of the council.

THOS. HERBERT, Pres't. W. VEITCH, Clerk pro temp.