

position on the crest of the sand hills about a hundred yards to the right of the route by which the column must pass. Their actions seemed so menacing to Heald that he rashly ordered his small body of infantry to move against them and expel them at the point of the bayonet. As the Indians showed no disposition to retire the soldiers fired a volley and charged. The Indians gave way in front but closed in upon their flanks and rear, delivering a deliberate and effective fire from the cover of thickets and hollows. In the course of fifteen minutes two-thirds of Heald's men were killed or wounded, his baggage train was captured, and the survivors forced to take refuge upon a mound in the adjacent prairie where they stood desperately at bay. They were not immediately pursued; but all the wounded men who were left behind and most of the women and children captured with the waggons were mercilessly slaughtered. Captain Wells was among the killed but his band of friendly Indians abstained from the contest and finally rode out of sight. Heald was badly wounded and the total destruction of his party could have been accomplished with ease. But instead of renewing the attack, the Indians assembled and held a consultation after which they signalled to him to come forward. Heald gallantly advanced alone and was met by Blackbird, a noted Ottawa chief, accompanied by a half-breed interpreter. After shaking hands Blackbird invited him to surrender promising that the prisoners should be well treated. As further resistance was evidently hopeless, Heald agreed to this proposal with little hesitation, although still doubtful of the Indians' sincerity. Thirty-eight men, of whom twenty-six were regular soldiers, two women and twelve children had already perished. Mrs. Heald and several other persons were suffering from wounds. After being disarmed the prisoners were marched back to the Indian camp where they were apportioned among the different bands. Next day Fort Dearborn was burnt and the Indians dispersed to their respective villages. Heald and his wife were taken to the Ottawa village near the mouth of the River St. Joseph where they were allowed to reside at the house of Benoit, a French Canadian trader. A few days later many of the warriors marched away to besiege Fort Wayne and Heald took advantage of their absence to induce a Canadinn to take them in his boat to Mackinac where they were kindly treated by Captain Roberts who supplied their wants and furnished them with a passage in the next vessel sailing for Detroit.¹ The earliest information received by Procter, about the 8th of September, led him to believe that only three persons had escaped death and made him tremble for the fate of the garrison of Fort Wayne, which was described as being closely invested and reduced to the last extremity. Until that moment he had no intimation that an attack upon Chicago

¹ Heald to Eustis, Oct. 23, 1812; A. B. Woodward to Procter, Oct. 8, 1812.