

had mustered. Livingston himself had only returned that morning from York, and the promised reinforcements of Indians and militia were not due for days yet.

The first day the enemy's boats explored the river mouth and found nothing, but an encampment party which pulled to the beach in the evening and crossed the narrow sand ridge to the winding river spied a pair of topmasts when the sloping rays of the sun illumined the tree-tops—and the *Nancy* was discovered.

Commodore Sinclair wasted neither men nor ammunition in attempting a boat attack up the river by night. The fleet was brought as close to the beach as was safe next morning, opposite the *Nancy's* hiding-place, and a bombardment opened upon the hidden target, which the sand ridge and the heavy growth of pines and underbrush completely screened. The blockhouse guns roared back at the masts in the lake, which showed above the intervening foliage, but accuracy of aim was impossible. Under cover of the bombardment the Americans landed on the shore and dragged their heavy guns up the sand ridge, protected from view by the bushes, and soon opened a heavy fire across the river at close range. Worsley's position rapidly became hopeless. A train of powder was laid to the *Nancy* from the blockhouse, and preparations made for a retreat through the woods. A shell from an American howitzer burst right within the fort and the place at once took fire, the flames spreading almost immediately to the schooner. With a roar the blockhouse blew up, fragments being hurled in all directions, and the pursuing and victorious Americans, pushing across the river, found the works in ruins and abandoned, and the schooner in flames. Repeated explosions of powder below decks defied all attempts at boarding her or towing her to the lake. She burned to the water's edge and sank at her moorings.

Of the defenders the victors found no living trace. The desk of the commander of the *Nancy* was found in the woods, along with other scattered belongings, possibly hurled there by the explosion. The guns at the blockhouse had been spiked.

The surrounding forest baffled investigation or pursuit. Skulking Indians fired on the invaders and recalled ghastly memories of the scalps torn from tomahawked heads in the battle of Michillimackinac only a few weeks before.

The burning of the *Nancy* "accomplished," as Commodore Sinclair magniloquently told Lieutenant Daniel Turner, of the *Scorpion*, "the object for which the squadron came into this quarter, the destruction of the enemy's whole naval force on this lake."

Plucking what satisfaction he could from this victory for the defeat of the expedition against Mackinac, Sinclair sailed next day for Lake Erie, taking with him the spiked guns and a batteau he had found which mounted a twenty-four-pounder. He felled trees across the stream and left the two schooners to blockade the river. They were told not to suffer a boat to pass in or out—and yet Turner, of the *Scorpion*, was authorised to detach the *Tigress* for a cruise of a couple of weeks around the Island of St. Joseph's to pick up fur canoes as they passed between French River and Sault Ste. Marie, or rowboats that might be venturing across with supplies for Mackinac from far-away Montreal. He was warned that the enemy would be desperate and might try a night attack by small boats. For this reason Sinclair left him a boarding netting. But lest the time should hang heavy on his hands he was told to take an accurate survey of Gloucester Bay and its islands—as that part of the Georgian Bay was known—and also one of Matchedash Bay.

In the flame of the last sunset in August a deep-laden canoe paddled briskly into the shelter of Fort