

Expedition against Mackinack.

First Intimation of Danger.

Demand for the Surrender of the Fort.

June 26, 1812. dispatched an express<sup>a</sup> to Captain Roberts with the important intelligence. A letter from another hand, as we have observed, had already given that information to Roberts. Brock ordered him to attack Mackinack immediately, if practicable; or, in the event of his being attacked by the Americans, to defend his post to the last extremity. Another order, issued two days later,<sup>b</sup> directed him to summon to his assistance the neighboring Indian tribes, British and American, and to solicit the co-operation of the employees of the Northwest Fur Company in that vicinity. Still another was issued, giving Captain Roberts discretionary powers.

Mr. Pothier, the agent of the Northwest Company, was then at St. Joseph's, and Roberts laid before him his plan of operations. Pothier approved of them, and placed all the resources of the company at that point at his disposal; and he offered to command in person one hundred and fifty Canadian *voyageurs*, then employed in the company's service, and within call.

On the morning of the 16th of July—a bright and beautiful morning—the wind blowing gently from the northwest, Captain Roberts embarked with his whole force, civilized, semi-civilized, and savage, for Mackinack, in boats, bateaux, and canoes, accompanied by two six-pounders, and conveyed by the brig *Caledonia*, belonging to the Northwest Fur Company, which was laden with provisions and stores. Meanwhile the doomed garrison at Mackinack was ignorant of the declaration of war and the impending blow. Lieutenant Hancks had observed with some uneasiness the sudden coolness of Ottawa and Ojibwa chiefs, who had professed great friendship only a few days before; and on the morning when Roberts sailed from St. Joseph's, the Indian interpreter at Mackinack told Hancks that he had been assured that the Indians, who had just assembled in great numbers at St. Joseph's, were about to attack Fort Holmes. Hancks immediately summoned the American gentlemen on the island to a conference. It was thought by them expedient to send a confidential agent to St. Joseph's to ascertain, if possible, the temper of the commandant of the garrison, and to watch the movements of the Indians. Captain Daurman was sent on that errand. He embarked at about sunset on the 16th.<sup>c</sup> The moon was at its full, and when night fell upon the waters they were softly illuminated by its dim effulgence.

Captain Daurman had accomplished fifteen miles of his voyage when he met the hostile flotilla, and was made a prisoner. He was paroled on the condition that he should land on Mackinaw in advance of the invaders, summon the inhabitants to its west side to receive the protection of a British guard for their persons and property, and not to give any information to Hancks of the approach of the expedition. He was also instructed to warn the inhabitants that all who should go to the fort would be subject to a general massacre!

Daurman was landed just at dawn, and fulfilled the provisions of his parole to the very letter. But, while the inhabitants were flying from the village to seek British protection from the blood-thirsty savages, Dr. Day, an American gentleman, more courageous than the rest, hastened to the fort and gave the alarm. This was the first intimation that reached Hancks of the approach of an enemy. That enemy had already landed, and taken one of his two heavy guns, in the gray morning twilight of the 17th, to the crown of the island, in the rear of the fort, and placed it in battery so as to command the American works at their weakest point. It was too late for Hancks to prepare for defense. By nine o'clock in the morning Roberts had possession of the heights, and the woods back of the fort seemed to be swarming with painted savages. At half past eleven a summons was made for the immediate surrender of the fort, garrison, and island "to the forces of his Britannic majesty." "This," said Hancks, in his report to the government, "was the first intimation I had of the declaration of war." Hancks held a consultation with his officers and the

Surrender of the

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<sup>2</sup> In the course of their employment by Pitt (Earl of Chatham) most abominable ave to the bishops), those work, and to vindica the employment of t

During the war of them allies, and usin called piteously upon said, "had been our t their favor. . . . We in establishing the tru ship of the Indians."