

See points A and B on diagram.

railway to Port Colborne. No news of any further approach having been brought in by any of the numerous scouts sent out by the villages during the forenoon, I proceeded to billet the men, in order to get them dinner; and then, before determining to commence the construction of any defences, I dispatched messengers across to Buck's Tavern and Stevensville, between Erie and the town of Welland, to ascertain and report any movement of the enemy in that direction, which I thought probable, as sufficient time had elapsed to enable him to reach Port Colborne, had that been his intention; and having, through the kindness of Mr. Larmon, the superintendent of the line, obtained a locomotive, I started down the railway upon a reconnaissance, getting down to within six miles of Erie, the burning of the bridge mentioned preventing any closer approach. I then learnt that the bridge had been destroyed by a party of some seven men, who had come up at about 7 A.M., who, in addition, stole a number of horses from the farmers in the vicinity, and then went back towards the main body, which, from testimony I received, it appeared, had gone down the river about a mile below the Lower Ferry, and camped close to the River Road, on one Newbigging's Farm.

See point C on map.

Their numbers were variously estimated at from 450 to 1,200 men. This testimony was corroborated by the statement of the mounted scouts from Buck's Tavern and Stevensville, who returned in the evening, and went to show that, with the exception of parties out stealing horses, there had been no Fenians seen in that direction, and was rendered certain by the arrival about 10 P.M. of Mr. Graham, the officer of Customs at Fort Erie, who had been in their camp at 6 o'clock that evening. Shortly before this time, however, Colonel Booker, of Hamilton, had arrived with the 13th Battalion of Volunteers, and, being senior officer, took command, and continued the communication by telegraph which had been going on between Colonel Peacocke and myself, respecting position and strength of enemy, and best method of attacking him. Colonel Peacocke, then at Clifton, having at about 5 P.M. telegraphed me that he had ordered the International Railway steamer up to Port Colborne for me to put upon her a gun or detachment, in order to patrol the river from Fort Erie to Chippawa—she not having arrived at 10.30 P.M.—I ordered the "Robb," a powerful tug-boat, owned by Captain McCollum, down from Dunnville, for the purpose, intending to place upon her the Welland battery, without guns (the men armed with Enfield rifles), and received a reply that she would be down at 3 A.M. the following morning. This was the position of affairs when Captain Akers, R.E., arrived from Chippawa, sent over by Colonel Peacocke, to consult and to explain Colonel Peacocke's views as to the best mode of attack.

After due consideration between Captain Akers, Colonel Booker, and myself, a certain course was decided, arranging for an attack in concert on that morning, and Colonel Peacocke was telegraphed accordingly.

In accordance with this plan, Captain Akers and myself embarked on the tug\* (which did not arrive, however, till about 4 A.M., having been delayed in consequence of Captain McCollum wishing to bring with him his naval company from Dunnville), and proceeded down to reconnoitre the river and Fenian camp, arranging to meet the Port Colborne force back at the railway depôt, three miles above the enemy's camp, at 7, or, at the latest, half-past 7. On our way past the village of Fort Erie, we were brought to by the armed patrol tug-boat from the United States' steamer "Michigan," who, on finding out who we were, informed us that the Fenian camp on Newbigging's Farm had been broken up at 3 A.M. that morning, the enemy having marched down the River Road.

We proceeded down the river to the mouth of the Black Creek, eight miles above Chippawa, where we learnt that they had turned off the river to the west, a short distance above, and were there, at a point two miles directly in rear of a place called New Germany. A messenger was at once sent off to Colonel Peacocke, presumed then, under previously-concocted arrangements, to be near there moving up; and we returned with the tug, in accordance with that arrangement, to meet Colonel Booker and the Port Colborne force at the Upper Railroad Depôt at Fort Erie.

See point E on sketch.

On our arrival there we could see or hear nothing of them. This was accounted for subsequently by the fact that Colonel Booker had received, after we left, an order from Colonel Peacocke directing him to turn off the railroad at Ridgway, some eight miles above Fort Erie, and cross the country in order to meet and attack in concert.

This being the case—presuming a combined attack would be made in the course of the day, of the result of which we could have no doubt, I considered, as I could not then join my proper force, that important service could be rendered by patrolling the river to intercept and capture fugitives, and to prevent by every possible means the escape across the river of any large body of the enemy.

\* Our object in this was to ascertain definitely the position of the enemy's camp as preliminary to the attack.