

The action commenced at the dawn of day: the picquet guards were driven in, and a heavy fire opened upon the whole line, by which part thereof was thrown into disorder; and being ordered to form on more advantageous ground, I found the enemy doubling our left flank with force and rapidity.

A destructive fire was sustained for some time; at length borne down by numbers, the few of us that remained with the party retired from the lines, and submitted. The remainder of our force, in number about 400, continued to defend themselves with great gallantry, in an unequal contest against small arms and artillery, until I was brought in as a prisoner to that part of the field occupied by the enemy.

At this latter place, I understood that our troops were defending themselves in a state of desperation; and I was informed by the commanding officer of the enemy, that he would afford them an opportunity of surrendering themselves prisoners of war, to which I acceded. I was the more ready to make the surrender from being assured, that unless done quickly, the buildings adjacent would be immediately set on fire, and that no responsibility would be taken for the conduct of the savages, who were then assembled in great numbers.

In this critical situation, being desirous to preserve the lives of a number of our brave fellows who still held out, I sent a flag to them, and agreed with the commanding officer of the enemy, that they should be surrendered prisoners of war, on condition of their being protected from the savages, and being allowed to retain their private property, and having their side-arms returned to them. It is impossible for me to ascertain, with certainty, the loss we have sustained in this action, from the impracticability of knowing the number who have made their escape.

Thirty-five officers, and about four hundred and eighty-seven non-commissioned officers and privates, are prisoners of war. A list of the names of officers is herewith enclosed to you. Our loss in killed is considerable.

However unfortunate may seem the affair of yesterday, I am flattered by the belief that no material error is chargeable upon myself, and that still less censure is deserved by the troops I had the honor of commanding.

With the exception of that portion of our force which was thrown into disorder, no troops have ever behaved with more determined intrepidity.

I have the honor to be with high respect,

Your obedient Servant,

JAMES WINCHESTER,

Brig.-Gen. U. S. Army.

Hon. Secretary at War.

N. B. The Indiana have still a few prisoners in their possession, who, I have reason to hope, will be given up to Colonel Proctor, at Sandwich.

James Winchester, Brig.-Gen.

*From Major-General Harrison, to Governor Shelby.*

Camp on Carrying Rock, 15 miles from the Rapids, January 24th, 1818.

MY DEAR SIR,—I send Colonel Wells to you, to communicate the particulars (as far as we are acquainted with them) of an event that will overwhelm your mind with grief, and fill your whole state with mourning.

The greater part of Colonel Wells's regiment, United States Infantry, and the 1st and 5th regiments Kentucky Infantry, and Allen's rifle regiment, under the immediate orders of General Winchester have been cut to pieces by the enemy, or taken prisoners. Great as the calamity is, I still hope that, as far as it relates to the objects of the campaign, it is not irreparable. As soon as I was informed of the attack upon General Winchester, about 12 o'clock on the 22nd instant, I set out to overtake the detachment of Kentucky troops, that I had sent that morning to reinforce him, and I directed the only regiment that I had with me to follow. I overtook Major Robb's detachment at the distance of six miles; but before the troops in the rear could get up, certain information was received of General Winchester's total defeat.

A council of war was called, and it was the unanimous opinion of the Generals Payne and Perkins, and all the field officers, that there was no motive that could authorize an advance but that of attacking the enemy, and that success was not to be expected after a forced march of forty miles against an enemy superior in number, and well provided with artillery. Strong detachments of the most active men