

left on the Niagara peninsula with his right exposed to the lake, where he had no fighting force afloat. The mistake of leaving Kingston untouched and Sackett's Harbour open became more apparent every day. Besides, there was no Prevost at the western end of the lake to make things easy for an old and obsolescent man like Dearborn.

The Americans took up a good position at Stoney Creek to pass the night of the 5th and 6th of June. The main road ran parallel to the lake from one to two miles off. The camp was made on the crest of a low, zigzagging bluff, which was nowhere more than twenty-five feet high, and which looked like the bank of a stream that had shrunk away from it. The top was clear, and so was the lower ground for some distance in front. The right rested on a mile-wide swamp, running down to the lake. The left ended at Burlington Heights, which ran all the way from Queenston to Burlington. Moderate precaution ought to have made the position safe. But the Americans thought more of attack than of defence; and they were probably conscious of having twice failed to destroy a beaten enemy, first at York and then at Fort George, though they had superior land forces and overwhelming sea forces at both places. This was forcibly pointed out to them by their Secretary of War later on.

Just before dark, Harvey, Vincent's deputy-adjutant-general, had reconnoitred the enemy with some light troops and formed the plan of a night surprise. Vincent approved; and the selected force paraded half an hour before midnight, "704 firelocks" strong, according to Vincent's own statement. Harvey was in command; and the men were drawn from the 8th and 49th, Brock's two old regiments. The night was unusually dark; and all went well till the men were forming up for the attack at a distance of 300 yards. Then someone fired his musket; others followed; there was some cheering; and the whole enterprise threatened to come to an untimely end. But Harvey and the officers ran