



*Plan of Ft. Madison, 1808.*

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|-----------------|----------------------|-------------------|
| 1 Block Houses. | 4 Officers Quarters. | 7 Surgeons Office |
| 2 Factory       | 5 Barracks           | 8 Gates           |
| 3 Passage-way   | 6 Guard-house        | 9 Spring          |

## FORT MADISON.

The following article was prepared at the War Department, Washington, D. C., for this magazine. It includes extracts from reports of Lieut. Alpha Kingsley, 1st U. S. Infantry, giving an account of the selection of the site for and the construction of the old Fort, together with portions of other reports relating to its position, uses, defense and final abandonment. The old Gazeteers speak of it as "A United States Military Post, on the west bank of the Mississippi river, about twelve miles above the Des Moines rapids; the site of the present town of Fort Madison, in Lee county, Iowa. Latitude, 40° 36'; longitude, 14° 15', W. Washington."

If for no other reason than to reconcile the conflicting data that pervades every unofficial account of this fort, the necessity for compiling its history would be apparent. Thus from Charles K. Gardner's Dictionary of the U. S. Army, we learn that "Fort Madison was erected by Lieutenant Pike in 1805, a few miles above St. Louis; evacuated and rebuilt in 1813; the village now so called in Lee county, Iowa." Rufus Blanchard, in his "Discovery and Conquest of the Northwest," (1880), page 27, tells us that "the United States built Fort Madison in 1804, on the West Bank of the Mississippi, opposite the Des Moines rapids;" from Appleton's Cyclopaedia, title Fort Madison, we learn that "it derives its name from a fort erected in 1808, and named in honor of James Madison;" while no less an authority than the editor of *The Fort Madison Plain Dealer*, in Johnson's new Cyclopaedia, remarks that this town is "the site of a fort built in 1808, and captured by the Indians in 1818;" and one or another of these errors appear to be perpetuated in every publication bearing upon the history of that section, of which the writer has had knowledge. To show the correct status of this fort, and perhaps to account for the errors into which these authorities have been led, requires a brief narrative of the events that led up to its establishment.

On the 9th of March, 1804, the territory of Upper Louisiana was surrendered to the United States by France, under the treaty of April 30, 1803. Upper Louisiana embraced within its boundaries what now comprises the states

of Missouri, Iowa, and all territory to the westward then as yet unexplored; and by act of March 26, 1804, its southern boundary was defined, and its political designation changed to the District of Louisiana. By this act, for all political and judicial purposes, the District of Louisiana was attached to the Territory of Indiana. Gen. W. H. Harrison was governor of the District and superintendent of its Indian affairs. In that capacity, and under instructions from Washington, Gov. Harrison met at St. Louis, in the month of November, 1804, five chiefs of the Sacs and Foxes, and persuaded them to make a treaty by which they conveyed to the United States all their lands east of the Mississippi, and a large tract to the west of that river, which included much of what is now the states of Missouri and Iowa. For this cession they were given the sum of \$2,234.50 in cash and goods, and the promise of a yearly annuity of \$1,000, the United States upon its part, recognizing their right to the land still retained by them, and agreeing to protect them in its quiet enjoyment.

In the following year Gen. James Wilkinson, then in command of the Military Department of the West, with headquarters at St. Louis, sent Lieut. Zebulon M. Pike, 1st U. S. Infantry, on an expedition to the head-waters of the Mississippi. Among other things, Lieut. Pike was especially directed to select a site for a military post somewhere between St. Louis and Prairie des Chiens, and to obtain the consent of the Indians for its erection. Lieut. Pike's journal shows that he selected the site for Fort Madison, and in his official report he states: "I have chosen three places for military establishments; the first on a hill about forty miles above the river de Moyen rapids on the west side of the river in about  $41^{\circ} 2'$  north latitude. The channel of the river runs on that shore; the hill in front is about sixty feet perpendicular, nearly level on the top." There is ample evidence to show conclusively that this was the site on which Fort Madison was erected. It has been erroneously stated that Lieut. Pike constructed the fort.

Profs. C. R. Tuttle and D. S. Durrie, the generally accepted authorities for early proceedings in that section, in their History of Iowa, while apparently fixing a definite and accurate period for the building of this work, merely complicate the matter by adding to the confusion already specified. On page 58 they remark: "Soon after making this treaty (Nov., 1804) the United States commenced the erection of Fort Edwards within the limits of the then recently acquired territory, which gave much uneasiness to the Indians. The government also erected Fort Madison on the west bank of the Mississippi, in the territory not ceded by the Indians, about ten miles above the Des Moines rapids. This fort was constructed by Col. Zachary Taylor, and named in honor of President Madison." Now Fort Edwards, at Warsaw, was not built until 1816, ten years after the signing of the treaty of St. Louis, and long after Fort Madison had been wholly burned and abandoned; while Zachary Taylor entered the service as a 1st lieutenant of the 7th Infantry, May 3, 1808, joined his regiment in the fall of that year, and is not known to have had any separate command until the summer of 1809. Again, on page 89, Tuttle and Durrie inform us, that the fort [Madison] "was built in 1808, and soon after Black Hawk and his party undertook to destroy it but failed;" and again, on page 563, that "Fort Madison was once a military post of great importance, but since 1853, it has never been used for such a purpose; and the Indians who had long felt its presence as a standing menace, removed every vestige of the old block-house by fire as soon as they found it would be safe." Considering that the work was at no time of any great importance, and that in 1853, it had been abandoned for nearly forty years, this authority cannot be regarded as of much use in the elucidation of a doubtful point.

The following account of the construction of Fort Madison is taken from Lieut. Alpha Kingsley's\* report to "the

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\*Lieut. Kingsley was appointed Ensign in the 1st U. S. Infantry November 22, 1803; 2d Lieut. June, 1805; 1st Lieut. January, 1808; dist. paymaster, February 9, 1810; disbanded, June 15, 1815.

Honorable Henry Dearborn, Esq., Secretary of War, at Washington."

GARRISON AT BELLE VUE, NEAR RIVER LE MOINE,

22 November, 1808.

SIR: Having received orders at Belle Fontaine, to move up the Mississippi river as far as the river Le Moine, with Captain Pinckney's\* Company under my command, and fix on a suitable situation for the fort, as nigh that place as possible—not finding any place nearer to that designation than this—I have accordingly fixed on it, which is about 25 miles above Le Moine. The season being so far advanced when I arrived here (26th September) that it was impossible to put up such buildings as were necessary to answer the object in view, I therefore thought it expedient to erect temporary houses for the winter. Having set a good picket around my camp, with bastions at right angles, I then commenced upon the factory, and other store houses, barracks, etc., all of which are small and done in the rough way, but will answer the purpose, they being nearly completed. I shall by the first of next month commence on building a small fort with three block houses, of hewed timber, so disposed as to have full command of each angle of the fort—a plan which I humbly submit. Having plenty of timber convenient, and that of the best quality, I am fully of the opinion that by June next I will have the fort ready for the reception of the troops. The expense of this work to the United States will be but a trifle, when put in completion, [compared] with the good effect that will result to the government.

This situation is high, commands an extensive view of the river and the adjacent country—also an excellent spring of water—and I believe there is no place on the river which will prove more healthy, and none more advantageous to the Indian trade. I shall prosecute the work of the fort with all possible expedition, and hope by spring to have it so far advanced that it will bid defiance to the evil-minded savage, and at the same time insure the respect and friendship of the better disposed. With these sentiments at heart, having the public good in view, at the same time wishing to comply with my orders, which, though not pointed, leave me latitude, for which I have above premised, and fully expecting your approbation, I shall proceed to complete the work.

I am with high consideration, sir, your very obedient servant,

ALPHA KINGSLEY, LT.,

*1st U. S. Regt. Inf't.*

What follows is compiled from other reports.

The winter of 1808-9 was passed by the little garrison in preparing the timber for the block-houses and pickets, the

\*Col. Ninian Pinckney appointed 1st Lieut. 9th Inf't., 1799; retained 1st Lieut. in 1st Infantry, 1801; Capt., 1807; Brig.-Inspector, 1809; Maj. 5th Infantry, 1813; Aid to Gen. Wilkinson, 1813; Inspector-Gen. (rank of Col.) Dec., 1813; Lieut.-Col. 22d Infantry, 1814; Col. 3d Infantry, 1820; died at Baltimore, 1825.

latter being of white oak from twelve to eighteen inches in diameter, and of a uniform length of fourteen feet, hewed on both sides and freed from the bark. Early in the spring Lieut. Kingsley received information from various sources that the Indians were about to raid the settlements, and that their first blow was to be struck at that garrison. He had recently sent Lieut. Nathaniel Pryor\* with six men to St. Louis for needed supplies, and deemed his force inadequate to cope with any large number of the enemy. "Upon receiving this information," he writes, "I made every exertion to erect the block houses and plant my pickets; this we did in two weeks (lying on our arms during the night), and took quarters in the new fort the 14th inst. (April, 1809). Being tolerably secure against an attack we have been able to get a little rest, and are now making the best preparations for the safety and defense of this establishment." This letter is dated "*Fort Madison*, near river Le Moin,† 19th April, 1809," and is the first official evidence of the naming of the work. "I have acted as Assistant Military Agent for this post," he adds, "since my arrival. Will you please honor me with that appointment? \* \* \* In my letter and plan I propose to build the factory house inside the fort, but the recent conduct of the Indians has evinced to my mind that the thing is improper (except the ware-houses), and unless I receive contrary orders, shall build the retail store outside, say 100 yards distant." In this letter he reports that rumors of an Indian alliance are reaching him frequently, and that any coming trouble may be traced directly to British influence. "The sooner the British traders are shut out of the river," he adds, "the better for our government." In May of that

\*This officer was appointed Ensign 1st Infantry, Feb., 1807; 2d Lieut., May, 1808; 1st Lieut., 4th Infantry, Aug., 1813; Capt., Oct., 1814; disbanded, June, 1815.

†The indiscriminate use of the term *le moins*, *la moins*, *des moins* and *des moyens*, wherever they occur must not be charged to any carelessness on the part of the writer. They are thus employed to conform to the authorities used. The proper derivative is the French noun *moines*—a friar or monk— and not *moyens*—means or manner, as used by Wilkinson and Pike. Hence the article *le*, *la*, or *des*, is properly or improperly employed, according to the gender of the noun it precedes and when so used must not be confounded with the river La Moin (Crooked Creek) or with the town of that name on the opposite bank of the Mississippi, in McDonough county, Illinois."

year he writes for special instructions regarding the "Factory Department;" "how far and in what manner are the soldiery to be employed for that department; whether the factory buildings are to be made altogether by the military; if so, what number of houses shall be erected, and from whence shall the material be derived?" "As the commanding officer of this post," he suggests, "it would be pleasant to know how far I am to comply with the requisitions of the factory, inasmuch as, if the soldiery are drawn for the use of the factory in such numbers as to answer the expectations of the factor, it will be impossible to complete the fort this season." In response to this appeal he was informed by the War Department that the soldiers were to build the factory, receiving extra pay therefor at the rate of ten cents per day, and one gill of whiskey for each man, to be paid by the Factory Department.

In May, 1809, Captain Horatio Stark\* of the 1st Infantry, then on duty at regimental headquarters (near Fort Adams, Miss.) was ordered to proceed with a corporal and seven privates, *via* St. Louis, to join and assume the command of Captain Pinckney's company. He left St. Louis on the 14th of August, reaching Fort Madison within ten days, where he relieved Lieutenant Kingsley in the command of the fort. This was doubtless the "reinforcement" referred to by Black Hawk in his narrative. Lieutenant Kingsley remained with the garrison until the winter of that year, but his active part in the administration of the fort, ceased with the arrival of Captain Stark. To the former officer is due whatever credit may attach to the building of the fort.

From a return of troops stationed in the District of Louisiana, commanded by Lieut.-Col. Daniel Bissell,† from the

\*This officer was Ensign and 2d Lieut. 7th Infantry, January, 1799; Quartermaster May, 1799; 1st Lieut. April, 1800; 2d Lieut. 1st Infantry, February, 1801; 1st Lieut. April, 1803; Capt., 1808; Maj. 6th Infantry, January, 1813; Lieut.-Col. 33d Infantry, 1814; disbanded, 1815.

†Cadet, 1791; Ensign, 1st Infantry, April, 1792;—in 1st sub-legion, December, 1792; Lieut., January, 1794;—in 1st Infantry November, 1796; Capt., January, 1799; Lieut.-Col., 1st Infantry, August, 1808; Col., 5th Infantry, August, 1812; Brig.-Gen., March, 1814; commander in successful affair at Lyon's Creek, U. C., Oct., 1814; retained May, 1815, Col., 1st Infantry with *bvt.* of Brig.-Gen.; disbanded June, 1821; re-nomi-

30th of June to the 31st of August, 1809, it is shown that the garrison of Fort Madison on the latter date consisted of one first lieutenant (Alpha Kingsley), one second lieutenant, (Nathaniel Pryor), one surgeon's mate, three sergeants, three corporals, two musicians and sixty privates of Captain N. Pinckney's company of the first infantry; one captain (Horatio Stark), one sergeant and eight privates of Captain Stark's company, of the same regiment, making a total force of eighty-one persons irrespective of those counted with the factory, who numbered, according to the factor's report for 1809, but seven souls. The factory was completed during the winter of 1809-10, and immediately went into operation, under the superintendency of Mr. John Johnson.

After the departure of Lieut. Kingsley, no material changes were made in the *personnel* of the garrison during the succeeding two years. From a return dated October 31st, 1811, it appears that there were at Fort Madison one captain (Horatio Stark), one first lieutenant (Ethan A. Allen, 1st Artillery), one second lieutenant (Nathaniel Pryor), two sergeants, two corporals, one musician and thirty-four privates, making an aggregate strength of forty-two, exclusive of ten factory employes reported by the Trading Agent.

Reports show that the winter of 1811-12 was passed amid no little anxiety, owing to the activity of the Indians, whose assault upon the fort was daily expected. During the following months the utmost anxiety prevailed regarding the designs of the Indians, whose threatening attitude necessitated constant watchfulness on the part of the garrison. Subsequent reports show many depredations by the Indians and destruction of property and small parties of Americans killed in the vicinity of the fort, but no attack upon the fort itself.

A letter from Col. Bissell to the War Department states that he has directed Capt. Stark to put his work into the best possible state of defense, and that he cannot believe,

nated by the President as Col. 2d Arty., January, 1826; Senate decided he was Col. in Army and bvt. Brig.-Gen. from former dates, and "the President may arrange him accordingly;" [not done;] died, 1833, at St. Louis.



“if vigilance is used, that there can be any danger of his not being able to defend the place against any number of Indians that may be brought against him.”

A few days later, however, he detached Ensign Barony Vasquez\* with twelve men to Fort Madison with instructions to assist the commanding officer of that post to put his work in the best possible state of defense. During the summer Capt. Stark left the fort with a small detachment for service down the river, leaving the post under the command of Lieut. Thomas Hamilton.†

Harrison's victory on the Wabash, while it had the effect of driving the Winnebagoes from that section, incited that nation to frenzy. War parties were started in every direction, one to the mining country, another to Prairie du Chien, and a third to Fort Madison. Black Hawk admits having joined this party to Fort Madison with several of his band, and to have been an active participant in the attack upon the work. The earliest intelligence of this attack was received at St. Louis by an express which was sent by Lieut. Hamilton. No report of this action appears in the files of the War Department, and the following account is that which appeared in Niles' Register, Vol. 3, page 142, on October 31, 1812:

ST. LOUIS, September 26, 1812.

The following account of attack on Fort Belle Vue (Fort Madison) was handed to us by a friend who was at that post during the siege. The position is one of the most ineligible on the Mississippi for a place of defense; as from an eminence their parade ground could be swept by small arms, and it is almost surrounded by chasms to within ten or twelve steps of the pickets and block-houses, from whence the Indians threw upwards of five hundred pieces of burning timber on the roofs of the houses; and when the attack commenced there was no spot about the fort that did not emit a continued sheet of fire from guns, fiery arrows and brands, and the brave fellows within were not afforded an opportunity of doing much execution, except now and then knocking over such red skins as had the impudence

\*This officer was appointed Ensign in the 2d U. S. Infantry, December 12, 1808; 2d Lieut. in March, 1811; 1st Lieut., July, 1813. He was wounded at the battle of Niagara Falls, and resigned October 1, 1814.

†Ensign 1st Infantry, 1806; 2d Lieut., 1807; 1st Lieut. 1808; commander Fort Madison, 1812; Capt., 1814; retained in 6th Infantry; transferred to 5th Infantry; bvt. Maj. after ten years service; resigned, August, 1824.

to peep over the bank. Lieutenants Thomas Hamilton and Barony Vasquez have done themselves much credit in defense of the post committed to their care.

ATTACK ON FORT BELLE-VUE (Fort Madison).

September 16th, 1812. On the 5th inst. at half past 5 p. m. this garrison was attacked by a party of the Winnebagoes, the number not precisely known, but supposed to be upwards of 200. Fortunately there was only one soldier out of the garrison (John Cox) who fell a victim to the scalping knife. A constant firing on both sides was kept up until dark; early next morning they commenced again, and about 7 o'clock they set fire to a Mr. Graham's boat and loading, this man having arrived on the 4th; they also burnt two boats belonging to the public; soon after, they began to throw fire on the block-houses that stood near the bank of the river, but not sufficiently near to command the space between them and the river; syringes being made of gun barrels, the roofs were wet so as to prevent fire taking; during this time part of them killed the live stock, plundered and burnt Mr. Julian's houses, destroying the corn; and on the 7th they continued throwing fire on the block-houses and shot arrows in the roofs with matches tied to them.

The morning being calm, all their attempts to fire the block-houses proved useless. In the evening they burnt Mr. McNabb's house and attempted the smith shop, and it was generally believed they were only waiting for a favorable wind to burn the factory, so that it might catch the garrison, which would have been the certain means of destroying us all; to prevent that, as the evening was very calm, the commanding officer, Thomas Hamilton, despatched a soldier with fire to the factory, and in less than three hours that building was consumed without any danger to the garrison. During the day several Indians crept into an old stable and commenced shooting out of it, but a shot from the cannon by Lieut. Barony Vasquez, soon made their yellow jackets fly.

On the 8th we heard but little from them; several canoes were seen crossing the river, and on the 9th not an Indian was to be seen, nor was a gun fired. I am happy to say no lives were lost in the fort, one man was slightly wounded in the nose. The Indians must have had many killed, as several of them were seen to fall.

There are many reports to the effect that the site chosen for Fort Madison was an improper one. Gen. Benj. Howard, Governor of the Missouri Territory, had repeatedly advised the authorities at Washington to move this post to a point further up the river, his preference being for Prairie du Chien, a point where he later, while military commander of that district, established a strong work. On the Governor's recommendation the War Department in a letter dated October 7, 1812, instructed Col. Bissell to withdraw the

troops from Forts Osage, Madison and Massac, with all the army stores, providing Gov. Howard should still advise the measure. In replying to this letter, Col. Bissell urged the impracticability of evacuating these posts until March, when the river will be free of ice, although he does not regard it necessary to reinforce them or to continue them longer than that date.

On the 30th of March, 1813, in a letter to the War Department, he states that Gov. Howard is absent from the Territory and that as Frederick Bates, acting Governor, declined to assume the responsibility of advice on the subject, he hesitates to withdraw the garrisons from Forts Osage and Madison. He states that it might not be politic at this moment to evacuate Madison, though he is of the same opinion as to this post as when he wrote in December, and he recommends their removal the moment circumstances should justify it. Gov. Howard returned to St. Louis April 1, 1813, and his advice was that Fort Madison should not for the present be abandoned. On April 4th he wrote Col. Bissell as follows:

I never considered it (Fort Madison) a happy selection of a site for a garrison, either as respects defense for the fort itself, or its efficiency in affording protection to the frontier. Had my opinion been taken before we were in hostility with the Indians, it certainly would have been in favor of its evacuation, but from a variety of considerations arising from existing circumstances, I deem the abandonment of it inadvisable. Were it to take place at this time the measure could be employed with great dexterity among the Indians by British agents, as evidence of our inability to maintain it, and would embolden those who are now hostile, and probably decide the wavering to take part against us; further, since the removal of the villagers by Capt. Thomas E. Craig from the Peorias, we have no place where persons can safely be sent, or kept in the enemy's country, to collect information of their views and movements, except Fort Madison. In this respect its utility is increased by circumstances accruing in the progress of the war. In addition to these considerations, there is another, resulting from an opinion possibly confined to myself, which is that our difficulties with the Indians will not terminate without an imposing campaign carried as far at least, as the Oisconcen,\* and the erection of a garrison commanding the entrance of that river into the Mississippi. In the prosecution of a campaign of this kind, Fort Madison

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\*One of the old styles of spelling the word "Wisconsin."

would afford many facilities which will occur at once to you; in short, from any view I am able to take on this subject, I am of opinion this post ought to be maintained, if the means are possessed. The number of men now there and destined for the place, stated in your letter, is, in my opinion, entirely equal to its defense against any assault by Indians alone, if well supplied; but if a British force with artillery should co-operate, I fear it would be insufficient, unless the garrison is strengthened in a way not usual, nor necessary to repel attacks made by Indians. How far it is susceptible of such improvements, you can better judge than myself, from your superior knowledge of its condition. The fortified boat or boats you intend to employ there, I think highly useful. The garrison can co-operate with them in arresting an attempt of the enemy to descend the river against the settlements below, and in the event of a serious attack of the Post on the land side, the command in them can be drawn with facility to its support. It is to be regretted that Fort Madison had not been built higher up or lower down on the river, as I believe a much more eligible military position, not distant, is to be found in either direction, but it could not be advised in the present state of things unless there was a greater protecting force during the erection that can be spared, I believe either from the means in your power, or the resources of the Territory, consistently with the safety of our settlements.

And on the 8th of April, the Governor, being then at Portage de Sioux on an inspection tour, which had included the post of Fort Madison, advises "that the post be not evacuated until the arrangement with the Osages which I have sent on is made; the result of my proposition to them will be known shortly." "Still," he adds, "every necessary preparation to a relinquishment of the garrison can go on." At that date the garrison at Madison consisted of Captain Horatio Stark, Lieutenants Thomas Hamilton and Barony Vasquez, and not far from one hundred non-commissioned officers, musicians and privates, of whom twenty-eight were a part of Capt. Robert Desha's\* company of the 24th Infantry. During the month of July (1813) the post was twice attacked by Indians, but in such small bodies that they were easily repulsed, although at the loss of several soldiers who were surprised at the outpost and speedily butchered. On the morning of the 16th a second attack was made which is thus reported by the commanding officer under date of Fort Madison, July, 18, 1813:

\*Capt. 24th Infantry, March, 1812; bvt. Maj., August, 1814; Brig. Maj., October, 1814; retained in 3d Infantry; Rep. in Congress, 1827-31; died, Mobile, 1849.

Once more I have the mortification to communicate the displeasing intelligence to you, of the loss of one corporal and three privates from my command. I informed you of the successful attack on the morning of the 8th instant. The position then taken by them was in a spring branch but one hundred paces from the garrison. This hollow affords them about sixty yards shelter, and cannot be cut away so as to be raked by the block-house. I felt anxious to secure one side at least against a second ambuscade, for which purpose I erected a small block-house on the point by its mouth; in this the corporal and men were killed on the morning of the 16th inst. It certainly is very astonishing to me to find how instantaneously they were dispatched; I am told that the whole guard was outside, and while in the act of barring the door, an Indian with a long spear found means to introduce it through, and in this manner they were all killed, yes, in less than ten minutes. During this time one was employed in taking out the underpinning (which was of stone) and succeeded in getting two men out, whom they mangled in their usual mode of warfare. At half past 2 p. m. we attempted to bring in the men who were killed, but as soon as a party was at the post they were fired upon from the hill, but no injury was done—the men got safely into the garrison. The Indians then continued firing until 5 o'clock, at which time they ceased and left us quiet all night, but we were not without our usual apprehensions. I must begin again cursing the situation of this garrison. If there is any necessity for one in this part of the country why can it not be removed to a more eligible spot? The Indians have decided advantage over us in our present position, and will always succeed whenever they attempt to kill a man. It is true we may prevent them from taking the garrison, but that, sir, \* \* \* must be attended with great slaughter, for I never heard of greater acts of desperation offered by any of the tribes than what has been shown in storming the small block-house. Our incessant watching I fear is \* \* \* why I have so many at present on the sick report.

Permit me to request that you will impress on the General's mind the necessity of doing something more for the post. A man is positively in danger of losing his life to be seen outside of the garrison. They [the Indians] can actually come in a considerable body within 150 yards, and arrange for the execution of any plan they choose without being discovered. Of course they can come down upon us like a flash of lightning—to be ready to meet which, we are harnessed up day and night, and must always be on the watch. This kind of duty would break the constitution of any man. I shall depend on some other arrangements taking place within one month. The enemy's corn and all provisions which they will require, ripens about the middle of August, and though they harass us at present with, I do not know what number, they may possibly be more determined when their conveniences are at hand. \* \* \* \* \* We must have wood, and I shall remain entirely inside the fort until I hear from you, even if in so doing I should be compelled to burn some of the petty mouldings in some of the fine buildings.

Yours with due respect,

T. HAMILTON,

Lieut. 1st Regt. Infy. Com.

N. B. I must have 50 lbs. musket powder, and 100  $2\frac{3}{4}$  inch shells fixed, say, in proportion from five to ten seconds.

T. HAMILTON.

I must repeat that I do expect to hear from you within one month, and when I do, I wish most cordially that it may be [orders for] the evacuation or removal of this garrison. If I do not hear from you by the 20th of August and the Indians continue to harass me in the manner they appear determined to do, I do not know but I will take the responsibility on myself, that is if they will permit me to go away. It is impossible for us to do duty long in the manner that I have adopted.

T. HAMILTON, Lieut.

This was the last official communication from Fort Madison. While the authorities at St. Louis were temporizing, the savage foe was vigilant and determined. The siege of which Lieut. Hamilton was apprehensive was already upon him, and ere this letter had reached St. Louis, the alternative which he had so earnestly set forth, had been already carried into effect. Entirely surrounded by a treacherous, deadly foe, urged on by British agents, of whom the notorious Dixon was the most active; reduced to the direst extremity for the want of supplies that had been long delayed by the failure of the contractors, and driven to the verge of starvation, the gallant commander resolved to abandon the work at all hazards. During the night of the 3d of September, a trench was dug from the southeast block-house to the river. The boats belonging to the garrison had already been secured, and to them was hurriedly conveyed the remainder of the provisions and the most valuable of the movable property. Then the garrison moved stealthily on their hands and knees along the trench, and gained the boats; the order was given to apply the torch, and although the savages were encamped in force within gunshot of the fort, so secretly and cautiously had the movements been made that Hamilton and his men were far away on the bosom of the Mississippi, and the fort completely wrapped in flames, before the enemy was aware of their departure.

After Hamilton's return to St. Louis, the propriety of rebuilding Fort Madison was earnestly discussed, and finally decided as most politic and essential for reasons which were advanced in Gov. Howard's letter before cited. The files of

the War Office contain a communication dated St. Louis, 31st October, 1813, and signed by John Cleves Symmes,\* Captain 1st Infantry, who was subsequently distinguished as the author of the famous "Theory of Concentric Spheres," better known as "Symmes theory," whereby it was demonstrated that the earth was hollow and open at the poles. In this letter Captain Symmes announces that Fort Madison is to be rebuilt and that he has been ordered to its command, but requests permission to delay in order to settle his accounts as Quartermaster. But before this movement could be carried into execution the entire 1st Infantry was ordered east to enter upon the Northern Campaign, and its withdrawal so reduced the troops in that section that all endeavors to garrison the posts on the upper Mississippi were wholly abandoned.

Thus ended the military history of the first fort within the limits of what is now the State of Iowa. Its mission as an agent of civilization had been fulfilled. At no time a strong work, at the most a large stockade surrounding a trading establishment erected in the interests of peace, its existence had been one long struggle against a foe whose protestations of friendship were merely the means to accomplish treacherous ends. In every sense, military or otherwise, it had been a failure, and after the burning of the factory there was no longer an excuse for its being. That there stands today on its site, a thriving town whose people are numbered by thousands, is in no manner due to the fact that twenty years before its settlement, there existed a frowning stockade overlooking the Mississippi, peopled by a hundred soldiers, whose nearest neighbors were at St. Louis, four hundred miles away.

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\*Ensign 1st Infantry, 1802; 2d Lieut., 1804; 1st Lieut., 1807; Capt. 1813; distinguished in Brown's sortie, Ft. Erie, U. Can.; disbanded, 1815; died, 1829.

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