

Chapter 15 (11-01-11)

**"Ours was a bloody victory;
theirs was a bloody defeat."**

Isaac Naylor 1791-1873

What really happened at the Battle of Tippecanoe?

The Transition from Political Enemies to Militia Friends

The men in the Indiana Territory who fought each other so hard on the slavery issue ended up joining ranks in the Battle of Tippecanoe. The battle occurred on November 7, 1811 in the early morning hours near the banks of the Wabash River. The proslavery men who fought in the battle were primarily Gen. Harrison who was governor of the Indiana Territory from May 13th, 1800 until December 28th, 1812, and Maj. Benjamin Parke who was Territorial Attorney General from 1804 until 1808, Congressional Delegate from 1805 until 1808, and Judge of the Indiana Territory from 1807 until 1817, when he was appointed the U. S. District Court Judge for Indiana in which position he served until 1835 when he died. Parke commanded a troop of light dragoons of the Indiana militia from September 18 to November 19, 1811. The antislavery men who fought in the battle were Floyd, the adjutant for the staff of Maj. Parke's dragoons; Capt. Charles Beggs, company commander of light dragoons of the Indiana militia; General Washington Johnston, quartermaster for Maj. Parke's dragoons, and Albert Badollet, son of John Badollet and probably godson of U. S. Secretary of Treasury, Albert Gallatin, and a private in Maj. Parke's troop of light dragoons. Some might argue that Johnston was not really an antislavery man. It is an anomaly of history that these men who fought each other so hard on the slavery issue in the Indiana Territory would all be together again, just a few years later, at this battle against the Shawnee Indians.

What the Northwest Ordinance of 1787 Said About the Treatment of Indians?

As the reader reads the excerpts from reports and diaries on the Battle of Tippecanoe in this chapter, it is important to keep in mind what the Northwest Ordinance of 1787 said about the treatment of Indians. Were these words ignored by Gov. Harrison and other Indian fighters? The prized words said:

The utmost good faith shall always be observed towards the Indians; their lands and property shall never be taken from them without their consent; and, in their property, rights, and liberty, they shall never be invaded or disturbed, unless in just and lawful wars authorized by Congress; but laws founded upon justice and humanity, shall from time to time be made for preventing wrongs being done to them, and for preserving peace and friendship with them.

Art. 3, Northwest Ordinance of 1787.

The Indian rights expressed in this passage of the Northwest Ordinance of 1787 were poorly expressed in the words and actions of the political and military leaders of the Indiana Territory. It is doubtful that their lands and property were taken with their consent, or as lawyers would say today, their "informed consent." And Harrison's military movements against the Indians in the fall of 1811 were not authorized by Congress. If the letters of John Badollet to Albert Gallatin are to be believed, the basis for the movements was superficial. Harrison argued that the Indians attacked them first, but he put them in a position which forced the attack. But further, the Indians were poorly advised by some of their leaders.

On September 12th, 1833 John Tipton who had fought in the Battle of Tippecanoe wrote the following letter to William Polk:

Dear Sir Since you were here I have reced [received] a letter from Genl Harrison enclosing a news paper in which is published a letter from some visitor to the Tippecanoe battle ground. the writer

pertends to relate some particulars of the engagement. he repeats the old story of the Indians pointing out the place for encampment, and goes on to say that the Kentuckians under Davis [Davies] saved the army. that Harrison ordered the charge in which Davis fell. H. wants the truth told and I will attempt it. I heard Harrison and the Indians talk in the evening before the battle. I understand that Taylor and Clark selected the camp ground, and that Davis asked permission to make the charge in which he fell .how did you understand all these things--

The John Tipton Papers, Vol. II, 1828-1833, Indiana Historical Collections, Vol. XXV, pp. 823-824.

John Tipton's Version of the Battle of Tippecanoe

There are many versions of the battle but perhaps the most accurate is that reported by Tipton in a letter to the Editor of the *Vincennes Gazette* in September, 1833 elaborating on the letter he had written to William Polk on September 12th. That letter recited the following (the accompanying maps show (1) the army's route from Vincennes to Fort Harrison, then to the Battle encampment, (2) the immediate area around the encampment, and (3) the encampment itself showing the location of the various military units):

SIR--In your paper of the 17th of last month [August] you have published an erroneous account of the battle of Tippecanoe, written by a visitor to the battle ground in May, 1831, and first published in the Kentucky Intelligencer. I deem it due as well to the character of General Harrison, as to that of the United States' Infantry and the Volunteers and Militia of the Indiana Territory engaged in that memorable battle, that the errors in the publication above mentioned should be corrected. I do not believe that the visitor misstated facts knowingly, but that he had been misled by erroneous information, I cannot doubt; therefore, with no other object than to do justice to all concerned, I will endeavor to give a brief statement of some of the transactions that led to that campaign and victory. In doing this after the lapse of 22 years, and writing as I do mostly from my own recollection, I may fall short of relating all the particulars, but I will set down nothing but what I know or have reason to believe is true, and will feel obliged by being corrected by those who know wherein I have fallen into error.

As early as the year 1808 or 1809 the celebrated Shawnee chief Tecumseh, and his brother the Prophet, were known to be fomenting

the Indians against us, and about that time they located themselves near Tippecanoe upon the Wabash, and Tecumseh conceived the grand design of uniting all the Indians to make a common cause against the encroachments of the white man and to make an effort to regain their former territory, and to check the growth of our settlement in the north west. Governor Harrison, then Superintendent of Indian affairs, believing these Indians were stimulated by British traders, and fearing it would lead to something more serious, kept the President informed of their movements, and under instructions from our Government held frequent friendly talks with the Indians, and endeavored by presents and kindness to satisfy them, but without effect. In 1810 serious apprehensions were felt for the safety of our frontier inhabitants, and a call was made on the militia of the Indiana Territory for the purpose of protecting the inhabitants on the Wabash against Tecumseh's banditti; but on his promise to remain peaceable, the march of our men to the Wabash was countermanded. This suspended but did not prevent hostilities. Early in the year 1811 the Indians assumed a more offensive attitude, large numbers were collecting at Tecumseh's town from all the tribes in the north west. This alarmed the inhabitants of the frontier of the Indiana and Illinois Territories, checked emigration and prevented the settlement of the country, meetings of the people were holden in both Territories, and resolutions adopted expressing the sense of the inhabitants of imminent danger from the hostile Indians collecting at the Prophet's town. Capt. Walter Wilson of Vincennes, with Barron interpreter, was sent by Gov. Harrison late in June of 1811, with a talk to Tecumseh and the Prophet, and on arriving at their town he found about 1500 warriors assembled there. After the talk Tecumseh promised to visit Vincennes in 18 days; he came about 25 days with 600 warriors, and the result of the council between Gov. Harrison and Tecumseh left no doubt war was unavoidable, and at the earnest request of the people expressed thro' public meetings and petitions, the President directed Gov. Harrison to disperse Tecumseh's banditti. Col. Boyd with the 4th regiment of the U. States Infantry, was placed under Gov. H. who called on the militia of the Indiana Territory; many volunteered their services and others were drafted for the expedition. The object of the campaign was to march up the Wabash toward Tippecanoe, build a fort and station troops near the Indian boundary, and if possible to disperse Tecumseh's banditti without shedding blood. The time was considered favorable to effect the object of the Government as it was known immediately after the council at Vincennes in July 1811, the chief, Tecumseh, went on a tour among the Southern Indians to stimulate them to join in his plan of operations against us. Our army assembled at Vincennes in September, and before its march from that place was joined by Col. J. H. Daviess and a few, *less than twenty*, dragoons from Kentucky to go

on the expedition. The troops left Vincennes about the 26th of September, and one of the first days of October commenced building the fort [Fort Harrison]. While the troops were thus employed, Gov. Harrison sent messages inviting the Indians of Tecumseh's banditti to a friendly council or warning them to disperse. They declined doing either, and about this time a family was killed on the Embarras river in Illinois a few miles north west of Vincennes, and one of our sentinels was shot by an Indian on the 10th of October. These transactions indicated too strongly to be misunderstood what we had to apprehend from that banditti of savages, and Gov. Harrison called on the citizens of the Territory; many of them volunteered and flocked to the standard of their Governor. Capt. Funk with a few dragoons from Kentucky also joined the army, and the fort being near its completion, the army consisting of about 750 men, after leaving the sick and a small garrison in the fort, marched on the 29th of October for the Indian town, and was overtaken on the march about the first of November by Gen. Saml. Wells and Cols. Owen and Keigar from Kentucky with about 30 or 40 volunteers from that State. I am confident that the number of men that were in the battle from Kentucky did not exceed 80, perhaps not more than 70. About half the number was dragoons under Col. Daviess and Col. Keigar, Col. Owen acting as a volunteer aid to the commander in chief. On the night of the 5th of November the army encamped 10 or 11 miles from the Indian town. During our march on the morning of the 6th, Indians were frequently seen by our advance; attempts were made but failed to bring them to a friendly talk. When within less than two miles from the village the army having formed in order for battle halted. Our troops were in good spirits and every officer appeared anxious to engage the enemy; but Gov. Harrison in strict conformity to his instructions from the President, resolved to make one other effort to adjust the difficulty without shedding blood; and for that purpose he rode forward accompanied by some of his principal officers and protected by Spencer's company of volunteers from the Territory. Arriving within less than 200 yards of the town, he directed his interpreter Barron to go into town and invite the Prophet to come out and talk with him as a friend, stating that the difficulties could be arranged better than to let their young men kill each other in battle. Two other chiefs came out, and after shaking hands in the most friendly manner, these chiefs assured the General that they were not able nor had they a wish to fight, and that their principal chief the Prophet had gone out to meet the army to make peace, but that he had crossed to the east side of the Wabash, believing the army was marching up that side, and these chiefs repeatedly declared that if the Governor would wait until the next day they would come into council, make peace, bury the hatchet, and thereafter live like brothers. Gov. Harrison directed Majors Taylor and Clark, his aid de-camp and

Brigade Inspector, to select a suitable camp ground. They did so, and reported that they had found the best encampment that the army had occupied since its march; and after mutual pledges of friendship between the General and the Chiefs, orders were given to march to the ground, and lines of encampment were marked off by the proper officers. No one was heard to object to the ground for an encampment. Indeed no one who is a competent judge could with propriety object. Something was said about a breastwork, but this was abandoned, owing, as the writer understood and believes, to the scarcity of camp axes and the prevalent opinion that it was unnecessary. The army encamped in the form of a hollow square, occupying a grove of timber surrounded on three sides by prairie, the right wing fronting on the south east toward the Indian town, was composed of part of the 4th U. States' regiment and a few companies of the militia of the Territory, constituting what was termed on the morning of the battle the front lines; the left wing also consisting of a part of the 4th regiment and a portion of the militia of the Territory composed the rear line, the right flank was composed of Spencer's company of 80 volunteer riflemen of the Territory fronting south west and closing the space between the front and rear lines in the south west point of the grove in which we encamped. The left flank consisted of the company of Kentucky volunteer riflemen under Keigar and a company of riflemen of the Territory under Capt. Robb; this flank was commanded by Gen. Wells who ranked as Major. Capt. Snelling's company of the 4th encamped within the square as a reserve. The dragoons both of Kentucky and of the Territory was encamped within a square with orders that in case of a night attack to parade sword in hand with their pistols in their belts. A double line of sentinels was placed out and all the precaution that experience and prudence could dictate, with a due regard to the exhausted condition of the soldiers, owing to forced marches on a reduced ration was taken by the commander in chief.

Between 4 and 5 o'clock in the morning of the 7th of November, 1811, a sentinel at the south east angle discovered the Indians crawling through the grass in the prairie approaching him. He fired and fled toward the line pursued by hundreds of Indians who reached our line at the same moment with the sentinel. So sudden and unlooked for was the attack on the left flank that the officers had no opportunity to form their men for action, but were compelled to retire toward the centre of the encampment. Gov. Harrison seeing his left driven in, ordered Captains Snelling, Wilson, and Scott to charge the Indians; they done so and checked them. This timely aid enabled Well and Keigar to rally their men and regain their ground, which they immediately did and throughout the battle fully sustained their former high reputation as soldiers of Kentucky. The attack in a few

minutes became general along the front line, right flank, and part of the rear line. All our sentinels and both guards were driven into the encampment, and nothing saved the army from defeat but the cool deliberate courage of Gen. Harrison, aided by the field officers and the steadiness of our troops amidst dangers the most desperate. The writer is a witness that Gov. Harrison rode along our lines giving such orders as were necessary to restore order and to ensure a victory.

The battle had continued for some time when Col. Daviess observed to Gov. Harrison that the Indians were sheltering behind a log and some standing tree near the angle formed by the front line and left flank and were annoying our line very much, and he asked permission to dislodge them. Permission being granted, he called on his first division, as he termed them, which consisted of not more than 20 picked men, to follow him, and rushed to the charge through the United States' infantry, who were formed in his front, followed by 6 or 7 of his men, and of that number at least three, to-wit. *White, Floyd, and Percil*, were citizens of the Territory, not citizens of *Kentucky* as claimed by the visitor to the battle ground. Daviess and White fell and were with difficulty borne into our lines, without dislodging the Indians, and a company of the 4th regiment was ordered by Gov. Harrison to dislodge them, which order was most gallantly executed. By the foregoing statement, for the truth of which the writer appeals to all who were present, the world may judge whether Col. Daviess threw away his life by rashness or whether it was sacrificed by the orders of his commander. It is admitted that if Col. D. had have been followed by his whole command they were competent to effect his object; but owing to the noise and confusion of the battle his orders were either not heard or were misunderstood and not obeyed.

This visitor seems inclined to claim all the credit of the victory to what he terms the Kentucky rangers. Nothing could be more unjust than this. Let works bear witness. It is true they all behaved well, and that the gallant Owen of Kentucky fell in front of the battle while animating our men in the retiring line, by his words and his example, to face about, charge the enemy, and maintain their ground. Maj. Bain of the army fell mortally and Col. Bartholomew of Indiana Territory severely wounded also, leading and animating their commands to the charge; and few if any of our field officers were more eminently useful than Major Clark and Taylor of the Territory. In comparing the loss of the different companies of the army, it should not be forgotten that the greatest loss was not sustained by the Kentuckians. Compare the loss of Snelling and Barton of the 4th regiment, Keigar and Funk of Kentucky, and Spencer and Wilson of the Territory. Snelling and Spencer's loss was nearly equal, and probably the heaviest, about 20 men each, (Spencer's loss was 21.)

and either of these companies lost more men than both the companies from Kentucky. I write without the aid of the official report.

Capt. Snelling made several successful charges. Wilson was drawn from the real line and charged the enemy three times. Scott also of the Territory was drawn from the front line and charged the enemy. Capt. Spencer's line was engaged in close action by a vastly superior force in point of numbers for nearly two hours, unaided by other forces, and lost their Captain, two Lieutenants, and 5 other killed and 13 wounded.--As soon as it was sufficiently light to enable our men to distinguish objects the enemy was charged and routed from every point, leaving part of their dead upon the field. Our loss was severe; about 179 in killed and wounded, of whom none was more lamented than Owen and Daviess of Kentucky and Maj. Bain of the 4th. But the Territory lost Spencer, Warrick, White, M'Mahan and Berry, with many others, and nothing could be farther from the intention of the writer than to detract from the merits of the gallant dead from any section of our country, his object being to claim justice and nothing more for the brave sons of Indiana who fell, and for their General what is due to him for both courage and prudence in conducting his command to a glorious victory.

The victory being won, the first care of the General was to restore order, provide for the wounded, and bury the dead. On the day after the battle the Indian town was burned and preparations for the return march were made, and on the 9th the army left the battle ground. On its arrival at Busserow the militia and volunteers were disbanded. It has always been believed by those qualified to judge that this victory had much influence in shortening the war that commenced the ensuing spring [War of 1812] and in saving many lives of the people of the Territory, as the Prophet's town would have been a rallying point for the followers of the brave and intrepid Tecumseh, who lost such a number of his warriors at Tippecanoe as evidently to dishearten the Indians and cripple his operations, and the combined Indian forces were beaten upon their own ground with the advantage of their favorite mode of attack, by the united skill and courage of the army of the United States and the volunteers and militia of Kentucky and the Indiana Territory jointly; and it is unjust to claim or to ascribe the credit of this victory to any one corps of that little army. Let it suffice to say that it was an American army, led by Gov. Harrison of the Indiana Territory and followed by many of the first citizens of our country who confided in his ability to command, and they were not disappointed.

We are informed that a day or two after the army left the battle ground the Indians returned, tore our dead men from their grave,

stripped and otherwise mangled them. Their bones lay bleaching on the field of their glorious death up to the fall of 1821, when Capt. Huntington with a company from Terre Haute collected the bones and covered them in the earth, marking the place with a large stone. In October 1830, arrangements were made to re-inter the bones of these heroes. Gen. Harrison was invited to attend, but prevented by indisposition. A great number of people from different States attended; among them a son of Gen. Harrison, one of Col. Owens, and a son of Captain Warrick, with a few of the survivors of the battle. The bones were collected and put into one coffin and re-interred (in the hole first made to bury our officers) with the honors of war and an eloquent eulogy by E. A. Hannegan, Esq.

The friends of Gen. Harrison have always regretted that he left the Territory in 1812 and accepted the command of a brigade of Kentucky volunteers, and they have equal reason to regret his resignation of the office of Major General of the army of the United States. By the first he left his friends in the Territory without a leader possessing an equal share of their confidence to conduct them through the war, by the latter he left the army soon after his brilliant victory of the Thames of the 5th October, 1813; a victory second only to that of New Orleans. By this victory a British army was captured, a Province conquered, the famous Tecumseh slain, and all our foes humbled; and the General left the field of his usefulness and his glory and others have reaped a rich harvest of his well earned laurels, and must he now be buried in obscurity? Forbid it heaven.

September, 1833

A Volunteer

The John Tipton Papers, Vol. II, 1828-1833, Indiana Historical Collections, Vol. XXV, pp. 825-833.

Harrison left the Indiana Territory in 1812 having been deposed by the anti-slavery men including Jonathan Jennings. After his military career in the Kentucky militia and the United States Army during the War of 1812, where he served honorably, he moved to the state of Ohio which was his home until he died in the Presidency of the United States on April 4, 1841. In the meantime, he served as a member of the United States House of Representatives from Ohio's 1st District from 1816 until 1819. The next two years saw him in the Ohio State Senate. He then ran for governor in Ohio but lost that race. In 1825 he was elected a United States Senator from Ohio and served until 1828 where he

was the Chairman of the Senate Committee on Military Affairs. He served sixteen months as the United States Minister to Columbia. He ran for President in 1836 and lost but ran again in 1840 and won. He died one month to the day after taking office.

Tipton, who wrote the piece quoted above, was born in Tennessee in 1786. In 1807 he, his mother, and three siblings moved to Harrison County, Indiana Territory. He was sheriff of that county from 1816 until 1819 and served as a representative in the Indiana House of Representatives from 1816 until 1823. He and Floyd had some disputes over slavery issues during his service as sheriff. He then was appointed the Indian Agent for the Ft. Wayne District where he negotiated treaties with the Indians in 1826, 1828, and 1836. In 1831 he was appointed to fill an unexpired term in the U. S. Senate and then was elected to a full term covering the years of 1833-1839. He died in 1839.

John Badollet's Versions of Events Leading Up to the Battle, the Battle, and its Aftermath

One of Gov. Harrison's strongest opponents in the Indiana Territory was John Badollet. Badollet was critical of Harrison's assessment of the danger that the Indians presented to the settlers in the Territory and the necessity of a war with them. Between October 15th, 1811 and August 5th, 1812 Badollet wrote numerous letters to his friend Albert Gallatin concerning the European Settler/American Indian agitation in the Indiana Territory during this period. It is obvious from the Chapters in this book on the slavery issue, Badollet not only had a strong dislike for Harrison but also for Parke. The sentiments expressed against these two men in the letters on the slavery issue were carried forward in the letters on the events surrounding the Battle of Tippecanoe. Badollet was vicious with the pen while Jennings was vicious with his mouth when it came to Gov. Harrison. These two men, more than any others, brought about Harrison's political demise in the Indiana Territory and the State of Indiana. They literally

ran him out. Whether Badollet's letters to Gallatin had any influence in Washington city over what happened to Harrison in the Territory is unknown.

A sampling of Badollet's letters to Gallatin in 1811 and 1812 will suffice to describe his continued animosity toward both Harrison and Parke.

Vincennes October 15 1811

We are my dear Friend [Gallatin] in almost indescribable situation in this Territory the din of war, a military force of 1200 or 1300 men marched up the Wabash, and not a solitary act of hostility on the part of the Indians comitted, travelers in every direction, north and south, east and west passing and repassing unmolested, every thing quiet in the Illinois Territory, Governor Edwards betraying no symptom of alarm and resorting to no means of defense and as I am informed Governor Hull [governor of the Michigan Territory] foreseeing no approaching danger. Projects ascribed to the Prophet and his brother [Tecumseh] which I believe and every body believes, they never dreamt of, entirely absorbed as they appear to be in their favorite plan of bringing the Indians to the habits of sobriety and the arts of industry. Their town to a reflecting and philanthropic mind exhibiting the comforts of civilized life and their regulations the appearance of social order. What can this all mean? The whole can be resolved into a personal enmity of the Governor against Tecumseh and the Prophet and a wish to stifle the murmurs of the Wabash Indians in relation to the late treaties and the unwarrantable means employed to effect them.

Where did the National Intelligencer find the accounts he has presumed to give of Tecumsehs views of his visit to Vincennes, of his intention of sacking it, of the number of men he had with him? The whole is a mere fabrication. The Governor sent successively one Laplante a french trader of this place and one Captain Wilson to invite Tecumseh to Vincennes, he came with 30 or 40 men their wives and children as they are accustomed to do, and when arrived was received in the middle of bayonets. If all this be not an imposition on the Administration say that I have become a knave.-- All I fear is that such a madman will goad the Indians into some act of despair to make good all what he has got published of their pretended bloody views. Oh God! Oh God!...

Thornbrough, *The Correspondence of John Badollet and Albert Gallatin 1804-1836*, pp. 194-195.

Vincennes October 26, 1811

Since my last nothing new has occurred here, peace under the garb of war still lasts, as a neighboring town is daily visited by travellers and marketing people, the woods are traversed in every direction with the greatest safety, and that bloody Tecumseh with his small band, keeps snugly at home without injuring any body as sure proof that he meditates sanguinary deeds! How long this farce will last or how it will terminate none but the knowing ones can foresee. Be it as it may the first act of the Legislature, which if not prorogued again, will meet in two weeks, will undoubtedly be to praise the patriotism and foresight of the Governor, and to address the President with a high coloured picture of the dreadful calamities of which he has delivered to us. I have no doubt but that it is already drawn up as usual by himself, his friend Parke or some other amanuensis, and is ready for signing. Some appointments made with a proper degree of sagacity ensure him a majority in a weak and obsequious legislature, and he will palm upon the Administration what he will have dictated to them for the genuine effusions of the representatives of the People....

Since I began this letter information has reached us from the camp that the Governor has set off with the army for the Prophet's town, after having in vain by repeated messages endeavoured to induce him to come down to him. What he will do when there, God only knows, the Miamis or Wabash Indians, terrified half to death, have come with assurances that they want to live in peace with the Whites, which implies (if not positively expressed) that they will say not a word more of the late treaties and other causes of complaint.... If the Prophet should in defense of his *Penates*, assume a resisting attitude, or should an act of imprudence on the part of such a rabble of militia kept in a state of unusual ferment by the frequency of his Excellency's inflammatory speeches, be resented, the most dreadful consequences may well be apprehended.

Thornbrough, *The Correspondence of John Badollet and Albert Gallatin 1804-1836*, p. 199.

Vincennes November 13, 1811

At last my dear Friend what I anticipated has taken place, by advices from the camp the following particulars have come to our knowledge, not in regular official accounts by [but] by the unanimous testimony of such persona as have come down.

The army continued their march and on the 6th inst. were encamped within gun shot of the Prophet's village, and such was their perseverance in adhering to an inoffensive system that the Governor rode around unmolested. Some parleys ensued wherein it was at last concluded to have a conclusive conference on the next day. But it appears that a Negro in the camp, of notable vicious disposition went over in the night to the Indians, with the information, that the last day's proceeding were mere stratagems to decoy them into security, and that the plan was to attack them the following day and burn their village. The consequence of which information was that the Indians attacked the army thrown into a state of false security a little before day light, with the fury of lions, they would have made a cruel slaughter of the militia undisciplined and insubordinate, had not Col. Boyd made a spirited charge with his regulars which decided the action. It was a bloody and dearly purchased victory, amongst the slain are Joseph Daveiss, Wm. Mahon, Isaac White, and Thomas Randolph of the Light horse, Major Robb, Capt. Spier Spencer, Thomas Berry & Jacob Warrick of the Militia, and Capt Bain of the Regulars, amounting in all to about 172 killed and wounded some mortally. Albert [Badollet's son] is safe yet. The Prophet's village was next burnt and thus the efforts of some year's industry and perseverance & the fruits of the first rational attempts to reach the comforts of civilized life spontaneously made by the northern Indians have been involved in a common ruin. Thus we are plunged in the horrors of an indian war.

Thornbrough, *The Correspondence of John Badollet and Albert Gallatin 1804-1836*, pp. 205-206.

Vincennes, Novr 19, 1811

....I have seen the wounded arrive, my God, what heart rending sight! what scene of woe! From an enemy we expect no mercy, but when at the hand of our own friends, country men, of those we have defended, we meet with the most culpable neglect, the most unfeeling indifference, when our sufferings excite no sympathy*--enough, the cadaverous smell which fills the small rooms wherein so many mangled human beings are crowded, has left upon my mind an impression of horror not to be effaced....

Parke, Judge Parke is commissioned bull dog to bark into silence and terror who presume to think, he has publicly accused the opposition of having stopped the supplies of the army,* had the audacity to caution Caldwell as deserving member of the Legislature against speaking, other wise it would fare bad with him, & he has threatened another member so seriously that he has fled home to Clark County....

The opinion which I entertain in relation to our Indian affairs that of most every body far and wide, & to this minute it is amongst the reflecting part, a settled belief that the indians were sincere in their so often repeated assurances they wanted peace and no war, that if the Governor had built a garrison in the tract reserved by the treaty of Greenville, not a murmur would have been heard, but that his rashness in violating their territory, his approaching the Prophet's town with such force and in such a menacing attitude, have convinced them that their destruction was intended, et [and] driven them to despair....

20th. Twenty three wounded have died since--My son [Albert] who has made pretty correct observations during the campaign, tells me that to the day of his death he will believe that the object of the Governor was to bring on an indian war-- He has a poor idea of his military talents, but an high one of his personal courage.--...When the army arrived at the Prophet's village, the Light horse passed through their corn field, and when he was asked why he had done so and what he came for, the answer was my young men are tired now

*this picture is perhaps too high coloured much has been done for alleviating their suffering, but apathy reigns here et [and] enough of unavoidable misery is left to rend the heart.

*which were never interrupted

Thornbrough, *The Correspondence of John Badollet and Albert Gallatin 1804-1836*, pp. 207-209.

Vincennes December 17, 1811

An event my Dear Friend as unexpected as it is ignominious has happened as follows.

At a moment that nobody even dreamt here that the Governor would dare to hope a single word of approbation from the Legislature, all of a sudden one of his supporters in the House of representatives rose and reading an address to the President replete of praises for every talent and virtue which the Governor does not possess and praying for his reappointment, moved for the adoption of the same. Three ayes were hear, the rest thunderstruck did not collect their spirits in time to utter one single nay. It was sent up to the Council who negatived it, sent up again for reconsideration and negatived a second time. The title then was altered from the *Legislative Council & House of Representatives* to the *House of representatives* only, and during the

absence of the rest of the members, the Speaker & three other members, against the rules of the House which require a majority to form a quorum, adopted the said address with much precipitation & have forwarded it by the last mail, to the great terror of all honest citizens. Thus the President will be guided, the territory is degraded, and our allarms are increased....

Thornbrough, *The Correspondence of John Badollet and Albert Gallatin 1804-1836*, p. 211.

Vincennes December 30, 1811

Read and stare my Friend. At the return of the army from that ever to be lamented expedition, although the militia who had shared the dangers of that dreadfull night , were unanimous in proclaiming that the army had been *saved* by Col. Boyd and his brave Regiment yet from apathy or through some secret influence, those gallant men were received here with the most chilling coolness. A small number of us indignant at such reception met and resolved to address, which I did, Judge Vander Burgh & myself were appointed to wait on the Col. with it, which we accordingly did....

Thornbrough, *The Correspondence of John Badollet and Albert Gallatin 1804-1836*, p. 217.

Vincennes February 26, 1812

....The Indians have hitherto remained perfectly quiet, sending frequently messages for peace, but I am very much afraid that such a calm may eventually be followed by a storm, if by this time Government has not taken some measure to avert it. which in my opinion and that of every reflecting man, may be easily effected provided negotiators in whom the Indians can have confidence are employed, for you may rely upon it, no cordial accommodation can be accomplished through the agency of Harrison or any of his subordinates, he is too much disliked & mistrusted....

Thornbrough, *The Correspondence of John Badollet and Albert Gallatin 1804-1836*, p. 223.

Vincennes April 29, 1812

Dear Friend

The expedition of last fall up the Wabash can be considered in no other light than that of an outrageous aggression on an unoffending & peaceable neighbour, and a wanton waste of treasure & blood. But whatever opinion may be entertained in relation to it, the consequences are at this moment as disastrous as real. The bloody tomahawk is now *in fact* raised, the work of murder has begun, a whole family has been destroyed in the new purchase, the bones of which have been found in the ashes of their house, last Friday about seven miles from this place One Harriman his wife and five children were murdered & it is now ascertained that large collections of Indians are forming on the Wabash above us, with a view it is said and believed of retaliating upon this place the inhuman burning of the Prophet's town. The terror is inexpressible, the Scattered settlement fall back a few forts are formed & the country hitherto flourishing is fast returning to a state of wilderness....

Thornbrough, *The Correspondence of John Badollet and Albert Gallatin 1804-1836*, pp. 226-227.

Vincennes May 6, 1812

Our situation is still the same if not more allarming, a new murder on the East Fork of White river.--The consummate General is fortifying his own house & leave the town shift for itself. he diffuses despondence and distrust by observing that the town is in real danger & *kindly* offering an asylum within *his* strong hold to such as will accept of it, no measure for the general protection, the country which last year exhibited the preparations of military enterprise, where the banners of war were ostentatiously unfurled, where drums & trumpets were sounding, looks in the present moment when the enemy is at our door in a deadly lethargy....The great military ardour of the famous Hero of Tippecanow seem to have Sunk into a selfish sollicitude for his own safety & that of his family and property....

Thornbrough, *The Correspondence of John Badollet and Albert Gallatin 1804-1836*, p. 229.

Vincennes May 27, 1812

Every thing is in status quo here, of murders no more accounts are heard, from which impression arises that a general war on the part of the Wabash and other Indians is not decided on, and that the several attacks which I have mentioned are the works of some individuals....

There is great disparity in the events leading up to the battle between John Tipton's recollections twenty-two years after the battle and John Badollet contemporaneous reports to his friend, Albert Gallatin. Badollet's descriptions of the actions of Harrison and Parke may be colored by his insidious hate for the two men. He hated them for not only what they did to the Indians but also to the slaves. Tipton recollected that Capt. Wilson found about 1500 Indian warriors at Prophet town in June 1811. In July 1811 he recollected that Tecumseh came to Vincennes with 600 warriors. On November 6th, 1811 Badollet wrote Gallatin

When I told you that Tecumseh came down at the requisition of the Governor with about forty of his people besides women and children I believe I was incorrect, the number of such as are within his controul are much Smaller. A small gang of Winebagoes et [and] some Miamis who came down at the same time not acknowledging his authority. Where did Mr. Gales find the pretty stories of seven or eight hundred men coming under the command of Tecumseh to burn Vincennes, he had better give his authority, that the Public might know who has the audacity to utter such falsehoods. The women themselves laugh at such clumsy tales. The Governor keeps up the spirit of infatuation of his supporters by repeated speeches....

Thornbrough, *The Correspondence of John Badollet and Albert Gallatin*, p. 203.

Tipton fails to mention Col. Boyd in his colloquy. According to the official brochure of the *Sesquicentennial of the Battle of Tippecanoe* held on August 17-20, 1961 it is reported that:

Returning to the United States in 1808 the Government, in sore need of officers for the military, offered him (Col. John R. Boyd) the Colonelcy of the 4th Regiment which he accepted, displaying his characteristic energy and thoroughness in drilling his men who had been recruited in New England. Early in August, 1811, when Governor William Henry Harrison called for troops to quell the Indians at Prophet's Town if they went on the war-path, Boyd's

regiment was ordered to Vincennes. Transporting his men in keel boats from Pittsburg down the Ohio to the mouth of the Wabash, thence up that sluggish stream, the army arrived at Vincennes on September 19th to the great relief of the towns-people who feared an attack by the Indians.

Col. Boyd was second in command under General Harrison at the Battle of Tippecanoe, being distinguished for his bravery and able leadership when his men bore the brunt of the Indian's first attack. His ability was such that in the political controversies of the next decade or so the enemies of General Harrison credit Boyd rather than Harrison with the victory at Tippecanoe.

At the beginning of the War of 1812 he was commissioned a Brigadier-General and served until his withdrawal from the army in 1815.

Official Brochure of the Sesquicentennial of the Battle of Tippecanoe, p. 15.

It would appear that Badollet was in a better position to observe what went on in Vincennes during this period and that his facts were based on personal knowledge and the reports from scores of witnesses who came through Vincennes. The preponderance of the evidence is with Badollet and his version of the facts.

Disputed Facts as Described by Lt. Charles Larrabee

Perhaps the disputed facts are best described by Lieutenant Charles Larrabee in a letter that he wrote his cousin from Fort Knox (II) in the Indiana Territory on February 7th, 1812. He was a commander of one of the 4th Regiment companies. He recognized the battle of words which were taking place between Harrison's supporters and his opposition:

...their has been a number of publications of various kinds respecting the expedition and extracts from officers L[etters] / I disclaim against the whole in toto, except the necessary ones, and beg that no extracts of my L.s be published on any account whatever / their has been no more difference in the opinion of the people, than might have been expected / such always will [be] the case, in our free government....

Larrabee was praiseworthy of Harrison in the rest of his letters. From the standpoint of Tipton and Larrabee their assessments of the battle are not unlike the different versions from witnesses of an automobile accident in modern days. Sometimes one wonders if they are describing the same accident, or in this case, the same battle.

Version of Shobonier, an Ottawa Indian,

Another version is noteworthy although its authenticity does not hold up like the reports and letters of Tipton, Badollet, and Larrabee. In an article in the *Indiana Magazine of History* written by J. Wesley Whickar in 1921 he started out by saying:

I found recently a description of the Battle of Tippecanoe by Shobonier, an Ottawa Indian, who became a Potawotomi chief, and this with the description by Judge Isaac Naylor, whose home was in Crawfordsville, gives two good accounts of the Battle of Tippecanoe. One from a white soldier, the other from an Indian brave, both participating in the battle. In a publication entitled *Me-Won-I-Toc*, which was written by Solon Robinson, who gives the following account of the Battle of Tippecanoe by Shobonier.

Shabonee's Description of the Battle of Tippecanoe

.... Perhaps your people do not know that the battle of Tippecanoe was the work of white men who came from Canada and urged us to make war. Two of the who wore red coats were at the Prophet's Town the day that your army came. It was they who urged Elskatawwa [The Prophet] to fight. They dressed themselves like Indians, to show us how to fight. They did not know our mode. We wanted to attack at midnight. They wanted to wait until daylight. The battle commenced before either party was ready, because one of your sentinels discovered one of our warriors, who had undertaken to creep into your camp and kill the great chief where he slept. The Prophet said if that was done we should kill

all the rest or they would run away. He promised us a horseload of scalps, and a gun for every warrior, and many horses. The men that were to crawl upon their bellies into the camp were seen in the grass by a white man who had eyes like an owl, and he fired and hit his mark. The Indian was not brave. He cried out. He should have lain still and died. Then the other men fired. The other Indians were fools. They jumped up out of the grass and yelled. They believed what has been told them, that a white man would run at a noise made in the night. Then many Indians who had crept very close so as to be ready to take scalps when the white men ran, all yelled like wolves, wild cats and screech owls; but it did not make the white men run.

They jumped right up from their sleep with guns in their hands and sent a shower of bullets at every spot where they heard a noise. They could not see us. We could see them, for they had fires. Whether we were ready or not we had to fight now for the battle was begun. We were still sure that we should win. The Prophet had told us that we could not be defeated. We did not rush in among your young men because of the fires. Directly the men ran away from some of the fires, and a few foolish Indians went into the light and were killed. One Delaware [Indian] could not make his gun go off. He ran up to the fire to fix the lock. I saw a white man whom I knew very well--he was a great hunter who could shoot a tin cup from another man's head--put up his gun to shoot the Delaware. I tried to shoot the white man but another who carried the flag just then unrolled it so that I could not see my aim. Then I heard the gun and saw the Delaware fall. I thought he was dead. The white man thought so, too, and ran to him with a knife. He wanted a Delaware scalp. Just as he got to him the Delaware jumped up and ran away. He had lost only an ear. A dozen bullets were fired at the white man while he was at the fire, but he shook them off like an old buffalo bull.

Our people were more surprised that yours. The fight had begun too soon. They were not all ready. The plan was to creep up through the wet land where horses could not run, upon one side of the camp, and on the other through a creek and steep bank covered with bushes, so as to be ready to use the tomahawk upon the

sleeping men as soon as their chief was killed. The Indians thought white men who had marched all day would sleep. They found them awake.

The Prophet had sent word to General Harrison that day that the Indians were all peaceable, that they did not want to fight, that he might lie down and sleep, and they would treat with their white brothers in the morning and bury the hatchet. But the white men did not believe.

In one minute from the time the first gun was fired I saw a great war chief mount his horse and begin to talk aloud. The fires were put out and we could not tell where to shoot, except one side of the camp, and from there the white soldiers ran, but we did not succeed as the Prophet told us that we would, in scaring the whole army so that all the men would run and hide in the grass like young quails.

I never saw men fight with more courage than these did after it began to grow light. The battle was lost to us by an accident, or rather by two.

A hundred warriors had been picked out during the night for this desperate service, and in the great council-house the Prophet had instructed them how to crawl like snakes through the grass and strike the sentinels; and if they failed in that, then they were to rush forward boldly and kill the great war chief of the whites, and if they did not do this the Great Spirit, he said, had told him that the battle would be hopelessly lost. This the Indians believed.

If the one that was first discovered and shot had died like a brave, without a groan, the sentinel would have thought that he was mistaken, and it would have been more favorable than before for the Indians. The alarm having been made, the others followed Elskatawwa's orders, which were, in case of discovery, so as to prevent the secret movements, they should make a great yell as a signal for a general attack. All of the warriors had been instructed to creep up to the camp through the tall grass during the night, so close that when the great signal was given, the yell would be so loud and frightful that the

whole of the whites would run for the thick woods up the creek, and that side was left open for this purpose.

“You will, then,” said the Prophet, “have possession of their camp and all its equipage, and you can shoot the men with their own guns from every tree. But above all you must kill the great chief.

It was expected that this could be easily done by those who were allotted to rush into the camp in the confusion of the first attack. It was a great mistake of the Prophet’s red-coated advisors, to defer this attack until morning. It would have succeeded when the fires were brighter in the night. Then they could not have been put out.

I was one of the spies that dogged the steps of the army to give the Prophet information every day. I saw all the arrangement of the camp. It was not made where the Indians wanted it. The place was very bad for the attack. But it was not that which caused the failure. It was because General Harrison changed horses. He had ridden a grey one every day on the march, and he could have been shot twenty times by scouts that were hiding along the route. That was not what was wanted, until the army got to a place where it could be all wiped out. That time had now come, and the hundred braves were to rush in and shoot the “Big chief on a white horse,” and then fall back to a safe place.

This order was fully obeyed, but we soon found to our terrible dismay that the “Big chief on a white horse” that was killed was not General Harrison. He had mounted a dark horse. I know this, for I was so near that I saw him, and I knew him as well as I knew my own brother.

I think that I could than have shot him, but I could not lift my gun. The Great Spirit held it down. I knew then that the great white chief was not to be killed, and I knew that the red men were doomed.

As soon as daylight came our warriors saw that the Prophet’s grand plan had failed--that the great white chief was alive riding fearlessly among his troops in spite of bullets, and their hearts melted.

After that the Indians fought to save themselves, not to crush the whites. It was a terrible defeat. Our men all scattered and tried to get away. The white horsemen chased them and cut them down with long knives. We carried off a few wounded prisoners in the first attack, but nearly all the dead lay unscalped, and some of them lay thus till the next year when another army came to bury them....

Whickar, J. Wesley, "Shabonee's Account of Tippecanoe," *Indiana Magazine of History*, Vol. XVII, No. 4, December 1921, p. pp. 356-359.

Judge Isaac Naylor's Version of the Battle

Another noteworthy account of the battle is that of Judge Isaac Naylor which adds another viewpoint. His account reads:

I became a volunteer member of a company of riflemen, and on the 12th of September, 1811, we commenced our march towards Vincennes, and arrived there in about six days, marching about 120 miles. We remained there about a week and took up the march to a point on the Wabash river sixty miles above on the east bank of the river where we erected a stockade fort which we named Fort Harrison. This was three miles below where the city of Terre Haute now stands. Colonel Joseph H. Davies, who commanded the dragoons, named the fort. The glorious defense of this fort nine months after by Capt. Zachary Taylor was the first step in his brilliant career that afterwards made him President of the United States. A few days later we took up the march again for the seat of Indian warfare, where we arrived on the evening of November 6, 1811.

When the army arrived in view of Prophet's town, an Indian was seen coming toward General Harrison with a white feather suspended on a pole. Here the army halted, and a parley was begun between General Harrison and an Indian delegation, who assured the General that they desired peace, and solemnly promised to meet him the next day in council, to settle the terms of peace and friendship between them and the United States.

General Marston G. Clark, who was then brigade major, and Waller Taylor, one of the judges of the General Court of the Territory of Indiana, and afterwards a Senator of the United States from Indiana

(one of the General's aides), were ordered to select a place for the encampment, which they did. The army then marched to the ground selected about sunset. A strong guard was placed around the encampment, commanded by Captain James Bigger and three lieutenants. The troops were ordered to sleep on their arms. The night being cold, large fires were made along the lines of the encampment and each soldier retired to rest, sleeping on his arms.

Having seen a number of squaws and children at the town, I thought the Indians were not predisposed to fight. About ten o'clock at night Joseph Warnock and myself retired to rest, he taking one side of the fire and I the other, the other members of company being all asleep. My friend Warnock had dreamed the night before, a bad dream which foreboded something fatal to him or to some of his family, as he told me. Having myself no confidence in dreams, I thought but little about the matter, although I observed that he never smiled afterwards.

I awoke about four o'clock the next morning, after a sound and refreshing sleep, having heard in a dream the firing of guns and the whistling of bullets just before I awoke from my slumber. A drizzling rain was falling and all things were still and quiet throughout the camp. I was engaged in making a calculation when I should arrive home.

In a few minutes I heard the crack of a rifle in the direction of the point where now stands the Battle Ground house, which is occupied by Captain DuTiel as a tavern. I had just time to think that some sentinel was alarmed and had fired his rifle without a real cause, when I heard the crack of another rifle, followed by an awful Indian yell all the around the encampment. In less than a minute I saw the Indians charging our line most furiously and shooting a great many rifle balls into our camp fires, throwing the live coals into the air three or four feet high.

At that moment my friend Warwick was shot by a rifle ball through his body. He ran a few yards and fell dead on the ground. Our lines were broken and a few Indians were found on the inside of the encampment. In a few moments they were all killed. Our lines closed up and our men in their proper places. One Indian was killed in the back part of Captain Griger's tent, while he was attempting to tomahawk the Captain.

The sentinels, closely pursued by the Indians, came to the lines of the encampment in haste and confusion. My brother, William Naylor, was on guard. He was pursued so rapidly and furiously that he ran to

the nearest point on the left flank, where he remained with a company of regular soldiers until the battle was near its termination. A young man, whose name was Daniel Pettit, was pursued so closely and furiously by an Indian as he was running from the guard fires to our lines, that to save his life he cocked his rifle as he ran and turning suddenly round, placed the muzzle of his gun against the body of the Indian and shot an ounce ball through him. The Indian fired his gun at the same instant, but it being longer that Pettit's the muzzle passed by him and set fire to a handkerchief which he had tied round his head. The Indians made four or five most fierce charges on our lines, yelling and screaming as they advanced, shooting balls and arrows into our ranks. At each charge they were driven back in confusion, carrying off their dead and wounded as they retreated.

Colonel Owen, of Shelby county, Kentucky, one of General Harrison's volunteer aides, fell early in action by the side of the General. He was a member of the legislature at the time of his death. Colonel Davies was mortally wounded early in the battle, gallantly charging the Indians on foot with his sword and pistols according to his own request. He made this request three times of General Harrison, before he permitted him to make the charge. This charge was made by himself and eight dragoons on foot near the angle formed by the left flank and front line of the encampment. Colonel Davies lived about thirty-six hours after he was wounded, manifesting his ruling passions in life—ambition, patriotism and an ardent love of military glory. During the last hours of his life he said to his friends around him that he had but one thing to regret—that he had military talents; that he was about to be cut down in the meridian of life without having an opportunity of displaying them for his own honor, and the good of his country. He was buried alone with honors of war near the right flank of the army of the army, inside the lines of the encampment, between two trees. On one of these trees the letter "D" is now visible. Nothing but the stump of the other remains. His grave was made here, to conceal it from the Indians. It was filled up to the top with earth and then covered with oak leaves. I presume the Indians never found it. This precautionary act was performed as a mark of peculiar respect for a distinguished hero and patriot of Kentucky.

Captain Spencer's company of mounted riflemen composed the right flank of the army. Captain Spencer and both his lieutenants were killed. John Tipton was elected and commissioned as captain of this company in one hour after the battle, as a reward for his cool and deliberate heroism displayed during the action. He died in Logansport [Indiana] in 1839, having been twice elected Senator of the United States from the State of Indiana.

The clear, calm voice of General Harrison was heard in words of heroism in every part of the encampment during the action. Colonel Boyd behaved very bravely after repeating these words: "Huzza! My sons of gold, a few more fires and victory will be ours."

Just after daylight the Indians retreated across the prairie toward their town carrying off their wounded. This retreat was from the right flank of the encampment, commanded by Captains Spencer and Robb, having retreated from the other portions of the encampment a few minutes before. As their retreat became visible, an almost deafening and universal shout was raised by our men. "Huzza! Huzza! Huzza!" This shout was almost equal to that of the savages at the commencement of the battle; ours was the shout of victory, theirs was the shout of ferocious but disappointed hope.

The morning light disclosed the fact that the killed and wounded of our army, numbering between eight and nine hundred men, amounted to one hundred and eight. Thirty-six Indians were found near our lines. Many of their dead were carried off during the battle. This fact was proved by the discovery of many Indian graves recently made near their town. Ours was a bloody victory, theirs a bloody defeat.

Soon after breakfast an Indian chief was discovered on the prairie, about eighty yards from our front line, wrapped in a piece of white cloth. He was found by a soldier by the name of Miller, a resident of Jeffersonville, Indiana. The Indian was wounded in one of his legs, the ball having penetrated his knee and passed down his leg, breaking the bone as it passed. Miller put his foot against him and he raised up his head and said: "Don't kill me, don't kill me." At the same time five or six regular soldiers tried to shoot him, but their muskets snapped and misfired. Major Davis Floyd came riding toward him with dragoon sword and pistols and said he "would show them how to kill Indians," when a messenger came from General Harrison commanding that he should be taken prisoner. He was taken into camp, where the surgeon dressed his wounds. There he refused to speak a word of English or tell a word of truth. Through the medium of an interpreter he said that he was a friend of white people and that the Indians shot him. While he was coming to camp to tell General Harrison that they were about to attack the army. He refused to have his leg amputated, though he was told that amputation was the only means of saving his life. One dogma of Indian superstition is that all good and brave Indians, when they die, go to a delightful region. Abounding with deer and other game, and to be a successful hunter, he should have all his limbs, his gun and his dog. He therefore

preferred death with all his limbs to life without them. In accordance with his request he was left to die, in company with an old squaw, who was found in the Indian town the next day when he was taken prisoner. They were left in one of their tents.

At the time this Indian was taken prisoner, another Indian who was wounded in the body, rose to his feet in the middle of the prairie, and began to walk towards the woods on the opposite side. A number of regular soldiers shot at him but missed him. A man who was a member of the same company with me, Henry Huckleberry, ran a few steps into the prairie and shot an ounce ball through his body and he fell dead near the margin of the woods. Some Kentucky volunteers went across the prairie immediately and scalped him, dividing his scalp into four pieces, each one cutting a hole in each piece, putting his ramrod through the hole, and placing his part of the scalp just behind the first thimble of his gun, near its muzzle. Such was the fate of nearly all of the Indians found dead on the battle-ground, and such was the disposition of their scalps.

The death of Owens, and the fact that Davies was mortally wounded, with the remembrance also that a large portion of Kentucky's best blood had been shed by the Indians, must be their apology for this barbarous conduct. Such conduct will be excused by all who witnessed the treachery of the Indians, and saw the bloody scenes of this battle.

Tecumseh being absent at the time of battle, a chief called White Loon was the chief commander of the Indians. He was seen in the morning after the battle, riding a large white horse in the woods across the prairie, where he was shot by a volunteer named Montgomery, who is now living in the southwest part of the State. At the crack of his rifle the horse jumped as if the ball had hit him. The Indian rode off toward the town and we saw him no more. During the battle the prophet was safely located on a hill, beyond the reach of our balls, praying to the Great Spirit to give victory to the Indians, having previously assured them that the Great Spirit would change our powder into ashes and sand.

We had about forty head of beef when we came to the battle. They all ran off the night of the battle, or they were driven off by the Indians, so that they were all lost. We received rations for two days on the morning after the action. We received no more rations until the next Tuesday evening, being six days afterwards. The Indians having retreated to their town, we performed the solemn duty of consigning to their graves our dead soldiers, without shrouds or coffins. They

were placed in graves about two feet deep, from five to ten in each grave.

General Harrison having learned that Tecumseh was expected to return from the south with a number of Indians whom he had enlisted in the cause, called a council of his officers, who advised him to remain on the battlefield and fortify his camp by a breastwork of logs around, about four feet high. This work was completed during the day and all the troops were placed immediately behind each line of the work when they were ordered to pass the watchword from right to left every five minutes, so that no man was permitted to sleep during the night. The watchword on the night before the battle was "Wide awake, wide awake." To me it was it was a long, cold, cheerless night.

On the next day the dragoons went to Prophet's town, which they found deserted by all the Indians, except the old squaw, whom they brought into the camp and left her with the wounded chief mentioned. The dragoons set fire to the town and it was all consumed, casting up a brilliant light amid the darkness of the ensuing night. I arrived at the town when it was half on fire. I found large quantities of corn, beans and peas. I filled my knapsack with these articles and carried them to the camp and divided them with the members of our mess, consisting of six men. Having these articles of food, we declined eating horse-flesh, which was eaten by a large porting of our men.

Naylor, Isaac, "The Battle of Tippecanoe as Described by Judge Isaac Taylor, a Participant—A Recently Discovered Account," *The Indiana Magazine of History*, Vol. II, No. 4, December, 1906, pp. 164-169.

Naylor's Confusing Description of Davis Floyd at the Battle

Isaac Naylor wrote the following concerning Davis Floyd at the Tippecanoe Battle:

[Davis Floyd] was the adjutant of the Squadron of dragoons commanded by Col. Joseph H. Daviess, in the army of Tippecanoe. He was one of those, who charged the Indians when the Commander Daviess received his mortal wound. As a volunteer he left Vincennes in the afternoon to go to Fort Harrison, where it was surrounded by Indians, to ascertain the condition of the Fort and garrison, rode all night, went so near the Fort, that he was discovered and pursued, by a number of Indians on horseback, for many miles. He accomplished his object and arrived safe at Vincennes.

We know that Davis Floyd was with Gen. Harrison's army on the day before the Battle and on the day of the Battle from the reports of Judge Naylor. He was constantly at the side of Maj. Daveiss. That means that the last sentence in the narrative presented above was referring to Floyd at another time. We know that Naylor's unit left Clark County on September 12th, 1811 and arrived in Vincennes "in about six days, marching 120 miles." They stayed there about a week and then marched to a point about sixty miles north of Vincennes on the Wabash River where Fort Harrison was constructed. Therefore, Fort Harrison was probably built in the month of October 1811. The fort was named for Gen. Harrison by Maj. Daveiss.

Naylor goes on to say "the glorious defense of this fort nine months after it was erected, by Captain Z. [Zackary] Taylor, was the first step in the brilliant military triumph that made him President of the United States." Nine months later would be sometime in the summer of 1812 maybe in July. It is at this time in the summer of 1812 that Naylor is describing a dangerous mission that Floyd voluntarily undertook to determine the condition of the fort and garrison at Fort Harrison and to report back at Vincennes.

One can also imagine the devotion that Floyd had to Daveiss. Remember Floyd was supposed to be Daveiss' key witness for the government at the trial of Aaron Burr in Frankfort, Kentucky in the fall of 1806. The two men were Freemasons. There is no doubt that Floyd was at the side of Daveiss constantly while the latter's life drained out of him after he was mortally wounded in the Battle. Maybe Floyd's voluntary act was to honor his friend and fellow Mason for the ultimate sacrifice he had made.

Col. George Rogers Clark Floyd's Participation in the Battle

It is known that Col. George Rogers Clark Floyd, the son of Col. and Judge John Floyd of Kentucky, and a blood first cousin of Davis Floyd, was at the Battle of Tippecanoe. The *Regular Army Register* for the period from 1779 to 1879 reports that George R. C. Floyd was a Lieutenant Colonel in the Seventh Regiment of Infantry, 26 Aug., 1812. According to the roll of the field and staff of the 4th Regiment of Infantry for November and December, 1811 at the Battle of Tippecanoe, Major G. R. C. Floyd was a member of that Roll. Also according to the *Plot of Tippecanoe at Battle Ground Floyd November 7, 1811* Floyd commanded two companies of regulars located on the front line and Col. Bartholomew commanded two other militia companies on the front line. However, the "Map of Tippecanoe Battle Field Showing Harrison's Camp on Evening of November 6, 1811" in the Official Brochure of the *Sesquicentennial of the Battle of Tippecanoe* shows six companies under Floyd those being the infantry companies commanded by Capt. Thorton Posey, Capt. William C. Baen, Capt. Josiah Snelling, Capt. George W. Presscott, Capt Return B. Brown and Lt. O. G. Burton.

William Floyd Tuley wrote in his book entitled *Tuley Family Memoirs and the Floyd Family Connection*:

Major George Rogers Clark Floyd, second son of Col. John Floyd, distinguished himself as a soldier, commanding the regulars at the battle of Tippecanoe. At the hour of the Indians under Tecumseh made the attack upon General Harrison's camp, Major Floyd was asleep. The yells of the savages awakened him and seizing his horse he mounted and rode into the fight, clothed only in his night dress. A soldier seeing his white clothes fluttering in the breeze, seized a cloak which he threw about the form of the Major, rendering his person a less conspicuous mark.

Tuley, *Tuley Family Memoirs and the Floyd Family Connection*, p. 71.

Davis Floyd's Participation in the Battle

An incident occurred after the battle involving Maj. Davis Floyd. Although Floyd held the rank of sergeant and then adjutant in the events leading up to the battle he had previously held the rank of major in the Indiana militia and it was not unusual for his friends to use the highest rank attained by him in identifying him. The incident was reported by Judge Isaac Naylor and is repeated here even though it appears in his whole narrative which is quoted in full above:

Soon after breakfast [after the battle] an Indian chief was discovered on the prairie, about eighty yards from our front line, wrapped in a piece of white cloth. He was found by a soldier by the name of Miller, a resident of Jeffersonville, Indiana. The Indian was wounded in one leg, the ball having penetrated his knee and passed down his leg, breaking the bone as it passed. Miller put his foot against him and he raised up his head and said: Don't kill me, don't kill me." At the same time five or six regular soldiers tried to shoot him, but their muskets snapped and missed fire. Maj. Davis Floyd came riding toward with dragoon sword and pistols and said he would show them how to kill Indians, when a messenger came from General Harrison commanding that he should be taken prisoner. He was taken into camp, where the surgeons dressed his wounds. Here he refused to speak a word of English or tell a word of truth. Through the medium of an interpreter he said that he was coming to the camp to tell General Harrison that they were about to attack the camp. He refused to have his leg amputated, though he was told that amputation was the only means of saving his life. One dogma of Indian superstition is that all good and brave Indians, when they die, go to a delightful region, abounding with deer, and other game, and to be a successful hunter he should have his limbs, his gun and his dog. He therefore preferred death with all his limbs to life without them. In accordance with his request he was left to die, in company with an old squaw, who was found in the Indian town the next day after he was taken prisoner. They were left in one of our tents.

Official Brochure Sesquicentennial of the Battle of Tippecanoe, p. 10.

Another account reported by Naylor on Davis Floyd's participation in the battle was as follows:

He [Davis Floyd] was the adjutant of the Squadron of dragoons commanded by Col. Joseph W. Daviess, in the army of Tippecanoe.

He was one of those, who charged the Indians where the Commander Daviess received his mortal wound.

Naylor, Isaac, Manuscript, p. 17.

Naylor was a sergeant in Capt. James Bigger's company of riflemen of the Indiana militia. His brother, William Naylor, was a private in the same company.

Apparently Floyd was with his commander Daveiss most of the time. In a report attributed to Harrison, he asked his officers after they had arrived in the vicinity of The Prophet's town on the afternoon of November 6th, 1811 whether the army should advance into the town or withdraw to another location. Harrison apparently was satisfied with the answer given by one of his officers:

Major Daveiss immediately replied, that from the right of the position of the dragoons, which was still in front the openings made by the low grounds of the Wabash could be seen; that with his adjutant Davis Floyd, he had advanced to the bank, which descends to the low grounds, and had a fair view of the cultivated fields and the houses of the town; and that the open woods, in which the troops were, continued without interruption to the town.... Upon marching a short distance further he came in view of the town, which was seen at some distance up the river upon a commanding eminence. Major Daveiss and adjutant Floyd had mistaken some scattering houses in the field below, for the town itself. The ground below the town was unfavorable for an encampment, the army marched on in the direction of the town, with a view to obtain a better situation beyond it.

Esarey, Logan, *Messages and Letters of William Henry Harrison*, Vol. I, 1800-1811, Indiana Historical Commission, 1922, pp. 610-611.

There are two accounts placing Davis Floyd with Daviess when he received wounds that resulted in his death the next day. Tipton recounts that White, Floyd, and Percil were three of the six or seven men who accompanied Daveiss on his charge to dislodge some Indians who were behind a log and some trees. White was Isaac White, a private in Capt. Parke's Troop of Light Dragoons, who was killed that day. Percil is probably Andrew Purcell who survived the charge.

He was also a private in Parke's dragoons. There is a dispute whether Daviess, Floyd, White, and Purcell were on foot or mounted on horseback. Naylor said that:

Colonel Daviess was mortally wounded early in the battle, gallantly charging the Indians on foot with sword and pistols according to his own request. He made this request three times before General Harrison would permit it. This charge was made by himself and eight dragoons on foot near the angle formed by the left flank and front line of the encampment.

Official Brochure, *Sesquicentennial of the Battle of Tippecanoe*, p 9.

Most engravings show the men on horseback. They were dragoons or cavalry soldiers and such a charge would have been more likely to be successful on horseback rather than on foot. Plus they had time to saddle up their horses. In fact, it would have been foolish to charge the Indians on foot with them hidden behind a log and trees. However, Naylor expressly said they charged on foot.

The *Kentucky Gazette* reported on the battle in its November 19th, 1811 issue. The article said in part that "Too much cannot be said in favour of Colonel Boyd's regiment of regulars and Major Floyd's [George Rogers Clark Floyd] detachment, who sustained the heat of the action, and acquitted themselves like heroes." (*Kentucky Gazette*, Number 47, Volume II, Tuesday, 19 November 1811, Number 1362, Volume 25.

Davis Floyd was an adjutant at the Battle of Tippecanoe. The duties of an adjutant in the Army have been the same since the Revolutionary War. The author recently found the following description of an adjutant's duties:

[The adjutant's duties...concern the personnel records, the discipline, the pay, the morale, the duty rosters, the periodic reports of strength,

health, punishment; the collection sheets, the service records and efficiency reports....

There are some unmistakable hallmarks of the good adjutant which may well be listed here.... He must be fair and have a reputation for square dealing, both with the enlisted men and junior officers. He must be patient, solicitous for the welfare of the juniors as well as the seniors in the unit. He must be industrious. A slovenly adjutant does not last long. It is well for him to be an example to the other officers in dress, personal appearance and in compliance with...regulations. The man who issues orders must be the first to obey them.

The adjutant of a unit must be familiar with the customs of the service, for he bears a relation to many manners which are governed largely by ancient military custom. In the matter of calls, receptions, displaying the flag, handling the semisocial functions, he is expected to know the desires of the commanding officer and to supervise preparations.

Arnold, Lieutenant General H. H., and Eaker, Major General Ira C., *Army Flyer*, Harper & Brothers, New York, New York, and London, England, 1942, pp. 134-137.

The authors of this book go on to say that adjutants must be "good office managers, good administrators, and good staff officers." Floyd was probably very good in these duties. Most of his career focused on administration rather than leadership.

After-Events of the Battle of Tippecanoe

Two events happened in Clark County after the Battle of Tippecanoe. According to a publication entitled *War of 1812 Soldiers Indiana Militia* self-published by Charles M. Franklin in 1984, there was a company in Clark County of mounted volunteer riflemen or dragoons. The company was activated on August 16th, 1812 and discharged on September 24th, 1812. John B. Pittman was the Captain, Henry Giles, the 1st Lieutenant, John Owen, the 2nd Lieutenant, and Davis Floyd, the Ensign. John Owen was probably the man who served with Floyd on the Clark County Anti-slavery Committee. Floyd's step-son or rather his

adopted son, Gabriel Jones Floyd, was a corporal in the company. Joseph Bartholomew was a private.

On August 12th, 1812 Acting Gov. Gibson had ordered the activation of Capt. Pittman's company saying the following "The men under your command will still keep up the same vigilance. The Militia of this Territory will in a great measure leave for the North. Then our force of able bodied men will be much reduced and it will be necessary to carefully watch every point of our frontier."

The first event occurred on September 3rd, 1812. Pigeon Roost was a community of scattered cabins established in Clark County, now a part of Scott County, in 1809 by a group of twelve families. The place got its name from the huge hoard of flocking pigeons that roosted in the area. On the aforementioned date Indians attacked the small community and killed three men, five women, and sixteen children. One of the murdered women was scalped and her unborn baby likewise was scalped and laid in her arms after she had been raped. Another woman stuffed a shawl into her infant's month to keep its cries from being heard by nearby Indians and after they departed, she discovered she had inadvertently suffocated her child. Most of the able-bodied men were away from the community serving in Capt. Pittman's company which was probably in Vincennes at the time.

The second event was described in a letter from Floyd to Gov. Gibson:

Charles Town, March 24, 1813

On the night of the twenty first about one o'clock at night I had information that the Indians had attacked a house about 7 miles from this place and had killed and wounded several of the family I arose tho in very ill health and a sun up was at the place with about twenty men. We found the owner of the house a Mr Huffman killed, his wife badly wounded and one of his daughters slightly wounded and a little boy his grandson, missing, the Indians had also killed two horses and

stripped the saddle, and bridles off them and taken them off after a little examination we found a trace made by horses and pursued it after a very forced march of about 20 miles came up with the Indians four in number. they had been detained crossing the Mushkaqueteck [Muscatatuck River] which was very high and when we came in sight I believe that they were just getting out of the river on the opposite shore. I put spurs to my horse and before they had time to mount was on the opposite bank say thirty or forty yards apart one of the Indians who was either more unwilling or more unable to leave the horses than the rest was in the act of picking up his little clothing and before I was prepared to fire he had retreated say twenty steps he again halted and stooped down appearing to be trying to get on a mokison [moccasin] and while in that attitude I took deliberate aim at his body perfectly fair as soon as my gun fired he sprang to his feet and turned and walked off for all appearance unable to run and where he had halted left one legging his knapsack with his little trinkets, I immediately ordered such of the men as were riding the stoutest horses to plunge in and swim across but in doing so out of five who made the attempt (myself amongst the number) only two guns were dry and two of that number were like to be drowned upon attempting to pursue I found that they scattered and made to poor dry ridges where they could not be tracked. The bottom of the crick [creek] was all covered with water and we could find no blood. After I shot I believe there were nine or ten others fired at the same fellows back and him walking off before he got out of our gunshot. We brought in the horses and all the little plunder which they had.

In great haste I am Respectfully
Your Obedient Servant

Davis Floyd

Esarey, Logan, *Governors Messages and Letter--Mesages and Letters of William Henry Harrison (Concluded)*, Indiana Historical Commission, Indianapolis, Indiana, 1922, pp. 396-397.

The Indian attack described in Floyd's letter is also mentioned in a book entitled *History of The Ohio Falls Cities and Their Counties with Illustrations and Biographical Sketches* published in 1882.

In the spring of 1813 another party of Indians, or the same that were at Pigeon Roost, came into the neighborhood of Zebulon Collins, about nine miles northwest of Charlestown. They concealed themselves behind the bank of Silver creek, and shot Mr. Huffman, who at that moment came to the door to look for his two sons, who were playing in the bottom below the house. The old gentleman was killed instantly, and the ball passed through the body of his wife. She

recovered from this wound, although it was thought at first to be fatal. They took one of the children into captivity, and kept him for a number of years. His relatives afterwards, through the aid of the General Government, ascertained his whereabouts, and secured his release. During the time of his captivity he had become so uncivilized and so attached to the Indians and their manners, that it was with no little difficulty his friends succeeded in persuading him to leave the savage tribes and return to his home and relations.

A company of soldiers were stationed at this time at Zebulon Collin's, which was only a few hundred yards from Huffman's house; and had they attended to their duty they could have protected the Huffman family. It being the Sabbath day, they had abandoned their posts and gone off to enjoy the society of some young people in the neighborhood.....

History of the Ohio Falls Cities and Their Counties with Illustrations and Biological Sketches, Vol. II, L. A. Williams & Co., Cleveland, Ohio, 1882, p. 361.

According to an earlier passage in this account, the author apparently lived in Charlestown and remembered hearing a runner before daylight sounding the alarm to the citizens. Whether Floyd was in Charlestown at the time or came there from Jeffersonville is unknown.

What provoked these two reprisals by the Indians? Captain Lewis C. Baird in his *Baird's History of Clark County Indiana* published in 1909 said

The Pigeon Roost massacre was not an Indian raid as has been so often stated. The Indians passed through the little hamlet which was the nucleus of Vienna and never harmed a soul, while there. There had been bad blood between the Collins family and the Indians for some time. The Collins boys had stolen a fawn from the Indians and refused to give it up, and from this cause and possible some other, the whole trouble originated. Those other than Collins were killed only because they lived in that neighborhood. Neither before nor after the massacre were other white people harmed, showing conclusively that it was only a local fight and giving no cause for alarm to other settlers.

Baird, Captain Lewis C., *Baird's History of Clark County Indiana*, B. F. Bowen & Company, Publishers, Indianapolis, Indiana, 1909, p. 147.

Baird ignored or did not know about the second incident which occurred about six months later. Other authors have done the same thing. But the two events were relatively isolated.

By 1812 Gov. Harrison's political career in the Indiana Territory had ended although he did not give up his governorship until 1813. In the meantime he defected to Kentucky where he received an appointment as a brevet major general giving him the command of that state's militia and volunteers. The appointment violated both Kentucky's constitution and its state laws. But Harrison was never the man to be troubled by such technicalities. He then started maneuvering for the rank of major general in the United States Army but only got the rank of brigadier general and the command of the troops in the Indiana and Illinois Territories. That created confusion in the Northwest Territory as to who was really in command. William Hull had suffered a dismal defeat at the hand of the British and the Indians at Ft. Detroit and then James Winchester sustained a similar defeat at the River Raisin Massacre, also in the Michigan Territory. Those defeats cleared the way for Harrison's appointment as major general of the Eighth Military District composed of the States of Kentucky and Ohio and the Territories of Indiana, Illinois, and Missouri, and Thomas Posey's appointment as Governor of the Indiana Territory. Harrison would go on to defeat the British at the Battle of the Thames in which battle Tecumseh was killed. Although he was known for his military exploits as "Tippecanoe and Tyler Too" he should have been known as "Tippecanoe and Thames Too."

Hostilities Eventually Settled Down

In a book entitled *Fort Harrison on the Banks of the Wabash--1812-1912* published at the direction of the Fort Harrison Centennial Association in 1912, it was reported that "July 4, 1817, was the first one ever celebrated [probably the fifth anniversary of the building of the fort] in Terre Haute. The celebration ball

was in Henry Redford's new hewn log house, known at The Eagle and Lion Tavern. The record says, 'Major Chunn with his officers, Lieutenants [Robert] Sturgis and Floyd [probably Gabriel Jones Floyd], Drs. Clark and McCullough, with several other gentlemen with their ladies residing at the Fort, were of the happy crowd of celebrants.'" (See p. 28.) The book mentions Davis Floyd on page 54 as one of the distinguished men at Fort Harrison and the Battle of Tippecanoe and stated simply: "Sergeant in Captain Beggs' company. Floyd County was named for Sergeant Floyd."

The War of 1812 was fought, Tecumseh was killed, and Harrison returned to civilian life. The capitol of the Indiana Territory moved from Vincennes to Corydon and Davis Floyd moved to where there would be new action for him and his family.

Books and referenced relied upon other than those cited in this chapter:

- (1) Cleaves, Freeman, *Old Tippecanoe--William Henry Harrison and His Time*, Kennikat Press, Port Washington, New York, 1939.
- (2) Esarey, Logan, *Messages and Letters of William Henry Harrison*, Vol. I, 1800-1811, Indiana Historical Commission, Indianapolis, Indiana, 1922.

Images:

- (1) Map of Indiana Territory in 1811 Showing Harrison's Line of March and Ft. Harrison.
- (2) Map of Vicinity of Tippecanoe Battle Field Showing Line of March on November 6, 1811.
- (3) Plot of Tippecanoe Battle Ground, November 7th, 1811 by Adolph Hallenberg, Del. 1897.
- (4) Engraving of Daveiss, Floyd, et al charge on the Indians in the Battle of Tippecanoe (History of Freemasonry).

- (5) William Henry Harrison, in the dress of uniform of the War of 1812, from a painting attributed to Rembrandt Peale.
- (6) Photograph of Monument at the Tippecanoe Battle Ground.
- (7) Photographs of scenes at the Tippecanoe Battlefield Park near Lafayette, Indiana.
- (8) Photographs of scenes of Sugar Creek at Turkey Run State Park near Marshall, Indiana.