

## This and That - War of 1812

Written by Helen Kaverman  
Monday, June 25, 2012 10:57 AM -

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The church bells tolled at high noon for six minutes in Fort Jennings on Monday to commemorate the 200th anniversary of the beginning of the War of 1812. Bell ringing ceremonies such as this were performed in many parts of Ohio. A 15 star, 15 stripe flag was raised at the monument on State Route 189, which marks the location where it is believed the actual fort stood.

The ceremonies included a reading of President Madison's Declaration of War and a moment of silence to honor the 12 soldiers buried at Ft. Jennings during the War of 1812. It was also to remember all those who are serving or have served our country. The 12 soldiers buried at Fort Jennings were not killed in battle but died of swamp fever. Members of the Fort Jennings High School Band played the "Star Spangled Banner" after a reading was given on the history of our National Anthem by the Boy Scouts, Girl Scouts and the American Legion.



### Madison's Declaration of War

#### Part 1

On June 1, 1812, President James Madison sent a war message to Congress. This document cited numerous American grievances against Great Britain, including impressment of US sailors into the Royal Navy, the practice of searching American vessels in American waters, trade policies that hurt the American economy and finally the incitement of the Natives to violence by the British Army. A few days later the House of Representatives voted 79 to 49 in favor of war. President Madison signed the Declaration of War on June, 18, 1812. On that same day the declaration was read across countless cities and towns and was met with the ringing of the bells.

#### Part 2

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in

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Congress Assembled, that war be and the same is hereby declared to exist between the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland and the dependencies thereof, and the United States of America and their territories; and that the President of the United States is hereby authorized to use the whole land and naval force of the United States to carry the same into effect, and to issue to private armed vessels of the United States commissions or letters of marquee and general reprisal, in such for as he shall think proper, and under the seal of the United States, against the vessels, goods, and effects of the government of the said United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland, and the subjects thereof. APPROVED June 18, 1812

The War of 1812 played an important role in the shaping of west central and northwestern Ohio. The following forts were located in the Northwest Territory. They are: Fort Amanda, east of Spencerville; Fort Auglaize, near Wapakoneta; Fort Ball, Tiffin; Fort Barbee (St. Marys), Fort Brown, near Melrose; Fort Winchester (Fort Defiance), Fort Jennings, Fort Laramie; Fort Ferree, Upper Sandusky; Fort Findlay, Fort Necessity, near Williamstown (aka Mud Outpost); Fort Seneca, Old Fort; Fort Stephenson, Fremont, Fort Meigs, Perrysburg, Fort Morrow, near Norton, Urbana Fort (unnamed defense) and Girty's Town, Trading Post at St. Marys. These were all in Ohio. Then there was Fort Detroit and Fort Mackinac in Michigan and there was the Battle at River Raisin Monroe, Michigan. There was also Fort Dearborn, near Chicago and Fort Wayne (Indiana).

Transportation through Ohio was done on the rivers or on the paths along the rivers. The Auglaize River was a very important route from Fort Amanda to Fort Defiance. This was the only way to get through the deep, dark swamp. A group of Kentucky Militia was mustered in into the Army in Frankfort, Kentucky. They made their way to Fort St. Marys to join General William Harrison's Army. General Harrison ordered Lt. Col. Jennings to proceed down the Auglaize River, toward Fort Defiance, and establish an intermediate post and escort provisions to Gen. James Winchester on the Maumee River. Advancing about 30 miles, Lt. Col. Jennings saw signs of Indians and his spies reported the enemy was near Fort Defiance. He halted on the banks of the Auglaize and began building block houses. During the building of the fort, the men stationed there camped in tents. Fort Jennings was built as a supply fort.

The Ohio Historical Marker in front of the Fort Jennings Memorial Hall reads:

"On Sept. 21, 1812, Col. William Jennings, with his regiment of Kentucky Riflemen, was ordered by Gen. W. H. Harrison to cut a road from Fort Barbee at St. Marys to a point midway between that place and Defiance, and there establish a fort. The post was completed on this site in October 1812 and named in honor of its builder. The road begun by Col. Jennings was later extended to Fort Winchester by Col. Poague, builder of Fort Amanda. The Auglaize River Valley then became a major supply artery for Harrison's Army, operating to the northwest by boat and wagon in summer and by sled in winter. Troops and large quantities of Army stores were moved through here to the scenes of the major actions. The following description is on the reverse side of the marker: The War of 1812 in the Northwest. On June 18, 1812, a war began which is considered to be the final phase of the American Revolution. In the northwest, early actions were disastrous to the United States. The British, under General Proctor, and the Indians under Tecumseh, captured Mackinac Island, took Fort Dearborn (Chicago), forced General Hull to surrender his army at Detroit, and massacred General Winchester's Army on the River Raisin at Frenchtown (Monroe, Michigan). The way was open for an invasion of Ohio. In the spring and summer of 1813, the enemy failed in two attempts to take Fort Meigs, Gen. Harrison's bastion on the Maumee. The tide turned in favor of the Americans. In August, Major Croghan made his staunch stand at Fort Stephenson (Fremont) and in September, Commodore Perry swept the

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British fleet from the lakes in the Battle of Lake Erie near Put-In-Bay. General Harrison then invaded Canada and on October 5th won a decisive victory in the Battle of the Thames. Tecumseh was killed in this battle and the war, to all intents was over in the northwest." The War of 1812 ended in December of 1814. Fort Jennings was then abandoned as a military post.

(Continued next week)