

# SIEGE OF FORT HENRY

John Hanks

1777

From Zane's we went to the fort. While we were there one morning, were out Jacob Coles, John Mills and Dr. McMahon, looking for McMahon's heifer. McMahon was intending to move out of the fort. I was out at the spring, when the firing was heard. About twenty men seized their guns and ran out. Jacob Coles and John Mills were killed, and Dr. McMahon wounded. The Indians seemed to have made as much sign as possible. When they got to the mouth of Wheeling to which the trace led, John Saunders said to the Company, "I wish we were over the other side of the River." Some one said they wouldn't wish to be over the other side. Letters were found on the trail, left by the Indians inviting the pursuers to come over and join them that if they would bring a flag they shouldn't be hurt, and should have fine quarters at Detroit. Dreading some evil consequences from these letters, all the members of the party were mutually sworn not to divulge the secret of their contents, for the next six months....

Dr. McMahon sent an Irishman, and his black man Loudon, out in the morning to get the oxen. When they got out, the Indians were in ambush and took after them. The Irishman was overtaken and tomahawked; but the negro, who was too swift for them rushed into the fort, and cried "Indians, Indians." The men in the fort snatched up their guns, and ran, some without their hats. A high mountain puts in just by Wheeling. There the Indians drew the pursuing party to follow them round this mountain, having others prepared to follow them in the rear, till they closed in on both sides, and the whole party but two cut off. These were Sam. Mason (a Captain) and one Caldwell, who did not get started as soon as the others, and so were not surrounded. Mason and his sergeant encountered two Indians, Mason called on the sergeant to shoot. Both shot on both sides. Both the Indians and the sergeant, named Steell, were killed and Mason wounded. He now crept down under the banks of Wheeling Creek, where he lay till night, and then got on to Shepherd's fort, about six miles.

Reuben Gold Thwaites, ed. *Frontier Defense on the Upper Ohio, 1777-1778*. (Madison: 1912):58-61.