

Kentucky Soldiers At The Battles Of Frenchtown And The River Raisin Massacre

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Introduction

When the nation called during our second war with the United Kingdom the men of Kentucky answered the call. They participated in engagements from Fort Meigs to the Battle of New Orleans fighting and dying as their fathers and grandfathers had done during the Revolution. Two such engagements were the Battles of Frenchtown and the ensuing massacre.

Abstract

Research on The War of 1812 has been sporadic over the last two hundred years. Despite the two centuries which have passed, significant gaps in the scholarship remain. Most individuals recognize that Kentucky troops played a major role in the war, but their participation and the number of casualties they suffered remains speculative. American newspaper accounts of the period, written with an eye to sell more copies, may not be accurate as they historically over inflated the number of dead. At the same time, British accounts tend to downplay the numbers of American troops involved for their own political reasons.

Working with Dr. Adrian Mandzy on an ongoing research project about the War of 1812, we focused our attention on the number of Kentucky troops involved in the January 1813 River Raisin Massacre. Using pension requests, the published 1891 Kentucky National Guard Adjutant Generals Report, and a document found within the Draper Manuscript Collection (documents collected by Lyman Draper in the mid-19th century), we were able to calculate the approximate numbers of Kentuckians who fought and died at this engagement. Once we complete our research, we hope to publish our findings in the Journal of America's Military Past.



Reconstruction of the Kentucky Battle Flag Lost at Frenchtown.
Curtesy of the Kentucky National Guard Public Affairs Office.

<https://www.dvidshub.net/image/6493064/kentuckys-river-raisin-battle-flag>



Massacre of the American Prisoners, at French-town, on the River Raisin, by the Savages Under the Command of the British Genl. Proctor: January 23rd, 1813

Courtesy of the University of Michigan - William L. Clements Library

Conclusions

1st Battle (18 January 1813)

1st Regiment Kentucky Militia – 200 Men
2nd Regiment Kentucky Militia – 21 Men
5th Regiment Kentucky Militia – 330 Men
1st Rifle Regiment Kentucky Militia – 110 Men

2nd Battle (22 January 1813)

17th United States Infantry Regiment – 225 Men
19th United States Infantry Regiment – 75 Men
1st Regiment Kentucky Militia – 196 Men
2nd Regiment Kentucky Militia – 21 Men
5th Regiment Kentucky Militia – 325 Men
1st Rifle Regiment Kentucky Militia – 107 Men

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