

REMEMBER THE RAISIN

October-December 2008 Issue No. Four

www.riverraisinbattlefield.org

River Raisin Battlefield Visitor Center
1403 E. Elm Ave., Monroe, MI 48162

HISTORICAL
MUSEUM
TELEPHONE
(734) 240-7780

VISITOR
CENTER HOURS
APR-SEPT
FRI, SAT, SUN,
1PM-5PM

News from the Battlefield

WAR OF 1812 ROUNDTABLE

Mike Waskul and Dave Washburn will provide a detailed presentation on another obscure, but fascinating battle of the War of 1812. This time, their investigations concern what may have been the very last land battle of the war, the Battle of the Sink Hole, fought on May 24, 1815.

“Finding a Lost Battlefield”

Saturday, November 8, 2008 at 7:00PM

River Raisin Battlefield Visitor Center
1403 E. Elm Ave., Monroe
(1/4 mile east of Exit 14, off I-75)

OPEN HOUSE FOR AUTHOR NAVEAUX

The FRRB hosted an Open House book signing event for founding member Ralph Naveaux's new book Invaded on all Sides; the Story of Michigan's Greatest Battlefield. Many came to the Monroe Bank & Trust building in downtown Monroe to enjoy words from Ralph and refreshments.

MEMBER APPEARS IN CABLE MAGAZINE

Chuck Estep continues to appear in the national media for his efforts in creating Virtual Field Trips (VFT's) for the classroom. This time, he appeared in an article by Ellen Ullman in the October 2008 issue of Cable in the Classroom, complete with photos of himself in our 2nd Regiment uniform, along with John Gibney and several members of Lacroix's company and museum volunteers. To view article or listen to a podcast interview, go online to: <http://www.ciconline.org/cicmagazine-oct08>.

In this issue:
Naveaux Book,
Bicentennial News,
LaCroix Events,
Lantern Tours,
Frenchtown Diaries



Ralph Naveaux signing his new book, *Invaded on All Sides*, for Monroe residents Richard and Marjorie Sieb, supporters of Monroe history. Photo submitted by Laurel Heyman.



Cable in the Classroom magazine cover with FRRB member Chuck Estep.



Author Naveaux receiving plaque from Monroe County Commissioner Floreine Mentel. Read more on page 3. Photo submitted by Laurel Heyman.

NEWS FROM THE 1812 BICENTENNIAL COMMITTEES

On the national scene, Congress passed legislation to create a 175-mile long **Star-Spangled Banner National Historic Trail** that ties together Washington, D.C., and 1812 era sites around the Chesapeake Bay area in the states of Maryland & Virginia. The National Park Service has completed its report to Congress on the state of 1812 & Rev War sites as legislation progresses regarding the creation of the River Raisin National Battlefield, for which our mayor, Mark Worrell, and our society president, Bill Braunlich, were testifying before Senate subcommittees in September.

Meanwhile, in Canada, the Niagara Falls Council has awarded \$2 million to the **Lundy's Lane Battlefield Legacy Project**. (Lundy's Lane was arguably the bloodiest battle of the war.) Their goal, as reported by The Journal of the War of 1812, is to secure some \$11 million from Canadian government sources in advance of the bicentennial. Doesn't Michigan deserve (and need) federal largesse on this scale?

The **Michigan War of 1812 Bicentennial Commission** met in Lansing on August 25. In addition to puzzling over some means of acquiring funding for the commission, members are pursuing ways of listing the state's 1812 assets and supporting local commemorative efforts. A logo design is in the works and a communications plan is being drafted. Michigan Public Radio has expressed interest in creating a documentary, and educational programming is being considered.

Monroe County's War of 1812 Bicentennial Steering Committee gathered at the Battlefield Visitor Center on September 11, where they got a first sight of a wonderfully detailed diorama of French Town produced by the kids at the County Youth Home. The funding committee announced a reduction in the ATT grant, but still enough to run the ISD's fiber optic cables out to the battlefield. They have also begun planning the annual sponsor breakfast and the Dancing through Time fundraiser. Plans are still proceeding for the Art League's January art contest. Discussions were held regarding the Bicentennial Club newsletter, brochure project, student essay contest, tourism, web site, Hull's Road as a fixture in coastal & greenway initiatives, and the historical marker project.

The **War in the Western Theatre Legacy Council** unites professional staff of regional War of 1812 sites with the view of increasing public awareness and education, cooperative marketing, coordination of events, and site preservation. Work is being done on a web site. At Fort Meigs on September 24th, Ron Dale of Parcs Canada presented Ontario's plans to capitalize on existing marketing by adding a bicentennial theme to annual events. Towns on Lake Ontario will pool funding for international marketing of an opera, some mega re-enactments and a 2013 tour of tall ships.

FRRB News & Events

≈ Next Meeting ≈
Sunday, October 19, 2:00PM
River Raisin Battlefield
Visitor Center
1403 E. Elm Ave., Monroe

SEPTEMBER 20, 2008 MEETING

Judy Yokom has resigned as Secretary due to conflicts with her schedule. President Ken Howard has appointed Cathy Taylor to serve as interim Secretary until an election can be held. A nominations committee was voted in, consisting of Floreine Mentel, Sue Grassley, and Sherri Howard.

Discussions were held concerning coming events and some money was allocated to help with the reprinting of a battlefield brochure. Events include Mississinewa on October 11-12, the October Lantern Tours, January 23rd Dancing through Time, and January 24th Battle Commemoration. There will also be an Art League contest on January 17th and a clothing presentation at the Sawyer House on January 20th.

OUR NEWEST MEMBER

On September 26, Judith Bargeon of Monroe became the newest FRRB. She is also a member of the Daughters of the War of 1812 and the Nancy DeGraff Toll Chapter of the Daughters of the American Revolution. Welcome aboard!

Publications

NEW NAVEAUX BOOK

Ralph Naveaux, founding FRRB member, has recently completed a book on the Battle of the River Raisin entitled *Invaded on all Sides; the Story of Michigan's Greatest Battlefield*. The 400-page, soft-cover book retails for \$19.95 and is available at the Monroe County Historical Museum and the Book Nook.

QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER

The Journal of the War of 1812 is a quarterly newsletter available from The War of 1812 Consortium, Inc., c/o Star Spangled Banner Flag House, 844 E. Pratt St., Baltimore, MD 21202. Annual subscriptions run \$12.50. The summer issue contained around 30 pages, including fascinating articles on such topics as the lead-up to the Battle of Horseshoe Bend, the invasion of Florida, the chronology of the war, a profile of Isaac Hull, Massachusetts in the war, the USS Constitution Museum, and many others.

Lantern Tours

OCTOBER 17, 18, 24, & 25

Don't forget, the 2008 Monroe County Historical Museum Lantern Tours will take place on October 17, 18 & 24, 25. This year's theme is ***"Mischief, Mayhem & Murder: A Legendary Night in 1808."*** We will step back in time to an autumn evening in 1808, where mischief and mayhem reign supreme! Newlyweds find themselves victims of a surprise

LaCroix Events

PARADES AND BOOK SIGNING

There were no major meetings or events over the summer, although several FRRB members did participate in the decoration of a float and also marched in the Fair Parade on July 31, where they were viewed by thousands of onlookers and once again won honors from parade officials. Afterwards, members shared duties with the Friends of Potter Cemetery at the Eby Cabin on the Monroe County Fairgrounds.

On Sept. 6, a delegation of 5 men and 4 women participated in the historical weekend at Perry's Victory and International Peace Memorial in Put-in-Bay, Ohio. LaCroix's company contributed half the muskets for the initial firing demonstration on Saturday morning. Later, we marched in the downtown parade and took part in the afternoon

tactical demonstration, before retiring to the island winery. As NPS "Volunteers in Parks," we were provided cartridges and reimbursed for mileage and transportation by ferry.

A book signing for "Invaded on all Sides" was held at the Monroe Bank & Trust building on September 25. Several dozen notables attended and enjoyed conversations with the author, as well as the wine & cheese, and the view looking north over the River Raisin. A county community service plaque was presented to the author.

Ralph's wishes to thank Floreine, the Grassley's, the Howard's, Cathy, and all the others who dressed up or helped at the book signing. Thanks to John & Judy for the cake with the picture of my book on top.



Indian Village scene from Lantern Tours.

charivari. Partygoer James Knaggs has troubles of his own. And legendary ghosts and goblins are up to all kinds of mischief.

We are very grateful to all of you who volunteered to participate this year in whatever capacity. The success of Lantern Tours depends upon your generosity. A special 'Thank You' to Ralph Naveaux

for 20+ years of successful Lantern Tours, and all his support in handing over the "Lantern." Ralph you will be sorely missed....

Reservations for tours can be made by call the Monroe County Historical Museum at (734) 240-7780. Re-enactors are always welcome to participate.

FRENCHTOWN DIARIES: WAR OF 1812 IN MICHIGAN

The Prophet's village at Tippecanoe, near midnight, Nov. 6, 1811:

The Prophet's Town was a small, but handsome village of a couple hundred cabannes. It was equipped with a large, central storehouse containing about 3,000 bushels of corn and beans. One could have mistaken it for a comfortable, sleepy haven of peace, were it not for the furtive activity taking place throughout the night.ⁱ

Peter Navarre stirred groggily under his blanket. He had been awakened by noises coming from outside his shelter. The noises were made by native warriors pecking sharp edges onto their gunflints.

As he began to throw off his covering, the low voice of Jean-Baptiste Sanscrainte came to him out of the darkness: "Be still," Baptiste whispered, "if you value your life."

Navarre did as he was told, wondering just what was going on. Hours seemed to pass as he waited and reflected on the events which had brought them to this hotbed of Native-American resistance.

It had all started when Sanscrainte invited him to join his fur trading venture to the Prairie Potawatomes near Chicago. After visiting several villages, they had acquired only a small quantity of furs. When he complained about their lack of success, Sanscrainte had assured him they do better on their return trip to the Maumee. This is what had brought them, after more than a month of travel, to the Prophet's town. Unfortunately, they arrived just as General Harrison appeared with an American army.

So instead of trading, the village chiefs had spent most of the previous day negotiating with General Harrison. Tecumseh being absent at the time, leadership fell to the Prophet. The Miami chief White Moon (White Loon), and the Potawatomi chiefs Stone Eater, and Winemac were all more in a mood to fight rather than trade. Navarre and Sanscrainte, discouraged, had retired early.ⁱⁱ

Village of Tippecanoe, Wabash River, 4:00AM, Nov. 7, 1811:

It was an hour or more before dawn, when the noise of battle came in through the stillness of the night. At first, Navarre and Sanscrainte had strained to hear beneath the patter of a drizzling rain, but gradually the sound of gunfire rose in volume as the battle peaked at a point about 3 miles away from them.

The two traders decided it would be best if the American soldiers did not find them in the Indian village after the fighting, or they might mistake them for renegades or British collaborators. So they quietly packed up their belongings and left for home.ⁱⁱⁱ

The American army was not caught completely unawares. General Harrison had ordered his men to sleep on their arms, and had himself come out of his tent just minutes before the attack began. The orderly musician was standing by, ready to give three taps of the drum, the usual signal for the troops to get up and stand by their arms. Ten minutes more, and the troops would be standing in line of battle.

Some of the soldiers were already up and throwing fresh wood on the morning fires. Silhouetted against the flames, they made easy targets. Realizing their exposure, the men made frantic efforts to douse the fires, but to no avail. Those who tried were quickly picked off by Indian sharpshooters.

Although inexperienced, the troops responded to their officers' commands to form and hold their lines, keeping up a heavy fire into the dark shadows. Their muskets, loaded with buck and ball, were well designed for this type of indiscriminate firing.^{iv} As daylight broke over the tree line, Indian pressure slackened. The 4th Regiment and a detachment of dragoons mounted a charge. Giving 3 cheers, they drove the Indians off into the adjoining swamps.

38 warriors were left dead in the field, and the troops found a few more bodies when they advanced to search and destroy the Prophet's abandoned village. Harrison's men lost 41 killed and 147 wounded, and their line had been forced three times, but they had finally won the day and delivered a heavy blow to the prestige of the Prophet.^v

In their search, the soldiers found a severely wounded Potawatomi chief. Taken before Governor Harrison, the chief expressed regrets for the attack and blamed the Prophet for misleading them.

Harrison had the surgeon dress the Potawatomi's wounds and left him on the field of battle. He was given a message to deliver to the rest of the Indians, urging them to abandon the Prophet and to agree to the governor's terms for peace.

Continued on page 5.

Battlefield Artifact Corner



TOMAHAWK HEAD

Frenchtown Diaries: War of 1812 in Michigan

(Continued from page 4)

ⁱ Walker, Adam. A Journal of Two Campaigns of the Fourth Regiment of U.S. Infantry. Keene, N.H.: Sentinel Press, 1816. p 33-34.

ⁱⁱ Hosmer, Hezekiah Lord. Early History of the Maumee Valley. Toledo: Hosmer & Harris, 1858, p24.

ⁱⁱⁱ Michaels, Larry, and Robyn Hage. Peter Navarre, War of 1812 Scout: The Man Behind the Legend. Toledo: Bihl House Publishing, 2002, p47.

^{iv} Walker, Adam. A Journal of Two Campaigns of the Fourth Regiment of U.S. Infantry. Keene, N.H.: Sentinel Press, 1816. p15-33. Some of these "...statements are from Sergeant Montgomery Orr, of Capt. Barton's company...and that of William Brigham, a private of the late Captain Whitney's Company of Riflemen, who was on his post in front of Barton's Company at the time of the attack; the latter of whom was mortally wounded and died of his wounds a few weeks afterwards at Vincennes." Adam Walker, the writer of this journal, was also wounded during the battle. In his after action report, General Harrison says most of the army cartridges contained 12 buckshot, a load "admirably calculated for a night action."

^v McAfee, Robert. History of the Late War in the Western Country. Bowling Green, Ohio: Historical Publications Company, 1919 (reprint of 1816 original edition.) p 37-48.

AREN'T YOU A MEMBER?

Dues for a one year membership with the Friends of the River Raisin Battlefield are \$10.00 USD per individual or \$15.00 USD per family. An application is available on-line at www.riverraisinbattlefield.org. Mail dues with contact information (address, e-mail) to: **FRRB c/o Monroe County Historical Museum, 126 S. Monroe St., Monroe, MI 48161**

FRRB OFFICERS

President: Ken Howard
Vice-President: Floreine Mentel
Secretary: Cathy Taylor
Treasurer: Ralph Naveaux

SUBMISSIONS

This e-newsletter will be sent quarterly: January-March, April-June, July-September, & October-December. Submissions are invited and should be sent to Ralph at ralphnaveaux@att.net (new e-mail address) a month in advance of each issue. Space is limited to 4 pages. In some cases, updates & extra communications may be e-mailed on their own, separate from the newsletter.

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