

## Clarksburg and Marietta

The Ohio River was the western boundary of the British colonies and the United States for seventeen years from 1768 to 1785. During this period the line of forts constructed in 1774 from Fort Pitt to the headwaters of the West Fork of the Monongahela River---of which Nutter's on Elk Creek near Clarksburg, Richards' on the West Fork near present West Milford, West's on the West Fork near present Jane Lew, and Bush's on the Buckhannon River near present Buckhannon---gave protection for settlements that formed the frontier in northwestern Virginia. The land which lay between the forts and the Ohio River eighty miles to the west was wilderness where frontiersmen hunted game and scouted for Indians. Scouts from the West Fork settlements employed by the state of Virginia watched closely the area near the mouth of the Little Kanawha River on the Ohio River where Indians, crossing the Ohio from the area where the Muskingum River flows into the stream, made a highway up the Little Kanawha to harass settlements on the streams near Clarksburg.

After the state of Virginia in 1784 ceded to the United States her right to land northwest of the Ohio River, the Congress of the United States was determined not to repeat the mistakes of Virginia in settling new land in a haphazard way. The federal government sent to the West General Josiah Harmar who wrote from Fort Pitt January 24, 1785, of his mission: "Surveying or settling lands not within any particular state being forbid by the United States, in Congress assembled, the commander will employ such force as he may judge necessary in driving off persons attempting to settle in lands of the United States Government."<sup>1</sup> He cleared the land of settlers on the north bank of the Ohio for seventy miles downstream from Pittsburgh and established Fort Harmar on the west bank of the Muskingum River where the stream flows into the Ohio River so that he could protect government surveyors at work in the Seven Ranges in Ohio lands, ceded to the United States by purchase from the Indians, and stop the incursion of settlers into Ohio. Joseph Buell, orderly sergeant, who arrived in May 1785 at the garrison Harmar had begun to construct, by the twelfth of the month wrote in his journal that he had begun "to make our gardens,"<sup>2</sup> which in a print made of Fort Harmar in 1790<sup>3</sup> stood surrounded by a palisade of upended logs near the seven small buildings, also enclosed by a log palisade, that made up the garrison. When he was not making garden, Buell shingled barracks. On June 10, 1785, meat---which was "getting short" at the fort---was replenished by five frontiersmen who brought in a supply of venison. On November 9, 1785, Buell wrote that hunters had delivered about thirty deer and a great number of turkeys; and on February 24, 1786, a buffalo that had stood "18 hands high and weighed 1,000 pounds."<sup>4</sup> The hunters were men from the West Fork River area who roamed the woods near the Ohio River and found in the army outpost a ready market for the animals and fowl they felled with fire from their rifles.

In 1787, the year Congress adopted the Northwest Ordinance, the Ohio Company of Associates, organized in Boston by a group of officers in the American Revolution, paid half a million dollars down for land at the mouth of the Muskingum River in Ohio and, led by Rufus Putnam, followed the Old Glade Road through Pennsylvania in the middle of the winter of 1788 to the east side of the Muskingum River which they named "Marietta"---in honor of Marie Antoinette and France which had contributed to the American cause during the Revolution. In the first group of Ohio Company settlers to arrive at Marietta were 4 surveyors, 22 men with the surveyors, plus 20 men; 6 boat builders, 1 blacksmith, 9 common workmen.<sup>5</sup> After he had arrived on April 12, "Colonel Return Jonathan Meigs, Sr., drew up a system of regulations as to rules of conduct for Marietta first settlers and posted them on an oak."<sup>6</sup> The Ohio Company settlers set to work erecting huts with bark roofs in which they would live while they built permanent residences.

Arthur St. Clair, a resident of western Pennsylvania appointed governor of the Northwest Territory, arrived on the Muskingum River June 9, 1788: "On landing he was saluted with thirteen rounds from the field piece. On entering the garrison [Fort Harmar] the music played a salute; the troops paraded and presented their arms. He was also saluted by a clap of thunder and a heavy shower of rain as he entered the fort; and thus we received our governor of the western frontiers."<sup>7</sup>

The activity at Marietta caused a stir in the West Fork River area, where the new settlers were called "The New Englanders." Hunters and men of the Virginia militia, after inspecting Neal's Station---an outpost manned by Virginia militiamen at the mouth of the Little Kanawha River to watch for incursions into the state by marauding Indians---were regular visitors to the new town. They brought to Clarksburg tales of imposing structures rising on the east bank of the Muskingum River.

West Fork River men were quick to exploit the commercial opportunities in the settlements on the Muskingum. They somehow drove over the paths to the Ohio River cows they sold to the Marietta settlers and beeves they sold at Fort Harmar for General Harmar's sumptuous dinners at which a visitor in June 1788 was served "(beef) á la mode, boiled fish, bear-steaks, roast

1. Archer Butler Hulbert, Waterways of Westward Expansion: The Ohio River, p. 55.
2. Samuel Prescott Hildreth, Pioneer History, p. 143.
3. "Fort Harmar 1790", Ohio Historical Society, Ohio Historical Center, Columbus, Ohio.
4. Hildreth, pp. 247, 150.
5. Ibid., p. 201.
6. Obituary of Col. Return Jonathan Meigs, Sr., Florrie Jackson Needham Papers.
7. Hildreth, p. 162.

venison, etc., excellent succotash, salads, and cranberry sauce; grog after dinner."<sup>8</sup> The traffic was largely one way for the Marietta people went up the river to Pittsburgh on their way east. The wilderness paths through Virginia were so baffling that a traveler in 1790 setting out from Marietta for Clarksburg soon had to return to Marietta for a guide to direct his steps.<sup>9</sup>

Change in frontier defense brought concern to frontiersmen on the West Fork River who were better acquainted with Indian ways than the newcomers on the Ohio. Benjamin Wilson, Sr., wrote from Clarksburg to the governor of Virginia on September 28, 1789, that he understood the protection of the frontier had been put in the hands of Governor St. Clair, who was now absent from the mouth of the Muskingum River; that the people were dispirited; that "If Congress knew the situation, it would be otherwise." He requested that the bearer of the letter, Major William Lowther, be called before the Board in Richmond and examined on oath as to Indian incursions to the settlements on the West Fork River. He added that he was sending a copy of the report of the incursions enclosed with his letter to President George Washington.<sup>10</sup>

Ohio Company settlers were more realistic as to the Indian danger after General Harmar was defeated in 1790 in a campaign he had launched against the Indians farther down the Ohio River from the site where Marietta stands. The New Englanders had learned from the Virginians how to use the rifle, which the Yankees had not seen until they arrived in the West. The Virginians taught them how to scout for Indians.

The Ohio Company began to construct on the banks of the Muskingum River "Campus Martius", which after it was completed in December 1791 was described by a visitor as "the handsomest pile of buildings on this side of the Alleghenies and the strongest fortification in the United States."<sup>11</sup> It was built like an elaborate frontier fort with two-story dwelling houses divided into a total of seventy-two rooms. Governor St. Clair and his family lived in the southwest blockhouse; the directors of the Ohio Company had their offices and a storehouse in the northeast blockhouse; for recreation settlers used the "house of entertainment" in the southeast blockhouse; and courts, religious groups, and schools met in the northwest blockhouse. Winthrop Sargent, secretary of the Northwest Territory, had an office in the bastion over one of the two gateways. A small cannon was installed in each of the cupolas of two blockhouses to be used to warn workers in the fields outside the garrison in case Indians should approach the settlement.<sup>12</sup>

They were thankful for their fort when they heard of the fate of Nicholas Carpenter, a Clarksburger who with his ten-year-old son and five men from the West Fork area "viz. Jesse Hughes, George Legit, John Paul, Barns, and Ellis" had stopped in the evening of October 3, 1791—on a journey to deliver cattle to Fort Harmar—on a stream six miles above Marietta and a half mile east of the Ohio River. They turned the cattle out to range, hobbled their horses, and after eating supper, fell asleep around the fire they had built to cook their evening meal. Having seen no signs of Indians and being almost within sight of Marietta, they had not set a guard to watch for Indians. At dawn the next morning while Carpenter was conducting devotions, six Shawnees fired on the party. All the whites, except Jesse Hughes who ran into the woods, were killed. Carpenter's body was later found wrapped carefully in his blanket, his feet adorned with new Indian moccasins—a tribute of respect because Carpenter had refused payment after repairing the rifle of one of the Indians at Marietta the year before.<sup>13</sup> This incident, plus others, caused the Ohio Company settlers to add in the spring of 1792 beyond the stockade walls of Campus Martius an abatis consisting of two rows of pickets pounded upright into the ground.

The Indian wars, which did not end until after the signing of the Treaty of Greenville in 1795, did not stop the work of the Ohio Company surveyors, of whom Rufus Putnam, Benjamin Tupper, Ebenezer Sproat, Winthrop Sargent, and John Mathews were highly skilled in their craft.<sup>14</sup> Knowing that George Jackson of Clarksburg—the supply officer for the militia in Monongalia, Randolph, and Harrison counties of Virginia<sup>15</sup> and a frequent visitor to Marietta—had been defeated in April 1793 in his bid for a seat in the United States House of Representatives by only five or six votes,<sup>16</sup> Rufus Putnam realized that Jackson stood a good chance in 1795 of being elected to Congress, where he could have influence in the naming of a surveyor general of the United States.<sup>17</sup> Putnam gave Jackson's sixteen-year-old son, John George, a job as assistant

8. John May, Journal and Letters of Col. John May, pp. 59-60.

9. Henry Haymond, History of Harrison County, pp. 438-9.

10. Virginia, Calendar of State Papers, 5:31-2.

11. Hildreth, p. 227.

12. Ibid., 325-8.

13. Ibid., 300-3.

14. On May 22, 1785, Congress named a surveyor for each state. General Rufus Putnam, appointed for Massachusetts, was engaged in a survey of Maine for the state of Massachusetts. General Benjamin Tupper was appointed to replace Putnam as surveyor for Massachusetts. Ebenezer Sproat was appointed by the Congress to be the surveyor of Rhode Island; Winthrop Sargent, to be surveyor of New Hampshire. John Mathews, a native of Massachusetts, had assisted Thomas Hutchins in the survey of the Seven Ranges in Ohio in 1786. Hildreth, pp. 166-70.

15. Virginia, Calendar of State Papers, 5:422-3.

16. Ibid., 7:289-90.

17. Rufus Putnam wrote President Washington July 15, 1789, that he intended to live on the Muskingum River and would like to be the U. S. Surveyor. Calendar of Applications and Recommendations for Office During the Presidency of George Washington, p. 105.

to the Ohio Company surveyors in the summer of 1793.<sup>18</sup>

George Jackson was elected to the United States House of Representatives from the Third Congressional District of Virginia in April 1795. He and all other congressmen from the West worked for a law to provide for the surveying and sale of land in the "U. S. Military District" in Ohio passed May 18, 1796.<sup>19</sup> Rufus Putnam was named surveyor general of the United States on January 25, 1797.

On April 10, 1797, Rufus Putnam wrote John George Jackson "on the West Branch of the Monongahela":

Yours of the 30th Ultimo is before me. I wrote some time before to your father that I would give you a chance in the business of surveying the public land and having received the dispatches from Philadelphia which I have been waiting for, I now inform you that I am ready to enter into a contract with you to survey a District of the Military Land, but you can't commence work until the Indian boundary is surveyed...I think not before July or August. In the meantime if you come forward, I am ready to point out your District, to write a contract for the purpose, and then you will be able to judge what preparation it will be necessary for you to make.<sup>20</sup>

George Jackson suggested that his young son---who must provide food and protection for himself and his surveyor helpers---take with him Elias (Ellis) Hughes who had scouted for years and whose father, Thomas Hughes, and brother, Jesse Hughes, had been with George Jackson, his father John Jackson, and others who came to the Buckhannon River in 1769.<sup>21</sup> Hunting had been Elias Hughes' occupation from the time he was first able to carry a gun. He was a dead shot who, as a scout, "could hit an Indian under any and all circumstances within the range of his rifle."<sup>22</sup> Hughes promised to go and to take with him his nephew, John Ratliff.<sup>23</sup>

John George Jackson signed a contract in Marietta on July 12, 1797, to survey the South Middle District in the U. S. Military District (present Licking and Muskingum counties, Ohio) for \$2.50 a mile and started up the Muskingum River the next morning with his surveyor helpers and the two middle-aged hunters.<sup>24</sup> He finished his work in October and returned to Clarksburg. Hughes and Ratliff really never did return to Virginia. They built a cabin on the site where Zanesville, Ohio, would later stand. In 1798 they took their families to Ohio.<sup>25</sup>

In 1797 commissioners from Clarksburg cut a road, first ordered in 1786 by the Virginia Assembly to be built by the Harrison County Court<sup>26</sup>, through to the site where Isaac Williams operated a tavern on the Virginia shore opposite Marietta. The road in 1798 was described by a traveler as "nothing but a blazed way through the woods."<sup>27</sup>

On November 29, 1802, the legislature of the Northwest Territory meeting in Chillicothe, Ohio, sent to the United States Congress a proposed constitution for a State of Ohio and resolutions passed by the legislature in favor of the formation of a state. In December the United States House of Representatives, having received from the United States Senate an act for due execution of laws of the United States within the State of Ohio, submitted the bill to a committee consisting of George Jackson and four other congressmen. The act to extend federal laws over the State of Ohio became law on February 22, 1803.<sup>28</sup>

George Jackson had a personal reason for wanting Ohio admitted as a state. He had bought thousands of acres of land in the U. S. Military District and wanted in a few years to move his family and establish a permanent residence in Zanesville.<sup>29</sup> The land office<sup>30</sup> in Marietta was a stopping place for all Clarksburgers on their way to view lands in the U. S. Military District, for here they could learn news, examine surveys which had been recorded, and purchase additional acres. While they were in Marietta they visited with men who were politically active

18. United States, Congress, Biographical Directory..., p. 1366.

19. United States, Congress, Annals of Congress, 6:2905-9.

20. Rufus Putnam to J. G. Jackson, April 10, 1797, Jackson Manuscripts, Lilly Library, Indiana University, Bloomington, Indiana.

21. Alexander Scott Withers, Chronicles of Border Warfare, pp. 121-2.

22. Lucullus Virgil McWhorter, The Border Settlers of Northwestern Virginia, p. 41.

23. Also spelled "Ratcliff", Ibid., 234-5.

24. Rufus Putnam to Oliver Wolcott, July 22, 1797, United States, Treasury Department, Letters Sent by Surveyor General of Territory Northwest of Ohio River, 1797-1854, National Archives, Washington, DC.

25. McWhorter, pp. 475-6. Elias Hughes died in 1843 at the age of eighty-six years at his home on the Licking River. Biographical and Historical Memoirs of Muskingum County, Ohio, p. 47, John McIntire Public Library, Zanesville, Ohio.

26. William Waller Hening, ed., The Statutes of Virginia, 12:295-7.

27. Haymond, p. 251. The road had improved very little in 1813. After traveling it in June 1813 Elbridge Gerry, Jr., wrote that it was chiefly a foot path through swamps and wet valleys and over high hills. Elbridge Gerry, Jr., The Diary of Elbridge Gerry, Jr., pp. 121-4.

28. Annals of Congress, 12:474, 1449.

29. In 1800 George Jackson had purchased 4,000 acres in present Licking County, Ohio; his son John George at the same time purchased 4,000 acres in present Muskingum County, Ohio. Ohio, Auditor of State, Land Office, Columbus, Ohio, U. S. Military Lands...George Jackson moved to Zanesville, Ohio, in either 1806 or 1807.

30. The building stands in 1975 on the grounds of the Campus Martius Museum, Marietta, Ohio.

in order to keep abreast of trends in national and local government. One of these politicians was Attorney Return Jonathan Meigs, Jr.<sup>31</sup>

When John George Jackson, who had replaced his father in 1803 as congressman from the district of which Clarksburg was a part and had been reelected two times, stopped late in 1808 at the stately mansion<sup>32</sup> Meigs had built overlooking the Muskingum River in Marietta, he was attracted to Meigs' daughter Mary Sophia. A statement in a letter written by Jackson to Mary Meigs during the courtship of the two reveals the close communication that existed between Marietta and Clarksburg. Mary Meigs had written from Marietta to Jackson in Washington asking about a statement Clarksburger Benjamin Wilson, Jr., had supposedly made in which he questioned Jackson's seriousness of intent toward Mary Meigs. Jackson replied: "I am stranger to the reports you trace to Mr. Wilson, but on reflection they do not surprise me: for going up the Muskingum [October 1808] and down to Marietta you were my constant theme. After I left Marietta [where Mary by pleading sick, did not see Jackson], I never opened my lips concerning you and he might infer something from this."<sup>33</sup>

John George Jackson married Mary Meigs in Marietta on July 19, 1810, in a ceremony conducted by Reverend Stephen Lindley.<sup>34</sup> He brought his bride to live in the mansion Jackson had built in 1801 and which stood in Clarksburg on the north side of East Main Street on the lot bounded in 1975 on the west by Maple Avenue.

In the summer of 1812 a group of Clarksburgers, all officers in the Virginia militia, decided to ride as mounted cavalymen to offer their services to General William Henry Harrison—who was stationed at Franklinton (Columbus), Ohio—in a campaign to take Detroit from the British.<sup>35</sup> John George Jackson, a brigadier general in the Virginia militia, took his wife in the early fall to Marietta, where the other officers arrived a few days later. They and Jackson joined Harrison, discovered muddy roads would stop any movement of troops and equipment to Detroit, and decided to return home. Jackson returned to Marietta for his wife, mother-in-law, and daughter Mary Elizabeth Payne Jackson<sup>36</sup>, all of whom traveled with him to Clarksburg. Governor Meigs wrote from Chillicothe to Jackson in Clarksburg on December 23, 1812: "Military movements in this region are tardy. Harrison is still at Delaware...The Petersburg Volunteers arrived here yesterday in the most splendid war habiliments which I have ever seen. Tomorrow the whole company, one hundred, are to receive a public dinner. They draw no rations. Each man put into stock \$500 and their own quarter master supplies them. Our session will not set more than one month longer. Our legislature is highly Republican. My love to Mrs. Meigs; Mary [Meigs Jackson] I hope is restored to health and Little Mary well."<sup>37</sup>

When R. J. Meigs, Jr., became postmaster general of the United States in 1814, he and his wife each June traveled from Washington to Marietta via Clarksburg so that they could visit with the Jacksons. Then in September, the Meigses followed the same route to return to Washington.

After he had established an industrial complex one mile east of his home, Jackson in February 1818 sent Samuel Hart to Marietta to sell products from his iron furnace and forge which he planned to deliver by floating the wares down the West Fork, Monongahela, and Ohio rivers. Hart wrote him from Marietta: "I do not believe the merchants in this place will make a contract until they can see it [the iron?]. They are in great expectation of pot metal getting cheaper in consequence of a number of new furnaces lately established on the Muskingum and its branches. I have very little acquaintance with the merchants of Cincinnati tho I believe John N. Pratt is doing great business in that place."<sup>38</sup>

Because the wildcat Virginia Saline Bank in Clarksburg was a shaky institution and the Virginia Assembly refused to issue a charter to it or to any other bank in the West until 1818, Clarksburgers looked beyond the borders of the state for a banking institution during most of the years of the first quarter of the nineteenth century. The Bank of Marietta, for which J. G. Jackson was an attorney and in which he was a large stockholder, supplied loans for many businessmen in the West Fork area.<sup>39</sup>

People and institutions of Marietta and Clarksburg became less closely associated after the Northwestern Turnpike connecting Romney and Parkersburg, VA (WV), opened in 1838. Stage-coaches soon ran from the East through Clarksburg to Parkersburg and on to the West. Marietta, to Clarksburgers, no longer was the town to visit on the Ohio at the end of the road west.

31. He was appointed judge of the Superior Court of Ohio (1803), one of the judges of Louisiana Territory (1805), one of the judges of Territory of Michigan (1807), judge of Supreme Court of Ohio (1808), United States Senator from Ohio (1808), elected governor of Ohio (1810); appointed postmaster general of the U. S. (1814). Dictionary of American Biography, 6:509-10.

32. The house stands in Marietta, Ohio, in 1975.

33. J. G. Jackson to Mary Meigs, April 21, 1810, Florrie Jackson Needham Papers.

34. His name is also recorded as "Lindsley" and "Lindsly". Ohio, Washington County, Probate Court, Marriage Record, 1:66.

35. J. G. Jackson to James Madison, October 21, 1812, James Madison Papers, Library of Congress, Washington, DC.

36. Daughter of J. G. Jackson by Mary Payne Jackson.

37. R. J. Meigs, Jr., to J. G. Jackson, December 23, 1812, Jackson Manuscripts, Lilly Library, Indiana University.

38. Samuel Hart to J. G. Jackson, March 19, 1818, Meigs-Jackson Papers, Ohio Historical Society, Campus Martius Museum, Marietta, Ohio.

39. J. G. Jackson to Charles Yancey, January 30, 1819, Jackson Manuscripts, Lilly Library, Indiana University.

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