

On the 24th of February, 1812, a proclamation was published announcing that divers persons had recently come into the Province "with a seditious intent and to endeavor to alienate the minds of His Majesty's subjects," and directing the officers appointed to enforce the act lately passed by the Legislature "for the better security of the Province against all seditious attempt" to be vigilant in the discharge of their duties. Joseph Edwards of Niagara, Samuel Street of Willoughby, Thomas Dickson of Queenston, William Clocks of Grimsby and Samuel Halt of Ancaster were among the persons commissioned to execute this law. On the 17th of April, a boy at Queenston fired a shot across the river which happily did no injury. He was promptly arrested and committed for trial, and two resident magistrates, James Kirby and Robert Grant, tendered an apology to the inhabitants of Lewiston for his offence. Five days later General Brock reported that a body of three hundred men in plainclothes had been seen patrolling the American side of the river. On the 25th, it was announced that 170 citizens of Buffalo had volunteered for military service. A proclamation by President Madison calling out one hundred thousand was published about the same time, and the Governor of New York was required to send 500 men to the Niagara, which he hastened to do, being a warm advocate of the war.

Meanwhile the flank companies of militia regiments of the counties of Lincoln, Norfolk and York were embodied by General Brock, and drilled six times a month. They numbered about 700 young men belonging to "the best class of settlers". By the recent Militia Act, they were required to arm and clothe themselves, and as many of them had far to travel, Brock begged that they should at least receive an allowance for rations.

The Governor General suggested that the Government of the United States entertained hopes that something might happen to prevent a quarrel between its soldiers and the British troops on that frontier, and desired him to take every precaution to prevent any such pretext for hostilities.

Early in May, Brock made a rapid tour of inspection along the Niagara, thence to the Mohawk village on the Grand River, returning to York by way of Ancaster. He reported that the people generally seemed well disposed and that the flank companies had mustered in full strength.

BEGINNING OF HOSTILITIES.

By the 17th of June, six hundred American militia were stationed along the river, and a complaint was made by three reputable inhabitants of Fort Erie that their sentries were in the habit of wantonly firing across the stream. On the 25th of the same month this period of suspense was terminated by the arrival of a special messenger employed by Mr. Astor and other American citizens interested in the Northwest fur trade, to convey the earliest possible information of war to Lieut. Colonel Thomas Clark, of Queenston, who immediately reported his intelligence to the commandant of Fort Erie. The messenger, one Vosburg, of Albany, had travelled with relays of horses at such speed that he out rode the official courier bearing dispatches to Fort Niagara by fully twenty-four hours. On his return he was arrested at Canandaigua, and held to bail together with some of his employers, but it does not appear that they were ever brought to trial.