

Documents

Notes on the Wabash River in 1795

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Meeting the western Indians on the field of battle and defeating them was extremely important to the new nation if its lands north of the Ohio River were to be made safe for settlement and eventual statehood. After the unsuccessful ventures of previous expeditions under Josiah Harmer in 1790, and Arthur St. Clair in 1791, Anthony Wayne led his well-trained legions and volunteer contingents northward into the heart of the Indian country. Twice in 1794, at Fort Recovery in western Ohio (April 30-June 1) and at Fallen Timbers in northwestern Ohio (August 20), major engagements occurred. In both instances the Indians were defeated; and in the latter they apparently lost support of the British upon whom they had depended so greatly.

The backbone of the Indian confederation was broken. This did not mean, however, a guarantee of peace on the frontier in the Old Northwest. Military defeat must be acknowledged in a formal way and definite concessions must be gained through the instrument of a peace treaty. To make sure this treaty would not suffer the fate of previous Indian-American agreements that were not mutually respected, Wayne set about consolidating his victory. For example, he daringly and openly insulted the British in their Fort Miamis near the Fallen Timbers battle scene. He employed scorched earth tactics on Indian fields and villages. He erected another military outpost, Fort Wayne (Indiana), in the heart of the Indian country located at the forks of the Maumee River and terminal point of the important Wabash-Maumee Portage.

Besides a general boundary line between the Indians and the Americans, Wayne was expected to gain other important locations and concessions within the Indian country. One of these, the Wabash River, is of present interest. Wayne was instructed to secure the posts and potential sites of posts along the Wabash to maintain a chain of communications from the

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Ohio River to Fort Wayne.¹ This is amplified in the draft form of the proposed treaty which Wayne received from the war department. The Indians "will allow . . . a free passage thro' their Country, by land and by Water . . . from Fort Wayne along the portage . . . which leads to the Wabash, and then down the Wabash to the Ohio."² Accordingly, between the American posts at Vincennes and Fort Wayne, activity on the Wabash increased considerably in 1794 and 1795.

Two of Wayne's officers who made trips up and down the river recorded their experiences. Ensign Thomas Bodley from Kentucky was a member of the Third Sub-Legion. Lieutenant John Wade from Pennsylvania belonged to the First Sub-Legion.³ Bodley descended the Wabash to Vincennes and returned to the portage in the spring of 1795. He made some general remarks on these journeys in a report to his commander.⁴ Both Bodley and Wade made trips down and up the river again. On the return trip at least, both kept rather extensive journals. These were extracted and sent to Wayne for what value they might be in connection with the pending treaty.⁵ They are of considerable interest as commentaries on the Wabash, its tributaries, its navigation, Indian camps and villages, natural resources, and sites of potential military posts. Wade's extraction is more extensive so it is presented here. Where pertinent, information from Bodley's observations and letters is used to supplement the information given by Wade.⁶

¹ Timothy Pickering to Anthony Wayne, April 8 and 14, 1795, manuscript in the Northwest Territory Collection, William Henry Smith Memorial Library of the Indiana Historical Society, Indianapolis, Indiana.

² Draft of the proposed treaty, manuscript in Northwest Territory Collection.

³ Brief sketches of these men can be found in Francis B. Heitman, *Historical Register and Dictionary of the United States Army* . . . (2 vols., Washington, 1903), I, 227, 991.

⁴ Thomas Bodley to John Francis Hamtramck, May 20, 1795, Anthony Wayne Papers, Historical Society of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia, XLI, 10; Hamtramck to Wayne, May 21, 1795, *Ibid.*; Wayne to Hamtramck, June 7, 1795, *Ibid.*, XLI, 52. These papers will henceforth be cited as Wayne MSS.

⁵ Wayne to Hamtramck, June 7, 1795, Wayne MSS., XLI, 52.

⁶ John Wade's extracts, Wayne MSS., XLI, 64. Bodley, "Observations, on the Navigation, Soil, Waters, & Villages of of [*sic*] the Wabash, from Post Vincennes to the Portage nine miles from Fort Wayne—", [June 12, 1795], Wayne MSS., XLI, 62.

Extracts from a Journal of a tour up the Wabash from Fort Knox⁷ to the portage within 8½ miles of Fort Wayne, at the Miami Villages- Commencing the 8th of May, and Concluding the 2d day of June 1795—

The want of an Interpreter versed in the English language, was a great obstacle to my obtaining that perfect Knowledge of the Country I passed thro', which my wishes anticipated, and which it was my desire to embrace but the observations I have made of the navigation, waters, soil and villages, are firm facts established in my own mind, as Just, and I hope will prove to be so- To make a Calculation of distance from the Information of frenchmen trading from Post Vincennes to the Miami villages, would be productive of error and Confusion, because they have been accustomed to number their leagues by the pipes they smoak-, and thus have lengthened or shortened the distance as their appetite for smoking has arisen- was I to give an opinion of the distance by the mode in which I travelled, I should compute it at 350 miles at the utmost.

In examining with strict attention, and informing myself from those who have frequently ascended and descended the Wabash, I conceive myself right in concluding that no obstacle can interfere to obstruct the ascension of Boats sufficient to contain a Burden of from 15 to 20,000 weight as far as the Thipacanos or rather two or three miles above it, where a high and Commanding piece of Ground offers for the erection of a post and store houses, and from whence large perogues may be loaded, and ascend with little difficulty to the *Petite riviere*⁸ at all Seasons of the year, and indeed up it until you arrive at the *Marsh* or *Bog* which is distant from Fort Wayne about 16 miles-⁹ Here a difficulty would arise unless the fresh had taken place prior to your ascension, and then, all obstacles would be removed, and an easy ascension offer as far

⁷ Vincennes.

⁸ Little River. The Portage between the Wabash and Maumee river systems had its Wabash terminus at Little River.

⁹ Bodley felt that boats "of almost any size" could negotiate the Wabash from Vincennes to the mouth of the Tippecanoe, at any season; and from thence to the portage, after some trees across the river were cleared off and two small rapids repaired, boats of fifty foot keel could navigate between the first of March and mid-June. Bodley to Hamtramck, May 20, 1795, Wayne MSS., XLI, 10.

as the portage- The Current of the Wabash is rather gentle than rapid, (the river remarkably serpentine) and has all the advantages of depth of water,¹⁰ except where you encounter a few rapids, the principal of which commences at the distance of 1 League above the mouth of the Eel river and is by far the strongest of any in the Wabash, however, the obstruction at this place might be easily obviated by the removal of a few loose rocks which would open a passage for Boats, and would not employ more than 10 men for two hours- for it is not so much the rocks as the force of Current which makes the ascension difficult, and the distance tho not very long, is attended with a small share of labor to pass thro- A few other rapids of no very great consequence present themselves, but as they can in no way be obstacles to the ascension of such Perogues as are generally used in the Wabash I shall not particularly remark the whole of them, a Shallow one however (which the French deem to be 3 miles in length, but which is not in my opinion more than half the distance) employs as great a share of time in passing thro, as any other on the river it being extremely shallow,- When I ascended the water was very low, the Boat I had with me was 63 feet long, and Built to Bear a Burden of 6000 Wt- I however found at the above place not so much difficulty, as I was taught to believe I should have to encounter because I immediately discovered a Channel might be made, by removing of the small loose rocks, which here and there I found it necessary to do- a very slight fresh would be sufficient to make the ascension easy- about 12 miles below this you meet with a fall of water of 12 Inches, the Channel of which at low Water is immediately in the Centre, and the force of Current violent but the distance you have to ascend is so short, that the labor in effecting it is very trifling- The Variety of handsome streams which empty themselves into the Wabash, and which are ever ready with their waters to assist your ascension, greatly add to the Beauty of the Country and gives a lux-

¹⁰ Bodley reported that from Terre Haute to Ouiatenon, the river is about two hundred yards wide, the channel about six feet deep, "& the Current easy"; from Ouiatenon to the Tippecanoe River, about one hundred and seventy-five yards wide, about five feet deep, "& gentle Current"; from the Tippecanoe to the Eel River, about one hundred and fifty yards wide, four or five feet deep; from the Eel to the Salamonie River, from one hundred to one hundred fifty yards wide, four feet deep; and from the Salamonie to the Little River, about one hundred yards wide. Bodley, "Observations," Wayne MSS., XLI, 62.

uriance to the Scene, which is only felt by an admirer of the works of nature- the principal ones are the Bruet¹¹ (which is 27 miles from Terrote)¹² Racoon Creek¹³ 21 miles from Bruet- the River d Erablieries or Sugar tree river¹⁴ 10 miles from Racoon creek- the Little Vermillion¹⁵ 6 miles above d Erablieries-¹⁶ the Great Vermillion¹⁷ 8 miles above the Lesser- La petite Riviere at the Weaw¹⁸ about 61 miles

¹¹ Brewyet Creek, *Ibid.*

Riviere a la Brouette, Thomas Hutchins, *A New Map of the Western Terre Haute* in section 3, township 13, north, range 9 west of the *North American Union* . . . (Philadelphia, 1823).

Riviere a la Brouette, Thomas Hutchins, *A New Map of the Western Parts of Virginia, Pennsylvania, Maryland and North Carolina; Comprehending the River Ohio, and all the Rivers, which fall into it* . . . (London, 1778). Wade mentions the Hutchins map and probably used it on this expedition. Errors are frequent in the upper Wabash regions but the map is of some value to the present study as it represents a composite of the best geographical knowledge to that date (1778).

Browellett's Creek flows from the northwest into the Wabash above Terre Haute in section 3, township 13, north, range 9 west of the second principal meridian. [E. T. Cox], *Map of Vigo County, Indiana* (Compiled for the Seventh Annual Report of E. T. Cox, State Geologist, [Indianapolis], 1875).

¹² Terre Haute, sometimes referred to in contemporary documents as High Ground. See footnote 28 below.

¹³ Big Racoon Creek flows from the southeast into the Wabash above Terre Haute in section 11, township 15, north, range 9 west of the second principal meridian. B. C. Hobbs, *Map of Parke County, Indiana* (Drawn . . . for the 3d and 4th Annual Reports of . . . E. T. Cox, Indianapolis, 1872).

¹⁴ Sugar Creek flows from the northeast into the Wabash above Terre Haute in section 12 township 16 north, range 9 west of the second principal meridian. Collett, *Map of Vermillion County*.

¹⁵ Little Vermillion River flows from the west into the Wabash above Terre Haute in or near section 30, township 17, north, range 8 west of the second principal meridian. John Collett, *Map of Vermillion County, Indiana* (Drawn . . . for the First Annual Report of . . . E. T. Cox, Indianapolis, 1869).

¹⁶ Bodley reported these four streams to exceed 25-30 yards in width. Bodley, "Observations," Wayne MSS., XLI, 62.

¹⁷ Big Vermillion River flows from the north into the Wabash above Terre Haute in section 33, township 18, north, range 9 west of the second principal meridian. Collett, *Map of Vermillion County*.

¹⁸ "La petite Riviere at the Weaw" is Big Wea Creek which flows into the Wabash from the southeast in section 27, township 23, north, range 5 west of the second principal meridian. The principal village of the Wea was located here. T. C. Hopkins, *Geological Map of Indiana* (Compiled for the 28th Annual Report of W. S. Blatchley, Indianapolis, 1901-1903), Frederick W. Hodge, ed., *Handbook of American Indians North of Mexico* (2 parts, Washington, 1907-1910), part 2, 174. Hutchins also indicates a "Petite Riviere" but locates it further down the Wabash than Wade here describes it. Hutchins, *A New Map*.

from the Great Vermillion- the Riviere a la Panse¹⁹ about 12 miles from the Weaw (an elegant stream- The Thipecanos²⁰ about 6 miles above La panse- the L Anguille or Eel river,²¹ is distant from the Petit Rocher²² two Leagues, and from Eel river to the great rapid is one league- the Petit Rocher is calculated to be distant from the Ouiattanon 18 Leagues- from the Great rapid to the Calumet²³ on the South side is four leagues here is a rapid but not a shallow one, at about one League from the Calumet is an Island, in ascending this part of the river you keep on the north side from this Island to the Massissinuai²⁴ is five Leagues another rapid- from Massissinuai to the Salamanie river²⁵ is 10 Leagues, and from the Salamanie to the Little river is five Leagues, and from the mouth of Little river²⁶ to the Portage

¹⁹ Hutchins likewise labels it "Riviere a la Panse." Hutchins, *A New Map*. This is probably the present Wild Cat Creek which flows from the east into the Wabash above Lafayette in or near section 3, township 23, north, range 4 west of the second principal meridian. Hopkins, *Geological Map of Indiana*.

²⁰ Tippecanoe River flows from the north into the Wabash above Lafayette in section 17, township 24, north, range 3 west of the second principal meridian. Hopkins, *Geological Map of Indiana*. Bodley adds that the Tippecanoe is approximately sixty yards wide. "About ½ mile up the river was an old village in a Prarie, about 200 acres is now under cultivation by the Potawatomy & Wyaw Indians, the Land is rich handsomely situate & well watered by standing springs- this is the most delightful place for a Farm I ever beheld." Bodley, "Observations," Wayne MSS., XLI, 62.

²¹ Eel River flows from the northwest into the Wabash at Logansport in or near section 36, township 27, north, range 1 east of the second principal meridian. Hopkins, *Geological Map of Indiana*.

²² It is somewhat uncertain as to what stream Wade here has in mind. The Hutchins map, which he carried, indicates a "Riv. de Petit Rocher" flowing into the Wabash from the north between the Tippecanoe and the Eel. There is also a Rock Creek entering the Wabash from the east in or near section 18, township 26, north, range 1 west of the second principal meridian. Hutchins, *A New Map*; Hopkins, *Geological Map of Indiana*.

²³ Calumet or Big Pipe Creek flows from the southeast into the Wabash above Logansport in section 32, township 27, north, range 3 east of the second principal meridian. Hopkins, *Geological Map of Indiana*.

²⁴ Mississinewa River flows from the southeast into the Wabash above Logansport in section 25, township 27, north, range 4 east of the second principal meridian. *Ibid.*

²⁵ Salamonie River flows from the southeast into the Wabash above Logansport in section 34, township 28, north, range 7 east of the second principal meridian. *Ibid.*

²⁶ This juncture of the Little River with the Wabash is sometimes called the forks of the Wabash. The mouth of the Little is in section 16, township 28, north, range 9 east of the second principal meridian. *Ibid.*

is 12 Leagues- this Calculation as I have before observed is made from the number of pipes smoked, and the Leagues sometimes short and sometimes Long, this mode of measurement must of course beget error I have therefore ventured to limit the distance at the number of miles mentioned within and do not conceive it to be more- No doubt can possibly arise of the practicability of ascending with heavy laden Boats- two or three miles above the Thipecanos at any and at all times of the year, except when impeded by Ice- The Bed of the river is Generally Gravel and hard sand as far up as L'Anguille, from thence commences a rocky bottom, here and there smooth and solid, but excellent for poling- I have confined my observations of the navigation of the Wabash principally to that period when the water is supposed to be in a low State, and when it would be necessary to employ perogues in lieu of larger crafts, attention should be paid to the length of the Boats, because in passing thro the willows (as they are called) about 4 miles from the portage, the river is narrow (but deep) remarkably crooked, and will not admit of a Boats passing at low water, whose length exceeds 42 or 43 feet- indeed shorter would be better say 35 feet at high water the difficulty ceases, for Boats of any length or Burthen may ascend- My Perogues being so very long, reduced me to the necessity of leaving her, at the foot of the marsh, and employing shorter ones- I can only Judge of the nature of the soil from the observations I made at the several places I halted- so far as I could Judge it is rich to a very great degree, and abounds with a variety of fine Strait timber,²⁷ The Situations which strike the eye most forcibly are first the Terrote calculated to be half way from Fort Knox to Quiattanon- Here are the remains of an old French fort, which has been destroyed many years past this Ground, tho well suited in many respects for the erection of a small work, is still too short a distance and its Banks steep, as to make it very fatiguing to obtain water-²⁸ Several other very elegant

²⁷ According to Bodley, from Vincennes to Terre Haute "the Land [is] fertile, well watered, a great many Praries & some good woods, the growth Hickory, Oaks, Walnut, Elm, Buckeye & Sugar tree, a number of handsome situations-" Bodley, "Observations," Wayne MSS., XLI, 62.

²⁸ Bodley says, "The High Ground, is an extensive body of Rich Land on the South east side of the river, part of which is Prarie very

spots offer between the Terrote and the Great Vermillion better fitted to make handsome farms, than for the erection of fortifications-²⁹ the Banks of the Great Vermillion afford you Ground sufficiently high to look over a large extent of Country, but its being detached from the Wabash, with low Ground in front subject to overflow, rather militates against it as a place of defence, unless you were to ascend the Vermillion about one quarter of a mile-³⁰ below the Vermillion near one mile and on the south side of the Wabash there is a Hill of as rich *coal* as the earth ever afforded, and in great abundance, a vein of Iron ore, and another of Lead are said to run thro the hill, this Hill the Savages considered of so much value, that they forbad the French at the Post to carry off the Coal- the same Hill is laid down in Hutchins map-³¹ about 6 miles from the mouth of Vermillion you pass a fertile piece of Ground, immediately on the Banks of the river, with the advantages of a number of fine springs and an excellent quarry of Stone, its situation is eminent, and the country around abounding in Game- Between this place and the Weaw you pass a number of Beautiful situations, whose value are enhanced by a multiplicity of never failing springs³² The Weaw next claims your attention and is deservedly noticed as the pride of the Wabash- But the high ground being too far from the river, and the ground in front being subject to feel the effects of a severe fresh,³³ a decided preference

fertile, in which some of the Wabash Indians are raising corn this Season- Here is an elegant situation for a Fort, the Ground is High & the ascent gradual from the water edge. for this distance the river is above two hundred yards wide & in no place is seldom less than ten feet water in the Channel. the Current is very gentle." *Ibid.*

²⁹ "Between those places," according to Bodley, "the Land is good, & several handsome creeks come in . . ." *Ibid.*

³⁰ "The Vermillion river," Bodley comments, "is about 70 yds wide . . . [at the mouth] has been an old village & an extensive body of Clear'd ground- the land immediately on the Wabash is low & at times overflows- about three hundred yards from the river is high ground which extends up the Vermillion for several miles—" *Ibid.*

³¹ Bodley describes the same feature as "a high Hill of stone Coal. & to all appearance a great body of Iron Oar-." *Ibid.* The Hutchins map indicates a "Coal Hill" approximately opposite the mouth of the Big Vermillion. Hutchins, *A New Map*.

³² Bodley gives additional information. "From the Vermillion to the Quiattanon Village . . . the soil is shallow, greater part Prarie, the woods is but lightly timbered-" Bodley, "Observations," Wayne MSS., XLI, 62.

³³ Bodley elaborates on this. "The old Village on the S.E. side stood on low ground on the verge of the river- about 300 yds back is a high

for elegance of Situation, fertility of Soil, goodness of timber close Connection with the Wabash, numbers of Springs, and the advantages of Game make it every way preferable to any must be given to an eminence about one mile above, which, Spot below or above it for private improvement-³⁴ But should the navigation of the Wabash ever call forth the attention of the public- and should it be found necessary to erect a work and Store houses, for the protection and reception of public stores, it would certainly be better to ascend as high as possible with your large Boats, It would therefore remark a situation about 2 or 3 miles above the Thipecanos, which is every way calculated from its elevation, for the erection of such works as might be deemed necessary, it has a large quantity of fine timber, is on the very margin of the river, and at the end of the navigation for Boats bearing a heavy Burden and of large sizes-³⁵ Here would be the Spot, where it would be necessary to employ perogues- and the distance from thence to the portage does not exceed 56 Leagues (French Calculation)- after you leave the marsh or Bog noticed in these remarks you will find at all times a sufficiency of water for Perogues-³⁶

The fourth day after my departure from Fort Knox, I

Hill on the Top of which is an extensive Prarie about 10 miles in Length & three in Width On the N.W. side was the old French Village it stood in a large Prarie part of which overflow's at times, the soil is fertile- here about 300 acres has been Cultivated by the Indians-"
Ibid.

³⁴ Bodley agrees with this description. "About one mile above the old village on the N.W. side, is high ground & some beautiful Springs this would be an elegable situation for a Fort, Timber for building is convenient & of an excellent Quality-" *Ibid.*

³⁵ Bodley adds that "to this place Boats that will carry Twenty thousand weight may come at any Season-" *Ibid.*

³⁶ More detailed comments on the Little River are given in Bodley's account: "The Little river at the mouth runs about SW. & is about 40 yds wide the Wabash runs near West & is about 100 yds wide-

"From the mouth of Little river to the Portage is about 30 Miles thro' a flat, low country & for some distance from the river is generally covered with water- for six miles from the mouth the Current is very Swift & in some places strong rapids tho' generally composed of *Loose Stones*; in those rapids the water is sometimes not more than one foot deep- from the head of the Rapid to the Portage the wa[ter] is from three to Ten feet water at all times, the river is from Ten to twenty yards wide & very Crooked- about three miles below the portage is a thicket & Pond, the Channel is entirely grown up with willows, but may be easily Cleared- For three months in the year, large Boats or perogues which will carry Ten thousand Weight can come to the Portage-" *Ibid.*

fell in with a Hunting Camp of 8 or 10 Indians, where I Breakfasted, was treated with friendship, and received from them a Carcase of Venison-

The Seventh day brought me to a village of 22 families of Wabash Indians, detached about $\frac{3}{4}$ of a mile from the Bank of the river, in a very handsome Prairie, altho I could have passed them without difficulty, yet Conceiving that my halting to visit them, would probably afford them some satisfaction and evince to them the confidence that was placed in their good intentions I deemed it proper to walk to their village, and offer my respects to their Chiefs- who were five in Number this visit- the first that had been paid by an American officer created no small share of surprize, and evident tokens of satisfaction- the customary ceremonies being over, I informed the Chiefs of my intention to ascend the Wabash to the portage, that as I had heard of their being established so near to the river, I thought proper to visit them and shake them by the hands, they returned me thanks for themselves and in behalf of their tribe, and requested very strongly that I would not leave them until the next day, as it was their wish to speak to me in the course of the day, this I was compelled to consent to as well by policy, as by a wish to hear what they had to say, about 4 O Clock in the Afternoon, A messenger was dispatched from the village to my Boat to inform me, that the Chiefs had assembled, & would be glad to see me- I met them, and after a short time, the Speaker, opened his harangue with an assurance of the friendship of the Wabash and Kickapoos tribes towards the Americans, observing that my visiting their Country with confidence in them, was a convincing proof that the Hatchet was about to be buried, and the path which had been for so long a time Covered with Blood, was now going to be strewed with flowers- that I might be certain of passing thro their tribes unmolested, as it was their firm wish (for the truth of which they appealed to the Great Spirit) to hold fast the chain of friendship with the Americans, as an evidence of which, they begged me to forward to the Commander in Chief two strings of wampum, which they presented me with- and concluded with informing me, that, as they had but Just situated themselves on that spot, and were wholly destitute

of corn to raise a crop, they begged I would furnish them with a few Bushels to plant and some Tobacco to smoke, and disperse any bad vapours, which might be around them- My Interpreter having fortunately a few Bushels of Corn, I Borrowed and presented them with three Bushels, some Tobacco, and some salt- for which they were extremely thankful- Not being on any public business I did not conceive myself authorized to say more than was barely sufficient to assure them, that the United States were sincere in their wish for peace, and that if it was not permanent, the fault would not rest with them, but with those bad Indians, who would prefer listening to the dictates of an Evil Spirit, sooner than the mild voice of the harbinger of peace- thus we parted- the 9th day I Breakfasted at a Hunting Camp, consisting of two families, where I exchanged Tobacco and Corn for venison The twelfth day I halted to take Breakfast, on a very handsome piece of ground, and met with two families of Kickapoo Indians moving to the Weaw- from whom I purchased venison- On the 17th day fell in with 2 Squaws and 3 Children procured fresh meat from them- the same day met One Indian with his Squaw returning from a Hunt, and at some distance above them overtook 3 Indians and one Squaw- this day which was the 24th Ulto brought me to the Thipecanos- prior to my arrival at this place- I was received with such Civility and attention as served to convince me of the difference between the disposition of the Wabash and Potowatomies Indians- for the latter I found to be much under the influence of the British, insolent- haughty- and domineering- holding forth the power and Consequence of the British, declaring their determination to exact from every Boat which ascended such proportion of presents as they deemed proper, and boasting of the quantity they received from Great Britain it was here that a rascal who had been captured by Captain Gibson,³⁷ and lately released by the Commander in Chief, had the insolence to hold in his possession one of my mens rifles, telling me that he had been held in Irons for a long time, had been cruelly treated by the Americans- had lost his Rifle when taken, and was determined to hold the one he then had, to replace that he had

³⁷ Probably Captain Alexander Gibson of the Fourth Sub-Legion. Heitman, *Historical Register*, I, 453.

lost altho I argued to his Chiefs with all the mildness I was master of- it had no effect, the fellow persevered, and finding the Chiefs, were only Cyphers in the scale of Consequence, I was obliged to direct my Interpreter to tell them, that this instance of bad Conduct, was no evidence of their intention to preserve harmony and friendship with us, that if they expected a large present from me for the restoration of the Rifle, they would be mistaken, for that I was determined to have it before I starte[d] let the event be what it might. This Language staggered them & I was told, that if I would give the late prisoner one Bottle of Whiskey he would give up the Rifle- to this I objected, because I Judged it would be establishing a precedent not only improper but impolitic, and therefore insisted on the Rifles being delivered without any Bargain, and if I thought proper afterwards to make a present, I would do it- accordingly it was given up I then gave them a Bottle of whisky and left them-³⁸ I had not proceeded more than one mile before I was hailed by a party from the same place- halting they Joined me, and made a request for some whisky- I urged to them the impropriety of their Conduct- but in short all my persuasion was of no avail- I had no alternative but refusing them, and subjecting myself to be insulted by them (which could produce no good Consequences) or granting their request and move off with their *good wishes*- the latter I preferred, and gave them one gallon and an half- they left me Contented- the next day I Joined another party of the same nation but of different disposition probably owing to their not being in force sufficient to oppose me-

The 26th A Hunting party of Kickapoo and Potowatomies overtook me with a large quantity of Peltry which they requested me to take across the river- they did not consist of more than 4 men- one women [*sic*]- one child, and a white Boy of the name of James Flinn about 14 years of age- he had been taken when a Child below the mouth of Blue Stone river by the Shawanese and sold to the Potowatomies, as

³⁸ Bodley had a similar experience with the same band of Indians at the mouth of the Tippecanoe. He was afraid that "unless they are Checked by some means [there] will be a Tax on every Boat which ascends or Decends the river-" Bodley to Wayne, July 12, 1795, Wayne MSS., XLI, 61.

he appeared more anxious to Continue with the Indians than with his own Countrymen, and as I expected they would deliver him up at the treaty, I made no propositions for his restoration- a Short distance above the Massissinouai arrived at a village of Miami Indians where I met with Nancy the Young Squaw taken by Wm Wells- this village consisted of 9 houses situate immediately on the Bank of the river, on very bad ground, but considered only as a temporary establishment- dined here- and was treated friendly- Saw two or three whites, who were so much attached to the Indians that they would not converse in English altho my Interpreter assured me they understood it- Above this place one mile I halted and Continuing a few minutes was Joined by Monsieur Richardville³⁹ with Nine Canoes on his way to establish a village at the Massissinouai- a few families lived at this place, who, together with those who arrived with Richardville supplied me with Turkeys and venison and tho exceeding 100 in number never requested one article from me, but behaved with all the friendship and Civility imaginable, owing principally I imagine to the influence Richardville has over them- after leaving them, I fell in with no other parties, until I arrived at the portage where I found several families of Delaware, preparing to descend the Wabash- their vicinity to the Garrison of Fort Wayne and their dependence upon it for provision, rendered my situation safe and free from trouble, Here I remained one night, and the next, started and arrived at Fort Wayne about 11 O Clk making the whole of my Journey to Fort Wayne from Fort Knox equal to 25 days, But it must be observed that I could have accomplished it several days sooner, but for my detention with the Indians, my frequent halting at early periods of the day to examine particular Spots- and the necessity I was under of opening my Stores to prevent the Bad effects of several severe rains- Certain I am that the ascension of the Wabash to the Portage may be completed in fifteen days at most when the Water is in a Middling state-

The names of the Potowatomies Chiefs at the Thipecanos are La Masse and La Bass or Bennac and La Blau or

³⁹ John B. Richardville (Peshewah) succeeded Little Turtle as leader of the Miami Indians. Hodge, *Handbook*, part 2, 235.

Bennac-⁴⁰ the former is an Insolent deceitful Scoundrel, much Swayed I conceive by British influence and British *Gold*-⁴¹

J Wade

⁴⁰ The words "and La Bass or Bennac," and "and La Blau or Bennac" occur at the end of one manuscript page and at the beginning of another, respectively. Though the script indicates otherwise, Wade may have meant these to be the same, repeating the last word of one page as the first word of the succeeding page as frequently occurs in manuscripts of the period.

⁴¹ Bodley's estimate was also a negative one. "From the number of Horses those Rascals have in their possession & the number of Prisoner[s] they have taken I am convinced they have done more mischief on our Frontier Settlements than any other party-" Bodley to Wayne, July 12, 1795, Wayne MSS., XLI, 61.