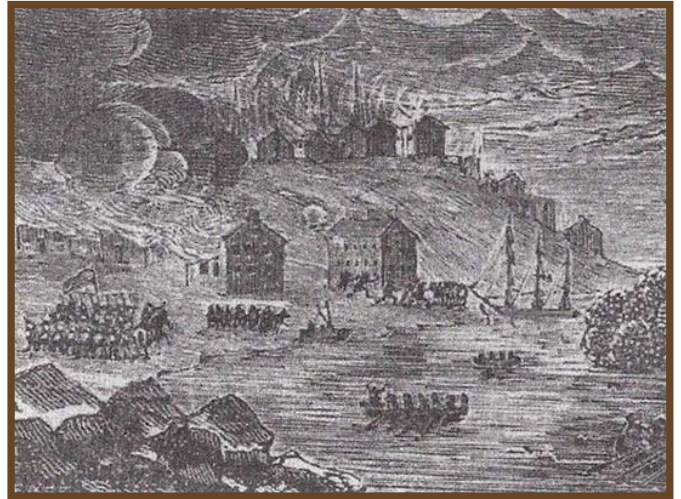


ISCHUA VALLEY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

THE BURNING OF BUFFALO

Men from Cattaraugus, Chautauqua and Genesee Counties were involved in many of the battles that took place in Western New York and Canada during the War of 1812, especially the burning of Buffalo and Newark.

General George McClure, not related to Joseph McCluer from Franklinville, was the commander of forces on the Niagara Frontier. On December 10th, 1813, he made the decision to burn the Canadian town of Newark (today known as Niagara-on-the-Lake) before abandoning the west side of the Niagara River. There was an outcry over the cruelty of the act and even Americans protested his decision. Many Americans had hoped that one day Canada and the United States would become one country.



The General's decision to destroy Newark permanently destroyed that hope from ever becoming a reality. Americans also feared that there would be retaliation by the British Army.

Their fears were realized on December 19th when the British forces crossed the river and surprised the soldiers at Fort Niagara. They arrived at Lewiston and burned that village. They continued on to Manchester, today called Niagara Falls, and burned the village. Many of the settlers in Buffalo and Black Rock decided to flee when they learned that the American Army was being defeated by the British. They also discovered that Indians were involved. At this time Buffalo was a thriving settlement with carpenters, blacksmiths, wagon makers and an assortment of trade people. There were taverns and homes that had been established.

Black Rock was burned and the British advanced toward Buffalo. On December 30th 1813, Buffalo lay in ashes except for a few buildings. A number of naval vessels had also been destroyed. The British left after the raid, but on January 1st a detachment returned and burned most of the remaining buildings. All that was left standing was a blacksmith shop, Mrs. John's house, and a stone jail. Both the British and American forces suffered heavy losses. However, by May of 1814, 3 taverns, 16 stores, and 50 buildings were constructed showing the resilience of the early settlers of Western New York.

Information gathered from R. Arthur Bowler's article entitled "[The Burning of Buffalo.](#)"