

U.S. Capital for a Day

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On Saturday, August 20, 1814, Secretary of State James Monroe (or Colonel Monroe as he was known), from a vantage point near Aquasco overlooking the Patuxent River, observed a large number of British troops landing at Benedict, Maryland. Not having a spyglass, he was unable to estimate the size of the enemy force. But by the next day he had seen enough to write to President Madison, "...The enemy are in full march for Washington. Have the materials prepared to destroy the bridges....You had better remove the records." [1] Thus began a week when Washington would descend into pandemonium, its citizens fleeing in panic. The White House, the Capitol, and the rest of the public buildings in the city would be burnt; the President would be on the run, the army routed in a battle and left in disarray; and Brookeville, Maryland, would become known as the United States Capital for a Day.

This is an accounting of the sequence of events over the next seven days.

Sunday, August 21, 1814

On Sunday, word that the enemy was on the march toward the capital had spread throughout Washington and Georgetown. Although no executive order had been given, most of the population (at least the part of the population with the means to do so—with a horse and coach or wagon) prepared to leave. The *Baltimore Patriot* described the scene: "On Sunday, the public offices were all engaged in packing up their books and citizens their furniture. Citizens were absent or under arms. Business was suspended. Every means of transportation was engaged or in use." [2]

Like the clerks of the House and the State Department, Senate clerk Lewis Machen prepared to move the government's important documents to safety. He set about acquiring transport, as the Senate didn't have its own horse or wagon. With the help of another clerk, John McDonald, Machen succeeded in borrowing a horse and wagon and packed up the history of the Senate since it first assembled, along with "confidential papers of that office that contained the number and positions of the entire American Force [that] could have been exposed [to the enemy]." By midnight, he had set out alone for his farm, near present-day Adelphi, Maryland, with his overloaded wagon, encountering one disaster after another—first an overturned wagon, then loss of a wheel that had to be replaced—only to be told by McDonald (who had caught up with him just before the wheel incident) on arrival at the farm, "Your residence is not

as secure as Brookeville." Machen agreed and McDonald proceeded to take the precious cargo to Brookeville, where it remained for several weeks until the Senate had reconvened and a place had been set to store the papers. [3]

On the same day, General John Mason sent a frantic letter to his friend Isaac Briggs in Brookeville: "The Enemy are marching on us. I send you my wife and children. I know I can count on your friendship. Please assist them in getting comfortable lodgings in Brookeville for a few weeks..." [4] General Mason, son of George Mason, was a friend and advisor to President Madison and also a close friend of Quaker Isaac Briggs.¹ At the time, Mason's wife, Anna, a friend of Dolley Madison, was seriously ill with a "bilious fever" (the usual term for typhus).

Monday, August 22

As government clerks prepared for an invasion, so did the banks of Washington, removing their specie (the money in coin, not the paper money, which was virtually worthless) for safekeeping. [5] General Mason, who was President of the Bank of Columbia in Georgetown, sent the bank's money to Caleb Bentley, the postmaster in Brookeville, to be stored in the most secure place in the town, the federal post office, which was attached to Mr. Bentley's house. [6]

All day Monday, the population of Washington and Georgetown scrambled to get out. Washingtonian Margaret Bayard Smith² wrote, "The alarm was such that on Monday a general removal from the city and George Town took place. Very few women or children remain'd in the city on Tuesday evening...." [7]

It is difficult to determine just how many people left Washington and Georgetown in the run-up to the enemy invasion, much less how many fled to Brookeville. In 1814, the population of Washington was approximately 8,000, with another 5,000 living in Georgetown. (These are necessarily approximations because most of the results of the Washington Census of 1810 were lost to fire.) Contemporary estimates were that 90 percent of the population had left the city when the British arrived. Hundreds, perhaps thousands of people were on the road, looking for a place to take refuge. Citizens hid in the woods around Washington, and many crossed by the few bridges and Mason's Ferry into Virginia and Maryland, particularly people who had friends

¹ During the war, John Mason was Commissioner of Prisoners, responsible for arranging prisoner exchanges.

² Margaret Bayard Smith and her husband, Samuel Harrison Smith, were intimately connected to Washington society and the most powerful people in government. A close friend of Thomas Jefferson, Mr. Smith was the former founder and editor of the first national newspaper, the *National Intelligencer*, which he created at President Jefferson's suggestion. His job, Commissioner of Revenue, is roughly equivalent to that of the current Director of the Internal Revenue Service. Mrs. Smith was both a "society matron," friend of President Jefferson and the Madisons and all of the other leading families of Washington and Georgetown—the Gallatins, the Decatur, the Masons—and also a careful, insightful chronicler of the times. She recorded not only Washington's social life, but also its religious life, *who was who* in politics, and, to history's benefit, the events of the War of 1812 in the nation's capital and Brookeville.

or family whose homes they could reach. Others fled to the cities of Frederick and Leesburg, despite the long distances along primitive roads. They sought shelter in the taverns of Virginia and Maryland, and they fled north by the best available roads, the post roads, to Rockville and Brookeville. What they didn't do was head south or east, in the direction of the advancing British army, or toward Annapolis or Baltimore, which were possibly the next targets of the enemy. Nor did they turn toward the Potomac or the Patuxent, where the Royal Navy controlled the waterways.

Of the total population of Washington and Georgetown, about one-third were black, most of whom were enslaved. Only members of the free population were permitted to vacate the city as fears of an enemy invasion mounted. Slaves had no choice in *whether* or *where* to go. As Alan Taylor expertly documents in *The Internal Enemy* [8], whites were even more frightened by the possibility of a slave insurrection, or by the thought that slaves would join the enemy to attack their former masters, than they were of the British enemy—and they took steps to prevent the possibility. Author and slaveowner Margaret Bayard Smith presents a remarkably frank discussion of her fears in this regard, along with a description of the steps her husband had taken to assuage them: "As for our enemy *at home* I have no doubt that they will if possible join the British; here we are, I believe firmly in no danger...the few scattered about our neighbourhood, could not muster force enough to venture on an attack. We have however counted on the possibility of danger and Mr. S. has procured pistols &c &c sufficient for our defence.... As it is we are quite animated,... since we have been so well provided with fire arms, my apprehensions have quite ceased. *For those whom I fear'd are easily intimidated....* At present all the members and citizens say it is impossible for the enemy to ascend the river, *and our home enemy will not assail us, if they do not arrive....*" [9]

Out of fear, many slaveowners sent their slaves out of the city to isolated farms, where they were unlikely to encounter the British and would also be separated from one another. Mrs. Smith herself notes that she sent her servants (all enslaved women) to "some private farm houses at a safe distance." [10] Many free blacks, including Eli Nugent, founder of Asbury Methodist Chapel, and his family fled to Brookeville, where his brother and sister and a relatively large free black population lived. However, no evidence has been found that slaves came to abolitionist Quaker Brookeville.

Tuesday, August 23

"On Tuesday we sent off to a private farm house all our linen, clothing and other movable property..." Mrs. Smith wrote. That night, she and her husband, who was President of the Bank of Washington, were roused by the bank clerk with the alarm, "The enemy are advancing, our own troops are giving way on all sides and are retreating to the city. Go, for Gods sake go." [11] Mr. Smith left immediately with the clerk to take the bank's specie to Brookeville, where, like

the specie from the Bank of Columbia, it was brought to Mr. Bentley at the post office. Mrs. Smith ordered that their carriage and horses be readied, loaded a wagon with their remaining valuables, and set off for Brookeville with her daughters.

Wednesday, August 24

A little past noon, Margaret Bayard Smith arrived in Brookeville, where she joined her husband and several other refugees at the Bentleys' house. It took Mrs. Smith ten hours—walking much of the way—because there was so little light on the road. On her arrival, she described the town, where refugees had been arriving for days: "The appearance of this village is romantic and beautiful.... Here all seems security and peace! ... The town is full of people and waggons. It now affords so hospitable a shelter to our poor citizens! ... I have never seen more benevolent people." [12]

Meanwhile, the British forces that Colonel Monroe had spied disembarking at Benedict arrived at Bladensburg, where approximately 4,500 well-trained and -equipped British regulars engaged 6,000 largely untrained and poorly equipped American militiamen and 1,500 professional troops. The result of the matchup between the highly skilled, experienced British and the incompetently led militiamen of the American army was a rout of the Americans. According to the August 30 issue of the *Federal Republican*, "The retreat [of the American army] was continued until the troops reached Montgomery Court House, 18 miles from the battle ground, almost exhausted with fatigue and *without camp equipage* [italics mine], the baggage wagons having been sent across the Potomac bridge and ordered up the Virginia Shore." [13] On September 3, in a letter to his wife, Asa Moore (whose brother Thomas lived in Brookeville) wrote, "When our militia were going down first on this [the Maryland] side of the Chain Bridge above Georgetown..., they met 200 odd baggage waggons on their retreat into Virginia, ... all parties almost fatigued to death." [14]

President Madison, who had been on the battlefield early on, left Bladensburg and returned to the President's House. Finally, along with a small group of trusted advisors and Cabinet members, he fled the city, taking Mason's Ferry across the Potomac to Virginia.

By evening, the victorious enemy army made its way to Capitol Hill, where they set fire to the Senate and House of Representatives, the Library of Congress, and the Supreme Court, all housed within the Capitol building. Afterwards, they continued down Pennsylvania Avenue to the President's House, where some of them dined, and then burned the mansion and all of its contents, taking a few souvenirs and leaving everything else to be consumed by the fire. They continued setting fire to the adjacent buildings, including the State and War Departments and the Treasury.

On Wednesday night, as the public buildings of the nation's capital burned, President Madison watched from across the Potomac in Virginia. The sky over Washington was so brightly lit that it could be seen in Baltimore. And in Brookeville refugees could guess what was going on in their city.

Thursday, August 25

The American army had been routed, the troops scattered, and the supply wagons were far removed from what remained of the splintered army. As Mrs. Smith wrote on Thursday, "We were greeted with the sad news that our city was taken, the bridges and public buildings burnt, our troops flying in every direction. Our little army totally dispersed...." Even the semblance of military discipline had broken down, as Mrs. Smith continued: "This moment a troop of horse have enter'd; they were on the field of battle, but not engag'd. Major Ridgely their commander, disapproving Genl. Winder's order, refused to obey, left the army and is taking his troops home...." The result of the diversion of the supply wagons to Virginia was that no one was responsible for provisioning the troops. That task fell to Brookeville's Quakers, for those who could reach them. Mrs. Smith added, "Winder with all the men he can collect are at the Court House [Rockville]. He has directed our poor broken militia to make the best of their way to Baltimore. Every hour the poor wearied and terrified creatures are passing by the door. Mrs. Bentl[e]y kindly invites them in to rest and refresh.... Our men look pale and feeble but more with affright than fatigue,—they had thrown away their muskets...." [15]

Meanwhile, in Washington the conflagration continued. From Georgetown, Anna Mason's doctor, Caleb Worthington, who had refused to accompany his patient to Brookeville while he could still leave, wrote, "It is most prudent for citizens to stay in their houses; The enemy are still burning the public buildings. The War Office is now in Flames." (To this report he added the advice, "Keep bleeding or purging Mrs. Mason, and send for another physician.") [16]

On Thursday afternoon, another disaster hit. Mrs. Smith wrote, "Just as we were going to dinner, a tremendous gust arose, it has broken the trees very much, in the midst of it, a waggon came to the door with a family going they knew not whither. Poor wanderers. The hurricane which blew down houses, tore up trees and spread terror around, passed in a few minutes and nature recovered her tranquility."³ (17)

After the storm passed, troops continued to arrive in Brookeville. Mrs. Smith wrote, "Thursday evening. Our anxiety has been kept alive the whole day. Our poor men are coming in some two or three, sometimes a dozen at a time, just now another troop of horse have come in, they

³ Although most contemporary reports call the storm a "hurricane," historian Ralph Eshelman, in his "Travel Guide to the War of 1812 in the Chesapeake," Johns Hopkins Press, 2011, suggests it was a severe line of thunderstorms, probably accompanied by one or more tornados and possibly a *derecho*.

have not been in the engagement, as they did not arrive until a retreat had been order'd." [18] By ten o'clock, Mrs. Smith would write, "The street of this quiet village, which never before witnessed confusion, is now fill'd with carriages bringing out citizens, and Baggage wagons and troops. Mrs. Bentl[e]y's house is now crowded, she has been the whole evening sitting at the supper table, giving refreshment to soldiers and travelers. I suppose every house in the village is equally full....The table is just spread for the 4th or 5th time, more wanderers having just enter'd....The enemy are in the centre of [the] union!" [19]

When the storm ended, the British officers, concerned about a possible counterattack and satisfied with the results of their occupation of the capital city, began their exit from Washington.

Friday, August 26

General Winder got news that the enemy had left the city, and he and Colonel Monroe—who had crossed the Potomac from Virginia to join the army on Thursday, before the storm—and what remained of the fragmented army headed toward Baltimore. An anonymous correspondent wrote, "Near Rockville, I tallyed about thirty men who I met on the road leaving the camp.... Information was received that the British had evacuated the city, and immediately Winder marched with his whole force towards Baltimore." [20] As General Winder and the army followed the post roads, south on what is currently Veirs Mill Road, then east on Route then north on Route 97, they passed through the area that is now Olney. Our anonymous correspondent continued, "I followed the army, the main body of which passed within a mile of this village [Brookeville], the ammunition waggons and horse passing through here." General Winder and the main force of infantry turned east onto the current Route 108, the road through Sandy Spring, while the cavalry and ammunition wagons continued north to Brookeville, taking the post road (now Market Street and Brighton Dam Road) toward Baltimore.⁴

Meanwhile, President Madison and his party, which consisted of General Mason, the general's brother-in-law Attorney General Richard Rush, the President's man-servant, and a guard of two dragoons, were still in Virginia. They had camped for the night in a "hovel," possibly the home of the ferryman at Conn's Ferry. [21] On Friday morning, the party attempted to cross the Potomac into Maryland in time to rendezvous with General Winder and Colonel Monroe, but due to Thursday's storm the river was too high for crossing. By late afternoon, when the river

⁴ Ralph Eshelman presents evidence that corroborates the idea that most soldiers headed to Baltimore along the current Maryland Route 108, camping at Snell's Bridge just west of present-day Clarksville. These were probably infantrymen, who chose to take the shorter, but less finished, road to Baltimore. The post road, although a slightly longer route, was probably a better choice for mounted soldiers because it was maintained for post riders and wagons and equipped with watering troughs for horses. This would also explain why Margaret Bayard Smith's account notes that a number of "units of horse" came through Brookeville.

had receded enough, they crossed to a point just north of Great Falls, following along River Road to Montgomery Courthouse in Rockville, only to discover that General Winder and the army had already left for Baltimore. The President remained at Montgomery Courthouse—“without dismounting”—only long enough to acquire a guide, a "bitter Jacobin" (a derogatory term of the time for an anarchist), before departing for Brookeville. Somewhere near Montgomery Courthouse the President's party was joined by a troop of dragoons, estimated to have been between twenty and fifty, who accompanied them to Brookeville. [22]

Arriving in Brookeville about nine in the evening, as reported by the *Federal Republican* [23], the President's party approached the largest house in the town, that of the town's founder, Richard Thomas. There, the guide approached the owner, asking, "... 'if Gen Mason and suite, could have lodgings for the night,' taking care to avoid mentioning that the President was in company. He was told that he could not. 'Can you put them on the floor?' said the guide. 'No my house is filled with families who have fled from Washington and Georgetown,' was the answer. The guide then went to a house over the way [that of the postmaster Caleb Bentley] and made the same enquiry. A favorable answer being received, the distinguished guest dismounted, and to the astonishment of the hospitable host he was introduced to 'the President of the U.S.' by Gen. Mason."⁵ [24]

As the Bentleys welcomed the President and his party, "all hands went to work to prepare supper and lodgings for him, his companions and guards,—beds were spread in the parlour, the house was filled and guards placed round the house during the night.... All the villagers, gentlemen and ladies, young and old, throng'd to see the President. He was tranquil as usual, and tho' much distressed by the dreadful event, which had taken place not dispirited." [25]

Later, the *Federal Republican* again reported on the President's mood and the conversation at the meal on Friday night: "At supper his excellency was quite talkative and cheerful for some minutes, but occasionally relapsed into silent gloom. He ate ravenously, and remarked that it was his first meal since breakfast, and he had rode 30 miles on horseback. He enquired anxiously after Col. Monroe. Being informed that he was at Head Quarters [in Baltimore] with Gen. Winder, he said he would join the army in the morning if he did not receive advices from Gen. Winder, which should bring him to a different decision.... Some remarks were made upon the mild conduct of the enemy in respecting private property which was spared in every

⁵ Many other stories have been told about the refusal at the first house they approached to take the President's party—all from later sources. One of the earliest is from an article in the magazine of the Maryland Historical Society, "President Madison's Retreat," by J. D. Warfield, published about 1895, in which the owner (Richard Thomas) claimed to be a Federalist and against the War so he would not shelter the President. Later stories appear to have been made up out of whole cloth, for example, one in which the lady of the house (Deborah Thomas) responded, "not with those muddy boots, you're not coming into my house." The account published in contemporary newspapers is much more likely to reflect what actually happened.

instance, except where the enemy was fired on from houses. Mr. Madison instantly said he was at a loss to see how they could discriminate between Gales' printing press and Foxhall's Foundry, both being private property." [26] Our anonymous correspondent, writing on August 31, reported that the defense of the city was freely criticized [27] and the President seems to have agreed. As the *Federal Republican* noted, "He [Madison] spoke of the 5th Baltimore regiment and said, perhaps some other troops from that city being brought up hardier would have done better than the gentlemen who composed that regiment." [28] (Of course they *did* a couple of weeks later at the Battle for Baltimore.)

The conversation was sometimes uncomfortable for the President. "He [Madison] was told it was considered certain, that the enemy had pursued the road to Baltimore from Bladensburg. Then, said he, General Winder is on a parallel route, and will proceed with them *pari passu*. Some remarks were then made about the army, and a gentleman remarked that it was so completely dispersed in the retreat, or rather rout, that it must be small. His Excellency looked angrily, but said nothing. He changed the conversation by introducing the subject of domestic Manufactures..." Several other newspapers, including Poulson's *American Daily Advertiser* on September 2, 1814, and the *Boston Daily Advertiser* on September 5, reprinted the conversation, as well.) "In the course of conversation, he expressed great apprehension lest his library was burnt—as if there was a chance of its escape when all the furniture of the house was left in it and destroyed." [29]

Late Friday night, the President issued a dispatch to Colonel Monroe, telling him that he had received word from General Winder that the enemy had vacated the city and asking whether he should join him at headquarters in Baltimore. He wrote, "...I will either wait here [Brookeville] for you to join me, or follow and join you, as you may think best.... If you decide on coming hither, the sooner the better." [30] The twenty to fifty dragoons who had guarded the President "...encamp'd for the night, beside the mill-wall in a beautiful little plain. The tents were scattered along the riverlet and the fires they kindled on the ground and the lights within the tents had a beautiful appearance," as pickets circled the house. [31]

Saturday, August 27

During the early morning hours in Brookeville, the President received a message from Colonel Monroe, advising that they should return to Washington immediately to reestablish the government there (their messages having crossed in transit). "...[U]pon receipt of which information the dragoons were ordered in readiness to guard the President to the city." [32] The President immediately wrote to Dolley, telling her of the news that the British had left and that Colonel Monroe had suggested that they return to Washington. He wrote, "...We shall accordingly set out thither immediately, you will of course take the same resolution. I know not

where we are in the first instance to hide our heads; but shall look for a place on my arrival."
[33]

The good news that the enemy had vacated the capital was tempered by rumors (that would turn out to be false) summed up by our anonymous correspondent who wrote that the President would be returning to a city "where the blacks are reported to be plundering, burning &c." [34] And in Virginia, local inhabitants stopped General Robert Young on his way to join General Winder, asking for protection from the slave insurrection they had heard was occurring. [35]

Colonel Monroe arrived in Brookeville at about 10 AM. Almost immediately, he and the President's party, including Attorney General Rush and twelve of the dragoons who had served as guards, left Brookeville. They arrived back in Washington late on Saturday evening and the President spent the night at the home of his brother-in-law, Mr. Richard Cutts. [36]

Mr. and Mrs. Smith, on the President's advice, would also leave Brookeville, arriving back at their farm (near present-day Michigan Avenue in Northeast Washington, DC), where they found a pathetic scene: "...[A]t the foot of a tree we saw a soldier sleeping on his arms,—leaving the woods we saw four or 5 others crossing the field and picking apples. When we reach'd the yard, a soldier with his musket was standing by the gate and asked permission to get a drink." As they rode to their city home, they encountered an even worse scene of destruction: "...[We] passed several dead horses. The poor capitol! nothing but its blacken'd walls remained! 4 or 5 houses in the neighbourhood were likewise in ruins.... We afterwards look'd at the other public buildings, but none were so thoroughly destroyed as the House of Representatives and the President's House...[where] not an inch, but its crack'd and blacken'd walls remain'd." Mrs. Smith concluded, "...this is human grandeur! How fragile, how transitory! Who would have thought that this mass so solid, so magnificent, so grand...thus irreparably destroy'd. O vanity of human hopes!" [37]

EPILOGUE

James Madison

On his return to Washington from Brookeville, the President was forced to move from house to house until he was given permanent quarters at the Octagon House. As reported in the *Federal Republican*, "Since his arrival he has not slept two nights in the same house, nor is it allowed to be known in what house he means to sleep..." [38], "...taking up quarters at the homes of his different friends." [39]

However, on the most important issues of the day, the President took control. Almost immediately, he recalled the members of the Cabinet. All but General Armstrong, the Secretary of War, returned immediately to the city to survey the damage and determine what

to do next. General Armstrong, arriving two days late, offered excuses for the failure to defend the capital, and President Madison accepted his resignation. After that, the President replaced the incompetent General Winder with the experienced General Smith, who led the army to Baltimore where it was nearly certain the enemy would strike next. The President faced down petitioners who wanted to move the capital to another city for fear that the enemy would return to finish the conflagration. He reconvened the Congress, and despite the reverses of the previous week, he rallied the country behind him.

James Monroe

As reported in the *Federal Republican*, Colonel Monroe became a sort of one-man Secret Service: "Colonel Monroe is usually about his [Madison's] person. We saw the President go into his Secretary's house at 8 o'clock in the morning, and a little in his rear was the secretary with two pistols in one hand and a sword in the other." [40] The removal of General Armstrong as Secretary of War opened the door for James Monroe to assume that position, although he also remained Secretary of State. Monroe stood firmly with the President in rejecting the idea of moving the capital from Washington, threatening to meet with point of a bayonet anyone presenting a petition to do so, according to an exchange in the September 7 issue of the *National Intelligencer*. In the next election, Secretary Monroe was voted in as the fifth President of the United States.

Richard Rush

Although the President offered Mr. Rush the position of Secretary of the Treasury, Rush preferred to remain Attorney General. As such, he continued to be one of President Madison's closest advisors. Later he would become Comptroller of the Treasury and when John Quincy Adams returned from his diplomatic mission, Rush would replace him as Minister to England. Rush inspired such trust that President John Quincy Adams, a Federalist, made him Secretary of State during his administration, despite the fact that Rush was a member of the opposition party.

John Mason

Shortly after he returned to Washington from Brookeville, Mason was witness to the capitulation of Alexandria, the British sending barges up the Potomac to plunder the goods in the warehouses there. He described the scene to his friend Isaac Briggs in a letter with news for his wife, who remained at the Briggs' home. [41] In September, when his Georgetown neighbor Francis Scott Key went to assist John Stuart Skinner in negotiating the release of Dr. William Beanes from the British, General Mason arranged to support their case with letters from British officers who had been wounded at Bladensburg and were being held prisoner, attesting to their kind treatment by the Americans. Even after the War, Mason continued to

help American prisoners, sending his own ship, the *Analoatan*, to bring them back from Dartmoor Prison, where they were being held in England.

Anna Mason

Mrs. Mason stayed with the Briggses until October, when she was fully recovered. During those long months with the Quaker Briggses she wrote to her brother-in-law, Richard Rush, asking that he send her a case of wine to get her through her convalescence. [42]

Samuel Harrison Smith

Smith remained Commissioner of Revenue (although he was sometimes referred to as the "Commissioner of Debt," as the Treasury was depleted and the war was increasingly financed by borrowing from private sources) through the Madison and Monroe administrations, until the position was discontinued. Shortly after their stay in Brookeville, President Madison appointed Smith to the job of acting Secretary of the Treasury. A close friend of Thomas Jefferson, Smith negotiated the sale of Jefferson's huge collection of books to replace the Library of Congress, which had been lost to the fires.

Margaret Bayard Smith

Mrs. Smith continued to document Washington life through subsequent presidential administrations, admitting that she never warmed to the Monroes, "Certainly not like Dolley and Jemmy." [43] The *National Intelligencer* published her letters describing the War. In the early 20th century Mrs. Smith's grandson, assisted by the Library of Congress, published *The First Forty Years of Washington Society*, a collection of her family letters and journal entries, which proved to be an invaluable social history of the nation's capital when it was new.

There was **no slave rebellion**, despite persistent rumors of blacks burning buildings and looting. As Mrs. Smith wrote, "During the attack, the negroes all hid themselves and instead of a mutinous spirit, have never evinced so much attachment to the whites and such dread of the enemy.... It is supposed that 4[00] or 500 blacks have fled or been taken. The rest behaved well and [have] been quiet. In general they appear to dread the enemy as much as we do. Thus we are spared one evil and the one I had most dread of.... Muskets, cartridge boxes, were found by 100s and in possession of the blacks, who have all cheerfully given them up." [44]

There were the inevitable **Congressional hearings** into the failure to protect the capital and the performance of the army. However, with respect to the army, little changed. One of the most important topics, the failure to supply the troops with food, elicited multiple proposals, including providing them with hard loaves of bread to keep in their pockets. Congress left the issue unresolved.

Within a few weeks the **banks' specie** had been returned. The Senate papers remained in Brookeville until a place was provided for Congress to meet. The town returned to “security and peace” as its engineers embarked on projects crucial to the nation's infrastructure—the Erie Canal and the National Road. Brookeville's entrepreneurs continued to prosper by opening stores, lending for mortgages, and acquiring land and houses, and Henrietta Bentley summed up the generosity of the town to Washington's refugees, the army, and the President: “It is against our principles to have anything to do with war, but we receive and relieve all who come to us.” [45]

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