

= Nathaniel G. S. Hart =

Nathaniel Gray Smith Hart ( c . 1784 ? January 23 , 1813 ) , often Nathaniel G. S. Hart , was a Lexington , Kentucky lawyer and businessman , who served with the state 's volunteer militia during the War of 1812 . As Captain of the Lexington Light Infantry from Kentucky , Hart and many of his men were killed in the River Raisin Massacre of January 23 , 1813 , after being taken prisoner the day before following the Battle of Frenchtown in Michigan Territory .

Hart was especially well @-@ connected politically and socially . In addition to reading law with Henry Clay , Hart 's wife Anna and Clay 's wife Lucretia were sisters . Hart 's wife Anna Edward Gist was the stepdaughter of Charles Scott , Governor of Kentucky and through her Hart was also a brother @-@ in @-@ law to James Brown , a future Ambassador to France and to James Pindell - a member of the Society of Cincinnati . Many other members of Hart 's Kentucky militia unit and its associated troops also came from the elite of Lexington and of the state . The men 's deaths in the two Battles of Frenchtown , but especially in the subsequent Massacre captured state and national attention . The phrase " Remember the Raisin ! " became an American call to arms for the duration of the War .

= = Personal life = =

Nathaniel Hart was one of seven children , the second son of Colonel Thomas Hart , a veteran of the Revolutionary War , and his wife Susanna ( Gray ) Hart .

Originally from North Carolina , the family had moved to Hagerstown , Maryland , where Nathaniel was born . In 1794 they settled in Lexington , Kentucky as part of the postwar migration west . His father was a highly successful businessman , achieving wealth . Hart 's four sisters married men who achieved some renown : Ann married the future US Senator James Brown ( who subsequently served as Minister to France ) ; Eliza married the surgeon Dr. Richard Pindell ( a member of the Society of the Cincinnati ) ; Susanna married the lawyer Samuel Price , and Lucretia married Henry Clay , future US Senator and Secretary of State .

Hart attended Princeton College , where his classmates included William Elliott from western Ontario . Elliott 's father was a Loyalist who had resettled in Canada after the Revolutionary War . The two young men were close enough that Elliot stayed with Hart 's parents for a time to recover from a serious illness .

After Hart 's return to Lexington , he read law under Henry Clay , passed the bar , and set up a law practice in the city . Like his father , he became a successful businessman , a ropewalk ( hemp rope factory ) in the city being among his ventures . Hemp was a commodity crop of central Kentucky . In April 1809 , Hart married Anna Edward Gist , the stepdaughter of General Charles Scott , governor of Kentucky , and daughter of Judith Cary Gist Scott and her late husband General Nathaniel Gist . Hart and Anna had two sons , Thomas Hart Jr. and Henry Clay Hart . On January 7 , 1812 , Hart duelled with Samuel E. Watson at a location on the Indiana side of the Ohio River , near where Silver Creek emptied into the river . This was the site where Henry Clay had duelled with fellow state legislator Humphrey Marshall in 1809 .

= = Military service and death = =

At the start of the War of 1812 , Hart was commissioned as Captain of the Lexington Light Infantry Company ( aka " The Silk Stocking Boys " ) a volunteer unit of the Fayette County , Kentucky militia . He later served as either a Deputy Inspector or as Inspector General of William Henry Harrison 's Army of the Northwest . Hart 's command was attached to the Fifth Regiment of the Kentucky Volunteer Militia and left for the Northwest in August 1812 , where it became part of Army of the Northwest under General James Winchester . In January 1813 , a detachment was sent to the defense of Frenchtown , Michigan Territory as part of an effort to retake Detroit from the British . Frenchtown residents had sent word to the Americans asking for relief from an occupying force of the British and their Native American allies .

During the First Battle of Frenchtown on January 18 , 1813 , the American forces under Lt. Colonel William Lewis were successful in forcing the retreat of the small British force stationed there . The British commander of the Fort Malden garrison in Amherstburg , Colonel Henry Procter , made plans to take back Frenchtown and he ordered troops to the area .

On the morning of January 22 , 1813 , Procter 's forces , including hundreds of Native American warriors , attacked the American troops and overwhelmed the right flank of regulars under Winchester , forcing him and much of the general staff to surrender . The Kentucky militia under the command of Major George Madison on the left flank fought on and thought the flag of truce presented by the enemy was a British flag of surrender . During this second Battle of Frenchtown , 397 Americans were killed . Hart was wounded and was among the 547 survivors who surrendered to Procter upon orders of Winchester . Not many more than 30 Kentucky troops escaped death or capture .

William Elliott , Hart 's former Princeton classmate who had become a Captain in the British Army , promised the wounded man safe passage to Fort Malden , but did not carry out his pledge . Elliot borrowed a horse , bridle and saddle from Major Benjamin Franklin Graves , an American officer , promising to send help to the American wounded , but none arrived . Acting American captain William Caldwell wrote the next month that he heard Elliott tell General Winchester and Major Madison that " the Indians were very excellent surgeons ( and ought to kill all the officers and men ) . " In one official letter , the eye @-@ witness says that Elliott 's broken promise included an offer to take Hart in Elliott 's " own sleigh to Malden that evening " and that Hart could stay at Elliott 's home for his recovery .

Unable to march with the able @-@ bodied prisoners who were being directed to Fort Malden , Hart paid a friendly Indian to take him to the fort . Along the way they encountered other Native Americans , who shot and scalped Hart . Hart and an estimated 30 ? 100 unarmed prisoners were killed by Native Americans on January 23 , the day after the battle , in what became known as the River Raisin Massacre .

The high fatalities of the Americans in the Battle of Frenchtown and the subsequent Massacre of prisoners became fuel for pro @-@ war political factions known as War Hawks , and for anti @-@ British sentiment of the era . The phrase " Remember the Raisin ! " entered the lexicon of the day as a flashpoint for popular sentiment , becoming a battle cry for American troops , especially the ones on the western frontier . The fact that many of the murdered men were well @-@ known and well @-@ connected members of Kentucky 's elite increased the public outcry . Among the dead was Colonel John Allen , Henry Clay 's law @-@ partner and co @-@ counsel in Aaron Burr 's conspiracy trial at Frankfort . Hart 's death is remembered in modern times as " The Murder of Captain Hart . " Major Benjamin Franklin Graves of Lexington was another officer apparently killed while a prisoner of the Potawatomi , who were overseeing him and others marching to Detroit . Many American prisoners disappeared or were killed while being force @-@ marched back to British @-@ held territory .

= = Aftermath of Hart 's death and memorials = =

Owing to their high casualties and status as prisoners , surviving Americans were not able to properly bury their fallen comrades . The remains of the American dead at this site were not interred until months later . In 1818 , the remains were transferred from Monroe , Michigan to Detroit . Isaac Baker , an American ensign who survived the Massacre and served as an official US Agent for the prisoners , stated in a report to General Winchester that :

The dead of our army are still denied the rites of sepulture . ... I was told the hogs were eating them . A gentleman told me he had seen them running about with skulls , arms , legs and other parts of the human system in their mouths . The French people on the Raisin buried Captains Hart , Woolfolk , and some others , but it was more than their lives were worth to have been caught paying this last customed tribute to mortality . "

In 1834 , the box containing the commingled American remains ( including tomahawked skulls ) , were moved from their former Detroit resting @-@ place and re @-@ interred in Detroit 's City

Cemetery . These remains are asserted to have received final burial in the State Cemetery of Frankfort , Kentucky . As late as 1849 , a mass grave from the battle was excavated during road construction in Monroe , which developed in the area of the battlefield . Some writers state that those skeletons , along with the City Cemetery remains , were returned to Kentucky for final and proper burial that year . A 2004 archeological investigation at the State Monument found no evidence of remains from men of the River Raisin events .

Matthew Harris Jouett , a man who painted noted portraits of Thomas Jefferson , George Rogers Clark and Lafayette , was one of the Kentucky volunteers and among the survivors of the River Raisin Massacre . The company payroll of \$ 6000 disappeared during the slaughter . Jouett restored the missing funds to the militia , based on his earnings as a painter . He also painted portraits of his fellow soldiers from memory , including Hart and Colonel Allen .

= = Legacy and honors = =

In 1819 , the state of Kentucky named its 61st county as Hart County in Nathaniel Hart 's honor .

Hart was listed among officers on the Kentucky War Memorial in Frankfort Cemetery in the capital of Frankfort .

In 1904 residents of Monroe , Michigan , which includes much of the area of the battlefield , erected a monument to the Kentuckians who died defending their settlement during the various River Raisin engagements . Some unidentified victims were buried here .

In 2009 , the River Raisin National Battlefield Park was established , the only such park to commemorate the War of 1812 , and one of four battlefield parks in the nation . It had earlier been recognized as a state historic site and was previously listed on the National Register of Historic Places .