



Kentucky's War of 1812: George Madison's POW letter

During the War of 1812, future Kentucky governor George Madison was captured at the Battle of the River Raisin. Taken to Quebec, Canada, Madison wrote a letter home that details his anxiety about his "close confinement as an Hostage" and his ability to pay his debts. The letter is now in the KHS collection.

Written in January 1814, Madison notes that "My detention as a prisoner of war has so far exceeded my expectation" and that "I can make no calculation as to the period of my liberation." He also expressed sadness that his friend and attorney, Col. John Allen, had been killed at River Raisin.

Madison noted that "Our accommodations and treatment are as good as I wish, every attention paid us that we can or have a right to expect, we are in want of nothing but our liberty." While he and several other officers were "confined to a house & Garden," Madison had "extreme anxiety" in wanting to return to Kentucky.

Pictured: Gov. George Madison, who was a prisoner of war during the War of 1812.