

THE VILLAGE PIONEER



Journal of the Sheffield Village Historical Society

*Special Double Issue
—War of 1812 on the Great Lakes*



BATTLE OF LAKE ERIE. *Above left*—British fleet, commanded by Captain Robert Heriot Barclay, as it approaches the Lake Erie Islands on the morning of September 10, 1813. *Above right*—The American fleet, led by Commodore Oliver Hazard Perry's flagship Lawrence, sails westward from Put-in-Bay Harbor to engage the British fleet. *Below*—The British fleet's flagship Detroit (left center) commences firing on the approaching American brig Niagara (in the distance at right center). The damage to the Detroit was exacted by the brig Lawrence, which had been disabled and drifted out of view. The British vessels Queen Charlotte (far left) and Chippewa (far right) also join in firing on the Niagara. Commodore Perry's victory in this battle gave the United States control of Lake Erie and the Upper Great Lakes. These superb battle scenes were researched and painted by Peter Rindlisbacher and presented here courtesy of the artist.

THE WAR OF 1812 ON THE GREAT LAKES

Two hundred years ago, the Battle of Lake Erie had been won by Commodore Perry in September of 1813, but the war would still rage on for another year across the Great Lakes. Hostilities along the frontier with Canada retarded efforts to settle the Connecticut Western Reserve and it was not until the war ended in early 1815 that Sheffield had its beginning. This issue of *The Village Pioneer* explores the war strategies and battles that took place along our northern border.

Prelude to the War

Why was the United States willing to go to war again with Great Britain, less than three decades after the American Revolution ended? Often called *The Second War for Independence*, the War of 1812 had a number of causative factors. Emotional feelings against British impressment of American seamen and interference with American neutrality rights on the high seas—particularly blockades at U.S. ports—were notable factors, but more personal to inhabitants of the Great Lakes region, and those desiring to settle in Ohio and beyond, was the British influence behind Indian hostilities. In fact, once war broke out, more battles were fought on our northern border—especially the Niagara Frontier—with British forces and their Indian allies than in any other part of the United States.

Leading up to the war, in August 1794 President George Washington ordered Brig. Gen. “Mad” Anthony Wayne to Ohio to subdue Indian raids that were suspected of being supported by the British—it was well documented that British agents supplied the Indians with “gifts” of muskets and axes. Previous attempts by Brig. Gen. Josiah Harmar (October 1790) and Maj. Gen. Arthur St. Clair (November 1791) to dislodge the Miami Indians ended in disaster as Chief Little Turtle soundly defeated American troops. On August 20, 1794, Gen. Wayne’s forces defeated an Indian confederation at the Battle of Fallen Timbers on the banks of the Maumee River in northwestern Ohio. Lt. William Henry Harrison (aide-de-camp), Capt. Solomon Van Rensselaer (promoted to major for gallantry), and Brig. Gen. James Wilkinson (commander of a wing in the attack) served with Gen. Wayne in the battle. These three men figured prominently in the war to come.

On November 7, 1811 an American force of 900 troops commanded by Brig. Gen. William Henry Harrison defeated the Western Indian Confederation of 700 warriors (Chippewa, Huron, Kickapoo, Ottawa, Potawatomi, Shawnee, Winnebago, and Wyandot) at the Battle of Tippecanoe in Indiana Territory.

Again the British denied they guided and supplied the Indians, but strong evidence of their complicity was uncovered. The victory at Tippecanoe did not end Indian raids on the frontier and is often considered the opening battle of the War of 1812.

The settlers throughout the Midwest were “jumpy” about the threat of Indian hostilities. When the New Madrid Earthquake struck in the Missouri Territory on December 16, 1811—the most powerful earthquake to hit the eastern United States in recorded history—some of the pioneers thought it was an Indian attack.



General “Mad Anthony” Wayne (1745-1796). His military exploits in the Revolutionary War and fiery personality earned him the sobriquet “Mad” (Library of Congress).

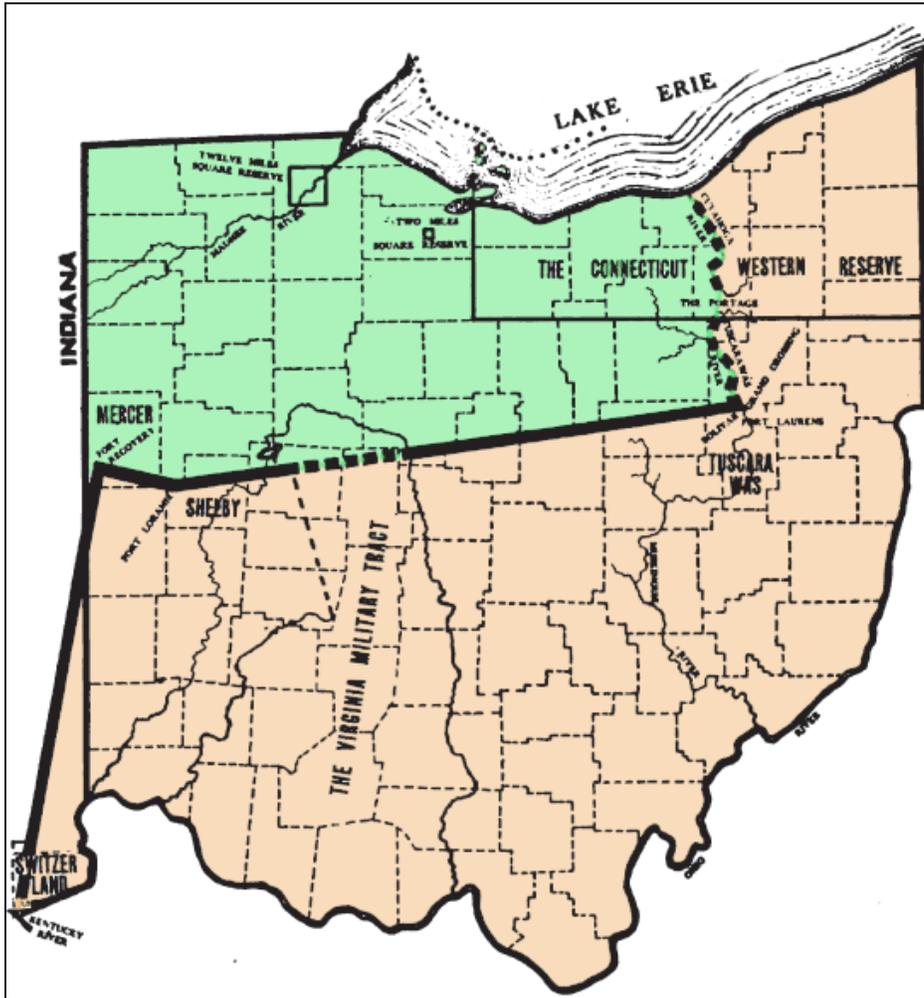
John Reynolds (1788-1865), 4th governor of Illinois wrote of it, “Our family all were sleeping in a log cabin, and my father leapt out of bed crying aloud, ‘the Indians are on the house.’ We laughed at the mistake of my father but soon found out it was worse than the Indians. Our house cracked and quivered, so we were fearful it would fall to the ground.”



Depiction of General Wayne’s decisive victory over the Western Indian Confederacy at the Battle of Fallen Timbers in northwestern Ohio on August 20, 1794 (Harpers Magazine, 1896).



Signing of the Treaty of Greenville on August 3, 1795 at Fort Greenville, Ohio. Victory in the Battle of Fallen Timbers resulted this treaty that established Indian territory in northwestern Ohio. Chief Little Turtle is the prominent figure to the left and General Wayne to the right. Lt. William Henry Harrison is the officer without a hat to the right of General Wayne (painting by Howard Chandler Christy).



Greenville Treaty Line defined Indian territory [green shading] west of the Cuyahoga River and north of Fort Recovery in present-day Mercer County (Office of Ohio Auditor).

Many of the Indians of the Northwest Territory took the earthquake as a sign that predictions of doom for their tribes were coming true, leading many to support Chief Tecumseh, an ally of the British. Attacks against American settlers by Indians quickly increased in the aftermath of the earthquake.

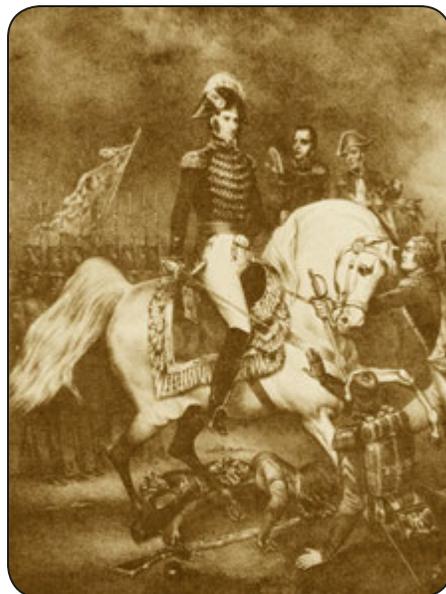
June 1812

WAR DECLARED—on June 1st, President James Madison asked Congress to declare war against Great Britain, citing: (1) impressment of American sailors, (2) interference with trade, (3) blockades of the American coast, and (4) aiding and inciting Native tribes to raid American settlements and forts in the Great Lakes region. On June 18th, Congress voted to go to war and the President signed a war proclamation.

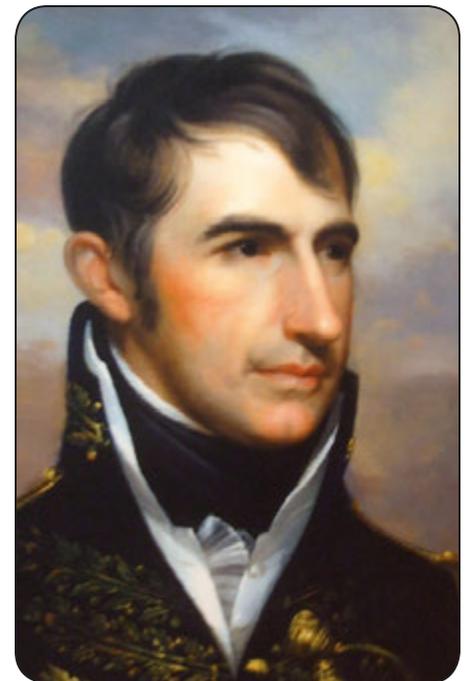
In preparation for the ensuing battles, Col. Jacob Brown was promoted to brigadier general and placed in command of the New York Militia with responsibility for protecting the Lake Ontario and St. Lawrence River shorelines from Oswego to Massena, New York. During the War of 1812, the term “militia” refers to a citizen fighting force composed of non-professional troops that could be called upon to enter in combat situations, as opposed to a professional force of regular, full-time soldiers.



General Arthur St. Clair (1737-1818), first governor of the Northwest Territory (Library of Congress). His forces suffered a major defeat on November 3, 1791 in a surprise attack led by Chief Little Turtle at present-day Fort Recovery, Ohio. Hundreds of soldiers and scores of women and children were killed in the battle, which has since borne the name St. Clair’s Defeat. It remains the greatest defeat of the U.S. Army by Native Americans, with 623 American soldiers and about 50 Native Americans killed.



General Harrison at the Battle of Tippecanoe, November 7, 1811 (Library of Congress). Generals Wayne and Harrison learned much from General St. Clair’s defeat, and spent months training militia and regular troops in Indian warfare strategies before going to battle.



General William Henry Harrison (1773-1841), commander of United States forces at the Battle of Tippecanoe and later the Western Army (Library of Congress).

July 1812

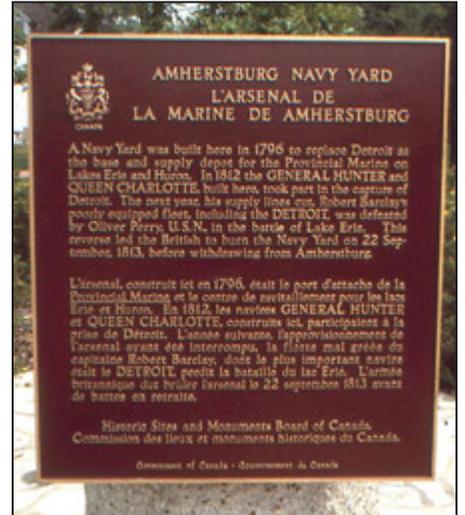
ATTEMPT TO CAPTURE FORT MALDEN AND BRITISH NAVY YARDS AT AMHERSTBURG—due to a lag in communications on the U.S. side, British Lt. Rolette of the Provincial Marine captured the schooner *Cuyahoga* in the Detroit River before the American crew was aware war had been declared. On July 12th, Gen. Hull crossed the Detroit River and invaded Upper Canada at Sandwich [now Windsor, Ontario] with the objective of marching 20 miles south along the Detroit River to capture Fort Malden and the British navy yards at Amherstburg. The American advance stalled for three reasons: (1) American militiamen at Fort Detroit refused to cross the river with the regular troops, (2) Indians loyal to the British disrupted the American supply lines, and (3) strong British resistance at the River Canard between Sandwich and Fort Malden. Gen. Hull retreated back across the Detroit River with British Gen. Isaac Brock and Shawnee Chief Tecumseh in pursuit.



Restored Fort Malden, built in 1796 by the British at Amherstburg, Upper Canada (present-day Ontario).



Painting of Amherstburg, Upper Canada in 1813 (Parks Canada).



Historic marker for the Amherstburg Naval Yard, construction site for the British fleet on Lake Erie.

CAPTURE OF MACKINAC ISLAND—on July 17th, British Capt. Charles Roberts led a force of 45 regulars, 180 Canadian fur company workers, and 400 Indians from Fort Saint Joseph [on the St. Marys River] south 40 miles to American Fort Michilimackinac on Mackinac Island in northern Lake Huron. Not having received notice of the declaration of war from Gen. Hull, the fort's commander, Lt. Porter Hanks, and 60 men were surprised and compelled to surrender to the British.



Plaque commemorating British landing on Mackinac Island.



Fort Michilimackinac on Mackinac Island—captured by the British on July 17, 1812.

FIRST BATTLE OF SACKETS HARBOR—on July 19th, a British Provincial Marine squadron, led by Capt. Hugh Earle, attacked shipbuilding facilities at Sackets Harbor, New York at the eastern end of Lake Ontario, and attempted to capture the American brig *Oneida*. Commodore Melancthon Woolsey eluded

the British and unloaded some of the *Oneida*'s heavy deck guns on shore. Armed with shorter-range guns, the British ships were unable to close the distance through the shallow lake to the shore where their artillery would be effective. Unable to overcome the Americans' long-range cannons, they were forced to retreat.



American brig *Oneida* (*Great Lakes Seaway Trail*). This ship captured the British schooner *Lord Nelson* in June 1812 and severely damaged the sloop *HMS Royal George* in July 1812 and again in November 1812.



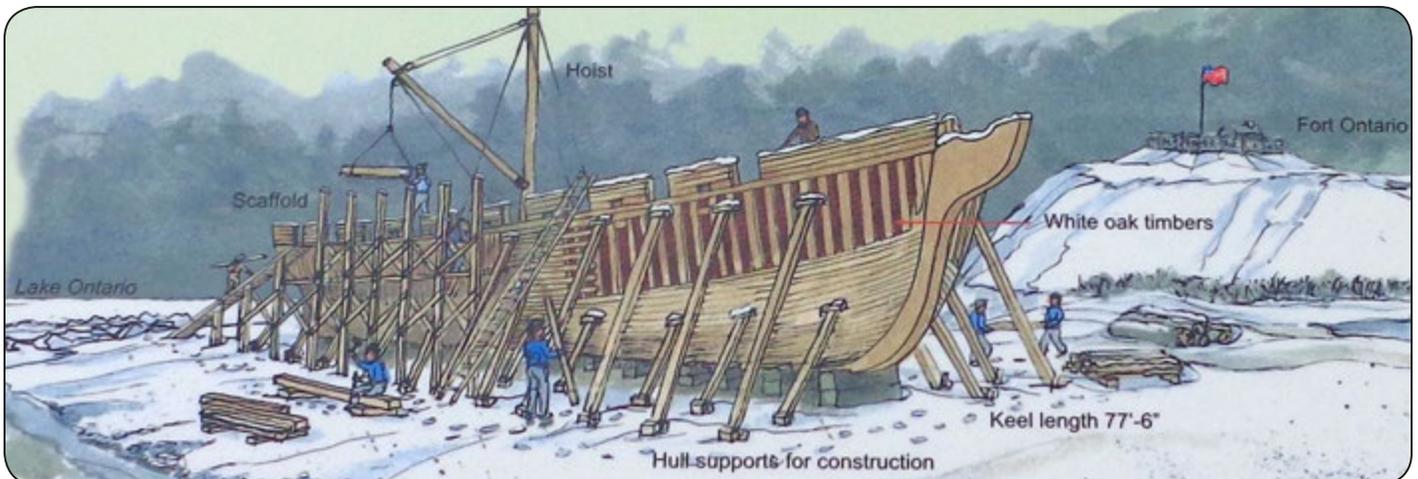
Commodore Melancthon Woolsey (1782-1838), hero of the Battle of Sackets Harbor in July 1812 (*Great Lakes Seaway Trail*).



Midshipman James Fenimore Cooper (1789-1851), noted for his sea stories and historical novels, assisted Commodore Woolsey in the construction of the brig *Oneida* (*Library of Congress*).



American shipyard at Navy Point in Sackets Harbor, New York (courtesy of New York State Military Museum). A British attack on this facility in July 1812 was repelled by American artillery. Towards the close of the action, as the British flagship *Royal George* was maneuvering to fire broadside, a 24-pound shot from the American brig *Oneida* struck her stern and raked her whole length, killing eight men, and doing much damage. The *Royal George* also sustained severe damage to her topmast and rigging.



Construction of the American brig *Oneida* at Oswego, New York in 1809. Supervised by Commodore Melancthon Woolsey with the assistance of Midshipman James Fenimore Cooper, the ship's displacement was 243 tons by carpenter's measurement, but her draft was comparable with a sloop of 80 tons. This enabled her to enter the rivers flowing into Lake Ontario without fear of grounding (*Great Lakes Seaway Trail*).

August 1812

FORT DEARBORN MASSACRE—on August 12th, Capt. Nathan Heald, commander of Fort Dearborn on Lake Michigan [now Chicago, Illinois] was ordered by Gen. Hull to evacuate the fort. The small garrison defending the post consisted of 54 regulars and 12 militiamen, with 27 women and children present. Not having enough warning to withdraw, Heald surrendered the fort after first destroying the weapons and liquor. The surrender agreement stipulated that the more benign Miami Indians would escort the Americans to safety. To appease the attacking Potawatomi and Winnebago Indians, the Americans offered the other supplies. Infuriated by not getting the guns and liquor, the Potawatomi and Winnebago Indians burned the fort and massacred most of the adults and took the children as prisoners. Capt. Heald and his wife were wounded, but managed to escape.

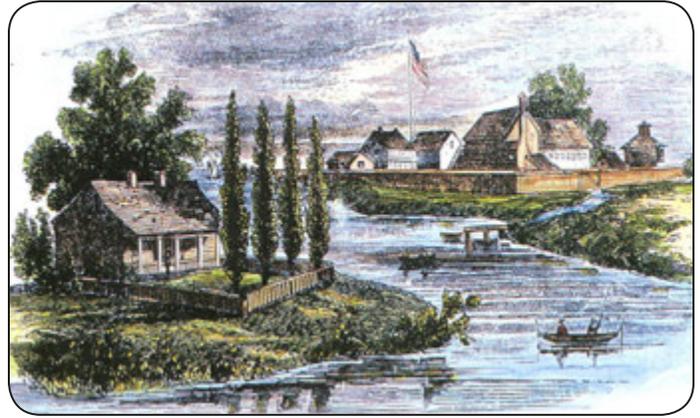
SURRENDER OF FORT DETROIT—on August 16th, Gen. Isaac Brock crossed the Detroit River with British forces and Tecumseh-led Indian warriors to attack Fort Detroit. Fearing an Indian massacre, Gen. William Hull surrendered his 400 regular troops without firing a shot—the British had created an impression of a having a large regular force by dressing militiamen in surplus red coats.

Brock paroled the American militiamen in the fort, but the regulars were marched to Quebec where they were paraded through the streets. American forces across the Niagara River at Lewiston, New York watched helplessly as the column of prisoners were marched northward. Upon his release from captivity, Gen. Hull was sentenced to death by a court martial for his cowardly behavior at Fort Detroit, but was given a reprieve by President Madison due to his honorable service in the Revolutionary War.

The British also captured the U.S. brig *Adams* at Detroit, leaving no American navy vessels on Lake Erie. At that time, the British had a fleet of four warships on the lake and they were in the process of building more at the Amherstburg navy yards.

September 1812

PRESIDENT MADISON'S WAR STRATEGY—on September 17th, President Madison appointed Brig. Gen. William Henry Harrison commander of all American forces in the Northwest Territory and the new state of Ohio. Harrison's command was given the name Second Northwest Army. He was ordered to retake Fort Detroit and defend the frontier against the menace of Indian raids on settlers. Originally Harrison refused the appointment because he would have to serve under Brig. Gen. James Winchester, an officer extremely unpopular with the officers and troops, as well as western settlers. The reporting relationship was partially solved when the Kentucky caucus elected and promoted Harrison as major general in the Kentucky Militia in



Fort Dearborn on Lake Michigan, scene of a massacre by Potawatomi and Winnebago Indians in August 1812 (Chicago History Museum).

August 1812. In March 1813 Congress approved the promotion of Harrison to major general in the regular army.

At about the same time plans were being laid to attack Canada at the Niagara Frontier to support Gen. Hull's ill-fated northwest campaign—the one that had ended in disaster at Detroit. The Niagara invasion plan suffered from lack of defined leadership and chain of command. Gen. Dearborn ordered Militia Gen. Stephen Van Rensselaer to move his army from Sackets Harbor to Lewiston and prepare to attack Upper Canada by crossing the Niagara River. Brig. Gen. Alexander Smyth, in command of some 3,000 troops in the Niagara area, decided not to cooperate. Smyth refused to

accept a subordinate position under a militia general and wanted the invasion to start at Black Rock by crossing the river to Fort Erie. He moved about 1,700 regulars to Buffalo, leaving only 1,300 at Fort Niagara to support Van Rensselaer's plan for a two-pronged attack across the river: (1) Lewiston to Queenston and (2) Fort Niagara to Fort George. A month was wasted sorting out an invasion plan, plenty of time for British Gen. Brock to return to the Niagara Frontier.

Also in September, three men called upon President Madison in Washington: Secretary of War William Eustis, Col. Lewis Cass [one of the officers who had been with Gen. Hull at Detroit, but was away meeting a supply caravan when Hull surrendered], and Daniel Dobbins, a veteran captain of merchant ships on the Great Lakes. They advised the President that the United States must build a fleet on Lake Erie in order to arrest control of the lake from the British. As long

as the British controlled the lake they could deploy their troops anywhere they wished along the American shore, with no force to stop them. Dobbins recommended Presque Isle Bay at the town of Erie, Pennsylvania as the best and safest place to build the ships. President Madison decided the men were right. He gave Dobbins a warrant as a sailing master in the navy and directed him to build four vessels of war at Erie.



Surrender of Fort Detroit by General William Hull (right) to British General Isaac Brock in August 1812, while Indian Chief Tecumseh observes the ceremony (Library of Congress).

RAID ON GANANOQUE, UPPER CANADA—on September 21st, Capt. Benjamin Forsyth led a company of 70 regulars and 30 militiamen from Cape Vincent, New York across the St. Lawrence River to the British naval storage yard at Gananoque. They burned a warehouse that served as a staging area for forming convoys to move supplies to Fort Malden. During the raid the Americans killed several defenders and took four prisoners.

WAR IN THE LAKE ERIE ISLANDS REGION—the original proprietor of the Bass Islands was Revolutionary War veteran, Judge Pierpont Edwards of Hartford, Connecticut. Judge Edwards was one of 59 stockholders in The Connecticut Land Company, a syndicate formed in 1796 to purchase 3,840,000 acres of land—known as the Connecticut Western Reserve—in what would become northeastern Ohio.

The land was distributed to the stockholders in a series of drawings. On April 4, 1807, Judge Edwards drew Township 7 of Range 16 on the shore of Lake Erie, which later became Avon Township in Lorain County. The three Bass Islands were awarded to Edwards as a supplement because the Avon tract was irregular due to the lake shore. Also, the land north of the ancient beach ridge [Detroit Road] was swampy and thought to be unusable for settlement. The Bass Islands and the Catawba-Marblehead Peninsula area were a special part of the Connecticut Western Reserve, known as the Firelands—western part of the Reserve awarded to Connecticut residents who were burned out of their homes by the British during the Revolutionary War.

Judge Edwards never visited his Ohio property, but in 1810 he deeded the Bass Islands to his sons, John Stark Edwards and Ogden Edwards. In 1811, John sent Seth Doan of Chatham, Connecticut to the islands to establish a homestead. Doan's first task was to dispose of a group of French Canadian squatters, then clear a woodland tract of 100 acres on South Bass Island, which he planted to fall wheat. Next he brought 400 sheep and 150 hogs onto the island to graze and forage on the acorns and hickory nuts, planning to slaughter the animals the following year. By the spring of 1812 there was considerable tension along the boundary line with British Canada that led to open warfare with the declaration of war by the United States on June 18th. John Edwards assembled a crew on South Bass Island to harvest the wheat as soon as it was ripe.

The entire crop of 2,000 bushels was transported to a new log shed he had built on the mainland at Catawba Peninsula. After the fall of Fort Detroit, the British invaded the islands region, tracing the wheat to the mainland. On September 22th, the British and their Indian allies fought a skirmish with the Firelands militia, led by Benajah Wolcott, on the Sandusky Bay shore of Marblehead Peninsula. As the British withdrew from the area, they destroyed John Edward's storehouse and its contents on Catawba [Wolcott would later become the first keeper of the Marblehead Lighthouse, when it was built in 1822].

This incident emboldened the Indians of northwestern Ohio. Fearing further attacks, many of the New England settlers fled the area until the war ended. News of British victories fanned rumors of further invasions of Ohio. The threat was felt as far east as the Black River in present-day Lorain County where a militia post was established to ensure the citizenry that they were safe in their cabins.

To protect his property, Gen. William Hart, first proprietor by virtue of the land drawing of what later became Sheffield Township, sent frontiersman Timothy Wallace to commence settlement of his property. Wallace selected a tract of land near the mouth of French Creek on the Black River where he constructed and small log house. He started to clear the land for planting, but as rumors persisted, he soon abandoned the property for fear of Indian reprisal.

It was not until the war was over that Capt. Burrell and Capt. Day purchased the township from Gen. Hart and established the permanent settlement of Sheffield.

Meanwhile, in an attempt to retaliate for his loss to the British, John Edwards organized a company of militia in Warren, Ohio and marched toward the Bass Islands. When his forces reached Cleveland the authorities appointed Edwards a colonel, but inexplicably ordered him to dismiss his company. That winter Col. Edwards became impatient to see the damage that his property had suffered. With two friends, George Parsons and William Bell, Col. Edwards again set off for the Bass Islands on horseback. A January thaw flooded the Sandusky River and they were unable to cross to Fort Stephenson [now Fremont, Ohio]. They turned back, but had difficulty crossing the Huron River. John became ill with pneumonia and took refuge in a log cabin. Bell headed back to Warren to fetch Dr. Seeley, while Parsons stayed with the sick man. On January 29, 1813, Col. John Stark Edwards died and Parsons put his body on his horse for the long trail back to Warren, meeting Bell, Dr. Seeley, and Mrs. Edwards along the way. John's widow and his brother Judge Ogden Edwards, then became co-owners of the Bass Islands, but neither showed any further interest in the islands while the war waged on.

The British developed a naval force on the Great Lakes that was unchallenged by the Americans until Commodore Oliver Hazard Perry was ordered to build a squadron of warships at Erie, Pennsylvania. At the suggestion of Gen. William Henry Harrison, Perry anchored his ships in Put-in-Bay Harbor awaiting a challenge from the British squadron under the command of Capt. Robert Barclay. Perry's victory at the Battle of Lake Erie on September 10, 1813, freed the Bass Islands from further threat by the British.



Judge Pierpont Edwards (1750-1826), original proprietor of Lake Erie's Bass Islands (New York Public Library).



General William Hart, the first proprietor of the township that would later become Sheffield (portrait by Marek Sarba, Old Saybrook Historical Society).

October 1812

FIRST BATTLE OF OGDENSBURG, NEW YORK—on October 4th, Gen. Jacob Brown of the New York Militia repelled a British attack at Ogdensburg on the St. Lawrence River. The attempted British raid of 600 regulars and militia in 24 bateaux [light, flat-bottomed river boats] and two gunboats was in retaliation for Capt. Forsyth's raid on Gananoque. Directing cannon fire at the invaders, Gen. Brown stopped the British force under Col. Robert Lethbridge in midstream on the St. Lawrence River.

In October 1812, Commodore Isaac Chauncey, American commander of naval forces on Lakes Ontario and Erie, arrived at Sackets Harbor to build or otherwise acquire ships. The Americans viewed control of these two lakes and the St. Lawrence River to be of paramount importance. In December, Lt. Jesse Elliott, then commander of naval forces on Lake Erie at Buffalo, submitted a recommendation to Chauncey to build a Lake Erie fleet at the Black Rock shipyard on the Niagara River. Under strong opposition from Daniel Dobbins, Elliott's plan was rejected because British gun installations were deployed immediately across the river. Also, rapid downstream currents in the Niagara River would have to be overcome to reach Lake Erie.

The following month (January 1813), Master Commandant Oliver Hazard Perry was selected to command the Lake Erie fleet being built by Sailing Master Daniel Dobbins in Presque Isle Bay. Perry was also assigned the task of transferring several small gunboats stationed at the Black Rock shipyard to Presque Isle.

Unable to cross the shallow sandbar at the entrance to Presque Isle Bay, Barclay had to wait for the American fleet to emerge and for his flagship, the brig *Detroit*, to be completed at Amherstburg, near the mouth of the Detroit River before he felt confident to engage the Americans.



General Jacob Brown (1775-1828), defender of New York's northern border during the War of 1812 (Library of Congress).



Commodore Isaac Chauncey (1779-1840), commander of the American fleet on Lake Ontario (painting by Gilbert Stuart, 1818; U.S. Naval Academy Museum).

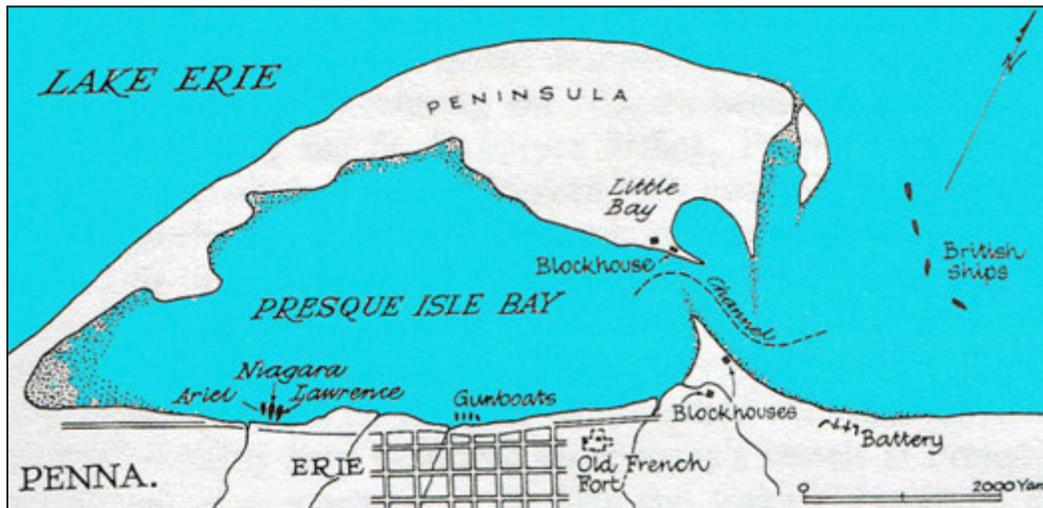


Commodore Oliver Hazard Perry (1785-1819), commander of the American fleet on Lake Erie (painting by Gilbert Stuart 1818; U.S. Naval Academy Museum).



Captain Robert Heriot Barclay commander of the British fleet on Lake Erie (Public Archives of Canada).

Perry's second assignment proved to be difficult because the British cannons at Fort Erie [at the head of the Niagara River] prevented American ships at Black Rock from moving out into Lake Erie. Also, the British fleet under Capt. Robert Heriot Barclay was patrolling Lake Erie and monitoring American progress at Presque Isle.



British fleet patrolling Lake Erie and monitoring Perry's progress at Presque Isle, but prevented by the sandbar from entering the bay (U.S. National Park Service).



Sailing Master Daniel Dobbins (1776-1856). His vision initiated construction of the American fleet at Erie, Pennsylvania in 1812 (Erie Public Museum).



Lake Erie fleet being built at Erie, Pennsylvania during the winter of 1812-1813 (Pennsylvania Bureau of State Parks).

Obtaining the materials necessary to build the vessels and transporting armaments through the wilderness to Erie, Pennsylvania was the biggest problem facing Dobbins and Perry. Some of the cannons came from New York City via the Hudson and Mohawk Rivers, along Lake Ontario, and over rough roads that ran along the Niagara River between Lakes Erie and Ontario to the America naval yard at Black Rock. From there Dobbins had to take over and move the guns to Erie. During the winter months, teams of oxen and horses pulled wagons and sleds to Presque Isle. Frequently the teams came over the ice of frozen Lake Erie, pulling their loads of big guns, anchors, and other critical supplies. Other supplies and armament came overland from foundries in Pittsburgh.



American gunboats at the Black Rock Naval Base during the winter of 1812-1813 (painting by Peter Rindlisbacher).

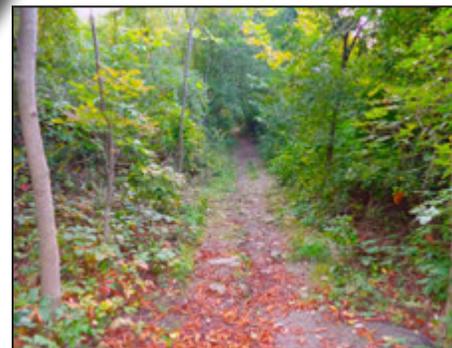
BATTLE OF QUEENSTON HEIGHTS—meanwhile on October 13, 1812, the Americans launched an attack across the Niagara River at Queenston Heights, Upper Canada. Gen. Stephen Van Rensselaer ordered Col. Solomon Van Rensselaer to launch the attack with a force of 1,300 men. Lt. Col. Winfield Scott refused to serve under Col. Van Rensselaer, a militia officer, but Lt. Col. John Christie and Lt. Col. John Fenwick, regular army, agreed to serve. The attack became disorganized due to lack of a central command, poor weather, insufficient boats, and little knowledge of the terrain. To make matters worse, Van Rensselaer was wounded in the first wave, Christie's boat was swept down river, and Fenwick was wounded and later captured. With the Americans pinned down and taking casualties, Lt. John Gansevoort learned of a fisherman's path up the cliff.

Captain John Ellis Wool (1784-1869) served as an officer in three consecutive U.S. wars—War of 1812, Mexican-American War, and American Civil War—attaining the rank of Brigadier General as shown in this daguerreotype image by Southworth & Hawes (Library of Congress).



Gansevoort led Capt. John Wool up the escarpment, where the Americans overran the British battery and chased the enemy back to Queenston. Gen. Sir Isaac Brock and Lt. Col. John Macdonell mounted a British counterattack. Both British officers were killed in the engagement, a severe loss to their command.

Taking charge, British Maj. Gen. Roger Sheaffe, outflanked the Americans and attacked from the rear. When American reinforcements, under Gen. Smyth, refused to cross the Niagara River, the invading Americans at Queenston were forced to surrender with 300 killed or wounded and 1,000 captured.



Fisherman's path up the cliff at Queenston Heights. Discovered by Lt. John Gansevoort, Captain John Ellis Wool used the path to lead American forces up the Niagara Escarpment and overrun the British battery.



Battle of Queenston Heights, October 1812. Mortally wounded General Isaac Brock urges Canadian militiamen forward (painting by John Davis Kelley, 1896).



Plaque commemorating the battery position where Lt. Colonel Macdonell was killed at Queenston Heights.



War of 1812 cannon marks the position where General Isaac Brock and Lt. Colonel John Macdonell fell at the Battle of Queenston Heights.



Monument to General Isaac Brock at the crest of the Niagara Escarpment, near where he fell during the Battle of Queenston Heights.

November 1812

BOMBARDMENT OF BLACK ROCK—on November 17th, Gen. Stephen Van Rensselaer resigned his position after the defeat at Queenston. Brig. Gen. Smyth was named commander of Niagara forces, making public his intention to invade Canada from Black Rock where his 4,500 troops were assembled. The British, well aware of Smyth's plan, bombarded Black Rock and destroyed barracks and a power magazine.

FIRST RAID ON LA COLLE MILL, LOWER CANADA—on November 20th, after calling off his planned attack on Montreal, Maj. Gen. Dearborn directed Col. Zebulon Pike [explorer of Colorado Territory in 1807 and discoverer of Pike's Peak] to advance north along the shore of Lake Champlain from Plattsburg, New York to La Colle Mill, Lower Canada [now Quebec]. With 600 regulars, Pike's objective was to capture a British blockhouse located south of the city. A second detachment of 400 militiamen was dispatched from Plattsburg a short time later, but took a different route toward the same objective. Pike and his regulars arrived first to find the blockhouse abandoned. When the militia approached at dawn from a different direction, Pike's forces mistakenly fired on them.

General Zebulon Pike (1784-1813)—killed at the Battle of York in April 1813 when a British powder magazine blew up (engraving by David Edwin). Earlier, as a lieutenant he had discovered the peak that bears his name in Colorado and as a colonel he raided the British blockhouse at La Colle Mill, Lower Canada [present-day Quebec].

After exchanging fire for several hours the mistake was realized, but not before the loss of 50 men. Both units returned to Plattsburg allowing the British to reclaim the blockhouse. This disaster pointed out a serious disconnect between the regular army and volunteer militia. By the following year, increased training and battle experience of the militia units, as well as the army, led to improvement in the combat relationship between them.

ABORTED INVASION OF UPPER CANADA—in retaliation for Black Rock, Gen. Smyth sent two detachments across the Niagara River on November 28th to capture a British artillery battery and destroy a bridge prior to his planned invasion. The battery was captured, but the bridge was not burned. Both detachments were forced to retreat. In their race to recross the river, many of the American troops were drowned or captured.

Two attempts were made by Gen. Smyth to invade on November 29th and 30th, but each was abandoned because of an inadequate amphibious strategy. Thereafter the entire invasion plan was shelved and the army went into winter quarters. The militiamen returned to their homes and Smyth departed for his estate in Virginia. Shortly thereafter, Gen. Smyth was removed from the army's rolls.

January 1813

Brig. Gen. James Winchester established a fortified camp on the rapids of the Maumee River in northwestern Ohio. The fort was to function as staging post where Gen. Harrison's army of 6,500 men could converge and launch an attack to recapture Fort Detroit.

BATTLE OF FRENCHTOWN AND RIVER RAISIN MASSACRE—on January 22nd, Gen. Winchester received an urgent request for help from American settlers at Frenchtown on the River Raisin [now Monroe, Michigan], about 35 miles north of the fort, where 160 Canadians and Indians were holding the village. Gen. Winchester dispatched Col. William Lewis and Col. John Allen with 660 men to rescue the settlers. They recaptured the town, killing 12 British soldiers and wounding 55.

Soon after, Gen. Winchester learned that British Col. Henry Proctor (Gen. Brock's replacement as commander at Fort Malden) was approaching Frenchtown with 1,400 troops from Fort Malden. Winchester marched north with 300 men to reinforce his troops at the River Raisin. The American force that was holding Frenchtown had its back to the river and suffered an intense artillery bombardment from the British and an attack on their west flank by 600 Indians led by Tecumseh. This caused a chaotic retreat of 400 men that ended in disaster with heavy casualties of 220 killed, 40 wounded, 147 captured, and only 33 escaped.

Being poorly situated, outnumbered, and lacking artillery support, Gen. Winchester, whose main troops were pinned down on the opposite side of the River Raisin, surrendered his army to Col. Proctor as did Col. George Madison whose 400 men were farther upstream. The American officers negotiated protection for their troops from the Indians that was accepted by Col. Proctor. However, British guards soon left the area and marauding Indians returned to kill 60 wounded men left in British care as Proctor marched the uninjured American troops back toward Detroit. As the prisoners were marched northward, those unable to keep up were murdered by Indians as well. An account by a survivor read, "The road was for miles strewn with mangled bodies." The needless slaughter of the American wounded, which became known as the River Raisin Massacre, so horrified contemporary Americans that it overshadowed the actual battle and word of it spread throughout the country.

The massacre was particularly devastating for the state of Kentucky, which supplied many of the soldiers that fell during the battle and the following massacre. "Remember the Raisin" became the rallying battle cry used in subsequent American engagements and ultimately sealed the fate of Tecumseh for not being able to control his warriors. The loss of this large segment of his army, with no replacements on the way, resulted in Gen. Harrison calling off his planned winter campaign to retake Fort Detroit. Harrison selected an elevated position on the east bank of the Maumee River and Capt. Eleazer Wood designed and supervised the building of defensive fortification, named Fort Meigs, for the reduced American force of 1,000 men.

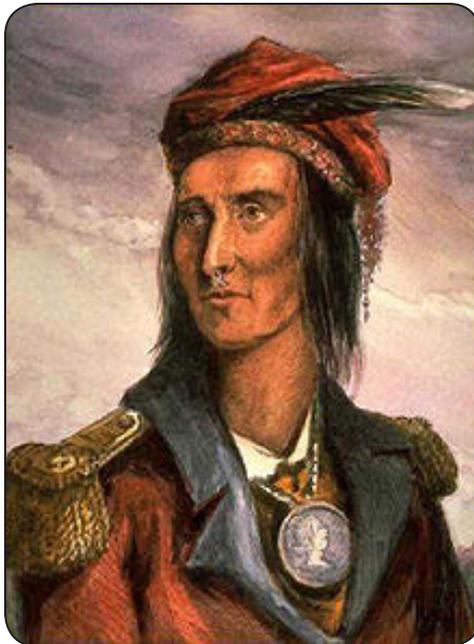




Frenchtown on Lake Erie at the mouth of the River Raisin, Michigan Territory, site of the Indian massacre in January 1813. Remember the Raisin became the battle cry of the Americans (Monroe County Historical Society).



Colonel Henry Proctor (1763-1822), later promoted to general, commander of Fort Malden after the death of General Brock (Parks Canada).



Shawnee Indian Chief Tecumseh (1768-1813), allied with the British, he was unable to control his warriors at the River Raisin Massacre (drawing by Benson Lossing).

February 1813

OGDENSBURG & ELIZABETHTOWN RAIDS—on February 4th, a small British force raided Ogdensburg, New York by crossing the frozen St. Lawrence River. They took a few prisoners back across the river and held them in Elizabethtown, Upper Canada. On February 6th, Capt. Benjamin Forsyth led 200 regulars and volunteers across the river to Elizabethtown to free jailed Americans. Forsyth's troops captured 50 Canadian militiamen and civilians in reprisal for the British raid.

SECOND BATTLE OF OGDENSBURG—on February 22nd, Lt. George "Red" MacDonnell with a 600-man British force and three cannons, led a surprise assault on Ogdensburg, in retaliation for Capt. Forsyth's raids. MacDonnell crossed the frozen St. Lawrence River, eliminated musket fire from town buildings, and took 70 prisoners. Substantial military supplies were captured and two schooners were burned. Gen. Jacob Brown was alerted, but was unable to reach Ogdensburg from Sackets Harbor in time to be of assistance. Without reinforcements, Capt. Forsyth was forced to retreat to the south.

Lt. Col. MacDonnell threatened the citizens of Ogdensburg with continued raids if the town was used for military purposes. After evaluating the damage to the military facilities, Gen. Brown recommended that the town not be used as a supply base; the garrison there was not reestablished for the remainder of the war.

April 1813

BATTLE OF YORK—on April 27th, Gen. Henry Dearborn and Commodore Isaac Chauncey sailed from Sackets Harbor, New York with 14 warships and transport vessels holding 1,700 troops across Lake Ontario to attack York [now Toronto]. Due to illness, Gen. Dearborn transferred command to Gen. Zebulon Pike, who led the land assault with the objective of capturing the sloop *General Isaac Brock* (under construction) and a major powder magazine. Gen. Roger Sheaffe, commanding a British force of 700 men, ordered the ship burned and the munitions destroyed as the Americans approached. A large stone killed Gen. Pike when the powder magazine blew up. The British then withdrew and the city surrendered within a day. The British lost 200 men; the remainder marched to Kingston at the head of St. Lawrence River. The Americans, who lost 320 men, sailed back to Sackets Harbor on May 8th, being delayed a number of days by storms on Lake Ontario.



Fort Meigs on the Maumee River in northwestern Ohio was originally constructed in January and February 1813 under the supervision of Captain Eleazer Wood. Dressed in clothing of the period, these guides give tours of the reconstructed fort. The lady is dressed in clothing typical of Ohio in the early 19th century and the soldier wears an Artillery uniform denoted by the red facings that continued as a distinction until after World War II (Lake Erie Coastal Ohio).

May 1813

FIRST SIEGE OF FORT MEIGS—on May 1st and again in July, Gen. Proctor attempted to capture Fort Meigs on the Maumee River in northwestern Ohio. During the first siege, Gen. William Henry Harrison defended the fort with a small force of about 1,000 men. Aware of Proctor's plan, Gen. Harrison requested reinforcements from Kentucky Governor Isaac Shelby, who dispatched Brig. Gen. Green Clay with 1,270 Kentucky militiamen.



General Green Clay (1757-1828) of the Kentucky Militia and 1,200 militiamen arrived at Fort Meigs in time to partially destroy General Proctor's artillery, causing the British to abandon the siege when their remaining cannons proved to be ineffective (painting by Matthew Harris Jouett).



Niagara-on-the-Lake, Ontario (formerly Newark, Upper Canada), location of Fort George at the Niagara River mouth. The clock tower is a cenotaph—an empty tomb monument erected in honor soldiers and sailors whose remains are elsewhere.

When Proctor arrived at a point immediately across the Maumee River from the fort, the Kentuckians were still a few days distant. Proctor with 1,000 regular and Canadian militiamen under his command, as well as 1,500 Indians led by Tecumseh, began to bombard the fort. On May 4th, after withstanding three days of heavy artillery barrage, Harrison received word that Clay's troops were only hours away. Harrison directed Clay to attack the two British batteries on the opposite side of the river, north of the fort, while his troops concentrated on the batteries the British had deployed on the fort's side of the river. Col. John Miller, of Clay's column overran one battery, took 40 prisoners, and returned to the fort with the 400 men in his command.

Col. William Dudley, with a force of 870 men, attacked the other battery and managed to hastily spike the British cannons and render them temporarily useless before being surrounded and trapped by Indians. He and 200 others were killed, 500 captured, and only 170 escaped to the fort.

Proctor retrieved his artillery, rehabilitated the cannons that had not been adequately spiked, and resumed the bombardment. Fort Meigs proved to be impregnable. On May 9th Proctor abandoned the siege when his Indian allies left with their plunder and prisoners and his militiamen returned home to plant their crops. Gen. Harrison promoted Capt. Eleazer Wood to brevet major for his exceptional service in constructing the fort.



Six-inch cannon ball recovered from the site of the Fort Meigs siege (courtesy of William Cucher).

CAPTURE OF FORT GEORGE—meanwhile, on May 27th, a combined army and navy action at the mouth of the Niagara River resulted in the capture of the British Fort George. The amphibious landing of 4,000 troops was executed by Commodore Isaac Chauncey while the assault of the fort was led by Gen. Henry Dearborn. The British not only withdrew from the fort leaving it to the Americans, but all their forces along the entire Niagara River were pulled back at the same time, including the troops that garrisoned Fort Erie, opposite the Black Rock shipyards.

The amphibious landing was planned by Col. Winfield Scott, Chief of Staff to Gen. Dearborn, with the assistance of Master Commandant Oliver Hazard Perry. Perry and Sailing Master Daniel Dobbins had made a fast trip from Presque Isle to Lake Ontario, traveling by boat, on foot, and horseback to take part in the attack of Fort George. With the guns at Fort Erie no longer preventing American gunboats at Black Rock from leaving, Perry immediately decided to sail these vessels to Presque Isle. He ordered the defensive cannons from the navy yard at Black Rock to be mounted on the gunboats and on June 6th he was ready to sail. He reasoned that as long as part of the U.S. Lake Erie fleet was a one place and part at another, there was always the opportunity for the British to destroy each part separately.

Unfortunately, Black Rock is located on the upper part of the Niagara River and the current was too swift for a sailing vessel to move against it.



British Fort George (restored) at Niagara-on-the-Lake, Ontario (Parks Canada). Originally built in 1802, the fort was captured by American forces in May 1813.

Perry needed a week to haul the vessels to Buffalo at the head of Lake Erie using teams of oxen and 200 sailors and soldiers struggling along the riverbank, heaving towropes. On the evening of June 14th, he sailed with difficult winds. Perry knew the superior British force was on the lake, but he could only move slowly against the wind. Off Dunkirk, New York a heavy fog came in and he anchored close to shore, using the fog as a curtain to hide his ships from the enemy. While at anchor a local seaman came aboard, who had been able to observe both squadrons from the lake bluff, and advised Perry of the course taken by the British. Armed with this intelligence, Perry was able to take evasive action and safely entered Presque Isle Bay on June 19th, easing the shallow draft gunboats over the protective sandbar.

SECOND BATTLE OF SACKETS HARBOR—meanwhile, knowing that Commodore Chauncey was engaged at Fort George, on May 26th the British, under Sir George Prevost and Sir James Yeo, directed another attack on Sackets Harbor. The British landed 880 men on Horse Island, but their advance was delayed by 650 regulars under the command of Lt. Col. Electus Backus. During the battle Backus was mortally wounded and his force fell back to defensive positions at the harbor's two forts. The New York Militia of some 300 men under Gen. Jacob Brown initially fell back in disorder, until Brown encouraged them to return and face the enemy. Lt. Wolcott Chauncey (Commodore Chauncey's brother) prematurely burned the warehouses, thinking the forts had fallen. The militia was able to repel the enemy, killing 48 and wounding 211 of which 18 were left behind. With Backus killed, Gen. Brown took charge, caring for the British wounded and giving an honorable burial to the enemy's dead. Two months later, Brown accepted a commission in the U.S. Regular Army with the rank of brigadier general for his defense of Sackets Harbor and defeat of the British.

On May 31st Commodore Chauncey sailed his fleet from captured Fort George at the mouth of the Niagara River back to Sackets Harbor, fearing further British attacks and to protect the USS *General Pike* [named for the fallen Zebulon Pike] being constructed there. His departure left Gen. Dearborn abandoned on the Niagara Frontier without naval support. As Chauncey took most of the able-bodied sailors with him, Perry—as noted earlier—had difficulty in securing men to move the gunboats from Black Rock.



General Winfield Scott (1786-1866). As a colonel, he and Master Commandant Oliver Hazard Perry planned the amphibious landing that resulted in the capture of the British Fort George at the mouth of the Niagara River (National Portrait Gallery).



Sir George Prevost (1767-1816), governor of Nova Scotia and commander of British land forces in Upper Canada during the War of 1812 (painting by Jean-Baptiste Roy-Audy).



Sackets Harbor, New York Lighthouse.



War of 1812 carronade at Fort George, Niagara-on-the-Lake, Ontario.



At the Second Battle of Sackets Harbor, in May 1813, New York Militia General Jacob Brown repelled a British amphibious landing. For his leadership, Brown was commissioned a brigadier general in the U.S. Regular Army.



Sir James Lucas Yeo (1782-1818), commander of the British fleet on Lake Ontario during the War of 1812 (Public Archives of Canada).

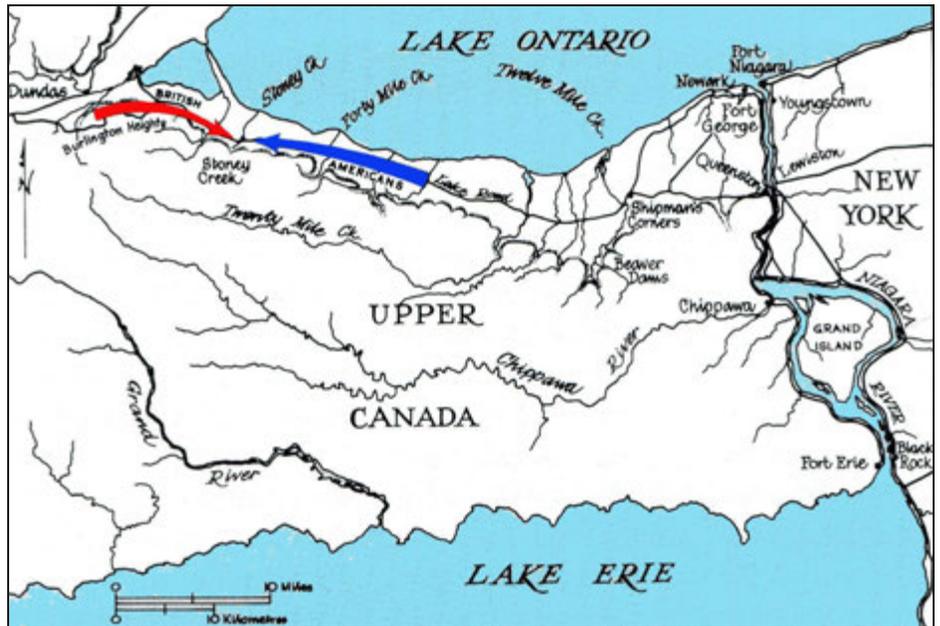
June 1813

BATTLE OF STONEY CREEK—in early June, American forces on the Niagara Frontier in Canada advanced toward Burlington Heights at the west end of Lake Ontario in pursuit of Gen. John Vincent's retreat from Fort George. While camped at Stoney Creek on June 4th, the Americans came under a night bayonet attack by 700 men with unloaded muskets. Two American generals, several other officers, and 100 men were captured. After the attack the British retreated, but Gen. Vincent became lost in the woods and was captured by the Americans. The Americans fell back to a position at 40 Mile Creek, where they came under attack from two British ships. Fearing the arrival of Sir James Yeo's fleet from Sackets Harbor, Gen. Dearborn ordered American troops to return to Fort George, abandon posts at Chippawa and Queenston, and to burn Fort Erie.

BATTLE OF BEAVER DAMS—on June 24th, Gen. Dearborn ordered Lt. Col. Charles Boerstler, with 700 men, to attack a British encampment at Beaver Dams, about 14 miles southwest of Newark [now Niagara-on-the-Lake, Ontario]. The British, under Lt. James Fitzgibbon had less than 100 regulars and 350 Mohawk and Caughnawaga warriors. The secrecy of the American march was kept at Newark, but it failed at Queenston and Fitzgibbon was forewarned. He placed Indians in the woods surrounding the trail. Ambushed, the Americans fought aggressively, but before Boerstler could retreat, Fitzgibbon advanced with a flag of truce and a demand for surrender claiming he had 1,500 regulars and 700 Indians. Learning too late of the deception, Boerstler surrendered his force to one that was half his size.

July 1813

RAIDS ON FORT SCHLOSSER AND BLACK ROCK—on July 5th, the British, led by Lt. Col. Thomas Clark, raided Fort Schlosser near Niagara Falls by crossing the Niagara River at Chippawa. The small American garrison was surprised and offered little resistance before fleeing. After seizing large quantities of supplies, which were largely disbursed to his Indian allies, Clark retreated back to Canada. On July 11th, British Lt. Col. Cecil Bishopp landed 250 regulars near the Black Rock naval yards, burning a schooner and capturing other boats, guns, and ammunition.



Battle of Stoney Creek, Upper Canada on June 4, 1813 (modified from a drawing by Geoffrey Matthews). Map contains the place names for many of the Niagara Frontier locations mentioned in this narrative.

As the British were withdrawing, Col. Peter Porter attacked with New York militiamen and Seneca Indian volunteers. Col. Bishopp was mortally wounded along with 53 of his men killed or wounded in the skirmish at the river.

SECOND SIEGE OF FORT MEIGS—after Gen. Harrison left Fort Meigs to recruit volunteers for his plan to retake Fort Detroit and invade Upper Canada, Gen. Green Clay was placed in command of the fort and set about preparing for an anticipated second British attack. On July 27th, Gen. Proctor returned and staged a mock battle with an imaginary American force using his 500 regulars and 1,000 Indians in an attempt to draw the defenders from the fort. Gen. Clay was not fooled knowing there was no American detachment expected and refused Gen. Proctor's surrender demands. Once again the British artillery was not effective against the well-built fort, and since the Indians had wasted their ammunition on the ruse, Proctor decided to withdraw and attack elsewhere.

FIRST BATTLE OF PLATTSBURG—the Richelieu River flows north from Lake Champlain at the New York-Quebec border to the St. Lawrence River. From Ile aux Noix on the river, five British naval vessels and 47 bateaux transported Col. John Murray's landing force of 950 men to Lake Champlain where 935 Canadian militiamen joined them on July 29th. The combined force proceeded south.

American lakeshore villages along the way were neither fortified nor garrisoned except for Burlington, Vermont. American Maj. Gen. Benjamin Moore's small force of 300 men, garrisoned at Plattsburg, New York, could offer little resistance as Murray proceeded to destroy public property, barracks, and storehouses along the way. American navy Lt. Thomas Macdonough and his small fleet could do little to repel the invaders, especially without the sloops *Growler* and *Eagle* that were previously lost to the British on the Richelieu River in June 1813. The British departed for Canada on August 3rd after Plattsburg was reduced to burning ruins.

August 1813

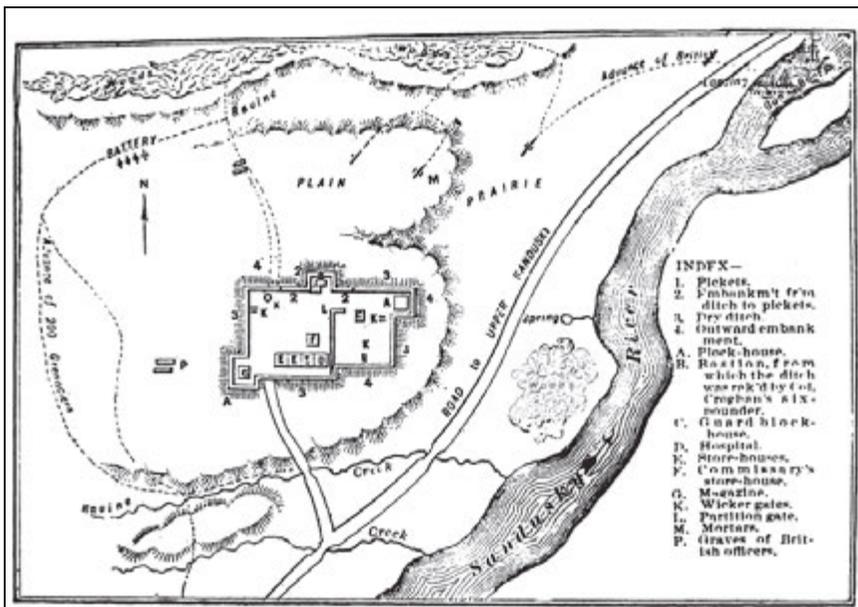
SIEGE OF FORT STEPHENSON—failing to get the Americans to recapitulate at Fort Meigs, Proctor, now a general, marched eastward to Fort Stephenson near the mouth of the Sandusky River at Sandusky Bay and attacked on August 2nd. He was aided in the attack by three gunboats that sailed through the bay to within less than a mile of the fort. Maj. George Croghan, commander of the fort with only 160 soldiers (mainly Kentucky sharpshooters) and one cannon "Old Betsy," refused to surrender, even though Gen. Harrison had sent a message to evacuate. Fortunately, Capt. Eleazer Wood, who had designed and supervised the building of Fort Meigs, had also made improvements to the breastwork of Fort Stephenson.

Proctor soon found that the fort was too well constructed to destroy. His repeated attacks were useless against the volleys of expert marksmen and the grapeshot from Old Betsy. This left him with no option but to withdraw and return to Fort Malden on the Canadian side of the Detroit River. For his bravery at Fort Stephenson, Maj. Croghan was promoted to lieutenant colonel and awarded a Congressional Medal.



Congressional medal awarded by Congress on February 13, 1835. Obverse side: Presented by Congress to Colonel George Croghan, 1835; bust of Colonel Croghan. Reverse side: Pars Magna Fuit [His share was great]; Fort Stephenson with three gunboats in background.

SINKING OF THE HAMILTON AND SCOURGE—on August 8th, these two U.S. Navy warships sank to the bottom of Lake Ontario in a sudden squall about 12 miles west of the mouth of the Niagara River. Originally merchant schooners, the Navy purchased these vessels in 1812 and converted them to warships by adding heavy cannons. This made the ships top-heavy. Of the 61 crew members, only eight survived. One survivor, Ned Myers, told his story to author James Fenimore Cooper, who incorporated the harrowing tale into his 19th-century naval classic *Ned Myers: A Life Before the Mast*. The two ships were found by a Royal Ontario Museum expedition in 1973 at a depth of 290 feet and featured in a 1983 *National Geographic* article. In the cold, freshwater at the bottom of Lake Ontario, the *Hamilton* and the *Scourge* are among the best preserved of all historic shipwrecks.



Siege of Fort Stephenson on the Sandusky River in August 1813 (Ohio Historical Society). Note the British gunboats on the Sandusky River (upper right) landing artillery and firing on the fort.



Sinking of the Scourge (painting by Paul Wright). After sunset, a squall created mountainous waves that sank the converted schooner made top-heavy by 10 large cannons.



Converted schooners *Hamilton* and *Scourge* make their way across a quiet Lake Ontario before a sudden squall sank them in August 1813. Long, heavy oars, known as sweeps, are being used to row the ships under very calm conditions (from a painting by Richard Schlecht).



As the *Scourge* is sinking, Ned Myers is able to escape the doomed schooner and is one of only six survivors, while 90 other sailors perished (after a painting by Richard Schlecht).



Figurehead of the schooner *Hamilton* at a depth of 290 feet in Lake Ontario (photographed by Emory Kristof, 1982).

CAPTURE OF THE *GROWLER* AND *JULIA*—by August 1813 the American and British naval forces were approximately evenly balanced on Lake Ontario, with Commodore Isaac Chauncey commanding the American flotilla and Sir James Yeo leading the British squadron. Neither officer was willing to commit to a battle without a clear advantage over the opponent, which led to a series of indecisive clashes. However, on August 10th the British, with an upwind advantage, outmaneuvered the Americans and were able to isolate two enemy schooners. Unable to sail back through the British line to rejoin the American squadron, the schooners *Growler* and *Julia* were forced to surrender. An American sloop by the same name, *Growler*, was also captured by the British in June 1813 north of Lake Champlain.



Capture of the schooners Growler and Julia by a British squadron in August 1813 (painting by Paul Wright).

CONDITIONS AT SACKETS HARBOR—with failing health, Gen. Dearborn resigned his command at Sackets Harbor and Maj. Gen. James Wilkinson replaced him on August 20th. Gen. Wilkinson held a council of his generals to map out an invasion strategy for an attack of Montreal, Lower Canada. Some believed it was too late in the year to plan and successfully conduct a major campaign, but Wilkinson prevailed and Secretary of War John Armstrong approved his plan. The plan called for Maj. Gen. Wade Hampton, who was in command of the Northeast Army at Plattsburg, New York to move his troops north along Lake Champlain to attack Montreal. On paper, Gen. Hampton was to report to Gen. Wilkinson, but he refused to take direct orders from him because he was promoted to major general 25 days earlier than Wilkinson. As a result, Secretary Armstrong was compelled to move his office from Washington to Sackets Harbor so he could act as an intermediary.

On August 31st, Lt. Col. Joseph Swift was assigned as Chief Engineer under Gen. Wilkinson at Sackets Harbor. Swift, a graduate of West Point, later reported on “disgraceful and deploring” conditions there, including authority, leadership, campaign planning, reconnaissance, knowledge of enemy positions, living conditions for the troops, sickness, supplies, and expenses. He viewed the three leadership positions as a “triple-headed Cerberus [monstrous watchdog with three heads that guards the entrance to Hades]—Armstrong, Wilkinson, and Hampton—barking at each other with a venom disreputable to their profession and destructive of all success to our aims.” In January 1814, a new command structure of the Northern Army emerged with the promotions of Brig. Gen. Jacob Brown to major general and Col. Winfield Scott to brigadier general.



Lt. Colonel Joseph Gardner Swift (1783-1865) was appointed chief engineer at Sackets Harbor in August 1813 and later reported the deplorable conditions at the military base. He was the first graduate of the U.S. Military Academy and later the superintendent of the Academy (U.S. Military Academy).

September 1813

NAVAL BATTLE OF LAKE ERIE—at Presque Isle, Perry had managed to get his major vessels, the brigs *Lawrence* and *Niagara*, over the sandbar at the entrance to Presque Isle Bay while the British were obtaining provisions across the lake at Port Dover. Dr. Usher Parson, surgeon on Commodore Perry’s fleet, recorded this account the final days at Erie, Pennsylvania. “The fleet was manned by sailors partly from Newport [Rhode Island] and partly from Lake Ontario. The two larger vessels, *Lawrence* and *Niagara*, were built and rigged precisely alike, and carried 132 officers and men each. By the 10th of July [1813], the guns were mounted on board all vessels, and the men were exercised at them several times a day.”

“On Sunday the 18th of July, two respectable missionaries who were passing through Erie, were invited by the Commodore on board one of the large ships, where as many officers and men as could be spared from all vessels were assembled to hear prayers that were offered up for the success of the expedition. I shall never forget their fervent pleadings in our behalf, that we might subdue the hostile fleet, and thereby wrest from savage hands the tomahawk and scalping-knife, that had been so cruelly wielded against the defenseless settlers on the frontier, and that in the event of a victory, mercy and kindness might be shown to the vanquished.”

“The bar of Erie had thus far served as a fortification to prevent the enemy from entering the harbor where our fleet was preparing, but now presented a serious obstacle to our egress. The two large brigs drew 3 feet of water more than there was on the bar.”

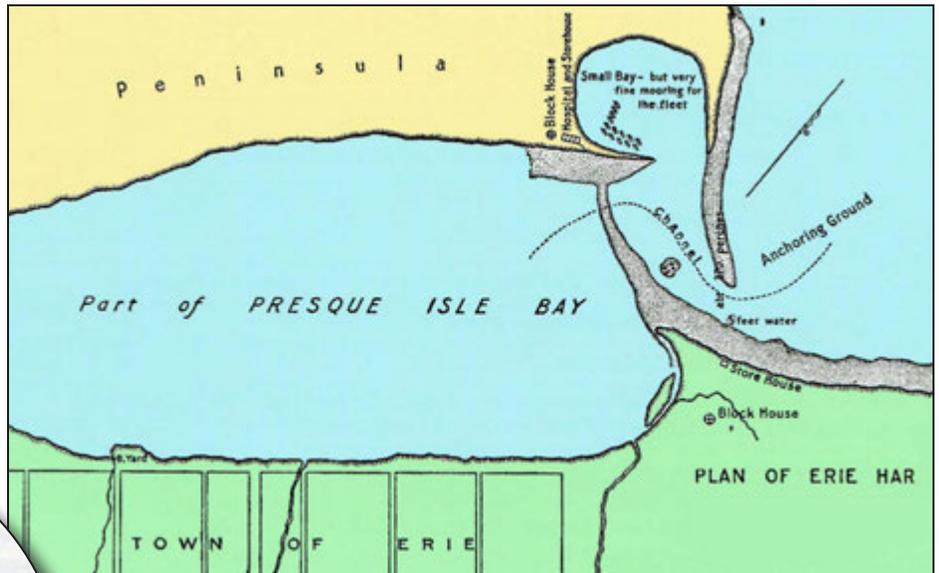
“On Sunday evening, 1st of August, work began of clearing the *Lawrence* of cannon and balls, to lighten her; and immense scows called *camels* were placed under her sides, and being sunk to the water’s edge, timbers were passed through from side to side of the ship, the ends of which were blocked up, resting on these floating foundations. Plugs were now put into the scows, and the water bailed out, and as they rose they lifted the ship 2 feet, and this not being enough, the ballast and other heavy articles were taken out, till she was raised another foot, when she was able to pass over the bar. The *Niagara* was served in a like manner, but the smaller vessels had previously passed over without aid of camels. Before the large vessels were fairly over, the enemy hove in sight, and fired a few balls which did not reach us.”



Dr. Usher Parson, surgeon with Commodore Perry's fleet, recorded the ingenious method of using camel scows to extricate the American's large ships from Presque Isle Bay over the sand barrier at the harbor entrance and on to Put-in-Bay (U.S. National Park Service).

“The Pennsylvania regiment paraded and the small vessels that were out returned the enemy’s fire. Had they come near enough to do execution while we were struggling over the bar, they might have destroyed our fleet with little difficulty.”

“On the 6th of August we sailed, with the fleet not more than half officered and manned, across the lake, wishing to encounter the enemy before the large new ship [*Detroit*] joined his fleet, but they had sailed for Malden, and we returned to Erie the next day, where we found Captain Elliot just arrived from Lake Ontario, with nearly 100 officers and men. A new arrangement was now made of officers throughout the fleet, and we soon sailed up the lake in pursuit of the enemy, and anchored on the 15th in Put-in-Bay, in a cluster of islands near the head of the lake.”



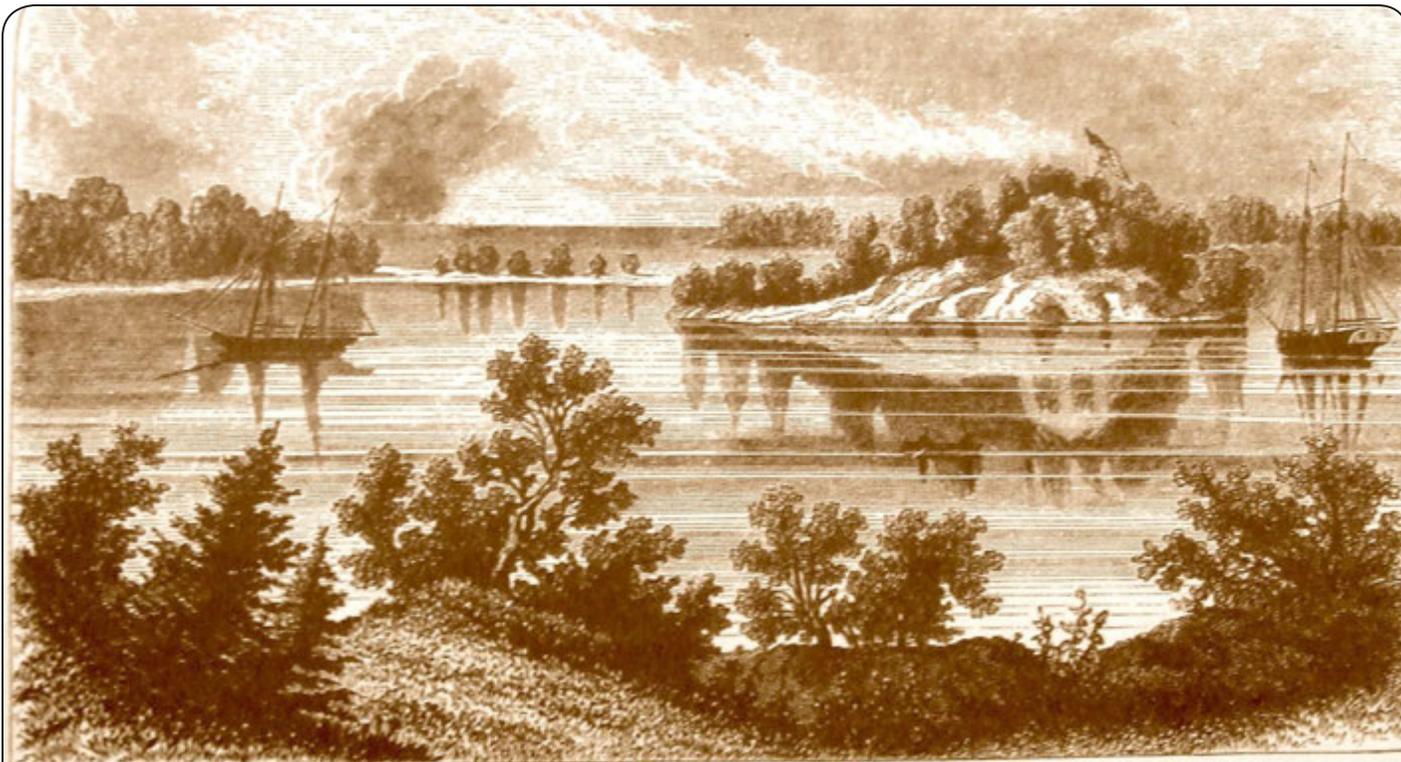
Presque Isle Bay at Erie Pennsylvania, site of the construction of the American's Lake Erie fleet, showing the sandbar that protected the fleet from British attack (map by Captain Arthur Sinclair, 1814).



Using camel scows to float the brigs Lawrence and Niagara over the sandbar at Erie Harbor (drawing by Benson Lossing).

Discovering the American fleet was out in Lake Erie, the British fleet returned to Amherstburg to await the completion of the brig *Detroit*. On September 10, 1813, perhaps the most famous naval engagement of the War of 1812 took place near West Sister Island—The Battle of Lake Erie. Commodore Perry and Gen. William Henry Harrison, commander-in-chief of all forces in Ohio and the Northwest Territory, had agreed that a base at Put-in-Bay [South Bass Island] would be best for naval operations to counter the Royal Navy’s base at Amherstburg.

The British fleet was spotted in the early morning from Gibraltar Island in Put-in-Bay harbor heading toward the Bass Islands. Captain Robert Heriot Barclay, aboard the *Detroit*, commanded six vessels, while Perry aboard the *Lawrence*, had nine vessels in his command, including the *Niagara* captained by Jesse D. Elliott. Perry instructed each ship to engage the enemy once he raised his battle flag emblazoned “Dont Give Up The Ship” [sic]—the last word’s of Perry’s comrade, Capt. James Lawrence, who died battling the British off the Atlantic coast and namesake of Perry’s flagship.



PUT-IN-BAY.

Put-in-Bay Harbor as it appeared in 1813 when Commodore Perry's fleet arrived (drawing by Benson Lossing). Gibraltar Island is shown at right center of the drawing.



Perry's Lookout on Gibraltar Island in Put-in-Bay Harbor, from which the approaching British fleet was first observed (drawing by Benson Lossing). Only the cornerstone of the monument to Perry shown in the drawing was ever constructed.



Perry's Lookout on Gibraltar Island as it appears today. The island is currently the home of The Ohio State University's Lake Erie Field Station—Franz Theodore Stone Laboratory. The turreted building is Cooke's Castle, built by Civil War financier Jay Cooke in 1865.

Armaments on both fleets consisted of smooth-bore muzzle-loading cannons. Long guns dominated the British fleet's armament with a greater range and faster-moving shot that left a clean hole [at 5° elevation a long gun's range was 1,922 yards for a 32 lb. shot]. The American fleet's armament was primarily the carronade, a short cannon invented in 1779 at Carron, Scotland.

The carronade fired a large size, slow-moving shot that fractured the planks of a ship [at 5° elevation a carronade's range was 1,087 yards for a 32 lb. shot]. The best firing strategy was to get a broadside position across the bow or stern of the enemy—this would allow the attacking vessel to rake or fire down the length of the enemy vessel, which was more destructive than firing across the width of the vessel.

In comparing broadside firepower—British long guns could fire 460 lbs. while the American carronades shot 925 lbs. at one time for one side of the vessel. However, at the early stages of the battle the British had the advantage in that their guns had a greater range. As the American fleet moved into closer range, they had the advantage.



Perry's crew aboard the brig *Lawrence* spot the British fleet and prepare for the engagement (drawing by Victor Mays).

A well-trained crew could fire one shot per minute for a short engagement. The American and British fleets were each capable of firing an estimated 25 shots broadside per minute during the nearly 3-hour battle—equivalent to total of some 9,000 shots.



Movements of the American and British fleets on the morning of September 10, 1813. Barclay initially held the weather gage [the position of a sailing vessel to windward of another] causing Perry to tack to depart Put-in-Bay Harbor, but the wind shifted and allowed Perry to close and attack (U.S. National Park Service).

For some mysterious reason the *Niagara* hung back and the *Detroit* and *Queen Charlotte* concentrated fire with their long guns on the *Lawrence*, which was quickly rendered powerless, but not before Perry's carronades exacted damage to the enemy. Conditions on the *Lawrence* were grim. Over half of the officers and seamen on board were either killed or disabled by wounds. In spite of a layer of sand, the deck was slippery with blood. All but one cannon was disabled on the enemy side of the ship and Perry himself assisted with the firing of that last gun. All the sails were shot away and the vessel became unmanageable.

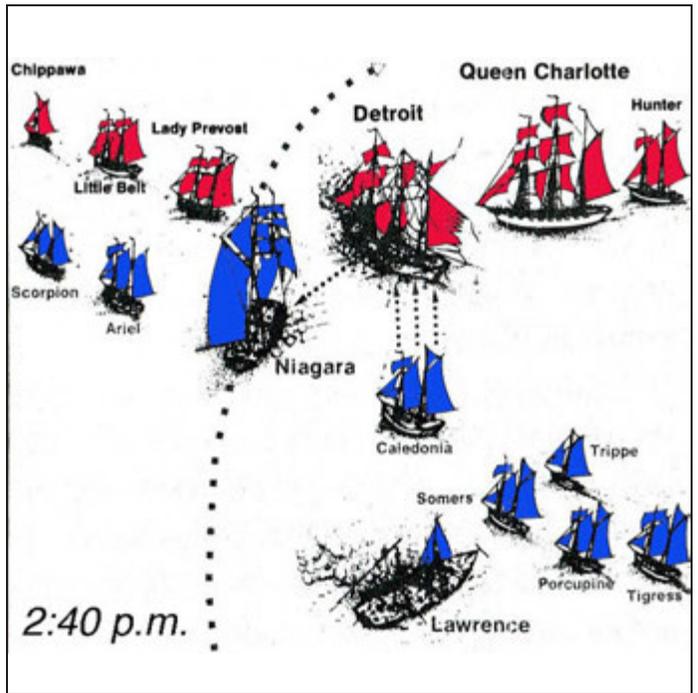
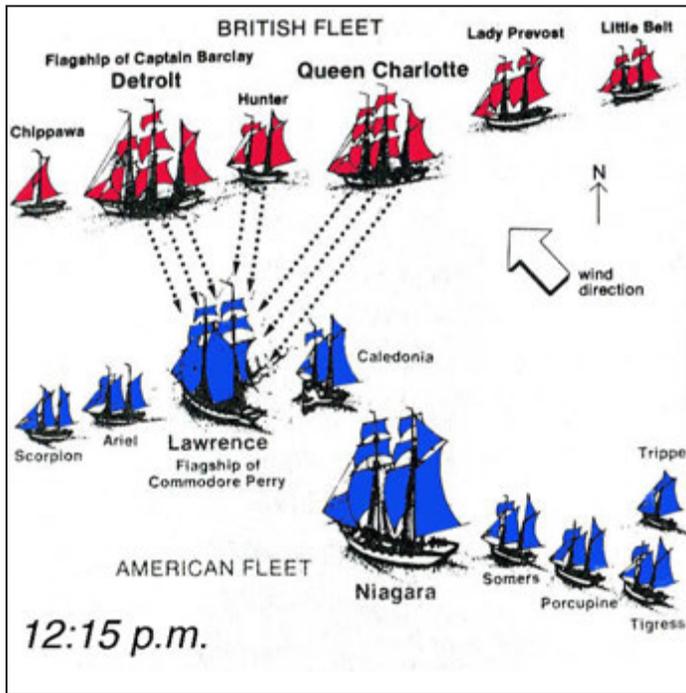
Perry looked back at the lagging *Niagara* and knew what his next move must be. Picking a few of the uninjured seamen, he was rowed in a longboat from the *Lawrence* to the *Niagara*, taking along his battle flag. Once aboard the *Niagara*, Perry dispatched Capt. Elliot in the longboat to bring up the gunboats.



Commodore Perry transferring from the disabled brig *Lawrence* to the brig *Niagara* in a longboat (painting by William Henry Powell).



Commodore Perry safely arrives onboard the brig *Niagara* and is greeted by Captain Elliot with the question, "How goes the day?" Perry immediately dispatches Elliot in the longboat to bring up the gunboats that were apparently following orders not to move ahead of the *Niagara* (courtesy of James Barry).

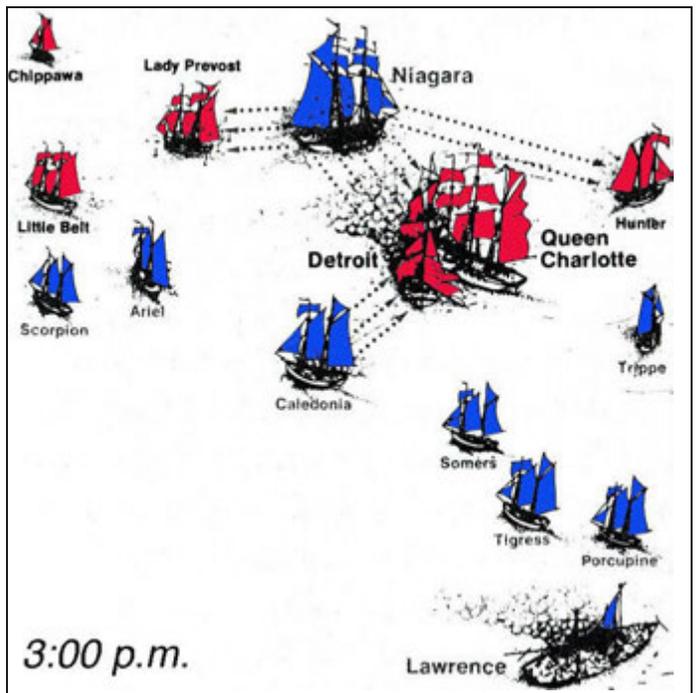


Stages of the Battle of Lake Erie, September 10, 1813—American vessels shown in blue and British vessels in red (modified from drawings by Geoffrey Matthews). Engagement begins a 12:15 p.m. with the British ships concentrating fire on the Lawrence, while the Niagara hangs back. Commodore Perry transfers to the Niagara and by 2:40 p.m. he moves the Niagara into position to engage the Detroit. By 3:00 p.m. the Niagara is able to fire broadsides at four British vessels as the Detroit and Queen Charlotte collide. Unable to effectively return fire, the British surrender their entire fleet.

Now, making the *Niagara* his flagship, Perry sailed directly between the British ships, firing broadsides in both directions. In an attempt to get in position to fire on the *Niagara*, the *Queen Charlotte* collided with the *Detroit* giving Perry the advantage he needed. With Capt. Barclay wounded and the commander of the *Queen Charlotte* killed, the British fleet surrendered.

The American armed schooner *Scorpion* also played an important roll in the Battle of Lake Erie. Built in Erie, Pennsylvania earlier that year, she was commanded by Sailing Master Stephen Champlin, first cousin of Oliver Hazard Perry. The *Scorpion* had the distinction of firing the first and last shots in the battle. At the close of the action, she and the armed sloop *Trippe* pursued and captured the fleeing British schooners *Chippewa* and *Little Belt*.

Perry sent his famous note the Gen. Harrison, “We have met the enemy and they are ours: Two Ships, two Brigs, one Schooner & one Sloop.” By defeating the British fleet, the United States secured control of Lake Erie and the Upper Great Lakes. Perry’s victory on Lake Erie and American control of Fort George made the transport of supplies and reinforcements impossible for the British and forced them to abandon Detroit and Fort Malden. Perry was promoted to Captain and Congress awarded him a gold medal and appropriated \$225,000 in prize money to be distributed to those who took part in the battle, or to their heirs.



Commodore Perry brings the brig *Niagara* into position to join the battle and commences firing on the *Detroit* and *Queen Charlotte* (right) and the *Lady Prevost* (left) as the disabled *Lawrence* drifts out of sight (U.S. Naval Academy).

Monuments to Commodore Oliver Hazard Perry



Congressional Gold Medal presented to Perry for his victory in the Battle of Lake Erie.



Put-in-Bay Harbor—Gibraltar Island in foreground and Perry's Victory and International Peace Memorial at far left (courtesy of Franz Theodore Stone Laboratory, 1967).



Perry Statue, Newport, Rhode Island.



Cornerstone to a proposed Perry's Victory Monument on Gibraltar Island, Ohio.



The Perry Monument, Presque Isle, Erie Pennsylvania.

The Battle of Lake Erie was anticipated and followed with great interest by the residents along the Black River in north central Ohio. Cannon fire from the battle was heard at the mouth of the river as well as all the way to Erie, Pennsylvania where Daniel Dobbins was securing supplies for the American fleet. Accounts by early settlers near the mouth of the Black River document how the tide of fighting shifted during the battle.

At first the alarming sounds of the British long guns prevailed—then suddenly the American's shorter, but more powerful carronades dominated the vibrations. Commodore Oliver Hazard Perry's defeat of the British fleet and capture of all of the enemy's vessels gave the United States control of Lake Erie and more security for communities along the coast. They hoped the victory would make possible the successful invasion of Upper Canada by Gen. William Henry Harrison.

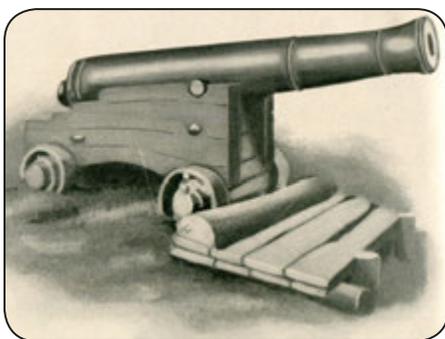
They knew of this plan by watching the construction of Harrison's military highway that was cut through the dense forest and across bogs via corduroy roads from Ashland to Oak Point on Lake Erie, just a few miles west of the Black River where Beaver Creek harbor is located. The road was constructed by Col. Moonsinger's command under orders from Gen. Harrison as a precaution, so that troops could efficiently be moved to the lake in time of need to repulse British invaders.

DONT GIVE UP THE SHIP

Commodore Perry's personal battle flag, adopted to commemorate his dead friend, Captain James Lawrence, who was killed while commanding the USS Chesapeake in a battle with the HMS Shannon off Boston Harbor.



Second restored brig Niagara at the site of the 1813 Battle of Lake Erie during the bicentennial celebration in September 2013.



Cannon from the brig Lawrence. At the end of the war, the artillery was removed from the Lake Erie fleet and the four large ships were sunk in Misery Bay at Presque Isle. A decade later, at the opening of the Erie Canal, the cannons from the battle were placed every 10 to 15 miles along the canal from Buffalo to New York City. The first being fired when the first boat left Buffalo and others being fired successively as the cannon crew heard the blast from the next gun upstream. Once the last cannon at the Battery in New York fired, the process was repeated in a reverse fashion all the way back to Lake Erie. The entire process was completed in slightly less than three hours.

BATTLE OF LAKE ERIE

AMERICAN FLEET

Commander, Men, Displacement, Armament, Broadside Firepower, & Casualties of American Fleet

Lawrence—Master Commandant Oliver Hazard Perry; 136 men; 260 tons; 18 carronades; 2 long guns; 300 lbs. firepower; 22 killed; 61 wounded

Niagara—Lt. Jesse Duncan Elliott & Master Commandant Oliver Hazard Perry; 155 men; 260 tons; 18 carronades; 2 long guns; 300 lbs. firepower; 2 killed; 25 wounded

Caledonia—Lt. Daniel Turner; 53 men; 88 tons; 1 carronade; 2 long pivot guns; 80 lbs. firepower; 0 killed; 3 wounded

Somers—Lt. A.M.H. Conklin; 30 men; 65 tons; 1 pivot carronade; 1 long pivot gun; 56 lbs. firepower; 0 killed; 2 wounded

Ariel—Lt. John H. Packet; 36 men; 60 tons; 4 long guns; 48 lbs. firepower; 1 killed; 3 wounded

Scorpion—Sailing Master Stephen Champlin; 35 men; 60 tons; 1 pivot carronade; 1 long pivot gun; 56 lbs. firepower; 2 killed; 0 wounded

Porcupine—Sailing Master G. Serrat; 25 men; 50 tons, 1 long pivot gun; 32 lbs. firepower; 0 killed; 0 wounded

Tigress—Sailing Master T.C. Almy; 27 men; 50 tons; 1 long pivot gun; 32 lbs. firepower; killed; 0 wounded

Trippe—Lt. Thomas Holdup; 35 men; 50 tons; 1 long pivot gun; 24 lbs. firepower; 0 killed; 2 wounded

Ohio—Sailing Master Daniel Dobbins; en route to Erie, Pennsylvania for provisions during battle

Disposition of American Fleet after the Battle

Lawrence—sunk for preservation Misery Bay, Erie, Pennsylvania in 1815; raised in 1875 for nation's Centennial Celebration; destroyed at Philadelphia by fire in 1876 while on display

Niagara—sunk for preservation Misery Bay, Erie, Pennsylvania in 1815; raised and rebuilt in 1913 for Centennial Anniversary of battle and Dedication of Perry's Monument at Put-in-Bay; rebuilt in 1988

Caledonia—sold commercial in 1815; converted to merchant vessel and renamed *General Wayne*

Somers—captured by British in 1814 at Fort Erie, Upper Canada while fort occupied by Americans

Ariel—trapped by British at Black Rock, New York and burned to prevent capture

Scorpion—captured by British in 1814 on Lake Huron; sunk at moorings after war

Porcupine—in U.S. Navy until 1821; sold commercial in 1825 and converted to merchant vessel; found to be unseaworthy in 1855; abandoned

Tigress—captured by British in 1814; sunk at moorings after war

Trippe—burned by British raiders at Black Rock, New York in October 1813

Ohio—captured by British in 1814 at Fort Erie, Upper Canada while fort occupied by Americans

Amelia—found to be unseaworthy; scuttled in Misery Bay, Erie, Pennsylvania before the battle in 1813

BRITISH FLEET

Commander, Men, Displacement, Armament, Broadside Firepower, & Casualties of British Fleet

Detroit—Capt. Robert Heriot Barclay & Lt. George Inglis; 150 men; 305 tons; 2 carronades; 16 long guns; 1 long pivot gun; 138 lbs. firepower; 11 killed; 39 wounded

Queen Charlotte—Lt. Robert Finnis & Militia Lt. Robert Irvine; 126 men; 280 tons; 14 carronades; 2 long guns; 1 long pivot gun; 192 lbs. firepower; 18 killed; 24 wounded

Lady Prevost—Lt. Edward Buchan; 86 men; 120 tons; 10 carronades; 2 long guns; 1 long pivot gun; 78 lbs. firepower; 8 killed; 20 wounded

General Hunter—Lt. G. Bignell; 42 men; 75 tons; 2 carronades; 8 long guns; 78 lbs. firepower; 3 killed; 5 wounded

Chippewa—Master Mate J. Campbell; 15 men; 35 tons; 1 long pivot gun; 1 killed; 4 wounded

Little Belt—unknown; 18 men; 60 tons; 2 long guns; 1 long pivot gun; 0 killed; 0 wounded

Disposition of Captured British Fleet after the Battle

Detroit—sunk in Misery Bay, Erie, Pennsylvania; raised in 1835 and sold commercial; converted to merchant vessel; sent over Niagara Falls with live animals as a "tourist spectacle"

Queen Charlotte—sunk in Misery Bay; sold commercial in 1835-1844; burned

Lady Prevost—sold as merchant ship after war in 1815

General Hunter—sunk in storm on Lake Huron on 1816 while in U.S. Navy; archaeologically excavated in 2001 on shoreline of Bruce Peninsula, Ontario

Chippewa—burned by British raiders at Buffalo in December 1813

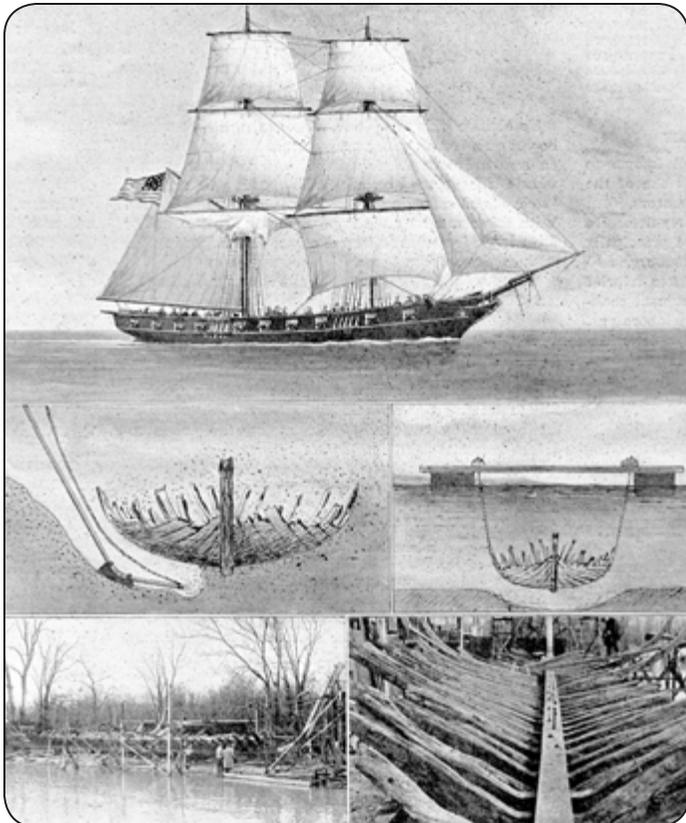
Little Belt—burned by British raiders at Buffalo in December 1813



The remains of the brig Lawrence being recovered from Misery Bay in 1875. The Lawrence was restored and taken to Philadelphia for display at the nation's centennial celebration. Unfortunately the exhibition building burned and the Lawrence was a total loss, except for some timbers that were made into walking canes (Erie Maritime Museum).



Remains of the brig Niagara, raised from the bottom of Misery Bay in 1913. The Niagara was restored and sailed to Put-in-Bay to celebrate the centennial of the Battle of Lake Erie and the dedication of Perry's Victory and International Peace Memorial (Erie Maritime Museum).

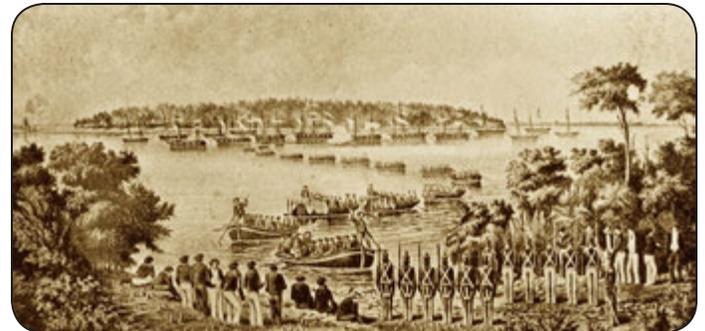


Unique process for recovering the remains of the brig Niagara by jetting a stiff water hose under the hull to which a lifting chain was attached (from Scientific American Magazine, 1913).

A hundred years ago and a hundred years after the war, in October 1914, Professor George Frederick Wright of Oberlin College and President of the Ohio Historical Society located the old road and the Oberlin Chapter of the National Society, Daughters of the American Revolution placed a bronze tablet on a large granite boulder about 1.5 miles west of downtown Oberlin to commemorate its construction.

The lakeshore of present-day Lorain County has one other connection with the War of 1812 and the Battle of Lake Erie. Local tradition holds that bodies of two sailors who died in the battle washed ashore at Avon Point [now in the City of Avon Lake]. During the ferocious fighting, 27 Americans and 41 British seaman and officers were killed and another 188 men wounded. The six officers killed, three American and three British, were buried on South Bass Island and are now interred under the base of Perry's Victory and International Peace Memorial at Put-in-Bay. Dead seamen, if they had not been lost overboard, were hastily sewn in their hammocks, a cannon ball placed at their feet, and committed to the lake at the battle site. Considering the dominant current patterns in Lake Erie, which rotate clockwise around the islands then flow south to the Ohio shore east of Cedar Point, it is conceivable that bodies could make their way to Avon Point.

The legend goes on that two bodies were buried in unmarked graves at the top of the low bluff where they came ashore. Over the years additional burials took place at this location, which since 1822 has been designated as Lake Shore Cemetery at the foot of Avon Belden Road. In September 2013, the Avon Lake Historical Society placed a memorial marker in the cemetery honoring the unknown seamen.



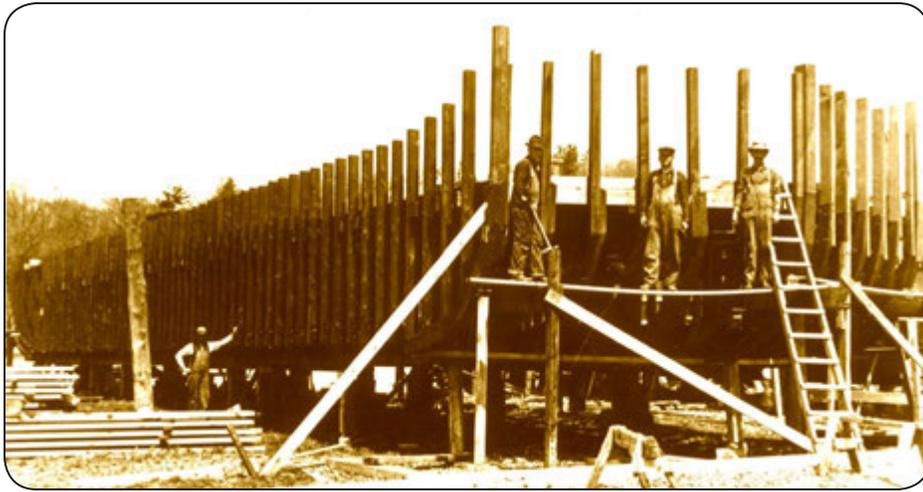
Ceremony at Put-in-Bay after the battle—three American and three British officers being buried on the island (courtesy of James P. Barry).



Lake Shore Cemetery in Avon Lake, Ohio, where the bodies of two sailors killed in the Battle of Lake Erie are believed to have washed ashore and were buried there before the cemetery was established.

October 1813

BATTLE OF THE THAMES—with the British fleet captured, Gen. William Henry Harrison, with the assistance of Commodore Perry, mounted an amphibious invasion of Canada near Amherstburg and defeated Gen. Henry Proctor at the Battle of the Thames [Moraviantown, Upper Canada] on October 5th.



In anticipation of Perry's victory, General Harrison ordered the construction of 80 scows at Cleveland, Ohio to transport 4,500 troops and artillery for an amphibious invasion of Canada near Amherstburg. Commodore Perry used the American fleet and captured British vessels to tow the scows (photograph of scows similar to those used for the invasion courtesy Patrick Labadie).



Thames River at Moraviantown, Upper Canada, site of the Battle of the Thames, October 5, 1813.



The death of Tecumseh as depicted in the Frieze of the Rotunda of the United States Capitol (Architect of the Capitol).

During the battle, Col. Richard Johnson of the Kentucky Militia led a charge of 1,000 mounted horsemen against the British and Indian forces. As the cavalry descended on the Indians the horsemen shouted “Remember the Raisin”—a battle cry in reference to the Indian massacre of 60 American prisoners at the Raisin River, Michigan Territory in January 1813, where then Col. Henry Proctor had promised protection. In the battle, Col. Johnson himself killed the Shawnee Indian leader, Chief Tecumseh, in retribution for the massacre. Tecumseh’s warriors carried the chief’s body into the swamp and disappeared from the field of battle. Leaving Lt. Col. Augustus Warburton to surrender, Gen. Proctor fled east with his family. Gen. Harrison returned to Fort Detroit where he left 1,000 men to defend the fort, discharged the Kentucky volunteers, and led another 1,300 men to the Niagara Frontier and on to Sackets Harbor for the winter.



The death of Chief Tecumseh at the hands of Colonel Richard Johnson during the Battle of the Thames (Library of Congress). General Harrison and Commodore Perry can be seen on horseback at the upper left of the painting.

MONTREAL CAMPAIGN—the plan of attack on Montreal, previously agreed to by Secretary of War Armstrong, had two components: (1) Gen. Wilkinson’s force of 7,000 men would leave Sackets Harbor on boats bound for the St. Lawrence River, while (2) Gen. Hampton’s troops would move north from Plattsburg assisted by Lt. Macdonough’s flotilla. After being rebuffed at Odletown, at the head of the Richelieu River, Hampton returned to Plattsburg, replenished his supplies, and headed 35 miles west toward the Chateauguay River, which flows into the St. Lawrence River near Montreal. On October 26th, he was met by a well-entrenched British force under Lt. Col. Charles de Salaberry about 15 miles inside the Canadian border and forced to retreat to Four Corners, New York.

November 1813

BATTLE AT CRYSLER'S FARM—meanwhile, on November 11th, Gen. Wilkinson's invasion force of 7,000 men in 300 boats met stiff British resistance at John Crysler's Farm located on the north shore of the St. Lawrence River about 80 miles upstream from Montreal. The Americans had successfully passed the guns at Port Prescott at night, but Lt. Col. Joseph Morrison and 800 disciplined British soldiers had undertaken a forced march from Kingston and established defenses at the western edge of the farm. Commodore Isaac Chauncey had failed to bottle up the Royal Navy at Kingston and Capt. William Mulcaster was able to move his gunboats into the river and support Morrison. When Gen. Wilkinson became ill and took to his bed on one of the sloops, Gen. Joseph P. Boyd took command. Boyd's piecemeal attacks failed and he was repulsed by the British. The American army retired from the field and joined Gen. Jacob Brown's brigade that had secured the area surrounding the St. Lawrence River rapids. With substantial losses in manpower and fearing that Sir George Prevost outnumbered him with 15,000 veteran troops defending Montreal if he reached the city, Gen. Wilkinson called off the campaign and withdrew to New York, where his health suddenly improved.



General James Wilkinson (1757-1825), engaged in two failed campaigns to capture Montreal—Battle at John Crysler's Farm (October 1813) and the Battle of La Colle Mill (March 1814). He was relieved of command and court-martialed (painting by Charles Wilson Peale, 1797).



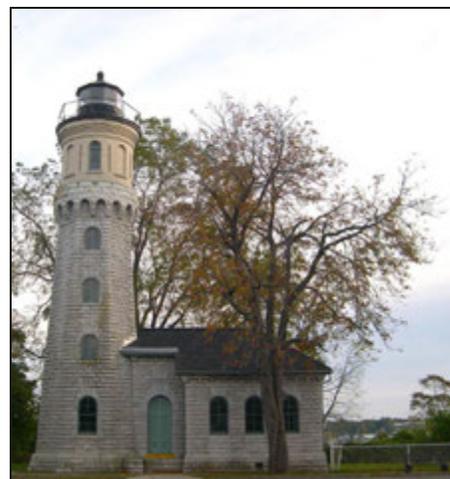
Fort Niagara, captured by the British in December 1813.

December 1813

CAPTURE OF FORT NIAGARA—on December 10th, based on poorly worded orders from Secretary of War Armstrong, American volunteers abandoned Fort George and burned Newark [now Niagara-on-the-Lake] and part of Queenston. This action displaced Canadian inhabitants and burned their homes, leaving them without shelter during a cold winter. American commander Gen. George McClure gave as a reason for this unprecedented act that he wanted to deprive shelter for advancing British troops. Soon after, on December 19th, some 560 British troops led by Lt. Col. John Murray crossed the Niagara River from Canada and gained entry to Fort Niagara. With fixed bayonets, the British forced the American defenders into a redoubt and a barracks. When the Americans refused to surrender the British commander ordered “no quarter given” and prisoners were bayoneted; 65 men were killed, most of whom were not resisting. In retaliation for Gen. McClure's devastation, British troops torched homes and buildings in villages and towns from Fort Niagara to Buffalo.



Niagara River mouth from the Canadian side showing Fort Niagara on the American shore.



Fort Niagara Lighthouse, a beacon for ships entering the Niagara River.

March 1814

SECOND BATTLE OF LA COLLE MILL—as part of a spring offensive to attack Lower Canada up the Richelieu River to Montreal, on March 30th, Gen. Wilkinson made a second attempt to move northward from Plattsburg with 4,000 men. At La Colle Creek a British detachment of 180 men occupied a stone mill at the south end of a bridge as well as a blockhouse on the north side of the river. The American bombardment did little to damage the 18-inch stonewalls of the mill. A British sloop and two gunboats under Capt. Daniel Ping gave cannon fire against the invaders and convinced Wilkinson to withdraw to Plattsburg. Gen. Wilkinson was subsequently relieved of command, court-martialed, and replaced by Gen. George Izard.

April 1814

END OF THE NAPOLEONIC WARS—the abdication of Napoleon on April 6th ended the war in Europe and freed up more British forces for transfer to British North America. Veteran units were sent to Canada with the intent of overwhelming the Americans and forcing the United States into peace negotiations. By occupying strategic areas of the United States, Britain believed it would have the advantage in dictating peace terms.

May 1814

RAID ON OSWEGO, NEW YORK—in early May, Lt. Col. William Drummond led a raiding party of 1,500 British regulars and 500 marines at Oswego Harbor, New York, supported by the Royal Navy under Sir James Yeo. The harbor was protected by Fort Ontario on the east bank of the Oswego River. The fort's garrison included only 150 regulars commanded by Col. Mitchell and 20 sailors under Capt. Woolsey. The Americans killed about 100 of the enemy, including Capt. Mulcaster, before the fort was taken, losing only 10 men. After taking the fort, the British crossed over the river to plunder and destroy the village of Oswego.

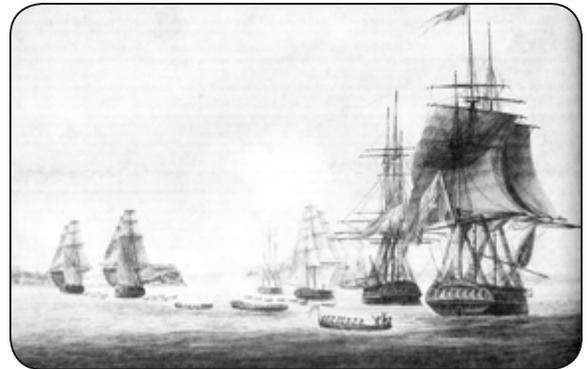
July 1814

SURRENDER OF FORT ERIE—on July 3rd, Gen. Jacob Brown's army crossed the Niagara River at Black Rock and once again captured Fort Erie. Gen. Brown and Gen. Winfield Scott then proceeded northward toward Chippawa. After a fierce fight with heavy losses on both sides, the Americans were victorious and crossed the Welland River. Gen. Brown continued his advance toward Queenston, but the lack of artillery support promised by Commodore Chauncey, prevented him from retaking Fort George.

Later in July, further battles took place along the Canadian shore of the Niagara River in the vicinity of Fort Chippawa. The encounter that took place on July 25th at Lundy's Lane near Niagara Falls is considered one of the hardest fought and bloodiest battles of the war with 878 British casualties (killed and wounded) and 860 American casualties.



La Colle Mill blockhouse, Lower Canada. American forces under General James Wilkinson were unable to progress beyond this point in the planned invasion of Montreal in March 1814.



Amphibious landing of British raiding party at Oswego, New York in May 1814 (Richard F. Palmer).

The battle proved to be indecisive with both sides retiring from the field, the Americans to Chippawa and the British to Burlington Heights.

Gen. Brown turned out to be one of the most competent military leaders to emerge during the War of 1812. After the war, in 1821, he was promoted to the position of the first Commanding General of the U.S. Army, serving in this capacity until his death in 1828. Gen. Winfield Scott served in the same capacity from 1841 to 1861.



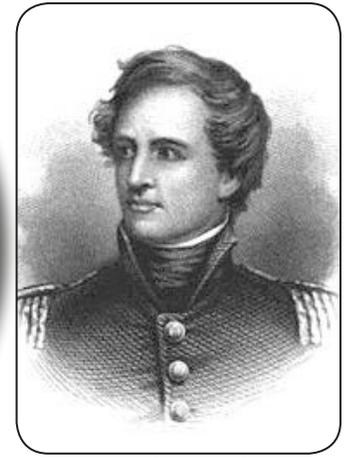
Fort Erie (restored), Upper Canada, captured by General Jacob Brown's forces in July 1814.



Fort Chippawa, Upper Canada—several bloody battles took place in the vicinity of this fort throughout July 1814.

BATTLE OF MACKINAC ISLAND—on July 26th, American forces arrived at Mackinac Island by ship from Fort Detroit, led by Lt. Col. George Croghan, in an attempt to recapture Fort Michilimackinac [Fort Mackinac], but were repulsed by the British. The Americans then located the staging post for the fort at the mouth of the Nottawasaga River on Georgian Bay. They destroyed the post and forced the British to scuttle the schooner *Nancy* that had taken refuge in the river. Before returning to Detroit, Commodore Arthur Sinclair, the commander of the expedition's vessels, deployed the gunboats *Scorpion* and *Tigress* to blockade Mackinac hoping to starve out the garrison. A stealthy British force captured both vessels soon after Sinclair departed.

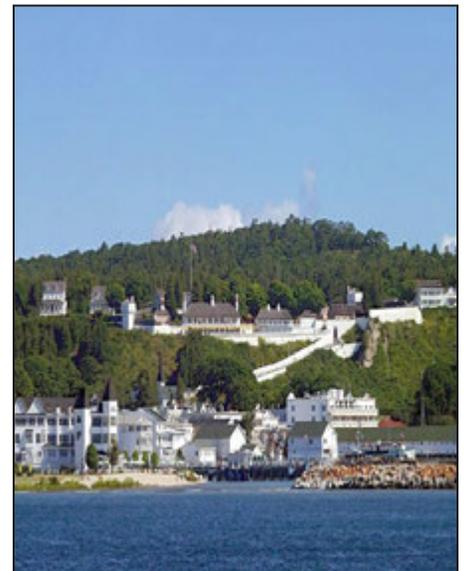
Commodore Arthur Sinclair (1780-1831), was appointed captain of the brig Niagara in 1814 after she was refitted following the Battle of Lake Erie (Library of Congress). The Niagara served as Commodore Sinclair's flagship at the Battle of Mackinac Island. The American ships attempted to bombard the British-held fort for two days, with most of the shot falling harmlessly in vegetable gardens around the fort. Sinclair discovered that the new British blockhouse stood too high for the naval guns to reach.



Major George Croghan (1791-1849), commander of Fort Stephenson during the siege in 1813 and at the attack on Fort Mackinac in 1814 (Library of Congress).



Fort Mackinac, on Mackinac Island, was built on the lake bluff at an elevation too high for the cannons on Commodore Sinclair's brigs to reach (painting by Seth Eastman, 1872).



From 1875 to 1895, Fort Mackinac served as Mackinac National Park, the second national park in the United States after Yellowstone National Park. Today it is a museum for Mackinac Island State Park, Michigan.

August 1814

BATTLE OF SCAJAQUADA CREEK AT BLACK ROCK—on August 2nd, anticipating an attack by British forces that had recently crossed the Niagara River, Maj. Lodowick Morgan's force of 240 American riflemen repulsed a superior force of 700 regulars led by Lt. Col. John Tucker. Morgan's successful defense of the naval yard at Black Rock discouraged any future invasion attempts by Gen. Drummond, who decided instead to lay siege to Fort Erie, then occupied by the Americans at the head of the Niagara River across from Buffalo.

Commodore Isaac Chauncey arrived with the American Lake Ontario fleet at the mouth of the Niagara River on August 4th, but too late to assist Gen. Brown's campaign on the Niagara Frontier. The American fleet did establish a blockade that forced the British to march reinforcements and transport supplies around and not across Lake Ontario.

BRITISH ASSAULT ON FORT ERIE—during August, September, and October control of Fort Erie was hotly contested. In early August the Americans anticipated a British siege and made improvements to the fort's defenses. The assault came on August 15th. During the assault the British gained control of a gun bastion. Suddenly the powder magazine below the bastion blew up killing 400 British troops. The siege failed with approximately 1,000 British casualties, whereas the Americans suffered less than 90. In September British Gen. Drummond reinforced a line of three artillery batteries focused on the fort. Gen. Brown ordered Gen. Daniel Davis, Col. James Gibson, and Lt. Col. Eleazer Wood to attack and destroy the batteries. They were successful in spiking the guns and blowing them off their carriages. During the attack Davis and Gibson were killed and Wood mortally wounded. After the war, Gen. Brown erected a monument to Lt. Col. Wood in the cemetery at the U.S. Military Academy in West Point, New York.

In October, Gen. Brown returned to Sackets Harbor and Gen. George Izard was left in command of the forces at Fort Erie. After several unsuccessful attempts to draw Gen. Drummond's British troops into battle at Chippawa in late October, Izard withdrew his forces to high ground near Fort Erie. The military hospital at the fort was closed and the sick and wounded were transferred to Buffalo. Fort Erie was eventually abandoned by the Americans and the army units returned to New York. On November 5th explosive charges were placed throughout Fort Erie and it was totally destroyed.

September 1814

BATTLE OF LAKE CHAMPLAIN AND PLATTSBURG—in September, at the opposite side of New York, battles took place on Lake Champlain and at Plattsburg. Col. Alexander Macomb had 3,300 American defenders at Plattsburg when Gen. George Prevost marched 12,000 veterans of the Napoleonic Wars in Europe from Montreal toward Plattsburg. The British land assault was supported by a naval attack on Lake Champlain led by Capt. George Downie.



Lt. Thomas Macdonough (1783-1825)—the hero of Lake Champlain (painting by Gilbert Stuart).



Battle of Lake Champlain, September 1814. As the British fleet sailed into Plattsburg Bay, it was ambushed by the American fleet commanded by Lt. Thomas Macdonough (Library of Congress).

As the British fleet sailed into Plattsburg Bay on September 11th, it was ambushed by the American fleet commanded by Lt. Thomas Macdonough, who had positioned his ships to fire broadside at the enemy. After two hours of fierce fighting, with Capt. Downie killed, the British fleet surrendered.

When word of the naval defeat reached Gen. Prevost, he immediately withdrew his army toward Montreal without attacking Plattsburg. This was the final major action of the war in New York and on the Great Lakes.



By anchors and winches, Lt. Macdonough pivoted his ship so that he could fire broadside from either the port or starboard deck by rotating the Saratoga up to 170 degrees (painting by Paul Wright).

Treaty of Ghent and Aftermath of the War



United States Military Academy at West Point, New York. After the War of 1812, General Jacob Brown erected a monument to Lt. Colonel Eleazer Wood in the academy's cemetery. Colonel Wood was the army engineer in charge of constructing the impenetrable Fort Meigs and Fort Stephenson in northwestern Ohio. Wood was killed at the Battle of Fort Erie.

While the war still raged on in North America, peace negotiations began in August 1814 in Ghent, Belgium. The United States was not in a good bargaining position. The British had conquered Napoleon, releasing experienced veterans to fight in Canada and a British army had invaded and burned Washington. Thus the American representatives at the Treaty of Ghent had little leverage. But the United States, thanks to victories by Commodore Perry and General Harrison, did hold most of Upper Canada west of Lake Ontario. This strengthened the American negotiators' position enough so that they could stave off a British attempt to limit United States sovereignty in Ohio and the western Great Lakes region. The British wanted to make these lands into an Indian country—where American pioneers would not be permitted to settle. Countering, American representatives pointed out an accomplished fact—the United States already held the western part of Upper Canada, thus it was unrealistic to ask the Americans to give up not only what they had won in the war, but also territory that America considered its own before the war. The British conceded the point. Today the United States-Canadian border through Lake Erie and westward is the result of Perry's glorious victory. On December 24, 1814 Great Britain and the United States agreed to an eleven-article settlement that stipulated among other things, "All hostilities, both land and sea, shall cease as soon as this treaty shall have been ratified by both parties" and further stated, "All territory taken by either party from the other during the war shall be restored without delay."

Owing to slow travel by sailing ships across the Atlantic, the text of the proposed peace agreement did not reach Washington until February 11, 1815. Four days later, on February 15th, the United States Congress ratified the Treaty of Ghent and the War of 1812 was officially over. The two-and-a-half year war cost the United States about \$200 million. A total of 2,260 American soldiers and sailors were killed. British and their Indian allies losses were equally substantial.

Although the Treaty of Ghent ended the fighting, it did not solve all the problems that led to the war. Not mentioned in the treaty was the United States demand that Great Britain stop illegally searching American ships and impressing United States sailors. Even though the treaty called for the "End of hostilities with all the tribes or nations of Indians" and "Restore all the possessions, rights, and privileges which they may have been entitled to in 1811," Indians continued to be forced from their lands as the United States expanded westward.

On a more positive note, the War of 1812 demonstrated that the Americans would not be bullied by the British Lion. By the end of the war the United States had emerged as a force to be reckoned with on the world stage. Within a few years thereafter, the Rush-Bagot Agreement of 1818 was signed, establishing a demilitarized border between the United States and the United Kingdom [present-day Canada] on the Great Lakes and Lake Champlain. The Louisiana Purchase a decade earlier expanded the nation's boundary to the Pacific Coast giving rise to the doctrine of *Manifest Destiny*—the 19th-century belief that the expansion of the United States throughout the American continent was both justified and inevitable. Soon the Mexican War would bring about the realization of this belief, with the acquisition of California and much of the Southwest. The discovery of gold in California would further transform the nation and give it the wealth to become a world power.



Signing of the Treaty of Ghent, Christmas Eve 1814 (painting by Anédée Forestier). British Admiral of the Fleet James Gambier is shaking hands with the U.S. Ambassador to Russia, John Quincy Adams; British Undersecretary of State for War, Henry Goulburn, is carrying a red folder.

GREAT LAKES WARSHIPS IN SERVICE DURING THE WAR OF 1812

The characteristics and dimensions of the 49 vessels that participated in the War of 1812 on Lakes Erie and Ontario vary somewhat among the several contemporary authorities who published accounts shortly after the war. The values presented here are general estimates derived from an analysis of these accounts and typical relationships for each type of vessel.

LAKE ERIE—Warships constructed or purchased by Great Britain

- General Hunter* (brig-of-war)—length: 61 ft.; displacement: 75 tons; compliment: 45 men; built: Amherstburg, Upper Canada (1809); armament: 2 carronades, 8 long guns; note: originally built as a schooner; altered to a brig in 1812; captured by Americans at Battle of Lake Erie in September 1813
- Queen Charlotte* (ship-rigged sloop-of-war)—length: 93 ft.; displacement: 280 tons; compliment: 126 men; built: Amherstburg, Upper Canada (1809); armament: 14 carronades, 2 long guns, 1 long pivot gun; note: captured by Americans at Battle of Lake Erie in September 1813
- Erie* (armed sloop)—length: 50 ft.; displacement: 60 tons; compliment: 20 men; built: Black Rock, New York (1810); armament: 1 long gun, 1 long pivot gun; note: captured by British at Mackinac in 1812
- Chippewa* [or *Chippeway*] (armed schooner)—length: 50 ft.; displacement: 35 tons; compliment: 20 men; built: Maumee River, Ohio (1811); armament: 2 howitzers, 1 long pivot gun; note: captured by British in 1812; recaptured by Americans at Battle of Lake Erie in September 1813; burned to prevent capture by British at Buffalo in December 1814
- Lady Prevost* (armed schooner)—length: 68 ft.; displacement: 120 tons; compliment: 86 men; built: Amherstburg, Upper Canada (1812); armament: 10 carronades, 2 long guns, 1 long pivot gun; note: captured by Americans at Battle of Lake Erie in September 1813
- Detroit* (ship-rigged sloop-of-war)—length: 93 ft.; displacement: 305 tons; compliment: 150 men; built: Amherstburg, Upper Canada (1813); armament: 2 carronades, 16 long guns, 1 long pivot gun; note: captured by Americans at Battle of Lake Erie in September 1813
- Little Belt* (armed sloop)—length: 60 ft.; displacement: 60 tons; compliment: 20 men; built: Black Rock, New York (1810); armament: 2 long guns, 1 long pivot gun; note: originally civilian *Friend's Good Will*; captured by British at Mackinac in 1812; recaptured by Americans at Battle of Lake Erie in September 1813; trapped at Buffalo and burned to prevent capture by British in December 1813

LAKE ERIE—Warships constructed or purchased by the United States

- Adams* (brig-of-war)—length: 75 ft.; displacement: 125 tons; compliment: 60 men; built: River Rouge, Michigan Territory (1801); armament: 6 long pivot guns; note: captured by British in 1812 at Detroit
- Trippe* (armed sloop)—length: 70 ft.; displacement: 50 tons; compliment: 35 men; built: Black Rock, New York (1803); armament: 1 long pivot gun; note: originally civilian *Contractor*; purchased by U.S. Navy in 1812; burned by British near Buffalo in December 1813
- Caledonia* (armed brig)—length: 80 ft.; displacement: 88 tons; compliment: 53 men; built: Amherstburg, Upper Canada (1807); armament: 1 carronade; 2 long pivot guns; note: capture by Americans at Fort Erie, Upper Canada in February 1813; converted to merchant vessel and renamed *General Wayne*
- Somers* (armed schooner)—length: 75 ft.; displacement: 65 tons; compliment: 30 men; built: Black Rock, New York (1809); armament: 1 pivot carronade; 1 long pivot gun; note: originally civilian *Catherine*; purchased by U.S. Navy in 1812; captured by British at Fort Erie in August 1814
- Ohio* (armed schooner)—length: 80 ft.; displacement: 87 tons; compliment: 20 men; built: Cleveland, Ohio (1810); armament: 1 long pivot gun; note: originally civilian; purchased by U.S. Navy in 1812; captured by British at Fort Erie in August 1814
- Porcupine* (armed schooner)—length: 60 ft.; displacement: 50 tons; compliment: 25 men; built: Erie, Pennsylvania (1813); armament: 1 long pivot gun; note: converted to merchant vessel until 1855; abandoned
- Tigress* (armed schooner)—length: 60 ft.; displacement: 50 tons; compliment: 27 men; built: Erie, Pennsylvania (1813); armament: 1 long pivot gun; note: captured by British in September 1814 on Lake Huron
- Scorpion* (armed schooner)—length: 68 ft.; displacement: 60 tons; compliment: 35 men; built: Erie, Pennsylvania (1813); armament: 1 pivot carronade, 1 long pivot gun; note: captured by British in September 1814 on Lake Huron
- Ariel* (armed schooner)—length: 70 ft.; displacement: 60 tons; compliment: 36 men; built: Erie, Pennsylvania (1813); armament: 4 long guns; note: trapped at Buffalo and burned to prevent capture by British in December 1813
- Lawrence* (brig-of-war)—length: 110 ft.; displacement: 260 tons; compliment: 135 men; built: Erie, Pennsylvania (1813); armament: 18 carronades, 2 long guns
- Niagara* (brig-of-war)—length: 110 ft.; displacement: 260 tons; compliment: 135 men; built: Erie, Pennsylvania (1813); armament: 18 carronades, 2 long guns

LAKE ONTARIO—Warships constructed by Great Britain

- Earl of Moira* (ship-rigged sloop-of-war)—length: 70 ft.; displacement: 169 tons; compliment: 127 men; built: Kingston, Upper Canada (1805); armament: 14 carronades, 2 long guns, 1 long pivot gun
- Duke of Gloucester* (armed schooner)—length: 60 ft.; displacement: 65 tons; compliment: 60 men; built: Kingston, Upper Canada (1807); armament: 12 long guns
- Sir Sydney Smith* (armed schooner)—length: 80 ft.; displacement: 187 tons; compliment: 70 men; built: Mississauga Point, Upper Canada (1808); armament: 10 carronades, 1 long pivot gun; note: built as a civil vessel
- Royal George* (ship-rigged sloop-of-war)—length: 97 ft.; displacement: 330 tons; compliment: 204 men; built: Kingston, Upper Canada (1809); armament: 18 carronades, 2 long guns, 1 long pivot gun
- Prince Regent* (armed schooner)—length: 72 ft.; displacement: 143 tons; compliment: 150 men; built: York, Upper Canada (1812); 10 carronades, 1 long pivot gun
- Sir George Prevost* (ship-rigged sloop-of-war)—length: 101 ft.; displacement: 426 tons; compliment: 224 men; built: Kingston, Upper Canada (1813); armament: 12 carronades, 1 long pivot gun; note: a sister ship *Sir Isaac Brock* burned while under construction at York in April 1813 to prevent capture
- Lord Melville* (ship-rigged sloop-of-war)—length: 72 ft.; displacement: 187 tons; compliment: 98 men; built: Kingston, Upper Canada (1813); armament: 12 carronades, 2 long guns
- Prince Regent* (frigate)—length: 155 ft.; displacement: 1,294 tons; compliment: 280 men; built: Kingston, Upper Canada (1814); armament: 28 carronades, 28 long guns; note: first Lakes frigate
- Princess Charlotte* (frigate)—length: 121 ft.; displacement: 756 tons; compliment: 280 men; built: Kingston, Upper Canada (1814); armament: 18 carronades, 24 long guns
- St Lawrence* (ship-of-the-line)—length: 191 ft.; displacement: 2,305 tons; compliment: 700 men; built: Kingston, Upper Canada (1814); armament: 36 carronades, 34 long guns; note: Sir Yeo's flagship
- Psyche* (frigate)—length: 130 ft.; displacement: 769 tons; compliment: 280 men; built: Kingston, Upper Canada (1814); armament: 28 carronades, 28 long guns

LAKE ONTARIO—Warships constructed or purchased by the United States

- Fair America** (armed schooner)—length: 75 ft.; displacement: 82 tons; compliment: 52 men; built: Oswego, New York (1804); armament: 2 long pivot guns; note: purchased by U.S. Navy in 1812
- Asp** (armed sloop)—length: 65 ft.; displacement: 57 tons; compliment: 45 men; built: Mississauga Point, Upper Canada (1808); armament: 2 long pivot guns, 1 long pivot gun; note: originally English merchant ship *Elizabeth*; captured by armed schooner *Growler* in 1812
- Oneida** (brig-of-war)—length: 86 ft.; displacement: 262 tons; compliment: 150 men; built: Oswego, New York (1809); armament: 16 carronades, 2 long guns
- Growler** (armed schooner)—length: 75 ft.; displacement: 81 tons; compliment: 35 men; built: Ogdensburg, New York (1809); armament: 4 long guns, 1 long pivot gun; note: originally civilian *Experiment*; purchased by U.S. Navy in 1812; captured by British in August 1813; recaptured by Americans in October 1813
- Pert** (armed schooner)—length: 60 ft.; displacement: 50 tons; compliment: 35 men; built: Ogdensburg, New York (1809); armament: 2 long guns, 1 long pivot gun; note: originally civilian *Collector*; purchased by U.S. Navy in 1812
- Hamilton** (armed schooner)—length: 72 ft.; displacement: 112 tons; compliment: 35 men; built: Ogdensburg, New York (1809); armament: 8 carronades, 1 long pivot gun; note: originally civilian schooner *Diana*; purchased by U.S. Navy in 1812; sank in a squall in August 1813
- Ontario** (armed schooner)—length: 60 ft.; displacement: 53 tons; compliment: 35 men; built: Lewiston, New York (1809); armament: 2 long pivot guns; note: purchased by U.S. Navy in 1812
- Conquest** (armed schooner)—length: 75 ft.; displacement: 82 tons; compliment: 40 men; built: Ogdensburg, New York (1810); armament: 1 long gun, 2 long pivot guns; note: originally civilian schooner *Genesee Packet*; purchased by U.S. Navy in 1812
- Governor Tompkins** (armed schooner)—length: 85 ft.; displacement: 96 tons; compliment: 64 men; built: Oswego, New York (1810); armament: 2 carronades, 2 long guns, 2 long pivot guns; note: originally civilian schooner *Charles & Ann*; purchased by U.S. Navy in 1812
- Raven** (armed sloop)—length: 60 ft.; displacement: 50 tons; compliment: 52 men; built: Oswego, New York (1810); armament: 1 mortar; note: originally civilian *Mary*; purchased by U.S. Navy in 1813
- Julia** (armed schooner)—length: 75 ft.; displacement: 81 tons; compliment: 35 men; built: Oswego, New York (1811); armament: 2 long pivot guns; note: purchased by U.S. Navy in 1812; captured by British in August 1813; recaptured by Americans in October 1813
- Scourge** (armed schooner)—length: 57 ft.; displacement: 50 tons; compliment: 30 men; built: Niagara, Upper Canada (1811); armament: 10 long guns; note: originally English schooner *Lord Nelson*; seized by U.S. Navy in June 1812; sank in a squall in August 1813
- Madison** (ship-rigged sloop-of-war)—length: 112 ft.; displacement: 580 tons; compliment: 200 men; built: Sackets Harbor, New York (1812); armament: 8 carronades, 14 long guns, 1 long pivot gun
- General Pike** (ship-rigged sloop-of-war)—length: 145 ft.; displacement: 875 tons; compliment: 300 men; built: Sackets Harbor, New York (1812); armament: 24 long guns, 2 long pivot guns; note: unfinished hull set on fire during British raid in May 1813, but doused before major damage
- Lady of the Lake** (armed schooner)—length: 65 ft.; displacement: 89 tons; compliment: 40 men; built: Sackets Harbor, New York (1813); armament: 1 long pivot gun; note: captured English schooner *Lady Murray* in a two-ship action on June 16, 1813
- Sylph** (armed schooner)—length: 65 ft.; displacement: 300 tons; compliment: 70 men; built: Sackets Harbor, New York (1813); armament: 16 carronades, 2 long guns
- Jefferson** (brig-of-war)—length: 122 ft.; displacement: 500 tons; compliment: 160 men; built: Sackets Harbor, New York (1814); armament: 16 carronades, 4 long guns
- Jones** (brig-of-war)—length: 122 ft.; displacement: 500 tons; compliment: 160 men; built: Sackets Harbor, New York (1814); armament: 16 carronades, 4 long guns
- Superior** (frigate)—length: 180 ft.; displacement: 1,580 tons; compliment: 500 men; built: Sackets Harbor, New York (1814); armament: 26 carronades, 32 long guns
- Mohawk** (frigate)—length: 155 ft.; displacement: 1,350 tons; compliment: 350 men; built: Sackets Harbor, New York (1814); armament: 16 carronades, 26 long guns

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Put-in Bay Celebrates the Bicentennial Anniversary of the Battle of Lake Erie

The summer of 2013 at the Village of Put-in-Bay was a seemingly endless procession of spectacular events to celebrate the 200th anniversary of Commodore Perry's victory in the Battle of Lake Erie. To name only a few, on July 4th the Village celebrated the 100th anniversary of laying the cornerstone for Perry's Victory and International Peace Memorial, the third highest monument in the country.



Put-in-Bay Harbor in preparation for celebrating the bicentennial of the Battle of Lake Erie. The reconstructed brig Niagara is docked at the right center of the photograph.



Visitors arrive on the Put-in-Bay ferry to celebrate the 200th anniversary of the Battle of Lake Erie.

Sixteen tall ships arrived in western Lake Erie beginning on August 29th to reenact the confrontation that swept Great Britain from Lake Erie and propelled Commodore Perry into the history books as the only commander to capture an entire British fleet. The reenactment on September 2nd was a grand event with 1,500 spectator boats surrounding the main vessels. The tall ships portrayed the battle vessels with the tall ship *Peacemaker* serving as the coordination and media vessel for the event.



Put-in-Bay's Bicentennial Celebration flag of the Battle of Lake Erie.



Equally as thrilling was the arrival of the entire Ohio State University Marching Band on September 1st via a special ferry provided by Miller Boat Lines. Dressed in their scarlet and gray summer shorts and tops the band arrived singing "I don't give a damn for the whole State of Michigan" in response to some misguided person on the shore waving a U of M flag. They marched off the boat, along the bay, and around De Rivera Park—all the time playing pep songs with half the town's folks marching behind and the other half cheering from the curb. Ending the parade at Put-in-Bay School, the band changed into their dress uniforms for an evening concert at Perry's Monument. As the concert concluded with the War of 1812 Overture, loud rocket blasts were set off from a barge in the bay at just the right time to simulate the cannons in the orchestral piece. Then began a spectacular fireworks display, rumored to cost upwards of \$100,000.



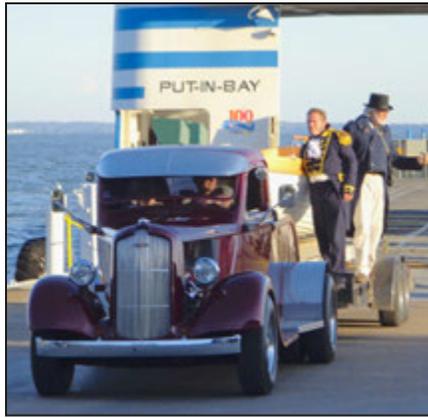
Hundreds of luminaries were ignited along Put-in-Bay Harbor, Gibraltar Island, and the south shore of Middle Bass Island—*Lights of Peace* on the night of September 7th, and on the actual anniversary date of September 10th, chartered power vessels took over a hundred guests to the site of the battle, about 15 miles west of Put-in-Bay, near West Sister Island. Earlier, the U.S. Coast Guard Cutter *Mobile Bay* had placed a permanent ceremonial buoy marking the battle location at 41°44'50" N latitude and 83°02'00" W longitude. A solemn moment was held at the site as representatives of the military services, descendants of the Perry family, and Native American tribesmen took part in a wreath-laying ceremony at the buoy.



The Ohio State University Marching Band arrives at Put-in-Bay on the South Shore ferry and marches around De Rivera Park.



To commemorate the Battle of Lake Erie, the U.S. Postal Service issued a special forever stamp at Put-in-Bay on September 10, 2013, depicting Commodore Perry's transfer in a longboat from the disabled brig Lawrence to the brig Niagara.



Actors for Commodore Perry and Sailing Master Dobbins arrive a Put-in-Bay with a replica of Perry's longboat built at the Sandusky Maritime Museum.



Tall ships reenact the Battle of Lake Erie on September 2, 2013



Tall ship Windy portrays the brig Lawrence.



Tall ship Pathfinder portrays the brig Lady Prevost.



Brig Niagara fires toward the British.

BATTLE VESSELS PORTRAYING VESSELS

American Fleet

US Brig Lawrence	Tall Ship Windy
US Brig Niagara	Brig Niagara
US Brig Caledonia	Pride of Baltimore II
US Schooner Somers	Madeline
US Schooner Ariel	Privateer Lynx
US Schooner Scorpion	Appledore IV
US Schooner Porcupine	Halie & Matthew
US Schooner Tigress	Denis Sullivan
US Sloop Trippe	Schooner Hindu

British Fleet

HM Ship Detroit	Sorlandet
HM Ship Queen Charlotte	Playfair
HM Brig Lady Prevost	Pathfinder
HM Brig General Hunter	Unicorn
HM Schooner Chippewa	Liana's Ransom
HM Sloop Little Belt	Friends Good Will



American fleet prepares to meet the British; Caledonia (left) and Niagara (right).



Tall ship Denis Sullivan portrays the schooner Tigress.



Tall ship Pride of Baltimore II portrays the brig Caledonia.

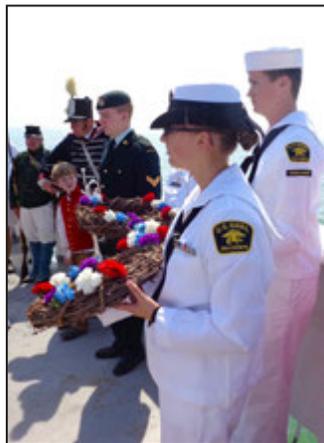


Ricki Herdendorf takes part in the reenactment of the Battle of Lake Erie aboard The Ohio State University research vessel Gibraltar III.

Site of the Battle of Lake Erie



Permanent marker buoy placed by the U.S. Coast Guard at the site of the Battle of Lake Erie.



Memorial wreath being placed at the site of the Battle of Lake Erie at noon on September 10, 2013—exactly two hundred years after the battle began.

Thanks to Historical Society member, Don Kriebel, for suggesting the topic of this special issue.

Society Organization

The Sheffield Village Historical Society is a charitable nonprofit 501(c)(3) and educational organization dedicated to discovering, collecting, preserving, interpreting, and presenting Sheffield's rich heritage. Membership is open to anyone who wishes to support the Society's mission.

For more information contact Eddie Herdendorf, President (440-934-1514 herdendorf@aol.com), Andy Minda, Vice President (440-537-0547 anmin36@aol.com), or Patsy Hoag, Secretary (440-934-4624 phoag@me.com).

Society journals can be found on the Village of Sheffield, Ohio official website: www.sheffieldvillage.com (click on the Sheffield Village Historical Society decal , then Pioneer newsletters, and then download). Page Layout is by Ricki C. Herdendorf, EcoSphere Associates, Put-in-Bay, Ohio.

 Look for Sheffield Village Historical Society on Facebook

The collections of the Sheffield Village Historical Society are housed in the Sheffield History Center at 4944 Detroit Road. The History Center is open to members and guests most Tuesdays 11:00 a.m.-2:00 p.m. and Thursdays 6:00 p.m.-8:00 p.m. or by appointment—please call Kathy Yancer (216) 543-3651.

The next meeting of the Board of Trustees is **April 10, 2014, 6:30 pm at the History Center. All members are welcome to attend this meeting.**

Society members are encouraged to submit items for future issues. Please send your stories or ideas to the Editor.

Charles E. Herdendorf, Ph.D., Journal Editor,
Sheffield Village Historical Society
Garfield Farms, 4921 Detroit Road
Sheffield Village, Ohio 44054

The Historical Society is now accepting donations for our Annual Mother's Day Weekend Yard Sale.

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APPLICATION FOR MEMBERSHIP

SHEFFIELD VILLAGE HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Garfield Farms—4921 Detroit Road, Sheffield Village, Ohio 44054—(440)-934-1514

Name _____

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Special Interests in Sheffield History? _____