

**The Naval War of 1812:
A Documentary History**

**Volume III
1814–1815
Chesapeake Bay, Northern Lakes,
and Pacific Ocean
Part 4 of 7**

**Naval Historical Center
Department of the Navy
Washington, 2002**

Electronically published by
American Naval Records Society
Bolton Landing, New York
2011

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themselves to you for further orders— The rest of the Gun Boats on this station, being so entirely destitute of men the few that remained in Commission, with the exception of one as Guard Ship, I have ordered to be delivered up to Capt. Cassin of the Dock Yard and made smug [*snug*] by the *Argus's* men before they leave the Station—

The Masters being all idle, & pressing applications for the Merchants, I was induced to recommend to them not to reject a good offer, as it was more than probable, an order for their discharge, or furlough, would soon arrive—

So many of my men have deserted since we have been under sailing orders, that I have deem'd it proper to leave two Officers to apprehend them when we disappear, and I have ordered the Tender *Despatch* to be kept in readiness to receive them and bring them on to me at New York,— should you have any particular service for the Tender in that quarter I will detain her, otherwise I contemplate sending her back immediately— I have the Honor to be Sir Very respectfully Your Obt. Servt.

Cha^s Gordon

LS, DNA, RG45, CL, 1815, Vol. 2, No. 99 (M125, Roll No. 43).

1. No date appears on this letter but it was postmarked 22 March. The phrase "24 Mch" was added in another hand in the dateline area and the letter was bound in the letter book between letters dated 23 and 24 March.

2. Purser Henry Denison's commission was dated 25 April 1812.

3. *Hornet* sailed for Washington on 24 March. Cassin to Crowninshield, 24 Mar. 1815, DNA, RG45, CL, 1815, Vol. 2, No. 100 (M125, Roll No. 43).

Chapter Two

The Northern Lakes Theater: January 1814–June 1815

The successes and failures of United States forces along the border with Canada in 1813 set the context of American operations in the northern lakes theater for 1814. The year 1814 opened with Tecumseh's Indian confederacy crushed and the United States in control of Lake Erie. The U.S. Army's plan to choke off the British lifeline to the lakes at the Saint Lawrence River, however, had failed during the 1813 campaigning season and could not be successfully prosecuted in 1814 without the infusion of many additional soldiers and the winning of naval mastery of Lake Ontario.

Napoleon's defeat in the spring of 1814 opened up wider possibilities for British operations in the northern lakes theater. The availability of thousands of British veterans of the wars in Europe for service in Canada emboldened Lord Bathurst, British secretary of state for war and the colonies, to order Sir George Prevost, governor-general of British North America, to go on the offensive and to invade the United States.

British objectives for the lakes theater in 1814 included retaining control of the forts along the trade routes to the west of Lake Michigan and thus the support of the western Indians, recapturing Detroit, destroying the American base at Sackets Harbor, and occupying a piece of United States territory. If successful, the British believed they could gain territorial concessions along the United States-Canadian border and establish an Indian state in the northwest that would serve as a permanent barrier to American northern expansion.¹

The Americans planned in 1814 to use mastery of Lake Erie to control Lake Huron, recapture Mackinac, and cut off British contact with the western tribes. In the meantime, the army projected conquering the Niagara frontier and then systematically taking the British settlements along Lake Ontario, from west to east, in preparation for moving against Kingston and Montreal.²

The American offensive on Lake Huron failed owing to a mixture of reasons, including bad weather, poor geographical knowledge, and carelessness, as well as pluck and enterprise on the part of the British. Further to the west, Prairie du Chien, a British trading post on the Mississippi River in Indiana Territory (now in Wisconsin), fell to an American expedition dispatched from St. Louis, but was soon retaken by the British.

During 1814, Commodore Isaac Chauncey, at Sackets Harbor, New York, the U.S. Navy's base on Lake Ontario, and Commodore Sir James L. Yeo, at the Royal Navy base, Kingston, Ontario, continued their shipbuilding race. Control of the lake's navigation alternated between the two fleets as each launched new warships.

Over the winter of 1813-14, the British started earlier than did the Americans on new warship construction, laying down a 58-gun and a 43-gun ship, and in the spring a large ship of the line. The Admiralty, which took over full responsibility for the naval forces on the lakes, shipped the frames of two frigates and two sloops to Quebec in the spring. In February 1814 the Americans began work on a 60-gun ship and a brace of 22-gun brigs; in May they laid down a 42-gun frigate.³

Having gained early ascendancy on Lake Ontario in May 1814, the British attacked Fort Ontario, a major transfer point for American supplies, and established a blockade of Oswego and Sackets Harbor. The Americans sent shipments of essential naval stores by boat along the Lake Ontario shore into Sandy Creek, south of Sackets Harbor, and captured a British force dispatched to intercept them. Having failed to cut off the supplies needed for the completion of new American warships, Commodore Yeo withdrew the blockade. Completion of the new American ships in mid-summer gave the American fleet a slight superiority in force, and, after recovering from a debilitating fever, Commodore Isaac Chauncey took his fleet into the lake in August, too late to be of essential aid to U.S. Army operations on the Niagara peninsula. In October, with the fitting out of the 102-gun ship of the line *St. Lawrence*, the British regained naval superiority on the lake. It was then too late in the season for an attempt against Sackets Harbor.

U.S. Army Brigadier General Jacob Brown's offensive along the Niagara River had some successes but ultimately bogged down because of changing objectives and the U.S. Navy's inability to cooperate at a sufficiently early date. Brown's forces captured Fort Erie and defeated the British in the Battle of Chippewa, but were unable to attack Fort George without naval support. The American troops held their own at the Battle of Lundy's Lane and defended Fort Erie against British assault. On 5 November, however, as winter closed in, Major General George Izard ordered the fort evacuated and blown up.

Prevost waited until late in the summer—and the arrival of reinforcements from Europe—to take the offensive. By then, he found it more practical logistically to invade the United States along the western shore of Lake Champlain than to move against Detroit, the Niagara forts, or Sackets Harbor. In order to protect the flank and supply lines of such an incursion, Prevost requested the Royal Navy to win control of Lake Champlain. Captain George Downie, in command of the British fleet on that lake, launched the frigate *Confiance*, of thirty-six guns, at Isle aux Noix, on 26 August. That same day, however, the commander of the U.S. Lake Champlain fleet, Master Commandant Thomas Macdonough, launched the twenty-gun brig *Eagle*. Macdonough had also added to his numbers the seventeen-gun schooner *Ticonderoga*. By early September, the opposing Lake Champlain fleets could throw about equal weights in broadsides, but Downie enjoyed the advantage that his new frigate was significantly heavier than the largest American ship, *Saratoga*, of twenty-six guns.

As Prevost was preparing his invasion force, the Americans were weakening their defenses in the Champlain Valley. On 29 August, Major General George Izard set out with 4,000 troops for Sackets Harbor, where Secretary of War John Armstrong ordered them to be ready to attack Kingston or to be in position to come to the defense of the Niagara frontier. Izard left Brigadier General Alexander Macomb with some 3,000 soldiers at Plattsburg. On 1 September, Prevost led 10,000 troops across the border. By 6 September, the British troops were on the outskirts of Plattsburg, where they paused while Prevost awaited the outcome of the naval battle. On 11 September, having been delayed by *Confiance's* outfitting and by contrary winds, Downie led his fleet into Plattsburg Bay, where Macdonough had decided to fight at anchor. At the end of the day, all the British warships, with the exception of the gunboats, had been captured. Fearing for his supply lines, Prevost beat a hasty retreat to Canada.

Along the United States-Canadian border, the 1814 fighting season ended in a standoff. The British retained control of a significant portion of the United States' upper Old Northwest, while the Americans still held Lake Erie. Neither side had been able to make permanent inroads across the Niagara River. On Lake Ontario the rival navies were in the process of building massive ships of the line that both were going to have difficulty manning. In the Lake Champlain Valley, the roles of defense and offense had reversed between the British and Americans. News of the American repulse of the British invasion at Plattsburg nullified any claim the British had to territorial demands at the negotiating table.

The shipbuilding contest on the northern lakes proceeded through the winter of 1814-15 until the proclamation of peace in February 1815. The U.S. ship of the line *New Orleans* remained on the stocks at Sackets Harbor until it was sold in 1883, a reminder of the monumental naval struggle for control of North America's destiny.

1. Horsman, *War of 1812*, pp. 169-70; for a printed copy of Lord Bathurst's 3 June 1814 dispatch to Sir George Prevost, outlining British defensive and offensive policy in Canada for the second half of 1814, see *Hitsman, War of 1812*, pp. 249-51.

2. Hickey, *War of 1812*, p. 183.

3. Horsman, *War of 1812*, pp. 139-40.

Security of the Fleet on Lake Erie

The British capture of Fort Niagara on 18 November 1813, followed by the destruction of the towns of Lewistown, Buffalo, and Black Rock in December, left British forces in a position to attempt to reestablish themselves on Lake Erie the following year. The British made plans in 1814 to recapture or destroy the ships they lost in the Battle of Lake Erie the previous September, and to establish a shipyard to build new vessels on Lake Erie or Lake Huron.

The weakness of the American land forces on the Niagara Peninsula caused apprehension at the American naval base at Erie, Pennsylvania, during the winter of 1813-14. Master Commandant Jesse D. Elliott and Governor Daniel D. Tompkins of New York feared that the British might attempt an attack on Erie, or try to recapture the prize vessels

anchored at Put-in-Bay by crossing the frozen lake. The British, indeed, had such a plan in the works, but the mildness of the weather that winter made any attempt to cross on the ice impossible.

GOVERNOR DANIEL D. TOMPKINS TO SECRETARY OF WAR ARMSTRONG

Albany January 2nd 1814

Sir

I have this moment received an express announcing the distressing intelligence that the flourishing Village of Buffalo is destroyed. The British crossed at Black Rock, two miles below Buffalo, on Thursday morning at day break 1000 strong. They were attacked with spirit by the Volunteers under the command of General Hall and several lives were lost; but the Volunteers & Militia were overpowered & dispersed. The British proceeded to and burnt the Village, and I presume, the Brig *Caledonia* and the smaller Vessels of the Erie Fleet, which were ashore near Buffalo. Genl Hall's account is not very circumstantial.

The Capture of Fort Niagara is confirmed, the whole frontier from Lake Ontario to Lake Erie is depopulated, and the buildings and Improvements with a few exceptions destroyed. The bodies of diverse Inhabitants of Lewiston have been found in a mangled State. They were massacred and Scalped. Amongst them are Doctor Alvord, Mr St John a nephew of Judge Spencer, Mr Gardner, Mr Low &c.

In my former Letter I took the liberty of suggesting the danger of the destruction of the Lake Erie Fleet. The Frontier which lies between the British, and the harbor of Erie now lies open for their march from Buffalo to that harbor; & if left unmolested by our Army, they will inevitably go to Erie to destroy the Vessels there, and will besides retake Detroit and destroy the Vessels in the upper part of the Lake if possible. Were they to accomplish these objects, and I have no doubt they will attempt them, it will with presents of Clothing and resources taken in Fort Niagara, enable them to regain the confidence and services of the western Indians

To counteract these winter expeditions it is indispensable that the Army should be in motion whether the whole force of Wilkinson & Hampton ought not to be assembled between Ogdensburgh & Sackett Harbor and acting in concert with the force at the latter place attack Kingston or Prescot, and thus divert the British from operations in the upper Country? or whether it will be better to convey about 2500 of the Regulars to the Niagara Frontier & let them with such Militia & Volunteers as I can assemble, (and I will pledge myself there shall not be less than 5000 Volunteers provided you will unite with them 2500 Regulars) make a diversion from Kingston, by assailing Burlington & York, while the residue of the Army with Commodore Chauncey's force attack Kingston, is thrown out for your consideration. The whole movement will cost little more than three or four large Vessels, which must otherwise be built. It is as healthy and as safe, and is less expensive, to move troops, warmly clad, in January & February as in the wet months of October & November. They can sleep in their sleighs with their arms in their hands & encamp as they would form; and the same sleighs which transport them will carry provisions & forage for ten days. The enemy's country will furnish some supplies. Be assured, Dear Sir that

something must be done, & that speedily and effectually, or the confidence of the Citizens of this quarter of the United States, in the government, will be lost.

You will excuse these suggestions. They are made with the best intentions. Any other propositions or arrangements which may be devised will equally receive my earnest cooperation & support. If any thing be undertaken it will be indispensable that all the enterprising & valuable officers of the Army, who are absent, should return to their posts instantly; & that all the recruits in Pennsylvania; New York & Vermont be ordered & forwarded to their respective Regiments without delay.

A disposition which might be made of Cass's Corps and the indians of the West, was mentioned in my letter of the 25th., namely, whether, if any winter campaign be undertaken, their transportation from the upper Country down to Lake Ontario, to cooperate in an expedition against Burlington & York, would not be advisable?

In consequence of the recent information I shall exert myself to prevent further intrusions of the enemy within our territory. But the capture of Fort Niagara will prevent the possibility of doing any thing more. To attempt or hope to retake that formidable work by Militia alone, & that without Ordnance, would be the height of folly.

Permit me to hear from you as soon as possible upon these topics. I have the honor to be, Sir with high regard, Your Obt. St.

Daniel D. Tompkins

LS, DNA, RG107, Letters Received by the Secretary of War, Registered Series, T-193 (7) (M221, Roll No. 57).

MASTER COMMANDANT JESSE D. ELLIOTT TO SECRETARY OF THE NAVY JONES

Erie Jany. 5th. 1813 [1814]—

Sir

By Express on the night of the 31st. ult. I had the honour to address you on the subject of the approach of the Enemy.¹ I have now to inform you that on Thursday morning 29th. inst. the Enemy, from the best information I can obtain, 2000 strong, crossed the Niagara River at the mouth of Scigocerdus Creek² (one mile below Black Rock) and with little opposition marched to the Village of Buffalow, succeeded in taking it from the Militia, and at 8 in the morning committed it to flames, together with two of the prize vessels, the *Little Belt* and *Chipaway*, and the Sloop *Tripe*, that had driven on shore some time previous in a gale of Wind. Lt. Packet with 12 Men, whom I had left in charge of these vessels for the purpose of securing the Rigging and other apparatus, have succeeded in effecting their escape, and I expect will be here in the morning. On his arrival I will inform you more particularly of all the transaction. I have had a communication through the Commanding Militia Officer at this place, and from the Commanding Officer on the Retreat, that the night previous to the crossing of the Enemy, one of our Prisoners had made his escape, and informed the Comg. General such was the intention of the Enemy—and that if not at that moment, when the Ice would make, all the force would be bent to Erie and the Shipping. Majr. Genl. Mead has ordered out one Brigade of Militia to perform a tour of

duty of 30 days. And for the security of this place and the Shipping, I would suggest to you the propriety of having a force of 2000 Militia at this place, until the middle of March. On the approach of the Enemy we shall have but a few hours previous notice. They are yet in possession of Buffalaw, and what will be their immediate conduct, it is impossible to conjecture. I have the honour to be Yours &c. &c.

Jesse D Elliott

ALS, DNA, RG45, MC, 1813, Vol. 1, No. 2 (M147, Roll No. 5). This document was misdated as 1813 and bound in with the 1813 master commandant letters.

1. See Dudley, *Naval War of 1812*, Vol. 2, p. 626.
2. Scogeoquady Creek.

MASTER COMMANDANT JESSE D. ELLIOTT TO COMMODORE ISAAC CHAUNCEY

"Copy"

U.S.S. *Niagara*
Erie 16th January 1814,

Sir

I have the honor to acknowledge the receipt of your communication of the 20th. Ultio. requiring the Dimensions age and armament of the Enemys fleet captured on the 10th. September 1813. The *Detroit* a Ship of about four hundred Tons, 126 feet on deck 28 feet beam, 12 feet hold, a new Ship well built and found, 4 long 24 lb Guns, 4 long 18 lb. Guns, 7 long 12 lb guns 2 long 9 lbs. and 2, 24 lb carronades. *Queen Charlotte*, a Ship about 5 years old, 116 feet on deck, 26 feet beam, 11 feet hold, well and substantially built, 14, 24 lb carronades and 3. long 9 lb Guns, and well supplied with every thing necessary for a Vessel of War, Schooner *Lady Prevost*, about 3 years old, 80 feet on deck 21 feet beam, 9 feet hold, 10. 18 lb carronades, and 3 long 9 lb guns, well found. Brig *Hunter*, about 9 years old 70 feet on deck, 18 feet beam, and 10 feet hold, 10. 4 lb Guns and, well found, Sloop, *Little Belt* about 3 years old, 59 feet on deck 16 feet beam and 7 feet hold, 2 long 12 lb guns and 1. 18 pdr, well found. Schooner *Chippewa*, about 8 years old 59 feet on deck 16 feet beam, 7 feet hold, 1 long 18 lb gun and well found, I regret that at this moment, I cannot get hold of the Inventory of what now remains on board, and what our Squadron has been absolutely in want of, and what has been used—

The affairs of the station are, as represented in my last communication, only the approach of the Enemy is near at hand, from late information from Detroit it appears that the Enemy are building a Naval force on Machidas Bay,¹ a bay laying on the grand River, receiving its water from Lake Huron, I shall not be able to have this fleet ready for service early in the Spring, unless I am furnished with sail Makers, many sails will be wanted, and I have not a person on the station at all acquainted with those Duties— Very Respectfully I have the honor to be Sir your obd. Servt,

signed Jesse D. Elliott—

Copy, DNA, RG45, MC, 1814, Vol. 1, No. 13 (M147, Roll No. 5). Another copy of this letter gives the following valuations for the prize vessels: ship *Detroit*,

\$95,000; ship *Queen Charlotte*, \$72,000; schooner *Lady Prevost*, \$34,400; brig *Hunter*, \$20,600; sloop *Little Belt*, \$19,000; schooner *Chippewa*, \$14,000. DNA, RG45, CL, 1814, Vol. 2, No. 105, enclosure (M125, Roll No. 35).

1. Matchedash Bay on Lake Huron.

LIEUTENANT GENERAL GORDON DRUMMOND, BRITISH ARMY, TO
GOVERNOR-GENERAL SIR GEORGE PREVOST

Kingston. January 21st. 1814—

Sir,

Your Excellency's letter of the 17th. Ultimo directing me to give my opinion, on the practicability of an attempt being made, for the destruction of the Enemy's Vessels and Craft, on Lake Erie, I have the honor to acquaint you, that I have had, since my return to Kingston, frequent communications, with Commodore Sir James Yeo, and with Colonel Nichol,¹ Quarter Master General of Militia, whose local knowledge renders him competent to afford the most correct information, on this important subject.—

The security of the Right Flank of the Army, and the preservation of our intercourse with, and influence over, the Western Indians, being objects of the very first importance, it is proposed to undertake an expedition against Detroit, and the Enemy's Vessels in that Quarter, as the only means by which these ends can be obtained.—

In making arrangements for this service, due regard must be had to, the immediate security of the Niagara Frontier, the force which the Enemy has at Detroit, and to the means necessary to transport and to provision the Force, which it may be thought necessary to employ.—

From the destruction of the Enemy's Boats and Craft on the Niagara, no apprehension of an attack need be entertained, on any part of that line below Fort Erie. And a very small force will suffice to prevent their crossing on the ice.— By blocking up the roads, leading from Sugar Loaf, and from Hawn's, all the routes, excepting that immediately on the bank of the River, will be closed. And, therefore, our line of defence will be shortened, and greatly strengthened.— Under these circumstances I should consider twelve hundred men, as amply sufficient for the defence of this line, which will leave a sufficient number for performing the other service.—

I am not correctly informed on the strength of the Enemy at Detroit: but, from the information I have received, it cannot be very great, and I understand it is not in their power to subsist a very large force in that country; it having been greatly exhausted during the last campaign; and the Enemy having no other resource, but to bring their provisions from the State of Ohio, on pack-horses, and in waggons, which is a most tedious, expensive, and difficult mode of supply.— I should not, under the circumstances just mentioned, estimate the force of the Enemy at more than Six hundred effective men. Of those I suppose Four hundred to be in Garrison at Detroit; the remainder at Amherstburg, Sandwich, and other out Posts.—

The force I should propose for this service would be

100th Regiment	500	
Light Company Royal Scots	100	
Do. 41st. Regt. completed to	100	
Do. 89th. Regt	<u>50</u>	750
Marines, if to be had	<u>100</u>	850
Marine Artillery, with two Six Pounders, & one 5½ Inch Howitzer,	40	
Militia	250	
Western Indians	400	
Captn. Coleman's Provincial Troop	20	
Seamen	<u>200</u>	1760

The Detachment of Seamen would be of the greatest service, in the attack on the Vessels, in Put-in-Bay.—

The next consideration is the moving and provisioning this force; which, from the state of the Country, must be marched in separate Columns, and probably by the following routes;

Light Infantry, and part of the Militia, by the Talbot road;—

100th. Regiment. &c, and Guns, through Oxford;

Indians, from Point aux Pins, to Point Peleé, followed by Light Infantry, and part of the Militia, through the Woods.

A road, at this season of the year, the ground being frozen, may be made with facility, through the woods, from the Thames to Amherstburg, without going round. And by moving by this last mentioned route, to the new settlements on the Lake, with the aid of the Militia of that Country, all communication with the Islands, will be prevented; and Amherstburg will immediately be secured; with such resources as the surrounding country can supply. While the rapid advance of the Troops by the Thames, will prevent the Enemy from detaching, either to support Amherstburg, or to reinforce their Post at the Islands.—

In some instances it will be necessary for the Troops to sleep out; but, being sheltered by the woods, and with large fires, it is hoped they will not suffer much.—

The Troops should be provided with Bill-hooks, or light hatchets; and the Militia with, each, a good axe, exclusive of his musquet or rifle; and the whole to be supplied with creepers.—²

The Provisions, necessary to subsist this force, may be calculated at 2500 rations per diem; weighing, including contingencies, two and half pounds each, or 6250 lbs.— A Sleigh may be calculated to carry one thousand pounds weight, so that, for 21 days provisions, 132 Sleighs would be requisite.— It is, however, proposed to take 300 Sleighs; as in moving the Troops forward, they might (as it is called,) ride and tie; that is, suppose a Column of 500 men on the march; 250 might march 12 or 15 miles without halting, while the other 250 went in

Sleighs. At the end of this march, the party in Sleighs having refreshed themselves, would proceed on foot, leaving the Sleighs for the party in the rear; who would get into them; and overtake the party in advance, in the evening: by which means they might proceed thirty miles a day.—

To procure the necessary number of Sleighs, active young Officers from the Militia should be selected, viz. one in each Township, who would procure even twice the number, if wanted.—

On arriving at Amherstburg the movements of the Troops would altogether depend on the information received. But, I should think, that the capture of Detroit would be indispensable, previous to any attack upon the Vessels, unless they should be in the Detroit River; as were Detroit left in the Enemy's possession, the Vessels at the Islands could not be maintained, without running a very great risque.—

The River Detroit, during the winter, may be crossed in several places; though seldom immediately opposite the town. And in Lake St. Clair, and at the Bar-Point below Amherstburg, it may be crossed in most seasons, as late as the middle of March.—

The distance, from Amherstburg, to Put in Bay, where two of the Enemy's Vessels are said to be, is about forty miles; all the way on the ice.—

Should this Expedition be determined upon, the sooner it is undertaken the better; as the Enemy will, doubtless, make great exertion to reinforce, and provision, Detroit; which delay, on our part, will perfectly enable them to effect.—

As much Biscuit as possible should immediately be baked; on which subject I have called the attention of the Commissariat at Niagara, and York.—

I need scarcely observe to Your Excellency the necessity of the Commissariat being furnished with a supply of at least four, or five, thousand pounds, in Specie, and small Bills, for this occasion.—

Should this proposed outline of operations meet Your Excellency's views, I shall lose no time in putting matters in train for carrying them into execution; although the state of the roads, through the want of snow, from the Bay of Quinte, upwards, renders any movement of such a nature, at present, totally impracticable.—

I am aware, there are several minor arrangements to be made, but which easily can be; provided the general plan be approved of.—

I propose moving with this Expedition myself. And Commodore, Sir James Yeo has expressed his intention to accompany me.— I shall be most happy to avail myself of his services, if it meets Your Excellency's approbation.— I have the honor to be, Sir, Your Excellency's most obedient, humble servant,

Gordon Drummond
Lt. General

LS, CaOOA, British Military and Naval Records, RG8, I, "C" Ser., Vol. 682, pp. 32-40.

1. Lieutenant Colonel Robert Nichol, Upper Canada Militia.

2. Billhooks are implements with a curved blade used for clearing brush; creepers are metal frames with iron spikes worn on the shoes to prevent slipping on ice.

LIEUTENANT GENERAL GORDON DRUMMOND, BRITISH ARMY, TO
GOVERNOR-GENERAL SIR GEORGE PREVOST

Kingston. February 3rd. 1814.

Sir,

I have the honor to acknowledge the receipt of Your Excellency's letter, of the 29th. Ultimo, communicating your approval of my proposed plan of attack upon the Enemy's Vessels on Lake Erie.—

The obstacles, which Your Excellency pointed out, to that highly desirable, and important object, are, no doubt, numerous; but they had not escaped my observation.—

And I am so sanguine as to think, they could all have been, by suitable energy and exertion, surmounted, were it not for the peculiarly uncommon mildness of the season; which has been so unusually free from cold and frost, that I could not form any hope, that, at this late period, the Ice would attain a sufficient degree of strength and soundness for our purpose, during the remainder of the winter.—

In a letter from Colonel Talbot I learn, that even the bordage upon Lake Erie, from Port Talbot, to Point Pelé is at present unsafe. And from every other information I can collect, there appears but little probability of it's being much better.—

As it would be highly imprudent to enter upon arrangements, under the probability that the season might still prove favorable; I conceive it much better altogether to give up the Expedition, at once; than to make a show of assembling Troops; without a very fair prospect of being able to continue my original intentions.—

From all these circumstances, having given the subject my most serious consideration, and placed every circumstance in the most favorable point of view, I feel myself under the necessity of relinquishing, with great reluctance, an object, from the success of which such beneficial consequences must have ensued.— I have the honor to be, Sir, Your Excellency's most obedient, humble servant,

Gordon Drummond
Lt. General

LS, CaOOA, British Military and Naval Records, RG8, I, "C" Ser., Vol. 682, pp. 90-92.

Plans for a British Base on Lake Huron

Fort Michilimackinac, on the island of Mackinac, which had been in British control since its surrender on 17 July 1812, became the focus of strategy on the upper lakes in 1814. The Americans believed themselves masters of the upper lakes since all British supplies would have to be moved across Lake Erie, which was now controlled by the Americans. The post at Mackinac was desperately low on provisions by 1814, and the British had to find a way to resupply and strengthen it against an American attempt to recapture the fort.

Unknown to the Americans, however, the British had already established an alternative route for provisioning Michilimackinac—from York by way of Lake Simcoe to Notawasaga Bay on Lake Huron. The British planned to move provisions and supplies along that route in order to build a fleet on Lake Huron and reestablish their military presence on Lake Erie through the "back door," through Lake St. Clair and Detroit.

GOVERNOR-GENERAL SIR GEORGE PREVOST TO
LIEUTENANT GENERAL GORDON DRUMMOND, BRITISH ARMY

[Extract]

Lt. Genl. Drummond

Head Qrs. Quebec
8th Jany. 1814

Dear Sir,

In reply to your letter of the 26th of last month¹ I have to acquaint you that I propose meeting Commodore Sir James Yeo at Montreal about the latter end of the month for the purpose of making with him the necessary arrangements for the approaching campaign—

Alive to the importance of Michilimackinac I have given orders for the necessary preparations being made to transport them in ten birch canoes as soon as the Ottawa is navigable Arms & ammunition, indian presents & provisions together with a proportion of Troops—² It is necessary you should make arrangements for conveying to that post by Lake Huron twelve months provisions for three hundred men the number of Gun Boats & Batteaux necessary for the carriage of the whole is a matter of calculation & should be commenced upon immediately provided you have found a man of activity & enterprize to undertake the building of them in Penetanguishene Bay, who will be responsible that they are finished by the time required—

In addition to the force I propose sending to Mackinac by the Ottawa I shall require from you two Companies of the 2d. Battn. of Marines & a proportion of Seamen under a Lieutt. to man the *Nancy* & Gun Boats— No useless consumer of Provisions is to be allowed to accompany this Detachment, but as it should be composed of none but men who would prove a benefit & not an encumbrance to the Service— The arrangements regarding this movement will be completed immediately after I have met the Commodore

The North West Company being interested their opinions must be left out of the question whilst we are considering the advantages which may result from the preservation of Mackinac.—

I consider it as of vital importance as respects our Indian alliance, it being the rallying point, the last link by which their Warriors still faithfully cling to our interest, severed from that, they will find themselves an abandoned people, deserted by us in their utmost need & reduced by despair to seek mercy from their bitterest foe— Then the charm of British influence would be dissolved & hopeless becomes the prospect of ever regaining their confidence—

But the preservation of our Indian alliance is not the only solitary good which will result from being able to retain possession of Mackinac,—the spirits of our auxiliaries would be so received [*revived*] by it that in the event of operations being undertaken for the recovery of Amherstburg & Detroit, a most essential



Map 11. Upper Lakes

cooperation might be looked for from Lake Huron for the accomplishment of so great an object.—

In respect to the conveyance of this reinforcement, the preference must be given to the most expeditious & from all the information I have collected, I understand the navigation of Lake Huron from Penetanguishene Bay is practicable early in April affording us a considerable start of the Enemy, provided you succeed in having the Gun Boats & Batteaux finished by that period— The Gun Boats may be armed with the 24 Pr. Carronades which are at York & were intended for the *Detroit*—

The reports of this day shew sixty 24 Prs. long guns for the new Ships moving towards Kingston & arrangements are made for forty 32 Prs. Carronades to follow— In addition to this immense transport several long guns are ordered from Montreal to Upper Canada for Garrison service—Two Brass 24 Prs. on Travelling Carriages from the Coteau dulac to Queenston are in the number. . . . I have &c

(Signed) George Prevost
Comr. of the Forces

LB, CaOOA, British Military and Naval Records, RG8, I, "C" Ser., Vol. 1222, pp. 20-30. Three paragraphs on the parole of two noncombatant prisoners of war and on prize matters have been omitted from this transcript.

1. See Wood, *Select British Documents*, Vol. 2, pp. 505-7.

2. Notation in the margin: "10 Rl. Artly. 60 R. & File Canadian Embodied Militia."

LIEUTENANT COLONEL RALPH H. BRUYERES, ROYAL ENGINEERS, TO
GOVERNOR-GENERAL SIR GEORGE PREVOST

York 23rd. January 1814

Sir

I have to report to your Excellency my arrival here yesterday I was detained some days at Kingston waiting the arrival of Genl. Drummond as I was apprehensive of passing him on the Road. I have made every enquiry since I have been here respecting the practicability of building some Gun Boats in Penetanguishene Harbor on Lake Huron for the purpose of communicating from thence to the Island of Michilimackinac as early as the opening of the Navigation can permit. the total want of resources in this part of the country renders any public undertaking extremely difficult, and uncertain. I have seen the only person here that could be competent for this Service (Mr. Dennis¹ late Master Builder at Kingston) he is at present unemployed but from the conversation I have had with him he is unwilling to engage in this business owing to the impossibility of procuring Workmen here for the purpose.

Captain Barclay whom I have seen on this subject very strongly recommends a Mr. Bell² who was Master Builder at Amherstburg he is now at Kingston, and I have written to Genl. Drummond to endeavor to engage him for this Service, and to procure 12 Ship Wrights to accompany him I have stated fully all that will be necessary. and I still hope that this business may be accomplished.—

The total want of Artificers, and Labourers of every description has retarded the progress of all the public Works here, and unless some efficient means are

taken to procure Men nothing effectual can be done towards the defence of the place. Lieut Kitson³ has exerted himself to the utmost but personal exertion is of no use without assistance only 13 Carpenters are now employed whereas four times the number are required. the want of Snow has also retarded the supply of Materials being brought but the Roads are now more practicable, and I have directed Requisitions to be immediately made for all that is necessary.

Mr. Crookshank⁴ the Commissary is at present at Lake Simcoe where I understand he is gone to make arrangements for the building of two Batteaux to convey Provisions that were left on the communication to be sent to Michillimackinac.

I proceed this day towards Niagara, and shall make every arrangement in my power on my arrival there for the security of that Frontier but I am informed the want of Workmen is fully as severely felt as in this place, and in some instances worse. but I shall do the best that can be devised for the public Service.— I have the Honor to be with the greatest Respect your Excellency's Most Humble Servant

R H Bruyeres.

ALS, CaOOA, British Military and Naval Records, RG8, I, "C" Ser., Vol. 732, pp. 10-12.

1. John Dennis, master shipwright.
2. William Bell, master shipwright.
3. Lieutenant John S. Kitson, Royal Engineers.
4. George Crookshank, Deputy Assistant Commissary General, British army.

LIEUTENANT GENERAL GORDON DRUMMOND, BRITISH ARMY, TO
GOVERNOR-GENERAL SIR GEORGE PREVOST

Kingston. January 28th. 1814.

Sir,

I have the honor to acquaint Your Excellency, that I received a communication from Deputy Assistant Commissary General Crookshank; at York, on his return from Lake Simcoe; where he had been, to make arrangements for forwarding the supplies to Michilimackinac.—

He informs me, that, from the authority of several credible persons, and likewise from Mr. Wilmot,¹ the Surveyor, who had been employed in running the line, from Lake Simcoe, to Penitanguishan Bay, that it is impracticable to transport anything by that route, previous to a road being cut upwards of thirty miles in length; and that it was calculated to take 200 men for at least 3 weeks, before it could be made passable; and, in case of deep snow, it could not be done at all.—

In consequence of the delay, and difficulty, attending such a measure, Mr. Crookshank has made arrangements for forwarding the supplies, to Nottawasaga Bay, on Lake Huron, a distance only of 20 miles from Penitanguishan.

The opening of the road to the river, leading to Nottawasaga Bay, will take but 12 men about 10 days; and, in the course of a few days, as soon as a shed can be erected, on the other side of Lake Simcoe, he will commence sending the Stores across it, should a thaw not prevent.—

As Mr. Crookshank found it almost impossible to procure hands to build boats, and altogether so a person to contract for the whole, or even a part; I have had a communication with the Commissioner of the Navy here; who says he could furnish 30 workmen, with an able foreman; that would, to ensure the measure being completed in the given time, contract, at once, for the building of as many as should be required.— And they could set out, from hence, at a day's notice, well furnished with Tools, Nails, Oakum, and every other requisite for the occasion.

This mode of proceeding would undoubtedly prove somewhat expensive; but I see no alternative.—

And, as there would be some check to the work upon the new Ships here, unless it was thought proper to send up an additional number of workmen, to supply the place of those thus otherwise to be employed, I have to request Your Excellency's instructions on this head, as soon as convenient.— I have the honor to be, Sir, Your Excellency's most obedient, humble Servant

Gordon Drummond
Lt. General

P:S: Since writing the foregoing, I have received a letter, from Lieutenant Colonel Bruyeres, from York, corroborating that part of Mr. Crookshank's letter, relative to the impossibility of procuring persons there, to build the boats at Penetanguishan Bay; and asserting, that the only way this object can be accomplished is, by sending up builders, with the necessary materials of Pitch, Iron Work, &c, from Kingston.—

G. D.

Copy, CaOOA, British Military and Naval Records, RG8, I, "C" Ser., Vol. 682, pp. 90-92.

1. Major Samuel S. Wilmot, surveyor-general.

CAPTAIN RICHARD BULLOCK, BRITISH ARMY, TO
CAPTAIN ROBERT LORING, BRITISH ARMY

Copy

Fort Michilimackinac
26th. February 1814

Sir/

I have the honor to Acknowledge Your Letter of the 12th Ulto: (Received on the Evening of the 23rd. Instant) Acquainting Me by directions of Lieutenant General Drummond that a Quantity of Provisions had been sent to Nottawasaga Bay and a further Quantity was about to be sent to Pentagushan Bay destined for this Post, which Provision we are much in Want of:

In Reply to the information required by the General, I am sorry to say that, our Resources here are very few, and in that, of the Article of Provisions almost Consumed;— At the time I Received the Account of the Retreat of the Right Division from Amherstburgh, the Government Provision was nearly exhausted, there being but Sixty eight pounds of Salt Meat in Store, and Flour only Sufficient to Serve the Small Garrison for One Month:— Amherstburgh being the

Depot from whence this Post had been always supplied, and the late Season of the Year Rendering any Supply from York very Precarious— I immediately turned my Mind to find out what resources there were on the Island, and in it's Vicinity, and I directed Mr. Bailey¹ of the Commissariat Department to proceed without loss of time to the Small Settlements in the Neighbourhood for that purpose, and to purchase every Species of Provisions he could procure, both on the Island and places adjacent, which he did at most exorbitant prices, and on which we have been existing since October;— the proportion of Animal Food purchased was so small that, I found it necessary on the 1st November, to Reduce the Ration of Beef to half a pound per day, and since, on the 25th. December, to limit the issue of Meat to four days in the Week, at the above rate—so that the Troops &c. might have a small proportion of that Food as long as possible—And which they will have until about the Middle of the ensuing Month— We must then have recourse to Indian Corn and Fish—of the latter We have been fortunately successful in obtaining a good supply, and on which We must exist until Provisions can be sent us:— The Number of Boats &c. I can send to Notawasaque and Penitanguishan Bay in the ensuing Spring to Assist in bringing the Supplies &c. will be, 2 Batteaux, 2 large Birch Canoes, and a Keel Boat;— There is no Clothing of any description in Store, and I send herewith Returns of what is Wanted—also a State of the Garrison and a Nominal List of Officers— The Men have been paid to the 24th. January, except those on Command at the Island of St. Josephs and Green Bay.— The Number of Indians immediately about us are but few, not exceeding Forty—this being their Hunting Season, they are employed in that Avocation far back in the Woods;— I expect Numbers here early in the Spring—they appear to be well disposed towards us—Nor have I heard of any that have Attached themselves to the American Government,—except a few of the Saguinas, Residing at Saguina Bay on the South Side Lake Huron—about 150 Miles from hence.— I have not been able to obtain any information respecting the Enemy's Vessels, None of them appeared on Lake Huron last fall, Nor have I been able to collect any intelligence from Detroit, Notwithstanding I have offered a Considerable sum for that purpose:— I shall pay close Attention to the Works, Picketting &c. of the Fort, and my exertions will not be wanted in Keeping this Post in the best state of defence;— Please to inform General Drummond, that Robert Dickson Esqr. Agent and Superintendant to the Western Indians, writes me from Green Bay (on the West Side of Lake Michigan) that he intends being here as early as possible in the Spring with about Six hundred Warriors, and one hundred White People of every description— the Consumption of Provisions will of course be very Great, and should the People arrive previous to the intended Supply I dread the Consequence.— I have the Honor to be &c.— &c.— &c.—

Signed Richd. Bullock
Captain 41st Regt.

a True Copy
Noah Freer
Military Secretary

Copy, CaOOA, British Military and Naval Records, RG8, I, "C" Ser., Vol. 682, pp. 227–30.

1. William Bailey, deputy assistant commissary general.

Winter Preparations on Lake Ontario

The indecisive close of the naval campaign on Lake Ontario in 1813 set the tone for the campaign of 1814, which became a contest to see which side could build more and larger warships faster in order to gain naval ascendancy of Lake Ontario earlier in the season. Without a decisive superiority in guns and ships, neither Commodore Isaac Chauncey nor Sir James L. Yeo would commit his squadron to the uncertain outcome of battle.

For both sides, supplies were best moved during the winter, when snow-covered roads made the transportation of heavy stores faster and cheaper by sleigh. The pace of work at Sackets Harbor and Kingston quickened during the winter months before snowy roads turned to mud, making transportation of heavy guns and naval stores almost impossible. Both sides also strengthened their defenses to guard against attack. Master Commandant William M. Crane directed American preparations and defenses while Commodore Isaac Chauncey was in New York and Washington making preparations for the ensuing campaign.

British naval forces in Canada were brought directly under the Board of Admiralty, eliminating the bureaucratic step of administrating them through the Quartermaster General Department under Governor-General Sir George Prevost. The British ships were renamed and added to the official Royal Navy list in 1814.

MASTER COMMANDANT WILLIAM M. CRANE TO COMMODORE ISAAC CHAUNCEY

(Copy)

USS. *Madison* Sacketts Harbour
Jany: 11th. 1814

Sir,

I have this morning learnt from Col: Smith¹ (the commanding military officer) that he has received information from a man, in the employ of government, that the enemy at Kingston are making great preparations to attack this place, all the sleighs in the province have been impressed, and coming up with six soldiers in each, their force I am persuaded is daily augmenting— I have great pleasure in assuring you that, the squadron is kept at all times in readiness for battle, our greatest apprehensions arises from the probability of the buildings on the wharf and in the Navy yard being fired—in which case the heat would become so great, that the *Madison*, *Oneida*, *Govr. Tompkins*, *Conquest*, *Pert*, *Ontario*, *Fair American*, and *Julia* must necessarily be abandoned—unless sufficient time should be given us to demolish them— I beg leave to add that, although sickness still prevails, the crews are in fine spirits, and I am satisfied will do their duty, I feel confident, that all will be done, by officers and men, that can be in case of an attack—the army consisting of near 1700 men muster less than 500 for duty and Genl. Wilkinson has made a requisition for the latter number to be sent to French Mills, it was however discretionary, and Col: Smith has declined sending them; and forwarded an express to the Genl. with the information I have already given you, the want of mounted Dragoons is also urged by the Col: it is stated here, but I cannot vouch for the truth of it, that 800 soldiers are in quarters at Green Bush— You may rest assured Sir that we will not yield up the Ships whilst men are left to man the guns— I am cutting

and hauling timber for the purpose of erecting a work at the cross roads Very respectfully I am Sir yr. obt. Servt.

W. M. Crane

Mr. Eckford² arrived this morning

LS, DNA, RG45, MC, 1814, Vol. 1, No. 9 (M147, Roll No. 5). Crane forwarded this copy of his letter to Secretary of the Navy Jones.

1. Colonel Thomas A. Smith, U.S.A., was promoted to brigadier general on 24 January 1814.
2. Henry Eckford, shipwright.

SECRETARY OF THE NAVY JONES TO COMMODORE ISAAC CHAUNCEY

Commodore Isaac Chauncey
Present.

Navy Department
Jany. 15th. 1814.—

Sir

The indecisive close of the Campaigne and the vigorous efforts making by the Enemy to gain the ascendancy on Lake Ontario, the probable theatre of decisive action the ensuing Campaigne, leaves but one direct and energetic Course to be pursued, which has been anticipated by the preparatory steps taken in pursuance of my order to the Navy Agent at New York on the 30th. Novr. last and my letter to yourself on the 1st. December last.¹

Every possible resource and effort must be directed to the creation of such a force at Sacketts Harbour as will enable you to meet the enemy on the Lake the moment he may appear, and with means competent to ensure success.— For this purpose you are by direction of the President of the United States invested with authority to make such requisitions, take such order and employ such means as shall appear to you best adapted to carry into effect the important objects confided to your direction, and in such manner as shall best promote the public interest, and attain the end with the least expenditure of blood and treasure.

In my letter of the 1st. December last, I have described the force which it then appeared to me proper to create, but as the force preparing by the enemy is now better known, that of our own must be regulated accordingly.—

The Ship of the first Class I have suggested still appears to be well adapted to the occasion.— the *Genl. Pike* is suggested as the model for the second,— and perhaps the third had better be of the same Class, and the fourth that of the *Sylph*; but with a steady eye upon the enemy you will vary your plan to meet the exigency of the case.—

The transportation of the Stores from Albany in due time, and of those from New York which may yet be wanting, is of primary importance. The progress making in this branch of service by Mr. Anderson² is very satisfactory, and on your return such arrangements may be made as will leave nothing to doubt or casualty.

The talents enterprize and zeal of Mr. Eckford the builder, is a source of great satisfaction and confidence, which assures me that though the enemy has made great progress in the building of his two largest Vessels, he will be overtaken

and surpassed in this branch of service, by the superior energy and judgement of Mr. Eckford.—

Mr. Bullus will inform you of the quantity of Beef & Pork deliverable at Albany by contract for the service of the Lakes, a considerable part of which has already been delivered.— With a view to the ordnance already transported to Albany and five 24 Prs. reported by Mr. Anderson to be at the Harbour, you will determine what may be required and order the residue on from New York, where if there should be any deficiency it can be made up from Philadelphia, where also there is an ample supply of Powder.

Your immediate attention will be required to the recruiting service, which unfortunately progresses but slowly, though it is believed the operation of the Embargo will facilitate that object, and you are authorized to give such reasonable bounty to Seamen as may be found necessary, particularly to those whose times may expire while in service on the Lakes.— Should your success in this branch fall short of your expectations when the period for active service shall be at hand, volunteer drafts from the flotilla service where it is practicable, and from such of our Ships as may be blockaded will be made in due time.—

The character and talents of the Officers employed on the Lake by the enemy shews the importance attached to that service, and must be met by corresponding qualifications on our part. This object will be provided for in due time by a reciprocal understanding between yourself and the Department. Lieut. Yarnall now at Philadelphia, was yesterday ordered to report himself to you, and Lieut. Stewart now attached to the flotilla on the Delaware, has this day been ordered in the same manner. These Officers you may immediately order on the recruiting service at New York and you will if expedient open Rendezvous further eastward.— Midn. G Lynch³ whose health does not permit him to perform other duty will report himself to you in New York for the recruiting service.—

I take this opportunity to reiterate the perfect confidence of the President, in your skill, talents, and patriotism, to accomplish all that is possible with the force, and the means at your Command, and his entire approbation of your past services.— In these sentiments I most cordially unite.— I am very respectfully Sir Your Obedt. Servt.

W Jones.

LB, DNA, RG45, CLS, 1814, pp. 89–91.

1. In his letter to Navy Agent John Bullus of 30 November 1813, and that to Commodore Isaac Chauncey of 1 December 1813, Secretary of the Navy Jones ordered that the guns from *John Adams* and *Alert*, and quantities of ordnance stores, cables, anchors, canvas, and iron to fit out new ships, be sent to Sackets Harbor. He also requested the services of Henry Eckford for the construction of a 32-gun frigate of 175 feet and two 22-gun sloops of war of the size of *Peacock* at Sackets Harbor. Jones to Bullus, 30 Nov. 1813, DNA, RG45, CLS, 1814, pp. 78–79; and Jones to Chauncey, 1 Dec. 1813, *ibid.*, pp. 79–80.

2. Samuel T. Anderson, Navy Storekeeper at New York.

3. Midshipman Green Lynch, appointed 16 January 1809, died September 1817.

FIRST SECRETARY OF THE ADMIRALTY JOHN W. CROKER TO
COMMODORE SIR JAMES L. YEO, R.N.

No. 4

Admiralty Office
29 Jany. 1814

Sir,

I am commanded by my Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty to acquaint you that it has been determined by His Majesty's Government that the whole of the naval Force on the Lakes of Canada, together with the Civil Establishments consequent thereon, are to be transferred to the direction of this Department, the ships composing the same to be registered on the List of the Royal Navy; and the Civil Officers and Artificers to be placed as nearly as possible, on the same footing with the naval establishments to which they may be most assimilated in His Majesty's other Colonies.

With the imperfect information of which their Lordships are possessed, they are unable to give you any detailed instructions for your guidance under this change of circumstances. The List transmitted with your Letter of the 29th. of September contains all the information by which they have been guided in classing and establishing the Vessels on Lake Ontario and I herewith transmit to you a List containing the names by which they are now ordered to be registered, with the establishments of men and Guns they are respectively to bear: which list includes also the Vessels employed on Lake Champlain; and I am at the same time commanded to direct that you give orders for placing, as soon as may be practicable, the said vessels on the Establishments severally allotted to them accordingly; and that you transmit to me with the least possible delay the most ample information of the arrangements you may make for officering and manning them: of the reinforcements that may be required for completing their Complements as established, and for manning any other Vessels that may be likely to be brought forward for service on any of the Lakes: of the supplies of Stores of all descriptions that may be required: and generally, to submit to their Lordships such observations as your experience may suggest for their guidance in the uninformed State in which they find themselves, with regard to all matters connected with this Establishment.

Directions are sent out to Sir George Prevost and Lieutenant Colonel Williams for breaking up the Second Battalion of Marines commanded by Lieutenant Colonel Malcolm, and placing the same, excepting the artillery company, at your disposal as far as may be necessary for furnishing the marine complements of the vessels under your orders, agreeably to the enclosed schemes, as well as of those to be brought forward here after, leaving the surplus if any to be incorporated with the first Battalion; and you are accordingly to take the necessary measures, in concert with the officers above mentioned, for so appropriating the said Marines.

With respect to the Ordnance proposed by the Navy Board for arming the vessels now employed on the Lakes, it appears to require the following number and nature of Guns, vizt.

Guns.	
8, 24 Pdrs.	on Col. Congreve's principle
4, 24 "	light
10, 18 "	Col. Congreve's
6, 12 "	
4, 9 "	
2, 6 "	

Carronades
10-32 Pdrs.
42-24 "
36-18 "

but it will be impossible to send you the Guns of a new description in time to enable you to arm these vessels according to their Establishments; but the quantity and nature of ordnance of which you must find yourself in possession (and of which an account is given here after) will enable you to arm the Squadron in a most ample and effective manner, until the arrival of the new ordnance may enable you to place them on their regular establishment.

The following is an account of the ordnance supposed to now at your disposal, vizt.

Long 24 Pdr. Guns.		
Already on the Lakes—	7	
Sent out by the ordnance last year	<u>18</u>	25
Long 18 Pdr. Guns		
Already on the Lakes—	12	
Sent out by ordnance	18	
Sent in <i>Aeolus</i>	<u>26</u>	56
Long 12 Pdrs. Guns		
Already on the Lakes—	2	
Sent out by ordnance—	<u>14</u>	16
Long 9 Pdr. Guns		
Already on the Lakes—	9	
Sent by ordnance—	3	
Sent in <i>Aeolus</i> —	<u>6</u>	18
Long 6 Pdrs. Guns		
Already on the Lakes—	<u>15.</u>	15
Carronades.		
68 Pdrs.		
Already on the Lakes	<u>6</u>	6
42 Pdrs.		
Sent out by ordnance	<u>6</u>	6
32 Pdrs.		
Already on the Lakes.	46	
Sent out by ordnance	<u>90</u>	136
24 Pdrs.		
Already on the Lakes—	12	
Sent out by ordnance—	42	
Sent in <i>Aeolus</i>	<u>8</u>	62
18 Pdrs.		
Already on the Lakes	20	
Sent by ordnance	<u>6</u>	26
12 Pdrs.		
Sent by ordnance—	<u>12</u>	12

and you will accordingly send me for their Lordships information by the first opportunity a full report of the measures you have taken in this respect, to enable them to determine what supplies of ordnance, if any, it may be necessary to send out.

I further transmit for your information a Copy of a Letter from the Navy Board, pointing out a mode of strengthening the larger Vessels, if it should be judged necessary to enable them to bear the ordnance proposed for them; and I am commanded to add that their Lordships have been pleased to sign a Commission appointing you Commander in Chief of all His Majesty's ships & Vessels on the Lakes, intending that you shall have a Captain under you. I am Sir, Your most obedient humble servant

Copy, UkLPR, Adm. 1/4360, fols. 24-28. A draft of this letter, with enclosures, precedes this copy at fols. 15-17.

[Enclosure]

An account shewing the number & nature of guns now carried by the vessels on the Lakes of Canada, and the New Establishments of the same (the latter in Red Ink)												
Ships	24 Pr. Guns	24 Pr. G. on Col. Congreve's principles	24 Pr. Guns on lightest pattern	18 Pr. Guns	18 Pr. Guns Col. Congreves	12 Pr. Guns	9 Pr. Guns	6 Pr. Guns	68 Pr. Carrs.	32 Pr. Carr.	24 Pr. Carr.	18 Pr. Carr.
<i>Montreal. (Wolfe)</i>	1			8					4	8		
new Estt.		8				2					10	
<i>Niagara. (Rl. George)</i>	1			2					2	16		
New Estt.					6	2					12	
<i>Star. (Melville)</i>				2						12		
New Estt.					4		2				8	
<i>Charwell (Moir)</i>							2				12	
New Estt.						2					12	
<i>Magnet (Sir S. Smith)</i>						2				10		
New Estt.						2				10		
<i>Netley (Beresford)</i>	1											8
New Estt.								2				8
<i>Linnet (Growler)</i>												12
New Estt.												12
<i>Chub (Eagle)</i>								11				
New Estt.												12
<i>Finch (—)</i>								4				
New Estt.												4
4 Gun Boats (1 each)	4											
New Estt.			4									
now at the Lakes.	7			12		2	2	15	6	46	12	20
Required by New Estt.		8	4		10	6	4	2		10	42	36

Copy, UkLPR, Adm. 1/4360, fol. 18.

[Enclosure]

List of Ships & Vessels at present employed on the Lakes of Canada, or building for that service

Tons	Guns	Ships	Compt.	Seamen	Marines
Lake Ontario					
655	20	<i>Montreal</i> (late <i>Wolfe</i>)	195	164	31
477	20	<i>Niagara</i> (" <i>Rl. George</i>)	175	155	20
288	14	<i>Star sloop</i> (" <i>Melville</i>)	95	80	15
192	14	<i>Charwell sloop</i> (" <i>Moir</i>)	86	71	15
234	12	<i>Magnet g.v.</i> (" <i>Sir Sidney Smith</i>)	75	60	15
121	10	<i>Netley g.v.</i> (" <i>Beresford</i>)	70	55	15
Lake Champlain					
—	12	<i>Linnet slp.</i> (late <i>Growler</i>)	80	65	15
		<i>Chub schr.</i>			
		<i>Finch do.</i>			
		Four Gun Bts. } No Marines			
Building					
43		A Gun Frigate		200	42
43		Do.		200	42
25		A Gun Frigate		120	42
25		Do.		120	42
18		Sloop	140	115	25
18		Do.	140	115	25
				1520	344

Copy, UkLPR, Adm. 1/4360, fol. 19.

MASTER COMMANDANT WILLIAM M. CRANE TO COMMODORE ISAAC CHAUNCEY

Copy)

US.S *Madison* Sacketts Harbour
Feby: 1st. 1814

Sir

Nothing of moment has occurred since I last wrote you. the bastions, platforms, guard and mess rooms of for [Fort] Tompkins are completed also the magazine and nearly all the pickets are up, it is a work of considerable strength, having seven heavy guns and one mortar in readiness, it has been entirely constructed by the seamen of the squadron, and without any expence, the block house has been altered and encreased in its armament— fort Chauncey, at the cross roads will prove highly important in case of an attack, it is already seven feet in height, I contemplate raising it seven more with solid massis of

logs, it is calculated to mount four 42 pdrs. carronades and two long 18 pdrs. on cavaliers,¹ it will command the main street and plain on both sides; fort Tompkins and the block house is garrisoned by about sixty seamen (exclusive of the Marines) under the command of Lt. Dudley of the Navy, this officer is also the superintending Engineer of fort Chauncey, this latter work may cost something as Lawyer Camp threatens to prosecute me for cutting timber off his land to defend his house and the Town—

a few days since I put in close confinement a fellow who calls himself Kenelm White, he was found loitering about the ship yard, and vessels, he affects to be desirous of entering the Navy as masters mate, states he made his escape from Niagara when it was taken, but gives a very imperfect and contradictory account of what carried him there. he pretends to have been acting Sailing Master of the *Argus* under Capt. Lawrence, and says Mr. Ludlow was the first Lieut. and that four or five years since (he does not recollect which) he cruised in her in the Bay of Biscay he recollects no other officers names than those mentioned pretends he wants either a masters mates birth or work as a rigger says he served with Commodore Truxtun when he engaged the *Vengeance* and that Comdr. Rodgers was the first Lieut. this story you will at once perceive is a lame fabrication, my opinion is that his object was to discover the number of vessels building length of Keel, defences of the place &c. &c. he has a dark villainous countenance, says he was born in Baltimore, I shall keep him confined until I hear from you— A respectable American in appearance was taken near Niagara falls (where he was keeping school) arrived last evening from Kingston, he made his escape on thursday last a few miles after they had left the Town on their way to Montreal where 100 prisoners were marching he saw two large vessels planked up but was so far off from the Ship Yard that he could not tell whether any more were building, he however was informed by several British officers and many of the inhabitants that two fifty Gun ships would be ready early in the spring beside a vessel equal to the *Pike*, all spoke confidently of their being able to obtain the command of the Lake, he arrived at York under guard in the night and saw outside the picketts nearest the town a large quantity of dressed timber but could not learn whether it was intended for a vessel, the country people said all their sleighs and sleds were numbered and they were ordered to hold them in readiness for an expedition, it was believed, Sacketts Harbour was the object this young mans name is Simeon Fuller a native of this state— Counsellor Bennet called on me to day and said he had learnt through a respectable and influential American in Canada, that the Enemy contemplate an attack on this place so soon as the ice will bear and that they are cutting a road across Long Island for the purpose I have no fears for the result if all do their duty—

Cannon daily arrives at Kingston. I have completed a new Code of signals. very respectfully I am yr. obt. St.

W. M. Crane

ALS, DNA, RG45, MC, 1814, Vol. 1, No. 39 (M147, Roll No. 5).

1. Cavaliers are raised platforms within a fort.

Ships or Galleys for Lake Champlain

During the winter of 1813–14, Master Commandant Thomas Macdonough anchored his vessels at the southern end of Lake Champlain on Otter Creek, below the town of Vergennes, Vermont. During the winter months, he faced the task of rebuilding his squadron after many setbacks in 1813, including the loss of two sloops, Growler and Eagle.

Workers at the shipyard at Vergennes undertook to carry out the secretary of the navy's instruction of December 1813: to build a sufficient force to gain naval superiority on Lake Champlain when the navigation opened. But what type of vessels would best serve that purpose? The British had a superiority in gunboats. Those vessels were quick to build, were highly maneuverable, and had proved their effectiveness in several raids on the shores of the lake in 1813. But ships alone carried sufficient firepower to face larger British vessels in combat. Even a steam warship, which would be the first in the nation, offered as a possibility.

SECRETARY OF THE NAVY JONES TO
MASTER COMMANDANT THOMAS MACDONOUGH

Thomas Macdonough Esqr.
Commanding the U S Naval force
on Lake Champlain.

Navy Department
January 28th. 1814.—

Sir

I have this day forwarded to you, to the care of John Bullus Esqr. Navy Agent New York, a rolled packet containing the draught and sectional plans showing the inboard works of the Galleys, the preparation for the building of which I ordered in my letter of the 7th. ultimo.¹— You will employ all possible means to expedite the building and equipping of those Vessels say fifteen in number which together with the force you already have, I trust will prove decisively superior to any that the enemy can oppose to you, even should he build the 24 Gun Ship you have mentioned and which is also mentioned as a fact in a letter received yesterday at the Treasury from the collector of the district of Champlain. My impressions are that the Galleys are better adapted to the waters and local circumstances of your Command than a heavy square rigged Vessel. As however your experience and knowledge of both will best enable you to determine that point, You are authorized to build either a vessel of such force as shall certainly exceed that of the enemy or the Galleys as you shall judge best adapted to the service. Or you may build a Ship and three or four of the Galleys. The object is to leave no doubt of your commanding the Lake and the waters connected, and that in due time.

You are therefore authorized to employ such means and workmen as shall render its accomplishment certain and you will make such requisitions upon the several Navy Agents for supplies of every kind, and for money for the recruiting service as in your judgement the public service may require, informing me of the places on which you may probably make your requisitions and they (the Agents) shall be instructed Accordingly.

The Galleys are liable to the Serious objection of requiring a great number of men, in proportion to their efficient force, but then they have the advantage of



Thomas Macdonough

attacking the enemy in calms and light winds, and in narrow waters to great advantage and of retreating into creeks, rivers and shoal waters from a superior foe.

If under all circumstances you shall deem the Ship, the most eligible, economy is decisively in favour of the Ship.

In the Battery of a Ship of 24 Guns is concentrated a very great force requiring but 180 to 200 men to serve at and manoeuvre the Vessel; whereas an equal Battery in Galleys will require three times that number of men.

The Ship will also cost but little more than the Galleys and has the advantage of good quarters in action, comfortable accommodations, and shelter from the inclemency of the weather peculiar to the Lakes.

If you determine upon building a Ship Messr. Browns of New York will build her in less time than any other builders.

In that case you had better proceed immediately to New York and make arrangements with them for that purpose.

Guns, small anchors & cables and sundry other stores, have long since been forwarded to Albany for your command, but no discrimination has been made between them, and the Stores forwarded for Sackett's Harbour at the same time Commodore Chauncey and yourself can readily settle this point, and you can order from New York whatever may be deficient.

You some time since expressed some uneasiness at the circumstance of the force under your command not being particularly noticed in the Presidents Message, which contained that notice of the services of the Squadrons on Lakes Ontario & Erie.² These Lakes were the great theatres of action, and by the magnitude and importance of the events which had taken place, had attracted and greatly excited the public attention and feeling.

In a brief communication to the Legislature the executive could not notice all whose services entitled them to public favor but I can assure you that the President entertains the highest confidence in your capacity zeal & patriotism and is perfectly satisfied with your Services.

You are authorized to open a rendezvous wherever you may think proper and to give a bounty of twenty dollars to Seamen and in proportion to others. You will probably succeed better to the eastward than in New York as the competition will be less. No time should be lost in the recruiting service, and Officers of address & judgement should be employed on that service. I am respectfully
Your Obt. Servt.

W. Jones.—

LB, DNA, RG45, CLS, 1814, pp. 94–96.

1. For William Jones's letter of 7 December 1813, see Dudley, *Naval War of 1812*, Vol. 2, p. 605.

2. For Macdonough's letter of 18 December 1813, see Dudley, *Naval War of 1812*, Vol. 2, pp. 605–6.

MASTER COMMANDANT THOMAS MACDONOUGH TO
SECRETARY OF THE NAVY JONES

Vergennes Feby. 7th. 1814—

Sir,

I have the honor to acknowledge the receipt of your orders of the 28th. January—they are received this day— I cannot but give a preference to Gallies for

these waters, the number of men required for them is a serious objection to them in preference to a ship, still, upon the whole their advantages are greater particularly in the north end of the lake where there are many reefs, shoal water, & calms and in this water tis most likely they will be called into action— The draughts and plans for those Gallies have not yet come on from New York. I am in daily expectation of them, and you may rest assured Sir, of my using every exertion to have them compleated by the opening of the lake—

I have sent three officers on the recruiting service, one at Boston one at Salem, Massa., the other at New York, should the officer at Salem not meet with early success he will open rendezvous at some more favourable place in that vicinity of which I shall immediately inform you— This increase of men and vessels will require an increase of officers, and I am very desirous to have the commanding officers those of experience, as it will require great care and attention to our men in those open vessels; I hope Sir, you will not deprive me of the services of Lt. Cassin—¹

I beg leave to observe that your orders heretofore have reached me by the way of Plattsburgh and have not been directed to this place which causes a longer delay— I have the honor to be very respectfully Sir, your most obt. Servt.

T. Macdonough

ALS, DNA, RG45, MC, 1814, Vol. 1, No. 48 (M147, Roll No. 5).

1. Lieutenant Stephen Cassin.

SECRETARY OF THE NAVY JONES TO
MASTER COMMANDANT THOMAS MACDONOUGH

Thomas Mc. Donough Esqr.
Commanding U.S. Naval Forces
on Lake Champlain.

Navy Department
Feby. 22nd. 1814.

Sir,

Mr. Brown,¹ Ship Builder of New York, will have joined you, some days since, from whom you will learn my anxious desire to complete the contemplated force on Lake Champlain.

He engaged, on the 14th. Inst., to launch a Ship of 24 Guns,² on Lake Champlain, in 60 days; presuming that the alleged fact of the enemy having a Ship of that Class in great forwardness, to be substantiated, I urged the propriety of building a Ship, without delay.

Yesterday Lieutenant Cassin arrived here, and informed me, that the enemy is not building a Ship, but some large Galleys. You will, therefore, consult with Mr. Brown, and vary your plan to meet the force and preparations of the enemy with decisive effect, and with such description of vessels as you may deem most efficient, and whose construction will admit of the greatest despatch.

Lt. Cassin says there is a New Boat, 120 feet long, near Vergennes, intended for a Steam Boat;³ if she will answer, you are authorized to purchase her for the use of the Navy. Can she not be armed with heavy Guns under deck? The Guns, on either side, to be opposite the space between the opposite ports, so that, as the Vessel is probably narrow, the Guns would not come in contact when roused in.

Two long 18 Pounders, and four 42 pd. Carronades, were landed from the *John Adams*; I have directed those, with their Carriages and implements complete, to be sent to you, without delay. I am, respectfully, Your Obt. Servant,

W. Jones.

LB, DNA, RG45, SNL, Vol. 11, p. 223 (M149, Roll No. 11).

1. Noah Brown.

2. The 26-gun sloop of war *Saratoga* was launched 11 April, only forty days after her keel was laid.

3. This ship would be purchased and completed as the U.S. schooner *Ticonderoga*.

MASTER COMMANDANT THOMAS MACDONOUGH TO
SECRETARY OF THE NAVY JONES

Vergennes March 7th 1814

Sir,

I have the honor to acknowledge receipt of your Letter of 22d Feby.— Mr. Brown having laid the keel of a Ship to carry 26 Guns, and nearly all her timber being on the ground, we have concluded to go on with building the Ship.— This, Sir, will still be agreeably to your wishes, as the enemy is certainly building a vessel to carry 20 Guns, or upwards.—¹ Persons from Canada say, the Enemy are building also four or five Gallies.—

A Man is now on his way to ascertain what their force is, together with what they are building, so, in a few days, I expect to be in possession of a correct statement thereof.—

I have commenced building Five Gallies, which Gallies, with the Ship, and the Force we already have, I calculate will be sufficient; but should it not be, the Steam Boat can then be purchased, finished & fitted, with eight or ten, long 24 pr. on circles amidships.—

I regret to inform you that the recruiting service is dull, ten men only have been shipped in Boston, and about thirty in New York.— The Officer ordered to Salem, & Marblehead, to recruit, was taken sick on the road; this caused some delay, and from the Officer afterwards ordered on that service, I have not heard, but presume, from what I learn that but few men are to be gotten there.— The inducements held out for men to enter the Army, is said to be the cause of the recruiting service of the Navy, being so dull, and I much fear when I get my vessels in other respects ready for service, there will be a great want of men.— Can an arrangement be made for the Comm'g. General to supply me with men for the Oars of the Gallies (this is the case with the Enemy's Gallies) leaving the Guns to be worked by Sailors?—

Commo: Chauncey informed me a few days ago in Albany, that he expected Officers & men from the vessels on the Atlantic for his command.— Should you make a transfer of Officers & men from the Atlantic to the Lakes, I beg you will direct some to this.—

The crew of the *Hornet* would well suit this ship

I perfectly well know that the Enemy have good Seamen & Officers on board their vessels.— I hold it correct to acquaint you that the men, with a few excep-

tions, sent to me last Summer are very indifferent, such as the command of this Lake, now of importance in our operations against Canada, should not be trusted to— I speak of good men for this Ship; as for the men for the Gallies, Soldiers, in my opinion, would answer in every respect as well as Sailors, and probably better in [torn]ing their small arms for close action.—

My requisition for Cannon, Powder &c has gone on to the Navy Agent in New York, and at present every thing appears in a fair way to operate on the opening of the Lake, with the exception of Officers & men.— I have the honor to be, very respectfully Sir Your most obt. st.

T. Macdonough

LS, DNA, RG45, MC, 1814, Vol. 1, No. 77 (M147, Roll No. 5).

1. The British were building a 16-gun brig at Isle aux Noix. This vessel was launched in April and named *Linnet*.

GOVERNOR DANIEL D. TOMPKINS TO SECRETARY OF THE NAVY JONES

Albany March 10th. 1814.

Sir,

The Steam boat Company of Lake Champlain, who have an exclusive privilege of navigating that Lake with boats propelled by steam, are building a boat at Vergennes of 125 feet keel & 24 feet beam of the strength of a vessel of 400 Tons at least. They have an Engine & machinery ready for her equipment at Vergennes. They are now about laying her deck timbers. The Company would, I believe, have no objection to dispose of her to Government in her present state with all the machinery at an expense of from 15,000 to 17,500 dollars. At [torn] She is capable of being equipped as a war vessel, with [torn] alterations, & to be so bulwarked, without impeding her [naviga]tion as to protect, vessel, machinery & men from the assaults of row gallies or other vessels. She may be made to carry 4 long 32 pounders & ten twelves or eighteens at an expense at the utmost of 37,500 Dollars, including the price abovementioned.

The importance of such a vessel on Lake Champlain is obvious; She can move when no other vessel can—is at all times capable of firing hot-shot—can tow gallies or other boats in a calm will require but one hundred men, at most, for the 14 guns above mentioned & to navigate her; whilst the same number of guns in row gallies, although they will cost less, will require 250 men at least. She will transport men & warlike stores & tow batteaux &c. with more certainty & less time than they can be otherwise conveyed down Lake Champlain.

At the conclusion of the war Gun brigs, row gallies & all other usual naval equipments will be worth little or nothing; whilst the Steam boat with her machinery will sell to great advantage for carrying passengers through the Lake, which has, in time of peace, been a lucrative business. This Company with this boat, will, I understand convey a right of running her under their exclusive privilege as well during the war as after the conclusion of peace.

I have reflected upon this subject maturely & the result is that in my opinion the Government ought not to omit having the use of that boat for public purposes & I therefore beg leave recommend that you authorize Commodore McDonough, or some other agent, to enquire into the propriety & usefulness

of the purchase and to equip the boat without delay if upon examination the ideas I have suggested are well founded. The old Steam boat on that Lake was by my advice employed under the War department for the transportation of troops &c. from Whitehall to Burlington & Plattsburgh in 1812 & 1813; & I refer you to that department for evidence of its great saving to the public in expenses of transportation. From the Steam boat now building the same advantages may be derived at the same time that She may be made a most formidable & efficient Vessel of war on that Lake. May I have the honor to hear from you on this Subject? With great regard I have the honor to be Sir, Your Obdt. Servt.

Daniel D. Tompkins

P.S. I forgot to mention that every thing is ready on the [torn] the new Steam Boat & that she can probably be completed at an earlier period than any other vessel, or naval force.

LS, NcD, U.S. Department of the Navy Papers.

Hardships of Lake Service

Service on the navy's distant stations, including the northern lakes, was hazardous, expensive, and unpopular. Small towns on these stations became boom towns as sailors, soldiers, officers, mechanics, shipwrights, and contractors moved in to stage the work of building and equipping a navy and fighting a war. Sanitation often lagged behind, resulting in disease and high rates of mortality. Living expenses were high, as both the necessities and the small luxuries of life had to be transported great distances, at great expense.

As the war dragged on into a third year, recruiting for these remote stations slowed, particularly when the prospect of prize money made service on a seagoing vessel more appealing than service on a remote station.

Early in 1814, President James Madison signed into law a bill authorizing a twenty-five percent increase in wages for service in these areas of hardship.

PETITION OF MASTER COMMANDANT WILLIAM M. CRANE AND OTHERS TO CONGRESS

Sacketts Harbour 8th. Feby. 1814—

The undersigned Officers of the United States Navy serving on the Lakes, beg leave respectfully to represent to the Honl. the Senate and House of Representatives of the U.S. the peculiar hardships to which themselves the Seamen and Marines are subjected.—

First, all the necessities of life have advanced near one hundred per Cent since the commencement of the present War, and on the Borders from a complication of causes which will readily present themselves to your consideration an additional heavy advance has taken place

Secondly Our inability to meet these additional expences is fully exposed— when we remind your Honl. body that on the formation of the Naval Establishment the pay &c was fixed as adequate only at that time to our support. Since that period the Wages of the Seamen have been curtailed and the value of the Ration reduced from 28 to 20 Cents.

Thirdly Altho' the established pay and notice of Government may be considered the recompence of the Officer, we nevertheless knowing the effect on the Seamen must call your attention to the limited opportunity they possess to obtain prize Money— A Contrast is unavoidably drawn between serving here and in an Atlantic cruizer and hence the difficulty in a great measure to obtain able Seamen for this Service again as we act immediately in Concert with the Army the difference of inducement held out to the Soldiers and the Seamen must be sensibly felt.

Fourthly

With the severities and unhealthiness of the climate many of your Honble. Body are personally acquainted— The favour which we hope to receive at your hands will on due consideration appear but a poor equivalent for the privations we suffer and the ill effects our Constitutions sustain—

Fifthly

We disclaim all intention of reflecting on or questioning the liberality of our Government and therefore beg leave to suggest to your Honble. Body that our Enemy receive their pay as Officers &c of the Royal Navy and an additional allowance from the Local Government— It would appear to us that our Establishment admits of the same distinction.

All which is respectfully submitted—

W. M. Crane Master Comdt.

Thos Brown Lt. Comdg.

Wm. Finch— Lieut.

J. Wragg— Do.

G^o: Pearce— Do.

Chs. Campbell— Surgeon.¹

Thomas B. Salter— Surgeon's Mt.²

William Lowe S M³

Henry Wells Lieutt.⁴

Francis H. Gregory do⁵

Charles W Skinner Lieut.⁶

Francis Mallaby S. Master⁷

Ja^s. A Dudley Lieut.

W^m. Mervine— Lieut.⁸

Joseph Stephens S. M.⁹

Sam^l. W. Adams— Lieut.

John Pettigrew Lt. Commanding

P. A. J. P. Jones, Lieut.¹⁰

Gwinn Harris— purser¹¹

Alex^r. P. Darragh Purser¹²

R^d. Smith Capt. Marines Comdg.

Lyman Kellogg Lt. Marine Corps—¹³

Leon^d. J. Boone Lieut. Marines¹⁴

W. W. Buchanan, M.D. Surgeon.

John D. McReynolds— Surgeon¹⁵

DS, DNA, RG46, Senate 13A-G8.

1. Charles Campbell, appointed surgeon 24 July 1813; resigned from the service on 14 July 1814 on account of poor health.

2. Thomas B. Salter, appointed surgeon's mate 24 July 1813; promoted to surgeon 22 May 1815.

3. William Lowe, appointed sailing master 19 November 1812; promoted to lieutenant 9 December 1814.

4. Henry Wells, appointed midshipman 20 June 1806; promoted to lieutenant 6 January 1813.

5. Francis H. Gregory, appointed midshipman 16 January 1809; commissioned a lieutenant 28 June 1814.

6. Charles W. Skinner, appointed midshipman 16 January 1809; appointed acting master 7 December 1811; promoted to lieutenant 24 July 1813.

7. Francis Mallaby, appointed sailing master 3 July 1813.

8. William Mervine, appointed midshipman 16 January 1809.

9. Joseph Stephens, appointed sailing master 3 May 1812.

10. P. A. J. P. Jones, appointed midshipman 16 January 1809; promoted to lieutenant 24 July 1813.

11. Gwinn Harris, appointed purser 25 April 1812.

12. Alexander P. Darragh, appointed purser 25 April 1812.

13. Lyman Kellogg, U.S.M.C., commissioned 2d lieutenant 3 July 1812; 1st lieutenant 18 June 1814.

14. Leonard J. Boone, U.S.M.C., commissioned 2d lieutenant 7 July 1812; 1st lieutenant 18 June 1814.

15. John D. McReynolds, appointed surgeon 30 October 1811.

COMMODORE ISAAC CHAUNCEY TO SECRETARY OF THE NAVY JONES

No. 14

U.S. Ship *General Pike*
Sacketts Harbor. 7 March. 1814

Sir

I have this moment been honored with Your Letter of the 25th. Ulto. together with a Copy of yours to Commodore Bainbridge.— I had already wrote to that Officer that I would hold myself individually responsible for any Money that he might authorize as bounty untill he could hear from the Department.

The increased Pay and bounty I think will insure Men for this Service and in fact they deserve it for they Suffer much beyond what any one can form an idea of unless they witness it—we seldom have less than 20 per Cent of our whole Number Sick and sometimes 30 per Cent.— within three days we have buried Seven Marines out of a Corps of 180 and have this day on the Sick report of the Same Corps 40—and our Seamen in nearly the Same proportion.—

You do not Say Sir whether the pay of the Men already in Service on these Lakes—is to be increased to the same as that to be allowed to Men who enter for the Lakes— if this Should not be the case it will create great dissatisfaction in the fleet here and cause many desertions— the term of Service of more than half of the Men on this Lake expires before the first of July— the Crew of the *General Pike* has nearly all volunteered to Stay as long as I remain on the Lake and I hope that the greater part of the others will re-enter particularly when they find their pay increased—

I will in a few days make you a Return of the number of Officers and Men on this Station, together with the number that will be required in addition I have the honor to be very Respectfully Sir Yr. Mo. Ob. St.

Isaac Chauncey

LS, DNA, RG45, CL, 1814, Vol. 2, No. 20 (M125, Roll No. 35).

SECRETARY OF THE NAVY JONES TO COMMODORE ISAAC CHAUNCEY

Commodore Isaac Chauncey
Commg. U.S. Naval Forces
on Lake Ontario S. Harbour.

Navy Department
April 18th. 1814.

Sir,

By an Act of Congress, passed this day, the "President is authorized to make an addition, not exceeding twenty five per cent, to the pay of the Officers, Petty Officers, Midshipmen, Seamen, and Marines, engaged in any service, the hardships or disadvantages of which, shall, in his judgement, render such an addition necessary."¹

The President, considering the Lake Service, as one of peculiar hardship and privation, directed an additional allowance of pay, to the Seamen and Ordinary Seamen, while employed on that service; which was communicated to you, in my letters of the 25th. February and 18th. March last.² He has, now, in conformity with the above mentioned Act, directed, that, from and after the date thereof, all the Commissioned, Warrant, and Petty Officers, while actually employed on the Lakes, be allowed twenty five per cent, in addition to the pay hitherto allowed; of which you will please to notify the Officers under your command. I am very respectfully Your Obedient Servant,

W. Jones.

LB, DNA, RG45, CLS, 1814, pp. 132-33.

1. The full text of "An Act Concerning the Pay of Officers, Seamen, and Marines, in the Navy of the United States" can be found in *Statutes at Large*, Vol. 3, pp. 136-37. This law was repealed 22 February 1817.

2. For Jones's letter of 18 March 1814, see pp. 409-10.

Gathering Intelligence on Shipbuilding

Building ships—larger, heavier, faster—became the key goal of the opposing navies on Lake Ontario in 1814. The rival commodores, Isaac Chauncey and Sir James L. Yeo, each knew that the side with the largest ships and the most guns, and the earliest to get out of port, would have the decided strategic advantage. The effort to sustain this shipbuilding race would increasingly cost both sides in men, money, and effort.

American shipwrights launched two large ships, Jefferson (18 guns) and Jones (18) in April; they completed two frigates, Superior (44) and Mohawk (32) in June. The British, too, had used the winter and spring months to strengthen their naval force. Two frigates, Princess Charlotte (42) and Prince Regent (56), and three large gunboats were constructed at Kingston. The British considered a proposal to send precut frames of ships from Royal Navy dockyards to Canada for assembly and completion. The idea proved immensely unpopular among the naval officers in Canada. They feared it would delay their own efforts to construct even larger warships locally. The Board of Admiralty, nonetheless, carried out the plan.

Because the shipment of naval stores and supplies was expensive and time-consuming for both sides, each sought accurate intelligence of what the opposing side was building and intended to build, as a measure of and guide to its own effort. In order to gain the

crucial knowledge of the enemy's shipbuilding plans and progress, the American and British navies employed spies and gathered information from local citizens, deserters, and prisoners of war.

COMMODORE SIR JAMES L. YEO, R.N., TO
ADMIRAL SIR JOHN B. WARREN, R.N.

Copy

His Majesty's Ship *Wolfe*
Kingston, Upper Canada
5 March 1814

Sir

A Deserter from the *Lady of the Lake*, American Schooner, came in Yesterday and has given us a Statement of the Enemy's Naval preparations for the ensuing Campaign, which, as it is Corroborated by the testimony of many other people who have been lately at Sackett's— I firmly believe to be correct.

I have the Honor to enclose for your information, a copy of the Deserter's deposition, and a Comparative Statement of the two Squadrons, as they are likely to meet in Battle.

You will regret with me, that the Enemy's preparations are so great, and Yet, so short a time back as the 20th. January, not a keel was laid at Sackett's, now they have 400 Shipwrights, and two of their new Ships nearly ready for launching; the Third will be ready by the 1st. of May, and a Forth, by the end of that Month.— The Roads from Albany, Boston, and New York, are covered with Ordnance, and Stores for these Vessels, and which, when added to their old Squadron, will be far Superior to any thing I can bring against them.

It therefore becomes my duty to acquaint You, that unless I receive immediate reinforcements of Guns (long 24, and 32 Pounders) Men, and Stores of every Description. Upper Canada, will, in my Opinion be lost to His Majesty. In the mean time I shall use every exertion to collect the Shipwrights in this Country and build (if possible) to be on something like equal terms with the Enemy, altho' their resources are so much nearer to them, than ours are to us, that, if they exert themselves, it will be impossible for us to get an Equal Force.—

You however may rely, that this Squadron will do all in it's power to Save the Upper Province, and to uphold the Honor of the British Flag, nor shall it be surrendered to the Enemy under any Circumstances whatever.

I have sent a Copy of the information herewith transmitted, to the Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty, and have solicited from their Lordships, immediate re-inforcements; and I have acquainted them, that without which, I cannot expect Success against the Enemy. I have the Honor to be with the highest respect Sir, Your Most Obedient Humble Servant

(signed) James Lucas Yeo.
Commodore.

Copy, UklPR, Adm. 1/506, fols. 292-93.

[Enclosure]

Copy of the Naval Part of a deposition, made by a Seaman, Deserter from the United State's Schooner the *Lady of the Lake*, in Sackett's Harbour.

4th March 1814.

"There are four Vessels building at Sackett's Harbour;— The First a Ship of 162 feet Keel, to carry 30 long 32 Pounders on the Main-Deck, and thirty two 42 Pounder Carronades on the Spar-Deck.— The Second the size of the *Pike*, to carry thirty long 24 Pdrs.; and two of 124 feet Keel; to carry twenty four long 24 Pounders each— The *Madison* is to have long 18 Pdrs.; and the *Oncida* Brig, to have 32 Pr. Carronades instead of 24's— The *Sylph* Schooner they have made a Brig, and she is to mount twenty two, long 12 Pounders.— They are also building another Schooner, the Size of the *Lady of the Lake*.—

Signed, James Lucas Yeo
Commodore

Copy, UklPR, Adm. 1/506, fol. 296.

COMMODORE ISAAC CHAUNCEY TO SECRETARY OF THE NAVY JONES

No. 15.

U.S. Ship *General Pike*
Sacketts Harbor 7th. March. 1814

Sir

A Deserter from the Enemy came in last Evening—he belonged to the 2d Battalion of Marines stationed at Prescott—a few Evenings since a Sailor came in direct from Kingston—these two Deserters together with many others give nearly the same account—these accounts are also corroborated by our own Spies—the substance of which is that the Enemy has about 2,000 regular Troops at Kingston and 1000 Seamen—they have two Ships caulked and decks laid—the materials for a third prepared, but not room to build her untill one of those the most forward is launched—the largest Ship on the Stocks is to be called the *Prince Regent* and is 154. feet Keel and 43 feet beam—to carry 30 long 24 pounders on Gun deck and 30–32 pounders Carronades on Spar Deck—the other Ship is to be called the *Princess Charlotte* and is 123 feet Keel—about 36 feet beam and is to carry 26 Long 18 pounders on Gun Deck—and 16 or 18 Carronades on Quarter Deck and Forecastle—these vessels are to be launched as soon as the Ice is gone—their Sails Rigging and Armament is all ready—the third vessel for which they are preparing Materials is to be 156. feet Keel 47. feet beam and is to carry long 32 pounders on Gun deck—the Guns are going up at this time and were taken from the lower gun deck of a 74 or 80 Gun Ship at Halifax—a Lieutenant and thirty Seamen have been sent to Lake Erie or Huron, supposed to fit some vessel— A number of Officers and Seamen expected from England or Halifax— In consequence of the information of the increased size of the Ships building at Kingston I have so altered the large Ship now building here that she will mount Sixty Guns, that is, with a tier of ports on the Spar Deck (the same as the Frigate *United States* had when first built) this alteration will increase the expense of building a mere trifle—the Sails and Rigging the same—her force double as I propose to mount 32-long 32 pdrs on Gun Deck and 30–32 pdrs Carronades on Spar Deck.— this alteration will I trust

meet with your approbation—this vessel is more than half planked and will be so far forward as to commence caulking next week—the other two are completely caulked and could be launched in a few days if the Ice was gone—

I am preparing Materials for two other vessels but neither of them can be commenced untill we launch these we have on the Stocks, as we have no other place to launch from— I hope that we shall not require more than one of them—

Will you have the goodness to direct what Names these vessels shall bear—if you had no objections I shall be gratified to name one of them— I have the honor to be very Respectfully Sir Yr. Mo. Ob. St

Isaac Chauncey

LS, DNA, RG45, CL, 1814, Vol. 2, No. 21 (M125, Roll No. 35).

GOVERNOR-GENERAL SIR GEORGE PREVOST TO
COMMODORE SIR JAMES L. YEO, R.N.

Quebec 14th March 1814

My Dear Sir

I have received your letter without a date containing the information you had just obtained from an American Seaman a Deserter from Sacketts Harbour of the extent of the Naval preparations at that Post

The unabated attention of every Department to meet & anticipate the Wants of the Dock Yard the enormous expence which has been incurred in complying with various requisitions made for articles essentially necessary to the equipment of the New Vessels and the prodigious difficulties which have been overcome in the Transport of proper and sufficient means for their Armament are sufficient evidence if any would be wanting of the extreme sensibility I entertain for every thing connected with the important service committed to you.

Sir Sidney Beckwith is instructed to meet your wishes respecting the removal of a proportion of Gun boats from the Coteau Du Lac to Kingston—

There is in circulation a comparative Statement of the American and British force in Lake Ontario which as regards the first is an exaggerated and the latter an unfair Diminution I should not mention this Circumstance to you but that the report comes from Kingston where as well as here it appears to me calculated to do much more mischief than good—giving publicity to such a document may depress us & must elevate the Enemy measures shall be taken to obtain from a Competent person correct information of what is going on at Sacketts harbour for your satisfaction as well as my own— I am assured that but a very small proportion of the heavy guns required by Commodore Chauncey can get beyond Oswego before the Navigation of the Lake is practicable— I have &c.

(Signed) George Prevost
Commr. of the Forces

Copy, CaOOA, British Military and Naval Records, RG8, I, "C" Ser., Vol. 1225, pp. 7–8.

COMMODORE ISAAC CHAUNCEY TO SECRETARY OF THE NAVY JONES

(No. 19)

U.S. Ship *General Pike*
Sacketts Harbour. 15th Mar. 1814

Sir

I have the honor of incloseing herewith three papers marked A. B & C.— the first marked A. is a view of the American Squadron as it is now fitting under the new arrangement— paper marked B. is a view of the British Squadron from the best sources of information that could be obtained and it is believed to be substantially correct— paper marked C. is an Exhibit of the number of Officers and Men on this Station at this time and also the number required to complete the Crews of the Vessels building.—

Altho' the allowance for Sick may appear large at first view Yet experience has taught us that it is not too great, for altho' our Sick List is sometimes reduced to 10. per cent, it more frequently increases to 25 Per Cent— the *Madison* for instance has never had since November last less than one third of her Crew Sick and in five Months she has lost by deaths, 41 Men— all new Men that arrive on the Station become sickly and in the Seasoning that they are obliged to undergo many of them die.

I will not presume to name any Commanders, that I wish sent to this Station, I will only observe that in the expected Contest, next Summer the Naval reputation of the Nation, as well as my own will be at stake—as it will be the first instance of an American Fleet being brought in contact with that of an Enemy's— We know moreover that the Enemy has some of his best Officers and Seamen to man his Fleet and has made great calculations upon the issue of the contest— we ought then certainly to meet him on equal terms by having our Vessels commanded by Officers of talents and experience and manned by Men who have already been disciplined— believing that You will do every thing for this Station which is right and proper, I have the honor to be very respectfully Sir Yr. Ob. St.

Isaac Chauncey

LS, DNA, RG45, CL, 1814, Vol. 2, No. 48 (M125, Roll No. 35).

JANUARY 1814-JUNE 1815

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[Enclosure]

(A.)
A View of the American Squadron on Lake Ontario as they are contemplated to be fitted under the new arrangement for the next Summer.—

Description of Vessels	Names	actual force	description of force	Remarks.
Ship	<i>General Pike</i>	28	Pdrs 24.— Long—	} These Vessels will be ready as soon as the Ice is gone—
Ship	<i>Madison.</i>	22	18— do.—	
Brig.	<i>Sylph.</i>	18	24. . Carronades	} These two Brigs are nearly ready to launch, which they will be as soon as the Ice moves and fitted immediately after.
Brig	<i>Oneida</i>	16.	12. Long. . .	
Brig.	—	22.	42. . Carronades	} This Ship is planked and it is expected that she will be ready to launch on or before the 10th. May, and can be fitted as soon after as her Guns arrive.—
Brig	—	22	42. . do.—	
Ship	—	60.	32. . 30. . Long 30. Carronades	} This Ship is not commenced but the materials are preparing and her keel will be layed as soon as one of the Brigs is launched, and it is expected she can be completed in forty days.—
Ship.	—	26.	24— Long. . .	
Pilot-Boat Built-Schooner	} <i>Lady of the Lake</i>	1. . . 215.	18— Long. . .	} This small Schooner is kept as a dispatch Boat & as a repeater in time of action

U.S. Ship *General Pike*
Sacketts Harbor. 15 Mar 1814

Isaac Chauncey

DS, DNA, RG45, Subject File, Box 354 [OD], Folder 18, Lists of British and American Forces on Lake Ontario, 1814.

[Enclosure]

(B)

A View of the British Naval Force on Lake Ontario, including Two Ships, that are building as derived from various sources, and believed to be substantially correct.—

Description of Vessels	Names	Force in Guns	Description of Guns	Remarks.
Ship	<i>Wolfe</i>	27	Pdrs. 68-32-24-18	These Vessels are all fitted and ready for Service as soon as the Lake opens— they have all a proportion of Long Guns.—
Ship	<i>Royal George</i>	24	68-32-18-	
Brig	<i>Metville</i>	18	32-24-18-	
Brig	<i>Earl Moira</i>	18	32-& 18-	
Schooner	<i>Sir Sidney Smith</i>	14	18 & 12-	
Schooner	<i>Beresford</i>	14	12 & 9-	
Ship	<i>Prince Regent</i>	60	Long Carrons. 24 & 32	These two Ships will be ready to launch in all April— the Rigging Sails and Armament is believed to be ready for them.—
Ship	<i>Princess Charlotte</i>	44 219	Long Carrons. 18 & 32	
Ship	—	—	—	This Ship is barely commenced and is supposed to be intended for two tier of Guns—her keel is 156 feet & breadth of beam 47 feet.

Besides the above the Enemy are building Four small Schooners, which are believed to be intended for Gun Boats to mount from one to two Long Guns— they have about 1000 Seamen at Kingston and more on the way.—

D, DNA, RG45, Subject File, Box 354 [OD], Folder 18, Lists of British and American Forces on Lake Ontario, 1814.

SECRETARY OF THE NAVY JONES TO COMMODORE ISAAC CHAUNCEY

Commodore Isaac Chauncey
Commanding U.S. Naval Forces
on the Lakes.

Navy Department
March 18th. 1814

Sir

Your Nos. 12, 14, & 15 have been received. The rate of pay, authorized to be allowed to the Men, who may be recruited for the Special Service of the Lakes, according to the tenor of my letter to Commodore Bainbridge, (copy of which you have received,) you will understand to apply, as well to the men now in service on the Lakes, as to those who may be thereafter recruited; and that the increase of pay will commence from the day on which you received that order.

The pay of the Non-commissioned Officers, Musicians, and Privates of the Marine Corps, as well those now in service, as those who may be recruited, is augmented to that which is allowed to the Infantry of the Army, to take place on the 14th. current.— This information it will be well to communicate to those now under your Command.

There is now, before Congress, a Bill for the augmentation of the Marine Corps, about 800 Officers and Men; and as a Bounty of 50 Dollars is authorized, I have no doubt of the prompt success of the Recruiting Service; which will enable me to order to your command a handsome Detachment.

You will, also, observe, that the price of the Navy ration, for the current year, is estimated at 25 cents, which will be allowed from the 1st. day of January.

The Naval Committee of the House of Representatives, has, also, under consideration, an Estimate, which was submitted by this Department, for the increase of the Pay of the Commissioned, Warrant, and petty Officers, while actually serving on the Lakes; and the best disposition appears to prevail on that subject.

The actual force, and increased preparations of the enemy at Kingston, as detailed in your No. 15,¹ demonstrate the necessity and propriety of the early measures, and subsequent modifications, which have been adopted to meet and frustrate his designs. The alteration you have made in the large Ship is approved. I shall send on as many heavy Carronades as can be commanded for that service; the two smaller vessels are abundantly competent to carry 42 pd. Carronades.

I regret that the furnaces are incompetent to provide, in due time, all that is required.

The Agent at New York, has employed all the Furnaces, within a reasonable distance, to cast the Kentledge and Shot you have required. Can the quantity of the former be diminished, and stone, in any degree, be substituted; as the space for provisions and Stores is small, and none required for Water? Can Shot, Kentledge, or other Stores, from the prizes at Erie, or Put in Bay, be got down, by any reasonable means, in due time? I hope you will prevail upon the Military Commander, to let you have a part of the Shot at Onandago, or at Rome Furnaces. Has the Military Department no heavy Ordnance, in that vicinity, which could possibly be spared on an emergency so great?

The transportation is really a most serious obstacle; and in the existing state of the roads, absolutely impracticable for heavy cannon.

There are no Foundries North of the Chesapeake;— the stock of Ordnance we had in New York is exhausted; and to send heavy Ordnance from Philadelphia, Baltimore, and this place, is an Herculean task. There are 370 pieces of heavy cannon mounted on the several Batteries at and near New York, a part of which can surely be spared without hazard; and I shall apply to the Secretary of War for that purpose, as the state of the roads, through Delaware and Jersey, is horrible. I have directed Mr. Anderson to superintend and direct the transportation, and have given to him the necessary authority to facilitate and insure the accomplishment of that object.

You will name the Ships as you please; I should prefer Geographical names, or those of distinguished events, Statesmen, or Heros, whose character has the seal of immortality; reserving, however, the name of WASHINGTON for the first Ship of the Line, which shall be launched in the United States. I am, very respectfully, Your Obedient Servt.

W. Jones.

LB, DNA, RG45, CLS, 1814, pp. 112–14.

1. See pp. 404–5 for Chauncey's letter of 7 March 1814.

COMMODORE ISAAC CHAUNCEY TO SECRETARY OF THE NAVY JONES

(No. 22)

U.S. Ship *General Pike*
Sacketts Harbor 26th Mar. 1814

Sir

A Deserter from the Enemy came in the day before yesterday— he is a Seaman who left Kingston on Sunday last (20th) and belonged to the "*Prince Regent*" and came up with the last draft of Seamen under Captain Popham¹ and says that they were all picked Men but are very much dissatisfied with the Lake Service owing to the Short allowance of Provisions, that article being very Scarce in Canada— that the Men will disert whenever opportunities offer— that two left Kingston in Company with him but got alarmed and returned.—

This man corroborated what I have learnt from other Sources—to wit—that the Enemy are exerting every power they possess to get their vessels ready to launch the moment the ice breaks up— that the armament, Rigging and Sails are all ready to go on board, as soon as the Vessels are in the Water— that Sir James' avowed object is to attempt the destruction of the large Vessel building here— to take Oswego and Genessee and Supply themselves with Provisions from our Side of the Lake— that they have the most accurate information of our force and movements and even know the Caliber of the Guns coming from New York.— The force of the two Ships, that are in the greatest forwardness at Kingston are much the same as that I have already informed you—with this exception that both Ships are to mount, long 24 pounders on Gun Deck and the largest Ship 12–68 pounders it is expected that they will be on the Lake by the 25th. April the Enemy is also building 4 Gun Boats at Kingston, two of them with furnaces to heat Shot—and a Schooner at Presque [Isle] A detachment of Thirty Seamen under a Lieutenant left Kingston for Lake Huron Some time Since and another detachment of 70. or 80, were to follow about the last of this

month— it was understood that these Men were Sent up to man a Brig and Schooner building on Lake Huron— a number of Marines have arrived at Kingston lately and one or two Companies of Rocket Men—

The Enemy are building a third Ship which I mentioned when I wrote last upon this Subject— that he was not able to lay her Keel untill one of his others was launched— I find by the last Deserter that She has not only got her Keel laid but her floors acrossed and is contemplated to be finished about the first of August— She is to be a two Decker, and a very heavy Ship.—

I have got all our fleet that are in the Water rigged and fitted for Service— the two Brigs are ready to launch and the Rigging is fitting— the large Ship will be ready in the early part of May— and the materials for the fourth Vessel are preparing, which I hope to build and launch by the time the large Ship is ready— I shall also be obliged to fit and man some of our Schooners to oppose the Enemy's Gun-Boats— these kind of Craft always require more Men in proportion to the Service they render, than any other force.—

My last accounts from the recruiting Officers are not encouraging and from present appearances, I see but little prospect of manning one of the Brigs in time from the Rendezvous. If you should determine to draft from any of the vessels on the Atlantic—the Officers and Men cannot get here too soon for the Roads will soon be almost impassable and the two Brigs will be ready for their Crews the moment they are launched which may take place in Ten days if the Ice breaks.— We also shall soon require the Crew for the large Ship, as they could even now be very usefully employed.— I have the honor to be very respectfully Sir, Yr. mo. Ob. St.

Isaac Chauncey

LS, DNA, RG45, CL, 1814, Vol. 2, No. 76 (M125, Roll No. 35).

1. Commander Stephen Popham, R.N.

COMMODORE ISAAC CHAUNCEY TO SECRETARY OF THE NAVY JONES

(No. 25)

U.S. Ship *General Pike*
Sacketts Harbor 30 Mar. 1814

Sir/

This Morning my Agent from Kingston called on me— he left Kingston on the 21st. inst. and met the next day about 400 Seamen and nearly 500 Marines on their way to Kingston and supposes they all arrived on or before the 24th. the 103 Regmt. arrived at Kingston on the 20th. and relieved the Glengary and 104 Regmt. which has marched for York and Fort George and he understood that General Rial¹ had gone with a detachment to Malden— By a late Law of the Upper Province every 14th man of the Militia has been drafted and are to do duty one Year and to be officered with Officers from the line (or regular Army)— Every third man of the remainder of the Militia is also drafted to serve three Months, and to be officered in the usual way— he supposes that the force at and above York, about 3000 including the incorporated Militia— the enemy are building two Vessels on Lake Huron and makeing great exertions to supply Machelimackenac— that he saw a Letter from a Lady, residing

at that post to her relation in Kingston, saying that they were in a starveing condition—Salt one dollar a pint that if supplies did not arrive before the first of May the Post would be abandoned.— The two Ships at Kingston are ready to launch and it is the intention of the Enemy to fit them and show himself upon the Lake immediately and if opportunities offer to depredate upon our side of the Lake it is also his intention to make a desperate effort at this place— the Officers have been heard to express themselves that if they could destroy the large Ship which we are building and the Stores deposited here that they should have no more trouble during the War— The third Ship building at Kingston has been increased from her first dimentions—her keel is now 174 feet and 50 feet beam and to have two Gun Decks, below the Spar Deck— She is to be built of Pine Elm and Cedar and in the most expeditious manner— The Carpenter has assured the Commodore that she shall be in the Water, before the first of July— between 130 & 150 Cannon have arrived at Kingston in the course of the Winter and principally large Calibers— large Quantities of Rocketts, Shells, Carcases &c. &c. have also arrived together with every Species of Naval and Military Stores.—

You perceive, Sir, by this statement (which I believe to be correct) that the Enemy is bringing every resource he possesses into opperation to obtain and if possible keep the command of this Lake, and it really appears to me that it is going to be more a trial of Skill in building than in fair and honorable fighting—and unless we can get our Guns and Men by the first of May we shall be mortified with the Enemy's parading up and down the Lake uninterruptedly, and boasting of his having taken some defenceless Village of three or four houses.—

Could not the whole Armament of the *Hornet* be transported across the Country to Albany with less difficulty and expence than Guns could be procured else where—and as there is but little prospect of the Vessels at New London being able to get to Sea could not a part of the Officers and Men from that Squadron be sent here? and also from one of the Sloops of War in Baltimore or the *Constellation* at Norfolk? viewing the early command of this Lake as all important, I am persuaded that you will afford to me all the means within your power and consistent with the other great objects of the Nation and the Department over which you preside— I shall therefore rest easy as to men and Guns and use every effort to have the vessels ready to receive them— I shall prepare materials to build a Ship to meet the one building at Kingston—but I sincerely hope that some effort may be made to take Kingston and destroy that deposit of Stores and supercede the necessity of increaseing our Naval force on the Lakes.— It really appears strange that the whole Military force of the Nation aided with the Naval force here cannot take that small place— if nothing else could be done it appears to me that our Army might take up a position at or above Prescott and establish themselves there by which they would cut the Enemy's line of Communication and of course cut off all his supplies from below and distress him much for provisions, if not military supplies— it would also oblige the Enemy to come and fight our Army in their own position, instead of our being obliged to seek him in his strong holds— I have no pretensions to military Science—I merely suggest these ideas, thinking that in abler hands they may be improved upon or perhaps elicit some other

idea, which might be serviceable to our Country I have the honor to be with great respect and consideration Sir, Yr. Mo. Ob. St.

Isaac Chauncey

LS, PHi, Uselma Clark Smith Collection, William Jones Papers.

1. Major General Phineas Riall, British army.

COMMODORE ISAAC CHAUNCEY TO SECRETARY OF THE NAVY JONES

private

Sackets Harbor 30th. March 1814

Sir/

The Agent allude'd to in my letter No. 25 is a Doctor Carlisle who lives at Kingston has considerable property and an extensive practice is an american and well disposed towards this country he collects information and meets an agent employed on this side at particular places fixed upon—but seldom twice at the same place the reason of his coming over now was that he went to the place appointed but the agent on this side being sick and not meeting him there—he thought the information which he had to communicate of sufficient importance to come over himself and communicate it to me in person the reason that I did not mention his name in my official letter was that he is extremely anxious to have his name concealed lest it might be mentioned and the Enemy by some means become suspicious of him—

The above reasons I trust will be a sufficient apology for my troubling you with this private letter of explanation I have the honor to be Very Respectfully Sir your Most Obt. H. St.

Isaac Chauncey

ALS, PHi, Uselma Clark Smith Collection, William Jones Papers.

COMMISSARY GENERAL WILLIAM H. ROBINSON AND OTHERS TO
GOVERNOR-GENERAL SIR GEORGE PREVOST

Montreal 6th April 1814

We the Undersigned Officers having this day met agreeably to the desire of the Commander of the Forces, and having Attentively perused the Several Despatches with their Enclosures, which His Excellency has done us the honor to refer for our Consideration and Opinion, as relates to the intention of His Majesty's Government to send to this Country as early as possible in the present Year the Frames for the Construction of 2–32 Gun Frigates and 2 Brigs, to Carry each 20 Guns, for the Service of the Lakes in the Canadas;— Beg leave most respectfully to Report upon the Several Points which, upon a reference to the Plans or drafts of the Vessels proposed, have suggested themselves to us as to the practicability of carrying into effect the objects of Government in this respect;—

Having in view the several Arrangements on Lake Ontario and it being Understood that the two Vessels laid down in the last Autumn at Kingston, are in that state of forwardness that they will be launched in a few days

the Guns and Stores Complete for the Equipment of these Vessels have already been conveyed to the Spot where they are to be launched;—

a Third Vessel of a large class has been recently laid down at Kingston and is supposed to be now in that state of forwardness that, she may be launched in the Month of July next— Arrangements having been made for providing the Guns and Stores for this Vessel and it is expected that the Equipment will be complete to render her useful to the Service on Lake Ontario during the ensuing Summer;— the Conveyance required for the Guns and Stores of this last Vessel with the Various other supplies absolutely necessary to be forwarded from this Province for the existence of the Army and Navy in Upper Canada will engage and Occupy the whole of the Means of Transport by Batteaux or otherwise from Montreal to Kingston, which it will be possible to provide for the summer of 1814;

We are therefore of opinion that any impediments whatever which may be thrown in the way of the above Service, would be attended generally with Serious injurious Consequences to the Public, and in particular would retard the completion of the third Ship which is intended and Understood to be constructing of that Force; as equivalent and better adapted to the great object of obtaining the decided superiority over the Enemy on Lake Ontario, than the two Frigates if their Materials were this Moment at Kingston;

There being no Timber Merchants in Canada who keep any supply of that Article on hand, the Timber and Scantling required to be provided in Canada for the Completion of the two Frigates and two Brigs being of considerable Magnitude and not to be procured but from the Trees now Standing in the Woods would tend fatally to delay the present exertions in the Dock Yard at Kingston, And We are of Opinion that no Persons Could be found to Contract for the supply of that Timber at this unfavorable Season

Nor could the usual mode of obtaining Supplies be resorted to by raising a Competition, as it would give publicity to that which it is desirable to Conceal:

The Timber and Scantling for the Vessels building at Kingston was procured during the Winter, at which Season only it is possible to draw it from the Woods, or to procure hands for this Service—the Inhabitants who Attend to this business being in Summer engaged at their Agricultural Pursuits:—

It is recommended that no Attempt may be made for the Conveyance of the Frames of either the Frigates or Brigs to Kingston during the Approaching Season;—

We are now led to the Serious Consideration of the practicability of Conveying at any time during the Summer, the immense Timbers which Compose the Frames of the Frigates, as described in the Papers now before us, even if the whole Transport Accommodation could be allotted for that object, which never can be the Case;— The Batteaux at present in use are not calculated for the Service.

Flat Boats of a new description and larger in size must be provided and it is a matter of doubt whether, from the Weight they must carry, they could pass the Rapids of the River which impede the Water Communication with Kingston— It is also to be observed that in the Water Communication

with Upper Canada the Batteaux pass from Cornwall to Prescott within Musket Shot of the Enemy's Shore, whose Attention would naturally be excited by the Unusual Accumulation of Boats and Men for this extraordinary exertion, and the Americans not only possess the Means of obtaining the best information as to the object, but the ability of creating such interruptions as would prevent the possibility of Conducting this Service:—

We are however of Opinion that it may be possible to transport by Land to Kingston during a Winter Season, the Timbers, Guns and Stores for one Frigate should the Weather from the favorable State of the Snow and Frost be equal to the last, but the inconvenience and enormous expense that would Attend the conveyance of the Timber, by Land Carriage, and the time it must necessar[ily] employ, would exceed beyond all Comparison, what would be necessary to procure it from the Forests near the Naval Depôt at Kingston, and of equal good quality for the Lake Service;— Altho' from the Circumstances Stated it is our firm belief that neither of the Frigates or Brigs expected from England, can be rendered available to the Service of Lake Ontario during the Approaching Campaign, We recommend that a Communication made to Commodore Sir James Yeo, on [*the*] subject, and also to Captain Pring,¹ the Senior Officer of the Naval Establishment on the Richelieu who may probably be of Opinion that the Brigs might be made useful on Lake Champlain, if their draft of Water will admit of it, one of which with her Guns and Stores We are disposed to think may be conveyed to Isle Aux Noix during the next Summer by the Richelieu, partly by Batteaux, and about 12 Miles Land Carriage:—

In Submitting to His Excellency's Consideration these Suggestions, We beg leave to state that We have had reference to the best information on professional points that could be obtained, and that coupled with our own experience of the difficulty of Conveyance to Upper Canada We have been guided in forming our opinion upon the Several objects under Consideration:—

The Whole of which is respectfully submitted

W H Robinson
Comy Genl.
J. W. Clarke
acting Deputy. Commy. Genl.
Noah Freer
Military Secretary

Copy, CaOOA, British Military and Naval Records, RG8, I, "C" Ser., Vol. 732, pp. 97–103.

1. Commander Daniel Pring, R.N.

COMMODORE ISAAC CHAUNCEY TO SECRETARY OF THE NAVY JONES

(No. 34)

U.S. Ship *General Pike*
Sacketts Harbor. 7th. April 1814

Sir

The two Brigs have been ready to launch for the last Ten days, but the ice is still fast in the Bay altho' beginning to break in the Harbor— we have cut it away Yes-

terday and to day so as to enable us to launch one of the Brigs which I have called the "Jefferson" the other we shall launch as soon as the Ice is sufficiently clear— the large Ship will be ready to launch early in May— we shall lay the keel for a Ship as large as the *General Pike* on the blocks of the "Jefferson" immediately and which I hope to launch in forty five days.— from present appearances all our Vessels will be ready long before the Guns for them can arrive— my last accounts from Schinectady, mention that most of the heavy Guns which left New York early in February are still on the Road below Albany— it is much to be regretted that we did not leave them in New York to have come up in the first Sloops when the River broke up— they would now have been in Schenectady ready to have started in the first boats— we must now however make the best of it and redouble our exertions to get them here as soon as possible— I have directed Mr. Anderson to double man the boats and work night and day and you may be assured Sir, that every exertion in my power shall be used to be ready with the fleet as soon as possible I have the honor to be very respectfully Sir Yr. mo. ob. St.

Isaac Chauncey

LS, DNA, RG45, CL, 1814, Vol. 2, No. 128 (M125, Roll No. 35).

COMMODORE SIR JAMES L. YEO, R.N., TO
GOVERNOR-GENERAL SIR GEORGE PREVOST

His Majesty's Ship *Prince Regent*,
Kingston, 22nd. April 1814

Sir,

I have the honor to acknowledge the receipt of your Excellency's letter of the 6th. instant, together with the Copies and extracts of letters from the Secretary of State, making known the intentions of His Majesty's Government to convey immediately to this Country the frames of two Fir 32 Gun Frigates, and two Brigs, each to carry 20 Guns, for the Service of the Lakes. The plans of the Vessels proposed, with the schemes of scantling for building them, and the lists of timber to be provided in this Country, have also come to hand.

I perfectly agree with Your Excellency that the impediments to the Scheme are numerous, and very difficult to be overcome, if not (under existing circumstances) wholly impracticable. The timber to be provided here for their completion can be procured but the time that would elapse ere the frames could be transported, considering the immense Supplies Your Excellency must also send for the Subsistence of the Troops and Seamen, would be so long; that the third Ship, equal in force to three or four of Such frigates, would be built, equipt and on the Lake, ere the frames of the Fir Ships could be set up. That the Enemy would Suffer such immense convoys to pass unmolested, cannot be supposed and the large escorts which must consequently accompany them would weaken Your Excellency's force in those points where they might be more essentially useful. But what in my opinion, should chiefly influence Your Excellency's decision respecting them is, that the strength of the third Ship now building is Such as to give us a reasonable hope that their being Sent up is even unnecessary.

I wish much one of the Brigs could be made Serviceable on Lake Champlain; though I fear, that from their drawing 15 feet water, there is little hope of it. I have directed Captain Pring to ascertain with precision if a Vessel of that draft can navigate there in Safety, and his report shall be communicated to Your Excellency.

With respect to transporting the frames in the Winter Season, I see equal objections arise: for, should the War continue, the additional Ordnance and Iron Work, which we cannot do without, would employ all the Sleighs, horses and Oxen during the Season.— And on the whole, I am fully of opinion that building here is more beneficial to the public Service, not to say a word of the enormous expense that will be saved thereby. I have the honor to be, Sir, Your Excellency's Most Obedient humble Servant

James Lucas Yeo
Commodore

LS, CaOOA, British Military and Naval Records, RG8, I, "C" Ser., Vol. 732, pp. 139–41.

American Plans for an Expedition to Lake Huron

The American victory in the Battle of Lake Erie in September 1813 gave the Americans a chance to recapture Michilimackinac, to establish control in the old northwest territories of Michigan and Indiana, and to gain the loyalty and support of the native tribes in those territories.

Commodore Isaac Chauncey's order to Master Commandant Jesse D. Elliott offers a concise view of American goals at the opening of the campaign in 1814. At about the same time, however, Secretary of the Navy Jones determined to make Lake Erie a separate command under Captain Arthur Sinclair so that Chauncey could focus his attention on the campaign on Lake Ontario. Commander Elliott would be transferred to Lake Ontario as soon as Captain Sinclair arrived to take over the command in April.

Secretary Jones's detailed instructions to Captain Sinclair encapsulate the government's intentions for the upper Great Lakes.

COMMODORE ISAAC CHAUNCEY TO MASTER COMMANDANT JESSE D. ELLIOTT

Captain Jesse D. Elliott
Commg. Nav. Off.
at Erie, Pennsylv.

U.S. Ship *General Pike*
Sacketts Harbor 1 Apl. 1814

Sir

It is the command of the Honorable the Secretary of the Navy that such parts of the Squadron on Lake Erie as may be deemed necessary shall proceed into Lake Huron as soon as the Ice will permit for the purpose of reducing the Posts of the Enemy on that Lake— you will therefore prepare the *Niagara* and *Lawrence* with such of the other Vessels as you may deem necessary to accomplish this object (taking care to select those drawing the least Water) you will

proceed with this force to "Put in Bay" and take the two Ships from that place to Detroit and moor them under the protection of that Garrison; leaving a Petty Officer and one Man on board as Ship-keepers—exclusive of a guard of Soldiers which I presume the Commanding Officer at that Post will furnish.—

I have applied to the Secretary at War for a detachment of 6 or 700 Men under the command of a judicious Officer to accompany you into Lake Huron. I presume that the Secretary will instruct the Commanding General at Detroit to furnish the Men which you will receive on board and proceed with all possible expedition to Michilimachinac make your arrangements land and take the Fort if it can be done without too great a Sacrifice— if you succeed leave a Garrison and proceed with the Fleet and remainder of the Troops and reduce St. Josephs and any other posts or place that you hear of— If Machidoch (the place where the Enemy is building two vessels) could be destroyed it would be of very great importance but it ought to be approached with great caution as I understand that it is some distance up a River and no doubt well guarded— you will therefore inform yourself well upon every point before you put too much at hazard— after accomplishing these objects upon Lake Huron you will cooperate with the Army upon any enterprize where the Enemy can be annoyed.

There is a depot of Stores at Long Point if that could be destroyed it would distress the Enemy and be honorable to those who atchieved the enterprize. I should recommend you to open a correspondence immediately with General Harrison or the Officer commanding the North Western Army in order to ascertain his views of the approaching Campaign in that Quarter so that you may make your arrangements to act together— You ought to take Six weeks provisions from Detroit and enter Lake Huron the moment that the Ice will allow you to pass Lake St. Clair, by which you will probably appear before Michilimachinac before the Enemy can throw any supplies or reinforcements into that Garrison which will make it an easy conquest. you will keep me regularly informed of all your movements and transactions and send copies of all your communications to the Navy Department.

If the repairs of the *Lawrence* should not be completed, I should recommend you not to be detained a moment for her as your force will be amply sufficient without her and some of your small vessels you had better make mere transports of and concentrate your best Men on board of the *Niagara*— I should also recommend you to take about 10 or 12 of the heaviest of the Long Guns from the *Detroit* and mount them on board of the *Niagara* as battering Guns— if in your judgement any enterprize into Lake Michigan would be attended with beneficial consequences you are at liberty to send one or more vessels under a discreet Officer upon that Service.

Having the most perfect reliance upon your zeal intrepidity and talents I calculate much upon the honorable and brilliant issue to your enterprize into Lake Huron I have the honor to be very Respectfully, Sir Yr. Mo. Ob St

I. C.—

LB, NH*i*, Isaac Chauncey Letter Books (BV Chauncey, Isaac).

COMMODORE ISAAC CHAUNCEY TO SECRETARY OF THE NAVY JONES

No. 30

U.S. Ship *General Pike*
Sacketts Harbor. 1st. April 1814

Sir

I have been this day honored with your Letter of the 20th. and two of the 21st. Ulto.

I have already instructed Captain Elliott to be in a perfect state of preparation to push onto Lake Huron the moment that he can get through the Strait— I have this day wrote him more detailed instructions (a Copy of which is inclosed)— if the instructions to Captain Elliott do not meet the views of the Department, will you be pleased to make such additions or alterations as you may deem proper— An enterprize to Long-Point, would be desirable if it would not occupy too much time, but I am apprehensive that would be the case and possibly loose us the main object of our visit into Lake Huron which I think ought to be entered as early as the Ice will permit— I have wrote this day to the Honorable the Secretary at War asking for a detachment of Troops to accompany Captain Elliott, for the reduction of Michilimackinac, as well to assist in the reduction as to garrison it, if taken— your influence with the Secretary would ensure the Men— Captain Elliott complains much of the want of Officers, and as he has a number under arrest would it not be adviseable for the Department to reprimand the Delinquents and order them to duty? for it will be inconvenient to bring them to trial at this time.—

The valuation of the prizes taken on Lake Erie has been forwarded to the Department— The probable expence of repairs was not deducted as the gentlemen who made the appraisement had no documents or facts in their possession on which they could form an opinion of the extent of injury the vessels received in action consequently, could form no idea of the repairs which they would require— I have the honor to be with great respect Sir Yr. mo. Ob. St.

Isaac Chauncey

LS, DNA, RG45, CL, 1814, Vol. 2, No. 107 (M125, Roll No. 35).

SECRETARY OF THE NAVY JONES TO CAPTAIN ARTHUR SINCLAIR

Arthur Sinclair Esqr.
Captain U.S. Navy

Navy Department
April 7th. 1814.

Sir,

The magnitude and importance of the force preparing on Lake Ontario, absorbing the whole attention of the Commander of the U.S. Naval Forces on the Lakes; and the intercourse between Lake Ontario and the Upper Lakes, being cut off by the enemy at Niagara, it is intended to render the command of the Upper Lakes *distinct* from that of Lake Ontario.

The enemy, it is understood, is making efforts to create a force on Lake Huron; and the moment is at hand, when our Squadron on Lake Erie, must be

actively employed, not only in keeping secure possession of that Lake, but a part of the Squadron must immediately proceed into Lake Huron, in order to rout the enemy, retake Michillimackinac, take St. Josephs, and thus secure the entire command of the Upper Lakes.

It is for these important objects that your services are in requisition; and, in order that not a moment may be lost, this goes by an Express.

With the least possible delay, after the receipt of this Order, you will repair to this Department, where your instructions for the command of the United States' Squadron on the Upper Lakes, will be prepared, so that you may proceed, directly, on to Erie by the Stage to Pittsburg. I am, very respectfully Your Obedient Servant

W. Jones.

LB, DNA, RG45, CLS, 1814, pp. 120-21.

SECRETARY OF THE NAVY JONES TO CAPTAIN ARTHUR SINCLAIR

Arthur Sinclair Esqr.
Captain U.S. Navy
Present.

Navy Department
April 15th. 1814.

Sir,

You are invested with the command of the U. States' Squadron on Lake Erie, to which you will repair with the least possible delay; and, after a full investigation of the state and condition of that force, the result of which you will minutely report to this Department, you will take immediate measures to complete whatever you may find deficient, and prepare for the prompt and efficient execution of these, and such further instructions, as time and circumstances may render expedient.



Original American Squadron,
now at Erie.

The *Ariel* & *Trippe* are supposed
to have been destroyed by the
Enemy near Buffalo.

At Put in Bay, dismasted.

At Erie.

On shore near Buffalo; supposed
to have been burnt by the
enemy; but no Official Account.
Materials were stored
near Buffalo.

The Squadron consists of the following vessels; viz.

1	The <i>Lawrence</i>	Brig	20	Guns 32 pd. Carronades.
2	<i>Niagara</i>	Do.	20	" "
3	<i>Caledonia</i>	Do.	3	" "
4	<i>Scorpion</i>	Schooner	2	" "
5	<i>Ohio</i>	"	1	" "
6	<i>Porcupine</i>	"	1	" "
7	<i>Amelia</i>	"	1	" "
8	<i>Somers</i>	"	2	" "
9	<i>Tigress</i>	"	1	" "
10	<i>Ariel</i>	"	4	" "
11	<i>Trippe</i>	Sloop	1	" "
12	<i>Detroit</i>	Ship.	20	Guns and 2 Howitzers
13	<i>Queen Charlotte</i>	Do.	18	" "
14	<i>Lady Prevost</i>	Schooner	14	" "
15	<i>Hunter</i>	Brig	10	" "
16	<i>Little Belt</i>	Sloop	3	" "
17	<i>Chippeway</i>	Schooner	1	" and 2 Swivels

Prize Vessels



Under existing circumstances, and with the information now possessed, the 9 vessels first mentioned, together with Nos. 14 & 15 will be more than sufficient for the accomplishment of the objects contemplated by the Government; viz. the effectual command of Lake Erie against any attempt the enemy may make to gain the ascendancy; the attainment of the complete command of all the waters between Erie and Lake Superior; the reduction of the posts of Michillimackinac and of St. Joseph's, at the Mouth of French River.

The *Detroit* and *Queen Charlotte*, being entirely dismantled and otherwise much wrecked, the expense, difficulty, and delay in repairing and refitting them, would not only be very great, but their draught of water excluding them from the Harbour of Erie, and the passage over the Flats of the River St. Clair, they are applicable only to Lake Erie, where an additional force is not at present, and probably will not in future be required.

It is, nevertheless, absolutely necessary, that even the wrecked Hulls of these vessels, should be placed in a situation perfectly secure against any attempt of the enemy to recover them. It is, therefore, very desirable that they should be placed in the Harbour of Erie, if it is practicable to get their empty Hulls over the Bar, which, I presume, may be accomplished by giving them a careen and raising them between two of the small vessels, first filled with water, then swifed to the Hull and pumped out. In this situation they could be securely repaired, at leisure, and fitted for future service if necessary.

The recent large requisitions, made by Captain Elliott on the Navy Agent at Philadelphia, for Mechanics and Stores; and by the Agent at Pittsburg, for funds, induce me to believe that he contemplates repairing and refitting those two vessels; as I have no doubt, from the early measures taken, and expenditures actually incurred, that the other vessels are in complete order, or nearly so, at least, it is certain, they ought to be so. If my conjecture is correct, you will immediately put a stop to that business, and employ the Mechanics and others, in securing the *Detroit* and *Queen Charlotte* as above directed. From the Prizes taken, as well as from our own stock, the supply of Ordnance and Military Stores, and I should suppose of every article of equipment, must be superabundant for the force proposed to be employed.

The maintenance of a Squadron, and particularly repairs and equipments on those remote Waters, are extremely expensive; and I rely upon your judgment, and zeal for the service, to check and curtail every superfluous expenditure; recollecting that the service on the Lakes is but temporary, and, therefore, every economical expedient ought to be adopted, to substitute plain, rough, but solid equipments, for those which, on the Atlantic service, may be of a superior and costly nature.— Every thing that is ornamental, or tending to luxury, or personal gratification, ought to be rigidly suppressed.

What part of the Squadron it may be expedient to detach into Lake Huron, and what to retain in Lake Erie, will depend upon the information and circumstances, at the moment when you may be ready to act, which ought to be the instant the Navigation will admit of a passage into Lake Huron.

Either the *Lawrence*, or *Niagara*, will be the leading Ship of the Huron Squadron, with perhaps the *Lady Prevost*, and some of the light armed vessels, of easy draught, and best adapted to carry Troops and provisions, particularly of the Bread kind, of which you will require an ample stock.

You will, immediately, on your arrival at Erie, open a correspondence with the Military Commander at Detroit; asking of him all the information he may

possess, relative to the passage into, and navigation of Lake Huron; and all the circumstances connected with your expedition, the nature and extent of which you will explain to him. You will, also, request him to have in readiness to join your force, a body of 300 hardy, intrepid Volunteers, one half of which should be Rifle men; for which purpose, I have no doubt, the Secretary of War will direct the necessary measures to be taken. You will, immediately, examine your stock of provisions, and take measures to make good any deficiency, in time, to avoid delay. Mr. Ormsby, the Deputy Agent at Pittsburg, will inform you, as you pass through that place, what requisitions and preparations have been made.

According to the last Muster Roll received, the number of Officers and men, attached to the Squadron at Erie, was 282, exclusive of 21, who are at Put in Bay, in charge of the Prize Ships, *Detroit* and *Queen Charlotte*.

An additional number of Officers, and 50 or 60 men, shall be sent on, as soon as possible, from the Seaboard; and I have no doubt you may engage some good Volunteers at Erie. The pay of Seamen and Ordinary Seamen, on the Lake Service, specially, has been raised; the former to 15 dollars, and the latter, from 8 to 12 dollars per Month, from the 25th. day of February last; and Congress has now under consideration, an encrease of pay to the Officers on the Lake Service. There is, moreover, every stimulus, which the prospect of prize money can add to the Service on the Upper Lakes; as there are known to be large depots of Furs, and of Indian Supplies, at Michillimackinac and St. Joseph's. The encreased pay, and the prospect of prize money, I have no doubt, will enable you to procure a select body of Lake Watermen or Volunteers.

The information we possess, in relation to the designs and movements of the enemy, rests upon report, rather probable than certain. There is, however, reason to believe, that the enemy has sent two small detachments of Seamen, and perhaps Mechanics, to Lake Huron, where they are constructing some sort of Naval Force. Rumour says two Brigs; but if the fact is so, they must be of small force. They are also said to be building a number of Boats on Lake Simcoe, and have recently transported considerable quantities of Naval and Ordnance Stores to York; the distance from which to Lake Simcoe is not above 40 miles, over a good road. The Boats are doubtless intended to convey these Stores, through the waters emptying from Lake Simcoe into Lake Huron at Gloucester Bay, on the E.S.E. extremity of Lake Huron. It is on the shore of this Bay they are constructing their Naval Force. For this place you will make a prompt and vigorous push; destroy, or capture, whatever they may have prepared; and, before the alarm can be extended to St. Joseph's, at the Mouth of French River, which place, it is expected you may readily reduce, and get possession of all the property and stores deposited there, and leaving a force to protect that port, if tenable, or not liable to be attacked by a superior force, thence proceed to Michillimackinac, which, with the communication of the enemy being entirely cut off, and the place destitute of provisions, will doubtless prove an easy conquest.

Having accomplished these objects, you will be governed by the season, the state of your provisions, and the information you may receive, whether to leave a small Garrison at that place, and a part of the Squadron on that Lake, during the ensuing Winter, or return with the whole to Erie.

Should you succeed in the two first objects of your enterprize, it may be well to load the small vessels with the Furs and Stores you may capture, and despatch

them to Erie, to return immediately with a supply of provisions, and reinforcements if necessary.

An Officer, of approved capacity and conduct, will be selected as your second in Command; upon whom the command of that part of the Squadron remaining at Erie will devolve in your absence; during which time, he will communicate with, and receive instructions from the Department, as Senior Officer, commanding in your absence.

I think, that, in justice, the whole Squadron should participate of whatever may be captured on either Lake; otherwise discontent and desertion may ensue, among those who are not favored with the service on Lake Huron. This, however, you can readily accomplish, by mutual agreement among the whole, before the Squadron is divided.

Captain Elliott, who now commands at Erie, having some time since solicited to be transferred to Lake Ontario, will be indulged.

I regret to say, that symptoms of personal quarrels, and insubordination, have appeared among the Officers of the Squadron, which have called for a Court Martial on several Officers and one or two Men. The cause, I have no doubt, you will soon trace to its source and remove. In doing which, if you find it expedient, to promote accommodation and good understanding, by revoking the arrests which may have taken place, you have authority so to do, stating that you have derived it directly from this Department: If, as is often the case, the cause should be found to exist, in one or two irritable individuals, give the information, and they shall be ordered to some other service.

It is stated, that one of the Officers, in a gust of passion, threw a Volunteer overboard, who was unfortunately drowned. If this shall prove to be the fact, he is a fit subject for the Civil Authority, to whom you will deliver him over, if there shall be testimony sufficient to sustain a prosecution.¹ I am very respectfully,
Your Obedient Servant,

W. Jones.

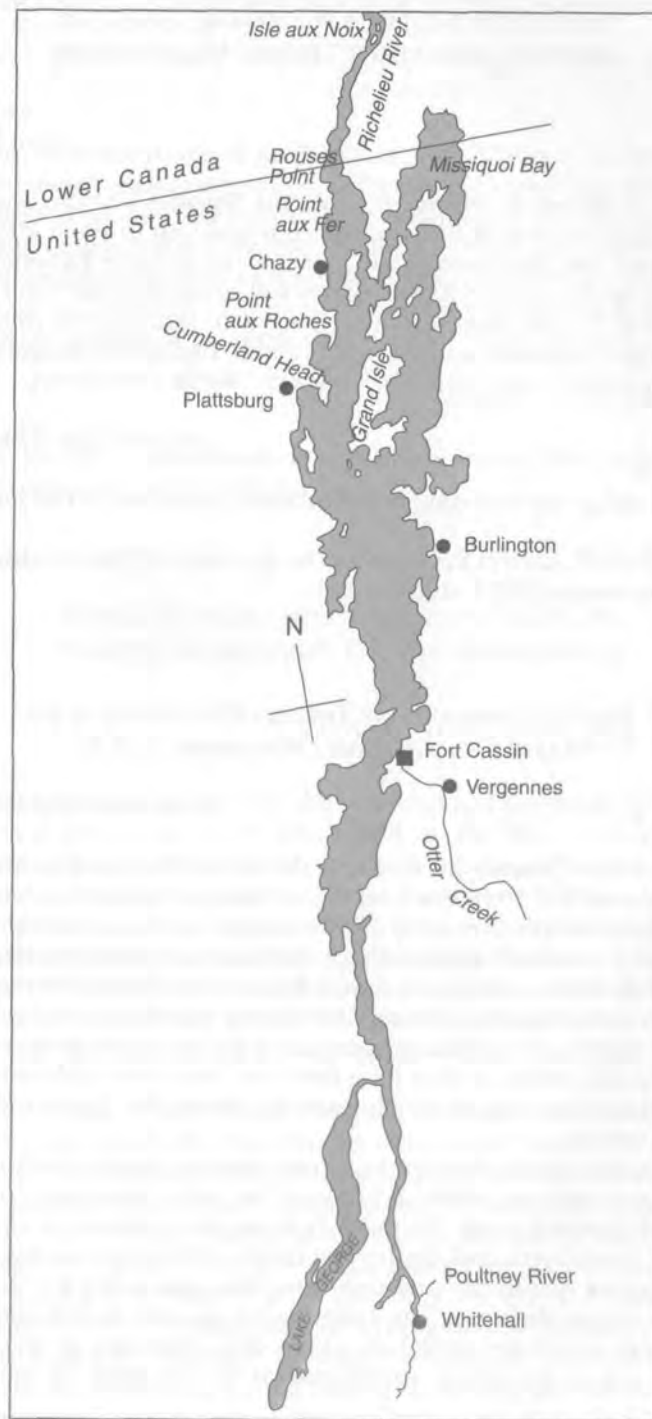
LB, DNA, RG45, CLS, 1814, pp. 123-28.

1. See p. 504 for more on this incident.

American Preparations on Lake Champlain

The shipyard at Vergennes, Vermont, hummed with activity during the winter months of 1813-14. The new vessels of Master Commandant Thomas Macdonough's squadron, the 26-gun ship Saratoga and six gunboats, were still under construction when the ice cleared on the lake in April 1814. The American military commanders feared the British might attempt to destroy the new American ships before they were fitted out and ready for service.

Navy officials also discussed the interesting possibility of a steam warship for Lake Champlain. Commander Macdonough determined, however, that the steamboat available for purchase might be too unreliable and too far from completion to warrant finishing her works. Macdonough, nevertheless, purchased the hull and later named her the U.S. schooner Ticonderoga. If she had been completed as a steamship, she would have been the first steam warship in the United States.



Map 12. Lake Champlain

MAJOR GENERAL JAMES WILKINSON, U.S.A., TO
MASTER COMMANDANT THOMAS MACDONOUGH

Champlain
April 5th 1814

Sir

I consider it proper to inform you, that the Squadron of the Enemy will be ready to sail in a few days & that the Sorrell is open up to Wind Mill point: the want of Cannon has prevented & still prevents my erecting Batteries at Rouses point to shut up the Sorrell; As the enemy will probably enter the Lake before you it is possible he may make a sudden movement with 1000 or 1500 Men & by landing attempt to destroy your vessels in dock. I offer this suggestion merely for your information being with much respect Sir Yr. Obed Servt.

(signed) Jas. Wilkinson

N B. You will oblige me by letting me know when you expect to be on the lake

Copy, DNA, RG107, Letters Received by the Secretary of War, Registered Series, W-344 (7), enclosure (M221, Roll No. 58).

MASTER COMMANDANT THOMAS MACDONOUGH TO
MAJOR GENERAL JAMES WILKINSON, U.S.A.

Vergennes April 9th 1814

Sir

As much anxiety prevails here among the inhabitants, and particularly with the proprietors of the Moncton Iron works, though their solicitations, and my own apprehensions for the safety of the vessels building, should the Enemy visit us by water to within a short distance of the Navy Yard, which adjoins the Town, I have thought it proper to acquaint you accordingly that such measures may be taken in having the Militia of this vicinity called out for the better security of these vessels, the public property, and the Moncton Iron works, which are of great public utility as they have been and are now employed by Government in casting Shot &ca., at which works lay about 200 Tons of Shot belonging to Government.

It would be very practicable for the Enemy to come by water before I can possibly launch my vessels to within 2½ miles of us, and a small body of men from thence could proceed these 2½ miles (without they should be opposed by a Force which is not here) and destroy the vessels which are building, as also the Iron works before mentioned and return to their vessels again which would insure them a secure shelter.— The Lake having opened so uncommonly soon, and before my vessels are launched, places this advantage on the side of the Enemy, and causes my serious apprehensions for the safety of the unfinished vessels.

A communication respecting the Militia has been made by the Citizens to the Governor of Vermont representing their situation and requesting his immedi-

ate attention thereto I have the honor to be Sir Very respectfully Yr mt. Obed Servt.

(signed) T. Macdonough

Sir

I have just received your's of the 5th. Inst. I shall launch in 4 or 6 days. The Guns for the new vessels, have not yet arrived to my knowledge this side Albany, & some have not yet reached New York from Baltimore on their way here Every exertion shall be used to get my force on the Lake but from the badness of the roads & consequent detention of stores &c, I cannot reasonably expect to be out before the last of this month; I shall avail myself of your information to direct my attention to the security of the unfinished vessels I have the honor to be &ca.

/signed T. Macdonough

Copy, DNA, RG107, Letters Received by the Secretary of War, Registered Series, W-344 (7), enclosure (M221, Roll No. 58).

MAJOR GENERAL JAMES WILKINSON, U.S.A., TO
MASTER COMMANDANT THOMAS MACDONOUGH

Plattsburgh
April 11th. 1814.

Sir,

I have just received your favor of the 9th. inst: and am happy to find you had anticipated my precaution. I left Champlain on the 9th., at which time, from the concurrent reports of my secret agents, the enemys Brig and other vessels were manned and equipt for service. A large number of Batteaux have been collected at St: Johns and the Isle aux Noix, where the whole regular force of Lower Canada and a Battalion of Glengarians from the Coteau de Lac, up the St: Lawrence, has been concentrated since my incursion, and a Navy officer in a Gig came up the Sorrell daily to examine the state of the ice in the Lake, which, without an extraordinary change of weather, must give way entirely tomorrow or next day.

I hope the display of preparations here, at Burlington and also in your quarter, may deter the enemy from attempting descent and confine to aquatic operations only. In such case you have nothing to apprehend I presume, but his seizing on the shallops of the Lake, loading them with stones and sinking them at the mouth of the creek to retard your movement. Permit me to suggest two precautions to prevent such a design— Seize and secure all the vessels along our shores and plant a heavy battery at the mouth of the Creek. I rejoice to hear of Governor Chittendon's¹ promptitude in turning out his yeomanry to your assistance,— and Brig. Gen. Macomb² will cooperate in every practicable mode.— If things will permit my absence, I will run up in my Gig and see you and return the same evening. I have a body of men at Chazy and am equipping a battery of flying artillery to wait on the enemys vessels wherever the roads may permit.

With much consideration and respect, I have the honor to be, Sir, your obedient Servant

(Signed) Ja: Wilkinson

Signed Copy, DNA, RG107, Letters Received by the Secretary of War, Registered Series, W-344 (7), enclosure (M221, Roll No. 58).

1. Martin Chittenden, governor of Vermont.
2. Brigadier General Alexander Macomb, U.S.A.

MASTER COMMANDANT THOMAS MACDONOUGH TO
SECRETARY OF THE NAVY JONES

Vergennes April 11th. 1814

Sir,

I have the honor to inform you that the Ship, "*Jones*"¹ to carry 26 Guns (20–32 lb. Carronades & 6–24 lb. Long Guns), was launched this day, being the thirty fifth day after her Keel was laid, and all her Timber taken from the Stump.—

The six Gallies will be launched by the 17th this month.— I regret to inform you that none of the Guns have yet come on, owing to the Roads being almost impassable— The Recruiting service is dull—we want about Two hundred & fifty more men to man all the Vessels

I beg leave to remind you of my want of Officers also—five or six Lieutenants or a less number of Lieutts. with four or five sailing masters.— I did myself the honor to mention the want of these officers in my Letter of the 23d. March— We want the Surgeon's mate, there mentioned, likewise as the Surgeon reports Forty men on this day's Sick List.— I have the honor to be, very Respy. Sir, Yr. obt. St.

T. Macdonough

LS, DNA, RG45, MC, 1814, Vol. 1, No. 103 (M147, Roll No. 5).

1. This vessel was renamed *Saratoga*.

SECRETARY OF THE NAVY JONES TO
MASTER COMMANDANT THOMAS MACDONOUGH

Thomas Macdonough Esqr.
Commanding the U. S. Naval force
on Lake Champlain.

Navy Department
April 20th. 1814.

Sir

Since the receipt of yours of the 23d of last month, I am without further information from you, either as to the progress of the Vessels & recruiting service, or the movements of the enemy.—

It is extremely important at this Crises, that the Department should be accurately and constantly informed of the actual state of things under your Command, otherwise it is impossible to make the necessary arrangements in due time.

I presume from the number of Officers and men under your Command at the date of your last Letter, and the success of the recruiting service since the pay and bounty have been raised, that your full complement is complete before this time, and trust that the Ship will be completed in due time to keep the enemy from the Lake.— As the Army and Navy are to cooperate and combine together whenever they can act with effect, the Commanding General will doubtless furnish you with as many Soldiers as you may require, particularly if your own numbers should be deficient.— Indeed our recruiting service has been embarrassed and retarded by the Army bounty seducing so many Seamen.— I have no doubt you may find many in the ranks of the late recruits whom the Commanding Officer would doubtless transfer to you, at least for the Campaign.— Some officers have been ordered, and more will be immediately ordered to report to you.

You will keep me constantly advised of the progress made and of the actual state of your force. and on receipt of this transmit a list of the Vessels with the particulars of their Armament, and of the number and grade of Officers and number of men, together with the advice you may receive from your recruiting Officers and such general information as may be interesting.—

You will call the Ship you are now building the "*Saratoga*."—

Will the Steam Boat be a necessary addition to your force, or will you be sufficiently Strong without her?— I think she would be an excellent substitute for a part of your small force, provided her Engine and Machinery are ready, which you could protect by a Bulwark. It would be a great saving of men and she would be well calculated to penetrate the River and return independent of the winds & without labour. Her Cannon and Musketry might be fought under Deck.— If her Engine and Machinery can be prepared in time (and I have been informed by Governor Tompkins, it could) you will purchase and equip her without delay.— I am respectfully Your Obet. Servt.

W Jones.—

P S In the arrangement of your plans and equipment of your force, you will be careful to avoid all unnecessary expenditure. It will be at best enormously great, and I calculate with confidence upon your prudence & judgement, not to extend your force and expenditure beyond what necessity prudence and economy shall require.—

W Jones

LB, DNA, RG45, CLS, 1814, pp. 134–35.

MASTER COMMANDANT THOMAS MACDONOUGH TO
SECRETARY OF THE NAVY JONES

Vergennes, April 30th. 1814.

Sir,

I have the honor to acknowledge the Rect. of your Letter of the 20th. Ult., and herewith, to give you a statement of our force, the number and grade of

the Officers, and the number of men; as also a statement of the Enemy's vessels from the best authorities.—

The *Saratoga* is rigged, her sails are made, and will be bent immediately; she is ready below to receive her Officers & men, and has her Provisions stowed, her Gun carriages at the Ports, ready for the Guns, part of which have arrived, which we are mounting;— the others expected daily.— The new Gallies are also finished, & some of their Guns have arrived, which we are also mounting;— the other Guns for these Gallies, are daily expected, and will be mounted immediately on their arrival.— All the Powder is expected to be here in two or three days, and all my other supplies of every kind are on, with few exceptions.—

I have advised with Mr. Brown, (the Master Carpenter) and with the Carpenter who is building the Steam Boat, on the practicability of having this Boat prepared in due time in the manner you have suggested, and they assure me, it cannot be done within two months; owing to the Machinery not being complete, and none of it being here;— this delay, and the extream liability of the Machinery (composed of so many parts) getting out of order, and no spare parts to replace, have induced me, to abandon the idea of fitting this vessel to be propelled by steam, but to have her directly fitted for Twenty Guns in the rig of a Schooner.— This, I hope, will meet with your approbation, when I make known to you my reasons for so doing.— You will observe by the statement of the enemy's vessels, their force, which force, I am informed by a person who is to be relied on, they are increasing with five new Gallies building on the Sorrell:— this person left Canada three days since, saw the vessels, and says the Enemy speak of their force as being sufficient to command this Lake.— The Enemy are not aware that the Steam Boat will be fitted, which Mr. Brown engages to have done in two weeks from this day; her Armament will be composed of two of the Sloops Guns, (these Sloops being miserable Sailers) and some spare Guns which we have here, and the Guns of the four old Gallies; two of which are very rotten, as they were built in 1808; thus making a saving of men, and creating a much more efficient force. The disarmed Sloops will, with much advantage, be employed in the Transport service, and in carrying Provision &c for the Army.— I have made this arrangement from a conviction of benefit resulting to us thereby, considering the activity of our Enemy, and his views to be the stopping of all communication between the opposite sides of this Lake, & having his Eye on the Public Depots, & private property along its Shores.—

My last advises from my recruiting Officers are, that the recruiting service is dull, but Forty Men are yet to come from the different rendezvous; those, with what we now have, will not be a sufficient number for all the vessels.— You will please notice that most of my officers are below Lieutenants, and that three Master's mates, were, by the absence of the recruiting officers, ordered to act as Sailing masters on this station.—

The enemy's largest vessel, from the best information, is not yet ready.— my informant says she was rigged, but had not her Guns on board three days since, and that they were not full manned.— We are using every exertion to enter the Lake before him.— I have not yet selected my Crew for the Ship, leaving this untill more men should arrive, & have therefore enclosed a List of officers & men without designating to which vessels they are, and will be, attached.— Should you have ordered on three or four Lieutenants to command such ves-

sels as I have no commanders for, there will then be a sufficient number of Officers; but a deficiency of men, allowing 200 for the *Saratoga*, 150 for the Schooner, 40 for each Galley (six in number), and 40 for the Sloop *Montgomery*, making in total, 630 men, which will leave a deficiency to man all the vessels, of 245.—

I beg you will rest assured of my prudence, and attention to economy in the expenditures of this station.—

That no time may be lost in waiting for your orders, I, in some cases, consider it proper to act without your orders, specially; but I am confident that you will, when made acquainted with the motives which call for such arrangements, approve of them, as they shall not be made without absolute necessity, and for the benefit of the service.

In the instance of the Steam Boat—two months would elapse before she could be got ready; then the great probability of some of the small parts of the machinery getting out of order, which is often the case on the North river, and is attended with long detention even there, where those parts are made.— This would subject us to the loss of her services probably in action; an accident happening to the Engineer would be of as bad consequences— I have scarcely known the Steam Boat, now running here, to pass thro' the Lake without something happening with her, and they have had to send to Albany to replace what was damaged.— The calculation by the Carpenter was that the Boat here would be propelled, at most, not more than five Knots, whereas, one of the Enemy's Gallies will move in a calm at the rate of six.—

In disarming two of my Sloops, I have got rid of two heavy dull Sailers, vessels that would have retarded (if sailing in squadron) the whole force;— also, the four old Gallies, vessels far inferior in size, and comfortable accommodations for the men, to the enemy's, and with their crews and equipments have formed those of the Schooner;— and should no unforeseen circumstance occur, the whole, (provided we should get the residue of Men) can enter the Lake by the 15th or 20th of May, and it is to be hoped that no additional force will become necessary.— I have the honor to be, with great respect, Sir, Yr mot. obt. St.

T. Macdonough

LS, DNA, RG45, MC, 1814, Vol. 1, No. 115 (M147, Roll No. 5). A list of the twenty-two officers and petty officers then stationed on Lake Champlain was enclosed with this letter.

MASTER COMMANDANT THOMAS MACDONOUGH TO
SECRETARY OF THE NAVY JONES

Vergennes, 6th May 1814

Sir,

I have the honor to inform you that we continue to progress rapidly with the equipment of our vessels here; some supplies have yet to come on, which are

said to be this side of Albany; that the Enemy have not appeared on the Lake this season, and that by my last advices he is not ready to enter the Lake.— 'Tis said he is in want of men as well as ourselves, and that their large vessel has not her Guns completely mounted.—

I have written to Major Genl. Izard¹ at Plattsburgh, inserting that part of your Letter to me of the 20th April which relates to my being supplied with Soldiers from the Ranks should I require them.— His answer, I much expect, will be, that he cannot spare these men, Two hundred & fifty in number, without injury or disadvantage to himself, as officers of the Army inform me that their men's times are daily expiring, and that they have not many men on this Frontier.— I expect from my different Rendezvous 50 men, and do not expect to get many more, as the recruiting service is very dull, particularly for this Lake, the Sailors having an objection to the Gun Boats or Gallies, and entering any service in preference to this.—

Sailing master Lindsey,² and three midshipmen, have lately joined me— No Lieutts. have yet come on.— You will please notice my want of Three or four Lieutenants—besides those on my Recruiting Service whom I cannot now order to join me without stopping the recruiting service, and even were those Officers here, viz Lt. Joseph Smith, & Lt. Stansbury,³ three or four others would be required.— I have the honor to be, with high respect, Sir, yr. obt. St.

T. Macdonough

LS, DNA, RG45, MC, 1814, Vol. 1, No. 121 (M147, Roll No. 5).

1. Major General George Izard, U.S.A.

2. Sailing Master Joseph Lindsey, appointed 17 March 1814.

3. Lieutenant John Stansbury, commissioned 24 July 1813.

Men and Guns for Lake Ontario

The rapid pace of shipbuilding on Lake Ontario required increasing the numbers of seamen sent to the lake to man the new vessels. Recruiting during the nation's third year of war, however, was slowing, partly because of the increase in bounty money offered by the army.

It became necessary in 1814 to find other ways to fill vacant berths in Commodore Isaac Chauncey's new ships. Entire crews of ships that were unable to get to sea during the British blockade of the United States coast were transferred for service on the northern lakes. Over a period of several months, the Department of the Navy ordered the crews of the frigates Congress and Macedonian, and of two new sloops of war, Erie and Ontario, to the lakes.

Likewise, it became expedient to transfer the guns from some ships in New York to Sacket's Harbor rather than wait for new guns to be cast and transported overland.

SECRETARY OF THE NAVY JONES TO COMMODORE ISAAC CHAUNCEY

Commodore Isaac Chauncey
Commanding US Naval Forces
on the Lakes

Navy Department
April 7th. 1814.

Sir

I have this moment received your No. 25. under cover with your private letter. You will perceive that I had anticipated your wishes in ordering the Officers and Crews of the *Macedonian* and *Erie*, and the commissioned and warrant Officers of the *Ontario*.—

The remainder of the long Guns required by you are on their way from New York, including the light 18 pounders from the Battery at New York.— The Carronades and indeed the entire armament of your requisition, according to the last letter from Mr. Bullus, had gone on, but I have this moment, in order to render things certain, and to avoid the delay incident to the mounting and equipments for the Carronades, enclosed an order to Mr. Bullus, to receive the entire Spar Deck Armament of the Frigate *United States*, (42 pound Carronades I believe 18 in number) carriages implements fixed ammunition &c. to be transported without delay across the Country to Albany and onward to Sackett's Harbour with the utmost despatch. Mr. Anderson is specially charged by the Departt. with the entire transportation, with ample powers to effect the object.— I am respectfully Your Obedient Servt.

W Jones.

LB, DNA, RG45, CLS, 1814, p. 119.

SECRETARY OF THE NAVY JONES TO NAVY AGENT JOHN BULLUS

John Bullus Esq
Navy Agent
New-York

Navy Department
April 10. 1814

Sir,

I have received yours of the 8th. current, and consider the hesitation to deliver the Cannon from the Battery as a little extraordinary when the urgency of the occasion is considered, and that superior cannon for a Battery were known to be actually on the Way from Philada. to replace them.— He must be a nice casuist who in times like these can draw a distinction between the various branches of the public service or withhold even for a day at this season, the delivery of Cannon for the Lake Service under the idea of endangering New York for a few days by the absence of 16 pieces of cannon out of 370. mounted in that Harbour.—

'Tis well however they are gone.

Mr Anderson writes to Capt. Evans¹ for seamen to help on with the Cannon and expresses great anxiety.

Stewart whom you had employed for that purpose had grossly failed in his engagement.—

Mr Anderson understood on the 4th. currt. that some of the cannon were still on the way between Poukeepsie and Albany.—

I sent you an order on Com Decatur to deliver to you the whole of the 42 pdr. Carronades on the spar deck of the *U States* to be forwarded across the Country to Albany.

I now enclose to you an order on the Commanding officer of the U.S. Ship *President* to deliver to you 100. tons of her kentledge, and the whole of her 42 pdr Carronades together with Carriages Fixtures and every implement belonging to them and such fixed ammunition as you shall require. These can be replaced from the *U. States* before the *President* is ready and therefore it will make more dispatch and save expense to send them from New York to Albany by water than from New London to Albany by land.—

The officers and crew of the *Macedonian* and of the *Erie*, and the Commissioned & Warrant officers of the *Ontario* are ordered to Sackett's Harbour. Those that pass through N York you will facilitate in getting on.—

Capt. Ridgely² is ordered to dispatch 50 or 60 of his best men and officers to join Mr Anderson in order to hasten on the Cannon.— These you push on as fast as possible.—

The carronades are going on rapidly in Waggons from Baltimore to New York some of them must have arrived with you ere this. Send on immediately such as are required for the Lakes, taking into view however those which you may send from the *President*. I am respectfully &c.

W Jones

LB, DNA, RG45, CNA, Vol. 2, pp. 40–41 (M441, Roll No. 1).

1. Captain Samuel Evans, commander of the New York Navy Yard.

2. Master Commandant Charles G. Ridgely, commander of the sloop of war *Erie* at Baltimore, was ordered to Sackett Harbor 4 April 1814. See pp. 31–32.

SECRETARY OF THE NAVY JONES TO COMMODORE ISAAC CHAUNCEY

Commodore Isaac Chauncey
Commanding U. S. Naval Forces
On Lake Ontario
Sackett's Harbour

Navy Department
April 18th. 1814.

Sir,

Your Nos. 32, 33, 34, & 35, have this instant come to hand. I participate in the solicitude you express for the safety of the Ships and Stores at Sackett's Harbour; and my anxiety, in respect to the transportation of the heavy Cannon and Stores is extreme. The enemy has enjoyed, during the whole Winter, an uninterrupted, easy, and rapid transportation of Ordnance and Naval Stores, which, from the magnitude of his force, he could spare with convenience, by dismantling two or three of his Ships; whilst we have had to transport, from Baltimore, Philadelphia, and New York, our heavy Ordnance and Stores, over roads almost impassable during the whole Winter; and although we commenced so early, and have employed the most extraordinary means and exertions, regardless of the increased expense, it is vexatious to find that the heavy Cannon are still so far short of their destination, and have to incur the hazard of the enemy, at and

from Oswego, after the Lake shall be open. Mr. Anderson describes the impediments and difficulties he has to encounter, from the state of the roads, as almost insurmountable. The Officers and Seamen on their way, I trust, will have greatly aided him.

Lest the heavy Cannon should not get on in time, I have ordered, as a substitute, the entire Spar Deck Battery of the *President*, consisting of 42 Pounder Carronades, with Beds, Carriages, Tackling, and fixed Ammunition, and also a part of the Kentledge of that Ship. These left New York five or six days since. The order for those of the *United States*, of which I informed you, has been countermanded.

Your No. 32 has been submitted to the Secretary of War, with my earnest solicitations on the subject.¹

I cannot permit myself to doubt, however, that you will be competent to repel any attempt the enemy may make upon the Harbour; and that, by the united exertions of all, the Guns and Stores will get on in time, to enable you to meet him on the Lake in successful combat. I am, respectfully, Your Obedient Servant,

W. Jones.

LB, DNA, RG45, CLS, 1814, pp. 131–32.

1. In his letter No. 32 of 4 April 1814, Chauncey expressed concern over the military defenses of Sackett Harbor and Oswego, and asked Secretary of the Navy Jones to urge the Secretary of War to increase the military forces in those villages. Chauncey to Jones, 4 Apr. 1814, DNA, RG45, CL, 1814, Vol. 2, No. 114 (M125, Roll No. 35).

SECRETARY OF THE NAVY JONES TO NAVY AGENT JOHN BULLUS

John Bullus Esqr.
Navy Agent
New York

Navy Department
April 25th. 1814

Sir,

I have received your letter of the 21st. current, quoting a passage in Commodore Chauncey's letter to you of the 14th. in which he observes, that "the *Jefferson* will have all her Guns mounted to morrow, but not a pound of powder for her defence." This, Sir, is a very serious inculpation of the Agent whose duty it was to procure and forward, in due time, the quantity of powder required.

After the early and earnest injunctions from this Department, relative to the procuring and forwarding, with the utmost possible celerity, the supplies for the Lake service, I should exceedingly regret to find any delay in the execution of the requisitions of Commodore Chauncey, not absolutely unavoidable. I know those requisitions were made in due time; and if difficulty had existed in procuring at New York the quantity of powder required, in due time, it was your duty to have stated the fact to the Department; and had it been necessary, I could, from the stock on hand, have placed in New York, in ten days, three times the quantity required. If your present situation and the confidence of this

Department, are of any importance to you, you will perceive the necessity of a satisfactory explanation of this transaction, from which the most fatal consequences may ensue.

You state, that Mr. Anderson sent from the Magazine, on the 21st. and 24th. of March, 400 Barrels of powder and on referring to your Vouchers, in the hands of the Accountant, I find two Bills, of precisely those dates for a like quantity of powder, received on those days from Bullus, Decatur & Rucker, by Mr. Anderson, the Navy store keeper. To these Bills are annexed, receipts for the payment made by you, to yourself, as one of the firm of Bullus, Decatur & Rucker, and at the rate of seventy two cents per pound.— If the contract with that firm, shall be found to have been made upon terms as favorable to the U States as may have been offered by other Manufacturers, upon public notice having been given, then the contract will be valid, if not, the price must be regulated by that which other Manufacturers would have delivered a like quantity at New-York, at the time; and upon this principle, alone will your accounts be admitted, as well in this case as in others, in which charges apparently beyond the usual rates and prices are made.—

In particular I have noticed the contract of Bullus, Decatur & Rucker, of the 9th. February 1813, to manufacture and deliver to the Agent, the whole quantity of the Public materials received by them in to powder, at 13½ cents per pound; and to be allowed for whatever loss may arise in "repurifying the Saltpetre"; no other allowance or charge whatever is admitted in the contract.—

By the Bill rendered, it appears that a quantity of powder, exactly equal to the Nitre & Sulphur delivered, has been returned and no more; and a long string of heavy charges not authorized by the contract.— This therefore, will not be admitted.— The contract must not only be complied with, but it must appear, that that contract is, at least, as favorable as could have been obtained, at the time, from other respectable Manufacturers.—

I have, moreover, observed in your general transactions, that the most prominent articles are purchased or procured at rates apparently above the market price, and certainly considerably higher than at the other neighbouring agencies; and that your principal transactions are generally confined to two or three particular firms.—

I recollect, in my enquiry of you, some time since, about the price of Sheathing copper, your quotations were 60 & 62½ cents and the article appeared to be scarce; whereas, in a short time after, the Department purchased, at New York, all that was required at 50 cents.— These things must be explained and corrected.— I am, respectfully &c.

W Jones.

LB, DNA, RG45, CNA, Vol. 2, pp. 53–55 (M441, Roll No. 1). No reply to this letter has been located.

The Opening of the Season

The "season for naval operations," that period when the ice cleared in the freshwater lakes, finally came in April. The opposing sides fitted out new vessels and readied their squadrons for action.

At the opening of the 1814 season, however, strategic goals for the year were still uncertain. The new British commander in Upper Canada, Lieutenant General Gordon Drummond, called on the British squadron under Commodore Yeo to support the movements of his army in its campaign on the Niagara peninsula. Likewise, the American Major General Jacob Brown requested the assistance of the American navy to support his troops on the peninsula and to move men and military supplies.

The freshwater commodores would assess each other's strengths and wait as their new ships were readied for service. As in 1813, however, neither would commit his squadron to the uncertain outcome of a naval battle unless he clearly had the upper hand.

Sir George Prevost was receptive to Secretary of State Monroe's suggestion of an armistice, made early in 1814, believing such an accord would secure Canada from invasion. Armistice negotiations failed before summer arrived because of inability to settle two critical issues. First, the Americans wanted either side to be able to end the armistice by giving twenty days' notice, whereas Prevost wanted any armistice to continue indefinitely unless peace negotiations in Europe were discontinued. Second, Prevost had no authority to accede to the American insistence that the armistice extend beyond the Canadian border to include the entire Atlantic coast. While military and naval commanders on both sides knew of the possibility of an armistice, that knowledge does not appear to have changed military preparations for the 1814 campaign.¹

¹ On the armistice proposal, see Stagg, *Mr. Madison's War*, pp. 385–86, and Quimby, *U.S. Army in the War of 1812*, pp. 497–99.

LIEUTENANT COLONEL JOHN HARVEY, BRITISH ARMY, TO
COMMODORE SIR JAMES L. YEO, R.N.

(Copy)

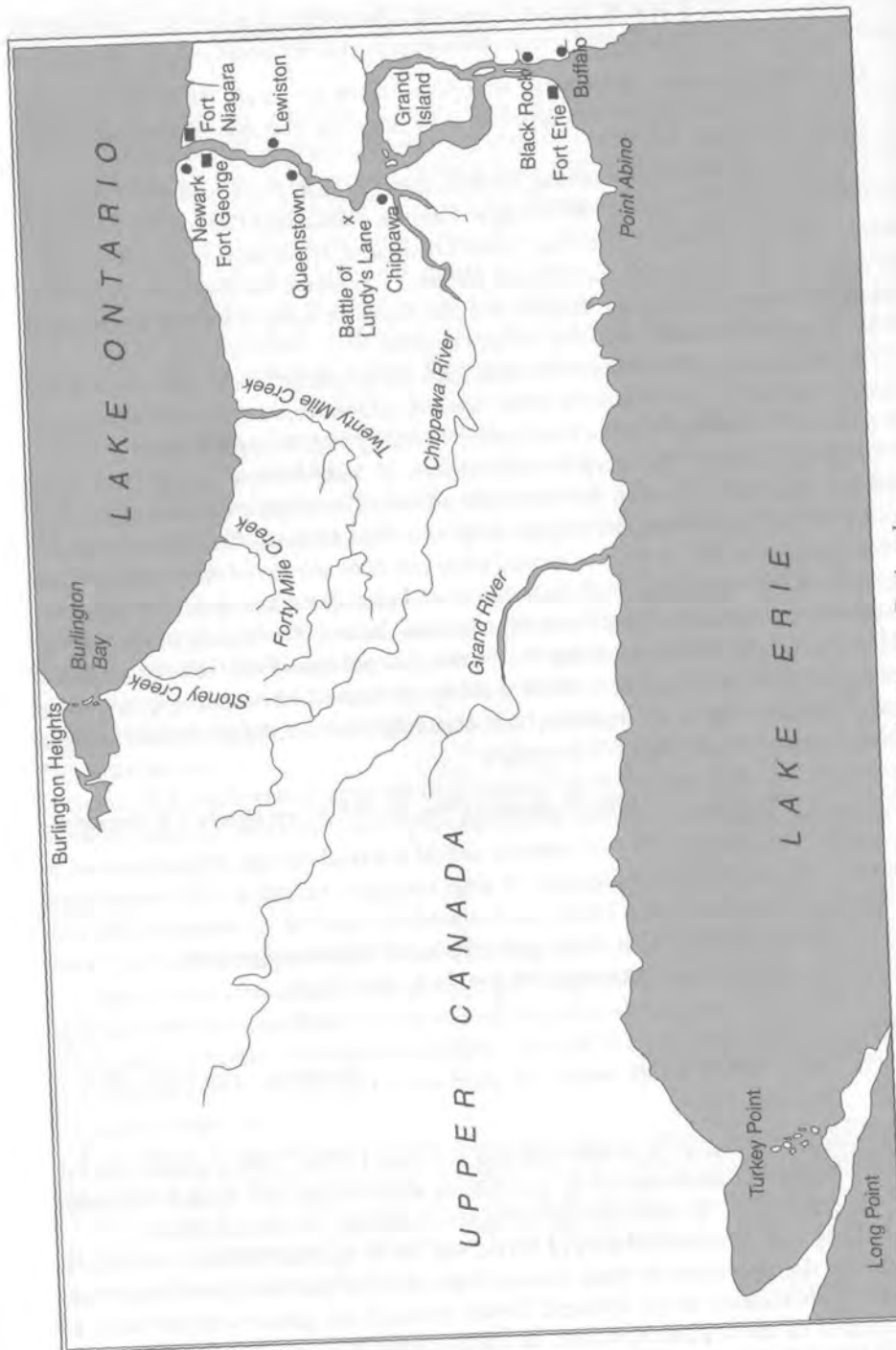
Most Secret & Confidential

Kingston April 9th 1814

Sir/

The Season for Naval Operations being at hand, Lt. Gen. Drummond considers it advisable to communicate to you his ideas as to how the Squadron under your command, may be best employed on the opening of the navigation.

Assuming that your superiority of force, will be in the first instance decidedly secured by the accession to your former Squadron of the two new Vessels, the service which appears to Lt. General Drummond of the greatest importance to the defence of the Upper Province, is the reinforcement of the Right Division by the 103rd Regiment, and the conveyance at the same time, of a supply of stores and provisions to Fort Niagara and Fort George—



Map 13. Niagara Peninsula

The Lieut. General would therefore wish, that you would be pleased to make arrangements for executing this service, at the earliest practicable period— The Troops to be landed at the Head of the Lake— The Stores and provisions at Fort Niagara and Fort George— On your way up the Lake, it would be desirable for one of the Vessels to look into York, to communicate with the Officer commanding that Post (Colonel Stewart¹) with a view to receiving on board, and conveying to Fort Niagara, five heavy Guns (3-18s. & 2-24s.) destined for that Fort if they have not already been forwarded—

After landing the Stores &c at Fort Niagara, and communicating with M General Riall, it might be desirable, if you find the M General has no material assistance or co-operation to require from the Squadron, that you should proceed down the American Shore looking into the different Creeks &c, particularly reconnoitring Oswego, when if you find it an object, and consider the Marines of the Squadron sufficient for the Service, you might land and bring off or destroy whatever Stores Craft or public Buildings, the Enemy might have there—

After which the Lt. General would recommend your proceeding off Sacketts Harbour, endeavour accurately to reconnoitre that place, and if you should consider an attack upon the Enemy at that place, as offering any rational hope of success, you might in that case dispatch a Boat, or fast sailing Vessel to Kingston with the result of your reconnoissance, and follow with the Squadron, to be ready to receive on board the Troops, in the event of the Lt. General's determining on the enterprize—

To the forgoing outline Lieut. General Drummond has nothing at present to add— New circumstances or fresh intelligence, may confirm, or render it necessary wholly or partially to change, the plan of operations, both with regard to the Troops, and the Squadron, in such case the Lt. General will hasten to apprise you of the nature of such change of circumstance, as he will be anxious to communicate and consult with you, on the change which it may become advisable to make in the plan of the Naval campaign— Considering it essential that you should be apprized of the Orders which have been sent to M General Riall, in order that you may be better prepared to appreciate the movements of the Troops under his Command, and more promptly and effectually to co-operate with, and assist them, I am directed to transmit inclosed, such extracts from M General Riall's instructions as relate to this subject— The Instructions to the officer commanding at York, are simply to defend that Post, which it is considered he has ample means of doing, against any force which the Enemy could convey to that Point, on board their Squadron—

If forced or over powered he is to retire upon Burlington, not Kingston. I have the honor to be &c.

(Signed) J Harvey
Lt. Col. DAG

Copy, CaOOA, British Military and Naval Records, RG8, I, "C" Ser., Vol. 732, pp. 147-51. Enclosures not found with copy.

1. Colonel Archibald Stewart, British army.

COMMODORE SIR JAMES L. YEO, R.N., TO
GOVERNOR-GENERAL SIR GEORGE PREVOST

Kingston U. Canada 13th. April 1814.

Sir,

I have the honor to acknowledge the receipt of Your Excellency's letter of the 7th. Inst. requesting my opinion respecting an overture for an Armistice offered by the American Government—together with the information obtained from a Person recently from Sacketts Harbour—which Your Excellency is disposed to consider as correct—which You wish me to compare with my former statement to You (I perceive it corroborates that statement) And which You wish should assist my judgement in the Answer I am about to give.

After the most deliberate consideration I am of opinion, that, as far as relates to Naval operations—It is by no means certain the Enemy will have the advantage at the commencement of the campaign—And the reinforcement of Seamen & supply of Stores—which His Majesty's Government mean so promptly to assist us with, will, I have no doubt, enable us to regain the ascendancy on this Lake.

The Third Ship, now building is, I believe, of far greater force than any the Enemy can launch at Sacketts Harbour—And doubts have arisen as to the practicability of launching the large Ship now ready,—as will appear by the accompanying deposition of the Carpenter of the *Madison*.— But, even admitting the Enemy are able to launch their large Ship & have received the whole of their Guns & stores (of which I entertain a doubt) we never have been so competent to engage them with a reasonable prospect of success as at present;— For, altho' the Enemy have a greater number of Guns of heavy calibre—Yet, my having two Ships of such effective strength as the *Prince Regent* & *Princess Charlotte* closely to support each other may give me an advantage in the early part of an Action,— which I feel confident, the talents of the Officers & spirit of the Men under my command would immediately avail themselves of.— I perceive two of the Enemy's new Vessels are *Brigs*—and, however formidable they may be as to weight of Metal, should any accident befall their Gaff or Main Boom—they become for the time unmanageable.— Brigs have never been esteemed so effective as Ships in Battle.— In short, Sir, I am fully persuaded, that, with the means I now possess—together with those the Government mean to place at my disposal—I shall be able either to bring Chauncey to a decisive action—or—should I find him too superior (for I cannot rely on his strength until I see His Squadron) manouvre with Him until the third Ship is ready—And which Vessel I look upon to be of a description to look down all opposition. In the interim of this Ship being ready—the reinforcement of Seamen can be placed in heavy Gun Boats that may effectually assist me during the Calms at the commencement of the season.

These considerations induce me to be decidedly of opinion that were Your Excellency to accept of the proposed armistice—it would neither conduce to the credit of His Majesty's Government or the Honor of His Arms;— While it would enable the Enemy to gain time for launching & equipping more Ships— augmenting & concentrating his Forces & bringing them to bear (should a rupture of the Armistice ensue—a measure, I fear, from the known enmity & insincerity of the American Government, too likely to occur) with redoubled force

against us. I have the honor to be with the highest respect Sir Your Excellency's most obedient humble Servant

James Lucas Yeo
Commodore

LS, CaOOA, British Military and Naval Records, RG8, I, "C" Ser., Vol. 683, pp. 19–23.

COMMODORE ISAAC CHAUNCEY TO SECRETARY OF THE NAVY JONES

No.—¹

U.S. Ship *General Pike*
Sacketts Harbor. 14 April 1814

Sir

The agent that I sent a few days since to the other Side has this moment returned with information that the Enemy has all his fleet ready (with the exception of the New Vessels) in the Stream he has 12 to 14 Gun Boats and a number of Small craft and 3000 Troops ready to embark for this place and it is said they are only waiting for a favorable time to make the attack— my own impression is that they have understood that we are going to York and that they have prepared this force for the purpose of attacking the Harbor the moment our Fleet leaves it— the Enemy however may be determined to make the attack at all hazards, as the object to them is of immense importance, and I am sorry to say that our force is but little adapted to the defence of this place— there are not a thousand effective Men here besides the Sailors and Marines— General Gains² arrived here Yesterday and assumed the command and we shall endeavour to defend the place as long as we can with the means we possess.—

We launched the other Brig yesterday which I have called the "*Jones*" but I am sorry to say that I have neither Men or Guns for her and from the present state of the Roads but little prospect of getting them soon— I received 21 Men a few days since from New York—they were eight days getting from Utica to this place a distance of about 80 or 90 miles I have the honor to be very respectfully Sir Yr. Mo. Ob. St

Isaac Chauncey

LS, DNA, RG45, CL, 1814, Vol. 2, No. 144 (M125, Roll No. 35).

1. This was Chauncey's letter No. 36 to Secretary of the Navy Jones.
2. Brigadier General Edmund P. Gaines, U.S.A.

BRIGADIER GENERAL EDMUND P. GAINES, U.S.A., TO
MAJOR GENERAL JACOB BROWN, U.S.A.

Sacketts Harbour N.Y.
April 14th 1814.

Dear General

I arrived at this place late in the night of the 12th., the Commodore has this moment informed me, that our confidential Agent has just now returned from

Kingston, and states, that the enemy have thier old Fleet all out in the stream, & ready to sail the first fair wind, with 3000 men for this place The wind is now fair, & that we shall this Evening, or to-morrow morning have some hard knocks, is very certain, unless the weather prevents, or the Enemy should conclude to pass on to Oswego, where we have, 'tis said, a great quantity of provisions. We shall exert our strength to the utmost. you know what our strength is—our works have been improved by the zeal & industry of the late Commdts. & the troops

I need not tell you that a Regt of Infantry a company of Artillerists and some mounted dragoons, would render this place more secure, and I pray you will send them, as it may be possible the Enemy may not move, untill this reinforcement could be got here. Your Friend

signed, E P Gaines.
Brigr. Gen'l commdg.

LB, DLC, Jacob J. Brown Papers, MMC-3212, Letterbook I, pp. 3-4.

MAJOR GENERAL JACOB BROWN, U.S.A., TO
SECRETARY OF WAR ARMSTRONG

[Extract]
(Copy)

Williamsville April 17. 1814

Sir

... I can see but two ways of approaching the Enemy in Upper Canada, with a prospect of striking a blow, that will effect any national object. The first is to carry Kingston by a direct attack, or to break the British Line below— this being effectually accomplished, all the Country above, is ours. I take it for granted, that this, the first, & the greatest object, will not be attempted untill we have the command on the lower Lake; Such appearing to be the will of the Government from the Vessels authorized to be built at Sacketts Harbour. The second, is to rapidly concentrate sufficient force, pass Lake Erie & by means of our flotilla on that Lake, and carry Burlington Heights, this being done, and our Force unbroken, the works along the Niagara river could be approached with better prospects of success. Should Chauncey have the ascendancy of Lake Ontario at the same time, the 2070 men that I have put down, might possibly be rendered useless to the Enemy, I do not know what our means are, but I am disposed to hope, that four thousand Regulars could be assembled for such an object, & this force, with the Militia volunteers & Indians that might be induced to join, would give us a fair prospect of success, All our supplies, not carried into the field, could be placed on board our Fleet. We need leave no deposits behind, to distract our attention or divide our Force, & with good luck, good management, and the smiles of Providence, this second plan will completely succeed by the 1st of June, One great difficulty may be in getting the necessary Force

With me, I have, say one half the number of Regulars deemed necessary—Men that I shall be willing to trust myself with, in any situation

2000

The Rifle Regt at Sacketts Harbour, that are much better fitted for the field than for the defence of a post their place may be supplied by some of the nearest Recruits—	say 300
Colo Ervin, ¹ 42d. Regt, Sunberry, Pennsylvania—to be ordered to join by the Sec'y of War—	400
The troops that can be spared from Detroit	say 1000
Defficiency to be supplied by the Sec'y at War	800
One ninth allowed for the Sick	<u>4500</u>

A less force, would perhaps be competent to effect all the objects of this second plan, & I shall be willing to attempt its execution, with any force that you may order. But as our Country and its Army require success, I have deemed it most wise, to name to you a force that in all human probability, will be competent to meet whatever the Enemy may be able to bring against it, within the peninsula.

Genl Gaines commands at Sacketts Harbour, I ordered him there, the moment I perceived you were disposed to make me responsible for the safety of that post. I shall consider it safe in his hands with one thousand effectives, during the pendency of the contest for the power of the Lake.

Beleiving that Genl Gaines can be best employed at Sacketts Harbour, untill Chauncey beats Yeo, and renders his force disposable, I have to ask of you, as a particular favour to give me Genl Swift,² to command the 2d. Brigade of my Division. Swift, I learn, is a General by brevet. Under me he would (as I understand the subject) be second to Scott.³ If I should fall, or be removed, Swift would command; If I have no additional force I desire no other Brigr. but Scott, If I have a Division, I ask for Swift,

I have neither Adj. or asst. Adj. General, Surgeon or Surgs. mate of the Army, with me, I should be pleased to have an efficient Adj. Genl. Walbach,⁴ would suit me very well, but he is better off where he is. If there is a Surgeon of the Army, fit for the active duties of the Field I should be highly gratified to see him with my command. Ross I do not want. Dr. James C. Bronaugh,⁵ was he a Surg of the Army would be the man I should choose.

From the Neighbourhood of long Point to Burlington heights, the roads are passably good, & the Country open, the natural obstacles are much less on that route than any other within the Peninsula. Very Respectfully and truly Yours

Jac: Brown

Signed Copy, DNA, RG107, Letters Received by the Secretary of War, Unregistered Series, B-1814 (M222, Roll No. 10). Four paragraphs, discussing troop strength of the army, have been omitted from this transcription.

1. Colonel William N. Irvine, 42d Infantry, U.S.A.

2. Brigadier General Joseph G. Swift, U.S.A., breveted 19 February 1814 for meritorious service.

3. Winfield Scott, promoted to brigadier general 9 March 1814.

4. Colonel John De B. Walbach, Adjutant General, U.S.A.

5. Hospital Surgeon James C. Bronaugh, appointed 15 March 1814.

MAJOR GENERAL JACOB BROWN, U.S.A., TO COMMODORE ISAAC CHAUNCEY

Near Lewiston
April 18th 1814—

My dear Sir

It is very unkind in you to remain so long silent, I did expect, that you would have written me very fully before this time. Last Evening I rec'd a letter at Williamsville, my Head Quarters, from Gen'l Gaines dated the 14th Inst, in which, he states, that from information received from you, he is induced to believe, that the Enemy are three thousand strong at Kingston; that their old Fleet was drawn out, and that an attack on Sacketts Harbour, was expected in the course of a day or two, from that time. You never intimated to me, a doubt of your ability to face the Enemy, at any moment after the Ice was out, and I must confess, that I was so confident of your strength by water, that I did not expect there would be any alarm for that post, during your continuance in its neighbourhood, of which I had no doubt untill the new ship was completed, I should have been very much gratified by receiving a Letter from you, shewing how the great change, in the relative strength of Sacketts Harbour & Kingston, is to be accounted for since I last had the pleasure of seeing you. You then mentioned, that by the last advices from Kingston, there was no reason to believe, that the Enemy had at that post, to exceed from 14 to 1500 men of the Army, and had you expressed a doubt, for the security of the position, so interesting to you particularly, and to all of us; I believe, you will not doubt, but that I should¹ have been disposed to stay with you, notwithstanding your unhesitating opinion that the order I rec'd, could mean nothing else, but the intention of the Sec'y, that I should march to this Frontier.

The Letter of General Gaines has rendered me very anxious, and unhappy, and I pray God, that what he appears to apprehend, may not take place. All I could do, with any prospect of being useful, has been done— The mounted Dragoons have been ordered to return, with all possible expedition, & the Recruits in the neighbourhood of Utica, have been ordered to your assistance.

Gen'l Gaines will have called in every soldier he can reach, and will accept of such Militia Volunteers, as may have the patriotism to offer themselves, or that he can induce to arm, in defence of thier country— The troops from this frontier could not, by any possibility, be expected to reach you in time. Should the Enemy presume to land, in defiance of your means, I can but hope and believe, that you will immortalize yourself, and should they get on shore, it does appear to me, that Gaines will be able to place the Army on higher ground, than it yet has stood. Let me again intreat you to write me fully, on this, and every other subject, connected with our common cause— Yours truly

Jac. Brown
Maj Gen'l—

LB, DLC, Jacob J. Brown Papers, MMC-3212, Letterbook 1, pp. 7-9.

1. The words "made it my duty" were written in another hand above the line at this point. These words were probably added at a later date, since other contemporary copies of this letter do not include that wording.

MAJOR GENERAL JACOB BROWN, U.S.A., TO
BRIGADIER GENERAL EDMUND P. GAINES, U.S.A.

Near Lewiston April 18th 1814

Dear General

Your letter has made me very anxious and unhappy, and was it possible, I should rejoice to change situations with you for a few days.—

I have never doubted the ability of Commodore Chauncey, to beat off the Enemy should they attempt to land a force near Sackett's Harbour, during his continuance in that part of the Lake.—

He has never expressed to me a doubt on the subject; and it was only in case of his absence, that apprehensions were to be entertained for the safety of the place, judge then of my surprize, to see by your letter, that the Enemy would presume to cross, and cover their troops with their old fleet.—

It would be impossible to march troops from this frontier, in time to be of any use to you: all that I could do with any prospect of being useful has been done, Capt. Harris¹ with the mounted Dragoons, is I trust, on his way back, I have ordered him to move rapidly: the recruits for the 23rd. Regt., say 300 are also under orders to join you.—

You will not hesitate to make use of all the means within your reach, for the preservation of the important trust, committed to your charge.—

Call every soldier to your assistance, by accepting the service of every Militia Volunteer, disposed to arm in defence of his Country.—

If you are deficient in arms, take them, or any thing which the cause requires, which you can procure, from the State Arsenal at Watertown.—

Victory in such a contest will cover you with immortal honours, and I feel that your chances are enviable, should the Enemy presume to attack your post.— I cannot believe that he has the power to bring against you 3000 men, but this number is not alarming considering the strength of your position.—

Lieut McChain² is the bearer of this, he is ordered to forward to the Regts. here (by land) whatever cloathing may have gone to your post for them, have the goodness to facilitate him in this business by all the aid you can give, so as to prevent delays.— With great Regard Your's

Jac. Brown
Majr. General.

LB, NBuHi, Jacob Brown Manuscripts.

1. Captain Samuel D. Harris, Regiment Light Dragoons, U.S.A.
2. Lieutenant George McChain, U.S.A.

Sacketts Harbor Defended

Commodore Chauncey's largest ship on the stocks, the frigate Superior which was just days from launching, made a tempting target for Commodore Yeo. Yeo sent a British party of three small boats on the night of 25 April 1814 in an apparent attempt to blow up the new American warship. The plan was foiled when American guard boats discovered and

chased the boats away. The failed plan, which is never mentioned in any official British documents, served as a British test of the strength of American defenses. Commodore Yeo and Lieutenant General Drummond were at that time discussing the prospects of an attack on either Sackett Harbor or nearby Oswego, which served as a supply depot and transshipment point for military and naval stores.

COMMODORE ISAAC CHAUNCEY TO SECRETARY OF THE NAVY JONES

No. 51

U.S. Ship *General Pike*
Sackett Harbor. 27th April 1814

Sir

The Night of the 25th inst. two of our guard Boats fell in with three of the Enemys boats in this Bay— Lieut. Dudley (the officer of the Guard) hailed and was answered "guard boats" this however not being satisfactory he repeated the hail but was not answered—finding that the strange boats were attempting to cut him off from the Shore he fired upon them the enemy laying upon their oars a short time pulled in towards "Bull Rock Point" without returning the fire— Lieut. Dudley returned to the Fleet and got a reinforcement of boats but nothing more was seen of the Enemy that night— Yesterday Morning I directed both Shores of Shermont [*Chaumont*] Bay to be examined to see whether the Enemy had not secreted himself in some of the small creeks— nothing however was discovered but Six barrels of Powder found in the Water near the Shore where our guard boats fired on the Enemy—these barrels were all slung in such a manner that one man could take two across his Shoulders and carry them—each barrel had a hole bored in the head of it above an inch diameter with a wooden plug in it—these barrels of Powder were evidently fitted for the purpose of blowing our large ship up, if the Enemy could have got in undiscovered by placing them under the Ships bottom and putting a piece of slow match or port-fire in the hole in the head, which would burn a sufficient time to allow the parties to escape before the fire would communicate to the powder this also accounts for the Enemy not returning the fire of our boats, for having so much powder in he was apprehensive of accidents which no doubt induced him to heave it overboard to be prepared to return the fire if he was pursued.—

It would have been impossible for the Enemy to have succeeded even if he had eluded our guard boats (which there are two Lines of) for independent of all the approaches by Water being secured by booms, the *Madison* is moored across the large Ship's Stern within Twenty Yards and her Guns loaded with Canister and bags of Musket Balls to rake under the bottom if necessary— A Lieutenant Two Midshipmen and ten Men are on watch under the Ship's bottom every night, besides a Marine Guard outside of her—with all these precautions, I think that it would be impossible for an enemy to land near the Ship-Yard unobserved—however after this discovery of the Enemy's intentions we shall redouble our vigilance and exertions to preserve our fleet to meet the Enemy fairly upon the Lake— I have the honor to be very respectfully Sir Yr. Mo. Ob. St.

Isaac Chauncey

LS, DNA, RG45, CL, 1814, Vol. 2, No. 186 (M125, Roll No. 35).

LIEUTENANT GENERAL GORDON DRUMMOND, BRITISH ARMY, TO
GOVERNOR-GENERAL SIR GEORGE PREVOST

Kingston 27th. April 1814

Sir/

I have the honor to acknowledge the receipt of Your Excellencys Letter of the 23rd. Inst. enclosing a plan of a combined attack proposed to be made on the Enemys Fleet at Sackett Harbour, to which I have given that serious attention which the great importance of the subject demands.

By my Letter to Your Excellency of yesterdays date, written prior to the arrival of your dispatches, you will perceive that I had already in a great measure anticipated Your Excellencys views with regard to the imperious necessity which exists for an immediate attempt to distroy the Enemys fleet, at the same time that I stated what I now beg leave to repeat, that in my opinion a force of not less than 4000 effective troops would be essentially necessary to ensure a reasonable hope of success, as from the latest information I have been enabled to collect, not only the Defences have been much strengthened and multiplied by the erection of Block Houses, but the Garrison does not consist of less than 1500 Regular Troops, with constant reinforcements of Recruits, besides there are between 1500 and 2000 Seamen.

Previously to the receipt of Your Excellencys commands, I had had a communication with Sir James Yeo relative to the expediency of a combined attack on the Enemys fleet. I also in compliance with your wishes, had this morning a conference with him on the same subject, when I submitted to him Your Excellencys Letter, and its accompanying Document.

Sir James entirely coincides in opinion with me, that the force to be brought against the place ought to be at least what I have before stated.—

Enclosed I have the honor to lay before Your Excellency a Statement of the Force & Means that I presume can be collected within my command, by which you will observe, that it is necessary a reinforcement should be sent from other quarters of the Province to make up the number specified.

In addition to the operation in agitation against Sackett Harbour I conceive that a successful attack on their great Naval Depot at Oswego would nearly if not altogether circumscribe the proceedings of the Enemy, because should we be so fortunate as to distroy the Stores &c that are now collected there for the use of the Fleet, it is very improbable they could shew themselves on the Lake for some time at least.

I propose giving Sir James Yeo an adequate number of Troops to cooperate with him for the accomplishment of this desirable object, as soon after the Squadron can put to sea, as possible. I have the honor to be Sir Your Excellencys Most Obedient Humble Servant

Gordon Drummond
Lt. General

ALS, CaOOA, British Military and Naval Records, RG8, I, "C" Ser., Vol. 683, pp. 57–60.

LIEUTENANT GENERAL GORDON DRUMMOND, BRITISH ARMY, TO
GOVERNOR-GENERAL SIR GEORGE PREVOST

Kingston 28th. April 1814

Sir/

In addition to the Statement I had the honor to address to Your Excellency in my Letter of yesterdays date, I now beg leave to transmit some further observations on the subject of the proposed attack on Sacketts Harbour. It is sufficiently obvious that considerable time will be required to collect the troops necessary for the undertaking, that a vessel must be sent to Niagara to carry up the Iron 24 Pr: and to bring down the Brass ones, as these Guns are indispensable, it is evident also, taking for granted that 4000 Men is the smallest number with which the Enterprize ought to be attempted, that at least 800 of them must come from the Lower Province.

Under all these circumstances, and with a view to derive every advantage which may be possible, from the interval which a reference to your Excellency for your decision and aid, has unavoidably occasioned, I propose that immediately after the Squadron is ready to sail (which it is hoped will be in two days, provided the ring bolts arrive) Sir James Yeo shall proceed off Sacketts Harbour, to reconnoiter the state of forwardness of the Enemys new Ship, and from thence along the coast, to Oswego, where it is reported there are large Depots of provisions and Naval Stores, and what are of infinitely greater importance, some of the Guns and other essential parts of the Equipment of the New Ship, should Sir James Yeo in cooperation with the force which I intend embarking on board the fleet be so fortunate as to seize or destroy the Guns and Stores, and thereby retard the progress of this Vessel, the advantages to be derived from such a measure would be incalculable.

From Oswego Sir James can detach one of the Brigs to Fort George, and the Head of the Lake, to take up the Iron and return with the Brass Guns, and with the assistance of the *Beresford* and *Vincent* schooners, which are already there, and such Craft as can be collected the Detachments of Regular and Militia troops from York, and the Indians from Burlington can be conveyed to Kingston, or to the Point of Rendezvous.

Without entering into any of the numerous reasons in favour of an immediate attack on Sacketts Harbour, it may be sufficient to observe that the exhausted state of this Province with respect to provisions will not admit of protracted operations. I will not say exactly how long our resources may hold out, but I am very apprehensive that at no very remote period, difficulties the most serious and alarming in this respect will be felt by the Right Division.

Should the Enemy therefore be suffered unmolested to complete his new Vessel, it is to be feared that he will then be enabled occasionally at least, to interrupt the communication with Niagara and the Head of the Lake, by which alone that Division can be supported and fed. I have the honor to be Sir Your Excellencys Most Obedient Humble Servant

Gordon Drummond
Lt. General

LS, CaOOA, British Military and Naval Records, RG8, I, "C" Ser., Vol. 683, pp. 61-64. This letter covered two enclosures. In the first, "Statement of the Force and means which it is assumed may be collected in Upper Canada for the attack

on Sackett's Harbour," Lieutenant General Drummond proposed raising 300 troops and 200 Indian warriors from several British army and militia regiments. In the second, he detailed moving ordnance from Kingston and Fort George for the proposed attack on Sackets Harbor.

The State of the Lake Erie Station

Commodore Oliver H. Perry departed the Lake Erie station in late October, 1813, leaving Master Commandant Jesse D. Elliott in command. There was a great deal of work to be done that winter, for the American ships as well as the prize vessels captured the previous September in the Battle of Lake Erie were in need of extensive repairs. A rancorous debate over Commander Elliott's role in the battle divided the officer corps into bitter factions.¹ Squabbles and duels among the officers and men sapped the station's energy.

Captain Arthur Sinclair discovered just how bad things were on the station when he arrived at the end of April 1814, but he lost no time in restoring the station to better order.

1. On the Perry-Elliott controversy, see Dudley, *Naval War of 1812*, Vol. 2, p. 607, note 1. In addition to sources cited in that note, see Skaggs, "Aiming at the Truth," and Skaggs, "Creating Small Unit Cohension."

CAPTAIN ARTHUR SINCLAIR TO SECRETARY OF THE NAVY JONES

Erie 29th. April 1814—

Sir

I merely drop you a line to notify my arrival, as the short time I have been here precludes the possibility of giving you any thing like correct information as regards the state of affairs on the Station. I can only say the Squadron are in no state of forwardness for service. The materials and mechanics are beginning to arrive, Every nerve shall be exerted, as the very life of the expedition depends on the time we may be able to commence it. I have written the commanding officer at Detroit, apprizing him of the intended expedition, and dispatched a vessel with it yesterday morning—from present appearances, he will receive it tomorrow morning.— I have endeavoured to impress upon him, the absolute necessity of securing the strong holds, which may command our passage to and from the Upper Lakes, as from every information I can gain, there are situations when a very small force, could effectually cut off all communication between the two Lakes, (Erie & Huron), a narrow channel, bordering close upon the Enemy's shore (within Pistol Shot) and a current of 4½ knots, setting down, would it not be well to make arrangements with the war office to this effect, while it is in our power to secure those important points? It is stated here that Genl. Harrison has ordered all other points to be abandoned except Detroit— Should those passes be secured by the Enemy when the Squadron are divided on the two Lakes, it might be attended with most serious consequences to the Country, and the probability is he will not attempt doing so, until we are so divided—

There is no bread Stuff as yet on the Station—I have, however made arrangements for an ample supply— There are very few officers here, not one of the least experience, from whom I can receive assistance— Commanders for the



Arthur Sinclair

vessels are immediately and much wanting— Since your last returns from this place there has been many deaths & discharges— Capt. Elliott thinks there are not more than 170 all told, many of whom are unfit for service— I have sent up ordering the Prize ships immediately down to this place, and shall use all possible exertion to get them in safety over the Bar. There is only 5 feet on the Bar, Capt. Elliott thinks it impossible to get them over, as they draw 9½ with swept holds— I shall however, have some lighters constructed, which I hope will succeed in getting them in,

As soon as returns can be made you shall receive them— I have the honor to remain with great Respect, Sir, Your Obedt. Sert.

A Sinclair

N.B. Your letter of the 18th. Inst. respecting the increase of pay of officers, was received yesterday—

ALS, DNA, RG45, CL, 1814, Vol. 2, No. 200 (M125, Roll No. 35).

LIEUTENANT COLONEL GEORGE CROGHAN, U.S.A., TO
CAPTAIN ARTHUR SINCLAIR

“Copy”

Detroit 1st. May 1814

Sir

I have this moment received your confidential communication of the 28th. Ult, and am happy in assuring you that every assistance which my diminutive force can afford, will be freely offered you— Knowing that an expedition would be fitted out against the posts on the upper Lakes, I was enabled to anticipate your enquiries relative to the situation, Strength &c, of those several places, and have taken such steps as are most likely to secure me correct information on the subject, I have not been able to ascertain *directly* the strength of the several Garrisons of Michilimackinack, St Marys, & St. Josephs but from the latest indian accounts, they are stated to be weak, that of Mackinac, cannot exceed 40 regulars & Canadians, The Indians from the neighbourhood of the River Sable generally agree in saying that the Enemy have built at Matchitash, (Gloucester Bay) 25 boats each carrying two guns, but as for the correctness of this tale I cannot vouch, I am rather disposed to disbelieve it— I think it highly probable that boats are building on Lake Simcoe, but as there is a portage of some miles between Lake Simcoe, and the waters of Gloucester Bay, over which those boats must be hauled I am induced to believe that they are not larger than ordinary bateaux, and that they are intended more for the purpose of keeping up the communication with, and of provisioning those posts above mentioned, than for acting offensively, I am well aware of the annoyance that your Fleet would meet with in passing up the Strait, should the Enemy by batteries, Gunboats or otherwise, command or block up the entrance into Lake Huron and shall therefore make immediate preparations for establishing a strong Post at the point on which, Fort St. Clair formerly stood— I fear Sir that in the present reduced state of my force, I shall not be able to afford you

any valuable assistance, indeed I cannot (unless previously reinforced) pledge myself to cooperate with you in any way, which would be likely to draw my troops from the immediate defence of this place and its dependencies— With regard to Provisions I cannot speak confidently, our supply at present is but scanty, nor am I aware of the arrangements made by Genl. Harrison for increasing the stocks, I find on enquiry that a sufficient number of boats can be furnished you at this place, the Qr. Masters return, reports 40, each capable of landing from 50 to 80 men— I have the honor to be Sir Your Obt. Sert

Signed, G, Croghan, Lt. Colo.
Comdt. Mic. Tery.

P.S, about 10 days since, I sent up some active Spies in the direction of Lake Simcoe & Gloucester Bay, for the purpose of ascertaining the exact situation of the Enemy in that quarter, within 10 or 15 days their return is expected.

Copy, DNA, RG45, CL, 1814, Vol. 3, No. 24 (M125, Roll No. 36). Croghan's letter was enclosed in Sinclair to Jones, 6 May 1814, pp. 453-57.

CAPTAIN ARTHUR SINCLAIR TO SECRETARY OF THE NAVY JONES

Erie 2nd. May 1814

Sir

Yours of the 27th. Ult. has this moment come to hand, I had anticipated that part of its contents which required the curtailing the indents made on the Navy Agent at Pittsburg— I have however, difficulties to contend with, in order to inform myself of the State of the Station, which you can form no idea of— It appears that since Mr. Hambleton left this, there has been no responsible person, whos' duty it is to keep copies of requisitions, receipts, returns of expenditures &c, I am using every possible exertion, in my power to enable me to give you a correct and circumstantial account of what has been done, what requires doing, what is on hand, and what required to complete the outfits of the intended expedition—you will readily see the difficulties existing, when I tell you that there is no account of the articles on hand of any discription, and that they are scattered over a space of several miles— Shot are to be raked from below high water mark, covered in sand, materials of every kind unstored—private Store houses, which have been rented, and used for Storing, have been so repeatedly broken into, that they are now nearly useless, therefore inventories of every article must be taken before I can inform you with any degree of accuracy. From the view I have taken of things, I am very confident that, system once established, there will be a saving of 25 th ct. to the Public,

I shall endeavour in the course of this week to give you a general view of the Station, and suggest such alterations as may appear necessary for the public good, The mechanics are arriving here daily—no provision had been made for their reception, and such are the difficulties for provision in this country, that I have been compelled, tho' against my inclination, to advance some from our Stock, in order to get them boarded at all— There are no boats on the Station, not a boat a piece for each vessel, of any discription—

The small vessels are in some state of readiness, the *Niagara* is over the Bar, but wants considerable repairs, Caulking entirely— The *Lawrence* shall pass the Bar the first good weather, in the mean time her repairs are going on, The *Lady Prevost*, a vessel only 72 feet on deck and 18 feet beam was altering into a Brig, the lower masts only are prepared, I have stopt the alteration, not only on account of expense, but utility also— She will not answer for the Upper Lake, her draft is 2 feet more than our Brigs, The *Hunter* is sunk with a quantity of Powder and Stores in her, much of which is damaged— The *Amelia* is in the same situation, I am now getting them on float, and saving what can be saved from them— The report is that they are rotten, and unfit for service—a survey shall be held and a report made accordingly—

The Prize Ships arrived last night, I have not yet visited them—their safety &c, shall be immediately attended to, they have considerable quantity of powder and ordnance Stores on board, full sufficient, I fancy, with what we have on hand, to answer all our purposes—

I am much pleased at the prospect of some Officers of experience being on their way here—none however have arrived yet; I would suggest that an old and experienced Purser be ordered to the station— One of that discription would answer all purposes, Mr. Harris, Mr. Hambleton, or One of their standing— A master commandant also of considerable experience, and who has system about him, will be absolutely necessary during my absence— I trust, Sir, that in my duty I shall not make unfavourable impressions as regards Capt. Elliott— He is very young as a Commander, has had but little experience, surely none to justify the difficulties he has had to contend with here—they have been many and of magnitude—

I have not yet heard from Detroit; but as the same vessel which carried my orders for bringing the Ships down took my dispatches, for that place, I shall expect her the first wind,

The vessels which were on shore (except the *Ariel*) were burnt, She, I am told, is a fine vessel, and lays four miles this side of Buffalo, uninjured— There is a considerable quantity of Ice yet between this and her, I shall however send down immediately and request Genl. Scott, who is in her neighborhood, to have her protected until I can make the necessary arrangements for getting her on float, which shall be in the shortest possible time— I have the honor to remain Sir, with high Respect Your Obt. Sert.

A. Sinclair

ALS, DNA, RG45, CL, 1814, Vol. 3, No. 3 (M125, Roll No. 36).

CAPTAIN ARTHUR SINCLAIR TO SECRETARY OF THE NAVY JONES

Erie 6th. may 1814

Sir

I herewith inclose you a return of officers and men on the Station and an inventory of such articles as I have been able to come at, and I shall endeavour to give you a view of the Station generally,—

There has not been a responsible officer at the head of any one department, whose duty it was to keep an account of the expenditure of Stores— There is

a Colo. Forster of this place (who appears to be a respectable man), and who Capt. Perry or Elliott appointed as receiver of provision and other Stores, (with the pay of a master) and to superintend the transportation from Waterford to this place, he is the only person who could give me any insight or information of what had been received, but as most articles, except provision, was either taken over to the Peninsula, or on board the Fleet with out order or requisition it, was out of his power, to say more than that they had been received. Timber which has been contracted for, not only for the use of the fleet, but for a Public Store House which Capt. Elliott has framed, and is finishing, by contract, on the Peninsula, has been exposed to pilfer and at the mercy of the waves—and I am told there are great quantities of 32 pd. Shot which have been brought from the Ships, and where the boats grounded, thrown overboard and are covered with sand— I am in hopes however, to recover them, and from that source have a sufficient quantity for the use of the Station—great quantities of timber and plank are contracted for, at very large prices, and the transportation to this place, from the mills, which are only two miles distant, amounts to more than half the cost of the articles: but as the work has been done under written contract, I shall be bound to pass the bills: but I absolutely feel mortified to place my Signature to them, as a sanction of their correctness— The Store house, building for the public, is much wanting for the security of Provisions and Stores, and also that part of it which is intended for a Hospital: but its situation is illy chosen, so much so, that I am yet doubtful whither I ought to have it finished, notwithstanding it is all ready for covering in, the materials nearly all delivered, and the finishing it contracted for,— I will inclose you a rough sketch of it with my opinion of the advantages, and disadvantages attending its situation, and shall be glad to receive your instructions on the subject as early as possible, that the necessary arrangements may be made with the contractors previous to my leaving the place—

The temporary manner in which the Brigs have been repaired has added nothing to their strength—they have merely had graving pieces put in without regarding the injury done their timbers, and they have not been caulked in the upper works, as appears, from their state, to be absolutely necessary, both for their preservation, safety, and the comfort of those on board, I have yet to get their Spars from the Forest— the *Hunter*, is from 12 to 16 years old and much decayed— They have put Powder and other articles in her, then suffered her to ground with her decks full of Shot and other heavy articles, where she has fell over, filled to water mark, and damaged half her contents, I have had her pumped out, and have secured what remained unspoiled— The *Amelia* is also sunk and reported to be rotten in her bottom—she shall be attended to as soon as possible, The *Ohio*, the *Porcupine*—the *Somers*—the *Scorpion*—and *Tigress* are all over the Bar— I keep two of them cruising between this and Long Point—two others anchored for the protection of those vessels over the Bar which have not yet got their guns on board, for such is the scarcity of Boats, and so heavy has the wind been since the *Niagara* passed the Bar, that I have not been able to get off all her Ballast & guns—nor has the *Laurence* been able to move towards the Bar, in consequence of the sea on it,—I was anxious to stop the purchase of articles, which might not be wanted, and which had been ordered by Capt. Elliott when he contemplated fitting out the two Ships, but was at a great loss how to proceed, as he had only a copy of a part of his requisitions— I was therefore obliged to make a rough and hurried estimate of what they would have re-

quired, and send it on, as articles not wanting, but I very much fear most of the heavy articles have been contracted for by the agent at Pittsburg,— I would have curtailed the indents when passing through that place, but it was impossible for me to know what Capt. Elliott's views were, or what the Station absolutely required,— I am of opinion that the article of Shot, the transportation of which is so very heavy, might have been dispensed with, as there is on the Station, a very ample supply for any service we have in view— The arrangement as regards provision is bad, the Flour is brought here to be baked, and with the utmost exertion which can be made here, no more than 10 barrels can be baked $\text{\textcircled{R}}$ day— I have urged the agent at Pittsburg to forward on bread with the least possible delay, and by paying extra to the Bakers here, I get soft bread baked sufficient of a night to serve the crews the following day, by which means we do not in-croach upon our Stock intended for the supply of the Expedition— The Beef & Pork, contracted for, to be delivered at this place, Capt. Elliott has directed the contractor to deposit at different points on the Lake, from 70 to 150 miles distant from here—which not only subjects us to the inconvenience of sending for it, but it is entirely unprotected from any expedition which might be formed against it by the Enemy, and altho not at our risque, the want of it might prove of serious inconvenience, I have therefore as there are no private craft on the Lake, employed one or two of the public vessels to transport it here immediately— they have arrived with a part of it and have gone for a second load,

The small part of the Ration, such as Beans, Peas, Rice, Molasses, Butter, Suit, and even vinegar, the men have been very long destitute of, and it is, as may be expected, a source of great discontent— I have written in the most pressing manner to the agent at Pittsburg to endeavour to supply them immediately—they had been some days without Spirits when I came, and but a very few barrels has yet arrived, I am doing every thing in my power to reconcile them to the Service here, as their times are daily expiring: but with all the inducements held out, I fear I shall lose a large portion of them—and as for getting volunteers among the people of this country, it is out of the question, where the common labourer gets his dollar $\text{\textcircled{R}}$ day— you will perceive that there are only 31 marines fit for Service— That discription of men might be procured, as there are a number of substitutes among the militia here, who have evinced a disposition to enlist, were it not for their Officers preventing it, they have gone so far as to confine their men to camp and prohibit our recruiting parties from passing their lines, you will perceive, by the enclosed list of men, how little was known of the State of the Station, when I informed you, by authority from Capt. Elliott, that all told, there was not more than 170 attached to it, A muster had not been had for a very considerable time—

The mechanics have nearly all arrived, but their tools are yet behind— I have mustered for their use, all I can procure on the Station, have got the Spars underway, and am preparing to build a couple of Launches, fit for anchor boats &c, which are indispensably necessary, as we are going into strange, narrow, & shallow waters. I shall not be detained for any other class of boats, but endeavour to substitute such as Colo. Croghan mentions in his letter (in answer to mine on the subject of our expedition), can be furnished at Detroit, a copy of which letter I herewith inclose you—

So great is the scarcity of provision in this quarter, that in order to get board, upon any terms, for the mechanics, I have been compelled to advance provisions to each house keeper who would take 10 men at \$4 $\text{\textcircled{R}}$ week— Better

arrangements might, perhaps, have been made, had it been thought of before they arrived, but it appears their arrival had not been anticipated in any respect.

The gun carriages disabled in the action are yet to be made, I have been thus particular in giving you a correct state of things, that you may know the means with which I am furnished, and calculate accordingly—& whatever industry and the exertion of all the means in my power can perform, shall be done to hasten my departure and the equipment of that part of the Force intended for this Lake: but you will readily perceive that too much depends upon contingencies, for me to speak with any thing like certainty of the time I shall have it in my power to leave this, my situation is peculiarly mortifying, as I feel that the very soul of the enterprise depends upon the time, I shall be able to commence it—

I do not think that Mr. Magrath, (the only Purser we have on the Station) is entirely himself at all times, he is certainly occasionally deranged—¹ I suggested to you in my last letter the necessity of ordering an old and experienced Purser on the Station— I think the good of the Service requires it, and if he, instead of the commanding officer, could be made the agent and responsible person, through whom all money expended here should pass, it would take great trouble and responsibility from the commander—

Mr. Magrath, has been advancing some of the men three months pay, said to be voted by congress on account of their Services here, Is it correct and shall it be allowed to all? my having no instructions to that effect, I have stopt it until I hear from you,

What shall I do with the invalids, who have been disabled on the station? shall a certain allowance be made them to carry them home, and what shall that allowance be,—

Is there any allowance to seamen who have served their times out and discharged here, and if there is what shall it be?

Am I to continue the acting appointments made by Captains Perry and Elliott, where I find them deserving?

Shall I draw on the agent at Pittsburg or on the Navy Department for the requisite funds to meet the expences of the station— I have been able to trace most of the difficulties existing among the Officers to their proper source, and am in hopes to adjust them without court martial,— none of the officers mentioned in your letter of the 27th. have yet arrived—there services are very much wanting, as you know they are all very young here— a gang of Block makers, which I knew nothing of being ordered, have just arrived— A very industrious young man has been imployed here all the Season, and has an ample supply for all our purposes already on hand—they were therefore by no means wanting— I shall however, as they are here, and already incurred the greatest expense of getting themselves, tools and materials on the Spot, let them make a stock sufficient to meet contingencies, and then discharge them— I have written the agent at Philadelphia to send no more mechanics, as it seems they are not all yet underway that were required— I have sent an officer on to Pittsburg to forward the articles wanting, provision especially, I have the honor to remain with highest respect, Sir, Your Obt. Sert.

A Sinclair

N.B.

The next mail will bring on a regular muster Roll to the Accountant. of the Navy.

ALS, DNA, RG45, CL, 1814, Vol. 3, No. 23 (M125, Roll No. 36). Two enclosures, "Account of Naval Stores on the Erie Station 1st. May 1814" and "Account of the Stores captured from the Enemy, now on board the Prize Vessels, 1st. May 1814" follow this letter. A sketch showing the location of the new blockhouse, store house, and hospital, and discussing the advantages and disadvantages of a new anchorage for the fleet, follows letter No. 24.

1. Humphrey Magrath, purser. He committed suicide at Erie on 11 July 1814. For more on his mental state, see McKee, *Gentlemanly and Honorable Profession*, pp. 407–8.

The Accidental Death of a Shipwright

There were two causes for celebration at Sackets Harbor on 1 May 1814. First, the frigate Superior, which was constructed in only three months, was safely launched that day. As was customary in preindustrial America, the craftsmen were rewarded for their hard work with a celebratory feast and a "frolic," a day of freedom from work to go fishing, picnicking, and very likely drinking and reveling.¹

Superior's launching coincided with the day Commodore Isaac Chauncey announced the news that the officers, seamen, and marines on the northern lakes would receive a twenty-five percent increase in their pay, and an increase in the value of their rations, which would be an additional sum.² This, too, was probably celebrated by the officers, seamen, and marines with toasts and cheers.

The day of celebration however ended that night in the tragic death of a shipwright, Milo Lacy, who was accidently killed by a sentinel. His fellow craftsmen threatened to strike and the commodore feared the progress of shipbuilding during this critical time would be halted.

1. See *Trinidad Corporation, Ceremonies and Festivities, for more on ship launching ceremonies and celebrations.*

2. For more on the pay increase, see p. 402, and McKee, *Gentlemanly and Honorable Profession*, p. 332.

COMMODORE ISAAC CHAUNCEY TO SECRETARY OF THE NAVY JONES

No. 56
Hon Wm. Jones
Secy. of the Navy
Washington

U.S. Ship *General Pike*
Sacketts Harbor 1st. May. 1814

Sir

I am happy to have it in my power to inform you that the U.S. Ship "*Superior*" was launched this Morning without accident

The *Superior* is an uncommon beautiful well built Ship something larger than the *President* and could mount 64 Guns if it was thought adviseable to put as many upon her— This Ship has been built in the short space of eighty days and when it is taken into view that two Brigs of 500 Tons each have also been

built rigged and completely fitted for Service since the first of february—it will be acknowledged that the Mechanics employed on this Station have done their duty I have the honor to be very respectfully Sir, Yr. Mo. Ob. St

I. C.

LB, NH*i*, Isaac Chauncey Letter Books (BV Chauncey, Isaac).

COMMODORE ISAAC CHAUNCEY TO SECRETARY OF THE NAVY JONES

No. 57.

U.S. Ship *General Pike*
Sacketts Harbor, 2d. May. 1814

Sir.

A very unfortunate accident took place yesterday afternoon— The Carpenters as is usual after so important a launch were permitted to have a frolick—many of them got inebriated and in this situation one of them in passing a Sentinel at the Contractor's Store was stopped and an altercation ensued—the Sentinel fired and unfortunately killed one of the most respectable Carpenters on the Station who had not interfered in the altercation—this accident has created a great sensation, amongst the Carpenters and Mechanics generally in fact, so much so, that they immediately formed the resolution of doing no more work for the Public at this place but to proceed to New York immediately— The General and myself have done every thing in our power to soothe these Men and by giving the Sentinel up to the civil authority and a little management, I hope that I shall be able to induce them to relinquish their determination of proceeding to New York which if carried into execution would be ruinous to our prospects here and retard the operations of the Campaign so much that the Enemy would reap great advantages from it. I have the honor to be very respectfully Sir, Yr. Mo. Ob. St.

Isaac Chauncey

LS, DNA, RG45, CL, 1814, Vol. 3, No. 5 (M125, Roll No. 36).

A Change in Strategy on the Upper Lakes

The American campaign to recapture Michilimackinac by combined military and naval operations, which had been in contemplation since the fall of 1813, was about to get under way when Secretary of War Armstrong had a sudden change of heart about the strategy for the northern campaign.

Armstrong assumed that, because no British supplies had been shipped on Lake Erie that winter, the enemy must be concentrating his efforts on the Niagara Peninsula and making it the western extremity of his campaign. Armstrong argued that the American naval forces that would have supported joint operations on Lake Huron could instead be diverted to the support of General Jacob Brown's army, which had just moved from Sacket's Harbor to the Niagara frontier.

As a result, the operations on Lake Huron were delayed and scaled back while Captain Sinclair remained on Lake Erie with the squadron.

SECRETARY OF WAR ARMSTRONG TO PRESIDENT JAMES MADISON

War Dept.
1st May 1814.

Sir,

So long as we had reason to believe that the enemy intended and was in condition to re-establish himself on the Thames & open a-new his intercourse with the Indian tribes of the West, it was no doubt proper to give to our naval means a direction which would best obstruct or defeat such movements and designs.

An order has been accordingly given by the Navy Dept. to employ the flotilla on Lake Erie in scouring the shores of the more western lakes—in destroying a trading establishment at St. Josephs and in recapturing Michilemakinaw.

As however our last advices shew, that the enemy has no efficient force Westward of Burlington bay & that he has suffered the season of easy & rapid transportation to escape him, it is now evident that he means to strengthen himself on the Peninsula & make Fort Erie, which he is now repairing, the western extremity of his line of operations.

Under this new state of things it is respectfully suggested, whether another and better use cannot be made of the Flotilla?

In explaining myself it will be necessary to premise, that (the garrisons of Detroit and Malden included) it will be practicable to assemble on the shores & navigable waters of Lake Erie 5000 regular troops & three thousand volunteers & militia & that means have been taken to produce this effect on or before the 10th. day of June next. But without the aid of naval means this force will be comparatively inoperative & necessarily dispersed & with their aid ~~of these means it will be~~ competent to great objects.

Lake Erie, on which our dominion is undisputed, furnishes a way scarcely less convenient for approaching the heart of upper Canada than Lake Ontario. 8 or even 6000 men landed in the bay ~~within~~ between Fort Erie and point Abino and operating either on the line of the Niagara or more directly (if a more direct route is to be found) against the British post at Burlington bay, cannot be resisted with effect without compelling the enemy so to weaken his more eastern posts, as may bring them within the reach of our means at Sacket's harbor & platsburg.

In choosing between this object and that to which the flotilla is now destined there cannot be much if any hesitation. Our attack carried to Burlington & York interposes a barrier which completely protects Malden & Detroit—makes doubtful & hazardous his intercourse with the western Indians—reduces Makinaw to a useless possession—renders probable the abandonment of Fort Niagara & takes from the enemy half his motive for continuing the naval conflict on Lake Ontario. On the other hand—take Makinaw and what is gained, but Makinaw itself?

If this plan is ~~to be~~ adopted, no time should be lost in countermanding the execution of the other. I am Sir, with the highest respect Your Most Ob. Servt.

John Armstrong

ALS, DLC, James Madison Papers, Series I (Roll No. 16). Another copy of this letter, under date of 30 April 1814, can be found in DNA, RG107, Letters Sent to the President by the Secretary of War, Vol. 1, pp. 266–67 (M127, Roll No. 1).

PRESIDENT JAMES MADISON TO SECRETARY OF THE NAVY JONES

Montpelier May 4. 1814.

Dear Sir

The Secretary of War in a letter of the 1st. instant states that the last advices make it evident that the Enemy, instead of now undertaking a re-establishment of himself on the Thames, and a renewal of his intercourse with the Indians, means to strengthen himself on the Peninsula, making Fort Erie the Western Extremity of his line of operations; that including the Garrisons of Detroit & Malden, it will be practicable, by the means already taken to assemble on L. Erie & its waters, by the 10th. of June next, 5000 regular troops, and 3000 Volunteers & Militia; but that this force will be dispersed & comparatively inoperative, without the aid of the flotilla on that Lake, whilst with that aid, such a force, or even less, landed at a favorable point, and directed agst. the Enemy's post at Burlington Bay & York, could not be resisted without weakening & exposing himself to our forces at Sacket's Harbour & Plattsburg; the interposition of such a force being, in the mean time, a barrier to Detroit & Malden; obstructing their intercourse with the Indians, rendering probable the evacuation of Niagara, and, less important to him, a continuance of the Naval Contest on L. Ontario. With these prospects he suggests that the expedition into the Western Lakes be relinquished, and the naval means allotted to it, be turned in aid of that above proposed.

The probable effect, above as well as below, of so large a force if it can be assembled at the Eastern extremity of L. Erie, entitles the suggestion to a fair consideration; and if you find it not too late, & are satisfied that the project of creating a naval force on L. Huron is abandoned by the Enemy, or can not be effectually pursued so as to threaten a reanimation of Savage hostilities, it will be best, under all circumstances, to change your orders to Capt: Sinclair: I give the Secy. of War, so to understand.

Perhaps it may be practicable to find a sufficient naval aid for the War Dept without interfering with the expedition into the Western Lakes. The land force withdrawn for it, must I presume be too inconsiderable to interfere with the other object; besides that its appearance may prevent some of the Savages from descending to the main theatre of operations.

In a case depending on intelligence which must be daily unproving, and on circumstances liable to continual change, it would be unsafe to be more positive than I have been. I cannot do better than to leave it in the hands of yourself & the Secy. of War, whose interchange of information & sentiments, promises the soundest result. Accept my esteem & best respects

James Madison

ALS, PHi, Uslema Clark Smith Collection, William Jones Papers.

SECRETARY OF THE NAVY JONES TO PRESIDENT JAMES MADISON

Navy Department
May 6th. 1814

Dear Sir

Your favor of the 4th. came to hand this morning. If the information received by the Secretary of War be correct as I presume it is from the confidence re-

posed in it by the Secretary, then the plan of operations which he suggests appears to me well adapted to the occasion. I have no information of recent date either affirming or contradicting the rumored preparations of the enemy at Mackadash on Lake Huron.

All that I can infer from what has hitherto been the supposed object of the enemy is that boats have been constructed on Lake Simcoe for the transportation of provisions and Indian supplies to Mackinac and it has also been suggested that they would probably arm and equip a trading vessel which it is said remained on Lake Huron after the surrender of the garrison at Mackinac

Whether that vessel yet remains or whether she formed part of the captured Squadron is uncertain

I have just conversed with the Secretary of War on the subject of the contemplated operations and shall instruct Captain Sinclair to remain with the Squadron on Lake Erie for the purpose of cooperation and to detach two of the light vessels into Lake Huron for the purpose of observation and to intercept the supplies destined for the relief of Mackinac thro' I apprehend that object will have been attained before their arrival.

It will be of importance however to explore the several points of communication with the enemys posts on the waters of Huron and ascertain the real state of things in that quarter which can be accomplished in a short time. A small detachment of troops will accompany the expedition.

All apprehension for the safety of Sacketts Harbour has subsided and we are evidently ahead of the enemy in the equipment of our new vessels and the remaining heavy Guns I trust and believe will get on in due time. Our large new ship was to Launch about the first of this month.

The two new Brigs of 600 tons & 22. 32 pd. Carronades each, were ready with the exception of the Guns for one, which however were near at hand.

I think the enemys force and preparations have been much exaggerated but the apprehension which it has excited may have accelerated ours.

I am not apprized of the actual state of forwardness of the enemys large ship which was expected to Launch about this time. His largest ship cannot I think possibly launch until August if then. I hope and trust we shall be able to take and keep the Lake at least until that time, when if he is determined to overpower us the contest will be very unequal

On the upper Lakes I do not anticipate anything to disturb our complete controul. On Lake Champlain our superiority will soon be placed beyond doubt indeed there is good reason to believe the enemy will not venture on the Lake. Our new Brig the *Saratoga* was Launched at Vergennes in thirty five day from the day her Keel was laid

She will mount 16. 32 pd. Carronades and Six long 24 pounders. I know of nothing to equal the exertions and dispatch in this case.

Commodore Barney is in the Bay with fourteen of his vessels and about 600 men. Could we procure about 400 more for him I think he would keep the enemy at bay, but we cannot get men.

The army bounty has deprived us of many seamen and the demand for the Lakes has thined our flotilla service. The *Congress* Frigate at Portsmouth has been waiting a long time only for 100 men and cannot get them.

The *Constitution* will sail again in a short time and from the vessels that are out we have only news paper accounts. We have got the Loan but I feel the absolute necessity of drawing upon it as sparingly as possible. Having conferred

freely with the Secretary of the Treasury and attended to the closing of the Loan, although I am gratified in the highest degree that we have succeeded at this important moment. The issue however is not very flattering and I hope it may not lull us into confidence. I perceive that the stream is nearly dry unless new sources can be opened.

I am humbled when I reflect that this great nation has to depend for one half that Loan upon a speculative individual who may or may not fulfill his contract, for in him I view it as the bold effort of a gambler.¹

I will still hope for a better state of things, the election in New York is cheering, and I think there is daily evidence that the enemy has at least as little relish for the continuance of the war as we have. I am most sincerely yours.

W Jones

ALS, DLC, James Madison Papers, Series 1 (Roll No. 16).

1. On 2 April 1814, recently-confirmed Secretary of the Treasury George W. Campbell opened a short term loan of ten million dollars. In early May, New York banker Jacob Barker, as agent of a number of state and local banks, subscribed to half of the loan, and individuals and banks in Boston, New York, and Philadelphia loaned the government the remaining five million dollars. Stagg, *Mr. Madison's War*, pp. 375-79.

SECRETARY OF THE NAVY JONES TO CAPTAIN ARTHUR SINCLAIR

Captain Arthur Sinclair
Commanding Naval Officer
Lake Erie

Navy Department
May 19th. 1814.

Sir

The formidable exertions making by the Enemy to strengthen his positions and increase his force on the Peninsula and Niagara frontier, together with information which induces the belief, that he does not contemplate any movement with a view to recover the upper part of the province, but to exert all his vigor at these points, will necessarily induce a corresponding concentration of our forces along the Niagara & the adjacent shores of Lake Erie.—

These circumstances, it is expected, will call for combined Military and Naval operations on Lake Erie, where the Enemy may attempt by Boats, which he can soon construct, to accomplish by numbers what he is deficient in specific naval force; but it is particularly important that the Army should be afforded every facility of transportation, to such points as circumstances may require, and the cover of the Fleet while debarking.—

It is therefore, deemed expedient that you should remain with the Squadron on Lake Erie, to direct those important movements, secure the undisturbed command of that Lake, and by vigilantly exploring the hostile shore, defeat any attempt that may be made to create a floating force of any description.— This being determined, you will despatch either Lieutenant Dexter, Woodhouse, or Kennedy,¹ with three of the small Vessels, best calculated for the service, well equipped, upon the expedition to Lake Huron, pointed out to you in my instructions of the 15th. Ultimo.—

For all the purposes of this expedition, sixty Officers, Seamen and ordinary Seamen, in total, I should deem sufficient, and the commanding Military Officer at Detroit will furnish from 100 to 150 regulars to accompany the expedition.— Lieutenant Kennedy with the detachment from the *Constellation* left this place some days since.— Sailing Master Rutter² with his Detachment from Philadelphia writes from Pittsburg, and must be with you e're this. Some of his men deserted on the road.—

You will forward a description of all deserters to the Commanding Officer of the station, where they were recruited, to be advertized, and to Pittsburg, for publication, with a suitable reward.—

Examples must be made of Deserters, as the evil is greatly increasing.—

I have received your several Letters and reports, relative to the state of the force under your command, and of the measures you had adopted.— I regret the imperfect and negligent state in which you found that force, after the extravagant requisitions which had been made, and reiterate my earnest solicitude for the retrenchment of all unnecessary expenditures, and a judicious, systematical and economical arrangement.—

Enclosed you will have a list of the Officers which have been ordered to Erie, the date of each order and station to which directed.— I am very respectfully Your Obedt. Servt.

W Jones.—

LB, DNA, RG45, CLS, 1814, pp. 141-42.

1. Lieutenant Daniel S. Dexter was ordered to Erie, Pennsylvania, in April 1814; Lieutenant Samuel Woodhouse was transferred from Philadelphia to Erie in April 1814; Lieutenant Edmund P. Kennedy, the senior lieutenant on Lake Erie, transferred from the frigate *Constellation* at Norfolk in April 1814.

2. Thomas Rutter entered the navy as a midshipman on 9 November 1813. He accepted a warrant as a sailing master 25 March 1814, a position offered to him after he submitted his resignation from the navy.

British Assault on Oswego

The town of Oswego, New York, is located at the terminus of a nearly unbroken water communication going north from New York along the Hudson River, west along the Mohawk River to Rome, and then across a portage to Lake Oneida and the Oswego River to Lake Ontario. This water communication made Oswego an ideal transshipment point for military and naval stores and supplies being sent from New York City and the foundry at West Point, N.Y. Heavy guns for the new American ships, cables, and other supplies were shipped along this route during the winter to be ready for the spring campaign.

The British contemplated an attack on Sackets Harbor with the goal of destroying Commodore Chauncey's new frigate Superior. Several probes by small boat expeditions, however, indicated that Sackets Harbor was strongly guarded. Oswego was guarded by the poorly defended Fort Ontario.¹

If the British could carry off or destroy the military and naval stores and provisions that had been collecting at Oswego during the winter months, then they could essentially cripple American war efforts on the lake for many months.

A combined British operation, commanded in person by Commodore Sir James L. Yeo and Lieutenant General Gordon Drummond, got under way on 4 May 1814, but did not reach Oswego until after noon the next day. They made an attempt to land but were repulsed by American gunfire. Poor weather further delayed the assault, and another landing was not attempted until the next day, 6 May. The British carried off a quantity of valuable stores, but larger quantities remained safe below the falls of the Oswego River.

1. Oswego was the site of three forts in the eighteenth century: Forts George, Oswego, and Ontario. The French destroyed all three in 1756. In 1759, the British rebuilt Fort Ontario on the site of the original defensive works but Continental forces destroyed it in 1779. The British rebuilt it again in 1782. This fort, located on a bluff overlooking the confluence of the Oswego River and Lake Ontario, is often misidentified as Fort Oswego.

LIEUTENANT GENERAL GORDON DRUMMOND, BRITISH ARMY, TO
GOVERNOR-GENERAL SIR GEORGE PREVOST

Kingston. May 3rd. 1814.

Sir,

I have the honor to acquaint Your Excellency, that I propose embarking on board the Squadron, as soon as the wind is fair, the following Troops, viz.

Royal Artillery	24
Rocketeers	6
Sappers	20
Regt. de Watteville	450
Glengary Light Inf	50
which, with the Royal Marines	350

will make a disposeable force of 900 Men; for the purpose of destroying, if possible, the Enemy's Magazines, and Stores, at Oswego, and along the Southern Coast of Lake Ontario; bringing off, however, such quantities as it may be practicable so to do, particularly of provisions for the relief of our Right Division.—

To satisfy myself, that as much is done, on this occasion, as can be, I propose embarking myself, with Commodore, Sir James Yeo; but the immediate command of the Troops I have entrusted to Lieutenant Colonel Fischer, of De Watteville's Regt.¹

By the enclosed Copy of Intelligence dated from Sackett's Harbour the 28th. Ult. Your Excellency will perceive, that a new Ship is to be laid down there immediately, and finished in six weeks. If such be the case, as it is impossible for us to keep pace with such exertions, I must again beg leave to repeat my opinion, that the only way completely to secure the tranquillity of the Upper Province is a vigorous combined attack of Army and Navy against the Enemy's chief means of annoyance, their Fleet, & Stores, at Sackett's Harbour.— But on this occasion, the most ample measures must be taken to ensure success; and the small force, which the Upper Province can afford, must be assisted by a regular force from Your Excellency of certainly not less than 800 effective men from the Lower Province.— In all these opinions I am fully joined by the Naval Commander, Sir James Yeo.—

Major General Riall has reported to me, that the Enemy are encamped at Buffalo, with about 800 men, and three Field Pieces.— I have the honor to be, Sir, Your Excellency's most obedient, humble servant,

Gordon Drummond
Lt. General

LS, CaOOA, British Military and Naval Records, RG8, I, "C" Ser., Vol. 683, pp. 93–96.

1. Lieutenant Colonel Victor Fischer, De Watteville's Regiment, British army.

COMMODORE ISAAC CHAUNCEY TO SECRETARY OF THE NAVY JONES

No. 64.

U.S. Ship *General Pike*
Sacketts Harbor. 7. May. 1814

Sir

I received a Letter from Captain Woolsey¹ last Evening dated at 6. O'Clock p.m. on the 5th. inst.— the Enemy had been cannonadeing Oswego about three hours when the express came away without doing any injury— he had been twice repulsed in his attempts to land and the Officers and Men in high spirits, and expected to be able to hold out untill reinforcements arrived Col. Mitchell² and Captain Woolsey are both excellent Officers, and I may say without disparagement to any other corps that the 3d. Regiment of Artillery is one of the best disciplined Corps in the Army and is remarkable for the great number of scientific and correct officers in it— we therefore may expect a most gallant defence of Oswego if the Enemy has succeeded in taking the place, he has paid dearly for it— the attack I presume was renewed yesterday Morning as the guns were heard distinctly at this place from Morning untill about 2. P.M. when the firing ceased

Captain Woolsey writes me, that the Enemy has one of his large Frigates with him, and the *Lady of the Lake* saw the other off the Ducks yesterday, which has determined me not to risk an action with Such a disparity of force.— my Gig returned from Kingston about 2 O'Clock this Morning— Mr. Vaughn³ (the Officer who went in her) was within about two Miles of the Town last night at Sun-down and could see distinctly every thing which floated in the Harbor— he tells me that there is not a Vessel of any kind in Kingston (except the one on the Stocks) the Enemy must therefore have his whole fleet with him which will enable him to blockade Oswego, if he can't take it and oblige us to bring our Guns and other Stores by Land I must hear by tomorrow the result of the last attack which will determine me immediately what course to adopt— I should have sailed this Morning, if I had found that the Enemy had been out, with his old fleet only I have the honor to be very respectfully Sir yr. mo. Ob. St

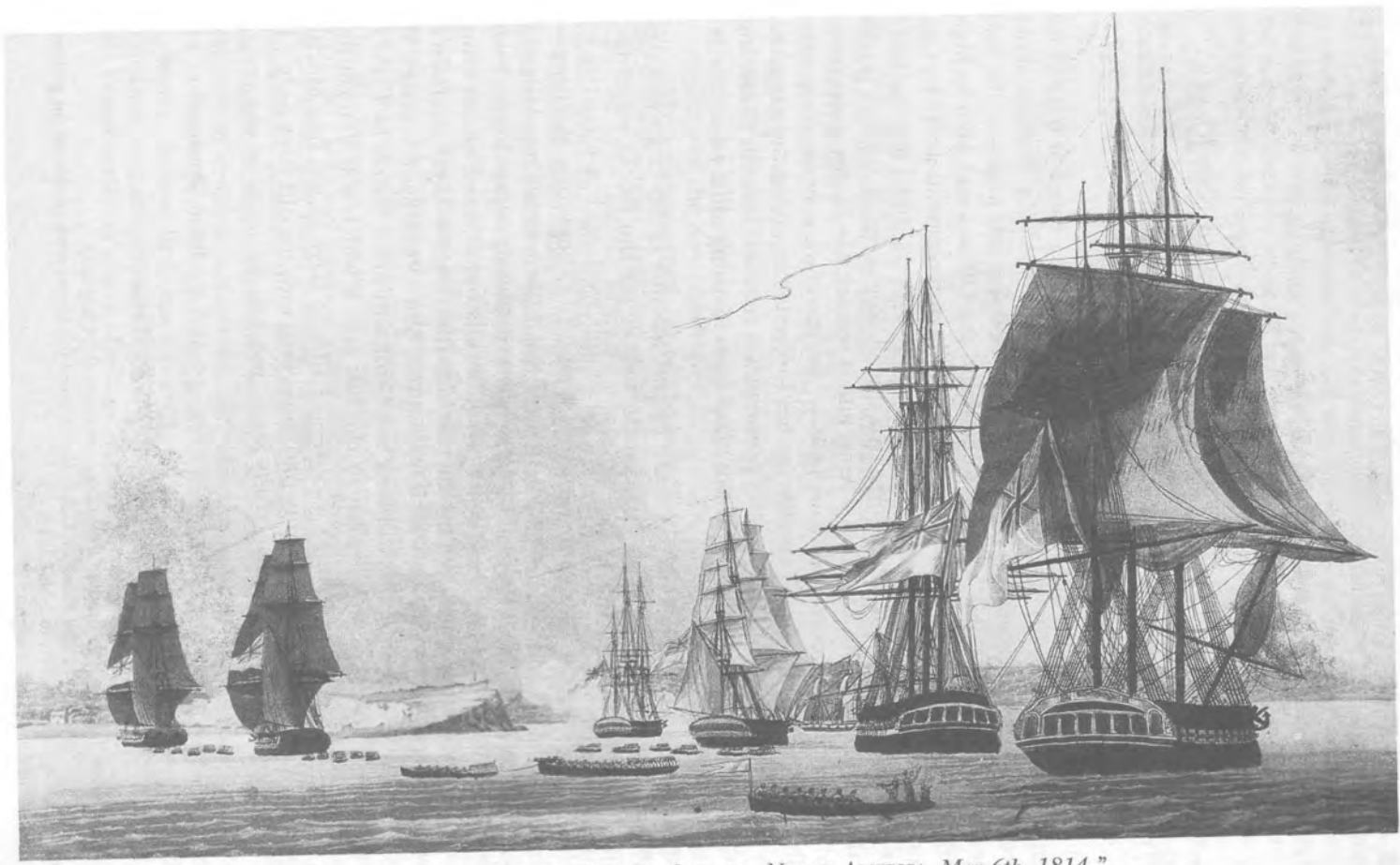
Isaac Chauncey

LS, DNA, RG45, CL, 1814, Vol. 3, No. 28 (M125, Roll No. 36).

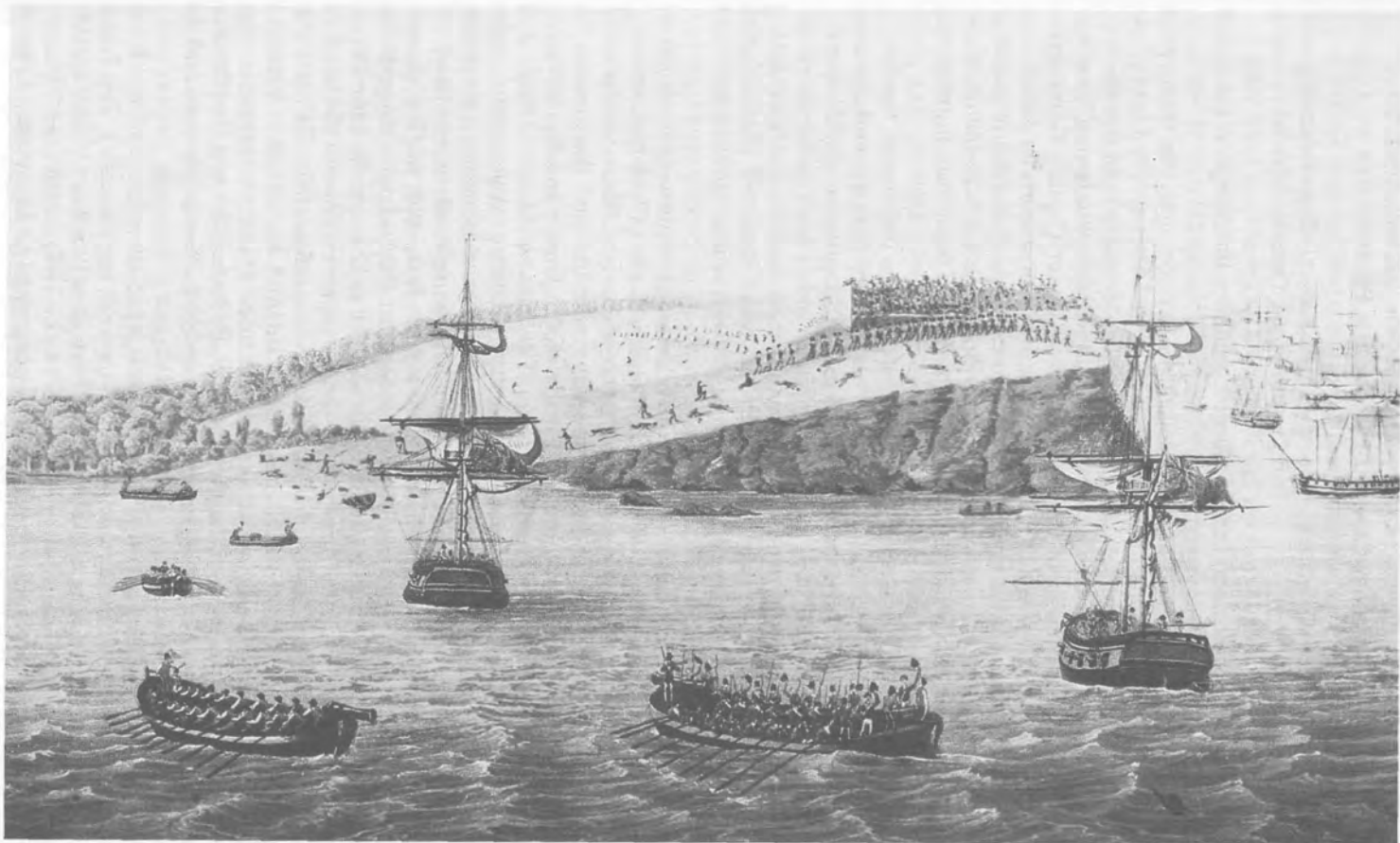
1. Melancthon T. Woolsey, promoted to master commandant 24 July 1813.

2. Lieutenant Colonel George Mitchell, U.S.A. He received the brevet rank of colonel for gallant conduct at Oswego, antedated to 5 May 1814.

3. Sailing Master William Vaughn.



"STORMING FORT OSWEGO, ON LAKE ONTARIO, NORTH AMERICA. May 6th. 1814."



"STORMING FORT OSWEGO, by 2nd. Battalion ROYAL MARINES and a party of SEAMEN; 15m. past Twelve at Noon."

LIEUTENANT GENERAL GORDON DRUMMOND, BRITISH ARMY, TO
GOVERNOR-GENERAL SIR GEORGE PREVOST

His Majesty's Ship *Prince Regent*
off Oswego, Lake Ontario, May 7th: 1814

Sir,

I am happy to have to announce to Your Excellency the compleat success of the Expedition against Oswego.

The Troops mentioned in my Despatch of the 3rd. Inst. viz. Six Companies of the De Watteville Regiment, under Lieut. Colonel Fischer, the Light Company of the Glengary Light Infantry under Captain McMillan, and the whole of the 2nd. Battn. Royal Marines under Lieut. Colonel Malcolm, having been embarked with a Detachment of the Royal Artillery under Captain Cruttenden, with two Field Pieces; a Detachment of the Rocket Company under Lieutenant Stevens, and a Detachment of Sappers and Miners under Lieutenant Gosset of the Royal Engineers, on the evening of the 3rd. Instant, I proceeded on board the *Prince Regent* at Daylight on the 4th. and the Squadron immediately sailed—¹

The Wind being variable, we did not arrive off Oswego until noon, the following day. The Ships lay to, within long Gun shot of the Battery, and the Gun boats under Captain Collier,² were sent close in, for the purpose of inducing the Enemy to shew his fire, and particularly the number and positions of his Guns.— This service was performed in a most gallant manner, the Boats taking a position within point blank shot of the Fort, which returned the fire from Four Guns, one them heavy—³ The Enemy did not appear to have any Guns mounted on the Town side of the River—

Having sufficiently reconnoitered the place, arrangements were made for its attack, which, it was decided, should take place at Eight oClock that evening, but at Sunset a very heavy Squall blowing directly on the Shore, obliged the squadron to get under weigh, and prevented our return until the next morning; when the following disposition was made of the Troops and Squadron, by Commodore, Sir James Yeo and myself— The *Princess Charlotte*, *Wolfe*, and *Royal George* to engage the Batteries, as close as the depth of Water would admit of their approaching the Shore; The *Sir Sidney Smith* Schooner to scour the town, and keep in check a large body of Militia, who might attempt to pass over to the Fort.— The *Moira* and *Melville* Brigs to tow the Boats with the Troops, and then cover their landing, by scouring the woods on the low point towards the foot of the hill, by which it was intended to advance to the assault of the Fort— Captain OConner⁴ had the direction of the Boats and Gunboats destined to land the troops, which consisted of the Flank Companies of the DeWatteville Regiment, the Company of the Glengary Light Infantry, and the 2nd. Battalion of the Royal Marines, being all that could be landed at one embarkation. The four Battalion Companies of the Regiment of DeWatteville, and the Detachment of Artillery remaining in reserve on board the *Princess Charlotte*, and *Sir Sidney Smith* Schooner—

As soon as every thing was ready, the Ships opened their fire, and the Boats pushed for the point of Disembarkation, in the most regular order. The Landing was effected under a heavy fire from the Fort, as well as from a considerable Body of the Enemy drawn up on the Brow of the Hill, and in the Woods— The immediate command of the Troops was entrusted to Lieutenant Colonel

Fischer of the Regiment of deWatteville, of whose gallant cool, and judicious conduct, as well as of the distinguished bravery, steadiness and discipline of every officer and Soldier composing this small force, I was a witness, having, with Commodore Sir James Yeo, The Deputy Adjut. General, and the officers of my Staff, landed with the Troops—

I refer Your Excellency to Lieut. Colonel Fischers Letter enclosed, for an Account of the operations.— The place was gained in ten minutes, from the moment the Troops advanced. The Fort being every where almost open, the whole of the Garrison, consisting of the 3rd. Battalion of Artillery, about 400. strong, and some hundred Militia effected their escape, with the exception of about Sixty Men, half of them severely wounded, who fell into our hands.— The loss of the Enemy could not have been less than one hundred in killed and wounded—

I enclose a return of our loss; amongst which I have to regret that of Captain Holtaway⁵ of the Royal Marines. Your Excellency will lament to observe in this list, the name of that gallant, judicious and excellent officer, Captain Mulcaster⁶ of the Royal Navy, who landed at the head of 200 Volunteer Seamen from the Fleet, and received a severe and dangerous wound, when within a few yards of the Guns, which he was advancing to storm, which I fear will deprive the squadron of his valuable assistance for some time, at least.

In noticing the cooperation of the Naval Branch of the Service, I have the highest gratification in assuring Your Excellency that I have throughout this, as well as on every other occasion, experienced the most zealous, cordial, and able Support from Sir James Yeo— it will be for him to do justice to the merits of those under his command; but I may, nevertheless be permitted to observe that nothing could exceed the coolness and gallantry in action, or the unwearied exertions on Shore of the Captains, Officers and Crews of the whole squadron—

To the high honor of both branches of the service; I have to draw Your Excellency's notice to the gratifying fact, that not a single Soldier or Sailor is reported missing, nor did I observe one of either Service in a state of intoxication, altho surrounded by temptation.

I enclose a Memorandum of the captured articles that have been brought away, in which Your Excellency will perceive with satisfaction Seven heavy Guns, that were intended for the Enemy's new Ship— Three 32 Pounders were sunk by the Enemy in the river, as well as a large quantity of Cordage, and other naval Stores; the loss to them, therefore, has been very great, and I am sanguine in believing that by this blow, they have been deprived of the means of compleating the armament, and particularly the equipment of their large Man of War— an object of the greatest importance—

Every object of the Expedition having been effected, and the captured stores embarked, the Troops returned in the most perfect order on board their respective Ships, at 4 oClock this morning, when the Squadron immediately sailed; the Barracks in the Town, as well as those in the Fort having been previously burnt, together with the platforms, Bridge, &c, and the works, in every other respect, dismantled and destroyed, as far as was practicable.

I cannot close this despatch, without offering to Your Excellency's notice, the admirable and judicious manner in which Lieut. Colonel Fischer formed the troops, and led them to the attack— The Cool and gallant conduct of Lieut. Colonel Malcolm at the head of the 2nd. Battalion Royal Marines, the intrepidity of Captain De Bersy of the Regiment De Watteville, who commanded the ad-

vance, the zeal and energy of Lieut. Colonel Pierson, Inspecting Field Officer, who, with Major Smelt of the 103rd. Regiment had obtained a passage on board the squadron to Niagara, and volunteered their Services on this occasion, the gallantry of Captain McMillan of the Glengary Light Infantry, who covered the left flank of the Troops in the advance, and the activity and judgment of Captain Cruttenden, Royal Artillery, Brevet Major De Courten of the Regiment De Watteville, Lieutenant Stevens of the Rocket Company Lieut. Gosset, Royal Engineers, each in their respective situations— Lieut. Colonel Malcolm has reported in high terms the conduct of Lieutenant Lawrie of the Royal Marines, who was at the head of the first men who entered the Fort; and I had an opportunity of witnessing the Bravery of Lieutenant Hewitt of that Corps, who climbed the Flag Staff, and pulled down the American Ensign, which was nailed to it—⁷

To Lieut. Colonel Harvey, Deputy Adjutant General my warmest approbation is most justly due, for his unremitting zeal and useful assistance— the services of this intelligent and experienced officer have been so frequently brought under Your Excellency's observation before, that it would be superfluous my making any comment on the high estimation in which I hold his valuable exertions—

Captain Jervois my Aide de Camp, and Lieut. Colonel Hagerman⁸ my provincial aide de camp, the only Officer of my personal Staff who accompanied me, rendered me every assistance—

Captain Jervois, who will deliver to Your Excellency, with this Despatch, the American Flag taken at Oswego, is fully enabled to afford every further information you may require—and I avail myself of the present opportunity strongly to recommend this Officer to the favourable consideration of His Royal Highness, the Commander in Chief— I have the honor to be Sir Your Excellency's most obedient Humble Servant

Gordon Drummond
Lt. General

LS, CaOOA, British Military and Naval Records, RG8, I, "C" Ser., Vol. 683, pp. 105–12. Document has two enclosures, "Return of Killed and Wounded of the Troops, in Action with the Enemy at Oswego, on the 6th May 1814," and "List of Officers and Seamen of His Majesty's Squadron Killed and Wounded at Oswego on the 6th May 1814—."

1. Officers mentioned in this paragraph are: Lieutenant Colonel Victor Fischer, De Watteville's Regiment; Captain Alexander McMillan, Glengarry Light Infantry; Lieutenant Colonel James Malcolm, Royal Marines; Captain Edwin Cruttenden, Royal Artillery; Lieutenant John Harvey Stevens, Rocket Company; and Lieutenant William M. Gossett, Royal Engineers.

2. Commander Edward Collier, R.N.

3. The American fort at Oswego was armed with three 4-pounders, one 6 and one 12-pounder; the shot were heated in a shot oven.

4. Commander Richard O'Connor, R.N.

5. Captain William Holtaway, Royal Marines.

6. Captain William H. Mulcaster, R.N.

7. Officers mentioned in this paragraph are: Captain Rodolphe de Bersy, De Watteville's Regiment; Lieutenant Colonel Thomas Pearson; Lieutenant Colonel William Smelt, 103d Regiment; Brevet Major Armand de Courten, De Watteville's Regiment; Lieutenant James Laurie, Royal Marines; Lieutenant John Hewitt, Royal Marines.

8. Captain William Jervois, 57th Regiment; Lieutenant Colonel C. A. Hagerman.



Melancthon T. Woolsey

MASTER COMMANDANT MELANCTHON T. WOOLSEY TO
COMMODORE ISAAC CHAUNCEY

Copy.

Oswego Falls.
May. 7. 1814.—

Dear Sir,

I wrote you last night per express but he went without my Letter.— Col. Mitchell I believe detailed our truly disaster— The Enemy got the *Penelope* and her Cargo— 3-32's and 2-24's— two Batteax 2 (I believe) 32's and 1-24 all sunk— one 24. they have not found.— I have sent Mr. Hart¹ to Selina for all boats, to send back all Schenectady boats which have not passed Three River Point and two or three large boats are coming down from Baldwins Mills to carry any thing back to Rome— where I calculated to be in a day or two—but we have just heard that the Enemy have evacuated Oswego and I do not know what to do— I will however send the lighter articles back to go by Land send the Guns on in light boats by water until I shall receive your orders on the subject which I beg may be as soon as possible.— Two of our Seamen (Brookins and Harris) were killed Two (my boy Elixis Maville and Scott) were missing the latter has just come in— I send you the report of a deserter, who does not consider himself either a deserter or Prisoner of War

I wish the honor of your orders respecting him— at present I want him to shew me the train to a plot I have the honor to be &c. &c. &c.

M. T. Woolsey—

Copy, DNA, RG45, CL, 1814, Vol. 3, No. 41, enclosure (M125, Roll No. 36).

1. Midshipman Ezekiel B. Hart, appointed 30 April 1814.

[Enclosure]

Copy.

John Miller a Native of Liverpoole and a Quarter Master on board H.B.M. Ship *Prince Regent* left the *Royal Sovereign* at Plymouth some time last summer for the Lake Service and embarked in the *Oelus* for Quebec where he arrived some time in July last— from Quebec (we 550 Sailors) were sent to Montreal— 65 Seamen we sent to Lake Champlain— the remainder of us have been at Kingston about four Months.—

The *Prince Regent* and *Princess Charlotte* were launched about three weeks since— about a Week after they were launched or just before the *Superior* was launched an expedition consisting of only one boat seven Men proceeded to the Harbor and landed under the bottom of the *Superior*.— Last Monday a week the Second expedition one boat as before but with Rocketts but did not fire them having been pursued by the guard Boats.—¹ Last Monday the third expedition, the same boat as before went into the Harbor saw the *Superior* afloat one of the Brigs with the foretopsail not bent— all day Tuesday hid in the bush— Wednesday all day in the bush— Thursday chased by the *Lady of the Lake* obliged to haul our boat on Shore and conceal her Friday Morning joined the Fleet, at 1 A.M. off Oswego— There were four thousand Troops in the fleet.—

250 Seamen landed in front of the Battery— all the Marines landed and some of Dewattervilles, some Glengarians, but how many he does not know.—

They took eight guns, all the other Naval Stores and all the military Stores burned the barracks, Hospital and Blacksmiths Shop— Sir James Yeo landed General Drummond commanded the expedition and landed Capt. Mulcaster headed the Seamen and was wounded in the groin, supposed mortally— The Seamen lost most.—

The *Prince Regent*— Sir J. Yeo—

On the Gun Deck. 28 long. 24s.— on the spar deck 8-68s. Carronades,— 20-32s. Cds. and 2. long 24s. shifting Guns— 450 Men exclusive of Marines— One Officer and four men Rocket Party

Princess Charlotte—

Capt. Mulcaster— 42. long. 24s.— draws more water than the *Prince Reg[ent]* number of Men does not know

Wolf

Captain Popham— Metal or Men not known.

Royal George

Captain Spillsburgh— M.C.²

Milvill

Captain Colier— Post— with volunteers from Halifax

Earle of Moira

Captain Dobbs— M.C.³

Brig *Baresford* (old *Prince Regent*) Lieut. Owens

On the Stocks a ship five feet longer on the keel than the *Caledonia*

A Carpenter deserted from Sacketts Harbor and launched in style the *Princess Charlotte*

The spies who stole the boat from this place were a Mr. Kere a Merchant in Kingston and a Masters Mate, Mr. Brown wounded yesterday.—

Copy, DNA, RG45, CL, 1814, Vol. 3, No. 41, enclosure (M125, Roll No. 36).

1. See p. 446.

2. Commander Francis B. Spillsbury, R.N.

3. Commander Alexander Dobbs, R.N.

LIEUTENANT COLONEL GEORGE MITCHELL, U.S.A., TO
MAJOR GENERAL JACOB BROWN, U.S.A.

Oswego Falls
May 8. 1814

Sir

I informed you of my arrival at Oswego Fort on the 30th. April, and reported to you the truly defenceless situation of that large and antient Fortification; of what repair was necessary and what Guns and ordnance Stores were wanted to successfully defend it against a Naval and Land attack. Circumstances made it utterly impossible for you to comply with my requisition. I found five old Guns one 12, one 6 and three Four's in the Fort & Batteries on the Lake, three of which had no Trunnions. These Guns had been reported unfit for service, yet for want of better I thought it my duty to prepare them for action; and by unremitting industry and labor their carriages were repaired and new platforms made in the Batteries in Twenty four hours after our arrival. At the same time, a number of men were employed in preparing Timber for and making Gun Carriages for large Guns coming down the River for Commodore Chauncey, which Lt. Pearce of the Navy had offered to furnish us. The want of time prevented their being finished. The corroding hand of time had destroyed every Picket around the Fort and at several points it was as accessible as through an open Gateway. Every exertion was however made, that time and circumstances would admit to place it in the best possible state of defence.

On the 5th. Inst. the British Naval Force of the Lake consisting of four large Ships, three Brigs, and a number of Gun boats, was descried at Reveillie about seven miles from the Fort. I immediately gave information to Capt. Woolsey of the Navy who was at the Village of Oswego he promptly made great exertions to assemble the Militia and made precautionary arrangements, required by apprehensions of the result of a contest very evidently about to take place with a force vastly our superior.

It being doubtful which side of the River the enemy would land, and dangerous to detach from my command, consisting only of 290 effective men, I thought proper to endeavour to deceive him and ordered the Tents in Store to be pitched on the Village side of the River, and concealed all my force within the Fort on this side, except Capt. Boyle's company, who had command of the Guns without the Fort. I think it probable this artifice had the effect of making the Enemy believe our force was with the Tents, when we had not a man or Gun on that side of the River, and perhaps determined them to land on this side where they no doubt expected the least opposition. Aware of the Superior Force of a brave and enterprising Enemy and the importance of securing an honorable retreat to protect this place and the Country, I called for the opinion of my intelligent and brave officers, Capts. Boyle, Melven, Romaine McIntire & Pierce, and we unanimously determined, as we could not man & defend the Fort, to meet the Enemy on the Shore, and contend with him every foot of ground as long as we had a probability of making good our retreat.¹

The Fleet about one o'clock approached within a mile of the shore and a mile and a half below the Batteries. The Boats fifteen in number, very large and crowded with Troops rendezvoused at the Commodore's Ship, and at a Signal given moved slowly for the Shore rapidly preceded by the Gun boats to rake the woods and cover their landing. The Gun boats and several of the vessels of War

commenced & kept up an incessant cannonading on the Batteries, the Fort and the Militia I had marched into the Woods, having thought proper not to shew my Regular Force at that time. As soon as and not until the Gunboats approached within the range of our Guns Capt. Boyle and Lt. Legate² commenced from their Batteries a well directed and successful fire and caused them twice to retire, during which the Six pounder in Lt. Legate's Battery burst without doing any injury. The Enemy returned to the vessels and I think not without loss. A wind unfavorable to their anchorage compelled them to weigh and run off from the Shore. Late in the evening we took up one of the Boats, Sixty feet in length, thirty six oars, three sails, and sufficiently large to carry one hundred & fifty men. It was nearly full of water having received a Ball through it's bow. Several other Boats were taken up by the Militia but not reported to me.

During the night picquet Guards were stationed at different points on the shore— We laid on our Arms. One sail of the Fleet was seen for several hours during the night below the Fort and off the Harbor, I supposed engaged in sounding. An intelligent Deserter from De Watteville's Regt. informed me that the comm'g. officers Lt. Genl. Drummond and Sir Jas. Yeo had received a letter from the Village of Oswego during the night giving much information.

At day break (6th. Inst.) the Fleet was bearing up under easy Sail. The Militia that had collected, I ordered over on the Village side, and ordered Capt. Romaine to assist the commanding officer of the Militia in displaying them to the best advantage, and as soon as the Fleet should approach near enough to fire Grape to protect them in the Ravines, old redoubts and woods. This order was well executed.

I supposed from the movement of the Fleet that the Village side of the River had been selected for the place of landing and under this impression I marched secretly from the Fort with the Troops to the Wharf, when I soon found it necessary to return, the new position of their smaller Vessels and Gun boats, having pointed out the place of landing.

The *Wolfe* run up and anchored opposite the Batteries and kept up a constant firing for three hours, frequently pouring in Broad sides of Grape.— other vessels having taken the most advantageous positions, kept up an incessant firing of Ball & Grape on the plain, Fort & Batteries; and often the whole Fleet was engaged in cannonading our Antient Fortification and small Batteries. Capt. Boyle & Lt. Legate were unremitting in their duty The *Wolfe* must have received many shots, and if the information received be correct, her crew must have suffered considerable injury.

Knowing that I could not approach the intended place of landing without exposing the Troops to a severe and galling fire from the Fleet and Gun Boats, I concealed them in the ditch in rear of the Fort until the enemy had landed and were between my place of concealment and the covering vessels; I then advanced with Capts. Romaine & Melven's companies and commenced a brisk fire on their advancing columns, then retired with a retreating fire and joined the other companies which had advanced and were warmly engaged with the Flank companies of the enemy. Lt. Pearce of the Navy joined us with his Sailors, they fought with their characteristic bravery. We stood our ground about thirty minutes. Having with safety to my Troops done them all the injury in my power, I ordered a Retreat and when we had gained the road in the woods 400 Yards only from the Fort, I ordered Capt. Romaine to halt his company and act as a

rear Guard. I remained with it and marched in good order to this place. The Bridges were cut down in our rear.

Capt. Boyle & Lt. Legate merit your greatest approbation for their unparalleled gallantry and good conduct. I have not language to express my admiration of the conduct of those Gentlemen whose names I have already mentioned, and of the valuable Subalterns, Lt. Blainey, Adjutant Macomb Lieuts. Ansart, King, Robb, Earle, McClintock & Newkirk who acted well their parts in this little affair.³

I lament that it is my melancholy duty to report to you the death of Lt. Blany, a brave and enterprising young officer from Delaware— he was shot through the heart with a musket ball. But Sir, while we shed the sympathetic tear, we ought to reflect he fell fighting for his Country.— He rests in the Grave of honor. Our loss in killed, wounded and taken, the Adjut's report will inform you. From my own observation within Sixty Yards of the Enemy and from information from Deserters, the Enemy landed in the first Boats 600 of De Watterville's Regiment, 600 Marines and Two companies of the Glengary Regt. 350 Sailors landed at the same time under the Batteries.

His Excellency Lt. Genl. Drummond and Commodore Sir James L. Yeo were on shore. The loss of the enemy in killed and wounded must have been much greater than ours; Eighteen were found buried near the Fort. Those killed in the Boats and on the shore by the pieces of Arty. and near the shore by the Artillery acting as Infantry were taken to the Ships.

The Deserters, and citizens who taking Prisoners and afterwards released report that there were 64 killed and a great number wounded and that several officers of merit of the army & navy were killed and wounded.

It would be injustice not to acknowledge and report to you the patriotism evinced by the Militia officers and soldiers who arrived at a very short notice and were anxious to be useful. Mr. Forrest actg. D. Qr. Mr. Genl. had orders to destroy all the public property belonging to the Army at Oswego Village, should it be necessary. He executed the order. The amount was inconsiderable; It could not be removed. Capt. Woolsey no doubt has reported to the Commodore what loss the Navy may have sustained.

There was at the Village a great number of Barrels of Salt belonging to different Citizens. On my arrival there I requested them to have them removed into the woods; this request was not attended to. The Enemy took off the greater part of it, as well as some of the Citizens with them.

Dr. Senter⁴ remains with the sick and wounded— this excellent officer was assisted much by the humanity of Dr. Baldwin an eminent Physician of this neighbourhood. The Dead have been buried with the honors of War and the wounded provided for.

It was my duty to be particular in correctly detailing occurrences to you. It is your duty to decide whether we have acted honorably to ourselves and our Country. I have the honor to be Very respectfully

G. Mitchell.
Lt. Col. 3d. Arty.

P.S. The enemy having burnt the old Barracks evacuated the Fort about 3 oClock in the morning— Little respect was paid to private property.

ALS, DNA, RG107, Letters Received by the Secretary of War, Registered Series, B-510 (7), enclosure (M221, Roll No. 51). An enclosure, "Consolidated Report of the Killed, Wounded and Prisoners, engaged in the action of 6th. May 1814 at Fort Oswego," listed a total of six killed, thirty-eight wounded, and twenty-five taken prisoner among U.S. Army regulars.

1. The officers mentioned here were Captain James H. Boyle, breveted major 5 May 1814 for gallant conduct in defense of Fort Ontario; Captain George W. Melvin; Captain James T. B. Romayne; Captain Rufus McIntire; and Captain Benjamin K. Pierce, all of the 3d Artillery, U.S.A.

2. Lieutenant Thomas Legate, Corps of Artillery, U.S.A.

3. Lieutenant Daniel Blaney; Lieutenant Charles M. Macomb, Adjutant; Lieutenant Felix Ansart; Lieutenant William King; Lieutenant B. F. Robb; Lieutenant Thomas V. Earle; Lieutenant William McClintock; and Lieutenant Charles Newkirk, all of the Corps of Artillery, U.S.A.

4. German Senter, surgeon's mate, 3d Artillery Regiment, U.S.A.

COMMODORE SIR JAMES L. YEO, R.N., TO
FIRST SECRETARY OF THE ADMIRALTY JOHN W. CROKER

His Majesty's Ship *Prince Regent*
9th May 1814

Sir

My Letter of the 15th of April last, will have informed their Lordships, that His Majesty's ships *Prince Regent* and *Princess Charlotte* were launched on the preceding day, I have now the satisfaction to acquaint you for their Lordships' information, that the Squadron, by the unremitting exertion of the Officers and Men under my Command, were ready on the 3rd. Inst. when it was determined by Lieut. Gen. Drummond and myself that an immediate attack should be made on the Forts and Town of Oswego, which in point of position is the most formidable I have seen in Upper Canada, and where the Enemy had, by river navigation, collected from the interior several heavy guns, and Naval Stores for the Ships, and large depots of Provisions for their Army.

At noon on the 5th. we got off the Port and were on the point of landing when a heavy gale from the N. West obliged me to gain an offing. On the morning of the sixth, every thing being ready, one hundred and forty troops, two hundred seamen armed with pikes, under Captain Mulcaster, and four hundred Marines were put into the boats. The *Montreal* and *Niagara* took their stations abreast and within a quarter of a mile of the Fort, the *Magnet* opposite the Town, and the *Star* and *Charwell* to cover the landing, which was effected under a most heavy fire of round grape and musquetry kept up with great spirit. Our men having to ascend a very steep and long hill were consequently exposed to a destructive fire, their Gallantry overcoming every difficulty, they soon gained the summit of the hill, and throwing themselves into the fosse, mounted the ramparts on all sides vyeing with each other who should be foremost. Lieut Laurie my secretary was the first who gained the ramparts, and Lieut Hewitt of the same Corps climbed the flag-staff under a heavy fire and in the most gallant style struck the American colours which had been nailed to the mast.

My gallant and much esteemed friend Captain Mulcaster led the Seamen to the assault with his accustomed bravery, but I lament to say he received a dangerous wound in the act of entering the Fort, which I apprehend will for a con-

siderable time deprive me of his valuable services, (the benefit of which I have many years experienced) and the country of a brave and experienced Officer. Mr. Scott¹ my First Lieutenant who was next in command nobly led them on, and soon gained the ramparts.

Captain OConor of the *Prince Regent*, to whom I entrusted the landing of the troops displayed great ability and cool judgement, the boats being under a heavy fire from all points.

Captain Popham in the *Montreal*, anchored his Ship in a most gallant style sustaining the whole fire untill we gained the shore. She was set on fire three times by red hot shot and much cut up in her Hull, masts, and rigging. Capt. Popham received a severe wound in his right hand, and speaks in high terms of Mr. Richardson the Master,² who from a severe wound in the left arm was obliged to undergo amputation at the Shoulder joint.

Captain Spilsbury of the *Niagara*, Captain Dobbs of the *Charwell*, Captain Anthony³ of the *Star*, and Captain Collier in the *Magnet*, behaved much to my satisfaction.

The 2nd. Battalion of Royal Marines excited the admiration of all. They were led by the gallant Colonel Malcolm and suffered severely. Captain Holtaway doing duty in the *Princess Charlotte* gallantly fell at the head of his Company.

Having landed with the Seamen and Marines I had great pleasure in witnessing not only the zeal and prompt attention of the Officers to my orders but also the intrepid bravery of the Men whose good and temperate conduct under circumstances of great temptation (being a whole night in the town employed loading the Captured Vessels with Ordnance, naval stores and Provisions) most justly claim my high approbation and acknowledgement and I here beg leave to recommend to their Lordships notice the services of all, of my First Lieutenants Mr. Scott and aide de camp Actg. Lieut. Yeo,⁴ to whom I beg leave to refer their Lordships for information, nor should the meritorious exertions of Acting Lieut. Griffin,⁵ severely wounded in the Arm, or Mr. Brown both of whom were attached to the storming party be omitted.

It is a great source of satisfaction to me, to acquaint their Lordships that I have on this and all other occasions received from Lieut. General Drummond that support and attention, which never fail in securing perfect cordiality between the two services.

I herewith transmit a List of the killed and wounded, and of the Ordnance, Naval Stores and Provisions captured and destroyed by the combined attack on the 6th. Inst. I have the honor to be, Sir, your most obedient Humble Servant

James Lucas Yeo
Commodore and Commander in Chief

LS, UkLPR, Adm. 1/2737, fols. 43–46.

1. Lieutenant John Scott, R.N.

2. Master James Richardson, R.N., previously of the Provincial Marine.

3. Commander Charles Anthony, R.N.

4. Acting Lieutenant George C. Yeo, R.N., brother of the commodore.

5. Acting Lieutenant Charles W. G. Griffin, R.N.

[Enclosure]

A Statement of Ordnance and Naval Stores and Provisions brought off and destroyed in a combined attack of the Sea and Land Forces on the Town and Fort of Oswego on the 6th of May 1814

Brought off
Ordnance Stores

Guns— 3 long 32 Pdrs.— 4 long 24 Pdrs.
A quantity of various kinds of ordnance Stores.
Naval Stores & Provisions
3 Schooners
800 Barrels of Flour
500 Do. of Pork
600 Do. of Salt
500 Do. of Bread
A quantity of large Roap

Destroyed

Guns, Sunk— 3 long 24 Pdrs. 1 long 12 Pr. 2 long 6 Pdrs.
1 Schooner, and all Barracks and other public Buildings.

James Lucas Yeo
Commodore & Commander in chief

DS, UkLPR, Adm. 1/2737, fol. 49. A second enclosure to this letter is not printed here. "A List of Officers Seamen and Marines of His Majesty's Fleet on Lake Ontario Killed and wounded at Oswego on the 6th of May 1814" listed the names of nine men killed and thirty-seven wounded in the attack (UkLPR, Adm. 1/2737, fol. 47).

Attack on Otter Creek

The British made the first move on Lake Champlain in 1814. Their new brig, Linnet, under Commander Daniel Pring, led the British flotilla on an expedition to capture or destroy Master Commandant Macdonough's vessels at Vergennes, Vermont, before they were fitted out for service.

The expedition arrived at the mouth of Otter Creek on 14 May. The British ships and the American shore batteries that had been hastily erected exchanged fire for an hour and a half. The British concluded that a landing would be impossible and withdrew.

Casualties were light on both sides, and the action had little effect on the American post. The British attack on Otter Creek signaled the start of operations in what would be a decisive year on Lake Champlain.

MASTER COMMANDANT THOMAS MACDONOUGH TO
SECRETARY OF THE NAVY JONES

Vergennes, 13th May 1814

Sir,

The Enemy entered the Lake yesterday with his Brig, 14 Gallies & Three Sloops; he evinces an intention of coming to the mouth of Otter Creek probably with an intention of blocking us in.—

Ten of our Gallies will be placed at the mouth of the Creek to day, & with the aid of a Battery there, will keep the passage open for our entrance into the Lake as soon as the Ship shall be compleated.— The Ship has her Guns mounted and one hundred men on board,— I not having more men to put on board of her, and there are none to join me from the different Rendezvous.—

The Schooner is launched & rigged, and had I men she could enter the Lake with all the force in ten days at farthest.—

None of the Lieutts. whom you have directed to join me have arrived.— Lt. Cassin & actg. Lt. Budd, are the only Lieutts. with me; Lt. Cassin has charge of the Schooner, & Lt. Budd, one of the Sloops; leaving the Ship without any Lieutenants.— It is much wished that those Lts. you may have ordered will join me soon;— I shall employ my whole force in keeping the entrance into the Lake clear, for my passage out, when the vessels are officer'd & manned; and when this is the case I shall be sufficiently strong to keep the Enemy out of our waters.— No answer has been given, as yet, to my application to Major Genl. Izard for men, and as our Depots may be attempted by the Enemy, I think he will not supply me with any.—

I have called the Schooner *Ticonderoga*.— Should it meet with your approbation I shall continue it so.— I have the honor to be, with great respect Sir, Yr. obt. St.

T. Macdonough

ALS, DNA, RG45, MC, 1814, Vol. 1, No. 126 (M147, Roll No. 5).

MASTER COMMANDANT THOMAS MACDONOUGH TO
SECRETARY OF THE NAVY JONES

Vergennes, 14th May 1814

Sir,

I have the honor to inform you that an Engagement, between our Battery at the mouth of Otter Creek, & Eight of the Enemy's Gallies, with a Bomb Vessel, has just terminated, by the retreat of the Enemy, who, it is supposed, came with an intention of Blockading us.—

The Battery, commanded by Capt Thornton¹ of the Artilery, who was gallantly assisted by Lt. Cassin of the Navy, received but little injury, although a number of Shells were thrown and many Shot lodged in the Parapet.—

Colo. Davis² was advantageously posted to receive the Enemy, in the event of his landing, which we had reason to expect, as his new Brig, with several other Gallies, & four Sloops, were within 2½ miles of the Point, on which the Battery

stands, during the Action, which lasted one hour & an half; when they all stood off, and were seen passing Burlington for the Northward.— Every exertion was made to get the Vessels down to the mouth of the Creek, which, however, we could not effect, untill the Enemy had withdrawn.— Our whole force is now at the Creek's mouth with the exception of the Schooner, and she will be down also, in four or five days.—

I expect to be supplied with some men from the Ranks, & I hear that Lt. Perry³ is at Whitehall, with 50 men for me.— Should this be true, I shall enter the Lake immediately on getting the different crews quarter'd, and the men feeling themselves at home at the Guns.— The Enemy have as yet done but little or no injury on the Lake I am induced to believe the sole object of his visit was to take a position at the Creek's mouth and probably to fortify the point in order to keep us from entering the Lake.—

Their Brig is one of the first class and is a remarkably fine looking vessel.— Sail'g Master Jairus Loomis, who command[ed] & was taken in, the Sloop *Eagle*, has joined me & is on duty, also Midsn. Walter N Monteath who was taken at the same time.— I have the honor to be, with high respect, Sir, Yr. obt. St.

T. Macdonough

LS, DNA, RG45, MC, 1814, Vol. 1, No. 128 (M147, Roll No. 5).

1. Captain Arthur W. Thornton, Regiment of Light Artillery, U.S.A.

2. Probably Colonel Parley Davis, Vermont militia.

3. Lieutenant Raymond A. Perry, brother of Oliver H. Perry; he was ordered from Newport, R.I., to Lake Champlain on 22 April 1814.

COMMANDER DANIEL PRING, R.N., TO
LIEUTENANT COLONEL WILLIAM WILLIAMS, BRITISH ARMY

HM Sloop *Linnet* cruising off
Little Otter creek, May 14th. 14

My dear Colonel,

You will be sorry to hear that continued Southerly winds kept me from reaching Otter Creek until this morning, as it gave the Enemy so much time to prepare for receiving me, that I found it impracticable to effect what I proposed to you before leaving the Island—

A Battery of three long twelve pounder Guns and one Field-piece was placed on the point north of the Entrance which the Gun boats cannonaded at Day-break this morning, I think with great effect; and, I have not the least doubt but that we should have succeeded in taking it by storm, but as the ground immediately in the rear and on the opposite side of the River perfectly commanded the Point the Enemy having a number of men laying in Ambush at both places I deemed it imprudent to prosecute my intended plans; being most fully convinced from the situation of the place that it could not be tenable; or that we should have a chance of succeeding in blocking up the Channel without a sufficient Land-force to keep the Enemy from Skirting the woods at the entrance—

One Seaman was killed & two Marines slightly wounded in the Gun boats—
The Battery appeared to be strongly manned by Artillery men, and the enemys Gun boats were there with many Seamen Landed— I think I had a view of my adversary Commodore McDonough Every Tree on the Lake Shore seems to have a Jonathan stationed behind it and all the Military Posts and towns are in a dreadful consternation hourly expecting an Attack—

By two Prisoners taken in a small vessel from Vergennes I learn that the Enemys large ship has got mounted eight long 18 Pr. Guns and twenty 32 Pr. Carronades; her sails bent, and wanting only her Breechings and tackles to complete her for taking the Lake— Commodore McDonough had a month since received authority to purchase the Steam-boat building at Vergennes to be fitted as a Vessel of War; She has been strengthened and fitted for that purpose has got 11 Ports of a side and was to be launched Thursday last, they state her to be a very fine looking Vessel, and is to be rigged as a Brig carrying Six long 12 Pr. Guns and Sixteen 32 Prs. Carronades. A Captain has arrived from Boston to command her, and brought with him a strong party of seamen, making their number at present above 500— The complement in the Ship is 160— the Brig, 120 exclusive of Soldiers to serve as marines, All the Sloops excepting the *Commodore Prebble* and *Montgomery* are to be sold out of the government service, the former one is to carry 10–18 Pr. Carronades and 1, 18 Pr. Columbian gun, with a compt. of 60 Seamen & the latter two Carronades less with 50 Seamen besides marines— Their Six new Gun Boats which are nearly ready as well as the four old ones which we saw this morning are to have 100 Seamen attached to them, to be completed with Soldiers and placed under the command of Lieut. Kettleton¹ of the Navy—

The ship is called the *Jones*,² length of Keel 135 feet; breadth abeam 35— the Brig, name unknown,³ length of keel 112 feet, breadth 32 feet 6 inches, they are expected to be ready and to come out in a week or ten days, I think this information may be relied on excepting that as they have had so much difficulty in procuring heavy guns for the Ship it is more probable that the Brig will have those mounted, which have been taken from the three dismantled Sloops and indeed one of the Prisoners tells me that it is intended as a temporary arrangement—

After looking into Burlington and Plattsburgh I intend returning within the Province Line, to be able immediately to give every assistance in my power for building the new Ship, and I hope if it is in your power you will have the goodness to allow any artificers there may be in the Regiments stationed at the Post under your command to be employed for that purpose—

The Builder feels assured that she can be completed by the latter end of July—

The Marines with the Sloops (Merchant) under convoy of the *Canada* will return to the Island without loss of time— the Officers and men deserve the greatest praise for their steady and cool conduct whilst cannonading the Battery within grape distance, and for their spirit in volunteering the storm of it; indeed they have evinced the greatest cheerfulness in executing every service that has been required of them, whilst undergoing much fatigue, and suffering from being exposed to the continued rainy weather which they have experienced since leaving Isle aux noix—

Believe me my dear Colonel I feel very sensibly the extent of the obligation I owe you for the very flattering compliment paid to the force under my com-

mand on quitting the Island, which will always be remembered by Yours very sincerely—

Dan Pring

ALS, CaOOA, British Military and Naval Records, RG8, I, "C" Ser., Vol. 683, pp. 164–70.

1. He probably means Sailing Master Samuel Kettleas.
2. Later renamed *Saratoga*.
3. *Ticonderoga*.

The Raid on Port Dover

Petty warfare, raids, and retribution characterized fighting on the Niagara peninsula and the northern shore of lakes Ontario and Erie in 1813 and 1814. This unofficial policy culminated in a raid on Port Dover, Upper Canada, that brought recriminations from both sides.

The goal of the expedition was to capture or destroy valuable stores of flour and provisions on the Long Point peninsula on the north shore of Lake Erie. Colonel John Campbell of the 11th U.S. Infantry led the expedition. The navy provided transportation for the troops, landing support, and a shore party. A group of Canadian volunteers fighting for the American cause joined the raiding parties.

The attack quickly got out of hand and the American troops and Canadian volunteers burned or ransacked private homes and property as well as public stores and buildings. Colonel Campbell took it on himself to exact retribution for the burning of Buffalo, New York, four months earlier. His actions were disavowed by the American government and he was tried by a military court-martial but acquitted.

The raid provoked outrage in Canada, and Governor Prevost called for retaliatory measures to be taken on the east coast of the United States. The memory of the burning of Dover would be used to justify the raids on the shores of Chesapeake Bay, Washington, D.C., and Baltimore in 1814.

CAPTAIN ARTHUR SINCLAIR TO SECRETARY OF THE NAVY JONES

Erie 13th. May 1814—

Sir

The *Lawrence* past the Bar yesterday, after almost insurmountable difficulties— She had been Hogged when getting on shore last Fall, and from this circumstance drew upwards of a foot more water than her marks, and the water having fallen to four feet, eight inches on the Bar, it was attended with excessive labour to get her out, I have now outside the Bar three Brigs, including the *Caledonia*, and five Gun boats, and have every department employed to the best advantage to facilitate their outfits—materials, however, begin to be much wanting, none of importance having yet arrived from Pittsburg—oweing, it is said, to the waters having fallen very much since their being shipt from that place, The

greatest difficulty now, upon the spot, is the great deficiency of Boats, there not being more than one for each two vessels, and our having to transport Ballast, Guns, and all materials at least 3 miles to the Fleet, and three fourths of the time, as yet, it has been blowing and raining— The very bad arrangement made in sending the carpenters before their tools is attended with serious inconvenience— The latter have not yet arrived, and if they do not by the time we get though the caulking, I shall discharge one half of them, as it will be very useless to keep them here at high wages & board, without the means to employ them, I shall have gotten through with making most of the spars by that time, and half of them will be amply sufficient for all other purposes, I shall not wait for more boats than can be completed by the time I am ready in other respects— I shall have at least one good anchor boat built, and shall depend upon what I can get at Detroit, to answer other purposes— The Troops from this place both Regulars and militia are ordered to Buffalo— I do not, however, apprehend any danger from their departure, as I have acquired the best information, within a few days past, from the oposite Shore, by which I learn they are building nothing, on any part of this Lake, which can give transportation to Troops, I learn that near Long Point, they have a considerable quantity of Flour deposited in five or six large manufacturing mills, standing within a compass of as many miles, and guarded by only a company, and distant forty or fifty miles from any military post. Those mills supply all the Upper part of the province with bread Stuff. I have proposed to the commander of the military (Colo. Campbell of the 11th. Regiment an inteligent and apparently enterprising officer,) that I will transport as many of the Troops, from this to Buffalo, as can be embarked on board the small vessels, say 750, which will not interfere, very materially, with my outfits, and that we shall wait a favourable opportunity, touch on the oposite Shore, land before daylight, and by a rapid move, distroy those mills, embark the same day and proceed down— He seems full of the Enterprise, and if the weather favours, I am in hopes, it may be accomplished, I know it is your wish to give every possible aid to the movements of the armies, and as those small vessels are equipped for service, I will employ them to the best advantage— Your letter of the 27th. mentions that some of the officers ordered here will have arrived by the time I received it; but I regret to say that they have not yet done so— How they [recon]cile it to themselves to trifle with their orders, in the way they must have done, is very astonishing to me— I have the honor to remain with great Respect, Sir, Your Obd. Sert.

A Sinclair

ALS, DNA, RG45, CL, 1814, Vol. 3, No. 63 (M125, Roll No. 36).

COLONEL THOMAS TALBOT, MIDDLESEX MILITIA, TO
MAJOR GENERAL PHINEAS RIALI, BRITISH ARMY

Turkey Point 16th: May 1814. P:M:

Sir

I have the honor to inform you, that the Enemy have reembar[k]ed, and their Vessels have Steered towards the extremity of Long-Point where they ap-

pear to have come to an Anchor— It is painful to relate the excess's the Americans have committed in this Settlement, unfortunately from the dispersed state of the Militia, it was impossible to assemble the Militia in sufficient time to oppose the landing of Enemy, which took place on the 14th. Int. at 4 oClock in the afternoon at the mouth of Pattersons Creek near Dover. The Weather was so extremely foggy that the approach of the American Vessels was not perceived more than an hour before they landed, I found it therefore necessary to retire as far as Sovereigns Mills, as did also Lieut. Burton with the Detachment of the 19th. Light Dragoons,¹ for the purpose of affording time to the Militia to collect. About one hundred joined me at that Place during the course of yesterday, with whom I returned in the afternoon to Dover, which Village, I am extremely sorry to say was burnt during the Morning, Ryerse's Mills and buildings were also destroyed, after which the Enemy returned to the mouth of Patterson's Creek and returned on board their Vessels— from thence they moved up during the Night opposite to Finches Mills between Ryerse's Mills and Turkey-point where they sent a Strong force and burnt those Mills at an Early hour this Morning, I proceeded with the Militia and the 19th. Light Dragoons to Turkey point, knowing it to be their next object of destruction, The enemy shewed a disposition to land at this place, but after getting as near to the landing place as the Water would admit of, they steered outward. The Dragoons and Militia will remain at this place for the present, that is to Night, as it is not impossible but that the Enemy may return during the Night and attempt to complete their work of destruction in burning the Court House and other buildings— I have every confidence in the determined Spirit of the Militia to oppose the Enemy, at the same time, that I must add that their ardour is greatly increased by the support of the 19th. Light Dragoons, whose anxiety to face the Enemy cannot be described.

The force of the Americans, that have landed, is estimated at about 800 men commanded by a Lieut. Col. Campbell, Markle and young Grace that deserted last winter with Malleray were with them.² I conceived it proper to send for the Detachment of the Royals & Kent Volunteers from Burford, they have arrived at Culvers about an hour back— with this additional force I think I can prevent any further attempts of the present force of the Enemy from succeeding.

I trust that Lieut. General Drummond will be enabled to send some Regulars to Long Point, as it is to be apprehended that the Enemy will ere long return with a strong force, at least, they have declared such to be their intention, and also that you will be so good as to order a supply of ammunition to be forwarded without delay—such as will answer French & American Muskets— I have the honor to be Sir, Yr. very obt. Humble servt.

Thomas Talbot

Copy, CaOOA, British Military and Naval Records, RG8, I, "C" Ser., Vol. 683, pp. 171-74.

1. Lieutenant Benjamin Burton, 19th Light Dragoons, British army.

2. Major Abraham Markle, 1st Lieutenant Oliver Grace, and Major Benajah Mallory served in Joseph Willcock's regiment of Canadian Volunteers.

COLONEL JOHN B. CAMPBELL, U.S.A., TO SECRETARY OF WAR ARMSTRONG

Erie Pennsylvania 18th May 1814

Sir,

I informed you a short time since that I had come on here from put in bay in the prize ships with the regular troops I had with me at that place for their protection. Unwilling to be idle, I obtained the consent of Commodore Sinclair to an enterprize against Long point; and prepared a force of seven hundred men for the purpose, consisting of Capt Chunn's company of the 19th Lieut Macdonald's of the 26th, Lieut Ellisons of the 24th & 27, being two small detachments consolidated, Major Marlins detachment of the 22d. consisting of Capts Kings and Carmacks companies, and a part of Col Fentons regiment of Pennsylvania militia commanded by the Colonel in person and Majors Gallaway and Wood; amounting to about two hundred and fifty regulars and four hundred militia, to which the Commodore added thirty sailors under the command of Lieut John packet of the navy and twenty marines under Lieut Hyde, to work three pieces of Artillery.¹

With this force I sailed from this place on the night of the 12th, and hoped to effect a landing on the enemy's shore on the night succeeding. But the winds being adverse, we were disappointed, and it was not until the evening of the 14th, I reached the shore with the first boats about a mile and a half below the town of Dover. A party of Dragoons hovered about, more with a view to ascertain our force, than to resist the debarkation of the troops. I immediately took possession of an elevated piece of ground, which upon examination I found to be well chosen, and bivouaced for the night. On the 15th I marched into the town of Dover without resistance, except a little skirmishing in the morning before I left the camp, between a party I had sent to burn a warehouse, and some of the enemy's militia. No injury was sustained on either side except by one of the enemy, who I was informed was wounded in the shoulder.

The town of Dover being inhabited mostly by revolutionary Tories and half pay officers, noted for their oppression of those who were suspected of being friendly to the success of our arms; some of them also having taken a part in the burning and plundering of Buffalo: I determined to make them feel the effects of that conduct, they had pursued towards others. I therefore had burnt under my orders the whole village and Col Nicol's Mill, sawmill and distillery, Col Rierson's mill, carding machine and distillery in the neighbourhood, and Mr Finch's mill, sawmill and distillery the whole perhaps amounting in value to about \$100,000. I then reembarked the troops, and arrived at this place this morning.

Whilst at Dover, several country people came in, and from a very intelligent man on whose information, I was told by Capt Markle of the Canada volunteers who accompanied me, I might implicitly rely, I received the following account of the enemy force in that part of the province above York.

Fifteen hundred men on the Niagara river, six hundred of those garrison, Fort Niagara, and four hundred Fort George: Thirty at Burlington heights: twenty regulars and twenty militia at Burford near the Grand river, fourteen militia near Oxford, and fifty Dragoons at Long point.

I could Sir, with the force under my command have marched to Burlington heights, but for the want of supplies and cooperation with the other parts of the Army, I could not have remained there. With great deference, I would however

beg leave to remark, that by this route from Long point to Burlington, which is said to be a good one, the enemy's retreat from Niagara river could be completely cut off. If a force of fifteen hundred or two thousand men were to pass over from this place, whilst the Army below occupied the attention of the enemy, they could reach the head of the Lake, seize the post at the heights, which is not now strong, but can be made so, and make a stand in the heart of the country. It is not, Sir, by impressions made on the margin of the enemy's territory that we are to conquer it; we must penetrate to the interior, give confidence to the people, and establish a rallying point for the disaffected, of which description there are great numbers in the upper province. The oppressions of the government are becoming insupportable a slight suspicion will send the most respectable to the jails of York and Kingston.

This expedition was undertaken by me without orders and upon my own responsibility. I have done the enemy some injury and returned without the loss of a man. I did communicate with Brig Genl Scott on the subject, who did not disapprove of it. I am ordered by Brig Genl Scott to join him with all the regular troops at this place. Having no opposing orders and not wishing to return to the 8th Military District,² in which I have served long enough, I will proceed to Buffalo as soon as the troops get a little repose. I enclose you a copy of my order prescribing the order of battle and of march. I am with great respect Your obdt Hble Servt

John B Campbell
Col U S Army by brevet.

ALS, DNA, RG107, Letters Received by the Secretary of War, Registered Series, C-297 (7) (M221, Roll No. 51).

1. Captain John T. Chunn, 19th U.S. Infantry; 1st Lieutenant William McDonald, 26th U.S. Infantry; 1st Lieutenant Uriah Allison, 24th U.S. Infantry; Major Ralph Marlin, 22d U.S. Infantry; Captains Sampson S. King and Jacob Carmack, 22d U.S. Infantry; Colonel James B. Fenton, Major Samuel Gallaway, and Major James Wood, Pennsylvania Militia; Lieutenant John Packett, U.S.N.; 1st Lieutenant Benjamin Hyde, U.S.M.C.

2. The 8th Military District encompassed Kentucky, Ohio, and the territories of Indiana, Michigan, Illinois, and Missouri.

CAPTAIN ARTHUR SINCLAIR TO SECRETARY OF THE NAVY JONES

U S Sloop *Niagara*
Erie 19th. May 1814—

Sir

In my last letter of the 13th. Inst. I stated to you that I was about giving transport to the Troops stationed here, in such of the small vessels as were ready for service and not otherwise employed, from this to Buffalo, and that if the weather would admit they would call at Long Point, and endeavour to distroy such Stores as the Enemy might have there, and several large manufacturing mills, on which most of the Upper part of the Province was dependent for Bread Stuff.—

To forward those views I placed under the command of Colo. Campbell—3 pieces of light Artillery maned from the Gun Boats and commanded by Lieut

Packett—this party was covered by Lieut Hide with 25 marines— They were two days on shore, succeeded in distroying several valuable mills, and some Public property, with very little oposition: but I am sorry to learn that several private Houses were also distroyed, which was so contrary to my wish, and to the idea I have of our true policy to those people, that I used every argument against it before his departure, and was under the impression that he accorded with me most fully. He has explained to me that he was urged to do so by people favourable to our cause, on that side, who pointed out those persons as old revolutionary Tories who had been very active, not only in oppressing our friends in Canada, but in aiding all in their powers the burning and plundering Buffalo— However much, such characters may deserve our vengeance, I do not think it correct that our judgements should be past upon them from their merely being designated by a partisan Officer or Citizen who may, and no doubt are, in many instances, biast by individual motives— He, however, will explain the whole affair to the Government, in the Official report he makes, The impossibility of getting the militia to volunteer for an expedition without its being made known to its fullest extent was, no doubt cause of the Enemy being informed of the contemplated attack, and their having moved several thousand barrels of Flour to the niagara Frontier just before the arrival of our party— We learn of no Troops being to the westward of York, of any consequence. There are 400 at that place— 30 at Burlington heights— 500 at Fort George, and 700 in Fort Niagara,

A Capt. Marcle, one of the Canadians of Willcox's party, was over on the expedition— He has sent several of his friends into their military Posts to gain all the information in their powers, which will be sent over to us on sunday next by a person we shall take off from there— Lieuts. Woodhouse and Delainey¹ arrived the evening before the last. But five ordinary seamen have yet arrived, nor have the Carpenters tools from Philadelphia yet come to hand This bad arrangement has put me to much inconvenience— I have, notwithstanding, nearly completed the sparing, and shall, I hope, have the necessary Boats built by the time the Bread and other articles, equally necessary, come to hand— I have a letter by the last mail from Mr. Ormsby,² stating that most of the articles, required by my requisition, were shipped, and I hope most ardently that they, with a reinforcement of Seamen, will soon arrive, as I am anxious in the extreme to be on my way above— Seamen are very much wanting: a number of those so rated here are but indifferent ordinary Seamen, and their terms are daily expiring, and they insisting on their discharge— The best men I am in hopes I shall prevail on to stay at least until the Fall, but they will not enter for a longer time or will they receive the Bounty— A detachment of marines is very much wanting here— When leaving a Corporals Guard for the Public Store house, which is indispensably necessary, there will not be a sufficiency for one Brig— A letter from Mr. Ormsby, this moment received states that he had selected and shipt on the 17th. Inst., all the articles immediately wanting to complete the Fleet for service, and that the persons are bound to perform their water carriage in 15 days; and I shall make the necessary arrangements for their being immediately brought from Waterford here— Should men and officers arrive, nothing can interfere to detain me longer— I shall not wait for extra Stores, but let

them follow in the provision vessel— I have the honor to remain with high Respect, Sir, Your Obd, Sert,

A Sinclair

ALS, DNA, RG45, CL, 1814, Vol. 3, No. 81 (M125, Roll No. 36).

1. Acting Lieutenant Bladen Dulaney was ordered to escort seamen from the sloop of war *Argus* to Erie.
2. Oliver Ormsby, acting navy agent at Pittsburgh.

LIEUTENANT GENERAL GORDON DRUMMOND, BRITISH ARMY, TO
GOVERNOR-GENERAL SIR GEORGE PREVOST

Kingston, May 27th. 1814

Sir,

In my letter, which I had the honor to address to Your Excellency, on the 21st. Inst. I stated, that a force of the Enemy, at that time supposed to be about 300, had landed near Dover, on Lake Erie.— I have now the honor to transmit a letter from Major General Riall, covering a Report of Colonel Talbot, commanding the Militia of the London District, on the subject.— Your Excellency will, however, perceive, that the force of the Enemy has been since computed to consist of about 800 Men, whose conduct has been disgraced, during their short stay ashore, by every act of wanton barbarity, and of illiberal and unjustifiable outrage.— Not only a large store, fitted up as a Barrack for Militia, but every private house, and other building belonging to the peaceable inhabitants of the Village, and neighbourhood of Dover, has been reduced to ashes; together with Ryarse's, and Finch's Mills, between that place, & Turkey Point.— The Court House, and Buildings, at Turkey Point were only saved, by the appearance of the Militia, and a Detachment of the 19th. Light Dragoons; both of which Corps, I have very great satisfaction in acquainting Your Excellency, evinced the strongest anxiety to come in contact with the Enemy.—

I have likewise received the most satisfactory accounts, from Lieutenant Colonel Parry,¹ of the 103rd Regt. relative to the conduct of the Grenadier Company of that Corps, and the Light Company of the 89th. placed under his immediate orders.— The Latter he says are wild; but with attention and management perfectly tractable and orderly.— And Lieutenant Colonel Parry bestows much just commendation on the zeal and alacrity, with which the Militia assembled, considering the distance from whence they were to be collected.— The Lieutenant Colonel from all these circumstances feels convinced, that, had not the Enemy retired to their Shipping, before his arrival, his little band, encreased by a few of the Rangers and of the Kent Volunteers, as well as of some persons, and some Wyandot Indians, who joined him from Amherstburg, would have made the Enemy pay dear for their outrages.— He states, that but one house, in which a sick woman resided, was left standing, between Paterson's Creek, and Turkey Point.— And the Enemy, on retiring, avowed their intention to destroy Port Talbot in a similar manner.— And as their Officers appear determined to pursue the same system, throughout the whole of the Western Frontier, I feel convinced, that nothing but the most vigorous opposition to such disgraceful proceedings will prevent a recurrence of them.— The accompanying

Declaration made by Captain Holmes,² Commanding at Amherstburg, to the Inhabitants of the New Settlement is a proof of the Enemy's nefarious intentions.— I have the honor to be, Sir, Your Excellency's most obedient humble servant.

Gordon Drummond
Lt. General

LS, CaOOA, British Military and Naval Records, RG8, I, "C" Ser., Vol. 683, pp. 196–99.

1. Lieutenant Colonel Parry J. Parry, 103d Regiment of Foot, British army.
2. Captain Andrew H. Holmes, U.S.A., was promoted to major 9 April 1814.

The Royal Navy on the Lakes

British ships, officers, and seamen on the northern lakes came under direct control of the Board of Admiralty under new orders issued to Commodore Sir James L. Yeo in January 1814.¹ The Admiralty's original orders, issued 19 March 1813, placed Commodore Yeo in command of the squadron but also required him to operate with the concurrence of Governor-General Sir George Prevost and to cooperate with the military department under the governor.²

The Admiralty's new orders placed Yeo on an equal footing with other Royal Navy squadrons and dockyards and allowed him more responsibility and more autonomy in command decisions. Commodore Yeo received these new orders in May and began reorganizing the squadron. The Admiralty renamed the British vessels on the lakes in order to avoid duplicating names of vessels already on the Royal Navy list. Under the new instructions, Commodore Yeo could reward his promising young officers with acting post captaincies.

1. See pp. 388–91.

2. See Dudley, *Naval War of 1812*, Vol. 2, pp. 435–37 for the Admiralty's instructions to Commodore Sir James L. Yeo.

COMMODORE SIR JAMES L. YEO, R.N., TO
FIRST SECRETARY OF THE ADMIRALTY JOHN W. CROKER

No. 11

H.M.S. *Prince Regent*
at anchor off Sackett's Harbour
21st. May 1814

Sir,

I have the honor to acquaint you for their Lordships' information that I have placed the former Squadron (as near as I possess the means and the nature of the service will admit) on the Establishment they have directed. For this purpose I have appointed Captain OConor (late civil Commissioner) to act in this Ship bearing my Pendant, Captain Popham to act as Post Captain in the *Montreal* and Captain Spilsbury to act as Post Captain in the *Niagara*.

As to Pursers, Gunners, Boatswains and Carpenters I have not Men qualified to hold such situations. I have only seven Midshipmen who have passed, two of whom I think alone deserve promotion, and the Captains of the Squadron cannot find above half the number of Men worthy of being rated Petty Officers agreeable to their Lordships' new Establishment.

We are particularly deficient in Artificers of every description.

I have the honor to transmit a copy of a Scheme I have issued to the Squadron for the payment of the Seamen and Marines, conforming as closely as possible to their Lordships instructions on that head, and which I hope may be approved of.

With respect to the difference of the Seamen's pay on the Lakes and the general service, I feel it my duty to assure their Lordships, I do not consider it more than a just equivalent, for the following reasons— In the first place all the labour of the Dock yard in building the Ships, Stores &c has been performed by the Seamen, who remaining six Months of the Year on Shore &c. are obliged to take up double or treble the quantity of Slop Clothing they would have occasion for on any other Station. Secondly—The great scarcity of and exorbitant charges for every article of life— Thirdly—the very great privations in fresh meat, vegetables, or any thing that is nourishing, in a country subject to the Lake fever and Dysentery. His Majesty's Squadron has not had a fresh beef day since the 24th of February last, nor can they hope for any until the month of July. A general Officer is frequently on the Same fare with his Men.

The Ships of the Squadron are very short of Complement agreeable to the Admiralty Establishment, and the third ship building at Kingston, (which will be ready in August), will require a Complement equal to fight one hundred and two Guns.

The Enemy's large ship which is launched will carry thirty-two long 32 Pounders on the main and thirty-four long 24 Pounders on the Spar Deck. Their two new Brigs mount twenty-two 42 Pounder carronades, one long 24 and two long 18 Pounders each— Another ship of 140 feet Keel will be launched in three weeks, I therefore leave their Lordships to judge what I have to contend against.

Though the Artificers of this Country have been receiving very extravagant wages, it is found impossible to retain them in consequence of the great privations they undergo, no provisions being to be procured more than what Government allows. They soon become tired and anxious to rejoin their families at Quebec, which being four hundred miles distant little prospect is afforded of their again returning. Under those circumstances I have to submit the great advantage the public service would derive from there being sent to this country a gang of Shipwrights regularly entered and bound by agreement to serve a stated period; these may be encouraged, if necessary, by the promise of grants of land proportioned to the merits of their claims.

There is likewise much wanted, to assist me, a Civil Officer well versed in Accounts, acquainted with the Rules and forms practised at Somerset House,¹ and on Foreign Stations, (that the same may be observed at the different Posts on the Lakes in Canada or as near thereto as the peculiar nature of the service will admit) and one in whom their Lordships may feel disposed to place much confidence, it being necessary to lodge in his hands, during my absence, large sums to make the necessary disbursements on account of purchasing materials for, and constructing vessels of such force as were launched this spring and are now

in progress. It would be endless to detail to their Lordships the substitutes used, and difficulties to be overcome in constructing vessels of force, in a country so new and deficient of materials. Much has been, and will be performed by perseverance and unceasing exertion.

The necessity there exists that the Officer presiding in my absence should merit the greatest confidence, will be seen, when their Lordships are informed, he must as regarding the public expenditure be governed by local circumstances, and early information of what Force the Enemy are constructing, that timely provision may be made for keeping pace with their exertions.

I beg leave to call their Lordships' attention to a very worthy Man and excellent Officer Mr. James Mackenzie Master of this Ship. He has performed the duty of Master Attendant in Kingston Yard ever since I have been in the Country, and tho' Commissioner Wodehouse² in a letter to me declared, that with the whole strength of Halifax Yard he could not make the sails for the two new frigates, but would transmit my demand to England; yet Mr. Mackenzie without the aid of any regular Sailmaker cut out all the sails, and had them ready by the opening of the Navigation, tho' I could not procure the canvass before the middle of February. He has also by a judicious arrangement and conversion of stores saved much to the Public, and without which this Squadron could not have been equipped until the arrival of the supplies from England which will not reach Kingston before July—

I therefore beg leave (if their Lordships have not already appointed an Officer to that situation) to recommend the above Gentleman. I have the honor to be Sir, Your most obedient humble servant.

James Lucas Yeo.

Commodore and Commander in Chief

LS, UkLPR, Adm. 1/2737, fols. 96–97, 102–3.

1. Somerset House was the London address of the Navy Office.

2. Captain the Honorable Philip Wodehouse, Commissioner of the Royal Navy dockyard at Halifax.

COMMODORE SIR JAMES L. YEO, R.N., TO
VICE ADMIRAL SIR ALEXANDER F. I. COCHRANE, R.N.

H.M.S. *Prince Regent*
Off Sackett's Harbour. 26th May 1814

Sir

Having received several communications from their Lordships, announcing an intention of sending out Frigates and Brigs in frame, Stores &c. but being perfectly silent with respect to a reinforcement of Seamen, which of all things is the most important.— From the strong representations made to Government by Sir John Warren, Bt. Sir George Prevost, and myself I did not entertain a doubt on the subject, particularly as Sir John desires me to send back the Crews of the Sloops, immediately my reinforcements arrive in the Spring

The Enemy's large ship which is launched will carry 32 long 32 Prs. on the Main and 34 long 24 Prs. on the Spar Deck: their two new Brigs mount 22–42

Pr. Carronades 1 long 24 and 2 long 18 Prs. each. another Ship of 140 feet Keel will be launched in Three weeks, I therefore leave you to judge what I have to contend against—

His Majesty's Squadron on this Lake are all very short of complement, and I have not a man for the Ship on the Stocks which is to carry 102 Guns—

I therefore feel it my Duty, (as I am directed by Their Lordships to apply to You for Seamen &c. when necessary) to represent to You Sir that unless I receive a sufficient number of Seamen to man the above Ship, This Province will be lost to His Majesty in the course of the Summer, and all our Efforts rendered useless I have the Honor to be Sir Your most Obedient Humble Servant

James Lucas Yeo

Commodore and Commander in Chief

LS, UkENL, Alexander F. I. Cochrane Papers, MS 2326, pp. 125–125a.

Reassessing the 1814 Campaign

Disagreements and doubts about the goals of the military and naval campaign began to surface in Madison's administration in May and June 1814. Secretary of War Armstrong questioned the use of naval force on Lake Huron in his memorandum of 1 May.¹ News of the British attack on Oswego, which reached Washington in early June, exposed the lack of military and naval coordination on Lake Ontario. It became apparent that larger ships would have to be constructed on Lake Ontario to match the British shipbuilding program. There were rumors, too, that Napoleon's army had been defeated in France, and the British would be able to send seasoned veterans to fight in North America.

In his letter of 25 May, William Jones expressed his dismay at the lack of a coordinated, combined campaign against Canada. President Madison called an urgent cabinet meeting for 7 June to discuss military goals for the year.

The President and his cabinet agreed on an ambitious four-prong attack against Canada in 1814. A joint expedition would be sent into Lake Huron from Lake Erie to recapture Mackinac and destroy British shipbuilding activities on Lake Huron, and a second expedition would be launched from the north shore of Lake Erie across the Niagara Peninsula toward York. The army would also secure the Saint Lawrence River above Kingston, and a movement would be made toward Montreal in an attempt to cut off British communications between Quebec and Kingston. A direct attack on Kingston was apparently not considered.²

These plans hinged on the naval contest on Lake Ontario and the ability of Commodore Chauncey to secure naval control of that waterway as early in the season as possible. An additional goal was thrown open in a comment by Secretary of War Armstrong's instructions to Brigadier General Brown on 10 June: "To give however immediate occupation to your troops & to prevent their blood from stagnating—Why not take Fort Erie and its garrison?" This comment would initiate some of the fiercest fighting of the war in the military campaign for the Niagara peninsula.

1. See p. 459.

2. See also Stagg, *Mr. Madison's War*, pp. 387–91, and Skeen, *John Armstrong*, chapter 10.

COMMODORE ISAAC CHAUNCEY TO SECRETARY OF THE NAVY JONES

No. 80

Honble. Wm. Jones
Secy. of the Navy
WashingtonU.S. Ship *Superior*
Sacketts Harbor 23d May. 1814

Sir

As I have already had the honor of stating to the Navy Department in my communication of the 15th. of March the number of Men we should require to man the Squadron on this Lake (exclusive of the Schooners— I hope that I may not be considered importunate in again calling your attention to a Subject of such vital importance to the Nation and my own reputation

Notwithstanding my present difficulties I calculate to get all my Guns and Stores here on or before the 10th of June about which time we shall launch another ship 10 feet longer than the *General Pike* and if we have Men the whole Squadron will Sail before the end of June

This I conceive to be important as the Enemy is driving on with great force with his large Ship at Kingston which is intended to be an 80 Gun Ship upon two decks but will mount 100 Guns or upwards.— there are large reinforcements of Officers and Seamen expected at Kingston in all June besides a number of Carpenters— The Enemys Ships which are now off this place are uncommonly well manned— the *Prince Regent* having 500 Men on board including Marines and the others in proportion this information is from a source which cannot be doubted first from a deserter from their Fleet— second from one of the Seamen taken Prisoner at Oswego— third from an American Citizen who has been a Prisoner on board of the *Prince Regent* for the last 10 days and was landed yesterday— this gentleman took some pains to ascertain the force of the Enemy while he was on board.—

Our recruiting prospects are not encourageing Commodore Bainbridge informed me some time since that he should not be able to send me any More Men from Boston and the recruiting Officers at New York and Philadelphia also inform me that their prospects are not flattering

The Discharges of Men whose term of Service has expired averages from 5 to 7 per day some of them reenter but the greater part (and generally the best) push for the Atlantic States— some of these get rid of their Money at Utica and Albany and enlist in the Army with the idea of being transferred to the Navy when they arrive here, but it appears that power only rests with the Secretary at War—

Could not an arrangement be made with the War department to transfer the Seamen which are in the different Regiments at this place to the Navy upon our returning the bounty which has been given by the recruiting Officer of the Army and charge the Men so transferred with the difference between the bounty given as Soldiers and that allowed as Seamen we should then save the expense of transporting the Men from the Atlantic and I am confident that we should get from 100 to 150 good Seamen who are now here as Soldiers— many of them were some of our best petty Officers and are extremely anxious to be transferred to the Navy— it is certain that they will never make good Soldiers.—

Knowing the lively interest which you take in every thing relating to the Service and that you will do all that can be done for this Station consistent with the

good of the whole service I shall rest satisfied that if Men can be spared from other Stations that they will be ordered in time to mann the Squadron. I have the honor to be very respectfully Sir, Yr. Mo Ob St

I. C.

LB, NHi, Isaac Chauncey Letter Books (BV Chauncey, Isaac).

SECRETARY OF THE NAVY JONES TO PRESIDENT JAMES MADISON

Navy Department
May 25. 1814

Dear Sir

The enclosed are copies of the last received from Com. Chauncey. I regret to find that the enemy raised the schooner which had been sunk with the guns and stores onboard and that we have lost seven guns instead of two as I had supposed.

Except the heavy guns the loss is unimportant as the entire upper deck battery of the *President* Frigate consisting of 42 pd. Carronades were sometime since forwarded from New York by my order to provide against any casualty and ensure a surplus. These will form an excellent substitute for those that were lost.

Every precaution has been employed and every possible exertion used by this Department and those under its direction to get the heavy stores on with dispatch and safety, the difficulties have been almost insurmountable and it is painful to reflect that a point so important and which of necessity our heavy stores must pass, or be greatly delayed; should have been left to the defense of a handful of brave men in an old mouldering fortification.

It is consoling however to reflect upon the judicious and gallant conduct of this little band and the severe chastisement they inflicted upon the enemy

Last year our plans were marr'd by the defenceless state in which Sacketts Harbour was left in the absence of the fleet and consequent destruction of our stores and now we are again delayed by the defenceless state of Oswego and the disaster consequent thereon.

I have thought that military and naval cooperation should be reciprocal and that if the command of the Lake is paramount to every other consideration that protection to the stores during their transit without which that command cannot be attained, would have been considered as the first military object. The defenceless state of Oswego has long since been a subject of remark and of apprehension. We shall probably learn to day the object if not the result of the subsequent expedition of the enemys squadron, which Com Chauncey says was steering toward Oswego or Genessee river.

I have some apprehension that his object may be to push forward to Oswego falls in order to meet and destroy our stores in which should he succeed the consequence would be disastrous indeed.

The squadron of the enemy is very formidable—is said to be exceedingly well officered and manned, and his means of increasing his force infinitely transcend ours. His ordnance and naval stores, and equipments, are all prepared to any required extent, and the transportation by water easy expeditious and uninter-

rupted along the whole line of the St. Laurence to Kingston, and as to seamen he has only to transfer the crews of any given number of his superfluous ships.

Our means are comparatively narrow, and our transportation difficult, distant, tedious, and expensive, in the highest degree. In weight it has exceeded 1500, tons this Season along a line from Baltimore Philada. and New York to Sacketts Harbour.

The transportation alone will amount to \$200,000 we have stripped our Atlantic ships of their crews and in so doing I fear have exposed them to destruction by the enemy particular near New London unless our military defence shall protect them. All the men that could be recruited with the increased pay and bounty for the Lake service have been and unless we strip the few remaining ships of their crews or the flotillas and leave our harbours exposed our physical means are nearly exhausted. Should the hostile squadrons meet, the contest will be bloody and probably decisive of the fate of one or the other. Whether vanquished or victor we are sure to gain honor.

Have we an adequate object in that quarter for all this hazard and expenditure of blood & treasure?

I do not understand that we are prepared for or have any view to offensive military operations. The enemy is perfectly secure at Kingston and I suspect equally so on the Niagara frontier.

Then is it exclusively a naval contest and even if we fight at all it will be on unequal terms for the enemy secure in Kingston will chuse his time circumstances and force. Not so in the ocean where twenty of his ships cannot check the depredations of one of our ships or prevent the capture of his single Ships. Is it for the defense of that frontier? Than is one fourth of our naval force employed for the defence of a wilderness, while our Atlantic frontier—our flourishing Cities, towns & villages, cultivated farms, rising manufactories, public works & edifices; are deprived of the services and protection of this valuable body of men, the loss of whom by any casualty would be to the nation a deep calamity

Judging of the reported increased preparations of the enemy, by the great exertions he has recently made and the importance attached to the possession of Ontario he is now pursuing his true policy, which appears to me to be, to tempt us to follow his example and thus free him from trouble on the ocean and expose our Atlantic frontier to his depredations.

Feeling the force of these reflections (whether they are really entitled to weight or not) duty induced me to exhibit them to your view, and you will receive them for what they are worth. Do not imagine Sir that these observations are excited by undue apprehension or any indisposition to pursue the original plan of operations, so long as the circumstances and views which gave rise to it, shall continue the same but they appear to me to have entirely changed with the aspect of our military affairs and that the war in that quarter is and must from necessity be purely defensive. Not the slightest relaxation has taken or shall take place in this Department [everything that] could or can be done has and shall be done.

The upper Lakes we have and can maintain at a moderate expense of men and treasure so long as we keep the military command of the passage between Erie and Huron, but if that should be lost we shall lose the command of Huron and Michigan unless a military and naval post is created at the head of Lake Michigan (which appears to me extremely important) with which we could

keep the command of both lakes although [— —?] communication should be cut off. With sincere regard I am your Obdt. Servt.

W. Jones

I had written this before I saw the National Intelligencer of this day which states from the Albany Digest that the British were again at Oswego.

Draft, PHi, Uselma Clark Smith Collection, William Jones Papers. Two words in the last paragraph are illegible.

PRESIDENT JAMES MADISON TO CABINET

June 3. 1814

J. Madison requests a consultation with the Heads of Dept. on Tuesday next at 11 O C.

The object is to decide on the plan of campaign which our means naval & military render most eligible.

Meantime the Secretary of the Navy will cause to be made out, & send over

1. a Statement of the naval force on the Lakes Erie, Ontario, & Champlain, respectively, now ready for service; & the portion of that on L. Erie, destined for L. Huron
2. State & prospects of additional naval force, in preparation for Lakes Ontario & Champlain, respectively.
3. State & Stations of vessels of war (including the Steam vessel), Gun boats & barges, for the defence of the Atlantic frontier.
4. Naval force of the Enemy (including marines) according to best information in the Navy Dept., near & in the Atlantic waters of the U.S.
5. do. understood to be destined for our Coast

J. M

LS, PHi, Uselma Clark Smith Collection, William Jones Papers. See Appendix for Secretary of the Navy Jones's report on the state of the navy.

NOTES ON CABINET MEETING

In Cabinet June 7. 1814— present J. Monroe, G.W.C Genl. A., W. Jones, R. Rush.¹

The subject, the opening of the Campaign,—

1. determined nem: con:² on an expedition into L. Huron, of 4 or 5 vessels, and 800, or 1000 troops—the first object to occupy Machedash & St. Josephs—leaving abt. 500 to hold at least the former.

2. do nem: con. (except Mr. Monroe who did not positively oppose but thought the measure hazardous) on an expedition, with the forces under Genl. Brown, from L— Erie, near long Point, to Burlington Heights, preparatory to

further operations for reducing the Peninsula, & proceeding towards York, &c; the expedition to depend on Commodore Chauncey's getting the command of the L: without wch.—supplies could not be secured, and with which they might be conveyed safely by water from Depots on the S. side of L. Ontario.

3. do. Nem. con. 14 or 15. Armed Boats to be built at Sacket's Harbour to command the St. L.³ under protection of posts to be supplied by detachments from Izard's command; so as to intercept the Water communication between Montreal & Kingston—

4. do. nem: con: the main force under Izard, to make demonstrations towards Montreal, as a diversion of the Eny. from operations westward & affording a chance of compelling Prevost to fight disadvantageously, or break up his connection with L. Champlain

D, DLC, James Madison Papers, Series 1 (Roll No. 16). Docketed: "Cabinet plan for commencing the Campaign for 1814."

1. The names Campbell and Armstrong were spelled out in another hand. Cabinet members present were Secretary of State James Monroe, Secretary of the Treasury George W. Campbell, Secretary of War John Armstrong, Secretary of the Navy William Jones, and Attorney General Richard Rush.

2. Nem. con, an abbreviation for *nemine contradicente*, no one contradicting.

3. The word "Laurence" is inserted here in another hand.

SECRETARY OF WAR ARMSTRONG TO MAJOR GENERAL GEORGE IZARD, U.S.A.

Major Genl. Izard

War Dept. June 10th. 1814.

Sir,

I avail myself of the return of Colonel Snelling¹ to communicate to you the general objects & outline of the present Campaign.—

1st. Capt. Sinclair will repair to Detroit with a part of the fleet under his Command. He will there embark Lt. Colonel Croghan and as large a number of troops, with the necessary supplies of ammunition and provisions as his Vessels will accommodate. He will then enter Lake Huron and proceed to Gloucester bay, where the troops will debark, attack & carry the enemy's new establishment at Matschedash—fortify and garrison that place, and open with General Brown a communication, if another part of the plan to be next detailed, shall succeed. This effected the fleet will go on to the mouth of St. Joseph's and to Mackinaw &ca.

2nd. What remains of the fleet at Buffaloe, will be put under orders to transport General Brown's Division to the Canada shore. The place of landing will be selected in the discretion of the General, and under the best information of which he may be possessed. Burlington-Heights will be his first object. These he will fortify, and so soon as Commodore Chauncey shall be in condition to co-operate with him (say the 15th. of July) proceed to attack the Enemy's posts on the peninsula in succession &ca.

3rd. A number of armed Gallies (such as those employed on Lake Champlain) will be immediately constructed at Sackett's Harbor and, while we have the ascendancy on Lake Ontario, pushed into the St. Laurence, with orders to

occupy the rapids of that River & thus intercept the water communication between Montreal and Kingston. The better to effect this object, a post will be established on the South Bank of the St. Laurence, strongly fortified, garrisoned by a competent force (say 1500 men) and in case of attack, sustained by the 1st. or division of the right. The moment for beginning this establishment will be that which assures to us the command of Lake Ontario. An Engineer will be employed by the War Department to select the scite: and

4th. Another post of Lake Champlain adapted to the purpose of cooperating with & covering our fleet on that Lake & of excluding the enemy's flotilla therefrom, will be immediately selected, established & garrisoned. This post you will be pleased to select.—

LB, DNA, RG107, Letters Sent by the Secretary of War Relating to Military Affairs, Vol. 7, pp. 269–70 (M6, Roll No. 7).

1. Colonel Josiah Snelling, U.S.A.

SECRETARY OF WAR ARMSTRONG TO MAJOR GENERAL JACOB BROWN, U.S.A.

Major Genl. Brown.

War Department
June 10th. 1814

Sir,

This dispatch will be handed to you by Lt. Frazier of the 15th. Regt. of Infantry.¹ It contains the necessary construction both as regards the objects to be attained & the means of attaining them.—

1st. Cap. Sinclair will go up to Detroit with a part of the fleet. He will there embark Colo. Croghan and as large a number of troops as his Vessels will accommodate, with the necessary supplies of ammunition & provisions. He will then enter lake Huron and proceed to Gloucester bay, where the troops will debark, attack & carry the Enemy's new establishment at Matchedash, fortify & garrison that place & open with you a communication, if another part of the plan, to be next detailed, shall succeed. This effected, the fleet will go on to the mouth of St. Josephs & Makinaw.—

2nd. What remains of the fleet in lake Erie will be put under orders to transport your Division to the Canada Shore. The place of landing will be selected under the best information you possess. From Colo. Campbell's report & other advices it is believed, that the point marked A. in the inclosed sketch, is best adapted to the purpose & that your approach to Burlington bay, should be made by the route, marked C, as laid down in Faden's map.² On reaching the heights of that place, your first study will be to fortify the position in such way as to cover your whole force, taking care to establish a small interior work of increased strength, which will render the position tenable by a reduced force & which, in particular, will be so constructed as to command the only road, as we understand, that leads from York to Fort George. Thus situated, you will find yourself in the heart of the Enemy's Country—in the center of his military Stations & prepared to fall upon & carry these in succession.—

A question arises here, whether this expediton should be hazarded immediately & as an isolated movement, or whether it should be suspended until we

obtain an ascendancy on lake Ontario, & as part of a greater plan? This question turns on circumstances which I shall briefly examine. In all military operations, we must, as you know, begin with the belly. Our attention must therefore be first directed to the quantity of provisions on hand, to the means of transporting them, and to the expedients for supply, should either be deficient.—You ought to be assured of at least one month's provision. This you possess—but how is it to be transported? In boats to the Canada shore & thence by land, in waggons or on pack horses. But 5000 men require for one month's subsistence 300,000 lb. weight of bread & meat. Calculate then the lading of a 2 horse waggon at 1500 lbs. & that of a pack horse at 250 lbs. & your train will be enormous, difficult to sustain, perhaps impossible to procure. But besides provisions, you must also carry Artillery, Ammunition, medicines, Hospital Stores, camp Equipage, tents, Spare musquets &ca. &ca. Where is such number of Waggons or pack horses to be found? In Canada? No.— They also must be carried with you, which necessarily leads me to state another difficulty. I have said you must cross the lake in that part of the fleet which shall be left in Lake Erie. But the Secretary of the Navy does not calculate on more being left than will transport 800 men at one trip. Whence it follows, that 5000 men will require more than six trips—besides what may be wanted for your tents, Artillery, provisions, Waggons & horses. Is it to be supposed that the Enemy will remain ignorant of these repeated movements, or that knowing them, they will either mistake their object, or be inattentive to the means of defeating it? We have no right to think so. They are well informed, vigilant and skilful. Taking for granted, however, that we had conquered all difficulties arising from land & water transportation, and that we had actually got hold of Burlington heights—are we in condition to avail ourselves of that position, so long as the Enemy has command of Lake Ontario? Could we advance to the reduction of York or fort George—with any hope of success, without the aid of a fleet? Could we even maintain ourselves at Burlington for any length of time without this aid, and if not, ought we to hazard the reproach of a retreat, or the disgrace of a surrender? The conclusion from all this is—that though the expedition be approved—it's execution must be suspended, 'till Chauncey shall have gained the command of the lake. That accomplished, there will be no hazard of interruption to our march from the enemy—nor any necessity for loading ourselves & retarding our movements, by a long provision train.— Burlington will be easily supplied from 18 mile Creek or the Genessee River, where depôts have been long established. Other considerations lead to the same conclusion. This course will give time to Genl. Porter to assemble his Corps—to Genl McArthur to forward the recruits of the 17th. 19th & 28th. Regiments—to those of the 9th. 11th. 21st. & 25th. to join their Regiments—to the 1st 22d. & 23d. Regts. to reach their destination & for the Boats now at Detroit to be brought down to Buffaloe.— Commodore Chauncey says "the fleet will be ready in all the month of June"—to which the Secretary of the Navy adds two weeks, for accidents—making it the 15th. of July before they will be actually on the Lake & fit for action with the Enemy— On the whole therefore it will be seen, that the expedition is contingent—& that if our fleet on lake Ontario be beaten or destroyed, it will not be undertaken.—

To give however immediate occupation to your troops & to prevent their blood from stagnating—Why not take Fort Erie & it's garrison, stated at 3 or 400 men? Land between point Abino & Erie in the night—assail the fort by land & Water—push forward a Corps to seize the Bridge of Chippeway, & be governed by circumstances in either stopping there, or going further. Boats may

follow & feed you. If the Enemy concentrates his whole force on this line, as I think he will, it will not exceed 2000 men. But garrisons must be left to occupy forts George & Niagara— Whence arises the probability that he will not shew in the field more than 1600 regular troops. With these you should not decline a Contest.— A successful one, on our part, will enable you to invest Fort George & to avail yourself, in the most direct way, of Commodore Chauncey's aid (should he beat Yeo) in reducing that place & Fort Niagara.—

LB, DNA, RG107, Letters Sent by the Secretary of War Relating to Military Affairs, Vol. 7, pp. 257–59 (M6, Roll No. 7). The maps mentioned in the text are not found with this letter book copy.

1. Lieutenant Donald Fraser, 15th Infantry, U.S.A.
2. British map publisher William Faden (1750?–1836) was geographer to the king during the American Revolution.

Reinforcing Michilimackinac

The outpost of Fort Michilimackinac was badly in need of reinforcements and supplies in 1814. Captain Richard Bullock, commander of the fort since September 1813, knew additional officers, soldiers, and sailors were also needed if the British were to resist the American assault that was likely to occur in 1814.

In February, Lieutenant Colonel Robert McDouall was ordered to the Nottawasaga River to construct batteaux and transport troops and supplies to Mackinac. McDouall was an experienced veteran who participated in several campaigns on Lake Ontario, including the attack on Sackets Harbor in May 1813, and was stationed on the Niagara peninsula in 1814. When the ice finally broke up on Lake Huron, his party of twenty-one seamen, eleven artillerymen, and two companies of the Royal Newfoundland Regiment set out in twenty-four batteaux to cross 360 miles of open lake to Mackinac Island. They departed 25 April and arrived 18 May after a stormy and icy passage, carrying with them the much-needed military stores and provisions.

Lieutenant Colonel McDouall's authority on Lake Huron, however, was challenged by young Lieutenant Newdigate Poyntz, who apparently perceived himself commodore of everything afloat on the lake, including the batteaux that McDouall had constructed at Nottawasaga that winter. The young lieutenant was speedily replaced by Lieutenant Miller Worsley, who would prove more willing to participate in joint British operations on Lake Huron.

LIEUTENANT COLONEL ROBERT MCDOUALL, BRITISH ARMY, TO
LIEUTENANT GENERAL GORDON DRUMMOND, BRITISH ARMY

Copy/
My dear General,

Michilimackinac 26th. May 1814

The Nancy being just under way, I refer you to my Letter to Col. Harvey for the particulars of our Voyage. I avail myself of the few minutes left me before

she sails, to urge in the strongest terms, the necessity of Mr. Crookshank being immediately directed to deposit for us at the mouth of the Nottawasaga River, another supply of provisions consisting of from three to four hundred Barrels of Flour and Pork; otherwise this place will soon be in danger from the want of that article, owing to the great issues to the Indians, which I have curtailed as much as possible, even at the risque of offending them. I also daily expect Mr. Dickson, with from three to four hundred more, which will encrease our issues to about 1600 ~~per~~ day. Mr. Crookshank should also be directed to send us

20 Stand of Arms, left at Lake Simcoe.

The Stocks and Clasps I ordered.

200 pairs more Shoes, & 400 more American Socks.

A Good supply of Leather to repair the others, there not being any here.

As much of the Flour and Pork should be in Bags as possible, to stow in Canoes, as I may have no other means of getting them.

Ten Casks of Rum, of about 16 Gallons each.

No step has yet been taken to fit out the *Nancy*; her former Commr. Capt. Mc.Intosh gave his opinion that she was not fit to cut down, or worth it, and I silently acquiesced in Lieut. Poyntz's opinion, that even if fitted out, she could not shew herself before the force which the enemy could bring against her, because I derive more advantage from her guns on shore than I have any hope of doing from her being equipped with them. I most heartily wish that Sir James again had the pertinacious Lieut. that he unfortunately sent me, who, full of his own consequence, as Commanding on Lake Huron (Commg. what? not a vessel) and a great stickler for naval etiquette, is constantly disposed to cavil, and on the watch for opportunities in his naval capacity, to oppose what I wish. I have had on that account, much difficulty in getting the *Nancy* sent this trip. Indeed I should have sent the *Gentn.* back in her, only I could not well spare in our circumstances, the twenty Seamen, and they would not be willing to serve under a military officer. It is necessary that he should return, and that a deserving Midshipman, or some one explicitly under my orders, be sent out in his place, or that part of the service cannot go on. Lieut. Poyntz told me on the passage, that he conceived he commanded all afloat, and of course the whole expedition, when we were in *Batteaux*. I shall state these matters by the Express Canoe to His Excellency— I have sent two Canoes to ascertain what they are doing at Detroit and the River St. Clair. Should they be establishing themselves at the latter place, uncountenanced by a Naval Force, it may be in our power to interrupt them, on Mr. Dicksons arrival, but, if well protected in that way, it would be a hazardous attempt, as our *Batteaux* may be destroyed, and our retreat cut off— Believe me to be &c

(Signed) Rt. Mc.Douall

CAPTAIN ARTHUR SINCLAIR TO SECRETARY OF THE NAVY JONES

U States Sloop of War *Niagara*
Off Erie— May the 27th. 1814

Sir

I think it proper to inform you that Genl. Scott sent, with a letter of introduction to me about two weeks since, a Captain Marcle, who it appears is a Canadian of respectable standing and one who has taken a decided and active part in our cause during the present war— He brought with him a confidential and enterprising man, selected by the Genl., as a Spy— Through this man, who I have landed several times in the Enemies Country, Capt. Marcle has been enabled to correspond with his friends, who are favourable to our cause, and has gained considerable information as to the numbers, situation and movements of the Enemy in the upper province— One of his friends visited York in order to ascertain what had gone Westward, and their views in that quarter— It is now certain that a large body of men, more than a thousand, 500 of whom were Mechanicks, & Sailors, with a number of pieces of Cannon have been sent Westward, by the way of Lake Simcoe, during the last winter; and since that time quantities of stores have gone the same rout; but so closely cased up that no citizen could say of what kind they were: indeed, no undertaking of theirs during the War has been kept so profound a secret as has this; so say his friends, and they are clearly of opinion that the object is the building a strong naval force— They go on to say to him, "from frequent hints we have from officers, in the different garrisons, there is no doubt but they are constructing a force above, with which they calculate to gain the superiority of all the upper waters, and from what our wives have gained from the wives of officers high in Rank, we are confirmed in the belief that they calculate on the superiority on this Lake before the month of August"— Marcle appears to be a man who can be relied on, and places implicit confidence in those friends who give the information— I therefore feel it my duty to transmit it to you, that you may use your judgment as to its correctness and if believed, order the necessary coercive steps to be taken— I will not venture to hazard an opinion on the subject, but shall endeavour to be in perfect readiness; with all the means in my power, to meet any emergency, and I trust that whatever force he may bring, to oppose me, the well earned glory of our Flag on this Lake will receive no tarnish— Our informant states that a Ship to rate 80 and mount upwards of 90 Guns is now building at Kingston, by a company of Merchants, and other citizens, who have bound themselves to their government to have her completed by the middle of July— Comdr. Chauncey is no doubt informed on the subject; but I will, notwithstanding, give him the information as I have recd. it

Our information as to their number of Troops on the Niagara frontier (including York) and their distribution, corresponds with what I last stated to you—

Your letter by this days mail, countermanding my proceeding with a strong force above, has proved a source of considerable disappointment to me, more especially after having received the above information, and by great exertion, having got that part of the force intended originally for Lake Huron nearly ready to proceed on service— Your order shall, however, be promptly obeyed— I have the means in my power to dispatch the force you last mention, and it shall be done in a few days, under Command of Lieut. Woodhouse,

neither of the others mentioned by you having yet arrived— I had intended taking with me the *Niagara*, *Lawrence* & 3 gunboats—Leaving on this Lake the *Hunter*, & *Caledonia* Brigs, and *Lady Prevost*, *Ohio* and *Somers*, s[c]hooners—the British built vessels being of much too heavy draft to pass through the straits—The *Lady Prevost* (a vessel of 102 Tons) draws 2 feet more than either of our Brigs— I shall send the *Caledonia* as one of Lieut. Woodhouse's squadron, as she will carry a quantity of provision and draws but little water—

Your letter of the 11th. Inst., ordering the release of Purser McGrath from arrest, has been received by the last mail. Its contents had been anticipated, by the release of that officer soon after my arrival; the cause of his arrest having been a trivial one— Most of the others have been also released from their arrests, there not being sufficient evidence to substantiate the charges

The sailor who threw the volunteer overboard, and whom you had understood to be an officer and ordered to be delivered to the civil authority in case of their being evidence to convict him, I have also released; the misfortune having originated entirely in accidents; and I am happy to state to you that the most perfect harmony exists throughout the station. The only officer now under arrest is Lieut. Conkling,¹ the charges against whom are serious, but the evidence against him being principally of the Army, and absent or removed from this place, it is doubtful whether they can be substantiated— As soon as time will allow my doing so, I will have a fair investigation, and if in my judgment there is sufficient evidence, I will require a court martial and try him, otherwise I will release him under the power given by you to that effect

Your letter of the 17th Inst. relating to a vessel being sent to Cleveland for his Excellency Genl. Cass, also came to hand by the last mail and shall be complied with if not, as you say, inconsistent with the publick service

He had written to Capt. Elliott to the same effect, which letter came into my hands, and was answered, before you reached me, and a conveyance promised him. I have the honor to remain with high respect, Sir, your Obt. Servt.—

A Sinclair

N B— In case the above information should alter your determination as relates to the force to be sent into Lake Huron, I shall order a place of rendezvous in that Lake, where I may be certain of seeing or hearing of the Force under Lt. Woodhouse— Tho, if I hear from you immediately I may perhaps overtake him before he passes the River St. Clair, as I understand there is considerable difficulty in passing those flats in almost any vessel

ALS, DNA, RG45, CL, 1814, Vol. 3, No. 106 (M125, Roll No. 36).

1. Lieutenant Augustus H. M. Conckling, U.S.N.

Macdonough on the Lake

Twelve days after the failed British attempt to destroy the American vessels near Vergennes in Otter Creek, the American squadron entered Lake Champlain. They sailed to

Plattsburg and anchored 29 May, ready to cooperate with the army under Major General George Izard.

Before long, however, Master Commandant Macdonough learned the British were constructing a new ship at Isle aux Noix and that eleven galleys had arrived from Quebec. Two of the ships in frame that had been sent from the Royal Navy dockyards in England were to be assembled on Lake Champlain as well. More ships would have to be built if Commander Macdonough was to keep pace with British construction on Lake Champlain.

MASTER COMMANDANT THOMAS MACDONOUGH TO
SECRETARY OF THE NAVY JONES

U S Ship *Saratoga*
at anchor off Plattsburg.
May 29 1814

Sir

I have the honor to inform you that I arrived off here to day, & having been informed that the enemy had retired to the Isle aux noir the Squadron was brought to an anchor.— there is now a free communication between all parts of this Lake—and at present there are no doubts of this communication being interrupted by the enemy.

I find the *Saratoga* a fine Ship, she sails & works well, she is a ship between the *Pike* & the *Madison* on Lake Ontario, the Schooner is also a fine Vessel & bears her metal full as well as was expected. The Gallies are also remarkably fine Vessels— I have not yet my complement of men, but as fast as they come on I shall relieve the Soldiers whom I have on board by them.

I have made it known to Major Gen Izard that the squadron is ready for service. I have the honor to be, very respectfully Your Ob. Servant

T. Macdonough

LS, DNA, RG45, MC, 1814, Vol. 1, No. 134 (M147, Roll No. 5).

MASTER COMMANDANT THOMAS MACDONOUGH TO
SECRETARY OF THE NAVY JONES

U S Ship *Saratoga*, 11th. June 1814.

Sir,

Four Sailors (Deserters) from the Enemy's Squadron came in to day, who give information that the keel of a ship to carry 32 Guns was laid at the Isle Aux Noix, and that the Enemy are getting up Gallies from Quebec:— this intelligence is confirmed by the person whom I sent in a few days since, who has returned with information that the enemy had the keel of a ship laid which was to equal, at least, the *Saratoga*; that three Gallies had arrived at the Isle Aux Noix

from Quebec, and that eight more Gallies were on their way to that place from Quebec.—

They certainly consider the command of this Lake of much importance by the determination they evince to have an ascendancy on it, and as they can easily obtain a correct statement of our force, they can prepare their's accordingly.—

Four frames of Vessels have arrived at Montreal, two of which, it is said, are intended for this Lake, the others for Lake Ontario.— I shall, however, ascertain what is to be done with those frames without delay.—

Our force is now very considerable on the Lake, an augmentation of which, on this probably might be unnecessary, if the narrow parts, in the vicinity of the line, were so fortified as to keep the enemy from entering our Waters, with the assistance of our Vessels, untill there should be an expedition against Isle Aux Noix.— Should it be ordered to increase our Naval force, it should be commenced without loss of time, & Messrs. Brown of New York would be the persons to build such force as might be deemed necessary.— Gallies are unquestionably the best description of Vessels for the northern parts of this Lake, but the number of men they require is a very serious objection to them.— The next best Vessels for this service in my opinion are Schooners or Brigs carrying 16 or 18 long 18 prs— these Guns would reach their Gallies in their sculking places— the number of men requisite for these latter Vessels, in comparison with the Gallies I think would make them the vessels to be preferred the whole expence of the Gallies would exceed the expences of larger Vessels without being so healthy or comfortable.— All the Carpenters have long since gone to New York.—

Cannon, Rigging &c would have to be sent on, which I should like to be about getting on immediately—Should you order me to build.— I hoped a short time since that no increase of our Naval force would become necessary, and that the Enemy would meet us with what force he had compleated, which three years ago, he would have considered equal to ours; but now, Sir, I am sure he intends risking nothing, but will endeavour to out build us, and there is no knowing where this building may stop, for, as I before said, his acquaintance with our force will enable him to know exactly what force to bring against us, so there is a probability of his not meeting us unless he is pretty confident of being successful.—

He is now under the protection of Isle Aux Noix, and will no doubt continue there untill he feels himself strong enough to risque a Battle.—

I have been changing some of my Crews for other men from the Ranks, and shall now go down towards Isle Aux Noix, & if I can, without very imprudently exposing my vessels I shall endeavour to bring him to action.— I have the honor to be, Sir, with great respect, Yr. Mot. Obt. St.

T. Macdonough

MASTER COMMANDANT THOMAS MACDONOUGH TO
SECRETARY OF THE NAVY JONES

U S Ship *Saratoga*,
At the lines 19th June 1814.

Sir,

I have the honor to inform you that the Squadron was brought to an anchor here on the 12th Inst.—

The Enemy's squadron which lies in the Sorrell has been reconnoiter'd and found to be moored across a narrow channel under the protection of Batteries.— They have one Brig, four Sloops, and twelve Gallies,—some of the Gallies carrying two Guns, others one Gun.

Their position is so strong as to make an attack on him, where he now lies, a very imprudent measure— There is no getting round him, or between him, and Isle Aux Noix: the Channel will not admit of it, and there are so many Reefs, & such bad water, on the South side of him, as to make it hazardous to move the Ship farther down the Lake than where she now is.—

The position my Vessels are now in, at the Lines has the effect of keeping the Enemy entirely out of the Lake, consequently, a free communication on all its parts.— My intention is to continue here untill a combined movement, between the Army & Navy, shall be deemed expedient by Major Genl. Izard, who is aware of my present superiority to the Enemys.—

This superiority, I am apprehensive however will not continue untill the Army can make a movement, for the Enemy are preparing a large increase to their force.— My information from the Enemy is as late as yesterday—they were then raising the frame of a Vessel, intended to equal, if not surpass, the *Saratoga* they are also getting up Gallies from Quebec, three of which took their Guns on board the 12th. Inst. at Isle Aux Noix, and eight more were on the way to the Island which will be ready in the course of a few days.—

By my last information the four Frames, which came from England, were at Montreal, and my informant did not understand what was to be done with them.

We may, however, calculate that they will set them up on some of the Lakes without delay.— Two Gallies are nearly ready to launch at the Isle Aux Noix which are all the Gallies building at that place.— When all are compleated, their force will be Twenty two Gallies (nine of which we see every day, as they come up the Sorrell to look at us) the Brig, four Sloops, & the Vessel now building.— This force will be much larger than our's— I should, therefore, propose building (if our force is to be increased in preference to Batteries) a Brig, or Schooner, to carry Eighteen long 18 prs., which Vessel would require so few men to what half her number of Guns would require if in Gallies; that, upon the whole, she would be preferr'd to Gallies—her long Guns could reach the Gallies of the Enemy, and in a breeze she would have decidedly great advantage over them.— The Enemy are very industrious, & seem to have a strong desire for the ascendancy on this Lake.— Should such large reinforcements of Troops be coming from Europe, as the Papers speak of, they would do much mischief, had they this ascendancy.—

I have just sent a Flag to Capt. Pring the British naval commander for him to receive about Two hundred Prisoners of War, who are here from the Westward.— These Prisoners, it is believed, will immediately on their arrival in

Canada, be put on Duty, whereas, those of our's who came out & were said to be exchanged on the 15th. May, are here, but not on duty, in consequence of Genl. Winder advising me not to put them on Duty untill something farther should be done relating to the exchange.—

Will you inform me, Sir, whether these Prisoners who came from Canada on the 15th May are to bear Arms, or is it as Genl. Winder said, inexpedient that they should bear Arms untill something more should be done about their Exchange?— I have the honor to be, Sir, with great respect, Yr. mot. obt. St.

T. Macdonough

LS, DNA, RG45, MC, 1814, Vol. 1, No. 146 (M147, Roll No. 5).

The Capture of British Gunboats in Sandy Creek

Following the British attack on Oswego, the Americans continued to move naval supplies and ordnance from that place to Sackets Harbor, but were careful to transport stores by night in small boats which could be concealed in the creeks during the daytime. Lieutenant Melancthon T. Woolsey coordinated these movements, aided by the First U.S. Rifle Regiment and a band of Oneida warriors who were friendly to the American cause.

The British maintained a blockade of Sackets Harbor and watched for a chance to capture these small boats and the valuable naval stores. After capturing one boat that had been separated from its convoy, a British party under Captain Stephen Popham set out to capture the remainder of the convoy, which was transporting a valuable shipment of guns and cables to Sackets Harbor. The British gunboats were surprized by a strong shore party in Sandy Creek, suffered heavy casualties, and were captured. Six Royal Navy officers and nearly two hundred sailors, soldiers, and marines were made prisoners.

MAJOR DANIEL APPLING, U.S.A., TO
BRIGADIER GENERAL EDMUND P. GAINES, U.S.A.

Sandy Creek, May 30th 1814.

Sir

This morning the Enemy attacked the detachment under my command at this place. We met, beat, & took them, after an action of 10 mints. The killed wounded and prisoners, on the part of the Enemy are as follows:

Prisoners	27. marines
"	106. soldiers
wounded	28. sailors & marines
killed	13. do. " do.
"	1. midshipman
	<u>175.</u>

With two post Captains, four Lieuts of the Navy, Prisoners, and two Lieuts of the Marines dangerously wounded, & Prisoners. The dead and wounded will receive all the honors & attentions due unfortunate Soldiers.

The prisoners have been marched into the Country, and to-morrow they will proceed to the Harbour. The Enemys boats also fell into my hands, consisting of two gun boats, & five barges, some of which carried Howitzers. Of 120 men, and a few Indians, my loss does not exceed one man killed & two wounded. I cannot sufficiently extol the conduct of the Officers who served under me, who were Lieuts. McIntosh, Colhoun, McFarland, Armstrong and Smith, & Ensign Austin.¹ The Indian Warriors conducted themselves with humanity & gallantry. I have the honor to be Respectfully Your obt Sert.

Signed} D Appling
Maj: commdg.

Copy, DNA, RG107, Letters Received by the Secretary of War, Registered Series, B-14 (8), enclosure (M221, Roll No. 59).

1. 1st Lieutenant James McIntosh, 1st Lieutenant Joseph Calhoun, Jr., 2d Lieutenant Robert M. McFarland, 2d Lieutenant William Armstrong, 3d Lieutenant T. F. Smith, and Ensign H. B. Austin, all of the First Rifle Regiment, U.S.A.

COMMANDER STEPHEN POPHAM, R.N., TO
COMMODORE SIR JAMES L. YEO, R.N.

(copy)

Sacketts Harbour June 1st. 1814

Sir

Having obtained certain information that the Enemys Boats with their Guns and stores, had taken shelter in Sandy Creek, I proceeded to that place (having ordered Captain Spilsbury to accompany me) and reached the entrance of it shortly after day light, yesterday morning. I landed accompanied by Captain Spilsbury and some of the Officers, and having reconnoitred their Position, determined on an immediate attack.

The masts of their Boats (consisting of eighteen) were plainly seen over the marsh, and from their situation did not appear to be very near the woods, and their not attempting to interrupt our entry into the Creek, led me to hope they were only protected by Militia. This circumstance, added to the very great importance of the lading of their Boats, to the equipment of their Squadron, was a strong motive for me to risk the attack, not aware that they had brought their Riflemen in their Boats, and that a body of Indians had accompanied them along the Beach—

The Boats advanced cautiously to within about a quarter of a mile of the Enemy's, when Lieut. Cox of the Royal Marines, was landed with the principal part of his men, on the left Bank: and Captain Spilsbury and Lieut. Brown, with the Cohorn and Small arm Party accompanied by Lieut.

McVeagh, with a few Marines, were landed on the Right Bank:¹ these respective Parties, advanced on the flanks of the Gun Boats (which had from their fire dispersed a Body of Indians) to a turning which opened the Enemy's Boats to our view, when unfortunately the Sixty eight Pounder Carronade, on which much depended, was disabled, seeing us pulling the Boat round to bring the 24 pounder to bear, the Enemy thought we were commencing a retreat, when they advanced with their whole force, consisting of one hundred and fifty Riflemen, near two Hundred Indians, and a numerous Body of Militia and Cavalry: which soon overpowered the few men I had, their resistance was such as I could have expected from a brave and well disciplined Body, but opposed to such numbers unavailing, their officers set them an example honorable to themselves, and worthy of a better fate. Captain Spilsbury for a time checked the advance of the Enemy by the fire he kept up with the Cohorn, and his Party; and I feel much indebted to him for his conduct throughout—

Lieutenants Cox and McVeagh, who nobly supported the honor of their Corps, are I am sorry to say dangerously wounded. Mr. Hoare² Master's mate of the *Montreal*, whose conduct was conspicuous throughout, is the only Officer killed; our loss in killed and wounded (mostly dangerous) is great, I send as correct a return as I can possibly get of them as well as of the Survivors—

The winding of the Creek which gave the Enemy great advantage in advancing to intercept our retreat, rendered any further perseverance unavailing, and would have subjected the men to certain death.

Lieutenants Majoribanks and Rowe, in the rear, with the small boats, did every thing in their power, and Lieut. Loveday's exertions in the *Lais* Gun Boat was such as I was much pleased with—³

The exertions of the American Officers of the Rifle Corps commanded by Major Appling, in saving the lives of many of the Officers and men, whom their own men, and the Indians were devoting to Death, was conspicuous, and claim our warmest gratitude I have the honor to be Sir &c.

(Signed) Stephen Popham
Captain

A true Copy
(signed) J L Yeo

Copy, CaOOA, British Military and Naval Records, RG8, I, "C" Ser., Vol. 683, pp. 220–24.

1. Lieutenant Thomas S. Cox, Royal Marines; Commander Francis B. Spilsbury, R.N.; Lieutenant Patrick McVeagh, R.N. Probably Acting Lieutenant John H. Brown.

2. Master's Mate Charles Hoare, R.N.

3. Acting Lieutenant John Majoribanks, R.N.; Acting Lieutenant James Rowe, R.N.; Acting Lieutenant Edward Loveday, R.N.

MASTER COMMANDANT MELANCTHON T. WOOLSEY TO
COMMODORE ISAAC CHAUNCEY

Copy

Sacketts Harbor 1st. June. 1814

Sir

"I have already had the honor to inform you of the affair at Sandy Creek on the 30th. Ult. but for want of time at that juncture I had it not in my power to give you the particulars and as the most of my communications since measures were adopted for a push from Oswego Falls to Sandy Creek with the Naval Stores, have been made in great haste— I avail myself of a leisure moment to make a report in detail of my proceedings Since that period.— On the 17th. I dispatched Mr. Huginan to Mexico¹ to hire a number of Ox Teams and to engage a quantity of forage &c.— I also sent orders to Oswego Falls to have an additional number of large wheels made for transporting the Guns and Cables back, across the Portage and caused reports to be circulated in every direction that I had received your orders to Send all the Naval Stores to Oneida Lake, with all possible expedition.— On the Morning of the 28th. when these reports were well in circulation and when (as I have since heard from good authority) they had been faithfully detailed to Sir James, I had the honor to receive per express your communication of the 27th. vesting in me discretionary powers.— I immediately dispatched Mr. Dixon² in the long Gig to reconnoitre the Coast— I went with my Officers to the Falls, to run the boats down over the Rapids— at Sunset we arrived at Oswego with the boats (nineteen in number) loaded in all with Twenty one Long thirty two Pounders, Ten–Twenty four pounders— three Forty two do. (Carronades) & ten Cables besides some light articles and distributed in the batteause a guard of about One hundred and fifty Rifle-men—under command of Major Appling— Mr. Dixon having returned with a report of the coast being clear, we Set off at dark and arrived at Big Salmon River about Sun rise on the 29th. with the loss of one Boat having on board Two Twenty four Pounders and one cable— I cannot account for his having sep[ar]ated from us but by the design of her Commander as every possible exertion was made to keep the brigade as compact as possible

At Big Salmon we met the Oneida's whom I had dispatched the day previous under the command of Lieut. Hill³ of the Rifle Regt.— as soon as they had taken up their line of [*march?*] along the Shore to Big Sandy Creek, I started with all the boats and arrived at Noon at our place of destination about two Miles up the Creek— In this laborious and hazardous duty I feel much indebted to Major Appling, his Officers and Men for their exertions, having assisted my Officers and Seamen in rowing the boats without a moments rest— twelve hours and about half the time enveloped in darkness and deluged with rain—also to Some of the principal inhabitants of the village of Oswego, who volunteered their Services as Pilots— At 2 A.M.—on the 30th. I received your Letter of the 29th. 6 P.M. per express and agreeably to the order contained therein sent Lieut. Pierce [*Pearce*] to look out as far as Stoney Point about 5 O'Clock he returned having been pursued by a Gun Boat and three Barges— The best possible disposition was immediately made of the Rifle men and Indians about half a mile below our boats— about 8. AM a canonading of long shot was commenced by the Enemy and believing (as I did) that no attempt would be made to land with their small force I ordered Lieut. Pierce to proceed

in erecting Shears and making preparations to unload the boats, and as all the Teams had retrograded in consequence of the canonading— I sent in pursuit of them to return— about 9 O'clock Captain Harris with a Squadron of Dragoons and Captain Melvin with a company of light Artillery and two Six pounders arrived— Captain Harris the commanding Officer agreed with me that this reinforcement should halt as the Troops best calculated for a bush fight were already on the ground where they could act to the greatest advantage, and that the Enemy seeing a large reinforcement arrive would most probably retreat about Ten the Enemy having landed and pushed up the Creek with three Gun boats, three Cutters and one Gig,— The Rifflemen under that excellent Officer Major Appling rose from their concealment and after a smart fire of about Ten Minutes Succeeded in capturing all the boats and their Crews without one having escaped— at about 5 P.M. after having buried with the honors of War Mr. Hoare (a British Midshipman) killed in the action I was relieved by Captain Ridgely⁴ who you did me the honor to Send to Sandy Creek for that purpose— all the Prisoners except the wounded having been removed and expecting another attack at Night, I remained to assist Captain Ridgely in that event—but yesterday Morning Seeing nothing in the offing I availed myself of my relief, I returned to this place— In performing to the best of my abilities the duty for which I was ordered to Oswego Falls, I have great Satisfaction in acknowledging the unremitted exertions of Lieut. Pierce Sailing Master Vaughan and Midn. Mackey Hart and Caton⁵ also to Major Appling his Officers and Men for their kind assistance in the same duty."

"The Report of killed and wounded and prisoners and also the number and description of the capt[ured] boats has been already remitted by Captain Ridgely and myself—" I have the honor to be &c. &c. &c.

(Sign'd) "Meln. T. Woolsey"

Copy, DNA, RG45, CL, 1814, Vol. 4, No. 3, enclosure (M125, Roll No. 37).

1. Mexico, a village on the Little Salmon River in Oswego County, N.Y.
2. Acting Sailing Master Samuel Dixon.
3. 2d Lieutenant Josiah Hill, First Rifle Regiment, U.S.A.
4. Master Commandant Charles G. Ridgely.
5. Midshipmen Daniel H. Mackey, Ezekiel B. Hart, and Richard Caton, Jr.

Commencement of the American Expedition into Lake Huron

The joint expedition into Lake Huron, originally ordered by Secretary of the Navy Jones on 15 April but postponed,¹ finally got under way in June. The goals were to destroy any British shipyards at Matchedash, to capture St. Joseph Island, an important military and fur trading post, and to recapture Fort Michilimackinac.

The expedition departed Erie on 19 June and arrived at Detroit two days later. It consisted of five American vessels, Lawrence, Niagara, Caledonia, Scorpion, and Tigris, under Captain Arthur Sinclair, and some 700 infantry and artillerymen under the

command of Lieutenant Colonel George Croghan. Delayed by a week of adverse winds and low water, the ships entered Lake Huron on 12 July.

1. See pp. 420–24.

SECRETARY OF THE NAVY JONES TO CAPTAIN ARTHUR SINCLAIR

Captain Arthur Sinclair
Commanding the U S Naval force
on Lake Erie.— Erie Penna.

Navy Department
June 1st. 1814

Sir

I have this moment received your Letter of the 27th. ultimo and upon the information it contains, have determined that the expedition to Lake Huron agreeably to the original design, communicated in my order to you of the 15th. April shall proceed without delay, and therefore revoke my subsequent order of the 19th. May, substituting a smaller force under the command of a Lieutenant. Whether your information be correct or otherwise, it will be prudent to explore the several Ports on Lake Huron, in order to ascertain the real force and designs of the enemy in that quarter, and if found to correspond with the intelligence you have received, the force under your command will be amply sufficient to frustrate his projects, and I trust to capture his force.— Should your information prove erroneous, still the recovery of Michilimacina and the capture of St. Joseph's will have an important effect, particularly upon the Indian tribes whom the enemy will endeavour to seduce into a belief of his competency and determination to recover the command of upper Canada; If the enemy is in reality creating any naval force, it is undoubtedly at Matschedash, which is on a point of land at the head of Gloucester Bay, marked on Smyth's Map Townplot.—

The Secretary of War will this day write to Major Croghan, to accompany you with as many troops as you can accommodate on board your Squadron, and not a moment should be lost in carrying into effect the objects of the expedition.

In the discharge of the duty assigned you, it is the express command of the President, that private property be respected, unless under circumstances so connected with, or favoring the designs of the enemy, as to render its destruction inevitable.—

This injunction accords no less with your sense of duty than of justice, as exemplified in your remarks upon the destruction of private property at long point, which has excited much regret, for notwithstanding the innumerable instances of violation on the part of the enemy to sanction retaliation on our part; the morality as well as the policy of the United States forbid the uncivilized practice.—

It will be of importance to return to Lake Erie, as soon as may be, in order to guard against any casualty or unfavorable change of circumstances, which may possibly take place during your absence. You will leave the Squadron on Lake Erie as strong as possible, for in the event of disaster, it will not be practicable to send reinforcements of Seamen from the Atlantic Ports in due time.—

I therefore trust, that in detaching your force for the upper Lake, you will bear this in mind, and take no more Seamen than are absolutely necessary to work the Guns, with a few to the rigging. This will enable you to carry more troops, a part of whom may act as Marines, and assist in working the Vessels.—

I submit it to your discretion, to take one or both the Sloops of War *Lawrence* and *Niagara*, though I feel some reluctance in permitting them both to leave Lake Erie. The principal object of the Squadron on Lake Erie during your absence, will be to facilitate the transportation of the Army from point to point, as occasion may require, and this service will in all probability be pretty active. You will therefore instruct the Commanding Officer, particularly on this point, and direct him to keep as many Vessels as are fit for this service in constant readiness.—

On the Eve of your departure you will forward to this Department, a Report of the force, state and condition of the Squadron under your immediate command, as well as that which you shall leave on Lake Erie, with a Muster Roll of the Officers and men attached to each Vessel.— I am respectfully Your Obedt. Servt.

W Jones.

LB, DNA, RG45, CLS, 1814, pp. 146–48.

SECRETARY OF WAR ARMSTRONG TO
LIEUTENANT COLONEL GEORGE CROGHAN, U.S.A.

Lt Colo. Croghan
Detroit

War Department
June 2d. 1814.

Sir,

Information has been received that the Enemy is about making a new Establishment at Matchedash on Lake Huron, and that five hundred or 1000 seamen, mechanics & others, are now employed there in the construction of armed vessels &c— This Establishment must be broken up— The safety of Detroit—the command of the lakes—the general security of the frontier depend upon it. Captain Sinclair will accordingly receive orders to pass into Lake Huron with part of the flotilla, & to carry such troops as may be destined to cooperate with the fleet in the reduction of this & other places. His means of transportation will probably accommodate more than eight hundred—but the safest rule will be to embark as many as can be accommodated—taking yourself the Command and leaving behind you a competent force to guard against Indian attacks, which at present are alone to be feared.

If on reaching & reducing the place, it be found to be important (as I believe it will) it ought to be fortified and garrisoned, & become the left of a new line of operations extending by the way of lake Simcoe, from Gloucester bay on Lake Huron, to York on lake Ontario. In this last view of the subject, surplus cannon, ammunition & provisions ought to be carried with you.—

LB, DNA, RG107, Letters Sent by the Secretary of War Relating to Military Affairs, Vol. 7, pp. 215–16 (M6, Roll No. 7).

CAPTAIN ARTHUR SINCLAIR TO SECRETARY OF THE NAVY JONES

U States Sloop *Niagara*, Erie, June
the 10th. 1814

Sir

your letter of the 1st Inst, from the circumstance of its having been put in the common instead of the Express mail to pittsburg, has just come to hand— I am pleased with the prospect it holds out, of a more active and interesting service than your order of the 19th May confined me to on this Lake— That order has in a considerable degree frustrated the arrangements I had made for the Service above; in as much, as it induced me to put an immediate stop to the transportation of Bread from pittsburg to this place, as I found the expense more than double that of Flour and the loss and damage, by exposure in Waggons, excessively great; and as I was not to leave this Lake I had got my Baking sufficiently ahead to keep up a regular supply of fresh good Bread— There was 100 bbls., however, contracted for previous to my order to the agent being recd.,— This is on its way, and will with what I have, and by feeding the men in the mean time, on loaf Bread which I get Baked of a night, enable me to sail in a short time— should it not arrive by the middle of the ensuing week I shall sail without it, leaving a vessel to follow with it and all that may in the mean time be baked, presuming she will overtake me while lightning over the Flats of the River St. Clair— I have dispatched a vessel to try and stop the expedition under Lieut. Woodhouse, as from the constant N.E. wind we have had ever since the time he must have arrived at Detroit, I am under the impression he has not yet been able to get further than that place— I have also forwarded the Secretary at Wars letter which was inclosed to me for Colnl. Croghan, in order that he may be apprised of our movements— The wind is fine as far as the mouth of the River, from which I have ordered the officer, should it still remain to the NE—to hire a horse and proceed by land to Detroit— The few seamen I have under my command is a source of serious inconvenience and uneasiness— I had confident[ly] hoped from the nature of your order to Capt. Gordon, that I should have been considerably strengthened by that draft; but there are scarcely any Seamen among them, and those we had here are the most indifferent men of their rates I have ever seen.— They have been reentered, it seems, and rated as seamen by way of encouragement to do so— They are really not good ordinary Seamen, and are exhausted in constitution from their winter dissipation onshore— I am told they were many weeks drunk at a time and never onbd. of their ships until forced there by disease and debility— The men from the *Constellation*, or rather which were intended by you to have come from that Ship, are Ordinary Seamen and landsmen, given a bounty from onbd., the gunboats, to enter for seamen for the Lakes, and told they were quite able to do their duty as such here— The ordinary Seamen sent, were every one rated Boys onboard the *Constellation*. I shall notwithstanding all those inconveniences, arising out of that want of liberality which I regret to see exists but too common in our service, use every effort in my power to carry into effect the views of the government intrusted to my conduct— You shall see by the next mail a proper Muster Roll arranged as you have directed, as one of the Pursers ordered (Mr. Soloman¹) has arrived, and appears to be

capable of filling the situation he holds— I have the honor to remain, Sir, very respectfully Your Obt. Sert.

A Sinclair

ALS, DNA, RG45, CL, 1814, Vol. 4, No. 47 (M125, Roll No. 37).

I. Purser Ezekiel Solomon.

CAPTAIN ARTHUR SINCLAIR TO SECRETARY OF THE NAVY JONES

U.S. Sloop of War *Niagara*
Detroit June 23d. 1814

Sir

Immediately after the Sailing of the *Caledonia* & *Ohio* for Erie with my letter of yesterdays date, Colo. Croghan returned from above.

He informs me that he has ascertained beyond a doubt that the Enemy are in force, from 800 to 1000, strong, and are building a considerable Naval force on Matschedash Bay— He is using every effort to make his force equal to cope with them, in which event the four Vessels I had intended taking will be by no means equal to their transportation, and would fall still further short of carrying an ample supply of provisions to guard against contingencies— In consequence of this information I dispatched an Express and succeeded in stopping the Vessels above mentioned, between this and Malden,

I ought to take them both with me; but I feel so extremely tenacious of complying implicitly with my instructions, and you have been so impressive, in your wish that Lake Erie should be left as strong as possible, that I act against my own judgement, when I determine to retain the *Caledonia* only— There can be nothing to fear but from above, and now, that it is clearly ascertained, that he is building a Naval force, is it not rational to believe, that that force will be at least equal to all ours? for surely his dear bought experience, must have taught him the futility of bringing into action an inferior one.— On the ascendancy on those Lakes, depends entirely the possession of all we hold in this quarter; every exertion, therefore, will necessarily be made to protect that force while building, and I cannot but ardently wish, that the gallant Officer who is to cooperate with me, had ample means in his power to insure that success. I am confident his exertions will merit, and that I had it equally in mine to give him the necessary transportation for such a force; but situated as we are, bravery and enterprise, must supply our deficiency in physical force— It appears that a force of Regulars have marched from the Niagara frontier lately— Col'n'l Croghan thinks that an effort will be made to cut off our return to the Lower Lake, by regaining one or both, this place and Malden,— He knows the Indians are concentrating, and that an attack is contemplated at some point.

Should it not be made certain that any effort of this kind should prove abortive? It is so much easier to garrison and hold a conquered Country than to reconquer it, should the Enemy again possess himself of it, that I have taken the Liberty of suggesting to you, what is believed will be attempted here during our absence, that the Government may take such Steps as they think adviseable to counteract his movements— I find the Army quite unprepared in Salt Provisions

They have not more than thirty days, The Expedition must consequently be given up or considerably delayed, unless I loan them— I have therefore thought correct to do so, at the same time taking the Contractors obligation that it shall be returned before I can want— I have a supply of my own Crews for between 4 & 5 months, and can, with what the Army have themselves, make up a supply for the whole for near two Months— This will insure time, at least, for the accomplishment of our first object, which is of infinite importance to be performed in the shortest possible time— The Contractor then binds himself to follow on with an immediate supply, One hundred Barrells of which I have loaned him from a deposit we have on the River Huron

I trust, Sir, that the discretionary powers I have used to facilitate the enterprise on foot will meet your approbation, as you must be assured that the good of the service is and has been my only Study,

The *Scorpion* has returned from staking out the flats through the River St. Clair, and has found not much short of 2 fathoms, Had this circumstance, as well as the Enemies force above been known in time, The prize ships might have been fitted for that service—

From the large requisitions of Capt. Elliott not being entirely put a stop to, owing to the state of forwardness many Articles were in, it is my Opinion, if you wish it, or the service of the Lower Lake should require it, that at least one of those Ships might be fitted out without scarcely any additional expense, from what is now actually on hand, provided recruits can be got to man her— I am now waiting entirely for the Army—they talk of being detained Six or eight Days; but this must not be the case— Colo. Croghan is an active Officer, and I shall give him every facility in my power to get him embarked. I have the honor to remain with great Respect, Sir, Yr. Obt. Servt.

A Sinclair

ALS, DNA, RG45, CL, 1814, Vol. 4, No. 94 (M125, Roll No. 37).

DIARY OF SURGEON USHER PARSONS

[Extract]

[U.S. brig Lawrence, Sandwich, Upper Canada]

Sunday [July] 3d— On shore— The troops from Sandusky arrived.—Sailed from Detroit at 9 P.M. for Michilimackinack 240 Soldiers on board—with Maj. Holmes.—¹ Col. Chroghan commands the expedition. The intention of the expedition is to retake Mackinack.—by storm and also destroy any shipping there may be on the upper lakes.— The Fleet will probably return to this place in 4 weeks.— Mr Croaks came on board.—²

Monday 4th. Arrived in Lake St. Clair early in the morning. Distance about 10 or 12 miles.— Rained in the morning Remarks— The banks of the lake are low,—not a hill to be seen.— There is a small current in the lake perhaps $\frac{1}{4}$ knot— The water is about 4 & 5 fathoms at the lower & middle part The wind blew various directions, and we several times came to anchor. About two thirds of the distance from the lower to the upper end of the Lake we came to 2 fathoms water and about 5 or 6 oclock having moved a short distance further we run aground, and the *Niagara* also,— Had a squall & shower. Remained here

all night in sight of the Huron River settlement at the mouth of the river perhaps a dozen or 20 families were once settled here and some now remain buildings are good. Orchards &c. There are a few buildings more scattered along the Western shore.—But the opposite or Canada shore is marshy & uninhabited

The water on the bar is about 8 feet this however is not the worst place.—

Tuesday 5th— The Soldiers were sent from the vessels to the mouth of the river St Clair that the vessels might be lighter.— The schooners *Scorpion* & *Tigress* came along side in the after noon and lightened us some, soon we drifted on shore again, where we remained all night. Wind West.— A schooner from Detroit with Lt. Col. Crogran arrived in the evening— Capt More³ & another slept on board. Signal guns were fired. The *Niagara* succeeded today in getting to the other bar about 6 miles distance.

Wed. 6th— Got over the bar 8½ feet water about 10 o'clock Passed the *Niagara* at 1 o'clock.—on the bar on which we were detained about 2 hours.— Proceeded about 6 miles further to the mouth of the river St Clair where we anchored at 3 P.M. and took in our ballast.— The men begin to be sick Took on the list 4 patients. On both sides the mouth of the river is an extensive Marshes particularly on the Starboard or Canada side. . . .

Sunday July 10th.— Sailed by 2 o'clock about 10 miles to where the troops were encamped and took them on board. . . .

Monday 11th.— Pleasant Wind continues ahead. Attended to writing cases in the Medical Ledger.— Officers plunged.— Got under way in the evening and sailed about ½ a mile to the head of the Island. The soldiers debark'd in the morning and march'd to Fort Graciot at the head of the river which is about 9 miles distant.—

Tuesday 12— Made but little head way Pleasant.

AD, RHi, Usher Parsons Diary. For a printed version, see Parsons, *Surgeon of the Lakes*.

1. Major Andrew H. Holmes, 32d Infantry, U.S.A.

2. Ramsay Crooks, agent for John Jacob Astor's fur company, was trying to arrange for removing a shipment of furs from Mackinac Island to the United States.

3. Captain Nimrod H. Moore, 28th Infantry, U.S.A.

The Blockade of Sackets Harbor Lifted

The British blockade of Sackets Harbor, which was clearly ineffective in preventing cannon and stores from reaching the American port, was lifted after the capture of the British boats at Sandy Creek on 30 May.

Commodore Chauncey's new ship Superior was nearly ready to take the lake except for a critical shortage of seamen. The commodore suggested "borrowing" some from the American ships that were unable to put to sea because of the tight British blockade of the American coast. It appeared that the American naval squadron would soon be master of Lake Ontario until Commodore Yeo could complete his new warship.

COMMODORE SIR JAMES L. YEO, R.N., TO
LIEUTENANT GENERAL GORDON DRUMMOND, BRITISH ARMY

Copy/

Prince Regent, at Anchor
Off Sacketts Harbour, June 3rd: 1814

Sir,

The Enemy's Squadron being now nearly ready for Sea, and it being too late for any joint attack on the Enemy's force at Sacketts Harbour, I conceive it necessary to determine in what way His Majestys naval Force can best be employed to defeat the Enemy's views, and protect this province; I transmit you herewith a statement of their force, on which it is unnecessary for me to make any Comment.¹

There are two things to be considered,

1st. What the Enemy's Squadron can effect before our large Ship is ready.

2ndly. What object we have for risking an action with our present force, when we will so soon have the superiority.

From the large reinforcements Government are sending to this country, it appears to me to be their wish, that a respectable naval Force should be established to meet the Enemy, and that any rash, ill-timed, or unnecessary risk, would defeat their views— The Enemy are not in sufficient force to undertake any expedition in the face of our present Squadron, but any disaster on our Side, might give them a serious ascendancy.

In making this communication, I trust you will give me credit, when I assure you I do not write from the feeling of a Captain of a Ship, but consider myself placed here in a highly responsible situation, as commanding the naval Force in this Country, on which most materially depends the safety or loss of this province—

I therefore require of you, Sir, as the General officer with whom I am acting, your opinion on the several points in my letter, I shall at all times be ready to take the Squadron into action, whenever the General Officer with whom I am acting represents to me that he thinks it necessary for the good of the service, and safety of the Colony, but such sanction or authority under existing circumstances, I will require, as I never can take the whole responsibility on myself— I have the honor to be &c &c

(Signed) James L. Yeo
Commodore & Commr. in Chief

Copy, CaOOA, British Military and Naval Records, RG8, I, "C" Ser., Vol. 683, pp. 239–40.

1. In the enclosure, "A Statement of the American Naval Force, in Addition to their old Squadron—3rd. June 1814," Yeo listed four American vessels, *Superior* (64 guns), *Jefferson* (24), *Jones* (22), and "name unknown" (52). The latter vessel would be called *Mohawk*.

LIEUTENANT GENERAL GORDON DRUMMOND, BRITISH ARMY, TO
COMMODORE SIR JAMES L. YEO, R.N.

Copy/

Head Quarters, Upper Canada
Kingston 6th. June 1814

Sir,

Your letter of the 3rd. Inst. has received my most serious attention—

So long as your position off Sacketts Harbour was found to distress the Enemy, and to retard the armament and equipment of his new ships, so long it appeared to me that the Blockade ought to be maintained, and so long, in fact, no risk whatever could attend it—

It appearing, however from your letter, that the Enemy's Squadron, including his new Ship (*Superior*) and Brigs, is now ready for sea, it is evident the Blockade has not had all the Effect to which we looked, and moreover, that it can no longer be maintained, without risking an action with a Squadron quite equal, if not superior to that under your command, and under circumstances on our part of decided disadvantage. With regard to the probable objects of the Enemy, and to what their Squadron may be able to effect, before our large Ship is ready, I am of opinion that whatever may be their ultimate views, they will not undertake any offensive operation, until their second large Ship is ready, and even then, I am very much disposed to concur with you in thinking that they will scarce venture, in the face of your present squadron and with the knowledge of the powerful addition to it, which is in rapid progress, to encumber theirs with Troops, and other means necessary for the invasion of any part of this province—

It follows, therefore, as my opinion, and I have no hesitation in giving it as such, that there exists at present no motive or object connected with the security of this Province, which can make it necessary for you to act otherwise than cautiously on the defensive (but at the same time closely watching all their movements) until the moment arrives, when by the addition of the large Ship now on the stocks, you may bring the naval contest on this Lake fairly to issue, or by a powerful combined Expedition (if the Enemy, as is probable, should decline meeting you on the Lake) we may attack and destroy him in his strong hold—

In thus frankly giving you my Ideas, as to the line of conduct which it would be prudent and proper for you, as Commodore of His Majesty's Naval Force in this Province, to pursue, it is scarce necessary for me to observe that circumstances may arise which may render it expedient and necessary to adopt a widely different system (such for instance as the relief of the necessities of the advanced Division, an Expedition against Sacketts Harbour &c &c

But these circumstances as they may arise, will be discussed by us, with those feelings of perfect good understanding and cordiality, which have, I think I may affirm, ever subsisted betwixt us, and which to me have been a source of great satisfaction and confidence— I have the Honor to be &c &c &c

(Signed) Gordon Drummond
Lt. General.

Copy, CaOOA, British Military and Naval Records, RG8, I, "C" Ser., Vol. 683, pp. 242-44. Enclosed in Drummond to Prevost, 7 June 1814.

COMMODORE ISAAC CHAUNCEY TO SECRETARY OF THE NAVY JONES

No. 92.

U.S. Ship *Superior*
Sacketts Harbor 8th. June 1814

Sir

I was yesterday honored with your two Letters of the 27th and 28th Ulto and will reply to them tomorrow

I have much gratification in being able to inform you that all my Guns (with the exception of the nine captured by the Enemy) have arrived and the *Superior* will have her whole armament on board tomorrow, and we have Sufficient Guns for all the other Vessels— the whole of our Rigging Shot, Powder and other Stores from North Bay Utica Rome and Sandy-Creek will be in before tomorrow night— all the prize boats, together with the Schenectady boats which brought the Guns to Sandy Creek arrived here this Morning and the Troops Marines and Seamen which have been detached for the protection of the Property at that place have all returned— I therefore begin to feel as if we should soon be in a Situation to take the Lake—in fact there will be nothing to prevent my Sailing on the first of July if Seamen arrive to man the vessels, but we are still Five hundred short— I understand that there are a number of Men recruited in Philadelphia for Lake Erie—could they not be transferred to this Lake? I should presume that the vessels on Lake Erie would not require to be full manned as the Enemy has no fleet to contend with— If any of the Frigates will lend me a few Men I will return them in the Autumn, I hope with interest. The *Congress Hornet* and New Frigate at Philadelphia¹ are in situation which makes it very doubtful whether they will be able to get to Sea before next Winter and if we could be supplied with our compliment from those Ships, I should hope to place the Mastery of the Lakes beyond a question— I hope Sir that you will not consider me impertinent in so frequently calling your attention to this Lake, but it is a subject in which I have much at stake and feel a great interest—you will I trust make all due allowance for my anxiety—

The reinforcements of Seamen Marines Soldiers and Carpenters which left England about the first of April have arrived at Quebec.— I have the honor to be very respectfully Sir Yr. Mo. Ob. St.

Isaac Chauncey

LS, DNA, RG45, CL, 1814, Vol. 4, No. 31 (M125, Roll No. 37).

1. The U.S. frigate *Guerriere* was then under construction at the Philadelphia Navy Yard; she was launched 20 June 1814.

GOVERNOR-GENERAL SIR GEORGE PREVOST TO
COMMODORE SIR JAMES L. YEO, R.N.

11th. June 1814

Dear Sir

Your letter of the 3d Inst made me acquainted with the unfortunate result of the expedition under Capt. Popham—

On receiving this unwelcome intelligence I desired every possible exertion to be used to hasten to Kingston the whole of the Officers, Seamen & Artificers who have just arrived from England, I also applied to the Senior Officer of His Majesty's ships at Quebec to send by the Steam boat as many sailors volunteers for the Lakes as could be obtained from the vessels in the St. Lawrence—

The most incessant exertions of every Departt. concerned with the Transport Service are making to forward the Articles which you have required for the Equipment & Armament of the New Ship & I most sincerely hope our endeavours to ensure to your Squadron a decided superiority will prove successful—

Captain Downie¹ having had an opportunity of entering into the detail of the measures in operation is well qualified to afford you such information as you may require respecting them—

In reply to your letter of the 5th from the Upper Gap I have to hope the timely arrival of officers & seamen removed one of the causes for raising the blockade of Sacketts Harbour during the short period you will be compelled to adopt defensive measures I cannot too strongly recommend that every possible precaution be taken to preserve the Water Communication from Fort Wellington to Kingston from interruption or molestation—

In order to facilitate this service I have directed the Gun boats which have been built at the Coteau du Lac to be delivered over to the Division of seamen as they passed that Post

The immediate arrangements you propose for the Naval establishment at Isle Aux Noix & on Lake Champlain cannot fail in being satisfactory to Dear Sir Your faithful Humble Servt.

George Prevost
Comr. of the Forces

LB, CaOOA, British Military and Naval Records, RG8, I, "C" Ser., Vol. 1225, pp. 15–16.

1. Captain George Downie, R.N.

COMMODORE ISAAC CHAUNCEY TO SECRETARY OF THE NAVY JONES

No. 102

U.S. Ship Superior
Sacketts Harbor 15th. June. 1814

Sir

The Enemy's Fleet has not been in sight since the 5th and I have some reason to believe that he is preparing for some expedition— he is now at Kingston collecting boats and transports— a large reinforcement of Seamen and Marines has arrived— the Marines is said to amount to about 2000 Men— boats are constantly passing up the St. Lawrence with Troops Naval Stores and munitions of War— last week more than Two hundred boats passed Ogdensburgh for Kingston and contrary to the usual practice all the boats are detained at Kingston for some purpose or other.—

I have good reason to believe that the Enemy contemplated an attack on this place about the time that he lost his boats and Men at Sandy Creek— that loss together with the severe indisposition of General Drummond (who still lays very low) induced the Enemy to defer the attack but I am persuaded that he has not abandoned it and only waits for his reinforcements and a favorable opportunity and why he has deferred it so long is most astonishing, for we are now pretty well prepared to take care of ourselves but if Sir James had landed 3000 Men when he first appeared off this Harbor and made a simultaneous attack with the Fleet he must have carried the place, for our New Vessels (with the exception of the *Jefferson*) at that time were without their armament and the Military force had been considerably weakened by Five hundred of the best Troops being ordered from this place to Buffaloe and a few days ago about Seven Hundred more marched in the same direction.— I really do not understand the Policy of

leaving the most important post upon the Frontier the weakest in point of force—for altho' the Fleet will be in a situation in a few days not only to take care of itself but to act offensively, yet if we should be obliged to visit the upper part of the Lake the Enemy would avail himself of the absence of our fleet make a push at this place and I have no doubt would carry it and destroy the place and all the Naval and Military Stores and provisions here which would put us back at least a Campaign besides the mortification of the Country at the loss of so important a Post.

I hope sir that you will not consider that I am travelling out of the line of my duty in detailing my impressions as to the situation of this place—my only motive is to make you acquainted with its true state in order that if in your judgment a reinforcement should be thought necessary for the protection of the public property here that you would be pleased to speak to the Honorable the Secretary at War upon the subject.

I have no information by which I can form a correct opinion of the strength of the Military at this place but believe that it is less than 2000 effective Men— this force would do all that so small a force could do for Officers and Men are excellent but the probability is that whenever the Enemy make the attack it will be with a force three times as large as the one we have which in the absense of the Fleet would ensure him success.— I have the honor to be very respectfully
Sir Yr. Mo. Ob. st

Isaac Chauncey

LS, DNA, RG45, CL, 1814, Vol. 4, No. 65 (M125, Roll No. 37).

Army-Navy Relations on Lake Ontario

In their public statements, army and navy commanders pledged to work in close cooperation with each other to further the interests of the United States. Privately, however, jealousies, bitter feelings, and latent rivalries between the services began to emerge in the northern lakes theater. Accolades for the American success at Sandy Creek, for example, became a sore point when the navy appeared to be given credit for the action.

The campaign of 1814 demanded close coordination and good communication between army and navy commanders on Lake Ontario if it was to succeed. Secretary of War Armstrong's instructions to Major General Jacob Brown, dated 10 June, led the general to believe that Commodore Chauncey would be on the lake no later than 15 July to cooperate with him in operations on the Niagara Peninsula.¹ Commodore Chauncey, however, only received orders to have shipwrights at Sackets Harbor construct barges for the army's use. The barges were modeled after those used by the Chesapeake Bay flotilla under Commodore Joshua Barney. These instructions did not detail specific plans to cooperate with the army.

1. See pp. 499–501.

MAJOR GENERAL JACOB BROWN, U.S.A., TO SECRETARY OF WAR ARMSTRONG

(Confidential)

Head Quarters
Buffaloe. June 7th. 1814

Dear Sir

Detachments from my division, having been long engaged in the defence of the Stores destined for the flotilla at Sacketts Harbour, & on this service, having conducted with honour to themselves & the Country, I cannot patiently stand by, & see a reputation so fairly earned, by the gallant Corps employed, wrested from them.* I feel the more tender upon this subject, as I do know, that the Navy of Lake Ontario is under great obligations to the Army; for its preservation & support, the last & the present Campaign, & I have not seen in this navy, a magnanimous expression of the obligation, unless this expression is to be found in the surrender of a dried Scalp.

Do not suppose, that I feel unfriendly to Commodore Chauncey, or the Navy. The Commodore has my friendship, & the Navy will ever have my support, but do not expect me under any circumstances, or for any considerations, to offer up the honors of the Army, on the Altar of the Idol that all sects & parties in this country, have agreed to worship. Believe me Very Respectfully & truly yours

Jac: Brown

*Besides Mitchells Artillery, & Applings Rifle Corps, Major Lyman¹ with three hundred & fifty Infantry, was ordered upon this service, & was at Oswego, when the Guns & Stores passed,— Lyman is now near this place.

At Buffaloe, I have found all well—.

LB, DLC, Jacob J. Brown Papers, MMC-3212, Letterbook 1, p. 55.

1. Major Chester Lyman, 9th Infantry, U.S.A.

SECRETARY OF THE NAVY JONES TO COMMODORE ISAAC CHAUNCEY

Commodore Isaac Chauncey
Commanding U S Naval force
Sacketts Harbour

Navy Department
June 7th. 1814.

Sir

The meditated operations of the Army and Navy in the course of the Campaign, render it expedient to construct and equip, fifteen large Barges at Sacketts Harbour, as soon as possible, and for that purpose I send by the Mail which conveys this, a roll containing a draught of a Barge 75 feet long, 15 feet wide and 4½ feet deep, to carry a long 24 or 18 in one end, and a 42 or 32 pdr. Caronade in the other, and to row forty Oars.¹

A considerable number of them have been built for the flotilla service on the Chesapeake and elsewhere, and perfectly answer all the purposes for which they were intended;— they row fast, and with Crew and every thing on board draw



Jacob Jennings Brown

but 22 Inches water.— You will therefore have fifteen of these constructed armed and equipped, as soon as may be practicable.

We have some of a smaller Class but they were all constructed in the same form and manner. The plan of the inboard works, of one of the small Class is also enclosed, and may serve for those you are to build.

The Awning is made of light stanchions and Cedar top covered with painted Canvas like the top of a stage Coach, with Canvas Curtains at the sides. They are decked on each side and open amidships, under the Awning where the men sit at the Oars.— You will adopt the awning or not as you think proper, but in all respects you will fit them in the most plain and economical manner

You have also a copy of the Naval Constructor's directions to the Builder.

I presume you will have a few spare Guns or Carronades toward their armament, and the Secretary of War will furnish the residue from the ordnance Stores, until required for separate service; You will find those Barges a valuable auxiliary to your Squadron in any enterprize where that species of force may be necessary; both ends are alike and they row equally well either way.— I am respectfully Your Obedt. Servant

W Jones.

LB, DNA, RG45, CLS, 1814, pp. 148–49.

1. A sketch of a larger version of this barge, drawn by Commodore Joshua Barney, can be found in Dudley, *Naval War of 1812*, Vol. 2, p. 375.

MAJOR GENERAL JACOB BROWN, U.S.A., TO COMMODORE ISAAC CHAUNCEY

Head Quarters Buffaloe
June 21st. 1814

Dear Sir

When I parted from you at the Harbour, you assured me, that you would communicate freely, with me, and give me all the information in your power. I have not received a line from you, and am yet to learn, when, your fleet will be upon the Lake.—

I shall consider the Lake as yours, the moment you have your new vessels in condition to appear upon it.— Sir James will not honestly and manfully meet you, and if his Fleet is captured this Campaign, it will be captured in port.—

Capt. Sinclair is ordered to Lake Huron, and I am yet to learn, that the Fleet of either Lake, will co-operate with the Army, under my command.—

The Fleet of Lake Erie having failed me, I have taken measures to procure the necessary water craft, to enable me to cross this end of Lake Erie, and intend to cross, with the means the Government have given me, about the first of July, with the hope of not being disgraced.—

Upon the receipt of this, will you have the goodness to let me know by Express, when you will be out; and if I may expect you in the Neighbourhood of Fort George, by the 10th. of July? or what day?—

If you conclude to meet me at the head of Lake Ontario, I desire you to bring up in the fleet, two 18 pounders that will be delivered to you by Genl. Gaines,

and if the General believes that he can spare the Rifle corps, will you have the goodness to convey them to me, in your Fleet?—

I am not advised of any reinforcements having reached Kingston, but I know, that the best Regt. the Enemy had, at that post, (the 103rd.) has been moved to the peninsula.—

Three of the Enemy's Ships, and three of their smaller vessels, were near the mouth of the Niagara River on the 19th. inst.—

They no doubt conveyed the stores and troops that Johnston gave an Account of, from Earnesttown, to Fort George, and Fort Niagara.— Very respectfully, and truly Yours,

(signed) Jac. Brown

LB, NBuHi, Jacob Brown Manuscripts.

COMMODORE ISAAC CHAUNCEY TO MAJOR GENERAL JACOB BROWN, U.S.A.

U.S. Ship *Superior*
Sacketts Harbor 25th. June 1814

Dear General

Your favor of the 21st. I received yesterday—the extreme anxiety under which I have labored for the fate of my Guns and other Stores must plead my apology for not writing you before— I have now received the whole of my Guns and Stores—the *Superior* is ready to sail the *Mohawk* is rigged and will be ready to sail the first Week in July—when I shall proceed in quest of Sir James and offer him battle, if he accepts the invitation I shall either go to Kingston or be at leisure to cooperate with you upon any enterprize against the Enemy—but if Sir James should pursue the policy that he did last year of avoiding a general action I should be obliged to watch his movements to prevent his doing mischief—I shall therefore be governed by circumstances—if he visits the head of the Lake with his Fleet, you may expect to see me there also, if he returns to Kingston, I shall remain in this vicinity to watch his movements—our force is about equal without reckoning his Gun Boats and small Schooners—my fleet will mount five Guns more than his but he has had greatly the advantage of me by two Months exercise on the Lake—he has received a reinforcement of about 700 Seamen, 2000 Marines and 300 Carpenters.— It is said that a large reinforcement of troops have arrived at Quebec and I have no doubt but that it is the Enemy's intention (if he can lead me up the Lake and induce us to weaken this Post by detaching from it) to make a bold push across in boats and attempt the destruction of this place and Stores and if he should succeed he gains a great object— It is my firm opinion that this place has been too much weakened already and I think that it would be unwise at this time to detach either Guns or men—as soon as I am ready to Sail and fix on the day I will write to you and I will also keep you informed from time to time of my movements upon the Lake.—

I am much indebted to Major Appling and the brave Men under his command for the protection and preservation of my Guns at Sandy Creek and beg to express to you and through you to them the high estimation in which I hold

their gallantry and services— General Gaines has also on all occasions promptly rendered me every assistance in his power.—

In your contemplated enterprize may your most sanguine wishes be realized and may the God of battles preserve you and give you victory I have the honor to be with great respect and esteem Dear General Yr. mo. ob st

Isaac Chauncey

LS, MHi, Jacob Brown Papers.

The Exploits of Lieutenant Francis Gregory

While he was fitting out his squadron at Sackets Harbor, Commodore Chauncey kept his officers and small boats busy moving supplies from Oswego, scouting the Canadian shore for signs of naval activity, and conducting an occasional operation against British gunboats moving troops and supplies to Kingston.

Acting Lieutenant Francis H. Gregory commanded a party of three gunboats sent out on the night of 15 June to the Thousand Islands to try to intercept British boats that were carrying supplies and troops from Montreal. They surprised and captured the British gunboat Black Snake on 19 June, but were in turn discovered by a larger British boat and gave up their prize in order to escape.

Sailing Master William Vaughan and privateersman Samuel Dixon piloted the other boats in the expedition. Both were experienced lake mariners, and Mr. Dixon had participated in a similar exploit the year before in the capture of the British gunboat Spitfire in July 1813.¹

The three men would undertake another successful raid a few days later. Commodore Chauncey sent them across the lake to Presque Isle on 26 June either to intercept British transports or to burn a schooner under construction there. After a close encounter with a British gunboat, Lieutenant Gregory landed and burned the ship on the stocks, then wisely beat a hasty retreat back to the American shore.

1. See Dudley, *Naval War of 1812*, Vol. 2, pp. 523–25.

COMMODORE ISAAC CHAUNCEY TO SECRETARY OF THE NAVY JONES

No. 110

U.S. Ship *Superior*
Sacketts Harbor 20 June 1814

Sir,

Knowing that the Enemy was constantly receiving Naval and Military Stores at Kingston by the St. Laurence I thought it might be practicable to surprize and capture a Brigade of Boats with Stores on board and either destroy or bring them off—for this purpose I directed Lieutenant Gregory to take three Gigs with only their Crew and one settee in each boat and proceed down the St. Laurence—secret himself on some of the Islands and watch a favorable opportunity to surprize a brigade of loaded boats and either bring them off or destroy them as circumstances would point out.—

Lieut. Gregory left here with his party on the Evening of the 15th. inst. and proceeded to the "Thousand Islands" where he hauled his boats on Shore and concealed them—saw two Brigades of boats pass one up the River with Troops of course too strong for our little party—the other down the River empty and not worth taking.—

Lieut. Gregory found that the Enemy had Gun boats stationed between Kingston & Prescott within about Six Miles of each other and that they had a Telegraph and Lookouts on almost every high Island so that they convey intelligence with great expedition.—

Yesterday Morning between 9 and 10 O'clock Lieut. Gregory finding himself discovered and a Gun boat close to him he instantly formed the bold design to board her which he did and carried her without loosing a Man—one of the Enemy was badly wounded—she proved to be the fine Gun-boat *Black Snake* or No. 9—and mounted one 18 pounder and manned with 18 Men chiefly Royal Marines (a List of which is inclosed) Lieut. Gregory manned his prize and proceeded up the St. Laurence but was soon discovered and pursued by a very large Gun-boat mounting two heavy Guns and rowed with upwards of forty oars, which overhauled him fast—he kept possession of his prize until the Enemy threw their shot over him he then very reluctantly (but I think properly) took all his prisoners out and scuttled the Gun boat which sunk instantly and escaped the Enemy altho so heavily loaded— Lieut. Gregory arrived safe this Morning with all his Prisoners

Permit me to recommend this gallant young Officer to your notice and patronage he is not surpassed by any of his grade in zeal intelligence and intrepidity Sailing Master Vaughan and Mr. Dixon each commanding a Gig under Lieutt. Gregory are entitled to my warm acknowledgements for their zeal and activity on all occasions to render service to their Country more particularly on the last expedition where from their knowledge of the River they rendered the most important Service by pointing out the proper channels to elude the pursuit of the Enemy

Will you be pleased to direct in what manner the Prisoners are to be disposed of I have the honor to be very respectfully Sir Yr. Mo. Ob. St.

Isaac Chauncey

LS, DNA, RG45, CL, 1814, Vol. 4, No. 82 (M125, Roll No. 37).

LIEUTENANT GENERAL GORDON DRUMMOND, BRITISH ARMY, TO GOVERNOR-GENERAL SIR GEORGE PREVOST

Kingston. June 21st. 1814

Sir,

I am concerned to acquaint Your Excellency of the capture, by the Enemy, of one of our Gunboats, under the command of Captain Landon,¹ of the Militia, with about 20 Marines, on the 19th. Instant at Tar Island.—

I understand, that Captain Landon, conceiving the first boat of the Enemy which made it's appearance, to be one of our own Flotilla, went on board her in

a small skiff; which, having been seen by his own people, induced them to consider her in the same friendly point; and they pulled towards her; when the whole force of the Enemy, (two Gunboats, and a gig, or cutter,) appearing, rendered resistance too hopeless a case, to be attempted.—

Captain Landon is so well known on the opposite Shore as an active, zealous, and loyal subject, that I am apprehensive he will not experience the kindest treatment during his confinement. I have the honor to be, Sir, Your Excellency's most obedient, humble servant,

Gordon Drummond
Lt. General

P.S: The enclosed are the only official notification I have had of this affair; immediately on receipt of which Captain Owen,² with two Gunboats, and 150 Seamen, to complete the complement of those at present manned with the Military, proceeded in pursuit of the Enemy.—

G D.

LS, CaOOA, British Military and Naval Records, RG8, I, "C" Ser., Vol. 683, pp. 300–302. Two enclosures, one from Thomas Blakeny and the other from Lieutenant John Newson, 89th Regiment, to Lieutenant Colonel J. W. Morrison, were filed with this letter.

1. Captain Charles Landon, 1st Grenville Militia.
2. Lieutenant Charles Cunliffe Owen, R.N.

LIEUTENANT GENERAL GORDON DRUMMOND, BRITISH ARMY, TO
GOVERNOR-GENERAL SIR GEORGE PREVOST

Kingston. June 23rd. 1814

Sir,

I have much satisfaction in acquainting Your Excellency, that the Enemy has not been able to reach any Port of their own, with the Gunboat, *Black Snake*, which they so lately captured.—

Lieutenant Campbell, of the 104th. Regt.¹ who had gone in pursuit,— was so fortunate as to fall in with them, and, in a most gallant manner, in a single boat, armed with a Carronade, and eighteen Soldiers, chased a Gunboat, and Four other Boats, filled with men, and obliged them, after firing a few shot, to scuttle, and abandon their Prize.— The Enemy's boats escaped round Gravelly Point by superior pulling.—

Captain Owen has weighed the *Black Snake*, and recovered the Gun, and greater part of her Stores; and sent her to Kingston for repair.—

Commodore, Sir James Yeo, anchored, this morning, with the Squadron, off the Ducks. I have the honor to be, Sir, Your Excellency's most obedient, humble servant.

Gordon Drummond
Lt. General

LS, CaOOA, British Military and Naval Records, RG8, I, "C" Ser., Vol. 683, pp. 303–5. A draft of a general order by Governor-General Sir George Prevost, commending Lieutenant Campbell and the soldiers of the 104th Regiment, is appended to this letter.

1. Lieutenant Alexander Campbell, 104th Regiment, British army.

COMMODORE ISAAC CHAUNCEY TO SECRETARY OF THE NAVY JONES

No. 121

U.S. Ship *Superior*
Sacketts Harbor 7th. July 1814

Sir

I am happy that I have it in my power to detail to you another brilliant achievement of Lieutenant Gregory with his brave companions.—

I received information some time since that the Enemy was building a large Schooner at "Presque Isle" I determined upon her destruction but deferred the execution until she should be nearly ready for launching— finding the alarm extensive down the St. Lawrence in consequence of taking the Gun Boat *Black Snake*, I thought it a favorable opportunity to attempt something at "Presque Isle"— on the 26th. Ulto. I directed Lieutenant Gregory to take with him Messrs. Vaughan and Dixon—proceed with the two largest Gigs to Nicholas Island (within about Seven Miles of "Presque Isle" harbor) and there conceal his boats and wait for some transports which I had information were expected there to take up Provisions and munitions of War, which had been sent up the Bay of Quinte for the Troops at York and Fort George, but if these Transports did not make their appearance in three or four days then to proceed to "Presque Isle" and burn the Vessel on the Stocks but with positive orders not to injure a private building or any private property— the day after Lieutenant Gregory arrived on the coast he discovered a vessel beating up, but just as he shoved off to board her a large Gun-boat hove in sight a little below him—this boat made a signal to the vessel in the Offing, upon which she tacked and stood for the Gun-boat— Lieutenant Gregory secreted his boats as well as he could but was apprehensive that he had been discovered— the Gun-boat and her convoy (which was full of Troops) stood into "Presque Isle"— Lieutenant Gregory was determined to ascertain whether he had been discovered—accordingly he sent one of his boats in the next Night and took off one of the inhabitants who informed him that it was known that he was on the coast and that two expresses had been sent to Kingston in consequence, he therefore determined upon executing the latter part of his instructions and made his arrangements accordingly, landed, placed Sentinels at the Houses to prevent alarm and set fire to the vessel which was nearly ready to launch—she was a stout well built vessel to mount 14 guns and would probably have been launched in about Ten days— a Small Store House which contained Stores for the New Vessel was unavoidably burnt as it was so near the Vessel that it took fire from her— Lieutenant Gregory learnt from the inhabitants that much property had been sent up a few days previous—that a Company of the Glengary Regt. had been stationed there but had been sent to York a few days before another company was on its way from Kingston to replace them— the few Militia which had been

left to guard the vessel and property retreated upon the approach of our Boats— as soon as the vessel was intirely consumed Lieutenant Gregory reembarked his Men without having permitted one of them to enter a House.— On finding the alarm so general he thought it prudent to cross the Lake immediately— he stopped one day at Oswego for refreshment and arrived here last evening having performed a most difficult service with his usual gallantry and good conduct

Lieutenant Gregory speaks in the highest terms of commendation of Sailing Master Vaughan and Mr. Dixon, as well as the Men under his command for their patient endurance of hunger and fatigue and the zeal with which they performed every part of their duty

I think in justice to these brave Men that they ought to be allowed something for the destruction of this vessel—they have however every confidence in the justice and liberality of the Navy Department and submit their case most cheerfully to your decision I have the honor to be very respectfully Sir Yr. Ob. Hl. St.

Isaac Chauncey

LS, DNA, RG45, CL, 1814, Vol. 4, No. 138 (M125, Roll No. 37).

Assessing Enemy Strength

Both Commodore Chauncey and Commodore Yeo needed accurate information on the numbers of ships and guns his opponent could bring to bear in the naval contest on Lake Ontario. They used various means, including spies, observations from small boats, and information from deserters, to assess their opponent's strength. The numbers of guns and ships were carefully totaled in an effort to match the opposing force.

COMMODORE ISAAC CHAUNCEY TO SECRETARY OF THE NAVY JONES

(No. 115.)

U.S. Ship *Superior*
Sacketts Harbor 24 June 1814

Sir

I have the honor to inclose a view of the American and British Squadrons on Lake Ontario.—

I shall sail the first week in July to offer the Enemy battle if he accepts the invitation—the superiority on this Lake will soon be decided and the victors remain Masters of these Waters during the War If however the Enemy pursues the policy that he did last year and avoids a general action it will force us to a blockade of his Fleet untill he can add to it a force much superior to ours which will be as soon as he can launch and fit the 84. now in great forwardness at Kingston—this Ship is progressing rapidly and the Enemy calculate to launch her by the first of August and fit out immediately—my own impression is however that she cannot be got ready for service before October—if however I should be mistaken and the Enemy add this Ship to his present force before next Fall I should again be obliged to submit to the mortification of a blockade

as we have nothing to oppose so overwhelming a force and as this class of vessel is so much beyond any thing which the Government contemplated when I had the honor of your instructions in January last, I should not feel myself authorized even to prepare to build any thing to oppose Such a vessel without Special authority.—

After I have been a sufficient length of time on the Lake to ascertain whether the Enemy will fight me without his 84 Gun Ship and there should be no probability of a Peace with England it will become absolutely necessary to prepare Materials for building next Winter, provided we mean to contest the Supremacy of the Lakes and the sooner these materials are collected the better both for the Government and builder, as much of the Timber must be brought a considerable distance and the water conveyance lessens the price considerably. I have the honor to be very respectfully Sir Yr. Ob. Hle. St.

Isaac Chauncey

LS, DNA, RG45, CL, 1814, Vol. 4, No. 98 (M125, Roll No. 37).