

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

**Volume III  
1814–1815  
Chesapeake Bay, Northern Lakes,  
and Pacific Ocean  
Part 5 of 7**

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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).

[Enclosure]

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### A View of the American Squadron on Lake Ontario

Description of Vessels	Names	Rate	actual force	Captains or Commanders
Ship	<i>Superior</i>	44	58	I. Chauncey
Do.	<i>Mohawk</i>	32	42	John Smith
Do.	<i>General Pike</i>	24	28	Jacob Jones
Do.	<i>Madison</i>	20	22	Wm. M. Crane
Brig	<i>Jefferson</i>	18	21	Charles G. Ridgeley
Do.	<i>Jones</i>	18	21	M. T. Woolsey
Do	<i>Sylph</i>	16	18	Jesse D. Elliott
Do	<i>Oneida</i>	14	14	Thomas Brown
Schooner	<i>Lady of the Lake</i>	1	<u>1</u> <u>225</u>	Marvin P. Mix <sup>1</sup>

This vessel is a small Pilot-boat built schooner for a tender & Repeater

I Chauncey

Sacketts Harbor  
24th. June. 1814.

DS, DNA, RG45, AF7 (M625, Roll No. 77).

NORTHERN LAKES THEATER

JANUARY 1814-JUNE 1815

1. Acting Lieutenant Mervine P. Mix.

[Enclosure]

### A View of the British Squadron on Lake Ontario

Description of Vessels	Names	Force	Captains
Ship	<i>Prince Regent</i>	58	Sir James L. Yeo Comm. O'Conner Captain
Ship	<i>Princess Charlotte</i>	44	
Ship	<i>Montreal</i>	25	late Wolfe
Ship	<i>Niagara</i>	24	" Royal George
Brig	<i>Star</i>	18	" Melville
Brig		18	" Earl Moira
Brig		16	" Sir Sydney Smith
Schooner		<u>16</u> <u>219</u>	

N.B. The Enemy has changed the Names of his vessels since last Winter

Besides the above the enemy has about Twenty heavy Gun Boats and two or three small Schooners mounting heavy Guns.—

I Chauncey

Sacketts Harbor  
24th. June 1814

DS, DNA, RG45, AF7 (M625, Roll No. 77).

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COMMANDER CHARLES CUNLIFFE OWEN, R.N., TO  
COMMODORE SIR JAMES L. YEO, R.N.

**Copy**  
Extract of a Letter fm. Captain Owen R.N.  
to Commodore Sir J. L. Yeo

Fort Wellington 17th. July 1814

Sir/

Since my arrival here, I have directed my attention towards the means of gaining Information as to the Enemy's movements & I have now the Honor of Communicating some Intelligence which may be relied on—

Informant is a man; well known to our Friends on the other Side & left Sacketts on the 14th. Inst.

The fleet was not expected to sail in less than fourteen days fm. that period waiting it is reported for the Equipment of the Flotilla—but it is generally thought delayed through the want of Seamen—

Sixteen large Gun Boats are building & will be compleat'd in the course of a fortnight— Informant has seen them & supposes them to be twice as large as those taken at Sandy Creek & capable of each holding 200 Men—

Four Gun Boats have been built of 60 feet keel—A great number of smaller ones are constructing—Two thousand Troops at the Harbour

I have obtained some Idea of the fire arms on the Repetition Principle—<sup>1</sup>

The Swivels (which are placed in the Tops) have seven Barrels—& throw 250 Balls at each fire— They have one Lock & the fire is communicated fm. Barrel to Barrel—& they discharge successively at the Interval of one Second—

They load very quick—The Balls are all perforated & are made up in Cartridges for the Charge— Their Boarders Pistols have one Lock & throw Six Balls—

The Musquets have Two Locks & throw twelve Balls—Eleven at one Discharge & a reserve Ball for the Second Lock—

The shock fm. these arms is not greater than that from ones on the common Construction—& which must be attributed to the Channel of the fire passing through the aperture of each Ball—

On the 14th Commodore Chauncey had 12 Swivels—50 Musquets & 200 Pistols of this description—more were daily expect'd—

Two Men of the names of Vaughn & Dickson have fitted out each a Privateer for the River—

It is the common opinion at Sacketts, that a general attack will be made on Kingston—

I have ascertained that the Boat taken fm. the Marine Officers has been scuttled in Jibaway<sup>2</sup> by people fm. our Side & the things sent by land to Sacketts— Judge Ford<sup>3</sup> has written to the Commanding officer there to endeavour to recover them—

Nothing will prevent Similar occurrences but Severe measures & removing Suspicious Persons on our own Side from the Banks of the river—

I have the names of Several Persons on the american Shore who ought to be carried off—& either sent to Quebec or on board the Squadron till the War is over—otherwise this System of plundering will never cease—

I propose remaining here two days longer & then proceed to the neighbourhood of Grenadier Island— I would have wished to have stopp'd a sufficient time in order to arrange a regular communication with Sacketts—but as the

Enemy is momentarily expect'd in the River—I consider it my Duty not to be absent from the probable point of attack—

Vaughn & Dickson are both determined Men & I understand have collect'd good Crews &c—

Have the goodness Sir; to let me know—to what extent I may go in paying people for Information— The Sum you did me the honor to mention—in employing confidential People (at least for a continuance) will not go far—

**Signed**  
C. Cunliffe Owen

**Copy**, CaOOA, British Military and Naval Records, RG8, I, "C" Ser., Vol. 684, pp. 160–63.

1. Joseph G. Chambers of Philadelphia was developing an experimental repeating gun for the navy. Some of these guns were sent to Lake Ontario in April 1814. Chambers guns were used in battle at Oswego, the Battle of Lake Champlain, and at New Orleans.

2. Perhaps Chippewa Bay on the Saint Lawrence River near Hammond, New York.

3. Judge Nathan Ford, St. Lawrence County, N.Y. See Dudley, *Naval War of 1812*, Vol. 1, p. 293, note 2.

## Smuggling Naval Stores

*The brazeness of some of the local residents in smuggling naval supplies, stores, cattle, and foodstuffs to Canada outraged Commander Macdonough. Trade across the border flourished during peacetime and remained lucrative despite embargo and war. The officers of the American navy remained vigilant and intercepted quantities of supplies, including the spars that were intended to fit out the new British ship building at Isle aux Noix.*

MASTER COMMANDANT THOMAS MACDONOUGH TO  
SECRETARY OF THE NAVY JONES

U.S Ship Saratoga  
at the lines 29th. June 1814

Sir.

I had information yesterday that two spars intended for the masts of a ship building at Isle Aux Noix were on their way to Canada in charge & under the management of four citizens of the United States, I sent Sailing Master Vallette<sup>1</sup> to destroy them which he did near the lines, the persons who came towing them made their escape on shore— One of the spars was 85 feet in length the other 80. feet, it is supposed from the size of these spars that one was for the Fore the other the mizen mast & that the main mast may also be on its way which we shall keep a good look out for— I have the honor to be, Sir, very Re-spty. your Mot. ot. Sert.

T. Macdonough

ALS, DNA, RG45, MC, 1814, Vol. 1, No. 153 (M147, Roll No. 5).

1. Sailing Master Elie A. F. Vallette, changed later in life to Lavallée.

MASTER COMMANDANT THOMAS MACDONOUGH TO  
SECRETARY OF THE NAVY JONES

U.S. Ship *Saratoga*  
near the lines Lake Champlain  
9th. July 1814

Sir,

I have the honor to inform you, on the night of the 7th. inst. Midn. Abbot<sup>1</sup> destroyed four Spars supposed to be for the enemy's ships Main-Mast and her three Top-Masts four Miles within the enemy's country—

The enemy are progressing rapidly with their Ship which they say will be ready by the first of August, they are also preparing Gallies it is said to the number of fifteen or Twenty; fourteen of these Gallies are to my knowledge in the Sorrell River between the line & the Isle aux Noix— The Ship it is said is to have a Frigates Guns on her, brought from Quebec and, all accounts agree that he will make a bold attempt to sweep the Lake, I am daily expecting orders to build for the enemy will when he gets his force compleated have one superior to ours, I have written to Doctr. Bullus requesting his immediate attention to forwarding carpenters &c (should he receive instructions from the Dep'mt. to do so) to White hall, to build there I fear the enemy would prevent any additional force built at Vergennes from joining me— As Gallies take so many men, I think the most servicable Vessel would be a Brig of 20. 18 prs. long Guns, she could be built in time to prevent, with the force I now have, the enemy continuing long on the Lake— I beg you to rest assured that what force we have shall be employed to the best advantage against the enemy but he will not I am convinced meet me unless he should come with a force that would not make a contest doubtful Our crews are healthy the arrangements of the Squadron similar and regular as Vessels on the Atlantic— I have the honor to be very respectfully Sir your most obt. sert.

T. Macdonough

ALS, DNA, RG45, MC, 1814, Vol. 2, No. 4 (M147, Roll No. 5).

1. Midshipman Joel Abbot.

### Completing the American Squadron on Lake Champlain

Master Commandant Macdonough urgently requested permission to build an additional ship for his Lake Champlain squadron to match the British force under construction at Isle aux Noix. William Jones approved a new 20-gun brig to be constructed by Adam Brown, the shipwright who helped to build Captain Oliver H. Perry's squadron on Lake Erie the previous year. The new brig Eagle was launched only nineteen days after the date her keel was laid, a remarkable feat. Secretary Jones, however, made it clear that he was not about to fund another naval shipbuilding contest like that on Lake Ontario.

SECRETARY OF THE NAVY JONES TO  
MASTER COMMANDANT THOMAS MACDONOUGH

Thomas Macdonough Esqr.  
Commanding the U S Naval Force

Navy Department  
July 5th. 1814.  
on Lake Champlain.

Sir

In consequence of the representations made in your letters of the 19th & 26th. Ult., I have directed Mr. Brown to repair immediately to Vergennes and commence with an adequate force, the building of a Brig of 18 Guns, agreeably to your suggestions.—

Your present force however, is greatly superior to the enemy, as from accounts I have received, the Schooner *Ticonderoga* is a full match for his Brig, and I had hoped that the irksome contest of Ship building would have been superseded, by the possession and fortification, of the point which the Secretary of War had designated, for the purpose of repelling any attempt of the enemy, to pass into the Lake.—

I am strongly impressed with the belief, that such a position in co operation with your Squadron, would have more effectually secured our command of the Lake, than any reasonable increase of our naval force, because the enemy's means and facility of increasing his naval Armament, greatly exceed those which we possess, either in equipment, transportation or manning.— If we have not the military means of commanding the pass into the Lake, how are we to command the Shores of the Lake, and if we are incapable of the latter, of what avail will the command of the Lake be to us.— If the enemy shall have sufficient military force to command the Shores of the Lake, our Squadron must ultimately fall into his power.— It is therefore in vain to rest exclusively upon our Naval superiority, and I see no end to this war of Broad Axes.—

You will however immediately confer with Mr. Brown, and take the necessary measures, for building and equipping the Brig of 18 Guns, with all possible despatch.

Mr. Bullus will provide and forward the necessary stores and materials, agreeably to the Indents of yourself and Mr. Brown, and the armament shall be forwarded in due time.— There are nine long 18 pounders in New York, and abundance of 32 pd. Carronades, you had better order her Battery of these.—

It will be superior, and more convenient, than an entire Battery of long 18s. as in case of necessity, you can fight more or less of the long 18s. on a side, and in close action the Carronades are more efficient.— I am respectfully Your Obedt. Servt.

W Jones.

LB, DNA, RG45, CLS, 1814, pp. 164-65.

MASTER COMMANDANT THOMAS MACDONOUGH TO  
SECRETARY OF THE NAVY JONES

U S. Ship *Saratoga*  
near the line, Lake Champlain  
August 12. 1814

Sir

I have the honor to inform you that Mr. Brown wrote me a few days since that he should without fail launch the Brig on the 11th. Inst., hence I conclude she went into the water yesterday,—by my advises from the transporting agents in Albany all her stores had left that place for Vergennes.

Can Master Commandant Creighton<sup>1</sup> be spared from the sea board to command this Brig?— all my officers are young and many of them inexperienced.

The recruiting service is dull and I am advised of but fifteen men being entered for the Brig although three rendezvous are opened for her—one at New York, one at New Port and its vicinity and Commodore Bainbridge has ordered one to be opened in Boston. The Brig will be ready to enter the lake before she gets her crew unless a transfer of men could be made from some vessel or station on the sea board. The enemies ship is caulking and from my last information will be ready for service by the first of next month, by which time our Brig could be easily got ready had she her officers and men. The enemy has collected in considerable numbers at the line near the lake and threaten an attack both by land and water.— We keep in readiness to receive him, as we cannot without unpardonable imprudence go to him, because he lies under strong batteries and the water is extremely unfavourable.— These circumstances have long since given him confidence of security in his situation. It was with great reluctance that Genl. Izard furnished me with men from the ranks, but I presume he will spare me about forty more for marines for the Brig. I have the honor to be, very respectfully Sir Yr. mo obd Servt.

T. Macdonough

LS, DNA, RG45, CL, 1814, Vol. 5, No. 91 (M125, Roll No. 38).

1. Master Commandant John Orde Creighton.

MASTER COMMANDANT THOMAS MACDONOUGH TO  
SECRETARY OF THE NAVY JONES

U.S. Ship *Saratoga*  
near the line lake Champlain  
August 16th. 1814—

Sir.

I have the honor to send you herewith a letter from Majr. Genl. Izard by which it appears not even the forty men to act as Marines on board the Brig are to be supplied, in my letter to you of the 12th. inst. I mentioned that I expected those men,— The Brig will be in Plattsburgh by the 20th. inst. where she will be moored until men arrive to man her, in the mean time should the enemy come

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out with his additional force, any movement of the Army on the Lake and the transportation for the Army also, would become unsafe, because the enemy's force would unquestionably be far superior to ours, without our new Brig— I have in the Squadron about 200 Men from the ranks of the Army this I think should not be considered a great proportion particularly as they are so immediately employed for the benefit of the Army in covering all its transportation &c. on water— By my last advises from the Rendezvous not more than thirty men can be entered for the Brig, had she her officers & men in a short time she would be ready for service The enemy's Ship will be launched in a few days I do not however think she will be ready before the next month— I have the honor to be Sir very respectfully your mo. ob. servt.

T. Macdonough

ALS, DNA, RG45, MC, 1814, Vol. 2, No. 18 (M147, Roll No. 5).

[Enclosure]

Captain Thomas Macdonough,  
U.S. Navy.

Camp near Chazy.  
August 17, 1814.

Sir,

Your note of yesterday was received last Evening— After the Conversations which took place with you several weeks ago respecting the Inconvenience & Impropriety of manning the Vessels under your Command from the Ranks of the Army I cannot but be surprised that supplies of sailors have not been provided, and that instead of restoring the men lent to the navy there should be an application for more at this late Hour. You are acquainted with my readiness to assist in every respect the Squadron on Lake Champlain—you will consequently attribute to its true cause my Declaration that it is inconsistent with the general situation of the Troops to detach any more of them for the service of the navy.— I have the honor to be, Sir, very respectfully your obedt. servt.

Geo. Izard

Copy, DNA, RG45, MC, 1814, Vol. 2, No. 18, enclosure (M147, Roll No. 5).

MASTER COMMANDANT THOMAS MACDONOUGH TO  
SECRETARY OF THE NAVY JONES

U.S. Ship *Saratoga*, near the Line,  
Lake Champlain Augt. 27th. 1814

Sir,

I have the honor to acquaint you of the arrival, at the Squadron, of the U S Brigt. lately built at Vergennes, under the Command of Capt. Robert Henley.<sup>1</sup>

From late advices from my different Rendezvous, I may expect men on in the course of a fortnight to man this Vessel; none of her Officers have yet arrived—I suppose they are, however, on the way.— The Enemy's Ship was, I believe, launched on the 22nd. Inst.—they talk of entering the Lake,—but, as the active

part of the Campaign is to the westward, and the different forces moving thither, this may be considered doubtful at this time.—

Subjoined is a statement of our force, and that of the Enemy's, as correctly as I have been able to ascertain it, & which may be relied upon as very Correct.—

<u>Our Force</u>		<u>Enemy's Force</u>	
Ship <i>Saratoga</i> —	26 Guns	Ship	Guns
Brig	20 "	Brig <i>Linnet</i> —	30 or upwards
Sch'r. <i>Ticonderoga</i>	17 "	Sloop <i>Shannon</i>	18—
Sloops— <i>Preble</i> —	7 "		11—
" <i>Montgomery</i>	6 "	<i>Broke</i>	11—
Six Gallies—each 2 Guns	12 "	Seven Gallies	
Four Gun Boats each 1 Gun	4 "	each 2 Guns } 14.—	
Total	<u>92</u> Guns	Ten Gallies } 10	
			Total <u>94</u> Guns
			also A Rocket Boat, and 3 Boats with pieces on them

I have the honor to be with great respect Sir, yr. mot. ob. St.

T. Macdonough

LS, DNA, RG45, MC, 1814, Vol. 2, No. 25 (M147, Roll No. 5).

1. Robert Henley was promoted to master commandant on 12 August 1814 and ordered from Norfolk to Lake Champlain; the new brig on Lake Champlain was later called *Eagle*.

## Major General Brown Seeks Support from the Erie Squadron

Captain Arthur Sinclair's flotilla was in the Detroit River when Major General Jacob Brown called on the Lake Erie fleet to support the army at Fort Erie. Brown's forces had recaptured Fort Erie on 3 July and were ready to advance. Major General Brown hoped the navy could anchor in his rear at the fort while his army pressed into Canada. Secretary of the Navy Jones, however, urged Lieutenant Kennedy, in command during Sinclair's absence on Lake Huron, to decline cooperating with the general. The remaining vessels on Lake Erie were already expected to transport British prisoners who had been captured in the Battle of Lake Erie the previous September from Sandusky, Ohio, to Canada for exchange.

By the time Lieutenant Kennedy received Secretary Jones's instructions, it was too late for the navy to render any assistance to the army. At the Battle of Chippawa on 5 July, Brown's victorious army had forced the British to pull back to Fort George and Burlington. The Americans began a siege of Fort George on 20 July but lifted the siege after two

days because of heavy casualties and the lack of naval support from either Lake Erie, or Lake Ontario.<sup>1</sup>

1. For more on army operations on the Niagara peninsula, see Whitehorse, While Washington Burned, and Quimby, U.S. Army in the War of 1812, chapter 16.

## LIEUTENANT EDMUND P. KENNEDY TO SECRETARY OF THE NAVY JONES

Erie July 8th: 1814

Sir,

I have the Honr. of enclosing a Copy of a Letter received from Majr. Genl. Brown at Fort Erie, he desires to have all the naval force on this Lake, to co-operate with him at the place he names—

The Three Gun Boats, *Ohio*, *Porcupine* & *Somers* are all the force on this Lake in readiness the *Lady Provost*, will be ready in a few days—

I have given charge of the Schooners to Lieutt. Conklin,<sup>1</sup> they are at Erie now, & will wait my arrival—. I have given sixteen of the *Lady Provost*'s men to the Schooner's *Somers* & *Porcupine*, & I think it necessary (when I sail from this Port) to leave half that I now have to Man the Block House on the Peninsula, as the armament of the Ships, & a number of naval Stores are deposited there— It will be necessary also to leave a proportion of Men to take care of the *Q. Charlotte* & *DeDetroit*, The *Hunter* & *Amelia* are under the Guns of the Block House on the peninsula— The Ships are under the other Block House—but in a wild anchorage— I have supplied Majr. Marlin with every necessary article for the Equitmt. of the Block House but he has but a small guard, a Bare sufficiency for guarding the public stores on this side—

I have a guard of Officers station'd on the beach, opposite the peninsula B. House, for the purpose of giving alarm, should the Enemy attempt to land in Boats, as a very small force might destroy that property in the night

Mr. Timberlake<sup>2</sup> has reported himself, Mr. Salomon was left here by Comd. Sinclair, he is a man of business, & quite able to discharge the whole duty of purser & agent for both Lakes Doctr. Richardson<sup>3</sup> has not arrived— I should be glad to have your Orders Sir, respecting the finishg. of the Block House & Hospital, the Hospital if finish'd would make a good roomy Store House & it lays but a few rods from the B. House— Very respectfully I have the Honr. to be Yr. Obt. Svt.

Edm<sup>d</sup>. P. Kennedy

ALS, DNA, RG45, BC, 1814, Vol. 3, No. 9 (M148, Roll No. 13). A copy of Major General Jacob Brown's letter to Kennedy, dated 4 July 1814, was enclosed. In that letter, Brown stated that he was in possession of Fort Erie and "would wish your whole force to move down & take a position near the Fort, where the vessels can continue with perfect safety & form a very desirable support to our rear—."

1. Lieutenant Augustus H. M. Conckling.

2. Purser Richard T. Timberlake.

3. Surgeon's Mate John C. Richardson was commissioned 17 May 1814 and ordered from his home in Kentucky to Lake Erie.

## SECRETARY OF THE NAVY JONES TO LIEUTENANT EDMUND P. KENNEDY

Lieutt. Edmund P Kennedy  
Commanding Naval Officer  
Erie Pennsylvania

Navy Department  
July 13th. 1814.

Sir

I have received your Letters of the 4th & 8th inst.— the latter covering a letter of the 4th Inst. from Genl. Brown to yourself, in which he requests the co operation of your whole force, and points out a position near Fort Erie, where it is proposed you should remain inactive at Anchor to cover his rear.—

This would leave Erie together with all our valuable Stores and the two prize Ships (which of necessity lay outside the Bar) exposed to destruction by a night attack, even of 200 men in Batteaux, which could cross from long point unperceived until the attack was made. All the arrangements made by this Department and the several important objects to be accomplished at Erie during the absence of Commodore Sinclair, together with the transportation of the Prisoners from Sandusky where they are now waiting your promised arrival, must be suspended if the plan of General Brown is adopted.—

This cannot be.— the force now remaining on Lake Erie is so exceedingly reduced by the expedition to Lake Huron, that your presence at Erie will be indispensable, in order to increase and render that force more efficient.—

You will therefore inform General Brown, that you are directed by the Secretary of the Navy, to state to him, that under existing circumstances, with the very reduced force left under your command by Com: Sinclair, and the objects you are directed to carry into effect at Erie, and other parts of the Lake, the only effectual co operation will be, that of transportation, which upon due notice you will promptly afford.—

You will then return to Erie, and equip for service with the least possible delay, the best of the two prize Ships—that is, the one which may be prepared for service at the least expense, and in the shortest time.— You will fit her as a Brig according to the directions which Com: Sinclair has given you.—

In a Letter of the 23d Ult. from Detroit he says,— "From the large requisition of Captain 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."— I trust therefore, that by your prudence and exertions, this object will be accomplished without any further requisitions or expense.—

In the equipment of the Brig, much may be saved by a judicious and economical conversion of the materials; and it will readily occur to you, how much more necessary this is, on a remote Lake, where the transportation in many cases exceeds the first cost of the articles, than in our Atlantic ports, where every article may be had with so much convenience, and at prime cost.

Having selected a sufficient number of men for the equipment of the Brig, you will immediately employ the Squadron in the transportation of the Prisoners from Sandusky as before directed, and then hold it in readiness for co operating with the Army under General Brown, wherever it may be practicable to employ its force with activity and effect.—

In respect to the place of landing the prisoners, that is arranged by the Commissary General of Prisoners, which you will adhere to. The Commissary General has been made acquainted with the loose and irregular manner, in which prisoners are allowed to travel, and I trust it will be corrected.—

You certainly have a right to apprehend for examination, any person whom you may have reason to suspect is a Spy, and if an Alien, the Department will upon being informed of the facts, order a Court Martial for the trial of the suspected person, provided the circumstances, shall appear to warrant that course.— If the suspected person shall be a Citizen of the United States, the civil authority alone can take cognizance of his offence.—

The enclosed Copy of my letter to Mr. Eyre,<sup>1</sup> will explain to you, the station he is to occupy, and the duties he is to perform, which you will take for your government.— He is a Shipwright of the first order, and a very worthy and highly ingenious man.—

If the repairs and other Carpenters work will admit, he will be well employed in building a light fast Sailing Schooner Boat, 30 feet keel, 8 feet rake forward, and 6 feet rake abaft, 12 feet Beam, and five feet hold, to trim at double the draught of water aft, to that of forward, with a Cockpit 6 feet long upon a level with the main deck, and a quarter deck 12½ feet long before the Cockpit, with a break of 18 inches at each bulkhead.— Such a Boat with the form he would give to her, would sail very fast, and would be usefully employed, as a Dispatch or look out Boat, from Detroit to Buffalo, as the *Lady of the Lake* is employed on Lake Ontario.— In this way we could receive dispatches at this place, from Malden through Buffalo, in six or seven days by the express mail.—

In respect to the finishing of the Block house and Hospital, and other details, I have no orders to give, but refer you to those from your Commanding Officer. I am respectfully Your Obedt. Servant

W Jones.—

LB, DNA, RG45, CLS, 1814, pp. 167-69. A notation followed this letter: "Duplicate of this and of Letter to Mr. Eyre sent by Express mail to Buffaloe, under cover to military Commanding Officer on 15th July.—"

1. Jones offered Thomas B. Eyre a position as master carpenter at Erie to superintend repairs to the vessels. Jones to Eyre, 30 May 1814, DNA, RG45, MLS, Vol. 12, pp. 175-76 (M209, Roll No. 4).

## SECRETARY OF THE NAVY JONES TO LIEUTENANT EDMUND P. KENNEDY

Lieutt. Edmund P Kennedy  
Commanding Naval Officer  
Erie Pennsylvania.

Navy Department  
July 19th. 1814.

Sir

On the 13th Instant I answered your letter of the 4th. and sent duplicate thereof by the express mail under cover to an Officer at Buffaloe, to meet you off Fort Erie, should you have taken that position, in consequence of the request of General Brown.

The subsequent movements and designs of that Officer which were not within the knowledge or anticipation of this Department, at the time my letter of the 13th. was written, indicate a possibility that he may require the transportation and aid of the Vessels under your command, so promptly as not to admit of the delay incident to giving notice to you at Erie.—

You will therefore immediately on receipt of this, suspend the transportation of the Prisoners, and send the four Vessels under your command, to Fort Erie, to co operate with Genl. Brown, reserving at Erie a sufficient number of Officers and men, to equip the Prize Vessel, as directed, and you will either proceed with the Squadron to Fort Erie, or remain to equip the Brig according to the confidence to be reposed in your next in Command, for the able discharge of either duty.—

Should the transportation of the Prisoners have taken place before you receive this, you will consult with General Brown, as to the proper point at which to land them.— I am respectfully Your Obedt. Servt.

W Jones.

LB, DNA, RG45, CLS, 1814, p. 169. A notation followed this letter: "Duplicate under cover to Commanding Military Officer at Fort Erie near Buffaloe.— Triplicate on the 20th. by Express mail to Erie via Pittsburg. The original to Erie via Buffaloe.—"

#### LIEUTENANT EDMUND P. KENNEDY TO SECRETARY OF THE NAVY JONES

Erie, 22d. July 1814.

Sir,

Your Letter of the 13th. Inst. I have before me every thing therein directed shall be strictly attended to— I yesterday dispatch'd the *Ohio*, *Porcupine*, & *Somers* with several hundred Men under Command of Ltt. Colo. Nicholas & Majr. Marline,<sup>1</sup> for Buffaloe—they had a fresh whole sail breeze, & in all probability will return here tomorrow, when they will be immediately Order'd to Cleveland, & the Mouth of Portage River, for the purpose of Transporting Troops to Buffaloe agreeable to arrangements made with Genl. McArthur— Genl. Brown has requested me by express, not to take on board the prisoners alluded to in your instructions, untill he has recd. reinforcements, or untill I hear further from him on the subject— I have sent Mr. Eyres to get the *Ariel* off, he thinks her a fine Vessel & a fast sailer, & may be got off with triflg. expence; I discover him to be such a man as you describe— Capt. Sinclair is mistaken Sir, as respects the situation of the Prize Ships, they have not a single spar belongg. to them, the old rigg. remains in the same cut up state as when dismantl'd, & every usefull article belongg. to them originally, have been plunder'd, such destruction of Public Property I never have witness'd before, notwithstanding the many exertions of Capt. Sinclair to discover where the many articles belongg. to those vessels were stow'd, there is yet many thousands of Dollars worth of property that never will be recover'd— On bd. the *Detroit* I found in cleang. out her hold a number of fine muskets, swords, pistols, & Fill'd Cartridges lying in the bilge water, & on board the *Hunter*, as many; on shore, abt. the Houses in the Town 75 stand of arms, Kentledge in the most of the Houses & distributed

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about the Lake 2270 round shott of different sizes & a few Grape & Cannister, some of them in one & one half fathoms water, Crow Bars, passing Boxes, powder horns &c., all gone, & the powder prickg. about the lower Decks of the Vessels—

I will have the *Queen Charlotte* put in fighting Order as soon as possible her sparrs can be soon rough'd out—

There are but three Men & an ensign left here by Majr. Marlin for the purpose of guardg. the Block House which is stow'd full of powder belongg. to the army— The public stores of the Navy are unprotected— I mean to set a watch of Midshipmen to guard them untill the arrival of some Troops—

I herewith inclose you Sir, Copy of a Letter rec'd from Capt. Sinclair the 20th. Inst,<sup>2</sup> an extract of which I have forwarded to his Excellency, the Governor of Pennsylvania— The *Lady Provost* will Cruise between this place & Long Point, untill I can ascertain the force & the spot where they are collected— Respectfully I have the Honr. to be yr. Obt. Svt.

Edm<sup>d</sup>. P. Kennedy

ALS, DNA, RG45, BC, 1814, Vol. 3, No. 36 (M148, Roll No. 13).

1. Lieutenant Colonel Robert C. Nicholas, 1st Infantry, U.S.A.; and Major Ralph Marlin, 22d Infantry, U.S.A. These troops reinforced Major General Jacob Brown's army at Niagara.

2. See pp. 557-58 for the enclosure, a copy of a letter from Captain Arthur Sinclair to Lieutenant Edmund P. Kennedy dated 12 July 1814.

#### SAILING MASTER JAMES E. McDONOLD TO LIEUTENANT EDMUND P. KENNEDY

Erie, July 27th 1814

Sir,

Agreeable to your instructions I repaired on board the sc[h]ooner *Diligence* at 3. P.M. on the 23 inst. with sixteen volunteers, which with the six seamen from the *Lady Prevost* made a party of Twenty Two men, and immediately sailed for the Enemies shores— at 11 P.M. the weather being thick discovered land which proved to be the east end of Long Point; stood up the bay in hopes of reaching Pattersons Creek before day light, but the wind becoming light & variable at day break, we were more than fourteen miles from that place, believing that if we should be discovered by the inhabitants the object of the expedition would be defeated; I hauled upon the wind and made a small bay of Long Point, where we came to anchor during that day of the 24th.— At 9. P.M. got under weigh with a head wind; at 3. A.M. seeing no hopes of making the creek before day light; got the men into the boat at the same time directing (Mr. Perry) the owner of the schooner, to beat as near in shore as practible she being then distant from Land about six miles; we pulled direct for the shore & landed at day break, left the boat in charge of Midshipn. Wendell<sup>1</sup> with orders to await our return, at the same time to keep pulling off & on, to prevent his being surprised, After ascending a very high and steep bank, we found ourselves in a thick piece of woods, through which we marched about half a mile, when we discovered some houses, which proved to be a court-house, Jail & Tavern near which the building of an immense large Block House had commenced & the

land recently cleared, after satisfying myself that there were no centinels placed, I concluded the force, if any must be trifling, and therefore determined on ascertaining the exact situation of the Place, surrounded the buildings, broke the doors of the Jail and Inn, seised the Jail Keeper, from whom I was in hopes I should be able to collect the information wanted at this moment— an alarm gun was fired by the enemy, which was answered by several others, we then retired to the boat, bringing the Jailor with us, when distant from the shore about half a mile, we perceived the enemy had collected on the bank forming a body of about three hundred men which number seem'd constantly encreasing while we continued in sight, an evidence that there is a force collecting at that place, at 7 A.M. stood for Erie where in consequence of baffling winds and calms we did not arrive untill 2 P.M. on the 26th— Mr. Windal, Midn. & Mr. Burling, Citizen, who acted as my assistants on landing as well as the citizens volunteers and seamen conducted themselves with much coolness and determination, and I am happy to say exhibited no disposition to depart from an honourable mode of Warfare Very Respectfully

(signed) J. E. McDonold<sup>2</sup>

Copy, DNA, RG45, BC, 1814, Vol. 3, No. 44 (M148, Roll No. 13).

1. Midshipman John W. Wendell, appointed 18 June 1812; resigned 16 December 1814.

2. James E. McDonold was appointed a sailing master on 21 July 1814. He was warranted a midshipman the following November and promoted to acting lieutenant on 12 January 1815.

LIEUTENANT EDMUND P. KENNEDY TO SECRETARY OF THE NAVY JONES

Erie, July 29th. 1814—

Sir,

I have the Honr. of acknowledging the receipt of yours of the 19th. Inst., & Triplicate of your Orders of the 13th.— Lieutt. Concklin with the three Schooners, sail'd on the 21st. Inst. for Buffaloe, with three hundred Troops from this place, with Orders to return here, to be join'd by the *Lady Provost* for Cleveland; but his not having yet arrived induces me to believe he has been detain'd by Genl. Brown,— I wait his arrival to put in execution your last Orders— Mr. Dulany Forrest, Acting Lieutt., has been extremely ill ever since he arrived on this station, he has a Certificate of his illness from the surgeon of the Station with my permission to leave here, for the recovery of his health, the surgeon earnestly requesting it

The schooners *Porcupine* & *Somers*, are commanded by Ship'd masters mates, they are active, genteel young Men, have been long on this station & have conducted themselves with propriety; the warrant Officers, Masters & Midshipmen are disatisfied on account of it, "how am I to act Sir, in this case"— I am sorry to say Sir, that there are only three others on the station, (of my experience), that confidence can be placed in, Those are Mr. Concklin, Sailg. masters Coldwell<sup>1</sup> & McDonald; The latter has recd. his warrant as master, & beg'd me to mention that he would much rather, if it meet your approbation to have a midshipmans warrant, believing that masters cannot be advanced in the line of promotion; I hope he is mistaken!— I herewith inclose you a report from him<sup>2</sup> I gave him Orders on the 23d. Inst. to proceed to Long Point, or its vicinity with a few Volunteers & land under cover of the night for the purpose of reconnoi-

terg. the Enemy & obtaing. information respecting the force there, & in what place, if any, the Boats were building, he has executed his Orders promptly, & brt. off a prisoner, who gives information, that there are from 6, to 700 militia & Regulars, at, & near long point & at Grand River, 1200 Including Indians, he gives no information of Boats, he calls himself an American, has been 15 years in Canada, born in New York, his name is Montrose, an American, Rifle & musket was taken with him, I think by treating him well, & permitting him to return, he may be of use, he is very communicative, he is known by several here, to be friendly to us. all his property, consisting of a mill & distillery were destroyed at the attack of long point by Colo. Campbell<sup>3</sup> I have the Guns, of the *Queen Charlotte* mounting, & am going on with her out fitts as fast as Circumstances will admit of— Respectfly. I have the Honr. to be yr. obt. Svt.

Edm<sup>d</sup>. P. Kennedy

ALS, DNA, RG45, BC, 1814, Vol. 3 (M148, Roll No. 13).

1. Sailing Master Thomas Caldwell, warranted 23 April 1814.

2. See pp. 547-48 for Sailing Master James E. McDonold's report on the expedition to Long Point.

3. See Campbell to Armstrong, 18 May 1814, pp. 486-87.

## Waiting for Commodore Chauncey

*The American victory at Chippawa on 5 July gave Major General Brown confidence that a quick campaign on the Niagara peninsula was possible. The next movement against York and eventually Kingston could commence if the Americans could secure a victory at Fort George and Burlington Heights. Major General Brown expected that Commodore Chauncey's fleet would be on the lake by 15 July, and anxiously waited for news that the squadron was at the head of the lake ready to cooperate with his forces.*

*Commodore Chauncey, however, had fallen ill about the middle of July, and no letters or reports were sent from Sackets Harbor until the end of the month. As the days stretched on with no word from the commodore, Secretary of the Navy Jones grew increasingly anxious. The period when the Americans were expected to command Lake Ontario was slipping by, and President Madison and Secretary of War Armstrong both pressed for news from the commodore. Secretary Jones had relied on Commodore Chauncey's loyalty and diligence during the past two years of the war, but the secretary had to make plans to replace him if no news was received. He issued secret instructions to Commodore Stephen Decatur to proceed to Sackets Harbor and take over command of the Lake Ontario station if he should find that Commodore Chauncey was still unwell.*

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

Sackets Harbor  
8th. July. 1814—

Dear General

Permit me to congratulate you upon your success in the commencement of the Campaign—it is I am persuaded a precursor of much more brilliant events.—

Johnson<sup>1</sup> returned a few days since and states that all the Glengarys and 103. have gone to York or Fort George and that 260 of the 10th. Regt. of Royal Artillery went up about Ten days Since— large Quantities of Provisions munitions of War &c. &c. have been sent up recently— the force at Kingston about Two Thousand including Militia but Troops constantly arriving from below.— The New Ship commenced planking and Two hundred additional carpenters at Work expected to have her ready by the first of September— the fleet in Kingston and not expected to Sail again until their New Ship was ready.—

I am nearly ready— the *Mohawk* is detained on account of a little Iron Work &c. but hope to sail in a few days— shall take my Station off the Ducks—unless the Enemy will go up the Lake in which case I hope to have the pleasure of seeing you at Fort George or Niagara

Two of my Gigs paid a visit to "Presque Isle" and burnt a vessel building there— let me hear from you soon. I have the honor to be very Respectfully Dear General Yr. mo. ob. st

Isaac Chauncey

LS, MHi, Jacob Brown Papers.

1. William Johnson, intelligence agent for the U.S. Army.

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

Head Quarters Queenstown  
July 13th. 1814

My dear Sir,

I arrived at this place on the 10th., as I assured you, that by the blessing of God I would.—

All accounts agree, that the force of the Enemy in Kingston is very light.— Meet me on the Lake Shore, north of Fort George, with your Fleet, and we will be able I have no doubt, to settle a plan of operations, that will break the power of the Enemy in Upper Canada, and that, in the course of a short time, at all events, let me hear from you.—

I have looked for your fleet with great anxiety since the tenth; I do not doubt my ability to meet the Enemy in the field, and to march in every direction over his country, (your fleet conveying for me the necessary supplies); we can threaten Forts George and Niagara, and carry Burlington Heights and York, and proceed direct to Kingston, and carry that place.—

For Gods sake let me see you.— Sir James will not fight; two of his vessels are now in Niagara River.—

If you conclude to meet me at the head of the Lake, and that immediately, have the goodness to bring the guns and troops that I have ordered from the Harbour: at all events have the politeness to let me know, what aid I am to expect from the Fleet of Lake Ontario.—

There is not a doubt resting in my mind, but, that we have between us, the command of sufficient means, to conquer Upper Canada within two months, if there is a prompt and zealous Co-operation, and a vigorous application of

these means: Now is our time before the Enemy can be greatly reinforced: Very respectfully and truly Yours

Jac. Brown

LB, NBuHi, Jacob Brown Manuscripts.

#### SECRETARY OF THE NAVY JONES TO COMMODORE ISAAC CHAUNCEY

Commodore Isaac Chauncey  
Commanding the U S Naval force  
on Lake Ontario

Navy Department  
July 20th. 1814—

Sir

General Brown in his Official letter of the 6th Instant to the Secretary of War, which you will have seen published,<sup>1</sup> appears to anticipate meeting you, to co operate with him near Fort George, which I presume must have been founded upon an understanding between yourself and him, as he had written to you by an Express for that purpose.—

Your instructions and powers from this Department in relation to co operation with the Military Commander on the Shores of Lake Ontario, are so ample, that nothing need be added on that subject, and your own zealous desire to give effect to every movement which may tend to promote the public cause, is sure to command the most efficient co operation in your power.—

I fear however that the unavoidable delay in the final equipment of the Squadron, will have protracted your departure to a period rather late for the movement and junction which General Brown anticipated.—

I am not fully apprised of the nature and effect of the aid you could contribute with your Squadron, in a joint Military and Naval attack upon forts George or Niagara, as I do not exactly know what position you could take for that purpose, nor am I aware, of what other co operation General Brown may desire.— I cannot undertake to define the manner in which the most effectual co operation may be afforded, but it appears to me, that the primary object, is, the attack and capture, or destruction of the enemy's fleet if tangible, or its close blockade & the effectual command of the Lake, so as to stop all transportation of troops & Stores by the enemy.— Of the nature and extent of the co operation which you may from time to time afford, you will determine in concert and harmony with the Military Commander, and with a special view to the security of your fleet, and the objects to be hazarded in your absence from the Rendezvous, upon which the existence of the fleet under your command so materially depends. I regret the delay of a few days, which you say in your Letter of the 8th inst., would take place in the sailing of the fleet, in consequence of the changes necessarily produced by Captain Smith's<sup>2</sup> incapacity, (from sickness) to reach Sackett's Harbour and take the command of the *Mohawk*. I have however no expectation that this will find you in Port, unless victory or casualty shall have caused your return. With earnest invocations for the glorious result of your enterprize, and your individual fame and happiness— I am very respectfully Your Obedt. Servt.

W Jones.—

LB, DNA, RG45, CLS, 1814, p. 170.

1. This letter appeared in the 15 July edition of the *Daily National Intelligencer*.

2. For more on Captain John Smith, see Perry to Jones, 12 July 1814, p. 174, note 1.

## SECRETARY OF THE NAVY JONES TO COMMODORE ISAAC CHAUNCEY

Commodore Isaac Chauncey  
Commanding the U S Naval  
Force on Lake Ontario.—

Sir

Since yours of the 8th instant, stating the inevitable delay of the Squadron in port, for a few days, in order to make some necessary changes in the Commanders and Crews, in consequence of Captain Smith's ill health preventing his taking the command of the *Mohawk*, I have not received a line intimating the day of your departure; nor for a considerable time past, any information respecting the force, position, and probable designs of the enemy, and progress of his new Ship; nor of your contemplated movements and operations, which can alone be regulated by a constant, vigilant, and correct view of all these on the spot.—

Your letters down to the 16th. are entirely silent on these subjects; and I can only infer, from the high state of preparation, and formidable aspect of your force, as exhibited in your Statement of the 15th. instant, and the Muster Rolls to the 30th. June, and subsequent arrival of men, in succession, from the several Rendezvous, that you were ready, and I hourly expect to hear of your departure.—

The public anxiety is beginning to be extreme; and it is the lot of those in command and authority, to sustain the irritable impatience of those, who judge only from the impulse of the moment, and their own partial views, without knowledge or correct information.—

Your expected co operation with General Brown, has excited much ardent solicitude, and uneasiness for the ultimate safety of the Army, should the enemy, by any means, convey reinforcements to Fort George.—

It appears that he wrote to you, on the 21st Ult. and calculated confidently on your receiving his despatch on the 23d.—but on the 17th instant, it seems, however, that he had not heard from you; and I hence infer, and fear, that his letter miscarried.—

I conclude, without doubt, that if any obstacle to the immediate sailing of the Squadron had existed, you would have mentioned it in due time; but your silence, as to your intention, so late as the 16th instant, has excited some uneasiness in my mind.—

The Squadron is, as it always has been, under your entire command and control, to sail when and where your judgement may dictate with a full knowledge of all the circumstances before you, in pursuit of such plan as may, in your view, be best calculated to bring the enemy to action, and capture or destroy his fleet; or to blockade his force, and cut off his entire communication by water, with the head of the Lake; to annoy him, by all the means in your power, and to co-operate with the Army, in the most effectual manner, by a liberal and harmonious concert with the Military Chief, and in such way as you may deem most efficient and practicable, with the force under your command.—

I have expressed the solicitude, which has produced this letter; but my confidence in your patriotism, Judgement, Skill, and Energy, is entire.—I am very respectfully Sir your Obedient Servant

W Jones.

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

Navy Department  
July 24th. 1814.—

Head Quarters  
Chippewa, July 25th. 1814.

Dear Sir,

On the 23rd. instant I received a letter by Express from General Gaines, advising me that on the 20th. the heavy guns that I had ordered from the Harbour, to enable me to operate against Forts George & Niagara, were blockaded in that port, together with the Rifle Regiment that I had ordered up with them. I had ordered these Guns & troops, in Boats; provided the Commodore should not deem it prudent or proper to convey them in his fleet, not doubting but that he would have been upon the Lake for their protection, & that the Enemy would have been driven into port or captured— As Genl Gaines informed me that the Commodore was confined to his Bed with a fever, and as he did not know when the fleet would sail, or when the guns & forces that I had been expecting would even leave Sacketts Harbor; I have thought it proper to change my position, with a view to other objects. You know how greatly I am dissapointed, and therefore I will not dwell upon that painful subject.— And you can best perceive, how much has been lost by the delay—and the command of Lake Ontario being with the Enemy—reliances being placed upon a different state of things. The Indians all left me some time since, It is said that they will return, but this you will perceive depends upon Circumstances, The reinforcements ordered on from the West have not yet arrived. Yours Respectfully & truly

Jac: Brown

LS, DNA, RG107, Letters Received by the Secretary of War, Registered Series, B-174 (8) (M221, Roll No. 59).

## CAPTAIN JACOB JONES TO SECRETARY OF THE NAVY JONES

U.S.F. *Mohawk* 25th July 1814

Sir

I write you by the direction of Commodore Chauncey, who is too unwell himself to do so, that the Squadron has been prevented being earlier fitted for sea, in consequence of the delay in obtaining blocks and iron work— We shall however be in A state of readiness in two days hence, at which time the Commodore's present condition, authorises the belief he will have sufficiently recovered to proceed upon A cruise

There was brought in here the day before yesterday by one of our citizens A portmanteau, containing several letters from the Mechanics working upon the ship building for the enemy at Kingston— They all agree that she cannot be launched before some time in September, and some of them express an apprehension that it may not be possible to launch, from the difficulty of securing the ways, as there is no rise or fall of the tide

There appeared A guarded silence upon the subject of the strength and state of the garrison and defenses of the place I am respectfully Yrs.

Ja. Jones

ALS, DNA, RG45, CL, 1814, Vol. 5, No. 31 (M125, Roll No. 38).

SECRETARY OF THE NAVY JONES TO COMMODORE STEPHEN DECATUR

Commodore Stephen Decatur  
Commanding the US Ship *President*  
New York.

Sir

The silence of Comr. Chauncey ever since the 8th Inst., relative to the sailing of the Squadron under his command,—the previous and positive assurance of his departure, after the final arrangements, which would be completed in a few days—his reported sickness, and the apprehension that it may be so serious, as fatally to retard the operations of the Squadron, and produce the most disastrous consequences; imperiously demand an immediate though eventual provision, for that highly important command.—

You will therefore Sir, on receipt of this, without a moment's delay, proceed with the utmost celerity to Sacketts Harbour, and if the Squadron shall be still in Port, and Com Chauncey disqualified by the state of his health, for the immediate and active Command of that force; take upon yourself the Command, and forthwith proceed to carry into effect the designs of the Campaign in that quarter.—

These objects I shall explain to you in general terms, leaving your own judgement and discretion free, to adopt such means, as shall appear to you best adapted, to the attainment of the end.

There is no alternative, between the absolute command of the Lake, by the capture or destruction of the enemy's Squadron, before he shall have added the heavy line of battle Ship, which he is now building—and taking shelter in port, and acting upon the defensive after that event.— This alternative in its ultimate consequences approaches so near to defeat, that I can scarcely draw the distinction.—

If he will give you battle in the present state of the two Squadrons, I feel an assurance of Victory.

If he shall avoid battle, and take shelter in Kingston, it will then be desirable to blockade him with the utmost rigour, and effectually shut all the avenues to his communication with the upper end of the Lake, by Boats as well as Ships, until he shall have attained the superiority by the accession of his line of battle Ship; which Com Chauncey thinks will not be before the month of October, though by the efforts he is making, and the importance of the object, I think it highly probable, he will accomplish it sooner.

In either case, you will thus afford the most effectual co operation with the Army of the United States, that the nature of your force will admit.—

The character of the War on the Lakes, requires in a peculiar degree, the joint operations, of the Naval & Military forces; and you will on all occasions, with the most perfect harmony and reciprocal concert, combine with the movements of the Army, all the aid and effect which the nature of your force and the important naval objects, which have been explained to you will admit, but you will yourself judge and determine, upon the propriety and expediency of any particular mode of co operation, which may be required of you, and with a special view to the safety of the fleet—the nature of the navigation, and to the elements whose violence and caprice on that Lake have scarcely a parallel any where.— Of the effect of all these upon any proposed operation, nautical science skill and experience can alone correctly determine.—

In the present state of things, it is peculiarly desirable to afford to Genl. Brown all the co operation in your power. His situation is critical and becomes more so by every days delay.— His object and wishes you will ascertain from Comr. Chauncey and General Gaines

The Squadron is represented to be in the highest state of order & efficiency, Officered and manned with disciplined Crews, not excelled by any equal number of men in any fleet; if however on your arrival at Sacketts Harbour, and taking the command, you should deem it expedient to provide against contingencies, by ordering One hundred and fifty Volunteers of the *President*, you may do so, and if the Ships shall be full, they may act in the Gun Boats.—

The President entertains the highest respect for, and confidence, in the patriotism, valour, skill, and experience of Com Chauncey and desires to proceed in this business with the utmost delicacy.—

If the state of his health will justify his retaining the command, no change is desired, and if before you start, or on your way, you should learn with certainty that the Squadron has sailed, you will consider this order as null and void.—

As this order may or may not go into effect, and as the Squadron will certainly have sailed if Commodore Chaunceys health, shall have enabled him to command, I shall not write to him on the subject; but should the final execution of the order become necessary, you will exhibit to him this letter, and request of him a free communication of the result of his observation, judgement and experience in that service.

You will see the propriety of withholding the knowledge of this order from the public, until its final execution.

You will please to acknowledge the receipt of this letter, and state the time of your intended departure from New York.—<sup>1</sup> I am very respectfully Sir your Obedt. Servant

W Jones

LB, DNA, CLS, 1814, pp. 173-75.

1. Having received news of Chauncey's apparent recovery, and reluctant to relieve a fellow captain and friend without unconditional orders from the department, Decatur delayed his departure for Sackets Harbor. The sailing of Chauncey's fleet on 1 August ended the crisis.

COMMODORE ISAAC CHAUNCEY TO SECRETARY OF THE NAVY JONES

No. 131

Sacketts Harbor  
31st July. 1814

Sir

I am so far convalescent that my Physicians are preparing to take me on board today. I shall sail immediately and look after the Enemy— when I have

sufficiently recovered as to be able to write I will account to you for the detention of the Fleet in Port so much beyond the time contemplated. I have the honor to be very respectfully Sir Yr. Ob. Hle. St.

Isaac Chauncey

LS, DNA, RG45, CL, 1814, Vol. 5, No. 45 (M125, Roll No. 38).

#### SECRETARY OF THE NAVY JONES TO COMMODORE ISAAC CHAUNCEY

Commodore Isaac Chauncey  
Commanding the U S Naval force  
on Lake Ontario, Sacketts Harbour

Sir

It appears by your letter of the 8th Ult. that the necessary changes in the Officers and Crews of the Squadron under your command, incidental to the absence of Captain Smith, would detain you in port a few days longer to make final arrangements.—

No other cause of detention was then apprehended or intimated, and your entire silence from that day until the 25th. following, when Captain Jones wrote by your desire, (as you were too unwell to do so) to say, "that the Squadron has been prevented being earlier fitted for Sea, in consequence of the delay in obtaining blocks, and iron-work," is so extraordinary and inexplicable, that though reluctant to communicate, I cannot withhold from you the knowledge of the extreme anxiety and astonishment, which the protracted and fatal delay of the Squadron in port, has excited in the mind of the President.—

Though entirely without information (other than indirect) of the serious indisposition, with which it appears you have been afflicted, I am compelled to attribute to that cause, the detention of the Squadron in port, during a period more critical and, important, than any that has occurred, and of which it appears you had been apprised by General Brown.—

The uninterrupted command of the Lake by the enemy during that period, has enabled him to transport formidable reinforcements to Niagara, and nothing but the unexampled prowess, and fortitude, of the gallant Army under General Brown, have saved it from utter destruction. These things cannot but be felt, and the questions naturally arise— Why has our fleet been detained in port, so late as the 25th., after the positive assurances, that it would be out the first Week in July?—

If the gallant and able Commander of our Squadron, was rendered incapable by disease, why did not the second in command, in whom the national confidence also resides, lead it into action, or scour the Lake so as to prevent, or intercept the transportation of the enemy, or force his fleet to battle, while we have the known and decided superiority?— Why was the executive kept in ignorance, of the ill state of health of the Commander, and of any real cause of detention, from the 8th. to the 25th. of July, when by timely notice, its orders might have provided for the contingency, and spared the flow of gallant blood in an unequal, though glorious contest.

Navy Department  
August 3d. 1814.

I shall not be able to answer to these interrogatories—the Squadron has been prevented being earlier fitted for sea, in consequence of the delay in obtaining blocks and Iron work!— I am very respectfully Sir Your Obedt. Servt.

W Jones.

LB, DNA, RG45, CLS, 1814, pp. 176–77.

#### Joint Operations on the Upper Lakes

*The American flotilla under Captain Arthur Sinclair entered Lake Huron after a difficult and slow passage through Lake St. Clair. The British lacked sufficient force to oppose the flotilla's entry into Lake Huron, but instead used their resources to strengthen their position on Mackinac Island by constructing a new blockhouse above the fort and erecting batteries.*

*Captain Sinclair's first objective was to destroy the British shipbuilding establishment at Nottawasaga. The islands, fogs, and shallow rocky coast prevented the Americans from locating that post, however, and the squadron sailed for St. Joseph Island, which they found abandoned. They discovered and captured the North West Company schooner Mink, and captured but later abandoned a second schooner, Perseverance.*

*The combined forces under Captain Sinclair and Lieutenant Colonel George Croghan attempted the recapture of Fort Michilimackinac on 4 August. Although the British troops at the post were few in number, they were well positioned and the British regulars were joined by armed Indian allies and militiamen. Lieutenant Colonel Croghan's troops suffered heavy casualties, including two senior officers, several junior officers, and many rank and file. The Americans gave up the attempt to recapture Michilimackinac and turned back to make a second effort to locate and destroy Nottawasaga. There, they found the schooner Nancy, which the British had set on fire to prevent her capture. On his departure for Lake Erie, Captain Sinclair left two schooners, Scorpion and Tigress to blockade the passage between Nottawasaga and Michilimackinac.*

#### CAPTAIN ARTHUR SINCLAIR TO LIEUTENANT EDMUND P. KENNEDY

U.S. Sloop *Niagara*  
At the Rapids of the River St. Clair  
July 12th. 1814—

After waiting two weeks at Detroit for the army I left that place eight days ago, and have by immense labour got thus far— I was a week heaving over the flats of Lake St. Clair there being only 8 feet & 4 Inches water for several miles,

I had to take almost every thing out to enable me to get over at all— I am now, however, over all the difficult parts I have to pass except the Rapids, and only wait a wind to pass them,

I take the opportunity of a boat passing to Detroit to send you these few hasty lines, the principal intention of which are to inform you that we are informed by prisoners captured by Col: Croghan's patrol that there is a force opposite to you at Long Point, and that boats are constructing in that place, or in some of

the creeks or inlets between that and Detroit, for the purpose of some enterprise—you must find out where they are and destroy them at once—no force of the kind must be allowed to be created—an [and] in the mean time be always on the look out against surprise—

Write me fully, & let me know what prospect you have for men, and how many vessels you have or will be able to put into comission and send me all the letters, and dispatches, newspapers &c. by the vessel which you send to join me with provision &c.— Let the commander of that vessel call at the Fort at the head of this River and get the signal I shall establish with that garrison

Let him also be particular in not going on shore between Detroit & the Fort above, as we find there is great danger of the Indians, & to be constantly on the alert while on his passage, in not venturing near any vessel which does not first answer his signal number, as I know of a 12 gun Brig the Enemy have already on float in the upper lakes Yours in great haste & respectfully

(signed) A. Sinclair

Copy, DNA, RG45, BC, 1814, Vol. 3, No. 36, enclosure (M148, Roll No. 13).

#### DIARY OF SURGEON USHER PARSONS

[Extract]

[U.S. brig Lawrence]

Wednesday July 13th.— Arrived in Lake Huron about 4 Oclock. P.M. The rapids are about  $\frac{1}{4}$ th of a mile in length, and run from 4 to 5 knots.— Fortunately we have a six knot breeze which enables us to enter the Lake. There are no settlements around the fort but below the Fort on both sides are small tracts of cleared land and several small houses all deserted since the surrender of Detroit— River St. Clair has many small windings—but from the commencement of arable soil and timber growth to Lake Huron the course is due north— The fort is about as large as Detroit but not so well stockaded—

Thursy. 14th.— Troops all onboard early in the morning amounting in all to about 750 Rank & file. On board the *Lawrence* more than 300 Made during the day & night about 100 miles.— The distance to Mashitash bay is about 230 miles. Thither we are bound before we go to Mackinack

From thence we shall go to Mackinack 220 miles further Course N by E The Starboard shore runs about N.N.E. The larboard about north....

Friday 15th.— Rained some last evening and the weather is hazy today. Unable to discern the vessels half a mile distant Hazy weather in the forenoon. high wind.— Made land ahead which led Commre. to think the land was the islands about the head of Mashitach bay and that we might tack to the Starboard and enter the large bay Accordingly we run down in a S.E. direction keeping the land on our lar bord side and near us. This tack was commenced in the afternoon—but no entrance into the bay could be discovered this night It was the opinion of many we were runing back to the rapids again by keeping along this shore; that it is the cape of land which divides the large bay from the lake, and

that we did not ascend the Lake sufficiently high to find the entrance in to the large bay at the head of this cape—

Saturday July 16.— Lake Huron— Pleasant & calm morning. While coasting along in the direction we did last night an encampment was discovered on our larboard bow by the *Niagara*. Commanders all called on board the Commodore.— A sail was now discovered (9 Oclock) astern of us N. by E. apparently about 15 or 20 miles distance— Signal was made but the Commodore not crediting the report nor discerning the sail gave no order for chasing for an hour or two. The sail was distinctly seen by the officers on board the *Lawrence*. The Com. finally ordered to give chase but presently countermanded the order. The vessel was probably the *Nancy*. Resumed our former course and continued it for some time and towards evening the Commodore concluding he had been mistaken about Mashitash bay, Order'd the fleet to sail in a direction for Michilimackinack— The wind was probably now nearly on the Larboard bow if our course had been directed toward Mackinac— Beat during the evening & night. Wind was west a little north— Was sea sick. . . .

Tuesday July 19th— Lake Huron.— Today made sight of Passed Thunder Islands bearing on our larboard beam Our course being N.W.— Sailed within a mile of the islands.— At about noon made sight of land on our star board quarter and ahead—represented to be the Mainland on the Starboard side of the river St. Joseph. In the afternoon we entered the mouth of sd. River with an 8 knot breeze.— The land in every direction as we came in sight of it had fires set the smoke of which is no doubt intended to serve as telegraphs for the enemy in Mackinack— The smoke arose on the land in the streights on our Larboard side from a high bluff when we were within about 3 miles from it and making toward it. We pass'd within musket shot of it. The Com. a short distance a head fired into it and discovered a man— The streight is about  $\frac{1}{2}$ ths of mile wide. Soon after we entered it we discovered Fort St. Joseph; a few miles a head bearing a little on a larboard bow tho' on the enemy's side, and commanding the river. It is on an island. Several houses perhaps a dozen are a little to the right of the Fort. Anchored in sight of the Fort & Village about 3 or 4 miles distant.— A flag was sent in the evening demanding a surrender of the fort, but no person was to be seen. Some spies were sent in the night in order if possible to take some person in order to gain intelligence respecting Mackinack. Some plunder was brot. off but no person could be seen.— The houses are good and one discovered marks of having been very recently occupied—even within six hours— Bedding was found and brot. off.

Wedy. July 20th.— Streights of St. Joseph The two launches were sent on shore today containing about 200 men. The Fort publick buildings &c destroyed— Found some beeves & sheep 3 of the former & about 6 of the latter were brot. on board. About 40 barrels of rosin was also found.— A trunk of officers clothing of inferior quality brot. on board, a chair, &c.— Men very sickly—about 12 on the list—4 with pleurisy.— Brought on board from the fort 40 barrels Rosin.—Some nails—copper, a fire engine, chairs—Old muskets. &c. also 2 or 3 birch canoes.—

Thursday July 21st. Early this morning a strange sail was discovered at the mouth of the river within 2 miles of us.— Gave immediate chase with all the vessels except the *Lawrence*. The vessel came around the point and was thus near before she discovered us, she made tack & put from us, but immediately turn'd and met our fleet & surrendered. She is the schooner *Mink* of about 6 tons. laden with flour 230 barrels for St. Mary's about 40 miles distant. Brot her along side about 10 o'clock— In a few minutes was discovered another sail coming around the point— Two launches and commanded by Lieut Turner—with sailors & soldiers on board were dispatched the sail immediately disappeared the *Scorpion* was likewise sent which fell to the leward and could not gain sight of the strange sail.— It proved afterwards to be indian canoes with sails— The indians fled & left them—and they were brought to the fleet with a number of tools belonging to the Indians.— People very sick. Learned by the prisoners of the *Mink* that there are 2000 Indians & 500 Regulars & 100 Volunteers

Friday July 22nd.— Near Fort St. Joseph very cold.— Two launches with Sailors & Soldiers were sent to Fort St. Mary's to take off any furs that may be deposited at the place.— Commanded by Lt. Turner & the land force by Maj. Holmes.— Signal was made to prepare to get under way the wind changed which rendered impossible to proceed.— Duel fought between Capt. Desha<sup>1</sup> of the Infy. & Lt. Bellus of the Navy, the latter wounded in the breast....

Sunday July 24th.— Near Fort St. Joseph Today the fleet got underway except the *Scorpion* Lt Packet left to take onboard Lt. Turner & the crews of the two launches.— Sailed South for perhaps 15 miles then nearly N.W. till we made sight of Mackinack about 10 or 15 miles ahead at sun set. In the night made to within 6 or 7 miles.— Was taken ill....

Tuesday 26th.... Set sail in the evening for to go around the island of Mackinack on the North Side a distance of about 8 or 10 miles and anchored off the west side of Round island In pursuing around the Island were fired on by the enemy and returned.

Off Mackinack about 2 & a half miles....

Saturday 30th The *Scorpion* arrived to the fleet laden, having been absent several days longer than was calculated. The boats that went to St Mary's within 15 miles of Lake Superior found there a small vessel above the falls containing perhaps 200 lbs sugar and perhaps 50 ceggs of liquors With about 40 skins and a few bales of cloaths &c &c Burnt the houses belonging to the N West fur company, and all the property they could not take away— In attempting to bring the vessel over the falls she had several holes beat through her and was finally burnt A few boats were also taken which with the launches brought off all the property to St Joseph's where the *Scorpion* lay.— An Indian carried the news from St Joseph's to St Marys that it was burnt and the news was noted in the log-book of the prize vessel. Mr Champlin today took some fish and nets from Point St Ignace— The Col. talks of not landing [— —?]

Sunday July 31st.— Rainy Col. Crognan came on board the *Lawrence*. Other officers arrived on board who went on the expedition— Two prisoners were

taken at Point St. Ignace frenchmen from whom the strength of the enemy was ascertained. It is stated by them that about 300 regulars 100 militia & 400 indians are on the Island Col. Crogran return'd to the fleet with the determination to fight— Recd half of a hog from Champlin

Wedy. 3d— Wind changed which soon brought us near the Commod. It was now determined by the army to land immediately but the artillery pieces being on board the *Mink* and she out of sight this was found inexpedient. In the course of the day she was found. She in following the Com. yesterday lost sight of him in the fog and her compass being wrong she sailed in a wrong direction. It is now determined to land tomorrow morning.— On board Champlin & Woodhouse Lt. B— went on shore after wood and was fired on by the Indians. One sailor & three soldiers were wounded Boats immediately returned.—

Off Mackinack August 4th— Pleasant at about 9 Oclock signal was made for army vessels to get under way At about half past 11 came to anchor in line of battle abreast the N.W. side of Mackinac island where there is a spot partly cleared, on which the British landed when they took the fort from us. The land is low. At ~~half past~~ one the troops began to disembark. At two a fireing commenced from the vessels which cleared the shore. At three o'clock the troops were formed at a short distance from the shore and marching at quarter past three fireing commenced with field pieces and shortly after musketry— a cessation then ensued 'til 35 minutes after 3 A constant irregular fire then commenced which continued ten minutes when there was a constant rattling of musketry—for about  $\frac{1}{2}$  a minute then the firing abated a little till 10 minutes after 4 when the firing recommenced with considerable rapidity accompanied with yelling and at  $\frac{1}{4}$  past four was very warm from which till  $\frac{1}{4}$  before five the ~~fireing was very~~ report of musketry was very frequent and irregular. At half after four however the direction of the firing indicated that Our army was on the retreat. At 5 Oclock fireing ceased and most of the troops were on the shore from which they had marched.— Boats were on shore ready to receive them. Maj. Holmes was killed early in the action and Capt Desha wounded. Capt Vanhorn was mortally wounded and likewise Jackson.—<sup>2</sup> The report of killed & wounded of the regulars stands thus

		Killed	Wounded	Missing
Regulars	Infantry	12	39	3
	Artillery	—	—	—
	Militia	—	—	—
	Marines	—	1	—

Lieut Jackson was wounded through the bowels a little below & to the left of the navel the ball passed out a little above the os innominatum<sup>3</sup> on the left of the spine a small portion of omentum<sup>4</sup> passed through the front wound. Capt Vanhorn was also wounded in the same manner. A seargent was wounded through the stomach and died in the night. A private through the left lung bids fair to recover. The other wounds were slight that occurred to the men on board the *Lawrence* Weigh'd anchor & stood off about one mile

The retreat was well conducted

Off Mackinac August 5th.— Lieut Jackson died early and Capt Vanhorn shortly after. A flag sent to the fort to ask the body of Maj. Holmes It was politely rec'd and the request granted. The commander Col. McDowell offered the fleet provisions fruit &c. In the evening the body of Maj Holmes was found unmolested and brought on board. But the other bodies had been scalped and buried the Maj was not found by the Indians. two balls had entered his breast.— A vessel arrived to the fleet from Detroit 17 days passage informs Genl. Brown had gained a signal victory over the enemy at Queenstown.

AD, RHi, Usher Parsons Diary.

1. Captain Benjamin Desha, 2d Rifle Regiment, U.S.A.
2. Captain Isaac Van Horne, 19th Infantry, U.S.A.; 3d Lieutenant Hezekiah Jackson, 24th Infantry, U.S.A.
3. The pelvis.
4. The membrane covering the intestines.

LIEUTENANT COLONEL ROBERT McDouall, BRITISH ARMY, TO  
LIEUTENANT GENERAL GORDON DRUMMOND, BRITISH ARMY

Michilimackinac 17th. July 1814

Sir

I beg leave to call your attention to the expediency of taking immediate & effectual steps towards the supplying of this Garrison with Provisions to the end of June next.

By the last Canoes to Montreal I have strongly urged the necessity of this being attempted with the least possible delay but unfortunately so much time is necessarily lost by the distance the delay in giving orders, & in acting upon them that I am not a little apprehensive that the opportunity which now exists may be lost, before preparations are matured & steps taken to provide us with the supply before mentioned which will require four hundred Barrels of Flour & two hundred of Pork, without including the Indian Corn necessary for the Indians, & which I am grieved to say threatens this year to fail us in our neighbourhood altogether, every thing in the shape of grain being nearly destroyed for want of rain, should the dry weather continue a few days more, the Corn will be burnt up, & a greater misfortune could scarcely befall us—for this Island cannot be defended without Indians, nor they fed without a large supply of Indian Corn—the little which remains at this Post selling for twelve Dollars pr. Bushel.— I was greatly disappointed at the *Nancy*s bringing us last trip, only eleven Barrels for Governt.— I at least expected three hundred— I also received but little comfort on Mr. Crookshanks telling me, that by the 20th. Inst. he was in hopes to have 200 barrels at the mouth of the Nottawasaga River— however as it is of great consequence even the securing that quantity, I am now dispatching the *Nancy* for it. I however beg leave to represent the great necessity which exists that the supplies should be more liberal for this place;— It is now the last point of connection with the Indians, & I believe the great importance of their alliance, & the policy of conciliating them as much as possible is generally admitted particularly as the enemy is making such efforts to seduce them from us, & yet what means are placed in my hands to counteract the influence

of the Americans a continual interchange of Indians is going on at this place, & some have come a great distance for its defence, & yet I have been compelled to refuse rations to their Wives & Children, & to many others in a half famished state, even my own garrison I am obliged to reduce the ration of, & as Soldiers have but little foresight, & think only of the present, it adds to the general discontent on the subject of Provisions. In what a predicament does this leave me & in what a situation shall I be left, if great efforts are not made for my relief, every day adds to my perplexity on this subject; I now only issue 250 rations daily to Indians, which makes the whole about 550, & is absolutely essential & cannot with prudence be otherwise, that in calculating the supplies for this Garrison at least three hundred Indians should be included, & I am fully convinced that they never could be expended to a better purpose.—

I have paid much attention to Coll. Forsters<sup>1</sup> suggestion of offering some annoyance to the Enemy during their operations in the River St. Clair.— If it is meant with a view to dislodge them, & drive them from the River, we have now since the departure of the expedition to the Prairie du Cheins, no force at all adequate to the purpose all we could muster being two Companies of the Newfoundland Regt. about 100 effective, & not a hundred Indians on whom I could rely—& as to these repeated experience has proved that they are scarcely of any use in attacking a fort— From the time the enemy have occupied the River St. Clair, we could never have dislodged them without a cooperation by the River Thames, & they must now be so well established having also a large Garrison, that it would require more than double my force to afford the least chance of success; But the principal objection even if a force equal to the attempt, could be mustered would be the danger arising from the Vicinity of the Smaller Vessels of the enemys fleet. An expedition of unprotected Batteaux (for the *Nancy* could not even protect herself) if fallen in with by them which in going or returning there would be every probability it would end in the Capture of the whole, & the consequent loss of this Island.—

Our latest Indian Accounts state that the enemy have ten Vessels at Detroit, & that great preparations were making to attack us which was to take place in August: I am doing my utmost to prepare for their reception, Our new works on the Hill overlooking the old fort are nearly completed & the Block houses in the center will be finished this week which will make this position one of the strongest in Canada; its principal defect is the difficulty of finding Water near it, but that obviated & a sufficient supply of Provisions laid in, no force that the enemy can bring will be able to reduce it.—

I am strongly inclined to believe that the threatened attack is likely to take place in the Course of next month hitherto they have been apprehensive of risking it, perhaps apprehensive of the Niagara Indians advancing upon Sandwich & Detroit in their absence; still their fleet is strong enough to afford a powerful protection to the latter place, & also admit of a sufficient number to come against Michilimackinac, to which it is probable they will be strongly induced, on hearing of the expedition against the prairie du Cheins, thinking that our force here is greatly weakened in consequence, I have about sixty of the Follsoyne<sup>2</sup> Indians, who are of the best description I have yet seen & most thoroughly to be depended on; I depend much upon them in the event of an attack.—

As to what has been suggested of endeavouring to feed the Indians upon the Enemy, I am convinced that such a project is altogether delusive. It could not be affected at Amherstburg, where the Indians were backed by a large regular

## NORTHERN LAKES THEATER

force—a Superior fleet & the enemys supplies at hand— We have none of these advantages & no place within our reach where these can be obtained—I have besides invariably found that the Indians in such exertions, as I have sent them upon, instead of effecting a saving, devour three times the usual quantity of Provisions.—

(Signed) Rt. McDouall

Copy, CaOOA, British Military and Naval Records, RG8, I, "C" Ser., Vol. 685, pp. 66–69.

1. Probably Lieutenant Colonel Colley L. L. Foster, adjutant general of the Upper Canada Militia and Drummond's military secretary.

2. Folles Avoines, or Folsavoins, was the French name for the Menominee nation.

## CAPTAIN ARTHUR SINCLAIR TO SECRETARY OF THE NAVY JONES

U S Sloop of War *Niagara*  
Off St. Josephs 22nd. July 1814

Sir,

The wind became favourable on the evening of the 3d. Inst. the Troops were immediately embarked, and I sailed from Detroit that night—but such were the difficulties I had to encounter on the Flats of Lake St. Clair (where instead of 10 feet, as I had been led to believe there was, I only found 8,) and the Rapid current of that River, that I did not reach Lake Huron, until the 12th., From thence I shaped my course, as directed for Matchadash Bay, and used every possible effort to gain it, but not being able to procure a Pilot for that unfrequented part of the Lake, and finding it filled with Islands, and sunken Rocks, which must inevitably prove the destruction of the Fleet, as it was impossible to avoid them, on account of the impenetrable Fog, with which this Lake is almost continually covered, And finding the Army were growing short of Provisions, from the time already elapsed—it was agreed between Colo. Croghan and myself, to push for this place, where we should procure such information, as would govern our future operations. We were favoured in winds, and arrived here on the 20th., The Enemy had abandoned his works, consisting of a Fort, and large Block House &cctr. Those we destroyed, but left untouched, the Town, and S W company's Store Houses.—<sup>1</sup> Very Respectfully I have the honor to remain, Sir, Your Obt. Sert.

A Sinclair

ALS, DNA, RG45, CL, 1814, Vol. 5, No. 24 (M125, Roll No. 38).

1. The South West Company was established in 1811 by a merger of John Jacob Astor's American Fur Company and the Montreal firm known as the Michilimackinac Company. It rivaled the North West Company in scope. For more on the fur trade during the War of 1812, see Haeger, *John Jacob Astor*, chapter 6.

## JANUARY 1814–JUNE 1815

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## LIEUTENANT DANIEL TURNER TO CAPTAIN ARTHUR SINCLAIR

"Copy"

U S Schooner *Scorpion*  
Off Michilimackinac 28th. July 1814

Sir

I have the honor to inform you, that agreeable to your orders of the 22nd. Inst. I proceeded on the expedition to Lake Superior with the Launches. I rowed night and day, but having a distance of 60 miles against a strong current information had reached the enemy at St. Maries of our approach, about two hours before I arrived at that place, carried by Indians in their light canoes, several of which I chased and by firing on them and killing some, prevented their purpose, some I captured and kept prisoners until my arrival, others escaped. The force under Major Holmes prevented any thing like resistance at the Fort, the enemy with their Indians carrying with them all the light valuable articles, Peltry, clothes, &c. I proceeded across the Strait of L. Superior, without a moments delay, and on my appearance the enemy finding they could not get off with the vessel I was in quest of, set fire to her in several places, scuttled and left her. I succeeded in boarding her and by considerable exertion extinguished the flames, and secured her from sinking. I then stript her and prepared for getting her down the Falls, having secured the Man you directed, offering the reward in case he succeeded, and death in case of treachery. Adverse winds prevented my attempting the falls, until the 26th, when every possible effort was used, but I am sorry to say without success to get her over in safety. The falls in  $\frac{1}{4}$  of a mile, is 45 feet, and the channel very rocky, the current runs from 20 to 30 Knots, and in one place there is a perpendicular leap of 10 feet, between 3 rocks, here she bilged, but was brought down so rapidly that we succeeded in running her on shore, below the Rapids before she filled, and burnt her. She was a fine new schooner, upwards of 100 tons, called the *Perseverance*, and will be a severe loss to the N. W. Co., had I succeeded in getting her safe, I could have loaded her to advantage from the Enemys store houses—I have however brought down four captured boats loaded with Indian goods to a considerable amount, the balance contained in four large, and two small store houses, were destroyed, together with a very superb mill amounting in value to, from 50 to 100 thousand Dollars, all private property was according to your orders respected. The Officers and men under my command, behaved with great activity, and Zeal, particularly Midshipman Swartwout.<sup>1</sup> I have the honor to be Sir with great Respect Your Obd. Sert.

Signed Daniel Turner

Copy, DNA, RG45, CL, 1814, Vol. 5, No. 49, enclosure (M125, Roll No. 38).

1. Midshipman Augustus P. Swartwout.

## CAPTAIN ARTHUR SINCLAIR TO SECRETARY OF THE NAVY JONES

U S Sloop of War *Niagara*  
off Michilimackinac July 29th. 1814

Sir

Whilst wind bound at St. Josephs, I captured the N W Companies Schooner *Mink*, from Michilimackinac to St. Maries with a Cargo of Flour— Receiving

intelligence through this source that the Schooner *Perseverance* was laying above the Falls, at the lower end of Lake Superior, in waiting to transport the *Minks* Cargo to Fort William, I dispatched the Ships launches under Lieut. Turner of the *Scorpion*, an active enterprizing officer, to capture her, and if possible, to get her down the Falls— Col. Croghan attached Major Holmes with a party of Regulars to cooperate in the expedition, in which the capture of St Maries was included— The official report of the result, made by Lieut. Turner, I herewith enclose you.<sup>1</sup> The capture of the *Perseverance*, gave us the complete command of Lake Superior, and had it not been for the strong force at Michilimackinac, forbidding a separation of our means of attacking that place, and feeling myself bound by my instructions to do so, before I was at liberty to enter into any extensive Enterprize of my own planning, I should have availed myself of this unlooked for advantage, and have broken up all their important establishments on Lake Superior— The capture of Fort William alone, would have nearly destroyed the Enemy's fur trade, as that is his grand Depot and general rendezvous, from which his extensive trade branches in all directions, and at which place there is never less than a Million in value, of property, and at this season of the year, it is said, there is twice that amount— I fear such another opportunity may never occur. The capture of those two vessels, and the provisions, will, however, prove of very serious inconvenience to the Enemy in that remote quarter, where the loss cannot possibly be retrieved— Flour was before this loss, worth \$60 (per barrel [with?] them, and Salt Provisions 50 cts (per lb. &c<sup>t</sup>r. I have the honor to remain Sir, with great respect Your Obedt. Sert.

A Sinclair

ALS, DNA, RG45, CL, 1814, Vol. 5, No. 49 (M125, Roll No. 38).

1. See p. 565.

LIEUTENANT COLONEL GEORGE CROGHAN, U.S.A., TO  
SECRETARY OF WAR ARMSTRONG

U: S: Sloop of War Niagara, off Thunder Bay,  
9th. of August, 1814.

Sir.—

We left Fort Gratiot (head of Strait St. Clare) on the 12th. ultimo, and imagined that we should arrive in a few days at Matchadash Bay. At the end of a week, however, the Commodore, from the want of Pilots acquainted with that unfrequented part of the Lake, despair'd of being able to find out a passage through the Islands into that Bay; and made for St. Joseph's, where he anchor'd on the 20th. day of July. After setting fire to the Fort of St. Joseph, which seemed not to have been recently occupied, a detachment of Infantry and artillery, under Major Holmes was order'd up to Sault St. Mary's, for the purpose of breaking up the Enemy's establishment at that place. For particulars, relative to the execution of this order, I beg leave to refer you to Major Holmes' report herewith enclosed.<sup>1</sup> Finding on my arrival at Michilimackinac, on the 26th. ultimo, that the enemy had strongly fortified the height overlooking the old Fort of Mackinac, I at once despair'd of being able, with my Small force, to carry the place by storm, and determin'd, (as the only Course remaining) on landing and

establishing myself on some favorable position, whence I could be enabled to annoy the enemy by gradual and slow approaches, under cover of my artillery, in which I should have the superiority in point of metal. I was urged to adopt this step by another reason, not a little cogent; could a position be taken and fortified on the Island, I was well aware that it would either induce the enemy to attack me in my strong hold, or force his Indians and Canadians (his most efficient, and only disposable force) off the Island, as they would be very unwilling to remain in my neighbourhood after a permanent footing had been taken. On enquiry, I learned from individuals who had lived many years on the Island, that a position as desirable as I might wish, could be found on the West end, and, therefore immediately made arrangements for disembarking. A landing was effected on the 4th. Instant, under cover of the guns of the shipping, and the line being quickly form'd, had advanced to the edge of the field spoken of for a camp, when intelligence was convey'd to me, that the enemy was a head, and a few seconds more, brought us a fire from his Battery of four pieces, firing shot and shells. After reconnoitering his position, which was well selected; his line reaching along the edge of the woods, at the further extremity of the field and cover'd by a temporary breast work; I determin'd on changing my position, (which was now two lines, the militia forming the front) by advancing Major Holmes' Battalion of Regulars on the right of the militia, thus to outflank him, and by a vigorous effort to gain his rear. This movement was immediately order'd, but before it could be executed a fire was open'd by some Indians posted in a thick wood near our right, which proved fatal to Major Holmes and severely wounded Captain Desha, (the officer next in rank.) This unlucky fire, by depriving us of the services of our most valuable officers, threw that part of the line into Confusion, from which the best exertions of the officers were not able to recover it. Finding it impossible to gain the enemy's left, owing to the impenetrable thickness of the woods; a charge was order'd to be made by the regulars immediately against the front. This charge altho' made in some confusion, served to drive the enemy back into the woods, from whence an annoying fire was kept up by the Indians

Lieut Morgan was order'd up with a light piece to assist the left now particularly galed; the excellent practice of this piece brought the enemy to fire at a longer distance. Discovering that this disposition, from whence the enemy had just been driven, (and which had been represented to me as so high and Commanding) was by no means tenable, from being interspersed with thickets, and intersected in every way by ravines; I determin'd not longer to expose my force to the fire of an enemy deriving every advantage which could be obtain'd from numbers, and a knowledge of the position, and therefore order'd an immediate retreat towards the shipping. This affair which has cost us many valuable lives leaves us to lament the fall of that gallant officer Major Holmes whose character is so well known to the War Department. Captain Vanhorn of the 19th Infantry and Lieutenant Jackson of the 24 Infantry, both brave, intrepid young men, fell mortally wounded at the head of their respective commands. The Conduct of all my officers on this occasion, merits my approbation.

Capt Desha of the 24th. Infty altho' severely wounded, continued with his command until forced to retire, from faintness through loss of blood. Capts. Saunders, Hawkins, and Sturgus with every Subaltern of that Battalion acted in the most exemplary manner. Ensign Bryan (2nd Rifle Regt.), acting adjutant to the Battalion) actively forwarded the wishes of the Commanding officer. Lieuts.

Hickman 28th. Infy & Hyde of the U:S: Marines, who commanded the reserve claim my particular thanks for their activity in keeping that command in readiness to meet any exigency. I have before mentioned Lieut Morgans activity, his two assistants Lieut Pickett and Mr. Peters Conductor of Artillery, also merit the name of good officers<sup>2</sup>

The Militia were wanting in no part of their duty. Colonel Cotgreave,<sup>3</sup> his officers, and soldiers, deserve the warmest approbation. My acting assistant adjutant Genl. Captain N. H. Moore 28th. Infy; with volunteer adjutant McComb were prompt in delivering my orders. Captain Gratiot of the Engineers,<sup>4</sup> who volunteered his services as adjutant on this occasion, gave me valuable assistance

On the morning of the 5th. I sent a flag to the enemy to enquire into the state of the wounded (two in number) who were left on the field, and to request permission to bring away the body of Major Holmes, which was also left, owing to the unpardonable neglect of the soldiers in whose hands it was placed

I am happy in assuring you, that the body of Major Holmes is secured, and will be buried at Detroit with becoming honors.

I shall discharge the Militia tomorrow and will send them down together with two regular Companies, to Detroit. With the remaining three Companies I shall attempt to destroy the enemy's establishment on the head of Naw-taw-wa-sa-ga River, and if it be thought proper, erect a post at the mouth of that River— Very respectfully I have the honour to remain, Sir, your obt. Sevt

G Croghan Lt. Col.  
2nd. Riflemen

ALS, DNA, RG107, Letters Received by the Secretary of War, Registered Series, C-110 (8) (M221, Roll No. 60).

1. Major Holmes's report discusses the legality of the capture of goods claimed by John Johnston, Indian agent and former governor of the Michigan Territory. Holmes to Croghan, 27 July 1814, DNA, RG107, Letters Received by the Secretary of War, Registered Series, C-110 (8), enclosure (M221, Roll No. 60).

2. Captain Minor Sturgis, 24th Infantry, U.S.A.; W. N. Bryan, 2d Rifle Regiment, U.S.A., promoted to 3d lieutenant, 1 August 1814; 1st Lieutenant James Hickman, 28th Infantry, U.S.A.; 1st Lieutenant Benjamin Hyde, U.S.M.C.; 2d Lieutenant Lewis Morgan, Corps of Artillery, U.S.A.; Lieutenant James C. Pickett, Corps of Artillery, U.S.A.; and John H. Peters, Conductor of Artillery, Ordnance Department, U.S.A. Captains Hawkins and Saunders have not been identified with certainty.

3. Colonel William Cotgreave, Ohio Militia.

4. Captain Charles Gratiot, Corps of Engineers, U.S.A.

#### CAPTAIN ARTHUR SINCLAIR TO SECRETARY OF THE NAVY JONES

U S Sloop of War Niagara  
Off Thunder Bay— August the 9th. 1814

Sir

I arrived off Michilimackinac on the 26th. July, but owing to a tedious spell of bad weather which prevented our reconnoitering or being able to procure a prisoner who could give us information of the Enemys Indian force, which from several little skirmishes we had on an adjacent Island appeared to be very great, we did not attempt a landing until the 4th. Inst. and it was then made more

with the view to ascertaining positively the Enemy's strength, than with any possible hope of success, knowing at the same time that I could effectually cover their landing and retreat to the ships, from the position I had taken, within 300 yards of the beach— Colo. Croghan would never have landed, even with this protection, being positive as he was that the Indian force alone on the Island, with the advantages they had, were superior to him, could he have justified himself to his government, without having stronger proof than appearances that he could not effect the object in view—

Mackinack is by nature a perfect Gibraltar, being a high inaccessible Rock on every side except the west, from which to the heights, you have near 2 miles to pass through a wood so thick, that our men were shot in every direction and within a few yards of them, without being able to see the Indian who did it, and a height was scarcely gained, before there was another in 50 or 100 yards commanding it, where breast works were erected, and cannon opened on them— Several of those were charged, and the Enemy driven from them, but it was soon found the further our Troops advanced, the stronger the Enemy became, and the weaker and more bewildered our force were,— several of the commanding officers were picked out and killed, or wounded by the Savages, without seeing any of them. The men were getting lost, and falling into a confusion, natural under such circumstances, which demanded an immediate retreat, or a total defeat, and general massacre must have ensued— This was conducted in a masterly manner by Colo. Croghan, who had lost the aid of that valuable, and ever to be lamented officer, Major Holmes, who with Capt. Vanhorn, was killed by the Indians— The Enemy were driven from many of his strong holds: but such was the impenetrable thickness of the woods, that no advantage gained could be profited by— Our attack would have been made immediately under the lower Fort, that the Enemy might not have been able to use his Indian force to such advantage as in the woods, having discovered by drawing a fire from him in several instances that I had greatly the superiority of metal of him; but its site being about 120 feet above the water, I could not when near enough to do him an injury elevate sufficiently to batter it. Above this, nearly as high again, he has another Strong Fort commanding every point of the Island, and almost perpendicular on all sides— Colo. Croghan not deeming it prudent to make a second attempt upon this place, and having ascertained to a certainty that the only naval force the Enemy have upon the Lakes consists of one Schooner of 4 Guns, I have determined to dispatch the *Lawrence* and *Caledonia* to Lake Erie immediately, believing their services in transporting our Armies there will be wanting, and it being important that the sick and wounded, amounting to about 100, and that part of the Detachment, not necessary to further our future operations here, should reach Detroit without delay— By an intelligent prisoner captured in the *Mink*, I ascertained this, and that the mechanics and others, sent across from York, during the winter, were for the purpose of building a Flotilla to transport reinforcements, and supplies into Mackinac— An attempt was made to pass them by the way of Matchadash; but it was found impracticable from all the portages being a morass—that they had then resorted to a small River called Nautauwasaga, situated to the south of Matchadash, from which there is a portage of 3 leagues over a good road to Lake Simcoe— this place was never known until pointed out to them last summer by an Indian— This River is very narrow and has 6 or 8 feet water in it, about 3 miles up, and is then a muddy Rapid shallow for 45 miles up to the portage, where their armada were

built and their Store Houses are now situated— The navigation is dangerous and difficult, and so obscured by rocks and bushes, that no stranger could ever find it—I have however availed myself of the means of discovering it. I have agreed on a reward with this man under a promise of secrecy, and the penalty of death in case of failure, who is one of a very few, who have ever been there, and who is to conduct me to the River and Portage—for this place I am now on my way, and if it is found tenable, its importance to the supply of Mackinac, will induce Colo. Croghan to fortify and garrison it. I shall also blockade the mouth of French River, until the fall, and those being the only two channels of communication, by which Mackinac, can possibly be supplied, and their provisions at this time being extremely short, I think they will be starved into a surrender by the Spring, when a strict Blockade must again commence. This will also cut off all supplies to the N W Company, who are now nearly starving, and their Furs on hand can only find transportation by the way of Hudson Bay. At this place I calculate on falling in with their Schooner, who it is said has gone there for a load of Provision, and a message sent to her, not to venture up while we are on the Lake.— Very Respectfully I have the honor to remain, Sir, Your Obd Sert.

A Sinclair

ALS, DNA, RG45, CL, 1814, Vol. 5, No. 78 (M125, Roll No. 38).

CAPTAIN ARTHUR SINCLAIR TO LIEUTENANT DANIEL TURNER

U.S. Sloop of War *Niagara*  
Nautawasagua River Aug 15th 1814

Sir

Having accomplished the Object for which the Squadron came into this quarter, in the destruction of the Enemies whole Naval Force on this Lake, I am on the eve of returning to Lake Erie: but as it is all important to cut the Enemies line of communication from Michilimackinack to York, which is through the Nautawasagua River, Lake Simcoe &c, and on which his very existence depends, You will remain here and keep up a rigid Blockade until you shall be driven from the Lake by the inclemency of the Season, suffering not a boat or canoe to pass in or out of this River— I shall leave the *Tigress* with you in case accident should happen to either one of the Vessels the other may afford her necessary assistance— Should you deem it proper to send the *Tigress* up to cruize a week or two about St. Josephs, in order to intercept the Enemies Furr Canoes between St Maries and French River, you can do so, as one Vessel is sufficient to Blockade this River

I should recommend your immediately finding out anchorage to cover you from N W Gales, as that is the only Wind which can effect you in this Bay— I see from the *Nancy's* Log Book that the small Island on the S. W. of this Bay is such a place as you could wish, directions for which I herewith give you— The Islands North of us may also give you good anchorage; but always be sure of good bottom before anchoring, as the loss of an Anchor might prove of serious consequence to you— Should you find Anchorage on both sides I would recommend your changing frequently, and in a way not to be observed by the

Enemy, who might not only avail himself of your position to move out his boats in the night on the opposite side, but he might attempt surprizing you in the night by throwing a number of Men on board— Against attacks of this kind, which he might be driven to by his desperate situation, as this Blockade must starve him into a surrender by the Spring, I must particularly caution you— When the *Tigress* is here it would be well to be on the opposite Shores—and sometimes run out of sight, taking care to scour both Shores as you return— I shall endeavour to annoy the Navigation of the River by felling trees across its mouth in order that a portage must be performed there; which must be seen by you

I wish you to take an accurate survey of this Bay, and its Islands, and if possible the one on the north of it, called Matschadash, observing all its Islands, Creeks, Bays, Shoals, Anchorages, Courses, Distances & Soundings, particularly attending to the kind of Bottom

Should any thing occur to make it necessary you can send the *Tigress* express to me— If we can keep their Boats from passing until October, I think the weather will effectually cut off all communication by any thing they have on float, and in the Spring an early Blockade will possess us of Mackinac—

You will be particularly careful in having communication with the Shore, and when you send a party for Wood, let it be on an Island, under the protection of your Guns, and a Guard from both Vessels— Wishing you a pleasant Cruize I remain very Respectfully Your Obt. Servt

Signed A Sinclair

Copy, DNA, RG45, CL, 1814, Vol. 5, No. 102b (M125, Roll No. 38). Marked  
"True Copy, George L. Lawton, Clerk."

DEPUTY ASSISTANT COMMISSARY GENERAL GEORGE CROOKSHANK, BRITISH ARMY, TO DEPUTY COMMISSARY GENERAL PETER TURQUAND, BRITISH ARMY

Copy

York 21st. August 1814.

Sir

I have the honor to report that I have just returned from Nottawasaga, on my arrival there I learned from Lieut. Worsley Royal Navy that the Enemies fleet had appeared off the mouth of Nottawasaga River on the 13th. Inst. and on the 14th. that they landed a large party of men, in consequence of which I regret to say that he had to destroy the *Nancy* with all her cargo to prevent the same from falling into the Enemies hands, a copy of the Invoice and receipts for the same I herewith enclose, there was also 50 bags of flour private property on board which I had directed Mr. Livingston<sup>1</sup> to load a canoe with and proceed and that I would replace the same, but the Enemy had appeared there before Mr. Livingston had reached that place, one of the largest size gun boats which had been brought down from Mackinac for the purpose of loading the Vessel fell into the hands of the Enemy. I have also enclosed a return of the Quantity of provisions remaining at the store house at Nottawasaga part of which Lieut. Worsley takes on with him in two Boats and a large canoe with Mr. Livingston,

as Mr. Worsley had hands for manning another boat, I directed one to be sent across from Lake Simcoe to him, and I think it probable that they have left Nottawasaga to day in case the boat sent across the carrying place should not have got injured in the Transport in that case Lieut. Worsley would proceed with the two boats and Canoe as it is doubtful whether Mr. LaMotte<sup>2</sup> who has charge of the government canoes will return for provisions, I shall immediately send out three batteaux's and endeavour to get hands for manning the same, that they may make two trips with flour to the place pointed out by Colonel MacDouall, and shall send out sufficient to make up the 600 barrels required for that Post.—

All the public letters that were forwarded in charge of Lieut Worsley for Lieut Col. McDouall I learn were burnt in that Vessel, which I have to request you will please inform Col. Foster, as some of the Packets that were delivered to Lieut Worsley were from General Drummond I have the honor &c

(Signed) Geo: Crookshank  
D. A. C. G.

P.S. The Enemies fleet left Nottawasaga river on the 16th. Inst. and stood up the Lake—

G. C.

Copy, CaOOA, British Military and Naval Records, RG8, I, "C" Ser., Vol. 685, pp. 145-46.

1. Lieutenant Robert Livingstone, Indian Department, British army.

2. Fur trader Joseph-Maurice Lamothe (1781-1827), resident agent of the Indian Department at Montreal, captain "to the Indian Warriors," and a captain in Montreal's 3d Militia Battalion, departed from Lachine on 9 July 1814, in command of a brigade of canoes bound for Michilimackinac. *Dictionary of Canadian Biography* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1966-), Vol. 6, pp. 387-88.

#### CAPTAIN ARTHUR SINCLAIR TO SECRETARY OF THE NAVY JONES

U S Sloop *Niagara* Erie— Septr. the 3d 1814

Sir

Immediately after the attack on Michilimackinac, I dispatched the *Lawrence* and *Caledonia* with orders to Lt. Comdt. Dexter to make all possible dispatch to Lake Erie, and there cooperate with our Army &c, while I shaped my course in pursuit of the Enemies force supposed to be about Nautauwasuga, and I cannot but express my surprise at having past those vessels and arrived at Erie before them— By that opportunity I apprised you of my movements up to the 9th Ult—since which time I have been fortunate enough to find his B Ms. Schooner *Nancy* loaded with provision, Clothing &Ct for the Troops at Mackinac

She was two miles up the Nautauwasuga River moored under a Block House strongly situated on the S E side of the River, which running nearly parrallel with the Bay shore for that distance forms a narrow peninsula—this and the wind being off shore afforded me an opportunity of Anchoring oposite to him and within good battering distance; but finding the sand hills and Trees fre-

quently interrupting my Shot—I borrowed an 8½ inch Howitzer from Colnl. Croghan, mounted it on one of my carriages and sent it on the Peninsula under command of Lieut. Holdup—a situation was chosen, by Capt. Gratiot of the Engineers, from which it did great execution— The Enemy defended himself very handsomely, until one of those shells burst in his Block House, and in a few minutes blew up his Magazine— This set fire to a train which had been laid for the destruction of the vessel, and in an instant she was in flames— I had made the necessary preparation with boats for geting onboard of her; but frequent and heavy explosions below deck made the risque of lives too great to attempt saving her—she was therefore, with her valuable Cargo, entirely consumed— I cannot say whether those who defended her were blown up in the Block House or whither they retreated in the rear of their work, which they might have done unseen by us, as it afforded a descent into a thick wood—I hope the latter— A number of articles were picked up at a considerable distance off—among them was the commanders Desk, containing copies of letters &Ct; several of which I herewith inclose you for your information— They serve to shew the vessel to have been commanded by Lieut. Worsley of the Royal Navy, of what infinite importance her cargo was to the garrison at Mackinac, and that they have nothing onfloat now on that Lake— The *Nancy* appeared to be a very fine vessel between the size of the *Queen Charlott* and *Lady Provost*— There were three guns on the Blockhouse—2-24 pdrs. & 1-6 pdr.— I cannot say what was on the vessel as all her ports were closed— I also got a New Boat, called by them a gunboat but unworthy the name, being calculated to mount only a 24 pound carronade

The Nautauwasuga is too narrow and over hung with bushes for a vessel to get up except by warping, which prevented my sending gunboats in, or Colnl. Croghan from attempting to turn his rear, as we saw a number of Indians sculling and occasionally firing across from the banks, it was in this way the only man we had touched was wounded

You will see by the inclosed letters the short state they are in for provision at Michilamackinac and I am assured from the best authority that this is the only line of communication by which they can be supplied, that of the Grand River being rendered impassable for any thing heavier than a man can carry on his back, by 60 portages; I have therefore left the *Scorpion* and *Tigress* to blockade it closely until the season becomes too boisterous for Boat transportation—

This precaution with an early blockade upon the same place in the spring, will insure the government of an easy conquest of Mackinac in May or June, and in my opinion the only means of conquering it without a sacrafise of lives such as the importance of the place cannot justify—

Colnl. Croghan thought it not advisable to Fortify and garison Nautauwasuga, as the Enemies communication from York is so short and convenient that any force he could leave there would be cut off in the Winter— It appears that the settlement at Green Bay, on Lake Mitchgan, can sell from 1 to 3000 bushels of grain which no doubt will be secured by the Enemy during the Winter— Their crops were yet growing when I left that country— should it now meet your approbation I will order a vessel or two up immediately to secure it, and in case of refusal to sell to the U States, as it seems they are favourable to the Enemy, a force of 100 men can distroy it— Any measure respecting it must be immediately taken, as the Navigation in that quarter is unsafe after this month

I was unfortunate in getting embayed in a gale of Wind on a rocky Ironbound shore which occasioned the loss of all the boats I had in tow, among which was the captured gunboat and my Launch— I felt fortunate, however, in saving my vessel, lumbered as she was with 450 souls onboard, and shipping such immense quantities of water as to give me very serious alarm for some hours— I was compeld to strike some of my guns below, and nothing saved her, at last, but a sudden shift of wind, as there is nothing like anchorag in Lake Huron, except in the mouths of Rivers—the whole coast being a steep perpendicular Rock—I have been several times in great danger of total loss, in this extremely dangerous navigation, entirely unknown to our Pilots except direct to Mackinac, by falling suddenly from no soundings into 3 fathoms & twice into  $\frac{1}{4}$  less twain—all a craggy rock

Those dangers might be avoided from the transparency of the water; but for the continued thick Fogs which prevail almost as constantly as on the Grand Bank— By the arrival of the mail a few hours after I anchored at Detroit, I learned the critical state of our Army on the Peninsula, and that the *Somers* and *Ohio* had been captured— The Craft from the Flats, with part of my Guns and Shot had not yet arrived; but being certain my presence would be necessary at the earliest possible moment I availed myself of a fair wind and sailed for this place—where I am happy to learn that our Army feel themselves perfectly secure where they are— I have howe[ver] sent the *Lawrence* *Lady Provost* and *Porcupine* to Buffalo; there to render any assistance which may be required, and shall follow them myself in the course of 24 Hours— There is such an eminent risque of the loss of the Fleet at this season of the year laying to an anchor near Buffalo, where the Bottom is composed entirely of sharp Rock, a strong current setting down, and exposed to the open lake from whence the heaviest gales are experienced, that I shall not, unless ordered positively to do so from the Department, continue there a moment longer than I can ascertain the commanding Genls. views and in what way the Fleet can cooperate with him— Daily and dear bought experience teaches us we ought not to risque our Fleet in a situation, where they are so liable to be lost— Lieut. Kennedy has, no doubt, informed you of the Total loss of the *Ariel* after being onfloat and ready to move from there— a large number of my best mens times are out and no argument or policy I can use can prevail on them to remain, even to go down to Buffalo, and I cannot use force as they have served already several months over their time— I shall stop the Outfits of the *Queen Charlott* immediately on my return here, unless I find she may be absolutely necessary as a Transport for some movement the Army may have in contemplation, as I have not a sufficiency of men now to man well more than 12 of the guns, onboard either the *Lawrence* or this vessel— I have not had time to look round me sufficiently since my arrival, to give you the state of things here—Lieut Kennedy, however, informs me that the lighters were too much decayed to get the *Detroit* over the Bar, which will induce me to leave the *Caledonia* here to protect her from surprise until I can have Lighters built, which I have ordered to be immediately done— The *Caledonia* is unseaworthy, from natural decay— I would recommend her, the *Amelia* and perhaps the *Hunter* to be sold, being all nearly in the same state— I have the Honor to remain with great respect, Sir, your Obt Servt.

A Sinclair

N B— A company of Riflemen from Sandusky has just arrived here & have been forwarded on to Fort Erie without delay—

ALS, DNA, RG45, CL, 1814, Vol. 6, No. 10 (M125, Roll No. 39).

[Enclosure]

Michilimackinac 28th July 1814

Sir

The American Expedition destined for the attack of this Island, having at length made its appearance, under the Command of Commodore Elliott<sup>1</sup> and Lt. Colonel Croghan, consisting of the *Niagara* 20 Guns, *Laurence* 20 Guns, *Hunter* Brigg 8 Guns, a Large Schooner of — Guns, the *Mary* of — Guns, five Gunboats, and the *Mink* their prize, I hasten to apprise you of this Circumstance lest the *Nancy* and her valuable Cargo, fall into their hands, and that you may be enabled to take such steps for their preservation as will appear to you most expedient under the present Circumstances— I have taken such precautions as were in my power, to make you acquainted with this Event, in case you should be upon your passage— If so, I would recommend you to return to the Nottawasaga River, and to take the *Nancy* up as high as possible—place her in a judicious position, and hastily run up a strong Log House, (such as were made where the boats were built but larger) with Loop Holes and Embrasures for your two six pounders which will enable you to defend her should you be attacked which is not unlikely—

The mode of obtaining her Cargo of such value to us, will depend upon the result of the attack which we daily expect and on the duration of the Blockade, I see no other way of obtaining the Provisions but by bringing them in Batteaux, protected by the Carronades in the Bows of two of them I have the Honor to be Sir Your Most Obt. Sert.

(Signed) R<sup>t</sup> McDowall Lt. Col.  
Commanding at Michilimackinac

You will probably receive instructions from Kingston as to your Conduct—

Copy, DNA, RG45, CL, 1814, Vol. 6, No. 10, enclosure (M125, Roll No. 39).

<sup>1</sup>. Captain Arthur Sinclair was in command of the squadron, not Master Commandant Jesse D. Elliott.

[Enclosure]

Extract from a letter to W D Thomas Esqr. M.D. Surgeon 104 Regt. York or Kingston—dated Nautawasuga River 6th. Aug. 1814.

"It is now nearly a month since I left York in company with Lieut. Worsley of the Navy, on my way to the Land of promise, but things have turned out rather unfortunately, for you still behold me a sojourner in this wilderness. We had waited about a week on the Banks of this River before the *Nancy* arrived, during which time we suffered every misery that you can imagine from bad weather, and meriads of musquetos &c., &c.— The land here is the most barren I have seen and seems to have been formed from time to time by the washing of Lake

Huron, it being for upwards of two miles composed entirely of banks of sand, on which nothing grows but small brush wood. We found a number of Indians encamped on the Lake Shore who were extremely troublesome before the Vessel arrived, and it was not possible to keep them out of our Wigwams. You may therefore judge what a pleasant sight the *Nancy* was for us, we found her a very fine Schooner with an admirable cabin, her cargo was not completed before Sunday last, and she got under way on Monday with every prospect of reaching Mackinac in a short time, which is only 220 miles from hence, we had been out but for a few hours, when we met an express from Colo. McDouall to say that the American Squadron from Lake Erie of large force was Blockading the Island, and that we could not possibly reach it, we therefore had the mortification to put back into this wretched place, where we are busily employed in erecting a Block House to contain and defend the Stores and Schooner in case of an attack which is an event I have no doubt of, but I hope from the strength of the ground Worsley has chosen, and the goodness of his crew, that we shall be able to beat off a very strong force— The River is too narrow to sail up, we shall therefore only have Gun boats to contend with— I hope Mackinac has Provisions for 3 months, and the Enemy it is said cannot keep out so long on account of the climate, so that the *Nancy* can make a run late in the season, with the Stores, if we succeed in defending them— I expect the man who brought the express the other day, who has gone to York, and intends going back to Mackinac in a canoe— I shall trust my person with him, as he thinks he can again give Jonathan the Slip."

Copy, DNA, RG45, CL, 1814, Vol. 6, No. 10, enclosure (M125, Roll No. 39).

[Enclosure]

By Commodore Sir James Lucas Yeo Kt., Commanding his Majesty's Ships and Vessels employed on the Lakes in Canada &c. &c. &c.

You are hereby required and directed to proceed to Lake Huron, and take upon yourself the Charge and Command of the Naval Establishment on that Lake—

In the execution of this Service you are strictly enjoined to cooperate most cordially with Lieutt. Colonel McDowell, the Military officer Commanding the Forces in that Quarter—

You are to be particular that a proper course of discipline and good order is observed in the party placed under your command—and to transmit to me by every opportunity the particulars of the Service you are employed on; also to keep a Journal of your proceedings, which is to be transmitted to me every Six Months—

Given under my hand on Board his Majesty's Ship *Wolfe*, at Kingston in upper Canada, this tenth day of February 1814—

(Signed) James Lucas Yeo

To Lieutt. Newdigate Poyntz  
Appointed to Command the Naval Establishment on Lake Huron

Copy, DNA, RG45, CL, 1814, Vol. 6, No. 10, enclosure (M125, Roll No. 39).

[Enclosure]

Dear Sir,

The Bearer Lt. Worsley is appointed to supercede Mr. Poyntz in the Command of your Flotilla, & I beg to introduce Him to you as an Excellent naval officer & fine honorable young man—

Col. Tucker<sup>1</sup> is come out to the 41st. & with that Regt. some Militia & Indians will proceed to Erie to watch the motions of the enemy's force there.—

Wishing you every success for there is no chance of Peace, I am yrs. very Truly

W Howe Mulcaster

I got a hit in the thigh at Oswego but am getting better—  
Kingston U.C. June 25th. 1814

ALS, DNA, RG45, CL, 1814, Vol. 6, No. 10, enclosure (M125, Roll No. 39). Addressed to "Lt. Col. McDouall, &c &c &c, favored by Lt. Worsley."

1. Colonel John G. P. Tucker, 41st Regiment of Foot, British army.

### Chauncey's Delay

*Commodore Chauncey at last recovered sufficiently from his illness to go on board his new flagship, Superior, on 31 July. The American squadron reached Niagara four days later, after Major General Brown's troops had retreated back to Chippewa. The army had fought the British to a standstill at Lundy's Lane on 25 July, and the general himself was wounded in the battle.<sup>1</sup>*

*Recriminations and censures for the failure of the Niagara campaign flowed freely on Lake Ontario and in Washington, D.C., Major General Brown placed the blame on Commodore Chauncey's failure to cooperate with his army and to communicate his intentions adequately. Commodore Chauncey declared that he had made no commitment to support the army and that sailing conditions at the Niagara River would have prevented his aiding the army anyway. The dispute between the two commanders became public when their private and official correspondence appeared in the press.*

*During its brief time at the head of the lake, Commodore Chauncey's squadron surprised a Royal Navy detachment that had been at Niagara to transport Major General Drummond's army from York. U.S.S. Sylph, commanded by Master Commandant Jesse D. Elliott, sighted H.M. brig Magnet and ran her on shore, but before the brig could be captured, the British crew set fire to her and she exploded.*

1. For an analysis of the battle, see Graves, Battle of Lundy's Lane.

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

Head Quarters Judge Barkers  
August 7th. 1814

Sir

Confined as I am, and have been, since the last engagement with the Enemy, I fear that the account I am about to give, may be less full and satisfactory, than

under other circumstances it might have been made.— I particularly fear, that the conduct of the gallant men it was my good fortune to lead, will not be noticed in a way due to their fame and the honor of our Country.—

You are already apprised that the Army had on the 25th. ult. taken a Position at Chippewa.— about noon of that day, Colonel Swift, who was posted at Lewistown, advised me by Express, that the enemy appeared in considerable force in Queenstown and on its Heights; that four of the enemy's fleet had arrived during the preceding night, and were then laying near Fort Niagara, and that a number of boats were in view moving up the streight.—

Within a few minutes after the receipt of this intelligence had been received, I was further informed by Capt Denmon,<sup>1</sup> of the Quartermaster's department, that the enemy was Landing at Lewistown, and that our baggage and stores at Schlosser, and on their way thither, were in danger of immediate capture.—

It is proper here to mention, that having received advices as late as the 20th. from General Gaines that our fleet was then in port and the Commodore sick, we ceased to look for co-operation from that quarter, and determined to disencumber ourselves of baggage, and march directly for Burlington heights.— To mask this intention, and from Schlosser a small supply of provisions, I fell back upon Chippewa. As this arrangement, under the increased force of the enemy, left much at hazard on our own side of the Niagara, and as it appeared by the before stated information, that the enemy was about to avail himself of it, I conceived that the most effectual method of recalling him from this object was to put my self in motion towards Queenstown. General Scott, with the first Brigade, Towson's artillery, and all the Dragoons and mounted men, were accordingly put in march on the road leading thither with orders to report if the enemy appeared, and to call for assistance if that was necessary. On the General's arrival at the falls, he learned that the enemy was in force directly in his front—a narrow piece of woods alone intercepting his view of them. Waiting only to give this information, he advanced upon them. By the time Assistant Adjutant General (Jones<sup>2</sup>) had delivered his message, the action began, and before the remaining part of the Division had crossed the Chippewa, it had become close and general between the advanced corps. Though General Ripley with the 2nd Brigade, Major Hindman with the Corps of Artillery, and General Porter at the head of his Command, had respectively pressed forward with ardour, it was not less than an hour before they were brought to sustain General Scott, during which time his command most skillfully and gallantly maintained the conflict.<sup>3</sup> Upon my arrival I found that the General had passed the wood and engaged the enemy at Queenstown road and on the ground to the left of it, with the 9th, 11th, and 22nd. regts. and Towsons Artillery. The 25th. had been thrown to the right to be governed by circumstances; Apprehending that these corps were much exhausted, and knowing that they had suffered severely, I determined to interpose a new line with the advancing troops, and thus disengage General Scott, and hold his Brigade in reserve. Orders were accordingly given to General Ripley. The enemy's artillery at this moment occupied a hill which gave them great advantages, and was the key of the whole position. It was supported by a Line of Infantry. To secure the victory, it was necessary to carry this artillery and seize the height. This duty w[as] assigned to Colonel Miller;<sup>4</sup> while, to favor its execution, the 1st Regt. under the command of Colonel Nicholas,<sup>5</sup> was directed to menace and amuse the infantry. To my great mortification this Regt., after a discharge or two, gave way and retreated some distance before it could

be rallied, though it is believed the officers of the Regt. exerted themselves to shorten this distance. In the meantime, Colonel Miller, without regard to this occurrence, advanced steadily and gallantly to his object and carried the height and the cannon. General Ripley brought up the 23rd. (which had also faulted) to his support and the enemy disappeared from before them. The 1st. regiment was now brought into line on the left of the 21st., and the detachments of the 17th and 19th, General Porter occupying, with his command, the extreme left. about the time Colonel Miller carried the enemy's cannon, the 25th regiment under Majr. Jessup,<sup>6</sup> was engaged in a more obstinate conflict with all that remained to dispute with us the field of battle. The Major as has been already stated, had been ordered by General Scott, at the commencement of the action, to take ground to his right. He had succeeded in turning the enemy's left flank—had captured (by a detachment under Captain Ketchum<sup>7</sup>) General Riall and sundry other officers, and shewed himself again to his own army, in a blaze of fire, which defeated or destroyed a very superior force of the enemy.— He was ordered to form on the right of the 2nd. Brigade. The enemy rallying his forces, and as is believed, having received reinforcements, now attempted to drive us from our position, and regain his artillery. Our line was unshaken and the enemy repulsed. Two other attempts having the same object, had the same issue. General Scott was engaged in repelling the former of these; and the last I saw of him on the field of battle, he was near the head of his column, and giving to its march a direction that would have placed him on the enemy's right. It was with great pleasure I saw the good order and intrepidity of General Porter's volunteers from the moment of their arrival, but during the last charge of the enemy, those qualities were conspicuous. Stimulated by the examples set by their gallant leader, by Major Wood, of the Pennsylvania corps;<sup>8</sup> by Colonel Dobbins of New York,<sup>9</sup> and by their officers generally, they precipitated themselves upon the enemy's line, and made all the prisoners which were taken at this point of the action.

Having been for sometime wounded, and being a good deal exhausted by loss of blood, it became my wish to devolve the command on General Scott, and retire from the field; but on enquiry I had the misfortune to learn, that he was disabled by wounds; I therefore kept my post, and had the satisfaction to see the enemy's last effort repulsed. I now consign the command to General Ripley.

While retiring from the field, I saw and felt that the victory was complete on our part, if proper measures were promptly adopted to secure it. The exhaustion of the men, was however such as made some refreshment necessary. They particularly required water. I was myself extremely sensible of the want of this necessary article. I therefore believed it proper that General Ripley and the troops should return to camp, after bringing off the dead, the wounded, and the artillery; and in this I saw no difficulty as the enemy had entirely ceased to act. within an hour after my arrival in camp I was informed [*that General Ripley had returned*]<sup>10</sup> without annoyance and in good order. I now sent for him and after giving him my reasons for the measure I was about to adopt, ordered him to put the troops into the best possible condition; to give to them the necessary refreshment; to take with him the picquets and camp guards, and every other description of force, to put himself on the field of battle as the day dawned, and there to meet and beat the enemy if he again appeared. To this order he made no objection, and I relied upon its execution. It was not executed. I feel most sensibly how inadequate are my powers in speaking of the troops, to do justice

either to their merits or to my own sense of them. Under abler direction they might have done more and better.— From the preceding detail, you have new evidence of the distinguished gallantry of Generals Scott and Porter, of Colonel Miller and Major Jessup.

Of the 1st. brigade, the chief, with aid de camp Worth, his Major of brigade Smith, and every commander of battalion, were wounded.<sup>11</sup>

The 2nd. brigade suffered less; but as a brigade, their conduct entitled them to the applause of their country. After the enemy's strong position had been carried by the 21st., and the detachments of the 17th. and 19th., the 1st. and 23rd. assumed a new character. They could not again be shaken or dismayed. Major McFarland<sup>12</sup> of the latter fell nobly at the head of his battalion.

Under the command of General Porter, the militia volunteers of Pennsylvania and New York stood undismayed amidst the hottest fire, and repulsed the veterans opposed to them. The Canadian volunteers commanded by Colonel Wilcox,<sup>13</sup> are reported by gen. Porter as having merited and received his approbation.—

The corps of artillery commanded by major Hindman behaved with its usual gallantry. Capt. Towson's company,<sup>14</sup> attached to the 1st. brigade, was the first and the last engaged, and during the whole conflict maintained that high character which they had previously won by their skill and their valour. Captains Bidle and Ritchie<sup>15</sup> were both wounded early in the action, but refused to quit the field. The latter declared that he never would leave his piece and, true to his engagement, fell by its side, covered with wounds.—

The staff of the army had its peculiar merit and distinction. Col. Gardner,<sup>16</sup> the Adjutant General, though ill, was on horseback and did all in his power; his assistant major Jones, was very active and useful. My gallant aids du camp, Austin and Spencer,<sup>17</sup> had many and critical duties to perform, in the discharge of which the latter fell; I shall ever think of this young man with pride and regret; regret, that his career has been so short; pride, that it has been so noble and distinguished. The engineers, majors McRee and Wood,<sup>18</sup> were greatly distinguished on this day, and their high military talents exerted with great effect—they were much under my eye and near my person, and to their assistance a great deal is fairly to be ascribed, I most earnestly recommend them, as worthy of the highest trust and confidence. The Staff of generals, Ripley and Porter discovered great zeal and attention to duty. Lieut. E. B. Randolph<sup>19</sup> of the 20th regt. is entitled to notice, his courage was conspicuous.

I enclose a return of our loss; those noted as missing, may generally be numbered with the dead. The enemy had but little opportunity of making prisoners.— I have the honor to be &c. &c.

Jacob Brown

LB, NBuHi, Jacob Brown Manuscripts.

1. Captain Denmon has not been identified.

2. Assistant Adjutant General Roger Jones, U.S.A., brevetted major 5 July 1814 for distinguished service at the Battle of Chippewa.

3. Mentioned are Major General Eleazer W. Ripley, U.S.A.; Major Jacob Hindman, 2d Artillery, U.S.A.; Brigadier General Peter B. Porter, New York State Militia; and Brigadier General Winfield Scott, U.S.A.

4. Colonel James Miller, 21st Infantry, U.S.A.; brevetted brigadier general 25 July 1814 for distinguished service at Battle of Niagara (Lundy's Lane).

5. Lieutenant Colonel Robert C. Nicholas, 1st Infantry, U.S.A.

6. Major Thomas S. Jesup, 25th Infantry, U.S.A.; brevetted lieutenant colonel 5 July 1814 for distinguished and meritorious service at the Battle of Chippewa; brevetted colonel 25 July 1814 for gallant conduct at the Battle of Niagara.

7. Captain Daniel Ketchum, 25th Infantry, U.S.A.; brevetted major 25 July 1814 for distinguished service and gallant conduct at the Battle of Niagara.

8. Major James Wood, 5th Regiment, Pennsylvania Volunteer Militia.

9. Lieutenant Colonel Hugh W. Dobbin, New York State Militia.

10. The text supplied in brackets is from another copy of this document in DNA, RG107, Letters Received by the Secretary of War, Registered Series, B-82 (8) (M221, Roll No. 59).

11. First Lieutenant William J. Worth, 23d Infantry, U.S.A., brevetted captain 5 July 1814 for gallant and distinguished conduct at the Battle of Chippewa; and Captain Gerard D. Smith, 6th Infantry, U.S.A., brevetted major 25 July 1814 for gallant conduct at the Battle of Niagara.

12. Major Daniel McFarland, 23d Infantry, U.S.A.

13. Lieutenant Colonel Joseph Willcocks, Canadian Volunteers.

14. Captain Nathan Towson, Artillery Corps, U.S.A.; brevetted lieutenant colonel 5 July 1814 for gallant and distinguished conduct at the Battle of Chippewa.

15. Captain Thomas Biddle, 2d Artillery, U.S.A.; and Captain John Ritchie, Artillery Corps, U.S.A.

16. Colonel Charles K. Gardner, Adjutant General, U.S.A.

17. Captain Loring Austin, 1st Light Dragoons, U.S.A.; brevetted major 5 July 1814 for gallant and distinguished conduct at the Battle of Chippewa; and Captain Ambrose Spencer, Jr., 29th Infantry, U.S.A.

18. Major William McRee, Corps of Engineers, U.S.A., brevetted lieutenant colonel 25 July 1814 for gallant conduct at the Battle of Niagara, and brevetted colonel 15 August 1814 for distinguished and meritorious service in defense of Fort Erie; and Major Eleazer D. Wood, Corps of Engineers, U.S.A., brevetted lieutenant colonel 25 July 1814 for gallant conduct in the Battle of Niagara, killed 17 September 1814 in sortie from Fort Erie.

19. Second Lieutenant Edward B. Randolph, 20th Infantry, U.S.A.; brevetted 1st lieutenant 25 July 1814 for gallant conduct at the Battle of Niagara.

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

Major General Jacob Brown  
Comm'g the Troops  
&c &c &c Niagara Frontier

U.S. Ship *Superior*  
Off Niagara 7th. Aug. 1814

Sir

I arrived off this place three days ago— I have run one of the Enemy's Brigs on Shore which he set fire to and blew up—two Brigs and one Schooner lay in the Niagara River I shall leave three Brigs under the orders of Captain Ridgeley to watch them and prevent reinforcements being landed at Niagara.

I shall leave here with the remainder of the Fleet for the vicinity of Kingston this Evening as I do not feel myself justified to remain longer absent from the lower end of the Lake particularly as Sacketts Harbor has been left so weak

My own health is mending slowly I have the honor to be very Respectfully  
Sir, Yr. Mo. Ob. St

I.C.—

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

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

Camp before Fort  
Erie— Augt. 8. 1814.

Sir,—

Immediately after the Dispatch of the Deputy Adjutant General's Letter to Colonel Baynes<sup>1</sup> of the 6th, respecting the unfortunate accident which Majr. Genl. Conran met with<sup>2</sup> & the appearance of the Enemy's Fleet off Niagara a sharp affair of Out Posts took place, the Enemy having thrown the whole of his Rifle Men into the Woods in front of his Position for the purpose of driving away our Indians, the latter having retired precipitately on the advance of the Rifle Men some of our most advanced Picquets also fell back, on being supported however by the Glengary Light Infantry in the first instance & subsequently by the Reserve the Enemy was driven back, & our advanced Posts quickly reoccupied. I enclose a Return of Casualties on this occasion.

During this operation the Enemys Schooners cannonaded our Position & one of his 32 Pr. Shot having struck close to myself & the Deputy Adjt. General I am sorry to say Lt. Colonel Harvey received a severe wound from one of the splinters which will I fear deprive him of the use of one of his Eyes for a few days.

In consequence of the very exposed Situation in which we have been compelled from the nature of the Ground to place our Breaching Battery; and of which the accompanying Sketch will give Your Excellency some idea, I felt convinced that it would be risqueing the safety of the Guns to arm the Batterys until a Traverse had been thrown up in the front & an abattis on the flanks to protect it against a Sortie which the Enemy would otherwise have the opportunity of making against it with his whole Force— The Engr. & an officer of the Quar. Mastr. General's Department have accordingly been employed on it and I am in hopes by this Night the Battery will be put in a state of sufficient Security to warrant my placing the Guns in it. Your Excellency will perceive however by a glance at the Sketch that from the position of the Enemy's Schooners<sup>3</sup> on its flank and the Battery of Black Rock on its rear, a Traverse in both these directions is also necessary for altho' the Enemy has not as yet shewn any Gun at Black Rock we have no reason to believe he will refrain from availing himself of that Position.

I hope to be able to open this Battery tomorrow morning, & if a good Effect is produced & no unfavorable Circumstance occurs, I shall probably risque an assault upon the Place on the following Morning the 10th.— My present idea is to make the principal attack with the 2nd. Brigade consisting of the King's & De Wattevilles Regt. under Lt. Colonel Fisher upon the right of the Enemy's Position by the Lake Road, on which side I have hitherto carefully abstained from making any demonstration & have reason to believe the whole of the Enemy's attention has been drawn to his Left.— If Lt. Colonel Fisher succeeds in gaining possession of Snake Hill I cannot doubt of our Success, but Your Excellency may be assured that I shall well weigh the risque & consequences of failure against the Chance of Success before I commit this Division of the Troops by an Attempt which considering the strength of the Enemys Position and the num-

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ber of Men & Guns by which it is defended, must certainly be considered as one of great hazard.

I Enclose Your Excellency the latest Report from Lt. Colonel Warburton,<sup>4</sup> which is dated at 4 oclock this Morning, at which time the Enemys fleet was standing down the Lake without having attempted any thing against the Forts or Vessels in the River. I regret to find that His Majesty's Schooner *Magnet* which had not been able to enter the River Niagara on the appearance of the Enemy's Squadron & which had in consequence been run on shore at the 10 Mile Creek has been burnt by her Commander, to me this appears to have been an Act of unpardonable precipitation, Lt. Col. Warburton having moved a Field Piece & Troops to her support, But I am not yet in possession of the whole of the circumstances, however I trust & believe that the whole of her Stores &c have been Landed & saved.

I omitted to mention, I believe, to Your Excellency, that on the first appearance of the Enemy's Fleet, I ordered Colonel Grant<sup>5</sup> to detach one wing of his Regt. to Burlington, remaining with the other himself at York, by which means the security of both places has been Effectually provided for.

With a view to the Attack contemplated above, I have ordered up the remainder of De Wattevilles Regt from the Forts, and the Battn. Companies of the 41st. to replace them.

The troops have hitherto supported the Privations & hardships of this severe service with great constancy & cheerfulness & I am happy to say very few desertions have taken place, those from the Enemy to us have been numerous & what is remarkable, three of our own Deserters serving in the Enemy's Rifle Corps have just come in.— I have pardoned these Men— They state a circumstance which I have strong reason for believing to be a fact, vizt. that in the night action of the 25th. ult. Their boasted 1st. Brigade laid down their Arms & called that they had Surrendered—this being believed by us to be a ruse de Guerre was not attended to, our fire resumed, & the Enemy compelled to save themselves by flight. I have the honor to be Your Excellency's most obedient humble Servant.

Gordon Drummond  
Lt. General

P.S. I have considered it necessary to order all the 6th. Regt. to this frontier.

LS, CaOOA, British Military and Naval Records, RG8, I, "C" Ser., Vol. 685, pp. 47–50. The enclosures referred to in this letter have not been located.

1. Colonel Edward Baynes, Adjutant General, British army.

2. Appointed second-in-command of the Right Division in August 1814, Major General Henry Conran was injured by a fall from a horse. Graves, *Merry Hearts*, p. 181.

3. U.S. schooners *Porcupine*, *Ohio*, and *Somers*.

4. Lieutenant Colonel Augustus Warburton, British army.

5. Probably Colonel William Grant, 82d Regiment of Foot.

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

Major General  
Jacob Brown  
Command'g the left Division  
of the American Army &ca &ca &ca  
Buffaloe

U.S. Ship *Superior*  
Off Kingston 10th Aug. 1814

Sir

Your Letter of the 13th Ult.<sup>1</sup> was received by me on a sick bed hardly able to hear it read and entirely unfit to reply to it—I however requested General Gaines to acquaint you with my situation—the probable time of the Fleet's sailing and my views of the extent of its cooperation with the Army.

From the tenor of Your Letter it would appear that you had calculated much upon the cooperation of the Fleet— You cannot surely have forgotten the conversation We held on this subject at Sacketts Harbor previous to your departure for Niagara—I then professed to feel it my duty as well as inclination to afford every assistance in my power to the Army and to cooperate with it whenever it could be done without loosing sight of this Great object for the attainment of which this fleet had been created to wit—the capture or destruction of the Enemy's fleet, but I then distinctly stated to you, that this was a primary object and would be first attempted and that you must not expect the Fleet at the head of the Lake unless that of the Enemy should induce us to follow him there.—

I will not suffer myself to believe that this conversation was misunderstood or has since been forgotten—how then shall I account for the intimation thrown out to the Public in your despatch to the Secretary of War, that you expected the Fleet to co-operate with you?<sup>2</sup> was it friendly or just or honorable not only to furnish an opening for the public but thus to assist them to infer that I had pledged myself to meet you on a particular day at the head of the Lake for the purpose of co-operating and in case of disaster to your Army thus to turn their resentment from You (who are alone responsible) upon me who could not by any possibility have prevented or retarded even Your discomfiture— You well know Sir that the Fleet could not have rendered you the least Service during Your late incursion upon Upper Canada— You have not been able to approach Lake Ontario on any point nearer than Queenstown and the Enemy were then in possession of all the Country between that place and the Shores of Ontario so that I could not even communicate with You without making a circuit of 70 or 80 Miles.—

I would ask of what possible use the Fleet could have been to You either in threatening or investing Fort George when the Shallowness of the Water alone would prevent an approach with these Ships within two Miles of that Fort or Niagara.

To pretend that the Fleet could render the least assistance in Your projected capture of Burlington Heights on Your route to Kingston is Still more romantic for it is well known the Fleet could not approach within nine Miles of those Heights.

That you might find the fleet somewhat of a convenience in the transportation of Provisions and Stores for the use of the Army and an agreeable appendage to attend its marches and counter marches I am ready to believe but

Sir the Secretary of the Navy has honored us with a higher destiny—we are intended to Seek and fight the Enemy's fleet—this is the great purpose of the Government in creating this fleet and I shall not be diverted in my efforts to effectuate it by any Sinister attempt to render us subordinate to or an appendage of the Army.

We have one common object in the annoyance defeat and destruction of the Enemy and I Shall always cheerfully unite with any Military Commander in the promotion of that object. I am Sir with Great consideration and respect Yr Mo. Ob. St.

I. C.

LB, NH<sub>i</sub>, Isaac Chauncey Letter Books (BV Chauncey, Isaac). This letter was published in the *Daily National Intelligencer* on 8 September 1814.

1. See pp. 550–51.

2. A reference to Brown's letter of either 6 June or 25 June to Secretary Armstrong. Both letters were published in the *Daily National Intelligencer* on 15 July and 5 August respectively.

## COMMODORE ISAAC CHAUNCEY TO SECRETARY OF THE NAVY JONES

No. 132.

U.S.S. *Superior* off Kingston  
August 10th. 1814.

Sir.

Great anxiety of mind and severe bodily exertions have at length broken down the best constitution and subjected me to a violent fever that confined me for eighteen days— This misfortune was no more to be foreseen than prevented but was particularly severe at the moment it happened as it induced a delay of five or six days in the sailing of the fleet—

In the early part of July I expected the fleet would be made ready for sailing by the 10th. or 15th. but many of the mechanics were taken sick & amongst them the Block makers & Blacksmiths so that the *Mohawk* could not be furnished with Blocks and Iron-work for her Gun and Spare Decks before the 24th or 25th. ult. when she was reported ready by Captain Jones As considerable anxiety had been manifested by the Public to have the fleet on the Lake I should have asked Captain Jones to take charge of it and go out, but I was then recovering my health and was confident I should be able in three or four days to go on board myself— there was an additional reason for submitting to this delay in the difficulty I found in making the changes of commanders, neither of them being willing to be separated from his officers and men and a change of crews through the fleet being inadmissible—

In the afternoon of the 31st. July I was taken on board, but it was calm, and I did not sail before the next morning— To satisfy at once whatever expectations the public had been led to entertain of the sufficiency of this squadron to take and maintain the ascendancy on this Lake and at the same time to expose the futility of promises, the fulfilment of which had been rested on our appearance at the head of the Lake, I got under way at 4 o'clock in the morning of the 1st. Instant and steered for the mouth of the Niagara—owing to light winds I did not arrive off there before the 5th. There we intercepted one of the Enemy's Brigs running over from York to Niagara with troops and ran her on shore about six miles to the Westward of Fort George— I ordered the *Sylph* in, to anchor as near to the Enemy as she could with safety and to destroy her—

Captain Elliot run in in a very gallant manner to within from 300 to 500 yards of her and was about anchoring when the Enemy set fire to her and she soon after blew up— This vessel was a Schooner the last year and called the *Beresford*— Since they altered her to a Brig they have changed her name and I have not been able to ascertain it.<sup>1</sup> She mounted 14 Guns—12 24-lb Carronades [and] two long 9 pounders—

Finding the Enemy had two other Brigs and a Schooner in the Niagara River I determined to leave a force to watch them and selected the *Jefferson*, *Sylph*, and *Oneida* for that purpose and placed the whole under the orders of Captain Ridgley— Having looked into York without discovering any vessels of the Enemy I left Niagara with the remainder of the Squadron on the evening of the 7th. and arrived here the 9th.— We found one of the Enemys ships in the offing and chased her into Kingston—

My anxiety to return to this end of the Lake was increased by the knowledge I had of the weakness of Sackets Harbour and the apprehension that the Enemy might receive large reinforcements at Kingston and embarking some of the troops on board his fleet, make a Dash at the Harbour and burn it with all my stores during our absence when I left the Harbour there were but about 700 regular troops fit for duty—it is true a few militia had been called in, but little could be expected of them should an attack be made— My apprehension it seems was groundless the Enemy having contented himself with annoying in some trifling degree the Coasters between Oswego and the Harbour in his boats—

I cannot forbear expressing the regret I feel that so much sensation has been excited in the Public mind because the Squadron did not sail so soon as the wise-heads that conduct our newspapers have presumed to think I ought— I need not suggest to one of your experience that a man-of-war may appear to the eye of a landsman perfectly ready for sea, when she is deficient in many of the most essential points of her armament—nor how unworthy I should have proved myself of the high trust reposed in me had I ventured to sea in the face of an enemy of equal force without being ready to meet him in one hour after my anchor was weighed

It ought in justice to be recollected that the building and equipment of vessels on the Atlantic are unattended by any of the great difficulties which we have to encounter on this Lake—there every department abounds with facilities— A Commander makes a requisition and articles of every description are furnished in twelve hours—but this fleet has been built & fitted in the Wilderness, where there are no agents, and Chandlers shops and foundries &c &c to supply our wants but every thing is to be created—and yet I shall not decline a comparison of what has been done here, with any thing done on the Atlantic, in the building or equipment of vessels— The *Guerrier*, for instance, has been building and fitting upwards of twelve months, in the City of Philadelphia, and is not yet ready— The *President* Frigate went into the Navy Yard at New York for some partial repairs a few days after the Keel of the *Superior* was laid— Since then two Frigates of a large Class and two Sloops of war of the largest class, have been built and fitted here, and have sailed, before the *President* is ready for sea, altho every article of their armament & rigging has been transported from New York in despite of obstacles almost insurmountable— I will go farther Sir for it is due to the unremitting exertions & the unsurpassed exertions of those who have served the Public under my command and will challenge the world to produce a parallel instance—in which the same number of

vessels of such dimensions have been built and fitted in the same time by the same number of workmen—

I confess that I am mortified in not having succeeded in satisfying the expectations of the Public but it would be infinitely more painful could I find any want of zeal or exertions in my endeavours to serve them to which I could in any degree impute their disappointment I have the honour to be Sir with the utmost respect your most obedient and very humble Servant—

Isaac Chauncey

LS, DNA, RG45, CL, 1814, Vol. 5, No. 84 (M125, Roll No. 38). This letter was published in the *Daily National Intelligencer* on 8 September 1814. Another letter of 10 August from Chauncey to Jones criticizing Brown had appeared in the *Intelligencer* the preceding day.

1. H.M. brig *Magnet*, formerly *Sir Sidney Smith*, was actually the vessel involved in the action. The Provincial Marine schooner *General Beresford*, originally built as the *Prince Regent*, was renamed *Netley* on the Royal Navy list in 1814. See pp. 388–91 for additional information on the renaming of British vessels.

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

Head Quarters Buffalo Septr. 4th. 1814

Sir

Your letter of the 10th. Ultimo, after going the rounds, was delivered to me a few days since, on my way to this place.

The exception you take at my letter to the Secretary, would be very reasonable and proper, provided the Fleet of Lake Ontario was your private property, over which the Government had no controul;—but as I have been induced to believe that it was the property of the Nation, subject to the orders of the Government; and as the Government led me to believe that the fleet you command would be upon Lake Ontario, to co-operate with my division of the army, the 1st. week in July; I have deemed it fit and proper to let the nation know, that the support I had a right to expect, was not afforded me.

I consider my conduct towards you and the Navy, as not only honorable, but Sir, as being very liberal and friendly, from the date of my report of the battle of Sackets Harbour to the present hour.—

The troops under my command have always been disposed of so as to meet your views, to the extent of my power, and authority; and as far as was consistent with the rights, and the honor of the Army. Your information appears to be very incorrect as to the situation of the army previous to the arrival of reinforcements, with Lt. Genl. Drummond. From the 9th. of July to the 24th. the whole country was in our power, from Fort George to Burlington Heights, and could the army have been supplied with provisions from the Depots provided on the shores of Lake Ontario; we should not have doubted our ability (without reinforcements or additional guns,) to carry the Heights; when we could have returned upon Forts George and Niagara, or advanced upon Kingston, as might have been thought most advisable, with the co-operation of the fleet.

You speak of responsibility, I do not desire you, or any man, to be responsible for me.— I have endeavoured to execute the orders given me; success has not attended my endeavours; but, I humbly trust in Heaven that the honor of the

brave men entrusted to my command, has and will be, preserved, let what may happen.— It will be very difficult to retire from fort Erie, pressed as the remains of my gallant little Army is, by the superior force of the enemy, but no other alternative will be left us, unless reinforcements speedily arrive. The Militia are coming in, in very considerable numbers, but it is not yet ascertained, how many of them will cross.— The Secretary has given me to understand, that Genl. Izard would move to the St. Lawrence, with the view of attacking Kingston, (Should he and you deem that measure advisable) should you decide otherwise; that Genl. Izard would come with, or send to me a reinforcement of from two to three thousand men.— I have not heard from Genl. Izard, and begin to apprehend that some thing has occurred to retard or prevent his movement, I will thank you for any information you can give me on this subject.— I am Sir with great Consideration and respect your most obt. Sert.

Jac. Brown

LB, NBUHi, Jacob Brown Manuscripts. This letter appeared in the *Daily National Intelligencer* on 26 October. Its publication was prompted by Brown's request to Secretary Monroe to arrange for the letter's public release.

### Capture of Somers and Ohio near Fort Erie

*Three American schooners that were anchored on Lake Erie near Fort Erie made a tempting target for the British, despite the lack of a British naval presence on Lake Erie. A party of soldiers and sailors led by Commander Alexander Dobbs cut a path through the woods between lakes Ontario and Erie and hauled a gig and five batteaux eight miles across the peninsula. Staging a daring night attack, they boarded and captured two of the three schooners, Somers and Ohio. During the action, the cables of the two captured schooners were cut, and as the two vessels drifted past Porcupine, the British raiders were unable to board and capture her in addition.*

COMMANDER ALEXANDER DOBBS, R.N., TO  
COMMODORE SIR JAMES L. YEO, R.N.

(Copy)

Niagara River near Fort Erie  
Schooner Somers August 13th. 1814

Sir/

Having succeeded in getting my gig and five Batteaux across from the Niagara River to Lake Erie, a distance of Eight Miles by land—I last night attacked the Three Enemy's Schooners, that had anchored close to Fort Erie—for the purpose of flanking the approaches to that Fort.— Two of them were carried sword in hand in a few minutes, and the third would certainly have fallen—had the Cables not been cut, which made us drift to Leeward of her among the Rapids— The Schooners taken are the *Ohio*, & *Somers*, Commanded by Lieutenants, and mounting Three long twelve pounders, with a complement of 35 men each— My Gallant Friend Lieutenant Radcliffe<sup>1</sup> and One Seamen fell in the act of boarding, which, with four wounded is our loss.— The Enemy had

One man killed and Seven wounded among the latter is Lieutenant Conklin commanding the Squadron as well as two of his Officers;— The Steady and gallant conduct of the Officers, Seamen and Marines employed on this Service, was such as to have insured me success against a greater force—and has called forth a very handsome General order from His Honor Lieutenant General Drummond— I beg leave particularly to mention Mr. Grinded Mate of the *Star*—and Mr. Hyde Mate of the *Charwell*,<sup>2</sup> not only, for their gallant conduct in the Attack, but for their skill in bringing the Vessels, into this River, through Shoals, and Rapids, and under a Constant and heavy fire— I have the honor to remain with great Respect Your faithful Humble Servant

(signed) Alexr. Dobbs.

Copy, UklPR, Adm. 1/2737, fols. 145–47. Attached was a list of the men killed and wounded in the attack. A notation on the first page reads "A True Copy J. L. Yeo."

1. Lieutenant Charles Radcliffe, R.N.

2. Master's Mate John Grinded, R.N.; and Master George Hyde, R.N.

LIEUTENANT EDMUND P. KENNEDY TO SECRETARY OF THE NAVY JONES

Erie, Augt. 15th. 1814

Sir,

It is with extreme regret I have to inform you of the capture of The *Ohio*, Lieutt. Concklin, & the *Somers*, Mr. Darling,<sup>1</sup> they were carried, after a short conflict on the night of the 12th. Inst. at 11 PM. by boarding, within Pistol Shott of Fort Erie; The Enemy had eight large batteaux's & one Small Gun Boat built 10 miles from point Ebony, in the interior, & brot. down that night by waggons: the expedition was headed by the Comdr. of one of the Enemies Sloops of war lately chas'd on shore near Fort Niagara by our Squadron on Ontario he had 150 Seamen & 100 marines & soldiers:

This information was given by two deserters that came from the Enemy the following morning the particulars are not known— 'tis fear'd there are but few survivors on our side, the night was very dark which gave the Enemy an opportunity of getting close on board within [without] being discover'd no Cannon was fired, but muskets, pistoles & the clash of swords distinctly heard, preparations were making for attackg. the *Porcupine* the next night, she however lost one of her anchors in the early part of the night, & draged down the rapids within Pistole shott of the Enemies Battery, & was challenged by the Centinal, but gave no answer, a favourable breeze springg. up at that time he made Sail, & arrived at this place on the following day, (the 14th.) having expended 150 rounds of 32 lb. round Shott, & as many of Grape & Cannister, & by report of deserters have dismounted five of their Battering Cannon, & kill'd a number of men & officers her Guns being very heavy, was most dreaded; Genl. Drummond has offer'd one thousand Dollars to the 1st Engineer that will disable, or sink the *Porcupine* hot shot has been directed at the Squadron but without effect, the *Porcupine* has been cut up considerably in her Sails & rigging, She recd. one

Shott in her foremast & five in her Hull, one of them in her magazine but no lives lost—

Lieutt. Concklin recommends Mr. Thos. Brownell in the highest terms, as a brave enterprizg. & meritorious officer indeed Sir, he is deserving of a better Station—he will sail for Fort Erie this Evening with a supply of every thing—

The Commandg. Genl. at Ft. Erie, urges the necessity of having all my force at that place, as they will be of the utmost importance to the safety of the Garrison, I have none to send but the *Porcupine*; the *Lady Provost* having sail'd for Detroit on the 12th. Inst. with Genl. McArthur & 300 Troops for that place, she will, I presume return in the course of two days, when she will have Orders to act with the *Porcupine*—

The Brig will be ready for Sea in eight days. I shall have to make a requisition on the Army for soldiers to assist in workg., & defendg. her— Ltt. Webster<sup>2</sup> who has a rendezvous open for this Lake writes that he cannot get Seamen— Respectfy. I have the Honr. to be yr. most obt. Svt.—

Edm<sup>d</sup>. P. Kennedy

ALS, DNA, RG45, BC, 1814, Vol. 3, No. 72 (M148, Roll No. 13).

1. Sailing Master Gamliel Darling.

2. Midshipman Nelson Webster, promoted to lieutenant 9 December 1814.

LIEUTENANT AUGUSTUS H. M. CONKLING TO  
LIEUTENANT EDMUND P. KENNEDY

Fort George U. C.  
Augt. 16th. 1814—

Sir,

With extreme regret I have to make known to you, the circumstances attending the Capture of the *Ohio* & *Somers*, on the night of the 12th.; between the hours of 11. & 12. the boats were seen a short distance ahead of the *Somers*, & were hailed from that vessel. They answer'd, "Provision boats" which deceived the Officer of the Deck, as our Army boats had been in the habit of passing, & repassing throughout the night, and enabled them to drift athwart his hawser and cut his cables at the same time pouring in a heavy fire, before he discovered who they were—

Instantaneously they were along side of me and notwithstanding my exertions aided by Mr. McCally Actg. S. Master<sup>1</sup> (who was soon disabled) I was unable to repulse them but for a moment, I maintained the Quarter Deck until my sword fell in consequence of a Shot in the shoulder and nearly all on deck either wounded or surrounded by bayonets, as their force was an overwhelming one, I thought farther resistance vain & gave up the vessel with the satisfaction of having performed my duty and defended my vessel to the last.—

### List of Killed and Wounded

#### Ohio

Killed ———	John Fifehill B.M. shot thro' the body
Wounded ———	Reuben Wright, shot thro' the arm
" ———	S.M. McCally shot thro' the thigh and bayoneted in the foot
Sergt. Eastman of the 11 regt. of the Army wounded in the neck by a musket ball	
——— Granger 11 regt. wounded in the arm	
——— Weath 11 " do " arm	
——— Whillers 21 " do — cut in the arm	

#### Somers

Wounded ———	Samuel Taylor shot in the arm & cut in the head
" ———	Charles Ordean cut in the shoulder

also one of the *Ohio*'s marines whose name the Sergt. cannot find, now in the Hospital, badly wounded

The enemy's loss in killed and wounded is much more, considerable; amongst the killed is the commanding Officer of the *Netley*, (lying here) Capt. Ratliff, he fell in attempting to come over my quarter—notwithstanding the number of muskets & Pistols which were fired, and the bustle inseperable from enterprises of this kind, neither the fort or the *Porcupine* attempted to fire as we drifted past them, nor did we receive a shot untill past Black Rock—tho' they might have destroyed us with ease— Respectfully Your Obt. St.

(signed) A. M. Conkling

P.S. We expect to be sent to Montreal & perhaps to Quebec directly—

Copy, DNA, RG45, BC, 1814, Vol. 3, No. 90, enclosure (M148, Roll No. 13).

1. Master's Mate Alexander McCully.

### Advice to Lieutenant Drury

In early April 1814, Acting Lieutenant John T. Drury, then engaged in the recruiting service at Portsmouth, New Hampshire, penned the secretary of the navy a long, rambling, distraught letter seeking a promotion. Instead of issuing Drury a lieutenant's commission, Jones ordered him to Lake Champlain. In August, Drury's unusual plan to discover whether the crews of his guard boats were neglecting their duties and stopping at a local tavern led to the death of a citizen in Vermont. Disguised as a British sailor, Drury entered the tavern, which was located on the Vermont shore of Lake Champlain. In the confusion that ensued, the tavern keeper was shot and killed. This incident caused Lieutenant Drury much remorse, and he fled Lake Champlain, became depressed, and started drinking.

Drury was apparently in the Washington area during the British incursion because on 5 September he was ordered to report himself to Commodore John Rodgers for temporary duty in Alexandria. By November the department had assigned him to Lake Erie. At this same time, Captain Macdonough learned of Drury's whereabouts and offered him a berth on Macdonough's next cruise. Macdonough's letter reveals the captain's religious and personal side.

MASTER COMMANDANT THOMAS MACDONOUGH TO  
SECRETARY OF THE NAVY JONES

U S Ship *Saratoga*.  
Off Chazy August 20th. 1814

Sir

I regret having to inform you of an unfortunate accident which took place on the night of the 16 inst near this, in the State of Vermont; a man was shot by the crew of one of my boats, the circumstances attending and which led to this tragical scene are from my best information as follows.— I had been informed that my guard boats had been in the practice of landing in the night at the house of the deceased which is a kind of tavern; in order to know an officer who should thus neglect his duty.— I sent Lieut. Drury after the guard boats had gone out to endeavour to discover what boat was in the habit of landing;— he went to the house of the deceased and as appears, the better to effect his object wished to pass for an enemy's boat, and though at [it] appears the disguise did not fully succeed for one said they were Americans and another they were Englishmen; the deceased it appears was of the latter opinion and entering through a back door charged furiously on Mr. Drury ordering him to surrender,— Mr. Drury knocked the musket aside, at this instant seeing his men preparing to fire, it seems he endeavoured to prevent them, but the men seeing their Officer charged upon (and another man behind him who charged also, with a musket) fired which took fatal effect.

It is probable the men were doubtfull whether they were assailed by friends or foes, although within the United States, being near the line it might be supposed they were enemies and concealed in the house for the purpose of taking a guard Boat which might land there. Mr. Drury has imprudently gone away supposed to Washington.— his intention is said to be by his friends in the ward room not to avoid a just and impartial trial—it is said by some Citizens that he would not get such a trial in the place where the act was committed.

The men concerned in this affair are demanded by the civil authority,— they are charged with wilful murder and will be turned over to that authority.

I should have made this affair known to you before but it was in so confused a state that I defered it untill as clear a statement could be given as in my power. I have the honor to be very respectfully Sir Yr. m. obd. Servt.

T. Macdonough

LS, DNA, RG45, MC, 1814, Vol. 2, No. 23 (M147, Roll No. 5).

CAPTAIN THOMAS MACDONOUGH TO ACTING LIEUTENANT JOHN T. DRURY

U.S. Brig *Eagle*  
Plattsburgh 12 Novr. 1814

Dear Sir

I understand that you are stationed at Baltimore, by Mr. Latimer who has recently arrived from thence— The subject of this letter is to offer you an opportunity to sail again with me should you wish it as I am thro' my own request directed to report myself to the Department in person and shall most probably

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be attached to a station or vessel on the Atlantic— Will you give this your Consideration?— I have wondered you did not write to me or some other of your friends on the Lake to let us know what had become of you, as we have all felt anxious about you, not so much thro' fear of your being unable to obtain a suitable situation in the service of your Country, as, that you would suffer yourself to ponder too much on the unfortunate accident which occurred in this quarter some time since— I call it accident, considering (as every thinking man would) that it was so—it is here, now almost universally acknowledged as such; this I hope will relieve your feelings, should they have been affected by it in a greater degree than those of a more firm or religious nature would have been— You my good sir can I am sure or at least I sincerely hope can lay your hand on your heart and acquit your Conscience and feelings to God of being intentionally, directly or indirectly instrumental in the unfortunate occurrence— I say I hope— I believe you can then let me advise you to do it in your room with your door and window shut asking with a penitent and unfeigned heart forgiveness of him who has said that he is always ready to forgive and receive all humble and penitent supplications—let me advise you my dear sir to bring your mind to this state and the heaviest weight will be taken off, leaving you reconciled to yourself and to your God— I have indirectly learned from a source friendly to yourself that it was suspected by him that the reflections on the late mentioned subject had or would affect you in a manner very injurious to health and morality— Now let me advise you in the most earnest and strong manner to refrain from such a mode of quiting or alleviating your feelings, your own good sense will I trust and sincerely hope point out the fallacy of such a remedy—it will be momentary and returning to the same thing again be the sure and natural consequence which will ultimately terminate in destruction and misery to yourself, and be to your family an everlasting sting of bitter pain and regret— No my dear sir you would do extremely wrong even to indulge at all in this deceiving and destroying substitute to exterminate any affection of the mind; believe me it leads to ruin, certain ruin—

Where is there a man to whom one may have done an injury who will not forgive it from the goodness which is inspired into his heart on the offender going to him openly and candidly asking it, and become probably a true friend—how much more ready then would the Almighty whose attribute is all goodness be to forgive one of his children when asked in an humble manner with a heart penitent for the offence; this, all great and good men have done before you and many testimonies have been left behind them at their deaths of their petitions having been granted by going to their graves in peace<sup>1</sup>

Will you favour me with a letter at Middletown Connecticut as I expect to be there in a few days—believe me your friend

T. Macdonough

ALS, DNA, RG45, BC, 1814, Vol. 4, No. 54, enclosure (M148, Roll No. 13). Enclosed in Drury to Jones, 1 December 1814.

1. Drury was commissioned lieutenant 9 December 1814. He perished in U.S.S. *Epervier* when that ship, bearing copies of a treaty with the Dey of Algiers, disappeared with all hands after passing the Strait of Gibraltar on 14 July 1815.

## The Capture of Lieutenant Gregory

*Lieutenant Francis H. Gregory evaded British boats in several successful expeditions in the St. Lawrence River and the north shore of Lake Ontario. His luck ran out on 26 August during a scouting expedition near Kingston. Two British gunboats spotted his gig and captured the American party after a spirited engagement. Commodore Yeo was glad to see the infamous lieutenant made prisoner, and also glad for the return of his personal gig, which the Americans had captured at Sandy Creek in May.*

### D. DAVERNE TO CAPTAIN POWELL, BRITISH ARMY

[Extract]  
(Copy)

Kingston 28th. August 1814

Sir

...Brought in on the night of the 26 Inst. a Gig containing Lieut. McGregor<sup>1</sup> of the U.S. Navy, Ten Seamen, five of which were wounded & a dead midshipman—who was enterred yesterday: they were taken by Lieut. Scott near the upper Gap in the Bay of Quinté the party of the enemy had Landed & been on shore for some time, during which time our people were taking a proper position to intercept them on their return.—They however left the shore before our people were altogether prepared to meet them, as on leaving the Shore they laid a different course to what was expected & went in quest of a raft of timber boards that was on, it was on its way down—on boarding it they threw all they considered valuable overboard, piled some of the boards & set fire to the raft took the owner (a Mr. Fairfield) into their boat & pushed off— they had not proceeded far before they perceived our boats in chase of them, on which she pulled away smartly, our people commenced a fire with musquity, on which she hove overboard the man taken from off the raft, with a view to lighten their boat, one of our boats (they were two) stopped to pick him up the other continued the chase keeping up a constant fire from both sides till the enemys boad [boat] had so many men killed & wounded on board that they found it unlikely to escape, when they lay to, and behold the Renegadoe McGregor who did his Country such an essential service in destroying that vessel that was burnt on the carrying place, he is a very meritorious fine looking fellow & I think justly entitled to some particular mark of favour for throwing the man overboard & when the poor fellow tryed to hold by the gunnel of the boat rapped his fingers heartily with the oars— They were taken in a Gig that was brought out by Capt. Mulsaster from England a very fine boat— Sir James expressed his pleasure on seeing him & the boat said they were what he just then wanted.... I have the honor to be Sir Your Most obt. Servant

(Signed) D. Daverne.

Copy, DNA, RG45, CL, 1814, Vol. 6, No. 15, enclosure (M125, Roll No. 39). This letter was intercepted in a packet of mail by William Johnson, an intelligence agent for the army at Sackets Harbor. This copy was forwarded by Isaac Chauncey to Secretary of the Navy Jones in a letter of 4 September 1814. The

first and last paragraphs of the letter, concerning military pay, have been omitted from this transcription. Powell was deputy assistant quartermaster general for the 24th Regiment of Foot.

I. Lieutenant Francis H. Gregory.

### COMMODORE ISAAC CHAUNCEY TO SECRETARY OF THE NAVY JONES

No. 144

U.S. Ship *Superior* off the Ducks  
29th. August 1814

Sir.

I have the mortification to inform you of the loss of Lieutenant Gregory, a midshipman and eight men in one of my Gigs.

On the 25th. Inst. we missed the enemys Ships from Kingston: at first I was apprehensive that they had taken advantage of the heavy north wind on the 20th. which had drove me from before Kingston, and gone up the Lake, to cut off our Brigs that were blockading Niagara; but I was determined to ascertain the fact, whether they had gone up the Lake or not before I left my present position, and as they sometimes lay in the passage between the Island of Fonta and the Main, the next day 26th. I dispatched Lt. Gregory in a Gig with a midshipman and eight men to look into the upper gap by which he could see through the passage and ascertain whether the enemy lay there or not. I cautioned him very particularly not to approach the shore or to run any unnecessary risque: but it appears from his letter that his zeal induced him to land and burn a raft of picket timber, and on his return by keeping too close in shore and not allowing himself room to see his danger, that two British Barges containing about 30 men (which had been secreted in the bushes) came upon him suddenly and by pouring in a very destructive fire compelled him to surrender after the loss of the midshipman killed and five out of the eight men wounded.

The loss of this boat and crew is truly mortifying: Lt. Gregory was an officer in whose judgment and discretion I had the most implicit confidence, but it appears that in this instance that he has suffered his zeal to get the better of his judgment.—he is an officer however, of great worth and bids fair to become an ornament to the service.

In midshipman Hart,<sup>1</sup> the service has lost a most excellent officer, he was a young man of great worth & of much promise; he was brave intelligent and full of zeal and enterprize and bid fair to become an ornament to his profession.

I enclose herewith copies of my letters to Sir James Lucas Yeo and his answer, also, Lt. Gregory's report of his capture. I have the honor to be Very Respectfully Sir Your Most obedt. Hble. Servt.

Isaac Chauncey

LS, DNA, RG45, CL, 1814, Vol. 5, No. 144 (M125, Roll No. 38).

1. Ezekiel B. Hart was appointed a midshipman 30 April 1814.

[Enclosure]  
Copy.

On Board H.M. Ship *P. Regent*  
Kingston Roads Augt. 27th. 1814.

Sir,  
It becomes a painful duty to inform you of my Captivity, and the loss of the Boat and Crew, (ten in all) under my charge, taken at the mouth of the Bay of Quanti, Yesterday by two English Barges, with thirty men, after an unavailing, and fatal attempt to escape.— In obedience to your orders I had pulled into the Bay, observing a cautious distance from the shore, just into the mouth of the Bay,— I fired a large raft of picket timber, and after having accomplished the duty, you had directed was returning to the Squadron, in pulling round a small point (which I had passed only a few minutes before) I discovered the Enemies Barges advancing and before I could wind the Boat was so completely under their fire, that it was impossible to escape. Three Seamen were shot down in a few minutes—two more shared the same fate.— Mr. Hart was killed while bravely animating the men.—leaving only three Seamen, and myself, there was no longer any hopes of escape.— The enemies Barges had been secreted in the Woods, seeing me pass had taken the position, which enabled them to cut us off.— I regret the unfortunate issue of this affair—but am proud of the heroic devotion of my gallant companions while overpower'd by superior numbers.—

The Wounded have every attention paid them from a generous foe.— Mr. Hart will be entered [*interred*] in a manner suitable to his rank.— A List of the Killed and Wounded will be sent you through Commo. Sir James L. Yeo. I have the honor to be Very Respectfully Your obdt. Servt.

(Signed) Fran. H. Gregory.  
Lieut. U.S. Navy.

Copy, DNA, RG45, CL, 1814, Vol. 5, No. 144, enclosure (M125, Roll No. 38).

### Macdonough at Plattsburg

In late August 1814, a British invasion of New York along Lake Champlain appeared imminent. The new American brig *Eagle* took the lake on 26 August and sailed north to join Master Commandant Macdonough's squadron patrolling the northern end of Lake Champlain. British troops under Governor-General Sir George Prevost crossed the border 31 August as the new Royal Navy frigate *Confiance*, building at Isle aux Noix, was nearly ready for service.

Commander Macdonough then moved his vessels back to Plattsburg Bay where they were sheltered from British artillery and could help support the movements of the American army, now under the command of Brigadier General Alexander Macomb. Brigadier General Izard and 4,000 of his troops had been ordered in mid-August to march westward to join General Brown's army at Niagara.

The British advance arrived near Plattsburg on 5 September. The American galleys took a position alongside the shore road to fire at the advancing troops, but withdrew when British artillery was placed to return their fire.

MASTER COMMANDANT THOMAS MACDONOUGH TO  
SECRETARY OF THE NAVY JONES

U.S. Ship *Saratoga*  
Plattsburgh Sept. 3d. 1814—

Sir,

I have the honor to acquaint you with the arrival of the Squadron at this place— As an attack on this place is threatened by a land movement of the enemy and their fleet evincing no immediate signs of coming out, Brigr. Genl. Macomb and myself considered this movement of our vessels proper and necessary.

The enemy say, when their ship is finished (which will be in a few days) he will come out, and it is supposed Plattsburgh will be attacked by land and water at the same time, and that their Army at Champlain is waiting for their fleet—I have the honor to be Sir with great respect Your Mo. Ob. Servt.

T. Macdonough

ALS, DNA, RG45, CL, 1814, Vol. 6, No. 5 (M125, Roll No. 39).

MASTER COMMANDANT THOMAS MACDONOUGH TO  
SECRETARY OF THE NAVY JONES

U.S Ship *Saratoga*  
off Plattsburgh, Sept. 7th. 1814.

Sir

I have the honor to inform you that on the 5th Inst. the Gallies composing a part of the Squadron under my command, were directed to take a position in shore, for the purpose of impeding the Enemy's force on their advance towards Plattsburgh, as they were momently expected.—

At 10 Oclock the next morning they appeared advancing rapidly towards the village, but in passing a defile in the woods (through which the Roads lie) their progress was considerably checked by the fire of the Gallies, untill their Artillery could be brought up.—

Being enabled, by their situation in the woods, by which they were screen'd, to aim with precision at our vessels, while a heavy sea running at the same time prevented the Gallies from bringing their Guns to bear, it was thought prudent to withdraw them from action.—

In this affair, I am sorry to state that Actg. Lt. Silas Duncan was mortally wounded on board the Gun Boat *Allen* while communicating my orders to her commander.— One Seaman was also Killed and three Marines wounded.— I have the honor to be, Sir, with great respect yr. mot. obt. st.

T. Macdonough

LS, DNA, RG45, MC, 1814, Vol. 2, No. 41 (M147, Roll No. 5).

GOVERNOR-GENERAL SIR GEORGE PREVOST TO  
CAPTAIN GEORGE DOWNE, R.N.

Head Quarters Plattsburg 9th September 1814

Sir

In consequence of your Communication of yesterday's date, I have postponed moving on the Enemy's position on the South bank of the Saranac, until your Squadron is in a state of preparation to cooperate with this Division of the Army.

I need not dwell with You on the evils resulting to both Services from delay, as I am well convinced you have done every thing that was in your power, to accelerate the Armament and Equipment of your Squadron, and I am also satisfied, nothing will prevent its coming off Plattsburg, the moment it is practicable—

I am happy to inform you, that I find from Deserters who have come over from the Enemy, that the American fleet is inefficiently manned,— and that a few days ago, after the arrival of the New Brig, they sent on shore for the Prisoners of all descriptions, in charge of the Provost to make up a Crew for that Vessel— I have the Honor to be Sir Your most Obedt. humble Servant

(signed) George Prevost

Captain Watson of the Provincial Cavalry<sup>1</sup> is directed to remain at little Chazy until you are preparing to get under weigh, when, He is instantly to return to this Place, with the intelligence.—

Copy, UKLPR, Adm. 1/2737, fols. 196–97. Copy enclosed in letter of 24 September 1814 from Commodore Sir James L. Yeo to Secretary of the Admiralty John W. Croker.

1. Captain William Watson, Dorchester Provincial Light Dragoons.

CAPTAIN GEORGE DOWNE, R.N., TO  
GOVERNOR-GENERAL SIR GEORGE PREVOST

9th Septr. off Little Chazy—  
H.M.S. *Confiance*

Sir

I have the honor to communicate to your Excellency, that it's my intention to weigh and proceed from this Anchorage about Midnight in the expectation of rounding into the Bay of Plattsburg about dawn of day and commence an immediate attack upon the Enemy if they shall be found Anchored in a position that will offer chance of success— I rely on any assistance you can afford the Squadron—

In manning the Flotilla and Ships—finding we are many short, I have made application to the officer commanding at Chazy, for a Company of the 39th. Regiment—

I have the honor of Your Excellency's letter of this morning to which the preceding is a full Answer I have the honor to be &c— &c— &c

(signed) G. Downie

Copy, UKLPR, Adm. 1/2737, fol. 199. Copy enclosed in letter of 24 September 1814 from Commodore Sir James L. Yeo to Secretary of the Admiralty John W. Croker.

## The American Squadron at Buffalo and Erie

*Captain Arthur Sinclair departed Lake Huron and returned to Lake Erie in early September. The storms that are common on Lake Erie during the fall months worried him. The Navy Department called on the squadron to support the remnants of Major General Brown's army as it withdrew back to Fort Erie and then prepared to recross to the American side of the Niagara River.*

*At the same time, the fleet was to transport a group of British prisoners who had been captured in the Battle of Lake Erie the previous September and were being marched from Kentucky to Ohio to await transportation to Upper Canada. The unfortunate prisoners were sickly, undernourished, and without warm clothes or blankets.*

*The vessels on Lake Erie were in need of repairs after another season on the lake. One, the brig Caledonia, was driven on shore in a gale and accidentally set on fire, an act which the suspicious Captain Sinclair considered treasonous.*

SECRETARY OF THE NAVY JONES TO LIEUTENANT EDMUND P. KENNEDY

Lieutt. Edmund P Kennedy  
or the Officer Commanding the  
U S Naval Force at Erie.

Navy Department  
Septemr. 5th. 1814.

Sir

Your letters of the 25th. (two) & 29th. have been received, and will be further noticed so soon as the derangement consequent upon the late disaster in this Capital shall admit.

The object of this letter is to request your vigilant attention to the state of the Squadron under your command, in order that its cooperation with the Army, at Fort Erie, may be rendered the most effectual.

The state of that Army has become critical in the extreme by its persevering defence of that Post, while the force of the enemy has increased to a degree which may render it impracticable for our Army to cross the Niagara without the hazard of destruction

You will therefore communicate with the Commanding Officer at Fort Erie, and render him every possible aid in your power, compatible with the safety of the force under your command, which must not be hazarded by taking an insecure position, from which you may not be able to extricate yourself in the event of the fall of Fort Erie, or of the enemy taking a commanding position, with heavy Guns on the Bank of the Niagara, which may prevent your return into Lake Erie.—

The two Vessels recently captured by the enemy, under the Guns of Fort Erie,<sup>1</sup> were lost in consequence of the injudicious position in which they had been placed, at the request of the Military Commander.—

You are alone responsible, and consequently are to be the judge of the cooperation required of you.— If it is reasonable and practicable, you will afford it with zeal and promptitude.—

If on the contrary it shall appear to you to be impracticable, or to expose the force under your command to extreme or unreasonable hazard, you will decline it, and proffer such other as your best judgement may dictate.—

The principal cooperation which you will be enabled to afford, will be in aiding and conducting the transportation of the Army across the Niagara should that measure be determined upon, and in this, you will exert all your powers to protect and conduct it in safety.— I am very respectfully Your Obedt. Servt

W Jones.

LB, DNA, RG45, CLS, 1814, p. 183.

1. For the capture of the schooners *Somers* and *Ohio*, see pp. 588–91.

CAPTAIN ARTHUR SINCLAIR TO SECRETARY OF THE NAVY JONES

U.S. Sloop *Niagara* Off Buffalo— Septr.  
the 7th. 1814

Sir

I arrived here on the morning of the 4th; but it has blown so heavy, on shore, as to prevent my having any communication with the Genl. until yesterday— He expresses great anxiety that I shall lay on the other shore, in order to secure the weak side of his Fort from a water attack— I am equally anxious to cooperate with him in every possible way, which does not place at too great hazard the safety of the Fleet—such a move would do this— I shall therefore not be urged to it, against my own judgment, by any argument he can use, unless the salvation of the Army depends on it—in which event I shall risque every thing, for on the safety of this Army depends the whole Niagara Frontier and the Winter security of the Fleet— I am now laying at the nearest possible point to be free from Rocks—and not without the range of their Rocketts, some of which have been thrown at the Ships— I have sent all the Commanding Officers, the Masters, and pilots, and sounded the whole Bay, and there is not a point at which the Ships could lay within serviceable distance of the army, that an Anchor would hold against the rapid current which is setting into the Niagara; and should it hang under one of those Rocks, the Cable would be cut from it in a few hours, when nothing could save the Ship from total loss— At the best Anchorage, we have sandy bottom, and are exposed to a scope of 250 miles, laying within  $\frac{1}{4}$  of a mile of a Rocky lee shore— in a common breeze this vessel rides with her bows under—you can therefore judge how very unpleasantly I am situated here— I would not remain here; but the Genl. intends crossing the militia in a day or two, and is anxious, in case of disaster, to have every assistance to get them back— This done or declined, I shall leave this unsafe place without delay, as the season for heavy gales is now at hand, and I am too well aware of the importance of those vessels, to the safety of this Frontier, to hazard their laying thus exposed a moment longer than can be avoided

Genl. Ripley has just sent his aid off, who informs me that the Enemy have hauled across 40 or 50 large boats to a point just above us, and that about 200 Seamen and Marines have come over from the vessels laying in the Niagara—

I think it probable they contemplate an attack upon me— I am prepared for it, and have no fears for the result— They may, knowing the weak state of Erie and the exposed state of the ships there, have views in that quarter

I shall therefore form a line in that direction within signal distance of each other and keep underway— I wish there was a possibility of geting Boats below the Falls I would take advantage of their absence and attempt the destruction of their vessels laying there— I have the honor to remain very respectfully Sir, your Obt. Servt.

A Sinclair

ALS, DNA, RG45, CL, 1814, Vol. 6, No. 29 (M125, Roll No. 39).

CAPTAIN ARTHUR SINCLAIR TO SECRETARY OF THE NAVY JONES

U S Brig *Niagara* off Buffalo  
Sepr. the 12th. 1814

Sir

It is with infinite mortification I transmit you the inclosed letter for your information, as I cannot but strongly suspect, from the circumstance of the vessels being fired after her geting onshore, that some unfair means was the cause of her geting there— A number of men on this station claim their discharge as having served their term of enlistment; but they have been transferred from other stations without any data by which the Purser's here can either know their term of service or state of their acct. with the Department—under such circumstances I have thought the president [precedent] would be a bad one to give them their discharge; but have done every thing to reconcile them, while I have taken the proper steps to ascertain their date of entry &cetr. Those men are becoming troublesome—there are Foreigners among them, and as the officers here commanding the small vessels are extremely inexperienced in their profession, I should not be astonished at advantages being taken of them, in cases of difficulty, by such characters— The *Caledonia* has been very leaky during my whole cruize on the Uper Lake, and since the Troops left her, the labour of the pumps, has been greater on the crew— this induces me to suspect that unfair means has been used in getting her onshore; particularly as I had her made snug for a Gale before I left there; her cables were very good, and the small vessels here rode out the same Gale, exposed to the whole Lake, without accident, while she had a lee of the Peninsula—

The person who set her on fire will be a proper subject for the Gallows, and will, I have no doubt, make known the truth of the affair when brought to trial—

You shall be made acquainted with further particulars on my return to Erie—

Our pilots and all persons acquainted with this anchorage, Genl. Porter among others who has long resided here, recommend my not remaining in this exposed situation longer than the middle of this month; about which time the S

W gales commence with great violence, and continue until November, when they change to the N Western quarter— I shall, therefore, be at Erie by the 20th. Genl. Browne has crosst over 2 or 3000 Militia, and says he feels very secure against any attack from the Enemy— I shall leave him all the transportation I have to spare, which with the Boats belonging to the army will make his means of retreat very ample, in case he should find it advisable to abandon Fort Erie—indeed I do not see any advantage the Fleet can be to him here— He says he wishes me to receive his Artillery in case of crossing; but as the Rocky bottom and strong current prevents the possibility of my anchoring nearer than I now am the transportation to Buffalo is equally convenient, and much more certain; as he can land in the Creek when he cannot come alongside of a Ship—

My greatest fear is that they will weaken themselves on this side so much as to give the Enemy an opportunity of crossing & destroying their Boats, by which means he cuts off their retreat and supplies at the same stroke— This might be affected in one night; and as they have brought across the Peninsula a number of Boats and seamen for some marine expedition, I should not be surprised if this was one of the objects in view— I trust, however, that no casualty of this kind will be suffered to take place I have the honor to remain with high respect, Sir, your Obt. Servt.

A Sinclair

ALS, DNA, RG45, CL, 1814, Vol. 6, No. 46 (M125, Roll No. 39).

[Enclosure]

Erie 6th. Septr. 1814

Sir!

I am sorry to inform you that in the gale of wind, this morning the *Caledonia* parted both her Cables, and drove ashore on the Beach—shortly after permission was granted to the Men to come ashore and cook as the Cabouse had been injured— A Black Boy by the name of Charles Stevenson, remained on board, and set her on fire—and it was with the greatest difficulty we could extinguish the flames,— The fire had got so far aft that we were compelled to heave the Powder overboard, together with the greater part of the sails, which were the first he set on fire,— The Vessel is much injured—all the after part of her beam is burnt to cinders— The trysail mast & Boom are likewise consumed & other damages which in my present weak state (having been compelled to swim to the Vessel) I am not able exactly to inform you I am Sir with great Esteem yr. Obt. Servt.

Tho<sup>s</sup>. Holdup

Comdr. A. Sinclair  
Comdg. U.S.N. Forces  
on the U. Lakes Buffalo

ALS, DNA, RG45, CL, 1814, Vol. 6, No. 46, enclosure (M125, Roll No. 39).

CAPTAIN ARTHUR SINCLAIR TO SECRETARY OF THE NAVY JONES

U.S. Brig *Niagara* Erie Roads— Octr. the 21st. 1814

Sir

I have the satisfaction of stating to you that I have succeeded in getting the *Detroit* and *Queen Charlott* within the Bar, and they are now safely moored, which circumstance has relieved me of much anxiety— I had to pass them over in 3½ feet less than they drew with sweep holds— The *Charlott* past over, on Friday last, without difficulty— Saturday and Sunday it blew a gale on shore, shifted the chanel and filled up nearly a foot, which gave me some trouble in getting the *Detroit* over on Monday

I have righted the *Caledonia*, freed her, within a foot, and taken every article out of her— she then began to motion in her bed and gained rapidly on the pumps—which induces me to believe her garboard streak, or some of her lower butts have started— Boistrous weather compeld me to leave her in her old bed—she lays in 5½ feet water, and should the present bad weather not separate her, I will put her on the Camels,<sup>1</sup> take her over the Bar and have her hauled up on the ways, where she can be repaired; as her deck being burned out of her, from her breasting beam aft, and her leaky bottom will prevent her being repaired in any other way— The loss sustained, by the fire, onboard of her was considerable—all her powder was thrown overboard and her sails burnt— Indeed, it must have required considerable enterprise and exertion to have extinguished the flames while they were at such a hight, and separated from her powder only by a thin Bulk head— Much praise is due to Lieut. Holdup who left a sick bed and swam off to her just in time to save her exploding

I have the masters mate and crew still in confinement, who I strongly suspect of the diabolical act of setting her onfire; but, as yet, I can get no clew to the truth of the act— No justifiable means shall be left untried to come at it—

I had sent the *Lawrence*, *Lady Provost*, and *Porcupine* to Sandusky, agreeably to your order of the 21st Ult. to transport the British prisoners to Canada (with orders to be governed by the instructions the officer of the guard might have from the government as to the point of landing) previous to your further instructions of the 3d Inst.— On receipt of that letter I dispatched an express to Genl. Izard, to be informed as to their place of landing, wishing if possible to save the risque of the vessels going into Buffaloe Bay at this season, and have received his instructions to land them at Long point—where there can now be no risque, since Detroit is garrisoned— Since the Sailing of the above vessels I have received a letter, dated the 10th Inst., from one of the Captains of the guard over those prisoners, informing me of his having marched them down to Cleveland, which accounts to me for the long absence of the Squadron— My greatest fear is, that they will not find them, as there are no inhabitants near Sandusky to inform them of their change of situation— It is strange that prisoners of war should be moved about in this way without the knowledge of government— Had you been informed of this change of situation, much time would have been saved— The above mentioned officer states that 430 out of 550 of the prisoners are sick, and that they are without a Blanket or a second suit of cloths— The guard are equally sickly and without shelter

Knowing those men to be principally sailors, and the squadron very shortly maned—I made *Flags*' of the Transport vessels, by taking off their Guns & Ctr. at the same time, while securing them in this way, I ordered the commanders to

be equally on their guard, not placing too much faith in British honor, and to hold out the idea that their crews were shortened in order to give room for transportation— I have nearly 150 sick on the station— I am using every exertion to finish a Hospital for their comfort, with the hope that their numbers and sufferings will be much lessened when placed in good Quarters I have the honor to remain with high respect, Sir, your Obt. Servt.

A Sinclair

N B— Since closing this letter the *Porcupine* has arrived, and informs me that they had learned of the Prisoners being at Cleveland and had returned there from Sandusky

They had taken onboard a part of them when a violent Snow Storm came on and caught them on a Leeshore— The *porcupine* parted from three Anchors, and before she could make sail she struck several times, but fortunately fetched off— The *Lawrence* had parted one Cable, and both her and the *Lady Provost* were in eminent danger when he left them— I have been riding here without lower yards and TG [topgallant] masts struck for two days, blowing tremendously with hail and snow— I trust however they will ride it out—as their ground tackle is very good—at least, it is new—good rope we never get from pittsburg— I have sent a parcel back at the cost of the makers— in haste

A S

ALS, DNA, RG45, CL, 1814, Vol. 7, No. 54 (M125, Roll No. 40).

1. For a description of camels, see Dudley, *Naval War of 1812*, Vol. 2, p. 543.

## Capture of *Scorpion* and *Tigress* on Lake Huron

*On his departure from Lake Huron, Captain Sinclair left behind two schooners, Scorpion and Tigress, with orders to Lieutenant Daniel Turner to blockade the passage between Nottawasaga and Mackinac to cut off the British supply line.*

*Lieutenant Miller Worsley, the former commander of the burned British schooner Nancy, gathered men and four boats for an expedition against the two ships. Lieutenant Worsley and three British army officers with their crews of soldiers, sailors, and Indians hid during the daylight hours near Tigress's anchorage. That ship had become separated from the Scorpion amid the islands in Lake Huron. The British made their move on the night of 3 September. They surrounded the American vessel and boarded her from both sides. The Americans spotted the enemy too late and submitted after a resistance of only five minutes. The American prisoners were sent to Mackinac, and Lieutenant Worsley and his men now commanded Tigress.*

*Two days later, Lieutenant Turner brought his vessel, Scorpion, back within two miles of Tigress and anchored for the night. Unknown to him was that Tigress, still flying the American flag, was now in British hands. Lieutenant Worsley wisely bided his time all night, then slipped anchor at dawn and brought Tigress alongside, capturing Scorpion as well with little resistance.*

LIEUTENANT ANDREW H. BULGER, ROYAL NEWFOUNDLAND FENCIBLE INFANTRY, TO LIEUTENANT COLONEL ROBERT McDouall, BRITISH ARMY

Copy

Michilimackinac 7th Sept. 1814.

Sir/

I have the honor to report to you the particulars of the Capture of the United States Schooners *Scorpion* and *Tigress* by a detachment from this Garrison under the command of Lieut Worsley of the Royal Navy and myself— In obedience to your Orders we left Michilimackinac on the Even'g of the 1st. inst. in four boats, one of which was manned by seamen under Lieut Worsley, the others by a detachment of the Royal Newfoundland Regt under myself, Lieutenants Armstrong & Radenhurst<sup>1</sup> We arrived near the Detour about sun set on the following day, but nothing was attempted that night, as the enemy positions had not been correctly ascertained— The Troops remained the whole of the 3rd Inst. concealed amongst the roads, and about 6 oclock that Eveng embarked & began to move towards the enemy— We had to row about 6 miles, during which the most perfect order and silence reigned. The Indians which accompanied us from Mackina were left about 3 miles in our rear— About 9 oclock at night we discerned the enemy and had approached to within one Hundred Yards of them before they hailed us, On receiving no answer, they opened a smart fire upon us both of musketry & from the 24 Pr. all opposition however was in vain for in the Course of five Minutes the enemy's vessel was boarded and carried, by Lieut. Worsley & Lieut. Armstrong on the Starboard side & my boat & Lieut Radenhursts on the larboard. She proved to be the *Tigress* commanded by Sailing Master Champlin,<sup>2</sup> mounting one long 24 Pr. and with a compliment of 30 Men. The defence of this Vessel did credit to her officers, who were all severely wounded, she had 3 men wounded & 3 missing supposed to have been killed & thrown immediately over board—our loss is 2 seamen killed & several Soldiers & seamen slightly wounded— On the morning of the 4th. Inst. the Prisoners were sent in a boat to Mackina under a Guard and we prepared to attack the other schooner, which we understood was anchored 15 miles farther down, the position of the *Tigress* was not altered, and the better to carry on the deception the American Pendant was kept flying— On the 5th Inst. we discerned the Enemy's schooner beating up to us, the Soldiers I directed to keep below, or to lie down on the Deck to avoid being seen— Every thing succeeded to our wish, the enemy came to anchor about 2 miles from us in the night, and as the day dawned on the 6th Inst. we slit our cable & ran down under our Jib & Foresail, every thing was so well managed by Lt. Worsley that we were within 10 yards of the enemy before they discovered us. it was then too late, for in the course of 5 minutes her Deck was covered with our men and the british flag hoisted over the American, She proved to be the *Scorpion*, commanded by Lieut Turner of the U. S. Navy carrying one long 24 Pr. in her hold with a compliment of 32 men—she had two men killed & 2 wounded— I enclose a return of our killed & wounded, and am happy to say that the latter are but slight— To the admirable good conduct and management of Lt. Worsley of the R. Navy the Success is to be in a great measure attributed, but I must assure you that every Officer and Man did his Duty— I have the honor to be Sir, your most obedient humble servant

A. H. Bulger  
Lieut. Royal Newfoundd. Reg.

Copy, CaOOA, British Military and Naval Records, RG8, I, "C" Ser., Vol. 685, pp. 172-74. The enclosure listed one enlisted man of the Royal Artillery wounded, one officer (Lieutenant Bulger) and six enlisted from the Royal Newfoundland Fencible Infantry wounded.

1. Lieutenants Alfred A. Armstrong and John Radenhurst, Royal Newfoundland Fencible Infantry.
2. Sailing Master Stephen Champlin, U.S.N.

LIEUTENANT COLONEL ROBERT McDouall, BRITISH ARMY, TO  
LIEUTENANT GENERAL GORDON DRUMMOND, BRITISH ARMY

Copy/ Michilimackinac 9th Septr. 1814.

Sir/

I have the honor to inform you that some Indians, on their way to the falls of St. Mary's, returned to me with the intelligence, that part of the enemy's Squadron had on the 25th ulto., again made their appearance in the neighbourhood of St Josephs, likewise occupying the passage of the Detour, their intention being evidently to cut off our supplies, & prevent all communication with this Garrison.

On the 31st,— I was joined by Lieut. Worsley of the Royal Navy with seventeen seamen, who had passed in a Canoe sufficiently near the enemy to ascertain them to be two schooner rigged Gun boats of the largest class, On stating to me his opinion that they might be attacked with every prospect of success, particularly as they were at Anchor nearly five leagues asunder, I immediately determined to furnish him with requisite Assistance.

In the course of the next day, four Boats were accordingly equipped, two of them with field pieces in their bows, One of them was manned by the seamen of the navy, the remaining three by a detachment of the Royal Newfoundland Reg't under Lieut Bulger, Armstrong & Radenhurst, consisting of fifty men. The whole sailed the same Evening under the Command of Lieut. Worsley—

I have now the satisfaction of reporting to you the complete success of the expedition. Lieut. Worsley having returned to this place on the 7th. inst. with his two prizes, consisting of the U.S. Schooners *Scorpion* and *Tigress*, the former carrying a long 24 and a long 12 pr. and the latter a long 24.— they were commanded by Lieut Turner of the American Navy and are very fine vessels— For the particulars of their Capture, I beg leave to refer you to the enclosed statement of Lieut Bulger, whose conduct in aiding the execution of this enterprise (in which he was slightly wounded) reflects upon him great credit, & I beg leave to recommend him as a meritorious Officer of long standing, who had been in many of the Actions of this War— Lieut Armstrong & Radenhurst possess similar claims, and with the detachment of the brave Newfoundland Reg't (who are familiar with this kind of service) merit my entire approbation—neither should I omit noticing the zeal displayed by Mr. Dickson and Lieut. Livingston of the Indian department, who volunteered their services on this occasion—

In calling your attention to the conspicuous merit of the Officer who so judiciously planed & carried into effect this well concerted enterprise—I am conscious that I only do Lieut Worsley strict justice in acknowledging the eminent services which he has rendered this Garrison— You are already acquainted with the unequal conflict which he sustained at the Mouth of the River Nottowasaga and the al-

most unprecedented defence which he made of the *Nancy* schooner with only twenty one Seamen and a few Indians, against the American Squadron & upwards of three hundred Troops— Since that period he with his gallant little band of Seamen, has traversed this extensive Lake in two boats laden with provisions for the Garrison, & having at this extremity of it, discovered two of his former opponents his active and indefatigable mind rested not,— till he had releev'd us from such troublesome neighbours, and conducted the blockading force in triumph into our Port—

Such, Sir, have been the services of Lt. Worsley during the short time that he has been stationed on Lake Huron— I have to beg that you will strongly recommend him to the protection of Commodore Sir Jas. Yeo & also to the patronage of His Excellency the Governor Genl. in order that my Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty may be enabled to appreciate them as they merit— I have the honor to be Sir your most obedt. Servant

Rt McDouall Lt. Col.  
Comg. at Michilimackinac

Copy, CaOOA, British Military and Naval Records, RG8, I, "C" Ser., Vol. 685, pp. 176-78.

## The Battle of Lake Champlain

*On the morning of 11 September, the British squadron, which had been delayed in fitting out, finally sailed for Plattsburg Bay toward the waiting American squadron. Choosing to fight a stationary battle, Master Commandant Macdonough anchored his vessels within the bay and waited for the British ships to come into range. About 9:40 A.M., the battle ensued. After nearly two hours of hard fighting, the British vessels surrendered one by one. It was an action fought at close range with devastating casualties on both sides.*

*On land, the British army under Governor-General Prevost was supposed to undertake a simultaneous assault of the American batteries. The governor-general, however, ordered a retreat when he saw the outcome of the naval contest.*

*The British offensive into New York State had ended. The American victory gave a huge boost to American morale and dealt a tremendous blow to the British war effort. The victory would be a significant factor in the British decision to negotiate an end to the conflict.*

CAPTAIN THOMAS MACDONOUGH TO SECRETARY OF THE NAVY JONES

U.S. Ship Saratoga  
off Plattsburgh September 11th. 1814

Sir:

The Almighty has been pleased to Grant us a signal victory on Lake Champlain in the capture of one Frigate, one Brig and two sloops of war of the enemy— I have the honor to be very respectfully Sir, your obt. Servt.

T. Macdonough Comg:

ALS, DNA, RG45, CL, 1814, Vol. 6, No. 38 (M125, Roll No. 39). Thomas Macdonough was promoted to the rank of captain effective 11 September 1814.

LIEUTENANT COLONEL EDWARD B. BRENTON, BRITISH ARMY, TO  
COMMODORE SIR JAMES L. YEO, R.N.

Montreal  
12 Septr. 1814

Dear Sir/

I this morning recd. from Capt. Freer the distressing intelligence of the loss of our Fleet in Lake Champlain which I lose no time in communicating to you.— The two Squadrons encountered each other yesterday at about ten in the forenoon, ours was led to the Attack in a most gallant Style by Capt. Downie & the Enemy very soon driven under their batteries but unfortunately at the moment the *Confiance* was rounding to in order to lay along side the American Ship she grounded & after sustaining a tremendous fire from their batteries & gun boats was compelled to strike & the Brig & the Sloops have shared a similar unfortunate fate—our gun boats have I believe escaped in consequence of the unsuccessful termination of the Naval Cooperation His Excellency recalled the Troops which were advancing to storm the Enemys works not considering the possession of them of sufficient importance to compensate for the loss we might sustain in effecting that object— as no further offensive operations can be carried on whilst the Enemy have the Naval ascendancy on the Lake I think it probable our Troops will return from our Frontier— no communication had taken place with the Vessels when the express came away at two—yesterday afternoon while the loss of lives had not been ascertained— the Action took place in Cumberland Bay & close to the Batteries upon Plattsburg— I am Dr. Sir yours truly

E B Brenton

13th. since writing the within I have recd. encl. letter from Capt. Freer—by which I learn that Capt. Downie was Killed early in the action—& that the loss of the *Confiance*'s rudder which rendered her unmanageable principally occasioned her Capture—nearly 150 men were Killed & wounded on board of her. the Capt. of Marines Killed & almost every sr. officer wounded—only 40 men escaped unhurt on board the Enemys ship upwards of 100 were Killed & wounded— the *Confiance* was so much damaged that she is said to have sunk the night after the action.— Capt. Pring was unhurt we presume— the *Lynx* which he commanded grounded on a rock as she was going into action & continued fast until she was compelled to strike— the two Sloops which came up in time to support the action fell on board the Enemys Vessels under a tremendous fire & were taken possession of one of them also said to have sunk— all our gun boats escaped with the provision Vessel which attended the Fleet— All our Troops moved from Plattsburg yesterday Mg. to Chazy & Champlain & His Excellency's Head Qtrs. moved in the course of the day & at Odell Town.— our hopes are now centered in the Ontario fleet & I am anxiously expecting the intelligence of the safe launching of the New Ship which is I trust destined under your auspices to retrieve the Misfortunes of the other Lakes Believe very try. Yr ob St.

E B Brenton

MAJOR GENERAL ALEXANDER MACOMB, U.S.A., TO  
ACTING SECRETARY OF WAR MONROE

Fort Moreau. Plattsburgh  
Sept. 12th. 1814.

Sir,

I have the honor to inform you that the British Army consisting of four Brigades—a Corp of Artillery a Squadron of horses and a strong light Corps amounting in all to about fourteen thousand men after investing the place on the north of the Saranac River since the 5th. Instant broke up their Camp and raised the seige this morning at 2 o'Clock. They are now retreating precipitately leaving their Sick and wounded behind—

The Enemy opened his Batteries yesterday morning and continued the Cannonading Bombarding and Rocket firing untill sun set. by this time our batteries had Completely silenced those of our opponents.

The light Troops and militia are now in full pursuit of the Enemy making prisoners in all directions— Deserters are continually coming in, so that the loss of the British Army in this enterprise will be considerable.— A more detailed report will be made of the Seige and circumstances attending it as early as possible.— The officers and men have all done their duty. The Artillery and the Engineers have performed their functions with a zeal and precision highly creditable to themselves and honorable to their Country.

Our loss is trifling indeed having only one officer and fifteen men killed and one officer and thirty men wounded.

The Militia of New-York and the Volunteers of Vermont have been exceedingly Serviceable and have evinced a degree of Patriotism and bravery worthy of themselves and the States to which they respectively belong.

The Strength of the garrison is only fifteen hundred effective rank and file. I have the honor to be with perfect Respect Sir, Your most obt. Servt.

Alex: Macomb

LS, DNA, RG107, Letters Received by the Secretary of War, Registered Series, M-135 (8) (M221, Roll No. 64). Enclosed with this letter was a detailed hand-drawn map of Plattsburg showing the British and American military positions and batteries and the position of the ships during the naval battle. Macomb was brevetted major general, 11 September 1814, for distinguished and gallant conduct in defeating the enemy at Plattsburg.

COMMANDER DANIEL PRING, R.N., TO COMMODORE SIR JAMES L. YEO, R.N.

Copy

United States Ship *Saratoga*  
Plattsburg Bay, Lake Champlain  
12th September 1814.

Sir,

The painful task of making you acquainted with the circumstances attending the capture of His Majesty's Squadron yesterday, by that of the American under

Commodore McDonough, it gives me to state, becomes my duty to perform, from the ever to be lamented loss of that worthy and gallant Officer Captain Downie who unfortunately fell early in the Action.

In consequence of the earnest Solicitation of His Excellency Sir George Prevost, for the Co-operation of the Naval Force on this Lake, to attack that of the Enemy, who were placed for the support of their Works at Plattsburg, which it was proposed should be Stormed by the Troops at the same moment the Naval Action should commence in the Bay, Every possible Exertion was used to accelerate the Armament of the New Ship, that the Military movements might not be postponed at such an advanced Season of the Year—longer than was absolutely necessary.

On the 3d Inst I was directed to proceed in Command of the Flotilla of Gun Boats to protect the left Flank of our Army advancing towards Plattsburg and on the following day, after taking possession and paroling the Militia of Isle la Motte, I caused a Battery of 3 Long 18 Pounder Guns to be constructed for the support of our position abreast of little Chazy where the supplies for the Army were ordered to be landed.

The Fleet came up on the 8th Instant but for want of Stores for the Equipment of the Guns could not move forward until the 11th— At daylight we weighed and at 7 were in full view of the Enemy's Fleet, consisting of a Ship, Brig, Schooner and one Sloop, moored in line, abreast of their encampment, with a Division of 5 Gun Boats on Each Flank;— at 7.40 after the Officers Commanding Vessels and the Flotilla had received their final instructions, as to the plan of attack; we made sail in order of Battle, Capt. Downie had determined on laying his Ship athwart hawse of the Enemy's, directing Lieut. McGhee<sup>1</sup> of the *Chub* to support me in the *Linnet*, in engaging the Brig to the right, and Lieut. Hicks<sup>2</sup> of the *Finch* with the Flotilla of Gun Boats, to attack the Schooner & Sloop on the left of the Enemy's line.

At 8 the Enemy's Gun Boats and smaller Vessels commenced a heavy and galling fire on our Line, at 8.10 the *Confiance* having two Anchors shot away from her Larboard Bow, And the wind baffling was obliged to anchor (though not in the situation proposed) within two Cables length of her Adversary. The *Linnet* and *Chub* soon afterwards took their allotted Stations, something short of that distance, when the Crews on both sides cheered and commenced a spirited and close Action, a Short time however deprived me of the valuable services of Lieutenant McGhee who, from having his Cables, Bowsprit and Main Boom shot away drifted within the Enemy's line and was obliged to surrender. From the light airs and the smoothness of the water, the Fire on each side proved very destructive from the commencement of the Engagement, and with the Exception of the Brig, that of the Enemy, appeared united against the *Confiance*.

After two hours severe Conflict with our opponent; she cut her cable, run down, and took Shelter between the Ship and Schooner which enabled us to direct our fire against the Division of the Enemy's Gun Boats, and Ship, which had so long annoyed us, during our close Engagement with the Brig, without any return on our part: At this time, the fire of the Enemy's Ship slackened considerably, having several of her Guns dismounted—when she cut her Cable, and winded her Larboard Broadside to bear on the *Confiance* who, in vain endeavoured to effect the same Operation, at 10.30 I was much distressed to observe the *Confiance* had struck her Colours— The whole attention of the Enemy's Force then became directed towards the *Linnet*, the shattered and disable state

of the Masts sails, rigging and Yards, precluded the most distant hope of being able to effect an Escape by cutting the Cable, the result of doing so, must in a few minutes have been her drifting alongside the Enemy's Vessels, Close under our Lee—but in the hope that the Flotilla of Gun Boats who had abandoned the object assigned them would perceive our wants and come to our assistance, which would afford a reasonable prospect of being towed clear, I determined to resist the then destructive Cannonading of the whole of the Enemy's Fleet, and at the same time dispatched Lieutenant W. Drew to ascertain the state of the *Confiance*.

At 10.45 I was apprized of the irreparable loss she had sustained by the Death of her brave Commander (whose merits it would be presumption in me to Extol) as well as the great Slaughter which had taken place on board, and observing from the Manoeuvres of the Flotilla, that I could enjoy no further expectation of relief; the situation of my gallant Comrades, who had so nobly fought, and even now fast falling by my side, demanded the surrender of His Majesty's Brig entrusted to my Command, to prevent a useless waste of valuable lives, and, at the request of the surviving Officers & Men, I gave the painful orders for the Colours to be Struck.

Lieutenant Hicks of the *Finch* had the Mortification to strike on a reef of Rocks, to the Eastward of Crab Island, about the Middle of the Engagement; which prevented his rendering that assistance to the Squadron that might from an Officer of such ability have been expected.

The misfortune which this day befell us by Capture, will, Sir I trust Apologize for the lengthy detail, which in Justice to the Sufferers, I have deemed it necessary to give of the particulars which led to it; And when it is taken into consideration that the *Confiance* was Sixteen days before, on the Stocks, with an unorganized Crew, comprised of several Drafts of Men; who had recently arrived from different ships at Quebec, many of whom only joined the day before, and were totally unknown either to the Officers or to each other, with the want of Gun Locks as well as other necessary appointments, not to be procured in this Country; I trust you will feel satisfied of the decided advantage the Enemy possessed, Exclusive of their great superiority in point of force, a comparative Statement of which I have the honor to annex.— It now becomes the most pleasing part of my present duty, to notice to you, the determined skill and bravery of the Officers and men in this unequal Contest, but it grieves me to State, that the loss sustained in Maintaining it, has been so great; that of the Enemy, I understand amounts to something more than the same number.—

The fine style in which Captain Downie conducted the Squadron into Action amidst a tremendous fire, without returning a Shot, until secured, reflects the greatest credit to his Memory, for his Judgment and coolness as also on Lieuts. McGhee & Hicks so strictly attending to his Example and instructions, their own accounts of the Capture of their respective Vessels, as well as that of Lieutenant Robertson,<sup>3</sup> who succeeded to the Command of the *Confiance*, will, I feel assured, do ample Justice to the Merits of the Officers and Men serving under their immediate Command, but I cannot omit noticing the individual Conduct of Lieutenants Robertson, Creswick and Hornby, and Mr. Bryden Master,<sup>4</sup> for their particular Exertion in Endeavouring to bring the *Confiance*'s Starboard side to bear on the Enemy, after most of their guns were dismounted on the other.

It is impossible for me to Express to you, my Admiration of the Officers and Crew serving under my personal Orders, their coolness and steadiness, the effect of which was proved by their irresistible fire, directed towards the Brig opposed to us, claims my warmest acknowledgements, but more particularly for preserving the same, so long after the whole strength of the Enemy had been directed against the *Linnet* alone, my 1st Lieutenant Mr. William Drew, whose merits I have before had the honor to report to you, behaved on this occasion in the most exemplary manner. By the death of Mr. Paul,<sup>5</sup> Acting 2nd Lieutenant the Service has been deprived of a most Valuable and brave Officer, he fell early in the Action, Great Credit is due to Mr. Giles,<sup>6</sup> Purser, for Volunteering his Services on deck, to Mr. Mitchell,<sup>7</sup> surgeon for the Skill he evinced in performing some amputations required at the moment as well as his great attention to the Wounded during the Action, at the close of which the Water was nearly a foot above the lower Deck, from the number of shot which struck her, between Wind and Water.—I have to regret the loss of the Boatswain Mr. Jackson, who was killed a few minutes before the Action terminated.

The assistance I received from Mr. Muckle the Gunner and also from Mr. Clarke, Master's Mate, Messrs. Fowke and Sinclair, Midshipmen,<sup>8</sup> the latter of whom was wounded on the head and Mr. Guy my Clerk, will, I hope, recommend them, as well as the whole of my gallant little Crew, to Your Notice.

I have much Satisfaction in making you acquainted with the humane treatment the wounded have received from Commodore McDonogh.

They were immediately removed to his own Hospital on Crab Island, and were furnished with every requisite. His generous and polite attention also to myself, the Officers and Men, will ever hereafter be gratefully remembered.

Enclosed I beg leave to transmit you the statement of the different Commanding Officers of Vessels relative to the circumstances attending their capture, also the Return of killed & Wounded, and I have honor to be [&c.]

(Signed) Dan. Pring  
Captain  
late of H.M. Sloop *Linnet*

Wood, *Select British Documents*, Vol. 3, pp. 368–73.

1. Lieutenant James McGhie, R.N., commander of H.M. sloop *Chub*.
2. Acting Lieutenant William Hicks, R.N., commander of H.M. brig *Finch*.
3. Acting Lieutenant James Robertson, R.N., commander of H.M. gunboat *Beresford*.
4. Mentioned were Acting Lieutenant Charles Creswick, R.N.; Acting Lieutenant W. Hornby, R.N.; and Master Robert A. Brydon, R.N.
5. Acting Lieutenant William Paul, R.N., killed in action.
6. Purser James P. Giles, R.N.
7. Assistant Surgeon James Mitchell, R.N.
8. Midshipmen Richard Fowke, R.N., and John Sinclair, R.N.

[Enclosure]  
Copy

United States Ship of War  
*Saratoga* off Plattsburg  
12th September 1814.

Sir,

In compliance with your Commands that I should relate the circumstances which led to the surrender of His Majesty's late Ship *Confiance*, I have the hon-

our to acquaint you that, in leading into the Action, the small bower Anchor was shot from the bows, and when the spare Anchor was let go, the Cable was shot away—the best bower was then let go, the spring on which suffered the same fate— About 15 minutes after we commenced the Action, our gallant Commander, Captain Downie, was mortally wounded, and only lived to be carried below. The Action was kept up with Great Spirit a considerable time afterwards, and until the Enemy's Ship was Silenced and he found it necessary by means of his Springs to bring his other broadside to bear on us. The Enemy's Brig at the same time finding her situation too warm, cut her cable, and anchored again in a position so as to enable her to do us much injury.

Our loss, at this time, amounted to a great number in Killed and Wounded, and on the side opposed to the Enemy we had nine long Guns two Carronades and the pivot Gun disabled; on the other side, three long Guns and two Carronades.

It then became absolutely necessary to shift our broadside, and a Spring was accordingly got on the Cable for the purpose, and our broadside was nearly got to bear on the Enemy again, when the Ship's Company declared they would stand no longer to their Quarters, nor could the Officers with their utmost exertions rally them.

The concentrated fire of the whole of the Enemy's Squadron and Flotilla of Gun Boats had been then, for some time directed against the *Confiance*, and the Ship's Company had until now kept up the Action with as much Spirit as could be expected from men unacquainted with each other and with their Officers, and in a Ship which had been sixteen days before, on the Stocks. I had previous to this ordered a Boat to inform you of the fate of Captain Downie, but I found that both our boats were shot from the Stern— Our Gun Boats were, at this time, at a distance from the Action, and when I ordered the Signal to be made for them to engage Closer, the Signal book, in consequence of the Captain's Death, had been mislaid.

The Ship was making Water very fast. The Rigging, Spars and hull completely Shattered; upwards of forty men killed, and the wind from that Quarter as not to admit of the smallest prospect of escaping, had the ship been in a condition. It was my own opinion and that of the Officers, that keeping up the Colours any longer would be a Wanton and useless waste of human blood, I was therefore under the most distressing circumstances that an Officer could be placed in compelled to order the colours to be struck.

It would be presumption in me to attempt saying anything of the merits of my late brave and meritorious Captain—they are too well known to require any Commendation of mine as well as those of Captain Anderson of the Marines who likewise fell performing the duty of a Gallant Officer; as did Mr. Gunn, Midshipman,<sup>1</sup> a very promising Young Officer.

It now becomes my duty to advert to the surviving Officers whose conduct on the occasion merits a better fate, and the warmest Approbation of their Country, for their unceasing exertions during so destructive a fire; it would be an injustice to them were they not mentioned individually. Lieutenant Charles Creswick and Acting Lieutenant Hornsby<sup>2</sup> set the best example; Mr. Bryden, the Master Carrid the ship into Action in the most gallant style: Lieutenant Childs of the Marines,<sup>3</sup> and Fitzpatrick of the 39th Regiment distinguished themselves in encouraging their men—Messrs. Simmonds and Lee, Midshipman,<sup>4</sup> were particularly zealous, the former had passed his examination for a Lieutenant,

and is in my opinion very deserving of promotion; the latter was wounded in two places. Messrs. Dowie, Whitesides and Kooystra, young Midshipmen, conducted themselves uncommonly well. It would be injustice to pass over the humanity and attention paid by Mr. William Martin, Acting Surgeon, and Mr C. C. Todd, Assistant, to the numerous Wounded and at a time when the water was above the Gun room deck. The Warrant Officers conducted themselves to my satisfaction in their different Departments, I have not been able to ascertain the exact number of Killed and wounded— Thirty eight bodies were sent on shore for interment, besides those thrown overboard during the Action I have the honor to be &ca. &ca.

(Signed) James Robertson  
Late 1st Lieut. *Confiance*

Wood, *Select British Documents*, Vol. 3, pp. 373–77. Two other enclosures, "A Statement of the Enemy's Squadron engaged with His Majesty's late Squadron on Lake Champlain," and "Return of the Killed and Wounded on Board His Majesty's Late Squadron in Action with the Enemy's Squadron on Lake Champlain," are not printed here.

1. Midshipman William Gunn, R.N.
2. Acting Lieutenant William Hornby, R.N.
3. Lieutenant Joseph Childs, Royal Marines.
4. Midshipman Robert Lee, R.N.

CAPTAIN THOMAS MACDONOUGH TO SECRETARY OF THE NAVY JONES

U.S. Ship *Saratoga*  
Plattsburgh Bay Sept. 13th. 1814.

Sir,

I have the honor to give you the particulars of the action which took place on the 11th Inst. on this Lake.—

For several days the Enemy were on their way to Plattsburgh by Land and water, and it being well understood that an attack would be made at the same time by their land & naval forces, I determined to await at anchor the approach of the latter.—

At 8 A.M the look out boat announced the approach of the Enemy.— At 9 he anchor'd in a line ahead at about 300 yards distance from my line.— His Ship opposed to the *Saratoga*—his Brig to the *Eagle*, Capt Robt. Henly—his Gallies, thirteen in number, to the Schooner, Sloop, and a division of our Gallies.— One of his Sloops assisting their Ship & Brig—the other assisting their Gallies. Our remaining Gallies with the *Saratoga* and *Eagle*.—

In this situation the whole force, on both sides, became engaged—the *Saratoga* suffering much from the heavy fire of the *Confiance*.— I could perceive at the same time, however, that our fire was very destructive to her.— The *Ticonderoga*, Lt. Commt. Cassin, gallantly sustained her full share of the Action.— At  $\frac{1}{2}$  past 10 the *Eagle*, not able to bring her Guns to bear, cut her Cable and anchor'd in a more eligible position, between my ship and the *Ticonderoga*, where

she very much annoyed the Enemy, but unfortunately leaving me exposed to the galling fire from the Enemy's Brig.—

Our Guns on the starboard side, being nearly all dismounted, or not manageable, a Stern anchor was let go, the bower Cable cut, and the ship winded with a fresh broadside on the Enemys Ship, which soon after surrendered.— Our broadside was then sprung to bear on the Brig, which surrendered in about fifteen minutes after.—

The Sloop that was opposed to the *Eagle* had struck some time before and drifted down the line—the Sloop which was with their Gallies having struck also.— Three of their Gallies are said to be sunk, the others pulled off.— Our Gallies were about obeying with alacrity the signal to follow them, when all the Vessels were reported to me to be in a sinking state—it then became necessary to annul the signal to the Gallies, and order their men now to the Pumps.—

I could only look at the Enemy's gallies going off in a shatter'd condition, for there was not a Mast in either squadron that could stand to make sail on; the lower rigging, being nearly all shot away, hung down as though it had been just placed over the mast heads.—

The *Saratoga* had Fifty five round Shot in her Hull—the *Confiance* One hundred & five.— The Enemy's shot passed principally just over our heads, as their were not 20 whole hammocks in the nettings at the close of the action, which lasted without intermission Two hours & twenty minutes.—

The absence and sickness of Lt. Raymond Perry left me without the services of that excellent Officer—much ought fairly to be attributed to him for his great care and attention in disciplining the Ships crew, as her first Lieutenant.— His place was filled by a gallant young Officer Lt. Peter Gamble,<sup>1</sup> who I regret to inform you, was killed early in the action.—

Acting Lt. Vallette worked the 1st. & 2nd. divisions of Guns with able effect.— Sailing Master Brum's<sup>2</sup> attention to the Springs, and in the execution of the order to Wind the Ship, and occasionally at the Guns, meets with my entire approbation,— also Capt. Youngs<sup>3</sup> comm'g the acting marines, who took his men to the Guns.—

Mr. Beale, Purser, was of great service at the Guns, and in carrying my Orders throughout the Ship, with midshipman Montgomery.<sup>4</sup>—

Master's Mate, Joshua Justin, had command of the 3rd division—his conduct during the action was that of a brave and correct Officer.— Midshipmen Monteath, Graham, Williamson, Platt, Thwing, and Act'g Mids: Baldwin, all behaved well, and gave evidence of their making valuable Officers.<sup>5</sup>

The *Saratoga* was twice set on fire by hot Shot from the Enemy's Ship.—

I close, Sir, this communication with feelings of gratitude for the able support I received from every officer and man attached to the Squadron which I have the honor to command.— I have the honor to be with great respect, Sir, Yr Mot. obt. St.

T. Macdonough

P.S. accompanying this is a list of Killed & wounded, a list of Prisoners & a precise statement of both forces engaged—Also letters from Capt Henly & Lt. Commt. Cassin.—

T. Macdonough

1. Lieutenant Peter Gamble entered naval service 16 January 1809; promoted lieutenant 17 March 1814.

2. Sailing Master Philip Brum, warranted 15 February 1813.

3. Captain White Youngs, 15th Infantry U.S.A.; brevetted major 11 September 1814 for gallant conduct in the defense of Plattsburg.

4. Purser George Beale, commissioned 24 July 1813; and Midshipman Lawrence Montgomery, appointed 17 December 1810. After 1815 the latter appears as "Nathaniel" and "N. L. Montgomery" in the navy registers.

5. Mentioned were Master's Mate Joshua Justin, Midshipmen Walter N. Monteath, John H. Graham, Charles L. Williamson, Charles T. Platt, and Samuel Thwing, and Acting Midshipman James M. Baldwin.

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

Secret

Hd. Qrs. Montreal  
16th Septr. 1814

Sir

By referring you to the accompanying General Order I shall spare myself a painful narrative of the disastrous event which befell the Lake Champlain Flotilla on the 11th. Int. off Plattsburg and which arrested the promising career of the Left Division into the State of New York. My views were to establish the Army at Plattsburg and to detach from thence a Brigade for the destruction of Vergennes & its Naval establishment. The melancholy fate of our Vessels blasted these intentions and compelled me to bring back the Troops nearer to their supplies.—

The impracticability of carrying on any operations without a sufficient Naval cooperation has caused me to turn the whole of my attention to Upper Canada in hopes to be enabled to inflict on the Enemy in that quarter the chastisement they so richly deserve.—

Sir James Yeo's report of the *St. Lawrence* having been launched in safety on the 10th. restores the hopes I have long cherished that Sackets Harbour, almost the only object now to be cared for, may be attacked with certain success provided the means & force we possess can be conveyed there— The impending blow must be struck the moment the Right Division has been relieved by the supplies which the Fleet is in the first instance to convey to it— My only apprehension is that by the time that service has been performed, the Season of the year may prove too unfavorable for so serious an undertaking—a design pregnant with such result, if successful cannot fail to fill the Enemy with despair & dismay & should be indefatigably followed up until accomplished I am well aware that Presquile is next in consideration to Sackets Harbour but it presents great difficulties yet without the destruction of the Lake Erie Fleet, every Military operation within our reach is cramped & paralized but more of that when Sackets Harbor falls.—

When I contemplate the first mentioned Service I cannot but indulge a hope that the expulsion of the Enemy from Fort Erie will add to the means of undertaking it.— The high military character which Major General Kemp<sup>1</sup> has brought with him induced me to entrust to him conjointly with Commodore Sir James Yeo the previous arrangements of an Expedition of so important a nature and as he shews talents fitting him for the task you will readily afford him your support.—

One great embarrassment still exists & that arises from the insufficiency of the Dépôt of Provisions at Kingston & my inability to encrease it whilst the Navy continue to require so considerable a proportion of our means of Transport for the armament & equipment of the large Ship to which objects, all others have hitherto given way.— I have &c.

(Signed) George Prevost

LB, CaOOA, British Military and Naval Records, RG8, I, "C" Ser., Vol. 1222, pp. 194-96.

1. Major General James Kempt, British army, was ordered to Canada to command a brigade sent there from Bordeaux, France.

SECRETARY OF THE NAVY JONES TO CAPTAIN THOMAS MACDONOUGH

Thomas Macdonough Esqr.  
Commanding the US Naval Force  
on Lake Champlain Plattsburg.

Navy Department  
Septemr. 19th. 1814.

Sir

The glorious victory you have achieved, having secured the tranquil and permanent command of the Lake, by the annihilation of the force of your adversary; you will with the utmost possible dispatch, detach from 250 to 300 of your best men including a proportion of petty officers, to Sackets Harbour, by the same route that General Izard pursued.— One Commissioned Officer will be sufficient to accompany the detachment. Their early arrival at the Harbour, will be of the utmost importance to the service, and I am sure you will omit no effort to accomplish it. very respectfully, your Obedt. Servt.

W Jones.

LB, DNA, RG45, CLS, 1814, p. 184.

Moving Major General Izard's Army

Major General George Izard took command of the Right Division of the U.S. Army at Plattsburg in April 1814. On 2 August he received orders from Secretary of War Armstrong to march his army westward toward Sackets Harbor, either to attack Kingston in conjunction with the navy, or to reinforce Major General Brown's army on the Niagara peninsula. These poorly-timed orders left the New York border short on troops.

Major General Izard's army of some 4,000 men began its march on 29 August, arriving at Sackets Harbor on 17 September. Commodore Chauncey's fleet took on board some 3,000 men and transported them to the Genesee River, arriving 21 September. Izard assumed command on the Niagara peninsula and the armies were combined.<sup>1</sup>

1. Quimby, U.S. Army in the War of 1812, pp. 602-8; Whitehorne, While Washington Burned, pp. 84-89.

## COMMODORE ISAAC CHAUNCEY TO SECRETARY OF THE NAVY JONES

No. 155.

U.S. Ship *Superior* off Stoney Island  
17th. September 1814.

Sir.

On the 11th. Inst. having the wind from the Northward and a fine breeze and a clear day, I detached the *Lady of the Lake* for the Harbour and beat (with the four ships) close in with Kingston, hove too and hoisted our Colours, the enemy shewed his colours and sprung his ships in line to receive us, but evinced no disposition to come out altho Superior.

We had a fine view of his works which appeared extensive, particularly the one on Sugar loaf Hill. The Town and Navy Yard appeared well defended with redoubts and Block Houses and the whole picketed in.

Their new ship<sup>1</sup> was launched and appeared to have her mizen mast in, but as her Hull was screened by some buildings on navy point, we could not discover the state of preparations she was in— I think however that in all probability that she will be ready for service about the first of October.

The wind which had been moderate during the 11th., that night and the following day increased to a severe gale attended with thick weather and heavy rains. The fleet in consequence was drove from its Station before Kingston into the Lake where we remained (most of the time under reefed foresail, and close reefed main topsail) until the 15 when it moderated and I was joined by the *Lady of the Lake* from Sackets Harbour with Major Brown<sup>2</sup> onboard bearing a letter from Major General Izard informing me of his arrival at that post.

I pressed upon the ships all the sail they could bear in order to gain an anchorage to communicate with General Izard to know his views and wishes. Owing however to the winds continuance from the Eastward I did not arrive at this anchorage before yesterday morning, and last evening I received the letter from General Izard marked No. 3. which has determined me to run into Sackets Harbour this morning to offer the General all the assistance in my power. Immediately on the receipt of the Generals Letter last evening I dispatched the *Lady of the Lake* to "Presque Isle" ordering captain Elliott to join me as soon as possible at the Harbor with the *Sylph* and *Conquest*.

I enclose herewith copies of the letters that have passed between General Izard and myself since I had the honor of addressing you last.

The Ships behaved uncommonly well in the late gale, they are stiff and very fine Sea Boats, and bore their mettle as well as any ships I have ever been in. I have the honor to be Very Respectfully Sir Your Most obed Hble servt.

Isaac Chauncey

LS, DNA, RG45, CL, 1814, Vol. 6, No. 64 (M125, Roll No. 39).

1. H.M.S. *Saint Lawrence*.

2. Major Samuel Brown, U.S.A., deputy quartermaster general.

[Enclosure]

Copy

No. 3.

Commodore Chauncey &amp;c. &amp;c. &amp;c.

Sackets Harbour  
September 16th. 1814

Sir,

Major Brown has just now delivered me your note of this date; I regret that mine of which he was the bearer, did not reach you twenty four Hours sooner, as I should then have been able to accept your obliging invitation to visit you on board of the fleet,— but the troops have this morning arrived, and my presence here is at present indespensable.

Until the last communication which has been made me by M Genl. Brown under date the 11 Inst., I was impressed with the belief that an expedition might be undertaken with Success to the Head of the Lake, which might embrace among other objects the attack of Fort Niagara. But it seems that he is very closely pressed by the enemy in his position and considers the arrival of my division to his relief as of the utmost importance. In this view it has become my duty to hasten to his assistance and to proceed with the least possible delay to Buffalo. The only doubt remaining is, whether the transportation of my force by water to the mouth of Genessee River, or some other point in that Vicinity will expedite my movement more than a continuance of my march by Land. In either case the train of the army must be sent to Onondago, as so many Horses cannot be conveyed in the vessels provided here.

The uncertainty as to the time of arrival, should we go by water, is balanced by the great fatigue incident to the Length & badness of the route. Permit me then to rest my division upon the answer to this Question, which I beg leave to propose to you Whether the naval means at your command are sufficient and prepared to take onboard 4,000 men on the morning of the 18: Instant (the day after tomorrow) and convey them to the mouth of Genessee River? If your opinion be in the affirmative, the troops will be ready for embarkation at Sun rise on that day— if it should be otherwise, we shall march to morrow afternoon or the following morning. Accept, Sir, the assurances of Respect & esteem with which I am your most obed & humble servt.

(signed) Geo Izard

Copy, DNA, RG45, CL, 1814, Vol. 6, No. 64, enclosure (M125, Roll No. 39).

[Enclosure]

Copy

No. 4

Sir

U.S. Ship *Superior* off Stoney Island  
Friday evening 16th. Sepr. 1814

I was this evening honored with your favour of this days date, and in answer to the question therein propounded "Whether the naval means at my command are Sufficient and prepared to take onboard 4,000 men on the morning of the 18th. Inst. and carry them to the mouth of Genessee river." I answer that the naval force under my command (and on this station) is not Sufficient to receive 4,000 men: but all the means that I have, shall be ready to receive as many

of your troops on the morning of the 18th. as we can accommodate and transport them to Genesee river or any other point on Lake Ontario that you may wish to land them at—probably the vessels that are at present in this vicinity could accommodate from 1500 to 2000 men—you will judge whether it is advisable to separate your force or not. at any rate I have ordered the vessels cruising off "Presque Isle" to rejoin me immediately and I shall run into the Harbor with this fleet tomorrow morning, and be prepared to afford you every assistance within my power. I have the honor to be with great consideration and respect  
Sir your most obedient Humble servant

signed Isaac Chauncey

Major Genl. George Izard  
commdg. the troops &c. &c &c S. Harbor.

Copy, DNA, RG45, CL, 1814, Vol. 6, No. 64, enclosure (M125, Roll No. 39).

COMMODORE ISAAC CHAUNCEY TO SECRETARY OF THE NAVY JONES

No. 161. U.S. Ship *Superior* off Stoney Island  
24th. Septr. 1814.—

Sir:

Owing to the Severity of the Storm we did not leave Sackets Harbor before the morning of the 21st. Inst., at the request of General Izard, I steered for the mouth of Genesee River, arrived there the next morning landed the Troops (3000) and Sailed that Evening, on my return, and Anchored here this morning. As soon as I can send the Gun Boats and small Craft (that we took up to land the Troops) to the Harbor, I shall resume my station off Kingston.

I left Lieut. Deacon in charge of the Schooners with orders to return to Sackets Harbor as soon as the Wind would allow him to get out of the River.—

The *Ontario* (which had been missing since the 12th. Inst.) I fell in with on my passage up the Lake, this Vessel had been sent to the Ducks with provisions for the Fleet, was drove out on the Lake by the Gale which commenced on the Morning of the 12th. Split her Sails, and drifted more than a hundred Miles up the Lake, however by the exertions of Midn. Evans<sup>1</sup> (who had charge of her) he got into Oswego a few hours before the second gale, on the 18th. commenced, there he repaired his Sails, and was on his return when I fell in with him.—

Mr. Evans together with his companions (six in number) deserve much credit, for their exertions in saveing this Vessel, during so severe a gale; he had previously lost his Anchors and Boat at the Ducks. I have the honor to be Very respectfully Sir Your most obdt. Hmble. Servt.

Isaac Chauncey

LS, DNA, RG45, CL, 1814, Vol. 6, No. 95 (M125, Roll No. 39).

1. Midshipman John Evans, appointed 17 December 1810.

COMMODORE ISAAC CHAUNCEY TO SECRETARY OF THE NAVY JONES

No. 167.

U.S. Ship *Superior* off the Ducks,  
1st. Octobr. 1814.

Sir,

On the 28th. Ult. at daylight we discovered two of the Enemy's ships standing out of Kingston under a press of Sail, as soon as they discovered us, they hove too, the Wind being fresh from the Northward and Eastward, and fair to leave Kingston, I was impressed with a belief that Sir James had got his large Ship ready, and that he was comeing out with his whole fleet. I immediately made Sail in order to gain the Wind, but as soon as we tacked for them, the Enemys Ships filled, made Sail on a Wind, and soon after tacked from us, the Weather being hazy it soon become so thick a fog, that we could not discover objects more than a hundred yards, I however continued to beat to Windward, and late in the afternoon it cleared up for a short time, when we discovered the Enemys two Ships outside of Nine mile point, but as soon as he discovered that we had neared him considerably and in a situation to cut him off from Kingston if he ventur'd farther out, he immediately made all Sail and beat in to his Anchorage.—

As no other part of the enemy's Squadron made their appearance and these two Ships from their Manouvers evidently wished to escape us, it struck me that the enemy had learnt the movement of General Izard up the Lake, and apprehending an attack upon General Drummon's Army (which probably also was distressed for provisions,) had induced him to put on board of these two Ships, Troops and provisions and risque them for the relief of his Army upon the Niagara frontier, the Wind and thick foggy weather also favor'd such a movement.— I determined to frustrate his design's if possible, soon after Sundown I anchor'd the Fleet between the Galooes and Grenedear Island, for the purpose of keeping them together, and put Lieutenant Skinner with an additional number of men on board of the *Lady of the Lake* with orders to Anchor between Pigeon and Snake Islands, and if he discovered any movement of the Enemy, to make me a Signal with rockets or guns of his number &c. It continued a thick fog during the Night, the enemy made no movement, and the next morning (29th.) the Weather cleared up with the Wind to the Westward, Weighed with the fleet and stood in for Kingston untill we open'd the Town, sent the *Lady of the Lake* close in to reconnoitre and assertain the state of forwardness of the new Ship, Lieut. Skinner found her haul'd off in the Stream, and completely rigged, but Sails not bent, four other Ships and a large Schooner laying also in the Stream and apparently ready to Sail.—

From present appearances I have no doubt but the enemy will be on the Lake, with his whole force in the course of a Week, and I think his first movement will be against Sackets Harbor, because he cannot be ignorant of its present weakness, besides at this time, he must have a large disposeable force, and no doubt, will attempt to retrieve at Sackets Harbor, what he lost at Plattsburgh. I hope however that he will meet with the same gallant resistance upon this Lake that he experienced on Lake Champlain. I have the honor to be Very respectfully Sir, Your most obdt. Hmble. Servt.

Isaac Chauncey

LS, DNA, RG45, CL, 1814, Vol. 6, No. 114 (M125, Roll No. 39).

## COMMODORE ISAAC CHAUNCEY TO SECRETARY OF THE NAVY JONES

No. 174

U.S. Ship *Superior*  
Sacketts Harbor 12th. Octo. 1814—

Sir

The defences of this place are not such as they ought to be considering its importance—they have been placed without plan or connexion.—

General Gaines while here and Colonel Mitchel since the command devolved on him have done every thing to connect the Works on the Land Side that could be done with the limited means they possessed

Upon examination I find that I cannot moor the fleet in any situation where more than four Guns from the different batteries can be brought to bear upon the Enemy after he anchors Ship to Ship, but on his approach he will be exposed to the fire of nearly all the batteries which will greet him with hot Shot and I hope with effect— Col. Mitchel has very much improved Fort Tompkins on the West side where we have 5-32 Pounders mounted I am now adding a redoubt on the east side where I shall mount four heavy Guns which will rake the Enemy's line after he anchors.—

Fort Tompkins will be manned with Seamen and Marines under the command of Major Smith of the Marine Corps and I have no doubt will be defended to the last.—

The effective Troops left for the defence of this place consist of 330 artillery 460. Infantry (the latter principally recruits left in place of veterans) and about 2000 Militia which desert by companies General Collins<sup>1</sup> appears to be a good Officer and disposed to do every thing in his power to provide for the defence of this Post but it is out of his power to make Soldiers of Militia in the short space of a few Weeks.—

Sacketts Harbor I believe is admitted to be a place of considerable importance to the Nation, at this time particularly, as its fall involves the destruction of this fleet—why it has been left with so few regular troops with the knowledge of the enemy's intentions of attacking it both by Sea and Land is best known to the Generals whose duty it was to provide for its defence.—

The Officers and Men whom I have the honor to command will do their duty and they feel a confidence that if the place could be maintained that the Enemy's fleet would be repulsed and possibly destroyed but if the works are carried and the Guns from the Shore turned upon us even after the Enemy's fleet should be worsted, our's would be in no situation to get under weigh to avoid the fire from the Batteries on Shore and must therefore inevitably fall.—

I do not wish to be thought an alarmist but conceive it to be my duty to acquaint you with the true situation of this place that you may make such application to the Secretary at War for reinforcements as in your judgement would be right and proper— it would be improper in me to make any pledge in advance but I think I should be safe in assuring you that the fleet of Ontario will be defended in such a manner as will satisfy the Department I have the honor to be very respectfully Sir, Yr. mo. ob. st.

Isaac Chauncey

LS, DNA, RG45, CL, 1814, Vol. 7, No. 28 (M125, Roll No. 40).

1. Brigadier General Oliver Collins, 13th Brigade of Infantry, New York Militia.

## SECRETARY OF WAR MONROE TO MAJOR GENERAL GEORGE IZARD, U.S.A.

War Department, October 24th. 1814

Sir,

I have received your letter of the 16th. of this month.

It appears doubtful by it whether you will be able to force the Enemy from his present position, so as to make any farther impression on him before the Campaign closes,— and as Commodore Chauncy is not a match for the Enemy on the Lakes, and the successes heretofore gained on the strait and the pressure now made on General Drummond may draw there, Sir George Prevost, in great force, to his aid, it becomes an object to look to your own safety, and that of the Country Westward of you, more especially the post of Detroit. Equally important is it, to look to the safety of Sacketts Harbour which seems to be eminently exposed by the ascendancy which the Enemy have gained on the Lake by its own weakness, the great force which the Enemy either have or may soon have at Kingston—and your distance from it, with the main Army of the United States.

Heretofore I thought it most advisable as I remarked to you in my letter to suffer the movement which had been given by my predecessor to go on, and to strengthen the posts which were most exposed in consequence of it.

The Governor of New York was called on for such aids in militia as would secure Plattsburg, Sacketts harbor and Fort Erie; not knowing as you depended on the Flotilla for your Conveyance up the Lake, when you might arrive at the point of your destination, General McArthur was instructed to send a detachment of One thousand regular troops from Detroit to its aid, and not wishing to press too much on the militia of New York, the Governor of Vermont was requested to send a strong detachment of the militia of that State to Plattsburg—I was happy to find that these views had been anticipated in a great measure by the Governors of those States, and to receive assurances from them of their continued exertions in support of our Operations in those quarters.

If it should be practicable to demolish the Army before you, it would certainly be a happy event—the good effects of it would be felt thro' the whole northern and Western frontier, along the Coast, and in Europe.—

It is impossible at this distance to give an Opinion of the propriety of such an attempt. The President entertains full Confidence in your Judgment that you will omit nothing justified by a well founded prospect of success nor attempt any thing attended with great risk—always recollecting that the preservation of the Troops we now have is important, not only for the protection of our frontier thro' the Winter but as a School of instruction and a model for the much greater Army which it is contemplated to raise.

As soon as the Enemy perceives that your Offensive operations are suspended on the strait; should that be the case and General Drummond secure, he will probably attempt Sacketts Harbour—if not previously—that post is deplorably weak— Its importance is well known to you— It constitutes in a manner the principal Head Quarters of our northern frontier— I have to request on the receipt of this letter in case the state of affairs on the strait will permit it that you either repair thither in person or detach General Brown to take the Command as you may deem most expedient. The great interest depending there, and the critical posture of affairs, admits of no delay in providing for the Safety of that post which it is thought will best be done by either you or General Brown taking immediate charge of it.

The next distant object to be attended to, is Detroit— It was expected that the regular troops brought thence lately to Erie would be sent back before the

winter set in— It is apprehended that, that post will be exposed to much danger in the course of the Winter, not from the Indians only but from more serious expectations, consisting of regular troops set on foot from below— How far this may be practicable regarding the position which we may hold on the Strait during the Winter and other circumstances on which movements from below must depend, you will best be able to judge— If the 1,000 men can be spared with Safety, to other objects—the President prefers that they be sent back to Detroit— he leaves this however to your Judgment.

You will apprise General McArthur of your decision as soon as taken, whether it be to detain or send them back.

LB, DNA, RG107, Letters Sent by the Secretary of War Relating to Military Affairs, Vol. 7, pp. 388–90 (M6, Roll No. 7).

## A Shipbuilder's War

The launching of H.M.S. Saint Lawrence on 10 September 1814 changed the scope of operations on Lake Ontario. That vessel, a first-rate ship of the line, 194 feet on the gun deck, pierced for 102 guns in three tiers, escalated the shipbuilding contest on that inland sea.

Commodore Chauncey would argue for building three 80-gun ships of the line during the winter of 1814–15 to match the strength of Saint Lawrence. A continuation of the war on that scale, however, would bankrupt the public treasury and require enormous numbers of seamen that were no longer available through illness, deaths in service, or their recruitment by the army or privateers. Additional shipbuilding on Lake Ontario would mean taking men and supplies from the eastern seaboard and from ocean-going vessels, actions that would result in a political and public outcry.

The low state of public finance in the United States, and the realization that the numbers of seamen who could actually be recruited were limited, forced Secretary of the Navy Jones to weigh other alternatives. One proposal that had to be considered was simply to abandon Lake Ontario and rely on cutting off the British supply line above Montreal. Another proposal was the construction of three floating steam batteries on the plan of Fulton the First, which was nearing completion at New York. Despite the navy secretary's belief that a continuation of the shipbuilder's war on Lake Ontario was strategically and financially unsound, President Madison ordered the construction of the new ships of the line for that station to proceed.<sup>1</sup>

1. Brant, James Madison, Vol. 6, pp. 345–46.

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

No. 34

H.M.S. *Saint Lawrence*  
Kingston 14th. October 1814

Sir

My letter to you No. 26, will have informed Their Lordships of the Safe Launch of this Ship—which, I have now the satisfaction of reporting, Completely Equipped—And will proceed up the Lake tomorrow— The Enemy's



Squadron of Ten sail are now off Sackett's, and whether They will engage, or not, is uncertain: If They do—I have reason to hope, a Complete Victory—as I think it impossible, any of Their Vessels can withstand the fire of this Ship—Should They seek shelter under Their Batteries, I have the satisfaction of having (by means of this Ship) gained the Superiority of the Lake

I am most anxious for Their Lordships' approval of my Conduct, in Building so large a Ship, without Their previous instructions, which, it was impossible to receive, in time,— I therefore have acted to the best of my Judgement, for the good of the Service;— and am convinced in my own mind, that nothing less, would have obtained the most important object, that, of the Naval Superiority on Lake Ontario—

It is impossible to describe the prodigious labour, and difficulty, we have had in Equipping this Ship;— from having to get all our supplies, from Quebec, and Montreal;— to give Their Lordships some idea of the Navigation of the River, between This, and Montreal I need only mention, the time which it took, to bring up the frame of the Frigate, B, which only arrived the end of September, having been, upwards of Three Months, from that Place—

I would strongly recommend all Stores and Supplies, which may be sent, for the Naval Service of the Lakes, being Shipped in Vessels of a light draught of water, (say 12 feet) which would enable them to come up to Montreal, and remove the Necessity of keeping any Stores, or Establishment, at Quebec,— In the Spring of the Year, when the first Convoys arrive, the Wind is always to the Eastward, and Vessels can run up to Montreal in a few hours,— without waiting at Quebec,— whereas, if They have to unload at the latter place, and ship the Stores in small craft, it causes such delay that the Wind sets in from the Westward—and They frequently are Two Months reaching Montreal—

I have also to inform Their Lordships, that I am making Arrangements for building a Ship of 24. or 26 Guns, on Lake Huron, which, with the Two Schooners lately captured by Lieutenant Worsley, and a few Gun Boats, will ensure the Naval Ascendancy in that Quarter.— As to Lake Erie, in the present state of the war, it would be impossible to establish a Naval Force on that Lake,— nor is it, in my opinion, near so important as Lake Huron—on account of the Indians.

I am sorry to say, we have suffered severely by Sickness, chiefly Dysentery, few have escaped an Attack—and the Mortality has been very great— I have, for this reason, been obliged to detain a greater Number of Marines, to enable me to man the Ships—

I particularly request, that any Seamen, Their Lordships may send to this Country in the Spring, may be Strong and hale Men, as none others can stand the extraordinary, and constant change of Climate, peculiar to this Country—

I am happy to say, Nothing can exceed the Zeal, and good Conduct, of the Seamen and Marines—it has been a source of great comfort to me, and I feel infinitely obliged to the Captains and Officers, for the Pains they have taken to keep Their Crews in such Excellent subordination.—

Captain Hall<sup>1</sup> has arrived, and I expect him here, hourly;

Their Lordships will have heard of the Capture of the *Stranger* Transport, with Ordnance and Naval Stores,<sup>2</sup>— but which, I am happy to say, I shall not feel the loss of, this Year—

To guard against Accidents, I have applied to Captain Upton<sup>3</sup> of the *Junon* for his Main Deck Guns—

I have the honor to Enclose a Statement of the Number of Seamen, which will be required to be sent from England, in the Spring, for the service of the Lakes—Also the Dimensions of His Majesty's Ship *Saint Lawrence*. 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. 221–23. In his first enclosure (fol. 225), Yeo requested a total of 868 seamen for service on the lakes in 1815, 310 for service on Lake Huron, 250 for "Frigate B" building at Kingston, and 300 to replace men from the *Junon* and transports who were temporarily serving on Lake Ontario. The second enclosure (fol. 226) gave dimensions for H.M.S. *St. Lawrence*, which was 194 feet on the gun deck, 171'6" keel, 52'5" breadth, and 11'6" depth. She weighed 2304 tons burthen with a draught of 12' afore and 15' abeam, and carried 102 guns on three decks.

1. Captain Sir Robert Hall, R.N.
2. H.M. transport *Stranger*, carrying ordnance for the northern lakes, was captured by the Portsmouth, N.H., privateer *Fox*, Samuel H. Handy, on 8 September.
3. Captain Clotworthy Upton, R.N.

GOVERNOR-GENERAL SIR GEORGE PREVOST TO  
SECRETARY OF STATE FOR WAR AND THE COLONIES EARL BATHURST

No. 200

Kingston 18th. October 1814

My Lord

The American Government having availed itself of the Naval Ascendancy it possessed on Lake Ontario and on Lake Erie to bring from Sackets Harbour and Detroit on board its vessels considerable reinforcements and extensive supplies to Major Genl. Browns Army occupying Buffaloe and Fort Erie Lieut. Genl. Drummond's situation with scanty resources for the support of a Force reduced by Sickness and contests was becoming daily more critical.— The State of the Roads from hence to York being represented as impracticable for that movement of any considerable number of men or any adequate quantity of Provisions— I had nothing to hope for the Lieut. Genl's. relief but from the exertions of Sir James Yeo.— On the 12th. Inst. a reconnoissance pushed into the neighbourhood of Sackets Harbour returned with intelligence that Commodore Chauncey's Ships were anchored under the Batteries indicating a disposition on his part to await there the result of the Superiority we had just obtained and in the event of an attack cooperate in the defence of the place,— In consequence Sir Jas. Yeo with difficulty consented to receive on board his Vessels\*<sup>1</sup> a Wing of the 90th. Regt. in addition to a small proportion of Ordnance stores and Provisions and Sailed from hence for Niagara on the 16th. Inst. leaving with me the assurance that he would return as soon as possible with as many of the Sick and disabled of the Right Division as were in a situation to be removed

and convey another and much more ample supply of Provisions Stores and Men previous to the closing of the Navigation

I have contemplated the Measures of the Aministration at Washington as originating in precaution against the effects to be produced by the Naval Ascendancy we were expected to acquire on Lake Ontario at an earlier period of the Year than has been the case— That the American Generals prompted by Confidence in their numerical Superiority and aware of my inability to reinforce the Right Division until our Squadron should take the Lake, may be induced to attack Lieut. Genl. Drummond at this moment, is in the opinion of that officer probable and he has made his dispositions accordingly with confidence that his Troops will in the event deserve the applause of their King and Country.—

An investigation of the state of the Stores at this post proved that the articles for the armament and equipment of a ship of the Class of the *St. Lawrence* carrying upwards of 100 Guns had absorbed almost the whole of the Summer Transport Service from Montreal leaving the Materials for an undertaking of the magnitude of the Destruction of Sackets Harbour still at the extremity of the Line of Communication and more by giving precedence to that supply of provisions and Stores without which an Army is no longer to be maintained in Upper Canada its removal is inevitably postponed until the Winter Roads are Established.—

Your Lordship has been long aware how unavoidably Military operations in this Country are combined with Naval Cooperation and unconditionally dependent upon it this conviction has excited a Struggle for ascendancy on the Water that has drawn forth on both sides a formidable array of Vessels that could never have been anticipated on these inland Seas, and the Naval Commanders have I am afraid in consequence been led to consider themselves as directing Squadrons which by a trial of strength were to decide the fate of the War forgetting their necessary Identity with the Land Force for the general prosperity of the Common cause.—<sup>2</sup>

Thus instead of that zealous, prompt, & cheerful cooperation so essential to the movement and very existence of H M's Troops on this widely extended frontier, every demand for the Transport either of Men or Stores, is considered as hampering the powers of the Fleet and endangering its safety.

As a partial remedy to this evil I beg leave to Suggest to your Lordship the expediency of a Transport Establishment on a Moderate Scale calculated to meet the ordinary demand for Conveyance which the Army may require by the Construction of a Sufficient number of small Vessels in the Dock Yard at Kingston to be manned by Seamen from the Fleet and placed in charge of an officer of the Navy as Agent of Transport, and I entreat that the necessary instructions may be given to the Commodore and Commander in Chief on the Lakes to carry this object into effect.— I have &c

(Signed) Geo: Prevost

1. Notation in the margin:

<i>St. Lawrence</i> —	110	Guns
<i>Prince Regent</i> —	58	—
<i>Prince Charlotte</i>	42	—
<i>Montreal</i> —	23	—
<i>Niagara</i> —	21	—
<i>Charwell</i> —	14	—
<i>Star</i> —	14	—
<i>Magnet</i> —	12	—
<i>Netley</i> —Burnt to avoid Capture	10	—
		<u>304</u>

} at York or Niagara

2. Notation in the margin (note that the actual number of guns adds up to 231):

Ships	<i>Superior</i> —	Guns
	<i>Mohawk</i>	60
	<i>Pike</i>	44
	<i>Madison</i>	28
Brigs	<i>Jefferson</i> —	24
	<i>Jones</i> —	22
	<i>Sylph</i> —	22
	<i>Oneida</i> —	16
Schr	<i>Lady of the Lake</i>	14
		230

SECRETARY OF THE NAVY JONES TO COMMODORE ISAAC CHAUNCEY

Commodore Isaac Chauncey  
Commanding US Naval Force  
on Lake Ontario, Sackets Harbour

Navy Department  
October 24, 1814.

Sir

The probable result of the Campaign on Lake Ontario demands the immediate decision of the Executive, upon the measures proper to be pursued in anticipation of the ensuing Campaign, and the prompt execution of the preparatory steps for constructing and completing for actual service by the time the Lake shall become navigable, a naval force decidedly superior to that of the enemy, including the accumulation of force which he may prepare during the interval.—

With the most perfect reliance upon your Skill, judgement, and patriotism, it is wished to derive information from your experience and observation upon the following points.—

1st. It is contemplated to build three Ships of the Line, of the following dimensions, Vizt.

190 feet between the perpendiculars—

52 feet moulded beam and of such depth as the harbour may admit, to have three flush gun decks, the lower battery 30 long 32 Pounders, the second bat-

tery 32, 24 Pounders and the spar deck battery 32 light 18s. or a mixed battery of long guns and heavy Carronades, as may be most conveniently procured.—

2d. Have you space, depth of Water, and foundation for the Slips proper to sustain and launch Ships of such magnitude, so that the whole may progress together?—

3d. Can all the materials of wood be procured with facility, and with the requisite despatch, and what other materials are there which may be procured in the vicinity so as to avoid the heavy and dilatory transportation from the Hudson? This question embraces every thing which may be applicable, to the building, equipping and arming, including heavy ordnance stores, kentledge &c.—

4th. What number of mechanics of the several branches, and what work shops, implements and machinery will be required for the purpose, at Sackets Harbour?—

5th. Will it not be better to transport the yarns, and erect rope works on the spot, to lay the Cables and heavy rigging?—

6th. What part of the equipment will it be necessary to manufacture or construct in the Atlantic Ports?—

7th. An estimate is required of all the heavy materials which it may be necessary to transport from the Hudson, while the navigation of the Mohawk is open.—

8th. An estimate is required, of all the materials, implements and articles, which it may be necessary to procure in the Atlantic Ports for the complete equipment of those Ships for service.—

You will please add such other information, as your experience may suggest, and point out the obstacles which present themselves, and the means of obviating them. In short the result of your deliberate Judgement, upon the nature, extent, execution and probable ability or incompetency of the force proposed is desired.—

The Guns will be put in motion immediately, they are to be transported from this place, Baltimore, and Philadelphia, and probably from the Lake Champlain and New London.— For your information, I will enclose, by tomorrow's mail, a copy of my letter to Mr. Anderson, relative to the transportation, with which he is charged, and generally to the object in contemplation.

A few days will determine whether the plan shall be carried into execution upon the Scale proposed or suspended.—

In the mean while, no time will be lost, as the heavy transportation will commence.— If in the affirmative, the whole force, both of Mr. Eckford and Messrs. Browns the builders will be put in requisition.—

You will please to transmit as soon as possible, your general view of the subject, and of the measures necessary to be put instantly in operation. If you deem it impracticable to complete in due time, the full extent of the force proposed, you will please say to what extent, it may in your judgement be carried with certainty in due time, and also your opinion of the means and capacity of the enemy to augment his force during the same period, and what steps may be taken on our part to counteract his measures and impede his resources.— I am respectfully Your Obedt. Servt.

W Jones.

SECRETARY OF THE NAVY JONES TO PRESIDENT JAMES MADISON

Navy Department  
Octor. 26. 1814

Dear Sir

In obedience to your instructions to take the preparatory steps for increasing our Naval force on Lake Ontario to an extent which shall command the superiority on that Lake at the opening of the spring campaign of 1815, I wrote to Commodore Chauncey and to Samuel T Anderson Esqr. agent for the transportation of stores, the letters of which the annexed are copies; the originals went by the mail of this morning.

Mr. Anderson will instantly set about the work of transportation with the greatest activity provided I shall be enabled to make good my promise to place the necessary funds at his disposal, of which however I see no immediate prospect.

Without funds not a gun can be moved and the magnitude of the undertaking does not admit of a days delay. The contemplated increase of force is three ships to rate 80 guns but to mount as follows, viz.

30 long	32 Pounders
32. do.	24. do
16. do.	18. do
<u>16</u> ....	42. Pd. Carronades.
<u>94</u> Guns and 800 men each.	

This augmentation is predicated upon the relative force of the adverse Squadrons at this time and the countervailing increase which the enemy may be expected to create during the same period of time; and it is believed that less would be doing worse than nothing.

The enemy has now one Ship of 104 Guns, the frames of two frigates which are probably now building, and he will doubtless lay the keel of another first rate and probably of two, the instant he discovers our preparations. Whatever may be my apprehensions and views upon this subject, your commands will always find a cheerful and ready obedience with every exertion on my part to ensure a prompt vigorous and efficient execution.

As the Naval contest on Lake Ontario has become a warfare of Dockyards and arsenals it may be well to examine with candour the relative capacity, resources, and facilities, of the combatants to attain their respective objects within the time limited. Nothing can be more obvious to reflecting practical professional men than the sanguine and extravagant ideas & expectations of the public in relation to our internal naval power and resources—and nothing can be more fallacious.

We seem to forget that we are at War with the most potent Naval power in the world, whose depots and workshops are full of all kinds of munitions and equipments which he may transport without interruption from the ocean to Lake Ontario, in less time and at one fourth of the expense that we can transport similar stores from Washington to New York.

He has nothing to construct at Kingston but the bare Hulls of his ships for which he has abundance of materials and workmen at his command and we have evidence that he can with facility procure both from our own territory.

He has paid off and discharged a great many seamen and has a superfluous number of ships of the line on the American Station, three or four of which he may at any time dismantle without inconvenience and send their stores and crews to Lake Ontario. If we have hitherto maintained a vacillating superiority on Lake Ontario by the greatest exertions and most vigorous application of narrow means that has ever been witnessed, we ought not to delude ourselves with the belief that these can be extended indefinitely, or we may perchance find their limitation in disaster and useless expenditure.

There is a point beyond which it will be admitted we cannot proceed, and we know that our enemy may create as many ships of the line on lake Ontario as his policy shall require, and so long as we shall maintain the competition he will have the strongest motive to persevere because by so doing he must ultimately and soon lock up all our disposable seamen, and thus free his commerce from depredation on the ocean, his flag from further humiliation, and expose our maritime frontier to incalculable vexation and pillage in consequence of the absence of our seamen on the Lakes.

With the contemplated increase of force on Lake Ontario we shall require for the Naval service on all the Lakes for the year 1815 about seven thousand men. My experience and observation particularly within the current year, enable me to say without doubt, that the U. States cannot calculate upon more than 12000 men in the aggregate for the Naval service including the flotilla and the Lakes.

We have at no time been able to reach that number and no rational estimate can be founded on the recruiting service for any definite period, force, or object.

Out of eight ships of the Navy which were ready or nearly ready for service in the Atlantic ports during the current year, we were compelled to transfer to the Lakes the entire crews of four—to draught part of the crews of three, and to lay up six in ordinary after dismantling three of them and sending their armament to the Lakes.

Heavy draughts of men were also made from the flotilla for the Lake service and all this while Rendezvous were open in all quarters, and in the most promising situations, exclusively for the Lake service, with an increase of 25 per Cent to the pay and 33 $\frac{1}{3}$  per Cent to the ordinary bounty.

The Lake service is one of peculiar privation, destitute of pecuniary stimulus, and unpopular both with the officers and men. Indeed our recruiting prospects are very discouraging in all quarters from our inability to pay not only those who are in service but those whose time have expired and have two or three months pay due to them.

It ought not to be forgotten that the services of our seamen are entirely voluntary and for which there is no substitute upon any pressing emergency as of militia for regulars; moreover our stock of seamen is fast diminishing by the casualties of War and the diseases incident to the service, particularly on the Lakes and in the flotilla service in open boats, exposed to the exhalations of marshes and the intense heat of our southern climate—by capture and remote imprisonment probably during the War—by enlistments in the Army—by the encouragement given in our manufactories to those who have families and are averse to the privations and dangers of War—by the domestic habits of a considerable

portion of our eastern Seamen who cultivate their little fields and by an ingenuity and industry peculiar to themselves sustain in comfort their families until the storm shall subside, and lastly as it respects the public service, by the preference given to that of the private in which they manage to acquire prize money, the greatest of all temptations to a seaman.

To all these may be added the entire suspension of our commerce fisheries and coasting trade, and the seductions of foreign employment free from the perils of war and the horrors of a British prison.

I have said that the aggregate Naval force in officers and men will not exceed twelve thousand from which deduct Seven thousand for the service on all the Lakes, will leave only five thousand for the defence of our Waters and Harbours from Louisiana to Maine and for service at Sea including ineffectives and captives.

Our present force may be estimated as follows—

#### Maritime frontier Viz

Louisiana.....	526
Georgia .....	259
South Carolina.....	398
North Carolina.....	197
Norfolk.....	696
Baltimore.....	800
Delaware River.....	702
New York .....	1309
New London.....	300
Rhode Island .....	189
Boston .....	636
Portsmouth .....	500
Officers and men. total	<u>6512</u>

#### On the Lakes Viz

Champlain.....	500
Ontario .....	2300
Erie .....	450
	3250.

#### At Sea Viz

Ship <i>Peacock</i> .....	160
" <i>Wasp</i> .....	160
Brig <i>Siren</i> .....	130
	450

#### In Prison Viz

Crew of the <i>Argus</i> .....	130
do. .... <i>Frolic</i> .....	165
do. .... <i>Rattlesnake</i> .....	110
Officers & men in Service total* <sup>1</sup>	<u>405</u>
	10617

With this distribution of force out of an aggregate of 10617. Officers and men we have 450 on the Ocean! 3250—on the Lakes—and 6512. employed in harbour defence, which latter includes four frigates and one Sloop of War ready for sea Viz the *Constitution* at Boston, the *President* at New York—the *Constellation* at Norfolk—the *Guerriere* on the Delaware and the Sloop *Hornet* at New London—

Nevertheless complaints are made from all quarters and in some cases by men high in authority of neglect and want of Naval protection—yet an increase of force on the Ocean is strongly urged by public writers and by the Legislature also as far as can be collected from the Committees and from individual members.

The species of force called for is undoubtedly well calculated to annoy the enemy and in order to meet the wishes which have been expressed on this subject by the President and in accordance with my ardent desire to employ every possible mean of annoyance against the enemy I have recommended an appropriation to cover the expenditure for about twenty Schooners.

These no doubt will be expected to be at Sea in the course of Six weeks, but it must be recollect that they will require about 2000. men!

Are our resources in Seamen and the inducements to hard fighting and destroying all captures such as to warrant the expectation?

If we transfer the men from the Lakes or from harbour defence are we to rely upon the precarious contingency of their return in the Spring for internal defence? Or are we to find our harbours and rich cities without protection and then hear the thunder of denunciation from all quarters for stripping those places of their local defence and exposing them a prey to a ruthless enemy? These are embarrassing alternatives and yet there appears to be none other.

It will be remarked that out of our whole force we have but three small Vessels on the Ocean which to be sure are well employed and serve to enliven the spirit of the nation by the fame of their exploits. The difference between the Lake and the sea service is that in the former we are compelled to fight them at least man to man and gun to gun whilst on the Ocean five British frigates cannot counteract the depredations of one Sloop of War.

The details in the letter to Mr. Anderson and the queries put to Commodore Chauncey will show the magnitude of the undertaking and some of the difficulties attending its execution. Ships of 90 Guns are enormous engines. The dimensions and weight of all the materials and machinery of Ships of War increase nearly in the ratio of the squares of their capacities and it is scarcely to be believed that we can construct equip and fit in six months three such ships in a wilderness to which every thing but the rough timber must be transported from the seaboard, when at Charlestown, Massachusetts under the most favorable circumstances it required fourteen months to build and launch the *Independence* seventy four Gun Ship.

The same details will show that we have the necessary ordnance, but it will be by dismantling some of our ships, and appropriating to this use the Guns intended for the two Seventy fours at Portsmouth and Charlestown which are now ready to receive them.

All the materials and stores mentioned in the details to Mr. Anderson are to be purchased with money and transported immediately. For this purpose an immediate appropriation of twelve hundred thousand dollars will be indispensable.

To construct a smaller force would in my opinion be useless and having reflected deeply and anxiously upon the subject it is my deliberate judgement that the force proposed cannot be constructed and equipped for service in due time, and that it would not be possible to man the fleet on Lake Ontario without withdrawing from the Ocean entirely, and draughting from the harbour defence to such an extent as would be altogether inadmissible; and finally that the project ought to be abandoned and the seamen brought into active service in defending our harbours and flourishing cities, and in pursuing and destroying the commerce of the enemy upon the Ocean and upon his own shores. The fact is that unless we estimate some given number as the maximum of seamen which the United States can command for the naval service we shall always be liable to fall into error and disappointments.

The estimate will be better founded upon the data derived from the experience of two years and a half of prosperous and popular service than from statistical tables or speculative reasoning to show our capacity to sweep the enemy from the Lakes, drive him from our Waters, and harass and destroy his commerce on the Ocean with a powerful flotilla requiring some thousands of men. It is remarkable that we invariably look to our capacity to build ships and vessels and lose sight of our resources in volunteer seamen and of our means of procuring them.

But it is proposed to abandon Lake Ontario! Let us examine the intrinsic importance of the Naval superiority on that Lake without reference to the interest and excitement which the ardour and display of the contest has produced. My own opinion always has been that it was greatly overrated and my settled belief now is that further sacrifices in the struggle would be incompatible with the public interest. It has often been said (and in the Cabinet too) always admitted, but never reduced to practice, that a position taken near St. Regis at the head of Lake St. Francis on the St. Laurence, well fortified and held with a strong force, would effectually cut off all transportation either of troops or stores from below. Of what consequence then would the Naval Command of Lake Ontario be to the enemy.

If this position were taken and maintained (and it is surely practicable, or it would prove that we are neither competent to invade Canada or to repel invasion) the enemy must of consequence abandon all the country above, together with this fleet and concentrate his forces for the defence of Montreal and the country below our northern frontier. If the Isle Aux Noix cannot be taken, is it not practicable to seize upon and maintain St. Johns or some point on the River Sorrel so as to cut off the communication with Isle Aux Noix?

I have never been able to discover any possible good to be derived from the contest on the Niagara. It has been emphatically styled "taking the Bull by the horns" and with great propriety.

The late Secretary of War in a letter to the President dated 22 July 1813 which formed the basis of the military operations under Gen Wilkinson says when urging the necessity of concentrating our forces with a view to some decisive object.

"If at Fort George our utmost success can but give us the command of the Peninsula which if Gen Harrison succeed against Malden will be of diminished interest both to us and to the enemy:—to us because Malden will more completely cover our Western frontier and controul the Savages than forts George & Erie—to the enemy because Malden lost, our inroad upon the Peninsula will but have the effect of shortning not of dividing the ene-

mys line of operations. In a word Success at this point will not give to the Campaign a character of decisive advantage."

Again in his letter of the 8th Augt. 1813. to Gen Wilkinson speaking of the indirect attack upon Kingston which contemplated taking and fortifying a position on the St. Laurence opposite Hamilton for the purpose of "obstructing him of his communications and thus drying up the sources by which he is nourished and maintained." he endeavours to demonstrate the impolicy of carrying the War to the Westward of Kingston and if that place shall be invulnerable to show the policy of the indirect attack by seizing a point below and cutting off the communication by which he received his supplies. If his reasoning was just when we had possession of forts George and Niagara and of the whole Niagara frontier how much more forcible was it when these posts rendered more formidable, and that frontier, were in possession of the enemy with a force superior to that under General Brown, and Lake Erie Detroit and Malden in our quiet possession.

Desperate and successful courage however may sanctify any plan, for the exaltations of victory preclude the cold retrospect of wisdom.

I presume the Ohio Kentucky and Penna. Militia are competent to defend Detroit and Erie, and the New York volunteers and Militia with a small body of regulars would protect the Niagara frontier. The efforts of the enemy would thus be neutralized in that quarter while the Army under Generals Izard Brown and Macomb, with an adequate force of Militia from New York and Vermont would seize upon the designated points on the St. Laurence & Sorrel Rivers and connect these points by a strong chain of posts forming a complete frontier barrier.

It is but forty miles from Plattsburg to St. Johns and from either place to St. Regis it is but 65 or 70 miles thus enabling the two divisions speedily to concentrate and receive supplies and reinforcements from Plattsburg. The division on the St. Laurence from the rapidity and facility with which it could descend to Montreal would keep the Garrison of that place in constant check and prevent large detachments from that place going to the relief of the posts on the Sorrel. Part of the guns of the Squadron at Sacketts Harbour might be transported to form the Battery at or near St. Regis and it appears to me that our great effort should be during the Winter Campaign while the Snow is hard and the weather settled. We surely can command numbers and means sufficient to execute these designs with energy and effect. If we cannot it will be in vain to attack him in his strong holds or to attempt to regain the command on Lake Ontario. The anxiety I feel on this subject though my participation in the responsibility will soon cease will I trust plead my apology for troubling you with these imperfect speculations. With sincere regard and great respect I am Sir your Obdt. Servt.

W Jones

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

1. Notation in the margin reads "Exclusive of the Stationary Marine Guards at Portsmouth NH Baltimore Washington and New Orleans."

COMMODORE ISAAC CHAUNCEY TO SECRETARY OF THE NAVY JONES

No. 193—

U.S. Ship *Superior*  
Sacketts Harbor, 5th. Novemr. 1814

Sir

In answer to the several interrogatories propounded to me in your Letter of the 24th ulto I have the honor to reply.

1st. That the dimensions of the three Ships proposed to be built are such as must be approved—their capacity will be equal to Ships of the first class—I would therefore suggest the propriety of mounting Two more Guns on each Deck which they would bear with great ease—The *Superior* can mount 32 Long 32 Pdrs. on her Gun Deck—Carronades would be preferable to Long Guns on the Spare Deck if they can be procured.—

2d. We have depth of Water and foundation sufficient to launch Ships of any size and space to build three Ships at the same time of the largest Class.—

3d. We can procure in this vicinity all the Materials of Wood and in time I think to complete Two of the Ships at least if not three—and all the Charcoal requisite for the Smiths—About 400 Tons of Shot or Kentledge might probably be obtained from the Furnaces of Onondaga and Rome and 100 Tons more perhaps from all the other small Furnaces in the neighborhood of Utica—The other articles used in building equipping and arming cannot be had nearer than at Albany and very few even there—I understand that the War Department has a large quantity of Shot at Onondaga and Vergennes furnaces if such parts of it could be borrowed as would answer our purposes it would very much facilitate our operations because it could be sent from those deposits in the Winter

4th.—There will be required to build the Three Ships contemplated—600 Ship Carpenters—60 Ship Joiners—60 Pair or 120 Sawyers—75. Blacksmiths—25. Block and Pump Makers.—10 Boat-builders. 10. Spar Makers.—15 Carriage Makers.—10 Armurers and 5. Tinmen—It will also be necessary to build 2 Blacksmiths Shops with Six fires each.—1. Joiners Shop 1 Block Makers Shop 1 Boat-builders Shed, 1 Armurer and Tinmen Shop—1 Powder Magazine—2 Wharves to launch over—1 Rope-Walk with all the Machinery required to lay a Cable of 24. Inches.—

The Quantity of Tools and Machinery required in the various Departments would be better regulated by the Heads of the different branches that are to be employed here.

5th. I think it will be better to transport the Yarns and erect Rope-Walks here for the purpose of laying the Cables and Standing Rigging.—

6th.—It will be necessary to manufacture in the Atlantic Ports all the running Rigging Seizing Stuff—White Lines Marline Spun Yarn &c. &c. all Cogs and Pins for Blocks Anchors—Rudder Pintles and Braces, Iron Tillers Fids Hawse and Scupper Leads, Pump Chambers Galleys Bells, Cannon Locks, Powder Horns Match Rope, Magazine Signal and Battle Lanthorns, Rocketts Port-Fires Blue Lights &c. &c. Canvass Twine and Bolt Rope and whatever Shot and Kentledge cannot be furnished in this vicinity—bolt and bar Iron Spikes Nails and all the Tools which will be required in the various Departments

7th. & 8th.—Are both answered in estimates A & B which will be forwarded immediately

As soon as it is determined to build here Mr Eckford should be sent with about 100 Carpenters to cut and prepare the necessary Timber—he should be dispatched immediately to enable him especially to make his Contracts before it shall be known to what extent it is intended building—for all classes of People here take every possible advantage of the Government and its Agents.—

It is also very important that all heavy Articles weighing One Ton and upwards should reach Albany before the Hudson closes—that accomplished there will be no difficulty in sending the Ordnance and Stores to this place by Land before the Roads break up, which I am confident is the best mode, both for dispatch and oeconomy— The trouble and expence of loading and unloading the boats will more than counter-balance the difference in the price of such transportation from Schenectady. The Roads from the 15th. of December to the 15th. of February are generally good— The Farmers at that Season take their Produce to Albany and as they are anxious for a return Load—transportation may then be obtained with facility and at low Prices—not so between Albany and New York—there the Roads are generally bad and the means of transportation difficult to be obtained.—

The Force proposed to be built is, in my estimation, ample for all the purposes wished or intended by the Government.—

Two Ships of the Line of 90 or 100 Guns can certainly be built and prepared for Service by the 15th. of May and I should say three, but for the difficulty which I apprehend will be found in procuring Timber of sufficient dementions for Vessels of so large a class—but as there will be unavoidably in so great a collection of Timber a large quantity which cannot be worked into the Line of battle Ships, but will answer for a smaller one—I am confident that a Frigate might also be built and in readiness at the same time.—

If we can prepare three Ships of the Line by the middle of May it will give us decidedly the superiority on the Lake and I think that Two Ships of the Class proposed and a Frigate added to our present Force would be superior to any thing that the Enemy could produce in the same time.—

From the best information I can collect the Enemy has no timber prepared to build any Vessel of a larger Class, than a Frigate and he has neither Guns nor Stores at Kingston for fitting even such a Ship nor could he procure them but with extreme difficulty, if a proper position upon the St. Lawrence was taken up by our Troops in order to impede & prevent his transportation by that River or along its Banks.—

The Frames of one or both of the Frigates sent from England last Spring have arrived at Kingston and the Keel of one of them laid and Stem and Stern-Post raised but I understand that neither of them will be built unless we commence building here—the dimentions of these frames are said to be about the same as those of their 38 Gun Frigates

Timber is not so easily procured in Canada as on this side—particularly Oak, which I understand to be extremely scarce—and I am inclined to believe the Enemy could not procure Mechanics to perform any very extensive operations.—

If the Division of the Army which is now on the Niagara Frontier should take a position on the St. Lawrence at or near "Hamilton" it would command the passage of the River and oblige the Enemy to send his Stores and Munitions of War by Land and under strong convoy, and even then he would be subject to interruption and loss as the Road lays near the banks of the River.—

The advantages to our Country to result from the Military occupation of such a position will readily present themselves

Besides the injury the Enemy would sustain in the interruption and loss of Stores, he would feel it still more severely in the harrassing his Troops with constant watching and fatigue and the consequent sickness and desertion

It may be asked what is to become of the Niagara Frontier? I answer leave its defence to the brave General Porter and the Militia and Volunteers of the State of New York.—

It has always been my opinion that among the best means to conquer the Canada's, was, that of cutting off the Supplies from the Lower to the Upper Province—by taking and maintaining a Position on the St. Lawrence—this would be killing the tree by "girdling"—the branches deprived of their ordinary supplies from the root, die of necessity, but if it is attempted to kill the Tree by lopping its uppermost branches, the body becomes invigorated by reducing the demands upon its resources—

To attempt to take Kingston by crossing at Erie, in preference to being landed within a few Miles of the spot is a species of Military policy, much beyond my comprehension; particularly when it is recollect that in the first mode our Troops would be obliged to march through a well settled Enemy's Country upwards of 200 Miles—their strength and resources constantly diminishing while that of the Enemy would be as rapidly augmenting; when by landing in the vicinity of Kingston they might go fresh to the assault with their whole force unexhausted by fatigue and undiminished in their numbers—

I cannot forbear calling your attention to my Letter of the 30th. October 1813—<sup>1</sup> On recurring to it you will be satisfied by what subsequent events have shown, that if my advice had been adopted by the Commanding General Mil lions would have been saved to the Nation, and the Executive had it in its power to concentrate the whole of the Northern and Western Armies at Kingston or Montreal. I have the honor to be with great respect Sir Yr. mo. ob' Hb'e St

Isaac Chauncey

L.S. DNA, RG45, CL, 1814, Vol. 7, No. 104 (M125, Roll No. 40).

1. For Commodore Chauncey's letter of 30 October 1813, see Dudley, *Naval War of 1812*, Vol. 2, pp. 594-96.

#### SECRETARY OF THE NAVY JONES TO SECRETARY OF WAR MONROE

The Honble. James Monroe  
Secretary of War

Navy Department  
Novemr. 7th. 1814.

Dear Sir,

I have received your note covering the letter from General Scott relative to the Navy Cannon loaned to the military Department at Baltimore.

In obedience to the orders of the President, preliminary steps have been taken, to create a very large additional force at Sackets Harbour, for which place those Guns are destined. The proposed increase of force on Lake Ontario

will require all the heavy Cannon at this place, Baltimore and Philadelphia, besides dismantling one or two (if not more) of our Ships of War.

You will recollect that this Department has recently loaned to the War Department 35, Thirty two pounders for Fort Washington, and about twenty for Fort Mifflin, besides those at Baltimore.— It will therefore be impossible to dispense with those Guns, unless the object contemplated by the President is abandoned, for there is not an hour to be lost in the transportation.— I cannot take upon me the responsibility of changing the destination of those Guns, without his approbation.— I believe it is proposed to have a Cabinet Meeting for the purpose of determining whether any and what increase of Naval force shall be prepared on Lake Ontario, will you have the goodness to see the President on this subject, it is of the utmost moment, that this question should be at once decided.— If it is to go into effect, every nerve must be strained, and instantaneously, to get the ordnance and heavy stores forward before the frost. very sincerely & respectfully Your Obed Servt.

W Jones.

P S. Will you be pleased to inform Genl. Scott of the intended destination of the Cannon, otherwise the impression will be made, that they are merely intended for Philadelphia.—

LB, DNA, RG45, CLS, 1814, p. 205.

#### SECRETARY OF THE NAVY JONES TO COMMODORE STEPHEN DECATUR

(confidential)

Commodore Stephen Decatur  
New York

Navy Department  
Novemr. 8th. 1814.

Sir

Preparatory to the augmentation of the Naval force at Sacketts Harbour, the transportation of Cannon has been ordered from this place, Baltimore, and Philadelphia, and is now in active operation.

In the mean time it is of great importance to decide upon the extent, and nature of the force, which may be most efficient, and adequate to the end, and the practicability of completing it in time to seek the enemy the moment the Lake opens. The magnitude of his principal Ship, the resources and facilities which he has in stores, equipments and transportation by water, to increase his force, will of course be taken into view, as well as the difficulties we have to encounter in these respects, in meeting him with a force of a similar nature and to so great an extent.—

The object of this letter is to ascertain the deliberate opinion of yourself, Governor Tompkins, Captain Porter (if in New York) and Mr. Fulton, whether three such Steam floating Batteries as the *Fulton*, could be constructed and completed at Sacketts Harbour in due time, and whether that force would or would not when combined with the Squadron now at Sacketts Harbour, be competent to subdue all the force the enemy may have prepared for service at that time.

I particularly wish to know whether Mr. Fulton could and would engage to construct the Machinery and Engines in due time, and whether any thing short of the force proposed would be adequate to the end. I must therefore request that you will without delay, ask the favor of a meeting with those Gentlemen, and report to me the result as soon as possible.— I am respectfully Your Obed. Servt

W Jones.

LB, DNA, RG45, CLS, 1814, p. 207.

#### COMMODORE STEPHEN DECATUR TO SECRETARY OF THE NAVY JONES

New York 16 Nov. 1814.

Sir.

Yours of the 8th. inst. marked "confidential" was duly received, and would have been answer'd before this, if Govr. Tompkins had not been out of Town when it came to hand. He did not return in time to allow me to lay the subject of your letter before him, until night before last, when I had the pleasure to confer thereupon both with the Governor and Mr. Fulton—

The opinions of these Gentlemen upon the questions propounded, were yesterday given to me in writing, and I have the honor herewith, to transmit their letters to you.

It is unnecessary to enlarge this communication, with my own opinions upon the same subject, further than to say, that after mature deliberation I agree entirely with Govr. Tompkins and Mr. Fulton. Very respectfully yr. Ob Servt.—

Stephen Decatur

LS, DNA, RG45, CL, 1814, Vol. 7, No. 135 (M125, Roll No. 40).

[Enclosure]

New York, Nov. 14th. 1814.

Sir,

I have reflected for a few hours upon the subject of the confidential letter of the Secretary of the Navy which you communicated to me this afternoon. The Steam frigate building in this harbour is, I presume, intended to act as a moveable water battery, for harbour defence; and is expected to operate most advantageously in a calm, when ships of the ordinary construction would be unmanageable and she of consequence would be enabled to choose her position. The Experiment of her utility is yet to be tried, though I think it probable she will answer the end proposed.— I do not believe however, that vessels of this description would be formidable on the ocean, or in broad waters; or that they would be the most adviseable armament for Lake Ontario. Ships of the Line and Frigates, form the Naval force upon which alone I should place reliance either for blockading the enemy's fleet on that lake, or for conquering it in open fight— I have the honour to be Sir, with high regard Your Obt. St.

Daniel D. Tompkins

Commodore Decatur.

LS, DNA, RG45, CL, 1814, Vol. 7, No. 135, enclosure (M125, Roll No. 40).

[Enclosure]  
To Commodore Decatur

New York Novr. 15th 1814

Sir

In answer to your communication from the secretary of the Navy concerning the propriety of now constructing steam Ships on Lake Ontario, I am of opinion that although the experiment which is making presents the flattering prospect of succeeding for harbor defence & will have many advantages over an Enemy in a calm, I would not until I see her in motion with her own engine, and until I shall have some experience on her movements and powers recommend such Vessels for a lake as turbulent as the Ocean; I have in contemplation some improvements which I have reason to believe will render them valuable for coast as well as harbour defence, and for narrow seas; but they can only be made after a fair experiment on the one now constructing, till then I could not recommend to the government so much confidence in a new machine, as to substitute it for the Usual engines of war of a power equal to that of the Enemy.

I request some days to reflect on the kind of vessel which moved by steam may be useful on the Lake I am about finishing the model of one to carry not more than Three or Four guns of heavy metal, and to apply Torpedoes, She may be made shot proof and so as to risk little from a plunging fire or bombs her cost from 50 to 60 thousand dollars. I have the principal part of the steam engine of a power for such a Vessel which could be finished in March if commenced about the first of December, In a few days when I shall have satisfied my mind on this subject, I will communicate it to you, I am Sir very respectfully  
Your most Obedient

Rob<sup>t</sup> Fulton

ALS, DNA, RG45, CL, 1814, Vol. 7, No. 135, enclosure (M125, Roll No. 40).

## Winter Quarters on Lake Champlain

*The threat of British invasion of New York State by land or water subsided following the American naval victory at Plattsburgh Bay. With the coming of winter, Captain Thomas Macdonough could safely send his vessels into winter quarters at Whitehall, New York. On 10 November, the now-famous navy captain turned over command to Lieutenant Charles A. Budd, giving him detailed instructions to be vigilant and thrifty in the management of the squadron.*

CAPTAIN THOMAS MACDONOUGH TO SECRETARY OF THE NAVY JONES

U.S. Brig *Eagle*  
Plattsburgh Bay October 15th. 1814

Sir.

I have the honor to inform you that I have sent the U.S. Vessels *Saratoga*, *Confiance*, *Linnet* and *Ticonderoga* to winter quarters at Whitehall; and have retained

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and kept prepared for service the Brig *Eagle* and the ten Gallies with the sloops *Preble*, *Growler*, *Eagle*, and *Montgomery* for the men attached to the Gallies to live in and for provision Vessels; as the contemplated attack on New York appears to have ceased I should be much gratified by receiving your permission to proceed to Washington for the purpose of settling my accounts of this station; as they extend to a considerable amount I should like a Settlement of them at an early period, and as Naval operations are considered at an end on this lake I beg you will be pleased to relieve me in this command; from Lt. Cassin's knowledge of the lake I think he could be a suitable person to succeed me— I have the honor to be very respectfully Sir, your Mo. obt. servt.

T. Macdonough

ALS, DNA, RG45, CL, 1814, Vol. 7, No. 42 (M125, Roll No. 40).

CAPTAIN THOMAS MACDONOUGH TO LIEUTENANT CHARLES A. BUDD

U.S. Brig *Eagle*  
Plattsburgh Bay Novr. 10th 1814

Sir

Agreeable to an order from the Honble. Secty. of the Navy to me directed dated 30th of October 1814 you will take command of the U.S. squadron on lake Champlain—

You will be particularly careful to guard against any enterprise of the Enemy at all times but more especially should there be a necessity for your going to the Northward of this place—Vigilant in watching the Movements of the enemy on the Lake that he does not capture or injure in any manner the public property, the citizens, or their property—To prevent which your force is amply sufficient— Do not be induced by any show of the enemy to get you beyond point Au Fair [*Point au Fer*], or any wish or request of the Commanding officer of our land forces, the Navigation of that water & your knowledge of it, will, I trust be sufficient to prevent your going there, unless with a land force of ours superior to the enemy acting in concert with you—

The time will arrive in the course of a few days to lay the squadron up for the winter, as the season is far advanced, the men suffering considerably from the severity of the weather, and the enemy at present evincing to My knowledge no intention to come out from his strong hold, with his gallies the only naval force he at present possesses—

You will however advise with the commanding general on the expediency of your going before you go— It is absolutely necessary however that you get to White Hall before the Ice makes. As you will there have all the vessels together & farthest from the Enemy's land forces during the winter—

When at White Hall the vessels must be moored so as to bring the guns to bear on any point, the greatest number on that point from whence an attack is most likely to be made— Correspond frequently with the Comdgng. General who will inform you of the movement of the Enemy & give information should his object be the destruction of the vessels, of which you will immediately inform the Hon Secty. of the Navy & take measures to repel or defeat such an at-

tempt— It will be well when you arrive to raise two or three gun batteries in advance of each other, & all in advance of the squadron on some elegible point bearing on the lake in case the Enemy came on the Ice & either intrench or strongly barricade a small Island called Crafts Island immediately where the vessels will lie, with a hundred or two of men to hold it & to have cannon on it. On the first correct intelligence of the Enemy to destroy the vessels you will require without loss of time the aid of the surrounding Militia & advise without fail the government of it; do not depend solely on the Comdg. general for information of the Enemys motions, but be vigilant in your own enquiries from every source from which you would be likely to obtain it—

It is the orders of the government that you enter into no contracts for the squadron but make your requisitions on the Navy Agent at New York directly or through the Purser as the service may require—and to draw no bills on the Navy Agent at New York— It will require your personal attention as well as the constant vigilance of all your officers in keeping the vessels in order as to the powder sails &c. having centinels & a regular watch kept to guard against any articles being taken away, And I cannot impress too strongly on your mind the great necessity of guarding against incendiaries— To Destroy these vessels is admitted to be the first & greatest wish of the Enemy on this frontier, to effect which, means will I do not doubt be taken to attempt to burn them by offering a large reward probably to some of our own citizens & most likely to those who may by their intimacy with the officers or men be the least suspicious, it will also require your vigilance personally in keeping the men regular in their habits, to prevent fatal effects by intoxication in this cold climate & to prevent abuse or maltreating of the Citizens in any manner; it will be well to adopt the Method which was adopted at Vergennes last winter by making the aggressor pay for any injury done to a citizen and averaging such injury by theft among the men of the vessel by whom the theft was committed if the persons who committed it cannot be found out or among the whole of the vessels crews if the particular vessel should not be known

The prevention of injury in any manner by the enemy on the Lake, a hearty Cooperation with the land forces & guarding against any attempts or enterprizes of the Enemy will be the objects of your first & immediate attention until you lay up for the winter then, the safety of the vessels in guarding against fire, as before said of Citizens & the regularity & good order of the vessels, officers, & men will be the objects of your immediate care & attention— ~~You will draw no bills on the Navy Agent at New York as directed by Govt.~~<sup>1</sup>— Respectfully I am Sir your Obt Servt

T. Macdonough

ALS, DNA, RG217, 4th Auditor's Accounts, Settled Miscellaneous Accounts and Claims, March 29, 1817–June 30, 1829, Numerical Series, Box 16, No. 1435.

<sup>1</sup> This sentence was moved up to the sixth paragraph when the letter was signed.

## News of the Loss of *Scorpion* and *Tigress*

*News of the capture of Scorpion and Tigress on Lake Huron on 3 and 6 September did not reach the American headquarters at Erie until late in October. Five American prisoners from the captured schooners, who had escaped while they were being transported to Kingston, returned to Erie with the first details of the capture. Sailing Master Stephen Champlin, who had been severely wounded in the action and was paroled and returned to Lake Erie in October, provided additional information.*

*Lieutenant Daniel Turner's official report on the capture of the two brigs, written 1 November while Turner was a prisoner at Beauport, did not reach Washington until April 1815.*

CAPTAIN ARTHUR SINCLAIR TO SECRETARY OF THE NAVY JONES

U S Sloop *Niagara*  
Erie Roads Oct 24th 1814

Sir

I think it proper to relieve you from the anxiety the Postscript to my letter of the 21st. Inst.<sup>1</sup> may have occasioned, the subject of which has never been a moment absent from my mind until dispeld by the arrival of the *Lawrence* this morning— She and the *Lady Prevost* had rode the Gale out without material injury. Her Boats were on shore for the Prisoners provision, and to assist in getting off the balance of them to the Schooner— After the Gale abated sufficiently for her to get her Anchors, finding the surf too high to get her Boats off, and no prospect of a change for the better, she was compelled for the want of Provision to leave the *Lady Prevost* to take off the balance— Necessity has driven her in here, contrary to my wishes; and such is the state of the weather blowing on shore, and still snowing, hailing &c—that they are compelled to remain until a change, when they shall immediately depart for Long Point—in the mean time they are kept from seeing the state or situation of the place— Their situations are lamentable, indeed, most all sick—no clothes or Blankets except the rags they have on, and the weather wet and freezing—several have died on their passage

The long absence of Lieut Turner beyond the time to which I limited the Blockade, which was to the 1st. of this month, and a report brought by Indians to Detroit, which I heard when last there but gave no credit to it, that he had been boarded and taken, begins to give me considerable uneasiness— Added to this, there is a report, this day from Buffalo, that some of their crew which had been captured, and made their escape from York, had arrived at Fort Erie, and confirmed the above report— I trust in God! it is not true, as it would at once undo what my unremitting exertions had effected in that quarter, and which promised to give us an easy conquest of Mackinac in the Spring— independent of the disgrace attending such surprizes— More particularly in this case, as my written instructions<sup>2</sup> fully embraced every point that ought to guard him against surprize, and my last words, on my Quarter Deck, when parting were, “never lay at Anchor the night through where you may have been seen at Anchor in the evening, for on your vigilance & safety depends the possession of Mackinac to your Country in the Spring— I also deprived myself of the most

experienced Officer in my Vessel (Sailing Master Rutter) who I left with him; believing that by adding Seamanship to his bravery & intrepidity I should secure him on all points—

The continued bad weather we have lately had, and which now seems to have set in for the Winter makes this Roadstead very unsafe, and the preparing and getting those Brigs over the Bar is becoming daily more perilous— It is very rare to have two succeeding good days— Our Camels cannot ride a Gale out here, and we cannot lighten and get over in one day— Everything must be struck from aloft; and all from below except just enough to insure their safety, taken out, and when the day offers the balance must be accomplished—a night must not be risked.— I shall much fear their safety, or the possibility of getting them in, if much of the next month passes before it is attempted— I therefore hope, Sir, you will give me your instructions as early as convenient— You must be well assured that I have no possible motive in urging this, but what arises out of the duty I owe the service I have the honor to remain very Respectfully, Sir, Your Obt Servt

A Sinclair

LS, DNA, RG45, CL, 1814, Vol. 7, No. 60 (M125, Roll No. 40).

1. See pp. 603–4.

2. See Sinclair to Turner, 15 Aug. 1814, pp. 570–71.

CAPTAIN ARTHUR SINCLAIR TO SECRETARY OF THE NAVY JONES

U.S.S. *Niagara*, Roads off Erie— Octr. the 28th 1814

Sir

I am under the mortifying necessity of stating to you that the report, mentioned in my last letter, of the vessels left in the Upper Lake having been surprised and captured by Boats of the Enemy has turned out to be correct— The Boatswain and four men from the *Scorpion*, made their escape, on their way to Kingston, and cross Lake Ontario in skiffs from the Bay of Quinte to the Genesee River, from thence to this place— This Mans story is a most unfavourable one, and such as I am loth to believe true, from the well known character of Lieut. Turner— He says the Blockade of the Nauwasaga River was raised in a short time after my departure—that the Lieut. who commanded the *Nancy* (and who had escaped in the woods when she was destroyed) had past up to Mackinac in Boats, and it was by him and his crew they were captured— The *Tigress* had been separated from him five days, among the Islands, in which time she had been captured— They came in sight of her, laying at anchor, in the Evening—the wind being light they anchored some distance from her, without passing signals— In the morning there was only four or five men and no Officer on deck— The *Tigress* got underway, run down, fired into them and were onboard without any report ever being made to Mr. Turner, or was there an Officer of any grade on deck when she was captured— The wind was light, the *Scorpion* had the advantage of a long 12 pr. over the other and could have recaptured her with much ease— The *Tigress* had made great resistance, but was overpowered by an Overwhelming force—her commander (Sailing master Champlin) and all his Officers were wounded, as were many of his men, and some killed— I had given Lieut.

Turner a picked crew from this vessel, with my Sailing Master, and had added to both their crews 25 chosen men borrowed from Colnl. Croghan, to act as Marines— I had also left him a Boarding netting: indeed there was no precaution I did not take, in anticipation of every effort, I knew, the Enemy would make to regain their line of communication on which their very existence depended— I herewith inclose you my instructions to Lieut. Turner<sup>1</sup> after which I cannot express to you, Sir, my chagrin at learning the little regard which appears to have been paid to them, and the evil consequences growing out of such neglect; consequences but too well known to you and to the government— you must first believe the infinite interest I had taken in the expedition, from the moment I had been intrusted with the conducting it, and the sanguine hope I had formed of its complete success, and the benefits resulting from it to my Country, to enable you to form an adequate idea of the mortification I now experience—

That part of the Squadron employed in transporting the Prisoners of War to long point have returned to this place The *Lady Provost*, with loss of her Foremast, in a gale of wind on the night of the 26th— It appears there are upwards of 100 that could not be taken off from Cleveland in consequence of the great surf on the shore, where the vessels were compelled to sail for want of Provisions, for the Prisoners— Six died on their passage— So soon as the weather will permit I will have the balance transported, if it is possible to get them off— There are a part of two Companies of Infantry, composing the guard over those men, now at Cleveland—permit me to make the request of you to make arrangements for their being ordered here to act as marines— I have not enough at this time, admitting they were all well, to do the Sentinel duty onboard the vessels—and all our valuable stores onshore are entirely unprotected for want of a guard, and have been several times depredated on within the last few weeks—

The two Block Houses are without garrison, and will afford them good Barracks— There is a Regiment at long Point, and it was understood, by our officers, they were building some king [kind] of Craft in Patersons creek— I have the honor to remain with high respect, Sir, your obt. Servt.

A Sinclair

ALS, DNA, RG45, CL, 1814, Vol. 7, No. 71 (M125, Roll No. 40).

1. For Captain Sinclair's instructions to Lieutenant Daniel Turner, see pp. 570–71.

LIEUTENANT DANIEL TURNER TO CAPTAIN ARTHUR SINCLAIR

Beauport L Canada Novr. 1st 1814

Sir/

It is with feelings the most poignant I have to inform you of the capture of the United States Gun boats *Scorpion* and *Tygress*. The particulars relative to the latter I refer you to Sailing Master Champlins Letter.

After you left me in the Bay I made a faithful tho unsuccessful search for anchorage but could find none to shelter me from a NW gale and after having ex-

perienced three severe blows from that quarter during which time it was with the utmost difficulty I kept off the lee shore (being obliged frequently to wear Ship) I deemed it most prudent with the advice of my officers and having in mind the good of the service, to leave the Bay and Cruize between St Josephs and French River knowing that the Enemys boats from the Natawwassaga to Michilimackinac, must pass thro that channel—which I did on the 28th August. I arrived off St Josephs two days after destroy'd a considerable quantity of wheat Potatoes &c—

I left the *Tygress* to Cruize off St. Joseph's when I got underway to Cruize between St Joseph's and French River to intercept the Enemys boats and canoes that might be passing to and from the Enemy—having made a diligent tho unsuccessfull cruize returned to St. Joseph's on the evening of the 5th Sept. I anchored  $\frac{1}{2}$  a mile to the Eastward of the *Tygress*, it being extreemly dark and having no signals on board to order her to Join company, not having the most distant Idea of the *Tygress* being in possession of the enemy. I remain'd at my anchors all night,

At dawn of day the officer of the deck came to me and informed me the *Tygress* was bearing up for me under easy Sail, as I supposed for the purpose of joining company five minutes after this information she being close on my larboard bow the enemy fired his long 24, 12 and 3 Pds. and boarded me at the same time, with one hundred and ten Sailors and soldiers accompanied by a great number of Indians— I sprang from my birth but all attempts to regain the vessel were found fruitless, my loss was two killed, and three wounded, enclosed is a list—together with Mr. Champlin's letter—

It was with considerable difficulty the Indians were restrained from Murdering my Crew and self—

The enemy in approaching took the necessary precaution, to secret all his force, six or seven men excepted and some of them dressed in the apparel of the officers formerly commanding—

Thus Sir, we have been captured in a way, which nothing but a knowledge of the *Tygress* being in possession of the enemy could have enabled us to avoid—

After taking into view all those circumstances, I am convinced you will give to my conduct on this Occasion a construction more favourable than it might otherwise be with an assurance that during my stay on Huron—I have always had in view the public good I have the honor to be Sir Verry Respy. Your Most Obt. Sert.

Dan<sup>l</sup>. Turner

ALS, DNA, RG45, CL, 1815, Vol. 3, No. 80, enclosure (M125, Roll No. 44). This letter was enclosed in Captain Arthur Sinclair to Secretary of the Navy Crowninshield, 27 April 1815. Captain Sinclair notes in his cover letter that "The official letter of Mr. Champlin alluded to by Lieut. Turner as being enclosed, must have been suppress'd by the Enemy, as it was not contained in the envelop." For Champlin's version of the loss of *Tygress*, see DNA, RG125, CM, Vol. 6, No. 207. Lieutenant Turner enclosed a list of two men killed and three wounded, and a list of the thirty-three officers, seamen, and soldiers on board the *Scorpion* at the time of the capture.

CAPTAIN ARTHUR SINCLAIR TO SECRETARY OF THE NAVY JONES

U S Sloop of War *Niagara*  
Erie Roads 11th. November 1814,

Sir

Your letter of the 4th. Inst, has just been received, and I see with regret and mortification the misconstruction you have put upon my application respecting the time those Brigs should be taken over the Bar— This Squadron is differently situated from any other in the service—when taken within this Bar, there is an end to its operations for the season, and the views of Government, however important they might be, could receive no aid from it— I have been ever anxious to cooperate most cordially with the Army on this Frontier, and to meet with alacrity all orders received from the Government; and as I was neither apprised of the movements of the one, or the wishes of the other, I fealt it my duty to consult you, who were acquainted with both, before placing the force under my command beyond your control— I feel gratified at the confidence reposed in my judgement by the Department, and shall study to merit it in all my acts— I trust, Sir, after this explanation you will not believe I am disposed to add to the weight of your office any detail duty of the Squadron, you have done me the honor to place under my command—

Sailing Master Champlin, who commanded the *Tigress*, has arrived here in the Cartel from Mackinac, with some of the wounded— He has his thigh shattered by a Grape Shot, and has not yet been able to make out a detail report of his capture— He appears not to have been surprised; but defended his vessel very bravely, killing and wounding a number of the Enemy, who overpowered him with 150 Sailors and Soldiers and 250 Indians, the latter headed by Dickson— The *Scorpion* was surprised, as mentioned in my letter of the 27th. Ult.

The conduct of the Enemy to our prisoners thus captured, and the inhuman butchery of those who fell into their hands at the attack of Mackinac, has been barbarous beyond a parallel— The former have been plundered of almost every article of clothing they possest—the latter had their hearts and livers taken out, which were actually cooked and feasted on (and that too in the quarters of the British officers sanctioned by Colo. McDouall) by the Savages—

This cannibal act, which has capt the climax of British atrocity, and must ever be viewed with indignant horror by the cristian world, will be sworn to by two respectable ladies, who came down in the cartel, and who were witnesses to it—I am further assured by Mr. Astor,<sup>1</sup> who was detained there with his cartel for near two months, that it was not disown'd by the Garrison at Mackinac, and that when remonstrance was made by some, who had not lost all sense of feeling and honor, they were threatened with arrest by the Colonel, if they checked the Indians in any of their wishes— One of the Prisoners was inhumanly murdered by one of their Militia (to decide a dispute between him and an Indian of who had the best claim to the reward for his body or scalp) and no notice was taken of it by the Colonel— To relate to you, Sir, all the acts of horror which have been practised upon those unfortunate victims who fell into the Enemys hands on the 4th of August, would go far beyond the limits of a letter— I have the honor to remain with high Respect, Sir, Your Obd. Servt.

A Sinclair

ALS, DNA, RG45, CL, 1814, Vol. 7, No. 122 (M125, Roll No. 40).

1. George Astor, agent and nephew of John Jacob Astor.

## SECRETARY OF THE NAVY JONES TO CAPTAIN ARTHUR SINCLAIR

Captain Arthur Sinclair  
Commanding U S Naval Force  
on Lake Erie

Navy Department  
Novemr. 17th. 1814.

Sir

I have received your letter of the 11th.<sup>1</sup> and do not perceive the misconstruction which you attribute to the observations contained in my letter of the 4th. instant; but, be that as it may, the meaning I intended to convey was, that the Squadron under your command would remain on the Lake as long as the Season would admit, (of which you were to be the judge) in order to render whatever cooperation with the Army the General might require, and yourself deem practicable, and that when the safety of the Squadron, should render it expedient, to seek a harbour for shelter from the inclemency of the season, you would determine as your judgement should dictate. If you have not been apprised of the movements of the Army, and of the General's views of cooperation, I must presume, that he stood not in need of the aid of the Squadron, or he would have requested your cooperation; but when you add, that you have not been apprized of the wishes of the Government in respect to the services of the Squadron, I have only to refer you to my letter of the 28th of Septemr. last, as well as to those prior to that date, to yourself and Lieutenant Kennedy, in which, the only wish that Government entertained, or indeed, that your services could gratify, on Lake Erie, is distinctly expressed, Viz,— to offer to the Military Commander all the aid in your power.

I am perfectly satisfied that the confidence reposed in you has been well placed, and that you have done, and will continue to do, all that can be expected from a correct and zealous Officer.—

I am gratified to learn, that Sailing Master Champlin was prepared to meet the enemy and defended his Vessel gallantly.

The alternate sensations of horror and indignation suppress all comment upon the awful narrative you have given of the barbarity of the enemy at Mackinac.— I am very respectfully Your Obedt. Servt.

W Jones

LB, DNA, RG45, CLS, 1814, pp. 209–10.

1. See p. 649.

## The Lure of the Atlantic

*Commodore Isaac Chauncey's squadron returned to Sackets Harbor on 7 October, relinquishing control of Lake Ontario to the British squadron, now led by the immense ship of the line Saint Lawrence, pierced for 102 but actually carrying 112 guns.*

*The squadron's return to port signaled the end of the active campaign season. As was usual at the end of each sailing season, officers requested transfers to other stations, citing illness, desire for professional training, patriotism, or the quest for prize money and glory to justify their requests.*

*News spread that Congress was considering a bill to purchase twenty schooners to be organized into three squadrons under the popular and successful captains Oliver H. Perry and David Porter. Lieutenants flooded the Navy Department with requests to command these fast schooners. Commodore Isaac Chauncey feared that his squadron, itself in need of more officers for the three new ships building at Sackets Harbor, would be left with only the youngest and least experienced officers.*

## LIEUTENANT WILLIAM CARTER, JR., TO CAPTAIN JOHN SHAW

*Mohawk* Frigate, Sacketts harbour, 7 November 1814—  
My dear Sir,

Your very acceptable favor of the 29 ultimo reached me yesterday; and in the evening I mentioned the purport of it to Captain Jones: After some compliments, expressive of his satisfaction with my efforts while I have been in his ship; and after stating his wish to have me remain with him, he finally remarked that the situation with you was certainly more promising than my present one here, and for that reason he could not object to my accepting of your polite offer— Indeed when we were about to leave the *Macedonian* for this station he had the goodness to let me know, tacitly, that when an opportunity for a more eligible situation should present itself he would cheerfully let me embrace it— The expected promotion this session of Mr. Rodgers<sup>1</sup> would, if it occurs, leave me first of this ship, but an Atlantic situation is much more congenial with my wishes— Considering that the application will come from you; that the birth is a desirable one to me; and that it has received the concurrence of Captain Jones I cannot doubt but the Secretary, when acquainted with these circumstances, will grant it without hesitation— Will you be pleased to make them known to him?—

It may not, perhaps, be amiss in me to remark that several reasons concur in making me anxious to receive orders at an early period— Besides the hope of being serviceable in promoting the great object of engaging a smart crew, and of having an opportunity of making myself acquainted with those who comprise it; it will, I apprehend, require some time, and considerable attention, to free the ships bottom from the shells that soon accumulate in the Thames.

Our present prospects here are neither brilliant nor animating, and they hold out but slender hopes for frequent enterprise: The superiority of the enemy is of too decided a nature to allow us a reasonable expectation of success in a general action; and it seems to be the opinion of many, whom I think well acquainted with the subject, that our government have determined to build no more ships here— An obvious consequence that must result from this determination, if it be founded in fact, is that those we have already built must become entirely useless— We have here, at this time, two thousand of the best men in the Navy and their fine health, and spirits, would appear to make them invincible—

I am really sorry to tell you that Lieut Gregory is not exchanged— We have learned that his wound was by no means dangerous, and it may of course be fairly presumed that he has long since recovered from it— I understand that he is yet in Kingston, and the circumstance of his having conducted, with success, several enterprises against the enemy may justify the conclusion that his

exchange will not be soon effected— The circumstance of your not having instructed me where to direct to you, whether at New York or New London, induces me to send a letter to each place, because if that addressed to New York should reach the city before your departure from it, it may hasten the object of the letter— Have the goodness to receive my best wishes, and to accept an assurance of the high esteem and regard with which I am, Dear Sir, yr ob sert

Will<sup>m</sup>, Carter

ALS, DLC, John Shaw Papers.

1. Lieutenant George W. Rodgers.

COMMODORE ISAAC CHAUNCEY TO SECRETARY OF THE NAVY JONES

No. 198

U.S. Ship *Superior*  
Sacketts Harbor. 23d Novr. 1814

Sir

The Bill which is now pending before Congress authorizing the President to build or purchase Twenty Schooners has set all the Lieutenants on this Station Crazy—they are all determined to have commands and the Department will be inundated with applications.— I am daily importuned for Letters, and it really would be an injustice to withhold them from Officers of such conspicuous merit as many of them are on this Station, yet I have given the Gentlemen fair warning, that altho' I will testify to their merits, yet I shall conceive it to be my duty to point out to the Department the inconvenience and injury the Service would sustain, by granting their requests

Many of the Officers appear to entertain erroneous opinions in regard to the Service on the Lakes— they think that when the Season for cruising has passed in consequence of the frost that all duty ceases also, when the contrary is the fact, for the Winter is the Season of fatigue and anxiety—besides if the Government should determine to build here we shall require the Services of all, Officers as well as Men— moreover by removing all the Senior Lieutenants, the Ships would be left with very young and inefficient Officers— I therefore pray that the Honorable the Secretary will not weaken this fleet by removing the most experienced and efficient Officers.—

I have the honor to be with great Respect Sir Yr. Mo. Obt. St

Isaac Chauncey

LS, DNA, RG45, CL, 1814, Vol. 8, No. 31 (M125, Roll No. 41).

COMMODORE ISAAC CHAUNCEY TO  
ACTING SECRETARY OF THE NAVY HOMANS

No. 1

New York 5th. January 1815

Sir

The great number of officers recently ordered from Sackets Harbor creates in my mind considerable alarm, scarcely a day passes without one or more ar-

riveing from that station either with a sick ticket or with orders from the Department to report themselves to Commodore's Porter or Perry, I presume that the Department is not aware of the extent of injury the public service is suffering by these removals, for independent of the extreme mortification to the commander of the station, to have his best officers selected and taken from him by his juniors, the weakening the station so much in officers may lead to consequences fatal to the squadron, It is hoped however that the Department will not hold me responsible for consequences arising from causes over which I have no controul.

I think Sir that you have not adverted to the last return of officers and men on Lake Ontario, because that return would show, that there was no surplus officers on that station, Yet within the last month most of the first Lieutenants and others have been ordered away, and all that remains are daily expecting orders to leave the station, the *Madison* has been so weakened by these means as to be left in charge of a Midshipman, every officer of higher grade having left the station, either by an order from the Department or by a sick ticket, the injury does not stop here, for a most serious riot bordering on mutiny took place on board of the *Superior* on the night of the 24th Ult, I have not heard the particulars of the case but presume it arose in consequence of the bad management of young and inexperienced officers, who know but little of the art of governing men, Mr. Elton the first Lieutenant having been ordered to report himself to Captain Perry and Mr. Macpherson to the temporary command of the *Oneida*, the duties of first Lieutenant devolved on Mr. Macomber,<sup>1</sup> who is not qualified for so important a situation, this riot was happily suppressed without blood shed, but might have led to serious consequences, to remove the first Lieutenant of any ship is attended with inconvenience and injury to the Public Service, this injury is much increased when such removal takes place in the absence of her commander, whose presence might remedy any defects in the discipline of the officer in his new situation,

The Flag ship of so important a station as Lake Ontario has become, requires a good first Lieutenant, I had one in Mr. Elton, but he has been ordered to Captain Perry, how I shall replace him I am at a loss to determine, I have no officer well calculated for that situation, I shall consequently be obliged to attend to much detail on board of my own ship which a good first Lieutenant would relieve me from

Mr. Bourne<sup>2</sup> has presented me with an order from Commodore Decatur to report himself to Captain Warrington as Purser of the *Peacock*, these orders has been predicated upon a letter received by Captain Warrington from the Department informing him, that Mr. Bourne has been ordered to his ship agreeably to his request, You may remember Sir that Mr. Bourne was ordered to Lake Ontario as my Secretary, but in consequence of Purser Chews<sup>3</sup> being ordered from that Station, Mr. Bourne was directed to assume the duties of Purser of the *Madison* and *Oneida*, when I was ordered to New York I brought him with me, to assist in any writing that I might have to do, or take charge of stores or men for Sackets Harbor, but Mr. Bourne has now been ordered on other service, the Department will be pleased to direct to what Purser, he will transfer the accounts of the *Madison* and *Oneida*, as the term of service of the crews of these two vessels are about expireing, unless the transfer is made regularly, it may lead to a confusion in the accounts that will not be easily remedied after Mr. Bourne has left the country,

The Naval force that is now in commission and building on Lake Ontario will require about Thirty Lieutenants, and Five Purasers, in addition to what was there on the first of December, and a proportionable number of other officers of all grades, I therefore hope that the Department will not further weaken the station by ordering any more officers from Sackets Harbor I have the honor to be very Respectfully Sir your mo. Obt. Sert.

Isaac Chauncey

LS, DNA, RG45, CL, 1815, Vol. 1, No. 16 (M125, Roll No. 42).

1. Lieutenant Samuel P. Macomber.

2. Purser Benjamin F. Bourne, commissioned 26 March 1814, transferred to *Peacock* 16 December 1814.

3. Purser Thomas J. Chew, commissioned 9 March 1809, was ordered from Sackets Harbor to Portsmouth, N.H., 16 August 1814.

SURGEON'S MATE LEONARD OSBORNE TO  
COMMISSARY GENERAL OF PRISONERS JOHN MASON

U S Brig *Oneida*,  
Sackets Harbor Jany. 6th. 1815.

Dear Sir,

From my very slight and short acquaintance with you, it will perhaps be deemed a liberty which I take not justified by your Knowledge of me in addressing an application to you, but feeling confident of your wish to advance the interests of any young man whom you may know as is consistent with your Knowledge and good opinion of him I request sir the favor of your making use of your influence with the present Secy. of the Navy in seconding a request that I have made for an appointment as Acting Surgeon to one of the New Brigs or Schooners which are now fitting out under the direction of Com Perry & Capn. Porter.—

After leaving the *Analostan*<sup>1</sup> I had confident expectations of getting to Sea in the "Congress" and participating in the honor & profit which I had hoped would have resulted from her cruise; The crew and officers having been ordered to this Lake, frustrated those expectations— Since my arrival here I have acted as Surgeon of one of the Brigs on this station, while a gleam of hope remained that we should have any active Service here I was content, all idea of a battle or an attack having ceased, I must anxiously desire to get to Sea this winter, and conceive that, if you can make any representations, in my favor, they will go far to obtain the boon which I am seeking.

My appointment to the *Analostan* was far from being a profitable one to me, not receiving from the Dept. the pay of Surgeon and my expences being equal to any Ward Room— I assure you sir tho' I made use of all due economy that I was more than \$100. in debt extra of my pay when I left that vessel, depending alone on the Service for Support I am very desirous of getting into a Situation where there is an expectation of drawing some profit from it: I wish very much to attend a course of Lectures at Philadelphia next winter, and it will be altogether impossible for me to accomplish it, unless I should be so fortunate as to make prize money, I pray you to excuse sir my troubling you with so long a letter, and so much of my private concerns—you will confer a particular obligation

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on me sir, when time & leisure will permit, by writing me a few lines on the subject of this letter.—<sup>2</sup> With Sentiments of respect I am Sir, Yr. mo obt. Servt.

L. Osborne.

ALS, DN-HC, Early Naval Records Collection ("ZV" Files), Subject Files, Box 171.

1. Leonard Osborne was appointed a surgeon's mate and ordered to the cartel brig *Analostan* on 29 April 1813. One of two vessels purchased by the government during the war to transport prisoners, *Analostan* was manned by navy personnel but under the direction of Commissary General of Prisoners John Mason.

2. Osborne left Sackets Harbor but not until 19 April 1815 when he was ordered to report to Commodore Decatur for duty on board *Firefly*.

ACTING SECRETARY OF THE NAVY HOMANS TO  
COMMODORE ISAAC CHAUNCEY

Como. Isaac Chauncey  
Comm'g U.S Naval force  
on Lake Ontario.— New York

Navy Department  
Jany 11th. 1815

Sir,

I have the honor to reply to your letter of the 5th. current, and to assure you that I am fully sensible of the nature of the service on Lake Ontario, and have felt as much anxiety and delicacy for your command, and its peculiar importance and security, as you have expressed on the subject.—

If the Station has been weakened by the transfer of officers, I assure you that I have not, in any respect, aided by a compliance with their solicitations, for removal.—

In the selection of officers by the late Secretary to command the small vessels fitting under Captains Porter and Perry, I had no agency; nor do I know more of that arrangement, than that other officers of equal or superior claims, under your command, are as much dissatisfied as you can be.—

I am aware of the unpleasant situation in which you are placed, as Commanding Officer of that Station, and of the importance it is to you to have able, active, and experienced officers under your command.— I believe that such can yet be found, to replace those who have been removed; and I will endeavour that your wishes shall, in this respect, be gratified when the new Secretary shall take charge of the Department.—

I have offended a number of respectable connexions of Officers, by refusing their requests to leave the Station, and have complied in one instance only; and that under circumstances of pulmonary weakness, which appeared to justify it, in the case of Lieut. Frederick W. Smith, formerly of the Sloop of War *Erie* under Captain Ridgely.— One other young Lieutenant has been ordered here on special business by direction of the President, Lieut. Dugomier Taylor; and he will return as soon as his affairs are settled.—

The Department is now crowded with letters of application all of which lie over for consideration. I was sensible, at first, of the strong inducements for the officers to apply for stations on board the Cruising Vessels, and kept in view constantly your suggestion to the Department on that subject at the early part of the business.—

If officers have obtained leave of absence by Sick Tickets the Department is not informed of their number, and cannot be answerable for the consequences; although in some instances humanity may have been the imperious and justifiable plea.—

As respects Purser Bourne, he was ordered at the special request of Captain Warrington, presuming that his services as Purser were not essentially necessary on the Station; but I was not informed of the peculiar relation in which he stood with you as an assistant.— There are other Purzers of experience who can replace him.— I assure you, Sir, that every thing shall be done to meet your wishes, in strengthening the Station, in ordering such officers as you may designate.—

Purser Bourne will transfer his accounts to Purser Chew, who is now here and will return to the station as soon as his accounts are settled.— I am very respectfully &c.

B Homans A S N.

LB, DNA, RG45, SNL, Vol. 12, pp. 9–10 (M149, Roll No. 12).

## Establishing British Dockyards on the Upper Lakes

*The capture of Scorpion and Tigress, renamed Confiance and Surprise, gave the British an advantage on Lake Huron. They planned to reinforce that theater with the construction of additional gunboats at Penetanguishene Bay during the winter. On Lake Erie, the capture of Somers and Ohio, renamed Sauk and Huron, provided an opening for the reestablishment of a British naval presence on that lake in 1815. The British intended to build a naval depot at Turkey Point, located on the north shore of Lake Erie east of Long Point, during the winter months.*

*These plans were interrupted when Brigadier General Duncan McArthur, leading a combined force of Kentucky and Ohio militiamen, swept across the northern shore of Lake Erie from Detroit eastward to the Grand River from 22 October until 7 November. His forces burned mills and destroyed stores of military provisions.<sup>1</sup> McArthur's raid deprived the British of valuable food supplies that would have sustained British troops and their native allies in the west. Lieutenant General Drummond called on Commodore Yeo to bring out his fleet to help transport foodstuffs to his army in the west, but Yeo declined, citing the uncertainty of navigation during the early winter months.*

<sup>1</sup>. For more on Duncan McArthur's raid, see Quimby, U.S. Army in the War of 1812, pp. 756–58.

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

H M Ship *St. Lawrence*  
Off the Ducks 9th. November 1814

Sir

Having proceeded to Niagara on the morning of the 6th I immediately embarked on board the *Montreal* and reached the *St. Lawrence* at her anchorage at

York early the following morning. Commodore Sir James Yeo gave an immediate and decided negative to my proposition relative to cooperating in operations on the right Bank of the Niagara. He grounded his objection on the lateness of the Season, the uncertainty of the weather and the danger which might arise to the Squadron from that cause as well as from the Enemy if left for any considerable Period at its anchorage at York.— I did not because I saw it was in vain to urge the matter.— It remained therefore to discuss the more important Point of the properest Situation for the proposed Naval Establishment for the Upper Lakes.— For this purpose I proceeded on shore with the Commodore and the Naval Commissioner and Captain Payne whom I had brought over from Niagara for the purpose, and having heard the opinion of the Surveyor General Major Wilmot the Asst. Commy. General Mr. Crookshanks and other well informed Persons at York it was decidedly and unanimously agreed that the obstacles in the way of such an establishment on Lake Huron at Penetangashen Bay at this season of the year are not only insurmountable but even if it were possible to overcome them that a Naval Establishment on that Lake would by no means offer the same advantages with one on Lake Erie, the formation of which at Turkey Point is to be effected with far less difficulty and risque than at any point on Lake Huron.— By gaining the Naval superiority on Lake Erie that of Lake Huron follows—but the Proposition cannot be reversed— Sir James required from me an assurance that the establishment should be protected by the Army a Promise which I have willingly given and have accordingly instructed M General Stovin to detach one Wing of the 37th. Regt. one Troop 19th Dragoons and two Six Pounders without delay to Long Point and in the event of the Enemy's attention being drawn to that Point and of its being threatened with a visit from him, not only to reinforce this Wing by the remaining Companies of the Regiment but to continue to strengthen that Post according as circumstances may render necessary.

Keeping in view the desire which your Excy. has manifested on the subject of some Naval establishment being formed on Lake Huron, I have directed Mr. Crookshank to cause a road to be opened from Kempenfelt Bay to Penetangashene (all that can at present be effected) with a view to open a better communication than we at present possess with the Shores of Lake Huron and particularly with our two newly acquired Schooners on that Water

Major Cockburn<sup>1</sup> with the Company of Canadian Fencibles & Captain Payne R Engr will proceed to Turkey Point without delay— I must take this occasion of observing however that Captain Payne has been sent up not only without any part of his Personal Baggage (or his Instruments) but without the Men of his Company whose Services on the duty on which he has been detached would have been invaluable and are in fact indispensable and I have therefore to beg they may be sent up by the quickest possible mode of conveyance

Sir James Yeo has consented to detach the *Niagara* filled with every thing which may be most useful for the new Establishment. Captain Collier a most active and zealous officer and who moreover is destined to command on Lake Erie is also to land and to proceed to Turkey Point with the whole of the Crew of that Ship (*Niagara*) after laying her up at York, to superintend and assist in the works.— Captain Payne is ordered to hue out a work (on a site to be determined by that which the Naval Commissioner will designate for the future Dock Yard) capable of containing 1000 Men, and to commence this work with such means as we can collect for him, without a moments delay. Your Excellency will

see the importance therefore of sending up to Captain Payne his Company of Sappers & Miners. The Naval Commissioner has come down in the Squadron for the purpose of making some necessary arrangements—but will return in the *Niagara*.

We had scarcely discussed this Point and taken the necessary consequent measures when a communication of which the enclosed is a Copy was brought to me by an Express from Kingston— It decided the Commodore instantly to return to this Place without waiting for the small Vessels which had been detached to Burlington to bring away the 103d Regiment.— The Embarkation of that Regt. has however I fear been delayed if not wholly prevented by a circumstance which I have not yet had an opportunity of reporting to your Excellency nor indeed am I at this moment in possession of any satisfactory information on the subject.— On the morning of the 6th. I received a Report, Copy of which is enclosed, from Lt Colonel Smelt 103d Regt. Comg. at Burlington.<sup>2</sup> I lost no time in detaching the 37th Regt. with two 6s and the remaining Troop of the 19th Regt. and directed M General De Watteville to proceed and assume the direction of the whole. As the M General probably would not reach Burlington, in the present state of the roads, sooner than the evening of the 7th. and as I sailed from York yesterday Evening (8th) I have had no further reports Lt Colo. Smelt having most unaccountably omitted to communicate with the Commanding officer of the Post of York relative to the advance of the Enemy. That the next reports will contain the account of the rapid retreat of the Plundering Party (for such I conclude it to be) I have no doubt— No time however shall be lost in forwarding any further information which I may receive.

Previous to quitting York I directed a communication to be made to the Indians in Council on the subject of the very gratifying information contained in your Excellency's Letter and its enclosure of the 31st Ultimo I have the honor to be Your Excellency's Most obedient Humble Servant

Gordon Drummond  
Lt. General

LS, CaOOA, British Military and Naval Records, RG8, I, "C" Ser., Vol. 686, pp. 144–50.

1. Major Francis Cockburn, Canadian Fencible Infantry. He was the younger brother of Rear Admiral George Cockburn, R.N.

2. Lieutenant Colonel William Smelt, 103d Regiment of Foot, British army.

[Enclosure]

Kingston Thursday Morning  
10th. November—

P S—

The Squadron Anchored off the nine Mile Point last night— I have just landed and find M General Robinson<sup>1</sup> in possession of no information subsequent to that contained in his Letter of the 4th. Inst.

I do not therefore Consider it necessary to detain the Troops here which the Squadron has brought down vitz. the 41st. Regt. the Light Company of the Kings and about 130 convalescents & sick of the 103rd. Regt.

Finding that the Express which conveyed my Letter to your Excy. of the 5th. Inst. has not yet passed through this Place I have great Satisfaction in acquainting Your Excy. that the principal object of that Letter was to report that the Enemy evacuated Fort Erie on the morning of that day (5th) & retreated precipitately to his own shores after blowing up the works and destroying the Place.

Having just observed in a late Quebec Paper the arrival at that Place of a considerable Detachment of R. Artillery Drovers I lose no time in requesting Your Excy to spare no less a Proportion of this valuable description of Men as may be possible for the Right Division in order to relieve the Boys of the different Regts. who are wholly unequal to that laborious & important duty.

G: D:

LS, CaOOA, British Military and Naval Records, RG8, I, "C" Ser., Vol. 686, p. 151.

1. Major General Sir Frederick Philipse Robinson, British army.

LIEUTENANT GENERAL GORDON DRUMMOND, BRITISH ARMY, TO  
COMMODORE SIR JAMES L. YEO, R.N.

Copy/

Head Quarters, Kingston  
13 November 1814

Sir,

Having just received an Account of the destruction by the Enemy of all the Resources (and the Mills) of the Country to the Westward of the Grand River, from which we had calculated upon deriving the principal part of the Supplies destined to support the Regular Troops and Indians during the approaching Winter, it becomes absolutely necessary that the means of feeding them should be forwarded from hence before the close of the Navigation.— I can not exactly state the quantity of Transport which will be required, but I can without hesitation say that nothing less than the aid of the whole Squadron will be sufficient to relieve the Urgent wants of the Right Division of the Army. In the event of your agreeing to afford me the assistance which I feel it to be my Duty to require, I should be induced to avail myself of the opportunity of proceeding myself to Burlington in order to ascertain the extent of the mischief which the unfortunate want of Troops at that point has enabled the Enemy to do us and to make such arrangements as may appear to me to be called for.

It will be necessary in my Opinion that the smaller Vessels should land the Stores they may take on Board at Burlington Beach.

In anticipation of your assent to a proposal which is so immediately connected with the preservation of an important part of the Province and which must be absolutely evacuated by the Troops unless I am provided with the means of conveying relief to them, I have directed the Deputy Commissary General to be prepared to put on Board the Ships every Barrel of Provisions which can possibly be spared from the Stores of this Dépôt.

Under the unfortunate circumstances which have occurred, it would perhaps be advisable to change the Plan relative to the Crew of the *Niagara*, which would only add to the difficulties which we shall, I fear, experience in feeding any

thing at Turkey Point—At all events, for the present I would advise only a few Artificers and Shipwrights being sent there—the Crew of the Ship can be sent up in the Winter. I have the honor to be, &c.

(signed) Gordon Drummond  
Lt. General—

Copy, CaOOA, British Military and Naval Records, RG8, I, "C" Ser., Vol. 686, pp. 170-72.

COMMODORE SIR JAMES L. YEO, R.N., TO  
LIEUTENANT GENERAL GORDON DRUMMOND, BRITISH ARMY

(Copy.)

His Majesty's Ship, *St. Lawrence*,  
at Kingston the 14th. Novr. 1814.

Sir,

I have had the honor of your letter of yesterday's date, acquainting me of the destruction by the Enemy of all the Mills, to the Westward of the Grand River, and requiring the aid of the whole Squadron to relieve the urgent want of the Right Division of the Army.—

I have at all times, (from motives of duty and inclination,) been ready and solicitous to cooperate, and assist the Army, to the utmost of my means and ability, and therefore on the present occasion feel the more distressed, that it is not in my power to comply with your request, without exposing His Majesty's Squadron to most imminent danger, such, as no Officer could be warranted in risking.—

I have consulted Messrs. Richardsons, the Pilots, and others best acquainted with the Lake, who give it as their opinion that it would be the height of imprudence and hazardous in the extreme, to take the large Ships on the Lake at this advanced season of the year—that it has ever been the custom to lay up the Vessels on the 15th. of this month, and though small Vessels have been on the Lake as late as the 1st. of December they have narrowly escaped being lost—that the Snow Storms generally last Twenty-four Hours, with great violence, and there is no anchorage or Shelter for large Ships between this and York. I do not hesitate in declaring, that if the Squadron were to be caught on the Lake in such a storm it is my opinion that their loss would be inevitable.—

It is also to be considered, that if the Squadron were at this moment ready to sail, the Service could not be accomplished under ten days at least, from its being impossible to approach the Niagara River within Six Miles; Burlington is out of the question, and York, which is the only place the Squadron can communicate with, the Ships are obliged to lay at the distance of three miles, and it is only in moderate weather, that Boats could land the Provisions—it would therefore be December before the Squadron could return, and then could not get into Port, if the wind was Easterly.—

The *Montreal* is reported by the Builder Unfit for Service without undergoing repair, and I can assure you, Sir, I am not without my apprehensions for the safety of the two Brigs on the Lake.—

I shall attend to your suggestions respecting the Crew of the *Niagara*.—

Should you determine on going up, and think proper to accept of the *Niagara*, I will order Captain Collier to be prepared to receive you on board.— I have the honor to be, &c.

(Signed) James Lucas Yeo  
Commodore and Commander in Chief.

Copy, CaOOA, British Military and Naval Records, RG8, I, "C" Ser., Vol. 686, pp. 173-76.

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

Kingston. November 22nd. 1814.

Sir,

I have the honor to acknowledge the receipt of Your Excellency's Letter of the 16th. Instant, covering an Extract of a Despatch from Your Excellency to Earl Bathurst, of the 5th. of the same month, expressive of your sentiments on the subject of Naval Establishments on Lake Erie and Lake Huron.—

Previous to my departure from York, although the idea of building upon the latter sheet of Water had been abandoned by the Commodore, the Commissioner, and myself, yet I issued directions to Mr. Crookshank, the Deputy Assistant Commissary General at that place, to commence opening the Road to Penetangushene, and to transport as much provisions as he possibly could across Lake Simcoe before the close of the navigation upon that Lake; and likewise to repair the Yonge Street Road; which has of late been totally impassable for Wheeled Carriages in many places: for both which purposes I have ordered him every assistance he could require from the Militia of the Country, &c; and from his unceasing zeal, and attention to the good of the Service, I feel little doubt but that he has already commenced the work required.— I will direct Captain Payne to proceed with the Sappers and Miners, to Penetangushene, according to the original instructions he received from Your Excellency detaching Lieutenant Wilson with a few of those men, to Turkey Point, for the purpose of erecting cover for the Wing of the 37th. Regt. at present there.— Captain Payne has recommended this cover to consist of Four Block Houses, connected by a strong Stockade; as being easiest erected, both as cover and defence, at this season of the year.— And I will also order Major Cockburne to proceed with the Canadian Axemen in like manner to Penetangushene.—

Sir James Yeo has decided upon taking out the Guns of the *Princess Charlotte*, and sending them, together with what Stores can possibly be spared from hence, and the Naval Artificers, to York, in the *Niagara*, (daily expected from the Head of the Lake,) for the proposed Vessel on Lake Huron.— And Captain Collyer, with this Ship's Company, will be ordered to remain at York, for the purpose of affording his assistance towards the completion of the desired object.—

A Boat has been dispatched, to Sackett's Harbour, by the Commodore; which is expected to return in about five days.— Should the Reports by her induce the opinion, that the Enemy's Fleet has no intention of again taking the Lake, or that even they still continue in their present position, (the two large ships an-

chored under Fort Tompkins, and the remainder across the Harbour's mouth,) I propose accompanying Sir James Yeo, by water, to Montreal, if it meets Your Excellency's approbation, for the purpose of having a personal interview with Your Excellency, on the subject of future operations; which, from the difficulty and risk attending epistolary communication, cannot be otherwise so satisfactorily arranged.— I have the honor to be, Sir, Your Excellency's most obedient, humble servant,

Gordon Drummond  
Lt. General

P: S: No accounts of importance, since my last communication, have been received from the westward.—

G: D:

LS, CaOOA, British Military and Naval Records, RG8, I, "C" Ser., Vol. 733, pp. 123-28.

DEPUTY ASSISTANT COMMISSARY GENERAL GEORGE CROOKSHANK, BRITISH ARMY, TO LIEUTENANT COLONEL COLLEY L. L. FOSTER,  
UPPER CANADIAN MILITIA

Copy/

York 16th. Decemr. 1814

Sir

Your Letter of the 4th. I had the honor to receive on the 14th. instant on my return from Crossing Lake Simcoe where I had been with Captain Collier to render what assistance I could in forwarding the shipwrights for Penetangushene Bay by way of Nottawasaga River, but on our arrival at the latter place we found the river had froze up the day before and that it was not practicable for them to proceed any further than Nottawasaga where Captain Collier has left 18 ship wrights under Lt. Poyntz, for constructing the Boats that may be required on that River, and the other ship wrights have been left at Holland River for Building the Boats required on Lake Simcoe.—

I beg leave to state that on my crossing Lake Simcoe immediately after the Lt. General went down to Kingston I wrote a note to Lt. Worsley commanding the Vessels on Lake Huron, stating that the Building of Vessels at Penetangushene Bay had been given up for the Winter, and recommended that his Vessels should remain at Nottawasaga River for the Winter, as it would Facilitate the Transport of the Supplies required for Mackinac in the Spring, as from what I had learnt the Vessels might make a trip to Mackinac from Nottawasaga River before the Ice would permit them to get out of Penetangushene Bay and in that case the enemy might again be on the Lake under present circumstances this arrangement has turned out rather unfortunate for had the Vessels gone round with what Provisions and Stores Lt. Woresley had taken in the Carpenters might have marched thro' the Woods and taken such Tools as was immediately required and have been supplyed with provisions from the Vessels.—

I have also to state that thinking there would be sufficient time for cutting the new Road out, not being aware of the change until Captain Collier's arrival, that it had not gone on as expeditiously as would other ways have done from my

Having had a Store House put up and also a small House for the person who had charge of the same, and the person I sent out in charge of the Party being taken dangerously ill was obliged to be brought in which also caus'd some delay. I have to report when I left these on the 12th. instant nearly 4 Miles of the road was cut out, 20 feet Wide and causd way'd to the large Cedar Swamp which was also cut thro' and partly caused way'd, on that Swamp being completed the Road will go on rapidly as I have directed that it should be opened only a sufficient width for the Team to pass and for to take our time afterwards for opening of it the full width, from the number of Hands 35 left at work I have not a doubt of it's being practicable for loaded Sleights to go thro' to Penetangushene Bay by the time the Ice will permit them to cross Lake Simcoe about the 20th. January, since my Return I also engaged some more hands but am fearful that it is not practicable for them to cross Lake Simcoe for some time.—

The Stores are going out a few Loads daily to Holland River and I am now receiving proposals for taking out the Guns, Anchors and other heavy articles for which contracts will be entered into next Week.— I have the honor to be Sir Your most obedient Humble Servant

(Signed) Geo. Crookshank  
A. C. G.

Copy, CaOOA, British Military and Naval Records, RG8, I, "C" Ser., Vol. 733, pp. 166-69, enclosed in Lieutenant General Gordon Drummond to Governor-General Sir George Prevost, 28 Dec. 1814. Lieutenant Colonel Foster was adjutant-general of militia.

CAPTAIN WILLIAM R. PAYNE, ROYAL ENGINEERS, TO  
BRITISH MILITARY SECRETARY NOAH FREER

York 21st. Decr. 1814

Dear Sir

His Excellency the Commander of the Forces being aware of my having been sent to Turkey Point, in consequence of Lt. General Drummond's decision, when at York, relative to the abandonment of the Establishment at Pennetangushine; I am now glad in being able to communicate, that I shall leave this to morrow for Holland River, and shall cross Lake Simcoe on my arrival, provided sufficiently frozen: if otherwise, shall employ myself in making such arrangements as may be found necessary.

The chief obstacle to the present service appears to be the supplying with provisions those employed; the winter communication will however, much facilitate the means of the Commissariat and I hope to be able to employ 300 Men this season: and have written to Lt. Genl. Drummond to cause the Commandant at this Post, to furnish me with such number of Militia as I may require: The resources of this part of the country are such as to prevent that Body of Men working beyond the period of three or four months without causing a great scarcity of Provisions in the ensuing season. I have however suggested (in

order to remedy this evil) that the embodied Militia be ordered to relieve the local in the early part of the Spring.

The communication to Pennetangushine by the Nottway Sague, will of course be used as soon as possible; but I am in hopes, that the heavy stores will be able to reach Pennetangushine by the road about to be formed; and which however can only be expected to answer as a winter communication. it will necessarily take some time and trouble to make it a summer road.

The Schooner's are now in the Nottaway Sague; the Post at Mackinac will demand their attention as soon as possible, in transporting Provisions Pennetangushine will be their second object; and I shd. wish six months salt provisions to be kept up at this latter Post. The Enemy may stop the communication by the Nottaway Sague in which case, that by the Road will, I fear, not be found as practicable, the ensuing summer, for the purpose of transport—

My utmost exertions will be used in forming the Depot at Pennetangushine, and, I shall transmit to his Excellency, Plans &c. of such works as I may intend to erect. Cover as well as defence must in the first instance be considered; and I shall endeavour so to arrange my plans, that the first works may ultimately add to the strength of the Post. I hope by the Spring to be able to cover 500 Men.

I left 5 Sappers & Miners with Lt. Willem<sup>1</sup> at Turkey Point, by Lt. Genl. Drummonds desire. I had not been able to visit the Deep Hole on the Point, a boat which I had sent for not having arrived in time; I however tried it with Major Cockburn, on Horseback, but the swampy state of the ground obliged us to return.

The high ground at Turkey Point presents a fine feature for a work; and I had laid down on paper a Fort, with the intention of commencing it in the Spring; and for the present had commenced a Block House, lined with earth, having a Ditch palisaded, and a covered way; and which wd. contain about 400 Men. The distance from the High ground to the Point being about 3 Miles, a work of a small nature wd. have been required between the Fort on the height, and that at the Naval Depot otherwise the communication might easily be interrupted by Gun Boats.

The swampy nature of the Point wd. have caused great trouble & time in forming an Establishment there. a causeway of about a mile and a half must have been made as early as possible tho' water communication might occasionally have been resorted to—

Lt. Willem will remain at Turkey Point to complete the work which I had commenced— I have the honor to be Sir your most obedient humble servt.

W. R. Payne  
Captn. Rl. Engrs.

ALS, CaOOA, British Military and Naval Records, RG8, I, "C" Ser., Vol. 388, pp. 240-44.

<sup>1</sup>. Possibly Sub-Lieutenant Patrick Whelan, Corps of Royal Sappers and Miners, Royal Engineers.

## Midshipman James McGowan's Mission

*Midshipman James McGowan departed Sackets Harbor on the night of 12 November on a secret mission to blow up the formidable new British warship Saint Lawrence with a torpedo. For five days, the intrepid crew lay in the Saint Lawrence River waiting for a chance to place the incendiary device under the hull of the ship. Their plan was thwarted when their boat was discovered by two British gunboats, which immediately surrendered to the Americans. With the number of British prisoners equaling the number of the Americans, Midshipman McGowan prudently decided to return to Sackets Harbor to bring in the prisoners.*

### MIDSHIPMAN JAMES MCGOWAN TO COMMODORE ISAAC CHAUNCEY

Copy.

U.S. Brig *Sylph*  
Sackets Harbor 19th Novr. 1814

Sir

"I have the honor to inform you of my arrival this day after an absence of eight days— according to the instructions I received from you, I left the Harbor on the Evening of the 12th. inst. at 6 o'clock, and proceeded with the Whale-boat, with Mr. Johnson (Pilot of the *Mohawk*) and Nine Men, to the River St. Lawrence and at 11. PM encamped on the Main land abreast of Fox-Island, the wind at S.E.—with heavy Squalls and rain— Sunday Novr. 13. fresh Gales from the S.E.—boats Crew engaged in making necessary preparations for the Cruise, latter part heavy rain and fresh gales from the S.E.— Monday Novr. 16th. [14th] light breezes from the N.E. at 1 o'C P.M. got under weigh and proceeded to the Mouth of the St. Lawrence, where we remained 'till dark, when we proceeded down the River about 7 Miles—the weather at this time squally from the N.E.—which compelled us to make a Harbour in Tibbets Bay, during the Night Tuesday Novem. 15. Moderate breezes from the No.E. during the day, we lie concealed and at 6. P.M. got under way and proceeded down the St. Lawrence at 11. made a harbor in Mill Creek, in consequence of the lightness of the Night, we considered it imprudent to proceed Wednesday 16th. fresh Gales from the S.W.—and very Squally and rainy during the Night thought it advisable to remain where we were— Thursday 17. Fresh winds from the S.W.—accompanied with Rain, at 3 P.M.—discovered two boats at the foot of Long Island standing for us, which appeared to be armed and well manned.— made every necessary preparation for receiving them— at  $\frac{1}{2}$  past 4, they came within hail; we then rushed out upon them and demanded a Surrender—no opposition was made, all hands crying out for quarters— they proved to be two of the Enemys boats, sent out by Capt. Owings,<sup>1</sup> commanding the British flotilla, on a plundering expedition to our Shore— the Prisoners &c. were immediately secured and as there were at this time several Gun boats at a short distance from us, we fortified ourselves against so superior a force, by springing several Mines &c. over which they would have been compelled to pass,— in case of an attack— Friday Nov. 18th. fresh Gales from S.W. and rainy—at 5. P.M. got under way with our prizes and proceeded for Sackets Harbor.— latter part light breezes from N.N.E.— Saturday 19th. at 8. am we arrived safe at this place.—

In consequence of the information we received from the Prisoners of the Enemy's Fleet having gone to the head of the Lake, we thought it advisable not to proceed any further for the present—we also learnt from them that the frame of a 32 Gun ship was nearly raised and that they were laying the keel of a 74—also that Two Brigs of 20 Guns each were building in Little York

I have now given you the particulars of our Cruise and it affords me great satisfaction to inform you that the Men conducted themselves with the greatest propriety." I have the honor to be &c. &c.

Signd—James McGowan  
Mid. U.S. Navy

Copy, DNA, RG45, CL, 1814, Vol. 8, No. 11, enclosure (M125, Roll No. 41).

1. Commander Charles Cunliffe Owen, R.N.

#### COMMODORE ISAAC CHAUNCEY TO SECRETARY OF THE NAVY JONES

private

U.S. Ship *Superior* Sackets Harbor  
19th November 1814

Sir

Midshipman McGowan's real business down the St. Lawrence was to pass round the foot of Long Island and approach Kingston from below for the purpose of attempting to blow the Enemies large ship up with a "Torpedo" but being discovered by two of the Enemies boats he was obliged to take them and as the prisoners amounted to an equal number to his own men he had no alternative but to return.

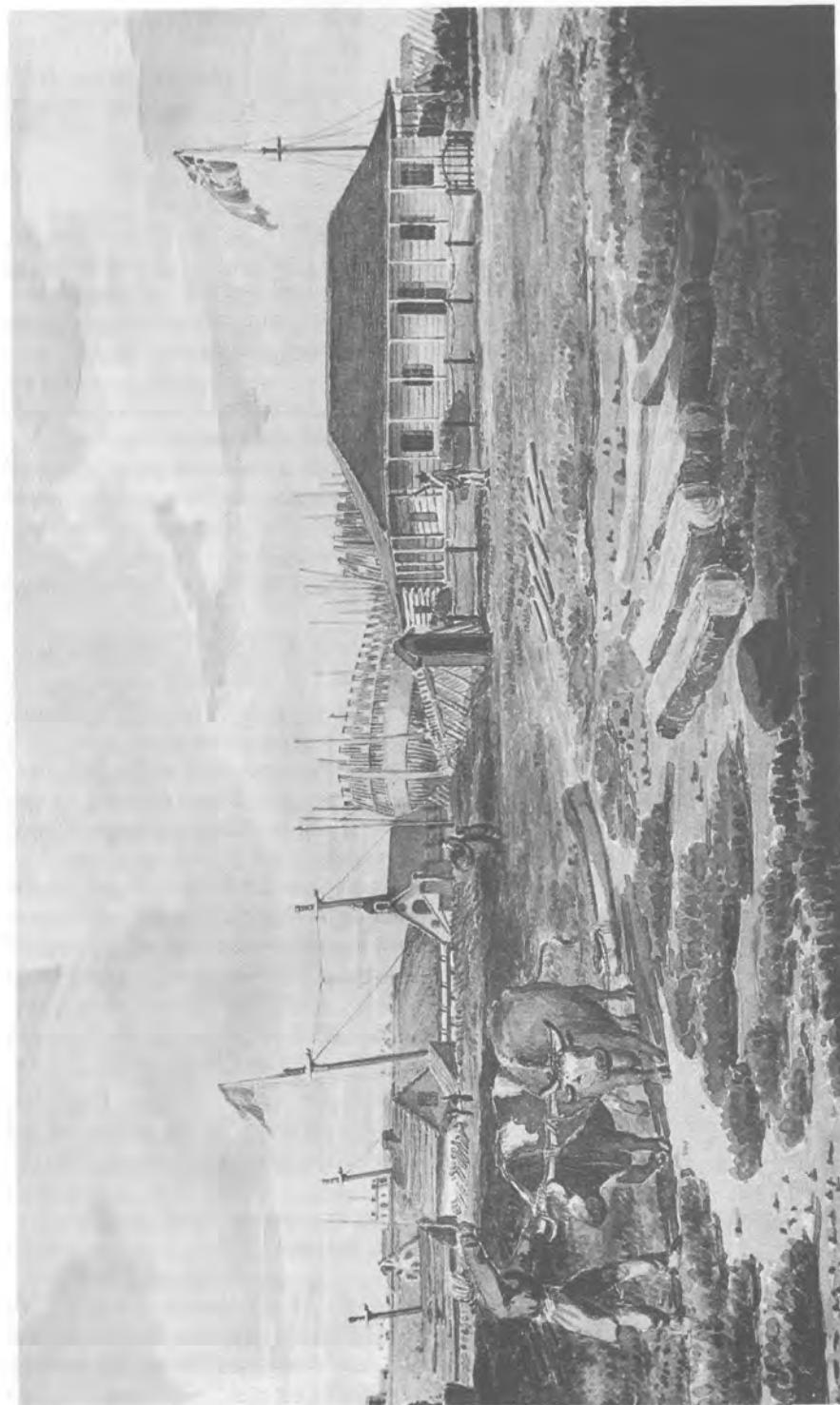
I shall make another attempt befor the frost sets in I have the honor to be with great respect Sir your Most Obt Humble Servant

Isaac Chauncey

ALS, DNA, RG45, CL, 1814, Vol. 8, No. 11 (M125, Roll No. 41).

#### Building New Ships of War

The balance of naval power on Lake Ontario swung back and forth between the American and British sides during the course of the 1814 season. At year's end, the British, with their enormous 102-gun ship Saint Lawrence, had an overwhelming advantage. If the Americans were to keep pace or surpass them, they would have to commit to an unprecedented level of ship construction. The Navy Department adopted Commodore Chauncey's plan to build two ships of the line and a frigate. Not a moment could be lost in moving guns, stores, and men to Sackets Harbor to gain the earliest advantage in the spring.



Commodore's House in the Naval Yard, Kingston, Upper Canada, July 1815

## SECRETARY OF THE NAVY JONES TO NAVY AGENT JOHN BULLUS

John Bullus Esqr.  
Navy Agent  
New York

Navy Department  
Novemr. 20th. 1814

Sir

The enclosed Indent will intimate to you the nature and extent of the intended augmentation of our Naval force at Sacketts Harbor during the ensuing winter, which from its magnitude will require the united energies of all who are engaged in the prosecution of this important object, and particularly of those who may be charged with the business of transporting and procuring the articles necessary for its construction and equipment.

As it is intended to erect a rope works at the Harbor, all the rope over eight inches will be made at that place. The Breeching stuff will be made at New York of Russia Hemp. you will therefore procure all the heavy articles and those which will be first required without delay on the best possible terms, payable either in Treasury Notes or in money 60 or 90 days after the purchase. Mr. Anderson is charged with the transportation; the guns are now on the way and will be at Albany in due time; as every heavy article must be before the Hudson closes—

Mr. Eckford and Messrs. Brown's will examine and correct the list of Mechanicks stores; the former will undertake one of the line of battle Ships and the latter the other. The 44 gun Ship will be built by either, or both as may be found convenient, and for this purpose you will immediately engage them. Mr. Eckford and one of the Mr. Browns will set out as soon as possible with a body of Carpenters to contract for and cut the timber. They will probably meet Commodore Chauncey on his way to New York with whom they will consult and whose directions they will follow.—

When he arrives at New York you will exhibit to him the Indent of the stores and materials, and follow his directions in all respects— The Indent for the cordage and cables of the 44 gun Ship is distinct and herewith enclosed. whatever may be at the navy Store or at the navy yard, or which may be made at the navy yard, you will require of the officers there; and if Mr. Anderson should not be on in time to take charge of the transportation of the heavy articles, you may have prepared, you will forward them to Albany without delay.— I rely upon your judgment and prudence to procure the articles on the best terms, and if necessary you will order any part thereof to be procured at Philadelphia, and forwarded without delay, but with certainty to reach Albany in due time.—

With my earnest requisition for your zealous cooperation in this arduous undertaking— I am very respectfully Your Obedt. Servant

W Jones

LB, DNA, RG45, CLS, 1814, pp. 212–13. The following text was centered between the address and the date lines: "Confidential with those who may be engaged in the prosecution of the business to which this relates."

## SECRETARY OF THE NAVY JONES TO NAVY AGENT JOHN BULLUS

John Bullus Esqr.  
Navy Agent  
New York

Navy Department  
Novemr. 28 1814

Sir,

I have received your letter of the 25th Inst and doubt not that every effort will be made on your part to accomplish in due time the important objects committed to your charge by my letter of the 20th. Inst.—

If you succeed in procuring the machinery and implements for the rope walks agreeably to your expectations it will save time, and probably expence also.— In order that you may have a more comprehensive view and form a better estimate of the measures necessary to be pursued in the first instance, I enclose an extract of a letter received from Commodore Chauncey in answer to certain detailed interrogatories contained in a letter from the Department embracing the whole subject; and as he was directed on the 16th inst to proceed to New York in order to arrange the plan of operations, he will probably be with you shortly after the receipt of this letter, when such of the details as do not require to be instantaneously acted upon, can be revised and executed with more deliberation and advantages particularly the procuring of the Workmen and materials, which may not be required in the first stage of the business.

The remittance I ordered to you on the 26th inst. will relieve Mr. Eckford and enable him to go on as soon as his presence may be required—I regret that the proposals of Mr. Eckford and Messrs. Browns are not more explicit and better defined.— The engagement on their part is altogether discretionary as to the time of completing their contracts, which is of all things the most important, for it is upon that, the whole efficacy of the measure depends; moreover they do not contemplate building the 44 until one of the line of battle Ships shall be launched, where as the whole may go on together—

I have understood from private sources that Messrs. Brown's have said they would engage to build two ships of the first class in two months, and I had hoped they would have fixed a short and definite period for their completion instead of "as early as possible in the spring," which is so loose as to afford no certainty.

It is true that relying upon what these gentlemen have already done in the public service, and upon their known zeal, talents and patriotism, I feel less solicitude upon this subject

The conditions also are too loosely expressed. They say—"to finish the Carpenters, Caulkers, Joiners, Blacksmiths, and Blockmakers work for the Hull and Spars: The Blacksmiths and Blockmakers work for the Rigging and armament excluded—all the materials except timber to be delivered on the ground by the Navy Department which is also to risk the vessels while on the Stocks.—

For which we are to receive and be paid at the rate of eighty dollars per ton United States tonnage or measurement"

Am I to understand that the contractors are to furnish the materials as well as to finish the work in the above branches, and that the Navy Department is to furnish all the transportation except for the timber, or that the Navy Department is to furnish the materials as well as the transportation to the ground, except the timber?—

Nothing is said of Oakum Naval Stores Iron or lumber though it may be inferred and I presume is intended that the contractors are to furnish all these and that the Navy Department is to furnish only the transportation to the ground, otherwise the price would be enormously high in the midst of a country abounding in timber, and for work merely substantial but rough.—

Again, what is meant by United States tonnage? Is it the tonnage by which the vessels of the Navy have always been built and measured; or is it Custom house tonnage? I presume it is the former, in which the length between the perpendiculars less  $\frac{1}{3}$  of the beam, and the rake of the post, is taken for the straight rabbet; which multiplied by the moulded breadth of the beam and that product again multiplied by half that breadth; and this last product divided by 95 the quotient will be the Navy tonnage—

If Custom House tonnage is meant (which I cannot suppose, as it is wholly inapplicable and has never been applied to Ships of War) which of the decks is to be taken as the basis of the length? If it is the upper deck as in Merchantmen it would swell the tonnage to an enormous degree.—

The Java 44 lately built at Baltimore (and better never was built) cost Seventy three dollars per ton Navy tonnage, and the builder found all the materials of Wood, of Iron, of Copper (except the sheathing Copper which he put on) and lead for the Hull, together with Carvers Plumbers and Joiners work, (except the rooms) Oakum Naval Stores, and three coats of paint inside & out.—

In the present case contracts cannot be made in the usual public manner because policy forbids it, and men must be employed upon whose integrity capacity and zeal the Government may perfectly rely not only to execute the work well but above all things, in due time; and for this merited confidence the Government is disposed to be liberal, but have a right to expect a corresponding disposition on the part of the Contractors—

I mention these things in order that proper explanations may be had and that you may have a perfect understanding and a well defined contract upon the best possible terms you can procure, and which you are hereby authorized to make without further reference to the Department as not a moment is to be lost. I am very respectfully Yr. Ob. St.

W. Jones

LB, DNA, RG45, CLS, 1814, pp. 213–15.

SECRETARY OF THE NAVY JONES TO COMMODORE ISAAC CHAUNCEY

Commodore Isaac Chauncey  
Commanding the U.S Naval  
force on Lake Ontario  
Sacketts Harbour

Sir,

On your arrival in New York Mr. Bullus will exhibit for your information the letters, estimates and Indents for the contemplated augmentation of the Naval force on Lake Ontario, by which you will perceive that your suggestion of Two Ships of the first class, and one 44 Gun Ship, has been adopted after having consulted Commodore Decatur, Governor Tompkins and Mr. Fulton, on the ex-

Navy Department  
Novemr. 30 1814

pediency of substituting Steam floating Batteries; which upon mature deliberation, they reported against, and recommended the description of force now adopted. If however, upon your consulting with those gentlemen again upon the expediency of substituting one Steam Battery in lieu of the 44, and the decision should be in favour of the former, you are authorized to take the necessary measures for that purpose, and to arrange the business with Mr. Fulton so as to leave no doubt of the execution in due time

You will carefully examine and correct the estimates and Indents, by extending, curtailing, or dispensing as you may deem proper; confiding in your judgement, and desire to limit this inevitably heavy expenditure to the most economical scale.

The transportation of the Guns, is in great forwardness, and I trust all the heavy and necessary articles required in the early stage of the operations, will reach Albany in due Season. On this subject the President is very solicitous, and I pray you to look into the entire arrangements and correct such as may be found defective.—

Mr. Anderson is charged with the transportation, but subject to such orders in that respect as you may deem best adapted to the end in view—

In what manner this great additional force is to be manned, ought to be investigated and provided for, as early as possible.—I cannot but entertain great solicitude on this subject, knowing the difficulty of procuring men for the service, and particularly that of the Lakes, for which they entertain a great aversion.—

The defense of our Atlantic ports cannot be abandoned, and the preference given to the private armed service, from the hope of gain, I fear will much impede our recruiting service.

The result of your reflections on this subject will doubtless be acceptable to the Department, in which, tomorrow will terminate my official functions, for which I have been preparing since April last, from the indispensable attention required by my private concerns.

I cannot suffer this occasion to pass without bearing testimony to the talents, energy, judgment, and patriotism which you have displayed during your arduous command, and stating expressly my perfect conviction that it could not have been in better hands.

With my best wishes for the honorable and prosperous issue of that, for which you are now preparing. I am very respectfully Sir, Your Obedt. Servt.

W Jones

LB, DNA, RG45, 1814, CLS, pp. 223–25.

CAPTAIN RICHARD O'CONOR, R.N., TO  
FIRST LORD OF THE ADMIRALTY VISCOUNT ROBERT SAUNDERS DUNDAS MELVILLE

91 Wimpole St. London  
Decembr. 19th. 14

My Lord

Having already informed your Lordship in person of the circumstances under which I was despatched to England by Commodore Sir James Lucas Yeo,

I consider it my duty to furnish your Lordship with all the information on the present state of affairs in the different Districts of Upper Canada which my long Residence therein in an Official situation has necessarily enabled me to acquire,

It will not be necessary for me to impress upon your Lordship how much the safety of the Province of Upper Canada depends on the maintenance of our Naval Superiority on Lake Ontario; This superiority which by unprecedented exertions we at present possess (as will appear by the accompanying statement of the comparative force of the two Squadrons on that Lake) can only be maintained by creating means of transport from Montreal to Kingston for the Supplies of Stores and Provisions which any increase of that force will necessarily demand,

Timber for building is to be procured on the spot to any extent, all the other materials must come from Europe, and be conveyed from Montreal in part by Land Carriage and the remainder by the most difficult Navigation perhaps existing, to Kingston, (a distance of nearly two hundred miles) which is the grand Naval Depot of all Upper Canada, The Navigation of the St. Lawrence is practicable only from May to the end of October or beginning of November, and the means of transport by this navigation, the most important of all considerations with a view to the defence of Upper Canada, may be very materially improved, as I am prepared to prove if called upon by your Lordship or any of His Majesty's Ministers so to do,

The present means of Kingston Yard I consider to be fully equal to any Demand which can be made upon it for keeping in repair the Force at present on Lake Ontario, and for a gradual encrease thereof, and the means of transport from Montreal as furnished by the Province during the last Campaign, may also be considered equal to the supply of the Yard on its present Establishment, Although admitting of no reduction: If however the preparations of the Enemy render necessary a corresponding increase of the British Naval Force on the Lake it will become a question of the most vital importance how the additional means of transport which the construction and maintenance of such increased force will demand, are to be procured, as without such additional means of transport it will be impossible to meet on equal terms the superior advantages which the Enemy in this respect possesses: The foregoing observations will equally apply to any force which it may be in contemplation to construct on Lakes Erie or Huron, the Demands for both of which Stations, must necessarily be supplied, from Kingston Yard, although there is another communication to Lake Huron by means of the Ottawa River which cannot however be depended upon,

I have already observed that I consider the present Establishment of Kingston Yard equal to a gradual increase of the Force on the Lakes but the continuance of the Naval Superiority which we at present possess, must depend on the expedition with which the exertions of the Enemy may be met, I take the liberty of calling your Lordships attention to the expediency of timely re-inforcing the strength of that Yard according to the Intelligence which may be received by His Majesty's Government of the preparations of the Enemy at Sackets, and here it may not be improper to observe that the general impression in Canada prior to my departure, was, that the exertions of the Enemy in this respect during the ensuing Winter would be very considerable; An early provision of Ordnance will also be necessary, and the serious injury which had nearly been occa-

sioned by the recent capture of the Transport laden with Ordnance Stores for the Lakes,<sup>1</sup> may probably suggest the propriety of sending them in Ships of War hereafter in preference to Transports: There are also many details with regard to an improved mode of packing the Stores both with a view to their preservation and more convenient transport and other matters, with which I will not trouble your Lordship, but will communicate, if your Lordship should think proper so to direct, with the Navy Board and the other Departments to which these Details more particularly belong. I have the honor to be your Lordships Most obedt. Humb. Servt.

Rich oConor

ALS, CSMH, Melville Papers.

1. H.M. transport *Stranger*, carrying ordnance for the northern lakes, was captured by the Portsmouth, N.H., privateer *Fox*, Samuel Handy, on 8 September.

## Close of the American Campaign on Lake Erie

*Operations on Lake Erie in 1814 were at an end when Captain Sinclair requested permission to leave Lake Erie to settle his accounts and visit his family. He also longed for the command of a frigate so that he could win the glory and "brilliant success" that he saw other naval captains achieve.*

*Captain Sinclair was granted permission to depart for Washington and to visit his family, but did not receive the coveted command of a cruising frigate during the war. He was ordered back to Erie to close up the station in March 1815.*

CAPTAIN ARTHUR SINCLAIR TO SECRETARY OF THE NAVY JONES

U S Brig Niagara Erie  
November the 28th 1814

Sir

I have the satisfaction to inform you that all the heavy vessels are within the Basin—without accident— The *Lady Prevost* will be ready to come in the first good day which offers, and it will be but a short time before they are moored in as complete a state of defense as it is possible to place them— I shall throw temporary roofs over the four large vessels, in order to secure the use of their guns at all times, give comfort and health to their crews, preserve the Ships and make them safe from boarding— I shall have it done in a short time & with but very trifling expense—a mere nothing when compared with the utility— It will be necessary to let me know as early as possible the force you contemplate for the ensuing season, as our mens times are daily expiring, and all the 12 Months men's times will be out in March; and those constitute a large majority, and will include almost every Sailor on the Station— If I knew your views I would regulate the recruiting service accordingly— Mr. Ormsby has also stated that much may be saved by an early contract for our Salt Provision, and

that it can now be made without an advance— I have the honor to remain with great respect, Sir, your Obt. Servt.

A Sinclair

ALS, DNA, RG45, CL, 1814, Vol. 2, No. 192 (M125, Roll No. 35). This letter was misfiled with letters from April 1814.

CAPTAIN ARTHUR SINCLAIR TO SECRETARY OF THE NAVY JONES

U.S. Sloop *Niagara* Erie, Decr. the 5th. 1814

Sir

you were good enough to say to me, when giving me my instructions for the station, that so soon as the campaign on the frontier closed, I should be permitted to return to the Atlantick— That time is now at hand, and the Squadron placed in a situation which requires bravery alone to defend it, should defence become necessary— I can therefore with propriety renew my request to you, not only to come on to the seat of government with a view to settle my account for the disbursements of the station, which stands open to a large amount; but to give some personal attention to my domestick affairs, which, from circumstances beyond my control, have become much deranged—<sup>1</sup> My family have been driven from two different settlements by the incursions of the Enemy, and they are now in that unsettled state which imperiously call for my presence— I have ever considered it the duty of an officer to make his private concerns subservient to the publick good, and I only ask indulgence when I am under a belief my services can be spared without injury to the command I hold—

It will be unnecessary for me to say to you, Sir, how much of my time has been employed on Lake Service, and how infinitely more desirable would be the command of a cruizing Frigate (were it in your power at this time, without interfering with officers who have stronger claims, to give me such an appointment) as you have too just a sense of the feelings which belong to an officer not to be able to anticipate his wishes in Service; I have therefore remained contented, under a belief that where I was ordered my services were most necessary— If a devotion to an arduous and unpleasant service gives an officer a claim to indulgence I feel conscious that I have earned it, and altho my exertions have not been marked with any brilliant success, yet I am not without a hope that they have been of advantage to my Country, and that those who know me will do me the justice to believe, that had opportunity offered I would have used the means in my power to the greatest advantage—

In making this request, Sir, I do not wish you to understand that I am paving the way to leaving this Station— I assure you I have no such intention, for unpleasant and arduous as is this Service, and preferable as would be an appointment to a Frigate, where glory might be won, I shall cheerfully lay aside all selfish pretensions and apply myself where it is believed I can render most service to my Country I have the honor to remain with high respect, Sir, Your Obt. Servt.

A Sinclair

ALS, DNA, RG45, CL, 1814, Vol. 8, No. 82 (M125, Roll No. 41). William Jones stepped down as secretary of the navy on 1 December 1814.

1. Acting Secretary of the Navy Homans ordered Sinclair to Washington to settle his accounts on 12 December. Lieutenant Daniel S. Dexter assumed command of the Lake Erie Station during Sinclair's absence. Dexter was promoted to master commandant on 10 December 1814.

## The Trial of Surgeon Joseph G. Roberts

Surgeon Joseph G. Roberts entered naval service in 1811 and served on Lake Erie during the war. In 1813 he was in charge of a shore hospital established at Erie, and so missed the action, and the prize money, when the American squadron under Captain Oliver H. Perry captured the British squadron on 10 September 1813. He petitioned Congress to grant him a share of prize money for the action, but was turned down.<sup>1</sup>

In 1814, he faced charges of neglect of duty, neglect of his patients, and unofficerlike conduct. The testimony at his court-martial reveals shocking accusations about his callousness toward his patients, and hints that he may have had a drinking problem and was perhaps embezzling naval stores as well. The testimony against him was so damning that Secretary of the Navy Crowninshield overturned his sentence and ordered a new trial on the grounds that his sentence was inadequate to the charges.

Doctor Roberts was the only medical officer to be court-martialed during the War of 1812. His hearing reveals much about the state of medical practice on distant stations. It also describes a man who was clearly not suited to the caring profession of medicine. Doctor Roberts resigned from naval service on 30 May 1815 before he could be called before a second court to hear the charges against him.

1. ASP: Naval Affairs, Vol. 1, p. 362.

### COURT-MARTIAL OF SURGEON JOSEPH G. ROBERTS

Duplicate of the proceedings of a Court Martial held on bd. the U.S. Brig *Queen Charlotte* in the harbour of Presque Isle by Virtue of the following Order—

Sir

By Virtue of authority vested in me by the Honl. the Secretary of the Navy, for the convening a Court Martial for the trial of Doctr. Joseph G Roberts on the enclosed charges exhibited by myself—You are hereby appointed President of said Court to be convened on bd. the U.S. Brig *Queen Charlotte* this day at 10 o'clock A.M. And to be composed of the following Members and Judge Advocate who's summonses have been duly handed them and for which this shall be your warrant

Lt. Comdt. Danl. S. Dexter President

Given under my hand &  
Seal on bd. the U.S.S.  
of War *Niagara* Erie, 6th.  
Decr. 1815 [1814]  
Sd. A Sinclair

Lieut. Comdt. S. Woodhouse  
" E P Kennedy  
Lieut. Thos. Holdup  
" S. H. Bullus } Members

John C Wallace Judge Advocate

Decr. 6th. 1814

The Court met pursuant to the above—Order—Present  
Lieut. Comdt. Danl. S Dexter—Presidt.

Lieut. Comt. E Kennedy	Lieut. Comdt. Woodhouse
Lieut. Saml. H Bullus	Lieut. John [Thomas] Holdup
	John C Wallace J Advocate

The Court being duly sworn in the presence of the Prisoner proceeded to the trial of Joseph G Roberts Surgeon in the U.S. Navy, who being previously asked if he had any objections to the members named in the General Order, and replying in the negative, was arraigned on the following Charges preferred against him by Arthur Sinclair Come. Commanding the U S Squadron on Lake Erie—

Charge 1st. General neglect of duty since first arriving on the station

Specification. That you were sent to Pittsburg for the purpose of selecting an assortment of medicine for the use of the Hospital Department, and that you there suffered the Apothecaries to select and put up several Hundred Dollars worth of Medicine entirely useless for a Naval Hospital, and others that were damaged and unfit for use, great quantities of which medicine is now laying on our hands— And that when you were asked, why you made such purchase, your reply was, that you gave the Apothecary a list of the Vessels and their supposed Crews, and suffered him to put up what he thought proper—not feeling disposed to give yourself much trouble about it

2nd. That you have most shamefully neglected the Sick in most instances when they came under your charge particularly on bd. the Hospital Ships *Detroit* and *Queen Charlotte* in not giving your personal attention to their diseases, and even after being urged by Doctr. Richardson who lived on board with them and knew all their wants, you did not let me know that they, such as Bedding & Clothing were wanting, and that it never came to my knowledge through you— That you were personal in your neglect to some of the Men to whom you had dislike telling them their lives were not worth saving or language to that effect— Should it be necessary before a Court Martial a number of instances of inhuman and flagrant neglect can be proved—

Charge 2nd. A want of proper Respect and decorum to the Comg. officer on this Station

Specification—That you threatened to punish the Officers who had reported your neglect to me (Doctrs. Barton & Richardson)<sup>1</sup> in my presence at which time I arrested you

Charge 3rd. For unofficerlike Conduct &c—

Specification—For suffering Midshipman Senat, to kick you in a most disgraceful way without resisting the affront in any way

Sd. A Sinclair—

Doctr. Joseph G Roberts  
U S Navy

To the foregoing charges and Specifications the Prisoner pleaded not Guilty— Doctr. Richardson Surgeons Mate in the U S Navy being duly sworn, says, that the prisoner was Surgeon of the Hospital Vessels *Detroit* & *Queen Charlotte*, and that he (the Witness) lived on bd. those Vessels, that frequently for two and three days at a time the Prisoner did not visit the Sick, and when on bd. that he

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did not pay that attention to the sick, that a Surgeon having the care of a Hospital ought to have Done— I frequently represented to him the necessity of procuring clothing Bedding &c for the sick, and at length (finding my complaint unattended to) told him I should make complaint to the Commodore if longer neglected—a partial supply was then obtained of Bedding, I then informed the Commanding Officer of the wants of the Sick who ordered a further supply— The first bedding procured for the Hospital was on a requisition signed by Capt Kennedy

At one time when going round the Hospital I observed to the prisoner there was a man by the name of Ray who required attention— The Prisoner said there was not much the matter with him, at any rate he was too much of a rascal to merit care

Q by the Court. Did the prisoner appear to have a personal dislike to Ray  
Ans. I think he had from his manner of speaking—

Q by the Prisoner— Was it not frequently the case that I could not visit the Hospital in consequence of high Winds and for want of a boat

Answer— Sometimes the wind would not admit of coming off; A Boat was every day sent on Shore, it frequently happened that you did not come on board when you might have done so

Q by the Court. Did he at all times when on board attend to his Duty  
Answer No, he sometimes did not arrive until I had done prescribing, at which time he did not visit the sick

Q by the Court. What was your hour of prescribing

Ans. I had not any particular hour, I usually put it off as long as possible, Waiting for the prisoner

Q by the Prisoner— Did I not always enquire when I came on board if any and what alterations had taken place during my absence

Ans. You did Generally

Q by the Court. Did the prisoner give his personal attention when changes had taken place

Ans. I believe he did

Doctr. Barton Surgeon in the U S Navy being duly sworn—Says—that he was directed by the Commodore to occasionally Visit the Hospital Vessel which he did, but does not know any thing of the Prisoners Conduct relative to the charges exhibited against him but as informed by Doctr. Richardson

The Court adjourned to meet tomorrow at 10 oclock

Decr. 7th 1815 [1814]

The Court met pursuant to adjournment

In consequence of the Arrest of Lieut. Bullus<sup>2</sup>—Lieut Packett was placed on the Court by order of the Commodore and duly sworn

Present	Lieut. Comt. D S Dexter—Presidt.
Lt. Com E P Kennedy }      Lieut. Comt. Woodhouse	Lieut. John Packett }      Lieut. Thomas Holdup
	John C. Wallace JA

Doctr. Parsons Surgeon the U S Navy being duly sworn, says, that during the time the prisoner had the charge of the Hospital he was absent, that he gener-

ally considered the prisoner as inattentive to his duty, that when the prisoner had charge of the Sick on bd. of the *Lady Prevost* in the Winter and Spring of 1814 he (the Witness) was called upon to visit the Sick on bd. of that Vessel, who were suffering for want of Medical Aid—

The Prisoner was sent to Pittsburg for the purchase of medicines &c for the Squadron at this place—among which medicines &c were a number of Articles unfit for practice on bd. a Man of War, useless instruments and two Boxes of Damaged Chocolate—

Q by the Court What medicines &c were unfit for practice on bd. a Man of War in the purchase made by the prisoner

Ans. Four Female Catheters and a Quantity of Worm Medicine

Q by the Court, Would not those things you mention as unfit for practice in a fleet, be useful in the event of transporting Troops with Women & Children

Ans. they might be useful

Q by the Prisoner— Was I not sick on Shore at the time you visited the Sick on bd. the *Lady Prevost*

Ans You were not at that time—

Q by the Court— Was the chocolate you mentioned being damaged, so when purchased in Pittsburgh, or injured in the transportation to this place

Ans. I dont know

Comr. A Sinclair being duly sworn, says, that the Prisoner met him in the town of Erie and asked him if he had any fault to find with him (the Prisoner) I said yes—he enquired for what— I told him for neglect of Duty he asked my informers— I said they were numerous and mentioned Doctrs. Barton & Richardson— he replied he would call upon them for gentlemanly satisfaction— I then told him to consider himself arrested—

Q by the Court. Did he appear to be in a passion when he addressed you

Ans. he did

Lieut Thomas Holdup being duly sworn Says—I commanded the *Lady Prevost* part of the Winter & Spring of 1814. the Prisoner was then Acting Surgeon of my Vessel four or five men were very unwell and were not attended to in the manner which they ought to have been by the Prisoner— In two instances I was obliged to send men to the care of Doctrs. Barton & Parsons to prevent their suffering

Q by the Court— Could the Prisoner have visited your Vessel at the time you sent those men to the care of other Surgeons

Ans. I dont know of any cause to have prevented him

Q by the prisoner— Did the neglect you mention take place in the month of January, if so—what time in that month

Answer. I do not recollect that it was in the month of Jany.—

John C Wallace being duly sworn—says, that he had the Charge of the Navy Hospital about the time the Medicines &c were purchased by the prisoner arrived from Pittsburg that he examined them when unpacked, that there was a quantity of Worm Medicine and some Female catheters in the said purchase, and that he firmly believes that there was five or Six Hundred Dollars worth of damaged or otherwise useless Medicines in said purchase

The Court adjourned to meet tomorrow Morning at 10 o'clock

Decr. 8th 1814

The Court met pursuant to adjournment all the Members present

John C Wallace J Advocate

Lieut. Comdt E P Kennedy being duly sworn—Says, he gave the Prisoner an order for clothing, Bedding &c to the amount required by the Prisoner for the use of the Hospital— I know at that time all the necessary Articles for the Sick could not be had—

Purser E Salomon<sup>3</sup> being duly sworn—Says—The Order issued by capt Kennedy and handed by the Prisoner for the Articles for the use of the Hospital could not at that time be complied with in whole—part was—there was not clothing on hand—had application been made at the time Capt. Kennedys Order was issued, a sufficiency of bedding could have been had, when on bd. the Hospital Vessel he passed through the Birth Deck where the sick lay, and did not think their situation so peculiarly distressing as represented, his view was slight, nor does he feel himself competent to judge of the Situation in which a Hospital ought to be

Q by the Court. Why was not the order of capt Kennedy complied with as to bedding

Ans I know not unless in consequence of its raining at the time the order of Capt. Kennedy was presented

Lieut Comdt Woodhouse being duly sworn—Says—that during the time the prisoner was under his command, he was attentive to his duty and his deportment Officerlike

Q by the Court— How long was the prisoner under your Command

Ans. About one Month—

In consequence of the death of Midn. Senat<sup>4</sup> previous to the meeting of the Court, no testimony was had on the third Charge & Specification against the Prisoner

The Prisoner being asked if he were ready to proceed made his defence

The Court being ordered to be cleared and the whole of the proceedings read over to the court by the Judge Advocate the following sentence was pronounced

Sentence

The Court after Mature deliberation Sentence the prisoner to be Six months Suspended, during which time he is not to receive pay or emoluments nor shall he wear the Uniform of the U S Navy during said time

The Court adjourned Sine Die

Dan'l S Dexter

President

DS, DNA, RG125, CM, Vol. 5, No. 193 (M273, Roll No. 7).

1. Surgeon Robert R. Barton, appointed 13 May 1813. John C. Richardson was appointed a surgeon's mate 17 May 1814.

2. On 7 December, the court's president, Daniel Dexter, ordered the arrest of Lieutenant Samuel H. Bullus on charges that included drunkenness and lying. Lacking sufficient officers to hold a court-martial, Dexter permitted Bullus to report himself to the department. Bullus resigned on 18 April 1815 while awaiting court-martial.

3. Ezekiel Solomon, pursur, appointed 28 March 1814; commission dated 26 March.

4. Midshipman George Senat was killed in a duel on 30 November 1814.

## CAPTAIN ARTHUR SINCLAIR TO SECRETARY OF THE NAVY JONES

U.S.S. Niagara Erie, Decr. the 12th. 1814

Sir

Inclosed I send you the proceedings of the Court Martial on Doctor Roberts— I should make no remarks on his character after his having been brought before a court, which has past sentence on him, but for a circumstance which has come within my knowledge since the Court closed its proceedings—

From my frequent absence from this place I have been obliged to suffer the Hospital surgeon to procure the necessities for the comforts of the sick, for which purpose I have directed a Merchant in this place to furnish him on his requisition; and upon calling the accounts in, a few days ago, for revision I found one, for the short space of three months, amounting to near \$1300— principally for wine, Sugar, Tea &c., with his signature to it, certifying its correctness— It is my opinion, and that of the surgeons here, that there must have been the most wanton and disgraceful waste that can be imagined; or something worse than waste— His rapacious plunder, when with Colnl. Campbell at Long point last May, as I have lately learned, was highly disgraceful— Indeed, Sir, from my personal knowledge of his character, since my return to this Lake, I must say he is unworthy the service; and he is certainly extremely ignorant in his profession, too much so to be trusted with the lives of a Ship's Company— I have the honor to remain with high respect Sir, your Obt. Servt.

A Sinclair

ALS, DNA, RG45, CL, 1814, Vol. 8, No. 105 (M125, Roll No. 41). Two letters are numbered 105 in this volume.

## SECRETARY OF THE NAVY CROWNINSHIELD TO CAPTAIN ARTHUR SINCLAIR

Capt. A. Sinclair  
Comm'g Naval Officer  
Erie Pa.

Navy Department  
April 20th. 1815

Sir

The proceedings of the Court Martial upon Dr. Joseph G. Roberts a Surgeon of the Navy, are herewith returned, and are disapproved, upon the ground of inadequacy in the punishment.— You will as soon as may be, convene a new Court Martial for his trial upon the same charges, and such other additional charges, as may be exhibited against him.— and if there should not be a sufficient number of Officers upon the Station, you will immediately order Surgeon Roberts to New York under arrest, to take his trial there.— I am very respectfully &c.

B. W. Crowninshield.

LB, DNA, RG45, SNL, Vol. 12, p. 107 (M149, Roll No. 12).

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## Guarding the American Fleet at Whitehall

*At the end of November, the American vessels and prize ships lay moored in the narrow southern end of Lake Champlain near Whitehall, New York. Captain Thomas Macdonough was given permission to visit Washington, D.C., to settle his accounts, then proceed to New York to take command of the U.S. Navy's first steam warship, Fulton the First.*

*Less than a month later, Captain Macdonough was ordered back to Lake Champlain. Rumors were circulating of a British expedition to destroy the American vessels as they lay moored for the winter. Such a plan had indeed been proposed, but was called off when it was discovered that the army at Plattsburg and the navy at Whitehall were prepared to counter the invasion. The British instead focused their efforts on building a new squadron at Isle aux Noix during the winter months.*

MAJOR GENERAL SIR THOMAS M. BRISBANE, BRITISH ARMY, TO  
GOVERNOR-GENERAL SIR GEORGE PREVOST

Montreal 22d. decr. 1814—

Sir

In consequence of the advantage that I have derived from local knowledge in the command of the left division of the Army, I deem it my duty to suggest to Your Excellency, the practicability of destroying the Enemy's fleet at White hall; and I should feel highly flattered if you are pleased to confide the execution of the under taking to me. I beg to assure you, I should not have engaged in a service of this nature without giving it that due reflection that the extent of the operation & the magnitude of the object required & which I should pledge myself to accomplish, at the hazard of any small Military reputation I may possess— I should require Your Excellency to place at my entire disposal not less than 7,000 men & 1000 sleighs—(or more if they could be conveniently collected as it might tend more effectually & more speedily to the completion of the under-taking) for the space of three weeks from the commencement of their march—

I shall not now enter into the detail of my arrangements as I am not yet aware that Your Excellency will be pleased to sanction such an enterprize at the present season, but should You coincide in opinion with me, as to its eligibility I shall lose no time in entering into the detail of the whole of my plan—

Draft, MiU-C, Thomas M. Brisbane Papers.

GOVERNOR-GENERAL SIR GEORGE PREVOST TO  
MAJOR GENERAL SIR THOMAS M. BRISBANE, BRITISH ARMY

Secret &amp; Confidential

Quebec— 24th. Decr. 1814

Dear Sir

Altho' it is out of my power to enter into the merits of the Enterprize suggested in your letter of the 22nd Inst. by this days post, still I cannot restrain the desire I feel of declaring to you that I consider it worthy of being chosen.

Having made known my predisposition to the measure, it remains with you to demonstrate its practicability with the means I can place at your disposal, which cannot exceed 6000 Men including Militia.— It is necessary I should ascertain that you are aware of the many difficulties you have to encounter, & that the roads you are to use have been examined on the ground & not upon Maps alone. Have you a thorough knowledge of the country in which the operation is to be executed? Do you propose moving by the East or West Shore of Lake Champlain?

Allow me to impress upon you the absolute necessity of the most profound secrecy upon the occasion. The Quarter Master General is the only person in whom I would recommend you to confide & from whom you may obtain valuable information, respecting the Enemy's arrangements, & useful assistance, in calculating the practicability of obtaining the extensive transport stated by you as requisite.—

In order to enable you to mature your scheme for the destruction of the Enemy's Naval Force on Lake Champlain I have taken this cursory view of it reserving to myself a more solicitous attention to so highly important a measure whenever the whole machinery is before me. I have the honor to be Dear Sir Your faithful humble Servant

George Prevost

ALS, MiU-C, Thomas M. Brisbane Papers.

ACTING SECRETARY OF THE NAVY HOMANS TO  
CAPTAIN THOMAS MACDONOUGH

Capt. T. Macdonough  
U.S. Navy. New York

Navy Department  
Decr. 27th. 1814

Sir,

It is the Presidents express direction, that you proceed immediately to White Hall, and take such measures as may be in your power, with the aid which may be furnished from the army, to repel an expected attempt of the enemy to destroy the fleet— in this Sir, you will receive all the support and assistance in the power of the Department to afford, and you will be pleased to communicate all the information you may obtain relative to the designs of the Enemy in that quarter and satisfy yourself as to their measures and preparations previous to leaving the station— they have Sleighs &c. to go on the Ice, and to transport several thousand men, this information is received direct and authentic and excites much anxiety for the safety of the Champlain fleet.— I am respectfully &c.

Benjn. Homans. A.S.N.

LB, DNA, RG45, SNL, Vol. 11, p. 492 (M149, Roll No. 11).

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

*Saint Lawrence, Kingston,*  
6th January 1815.

Sir,

In consequence of Mr. Goudie<sup>1</sup> Ship Builder, having offered to Build four Frigates at Isle aux Noix, to be ready by the Month of May next; I am induced to recommend to your Excellency, the Building three Frigates and two heavy Brigs:— It will oblige the Enemy to keep up a large Naval Force on that Lake, and thereby deprive him of the power of applying all his force at Sackets Harbour.

I consider this Force, added to the Gun Boats sufficient to regain the Naval Ascendancy on that Lake; and therefore request, if your Excellency should coincide with me on this subject, you will immediately urge His Majesty's Government to send out Officers and Seamen for that service.

I shall send through Commissioner Sir Robert Hall, a demand for every thing necessary for the Equipment of these Vessels. I have the honor to be, Sir, Your Excellency's most Obedient humble Servant

James Lucas Yeo

LS, CaOOA, British Military and Naval Records, RG8, I, "C" Ser., Vol. 734, pp. 8-9.

1. John Goudie.

SECRETARY OF WAR MONROE TO  
MAJOR GENERAL ALEXANDER MACOMB, U.S.A.

Department of War, January 12th. 1815.

Sir,

I have received your letter of the 28th. of December, which announces the removal by general Izard, of the company of light artillery from Plattsburg your great concern at that measure, and your apprehension of an attack from the enemy at that post, and likewise at Whitehall. I have always apprehended that the enemy would, as soon as the lake froze, make the attack which you now suggest, and had the utmost solicitude, that our preparations and means of defence should be adequate to their repulse. It was for this purpose that I ordered your return to Plattsburg, that looking to the danger which menaced, you might be prepared to meet it. You have power to call on the governors of New-York and Vermont, for any portion of militia you may think necessary. By making yourself strong at Plattsburg, you would not only secure that post; but add much to the security of the flotilla at White hall; for the enemy would not readily pass you to attack the latter place, having you in his rear, prepared to close on him. In addition to the strong force which it is indispensably necessary to land at both those points, I trust that you will not fail to make arrangements with the governors of New-York and Vermont, for reinforcements to co-operate with you, in case the enemy should make the advance in such manner as to afford the

most effectual aid. Should he make the attempt, I indulge a strong hope, that you will cover him with additional ignominy, and acquire to yourself new glory.

I have some time since, ordered all the troops capable of service at Greenbush, to move to Whitehall. I had before ordered 1000 of those under general Izard to Albany: I shall change their destination to Whitehall; but let not these precarious and distant resources relax your efforts to obtain those within your reach.

I shall request general Izard to send you all the artillery which he can spare. Should you be able to obtain any from nearer points, you will not fail to do it. In the mean time, you had better to continue to drill at the cannon, the necessary number of infantry, to be prepared for the earliest possible movement of the enemy.

You mention that you have in advance at Chazy, a detachment of 200 men. I presume those men are selected from the main body to act as light infantry. In drawing in the militia, it will be advisable to train many companies of them to that particular kind of service. I am, &c.

Jas. Monroe

LB, DNA, RG107, Records of the Office of the Secretary of War, Confidential and Unofficial Letters Sent, 1814-35, pp. 26-27 (M7, Roll No. 1).

GOVERNOR-GENERAL SIR GEORGE PREVOST TO  
MAJOR GENERAL SIR THOMAS M. BRISBANE, BRITISH ARMY

Confidential

12 Jany. 1815  
Quebec.

Dear General

The intelligence which you have obtained of the Enemy's preparations to frustrate your proposed enterprize against White Hall justifies sufficiently its suspension. I consider the destruction of the American Flotilla on Lake Champlain as so very desirable that I request your attention may continue, fixed on that important & difficult design, in order that any change in existing circumstances which may be deemed favorable to it should not slip past unseized.

Major Genl. de Rottenburg has reported that 300 of the American Regulars had made their appearance on the Manor, in consequence I have desired him to direct you not to allow of such visits without giving the intruders a suitable reception. I have the honor to be, Dear General, your faithful humble Servant

George Prevost

ALS, MiU-C, Thomas M. Brisbane Papers.

CAPTAIN THOMAS MACDONOUGH TO  
SECRETARY OF THE NAVY CROWNINSHIELD

White hall January 18th. 1815

Sir

I have the honor to report my arrival at this place and to give you such information relative to the enemy as I have been able to collect; it does not appear

that an attack on the vessels is contemplated by the enemy, various reports induce this belief and a man of respectability and intelligence who came from the line yesterday—informs me that no movements of the enemy excite among the people along the line any apprehension of an attack on the fleet and at present no apprehensions are entertained for its safety—, I shall in a day or two however go to the northward where I hope and expect to obtain a complete knowledge of the intentions of the enemy of which I shall give you immediate information—

It is reported that five hundred sleighs have gone from the lower to the upper province of Canada, some say with troops others with provision only, it appears however pretty certain that the Sleighs have gone—

Preparations have been made to repel an attack of the enemy and further preparations shall immediately be made with the same view and nothing shall be left undone that may tend to the security of the fleet—

The climate for this Latitude is mild but little ice in the lake and none in what is called the broad lake at a distance of from forty to sixty miles and many of the old inhabitants here think the broad lake will not close this winter— The Militia of Vermont express their willingness to meet the enemy should he invade us & I believe we are in a tolerable state of preparations have the honor to be very respectfully sir, your mo. obdt. Servt.

T. Macdonough

It is also said that the sleighs which have gone to upper Canada carried ordnance and ordnance stores, if so their destination may be Kingston— I have the honor & &—

T. Macdonough

ALS, DNA, RG45, CL, 1815, Vol. 1, No. 51 (M125, Roll No. 42).

CAPTAIN THOMAS MACDONOUGH TO  
SECRETARY OF THE NAVY CROWNINSHIELD

White Hall Febry.—6th 1815

Sir

I have the honor to inform you, that since my letter of the 1st Inst., sent from Plattsburgh, nothing has occurred respecting the Enemy in this quarter, contrary to the information that letter contained, as all accounts agree, that timber is collecting on Isle aux Noix and carpenters likewise, and it is still the opinion of every one, that no attempt for the destruction of the Fleet, will be made this Winter; we are notwithstanding making every preparation to repel such an attempt— There are now attached to the vessels on Lake Champlain about 250 men, some Young Officers, no old ones (in rank) and the Vessels in the state in which they were imediately after the action. Should Government Contemplate having our present Naval force prepared for service early in the Spring, it becomes necessary that Carpenters, Sail Makers &c Should be ordered from the Seaboard to repair them and that rendezvous be opened: the sooner the better;

for the Shipping of their Crews. It will be also highly necessary, that two or three Master Commandants, and eight or ten experienced Lieutenants be attached to the vessels and about twenty Midshipman— I have had a Communication with a Man who is said to be perfectly well acquainted with the Lake, and in my own opinion is, on the practicability of blocking up the Channell from Isle aux noix, into the Lake, he says that at six miles north of the line, the Channell is about fifty feet wide, and not to exceed fifteen feet deep, hard sandy bottom, within sixty yards of the shore which is about twenty feet high hard ground and favourable for the erection of works by the Enemy. hence arose the idea in my letter of the 1st Inst., the necessity of our having a military force superior to that of the Enemy, to cooperate with our naval force in obstructing this passage—

I have not since my return to the Lake received any orders that may have been issued for me from the Depmt. and acting under those of the 9th and 27th December— I conceive it my duty to proceed to the Steam Frigate in New York, after remaining at this place a few days longer— It is my intention to stop a few days in Middletown Connt. to make some arrangements with my Family, at which place as in New York, your orders for my future Service will meet me, this I hope will meet your approbation and Could it be so directed by the Depmt. that I do not Return to the Lake to Command the ensuing summer it would be very Gratifying to me— I have the honor to be very respectfully Sir Your Mo. Obdt. Servant

T. Macdonough

LS, DNA, RG45, CL, 1815, Vol. 1, No. 109 (M125, Roll No. 42).

## Financial Difficulties in Shipbuilding

*The public finances of the United States reached a crisis point in late 1814 and early 1815.<sup>1</sup> Congress was opposed to raising additional taxes to pay for the war, and government notes, already offered at high interest rates, were further discounted. The previous requisitions of navy agents went unpaid at the same time the government authorized new naval construction on Lake Ontario.*

*The human dimension of the troubled economy comes to light in the pleas of shipwrights Adam and Noah Brown and Henry Eckford. Their carpenters, laborers, and suppliers refused the discounted treasury notes and demanded payment in specie. Eckford and the Browns themselves had not been paid by the government. Unless the Navy Department could make good on the treasury notes they had been issued as payment on their contracts, they stated they would have to stop construction on the vessels they were building at Sackets Harbor.*

1. On public finances, see Stagg, Mr. Madison's War, pp. 436–53.

ADAM AND NOAH BROWN TO SECRETARY OF THE NAVY CROWNINSHIELD

New York Jan 15th. 1815

Sir

Please to pardon us fer taking the libirty of wrighing to your Hounour on this Subject the navy Agent offered us the first payment on our Contracts of build-

ing the Ships of war on Lake Ontario in treuree notes witch is Seven per cent under par this being too much fer us to we was obliged to refuse them unless we was aloud the discount whitch the navy agent refused to Comply with I hope your will be So good as to order him to pay us money So to in able us to go on with out any obstickles if we are to be paid in money Seven per Cent under par we never will be able to fulfill our contract we have allready give Security in treure notes one hundred and ten thousand Dollars fer one hundred thousand Dollars in cash, whitch being contrary from our understanding with the navy Deparment we have thought proper to Beg you to inform us what we are to do as it will ruin us if money is not Sent from the navy Department that will pass in this State to fulfill the contract that they have made with us one hundred thousand Dollars was Due the 22nd of Dec 1814 and the Like Sum on the first of febuary 1815 we therefore hope you will Send an answer to this in what manner we are to receive our money as our notes fer one Hundred thousand Dollars must be protested if we Dont receive it from the Navy Department—

We have received letters from Sacketts harbour stating all the timber is in the yard fer one of the large Ships and coming in fast fer the Ships and if money is Supplyd that the Ships will be done in ample time to Sail by the time the Lake is Clear of ise there is about one thousand Carpenters arivd at the harbour and at work— Your Most Obt. & Humble Servants

A & N Brown

ALS, DNA, RG45, MLR, 1815, Vol. 1, No. 59 (M124, Roll No. 68).

COMMODORE ISAAC CHAUNCEY TO  
SECRETARY OF THE NAVY CROWNINSHIELD

No. 15

U.S. Ship *Superior*  
Sacketts Harbor. 1st. feb. 1815

Sir

The two Ships of the Line are progressing rapidly—part of their frames are already raised and the builders assure me that they shall both be launched in all April— The Frigate is not yet commenced but the materials will be prepared for her, so that she can be built in a short time— would it not be advisable to give her so much beam as to bear two tier of Guns in case the Enemy should increase his force beyond what we at present expect? I hope to hear from Kingston in a few days when I shall learn what is building there.—

The Roads are now excellent and our Stores are coming in rapidly— I hope to have the principal articles here before the middle of March— the Rope Walk will be in operation in a few days and all the other branches of Mechanics at work, preparing for the Spring operations— the weather has been so extremely cold for the last week that Men could not work in the open air—it is to day more moderate and all the different branches are at work again. I have the honor to be very respectfully Sir Yr. Mo. Ob. St

Isaac Chauncey

LS, DNA, RG45, CL, 1815, Vol. 1, No. 98 (M125, Roll No. 42).

LIEUTENANT COLONEL GEORGE RICHARD JOHN MACDONELL,  
GLEN GARRY LIGHT INFANTRY, TO  
QUARTERMASTER GENERAL SIR THOMAS SIDNEY BECKWITH, BRITISH ARMY

Cornwall Feby 4th. 1815

My dear Sir,

I yesterday saw "our friend" Jones— He "left Sacketts on the 26th Ultimo, but could not cross the River till yesterday, on account of the floating ice—"

General Brown left S.H. on the 25. Ultimo to attend, as an Evidence, at General Wilkinson's trial.<sup>1</sup> It is understood that he will repair from thence to Washington, from whence "Commodore Chauncey is supposed to be on his return from [-] to his fleet, which Captain Jones commands in the interim— Colonel Brady<sup>2</sup> commands the troops at the harbour, amounting to about four thousand regulars— The Marines and Sailors amount in number to about Two thousand— The troops are all quartered in the forts" & except a Sentry in front of each, have no Outposts of any kind, nor even patrols— The Line of circumvallation & abbatis is entirely neglected & going to decay, the soldiers using some of it for fire wood & the people making roads thro' it— They do not appear to have any suspicion of the people who pass & repass—

"They have now two distinct Ship yards— the old one at the point, where they have laid down one keel, & have 400 Carpenters with 200 Choppers & teamsters— & the new yard at Stores's harbour, about two miles and a half higher up the bay, where they have 300 Carpenters & 200 Choppers & teamsters— at this yard they have no Guard nor fortification of any kind—

By pacing the length of these keels he thinks they are each 182 feet long each— Several of the ribs are up, to make room for the workmen in the yard—the shipwrights say that they do not know whether they are intended for two or three deckers—

They are hewing out more keels in the woods—it is supposed for a frigate at each dock yard—but no one appears to know exactly except the Master Builder, & it is said that the Commodore has laid the strictest injunctions of secrecy upon them, as he is reported to have said that the British have hitherto got information of all his plans— Ackfor<sup>3</sup> builds at the Point & Brown at Stores's harbour.

The general conjecture is that they are to be 3 deckers—to register 90 but to carry from 100 to 110 Guns— It is said that the Guns are still at New York, but that the Commodore will immediately on his return enter into contracts for bringing them on in sleighs— Report says that the Government have offered One thousand dollars per Gun— When our friend was at Albany (9th Jany.) he heard Colonel Jenkins, the Dy. Qr. Mr. General,<sup>4</sup> say, that 64 of the guns were then in store there— There were no Anchor nor any other stores then there— Report, some little time before he came away, said that the keels which are now preparing in the wood were intended for steam frigates—but it is now thought otherwise.

The Report of boats building on the point opposite to the harbour must have originated in the circumstance of a quantity of the ship timber being cut on that side, but the ice was not thought sufficiently strong to bring it over— The timber is supplied by the inhabitants who contract for it— The naval Officers

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say, their Commodore does not wish to have a superior fleet to our's, but that he will keep pace with us in building—

The Ships are moored in a line from the point of the harbour towards Fort Pike—in the same position that they have been in ever since they came into Port.

The Anchor of the *Superior* lies on the Point— The Ships are all frozen in & are not to be cut out till the Gravelly Point Channel be frozen over— He could not ascertain whether they sent persons to examine that channel frequently— It is said that when it is frozen, they will, as last winter, cut them so loose every day as to swing round & will have patrols of seamen towards Horse Island & Point Peninsula— The Ships lie thus—*Superior*—*Mohawk*—*Pike*—*Madison*—*Jones*—*Jefferson*—the schooners lie intermixed with the large vessels—

The sailors live on board of their ships day & night— Most of the seamen have six months pay due to them— They were bringing provisions into the harbour—a few naval stores were arriving daily—a great many sleigh loads of lignum vitæ in bulk had arrived— The great mass of the seamen appear to be coloured people—"

Nothing is now spoken of respecting cutting off the communication, nor is there any report of General Izard's Army coming to the harbour— There is a report of General Izard having resigned— On the 10th. of January our friend met about 1500 men of Izard's army from Buffaloe, between Utica & Albany— They had been at Genesee & then at Utica, & when he met them, they did not know their destination, but expected they were intended for Castine, as the Governor of that state had offered to attack it with the Militia if supported by a sufficient number of regular troops— He has not since been able to learn what has become of this Column, but he thinks they kept the route towards Castine, tho' some spoke of Plattsburg—

When at Utica, he dined two days successively with Generals Dearborne, Izard, Lewis & Porter & the other members of the Court martial— They all seemed to think that if the conscription failed that their Campaign would be defensive— Captain Eaton the biscuit contractor came to Utica from the harbour on his way to Buffaloe to procure 10,000 barrels of biscuit on that route, to be delivered at, or near, the harbour—but after conversing with General Dearborn he returned direct to Albany to receive further orders— It was supposed the failure of the prospect of the conscription was the cause of his sudden change of route— The Officers of Militia have not received any orders to prepare for the conscription—

The road to Gravelly Point is not opened, but probably the bordage is good every where round to the Harbour—

He met the officer of our Navy who deserted lately, at a Ball in Denmark—in his British uniform he said he was on his way to some friends he had at New York— He had been ordered away from the harbour<sup>5</sup>

It is thought that ere this the Congress has passed a general Non intercourse law, which will prevent all supplies of beef &c, as the Custom house officers are authorized by it to seize, with impunity, every thing approaching the frontier—

I have directed him to make minute enquiry into the marine preparations & to the probable movements of the army; & for this purpose to remain some days at the harbour—

He has been lately held to bail in the sum of 10,000 dollars,— he supposes some fictitious plea, to induce him to give up suits he has instituted with others against military officers for an illegal Arrest by General Pike when Commanding at Sacket's— He does not think it is on the score of giving information, as the process would have come thro' another Court— I have the honor to be my dear Sir yours faithfully

G MacDonell

Copy, CaOOA, British Military and Naval Records, RG8, I, "C" Ser., Vol. 687, pp. 96-99. The following appears above the address line in a different hand: "Extract for Secret Intelligence."

1. A court-martial investigating Major General James Wilkinson's management of the failed 1813 campaign in the northern theater convened in January 1815. The court acquitted Wilkinson of all charges.

2. Colonel Hugh Brady, U.S.A.

3. Henry Eckford.

4. Colonel Elisha Jenkins, U.S.A., deputy quartermaster general, 9th Military District, Albany.

5. Denmark may be a reference to the town of Copenhagen in Lewis County, New York. The officer referred to is probably Lieutenant George Hawksworth.

HENRY ECKFORD AND ADAM AND NOAH BROWN TO  
COMMODORE ISAAC CHAUNCEY

Sackets Harbour Feby. 10th. 1815

Sir

We have a sincere wish to perform the contract entered into with Doctor John Bullus in New York for building ships at Sackets Harbour—

But to enable us to do it we expected Doctor Bullus to perform his part also. The first and second payments are due and neither of them paid. Although we sent a person to New York for the express purpose of receiving the Money. One of us received for the first payment before we left New York. We are at a weekly expense of eight thousand Dollars each which must be paid in current money or we cannot go on

We were obliged to negotiate a loan of 100,000 Dolls. on treasury notes at a loss of 10 pr. cent exclusive of interest until the same is redeem'd. This was done in full confidence of being reimburs'd of which we were assured by Doct. Bullus we had further assurance from a letter shown us from Mr. Dallas.<sup>1</sup> Our present situation prevents us negotiating other loans particularly at the probable terms we should have to give, We will therefore most certainly be oblig'd to stop the whole business in ten or twelve days if we are not Supply'd with money. We again send a Young Man to endeavour to obtain by some mode the necessary supplies. Presuming that Doctor Bullus has ere this rec'd further instructions from the Department. With due Respect We remain—Yours—

Henry Eckford  
A & N Brown

LS, DNA, RG45, CL, 1815, Vol. 1, No. 117, enclosure (M125, Roll No. 42).

1. Secretary of the Treasury Alexander J. Dallas. He assumed direction of Treasury on 6 October 1814 in place of George W. Campbell.

## The Naval School at Sackets Harbor

*The professional education of midshipmen before the establishment of the U.S. Naval Academy in 1845 was limited and haphazard. Navy chaplains traditionally filled in as schoolmasters teaching mathematics and navigation as their time and inclinations allowed. Andrew Hunter, chaplain at the Washington Navy Yard, conducted a more ambitious educational program between 1811 and 1813.<sup>1</sup>*

*Secretary of the Navy Jones proposed a naval academy in his ambitious plan for the reorganization of the Navy Department that he submitted to Congress 15 November 1814.<sup>2</sup>*

*During the idle winter months, Commodore Chauncey asked his naval chaplain, Cheever Felch, to open a naval school at Sackets Harbor. The commodore may have implied that Reverend Felch would be allowed some extra compensation for his additional duties, something that the Navy Department did not usually allow.*

1. McKee, Gentlemanly and Honorable Profession, pp. 194-209.

2. William Jones to President of Senate, 15 Nov. 1814, DNA, RG45, Letters to Congress, p. 314; printed in ASP: Naval Affairs, Vol. 1, pp. 320-24.

CHAPLAIN CHEEVER FELCH TO SECRETARY OF THE NAVY CROWNINSHIELD

Sacket's Harbour  
February 17, 1815.

Sir,

When the fleet came in last fall, Commodore Chauncey ordered me on shore to open a Naval School, for the officers and boys on this station.— There are attending, ninety five officers, studying Navigation, Mathematics, Astronomy, Philosophy, Geography, &c. and seventy one boys, in various studies.— For the officers, I have no assistant; and you will readily perceive, Sir, that my duties must be of the most arduous nature. So unremitting an attention is necessary, that my health is somewhat impaired by it. And, although I would not arrogate to myself any peculiar patriotism, nothing but the conviction that I should be useful to the service, would have induced me to undertake it.

And I refer with much confidence to our excellent Commander and his officers, as to my application and ability in the discharge of the duties. If the Commodore has not already, he probably will soon write you on the subject.

Perhaps some compensation may be due me, for this extra service; and I beg leave respectfully to ask your attention to the subject.

Dr. Hunter, at Washington, received an additional pay from the contingent fund, although his school was nothing in comparison with this. But if that should not meet your approbation in my favour, I would respectfully suggest, the propriety of ordering something from the pay of those who are reaping the benefits of the institution, you will be aware, Sir, that there are many incidental expenses attending it, and unless something should be done for me, I shall be a considerable loser.— And it would seem a hardship, that I should receive no more pay, than those who do no duty, either as Chaplains or School-Masters; who hold the station as a sinecure.

I should have resigned a year since, had it not been for the solicitations of my lamented and worthy friend, Vice-President Gerry, and Capt. Smith, my former

commander. But as I find I can make myself more useful, I feel more willing to continue. Should Congress adopt the recommendation of the late Secretary, and establish a Naval Academy, I should apply for a professorship of Mathematics and Experimental Philosophy. My practical knowledge of Navigation, and the application of Mathematics to it, and my present situation, might be some recommendations. I have the honor to be, With the greatest respect Your most obedient servant,

Cheever Felch  
Acting Chaplain  
U.S.S. *Superior*.

ALS, DNA, RG45, BC, 1815, Vol. 1, No. 113 (M148, Roll No. 14).

## Peace on the Northern Lakes

*On 14 February 1815, Secretary of the Navy Crowninshield informed the commanding officers of the navy's ships and stations of the impending ratification of the treaty of peace between the United States and Great Britain. Work on the northern lakes stations would continue into the summer while ships were laid up or secured for preservation.*

*The American vessels on Lake Erie were eventually sold with the exception of the brigs Lawrence and Niagara, which were sunk for preservation. The timbers of Niagara were brought up for restoration and display in 1913 during the centennial of the Battle of Lake Erie.<sup>1</sup>*

*On Lake Ontario, the construction of the two ships of the line continued until carpenters were discharged and the ships housed over on the stocks. The former merchant vessels were sold off at auction. The other vessels were laid up in ordinary with roofs built over their upper decks; they eventually rotted and sank.<sup>2</sup>*

*Commodore Chauncey invited his former adversary, Commodore Yeo, to Sackets Harbor for a visit when the British officer was on his way south to take passage from New York back to England. The two commodores finally met in person and no doubt had much to discuss, having both constructed immense fleets in areas that were only sparsely settled and had little industry before the war.*

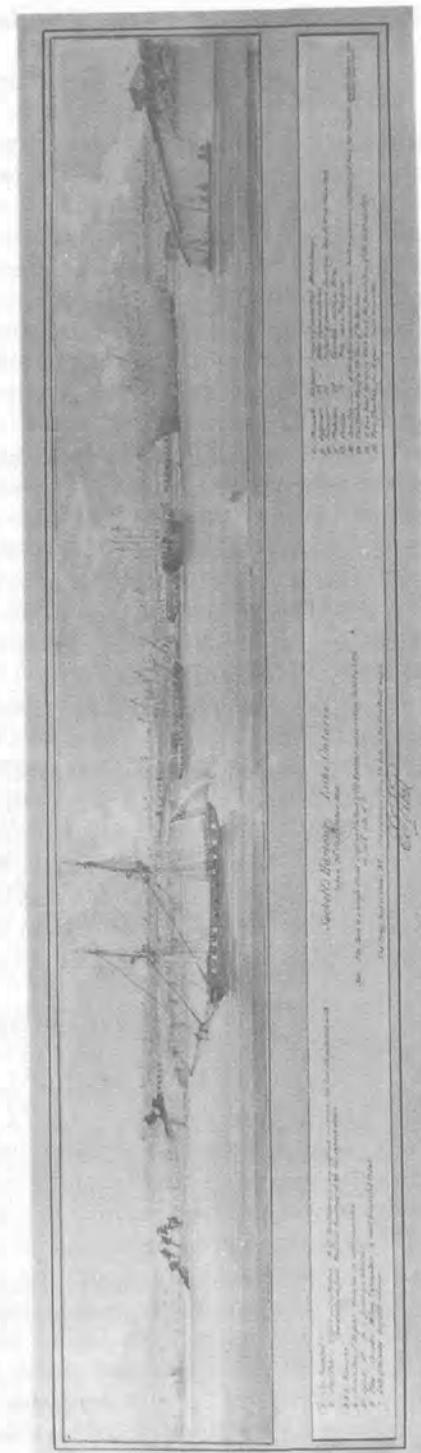
*The Lake Champlain squadron was moored in the narrow southern end of the lake. The sloops and galleys were sold at auction, and the other vessels decayed and sank, and were eventually sold for scrap. The schooner Ticonderoga was raised in 1958 for display at Whitehall.<sup>3</sup>*

*Canadian military and naval leaders remained wary of the peace settlement. The Canadian peace establishment reflected the desire of the British colony to defend against future American expansionism.*

1. Disposition of the ships on Lake Erie can be found in Malcomson and Malcomson, HMS Detroit, pp. 126–30.

2. Crisman, The Jefferson, pp. 164–77; Malcomson, Lords of the Lake, pp. 325–26.

3. Crisman, The Eagle, pp. 97–110; Crisman, Ticonderoga.



"Sackett's Harbour, Lake Ontario taken 20th September, 1815"

CAPTAIN ARTHUR SINCLAIR TO SECRETARY OF THE NAVY CROWNINSHIELD

Warrenton, N C. February the 24th 1815

Sir

After the ice had made upon the Lake and the Squadron under my command made secure, I was indulged, by the former Secretary of the Navy, with leave of absence from the Station, to visit my family until the breaking up of the ice; still retaining my command— A Treaty of peace concluded with our Enemy has, I presume, put an end to the naval service in that quarter; but as I feel myself responsible for the Squadron and stores being placed in the greatest possible security I take the earliest opportunity of addressing you on the subject— It is a general belief, and I think well founded, that vessels built of unseasoned timber will become seasoned (and never decay while under water) by sinking them

I think it worth the experiment with the *Lawrence & Niagara*, as they will by being left in the ordinary way, become unfit for service in three or four years, as their materials were not only green from the Forest, but were composed of various kinds of timber without selection— The *Detroit* is also of green timber, but more select— The *Queen Charlott* is built of the best seasoned Oak & Cedar— and by being preserved from the weather, as she is now under a tight Roof, she will last many years— Much may be done for their safety and preservation, and much oeconomy preserved by a judicious arrangement

Until otherwise ordered I must, of course, still consider myself as commanding that station; but as I presume it will not be thought necessary to keep an Officer of my grade on that service during a time of peace it may be understood that I volunteer my services (unless more active and important service should offer in the mean time) to return and place the Station in a proper situation, to be left in charge of a trusty Sailing Master and a few men (should that be the wish of the Department,) so soon as the ice will admit of such arrangements being made— In offering this, my sole motive is the good of the Service and an interest in the well doing of a Station I have commanded, as the trip to that place is an excessively unpleasant one—

I am induced to hope, Sir, from my long standing in the Navy, since the year 98 and my having been actively employed in all the wars in which my country has been engaged since that, I shall not be overlooked in case there is a squadron sent to protect our Mediterranean trade, Which I have little doubt there will be— Should there be local service to perform my family residence is Norfolk Virginia, therefore the nearer I could be given employment to my family, with convenience to the service the more gratifying it would be to me— I have taken the liberty, Sir, thus far to express my views and wishes, as it is impossible, at this early period, you can be acquainted with the different Officers; confidently hoping you will give them your attention if consistent with the good of the Service— The inclosed letter from Colnl. Gratiott, the commanding Officer at Detroit, reached me a few days since, I have therefore taken the earliest opportunity of offering it for your perusal— My family have been driven, by the war from my seat near Norfolk, to this village, where I shall remain until my destination is known from you—your communications will,

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therefore, find me here— I have the honor to remain with high respect, Sir, your Obt. Servt.

A Sinclair

ALS, DNA, RG45, CL, 1815, Vol. 1, No. 166 (M125, Roll No. 42).

[Enclosure]

Fort Malden  
28th. January 1815

Dear Sir,

Your favour of the 2d. instant from Pittsburgh came to hand by last mail & am happy to see that you were then on your way to visit your family & I hope that you will find in its bosom that happy relief which the soldier usually meets with, when returning to his home, after a dangerous & tedious Campaign.

It affords me particular pleasure to have it measurably in my power to give the information you requested, respecting the naval preparations, which are said to be making by the enemy on the waters of Lake Erie. Early after General McArthur's Return from Grand River & Long Point, reports circulated freely among the inhabitants of this province, that it was contemplated to build two large Frigates (44's) in the neighbourhood of Long Point during this winter. About the time that those reports were circulating, Agents to the Enemy, were busily Employed on the head of the River Thames in hiring Teams & offered \$5 per day for each pair of oxen, which price has since, been considerably encreased as we are informed. Whilst those proposals were making a number of paroled inhabitants applied to some of our officers to know wether it would be considered a breach of Parole, were they to send their Cattle to Long Point where such high wages were profered. On being examined they Uniformly Answered that the services required of their Teams (as they had been informed) was to hawl Ship Timber, Subsequently two young fellows have been apprehended on the River Thames, who state that they are deserters & Lately from the head of the Lake & that a very Large Collection of slays was making at Oxford, Burford & other places—they state that the object of this Collection was not Known, tho' Supposed by many to be for Kingston.

The next day after the reception of your Letter I sent out a reconnoitring party of indians, who is to explore the Country lying between the Crossing of Grand River & Long Point. The reward offered the party is \$500, for positive information on the questions stated in your Letter, \$100 in addition for a mail & \$50. for every prisoner brought off from either of those places. whatever information the party may bring in, I shall deem it a duty incumbent on me to give you the earliest intimation thereof.

Permit me, Sir, to reiterate my thanks for the many acts of hospitality bestowed on me whilst an inmate of your Cabin & you may rest assured, that I shall always appreciate them with gratitude. I am with respect Your Most Obt. Servt.

C Gratiott

Commodore A Sinclair

LS, DNA, RG45, CL, 1815, Vol. 1, No. 166, enclosure (M125, Roll No. 42).

COMMODORE ISAAC CHAUNCEY TO  
SECRETARY OF THE NAVY CROWNINSHIELD

No. 30

U.S Ship *Superior*  
Sacketts Harbor feby. 25th. 1815

Sir

I have suspended all contracts, and stoped the transportation of all stores, except those between this place, and Utica, which must come here for safe keeping— I have directed Messrs. Eckford and Browns to discontinue all building; these gentlemen however state to me that it is impossible for them to stop so suddenly, because they have upwards of Eight hundred men employed, which must be paid, work or play, untill they arive in New York, consequently it costs no more to keep them at work, than to suffer them to remain Idle; they reduce their gangs from thirty to forty men pr. day which is as many as they can find transport for—

I have directed a survey upon the two ships and the timber for the third one, to enable the Department to settle with these gentlemen on fair terms. As the two ships of the line are in that state of forwardness that they could be launched in four weeks, I should presume that it would have been for the interest of the government to have launched, and sunk them, between piers; in which state they would have lasted for ages; if left on the stocks they must be housed, or they will decay in a few Years.

As the Rope Walk is in full operation and the greater portion of the workmen belonging to the fleet, would it not be adviseable to spin all the Hemp into yarn and lay it up into small cordage; & in that state it would be more saleable (if to be sold) or it would be subject to less damage, in case it should be sent to the Atlantic— The Tar and every requisite is on the spot I have presumed, Sir, to volunteer these opinions presuming, that, information upon these subjects would be agreeable to the Department— I have the honor to be very Respectfully Sir Your obt. Humble Servt.

Isaac Chauncey

ALS, DNA, RG45, MLR, 1815, Vol. 2, No. 104 (M124, Roll No. 69).

#### REPORT OF SURVEY OF VESSELS BUILDING ON LAKE ONTARIO

Copy  
Triplicate

We the subscribers having been appointed by commodore Isaac Chauncey and Henry Eckford and Adam & Noah Brown, to examine and report what in our opinion would be the expence of completing the three vessels contracted to be built by the sd. Eckford and Browns for the U. States, in the state in which said vessels now are, submit the following report— That by the said contract dated the 15th. day of December 1814 and executed by the said Henry Eckford and Adam & Noah Brown of the one part, and John Bullus Navy Agent of the U. States of the other part, the said Eckford & Browns covenant to build or cause to be built Two ships of the line to carry from seventy four to one hun-

dred guns each and one Frigate of the largest class, for the use of the U. States at or in the vicinity of Sacketts Harbor in the state of New York, in the manner particularly specified in the sd. covenant— That said Eckford & Browns have commenced building said ships of the line one at Sacketts Harbor under the direction of sd. Eckford and the other at Store's Harbor under the direction of sd. Browns

The ship at Sacketts Harbor is completely planked up to the upper deck, fitted in between the ports, squared off and rabbits of ports cut, lower gun Deck beams and on top beams in and bolted at the ends, Masts capsterns half done. Iron work for them also half done, Dead Eyes completed pumps partly boarded, Iron work for dead eyes & chain Bolts ready—Bottom half calked and payed from keel to wales

The remaining beams clamps waterways and framing of Decks ready to go on board—Deck partly built and launching ways ready—Joiners work, vitz. Bulk heads steering wheel, Binacle &c. ready— The keel was laid on the 23rd. Jany. 1815— The ship at Store's Harbor is not in the same state of forwardness, owing to the situation of the place where she is building— When they commenced the said ship there was no house within a mile and the place a wilderness— They had to erect buildings for four hundred men to live in, a building to make the mould in 32 feet by 70 and a blacksmiths shop for Thirty Blacksmiths to work in also a Joiners shop and a guard house for the soldiers— The ship is all in frame has the greatest part of bottom planked and her wales on and her lower ports formed the greatest part of her ceiling, and all her deck beams dressed out and all the timber for the deck frame ready— The Masts spars and Iron work under considerable forwardness and one third of her bottom caulked— They have all the timber for finishing the two ships of the line and to build the Frigate, and it is believed a large surplus owing to the expectation that a fourth vessel would be built, and the difficulty of procuring timber after the sleighing is gone.— The number of hands now employed is about four hundred on each ship now building— The average of wages is one dollar and seventy five cents per day to each man, and four dollars a week for board— all the expence of building the three vessels except the wages and board of the hands appears to have been incurred— from the foregoing facts, and the manner the work has progressed in the winter season and all other evidence we can obtain upon the subject we are of opinion that four hundred hands would complete the ship at Sacketts Harbor in twenty three days, and that the same number of hands would complete the ship at Stores Harbor in thirty one days, The Frigate it is understood was to be built at Sacketts Harbor where the ship is now building, to have been 185 feet keel and forty six feet beam, That she would have been ready to raise as soon as the first ship was launched it is our opinion that with the preparation now made she would be built by four hundred hands in forty Days, It is to be understood that by finishing the aforesaid vessels, we mean all the work that was to be done by the said Eckford & Browns by their covenant aforesaid, from the carefull examination we have bestowed upon the subject, we verily believe the foregoing report to be substantially correct all which is respectfully sub-

mitted dated at Sacketts Harbor the third day of March Eighteen hundred and fifteen

signed Amos Benedict  
Jacob Jones  
Wm. M. Crane

Copy, DNA, RG45, CL, 1815, Vol. 2, No. 34, enclosure (M125, Roll No. 43). Enclosed in Chauncey to Crowninshield, 10 March 1815.

COMMODORE ISAAC CHAUNCEY TO COMMODORE SIR JAMES L. YEO, R.N.

(Private)  
Commodore Sir  
James L. Yeo Kn't  
&c. &c. &c. Kingston—

U.S. Ship *Superior*  
Sacketts Harbor 3 Mar. 1815

Dear Sir—

If your public avocations will allow you to visit Sacketts Harbor I should be most happy to offer my hand as a friend to one who I have contended with as an Enemy and for whose character I have the highest respect

If it should be your intention to return to England by the way of New York, it would afford me pleasure to offer to you all the facilities in my power with Letters to my friends in that City. I have the honor to be &c. &c. &c.

I— C—

LB, NHi, Isaac Chauncey Letter Books (BV Chauncey, Isaac).

SECRETARY OF THE NAVY CROWNINSHIELD TO  
COMMODORE ISAAC CHAUNCEY

Como. Isaac Chauncey  
Comm'g Naval Officer  
Sackett's Harbour

Navy Department  
March 7th. 1815,

Sir

In consequence of the final ratification of peace, it has been determined to suspend building, and to lay up all the Ships of War on the Lakes, except such as may be otherwise disposed of to advantage.— For this purpose, I request your attention to the proposition of Messrs. A & N. Brown to complete the two Ships of the line, provided it can be done for a sum not to exceed \$50,000. each, of which you will decide and inform me soon as convenient, also as to the expediency of sinking those Ships for their better preservation, upon the certainty of which (you will decide), that they can be so preserved and raised again for public service when wanted.—

Enclosed you have a Copy of my letter of this date to Messrs. A. & N. Brown, in answer to theirs upon this subject. The Timber procured for the Frigate must

be placed in the best situation to be preserved or to be sold, if it should be more for the public interest.—

You will be pleased to have all the other materials and stores collected, and prepared for transportation to New York, in the most economical manner, and I trust entirely to your good judgement and prudence, to do every thing for the best of the public Service.—

You will also state to me your opinion of the best mode of laying up and preserving all the public Ships; and such as you may think not worth keeping, or not suitable for the Service, you will furnish a list of their state and condition, and your opinion of their value in order that they may be sold, under the late Law of Congress authorizing the President to dispose of such Public Vessels &c.—

Your early decision on these subjects will enable the Department to come to a settlement with Messrs. Browns & Mr. Eckford, upon the relinquishment and payment of their Contracts.— I am, very respectfully &c.

B. W. Crowninshield

LB, DNA, RG45, SNL, Vol. 12, pp. 51-52 (M149, Roll No. 12).

CAPTAIN THOMAS MACDONOUGH TO  
SECRETARY OF THE NAVY CROWNINSHIELD

White hall March 12th. 1815

Sir:

I have the honor to acknowledge the receipt of your letters of the 28th. ultimo and the 1st. instant, and to inform you that the Squadron on Lake Champlain is compleatly dismantled with all the guns sails, ballast, powder shot, & stores on shore and stored— The officers and Men exclusive of a few to take care of the public property shall immediately proceed to Charleston Mass. and report themselves to the Commg. naval officer on that Station— I have not had Marines on this station but soldiers from the ranks of the army acting as such, it will therefore be necessary I suppose that the Guard which you have ordered in your letter of the 28th. ulto. to be kept by the vessels should be placed here by order of the War Department—

The best Manner in my opinion of laying up these Vessels will be to keep them afloat, to have them Whitewashed on the in side and out with the bulkheads taken down and every thing cleared away below so as to admit of a free circulation of air, to be roofed over with rough boards, all which can be done for about three hundred dollars, the vessels to be placed as much as can be out of the Sun—feeling assured of your assent to this secure and cheap mode of laying up the fleet and to save time in the transmission of orders I have commenced it, & expect that the men who remain will be able to get all the vessels thus laid up in a fortnight— I have the honor to be very respectfully Sir your Mo. obdt. Servt.

T. Macdonough

ALS, DNA, RG45, CL, 1815, Vol. 2, No. 38 (M125, Roll No. 43).

CAPTAIN ARTHUR SINCLAIR TO  
SECRETARY OF THE NAVY CROWNINSHIELD

Washington March 24. 1815

Sir

Agreeably to your instructions I herewith have the honor to hand you a statement of the shipping and their appendages now on the Erie station, with my opinion as to the best mode of preserving them &c.

The Brigs *Niagara* and *Lawrence* are new vessels built of Green indifferent Timber, badly put together and will no doubt decay in a few Years— They are about 430 Tons, mounting each 20 Guns principally 32 pound Carronades

The Prize Ship *Detroit* is a new vessel built of green Timber & of good quality— She is strong & roughly put together about 265 Tons—mounts 18 Guns of various calibre—Dismasted & without Sails or Rigging—

The *Queene Charlotte* a Prize Ship, (since made a Brig) is an old vessel, built of the best seasoned materials and will last many years 250 Tons and mounts 16—24 pound Carronades—Completely Rigged of new materials and has her principal Sails—

The Prize Schooner *Lady Prevost*, built of green Timber of good quality, well put together—model bad, new spars rigging & Sails about 100 Tons and mounts 12—12 pd. Carronades

The *Hunter* a prize Brig very old, rotten and unfit for service—Sails and rigging equally bad—about 75 Tons and pierced for 12 Guns—

The *Caledonia* a prize Brig taken at the commencement of the War— She is an old clunk Merchant vessel about 120 or 130 Tons—her frame good— she has been used as a Gun Boat carrying Two long 24 pounders— She was driven on shore last September, and sustained material injury Her upper deck, Ceiling, spars & Sails have been since burnt She was got off and ordered repairs before I left the station—when repair'd she will make a fine transport or provision vessel, being well calculated from her draft to pass into Lake Huron

The *Amelia* a Schooner purchased into Service has had new upper works, upon a rotten bottom was sunk when I arrived on the station, and condemned unfit for service—60 or 70 Tons, may perhaps sell for something; has no materials—

The *Porcupine* a new, Schooner rigged, Gun Boat about 45 or 50 Tons, mounts one long 32 pounder completely found and well suited for the navigation of the lakes—

The *Despatch* a fine pilot Boat Schooner built of the best materials, Oak & Cedar—55 Tons—Intended as a dispatch vessel— She is either launched or ready to be so, and will be a proper vessel to keep in Commission

A Block House newly built at the expence of the Navy—stands on that point of the Peninsula covering the Basin, where the ships are laid up, cost considerably and built of good materials mounts 8 heavy Guns and can fight from 150 to 200 Men within it—For its preservation, requires to be shingled and weather-boarded

A new Store House 160 feet by 24 Two Stories high—stands on the Lake shore—one end of this building constitutes a Hospital & Surgeons Room

It is too near the water, ought to be picketed in the rear; and a ridge of stone thrown in front to protect it from the wash of the Lake, which would form an inclosure for the safekeeping of the Cannon, Anchors &c.

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The Four large vessels are roofed in for winter protection, The plank, in case the method of sinking for preservation is adopted; will answer for Boat, Spar, and Gun carriage Sheds—

I would recommend that none of the material articles of the Ships, reserved for future service, be sold not until we see that Peace is likely to be permanent.

The Stock of Salt Provisions to be transferred to the War Department for the Garrisons on the Lakes—Colo. Munroe having sanctioned the proposition you authorised me to make him on that subject

The proposed plan of sinking the vessels intended to be preserved for future service, will place them beyond the reach of incendiaries and save much expence in Anchors Cables Men &c.

If Two or Three small vessels are kept in Commission for the purpose of carrying Despatches throwing in troops & supplies into remote garrisons It will be expedient to keep an old steady Lieutenant or sailing Master and Two or Three Midshmen and Masters Mates, with a few Seamen, ordinary Seamen and Marines on the station, amounting in all to Twenty Men I have the honor to remain very respectfully Sir your obt Servt

A Sinclair

ALS, DNA, RG45, AF7 (M625, Roll No. 77).

COMMODORE ISAAC CHAUNCEY TO  
SECRETARY OF THE NAVY CROWNINSHIELD

No. 48

U.S. Ship *Superior*  
Sacketts Harbor 26th. Mar. 1815

Sir

In answer to your Letter of the 7th. inst. I have the honor to state, that it is clearly my opinion that the two Ships of the Line might have been completed and launched for a sum not exceeding Thirty five Thousand Dollars each, provided the Carpenters had been permitted to have proceeded with their work, but as they have now broke off and returned to New York, it would make the difference of transportation each way, say about \$60,000 which would exceed the sum prescribed by the Department, yet I should imagine that in the course of the Summer Messrs. Eckford & Browns might be able to finish the two Ships of the Line for a sum not exceeding \$50,000. provided they were permitted to do the work at their leisure and launch before the Winter.—

I have caused the Timber to be collected and piled in order to preserve it I should however recommend it to be sold, if it should be determined not to complete the Ships— All the Ordnance and Stores of every description have been landed, and such as were subject to injury, have been put in Store-houses, and in a state to be transported to New York or elsewhere.—

I would respectfully recommend that the public Vessels which are not to be sold, should be sunk for their preservation, and the best mode is, to sink them between Piers so that the Vessels will remain upright—"Hendersons Harbor" is preferable to Sacketts Harbor to sink the vessels in, because it is completely land locked and not subject to be disturbed by any wind— I think that it

would be adviseable to keep one of the Brigs in Commission, because the Officers and Men (who are left for the protection of the Public Vessels and property on this Lake) would be more comfortable and kept in better discipline than if permitted to live in Barracks.—

The Schooners *Governor Tompkins*, *Conquest*, *Fair American*, *Ontario*, *Pert*, *Asp* and *Raven* I should recommend to be immediately sold— these vessels were originally Merchant Vessels purchased into Service— they are from 40 to 80 Tons burthen and would sell very well now—but if kept another year, would be nearly a total loss— The *Oneida* is a small Brig built about Seven years ago and is quite rotten and in the course of two years, would be condemned I would therefore recommend, that she should be sold also— *The Lady of the Lake* would render great service as a dispatch boat and to keep in Check the Smugglers which will swarm in great numbers on this Lake.— I have the honor to be very respectfully Sir Yr. mo. ob. St.

I Chauncey

LS, DNA, RG45, CL, 1815, Vol. 2, No. 114 (M125, Roll No. 43).

SECRETARY OF THE NAVY CROWNINSHIELD TO CAPTAIN ARTHUR SINCLAIR

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

Navy Department  
April 5th 1815.

Sir.

You will proceed immediately to Erie (Penna.) and direct the arrangements for laying up the U.S. Squadron, on that Lake, in such manner, as in your best judgement, shall tend to the preservation, and safety of all the Vessels to be placed in ordinary; and you will select a prudent, skillful, and competent Officer, to leave in Command of the Station, and of the Vessels to be retained in Service, for the purpose of Despatch Vessels, and transportation to and from the upper Lakes, to Michilimacina, Detroit, and else where, as may be ordered by this department.— I submit the manner of laying up the Vessels to your decision, when you shall have ascertained whether the sinking them in the Basin shall be best or mooring them afloat, the preservation of the Timber will probably induce you to sink them, and you will compare the probable advantages or disadvantages in both cases.— You will retain the new Schooner and the Schooner *Porcupine*, in command of a good Sailing Master with—

2 Masters Mates  
2 Boatswains Mates  
2 Stewards  
2 Quarter Gunners  
1 Carpenter  
2 Cooks &  
16 Seamen & Ordinary Seamen

to navigate them upon the Lakes, and to do such other duty, as shall be required of them upon the Station.— A Sergeants Guard of Marines will be ordered to guard the public property.—

You will have all the Guns, Shot, and materials of the Vessels of every kind, safely stored or covered from the Weather, and have complete Inventories thereof made, and transmitted to this Department.— Such of the Stores as can be disposed of to advantage, you will advertize and Sell at public Sale, and for which purpose Buller Cocke Esqr. is ordered to assist you.— The provisions not required for the Station you will transfer and deliver over to an agent of the War Department, taking proper receipts & Vouchers for the whole, which you will transmit to this Department.— You are authorized to sell the small vessels at public Sale, or any others which you may deem not suitable for public Service, provided they can be sold at a price near their Value.— You will also sell all the perishable articles, spare Boats, small Rigging, Sails, and useless materials, and such part of the powder, as may be Sold advantageously, and if you judge best, you may send all that will not be wanted on the Station to Detroit for safe keeping, in the public magazines at that place.—

You will give all necessary instructions to the Officer left in Command, and direct him to make regular quarter Muster Rolls of the whole station, in order that the remittances may be made for payment of the wages as they become due.—

You will have the U.S. Brig *Niagara* equipped and manned to proceed to Michilimacina, with such officers and troops as may be ordered by the War Department, to Garrison that Post, and on this vessels return, you will have her laid up in ordinary in the same manner as the rest of the fleet.—

After performing this service you will report yourself to this Department for further orders.— I am, very respectfully &c.

B. W. Crowninshield.

LB, DNA, RG45, SNL, Vol. 12, pp. 92-93 (M149, Roll No. 12).

COMMODORE SIR EDWARD W. C. R. OWEN, R.N., TO  
LIEUTENANT GENERAL GORDON DRUMMOND, BRITISH ARMY

*St. Lawrence* Kingston  
16 June 1815.

Sir

I have lost no time on my return to this place, in proceeding with the arrangements for the Naval Peace Establishment upon the Lakes, as I informed you was my intention, and I have the honor to give your Excellency the following outline of the plan which after consultation with the Commissioner I have begun to carry into execution.

At Champlain the twelve Gun Boats building being completed, I have ordered one, of each of the three different models of which they consist, to be launched, armed, and trial made of them comparatively with each other. The rest will be hauled up, and housed, or otherwise secured as the Commissioner when he visits that place shall direct.

I have ordered the Complement of that place to be One hundred and thirty five Viz.

- 65 Seamen with the Establishment of Officers for a sloop of war with 121 Men
- 5 Boys— and
- 65 Royal Marines including 3 lieutenants 3 Sergeants 3 Corporals and 1 Drummer to which will be added Nine Artificers the whole under the command of Captain Baumgardt.

At Quebec and Montreal, the Civil establishment is already as much reduced as it ought to be, and at the latter place I have desired the Commissioner Sir Robert Hall will order the Frames of the two Brigs which were sent out from England to be immediately set up and got ready to go round to Halifax.— It is very doubtfull whether the frame of the Frigate will be worth setting up, but the Commissioner will decide on this after enquiry at Montreal— I have given these directions, after consulting with the Builder because there seems little doubt that the price of conveying them up to Prescott (where they might otherwise have been put together) would be double that of building them at Kingston.

At this place the duties which we have in hand prevent the immediate reduction of the Establishment, but about the End of September the Commissioner is of opinion that it may be effected, and consist of about a hundred every description of persons being included—

Your Excellency is aware that I had before given directions, that the new Ships should be put in as forward a state as possible, with a view to seasoning; and be left in that State; the Beams, Plank and every thing which would be requisite to finish them being prepared, and kept as much in readiness as possible.—

One of these has been carried to that state and the other is in considerable progress towards it: but it has been reported that the American Ships at Sackets are to be completed, in consequence of the rise of Water on the Lake having softened the ground on which they have been built and endangered them. Whatever may be the cause they assign it will be incumbent upon us, if they complete their ships to do the same, and finish one at least of ours; for which, will take care to leave Conditional instructions

The *St. Lawrence*, *Psyche* and *Princess Charlotte* are reported to be in good condition and I shall lay them up immediately.

The *Regent* is said likewise to be in good Condition, but as she has been on shore and hung some time it will be necessary to examine her, and it is my intention to keep her in Commission with a few men only for the pendant of Sir Robert Hall who will retain the Command when I go home.

The *Niagara* is reported weak and, since the Scale of the vessels on this Lake has been so much encreased she has ceased to be of much consideration except, that, drawing little water, she can enter the Niagara when it is necessary

I propose to keep her in Commission with a smaller crew, and shall recommend her wintering at York to keep Communication with the distant Lakes—

The same reasoning which applies to the *Niagara* has already induced me to fit the *Montreal*, (as Your Excellency has been acquainted) with a spar Deck to enable her to carry Troops or Stores, and being now compleat, she is gone up

to Fort George.— I propose to keep her in commission, as well as the *Star* Brig principally with a View to the means of Transport which you may require; and I request Your Excellency will be pleased to acquaint me, if, in your opinion, or that of the officers with whose department it particularly rests, the service of these two Vessels will be sufficient for the purposes of the Colony, or whether any other assistance on this Lake and river will be necessary.

The *Charwell* is reported to be bad— She, (as well as the *Star*) is too inferior to the American Brigs to be considered in our effective Force.— I therefore purpose to condemn her as a vessel of war, and fit her expressly to be used hereafter as a Transport, which will be a reason for providing as we may have leisure the Frame of a better Vessel, in her stead.

Upon Lake Erie I cannot yet decide, but the two Schooners which were weighed up, in the Chippewa, have been fitted out and sailed for Sandwich: the two I ordered to be built it is reported will be ready early in the Month of August.—

The moment that I can obtain sufficient knowledge of those Lakes to form my opinion I will make your Excellency acquainted with it: in the mean time a dépôt will certainly be requisite for Erie wherever formed; and, that, most probably on a little larger Scale than that upon Champlain, although similarly organized.—

A Small dépôt will likewise be required for Huron, and most likely, one intermediate at York or Burlington.

It has appeared to me (as I have already stated to Your Excellency) and on reference to the Commissary General I find it is the case, that a considerable inconvenience must arise from the several Vessels on the Lakes sending separate demands at irregular periods to the Commissaries for their provisions:— I have therefore thought it right to confine the demands hereafter to one person, on each Lake; and, with this view, I am about to unite the duties of an Agent Victualler with those of Agent for the Hospital, and appoint an officer to fill the Situation; the arrangements for which, shall be transmitted to Your Excellency the moment that I have compleated them.

It is my intention that He shall always have in his store as much as may be necessary for three months probable consumption, and make demands upon the Commissary at stated periods to compleat—

I have ordered that the equipments and Furniture of the Ships and Vessels preparing to be laid up shall be in every thing completed, then stowed carefully away in places that will be assigned them: and as there is no Naval Establishment of Ordnance at this place, I have with a View of Keeping those Stores more complete and after consulting with the Commanding Officer of Artillery and Store keeper of Ordnance, requested the Commissioner to assign a storehouse for them, and have appointed a Steady Gunner to have them in his Custody, and to keep them constantly in readiness and good order.

I have likewise fixed with the Commissioner that stores sufficient for full three months expence shall be kept at Kingston, & the Isle aux Noix; and a larger proportion at the Dépôts to be established on the Upper Lakes.

This will I hope in the event of any future war, give time for the Arrival of supplies from England; and will enable the Squadrons on the Lakes to enter on immediate action—

I have however in the Article of Ordnance requested from My Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty that a considerable dépôt may be immediately formed, not

only to compleat the Vessels now upon the Lakes but with a View to any emergency which may make it needful to encrease the number of our Ships.

This outline of my Intentions will meet I hope, your Excellency's wishes and be Satisfactory: Should it appear defective, in any point or should Your Excellency think any alteration necessary, I shall be most happy in receiving any suggestions with which you may have the goodness to favor me who have the honor to be Sir Your Excellency's most obedient humble servant

E W C R Owen  
Commodore  
Commr. in Chief

LS, CaOOA, British Military and Naval Records, RG8, I, "C" Ser., Vol. 735, pp. 8-17.

### Chapter Three

## The Pacific Theater: January 1814–August 1815

*In December 1813 as David Porter prepared his frigate to leave the Marquesan island of Nuku Hiva, he could reflect on a year of memorable accomplishment and extreme good fortune. Ten months earlier he had made the bold decision to enter the Pacific and cruise singly against British merchant shipping off the coasts of Chile, Peru, and Mexico. In March he arrived at the Chilean port of Valparaíso where he was greeted enthusiastically by a people in the midst of their own revolutionary struggle for independence. The frigate commander was gratified on this occasion to win the friendship and support of the Carrera family who controlled Chile's military and ruling national junta. Fortified by these demonstrations of pro-American sentiment, Porter set sail for the Galápagos Islands where he cruised in search of British whaling ships from 17 April to 3 October. Essex enjoyed good hunting in the waters surrounding that exotic archipelago, bagging twelve whalers and more than 300 prisoners. Porter next headed for the Marquesas Islands to refit his ship and give his men a well-deserved rest ashore. He arrived at Nuku Hiva on 25 October and immediately began the hard work of repairing Essex and fitting out her prizes for the voyage home. He was impressed enough with the strategic importance of the island to claim it on behalf of the United States, a gesture the overawed natives were temporarily unable to dispute. After seven weeks of labor Essex was again ready for sea.<sup>1</sup>*

*Porter had hopes for even greater success in 1814. His reasons for such high expectations were not unfounded. His ship had suffered no material damage in the course of her cruise, his crew was healthy, and he had manned and fitted out the captured whaler Atlantic, renamed Essex Junior, to act in concert with Essex. Yet the American captain aimed at something more grand and personally gratifying than adding to the tally of whalers captured in 1813. As Porter would later explain it, I sought "to signalize my cruize by something more splendid before leaving" the Pacific.<sup>2</sup> Having learned before sailing for the Marquesas that the British had sent three warships in quest of Essex, Porter now determined to seek combat with the enemy. Knowing that Captain James Hillyar, the British squadron commander, would seek Essex at Valparaíso, Porter set sail for that port on 13 December 1813.*