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SMITHSONIAN DEPOSIT

BRIEF SKETCHES

OF THE

OFFICERS WHO WERE IN THE BATTLE OF LAKE ERIE.

BY USHER PARSONS, M. D.,

OF PROVIDENCE, R. I.

FROM THE NEW ENG. HIST. AND GENEALOGICAL REGISTER.



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The following brief sketches of the lives of the commissioned and warrant officers in Perry's squadron, written by one of them, at the request of some of their surviving relatives, were published in the *New England Historical and Genealogical Register*, for January, 1863. The two senior commanders, Perry and Elliott, are omitted, having already been sufficiently noticed by J. F. Cooper, A. S. McKenzie and others. The following persons are arranged according to the position of the vessels to which they belonged.

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BRIEF SKETCHES

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OFFICERS OF THE LAWRENCE.

Lieut. JOHN J. YARNELL of Pennsylvania, warranted as midshipman 1809, commissioned in July, 1813, served one year in a merchant ship in the Pacific, was ordered to Lake Erie to aid in fitting out the squadron, and was appointed first lieutenant of the flag ship Lawrence, which Perry commanded, until she was disabled, and when he transferred his flag to the Niagara. Perry says, in his official report, that "finding I could no longer annoy the enemy, I left her in charge of Lieut. Yarnell, who, I was convinced, from the bravery already displayed, would do what would comport with the honor of the flag.

* * * It was with unspeakable pain that I saw, soon after I got on board the Niagara, the flag of the Lawrence come down, although I was perfectly sensible she had been defended to the last, and that to have continued to make a show of resistance would have been a wanton sacrifice of the remains of the brave crew. But the enemy was not able to take possession of her, and circumstances soon permitted her flag to be hoisted." Again he says: "Of Lieut. Yarnell, first of the Lawrence, although several times wounded, he refused to quit the deck." Ten days after the action, Mr. Yarnell was sent to Erie in command of the hospital-ship Lawrence, and soon after was ordered on board the John Adams, as lieutenant, and then to the Epervier, as commander, which, in 1815, was lost at sea, with all hands on board. He was a brave and intelligent officer, and if lacking in *suaviter in modo*, possessed in a high degree the *fortiter in re*, and had life been spared would have made a distinguished commander.*

* ANECDOTE.—Lieut. Yarnell had his scalp badly torn, and came below with the blood streaming over his face; some lint was hastily applied and confined with a large bandana, with directions to report himself for better dressing after the battle, and he insisted on returning to the deck. The cannon balls had knocked to pieces the hammocks stowed away on deck and let loose their contents, which were reed or flag tops, that floated in the air like feathers and gave the appearance of a snow storm. These lighted upon Yarnell's head covered with blood, and on coming below with another injury, his bloody face covered with the cat tails made his head resemble that of a huge owl. Some of the wounded roared out with laughter that "the devil had come for us."

Lieut. DULANY FOREST, born in the District of Columbia. He was appointed midshipman in 1809, and was in the Constitution when she captured the Java, under Bainbridge. When the squadron sailed on the lake he was appointed acting lieutenant of the flag ship, and acted as chief signal officer. He behaved gallantly in the action, and was despatched to Washington with the commodore's official report and bearer of the captured flags. He sailed to the Mediterranean, as lieutenant of the Java, under Perry. He was commissioned as lieutenant in 1814, but died of fever in 1825.

Lieutenant of Marines, JOHN BROOKS, son of the late governor of Massachusetts, who was a colonel in the revolutionary army. Lieut. Brooks studied medicine with his father, who practiced in Medford. Desirous of serving his country in a military capacity, he obtained an appointment as lieutenant of marines, and was stationed in Washington when the war commenced. He was ordered thence to Lake Erie, under Com. Perry, and, with a recruiting sergeant, opened a rendezvous in that place and raised a company of marines for the fleet. He was an excellent drill officer and brought his company into perfect discipline. On the 10th of September, 1813, he, in the heat of the battle, was struck with a cannon ball in the hip, which carried away the joint. His agony was intense and impelled him to plead for death, calling earnestly for his pistols to end his misery. But in the course of an hour he sank away, having made a verbal disposition of his affairs to the purser, Mr. Hambleton, who lay by his side, also wounded. Mr. Brooks was probably surpassed by no officer in the navy for manly beauty, polished manners and elegant personal appearance.

Sailing Master WILLIAM VIGNERON TAYLOR was a descendant of Dr. Norbert F. Vigneron, a native of Provence d'Artois in France. He arrived in Newport in 1690, where he lived to the age of 95 years, and died in 1764. He was a well educated and popular physician, and being succeeded by his son and grandson, the three occupied a prominent rank in the medical profession during nearly a century.

Capt. Taylor was a sailor before the mast, then mate, and finally captain in the merchant service. Being thrown out of employ by the declaration of war in 1812, Capt. Perry obtained for him a warrant as sailing master in the flotilla under his command in Newport harbor, early in 1813, and having a high appreciation of his abilities took him to Erie to aid in fitting out and rigging the vessels there building. Mr. Taylor arrived there in April, in charge of a gang of sailors, and rendered highly important services in superintending the equipment of the vessels, being more experienced than any one on the station, in the duties of seamanship.

When the fleet sailed to meet the enemy, the commodore took Mr. Taylor into his flag ship, the Lawrence. This ship was crippled in the battle, in her sails and rigging and masts, every thing on board torn to pieces, so that it required the greatest coolness and self-possession as well as skill, to prevent her going to wreck, and Mr. Taylor was the man fitted for the occasion. He received a slight wound in the thigh, but was able to keep the deck till the battle was over. The Lawrence being converted into a hospital ship for the whole fleet, was sent to Erie, and Mr. Taylor returned in her. He was then

sent to Lake Ontario with despatches to Channcy, and soon after obtained leave of absence to return to his family in Newport. He was then placed in the line of promotion by awarding him a commission of lieutenant in 1814, and promoted to commander in 1831, and finally he was made post captain in 1841.

At the close of 1814, Com. Perry was offered the command of a new 44-gun frigate then building in Baltimore, and was allowed the privilege of selecting his officers. Mr. Taylor, after serving some time in Washington navy yard, was selected by Perry for one of his lieutenants in the Java, and for several months he was employed in superintending her launching, rigging and outfit, and sailed in her to the Mediterranean in December, 1815. He next went as first lieutenant under Capt. Nicholson, in the sloop-of-war Ontario, and was subsequently stationed two years in the Boston navy yard, and was ordered thence to the frigate Hudson, Com. Creighton, for the coast of Brazil. Being now promoted to the rank of commander, he took charge of the sloops-of-war Warren and Erie, in the Gulf of Mexico. After his promotion to post captain in 1841, he, in the 68th year of his age, received orders to command the ship-of-the-line Ohio, and took her round Cape Horn to the Pacific, where sickness compelled him to leave her and return home.

Soon after this Capt. Taylor made a profession of religion in the Protestant Episcopal Church. He was charitable to the poor, sick and needy. On the 9th of February, after a year of long suffering from disease of the heart, he was struck with apoplexy and died on the 11th in the 78th year of his age.

He married Miss Abby White, who was the mother of seven children, three of whom died in childhood. The elder daughter resides with her venerable mother, the other married Lieut. Camillus Saunders, son of Gen. R. M. Saunders, minister to Spain, and a resident of North Carolina. Camillus was lost in the revenue cutter Hamilton, on the Charleston bar. The youngest son, named O. H. Perry Taylor, graduated at West Point in 1816, and joined his regiment at the outbreak of the Mexican war, in which he was twice brevetted for gallant conduct. He was killed by the Indians, May 17, 1858, while acting as senior cavalry officer, under Col. Steptoe's command.

The other son, William R. Taylor, the oldest of the children, entered the navy as midshipman, in 1828, was promoted to lieutenant, 1840, and to commander, 1854. He has for many years held the responsible office of superintendent of the ordnance department, and and is recently appointed to the command of the steam sloop-of-war Housatonic, now fitting out in Charlestown.

Capt. William V. Taylor was a prompt and vigilant officer, and very active in carrying on any duties assigned him, and was a thoroughly bred mariner.

Dr. SAMUEL HORSLEY, acting surgeon of the Virginia, entered the navy, as surgeon's mate, in 1809, and served two or three years on the Atlantic. He was ordered to Lake Erie in May, 1813, as acting surgeon, and was commissioned in 1814. He died in 1821. The doctor was a polished gentleman, very companionable and universally esteemed. His health was feeble, and much exercise of body or mind not easily borne. During the week previous and subsequent

to the battle, he was unable to attend to professional business and did not attempt it.

SAMUEL HAMBLETON, purser, was a native of Talbot county, eastern shore of Maryland, born 1777, on a plantation granted to his ancestors by Lord Baltimore, in 1659. He was a merchant for some years in Georgetown, D. C., and then a clerk in the navy department, from which he was appointed a purser in 1806. From 1807 to 1811 he was stationed in New Orleans, under Commodores Porter and Shaw, and was ordered thence to Newport, R. I., and from there to Erie, under Com. Perry. He was the particular and confidential friend and counselor of the commodore. All the other commissioned and warrant officers of the fleet averaged the age of less than twenty years, and the lieutenants alone averaged but about twenty-one years, and were too young to afford counsel to Perry. But Hambleton being of riper years and of excellent judgment, was the staff that he leaned upon for advice more than any or all others, and whether on land or water, they were messmates side by side at their meals. During the action Mr. Hambleton fought with a musket until towards the close of it, when a spent cannon ball that had lodged in the mast, fell down upon his shoulder and fractured the scapula or shoulder blade; a portion of the bone was removed and he recovered in about four months. The officers and crews of all the vessels appointed him prize agent, to receive and pay over to them whatever the government allowed them by government for the captured fleet, which was the sum of \$100,000. The following year he left the lake. He after this, in 1820, sailed with Com. Bairbridge, in the *Columbus*; in the frigate *Congress*, Com. Biddle; and was on shore stations at Pensacola and at Baltimore. He died at his residence, Perry's Cabin, near St. Michael's, January 17, 1851, of paralysis. He never entered into political life, was devoted to agriculture, and president of the agricultural society. He was grave and dignified in his manners, an extensive reader, and an accomplished, high minded gentleman. During many of his last years he was a professor in the Episcopal Church. He never married.

[Dr. USHER PARSONS, who has furnished these sketches, was acting surgeon on board the *Lawrence*, and is the last surviving commissioned officer of Perry's squadron. The following account of him has been compiled from various sources:

He is a son of William and Abigail F. (Blunt) Parsons, and was born at Alfred, Me., August 18, 1788. (For his ancestry, see vol. 1, page 268 of the *Register*.) He finished his medical studies under Dr. John Warren, father of the late Dr. John C. Warren of Boston. Immediately after the declaration of war, he entered the navy as surgeon's mate. He volunteered for lake service with the crew of the *John Adams*. In the battle of Lake Erie he was on the flag ship *Lawrence* as acting surgeon; and, in consequence of the two other surgeons being ill, had sole charge of the wounded of the whole squadron. Respecting his valuable services on that trying occasion, Com. Perry made most honorable mention in a letter to the secretary of the navy. He served the following year on the upper lakes, under Com. Sinclair, and was at the attack on Mackinac by Col. Croghan.

Perry, on being appointed to the new 44-gun frigate *Java*, as commander, and allowed the privilege of selecting his officers, applied for Dr. Parsons as surgeon. After two years' service in that vessel the doctor sailed two years as surgeon of the *Guerriere*, under Macdonough, and for two years more acted as surgeon in the navy yard at Charlestown. After ten years' service in the navy, he resigned and settled in Providence, R. I., in the practice of medicine and surgery. He received the degree of M. D., from Harvard University, in 1818, from Dartmouth, in 1821, and from Brown, in 1825. He has been a professor in Brown University and in other colleges. He was formerly president of the R. I. Medical Society, and was the first vice-president of the National Medical Association. In 1822 he married Mary J., daughter of Rev. Abiel Holmes, D. D., of Cambridge, author of the *Annals of America*. (See *Register*, vol. viii, page 315.) She died in 1825, leaving one son, Dr. Charles W. Parsons, now president of the Rhode Island Medical Society. Dr. Parsons is the author of several medical works, and of the *Life of Sir William Pepperrell, Bart.*, of which three editions have been published. The readers of the *Register* will find in our thirteenth volume, pages 171-4, a speech by him at Pent-in-bay, Sept. 10, 1858, the 45th anniversary of Perry's victory, in which an account of that battle is given.

~~"Dr. Parsons," says the author of the *History of Erie County*, "was not only a distinguished physician, but a distinguished general. [Ed.]~~

THOMAS BREEZE, the chaplain, was the son of Major John Breeze of the 54th regiment of the British army, stationed at Newport, R. I., in the time of the American revolution. While there he became interested in a young lady, the daughter of Francis Malbone, Esq. At the close of the war he returned to England with his regiment, and, resigning his commission, he was appointed British consul at Newport, where he spent the remainder of his days, which ended in 1795. He married the lady, Miss Elizabeth Malbone, and had four sons and four daughters, the youngest of the sons being the subject of this notice.

Thomas Breeze was placed in a mercantile house in New York, of T. & W. Wickham, who were soon after reduced to bankruptcy by the declaration of war in 1812. He returned to Newport to reside for a time with his widowed mother. Soon, however, he became wearied of an inactive life, and applied to Com. Perry, then commanding a gun-boat flotilla in Newport harbor, for employment, who appointed him his private secretary, and on leaving for the lakes in January, 1813, took young Breeze to Erie, and there appointed him chaplain. This raised his pay and accommodated him with a better berth on shipboard with ward-room officers.

When the fleet sailed from Erie to meet the enemy, Breeze was appointed commodore's aid in battle, the other aid being Perry's brother Alexander, a lad of thirteen years. The duty of aids is, to run with the commander's orders to all parts of the ship, for amid the din and uproar of battle, the crash of timbers and shrieks of the wounded, orders are hardly audible at the distance of ten feet. Fleetness of

foot and self-possession were the requisites for this service, and which is best performed by youths in their teens. Towards the close of the battle, the marines are required to lay aside their muskets and work at the cannon, in place of sailors who are knocked down and disabled at the guns. But the marines were here all used up, and still more aid was needed, and here young Breeze, with other officers, seized hold of the ropes and exerted every nerve as common sailors, in working the last guns. He thus served in the fourfold capacity of aid during the battle, of secretary, to copy despatches in all directions when the fight was over, of gunner's aid near its close, and of chaplain to bury the dead. In this last office, his noble voice made the reading of the burial service very interesting and impressive.

Soon after the lake victory was achieved, Gen. Harrison embarked his army in the fleet and proceeded to Malden in pursuit of Gen. Proctor's army. Com. Perry accompanied him as aid and took young Breeze in the train. Having conquered the enemy on both lake and land, the two commanders, with their suites, returned to Erie, and proceeded thence to Buffalo in the fleet which conveyed troops to that place. Mr. B. remained at Erie during the following winter and spring, and then accompanied Capt. Sinclair, commander of the station, to Mackinac, as chaplain and secretary. Our squadron carried the army of Col. Croghan, for the purpose of recapturing the fort which was lost early in the war. After failing in this enterprise the squadron returned to Erie for winter quarters. Here, Mr. Breeze learned on his arrival, to his great joy, that his patron and friend Com. Perry had been offered the command of a new 44, then building in Baltimore, and allowed the privilege of selecting his officers, and that orders had accordingly arrived for enough of his old officers on the lake to officer his ship; they were—Lieuts. Turner, Thos. H. Stevens, Dulany Forrest, Wm. V. Taylor, Purser Hambleton, Usher Parsons and Thomas Breeze. Others would have been selected had they not been absent from the country. Mr. Hambleton being prize agent for the fleet, declined the place assigned him. Mr. Stevens was about to be married and could not go, and Mr. Breeze had the promise of the more lucrative office of purser in another vessel, which the situation of his widowed mother and his sisters made it advisable for him to accept. He was thus compelled to forego the pleasure of again accompanying his noble commander. He subsequently sailed in several vessels, and served on shore stations up to the time of his decease, which occurred in October, 1846, after a service of thirty-five years.

Mr. Breeze married Miss Lucy, daughter of Hon. Richard K. Randolph of Newport. She still survives, and has a family of four sons and three daughters. One of the sons, Lieut. Kidder R. Breeze of the navy, a promising young officer, is on board the fleet now anchored in front of New Orleans, and commands a detachment of mortar boats; and his eldest daughter is the wife of Thomas L. Dunnel, Esq., of Providence.

Mr. Breeze was a genial companion, high-minded and of gentlemanly bearing in manner and conversation. No officer in the service was more popular and beloved. His death was occasioned by disease

of the heart, of which many of his brother officers died. There are only two persons living who were on board the flag ship Lawrence, viz: the surgeon and Hosea Sargent of Charlestown, Mass., and these are natives of the county of York, Me.; and the only surviving commissioned officer of the whole fleet is the surgeon of the Lawrence.

Midshipmen.

HENRY LAMB was appointed 1809. He was struck by a splinter in the arm, that fractured the bone and carried away much of the flesh, so as to be in danger of dying from hemorrhage; a tourniquet was applied, and he was ordered to another apartment and to report himself after the action was over. But while the surgeon was supporting him in moving, a cannon ball passed through the room, hit him in the side and sent him from the hands of the surgeon against the wall, his body half severed. He was an estimable young man and correct in his habits.

THOMAS CLAXTON was one of the most promising officers I ever met with in the navy. He was son of Mr. Claxton, doorkeeper to the house of representatives at Washington, and brother of the late Com. Claxton. He was appointed in 1810, and ordered to Lake Erie early in 1813, where he was active in getting out the fleet, and sailed in the Lawrence. Early in the action he was taken below with a fatal wound of the shoulder, which carried away all the bones of the joint, the clavicle, scapula and head of the humerus, and yet he lingered along nearly thirty days, dying as it were by inches, and yet was beyond the reach of surgical aid. He was buried in Erie, and an address was made on the occasion by Rev. Mr. Reed, at the grave. No officer of his grade would have been more lamented in the fleet.

AUGUSTUS SWARTOUT of New York, was appointed in 1812. He was badly wounded in the arm early in the action. He joined Com. Perry, in the Java, in 1815, and sailed in her to the Mediterranean. He died in 1820.

JAMES A. PERRY, son of Capt. Christopher R. Perry, and brother of the commodore, was born in Rhode Island, received his warrant in 1812, and accompanied his brother to Erie, and acted as his aid during the battle, Mr. Thomas Breeze being the other aid. He returned home with his brother and sailed with him to the Mediterranean. He was promoted to lieutenant in 1818, and sailed in that capacity in the Mediterranean, under Capt. Crane. In a subsequent voyage to South America he was drowned in an attempt to save the life of a sailor, in 1822. He was a promising officer and his loss much lamented. The five brothers, viz: Oliver H., Raymond H., a lieutenant, Matthew C. (commander in the Japan expedition), J. A., above mentioned, and Nathaniel H., a purser, are all deceased.

PELEG K. DUNHAM, son of Charles C. Dunham of Newport, born August 17, 1794, was on board the flag ship Lawrence until a few days before the battle, when he was taken down with lake fever and was transferred to the Caledonia, Capt. Turner, for better accommodations. But he had recovered in some degree, so as to be able to take a part in the action, and behaved courageously. He entered service in 1812, was promoted to lieutenant 1818, and died of consumption August 17, 1822.

OFFICERS OF THE BRIG CALEDONIA.

Capt. DANIEL TURNER, the subject of this brief notice, was the son of Daniel Turner and grandson of Dr. William Turner of Newark, N. J. He had three brothers, viz: 1, Dr. William Turner, who was for many years at the head of the medical profession in Newport, but previously a surgeon's mate in the navy, and sailed in the General Greene, and for many years previous to his death was the medical officer at Fort Wolcott in Newport; 2, Lieut. Benjamin Turner, who fell in a duel with a son of the great Dr. Rush, who afterwards became a confirmed maniac in consequence of that fatal deed; and 3, Henry E. Turner, a most promising young officer, who died a few years after his appointment as midshipman.

Capt. Daniel Turner was appointed a midshipman in 1808. The declaration of war in 1812, caused rapid promotion of young officers, and young Turner was commissioned lieutenant in 1813, about which time he was ordered on lake service. He had served under Com. Rogers, in the President, and at the time of his arrival on the lakes was still in his minority. He was actively employed in rigging and fitting out the young squadron (aided by Lieut. Holdup and Sailing Master Taylor), until the vessels were ready for sailing early in August.

The first trip of the squadron, consisting of eight vessels, half officered and manned, was across the lake to Long Point, in pursuit of the British squadron of five vessels, the largest ship Detroit being then at Malden, not ready for sailing. Returning to Erie the following day there was found a reinforcement of men and officers just arrived from Lake Ontario. In this brief excursion across the lake, so short was the supply of experienced officers, that young Turner, still a minor, commanded the Niagara of 20 guns. But this party arriving from Lake Ontario gave the command of the Niagara to Capt. Elliott, and young Turner was ordered to the third ship, the Caledonia. When the line of battle was formed, the Caledonia ranked as fourth vessel in the line, the two schooners Ariel and Scorpion, commanded by Packet and Champlin, being ahead, followed by the flag ship Lawrence, then the Caledonia, Lieut. Turner, and the Niagara and four smaller vessels. Turner maintained his position in the fight most gallantly, keeping his vessel near the Lawrence, within a half cable's length; but the Niagara, as was remarked by the wounded as they came below, was out of the place assigned her and "out of the reach of the enemy's guns, whilst Turner's vessel was in her place fighting nobly." In his official report, Perry says that "Lieut. Turner brought the Caledonia into action in the most able manner, and is an officer that in all situations may be relied upon."

In the following year, 1814, Capt. Turner commanded one of the squadron sent to cooperate with Col. Croghan, and in the following autumn was captured by the enemy and taken to Montreal.

About this time Perry obtained command of a new 44-gun frigate, the Java, building and fitting out in Baltimore, and as a compliment, he was allowed to select his officers, nearly all of whom were taken from his flag ship Lawrence, on the lakes, with Capt. Turner, who

helped him rig the squadron and commanded the *Caledonia*. After a two years' cruise in the Mediterranean, Turner was employed in several vessels, and as commander of the Portsmouth navy yard and of the Pacific squadron. He was entrusted with important negotiations in different countries, and his papers show that he received the highest commendations of the government for the manner his duties were performed in all the stations to which he had been appointed.

For his services in the battle of Lake Erie his native state, New York, presented him an elegant sword.

The prominent trait of his character as an officer was rigid discipline, obedience to superiors in rank, and strict exaction of it from his subordinates, a principle that he copied from Com. Rogers, under whom he served some years. The crews of our ships of war were a rough and rugged class of men, many of them had served in the British navy, where punishments were severe, and they required similar treatment, to some extent, in our vessels. Some commanders, however, more than others, possessed the art of governing a crew by the hope of reward and by kindness, as well as by the fear of the lash. Reared under the discipline of Rogers, Mr. Turner was a terror to evil doers, and thought more of the motive power of fear than of affection. He was as brave as Julius Cæsar; was always temperate in his habits, generous to a fault, a genial companion and highly esteemed by his brother officers.

He had complained some of pain in the chest for months, but on the day of his death was in his usual health and retired to rest at his usual hour, but was found dead soon after. Funeral honors were paid to his memory at all the naval stations, by the discharge of cannon, lowering the flags to half-mast, and by a large procession at his burial, which took place in Philadelphia.

Capt. Turner's warrant as midshipman was dated January 1, 1808; his commission as lieutenant March 12, 1813; as master commander March, 1825, and as post captain March, 1835. He died February 4, 1850. He left a widow and one daughter, who resides with her mother in Philadelphia, and three maiden sisters, now living in Newport. He was a dutiful and devoted son and kind brother, in short, he aimed at kindness in all his domestic relations.

Acting Sailing Master J. E. McDONALD, born in England. He acted as sailing master on board the *Caledonia*; was made midshipman 1814, lieutenant 1817, and disappeared 1818, probably died.

OFFICERS OF THE NIAGARA.

Lient. JOSEPH E. SMITH, appointed midshipman in January, 1808, lieutenant March, 1813. He served under Com. Rogers in the *President*, was ordered to Lake Erie 1813, under Elliott, and served as first lieutenant in the battle, in the *Niagara*. He soon after left the lakes in ill health, and died in Virginia, December, 1813.

Lient. JOHN J. EDWARDS, appointed midshipman 1809, and lieutenant December, 1813. He was acting lieutenant in the battle, and was slightly wounded. He died of fever at Erie, January, 1814.

NELSON WEBSTER, midshipman, appointed February, 1811; acted as sailing master on board the *Niagara* in the battle; commissioned as lieutenant 1814; died 1825.

Dr. ROBERT R. BARTON was educated in Philadelphia, commissioned as surgeon July, 1813, and was attached to the Niagara. He was taken ill with lake fever previous to the action, and remained so some days after. In 1815 he sailed to the Mediterranean, and on his return married and settled in Winchester, Va., as a planter. He was a dignified and highly respected gentleman and physician.

HUMPHREY MAGRATH, purser. In 1814 he blew his brains out in a fit of insanity.

Mid. J. B. MONTGOMERY; native of New Jersey; appointed 1812; lieutenant 1818; commander 1839, and post captain 1853. He lately commanded the Pacific squadron, and is now commander of the Charleston navy yard; has served 20 years at sea. He was an elegant young officer, has ever stood high in the navy, is a religious and very exemplary man and a useful officer.

Mid. JOHN L. CUMMINS, was acting midshipman in 1812, and assisted in boarding and capturing two armed merchant brigs at Fort Erie, in September, 1812, under Capt. Jesse D. Elliott and Col. Lawson, in which he was badly wounded in the knee. He served on board the Niagara, was promoted to lieutenant 1818, and died in 1824.

CHARLES SMITH, Va., appointed midshipman 1810; was on board the Niagara in the action; died 1818. He was a very popular young officer.

SAMUEL W. ADAMS of Swanzy, Mass., appointed 1809; dropped 1815. He was killed 1817, in the Mediterranean, in a merchant vessel.

OFFICERS OF THE SCORPION.

Sailing-Master STEPHEN CHAMPLIN, commanded the schooner Scorpion ahead of the flag ship Lawrence. She opened the ball and closed it by firing the first and last gun of the day. We copy the particulars of his life, published two years ago in a New York paper:

"Capt. Stephen Champlin was born in South Kingston, Rhode Island, on the 17th November, 1789, of very respectable parents. His father Stephen Champlin, was a native of the same state, and had formerly served as a volunteer in the American revolution. His mother was Elizabeth Perry, daughter of Freeman Perry, Esq., and sister of Christopher Raymond Perry, the father of Com. O. H. Perry.

"At the age of sixteen, his great desire to become a sailor, and his natural aversion to farming, induced him to leave his paternal roof and adopt the seaman's life as a profession; which profession he successfully followed, passing through all the grades, until, after a lapse of six years, he found himself in command of a ship out of Norwich.

"At this period, on the 22d May, 1812, war about being declared against Great Britain, he was appointed sailing-master in the navy, and commanded a gun boat, under Com. O. H. Perry, at Newport.

"He was then ordered to join Com. O. H. Perry at Erie. On his arrival he was appointed to the command of the Scorpion, in which vessel he took an active part in the battle of Lake Erie; leading the van and firing the first gun by the order of the commodore, and the last while in the pursuit of the Little Belt, which vessel he was enabled to capture and bring back to the squadron at about ten o'clock the same night.

"Subsequently to this he was, by Com. Elliott, placed in command

of the Queen Charlotte and Detroit, the two prize ships that were left in Put-in-Bay during the Winter.

"In the spring following he was appointed to the command of the Tigris, under Com. Sinclair, and served under him during the summer, by whom he was left with Capt. Turner to blockade the port of Mackinac. In the performance of this service he was attacked by an overwhelming force of one hundred sailors and soldiers, and about three hundred Indians, having five batteaux and nineteen canoes. In this engagement he received a very severe wound in the thigh from a canister shot, and was taken prisoner.

"In 1816 he was appointed to the command of the Porcupine, and ordered to proceed up the lake with Col. Hawkins and Col. Roberdeau, topographical engineers, who had been directed to examine the line between the United States and Canada, under the treaty of Ghent. Subsequent to this, his wound breaking out afresh, he had to submit to a very severe operation, which, however, did not effect the object in view, and he has ever since been unable to do much active service. In 1828 he was ordered to the steam ship Fulton, at New York, and was detached from her a short time before she blew up. In 1842 he had the command of the rendezvous in Buffalo, and was very successful in shipping apprentices for the navy. After the rendezvous was discontinued in 1845, he was ordered to take the command of the steamer Michigan, on Lake Erie, which vessel he had charge of for about two and a half years. At the time the navy was reformed, a few years since, he was put on the reserve list, with full pay, and has remained so ever since."

Capt. Champlin resides in Buffalo; has six children. His wife died three years ago. He continues to be a great sufferer from his wound which he received in 1814, but is otherwise hale and hearty. He is the last surviving commander out of the nine that were in Perry's squadron.

Mid. JOHN W. WENDALL of Albany, or its vicinity, was attached to the Scorpion in the action, but he resigned soon after, and died about 1830.

Mid. JOHN CLARK, from Herkimer county, New York, behaved well in the earlier part of the fight, but he was soon killed by a cannon ball that struck him in the head. He was a promising young officer.

OFFICERS OF THE SCHOONER TIGRESS.

Lieut. AUGUSTUS H. M. CONKLIN of Virginia. He was appointed midshipman 1809, and lieutenant 1813. He arrived at Erie from Lake Ontario, with Capt. Elliott, and took command of the Tigress. Being a dull sailer, he was unable to bring her into close action till near the close of the fight. In 1814 his vessel was captured by a party in boats in a dark night, whilst laying off Fort Erie. In February, 1820, he resigned whilst stationed at Portsmouth, N. H. He was an elegant officer in appearance, but too convivial even for the navy.

Mid. A. C. SROUT, appointed 1809, promoted December, 1814, about which time he died, while on his way westward from Erie. He served in the Tigress.

Mid. HUGH N. PAGE, appointed from Virginia, 1811; was promoted to lieutenant 1818, to commander 1838, and to post captain 1850. His amount of sea service has been twenty years. For two or three years past he has been on leave of absence in Virginia. He served in the *Tigress* in the action. He was a jovial companion, and much esteemed, but has disgraced himself by joining the rebels.

OFFICERS OF THE ARIEL.

Lieut. JOHN PACKET of Virginia. He received his warrant as midshipman in 1809. A few days only before the battle, 1813, he was promoted to a lieutenant, and arrived at Erie a few days before the fleet sailed, and commanded the *Ariel*, a clipper-built schooner, and in the battle ranged near the head of the squadron. This vessel maintained her position nobly in the fight. He is well spoken of in the commodore's official report. Mr. Packet served at Erie some years after the battle, and died of fever. He was in the *Constitution* as midshipman, when she captured the *Java*. He was a gentleman of polished manners, and a faithful and much esteemed officer.

Acting Sailing-Master THOMAS BROWNELL, was attached to the *Ariel* during the fight, and performed his duty faithfully. He originated in Rhode Island, and went to Erie as master's mate, and was there promoted to sailing-master, and in the following year commanded a schooner, on the lake. He was an active, enterprising officer. He received his warrant from the secretary of the navy, October, 1840, and commission as lieutenant 1843; after which he was placed on the retired list, and he now resides in Newport.

OFFICERS OF THE BRIG SOMERS.

Sailing-Master THOMAS C. ALMY of Rhode Island, was of Quaker parentage. Early he commenced the life of a sailor, and at the age of 21 was commander of a ship. He was stationed in the flotilla at Newport, and was sent to Erie in charge of a gang of sailors. He commanded the *Somers* in the action on the lake. Almy was an active, efficient officer, and much esteemed by his brother officers. He died at Erie in December, 1813, three months after the action, of pneumonia.

Mid. DAVID C. NICHOLS, on board the *Somers*; appointed 1812; resigned 1814.

OFFICERS OF THE SCHOONER PORCUPINE.

Acting Master GEORGE SENAT of New Orleans, of French extraction. He commanded the schooner *Porcupine*, a vessel that lagged astern, being a dull sailer. In the autumn of 1814, after returning from Croghan's expedition at Mackinac, he became involved in a duel with Sailing-Master McDonald, and was killed. His commission as lieutenant arrived in Erie the day after.

OFFICERS OF THE SLOOP TRITTE.

THOMAS HOLDEP (STEVENS), was a native of South Carolina, and was an inmate and pupil of the orphan asylum in Charleston. Gen. Stevens of Charleston, on seeing him in that institution, took a deep

interest in his welfare, and obtained a warrant for him as midshipman in 1809, and six years after (1815), added, by legislative enactment, the name of Stevens to that of Holdup. Hence in tracing out his career by the naval registers, it is necessary to look for *Thomas Holdup*, for an account of his early services, and *Thomas H. Stevens*, for his later services.

In 1812 he was stationed on board the *John Adams* in Brooklyn, and volunteered with the other officers and the crew, in September, for lake service, and marched from Albany to Buffalo. In December following, he accompanied a party who crossed the Niagara, at Black Rock, in the night, to storm a battery on the opposite shore, in which he behaved in a gallant manner, and received a canister ball through the right hand which impaired its use for life. He was soon after promoted to an acting lieutenant. In April following he took charge of a gang of seamen and proceeded to Erie, a distance of 100 miles, and was actively employed there until August, in fitting and rigging the squadron. In the action on the 10th of September, he commanded the sloop *Trippe*, and brought up the rear of Perry's line, and passing ahead of the *Porcupine* and *Tigress* fought bravely against the rear of the enemy's line; and when their large vessels had struck their colors and two of the small vessels in the rear attempted to escape, Holdup and Champlin pursued them four or five miles, and, by constant firing, conquered and brought them back.

During the following summer, 1814, he sailed as first lieutenant of the *Niagara*, under Sinclair, to Mackinac, and in the autumn was selected by Perry to accompany him in the *Java*, but he had married and remained in Connecticut a year, on leave of absence. He subsequently commanded different vessels, was promoted to master commandant March, 1825, and post captain January, 1836. He died suddenly while in command of the Washington navy yard, January, 1841. He left several children, among whom were Thomas H. Stevens, Jr, who was made midshipman in 1842, and behaved most gallantly in the action at Port Royal.

Capt. T. H. Stevens was the very soul of chivalry, generous, high-minded, gallant and heroic. He had a manly tone of voice, which he liked to make audible in the social circle, being a loud and free talker. His literary talents were of a high order for his years, and his loss to the navy was much lamented. His widow, who was a Miss Sage, died soon after him. The inducements held out to Mr. Holdup to adopt the name of Stevens, proved unreal, the general lived to see his fortune exhausted.

Mid. JAMES BLISS was on board the sloop *Trippe*. He was appointed in 1809, and died at Erie, of fever, February 1, 1814.

The only surviving commissioned officer is Usher Parsons. The only surviving warrant officers are Stephen Champlin, J. B. Montgomery, Hugh N. Page and Thomas Brownell, and the only surviving commander of the squadron is Stephen Champlin of Buffalo.

Congress passed a vote of thanks to the officers and crews of the squadron, and awarded a gold medal to the two senior officers, Perry and Elliot, and to the commissioned officers a silver medal, and a sword to the midshipmen, sailing-masters, marine officers, master's mates, pursers and chaplains.





