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# PERRY AT ERIE

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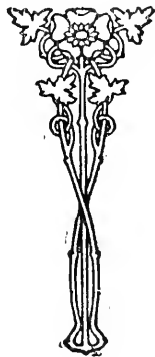
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¶ How Captain Dobbins, Benjamin Fleming and Others Assisted Him. Historical Incidents Having a Direct Bearing on the BATTLE OF LAKE ERIE

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BY GEORGE REID YAPLE



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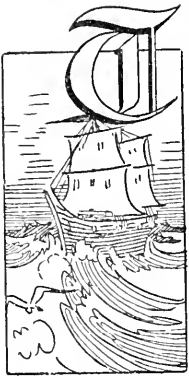
Oliver  
Hazard  
Perry





## PERRY AT ERIE

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THE story of Perry's Victory on Lake Erie, Sept. 10, 1813, is one that has thrilled the hearts of young Americans ever since, and will continue to inspire patriotism and pride in generations to come through all the history of our country. It has a special interest to Erie, Pennsylvania the surrounding countryside, and the Lake Erie region, for the reason that the little fleet, destined to wrest the supremacy of the Great Lakes from British dominion, was builded at Erie, of timbers that once stood on land afterwards included in the corporate limits of the city itself, and among the men who helped to hew the timbers and spike them in their places, were a number whose names are honored in the city's history.

Oliver Hazard Perry first looked upon the village of Erie, March 27, 1813, and 209 days later (Oct. 22, 1813) he departed, never again to visit the scene of his many trials and tribulations preceding the day he fought and won the victory that placed his name high among those of the world's naval heroes and made his memory one to be cherished in American hearts so long as America shall remain a "Land of the Free and Home of the Brave."

Perry was a dashing young naval hero of 27 years when he arrived in Erie by sleigh from Buffalo, N. Y., having been sent here by the United States government to take charge of a fleet of vessels, then building at the harbor front.

It is not the purpose of the writer to dwell upon the causes or effects of the war of 1812, nor to deal at length with the facts more generally known. The story is written following an exhaustive examination of all the historical data to be had and should prove interesting reading as well as val-

uable information in that it dwells mainly upon Perry's arrival in Erie and conditions there in 1813.

The port of Erie is the oldest port on the Great Lakes and in 1812 it was the most important. From there all military supplies were shipped to posts along the lakes. The port was then known as Presque Isle and though the name of the port was changed not long after the events here narrated. Presque Isle continued to be the name of the customs district until the civil war.

Perry's trip from Buffalo to Erie was most difficult. There were but few settlements along the lake shore, and Erie was practically cut off from Buffalo during the winter season. In summer, vessels plied between the two ports, but the overland journey, when the lake was frozen over, was a hazardous trip. There was a small settlement where Dunkirk now stands and there Perry spent the first night after he set out from Buffalo. The horses, attached to the old-fashioned sleigh in which Perry and his little brother were making the trip, were cared for in a log barn near a settler's cabin and the two travelers spent the night in the small but hospitable rural home.

Early the next morning they were on their way, for Perry was anxious to reach his destination in order to quickly take command of the situation and hasten the building of the fleet which, he had been told, was well started when he was assigned to the command.

There were no telephones or other speedy methods of communication in those days, of course, and Perry's arrival in Erie was unheralded until, in the gathering twilight of the March evening, he drove the tired horses into the edge of the village. In a very short time the entire village had learned that the young commander had arrived and crowds began to gather about the Dobbins homestead to which he had been escorted.

Daniel Dobbins and Noah Brown had just returned to their homes from the activities at the shipyard and they were among the first to grasp Perry's hand. How anxiously he inquired as to the progress made can better be imagined than

told for the records say nothing of the conversation between the three men.

Perry quickly made himself acquainted with the people of Erie and he was the lion of the hour socially as well as in the preparations for the campaign to wrest the lakes from British power. In those days dancing parties were of nightly occurrence and while Perry was a quiet, dignified unassuming sort of a fellow, he was a good dancer and no party in Erie would have been complete then without his presence.

Stories of Perry published many years ago refer to him as a gallant youth with whom half the young women of the village were infatuated, and needless to say he was in great demand at all the social functions of the day in Erie.

The home of Capt. Dobbins was a quaint little cottage erected on a small knoll at the corner of Third and State streets. The house was built back slightly from the street. It occupied the northeast corner of Third and State streets. Steps led up the hillock from the street to the dooryard from both State street and Third street. The old house was moved back toward French street about sixty-five years afterwards and remodeled into a flat. The hillock was graded down to the street level and a store building erected.

On his arrival at the Dobbins homestead Perry met with a cordial welcome, such as only Mrs. Dobbins knew how to extend to the stranger within her home. The neighbors came in to meet the young man who had been assigned to so important a command as the fleet that was to fight for American supremacy on the inland seas.

It was far into the night, we are told, that first evening of Perry's arrival here, when the young naval hero was shown to his room, an attic affair on the second floor, but which had a window commanding a fine view of State street and from which he could gaze out upon the waters of Erie harbor, from which he was shortly to sail at the head of the little fleet destined to make history for the American people and for the world.

In one corner of the little room was an old-fashioned four-post bed the most inviting place for rest that young Perry had seen in some time. One hundred years afterwards

the same bed in which young Perry slept that night and every other night during his sojourn in Erie, was in the possession of Mrs. Charles H. Strong. It was given an honored position among the historic relics so carefully preserved in the Strong residence at Sixth and Peach streets.

The village of Erie, as Perry found it, boasted a population of bona-fide residents of slightly over 400 souls. The fifty or sixty structures built on State, Peach, Holland and French streets, between what became the parks and the lake front, together with scattering cabins in near proximity, made up the village of Erie as Perry found it. Judah Colt, a man whose name stands out prominently among those of Erie's early enterprising citizens, was burgess and of course, he was included among the first to extend the hand of welcome to the young naval officer. Despite its credited population of less than 500 people, Erie was a busy spot when Perry first saw it. There were several hundred people, comprising a floating population, men whom the quest of fame and fortune had directed there, and men whose patriotic impulses had caused them to volunteer their services in the defense of the town.

James Sill, one of Erie's old-time honored citizens, says in the city directory published in 1853-54:

"At the close of the war of 1812, Erie continued to advance with a slow and steady growth until 1820, when the first official census was taken. At that time Erie had a population of 635. In 1830 the population had grown to 1 329, and in 1840 to 3,413."

Perry received orders from the navy department on February 17, 1813, to proceed to Erie, and 24 hours later he had sent off a detachment of 50 carpenters by way of Philadelphia. Four days later he set out himself with his younger brother, James Alexander. They traveled chiefly in sleighs and were five weeks reaching their destination. Their arrival in Erie on March 27, was marked by a warm welcome from the best citizens of the town.

When Perry arrived in Erie he found that the only defensive force was a military company of forty men and the workmen on the boats whom Capt. Dobbins had armed and

drilled for emergency. Gen. John Kelso had just called out the militia of his brigade, but they had not yet organized. Young Perry immediately counseled with Maj. Gen. David Mead, military commander in this section of Pennsylvania, the result being the calling out of all the available military forces, and in a short time 1,000 men had been gathered.

From the Illustrated Erie County History published in 1896, we gather interesting information concerning the gathering of troops here to support Perry and defend Erie and this information is supported by the Dobbins papers as recorded in the Buffalo Historical Society publication, although not so fully. The Erie County History says in part:

"The brigade of which the Erie county militia formed a part, was commanded by Brig. Gen. John Kelso, and the Erie county regiment was under command of Dr. John C. Wallace. Among the officers of the regiment were Capts. Andrew Cochran, Zelotus Lee, James Barr, William Dickson, Robert Davison, Warren Foote, John Morris, a man named Smith and another whose name was Donaldson. Capt. Barr's Springfield company kept guard along the lakes for some months. The company commanded by Capt. Foote did sentry duty near the head of the peninsula.

"Before the close of June Gen. Kelso ordered out his entire brigade for the defense of Erie. This was quickly followed by a general call for the sixteenth division, the state having by this time been apportioned into more numerous military districts than previously. The brigade rendezvous was on the farm of John Lytle, upon the flats where Waterford station, on the P. & E. railroad, now stands. Upward of 2,000 men were gathered from the counties of Erie, Crawford and Mercer and the adjoining counties. In August they were ordered to Buffalo which point was then in grave danger. They remained there during the winter."

Perry found that the most important matter following the summoning of troops for the defense of Erie in March, 1813, was to obtain some heavy pieces of ordnance, and Capt. Dobbins was dispatched to Black Rock for some 12-pounders and chests of arms. He succeeded in getting four 12-pounders and four teams loaded with small arms and stores to the

bridge over Buffalo Creek. The Dobbins letters tell of the difficulty he had there. After finding that the bridge had been washed away he rafted his precious cargo across and then went out upon the treacherous ice in the lake. He had proceeded but a short distance when one team and a 12-pound gun broke through where there was fifteen feet of water. After considerable delay the gun was fished out. Returning to the shore the remainder of the journey was made on land. From Conjaquada's Creek, Dobbins and the men brought a 32-pound gun in an open boat, a most hazardous trip.

From the forest around Massasaugua Point the timber for the squadron was cut and in a short time the keels were laid for all the vessels of the fleet. After almost incredible and protracted attention to details, Perry was enabled to launch a force of nine vessels, whose total tonnage was under 1,700 tons. He had 54 guns, capable of hurling a broadside of 34 pounds of metal. Of the squadron only two—the *Lawrence* and the *Niagara*—could be considered battleships. Each of those ships carried 20 guns, two being long 12-pounder carronades. The other vessels were of slight construction without bulwarks.

On April 15 two of the gun boats, the *Tigress* and *Porcupine*, were launched, and on May 1, the *Scorpion*. They were immediately fitted out, manned and armed. On May 23 Perry went to Buffalo and joined Commodore Chauncey in the capture of Fort George. He was accompanied by Capt. Dobbins. The *Ohio* and several other vessels were brought to Erie by Perry and Dobbins following the capture of Fort George, the vessels having been captured from the enemy.

The bringing of the war vessels from Buffalo to Erie to strengthen the fleet here, could not well have been accomplished without the aid of Providence.

Perry and his men were unaware that the British had been informed of the intended movement of the Americans, and as they crept along the bank of the lake toward Erie they did not know, although it is likely they realized such might be the case, that Barclay and his fleet were lying in wait to annihilate the vessels en route to Presque Isle. Off

what is only a few miles east of the spot where Dunkirk now stands Barclay waited. He had no way of knowing just when the Americans were coming, but he intended to get them when they did come. He had spread his fleet for many miles out into the lake. Barclay evidently thought the Americans would not risk hitting the rocks close in and in any event his men could watch five miles of space between them and the shore. Early one morning Perry and his little fleet crept down the coast. A dense streak of fog settled between his vessels and the nearest British boat. A man standing on the high rocks could see both the American and the British boats but the fog, like a long streak of smoke, prevented one from seeing the other. When the fog had lifted the Americans were out of sight and fast approaching Erie harbor and safety.

The Lawrence and Niagara were 110 feet between the perpendiculars, 100 feet straight rabbet, 30 feet beam and 9 feet hold. Noah Brown gave them this shallow depth of hold, in order to have a good height of quarters or bulwarks, and at the same time not show a high side; and also to secure a light draught of water. They were hastily constructed of such timber as came handy, though staunchly built. Many people are in error in regard to the name of the Lawrence, and give it as St. Lawrence. The name was given by the navy department in honor of Capt. James Lawrence, who fell mortally wounded while in command of the frigate Chesapeake in her unfortunate encounter with the British frigate Shannon; and Commodore Perry adopted Lawrence's last words, "Don't Give Up the Ship," as a fighting motto.

The schooners Ariel, of pilot boat model, and Scorpion, were about 63 tons; the Tigress and the Porcupine about 52 tons.

There is some discrepancy between those who should have a correct knowledge, as to the date the Lawrence and Niagara were launched. Mackenzie, the historian, gives it as the 24th of May, and most authors have accepted that date. Capt. Dobbins, in his papers, does not state definitely. He wrote, "I make it that the Lawrence was launched on or about June 20, and the Niagara on July 4."

It is not the purpose of this article to dwell at any length upon the points which are generally well known. The vital facts of interest to Erie and vicinity, which every patriotic citizen would like to know and ought to know are given herewith as the best authorities have recorded them.

The Dobbins papers state that on Sunday morning, August 1, Perry got under way with all the vessels in a light breeze from the northeast and worked down to the entrance of the channel, when they commenced preparations for getting over the bar. In the afternoon Major General Mead and suite visited the Lawrence and were received with a salute. The general was much gratified with the fine warlike and formidable appearance of the vessels, more particularly the Lawrence and the Niagara.

Dobbins says no religious services were held on board, as some authors maintain. "Not that it was distasteful to Perry," he explains, "but he had a time for everything and the present was occupied with preparation for crossing the bar." Dobbins goes on to explain that Rev. Robert Reid was the only minister here at the time and he showed him reports of the religious services. Rev. Reid said that he had held services on board the vessels as they lay at the cascade, but not on the occasion so often referred to.

Early on the morning of August 2, Dobbins took charge of the Lawrence as pilot and kedged her to the entrance of the channel. The east wind had made the water low. The other vessels were lined up to defend the Lawrence while on the bar. It took three hours to remove everything on board the Lawrence, including guns and supplies. The guns were rolled up on the beach and mounted over logs to be ready in case the British came up. The manner in which the vessels were raised and taken across the bar into the lake and the guns and supplies restored to them is known to practically everyone.

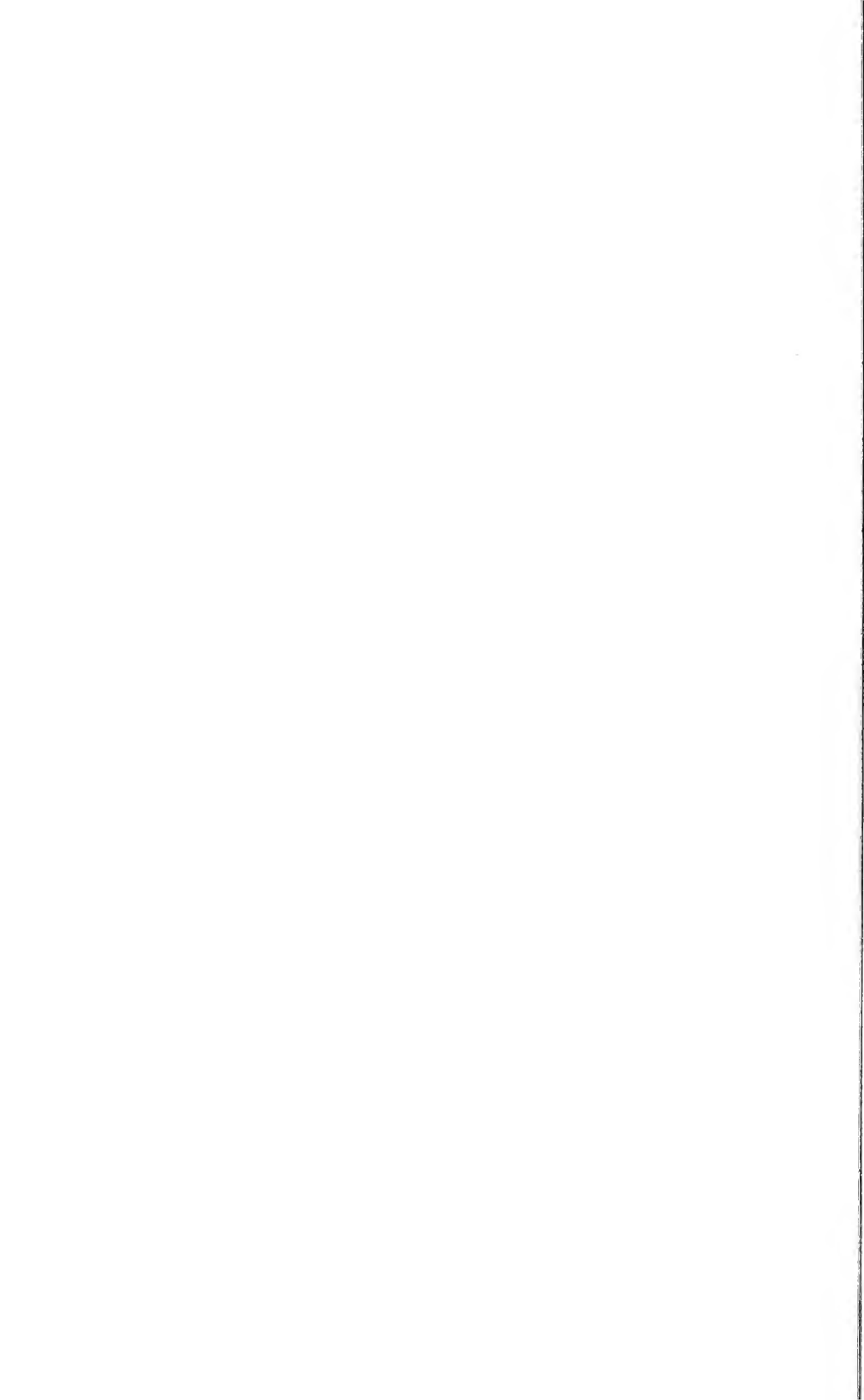
The carronades (so called by reason of their being made at the Carron iron works in Scotland) were useless except at close range. They fired a scattering shot at a low velocity, but with terrible effect when close to the object fired at. Another advantage they possessed was that they could be





### THE NIAGARA IN ACTION

During the Battle of Lake Erie (from a painting) and two photographs of the hull taken shortly after it was raised from Misery Bay in March, 1913.



worked rapidly in squads. To make his carronade fire as effective as possible Perry used scraps of iron sewed in leather bags, in addition to shot, grape and canister.

Captain Robert H. Barclay, in command of the British naval forces, learned early in the winter of Perry's presence in Erie and of his task in equipping a fleet. Barclay was kept posted by scout boats of Perry's progress, and late in July the British squadron of six vessels dropped anchor off Presque Isle Bay to block the American fleet from leaving port.

Perry waited his opportunity, however, and on the night of August 12, while the enemy was absent, he succeeded in getting away with his entire force. The larger ships—the Lawrence and the Niagara—were lifted on "camels," a water tight structure placed beneath the boats in order to assist their passage over shallow water at the mouth of the bay.

On August 28 he was made master commander of the fleet, and on September 9 he lay in Put-in-Bay, having gone up the lake in search of the enemy.

The vessels of Perry's fleet were the Lawrence, Niagara, Caledonia, Scorpion, Porcupine, Tigress, Ariel, Somers and Trippe.

Captain Barclay's squadron was composed of the Detroit, his flagship, and the Chippewa, Hunter, Queen Charlotte, Lady Prevost and Little Belt.

Man for man, the forces were about evenly divided, each having about six hundred men. Many, in fact the greater majority of Perry's men, had never seen service on the water, but in the five months of constant drilling at Erie he made good artillerists and sailors of them.

Barclay had 63 cannon, nine more than Perry. His total broadside of metal, however, was only 459 pounds. The total tonnage of his vessel was 1,460 tons.

Capt. Barclay had served his apprenticeship with Admiral Nelson of old, and he was recognized as one of the best navigators of the British navy.

On the afternoon of September 9, Perry discovered the enemy lying at anchor a few miles off Put-in-Bay. That evening the young commander called the officers of his

squadron around him for a conference, which was held on the *Lawrence*. He was determined to attack the British fleet the next morning if it still remained at anchor, inviting fight.

The conference lasted till after 10 o'clock. Just before its conclusion Perry had bumpers of grog brought on and each man drank to success on the morrow. The officers were cautioned, however, that they must not "touch another drop," for, as the commander said, "We will all need clear heads in the battle which is to decide the supremacy of the lakes."

Before the officers of his fleet departed Perry brought out a square battle flag which had been made for him by the ladies of Erie. It was blue, and bore in large letters made of muslin the dying words of Lawrence, "Don't give up the ship."

"When this flag shall be hoisted at the main yard," said Perry, "it shall be your signal for going into action."

That was a sleepless night for the men of Perry's fleet. When the officers returned to their respective ships after the conference aboard the *Lawrence* the word was quickly passed to the crews that an attack was to be made on the morrow.

As the fleets approached each other at 10 o'clock the next morning the whole British line gave three cheers and the long guns of the *Detroit* opened fire on the *Lawrence*. The distance between the two vessels was about one and one-half miles.

By noon the engagement was on in earnest, taking the form of a duel, the heaviest vessel in each fleet confronting the other.

At first the British had a manifest advantage, being able to employ a heavier battery in smaller space than the American fleet. Barclay concentrated his heaviest long-range guns on the *Lawrence* and after standing up under a steady fire for nearly four hours Perry's flag ship was reduced to a hulk. Only one of the *Lawrence's* guns was left mounted, and the cock pit was filled with killed and wounded, and out of the crew of 101 men only 18 were

uninjured. The uninjured included the commander, his brother, Alexander, and the ship's surgeon.

The Caledonia, Ariel and Scorpion had ably assisted Perry, but the Niagara, the best boat in the fleet, except the Lawrence, had remained in the rear by order of the commander.

With almost certain defeat staring him in the face, Perry called upon four sailors to man a boat, and with his brother and the flag of the Lawrence wrapped around his arm he left the ship in command of one of his lieutenants. Shielded by the smoke of battle that hung heavily over the water, he succeeded in escaping to the Niagara, which was reached after a hard pull of fifteen minutes. Sending Lieut. Elliott to command the Somers he ordered sail to bring up his best ships close to the Niagara, which would now be a target for the guns of the Detroit.

Favored by a freshening breeze, he quickly speeded the Niagara and other ships into action. In endeavoring to get a position for a broadside at the Niagara the Queen Charlotte was disabled by Perry's carronades, and falling foul of the Detroit the two ships became entangled. Taking advantage of this the American ships took raking positions and the full battery of the Niagara joined in the steady, rapid fire that swept the British decks. Riflemen from the mountains of Kentucky were in the tops of the American ships and they picked off every visible enemy. After an hour of this kind of fighting the British flag was hauled down and for the first time in history Great Britain lost an entire squadron, which surrendered to a young man of 27.

The Chippewa and Little Belt escaped, but were overtaken by the Scorpion and Trippe and surrendered in less than an hour.

On the deck of the Niagara, Perry, using his naval cap on which to rest the back of an old letter, wrote with a lead pencil the famous message:

"We have met the enemy and they are ours."

He was voted "thanks" by congress, presented with a medal for special bravery and raised to the rank of captain, his commission dating from September 10.

The British had 41 killed and 94 injured in the battle, while the Americans lost 27 men with 96 wounded, of whom fully two-thirds were aboard the *Lawrence*.

Perry joined General Harrison at once and the Americans pursued the retreating British and Indians up the Detroit River. The battle of the Thames followed, in which Chief Tecumseh was killed and all resistance to American supremacy on the lakes removed.

Perry took General Harrison and staff on board the *Ariel* and sailed for Erie, where the *Niagara* was to meet him. At Put-in-Bay the defeated Barclay and his attending surgeon were invited to join the victorious party and accepted. The *Ariel*, with Harrison, Perry and Barclay aboard, arrived in Erie, October 22. A national salute was fired from two field pieces on the peninsula as the *Ariel* was sighted. A large delegation of citizens assembled at the dock to greet Perry, and the party was escorted to Duncan's Hotel, at the foot of French street, where the gallant commodore was deluged with congratulations.

In the evening there was a great torchlight parade, the entire town being illuminated and decorated in honor of the returning hero. At Perry's request as little noise as was possible was made because of the illness of Barclay. On October 23, Perry paid his farewell visit to the battered *Lawrence* and on October 24 said farewell to Erie. He left for the East, never to return.

The command of the lakes was turned over to Elliott, and during the winter a dispute arose as to the respective merits of Perry and Elliot, and a duel was fought between Midshipman Senat, who had commanded the *Porcupine*, and Acting Master McDonald. The former was killed. He was engaged to be married to an Erie girl at the time. The duel created a sensation.

Perry remained in the navy until 1819, when he was given command of the *John Adams* and other vessels and ordered to the West Indies against pirates. He was stricken with yellow fever and died after a short illness. By an act of congress his remains were brought back to his native land and in December, 1826, were buried at Newport.

A magnificent granite block was erected to his memory by the state of Rhode Island, and a statue of Perry was dedicated at Cleveland 47 years after his great victory. Opposite his old home in Newport the citizens of that town erected a bronze statue, which was unveiled 28 years ago.

A large painting of the battle of Lake Erie hangs in the capitol at Washington, and another close by it of Perry leaving the *Lawrence* for the Niagara.

"Misery Bay," where Perry's fleet and a few of the captured British vessels were anchored for the winter of 1813-14, is an arm of Erie harbor on the peninsula side almost directly across the bay from the Pennsylvania Soldiers' and Sailors' Home. It was given its unique name by the men who were assigned to duty aboard the fleet the winter following the victory. Supplies were secured from the village of Erie with considerable difficulty and the vessels could not be properly heated to make them comfortable. The men suffered a great deal and before spring had so often spoken of their particular location as "Misery Bay" that the people of Erie adopted the name. It has been so called ever since.

The raising and rebuilding of the *Niagara* so that the centennial celebration of the signing of the Declaration of Independence, in 1876, but the number is small of those who can tell much of anything about the final disposition of the old vessel could be used in the Perry centennial celebration on the lakes in 1913 recalls that the *Lawrence* was raised from Misery Bay and sent to Philadelphia at the time of the other vessels of Perry's famous fleet.

A careful examination of all the available records, including the Dobbins papers, the records of the Buffalo Historical Society, and the writings of local historians, substantiates the following as compiled and published by Frank H. Severance, of Buffalo, a former Erie resident:

"The *Somers* and the *Ohio* were recaptured by the British while anchored off Fort Erie, the fort being then held by Americans. The *Porcupine* escaped capture through being anchored close to the shore. After the war the *Porcupine* was taken to Detroit. It is said she was used in

1817 and 1818 by the commissioners for determining the international boundary line. In 1830, at Detroit, her upper works were rebuilt and her name changed to the *Caroline*. \* \* \* The old *Porcupine* was taken to Grand Haven and sailed for some years by Capt. Harry Miller. In 1850 she was set adrift in Grand River, near the mouth. \* \* \* She was afterwards refitted and sailed for a season or two. Finally, about 1855, she was allowed to sink, head-on, at Ferrysburg, Mich. A few years ago a portion of her hull was raised. It was probably dispersed in relics.

"The *Scorpion* and *Tigress* were captured by the British on Lake Huron. The *Trippe*, *Little Belt* and *Ariel* were burned by the British at Black Rock. The *Chippewa* was disabled and beached at Buffalo, where she was destroyed when the British burned the town, December 30-31, 1813. The *Caledonia* was sold to John Wayne. The *Hunter* was sold to traders at Black Rock; the *Lady Provost* to merchants at Fort Erie, and both vessels sailed the lakes for some years.

"The *Niagara* was used by the government as a receiving ship at Erie until 1818 when she was abandoned and sunk in Misery Bay. The *Niagara* was sunk in deeper water than the *Lawrence* and escaped the ravages of relic hunters to a large extent. The *Lawrence*, *Detroit* and *Queen Charlotte* were sunk by order of the U. S. government in Misery Bay in July, 1815.

"In 1825, they, with the *Niagara*, were sold by the government, as they lay at the bottom of the bay, to Commander Budd, of the navy, and by him sold August 9, 1825, to Benj. H. Brown, of Rochester, for \$325. Brown appears to have sold them, or a part interest to A. Q. D. Leach, of Erie. \* \* \* Four boats were sold to Captain George Miles, of Erie, June 11, 1835. In 1835 the *Detroit* and *Queen Charlotte* were raised, refitted into merchant vessels, but were not used long before being laid up. The *Detroit* was docked at Buffalo, purchased by hotel men at Niagara Falls and sent over the falls as a spectacle to draw visitors on September 15, 1841. A part of her hull remained in view for over a year.



(Note—In 1836 some of the vessels were raised, Captain Miles and others intending to fit them up for merchant service. The Detroit and Queen Charlotte were found to be in fairly good condition, but the Lawrence was so badly riddled as to be useless and she was again sunk in Misery Bay.)

“On December 9, 1857, Captain Miles sold his interest in the Lawrence and Niagara to Leander Dobbins for \$200.  
\* \* \* For some years the Lawrence remained the prey of relic hunters. In 1860, at the time of the dedication of the Perry monument in Cleveland, several timbers were taken from the wreck of the Lawrence, handsome arm-chairs were made from them, one being presented to Dr. Usher Parsons, who served as surgeon on board the Lawrence during the battle; one was sent to the president of the Perry Monument Association in Cleveland and another to Captain Stephen Champlin, Buffalo. Several large fragments are owned now by the Buffalo Historical Society. For several years the making of ‘Lawrence canes’ was a profitable industry in Erie.

“In 1875 Mr. Dobbins placed the Lawrence in the hands of John Dunlap, Thos. J. Viers and Rush Warner for exhibition at the centennial and ultimate disposal as souvenirs. The speculation was unsuccessful. The hull of the Lawrence was raised September 17, 1875, towed across the bay to the city and again sunk. In the spring of 1876 it was raised, put on railroad cars and shipped to Philadelphia.”

Mr. Severance says that a one-fifth interest in the Lawrence cost Mrs. Anna C. Morrison, of Lockport, N. Y., \$1,000. The vessel was given a poor location at the centennial, and in August of that year it was seized for rentals of over \$300 due the land owners. It was sold by the sheriff for about \$600. It was repurchased by Rush Warner and a Mr. Adams and disposed of in relic fragments.

One incident of the period following immediately after the battle of Lake Erie that has been so widely discussed and caused so much feeling at the time as to result in many conflicting records being made of it was the hanging of James Bird. Erie people have heard so many versions of the affair that it is necessary only to mention it as an inci-

dent of the period. The best records of Perry and the Battle of Lake Erie that can be secured make little or no reference to the affair. From the best information available it appears that Bird was a stalwart, fearless sailor who did valiant service during the famous battle. His home has been variously fixed by different authorities from points in Central Pennsylvania to Western New York towns, including Westfield and Buffalo. It is probable, as some historians have it, that Bird was refused a furlough following the battle, and deserted. He was captured near Greenville, Pa., brought back, tried by courtmartial found guilty, and sentenced to hang. With two other offenders he was hanged from the yard arm of the Niagara as she lay in the channel entrance to the harbor and the remains interred on the beach near where the Perry Iron Works is now located. A human skeleton found there has been partially identified as that of Bird, but certain identification could not be made. It is possible that Bird's remains were taken up and interred in a cemetery here, at Buffalo or Westfield, each city presenting circumstances that would tend to establish their claims, were it not for the confliction of records found. The reasonable explanation is that there were several James Birds in the service of this country during its early years.

After telling the story of the battle practically as the historians have it, Captain Dobbins has this to say of Commodore Perry:

"Commodore Perry was a man of few words, rather sedate and of a serious turn of mind; seldom, if ever, addicted to the use of profanity in the slightest degree, or even levity; prompt and emphatic in giving an order, though always courteous and of charitable and generous impulses. His deportment was such as to command respect under all circumstances."

## Early Erie History

Erie was incorporated as a borough in 1805, having been designated as a seat of justice in 1800, with Judge Jesse Moore presiding in a log court house at Second and Holland streets. The county being too sparsely settled to maintain a distinct organization, by the Act of April 9, 1801, Venango, Mercer, Crawford, Warren and Erie counties were thrown temporarily together for election and governmental purposes. Meadville was designated as the place of holding court and for two years all county business was transacted there.

Judge Moore opened the Erie county courts at Erie in April, 1803. The hours of convening were announced by the crier by the blowing of a horn. This horn was used until as late as 1823. Supreme Judge Yates held the first supreme court session in Erie in October, 1806. The county courts were presided over by a president judge and two associate judges, the latter generally farmers in good standing, until 1839, when a district court was created to dispose of the accumulated business in that end of the state.

Judges were appointed by the governor up to 1851 when the first election for judges was held, Hon. John Galbraith being chosen president judge and Hon. Joseph M. Sterrett and Hon. James Miles, associate judges.

The first district attorney for Erie county was William M. Irvine, appointed by the governor in 1804. Hon. William Wallace succeeded him in 1806.

The first hanging for murder in Erie county occurred March 9, 1838, when Henry Francisco was executed by Sheriff Andrew Scott within the jail, which occupied the site of the present court house. Francisco was sentenced to death by Judge Shippen, in November, 1837. Francisco married a pretty Erie girl named Marie Robinson and shortly after the wedding the two agreed to commit suicide, and each swallowed four ounces of laudnum. The woman died, but the poison acted as an emetic to Francisco and he recovered.

He was convicted of influencing his wife to end her life and sentenced to hang. The body was interred at Seventh and Myrtle streets.

Erie's early history is remarkably free from Indian outrages, but one being recorded. James Sill wrote in 1853 of a man named Rutledge and his son, who were tomahawked near what was afterwards the site of the City Mills.

The Erie and Waterford turnpike road, over which troops marched to the defense of Erie in 1813, was completed in 1807 and was the first means of communication between the city and the Allegheny and Ohio rivers.

The first newspaper published in Erie was the *Mirror*, published by George Wyeth about 1810, for two years.

From Captain Dobbins' own papers it is learned that he was born the day after the Declaration of Independence was signed, July 5, 1776, in a pioneer's home on the south bank of the Juniata river near the present site of Lewiston, Mifflin county, Pa. In 1795, at the age of 19, he walked through the wilderness to Colt's station, about fourteen miles south-east of this city. He stopped there and engaged in the service of Judah Colt, agent of the Pennsylvania Population Company. On July 1, 1796, he first visited the settlement of Erie. In his own papers he describes Erie as he saw it on that first visit as follows:

"The only occupied houses were a small log cabin on the west side of the mouth of Mill creek, occupied as a tavern by James Baird, one near the junction of Second and Parade streets, occupied as a tavern by Julius Seth Reed; one on the present property of James M. Sterrett, occupied by Ezekiel Dunning, as a tannery; one on French and Front streets, occupied by Thomas Rees. In the county or triangle (then a part of Allegheny county) there were a few who had built log houses, among them the Lawries, who settled about the mouth of Sixteen-mile creek, comprehending what is now the village of North East. All the rest was wild, gloomy forest; and these few hardy pioneers of the woods, with the Indians, disputed their right to the soil, with the bear, the wolf and the panther."

In a letter from Erie in after years, Captain Dobbins wrote:

"I was in this place when General Wayne was brought here from Detroit sick with the gout, in the sloop Detroit. He continued sick with this disease until he died. I attended him part of the time and was at his funeral, December 15, 1796. He was buried near the flagstaff, in the fort, on the east side of the mouth of Mill creek. In 1808 or '09 his son came and disinterred the body and took it to his native place in Chester county. When the body was disinterred it was in such a state of preservation that to detach the flesh from the bones he employed Dr. J. C. Wallace to boil it in kettles. One of his boots was so well preserved that Mr. Duncan, who kept a tavern here, wore it after having had made a mate for it."

The Dobbins letters from this point on take up a great many pages in the Buffalo Historical Society publication, relating to correspondence between Dobbins and Rufus Reed and tell of early navigation here.

A glimpse of frontier conditions in 1807 is afforded by the following letter from Samuel Smither to Captain Dobbins, who was then trading in the Schooner Ranger:

Erie Reserve, Aug. 27, 1807.

Sir:—The town of Erie is so illy supplied with goods this summer that I will be under the necessity of importing some articles of necessity from some place that they are to be had. I have lately inquired for coffee—none to be had, not even in expectation in a short time. Also powder and shot much the same as with coffee. If you can obtain a supply of any or all of them at Fort Erie or elsewhere in your perigrinations on the coast of the lake or its waters please procure for me each of the following quantity: 4 lbs. coffee, 1 lb. powder, 3 do shot, 1 do lead. My gunlock is in need of some repairs. I will send it along. If there is any person in your course of trading who can do it please get it done—if not, it will serve as a pattern to choose another if any is to be had. \* \* \*

In 1810 Captain Dobbins was rebuilding the Salina at Black Rock and he complained of the appearance of maple

sugar sent him, and received the following explanation from the sender in Erie: "The sugar you speak of being black I have discovered is the same here. It is owing to its being made in black walnut troughs."

Captain Dobbins was at Mackinac Island on board his vessel, the *Salina*, July 16, 1812, when he learned that war had been declared. He was made a prisoner of war the same day by the British forces there. With sixty other Americans Captain Dobbins was asked to take the oath of allegiance to the British government and swear not to take up arms against Britain. This Dobbins refused to do. Among the British officials there was a petty officer by the name of Wilmoth, who knew Dobbins, with the result that he was allowed to depart with his vessel as a cartel, to take his fellow prisoners to Malden. Among them were Rufus Seth Reed and William W. Reed, of Erie, and 29 others.

At Detroit he found General Hull and troops encamped on the Canadian shore, opposite. A ball was fired across the *Salina's* bow to bring her to, and she was taken in charge by an officer. Captain Dobbins then joined a force under Colonel Cass, against a British scouting party and on his return from this expedition joined another force under Colonel Miller, which met and defeated a party of British and Indians. He then crossed with Hull's party to Detroit, was enrolled in a company of city guards. He did valiant service there and after the surrender of Hull, Captain Dobbins was taken with other prisoners to Malden. Someone told the British commanding officer, Brock, that Dobbins had broken his parole by taking up arms in defense of Detroit. Dobbins would undoubtedly have been seized and put to death, but a brother Mason warned him of his danger and supplied him with a pass to Cleveland. This pass has been preserved and reads:

"Permit Daniel Dobbins and Rufus Seth Reed to pass from hence to Cleveland on board of boats dispatched with prisoners of war.

"ROBERT NICHOLS,

"Lieut. Col. Q. M. Gen.

"Detroit, Aug. 17, 1812."

While waiting for this pass Dobbins lay in hiding in the woods near Detroit, a part of the time keeping himself concealed under piles of sand and rubbish. A reward was offered for him dead or alive; a price was set upon his scalp and Indians were placed upon his trail, but he managed to make his way on foot along the bank of the river until he reached its mouth, where he found a dug-out in which he paddled across Lake Erie to Sandusky, making his camp over night on the shore of Put-in-Bay, where the Perry Memorial is erected.

He secured a horse at Sandusky, then a mere handful of shanties, and journeyed to Cleveland, where he left the horse and proceeded in a canoe along the bank of the lake to Presque Isle and gave the garrison there and the few residents of the village the first news of the surrender of Hull at Detroit.

At the request of General Meade, the officer in command there, Dobbins started immediately for Washington, on horseback. He made the trip through the dense forests to Pittsburgh and thence by military road to Washington. At the war office in Washington he conveyed first news of Hull's surrender at Detroit to Secretary Eustice and the department officials. A few hours later Colonel Cass arrived with word of the defeat direct from Detroit. A cabinet meeting was held at which Capt. Dobbins related the incidents of the Detroit disaster and so eloquently and forcefully pleaded for a campaign to regain control of the lakes that President Madison exclaimed:

"There is one thing to be done. We must regain control of the lakes. Therein lies our only safety."

Captain Dobbins was asked for information as how best to proceed. He insisted that the best point from every consideration was Presque Isle, picturing to the officials the excellent harbor, the facilities surrounding it, including the excellent oak trees for building vessels. As a result it was decided to give the brave, fresh-water sailor charge of the work. He was accordingly commissioned an officer of the navy and set out immediately on his return to Erie, going

by way of New York, where he commissioned several shipcarpenters, who accompanied him home.

From his paper it is learned that he was authorized to draw on the navy department for \$2,000. A draft for this amount was placed in the hands of Rufus Seth Reed, who advanced the money on it as it was needed. He had studied a gun boat seen on the Ohio river and this gave him an idea of how to proceed.

He made contracts with timber owners for trees at a uniform price of one dollar per tree. Joseph Kratz was owner of tract 29 and he permitted Dobbins to have all the trees cut he wished, tellers to enumerate the number afterwards. Robert Brown and Robert Irwin acted as tellers and after the cutting was done they found that Dobbins owed Kratz \$113. Others sold standing timber in the same manner, the "Widow Lowrey receiving \$25 for trees."

Steel was hauled from Meadville and axes were made at the shipyard. Holmes Reed was given \$5.50 for setting a steam kettle and \$5 for building a forge for John MacDonald, the blacksmith. Coal was hauled from the pits (location uncertain) at 6 1-4 cents a bushel. Wages ranged from \$2.50 per day for the master builder to \$2 per day for the blacksmith and down to \$1.25 for the sawyers and 62 1-2 cents for the axemen. Hauling with horses or oxen was paid for at \$4 per day. Board was secured for the men at \$2.25 per week. William Black gave his receipt for \$64.00 for working in the blacksmith shop 68 days and boarding himself. The record shows "\$15 for a month's work," in numerous instances.

Roswell Nettleton received \$47 for 23 days' work hauling iron from Bellefonte to the navy yard. He afterwards went to Buffalo for a load of spike iron and charged \$41.25. It must have been a long and hazardous trip. James E. McElroy received \$47.14 for bringing a wagon load of carpenters' tools and nail rods from Pittsburgh through the wild country.

During this time (when the fleet was building) Dobbins seems to have had no end of trouble in getting official recognition of his acts. It took so long to communicate with



Washington that great delay was occasioned. Several letters passed between Dobbins and Lieutenant Elliott at Buffalo, and in one of Elliott's replies to Dobbins he discouraged Dobbins with the statement, "It appears to me utterly impossible to build gun boats at Presque Isle. There is not a sufficient depth of water to get them into the lake."

One man of the shipyard gang died. The bill for his coffin turns up among more important things. Several men deserted. Captain Dobbins followed them through the woods at a cost to the government of \$41.79 and they were ultimately lodged in the Pittsburgh jail. The designs for the vessel were made by Henry Eckford, one of the greatest naval architects this country has produced. Noah Brown was superintendent of construction. Shipwrights sent from Philadelphia did not reach Erie until the work was well under way.

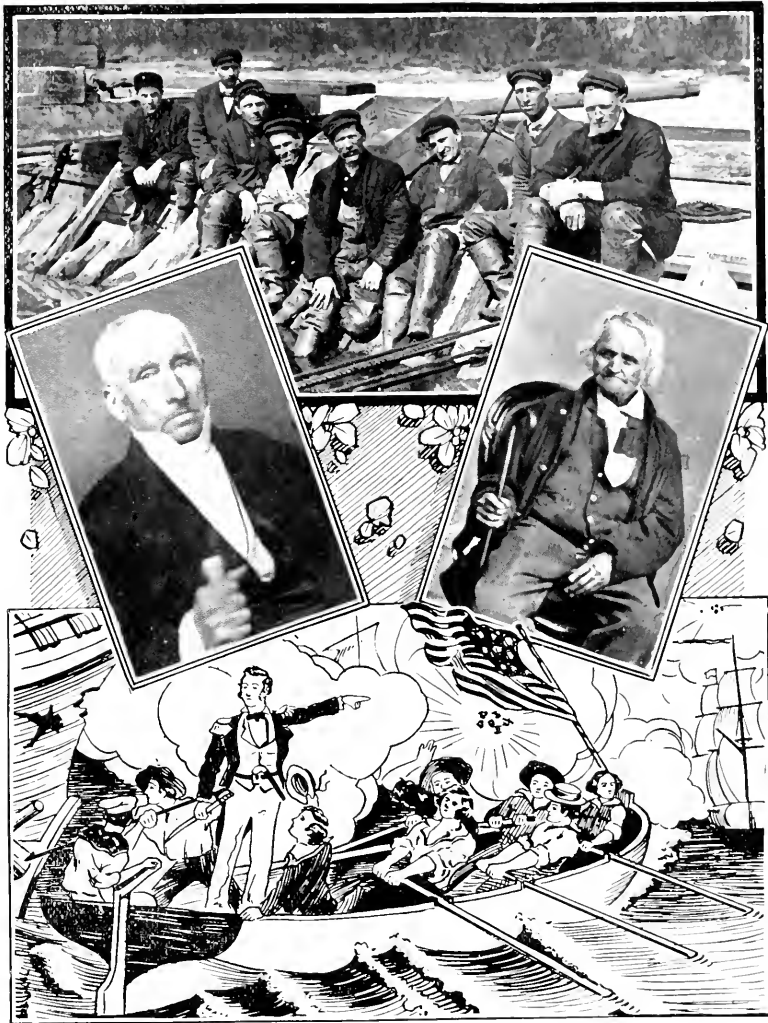
Sacket Dodge furnished teams to haul guns from Black Rock to Buffalo and William Price piloted the teams from Buffalo to Cattaragus in mid-winter, the guns being hauled a part of the way on the ice of the lake. To move a 12-pounder and other goods weighing 6,000 pounds from Buffalo to Cattaragus cost \$133.33 1-4. Augustus Porter sold to the workmen the beef they ate. One long account for hauling guns and stores from Buffalo to Erie foots up \$843.-95. Among the items are board bills at two Buffalo boarding houses.

There is nothing among the Dobbins papers which may be regarded as a total accounting of the cost of building the fleet, but it is probably closely approximated in Noah Brown's accounts, a total of \$19,466.42. One item that arrests the eye in these old accounts, but which was then a matter of course as the weekly board bill, is whiskey. Thus Rufus S. Reed supplied to the ship-yard, November 17, 1812, 32 3-4 gallons of whiskey; December 25, 30 1-2 gallons; January 19, 34 gallons; February 10, 39 gallons; Feb. 20, 30 gallons, etc. The liquor cost 75 cents a gallon. Capt. Dobbins' traveling expenses were allowed by the government at fifteen cents per mile.

That Dobbins furnished the government with accounts

of the work is shown in the lengthy letters which are a part of the voluminous records.

Before the writer turns from the Dobbins papers to the records of Perry's work, it should be mentioned that the Dobbins family was one of distinction in the Lake Erie region for a century. The old Dobbins homestead at Third and State sheltered not only Perry and other heroes of the war of 1812, but also Lafayette was a guest within its walls in 1825, and there were other famous men and women in the succeeding years. Capt. Dobbins died in Erie February 20, 1854, his widow surviving until January 22, 1879. Perhaps the saddest incident occurring in the Dobbins home was the death of their son, William W., a promising young naval man, who died on the day Rutherford B. Hayes was inaugurated president.



In the upper picture are shown the men who raised the hull of the Niagara. On the left (center) is the picture of Simeon Dunn, and on the right, Benjamin Fleming. Below is a sketch from a painting of Perry crossing from the Lawrence to the Niagara.



## Britain Expected Victory

Great Britain expected an easy victory when the war was declared, and her ministry planned to redraw the map of Canada so it would include at least the northern part of the United States. Canada, she even dared to hope, would extend from the north pole to the Gulf of Mexico. With this end in view, her efforts to retain control of the upper lakes (which she had wrested from us in 1812) takes on an added significance.

The man who was predestined to give the death blow to Britain's plan to extend Canada over the whole of North America, was Oliver Hazard Perry.

On March 24, 1813, there arrived in the village of Buffalo the young naval officer, who, impatient of dull, inactive service at Newport, in his native state, Rhode Island, asked for more active service; was assigned to the chief command on Lake Erie, and who, in one single battle, carved his name high on the roll of fame, along with Nelson, Von Tromp, Sir Francis Drake, Paul Jones—the name of Oliver Hazard Perry. Of Buffalo's part in the history which Perry made, one of her eloquent citizens, one hundred years afterwards, said the following:

"Sometimes it seems that of all our great naval and military heroes, Perry is most unfortunate in his popularity. Every school boy, at one time or another, becomes familiar with those catch phrases, "Don't give up the ship," and "We have met the enemy and they are ours," and somehow, in our exultation, we are carried away with a sort of enthusiastic hurrah and imagine Perry prancing up and down the deck, waving his sword and crying out in regular swash-buckler style, 'We have met the enemy and they are ours.' Such an idea is farthest from the truth.

"Perry was tall, well and strongly built, and a thorough seaman, officer and gentleman. He was quiet and courteous in his manner and very precise in his language. His written orders are models of clearness and brevity. Like

Grant and other great commanders, he never used superfluous words, and the message so often quoted, was simply his condensed report, boiled down, as they say in newspaper offices, of the great battle, and while he undoubtedly felt much exultation, as he had great reason to feel, he was not then, nor at any other time, in the slightest degree a braggadocio. He was tender-hearted and sensitive.

"Perry was no mollicoddle—he was bold, fearless, the best of energy and fertility of resources. While it is a fact that much of the work of creating the fleet was under way prior to his coming, his energy and earnest zeal, undoubtedly hastened its completion, especially at Erie.

"May 27, 1813, the capture of Fort George, near Niagara-on-the-Lake, was effected, and in order to be present with the marines and sailors who took part in the attack, Perry went from Erie to Buffalo in an open boat, against wind and storm, with only four companions. His presence was an inspiration. Said Commodore Chauncey, the commander-in-chief, in greeting Perry: "No person on earth, at this time, could be more welcome," and the official report declares that "he was present at every point where he could be useful, under showers of musketry."

"The capture of Fort George led to the abandonment by the British of the entire Niagara frontier, and gave the long-looked for opportunity to release five vessels which had lain in Scajaquada Creek for several months, and under the supervision of Henry Eckford, the most noted ship builder of that day, fitted over for war purposes, but had been unable to leave the shipyard, owing to the batteries along the Canadian shore. These boats were the Caledonia, Amelia, Trippe, Somers and the Ohio. These five boats formed Buffalo's contribution, and Buffalo's only contribution to Perry's fleet.

"Under Perry's personal command, these five boats left Buffalo June 13, 1813, and reached Erie on the 19th, joining the balance of the fleet which had been built at this point. Six boats were constructed there, the Lawrence, Niagara, Porcupine, Tigress and Ariel, the squadron originally comprising eleven boats. The Amelia, on arriving at Erie, was

found unseaworthy and abandoned. Another Buffalo boat, the Ohio, commanded by Captain Daniel Dobbins, whose descendants for three generations have resided in Buffalo, was absent on detached service the day of the fight, but the remaining three boats, the Caledonia, Trippe and Somers, were present in the fight.

"The six vessels built at Erie with these three, made up the nine vessels, which under Perry's leadership, fought and won the victory.

"The people of this entire section unite in doing honor to Commodore Perry and the American squadron in the war of 1812. The citizens of Erie can never forget what that gallant man achieved for the cities of the lakes. No officer on land or sea acquitted himself with greater honor; no man in naval history displayed greater bravery or heroism than the man who wrote the immortal message: "We have met the enemy and they are ours."

"His executive ability in organizing a fleet against the world's greatest naval power; his never-say-die spirit, shown in every engagement in which he participated; his pluck and nerve in the transfer from the sinking Lawrence to the Niagara enabling him to score a glorious victory after his flagship was shattered by British fire, these are the things for which the people of this city and nation can never cease to feel grateful. The war of 1812 brought great hardships to the village of Erie; but that war is happily a thing of the past. Another century has come and gone. The ashes of 1813 have given place to the beauty of 1913. International animosities have disappeared. Fraternal good will prevails between the new republic and the older empire."

Frank H. Severance, of the Buffalo Historical Society, has the original sailing order issued by Commodore Perry, directing the Buffalo squadron to sail to Erie. It is an elaborate document, giving minute directions to each captain in the fleet. It is all done in Perry's own handwriting.

## Simeon Dunn, Perry's Messenger

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Among the citizens of Erie in 1813 who gave Perry assistance worthy of special mention was Simeon Dunn, who for many years afterward resided in Erie and was honored by the community on numerous occasions. It was Simeon Dunn who carried Perry's messages to Chauncey at Buffalo. He dashed to that city on his fleet horse a number of times, undergoing severe hardships. His service was such that Perry and General Mead often commended him.

From an extensive obituary, published following his death in Erie May 22, 1871, is taken the following, showing that he was interested in his native city and did much to improve it:

"He was an active, enterprising citizen, a soldier of the war of 1812, and had gained so good a reputation as a scout that he was frequently the bearer of important dispatches. But the one act that will be the longest remembered is that Simeon Dunn planted the maples that adorn our beautiful parks. They are living, breathing monuments that shall perpetuate the memory of an active, spirited, honest citizen. Mr. Dunn was possessed of great physical endurance and was about apparently in good health until within a few days. On Friday before last he went to McKean to dig up a load of young maple trees (he has planted many a hundred in Erie) and in getting then so overheated himself that he was taken violently ill and failed from that hour until his death. Peace to his ashes."

From the papers left by Captain Dobbins, the following brief sketch of Simeon Dunn is secured:

"Simeon Dunn was a native of New Jersey, born April 14, 1782, came to Meadville, Crawford County, Pa., in June, 1797, was married to Martha Lewis, September 29, 1802, and removed to Erie in 1807.

"Mr. Dunn was an energetic citizen, as also a kind and social man, and a good neighbor. He made and handled



a large amount of money in his day, but like many others, had not the faculty of keeping it. He was a true friend, a kind husband and father. He followed various kinds of business and for many years that of manufacturing brick.

"During the year 1812 he was frequently employed by Commodore Perry and General Mead as a courier to carry dispatches, and by reason of his prompt and faithful discharge of duty, often elicited their commendation.

"As early as 1806 a volunteer company of infantry was organized in Erie and when Mr. Dunn came here to reside he joined it. This company was employed mostly in protecting the place during the building of Perry's fleet, as the British fleet was continually cruising off and on in front of the harbor, and it was supposed the British commander was only waiting a favorable opportunity to land with a force and destroy the vessels. This company continued in service until peace was declared in 1814. As this was the first military organization, we give the names of the officers and privates:

"Thomas Forster, captain; Thomas Reese, lieutenant; Thomas Stewart, ensign; Thomas Wilkins, sergeant; John Hay, second sergeant; Rufus Clough, fifer; J. Glazier, drummer.

"Privates—Archibald McSparren, Simeon Dunn, Adam Arbuckle, George Kelly, John Swan, William Murray, Jonas Duncan, John Woodside, William Duncan, George Stough, John Eakens, George Russel, John E. Lapsley, Peter Graszos, Jacob Carmack, William Henderson, Robert Irwin, Ebenezer Dwinell, John Bell, Robert McDonald, Samuel Hays, Thomas Laird, Thomas Hughs, Robert Brown, John Morris, George Buchler, William Lattimore, James Herron, Steven Woolverton, Francis Scott, Thomas Vance and John Teel."

## Last Survivor of Perry's Crew

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The last survivor of Perry's command was Benjamin Fleming, who died at his home in Erie in 1870, aged 96 years. Fleming was of Scotch descent and spent the entire period from 1813 until his death in Erie. During the latter years he came to be a conspicuous figure about the town and was frequently visited by men of prominence, who visited the city and were not contented to leave until they had seen and conversed with the last survivor of Perry's command.

One hundred years after the battle of Lake Erie there were many direct descendants of Fleming in Erie and the surrounding country who pointed with pride to their distinguished ancestor.

Fleming was a born seaman and to his last days spent much of his time on the water. He served with distinction on the Niagara and was one of the first to cheer when Perry and his little brother boarded the vessel after the Lawrence had been disabled. After the war, Fleming became conspicuous through being an important witness in the controversy between Perry and Elliott. For many years he fished and did a great deal of hunting about the peninsula.

The right of way given the Pennsylvania railroad company into Erie unfortunately cut too close to the private cemetery in which was interred the men who lost their lives in the battle of Lake Erie and some of the caskets, or what remained of them, were exposed. Citizens protested and finally it was decided to remove the bones of the dead heroes to Erie cemetery. The occasion was made one of general celebration and state officials took part in the long procession which escorted the "bones" to the cemetery. This was in 1859 and Fleming headed the parade in an open barouche, being proclaimed at that day the last survivor of Perry's command.

"Ben" Fleming attended the dedication of the Perry monument in Cleveland in 1860, and while there described

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the battle of Lake Erie in a vivid manner. His story in part was preserved in newspapers of that time. Among other things, he said:

“The Niagara was not so badly impaired when Perry came on board, as the enemy’s fire had been directed at the flagship. Every man on board had made up his mind not to give up the ship before Perry came on board, but after the flag came not an inch could be forced from them while a plank lasted.”

When he died his remains lay in state in the court house and were viewed by hundreds. A great military procession escorted the remains to their last resting place in Erie cemetery and he was buried with all the ceremony fitting the final disposition of the remains of the last survivor of the Battle of Lake Erie.

## Erie in 1813

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Less than three score buildings constituted the business center of Erie in 1813. They were erected between Sassafras and Holland streets and between the lake front and what was later Seventh street. Scattering frame and log houses were to be seen in close proximity to the village.

Seven years after Perry first reached Erie the official U. S. census showed but 625 inhabitants. It was somewhat larger during the war, by reason of the large number of volunteers assembled in defense of the town.

One of the principal residences of the city was that of Capt. Daniel Dobbins at Third and State streets, where Perry stopped.

A Crawford county judge, Judge Jesse Moore, held court in the village, Erie county not having a distinct court of its own at that time.

James Hughes was postmaster of Erie in 1813, having been appointed in 1811, and served until 1828.

Judah Colt was burgess of Erie in 1813, having been chosen for a one-year term. He was burgess again in 1820 and 1821.

Congressman representing Erie was Thomas Wilson, of Erie.

Joseph Shannon was state senator in 1813, representing Erie, Crawford and Warren counties.

James Weston, of LeBoeuf, represented Erie county in the state assembly.

James Weston was also sheriff of Erie county in 1813, holding the office through appointment by the governor.

John Warren, of Erie, was treasurer of boro and county in 1813.

John McCord, of North East, was coroner in 1813.



CAPT. DANIEL DOBBINS.

A sketch of the Dobbins home, made from a description, and a sketch of the old four-post bed in which Perry slept during his stay in Erie.



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John Salsbury, of Conneaut; Henry Taylor, of North East, and Thomas Wilson, of Erie, were county commissioners.

Thomas Wilson was county surveyor in 1813.

County auditors at that time were: John Lytle, Waterford; Robert McClelland, Millcreek, and Robert Townley, Erie.

## Personnel of Perry's Fleet

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Lawrence (flagship)—Eighteen 32-pound carronades, Commodore Perry.

Niagara—(Same armament as Lawrence), Capt. Jesse D. Elliott.

Caledonia—Three long 12-pounders. Purser Humphrey McGrath.

Ariel—Four long 12-pounders, Lieut. John Packett.

Trippe—One long 32-pounder, Lieut. Joseph E. Smith.

Tigress—One long 24-pounder and one long 12-pounder, Sailing Master Thomas C. Almy.

Scorpion—One long 24 and one long 12-pounder, Sailing Master Stephen Champlin.

Ohio—One long 24-pounder, Sailing Master Daniel Dobbins.

Porcupine—One long 32-pounder, Midshipman George Senat.

Before leaving Erie harbor Perry issued written orders to each vessel commandant. The written order issued to Capt. Dobbins and still preserved among his papers, reads:

U. S. Sloop of War, Lawrence,

Off Erie, 8th July, 1813.

Sir: You will immediately take command of the U. S. Schooner Ohio, and get her over the bar as soon as possible.

Respectfully, etc.,

O. H. PERRY.

Sailing Master Daniel Dobbins,

U. S. Navy.

P. S.—You will look out for two or three good pilots and engage them as soon as possible.



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One pilot engaged by Dobbins was Azeal (or Asel) Wilkinson, the pilot of the Ariel, who Lossing says, stood at his post throughout the battle of Sept. 10, "though the thunder of the great guns brought the blood from his ears and nose, permanently impairing his hearing." After the war Wilkinson made his home at Colden, Erie county, N. Y. He was present at the unveiling of the Perry monument in Cleveland, O., Sept. 10, 1860, and gave to historians many reminiscences of the battle. On July 4, 1861, while attending a celebration in Buffalo, he fell dead on the street.

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