

The U.S. Schooner *Lady of the Lake* A Design & Operational History

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“This dispatch Boat will give us great advantages”¹

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¹ Isaac Chauncey to William Jones, 6 April 1813, SNLRC, 1813 vol 2 item 135, M125 roll 27.

Introduction

Communications in 1812 were slow. It often required days, weeks or even months for information to reach its destination.² For a naval officer in command of a squadron and responsible for a wide area, as Commodore Isaac Chauncey was in September 1812, a delay in communicating his orders or in receiving news of the enemy impeded or even prevented Chauncey's operations.

For this reason, having a small and fast vessel available to carry dispatches and reports as well as to watch the activities of the enemy's squadron was critical. After some months using makeshift measures, in early 1813 Commodore Chauncey obtained a permanent solution to these requirements when he had shipwright Henry Eckford build the small schooner *Lady of the Lake*. This vessel saw almost constant service during the war, sailed to enforce the United States' revenue laws on Lake Ontario after the war, and ended her life in merchant service.

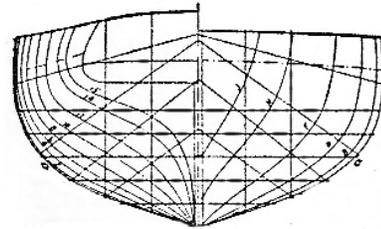
Origin

As early as July 1812, over a month before he was appointed to command on the Great Lakes, then commandant of the New York Navy Yard Captain Isaac Chauncey discussed the construction of an "express boat" with master shipwright Henry Eckford. Chauncey reported to Secretary of the Navy Paul Hamilton that Eckford was willing to build such a vessel with a 60-foot keel and 19 foot beam in about four weeks for \$2,500. Chauncey informed Hamilton that

*The advantages of such a boat would be very great in as much as she could convey information to any of our ships on the coast, take dispatches to any part of the continent or even to Europe sooner than they could be conveyed in any other way.*³

Nothing came of Chauncey's idea, but it proved he recognized the value of rapid naval communications during the war. After arriving at Sackets Harbor in October 1812, Chauncey focused on obeying President Madison's orders to obtain command of Lake Ontario. This Chauncey accomplished by mid-November but too late to be of any advantage to the United States that year.

During his first two months at Sackets Harbor, Chauncey felt the lack of a vessel small enough to be speedy and maneuverable yet large enough to withstand the frequent storms on the lake. On 31 October, Chauncey wrote New York Militia Brigadier General Jacob Brown asking to use the large boat *Neptune* for a "special service," arming her with a 12-pound carronade.⁴ That service was to sail from Sackets Harbor to Oswego under the command of



Hull form of a dispatch schooner proposed by Christian Bergh at New York, 1806; after Chapelle.

² Even letters had to be hand-delivered. There were cases where "telegraphs" could be used to communicate over limited distances. These were not the electrical telegraphs of later decades but were mechanical signaling devices placed no more than a few miles apart and requiring men to be permanently stationed at each site to repeat the messages to the next station in line. The British established such a telegraph chain at Kingston down the St. Lawrence River in 1813 but there is no record that the United States ever established such a facility at Sackets Harbor.

³ Isaac Chauncey to Paul Hamilton, 24 July 1812, SNLRC, 1812 vol 2 item 138, M125 roll 24.

⁴ Isaac Chauncey to Jacob Brown, 31 October and 3 December 1812, CLB 3. As Chauncey wanted to retain the 12-pound carronade mounted in October it was replaced in December with a 6-pound cannon, which Chauncey told General Brown, would "answer all the purpose."

Sailing Master William Vaughan to collect badly needed naval stores.⁵ Two weeks later Chauncey dispatched Vaughan and the *Neptune* to Kingston, Upper Canada under a flag of truce to land Captain James Brock of the 49th Regiment, George Miller, the master of the prize schooner *Mary Hatt* and the other men taken in the prizes captured that November on Lake Ontario.⁶ A few weeks later, Vaughan again arrived at Kingston in the *Neptune* under a flag of truce, this time to return Henry Murney.⁷ The frequent need for these special services convinced Chauncey that he needed a small schooner specifically designed for this purpose.

By early December 1812, Chauncey finished preparing his squadron for the winter. Shipwright Henry Eckford launched the new corvette *Madison* and armed the former merchant schooners purchased by Chauncey. With those tasks complete, the two men arranged for the building of a dispatch vessel to replace the *Neptune*.

On 10 December, Chauncey wrote Navy Agent John Bullus in New York City advising him “we are building at this place a gun boat which in her size and dimensions will be similar to one of the New York pilot boats.” He ordered Bullus to contract with New York City sailmaker Isaac Winder to manufacture a set of sails for the vessel. Bullus learned that Henry Eckford would provide the “the length of the spars and rake of the masts” and that the sails must be made from the “best Russia Duck.” Chauncey clearly wanted quality workmanship.⁸



Model of the New York pilot boat Phantom's sail plan from 1868. The Lady of the Lake was similar but larger, steered by a tiller and with a different stern form.

Chauncey explained his plan concisely in a later letter to Secretary of the Navy William Jones:

My object in building this boat was to communicate from one part of the lake to the other with facility and dispatch. With her I can send dispatches to Niagara and receive answers in about 60 or 70 hours. I think it can be done in this time with a head wind and in less if the wind should be fair. An express by land could not perform the same service in less than 10 to 12 days. This dispatch boat will give us great advantages in communicating along the borders of the lake from Ogdensburg to Niagara.⁹

Chauncey took advantage of the authority granted him when he became commander-in-chief on the Great Lakes:

In addition to the public vessels now on the lakes you are at liberty to purchase, hire or build, in your discretion, such others and of such form & armament, as may in your opinion be necessary.¹⁰

Chauncey could proceed without first obtaining permission from the Navy Department.

⁵ Isaac Chauncey to William Vaughan, 6 November 1812, CLB 3.

⁶ The prizes were the British merchant schooners *Mary Hatt* and *Elizabeth*, later purchased by Chauncey, armed and renamed *Raven* and *Asp*. The schooner *Two Brothers* was also taken but burned. Isaac Chauncey to John D. Vincent, 16 November and to William Vaughan, 17 November 1812, CLB 3.

⁷ Isaac Chauncey to John D. Vincent and to William Vaughan, 5 December 1812, CLB 3.

⁸ Isaac Chauncey to John Bullus, 10 December 1812, CLB 3.

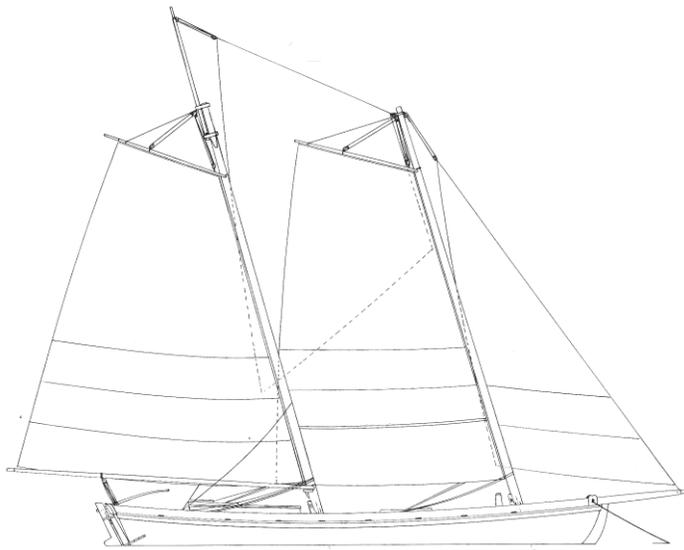
⁹ Isaac Chauncey to William Jones, 6 April 1813, SNLRC, 1813 vol 2 item 135, M125 roll 27.

¹⁰ Charles W. Goldsborough to Isaac Chauncey, 31 August 1812, SNLSC, T829 roll 175 pp.325-327.

Design

The design requirements that Chauncey's new dispatch schooner had to meet were:

- To sail fast under almost all wind and weather conditions.
- To have a schooner rig to permit her to sail close to the wind and to reduce the number of men needed to manage the sails.
- To have as shallow a draft as possible to allow her to maneuver close inshore when necessary and also to be able to pass over the sand bars at the entrance to the smaller ports on the lake.
- To be small enough to be maneuverable and to sail well in light and moderate winds yet robust enough to handle the strong winds that often occurred on Lake Ontario.



A New York pilot boat about ten feet shorter than the *Lady of the Lake*.
After Chapelle, *The Search for Speed Under Sail*, p.159.

- To accommodate a light armament, at least a six or nine pound pivot gun and possibly two broadside carronades if desired, without harming her speed or maneuverability.

Henry Eckford designed the new schooner to have the same form as a New York harbor pilot boat and it was probably similar to the “express boat” proposed by him to Chauncey for use along the Atlantic coast the previous July.¹¹ This was the smallest vessel designed and built by Eckford at Sackets Harbor during the war. Unfortunately, the contemporary record has no dimensional details except a report by Chauncey to the Navy

Department in June 1813 listing the new schooner as being of 89 tons.¹²

The standard tonnage value (“Builder’s Old Measurement” or “BOM”) in the early 19th century in the United States was not the water displacement tonnage used for warships later that century. It was obtained by multiplying the keel length times the square of the beam and dividing the result by 190. The British used a similar formula but divided by 188.¹³

The “express boat” design Henry Eckford proposed to Chauncey in July 1812 would have resulted in a vessel of 114 tons burthen using the “BOM” calculation. It is reasonable that Eckford would have retained the same keel to beam ratio for the smaller 89-ton schooner he proposed building for Chauncey. This resulted in a vessel with a 55-foot keel and a beam of 17 feet six inches. The length between perpendiculars would then be about 65 feet, a figure cited by

¹¹ Isaac Chauncey to Paul Hamilton, 24 July 1812, SNLRC, 1812 vol 2 item 138, M125 roll 24; Isaac Chauncey to William Jones, 6 April 1813, SNLRC, 1813 vol 2 item 135, M125 roll 27

¹² *A Return of Vessels of War belonging to the United States upon Lake Ontario exhibiting their force in Guns and Men*, 10 June 1813, AF, M625 roll 76 frames 201-203.

¹³ David Steel, *The Shipwright’s Vade-Mecum* (London, 1805) pp.249-251.

many secondary references.¹⁴ Her service draft of about seven feet allowed her to sail close inshore and pass over the sand bars at the entrance to most lake ports.

Based on the characteristics of a New York pilot boat, according to Chappelle the schooner would be

*Much like a yacht in that she sailed with selected trim and displacement nearly constant at all times. She could easily be tuned up to racing pitch without the need for repeated attention.*¹⁵

This feature reduced the number of men required on board to manage the sails. In addition, a pilot boat, and presumably Eckford's new schooner, had a large sail area and was well adapted to sail well in both light and moderate winds and to handle the very strong winds often experienced on Lake Ontario.

Although no plans of the *Lady of the Lake* appear to exist, in 1814, British shipwright William Bell built a similar vessel, the *Toronto*, at Kingston and her plans do exist. Although there were differences in rig (the *Toronto* was a topsail schooner while the *Lady of the Lake* had a "pure" schooner rig), her size and hull design was likely very similar. The *Toronto*'s plan appears on page 6

Construction

The exact date that construction of the new schooner began is unknown, but it was certainly before 1 January 1813 and possibly as early as mid-December 1812. This was the first wintertime keel-to-launch shipbuilding project at Sackets Harbor. Henry Eckford built the *Oneida* at Oswego during the winter of 1808-1809 but winters at Sackets Harbor are much colder than at Oswego.¹⁶ The previous year Sackets Harbor recorded a low on 18 January 1812 of minus 26°F.¹⁷ It is certain that Eckford did not anticipate having to deal with these conditions.

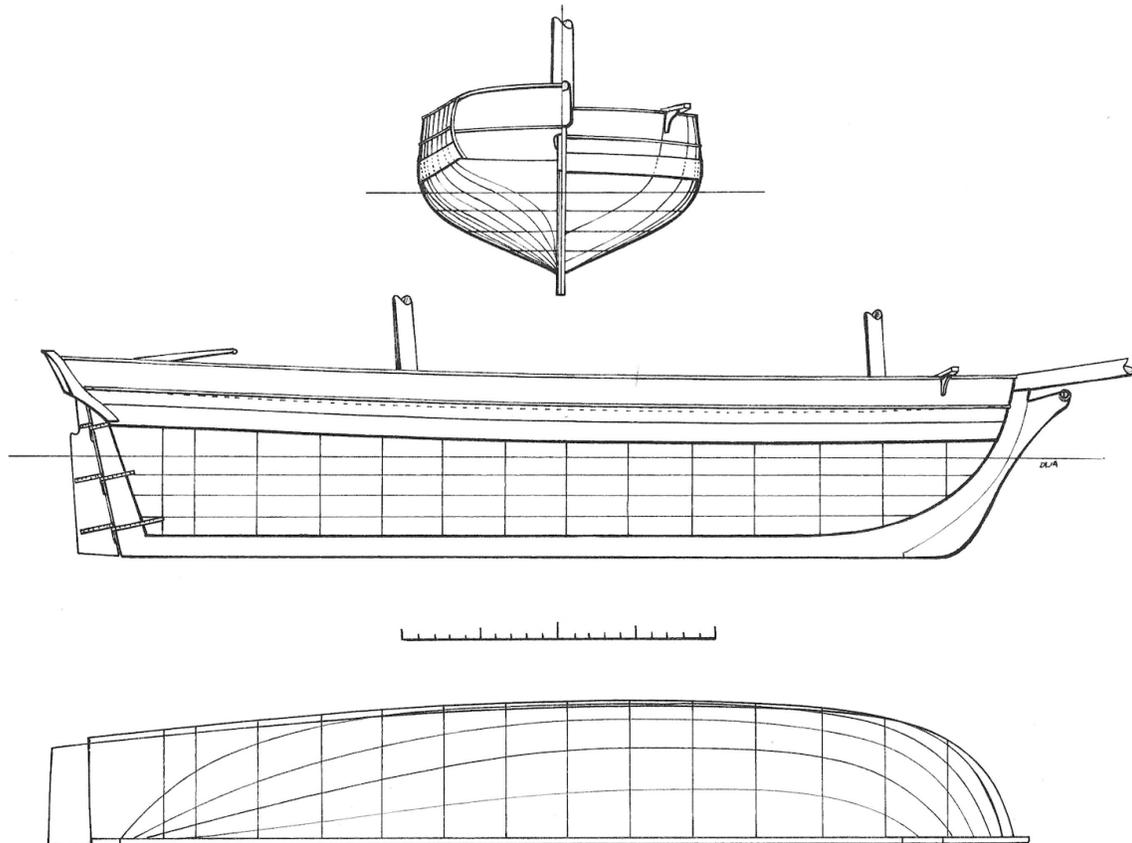
Shipbuilding at such temperatures is extremely difficult even today, and it was much harder in 1813. Progress was slow and frostbite was common. Even with the daily wage higher than at New York City or Boston, the workmen did not enjoy the experience.

¹⁴ For example, Robert Malcomson, *Warships of the Great Lakes 1754-1834* (London UK: Chatham Publishing, 2001) p.73; and Malcomson, *Lords of the Lake* (Annapolis MD: Naval Institute Press, 1998) p.89.

¹⁵ Chappelle, Howard L., *The Search for Speed Under Sail 1700-1855* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1967) p.157.

¹⁶ Comparing temperature statistics for January during the 50-year period from 1960 to 2010, the lowest temperature ever recorded at Oswego was minus 17°F in 1968. At Watertown, eight miles east of Sackets Harbor, the lowest was minus 34°F in 1981. In January 1994 the lowest temperature at Oswego was minus 15°F and the average low was 5.5°F. During the same month Watertown had a low of minus 33°F and an average low of minus 7.1°F. Since 2006 the author, at Sackets Harbor, has personally experienced winter temperatures below minus 25°F several times. The War of 1812 took place near the end of the period known as the "little ice age" when temperatures as a whole were lower than in a later century and especially when the "global warming" that started in the mid-20th century is considered.

¹⁷ Woolsey Journal 5, entry for 18 January 1812.



Plan of the schooner-yacht Toronto, built at Kingston in 1814. Courtesy of Dana Ashdown.

Nevertheless, progress was steady and by the third week of March, the new schooner was nearly ready to launch. Chauncey wrote Navy Agent Bullus at New York City ordering him to forward the schooner's sails as quickly as possible, "Let them be well packed in casks."¹⁸

It appears that Chauncey's original name for the new schooner was the *Teazer*.¹⁹ Two weeks later, he was calling her the *Lady of the Lake*. The reason for the change is unknown, but Chauncey wrote Navy Secretary William Jones asking for his approval.²⁰ As Jones never acknowledged Chauncey's request, the new schooner became the *Lady of the Lake* by default.

The *Lady of the Lake* used locally cut timber: pine, cedar and oak, which cost the government \$755.00. Over 1,330 man-days of work were required on the part of Henry Eckford's carpenters at an average cost per man of \$2.00 per day, high wages for the time. In addition to the labor cost, Eckford also had to provide board for his workmen for which he billed the government \$675.00

¹⁸ Isaac Chauncey to John Bullus, 20 March 1813, CLB 3.

¹⁹ Isaac Chauncey to John Bullus, 20 March 1813, CLB 3.

²⁰ Isaac Chauncey to William Jones, 6 April 1813, SNLRC, 1813 vol 2 item 135, M125 roll 27.

plus \$63.75 for the 85 gallons of 180-proof whiskey they consumed during construction.²¹ The total cost of the schooner was at least \$4,102.50.²²

Commodore Chauncey had the ice in the harbor cut away and the *Madison* moved from the dock in front of the building site to enable the *Lady of the Lake* to launch on 6 April 1813.²³ That same day, Chauncey ordered Sailing Master Thomas Nichols to take command of the *Lady of the Lake* and to have her ready for service as soon as possible.²⁴

Appointed an acting sailing master at New York City on 4 May 1812, Nichols received his warrant as sailing master two days later (officially post-dated to 7 July) and was placed in command of Gunboat No. 112. He transferred to Sackets Harbor and was on board the schooner *Fair American* by the end of January 1813.²⁵



Joining Nichols was Midshipman Wadsworth Loring, who was appointed on 1 December 1812 with his warrant backdated to 18 June 1812. Originally ordered to the schooner *Fair American* he transferred to the *Lady of the Lake* on 27 May 1813.²⁶

Also on board was Acting Gunner Elliott Smith. Smith transferred to the *Lady of the Lake* from the Black Rock, New York naval station on 25 May 1813. In July, he left for the Erie, Pennsylvania station and served on board the schooner *Somers* in the Battle of Lake Erie.²⁷

Armament

The *Lady of the Lake* was never designed to fight the British. However, Commodore Chauncey knew she had to be armed. Consequently, with the permission of New York's Governor Daniel D. Tompkins, he armed the *Lady of the Lake* with a brass 9-pound cannon borrowed from the New York State militia.²⁸

Although no deck plan for the *Lady of the Lake* is known to exist, the 9-pound cannon was on a pivot mount almost certainly in the center of the schooner between her two masts. Any other location would have reduced the schooner's stability and made her harder to handle. Royal Navy Captain Francis Spilsbury in an April 1815 report to Commodore Sir Edward Owen at Kingston

²¹ Providing alcohol for the workmen was usual and expected. For example the accounts for building the sloop *Wasp* at Newburyport, Massachusetts in 1814 include an expense of \$56.62 for "Rum to workmen," AF, 10 August 1814, M625 roll 77 frames 67-69.

²² Settled Accounts, Alphabetic Series, Chauncey, vouchers dated 26 June 1813. It was probably more as Chauncey's payments to Eckford frequently did not refer to work done on a specific vessel. This amount includes only those payments that are clearly associated with building the *Lady of the Lake*.

²³ Isaac Chauncey to William Jones, 6 April 1813, SNLRC, 1813 vol 2 item 135, M125 roll 27; Testimony of Isaac Chauncey at James T. Leonard's court martial, NAUS, RG45, *Records of General Courts Martial and Courts of Inquiry*, vol 4 case 152, 1 December 1812, M273 roll 6.

²⁴ Isaac Chauncey to Thomas Nichols, CLB 4.

²⁵ Service Records, p.128 (Nichols).

²⁶ Service Records, p.111 (Loring).

²⁷ Service Records, p.155 (Smith).

²⁸ Daniel D. Tompkins to Joseph Clark, 11 February 1813 and 29 July 1813, Tompkins Papers, vol III pp.252-253, 364-366; *A Return of Vessels of War Belonging to the United States Upon Lake Ontario...*, 10 June 1813, AF, M625 roll 76 frames 201-203.

on his personal post-war observations at Sackets Harbor noted that the *Lady of the Lake* carried a single gun mounted “amidships.”²⁹

Unlike a broadside gun, a pivot mounting allowed firing in (theoretically) any direction independent of the course the ship was steering. The potential advantage of such a mounting during a naval battle was considerable. However, in actual practice the presence of masts, rigging, bowsprit, boats and deck structures limited a pivot gun to firing at an enemy only within about a 30-degree angle relative to each side of the ship.

The *Lady of the Lake*'s single cannon, while of limited use in any kind of a fight, did allow her to engage and capture unarmed merchant vessels. Although the dimensions and weight of the militia brass 9-pounder used was apparently never recorded, a British army brass 9-pound cannon of the 1790s was about six feet long and weighed 1,500 pounds.³⁰ A naval 9-pound iron cannon in United States service in 1812 was about nine feet long and weighed twice as much.³¹ The shorter and lighter gun was a wise choice as it provided some firepower without harming the schooner's speed or stability. The biggest problem with brass cannon was its tendency to overheat when repeatedly fired to an extent not experienced with iron cannon. This limitation was not an issue, as the *Lady of the Lake* should run away from armed opponents, not stand and fight.

Although the navy knew the armament of the *Lady of the Lake*, for some time the newspapers did not. Two weeks after her launch, an “*Extract of a letter from a gentleman at Sacket's Harbor to his friend in this city*” appeared in the New York City newspaper *The War*. That paper reported that the *Lady of the Lake* carried three guns.³² This armament count repeated many times in the coming weeks in both the United States and Canada.³³

On 3 August, one Virginia paper described the *Lady of the Lake* as mounting “one 24 pounder with small guns.”³⁴ Three days later, a Boston paper reported her armed with a 6-pound and 3-pound cannon.³⁵ At the end of August, the same Virginia paper informed its readers that the *Lady of the Lake* now mounted “two brass pieces.”³⁶ Not to be outdone, a Boston paper reprinted April's original three-gun count but, in the same issue, reported her as having only two guns and those being “32, 24 or 18 pounders.”³⁷

²⁹ Edward W. C. R. Owen to John Wilson Croker #8, 2 April 1815, NAUK, ADM 1/2262, NAC film B-2634.

³⁰ David McConnell, *British Smooth-Bore Artillery: A Technological Study* (Canada, 1988) p.39.

³¹ Spencer Tucker, *Arming the Fleet* (Annapolis: Naval Institute Press, 1989) p.125.

³² New York NY, *The War*, 20 April 1813.

³³ For example, Baltimore MD, *The Weekly Register* and Brattleboro VT, *The Reporter*, both on 24 April 1813; New York NY, *New York Spectator*, 19 May 1813; Charleston SC, *The Investigator*, 24 June 1813. In Canada it appeared in the *Montreal Herald* on 8 May and the *Montreal Gazette* on 11 May 1813.

³⁴ Alexandria VA, *Alexandria Gazette*, 3 August 1813.

³⁵ Boston MA, *The Yankee*, 6 August 1813.

³⁶ Alexandria VA, *Alexandria Gazette*, 24 August 1813.

³⁷ Boston MA, *Boston Gazette*, 26 August 1813.

In early September, five months after her launch, Hezekiah Niles' *Weekly Register* finally reported the *Lady of the Lake* as mounting only a single gun.³⁸ The Canadian newspapers, however, continued to credit her with more guns for some time.³⁹ Even in the United States, the one-gun count was not to remain. Six weeks after reporting only one gun, the *Weekly Register* resumed crediting the *Lady of the Lake* with three guns.⁴⁰ That was later contradicted by the *Times* of London, which reported one gun.⁴¹ This confusion persisted as late as May 1814 when the *Richmond Enquirer* informed its readers that the *Lady of the Lake* mounted three guns.⁴²

Rank	Number
Boatswain (Campbell)	1
Carpenter's Mate	1
Gunner (Smith)	1
Midshipmen (Loring)	2
Ordinary Seamen	5
Purser's Steward	1
Quarter Gunners	2
Sailing Master (Nichols)	1
Seamen	15
Total	29

Table 1 – *Lady of the Lake's Crew as of 10 June 1813, AF, M625 roll 76 frames 201-203; Arrearage Abstract dated 31 December 1813, T829 roll 193 pp.373-374*

At some point between mid-June and November 1813, an iron 18-pound cannon, also on a pivot mount, replaced the *Lady of the Lake's* 9-pound brass pivot gun.⁴³ This added about 3,000 pounds of additional top weight.⁴⁴ Since there were no known complaints about the *Lady of the Lake's* handling after the change, it appears that the little schooner successfully accommodated the extra weight, a tribute to Eckford's design.

There was more contradictory information appearing in the press on both sides regarding the *Lady of the Lake's* armament than for any other warship on Lake Ontario on either side. One reason for this is that the *Lady of the Lake's* name appeared

frequently in every American and Canadian newspaper. By war's end, it was probably the best-known vessel in Chauncey's squadron. That meant its armament was often included in individual news reports as well as in printed tables of warships and their armaments. It is possible that the original plan called for two broadside carronades, probably 12-pounders, in addition to the pivot gun, which would account for the frequent reference to a three-gun armament. All official reports, however, list the *Lady of the Lake* as armed with a single cannon on a pivot mount.⁴⁵ Certainly

³⁸ Baltimore MD, *The Weekly Register*, 4 September 1813.

³⁹ The *Lady of the Lake* had two guns according to the Kingston UC, *Kingston Gazette*, 7 September 1813 and the Montreal LC, *Montreal Herald*, 30 April 1814.

⁴⁰ Baltimore MD, *The Weekly Register*, 16 October 1813.

⁴¹ London UK, *The Times*, 22 October 1813.

⁴² Richmond VA, *Richmond Enquirer*, 30 May 1814.

⁴³ Chauncey's report to Jones on 10 June 1813 reported the *Lady of the Lake* as armed with one 9-pound cannon. In November 1813 the New York *Columbian* reported her as armed with an 18-pound cannon on a pivot mount. This report was confirmed in another of Chauncey's reports to the Navy Department the following spring. Statements of naval forces on Lake Ontario, 10 June 1813 and 15 March 1814, AF, M625 roll 76 frames 201-203 and 557-558; New York NY, *The Columbian*, 9 November 1813.

⁴⁴ A standard U. S. navy 18-pound cannon weighed about 4,700 pounds. Chauncey preferred ones that were somewhat lighter, but they still added 3,000 pounds of top weight to the *Lady of the Lake*. Tucker, Spencer, *Arming the Fleet* (Annapolis MD: Naval Institute Press, 1989) p.125; Weight of British naval cannon and carronades of the period were almost identical to those in the U. S. Navy, which is important as some British-origin cannon, and carronades were used on board Chauncey's ships. Henry, Chris, *Napoleonic Naval Armaments 1792-1815*, New Vanguard 90 (Oxford UK: Osprey Publishing, 2004) pp.4, 8, 12.

⁴⁵ For example, the statements of naval forces on Lake Ontario on 10 June 1813 and 24 June 1814, AF, M625 roll 76 frames 201-203 and roll 77 frames 9-10.

after the brass 9-pound cannon was replaced with an iron 18-pounder, any thought of adding an additional ton of top weight for two carronades disappeared.

Fitting Out

After her launch, it took Sailing Master Nichols three weeks to complete the *Lady of the Lake*'s interior fittings, install her masts and rigging, mount her sails, provision her and provide for a crew. The crew, some 29 officers and men, appears in Table 1 on page 9. Furniture for the schooner's tiny stern cabin was obtained from the Sackets Harbor firm of Samuel F. Hooker & Co. at a total cost of \$40.14. The individual items purchased appear in Table 2.

Frying pan	Gridiron
12 Plates	6 Cups
6 Knives & forks	6 Large spoons
6 Tea spoons	3 Dishes
2 Decanters	12 Tumblers
12 Wine glasses	2 Coffee pots
2 Tea pots	Pepper box
Mustard pot	Tea kettle
Sugar bowl	Tureen

Table 2 – The Lady of the Lake's "Cabin Furniture," 21 April 1813, from Settled Accounts, Alphabetic Series, Chauncey.

York and Fort George

On 22 April, Sailing Master Nichols received orders to take on board "some carpenters, which will be furnished by Mr Eckford" and, as soon as the schooner's sails arrive, join the rest of Chauncey's squadron.⁴⁶ On 26 April, the *Lady of the Lake* sailed for York, Upper Canada where she arrived the following evening.

On board were shipwright Henry Eckford and a "gang of carpenters." They would launch the new British ship, the *Sir Isaac Brock*, after her capture, and perform any necessary repairs on other Provincial Marine vessels found at York prior to taking them back to Sackets Harbor.⁴⁷ The Americans discovered the *Duke of Gloucester* on shore and under repair. This vessel was soon back in the water and ready to be towed to Sackets Harbor. The British themselves burned the *Sir Isaac Brock* before they retreated.

In addition, after the battle Eckford's carpenters

*Soon repaired our little fleet—patched up the shot-holes, and before morning we were in apple pie order for any kind of service.*⁴⁸

As the plan called for haste, the men of Chauncey's squadron had a lot of work to do.

*They hurried on board of the Lady of the Lake all the naval stores they could find, or as much of them as they could carry There was pitch, oakum, spikes, iron, cordage, &c., and it was important that Mr. Eckford and his carpenters should be back to Sackets Harbor and hurry the new ship; and they all returned on the Lady as soon as possible.*⁴⁹

The "new ship" was the frigate *General Pike*, whose construction began on 8 April, two days after the launch of the *Lady of the Lake*.⁵⁰

⁴⁶ Isaac Chauncey to Thomas Nichols, 22 April 1813, CLB 4.

⁴⁷ There were about 30 carpenters on board. Isaac Chauncey to William Jones #15, 7 May 1813, SNLRC, 1813 vol 3 item 101, M125 roll 28.

⁴⁸ "Early Times on the Lakes" by Robert Hugunin, Sandusky OH, *Sandusky Register*, 23, 24 & 27 January and 2 & 3 February 1854.

⁴⁹ "Early Times on the Lakes" by Robert Hugunin, Sandusky OH, *Sandusky Register*, 23, 24 & 27 January and 2 & 3 February 1854.

⁵⁰ Isaac Chauncey to William Jones. 8 April 1813, SNLRC, 1813 vol 2 item 152, M125 roll 27.

The original American plan called for the landing force to spend only a few days at York, just long enough to secure and load those stores that could be removed, destroy the remainder, parole the Canadian militia and re-embark the troops. That also allowed time for word of York's capture to reach Niagara and for British reinforcements to be on their way, reducing Fort George's garrison. Mother Nature had other ideas.

The troops were all back on board the vessels of the squadron by 1 May and Chauncey planned to sail for Niagara the next morning. That evening, the wind which was moderate from the east, increased to a gale accompanied by rain. As Chauncey reported a week later,

*We have been riding ever since with two anchors ahead and lower yards and top gallant masts down.*⁵¹

After waiting a few days for the wind to subside, Chauncey boarded the *Lady of the Lake*, leaving his broad pendant flying on the *Madison*. The schooner carried a number of men seriously wounded when Fort York's magazine exploded a few days before. Once on board, Chauncey ordered the schooner to sail to Niagara. Making use of the schooner's ability to sail close to the wind and her seaworthiness, Chauncey reached Niagara safely. He remained there only long enough to confer with the army and land the wounded men. Chauncey and the *Lady of the Lake* were back at York by 4 May.

Meanwhile, Henry Eckford's men finished preparing the prize schooner *Duke of Gloucester* for her trip to Sackets Harbor. Chauncey ordered the *Lady of the Lake* to take Eckford and his thirty carpenters on board and sail again to Niagara.⁵² Eckford was to proceed up the Niagara river to Black Rock and prepare the vessels built there to sail upriver to Lake Erie "the moment that we are in possession of the opposite shore."⁵³ After landing Eckford and his men, the *Lady of the Lake* remained at Niagara, anchored off Four Mile Creek to the east of Fort Niagara.

With the weather finally better, Chauncey and the rest of his squadron reached Niagara on 8 May. There he landed the rest of the troops, many of whom were sick from hunger, exposure and cold after waiting on board ship at York for almost a week. Chauncey left the *Lady of the Lake* at Niagara, awaiting the arrival of Purser Edward Fitzgerald from Black Rock and letters from Major General Henry Dearborn, and sailed with the rest of his squadron for Sackets Harbor, arriving on 11 May.⁵⁴ Her mission accomplished, the *Lady of the Lake* sailed from Niagara to Sackets Harbor, anchoring off the harbor by 14 May.

While at Sackets Harbor embarking the men of Brigadier General John Chandler's brigade, Chauncey wanted to know something of the "the true situation of the enemy's vessels," so he dispatched Sailing Master Nichols in the *Lady of the Lake* to Kingston under a flag of truce. The cover story for this reconnaissance was delivering Provincial Marine Lieutenant M. L. Green, taken prisoner at York and on his parole.⁵⁵ With that officer and two British seamen on board,

⁵¹ Isaac Chauncey to William Jones #15, 7 May 1813, SNLRC, 1813 vol 3 item 101, M125 roll 28.

⁵² Chauncey later claimed there were 35 carpenters. Isaac Chauncey to William Jones #40, 12 June 1813, SNLRC, 1813 vol 4 item 57, M125 roll 29.

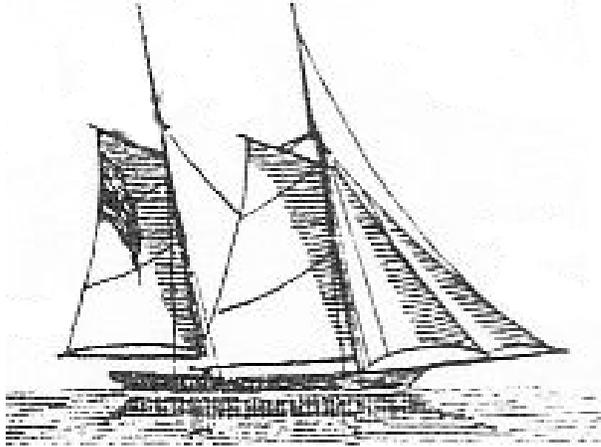
⁵³ Isaac Chauncey to William Jones #15, 7 May 1813, SNLRC, 1813 vol 3 item 101, M125 roll 28.

⁵⁴ Isaac Chauncey to Thomas Nichols and to Commanding Officer at Kingston, 9 May 1813, CLB 4.

⁵⁵ Chauncey listed Green as a Royal Navy lieutenant. Irving, however, has him as a second lieutenant in the Provincial Marine, normally stationed on Lake Erie. L. Homfray Irving, *Officers of the British Forces in Canada During the War of 1812-15* (Welland ON: Welland Tribune Print, 1908) p.204.

George Langley and Joseph Cloutier, taken the previous fall in the prize vessels *Mary Hatt* and *Elizabeth*, the schooner sailed for Kingston on 14 May.⁵⁶

While at Kingston, Nichols had to tolerate a “Post Captain” of the Royal Navy who arrived on board and, as Chauncey told Secretary Jones, “made many enquiries respecting the ship building at this place.”⁵⁷ The schooner was back at Sackets Harbor the following day bringing news that the British squadron was almost ready for sea and that “Officers of the Royal Navy (amongst whom was a Rear Admiral)” were on their way from Montreal to Kingston.⁵⁸ This intelligence encouraged Chauncey to leave his brother, Lieutenant Wolcott Chauncey, at Sackets Harbor with the schooners *Fair American* and *Pert*, when he took the rest of his squadron back to Niagara to attack Fort George.⁵⁹



The Lady of the Lake as she appeared in “The Taking of Fort George,” Portfolio Magazine, 1817

On 19 May, Chauncey ordered Sailing Master Nichols to take Brigadier General William Chandler and his staff on board the *Lady of the Lake*, deliver them to Niagara, and await further orders.⁶⁰ Also on board was Acting Surgeon’s Mate David M. Hall who was to report to the brig *Oneida*.⁶¹

The *Lady of the Lake* arrived, landed General Chandler, and remained at anchor off Four Mile Creek as ordered. After Chauncey arrived in the *Madison* on 25 May, that vessel, the *Oneida* and *Lady of the Lake* took on board troops and all the army’s heavy artillery.⁶² On the morning of Thursday, 27 May, the Americans attacked Fort George. Given the small size of the *Lady of the Lake*, it is unlikely that many troops or any of the army’s heavy artillery were on board that vessel. Chauncey’s after-action report makes no mention of the whereabouts of the *Lady of the Lake* during the attack, but given her very light armament it is probable she remained well off shore and out of range of the British artillery.

⁵⁶ Isaac Chauncey to Thomas Nichols, 14 May 1813, CLB 4.

⁵⁷ This officer was almost certainly Commander Robert Barclay who was temporarily in command of the Royal Navy on Lake Ontario. would not arrive at Kingston until 15 May.

⁵⁸ Thw “Rear Admiral” was Commodore Sir James Lucas Yeo who arrived at Kingston from Quebec and Montreal on 15 May 1813, the day after the *Lady of the Lake* departed, James Lucas Yeo to John Wilson Croker #3, 26 May 1813, NAUK, ADM 1/2736 pp.80-83, B-2941.

⁵⁹ Isaac Chauncey to William Jones #21, 15 May 1813, SNLRC, 1813 vol 3 item 141, M125 roll 28; Isaac Chauncey to Henry Dearborn, 16 May 1813, CLB 4.

⁶⁰ Isaac Chauncey to Thomas Nichols, 19 May 1813, CLB 4.

⁶¹ Isaac Chauncey to David M. Hall, 19 May 1813, CLB 4.

⁶² Isaac Chauncey to William Jones #29, 28 May 1813, SNLRC, 1813 vol 3 item 190, M125 roll 28.

The Raid on Sackets Harbor

The *Lady of the Lake* was at Niagara on the morning of 31 May 1813. The previous evening Chauncey received word of the British raid on Sackets Harbor the day before. That morning the squadron sailed for Sackets Harbor by way of York and the north shore of Lake Ontario in search of the British squadron, which was now part of the Royal Navy under the command of Commodore Sir James Lucas Yeo. With no sign of the British, the American squadron, including the *Lady of the Lake*, returned to Sackets Harbor on 1 June.⁶³ Left unclear was how Commodore Chauncey learned of the British attack on Sackets Harbor on 29 May.

Until the 1990s, most secondary accounts of the second battle of Sackets Harbor have the *Lady of the Lake* sailing from there to Niagara on 28 May to give Chauncey the news. One of the first such accounts was Richards' in 1833:

*Macomb having satisfied that excellent officer Commodore Chauncey, that every thing was done which lay in his power, and that, if his directions were followed, the Harbour in all human probability would be safe until the fleet could return, they embarked together, and joined the army and fleet at the Four Mile Creek, a, short distance from the mouth of the Niagara on the American side. Their arrival was on the 11th of May, when, every preparation for the attack was already made, waiting only for Commodore Chauncey. General Dearborn, regretting the anticipated departure, of Macomb from Sackett's Harbour, had despatched a fast sailing schooner "The Lady of the Lake," to meet him, and direct him to return, the general's apprehensions for the safety of that place having greatly increased. The Schooner however, missed Macomb in the night; and he reported himself the next morning to the general.*⁶⁴

Based on Richards' tale, The *Lady of the Lake*, missing the *Madison* on her way to Niagara, could have been at Sackets Harbor on the morning of 28 May to see the British approach and then sailed to Niagara to warn Chauncey.

Twenty years later, Franklin Hough interviewed local residents about the events of 28 & 29 May 1813, and his account confirms Richards' that the *Lady of the Lake* was present at Sackets Harbor and able to sail to Niagara to give the alarm:

*...and on the following morning (Friday, May 28) [the British] appeared in the offing, having been discovered by the schooner Lady of the Lake, that had been cruising on the lake, to watch the motions of the enemy.*⁶⁵

Much later, Patrick Wilder had the *Lady of the Lake* not only present at Sackets Harbor on 28 May but sailing to Niagara to warn Chauncey:

*Now the Lady of the Lake, being the fastest vessel on the lake, made sail for Niagara to alert the commodore, while the other two schooners [Fair American and Pert] made for the Harbour with alarm guns blazing.*⁶⁶

Wilder cites both Viger's manuscript entry dated 10 June 1813, which is unconfirmed, and Richards' book as the source for this information. Malcomson describes the battle but does not refer to the *Lady of the Lake* being present, only the *Pert* and *Fair American* under Wolcott

⁶³ Isaac Chauncey to William Jones Dup #30, 2 June 1813, SNLRC, 1813 vol 4 item 8, M125 roll 29.

⁶⁴ Richards, George H., *Memoir of Alexander Macomb, the Major General Commanding the Army of the United States* (New York: Melrath, Bangs & Co., 1833) pp.58-59.

⁶⁵ Hough, Franklin B., *A History of Jefferson County in the State of New York* (Albany: Joel Munsell, 1854, repr. 1976) p.485.

⁶⁶ Wilder, Patrick A. *The Battle of Sackett's Harbour* (Baltimore MD: The Nautical and Aviation Publishing Company, 1994) p.75.

Chauncey. However, Malcomson does not state how Chauncey learned of the attack, only that he did, so his account allows for the possibility that the *Lady of the Lake* was involved.⁶⁷

Past consensus, therefore, has the *Lady of the Lake* delivering the news to Chauncey at Niagara. The primary sources, however, raise some serious problems with this claim.

The *Lady of the Lake* was at Sackets Harbor on 19 May when she was ordered to Niagara with Brigadier General Chandler on board.⁶⁸ She was at Niagara when Commodore Chauncey arrived on 25 May in the *Madison*.⁶⁹ The following day Chauncey reported to Navy Secretary Jones that the next morning the *Lady of the Lake* took on board forces for the attack on Fort George:

*I took on board of the Madison, Oneida and Lady of the Lake all the heavy artillery and as many troops as could be stowed.*⁷⁰

Fort George was in American hands before noon on 27 May. Chauncey could have dispatched the *Lady of the Lake* to sail to Sackets Harbor, perhaps as early as 10 a.m. that morning, to report the success.⁷¹ However, there is nothing in the Navy Department records or in Chauncey's own letterbook that have the *Lady of the Lake* receiving such an order. There is also no mention that anyone present at Sackets Harbor saw the *Lady of the Lake* after she left on 19 May, until she returned on 1 June. On the morning of 28 May, Edward Brenton, on board HMS *Wolfe*, mentions seeing only the two American schooners *Pert* and *Fair American*. There is no mention of a third schooner, which would presumably have been the *Lady of the Lake*:

*Unfortunately the wind failed us at the period when it was most wanted & we did not get in sight of the place till broad day light, we then attempted to beat in, but the wind being most provokingly light & baffling we had not by two o'clock approached nearer than within ten miles, during this time alarm guns were constantly firing from their batteries & from two schooners, which came a short way out of the harbor...*⁷²

By 2 p.m. on 28 May, the British, by Brenton's account, were close to Sackets Harbor and had presumably been visible for many hours. Word would have been dispatched to Chauncey probably no later than noon that day. Chauncey received word of the British attack no earlier than 6 p.m. on 30 May:

*On the evening of the 30th. Ulto. I received an express from Lieut. Chauncey, stating that the enemy was off Sacketts Harbor, with his whole fleet.*⁷³

Chauncey's letter to Jones gives no details as to how the "express" arrived but at the time, the term usually referred to a mounted courier.

The distance from Sackets Harbor to Fort Niagara – using the roads available at the time – was about 190 miles. If the express left Sackets Harbor on horseback at 10 a.m. on 28 May and arrived at Fort Niagara at 8 p.m. on 30 May, that was a travel time of 58 hours. As it was less than a month to the longest day of the year, it would have been dark for seven hours the nights of the

⁶⁷ Malcomson, Robert, *Lords of the Lake*, (Annapolis: Naval Institute Press, 1998) p.232-233.

⁶⁸ Isaac Chauncey to Thomas Nichols, 19 May 1813, CLB 4 and Chauncey to William Jones #25, 19 May 1813, SNLRC, 1813 vol 3 item 151, M125 roll 28.

⁶⁹ Isaac Chauncey to William Jones #29, 28 May 1813, SNLRC, 1813 vol 3 item 190, M125 roll 28.

⁷⁰ Isaac Chauncey to William Jones #29, 28 May 1813, SNLRC, 1813 vol 3 item 190, M125 roll 28.

⁷¹ Isaac Chauncey to William Jones #28, 27 May 1813, SNLRC, 1813 vol 3 item 187, M125 roll 28.

⁷² Edward B. Brenton to Noah Freer, 30 May 1813, NAC, R8, C.1707 *Freer Papers*, pp.235-246.

⁷³ Isaac Chauncey to William Jones dup #30, 2 June 1813, SNLRC, 1813 vol 4 item 8, M125 roll 29.

28th and 29th, leaving 44 hours of daylight riding time. That would require an average speed of 4.3 miles per hour, easily possible by an express rider on dry roads.⁷⁴

If the *Lady of the Lake* left for Sackets Harbor on the morning of 27 May, she could not have arrived before the morning of 28 May and, given the “light & baffling” winds reported by the British, probably not until much later. By then the British were already present. Certainly, she could have immediately come about and returned to Niagara but there is no record of that event. Had she left Niagara later, say on the morning of 28 May, she would have needed to make the round trip in two days, a very unlikely event.

Therefore, Chauncey received word of the British raid on Sackets by express rider and not by the *Lady of the Lake*. The *Lady of the Lake* remained at Niagara after the capture of Fort George until she sailed with the rest of Chauncey’s squadron on the morning of 31 May.

The day after his return to Sackets Harbor, Chauncey ordered the *Lady of the Lake* to Kingston under a flag of truce carrying both a letter to Governor in Chief Sir George Prevost, and the ladies of the 49th Regiment’s Brevet Major James Dennis and Captain James Brock. The women had arrived at Sackets Harbor from Fort George on board the *Madison*. The schooner also delivered Captain John Blackmore of the 8th Regiment, wounded at Sackets Harbor during the British raid on 29 May. The schooner arrived at Kingston on the evening of 3 June and returned shortly thereafter to Sackets Harbor.⁷⁵

Wolcott’s Cruise

On 14 June 1813, Commodore Chauncey ordered the *Lady of the Lake* to sail near Presqu’île for a week with his younger brother, 29-year-old Lieutenant Ichabod Wolcott Chauncey and thirty of the crew of Wolcott’s own schooner *Fair American* on board.⁷⁶ The *Fair American* was left under the temporary command of Acting Lieutenant Charles W. Skinner.⁷⁷



Wolcott Chauncey became a midshipman in 1804 at the relatively old age of 20. He became an acting lieutenant in 1807 and commissioned a lieutenant in 1810. Before arriving at Sackets

Harbor in February 1813, Wolcott Chauncey served on board the frigates *John Adams*, *Constitution*, *Chesapeake* and *United States*, the sloop *Hornet* and Gunboat No. 6.⁷⁸

⁷⁴ Postmaster General Return J. Meigs informed Secretary of War John Armstrong that he had an express rider that regularly went from Buffalo to Washington, 407 miles, in 104 hours. Deducting eight hours for rest each of three nights, that express travelled at an average speed of five miles per hour. Therefore, it was certainly possible that an express rider could reach Niagara from Sackets Harbor in the time available. Even the regular mail from Buffalo to Washington took only 72 hours longer. Return J. Meigs to John Armstrong, 13 June 1814, SWLRR, item M-8 (8), M221 roll 64.

⁷⁵ Isaac Chauncey to Thomas Nichols and to George Prevost, 2 June 1813, CLB 4. Chauncey referred to Dennis as a colonel but Stuart Sutherland in *His Majesty’s Gentlemen* has him as a brevet major in 1813 and he is also reported as a major in the *Kingston Gazette*, 8 June 1813 which included Blackmore as a passenger.

⁷⁶ The younger Chauncey never used his first name, preferring Wolcott for his entire naval career. Ichabod was the name of his paternal grandfather.

⁷⁷ Isaac Chauncey to Wolcott Chauncey, 14 June 1813, CLB 4; Service Records, p.154.

⁷⁸ Service Records, p.53 (Chauncey).

Chauncey's order to his brother did not state that he was superseding Sailing Master Nichols in command. Indeed, the same day he wrote to Wolcott, Chauncey issued a General Order listing Thomas Nichols as commanding the *Lady of the Lake* and Wolcott Chauncey in command of the *Fair American*.⁷⁹ Nichols, however, was not copied on Chauncey's orders to his brother, nor was Nichols given separate written orders acknowledging Wolcott's.

Thirty men were half the crew of the *Fair American* and the *Lady of the Lake* was certainly large enough to accommodate those men on a voyage expected to last no more than a week.⁸⁰ The extra crewmembers would come in handy if prizes were taken. Still, thirty men would provide crews for six or seven prizes and it seems unlikely that anyone would anticipate the *Lady of the Lake* capturing so many in a week. If the extra men were not prize crews and as the *Lady of the Lake*'s regular crew was perfectly adequate to navigate the vessel, what were those extra men expected to do? Isaac Chauncey's order to his brother did not explain why they were included. Commodore Chauncey apparently left the selection of those men up to Wolcott. Did Wolcott include the marine lieutenant, sergeant and nine marine privates he had on board the *Fair American*? The record does not say.

If Wolcott Chauncey and the men from the *Fair American* completely replaced Nichols and his crew for this one voyage, why did the commodore's orders not say so? If Commodore Chauncey wanted to send his brother on an independent cruise, why not send him in the *Fair American*? Why change schooners? Who was commanding the *Lady of the Lake*? Wolcott was the senior officer. Commodore Chauncey, who was rather inflexible when it came to command matters, should have informed Nichols, in writing, of what the cruise was for and who was in command. Instead, he apparently left that task to his brother.

Three days before, on 11 June 1813, a three-man court of inquiry at Sackets Harbor, whose president, Lieutenant Melancthon Woolsey, was anticipating a promotion to master commandant in the near future and needed the commodore's support, declared that Wolcott Chauncey's actions during the 29 May British attack was "perfectly correct." The next step brought Wolcott's second in command, Acting Lieutenant John T. Drury, before a court martial on charges of disobedience of orders and cowardice. Even at the time, many at Sackets Harbor considered that Drury was being unfairly singled out for an action (burning the naval stores needed to complete the frigate *General Pike*) for which Wolcott Chauncey was responsible.

Removing his younger brother from view for a week would give the controversy time to diminish. In addition, using the *Lady of the Lake* instead of Wolcott Chauncey's own *Fair American* left Sailing Master Nichols officially in command during the voyage. This shielded Lieutenant Chauncey from responsibility should something go wrong while it left Nichols well aware that it was the commodore's brother who was really in command. Also, as senior officer on board, it would give Wolcott a good share of any prize money resulting from the voyage. It was, indeed, a very unusual situation.⁸¹

⁷⁹ General Order, 14 June 1814, CLB 4.

⁸⁰ Crew of the *Fair American*, 10 June 1813, AF, M625 roll 76 frames 201-203.

⁸¹ Wolcott Chauncey was a problem for his brother, Commodore Isaac Chauncey, throughout the war. Twice Isaac ordered Wolcott away from Sackets Harbor (7 December 1813 and 15 June 1814) and twice Wolcott returned. After the war, denied promotion to master commandant, Wolcott complained to his friends in Congress who, in turn, asked the Navy Department for an explanation. Asked for an opinion, the Navy Commissioners reported to Navy Secretary Crowninshield that each of them had Wolcott Chauncey under their command and "that each of them has in consequence of his professional incapacity, and improper conduct, been anxious to have him removed from their ship." Furthermore they believed that "the total want of chivalrous principle which characterizes this officer, and of which you have been appraised,

Isaac Chauncey's orders to his brother stated that

*The object in sending you upon that cruise, is to intercept the small vessels or boats of the enemy going up or down the lake with troops.*⁸²

This was a risk, as Chauncey did not know the location of the British squadron under Commodore Yeo. A few days earlier, he had word that they were off Niagara, but now they could be anywhere. His concern appeared in his additional orders to his brother, which, by implication, made it clear who was really commanding the *Lady of the Lake*:

*You will however be careful not to place yourself in a situation to be cut off by their large vessels in case they should be out.*⁸³

Chauncey's plan paid off. On the morning of 16 June, the *Lady of the Lake* captured the schooner *Lady Murray*, of about 60 tons burthen, sailing unescorted from Kingston to York.⁸⁴ The *Lady Murray*, originally an American schooner owned by William McKinstry, was seized on 19 November 1811 by Caleb Hopkins, the customs collector for the District of Genesee, for illegally importing goods from Canada.⁸⁵ The schooner and her cargo were brought before the United States District Court in New York City in August 1812 to be libeled, condemned and sold.

On 1 October 1812, before those court proceedings were complete, and while the schooner was at anchor at the mouth of the Genesee River, the Provincial Marine warship *Royal George* captured her.⁸⁶ She was armed with two guns and used as a transport by the British. On 29 May 1813, she participated in the British raid on Sackets Harbor.⁸⁷ When recaptured, the *Lady Murray* was loaded with "provisions, powder, shot, and fixed ammunition." Also on board was Ensign George Charles Morse of the 41st regiment, 14 non-commissioned officers and men belonging to the 41st and 104th regiments and a crew of six including her master, Edward Jones.⁸⁸ Two New York City

ought they conceive of itself to be a sufficient reason why the honor of the American flag should never be entrusted to him." Finally, that "his professional acquirements do not justify his being promoted to a rank which will entitle him to obtain the command of a vessel in the service of the United States." Despite that, Wolcott Chauncey received his promotion to master commandant and eventually to captain. He commanded the sloop *Ontario* and the Pensacola Navy Yard before his death in 1835; Service Records, pp.53-54.

⁸² Isaac Chauncey to Wolcott Chauncey, 14 June 1813, CLB 4.

⁸³ Isaac Chauncey to Wolcott Chauncey, 14 June 1813, CLB 4.

⁸⁴ The *Lady Murray*'s burthen tonnage is approximate and is variously reported: 42 tons in Cain, Emily, *Lake Traffic Analysis*; 55 tons in Van Cleave, *Reminiscences*, p.103; 60 tons in Hugh Earle to Noah Freer, 15 October 1813, NAC, RG8, C.731 pp.41-45, 70 tons in New York NY, *The Columbian*, 28 June 1813.

⁸⁵ NAUS, RG21, *Admiralty Case Files of the U. S. District Court for the Southern District of New York*, 24 August 1812, M919 roll 16. From the court records the cargo included "two bales containing dry goods, one trunk containing dry goods, three boxes containing dry goods, five crates of crockery, ten kegs of paint, fifteen barrels of brown sugar and three barrels of fish." William McKinstry lived in the town of Penfield, Ontario County, New York.

⁸⁶ Hugh Earle to Noah Freer, 15 October 1813, NAC, RG8, C.731 pp.41-45; *Ontario Repository*, Canandaigua NY, 6 October 1812; Spaulding, Lyman A., *Recollections of the War of 1812 and Early Life in Western New York* (Lockport NY: Niagara County Historical Society, 1949): 6.

⁸⁷ Viger, Jacques, *Diary*, entry for 27 May 1813. She had on board two pieces of British field artillery that were never landed.

⁸⁸ Wolcott Chauncey to Isaac Chauncey and Isaac Chauncey to William Jones #45 and #47, all 18 June 1813, SNLRC, 1813 vol 4 items 77 and 82, M125 roll 29; for some reason Ensign Morse is not listed in Stuart Sutherland's *His Majesty's Gentlemen*.

newspapers reported her cargo to be worth \$20,000, a major loss to the British and a stunning success by Wolcott Chauncey if it was true, which it was not.⁸⁹ A third New York City newspaper mentioned the event but, as was common during the war, got some of the facts wrong:

*The American vessel, the Lady of the Lake, having captured one of the British vessels, laden with a part of the stores plundered from Oswego, was herself captured by the remainder of the British squadron.*⁹⁰

There were no stores “plundered” from Oswego at that time and the British never captured the *Lady of the Lake*. Two days later the New York *Columbian* reported that the *Lady Murray*’s crew and prisoners of war were landed and marched through Sackets Harbor entertained by the tune of “Yankee Doodle.”⁹¹

In July 1813, the *Lady Murray*’s case was back in U. S. District Court, and the vessel, her tackle, apparel and furniture was sold by order of the court in early 1814 for \$1,500.00.⁹² Her cargo sold for \$3,344.92.⁹³ Commodore Chauncey and the crew of the *Lady of the Lake*, including Wolcott Chauncey, eventually divided \$2,031.37, half the value of the vessel and cargo less court costs and charges.⁹⁴

Of this sum, Isaac Chauncey received 5% as squadron commander or \$101.57, which was a bit over one-month’s salary for a navy captain. Whoever was considered the captain of the *Lady of the Lake* received 10% of the total or \$203.14 and the other received 10% of the remaining 85%, or \$172.67.⁹⁵ Given the lack of any formal orders removing Nichols from command he should have received the captain’s share, but with both Chauncey brothers involved, who knows?

⁸⁹ New York NY, *The Columbian* and the *Mercantile Advertiser*, both on 26 June 1813.

⁹⁰ New York NY, *New York Spectator*, 26 June 1813.

⁹¹ New York NY, *The Columbian*, 28 June 1813.

⁹² *Navy Pension Fund*, item C. No. 5, 15th Congress, 2nd Session, No. 163, ASP p.545.

⁹³ *Navy Pension Fund*, item C. Nos. 5 and 30, 15th Congress, 2nd Session, No. 163, ASP pp.545 and 552. The cargo consisted of two kegs of carbine cartridges, 1,500 each, 20 kegs of musket cartridges, 500 each, one keg of musket flints, one box of 12 ounce cartridges and two barrels of 12 ounce cartridges, 48 each, one box of cylinders, 48 fusees, six barrels of flour, 51 tierces of peas, 99 barrels of pork, three boxes of strap shot, two boxes of canister shot, two boxes of sphere case shot, 20 spades, ½ barrel of rice, 13 pick-axes, one suit of sails, running rigging complete, one anchor and cable, one caboose, one compass, a parcel of spare blocks, two sweeps, one bucket and one white flag.

⁹⁴ NAUS, RG21, *Minutes and Rolls of Attorneys of the U. S. District Court for the Southern District of New York 1789-1841*, M886 roll 4 target 2 pp. 4-5 & 79 and roll 5 target 1 p.175; *Navy Pension Fund*, item C. Nos. 24 and 30, 15th Congress, 2nd Session, No. 163, ASP pp.551-553. Costs involved included the marshal’s fees for both the first and second time the *Lady Murray* was brought into court, the fees for processing the paperwork associated with the *Lady Murray* as a prize taken from the British and the court clerk’s fees for the vessel and cargo. The total was \$782.18. Half of the remaining amount was paid into the Navy Pension Fund and the other half went to Commodore Isaac Chauncey and the officers and crew of the *Lady of the Lake*.

⁹⁵ The rules for distributing prize money allotted 15% to the captain, minus 1/3 for the squadron commander (Isaac Chauncey), and 10% of the remaining amount for all the lieutenants, captain of marines and sailing master. There was no captain of marines on board the *Lady of the Lake* and only one lieutenant and one sailing master. Therefore, who received what amount depended on who was considered the captain. The difference, \$30.47, was small – less than one month’s salary for either man – and that helped avoid any debate at the time regarding who was legally in command when the *Lady Murray* was taken. See McKee, Christopher, *A Gentlemanly and Honorable Profession* (Annapolis: Naval Institute Press, 1991) p.342 for the complete percentage breakdown for the entire crew.

This question and the question of the nature of the thirty additional men on board from the *Fair American* could be resolved by inspecting the distribution of the prize money. Unfortunately, that record remains undiscovered.

Actions With The British

After her return to Sackets Harbor with her prize, the *Lady of the Lake* remained at anchor along with the rest of Chauncey's squadron for the next two weeks. Commodore Chauncey had informed Navy Secretary Jones that he would remain in port until the frigate *General Pike* was complete and ready for sea.⁹⁶

At 6 p.m. on 1 July, a deserter told Commodore Chauncey that the British were ready to attack Sackets Harbor, that twenty large boats left Kingston with troops and that

*Sir James Yeo, with 800 to 1000 picked men, was secreted in the woods in Chaumont Bay about seven miles from this harbor.*⁹⁷

Chauncey immediately sailed with his squadron to Point Peninsula to try to cut Yeo off from Kingston, but saw nothing. When Yeo realized he had deserters, he assumed the Americans would learn of his presence. With surprise lost, Yeo abandoned his plan and his force was on their way back to Kingston before Chauncey sailed to intercept him.

With nothing visible from the lake, Chauncey then went on board the *Lady of the Lake* and sailed close inshore from Grenadier Island to the west shore of Chaumont Bay. Again, he failed to see any sign of the British. He then returned to Sackets Harbor and the *Lady of the Lake* rejoined the rest of the squadron at anchor.⁹⁸

On 13 July, Chauncey ordered Sailing Master Nichols to proceed to Kingston in the *Lady of the Lake* under a flag of truce. He delivered an officer selected by Major General Morgan Lewis, who was then commanding the army at Sackets Harbor, and returned immediately to Sackets Harbor when that officer's business was complete. This also gave Chauncey an opportunity to learn if the British squadron was at Kingston or was sailing the lake.⁹⁹

The *Lady of the Lake* returned from Kingston by 15 July. She then took on board sixty seamen, in charge of Sailing Master Steven Champlin, as reinforcements for Master Commandant Oliver Hazard Perry's squadron at Erie, Pennsylvania. Owing to bad weather, the *Lady of the Lake* remained at Sackets Harbor until 17 July.¹⁰⁰

When the *Lady of the Lake* finally sailed, she had a new commander. Sailing Master Thomas Nichols transferred to the new frigate *General Pike* and Sailing Master Mervine P. Mix, who formerly commanded the schooner *Growler*, arrived on board. The change took place after the *Lady of the Lake* returned from her visit to Kingston.¹⁰¹

⁹⁶ Isaac Chauncey to William Jones #38, 11 June 1813, SNLRC, 1813 vol 4 item 47, M125 roll 29.

⁹⁷ Isaac Chauncey to William Jones #54, 3 July 1813, SNLRC, 1813 vol 4 item 147, M125 roll 29.

⁹⁸ Isaac Chauncey to William Jones #54, 3 July 1813, SNLRC, 1813 vol 4 item 147, M125 roll 29.

⁹⁹ Isaac Chauncey to Thomas Nichols, 13 July 1813, CLB 4; Isaac Chauncey to Oliver Hazard Perry, 14 July 1813, SNLRC, 1813 vol 4 item 194, M125 roll 29.

¹⁰⁰ Isaac Chauncey to William Jones #62 and #63, 15 and 17 July 1813, SNLRC, 1813 vol 4 item 196 and vol 5 item 14, M125 rolls 29 and 30; Isaac Chauncey to Mervine P. Mix, 15 July 1813, CLB 4.

¹⁰¹ Isaac Chauncey to Mervine P. Mix, 13 July 1813, CLB 4.

Mervine P. Mix was appointed an acting sailing master by Commodore Chauncey on 22 December 1812 at New York City and was immediately dispatched to Sackets Harbor. On his arrival, he commanded the *Growler*. He remained in command of that schooner until he received his sailing master's warrant dated 3 July 1813 and became the *Lady of the Lake*'s captain.¹⁰²

After arriving at Niagara, the *Lady of the Lake* landed her passengers and remained at anchor in the Niagara River until she took on board twenty British prisoners of war from Fort George and sailed for Sackets Harbor.

Chauncey remained at Sackets Harbor until 21 July when his squadron sailed for Niagara with his broad pendant flying in the new frigate *General Pike*. The squadron sailed along the north shore of Lake Ontario in search of British vessels, but progress was slow due to light winds. On 24 July, he encountered the *Lady of the Lake* on her way back to Sackets Harbor with the British prisoners of war. Believing she was more useful as a part of his squadron than as a prisoner transport, he transferred the British and their guards to the schooner *Raven*, and gave that schooner's commander, Francis Mallaby, orders to carry them to Sackets Harbor.¹⁰³

After transferring the prisoners and guards, the *Lady of the Lake* sailed to Niagara and delivered a letter from Chauncey to Brigadier General John Boyd, commanding at Fort George. Mix was then to take on board "such officers and men as he [Boyd] may think proper to order on board of your vessel," and join Chauncey off York. If Chauncey was not there, or at the Head of the Lake, the *Lady of the Lake* was to return to Niagara.¹⁰⁴ Contingent orders such as this were common on the lakes as it was not always possible for either side to anticipate events or weather conditions several days in advance, nor was there any way to communicate orders other than face-to-face or by letter.

The letter carried to General Boyd was in response to a letter from Boyd addressed to Chauncey and delivered to him by the *Lady of the Lake*. Boyd reported that the British had a large deposit of stores at the Head of the Lake and Chauncey wished to "make a push for them without alarming him [the British] and giving time to collect a force to defend them." His letter to Boyd asked him to put on board the *Lady of the Lake* "the best guides that you can procure to direct us to this deposit of stores."¹⁰⁵

The *Lady of the Lake* rejoined Chauncey's squadron on 27 July with the guides provided by Boyd on board. In addition, she delivered Colonel Winfield Scott and Captain Ichabod Crane's company of the Third Artillery. Colonel Scott then transferred to Chauncey's flagship *General Pike*, where the two men agreed to attack and destroy the British stores at Burlington Bay. After taking on board 250 additional soldiers at Niagara, the squadron sailed but "light winds and calms" delayed their arrival at Burlington Bay until 29 July. The troops landed along with the squadron's marines but the British had a superior force strongly entrenched and covered by artillery. The landing force re-embarked, and on the evening of 30 July, the squadron, including the *Lady of the Lake*, sailed for York.¹⁰⁶

¹⁰² Service Records, p.124 (Mix).

¹⁰³ Isaac Chauncey to Francis Mallaby and Morgan Lewis, 24 July 1813, CLB 4.

¹⁰⁴ Isaac Chauncey to Mervine P. Mix, 24 July 1813, CLB 4.

¹⁰⁵ Isaac Chauncey to John P. Boyd, 24 July 1813, CLB 4.

¹⁰⁶ Isaac Chauncey to William Jones, 4 August 1813, SNLRC, 1813 vol 5 item 69, M125 roll 30.

By mid-afternoon on 31 July, the *Lady of the Lake* was at anchor off York. The town was undefended. The fortifications destroyed in April had not been repaired, there were no regular troops present, and most of the area's militia had been paroled in April and not yet exchanged. The squadron took away provisions, five cannon, eleven boats and other military and naval stores, all they could carry. The Americans burned the remainder along with the barracks and public storehouses. The troops were re-embarked and the squadron was back at anchor off Niagara on 3 August.¹⁰⁷

On 6 August, Chauncey ordered the *Lady of the Lake* to sail to Sackets Harbor to land the sick on board, and then return to Niagara with men now fit for duty, any new arrivals and a reinforcement of fifty marines.¹⁰⁸ While the schooner was absent, Chauncey planned to embark an army brigade, land them at Burlington Bay, overwhelm the defenses and capture the stores at that place. Afterwards that force, under Brigadier General David R. Williams, "was to march upon the road for Fort George in order to attack the enemy in rear, while Genl. Boyd made a simultaneous movement and attacked him in front." By this means, the enemy would be "completely cut off, and his whole army must have surrendered in the course of a few days." This plan was upset when Commodore Sir James Lucas Yeo's squadron suddenly appeared off Niagara at daybreak on 7 August. Discarding the design for an attack on the British at Burlington Bay, Chauncey sailed to meet Yeo.¹⁰⁹



The Lady of the Lake firing at the British squadron off the Genesee River, 11 September 1813 by Midshipman Peter Spicer, NH 7573 KN.

Early the next morning a sudden violent squall upset and sank the schooners *Hamilton* and *Scourge*. Two days later, on 10 August, a mistake by their captains caused the loss of the *Julia* and *Growler* to the British. Ordering the *Fair American* and *Asp* to Niagara, Chauncey, distressed at the loss of four of his vessels, sailed for Sackets Harbor.¹¹⁰

Meanwhile, the *Lady of the Lake* reached Sackets Harbor and took on board the marine reinforcements. On her way back to Niagara, she rejoined Chauncey's squadron and returned with them to Sackets Harbor, arriving on 13 August.¹¹¹

The *Lady of the Lake* remained at Sackets Harbor only long enough to take on board provisions for five weeks. She then sailed with Chauncey's squadron to return to Niagara. Delayed by light winds it took three days for her to get close to Niagara where the squadron again sighted Yeo's force. Chauncey spent the next three days trying to force an engagement but contrary winds, bad weather and skilled maneuvering by Commodore Yeo prevented an action. Finally, on 19 August,

¹⁰⁷ Isaac Chauncey to William Jones, 4 August 1813, SNLRC, 1813 vol 5 item 69, M125 roll 30.

¹⁰⁸ Isaac Chauncey to Mervine P. Mix and Robert D. Wainwright, 6 August 1813, CLB 4.

¹⁰⁹ Isaac Chauncey to William Jones #71 and #72, 13 August 1813, SNLRC, 1813 vol 5 items 99 and 100, M125 roll 30.

¹¹⁰ Isaac Chauncey to William Jones #71, 13 August 1813, SNLRC, 1813 vol 5 item 99, M125 roll 30.

¹¹¹ Isaac Chauncey to William Jones #71 and #72, 13 August 1813, SNLRC, 1813 vol 5 items 99 and 100, M125 roll 30.

with most of Chauncey's ships having suffered storm damage, the squadron, including the *Lady of the Lake*, returned to Sackets Harbor.¹¹²

Four days later, with all damage repaired, Chauncey wrote Navy Secretary Jones that he planned to leave Sackets Harbor on 25 August for Niagara carrying the new army commander, Major General James Wilkinson.¹¹³ A delay in completing the new schooner *Sylph*, however, postponed his departure until the end of the month.

Before she left Sackets Harbor, the *Lady of the Lake* added Acting Boatswain John McNally to her crew. Before arriving on board, McNally served on the corvette *Madison* and for a month on board the frigate *General Pike*.¹¹⁴

The *Lady of the Lake* remained at Niagara until 7 September when the British squadron was seen approaching the Niagara River. On sighting Chauncey's fleet, Commodore Yeo turned and sailed east along the south shore of Lake Ontario with Chauncey's squadron, including the *Lady of the Lake*, in pursuit. Although the two squadrons came together on 11 September, wind and weather prevented a close action and the British eventually reached safety in Kingston.¹¹⁵

The *Lady of the Lake* returned with the squadron to Sackets Harbor where she arrived on 17 September. Her stay was brief, only long enough to resupply and for Midshipman James Young to join her crew. Very little information is known about Young, including the date of his warrant, although he apparently served on board the *Lady of the Lake* until July 1814. He must have resigned his warrant then or shortly thereafter as he does not appear on 1815's *Naval Register*.¹¹⁶

The squadron sailed for Niagara at daylight on 18 September, but, once again, head winds delayed them. It took six days to reach Niagara. The following day, 25 September, Chauncey wrote Secretary Jones that he expected to embark General Wilkinson and his force and sail for Sackets Harbor three days later.¹¹⁷ As part of that plan, the *Lady of the Lake* received orders to take on board thirty soldiers from General Porter's brigade.¹¹⁸

Those plans changed the following day when Chauncey received intelligence that Yeo's squadron was at York. He immediately ordered the *Lady of the Lake* to sail and investigate. She returned that evening and confirmed that Yeo's squadron was there. Chauncey wanted to sail immediately but a strong northeast wind delayed him until the evening of 27 September. The following day, the two squadrons fought an engagement lasting several hours. Although the British were in a bad tactical position, gale force winds prevented Chauncey from getting all of his ships into the fight

¹¹² Isaac Chauncey to William Jones #73, 19 August 1813, SNLRC, 1813 vol 5 item 119, M125 roll 30.

¹¹³ Isaac Chauncey to William Jones duplicate #78, 23 August 1813, SNLRC, 1813 vol 5 item 145, M125 roll 30. This letter was late being delivered as it "was by some accident in the hurry of business mislaid, and not sent forward as ought to have been."

¹¹⁴ Service Records, p.121 (McNally).

¹¹⁵ Isaac Chauncey to William Jones #83 and #84, 13 and 25 September 1813, SNLRC, 1813 vol 6 items 43 and 92, M125 roll 31.

¹¹⁶ Service Records, p.184; *Muster Roll* dated 10 May 1815, NAUS, RG45, *Miscellaneous Records of the Navy Department*, T829 roll 125 pp.164-168; Young is listed as having departed the *Lady of the Lake* on 15 July 1814 but with no destination specified.

¹¹⁷ Isaac Chauncey to William Jones #84, 25 September 1813, SNLRC, 1813 vol 6 item 92, M125 roll 31.

¹¹⁸ General Order, 26 September 1813, CLB 5.

and when the British sailed close inshore, Chauncey declined to follow and broke off the action.¹¹⁹ The *Lady of the Lake*, although present, took no part in the action.¹²⁰

The *Lady of the Lake* returned to Niagara along with the rest of the squadron and remained there until Wilkinson's army finished embarking in small boats and set off for Sackets Harbor along the south shore of Lake Ontario. The squadron then sailed to locate Yeo and prevent him from interfering with Wilkinson's boat flotilla. On 2 October, Chauncey sighted Yeo steering for Niagara. The British reversed course and Chauncey made all sail in pursuit. Light winds, however, kept the two squadrons apart the rest of that day and all the next. At daybreak on 4 October the British were nowhere in sight.¹²¹

Chauncey ordered the *Lady of the Lake* to "sweep up to Burlington Bay and ascertain whether the [British] fleet was there." The schooner found no sign of the British.¹²² Chauncey then worried that Yeo may have sailed east either for Kingston or, worse, towards Wilkinson's flotilla. Chauncey "therefore made all sail and shaped my course for the Ducks, with a view of intercepting him or his prizes if he should have made any." On the afternoon of 5 October, he discovered seven sail to the east and, concluding it was Yeo's squadron, set off in pursuit. As Chauncey got closer, it was apparent that the vessels were not Yeo's warships but an unescorted British troop convoy sailing from York to Kingston. Chauncey ordered the *Sylph* and *Lady of the Lake*, his two fastest vessels, to close with and capture them. By the following morning one transport had been burned by her crew, five were captured and only one escaped and reached Kingston. Two of the schooners captured were the former *Julia* and *Growler*, taken by the British in August. Now burdened with prizes and 252 prisoners of war, Chauncey took his squadron back to Sackets Harbor, arriving there on 6 October.¹²³

Meanwhile, General Wilkinson arrived at Sackets Harbor from Niagara. The day after he returned to Sackets Harbor, Chauncey ordered Mix in the *Lady of the Lake* to deliver dispatches from General Wilkinson to Fort George, receive the answers and return as soon as possible.¹²⁴ In the meantime, although Chauncey was worried about the fate of Wilkinson's force in small boats, bad weather set in which kept him at anchor at Sackets Harbor.

*It has blown a severe gale from the westward with snow since the 9th and still continues — the ships are riding with two anchors ahead and lower yards and top gallant masts down.*¹²⁵

While the *Lady of the Lake* returned safely to Sackets Harbor from Niagara, it was clear to Chauncey that the weather would delay or perhaps even prevent future operations, as he reported to Secretary Jones:

¹¹⁹ Chauncey also began the action with each of his major vessels towing one of the armed merchant schooners, which reduced his squadron's speed and maneuverability.

¹²⁰ Isaac Chauncey to William Jones #85, 1 October 1813, SNLRC, 1813 vol 6 item 115, M125 roll 31.

¹²¹ Isaac Chauncey to William Jones #91, 8 October 1813, SNLRC, 1813 vol 6 item 147, M125 roll 31.

¹²² The British, however, were in Burlington Bay and they clearly saw the *Lady of the Lake*. "At 5 one of the enemy's schooners stood close in the Melvill [the brig HMS *Melville*] ordered to chase, at sunset returned to the anchorage the schooner having escaped to her squadron;" Log of HMS *Wolfe*, entry for 4 October 1813, NAUS, RG 45, entry 44 volume 5 of 10.

¹²³ Isaac Chauncey to William Jones #86 and #91, 6 and 8 October 1813, SNLRC, 1813 vol 6 items 126 and 147, M125 roll 31.

¹²⁴ Isaac Chauncey to Mervine P. Mix, 7 October 1813, CLB 5.

¹²⁵ Isaac Chauncey to William Jones #94, 12 October 1813, SNLRC, 1813 vol 6 item 151, M125 roll 31.

*It will be impossible for the army to move, before the weather moderates, in fact the division from Fort George has not yet arrived ... I am apprehensive that the severity of this storm will add many to the sick list, both of the Army and Navy, particularly that division of the army that are between this and Oswego.*¹²⁶

The weather finally moderated and the squadron sailed to a point off the Ducks Islands. Chauncey ordered the *Lady of the Lake* to remain with General Wilkinson and to report as soon as Wilkinson was ready to proceed with his army down the St. Lawrence River.¹²⁷ A few days later, Wilkinson sent the *Lady of the Lake* to Chauncey with a request that Chauncey meet with him at his temporary headquarters on Grenadier Island. Before this meeting, Chauncey believed Wilkinson was planning to attack Kingston. As Chauncey reported to Secretary Jones

*I was much disappointed and mortified to find that the general had taken his determination to descend the St. Lawrence and attack Montreal in preference to Kingston.*¹²⁸

This change of objective deprived Chauncey's squadron of any real role in the operation, as his large ships could not safely descend the St. Lawrence River, even as far as Ogdensburg. As Chauncey made clear to Secretary Jones, he was

*Mortified to find that the navy had been used as a mere attendant upon the army for the purpose of transport and protection and when it could be no longer used for those purposes and the season too far advanced to cruise on the lake with safety it is left to protect itself in the best manner it can without the possibility of participating in any enterprise against the enemy this season.*¹²⁹

Chauncey informed Jones, however, that he believed it to be his duty "to afford to the army every facility of transport and protection in my power" so he would accompany and protect Wilkinson's force "until it passes a point beyond which it will be perfectly secure from annoyance by the enemies fleet," but he was not a happy man. He told Jones he wanted to be out of the St. Lawrence River by 1 November as the ice would make navigation there unsafe after that date.¹³⁰

Unsafe or not, on 2 November the *Lady of the Lake* entered the St. Lawrence River and, with the rest of Chauncey's squadron, anchored off the east end of Long (now Wolfe) Island. Two days later, Chauncey received word that Wilkinson and his entire army arrived at French Creek (Clayton NY) and they should pass Prescott by 6 November, after which Chauncey would "use every exertion to get out of the river as soon as possible."¹³¹

Once again, Chauncey's plans were thwarted. On 5 November Yeo's squadron appeared and anchored off St. Johns Island, five miles and a narrow channel away from Chauncey. Shallow water kept the two squadrons apart. Chauncey planned to lighten his ships to be able to close the distance, but before that happened, Yeo's squadron returned to Kingston. Chauncey then worried that the British squadron would take advantage of his position down the St. Lawrence,

*Take on board a thousand men and take possession of Carlton Island which would have given us much trouble, and perhaps led to the final destruction of the fleet.*¹³²

¹²⁶ Isaac Chauncey to William Jones #94, 12 October 1813, SNLRC, 1813 vol 6 item 151, M125 roll 31.

¹²⁷ Isaac Chauncey to William Jones #99, 25 October 1813, SNLRC, 1813 vol 7 item 44, M125 roll 32.

¹²⁸ Isaac Chauncey to William Jones #101, 30 October 1813, SNLRC, 1813 vol 7 item 63, M125 roll 32.

¹²⁹ Isaac Chauncey to William Jones #101, 30 October 1813, SNLRC, 1813 vol 7 item 63, M125 roll 32.

¹³⁰ Isaac Chauncey to William Jones #101, 30 October 1813, SNLRC, 1813 vol 7 item 63, M125 roll 32.

¹³¹ Isaac Chauncey to William Jones #105, 4 November 1813, SNLRC, 1813 vol 7 item 76, M125 roll 32.

¹³² Isaac Chauncey to William Jones #106, 11 November 1813, SNLRC, 1813 vol 7 item 93, M125 roll 32.

Consequently, the *Lady of the Lake* and the rest of Chauncey's squadron moved first to a point off Carleton Island and then, on the evening of 9 November, to Gravelly Point (Cape Vincent). During this time, the weather was "uncommonly fine." That changed the following day and the "threatening appearance of the weather" induced Chauncey to return to Sackets Harbor, where the *Lady of the Lake* anchored on 11 November.¹³³

That day, a letter from Secretary of War John Armstrong asked Chauncey to transport Brigadier General Lewis Cass' brigade from Fort George to Sackets Harbor. Chauncey was worried that the lateness of the season would cause the voyage to "be extremely unpleasant if not dangerous." His particular concern was ice buildup on his smaller vessels such as the armed merchant schooners and the *Lady of the Lake*:

*As soon as it is sufficiently cold to freeze, the Ice would make so fast upon them that they would soon become unmanageable ... the rigging and sides of the vessel cannot be cleared as upon the Atlantic — she of course very soon becomes almost a solid mass of ice.*¹³⁴

Nevertheless, hoping the weather would allow him to return to Sackets Harbor by 25 November, Chauncey sailed for Niagara on 12 November, accompanied by the *Lady of the Lake*.

Despite sailing into a westerly wind, it took only three days for Chauncey to arrive at Niagara where he met with Major General William Henry Harrison. That same day, he dispatched the *Lady of the Lake* to York under a flag of truce with a letter to Judges Thomas Scott and William Dummer Powell along with two boxes of books. This was a humanitarian mission. When his squadron anchored off York following its capture in April 1813, Chauncey "discovered that some of the men had pillaged a number of books belonging to the Toronto Library." Chauncey searched his vessels, located what books he could and had them boxed, but inadvertently they returned to Sackets Harbor along with the squadron. Chauncey now returned those books, adding,

*I have no doubt however, but that many others were taken by the soldiers and will be finally lost to the library but I am confident that it was owing to the extreme indisposition of General Dearborn that they were not collected and returned.*¹³⁵

Chauncey closed his letter to the British judges by asking them to

*Assure the Trustees of the Toronto Library that it has been a source of great mortification to myself and officers that so useful an institution should not have been deemed sacred by every person under our command.*¹³⁶

After delivering the letter and books, the *Lady of the Lake* rejoined Chauncey's squadron at Niagara. The next day, 16 November, the squadron took on board 1,100 troops and prepared to return to Sackets Harbor. Once again, the weather interfered. Gale force winds from the east, heavy rains and snow kept the squadron at anchor off Niagara until the night of 19 November when the wind shifted to the west and the squadron was able to sail. The stormy weather, however, continued and scattered the vessels. Chauncey, in the *General Pike*, arrived at Sackets Harbor the evening of 20 November. The *Lady of the Lake* arrived the following morning

¹³³ Isaac Chauncey to William Jones #106, 11 November 1813, SNLRC, 1813 vol 7 item 93, M125 roll 32.

¹³⁴ Isaac Chauncey to William Jones #107, 12 November 1813, SNLRC, 1813 vol 7 item 99, M125 roll 32,

¹³⁵ Isaac Chauncey to Mervine P. Mix and Judge Scott or Judge Powell, 15 November 1813, CLB 5.

¹³⁶ Isaac Chauncey to Judge Scott or Judge Powell, 15 November 1813, CLB 5. The reference to "Toronto" seems out of place for the time as almost all other references use "York" or "Little York," but that is what Chauncey wrote.

accompanied by the *Oneida*, *Conquest*, *Pert* and *Ontario*. The remainder of the squadron, most with damage to masts, rigging and sails, straggled in to Sackets Harbor over the next few days.¹³⁷

Although that was the end of the sailing season for most of Chauncey's squadron, the *Lady of the Lake* was not so fortunate. The British had imprisoned Thomas Goldsmith, an American seaman taken that summer on board the *Julia*, claiming he was a British deserter and subject to punishment. Navy Secretary William Jones ordered Chauncey to deliver a letter to Commodore Yeo at Kingston "announcing that a British prisoner of war had been placed in close confinement as a hostage for Thomas Goldsmith and to share his fate."¹³⁸ On 23 November, the *Lady of the Lake* sailed to Kingston to deliver that letter. She was back at anchor at Sackets Harbor by 25 November.¹³⁹

Following her return, Chauncey kept the *Lady of the Lake* and the large schooner *Sylph*

*Employed as long as the weather will admit for the purposes of occasionally looking into Kingston and watching the movements of the enemy.*¹⁴⁰

By mid-December, the sailing season was over. For the crew of the *Lady of the Lake*, the winter of 1813-1814 passed uneventfully.

Operations in 1814

As soon as the winter ice broke up in the harbor, Chauncey ordered Acting Lieutenant Francis Hoyt Gregory to assume temporary command of the *Lady of the Lake*, take on board twenty volunteers and up to fifteen Marines and

*Proceed off Presque Isle and if the enemy should not have any of his cruisers in the harbor you will run in and bring off or destroy a schooner which you will find built or building there you will also destroy or bring off any public property or provisions that you may find there provided it does not detain you more than six hours.*¹⁴¹

Later, Chauncey ordered the *Lady of the Lake* to cruise between the Gallows and Kingston to keep an eye on the British. This task was interrupted on 21 April 1814 when Master Commandant Melancthon Woolsey was ordered to "select four or five officers and from twenty to twenty five men and proceed in the *Lady of the Lake* to Oswego." His job was "to forward the guns and public property now on the way from Schenectady to this place."¹⁴² The stores came up the Mohawk River, down Wood Creek, across Oneida Lake, down the Oneida and Oswego Rivers to the village of Oswego on the shore of Lake Ontario. Chauncey hoped to have most of the stores,

¹³⁷ Isaac Chauncey to William Jones #111, #113 and #117, 21, 24 and 28 November 1813, SNLRC, 1813 vol 7 items 114, 126 and 138, M125 roll 32.

¹³⁸ Goldsmith ran with British seaman Richard Jones on 13 November 1814. They were caught on Stony Island on the 19th. Jones was court martialed on the 25th and hanged at Kingston the next day. Goldsmith testified on his behalf. Malcomson, Thomas, "Hanging Seaman Jones," *Inland Seas* 55:5 (1999) pp.315-327. Thanks to Tom Malcomson for providing this information.

¹³⁹ Isaac Chauncey to William Jones #112 and to James Lucas Yeo, 23 November 1813, SNLRC, 1813 vol 7 item 123, M125 roll 32.

¹⁴⁰ Isaac Chauncey to William Jones #117, 28 November 1813, SNLRC, 1813 vol 7 item 138, M125 roll 32.

¹⁴¹ Isaac Chauncey to Francis Gregory, 13 April 1814, CLB 5.

¹⁴² Isaac Chauncey to Melancthon Woolsey, 21 April 1814, SNLRC, 1814 vol 3 item 69, M125 roll 36.

and especially the guns needed for the new frigate *Superior*, at Sackets Harbor by 10 May.¹⁴³ The British had other plans.

By 24 April, the *Lady of the Lake* delivered Woolsey and his men to Oswego and was back off Kingston. That day there was a favorable breeze and Sailing Master Mix

[Ran] close into Kingston and showed his colors which were answered by the enemy's fleet and batteries — his old fleet lay moored off the town with all sails bent and top gallant yards across — a number of gun boats also appeared to be ready but one of the new ships had her lower masts in.¹⁴⁴

It was clear that the new British frigates *Prince Regent* and *Princess Charlotte* were almost ready for sea. Until his large frigate *Superior* was finished, Chauncey would be both outnumbered and outgunned.

After reporting the results of her reconnaissance to Chauncey at Sackets Harbor, the *Lady of the Lake* returned to her post off Kingston. On the evening of 4 May, she saw Yeo's squadron leaving Kingston and attempted to follow, but night fell as the British were standing into Amherst Bay. The following morning the *Lady of the Lake* looked into Amherst Bay, around the Ducks Islands and the Gallows but with no sign of the British. She then returned to Sackets Harbor to report.¹⁴⁵

The *Lady of the Lake* missed the British squadron because it had sailed to Oswego, where it arrived on the morning of 5 May. The next day the British attacked and captured Fort Ontario and the village of Oswego. They carried off provisions, a number of cannon, naval stores and the transport schooner *Penelope*. Meanwhile the *Lady of the Lake*, having reported to Chauncey, sailed to the Ducks Islands where she sighted one of the two new British frigates.

If Yeo's new frigates had not been in service, Chauncey planned to sail on 7 May to meet the British with his 1813 squadron augmented only by the new brig *Jefferson*. Now this was no longer possible, as he reported to Secretary Jones:

*Captain Woolsey writes me that the enemy had one of his large frigates with him and the Lady of the Lake saw the other off the Ducks yesterday, which has determined me not to risk an action with such disparity of force.*¹⁴⁶

On 4 May, while the *Lady of the Lake* was off Kingston, her captain, Sailing Master Mervine P. Mix, desiring a promotion to acting lieutenant, wrote to Navy Secretary William Jones. Mix enclosed very favorable letters of recommendation from Captain Arthur Sinclair, Major General James Wilkinson, New York's Governor Daniel D. Tompkins and Master Commandant William M. Crane. Notable by its absence, however, was any request or recommendation by Commodore Chauncey for Mix's promotion. Apparently impressed, and without first referring the question to Chauncey, Jones granted the promotion on 16 May 1814 and Mix learned of it on 27 May.¹⁴⁷ The record does not say if Chauncey knew of Mix's direct appeal to the Navy Department.

¹⁴³ Isaac Chauncey to William Jones #43, 22 April 1814, SNLRC, 1814 vol 2 item 104, M125 roll 35.

¹⁴⁴ Isaac Chauncey to William Jones #48, 25 April 1814, SNLRC, 1814 vol 2 item 173, M125 roll 35.

¹⁴⁵ Isaac Chauncey to William Jones #62, 5 May 1814, SNRC, 1814 vol 3 item 16, M125 roll 36.

¹⁴⁶ Isaac Chauncey to William Jones #64, 7 May 1814, SNLRC, 1814 vol 3 item 28, M125 roll 36.

¹⁴⁷ Mervine P. Mix to William Jones, 4 May 1814, SNLRO, 1813 vol 2 item 13, M148 roll 11, included in 1813's letters by error; Service Records, p.124.

The Monday night before the attack on Oswego, a small British boat with seven men on board snuck into Sackets Harbor and discovered the *Superior* afloat. The men spent the next two days hiding “in the bush.” On Thursday, 5 May, the boat’s crew attempted to sail to Oswego but encountered the *Lady of the Lake*. A chase developed but the British escaped by running their boat on shore and covering her with foliage. Later the men reached the British squadron at Oswego and reported their findings to Commodore Yeo.¹⁴⁸

On 11 May, the *Lady of the Lake* sighted Yeo’s squadron leaving Kingston augmented by a number of gunboats and transport schooners. She followed the British, chased several times by one of Yeo’s brigs. After several hours, she returned to Sackets Harbor to report the sighting to Chauncey. The *Lady of the Lake* then sailed again to watch for the British.

On 19 May Yeo’s squadron chased the *Lady of the Lake* into Sackets Harbor. Most of the British squadron then anchored between Point Peninsula and Stoney Island, about ten miles from Sackets Harbor. Two of their brigs anchored in the passage between Stoney Island and Stoney Point. For the first time in the war, Chauncey and his squadron, including the *Lady of the Lake*, found themselves blockaded in port. Chauncey hoped “that this mortifying situation is of short duration.”¹⁴⁹

Fortunately, the British defeat at Sandy Creek on 30 May, and the loss of boats and crew, convinced Yeo that to abandon his blockade of Sackets Harbor. On the morning of 5 June, Yeo sailed to the south and west. Noting their absence, Chauncey dispatched the *Lady of the Lake* to follow them. The following morning she returned to report that the British were near the Ducks Islands, presumably bound for Kingston.¹⁵⁰

To Chauncey’s relief the British blockade was broken, but the frigates *Superior* and *Mohawk* and the brig *Jones* must be ready for service as soon as possible. With that done, his force would be stronger than Yeo’s. Until then, the only vessel he could risk was the *Lady of the Lake*; all others remained at anchor in Sackets Harbor.

The month of July 1814 was a contentious time for Isaac Chauncey. The army commander on the Niagara Frontier, Major General Jacob Brown, believed that Chauncey promised he would receive naval support no later than early July. A delay in completing the *Mohawk*, “a violent fever that confined me for eighteen days,” and an unwillingness to let his squadron sail without him delayed his departure from Sackets Harbor until 1 August 1814.¹⁵¹ This delay almost led to Chauncey replacement by Captain Stephen Decatur. It did lead to an acrimonious exchange of letters between him and General Brown with Brown criticizing and Chauncey defending his

Rank	Number
Boatswain (McNally)	1
Boy	1
Lieutenant (Mix)	1
Master’s Mates (Boughton, Thompson)	2
Ordinary Seamen	2
Pilot (Flinn)	1
Purser’s Steward	1
Quarter Gunner	1
Seamen	10
Total	21

Table 3 – *Lady of the Lake*’s Crew as of 1 August 1814, Muster Roll dated 27 March 1815, T829 roll 125 pp.164-168

¹⁴⁸ Report of a British deserter, attachment to Melancthon Woolsey to Isaac Chauncey, 7 May 1814, SNLRC, 1814 vol 3 item 41, M125 roll 36.

¹⁴⁹ Isaac Chauncey to William Jones #76, 20 May 1814, SNLRC, 1814 vol 3 item 82, M125 roll 36.

¹⁵⁰ Isaac Chauncey to William Jones #89, 6 May 1814, SNLRC, 1814 vol 4 item 25, M125 roll 37.

¹⁵¹ Isaac Chauncey to William Jones #132, 10 August 1814, SNLRC, 1814 vol 5 item 84, M125 roll 38.

absence at Niagara. These letters found their way into the newspapers, to the embarrassment of the Navy Department.¹⁵²

At the end of July 1814, while at anchor in Sackets Harbor awaiting the *Mohawk*'s completion, some \$22.87 was spent on replenishing the *Lady of the Lake*'s deteriorating cabin furnishings. This sufficed for the rest of the summer but that fall the navy paid an additional \$17.19 for the same purpose. Both times the new items came from the Sackets Harbor firm of Samuel F. Hooker & Co.¹⁵³

On 1 August 1814, the *Lady of the Lake* finally sailed for Niagara with the rest of Chauncey's squadron. Light winds delayed their arrival until 5 August when they saw the British brig *Magnet* sailing for the mouth of the Niagara River loaded with troops, stores and gunpowder. Chauncey dispatched the *Sylph* and *Lady of the Lake* to capture her but before they could do so the *Magnet*'s captain ran her on shore at Four Mile Creek, just west of the Niagara River. Later, the *Magnet* was set on fire by her crew and destroyed.¹⁵⁴

Afterwards, Chauncey left three of his brigs at Niagara to watch the British vessels anchored in the Niagara River and took the rest of his squadron, including the *Lady of the Lake*, east to blockade Kingston.

In mid-August, while the *Lady of the Lake* was with the squadron off Kingston, Commodore Chauncey received a letter from Major General George Izard asking for information. Izard wanted to know the "means of transportation by water" for a portion of his army from Ogdensburg to "a point in Canada."¹⁵⁵ On 11 September, Chauncey detached the *Lady of the Lake* from the squadron off Kingston, and ordered her to return to Sackets Harbor with dispatches and to collect the mail.¹⁵⁶

Meanwhile, General Izard had arrived at Sackets Harbor and he wrote to Chauncey on 13 September asking for information about the British strength in and around Lake Ontario. Chauncey's reply two days later invited Izard to board the *Lady of the Lake* and join him on board the *Superior* off Stoney Island.¹⁵⁷ Unfortunately, Izard's two-brigade force arrived at Sackets Harbor at the same time as Chauncey's letter, and his "presence here is at present indispensable." Izard asked Chauncey if he could transport his 4,000 troops to the mouth of the Genesee River, sailing the morning of 18 September, otherwise the brigades would go by road.¹⁵⁸ The *Lady of the Lake* carried Chauncey's reply that he could not accommodate all of Izard's force but that he had recalled all the vessels cruising on the lake and would

Be ready to receive as many of your troops on the morning of the 18th as we can accommodate and transport them to Genesee river or any other point on Lake Ontario that you may wish to land them

¹⁵² Stephen Decatur to William Jones and Isaac Chauncey to William Jones #132, both 10 August 1814, SNLRC, 1814 vol 5 items 83 and 84, M125 roll 38; Philadelphia PA, *Pennsylvania Gazette*, 17 August 1814; Boston MA, *Boston Gazette*, 18 August 1814.

¹⁵³ Settled Accounts, Alphabetic Series, Chauncey, vouchers dated 30 July and 5 October 1814.

¹⁵⁴ Isaac Chauncey to William Jones #132, 10 August 1814, SNLRC, 1814 vol 5 item 84, M125 roll 38.

¹⁵⁵ George Izard to Isaac Chauncey, 11 August 1814, SNLRC, 1814 vol 5 item 121, M125 roll 38.

¹⁵⁶ Isaac Chauncey to William Jones #155, 17 September 1814, M125 roll 39.

¹⁵⁷ Isaac Chauncey to George Izard, 15 September 1814, SNLRC, 1814 vol 6 item 64, M125 roll 39.

¹⁵⁸ George Izard to Isaac Chauncey, 16 September 1814, SNLRC, 1814 vol 6 item 64, M125 roll 39.

*at — Probably the vessels that are at present in this vicinity could accommodate from 1500 to 2000 men.*¹⁵⁹

Chauncey's letter promised Izard that he would "afford you every assistance within my power."

Chauncey himself returned to Sackets Harbor on 17 September and met with Izard. The two men agreed to embark as many troops as the squadron could accommodate starting early the next morning. That night a heavy gale sprang up with a force so great "that it renders it unsafe for boats to pass from the ships to the shore."¹⁶⁰ By the afternoon of 19 September, the gale had apparently blown itself out and 3,000 of Izard's troops embarked, with the last man on board before sunset.¹⁶¹ Unfortunately, the weather again deteriorated, delaying the squadron, and the *Lady of the Lake*, until the morning of 21 September.¹⁶² The next morning they reached the mouth of the Genesee River, landed the troops and sailed for Sackets Harbor that evening, arriving off Stoney Island the morning of 24 September. By 28 September the squadron, including the *Lady of the Lake*, was back off the Ducks Islands blockading Kingston.

That morning Chauncey spotted two British warships attempting to leave Kingston. The squadron set off in pursuit but the weather, which had been hazy, became foggy, "so thick a fog that we could not discover objects more than a hundred yards." That afternoon the fog cleared somewhat and the British ships were sighted off Nine Mile Point, in a position for Chauncey to cut them off if they continued. The British declined an action and returned to Kingston. Chauncey reasoned

*That the enemy had learnt the movement of General Izard up the lake, and apprehending an attack upon General Drummond's army (which probably also was distressed for provisions) had induced him to put on board of these two ships, troops and provisions and risque them, for the relief of his army upon the Niagara frontier.*¹⁶³

In this Chauncey was correct. Lieutenant General Gordon Drummond's army was indeed short of supplies, as Chauncey's squadron had prevented any significant quantity of provisions from reaching Niagara by water for almost two months. That evening, the fog thickened and Chauncey put Lieutenant Charles S. Skinner and some additional seamen on board the *Lady of the Lake*

*With orders to anchor between Pigeon and Snake Islands, and if he discovered any movement of the enemy, to make me a signal with rockets or guns of his number &c.*¹⁶⁴

The following morning, 29 September, the fog cleared and Chauncey ordered the *Lady of the Lake* to sail close to Kingston to ascertain how close the new British 102-gun ship-of-the-line *St. Lawrence* was to being ready for sea. She returned with news that convinced Chauncey that "the enemy will be on the lake with his whole force in the course of a week" and then the British will "attempt to retrieve at Sackets Harbor what he lost at Plattsburgh."¹⁶⁵

¹⁵⁹ Isaac Chauncey to George Izard, 16 September 1814, SNLRC, 1814 vol 6 item 54, M125 roll 39.

¹⁶⁰ Isaac Chauncey to William Jones #157, 18 September 1814, SNLRC, 1814 vol 6 item 66 M125 roll 39.

¹⁶¹ Isaac Chauncey to William Jones #158, 19 September 1814, SNLRC, 1814 vol 6 item 68, M125 roll 39.

¹⁶² Isaac Chauncey to William Jones #161, 24 September 1814, SNLRC, 1814 vol 6 item 95, M125 roll 39.

¹⁶³ Isaac Chauncey to William Jones #167, 1 October 1814, SNLRC, 1814 vol 6 item 114, M125 roll 39.

¹⁶⁴ Isaac Chauncey to William Jones #167, 1 October 1814, SNLRC, 1814 vol 6 item 114, M125 roll 39.

¹⁶⁵ Isaac Chauncey to William Jones #167, 1 October 1814, SNLRC, 1814 vol 6 item 114, M125 roll 39.

On 1 October, Chauncey again ordered the *Lady of the Lake* to sail close to Kingston to reconnoiter. She rejoined Chauncey's squadron that day reporting no change in the state of Yeo's squadron and his new ship was still not ready for sea.¹⁶⁶

On 5 October, the *Sylph* repeated the *Lady of the Lake*'s earlier reconnaissance of Kingston. This time the *St. Lawrence* was, to all appearances, completely ready for sea. Two days later, at the request of New York Militia Brigadier General Oliver Collins, who believed that a British attack on Sackets Harbor was likely in the next ten days, Chauncey took his squadron, including the *Lady of the Lake*, into the harbor to discuss the state of the defenses with Collins.¹⁶⁷

On the evening of 16 October, the *Sylph* returned from a reconnaissance of Kingston to report that the entire British fleet, including the new ship-of-the-line *St. Lawrence*, was out and in a "line of battle" near the Ducks Islands. This force now badly outgunned Chauncey's and most of the American vessels would remain at anchor in Sackets Harbor for the remainder of the war.

The Problem With Lieutenant Mix

With the squadron now idle for the winter, most of Commodore Chauncey's officers found the thought of spending the next five months in the snow and frigid temperatures at Sackets Harbor, with little to do, very unappealing. Consequently, many of these men lost no time in applying to Chauncey for leave, furloughs to make merchant voyages, temporary transfers to duties on the Atlantic, permission to leave Sackets Harbor for medical reasons or any other excuse that would get them away from the lake. As Chauncey informed Navy Secretary Jones,

*Many of the officers appear to entertain erroneous opinions in regard to the service on the lakes. They think that when the season for cruising has passed in consequence of the frost that all duty ceases also when the contrary is the fact, for the winter is the season of fatigue and anxiety.*¹⁶⁸

Having experienced this situation during his two previous winters at Sackets Harbor, Chauncey knew it would be a struggle to maintain enough officers on Lake Ontario to meet even the reduced demands for their services. He was also well aware that once an officer left the station, for whatever reason, there was a good chance he would never see the man again.

Chauncey recognized that requests to leave Sackets Harbor for medical reasons were the hardest to deny, but also the ones most likely to be permanent. One who was aware of this fact was the *Lady of the Lake*'s commander, Acting Lieutenant Mervine P. Mix.

According to Surgeons John D. McReynolds and Walter W. Buchanan, who examined him at the Sackets Harbor naval hospital, Lieutenant Mix had been "indisposed" for some time. They certified that Mix "will probably not recover on this station and that we think it necessary he should be permitted to leave it."¹⁶⁹

¹⁶⁶ Isaac Chauncey to William Jones #168, 2 October 1814, SNLRC, 1814 vol 7 item 3, M125 roll 40.

¹⁶⁷ Isaac Chauncey to William Jones #169, 8 October 1814, SNLRC, 1814 vol 7 item 15, M125 roll 40. Brigadier General Oliver Collins commanded the 13th Brigade of militia in Oneida County, New York. He was ordered to Sackets Harbor to take command of a three brigade force to defend the harbor by New York's Governor Daniel D. Tompkins on 3 October 1814; *Public Papers of Daniel D. Tompkins, Military Vol. I* (Albany: Wynkoop Hellenbeck Crawford Co., 1898) pp.514-515.

¹⁶⁸ Isaac Chauncey to William Jones #198, 23 November 1814, SNLRC, 1814 vol 8 item 31, M125 roll 41.

¹⁶⁹ Certificate of Surgeons John D. McReynolds and Walter W. Buchanan, 18 October 1814, SNLRC, 1814 vol 7 item 66, M125 roll 40.

On 22 October, Mix, medical certificate in hand, applied to Chauncey for permission to leave Sackets Harbor and go to New York City to recover his health.¹⁷⁰ Most officers who found the winter climate at Sackets Harbor unhealthy asked to go to a place somewhat warmer than New York City. Also unusual was Mix's simultaneous request that encouraged Chauncey to "order me on the Recruiting Service" once he arrived. Chauncey took five days to respond, probably to confirm with Doctors McReynolds and Buchanan that Mix's medical condition was serious enough to warrant granting his request. Chauncey was apparently convinced and he approved Mix's request but with a condition. When his health improved, Mix must report himself to both the Navy Department and to Chauncey for further orders.¹⁷¹ Mix left Sackets Harbor for New York City shortly thereafter.

On 12 January 1815, while at New York City himself, Chauncey observed that Lieutenant Mix, now promoted to that rank by Congress, appeared perfectly healthy. As Chauncey complained to the new Navy Secretary Benjamin W. Crowninshield,

*It appears that the air of New York had such a wonderful effect on Mr Mix as to restore him to health immediately.*¹⁷²

Furthermore, while at New York City, Chauncey learned that

*Instead of reporting himself to the navy Department or myself as directed, he applied to Commodore Perry for employment who ordered him to open a rendezvous for his squadron.*¹⁷³

Obviously, Mix had no wish to return to Sackets Harbor or even be involved in any activity related to that station. Consequently, Chauncey, who was senior to Oliver Hazard Perry, ordered Mix to disregard Perry's orders and to open a rendezvous to recruit 500 desperately needed seamen for service on Lake Ontario.¹⁷⁴

To his intense annoyance, the very day Chauncey returned to Sackets Harbor from his trip to New York City and Albany, he found a letter from Mix

*Informing me that he had shown my instructions to Commodore Perry who directed him to continue to act under his former orders, while he is to disregard mine.*¹⁷⁵

Isaac Chauncey was not one to allow his prerogatives of command and seniority to be so flagrantly disregarded. He immediately wrote to Secretary Crowninshield describing the situation and observed that

*I am persuaded that you will not countenance a practice so fraught with ruin to the service as that of one officer interfering with the commands of another.*¹⁷⁶

¹⁷⁰ Mervine P. Mix to Isaac Chauncey, 22 October 1814, SNLRC, 1814 vol 7 item 66, M125 roll 40.

¹⁷¹ Isaac Chauncey to William Jones #185, 27 October 1814, SNLRC, 1814 vol 7 item 66, M125 roll 40; Isaac Chauncey to Mervine P. Mix, 27 October 1814, SNLRC, 1815 vol 1 item 73, M125 roll 42.

¹⁷² Isaac Chauncey to Benjamin W. Crowninshield #9, 25 January 1815, SNLRC, 1815 vol 1 item 73, M125 roll 42.

¹⁷³ Isaac Chauncey to Benjamin W. Crowninshield #9, 25 January 1815, SNLRC, 1815 vol 1 item 73, M125 roll 42.

¹⁷⁴ Isaac Chauncey to Mervine P. Mix, 12 January 1815, SNLRC, 1815 vol 1 item 73, M125 roll 42; Mix was commissioned a lieutenant on 9 December 1814.

¹⁷⁵ Isaac Chauncey to Benjamin W. Crowninshield #9, 25 January 1815, SNLRC, 1815 vol 1 item 73, M125 roll 42.

¹⁷⁶ Isaac Chauncey to Benjamin W. Crowninshield #9, 25 January 1815, SNLRC, 1815 vol 1 item 73, M125 roll 42.

Chauncey was as angry with Mix as he was with Perry, as he told Crowninshield that

*I have reason to believe that Mr Mix has not only deceived Commodore Perry but the Department as to the circumstances under which he was permitted to leave this station.*¹⁷⁷

As Mix was “still on the books of this station and drawing pay as commander of the *Lady of the Lake*,” Chauncey insisted that Mix obey his instructions.

Recognizing a serious problem when he saw it, Secretary Crowninshield immediately wrote to Chauncey informing him that Lieutenant Mix

*Has been ordered to report himself to you for duty under your command, and he will follow your orders in the recruiting service.*¹⁷⁸

Three weeks later, Chauncey ordered Mix to report to Master Commandant James Renshaw at New York City “and receive his instructions in regard to your recruiting men for Lake

Rank	Number
Lieutenant (Mix)	1
Master's Mate (Taylor)	1
Ordinary Seamen	10
Pilot (Flinn)	1
Purser's Steward	1
Quarter Gunners	2
Seamen	10
Total	26

Table 4 – *Lady of the Lake's Crew as of 1 January 1815, Muster Roll dated 27 March 1815, T829 roll 125 pp.164-168*

Ontario.”¹⁷⁹ Five days later, Chauncey received word that the war was over. He then ordered Mix to suspend all recruiting for the lakes.¹⁸⁰ On 10 March, Chauncey ordered Lieutenant Mix to return to Sackets Harbor as he was still on the list as the *Lady of the Lake's* commander, and was needed to take charge of drafts of men intended for Boston.¹⁸¹ This was not an order Mix wanted to obey. With the war over and probably expecting an order to return to the lake, Lieutenant Mix lost no time applying to the Navy Department for a furlough to take a merchant voyage to Europe. Now with no pressing need for his services at New York City and unaware of

Chauncey's need for him at Sackets Harbor, the department granted his request on 21 March. There is no record that Lieutenant Mix ever saw Sackets Harbor again.

With Mix absent, the *Lady of the Lake* was in the hands of Master's Mate Ezra R. Taylor. The remainder of the war passed uneventfully. Word of the Treaty of Ghent ending the war arrived at Sackets Harbor on 23 February 1815 and found the *Lady of the Lake* lying quietly at anchor in the harbor.

Life on Board

The smallest of Isaac Chauncey's purpose-built warships, the *Lady of the Lake* saw more active service than any other warship in his squadron. With a small crew, averaging only 25 men, on board a vessel no larger than most of Chauncey's armed merchant schooners and with only a one-gun armament requiring a limited amount of storage for gunpowder and shot, there was plenty of room below deck.

¹⁷⁷ Isaac Chauncey to Benjamin W. Crowninshield #9, 25 January 1815, SNLRC, 1815 vol 1 item 73, M125 roll 42.

¹⁷⁸ Benjamin W. Crowninshield to Isaac Chauncey, 8 February 1815, SNLSO, vol 12 p.29, M149 roll 12.

¹⁷⁹ Isaac Chauncey to Mervine P. Mix, 18 February 1815, CLB 6.

¹⁸⁰ Isaac Chauncey to Mervine P. Mix, 23 February 1815, CLB6.

¹⁸¹ Isaac Chauncey to Mervine P. Mix, 10 March 1815, CLB 6; Isaac Chauncey to Benjamin W. Crowninshield #46, 22 March 1815, SNLRC, 1815 vol 2 item 87, M125 roll 43.

Unlike many of Chauncey's warships, the crew of the *Lady of the Lake* remained mostly intact for much of the war. From the end of May 1813 until early 1814, Midshipman Wadsworth Loring, the schooner's steward, two quarter-gunners, ten seamen and four ordinary seamen (over 70% of the crew at any one time) served on board without interruption. Four seamen: Joseph Lowe, William Parker, John Swartz and David Talbert served on board for almost the entire war (from late May 1813 until 27 March 1815). These men, tempered by continuity of service in the same vessel, were undoubtedly responsible for the high level of performance achieved by the *Lady of the Lake* throughout the war.¹⁸²

It also appears that the *Lady of the Lake* was both a "happy ship" and a healthy one. Apparently, only one man died during the war, Seaman William Veazey on 20 August 1813, probably of disease although the cause of death is unknown. This might have been due to the limited time the *Lady of the Lake* spent in port during the sailing season. She was "on the go" more than any other vessel in Chauncey's squadron. Two members of the crew, Seaman William Johnson and Boy Francis Crane, deserted in 1814 but the only other recorded deserter, Seaman Paul Robertson, departed two days after word of the war's end reached Sackets Harbor.¹⁸³

Seaman Johnson, however, was an unusual case. He deserted on 26 February 1814, crossed into Canada, and arrived at Kingston on 4 March. He then willingly gave Commodore Yeo a detailed and reasonably accurate picture of the American shipbuilding effort at Sackets Harbor:

There are four vessels building at Sackets Harbour. The first a ship of 162 feet keel to carry 30 long 32 pounders on the main deck and 32 42 pounders carronades on the spar deck. the second the size of the Pike, to carry 30 long 24 Prs and two of 124 feet keel to carry 24 long 24 Prs each. The Madison is to have long 18 Prs and the Oneida brig to have 32 Prs carronades instead of 24.

The Sylph schooner they have made a brig and she is to mount 22 long 12 Prs.

*They are also building another schooner the size of the Lady of the Lake.*¹⁸⁴

Little is known about Seaman William Johnson other than he arrived on board the *Lady of the Lake* from Sackets Harbor at the beginning of 1814. It is possible that he served on another vessel on Lake Ontario beforehand but his name is such a common one that the records do not allow that to be determined with any certainty.

Punishments on board awarded by either Thomas Nichols or Mervine Mix, and there probably were some, were so unremarkable as to have escaped mention save that required in the *Lady of the Lake's* log books, none of which have survived from the war years. The available records do not list any member of the schooner's crew as having committed any offense so serious as to warrant a court martial's attention. Civil records for the area are also devoid of wartime cases involving the *Lady of the Lake*.¹⁸⁵

¹⁸² Muster Roll dated 27 March 1815, NAUS, RG45, *Miscellaneous Records of the Navy Department*, T829 roll 125 pp.164-168.

¹⁸³ Muster Roll dated 27 March 1815, NAUS, RG45, *Miscellaneous Records of the Navy Department*, T829 roll 125 pp.164-168.

¹⁸⁴ Attachment in James Lucas Yeo to John Borlase Warren, 5 March 1814, NAUK, ADM 1/2737, NAC film B-2941.

¹⁸⁵ NAUS, RG45, *Records of General Courts Martial and Courts of Inquiry of the Navy Department, 1799-1867*, M273 rolls 5-8; Records of the Court of Common Pleas for 1812-1815, Jefferson County Clerk's office, Watertown, New York.

New Duties

On 15 March 1815, Navy Secretary Crowninshield, ordered Commodore Chauncey to sell, at public auction, “all the schooners, barges, gun boats, and other small vessels on Lake Ontario, belonging to this department.” Crowninshield, however, recognized that it might not be wise to sell every vessel, so the same letter gave Chauncey an option.

*Should you be of opinion that the public interest would be promoted by retaining the Lady of the Lake, or any other small vessels, you will be pleased to do so.*¹⁸⁶

Chauncey replied, listing the small vessels he thought should be sold but also informing the secretary that he believed that

*The Lady of the Lake would render great service as a dispatch boat and to keep in check the smugglers which will swarm in great numbers on this lake.*¹⁸⁷

A month later, Secretary Crowninshield responded clarifying his previous order. Chauncey was to

*Advertise and sell all the vessels as mentioned in your letter, reserving the Lady of the Lake and one of the brigs for service on the lake.*¹⁸⁸

The brig Chauncey chose to keep in service was the 22-gun *Jones*. Six of the other seven purpose-built warships were moved into the harbor, securely anchored, disarmed, sails and rigging removed, and all their furniture and equipment placed in storage on shore. The exception was the *Oneida*, which served as a transport until the fall of 1815. Four of the warships would never sail again, the other two had future careers in the merchant service.¹⁸⁹

On 27 March 1815, Acting Master Commandant David Deacon and Lieutenants Philander A. J. P. Jones and Thomas W. Magruder took a draft of 180 men from the *Lady of the Lake*, *Madison* and *Sylph* to Boston via New York City for service on board the new ship-of-the-line *Independence*.¹⁹⁰ Afterwards, the crew of the *Lady of the Lake* consisted of men assigned generally to the naval station at Sackets Harbor and not specifically to the schooner.

On 1 July 1815, Isaac Chauncey officially resigned his post as naval commander-in-chief on Lake Ontario. That post was now the responsibility of Master Commandant Melancthon Taylor Woolsey.¹⁹¹

On 9 July 1815, the *Lady of the Lake* arrived at Niagara with Commodore Chauncey on board on his way to Queenston, Upper Canada. She joined the *Oneida*, *Jones* and two merchant schooners already there under Woolsey’s command. That evening, the squadron embarked a number of soldiers and sailed the next morning for Sackets Harbor.¹⁹²

¹⁸⁶ Benjamin W. Crowninshield to Isaac Chauncey, 15 March 1815, SNLSO, vol 12 p.65, M149 roll 12.

¹⁸⁷ Isaac Chauncey to Benjamin W. Crowninshield #48, 26 March 1815, SNLRC, 1815 vol 2 item 114, M125 roll 43.

¹⁸⁸ Benjamin W. Crowninshield to Isaac Chauncey, 18 April 1815, SNLSO, vol 12 p.105, M149 roll 12.

¹⁸⁹ The *Superior*, *Mohawk*, *General Pike* and *Jefferson* ended their days sunk in Sackets Harbor. The *Madison* and *Sylph* were out of service until recast as merchant vessels after 1825. The *Oneida* was scheduled to be sold in May 1815, but the bid price was too low and she was retained by the navy until sold in 1825.

¹⁹⁰ Service Records, pp.66, 103, 115.

¹⁹¹ Isaac Chauncey to Benjamin W. Crowninshield, 1 July 1815, SNLRC, 1815 vol 4 item 50, M125 roll 45.

¹⁹² Melancthon Woolsey to John Rodgers, 14 July 1815, NCLRC.

On 20 July, Woolsey sailed again for Niagara with the *Jones*, *Oneida* and *Lady of the Lake*. The squadron carried Major General Jacob Brown, his staff and troops destined for the “Western Posts.”¹⁹³ After her return from Niagara, the *Lady of the Lake* remained at anchor at Sackets Harbor for some weeks. Too small to be a stores transport, Woolsey recommended to the Board of Navy Commissioners in Washington that she enforce the revenue laws.

*I have the also the honor to inform you that I have had frequent intimations that smuggling is carried on pretty briskly — the Lady of the Lake is in good order to sail the lake the remainder of the season — your particular instructions on this head will be highly acceptable.*¹⁹⁴

On 22 August 1815, the Navy Department ordered Woolsey to have the *Lady of the Lake* cruise Lake Ontario and to instruct her commander

*To use his best exertions in aiding the Revenue Laws and its officers, and in preventing and detecting illicit trade.*¹⁹⁵

Secretary Crowninshield clarified these orders in a subsequent letter to Woolsey:

*You are hereby strictly enjoined to afford assistance to the collectors of the revenues with all the means in your power &c to prevent breaches of the revenue laws, by detecting smugglers, and all persons engaged in illegal trade, in order to their being brought before the proper tribunals for trial.*¹⁹⁶

This was the end of the *Lady of the Lake*'s life as a warship and the start of her six-year service as a revenue cutter, although she remained a part of the United States Navy.

Woolsey reacted quickly to his orders. He had already informed the Navy Commissioners that the *Lady of the Lake* was completely ready for service. Now he ordered her to cruise “the whole south coast along and around the islands” and to “to use every possible exertion to detect and bring in for adjudication, all who might be found in the open violation of the existing revenue laws.”¹⁹⁷ These cruises continued, broken only by periodic returns to Sackets Harbor for supplies and for one voyage down the St. Lawrence River, until winter ended the 1815 navigation season on the lake.

In early September 1815, Master Commandant Woolsey boarded the *Lady of the Lake* and sailed down the St. Lawrence River as far as Ogdensburg, returning to Sackets Harbor on the evening of 15 September. As Woolsey reported to the Navy Commissioners,

*I have acquired a pretty thorough knowledge of the navigation of the S^t Lawrence from the outlet of the lake to that place, say seventy miles. The navigation is intricate in the extreme, the river being full of islands and sunken rocks so that the ablest pilot requires a man almost constantly at the mast head to con the vessel.*¹⁹⁸

Woolsey's voyage was not without incident. On the night of 9 September, while returning to the *Lady of the Lake*, a squall upset one of her small boats and five men drowned: the *Lady of the Lake*'s commander, Sailing Master Henry Davis, master's mate and pilot Alexander Bouton,

¹⁹³ Melancthon Woolsey to John Rodgers, 20 July 1815, NCLRC.

¹⁹⁴ Melancthon Woolsey to John Rodgers, 5 August 1815, NCLRC.

¹⁹⁵ Benjamin Homans to Melancthon Woolsey, 22 August 1815, SNLSO, vol 12 p.193, M149 roll 12.

¹⁹⁶ Benjamin W. Crowninshield to Melancthon Woolsey, 21 December 1815, SNLSO, vol 12 p.242, M149 roll 12.

¹⁹⁷ Melancthon Woolsey to Benjamin W. Crowninshield, 12 January 1816, SNLRD, 1816 item 2, M147 roll 6.

¹⁹⁸ Melancthon Woolsey to Navy Commissioners, 16 September 1815, NCLRC.

Seamen John Ross and John Heartley and Ordinary Seaman James Haney. The next morning there was no sign of the men or the boat.¹⁹⁹

Later that month, Woolsey reported to John Rodgers, the president of the Board of Navy Commissioners, that he was badly in need of men:

*I have at present here one hundred and thirty four petty officers and men who are ordinarily called to labour; out of this number there are in the hospital nineteen, and on the Jones sick report about twelve; besides there are fourteen ship keepers which will leave my number of effectives only eighty nine men to do duty on board the Jones and Lady of the Lake and all constant labor on shore.*²⁰⁰

Since the *Lady of the Lake* alone required 20 men exclusive of officers, Woolsey's request was justified. Unfortunately, instead of increasing the station's complement the Navy Department was working to reduce it.

In the spring of 1816, as soon as the ice broke up, Woolsey sent the *Lady of the Lake* on a cruise enforcing the revenue laws. He appointed Lieutenant Samuel W. Adams to command her. He also recommended to Secretary Crowninshield that Adams receive the pay of a "Lieutenant-Commandant."²⁰¹

Adams received his midshipman's warrant in 1808, became an acting lieutenant at Sackets Harbor in November 1812 and commissioned a lieutenant on 24 July 1813. Before his arrival at Sackets Harbor, Adams served on board the frigates *Constitution* and *President* and gunboat #43. On Lake Ontario he served on board the *Madison* and *General Pike*, commanded the schooner *Pert* and was temporarily in command of the brig *Jones*.²⁰²



The *Lady of the Lake* left Sackets Harbor on her first cruise under Adams' command in late April 1816. After sailing for a few days between the St. Lawrence River and Oswego, she returned to Sackets Harbor on 1 May 1816.²⁰³

Two days later, the *Lady of the Lake* set out on another cruise. The next day she stopped, boarded and inspected the merchant schooner *Appelona* bound from Kingston to Henderson Harbor. The following day the *Charles and Ann* was stopped and boarded near the Ducks Islands. She was sailing from the Genesee River to Ogdensburg with a cargo of flour. At noon on 6 May, the *Lady of the Lake* anchored off Oswego until midafternoon. She then sailed for Stoney Island where she anchored for the night. At daylight on 7 May she found the schooner *Teazer* at anchor in the Stoney Island passage, bound from Sackets Harbor to the Genesee River in ballast. After inspecting the schooner, the *Lady of the Lake* returned to Sackets Harbor that afternoon.²⁰⁴ The next day she sailed again on her third cruise of the year.

¹⁹⁹ Melancthon Woolsey to Navy Commissioners, 16 September 1815, NCLRC; Muster Roll dated 1 January 1816, NAUS, RG45, *Miscellaneous Records of the Navy Department*, T829 roll 18 pp.192-202.

²⁰⁰ Melancthon Woolsey to John Rodgers, 23 September 1815, NCLRC.

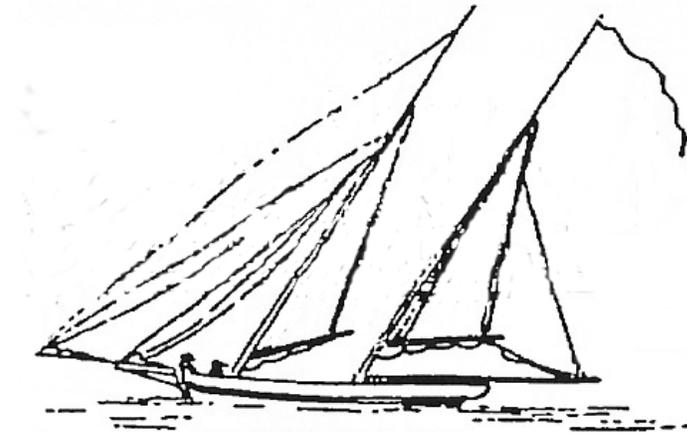
²⁰¹ Melancthon Woolsey to Benjamin W. Crowninshield, 28 March 1815, SNLRD, 1816 item 11, M147 roll 6.

²⁰² Service Records, p.27 (Adams).

²⁰³ Melancthon Woolsey to Benjamin W. Crowninshield, 1 May 1816, SNLRD, 1816 vol 2 item 97, M125 roll 49.

²⁰⁴ Journal of the *Lady of the Lake*, 3 to 7 May 1816, SNLRD, 1816 vol 2 item 107, M125 roll 49.

This was the schooner's normal routine for the next several years. A series of short five to eight day cruises on the lake between May and November, staying in American waters but, weather permitting, boarding and inspecting almost every vessel she encountered.²⁰⁵



The Lady of the Lake in 1816. From an ink sketch of the warships off Navy Point located at the Wisconsin Historical Society.

In May 1816, British intelligence incorrectly reported the *Lady of the Lake* as in use only as “a tender” carrying a single gun. However, the same report listed her as being armed with both a 32-pound and a 12-pound cannon.²⁰⁶

On 17 August 1816, the *Lady of the Lake* left Sackets Harbor and steered for Cape Vincent. The next morning heavy squalls delayed her departure for Grenadier Island until late that afternoon. The following day the *Lady of the Lake* stopped

and inspected the boat *Sophia* from Kingston bound for the Gallows in ballast. Two days later, it was the schooner *Nancy*'s turn. She was sailing from Pultneyville to Ogdensburg with a cargo of potash. On 22 August, the schooner *Henrietta*, sailing from Oswego to Cape Vincent with a cargo of potash, was inspected and released. The next morning the final inspection of the voyage was done of the boat *Lady Washington*, from Muskellunge Creek bound to Montreal with a cargo of staves. Afterwards the *Lady of the Lake* sailed for Sackets Harbor, arriving that evening.²⁰⁷

At the end of September 1816, the *Lady of the Lake* returned to Sackets Harbor from Niagara “where she had been with Colonel Hawkins and Major Roberdeau on their topographical view of our frontier.” While at Niagara, two seamen, William Banks and Andrew Dorsey, deserted to the British side of the Niagara River. Retaken, they later added mutiny to the charges. Banks' term of service was “too nearly elapsed to be tried by a Court Martial.” Dorsey's fate is unknown.²⁰⁸

After Lieutenant Adams made his report, the *Lady of the Lake* left Sackets Harbor on another cruise. In early October, she seized two boats on the lake for apparently violating the revenue laws. Woolsey questioned the propriety of this seizure but the Navy Department approved Lieutenant Adams' action.²⁰⁹

²⁰⁵ Between 8 May and 16 August 1816 the *Lady of the Lake* made at least six cruises on the lake. The logs have apparently not survived but letters referring to them were sent by Woolsey to the Navy Department. Melancthon Woolsey to Benjamin W. Crowninshield, 10 and 27 June and 22 August 1816, SNLRC, 1816 vol 2 items 161 and 192 and vol 3 item 67, SNLRC, M125 rolls 49 and 50.

²⁰⁶ William Fitz William Owen to Gordon Drummond, 16 May 1816, NAC, RG8, C.674 pp.33-34, roll C-3171.

²⁰⁷ Journal of the *Lady of the Lake*, 17 to 23 August 1816, SNLRM, 1816 vol 5 item 59, M124 roll 76.

²⁰⁸ Melancthon Woolsey to Benjamin W. Crowninshield, 28 September 1816, SNLRC, 1816 vol 3 item 117, M125 roll 50.

²⁰⁹ Benjamin Homans to Melancthon Woolsey, 28 October 1816, SNLSO, vol 12 p.418, M149 roll 22.

The following year the *Lady of the Lake* opened the season by acting as a transport and not a revenue cutter. On 1 May 1817, she left Sackets Harbor with Lieutenant Colonel Pinckey of the Second Infantry and his family on board, travelling to Niagara. On the way the *Lady of the Lake* saw but did not inspect the sloop *Acadia* of Sackets Harbor bound from Niagara to the Genesee River in ballast. On 3 May, Lt. Col. Pinckey and his family landed at Fort Niagara. The *Lady of the Lake* remained anchored in the Niagara River until late in the afternoon of 5 May when she sailed for the Genesee River. Once there she took on board fifty barrels of flour for the navy and sailed for Sackets Harbor, arriving on 11 May.²¹⁰

On 2 May 1817, as the result of the Rush-Bagot agreement between the United States and Great Britain, Secretary of the Navy Crowninshield ordered Woolsey to change the armament of the *Lady of the Lake* to one 18-pound cannon and to disarm all the other warships at Sackets Harbor to comply with that agreement.²¹¹ On 24 May, Woolsey reported he had done so and that the *Lady of the Lake* was now on her second cruise that year.²¹²

President Monroe

On 20 May 1817, Woolsey learned that President James Monroe planned to tour the northern frontier and would arrive at Sackets Harbor at a future time not yet determined. Secretary Crowninshield ordered Woolsey

*To have the U. S. Schooner Lady of the Lake properly equipped to receive the president and suite whom you will convey to the Head of Lake Ontario.*²¹³

Woolsey knew the *Lady of the Lake*, which Crowninshield had never seen, was much too small to accommodate a presidential party on a voyage to Niagara that could take several days depending on the weather. Woolsey wrote to Crowninshield that he had the brig *Jones* re-rigged and otherwise prepared to accommodate the president and his party

*With much more comfort to himself & in a more becoming style than in the Lady of the Lake which vessel will accompany the Jones as a tender and in her a part of the suite can be accommodated.*²¹⁴

At the same time, Woolsey asked for Crowninshield's permission to re-arm the *Jones* with "half her armament for the occasion and dismount it again as soon as the President shall have passed to the western Lakes."

Woolsey visited Kingston and while there learned from Commissioner Sir Robert Hall that the Royal Navy armed transport *Charwell*, much larger than the 100 tons permitted by the Rush-Bagot agreement, was being kept in service to transport Upper Canada's lieutenant governor, Sir Francis Gore, from York to Kingston on his way to England. Concerned that



James Monroe

²¹⁰ Journal of the *Lady of the Lake*, 1 to 11 May 1817, SNLRO, 1817 vol 2 item 195, M148 roll 18.

²¹¹ Benjamin W. Crowninshield to Melancthon Woolsey, 2 May 1817, SNLSO, vol 13 p.3, M149 roll 13.

²¹² Melancthon Woolsey to Benjamin W. Crowninshield, 24 May 1817, SNLRC, 1817 vol 2 item 105, M125 roll 53.

²¹³ Benjamin W. Crowninshield to Melancthon Woolsey, 20 May 1817, SNLSO, vol 13 p. 11, M149 roll 13.

²¹⁴ Melancthon Woolsey to Benjamin W. Crowninshield, 2 June 1817, SNLRC, 1817 vol 3 item 3, M125 roll 54.

It would appear to the inhabitants of this section of our country as an intended indignity if the President of the United States should not be received with equal or superior honors to those which are about to be paid to the governor of a petty neighboring province and he only clothed with civil powers.²¹⁵

Woolsey wrote John Rodgers, president of the Board of Navy Commissioners, that he had gone ahead and prepared both the *Lady of the Lake* and the *Jones* to receive the president and his party and that

Unless ordered to the contrary I shall mount on the Jones a sufficient number of guns to enable me to receive on board her in a manner becoming him, the chief magistrate of our nation. I do this because I am confident it will meet the approbation of the honorable board at which you preside.²¹⁶

When the Navy Commissioners received Woolsey's letter they lost no time in informing him that his confidence was misplaced. Their orders to retain only the *Lady of the Lake* in service must be obeyed. The *Jones* must remain out of service and "any deviation therefrom you will be responsible for."²¹⁷

Woolsey was not pleased to receive this letter with its implication that he had violated his previous orders. Nevertheless Woolsey "dismantled" the *Jones* as ordered but again stated his belief that

In preparing the best possible mode of conveying the President of the United States to Niagara I anticipated the wishes of the Navy Department and of the Board of Navy Commissioners.²¹⁸

On 1 August 1817, in preparation for the president's visit, the *Lady of the Lake*'s cabin was resupplied with candlesticks, bowls and a set of knives and forks.²¹⁹ Woolsey now learned that Major General Jacob Brown and his suite would accompany the president and his party on the voyage from Sackets Harbor to Niagara. With twice the number of important passengers as before, Woolsey knew there was no way the small schooner alone would be acceptable. The *Jones* remained technically dismantled, but usable if needed.

That was a wise move on Woolsey's part. President Monroe and General Brown and their suites arrived at Sackets Harbor on 4 June 1817. Brown was familiar with the *Lady of the Lake* and her accommodations from his service during the war, but she was new to President Monroe. When Monroe saw the *Lady of the Lake* it was obvious from her size alone that she would not offer any hope of a comfortable journey. Woolsey, of course, had a ready answer: put the *Jones* back in service. Disregarding the terms of the Rush-Bagot agreement and the prior orders of his own Navy Department,

The President finding the latter vessel [Lady of the Lake] not sufficiently large to accommodate himself & suite, General Brown and his staff ordered me to rig the Jones, which with what few men I have on this station was effected in a little more than twenty four hours.²²⁰

²¹⁵ Melancthon Woolsey to John Rodgers, 7 June 1817, NCLRC.

²¹⁶ Melancthon Woolsey to John Rodgers, 7 June 1817, NCLRC.

²¹⁷ John Rodgers to Melancthon Woolsey, 16 June 1817, NAUS, RG45, *Miscellaneous Records of the Navy Department*, T829 roll 288 p.251; Navy Commissioners Journal, p.99, *Miscellaneous Records of the Navy Department*, T829 roll 366.

²¹⁸ Melancthon Woolsey to John Rodgers, 27 June 1817, NCLRC.

²¹⁹ Purchased from Purser William M. Sands' private mercantile business on 1 August 1817 for \$34.52, *Account Bill Book* p.102, Archive #175, Jefferson County Historical Society, Watertown NY.

²²⁰ Melancthon Woolsey to John Rodgers, 19 August 1817, NCLRC.

The *Jones*, with Woolsey, the president, General Brown and members their staffs on board, sailed for Niagara on the morning of 6 August. The *Lady of the Lake* accompanied them, carrying more staff members and their baggage. The vessels arrived at Niagara two days later where the president and General Brown transferred to the *Lady of the Lake* to sail up the Niagara River to Lewiston. From there they proceeded by land past Niagara Falls and on to Buffalo. The *Jones* and *Lady of the Lake* were back at Sackets Harbor by 17 August.

Two days later, Woolsey wrote the Navy Commissioners summarizing the events of the president's visit. It was certainly satisfying for Woolsey to report that their orders to use only the *Lady of the Lake* were countermanded by the commander in chief. It must have been galling for the commissioners to learn that Woolsey's judgment had been correct all along. In that, they had no one to blame but themselves. Common sense should have caused them to realize that using a 500 ton armed brig to carry the president and his party was a much better and safer choice than sailing the lake on an 89-ton schooner. Woolsey did end his letter, however with the news that "the brig *Jones* is again dismantled."²²¹ There is no record that either the Navy Commissioners or Secretary Crowninshield made any further communication to Woolsey regarding this matter.

The Lady's Last Years in the Navy

At the beginning of the 1818 season, Captain Woolsey ordered the *Lady of the Lake's* commander, Lieutenant Samuel W. Adams, to start his first voyage as a mailman, delivering letters to the collectors of the customs at Oswego, Genesee River and Niagara.²²² Then he was to cruise for one week

*To prevent, as much as in your power lies, illicit trade; in order to effect which, you will be governed by your own discretion, and the advice of the collectors, in the choice of your cruising ground. In the execution of this duty special care must be taken, not to violate the territorial jurisdiction of a neighboring state; or unnecessary detention or vexation of, or to any, found navigating the waters of the United States — All who may be found evidently in the open violation of the existing revenue laws, you will bring or send on here for adjudication.*²²³

²²¹ Melancthon Woolsey to John Rodgers, 19 August 1817, NCLRC.

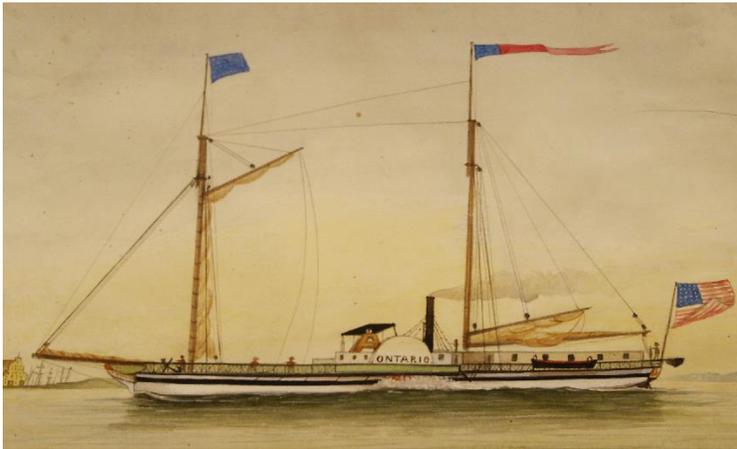
²²² The letters went to collectors Nathan Sage at Oswego, Jasper Hawley at the Genesee River and Robert Fleming at Niagara. Melancthon Woolsey to Benjamin W. Crowninshield, 5 May 1818, SNLRC, 1818 vol 2 item 56, M125 roll 58.

²²³ Melancthon Woolsey to Samuel W. Adams, 30 April 1818, SNLRC, 1818 vol 2 item 56, M125 roll 58.

Although these orders were similar to 1817's, in 1818 the *Lady of the Lake*'s first voyages were far from routine. After leaving Sackets Harbor on 30 April, the *Lady of the Lake* arrived the next day off Sodus Bay. There the wind shifted suddenly from southwest to north and increased. By midnight, the schooner was dealing with heavy squalls. The next morning the weather moderated, but the storm damaged the schooner's main boom. After making repairs, she returned to Sackets Harbor, arriving on 4 May. The *Lady of the Lake* then took on board a large anchor, cable and purchases to aid the steamboat *Ontario* that had run aground off Garrison Point near Oswego. She sailed for Oswego on 7 May but bad weather delayed her arrival until 10 May. At that point, the *Lady of the Lake* narrowly missed needing assistance herself, as her journal reported:

*At 10 AM weighed anchor and stood in for the river. Took a hawser from shore to warp in by: this was parted from the force of the current and we grounded on the east bar. At 7 P.M. got off the bar and stood to the northward five miles and lay to.*²²⁴

The *Lady of the Lake* spent almost eight hours aground at the mouth of the Oswego River but got off apparently without suffering any damage. The following day she anchored off Garrison Point, sent an officer and eight men to the *Ontario*, but failed to get the steamboat refloated. She then returned to Sackets Harbor and on 14 May received another anchor and "three purchase blocks." The next day the *Lady of the Lake* took on board a small boat belonging to the *Ontario* and thirty soldiers from Madison Barracks and returned to Oswego. That evening, the soldiers, aided by the



Steam boat Ontario approaching Sackets Harbor in 1826, from the James Van Cleave manuscript p.65. It probably looked the same in 1818.

equipment, refloated the *Ontario* but found her hull to be badly damaged. On 18 May, the steamboat was sufficiently repaired to proceed to Sackets Harbor. The *Lady of the Lake* escorted the *Ontario* until the steamboat entered the Stoney Island passage. With the *Ontario* now safe, the *Lady of the Lake* set her course to the westward to resume her duties enforcing the revenue laws.

This was not the end of the

matter; one of the items delivered by the *Lady of the Lake* to aid the *Ontario* was a large cable belonging to the Navy Department, which had been in storage at Sackets Harbor for several years. In refloating the *Ontario*, the cable

*Was parted in several places in consequence whereof Capt Woolsey refused to receive the same and has compelled your petitioner to give surety to the department for a new cable.*²²⁵

The principal owner of the *Ontario*, William Waring, petitioned the Navy Commissioners to be relieved from this requirement, claiming the loaned cable was not in good condition and "at that



A New York pilot boat in a storm. The Lady of the Lake would have had a similar experience

²²⁴ Journal of the *Lady of the Lake*, 10 May 1818, SNLRM, 1818 vol 3 item 150a, M124 roll 82.

²²⁵ William Waring to Navy Commissioners, 9 July 1821, NCLRC.

time affected with dry rot.” Waring, hoping to avoid the expense of shipping a replacement cable to Sackets Harbor, offered to replace it with a new cable but at New York City. Woolsey agreed that the facts stated by Waring were “substantially true” but he would prefer to have a “new hawser of from nine to twelve inches” delivered to Sackets Harbor as a replacement.²²⁶ Although it is certain that a replacement cable was provided, the record does not state where it was delivered.

The incident involving the steamboat *Ontario* was not the only time the *Lady of the Lake* had difficulty with the shallow waters near the shore of Lake Ontario. During her years as a revenue enforcement vessel, she grounded off Gravelly Beach (Cape Vincent) at least once

*In a bad time, and threw overboard a large quantity of cannon balls and pig iron ballast, diving for which years thereafter was a source of amusement and profit for the larger boys.*²²⁷

On 19 May, she boarded the schooner *Dove* sailing from Pultneyville bound to the Genesee River with a cargo of corn beer and fish. The next day, the schooner *Ontario* was inspected and found to be sailing from the Genesee River to Cape Vincent with a cargo of lumber. On 21 May, the *Lady of the Lake* arrived at Niagara and anchored in the Niagara River opposite Youngstown. She remained in the river until 25 May when she set sail for Sackets Harbor, arriving at 9 p.m. on 27 May.²²⁸

These voyages continued for the rest of 1818 and into 1819. Unfortunately, the record is silent as to most of the details. One exception occurred in August 1819 when the *Lady of the Lake* carried a number of “navy and army officers” from Sackets Harbor to Kingston where they dined “with the commissioner of the Navy.”²²⁹

In September 1819, Commodore William Bainbridge visited Canada, travelling from Niagara to Sackets Harbor in the steamboat *Ontario*, and then from Sackets Harbor to Kingston on board the *Lady of the Lake*. He then proceeded down the St. Lawrence River.²³⁰

By 1820, the *Lady of the Lake*'s sails were worn out and in February Woolsey asked the Navy Commissioners for permission to obtain a new set from New York City.²³¹ Although it is likely that approval was granted, as the schooner was still in service as a revenue enforcement vessel, no record of that approval or its associated expense has yet been found.

In May of 1820, Captain Woolsey was informed by the Secretary of the Navy that

*From this date no lieutenant attached to the station under your command is to receive any other pay than those of a lieutenant. The practice as far as has existed of paying the senior lieutenant of a navy yard or station as Lieut. Commt is hereby ordered to cease.*²³²

²²⁶ Melancthon Woolsey to Navy Commissioners, 6 August 1821, NCLRC.

²²⁷ Extract of a letter from Hamilton Colton, dated Milan, Ohio, August 18, 1876, Oswego NY, *Oswego Daily Palladium*, August 21, 1876.

²²⁸ Journal of the *Lady of the Lake*, 30 April to 27 May 1818, SNLRM, 1818 vol 3 item 150a, M124 roll 82.

²²⁹ Kingston UC, *Upper Canada Herald*, 17 August 1819.

²³⁰ Kingston. Upper Canada, *Kingston Chronicle*, 24 September 1819, referencing an article in the *Canadian Courant* that incorrectly had Bainbridge travelling from Kingston to York “in a small boat.”

²³¹ Melancthon Woolsey to Navy Commissioners, 28 February 1820, NCLRC.

²³² Samuel W. Adams to Melancthon Woolsey, 21 October 1821, SNLRC, 1820 vol 4 item 24, M125 roll 69.

Under this rule, Lieutenant Samuel W. Adams, who had commanded the *Lady of the Lake* since 1816, had his pay reduced from that of a lieutenant commandant (\$50.00 per month) to that of a plain lieutenant (\$40.00 per month). On 21 October 1820, Adams wrote to Woolsey stating his belief that this order should not apply to him. Woolsey, who had obeyed the order and reduced Adams' pay, asked Secretary Smith Thompson for instructions, stating his belief that Adams' reasons for receiving a lieutenant commandant's pay were "well grounded" as "The Lady of the Lake has been constantly in commission since the war." The protests were successful and Secretary Thompson replied, informing Woolsey "the order of the 12th of May will then not embrace the case of Lieut. Adams."²³³

In January 1821, the Navy Commissioners presented Navy Secretary Smith Thompson with a list of warships "so far decayed that they are unworthy of repairs." All the finished warships at Sackets Harbor were on that list except the *Lady of the Lake*, which was still employed as a revenue vessel.²³⁴ A report from Navy Commissioner David Porter at the end of October 1821 confirmed that the schooner was still "in commission."²³⁵ The end of the 1821 sailing season, however, was likely the last for the *Lady of the Lake* as a revenue vessel.

By the spring of 1822, the *Lady of the Lake*, badly worn from her years of continuous service, was in need of major repairs. Woolsey wrote the Navy Commissioners informing them that the work could be done using the materials on hand at Sackets Harbor but that he would need the "assistance of three carpenters in addition to those attached to this station" and he asked permission to hire them.²³⁶ There is no record yet found that approval was granted. Made out of unseasoned wood and now nine years old the *Lady of the Lake* was approaching the end of its useful life. As the Navy Department was already considering closing the lake stations, it is not likely that Woolsey's request was approved. Furthermore, later that same month Woolsey was informed by Navy Secretary Smith Thompson "there is no duty for a carpenter at Sacketts Harbour."²³⁷ There is also no record yet found that the *Lady of the Lake* ever sailed again as a revenue enforcement vessel.

On 3 January 1825, Captain Woolsey was ordered to report to Newport, Rhode Island to command the frigate *Constellation*.²³⁸ He left Sackets Harbor on 16 January leaving the naval station under the command of the *Lady of the Lake*'s former commander, Lieutenant Samuel W. Adams.²³⁹

On 3 March 1825, Congress passed a law authorizing the sale of the warships at Sackets Harbor.²⁴⁰ Three weeks later, Robert Hugunin of Oswego, New York, offered to buy the eight

²³³ Melancthon Woolsey to Smith Thompson, 22 October 1820, SNLRC, 1820 vol 4 item 24, M125 roll 69.

²³⁴ John Rodgers to Smith Thompson, 20 January 1821, NAUS, RG45, *Miscellaneous Records of the Navy Department*, T829 roll 341 pp.497-503. The incomplete ships-of-the-line *New Orleans* at Sackets Harbor and *Chippewa* at nearby Storrs Harbor were also preserved.

²³⁵ David Porter to Secretary of the Navy, 27 October 1821, NAUS, RG45, *Miscellaneous Records of the Navy Department*, T829 roll 341 pp.547-550.

²³⁶ Melancthon Woolsey to John Rodgers, 2 April 1822, NCLRC.

²³⁷ Smith Thompson to Melancthon Woolsey, 24 April 1822, SNLSO, vol 14 p.302, M149 roll 14.

²³⁸ Samuel L. Southard to Melancthon Woolsey, 3 January 1825, NAUS, RG45, *Miscellaneous Records of the Navy Department*, T829 roll 384 p.293.

²³⁹ Samuel L. Southard to Melancthon Woolsey, 20 January 1825, SNLSO, vol 15 p.467, M149 roll 15.

²⁴⁰ *Public Statutes at Large of the USA*, Vol 4, 18th Congress 2nd Session, Chapter 101 (Boston: Little & Brown, 1846). S.Doc 2, United States Senate, 19th Congress 1st Session, December 2, 1825.

square-rigged warships for a total price of \$8,000.²⁴¹ On 13 April, the Navy Department accepted Hugunin's offer, probably the only one they received.²⁴² Hugunin also offered to pay \$500.00 for the *Lady of the Lake* and the fourteen remaining gunboat/barges sunk at Storrs Harbor, a sum Lieutenant Adams believed was more than they might bring at public auction.²⁴³

Adams informed Hugunin that his offer to purchase the *Lady of the Lake* and the gunboats separately could not be accepted until he received instructions from the Navy Department.²⁴⁴ By early May, Hugunin had changed his position and he now claimed that the *Lady of the Lake* and the gunboats were included in the purchase as his bond required him to raise and remove "all U.S. sunken vessels in the port of Sackets harbor."²⁴⁵ On 11 May 1825, the Navy Commissioners informed Adams that the *Lady of the Lake* and the gunboats were definitely not included in Hugunin's purchase and they must be sold separately. On 6 June Lieutenant Adams reported that the sale was complete.²⁴⁶

On 1 August 1825 some of the *Lady of the Lake*'s equipment was sold at auction at Sackets Harbor. Her standing rigging was sold to Sackets Harbor merchant Hunter Crane for \$48.00 and her sails to William Johnston for \$125.00.²⁴⁷

In Merchant Service

Beginning shortly after her purchase, the *Lady of the Lake*, now owned and captained by John Rogers, operated as a packet boat carrying passengers and small amounts of cargo between Niagara and York (now Toronto).

The *Lady of the Lake* was enrolled and received registration #2 at Sackets Harbor on 30 September 1826. The registration and enrollment listed John Rogers as the owner and master and the schooner's tonnage as 49.43. For some reason she was again enrolled, temporarily, at Sackets Harbor by John Rogers five days later and the registration was surrendered the next day, 6 October 1826.²⁴⁸ Given her reported regular use as a packet between two Canadian ports, this short-term registration must have been required by a special voyage that included taking on cargo or passengers at Sackets Harbor.

²⁴¹ Robert Hugunin to William Bainbridge, 23 March 1825, enclosed with a letter from Lieutenant Samuel W. Adams to Bainbridge, 28 March 1825, NAUS, RG45, Entry 220, *Letters to Navy Commissioners from Sackets Harbor*. Lt. Adams replaced Melancthon Woolsey as commandant at Sackets Harbor.

²⁴² Samuel W. Adams to William Bainbridge, 9 May 1825, NAUS, RG45, Entry 220, *Letters to Navy Commissioners from Sackets Harbor*. Adams was acknowledging Bainbridge's letter of 13 April.

²⁴³ Samuel W. Adams to William Bainbridge, 28 March 1825, NCLRC.

²⁴⁴ Samuel W. Adams to Robert Hugunin, 26 April 1825, NCLRC.

²⁴⁵ Samuel W. Adams to William Bainbridge, 9 May 1825, NCLRC.

²⁴⁶ Samuel W. Adams to William Bainbridge, 6 June 1825, NCLRC. An attachment gave an account of the sale but has become detached from the letter and was not found.

²⁴⁷ Records of auction sales by Auctioneer Hiram Steele, 1 August 1825, NAUS, RG217, *4th Auditor Settled Accounts*, Alphabetic Series, Steele, Box 2528.

²⁴⁸ Enrollments at Sackets Harbor NY, #2 on 30 September 1826, temporary registration on 5 October and registration surrendered on 6 October 1826, NAUS, RG41, *Records of the Bureau of Marine Inspection and Navigation, Certificates of Enrollment issued at Sackets Harbor, New York*.

On 24 November 1826, with the sailing season over, the *Lady of the Lake* left York heading for Rogers' home at Oswego for the winter.²⁴⁹ Rogers reportedly had with him some \$1,300 in Upper Canada bills. On board as passengers were a lady from Oswego, her two children, her sister and her father. The *Lady of the Lake* never arrived. She was supposedly caught in a November gale and lost. All on board, including Captain Rogers and three hands, were never seen again and presumably drowned.²⁵⁰

In February 1827, following a jury trial, two men named Chapel and St. Johns were awarded a judgment for \$113.63 against the *Lady of the Lake* for some cause not specified by the surviving court records. Chapel was awarded \$70.50 and St. Johns \$43.13.²⁵¹

The wreck of the *Lady of the Lake* was supposedly discovered in July 1827, three miles east of Oswego in water shallow enough to see that "her masts and booms are lying at her sides where it would seem they had been lashed previous to her sinking."²⁵² If this report is true, and the wreck was the *Lady of the Lake*, either the schooner had been dismasted by the storm in a very unusual way or the sinking was intentional. If the latter, what happened to the passengers, crew and Captain Rogers? No bodies or wreckage were ever found.

Commanding Officers

Name and Rank	Dates in Command
Sailing Master Thomas Nichols	6 April 1813 to 13 July 1813
Sailing Master Mervine P. Mix	13 July 1813 to 16 May 1814
Acting Lieutenant Mervine P. Mix	16 May 1814 to 9 December 1814
Lieutenant Mervine P. Mix	9 December 1814 to 21 March 1815
Sailing Master Henry Davis	21 March 1815 to 9 September 1815
Unknown	9 September 1815 to 28 March 1816
Lieutenant Samuel W. Adams	28 March 1816 to November 1821

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²⁴⁹ Articles in the Ogdensburg NY St. Lawrence Gazette of 6 February 1827 and the *Upper Canada Gazette* of 17 February 1827 claim the sailing date was 13 December 1826.

²⁵⁰ Kingston UC, *Upper Canada Herald*, 30 January and 7 August 1827; Ogdensburg NY, *St. Lawrence Gazette*, 6 February 1827; Extract of a letter from Hamilton Colton, dated Milan, Ohio, August 18, 1876, Oswego NY, *Oswego Daily Palladium*, August 21, 1876; Oswego NY, *Oswego Daily Palladium*, January 20, 1877.

²⁵¹ Records of the Jefferson County NY Court of Common Pleas, County Clerk's Office, Watertown NY.

²⁵² Sackets Harbor NY, *Freeman's Advocate*, 2 August 1827.

Reference Abbreviations

To shorten and simplify the source references that appear in the notes I have used a set of abbreviations. These are:

AF	NAUS, RG45, <i>Area File of the Naval Records Collection</i> , Area 7.
ASP	<i>American State Papers, Naval Affairs</i> , Volume 1.
CLB	Isaac Chauncey's <i>Letterbooks</i> , Manuscript Department, New York Historical Society (#'s 1, 2, 5 & 6) & William L. Clements Library, University of Michigan (#'s 3, 4, & 7).
NAC	National Archives (Canada)
NAUK	National Archives (United Kingdom)
NAUS	National Archives (United States)
NCLRC	NAUS, RG45, Entry 220, <i>Navy Commissioners Letters Received from Commandants</i> .
RG	Record Group
Service Records	Gibson, Gary M., <i>Service Records of U. S. Navy and Marine Corps Officers Stationed on Lake Ontario During the War of 1812</i> , Second Edition (Sackets Harbor, 2012).
Settled Accounts	NAUS, RG217, <i>Records of the Accounting Officers of the Treasury, Fourth Auditor Settled Accounts</i> .
SNLRC	NAUS, RG45, <i>Letters Received by the Secretary of the Navy From Captains ("Captain's Letters")</i> .
SNLRD	NAUS, RG45, <i>Letters Received by the Secretary of the Navy from Commanders</i> .
SNLRM	NAUS, RG45, <i>Letters Received by the Secretary of the Navy From Miscellaneous</i> .
SNLRO	NAUS, RG45, <i>Letters Received by the Secretary of the Navy From Officers Below the Rank of Commander</i> .
SNLSC	NAUS, RG45, <i>Letters Sent by the Secretary of the Navy to Commandants and Navy Agents</i>
SNLSM	NAUS, RG45, <i>Miscellaneous Letters Sent by the Secretary of the Navy</i> .
SNLSO	NAUS, RG45, <i>Letters Sent by the Secretary of the Navy to Officers</i> .
SNPLB	NAUS, RG45, <i>Secretary of the Navy's Private Letter Book</i> , microfilm publication T829 roll 453.
Tompkins Papers	<i>Public Papers of Daniel D. Tompkins</i> , Military, 3 volumes (Albany, 1898, 1902).
WLB	Melancthon Woolsey's <i>Letterbook #3</i> , <i>Woolsey Family Papers</i> , Burton Historical Collection, Detroit Public Library, Detroit, MI.
Woolsey Journal 5	Melancthon Woolsey's <i>Journal #5</i> , <i>Woolsey Family Papers</i> , 52.MSS Box 95, WFP.2 JOU.1-5, Oneida County Historical Society, Utica NY.