

BATTLE OF SACKETTS HARBOUR

An American report dated SACKETT'S HARBOUR May 31 - 1813, reported that on

"Thursday evening last, the British fleet, consisting of the Wolfe, 24 guns,; Royal George, 24, each ship; the Earl; Moira, 18 Guns, a brig; and the Prince Regent, Simcoe and Seneca, schooners, mounting from 10 to 12 guns each, and two gunboats, with about 40 flat-bottomed boats and barges, under the command of Sir James Lucas Yeo, having on board 1200 men, under Sir George Prevost, sailed from Kingston, and on Friday the 28th appeared off this harbour; the day was fair, the wind was light, and at noon became a leading breeze for the enemy's vessels; the fleet hove to at five miles distance, and transferred their men to the barges for disembarking; they then bore up at about two o'clock with their barges in tow - they had stood their course but a short time when they discovered a fleet of our barges with troops from Oswego coming round Stoney Point".

This attack was an army maneuver organized and under the overall command of Sir George Prevost. The British troops "island hopped" in barges around the end of the lake in order to surprise the Americans.

The bulk of the American fleet was at Niagara at the time. The Naval Officers left in charge of the Sackett's Harbour station

"set fire to the Naval Storehouse, Hospital and Marine Barracks, by which all the immensely valuable stores taken at York were destroyed and all the stores for the use of the fleet, and the new ship that was deposited there ,were consumed. The Prize Schooner Duke of Gloucester was preserved by Lieut Talman of the army, who boarded the prize, extinguished the fire and brought her from under the flames of the storehouses - this vessel contained a considerable quantify of gunpowder. Schooners Fair American, Lieut. Chauncey (the commanding officer at this time), and the Pert, Lieut Adams, the only vessels at Sackett's Harbour, cut the cables and retreated up the river; the invalid Officers and seamen spiked what few guns they had upon Navy Point,, went off in boats after setting fire to the storehouses.

The village was left almost defenseless. The bulk of the American fleet had left for Niagara a few days before in detachments of three or four vessels at a time. The USS *Madison* had left a day or two before.

Commodore Yeo's said his only wish was to engage the American fleet, and suspecting that they had gone to land their troops at Kingston, immediately returned to avoid having his fleet being caught divided.

On Tuesday June 1 the American fleet returned after its operation at Niagara. The British fleet was then at Kingston, having not been seen off Sackett's harbour since the day of the attack.