

The first stage towards Montreal was leaving Sackett's Harbor for Grenadier Island, a distance of a few miles, which, owing to storms, was accomplished with difficulty. The choice of that island for rendezvous was designed to confirm Prevost's belief that Kingston was to be attacked. On the 29th October all was ready for the next stage, to reach Bush creek, 20 miles farther down the river, where the cavalry and field artillery, who had gone forward by land, were to be in waiting to be ferried to the north bank of the St Lawrence. Again the winds were against the boats, and it was not until the 2nd November that the embarkation of the army began. On the evening of the next day they encamped at French creek. The British were kept informed by their spies of what was going on, and Lieut. Mulcaster with several small gunboats was watching for an opportunity to attack when Chauncey, with a much superior force, appeared. Mulcaster then sailed to Kingston, confirming the news that the expedition was not designed to attack that place, but was bound for Montreal.

On the 4th November the flotilla ought to have been under weigh, but bungling had kept back part of the supplies and the day was lost. On the 5th there was no further excuse for delay. The flotilla emerged from French creek, opposite Gananoque, and streamed downwards. Neither before nor since has Old St Lawrence been the scene of a grander spectacle. There were nigh 350 boats, bearing an army of over 9000 men, with a large contingent of sailors and pilots for the management of the boats. The procession, five miles long, was gay with flags and uniforms, the choruses of the boatmen and the music of fife and drum adding joyous exaltation to the faith of all on board that this armada of the inland seas was sweeping onward to assured victory. It was a charming day, the Indian summer having set in, and such progress was made that before sunset 40 miles had been covered. That night the army encamped at Morristown opposite Brockville. Next day was spent on the sail to Ogdensburg, which was neared at dark. The batteries of Fort Wellington in Prescott were greatly feared. Instead of running the gauntlet at once Wilkinson signalled the flotilla to tie up. The ammunition was loaded on carts and every man unneeded to manage the boats sent to march, under cover of darkness, on the U.S. river bank, to a bay 2 miles below Ogdensburg, where the boats would pick them up next morning. This delay caused the 7th to be lost which was the more deplored by the U.S. staff from its being warm and fine. The boats remained tied up all day