

rendered important services to Commodore Chauncey in the capture of Fort George. On his way there, he stopped at Black Rock, near Buffalo, to hasten the arming and outfitting of the five merchant schooners, and on his way back to Erie he took with him from Chauncey's fleet a few men, and borrowed two companies of infantry from the army, with which he manned the vessels and sailed to Erie. It was a Herculean labor to drag these vessels by land up the rapids at Black Rock into the Lake, and required nearly a week with two hundred men, who warped them with ropes over their shoulders. Soon after getting safely into the Lake off Buffalo, we sailed for Erie. On the day following, Captain Perry was taken down with fever. On the next succeeding day, a small boat with two men appeared under the lake-shore, rowing toward our vessels. They brought us intelligence from Erie that the enemy had just appeared there, and was probably in pursuit of us. Perry immediately took the deck, and gave orders to the other vessels to prepare for action, and to board the enemy should he come near us. Fortunately we were not discovered, and on the evening of the next day our little squadron entered Erie in safety.

No one who hears me can form any idea of the difficulties encountered in obtaining cordage, canvas, cannon, powder and balls, and all other outfits, which were to be brought to Erie mostly from the seaboard, a distance of four or five hundred miles, over bad roads. Notwithstanding under the direction of the Rhode Island officers, the work progressed rapidly and successfully. A regiment of Pennsylvania militia was tented on a ground near the shore where our fleet lay; and whenever the enemy looked in upon us, at the harbor of Erie, which they did every few days, this regiment of militia paraded, and made a formidable appearance upon the high bank of the lake, as a repelling force, but in reality, had the enemy approached to destroy our fleet, could have done little to prevent it. They however served as a sort of scare-crow, to frighten him away.

The enemy, on learning that a fleet was preparing to gain possession of the lake, had early in the spring laid the keel of a ship larger than had ever floated upon the lake, which added to their other vessels, made their fleet to consist of the following