

## Under Owen's Direction

Owen saw and thoroughly agreed with Yeo's letter to Prevost, regarding what to do on the lakes.<sup>24</sup> Besides the measures to secure lake Ontario Sir James urged the re-establishment of a naval presence on Lake Erie, as quickly as possible. Commodore Owen wrote Croker at the Admiralty informing him that all the ships were in some state of being dismantled, except HMS *Psyche*, which still needed some gun carriages. The brig HMS *Niagara* had wintered at York, allowing Collier with some of his crew and a party of artificers, to proceed to Penetanguishene. He told the Admiralty that he would use the two schooners on Lake Huron to supply the British at Mackinac Island, which they had captured from the Americans in 1812. Owen ordered Captain Edward Collier to proceed to Fort George and raise the two schooners captured at Fort Erie, and sunk at the mouth of the Chippawa. They would serve as transports for the army on Lake Erie. The schooners were named *Sauk* (former *Ohio*) and *Huron* (former *Somers*) and Owen sent officers and eighteen men for each one.<sup>25</sup>

*Sauk* and *Huron* proved not to be effective, however, so Owen ordered two transports to be built for Lake Erie, to be named *Newash* and *Tecumseth*.<sup>26</sup> They would each be fitted for two long guns and two carronades, but would go unarmed in peacetime. After Drummond approved of the project, Owen sent Kingston Dockyard Commissioner Sir Robert Hall and a party of shipwrights to build the vessels, a mile up the Chippawa River from the Niagara River, at Street's Farm. The frames and planks were taken from the trees along the Chippawa and Niagara Rivers. All other stores for the ships, including rigging and sails came from Kingston's naval supplies.

Owen had written Hall, from Quebec, about his intentions for construction, after seeing Yeo's letter and discussing its contents with Prevost.<sup>27</sup> He wanted the two first rates to be brought forward to a state ready for launching, but kept on the stocks to season. Fearing the rumoured advanced state of the two American first rates, Owen urged Hall to work quickly, to regain the lead. All other expenses were to be curtailed, except where work was needed to keep ships ready to re-engage in war. Commissioner Hall had released the parties of contracted shipwrights for one of the two first rate ships and sent them away upon hearing the news of peace.

---

24 Owen to Corker, 4 March 1815, LAC, In-letters, ADM 1/2262, 67-8. This letter contains the letter noted from Yeo detailing American ship building at Sackets Harbour. Yeo to Croker, 20 January 1815, LAC, ADM 1/2738, 46-7; Yeo to Croker, 25 February 1815, LAC, ADM 1/2738, 78-9.

25 Owen to Hall, 16 April 1815, LAC, ADM 1/2262, 159-9b. Hall to Myers, 21 May 1815, LAC, RG 8, v. 695, mfr. C3234, p76-7. The schooners cost £950, in total. Owen to Drummond, 13 June 1815, LAC, RG 8, v. 735, mfr. C3244, 23-8.

26 Owen to Drummond, 4 April 1815, LAC, RG 8, V. 734, mfr. C3244, 66-8; Foster to Murray, 8 April 1815, LAC, Military Secretary Letter Book, Foster, [MSLB-Fo], RG 8, v. 1235, mfr. C3528, 5-6. Owen to Drummond, 14 April 1815, LAC, RG 8, v. 370, mfr. C2932, 11-17. See, Leeanne E. Gordon, "Newash and Tecumseth: Analysis of Two Post-War of 1812 Vessels on the Great Lakes" (master's thesis, Texas A&M University, 2009).

27 Owen to Hall, 10 March 1815, LAC, ADM 1/2262, mfr. B2635, 75-6.