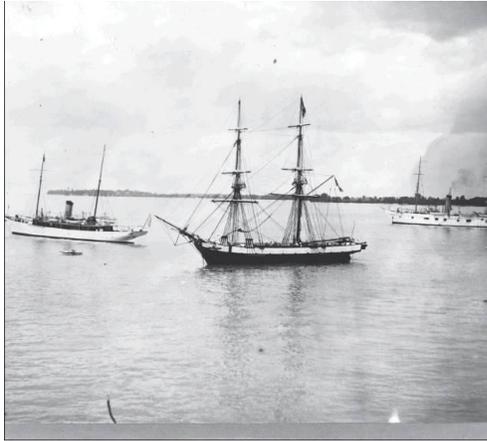


# Remembering the Battle of Lake Erie

6-23-2018 By CAITLIN NEARHOOD, Sandusky Register



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Oliver Perry's flagship the "Niagara" and two other ships in Put-in-Bay Harbor on the scene of the Battle of Lake Erie in 1813.

## SANDUSKY

It's a historical event you may remember learning about in history class. And it's an important part of America's history.

During a recent educational event, Sandusky Maritime Museum executive director Annette Wells explained how the Battle of Lake Erie played out, which occurred Sept. 10, 1813, during the War of 1812. The battle involved American naval forces fighting the British to determine who had control

over Lake Erie, a vital resource for trade and travel during that time.

American commander Oliver Perry controlled nine vessels, while British commander Robert Barclay had six ships. The Americans primarily used carronades, or short-barreled weapons that could shoot projectiles up to a half mile. Great Britain mostly used cannons, which could shoot cannon balls up from three-quarters to a mile away.

The battle occurred near South Bass Island. British forces, who were stationed near Detroit, traveled to the area to fight American forces. In the battle's early stages, the British badgered American vessels and destroyed the Lawrence, the command ship on which Perry was aboard.

To stay alive, Perry took the ship's flag with the message "Don't Give Up the Ship" as he moved to the Niagara, a ship that had almost no damage. It was after Perry arrived on the Niagara the Americans took control of the battle, inflicting heavy damage to British ships and killing many in the British navy. Later that day, British forces raised a white flag, signaling their surrender.

At the battle's end, 27 Americans were killed with about 96 wounded. The British, however, lost 40 men and about 94 people were wounded. A number of American and British men are buried under Perry's Victory and International Peace Memorial on South Bass Island, Wells said.

With the Americans' victory, the Battle of Lake Erie forced the British to abandon Detroit and cut off their trade lines.

Wells explained why the battle is vital for area residents to remember. "This is part of our heritage," she said. "Being in the Sandusky area, we've always known the water is important, but here's a good example of just how important it is. Nowadays, it's important for tourism, but back then (the lake) was a major source of transportation. It was so important we were willing to go to war about this, for our territory. You basically had this bloody naval battle that happened in our front yard just because everybody wanted control of the lake.

"Even though the reasons we use it now are different, it's definitely maintained its importance to all the communities in northern Ohio," she said.