

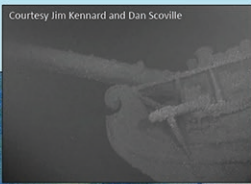
# LAKE ONTARIO

## BRIG-SLOOP HMS ONTARIO

### Against the Rebels

HMS *Ontario* was constructed by the British at Carleton Island in 1780 during the American Revolution.

This Brig-Sloop had two masts and 22 guns, but was up against a more powerful foe than the Rebels: mother nature. Sailing to Oswego from Niagara on October 31, 1780, HMS *Ontario* was overcome by a fierce storm, claiming the lives of at least 88 men, women, and children.



Ontario at Rest, by Robert Averill. Courtesy Quarry Heritage Press and Arthur Britton Smith

*Every person on board  
of her has perished.*

- Alexander Fraser  
Nov. 8, 1780

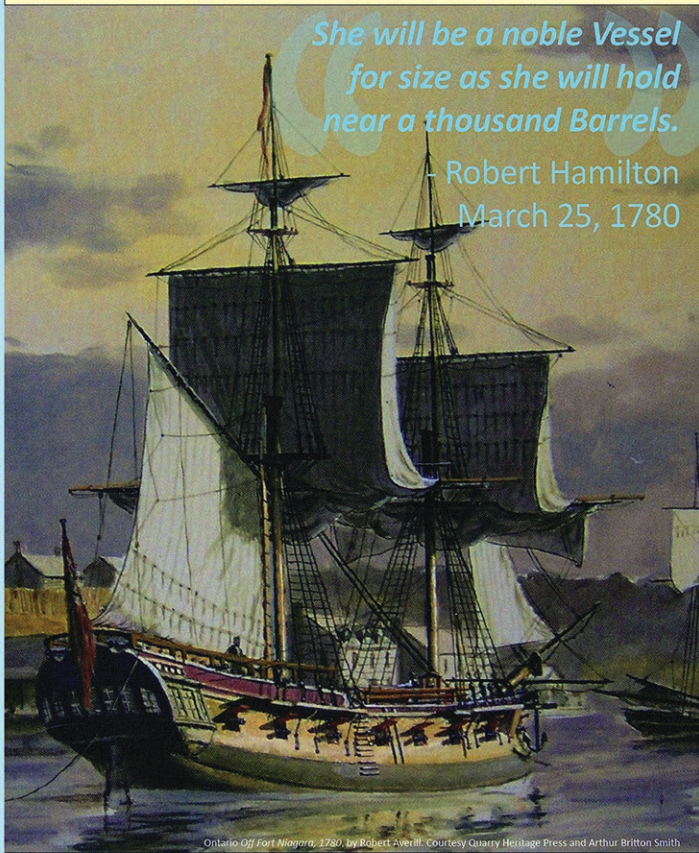
## LAKE ONTARIO At a Glance



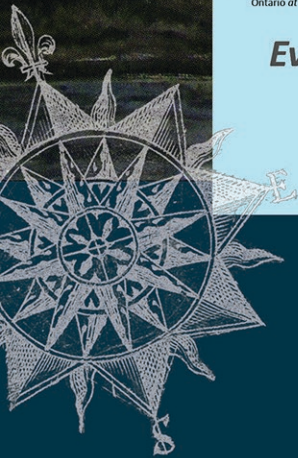
- Fed by the Niagara River, flows into the St. Lawrence River
- "Lake of Shining Waters" in the Huron language
- 193 miles (311 km) long
- 53 miles (85 km) at its widest
- 802 feet (244 m) deep
- 432 trillion gallons (1638 km<sup>3</sup>) water
- Borders New York and Ontario
- As many as 1,000 shipwrecks

*She will be a noble Vessel  
for size as she will hold  
near a thousand Barrels.*

- Robert Hamilton  
March 25, 1780



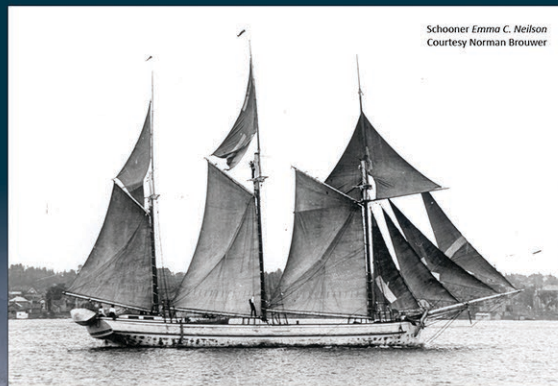
Ontario Off Fort Niagara, 1780, by Robert Averill. Courtesy Quarry Heritage Press and Arthur Britton Smith



## SCHOONER ST. PETER

*I do not know what caused her to go  
down. It might have been that the  
coal listed to one side and caused  
her to careen. Or ... the force of the  
waves broke in the cabin doors.*

- Captain John Griffin



Schooner Emma C. Neilson  
Courtesy Norman Brouwer

### A three-masted schooner,

*St. Peter* was an impressive sight on the water. On October 26, 1898, she loaded up with a cargo of coal in Oswego, NY, bound for Toledo, OH. That night a violent blizzard hit Lake Ontario, bringing 70 mph winds, 20-foot seas, and freezing sleet. Unable to reach the safety of Welland Canal, the captain turned back east.

The distressed vessel was sighted from shore, and the tugboat *Proctor* went out to assist, but it was too late for the crew. Only the captain survived.

*We steamed down the lake as fast as we  
could. We saw her suddenly list to port once  
and ...the second time she went down.  
We could see nothing but about eight feet  
of a mast sticking up out of the water.*

- Captain Gray, Tugboat *Proctor*



Courtesy James Sears



Artwork by Mark Peckham

Artwork by Mark Peckham