

# War on the Great Lakes

*Friends Good Will* sailed during the War of 1812 and her history is tied with the events of that time. But many people do not know very much about this war, the **political** struggles surrounding it, and the groups involved in it.

The Americans, the Native Americans, and the British were the three major groups in conflict over the **Northwest Territory**. In the early 1800s, many American settlers moved into the vast Northwest Territory, which was sold to the United States by the French to help fund their war in Europe.

More and more Native American tribes signed over their lands to the Americans, but often these lands were acquired through **trickery**, **bribery**, or threats. Sometimes these lands were signed over by Native Americans without **authorization** of their tribes. One famous Native American, **Tecumseh**, decided to organize as many Native American nations as possible to resist this **expansion** of American settlers in the southeast corner of what is now Michigan.

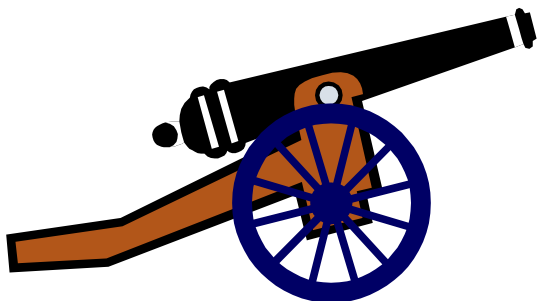
**William Henry Harrison**, who later became President of the United States, led a war party against Tecumseh's settlement near the **Tippecanoe River** in Indiana. The Americans were successful in sending the tribes from the area, but this led to even more problems with the Native American tribes. Later when Harrison ran for President, the slogan, "Tippecanoe and Tyler too," became a famous **rallying** point in his **campaign**. (**John Tyler** was his running mate.)

The British were blamed for causing more problems for the Americans because it was believed they gave guns, knives, war clubs, and **tomahawks** to the Native Americans. People in the territory felt strongly that the British were stirring up trouble among the tribes against the Americans.

There also were other reasons for the War of 1812. Some people said that "land hunger" had a lot of people looking to Canada for land. At that time, people thought that the prairies of the West were not good places to live because of the lack of trees and rivers and the distance from Eastern towns and cities.

In addition, the British were blamed for causing trouble for American shipping and were accused of **seizing** 10,000 American citizens on the Atlantic coast and forcing them into service for British naval vessels.

The Great Lakes played a **pivotal** role in the War of 1812. American ships fought and won the Battle of Lake Erie, securing the Northwest Territory for America and ending the British **siege** of Fort Detroit.



## Places and People

### Northwest Territory

An area of land that was eventually divided into the states of Ohio, Indiana, Illinois, Michigan, and Wisconsin.

### Tecumseh

A Shawnee chief who fought to stop American settlement in the Northwest Territory.

### William Henry Harrison

An American general who eventually became the 9th president.

### Tippecanoe River

A river in Indiana that was the location of a battle between several Native American nations and the United States.

### John Tyler

William Henry Harrison's vice-president who became president when Harrison died in office.



# War on the Great Lakes Lesson

**The Great Lakes of Michigan were a dangerous place during the years leading up to the War of 1812. Americans, British soldiers, and Native American nations all claimed her waters. *Friends Good Will* sailed the Great Lakes during this time of deception and trickery, which led to her capture.**

## Quest:

Michigan Core Curriculum Standards and Benchmarks alignment:

English Language Arts: ELA.I.2.LE.1, ELA.I.3.LE.1,5, ELA.VII.10.LE.3

Social Studies: SS.I.2.LE.1,3-4

**Dispatch:** students read and comprehend expository text

Provide a copy of War on the Great Lakes to students. Assist students to read and understand the story. As a group, list reasons that each group (Americans, British, Native Americans) had for war. Help students use a Venn Diagram to show either:

- Similarities/differences between their life today and what their life would have been like as a member of one of these groups
- Similarities/differences among the groups

**Vocabulary Challenge:** students learn to use new vocabulary words

**Political** Having to do with government

**Trickery** Use of tricks to cheat or deceive

**Bribery** Offering money or other items to persuade someone

**Authorization** Official approval or permission

**Expansion** Increasing in size, extent, or number

**Rallying** To arouse to action

**Campaign** A series of events, speeches, and debates designed to persuade voters to vote for a certain candidate

**Tomahawks** A small ax used as a weapon

**Seizing** The act of taking something by force

**Pivotal** Very important in determining the outcome

**Siege** A persistent or serious attack

## Give Me a Clue Vocabulary Game

Help students learn new vocabulary using this game.

1. Write vocabulary words on index cards with one card for each word. Make enough cards for each student.
2. Affix a card on each student's back without the student seeing the word.
3. Tell students that, to play the game, they must guess the vocabulary word on their back. They can ask each student one "yes" or "no" question about their word and then try and guess it.
4. Give students a set period of time to ask each other "yes" or "no" questions and guess their word.

**Geography Journey:** students use map reading skills

Using maps and charts, help students follow the travels of Oliver Hazard Perry, American naval hero.

1. At the beginning of the War of 1812, Oliver Hazard Perry was sent to Presque Isle (modern-day Erie, Pennsylvania) to command.
2. In September 1813, Perry set sail for Put-In Bay to meet the British fleet. He had several ships including the *Lawrence* and the *Niagara*.
3. Perry proceeded to Western Lake Erie and waited near South Bass Island.
4. On September 10, 1813, the Battle of Lake Erie took place. Early in the battle, the Royal Naval Squadron Commander Robert Barclay had the advantage over American ships. The *Lawrence* was destroyed. Perry took the ship's flag and sailed for the *Niagara*. The battle began to turn for the Americans. By nightfall, Barclay surrendered to Perry.
5. *Friends Good Will*, under British control and renamed, *Little Belt*, attempted escape. British Lieutenant Breman attempted to get *Little Belt* back to Amherstberg but it was captured by the Americans.
6. The American victory at the Battle of Lake Erie cut off the British supply lines and forced them to abandon Detroit.

#### What You'll Need:

- Great Lakes During the War of 1812 Map
- West Lake Erie to Lake St. Clair 1813 Chart
- Battle of Lake Erie Chart

**Commission:** students use research, problem solving, and writing skills

1. Ask students to imagine being alive during the War of 1812. What would it be like? Would they be American, British, Native American? How would their lives be different from today?
2. Tell them that their job is to choose a key person from the War of 1812; learn all about the person; and pretend that they are that person so that they can introduce themselves to the class – but first the class will have to try to guess who they are.
3. Help students to choose one of the following people from this list or create a list of possible people to choose from:
  - Chief Tecumseh
  - Commander Robert Barclay
  - Oliver Williams
  - Master Commandant Oliver Hazard Perry
  - General William Henry Harrison
4. Help students use the Internet and library for research. Ask students to include in their introduction:
  - The complete name and title of their person
  - How their person played a role in the War of 1812
  - What their person thinks about who should win the war and why
5. Remind students to prepare their introductions in first-person, as if they were the person introducing themselves. Tell them to save the name of their person until after the class guesses.
6. When students are prepared, have them introduce themselves to the class but not give the name of their person. Ask the class to guess the name of the student's person. After they have guessed, ask the student to give the complete name and title of their person.

Student self-assessment:

- ✓ Did you research the role of your person in the War of 1812?
- ✓ Did you speak in first-person as you introduced yourself to the class?
- ✓ Did you share what your person thought about who should win the war and why?

**Exploration:** activities to extend learning



### History:

Perry sent a dispatch to General William Henry Harrison, describing the Battle of Lake Erie. In the message, he wrote, "We have met the enemy and they are ours: Two ships, two brigs, one schooner and a sloop". That sloop was *Friends Good Will*.

The Battle of Lake Erie was celebrated throughout the nation. A song about the battle is available for listening and reading on the Michigan Maritime Museum website, *Friends Good Will* page, in the "Education and Training" section.

To this day, the battle remains the only time the British Navy has lost an entire squadron. The Battle of Lake Erie had special significance for Michigan. If the battle had been lost, Michiganders might have flown first the Union Jack (British flag) and years later the red maple leaf of Canada. What would life be like today if the battle had been lost? Would we have a president? What else would be different?

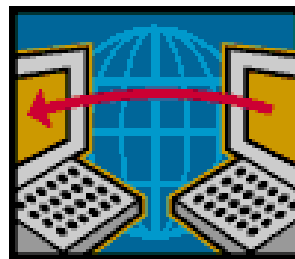
Write a victory letter as if you were Master Commandant Oliver Hazard Perry declaring that you've won the Battle of Lake Erie.

### **www.MichiganMaritimeMuseum.org:**

Use the Michigan Maritime Museum website as a learning resource. The *Friends Good Will* page has a section entitled, "Her Story" which describes the role of *Friends Good Will* in the War of 1812 in narrative form.

The section entitled, "Education and Training" contains:

- Glossary of Terms
- *Friends Good Will* Timeline
- *Friends Good Will* Children's Booklist
- Great Lakes During the War of 1812 Map
- West Lake Erie to Lake St. Clair 1813 Chart
- Battle of Lake Erie Chart



### **Set Sail:** reflection after visiting *Friends Good Will*

Imagine you are on the crew of *Friends Good Will* (re-named *Little Belt* by the British) as she battles Perry's squadron. Write a letter home to your British family describing the battle and being captured back by the Americans. Describe for your family the awful sights and sounds of the battle. Let them know that you are not injured and how you plan to return safely.



This project is funded in part by Michigan Humanities Council, an affiliate of the National Endowment for the Humanities. Any views, findings, conclusions or recommendations expressed in this project do not necessarily represent those of the National Endowment for the Humanities.