LAKE ONTARIO

**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.

*Every person on board of her has perished.*
- Alexander Fraser
  Nov. 8, 1780

**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

**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 km³) 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

**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