

**HISTORY OF THE BATTLE  
OF LAKE ERIE, AND  
MISCELLANEOUS PAPERS**

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History of the battle of Lake Erie, and miscellaneous papers by George Bancroft & Oliver Dyer

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**GEORGE BANCROFT & OLIVER DYER**

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GEORGE BANCROFT.

HISTORY OF  
THE BATTLE OF LAKE ERIE,  
AND  
MISCELLANEOUS PAPERS,  
BY  
HON. GEORGE BANCROFT.

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LIFE AND WRITINGS OF  
GEORGE BANCROFT,

BY  
OLIVER DYER.

*WITH PORTRAIT AND ILLUSTRATIONS.*

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LIFE AND WRITINGS  
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GEORGE BANCROFT.

By OLIVER DYER,  
AUTHOR OF "GREAT SENATORS."

CHAPTER I.

MR. BANCROFT'S LIFE AND CAREER.

In the last revision of his History of the United States, made in 1884, Mr. Bancroft says:

"Scarcely one who wished me good speed when I first essayed to trace the history of America remains to greet me with a welcome as I near the goal. Deeply grateful as I am for the friends who rise up to gladden my old age, their encouragement

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must renew the grief for those who have gone before me."

This touching paragraph was written when Mr. Bancroft was eighty-four years old. He was born in Worcester, Mass., October 3, 1800. He died in Washington, D. C., January 17, 1891.

Mr. Bancroft came of good stock. His family name was brought from England to America by John Bancroft, who arrived in June, 1632, less than twelve years after the Pilgrims landed at Plymouth. John Bancroft settled at Lynn, Mass. His descendants were always sturdy upholders of the rights of the colonists, and enjoyed the respect of their fellow-citizens. George Bancroft's grandfather, Samuel Bancroft, filled several public stations and was a man of note. The great historian's father, Rev. Aaron Bancroft, was a Doctor of Divinity and a man of mark and influence.

He was born in 1755. When only twenty years old, he fought at Lexington and Bunker Hill. At the age of twenty-three (1778) he was graduated at Harvard College. The same year he was settled at Worcester, Mass., and died there in 1839, five years after the publication of the first volume of his son's *History of the United States*, and two years after the completion of the second volume. He was an able preacher, an author of note in his day, and a member of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences. His son George therefore came by inheritance into his strong bias for scholastic, literary and historical pursuits.

From childhood, George Bancroft exhibited both a fondness and an aptitude for study. He was fitted for college at the Exeter (N. H.) Academy. He entered Harvard College when he was only thirteen years old, and took his degree in 1817, when

he was less than seventeen years of age. He stood second in his class, of which it is supposed he was the youngest member.

Edward Everett, who had recently been appointed Professor of Greek Literature in Harvard College, wished to have some young graduate of promise sent to Germany for purposes of study, with a view of having him enrolled on his return in the corps of college instructors. The choice fell on Bancroft, and in the summer of 1818 he went to Gottingen. He remained abroad four years, and diligently improved his opportunities.

When we contrast the youthful Bancroft's career abroad with the way in which the vast majority of young Americans spend their time in Europe, the difference is seen to be almost immeasurable. It does not appear that he wasted an hour in useless pursuits, in frivolous pleasure, or in the gratifi-