Canadian Historical Memory and the War of 1812

London Journal of Canadian Studies

Volume 29

Autumn 2014

Guest Editor: Phillip Buckner

UCL Press
University College London
Gower Street
London WC1E 6BT

Available to download free: www.ingentaconnect.com/content/uclpress/ljcs

ISSN 0267-2200 (print)
ISSN 1475-1674 (online)

Printed by Formara Print

Contents (Volume 29)

Contributors

Phillip Buckner is a professor emeritus at the University of New Brunswick and has served as a visiting fellow at various institutes at the University of London, including the Institute for Commonwealth Studies, the Institute for the Study of the Americas and the UCL Institute of the Americas. He is best known for this work in Atlantic Regional Studies and in promoting studies of the British World.

Michael Eamon is the principal of Catherine Parr Trail College in Trent University and has recently published a book on *Imprinting Britain: Newspapers, Sociability and the Shaping of British North America*.

Hector MacKenzie has been the Senior Departmental Historian of what is now Global Affairs Canada since 1991. In addition to editing two volumes in the series, *Documents on Canadian External Relations*, he has published numerous book chapters and articles on Canada's international relations in the twentieth century, with a particular emphasis on the period from 1935 to 1957.

Cecilia Morgan is a professor in the Ontario Institute for the Study of Education at the University of Toronto. She has written extensively about the links between gender, culture and imperial identities in Canada and about the history of commemoration and identity in Canada, including a book on *Creating Colonial Pasts: History, Memory and Commemoration in Southern Ontario, 1860–1980*.

James Tyler Robertson received his PhD from McMaster Divinity School and has published a number of articles on the role of religion in the War of 1812. He now serves as a pastor living and working around Hamilton and Toronto, Ontario.

Elaine Young holds a PhD in history from the University of Guelph and has written on a wide array of topics, including Indian Residential and Day Schools, the First World War, the War of 1812 and tobacco companies. She is currently a senior researcher with the Laurier Research Group in Ottawa.

London Journal of Canadian Studies, Volume 29 (2014). This is an Open Access article distributed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution Licence, which permits unrestricted use, distribution and reproduction in any medium, provided the original author and source are credited• UCL Press• Print ISSN 0267-2200 • Online ISSN 2397-0928 • DOI 10.14324/111.444.ljcs.2014v29.001

For God, King, and Country: Nineteenth-Century Methodist Interpretations of the War of 1812

James Tyler Robertson

Abstract

The War of 1812 almost ruined Episcopal Methodism in Upper Canada. During the War, the American itinerants were unable to travel in the land and, after the War, their detractors used their connection to America to undermine their influence in the loyal Province. This article offers two examples in order to highlight the ways in which the Methodists themselves used the war to prove their loyalty as well as their role in developing the land that would one day become Canada. The first example looks at how Methodists in the Reform party of the 1828 House of Assembly viewed their denomination's role during and in the years following the War. The second example looks at the publication of two popular books in 1880 that defended the contribution American Methodists had made to the British war effort. These examples moved the issue of Methodist loyalty into the sphere of politics and public policy and showed how the ongoing interpretation of the War of 1812 continued to affect these Methodists throughout the nineteenth century.

When General Hull landed American soldiers on Upper Canadian soil in the early summer of 1812, he set into motion events that were destined to shape the religious landscape of the province. In the years following the Revolutionary War and preceding the second Anglo-American contest in 1812, the clergy of the Church of England[1] and the Church of Scotland had become increasingly concerned with what they perceived to be the weakening of British sensibilities in favour of Republican sentiments from the south.[2] Such ideas, it was believed,

were being couched in religious language and were gaining ground in the colony through the efforts and teachings of the popular, entertaining, and engaging Episcopal Methodists, an American-based denomination that was numerically the largest in the land.[3] The criticisms leveled at the traveling preachers from that denomination included charges that they were enthusiastic 'comets' that were entertaining to watch but left the people colder to the importance of religion once they departed.[4] As the more rational Anglican Bishop of Quebec Jacob Mountain put it: 'The great bulk of the people have and can have no instruction but such as they receive occasionally from itinerant & mendicant Methodists, a set of ignorant Enthusiasts whose preaching is calculated only to perplex the understanding & corrupt the morals, to relax the nerves of industry, and dissolve the bonds of Society.'[5] They believed that the Methodists were too loud, disorganized, uncouth, and — worst of all — American to ever inculcate the people into British civilization.[6] Indeed, Mountain 'remained constant in the belief that the established Church of England … was entrusted with the task not only of disseminating the principles of sound religion but also of checking the spread of sectarian "enthusiasm," maintaining social and political stability, and defending the imperial connection.'[7]

With the outbreak of the war, the Episcopal Methodists' numbers and influence were decimated because the Upper Canadian circuits, which were now considered enemy territory, were largely abandoned by the itinerant preachers from the United States. Ironically, the Anglican and Church of Scotland clergy were handed their greatest weapon in the religious war against the American Methodists by the actions of the American government. However, when the War ended and an amicable spirit between the former combatants returned, the Episcopal Methodists were able to take up their work again in the post-war world of Upper Canada. Despite the warm welcome from Upper Canadian Methodists, the land had been changed by the violence of the previous years and the churches with stronger transatlantic ties utilized the war to strengthen their argument that any connection to American ideologies and particularly to American religious movements, was akin to inviting another invasion.

It is the argument of this article that the War of 1812 significantly altered the cultural influence of the Methodists and shaped the denominational interactions both internally as well as with the government and other churches for the remainder of the century. This article focuses on the ways in which the Methodist leadership viewed the War and particularly how the War was interpreted in the writings

of prominent Methodists. In his work on Canadian Intellectual History, S.F. Wise saw religion as an under-appreciated but vital force in shaping popular thought during the nineteenth century and argued that religious literature was influential due to the almost universal Christian nature of the people. The ecclesiastical landscape of the time, Wise contended, was 'wholly Christian; freethinkers kept their thoughts to themselves.'[8] This article offers two examples of the importance of religious opinion, highlighting the ways in which the Upper Canadian Methodists sought to use the War of 1812 to prove their loyalty as well as the importance of their role in developing the land that would one day become Canada. The first example examines how self-identified Methodists who were also members of the Reform party in the 1828 House of Assembly viewed their denomination's role during and in the years following the War. In 1828 many policies related to naturalization and education were decided and both the war and the role of the Methodists factored into the discussions. The second example comes from the 1880s which saw the publication of Egerton Ryerson's *The Loyalists of America* and W.H. Withrow's *Neville Trueman, The Pioneer Preacher: A Tale of the War of 1812*.[9] Both books examined how American Methodists had acted during the War and the contribution they had made to the British war effort. These examples from 1828 and 1880 moved the issue of Methodist loyalty into the sphere of politics and public policy and showed how the ongoing interpretation of the War of 1812 continued to affect the Methodists decades after the War was concluded.

Despite a proven record of service to the people by the 1820s, the American-based denomination was forced to operate under a seemingly perpetual cloud of suspicion, as the term 'Loyalty' had become a defining trait that had been forged in the furnace of war. While Methodists in 1815 and beyond were ultimately able to find prominent places within government, business, and society — much to the chagrin of the Anglicans — they also found themselves frequently accused of disloyalty. By the 1880s Methodism was independent of both America and England and was a respected Canadian denomination. The re-invention of the Loyalist tradition has received considerable attention from scholars in recent years, but Ryerson and Withrow also sought to reinterpret the War of 1812 to demonstrate how their American forebears had played a foundational role in what would become Canada.[10] While over fifty years separate these two examples, and the motivation of the 1828 document was different from that of the books produced in 1880, the works this article examines demonstrate

a Methodist understanding that their role in Canadian history was as servants who were loyal to God, to the King, and to their Country.

Methodist Loyalty in the War of 1812

Upper Canada in the 1820s was undergoing many changes that were not viewed positively by the Archdeacon of the provincial capital of York, Rev. Dr. John Strachan. While in England, Strachan entered into a dialogue with some Scottish Presbyterians who believed that theirs was the largest Protestant denomination in the growing Upper Canadian Province and, therefore, should be considered for co-establishment alongside Strachan's beloved Church of England. These members of the Church of Scotland argued that the Clergy Reserves should be shared equally between the two Protestant denominations and that this was the only way to reflect properly the religious composition of the imperial metropolis in the periphery of British North America. Strachan feared that this plan would weaken the Anglican Church's already tenuous hold on the colony, especially as it also faced the ongoing threat of unchecked American Methodism, which had been steadily regaining numbers and influence in the years since the end of the War. In order to address these issues, in 1826 Strachan composed a survey that, he claimed, offered an accurate assessment of the denominational inclinations of the Upper Canadian people.[11] However, his detractors argued that the Ecclesiastical Chart Strachan had constructed flagrantly misrepresented the religious sentiments of numerous Upper Canadians. Unfortunately for his critics, Strachan had successfully spun his lies into a royal charter to have the future King's College — the first institution of higher education in the Province — staffed only by people from the Church of England. The Assembly sent an impassioned plea to the ministers of George IV in the hopes that they would reconsider a decision to grant 'a Charter with a monopoly upon a principle so illiberal in its application to the state of this Province.' They charged Strachan with constructing the chart from fanciful reckonings with little concern for statistics (or ethics) in order to denigrate other Christian denominations and further advance Anglican establishment by creating an institution that was neither needed nor wanted by the loyal subjects of Upper Canada. Many in the reform-dominated Assembly elected in 1828 professed to believe that, had George IV known the truth, 'He would never have given his royal sanction to such a charter.'[12] The Assembly argued that Methodists, the denomination maligned the most in Strachan's report,

had proven their loyalty to the crown during the late war with America as well as in the years since.

This episode is important because it involved competing ideas about how Upper Canada should define its British colonial identity. After 1815, tensions between Anglicans and American Methodists grew stronger, as the Anglicans, with the support of the Legislative Council and the government of Upper Canada, clashed with the Methodists who had growing influence in the Assembly and overwhelming popularity among the masses. Strachan, and other members of a conservative elite known as the Family Compact, expressed concern that the Reformers were gaining too much power over the political and cultural landscape of the loyal province that shared a border with the expanding American Republic. In terms of education, Strachan had two chief concerns. First, the lack of a University meant that young Upper Canadians had no choice but to look to America if they desired any form of higher learning in medicine, law, or divinity. Strachan believed that the fact that the Methodists were mostly from the United States made them unable and unwilling to teach generations of colonial youth proper habits and respect for the British way of life. The large number of Methodists in the Assembly and Strachan's influence in the Legislative Council guaranteed that these religious disputes were not going to remain within ecclesiastical circles but were destined to shape provincial politics as well. Strachan's 1826 chart had made the claim that the people of Upper Canada desired a greater Anglican presence and he believed that money given to the church from the sale of the Clergy Reserves and for education could be used to advance Anglican establishment and British values in the colony. Second, Strachan believed that the Methodists should not have any influence over the education system, nor have any share in the substantial revenues derived from the sale of the Clergy Reserves.[13]

It was Strachan's attack on the Methodists' lack of loyalty that particularly offended the Assembly elected in 1828, the first Assembly with a Reform rather than a Conservative majority. Indeed, the Assembly dismissed outright any notion that the Methodists had failed to 'inculcate, by precept and example, as a christian duty [sic], an attachment to the sovereign and a cheerful and conscientious obedience to the laws of the country.' The members of the Assembly extolled the Methodists' labours for the colonists over the previous thirty-five years and insisted that 'the province has passed through a war which put to the proof the loyalty of the people,' leaving no doubt that 'the Methodists are as loyal as any of His Majesty's Subjects.' To reinforce this statement,

and to address the chief point in Strachan's Ecclesiastical Chart, the Assembly prepared a report examining how many religious leaders of each denomination were from the United States and the extent to which they had received their education and drew their sentiments from that land.[15] In his response to the latter question, the Rev. James Richardson responded that while he was 'a minister of the Methodist episcopal church in this province,' he was a 'native of Upper Canada' who had served for 'six years in His Majesty's navy on the lakes,' during which service he had '[l]ost an arm by a canon shot at the battle of Oswego.'[16] Richardson was just one example of a native-born — therefore not American — Upper Canadian Methodist who had fought and suffered for the British cause in the preceding War. Egerton Ryerson stated plainly that 'the [M]ethodists were as active and zealous in the defence of the Province as any other part of the population' and the Assembly report provided further compelling anecdotal evidence of the loyalty of the Methodists.[17] A member of the Upper Canadian Assembly by the name of John Johnston Lefferty also cited the war as support for his belief in the loyalty of the Methodists, stating 'they are as loyal a set of men as any in the Province; they proved it during the war, and [I have] heard nothing on the contrary since.'[18] These examples were designed to show the loyalty and the willingness of the people, irrespective of denomination, to defend Upper Canada in the War of 1812.[19] Lefferty's comments were also meant to show that there was no indication that the attitudes of the Methodists had changed in the years since the War.

The War lost much of its emotive power as time passed and as more British immigrants, who had not experienced the conflict, entered the province. The renewal of friendly intercourse and commercial ties between America and Upper Canada gave the people of both lands the time and ability to evaluate, in the words of John Willson, a member of the Upper Canadian Assembly, 'the value at which each estimated his own and the country's Government.'[20] Such choices over thirteen years meant that any who did not care for the colony's attachment to Britain had had ample opportunity to go elsewhere or, at the very least, that their sentiments and political attitudes were well known. The Assembly's *Report* revealed that all but eight Methodist clergy were either from England, Canadian-born, or naturalized subjects, that members of the denomination had proven their loyalty in the war, and that there was no indication that Methodist loyalty to the Empire had altered in the interim period and therefore concluded that concerns about their loyalty were unfounded.[21] The Assembly's *Report* also stressed how much the colony owed to the Methodists for the religious education and care of

the people. During a time when Upper Canada was 'thinly settled, and its inhabitants were scattered through the wilderness and destitute of all other means of religious instruction' those men 'animated by christian [sic] zeal and benevolence … carried among the people the blessings and consolations and sanctions of our holy religion.' The *Report* stated plainly the positive impact the itinerants had had on Upper Canadian colonial life, declaring that Methodist 'influence and instruction, far from having (as is represented in the letter) a tendency hostile to our institutions, [have] been conducive, in a degree which cannot easily be estimated, to the reformation of their hearers from licentiousness, and the diffusion of correct morals, the foundation of all sound loyalty and social order.'[22]

Strachan and others argued that established religion was an essential safeguard against anti-British tendencies and that the Anglican Church needed an infusion of capital to increase its influence and sustain the people's sympathy for all things British.[23] However, the Assembly, having shown Methodist loyalty in the war and in the years following the war and demonstrated the denominational leaders' predominantly British and Upper Canadian roots, argued that a greater Anglican presence would achieve the exact opposite. In the words of the Roman Catholic Rev. A. MacDonnell, 'many of the people would become more disaffected by increasing the number of missionaries of the [C]hurch of England.'[24] William Morrison, one of the authors of the 1828 *Report*, also argued that an increase in the number of Anglican missionaries 'would rather have the effect of alienating the people of the Province from our institutions as the majority of the people are of opposite sentiments to that church.'[25] The Methodist veteran of 1812, Rev. James Richardson, himself a convert to Methodism from the Anglican fold, argued that many people were leaving Anglicanism and had 'joined themselves to the Methodists' and cited the reasons for such defections as linked to 'the want of a christian [sic] discipline being exercised, and a dislike to certain practices of some of her ministers.'[26] While Richardson remained mute on the nature of those practices that aroused the distaste of the people, other comments indicate that Anglican involvement in politics topped the list. Although it could be viewed as ironic that professed Methodists in an official Assembly Report would voice condemnations of ecclesiastical involvement in politics, the point being made was that the policies supported by Strachan and the Legislative Council were deemed beneficial by only a small, and elite, collection of Upper Canadians. Therefore, to increase the influence of the Church of England in the realm of education had the

potential to make the inhabitants 'less likely to become more attached to our civil and religious or any other institutions.'[27]

The colonists of Upper Canada possessed a 'deep and enthusiastic' loyalty to the empire and, the Assembly argued, a proven spiritual maturity that would not benefit from 'any state establishment of clergymen.'[28] The contention of men like Egerton Ryerson and Marshall Spring Bidwell was that to force an establishment upon Upper Canada out of an outdated or unnecessarily strict colonial policy would negate the proven acts of loyalty to the empire that had been demonstrated a little over a decade earlier. To offer one denomination undue power over the others merely strengthened the American accusations of British heavy-handedness and the argument that the Republic was the true champion of personal and religious liberty. A Baptist by the name of Alexander Stewart humorously explained that Anglicanism is 'spreading only among those who have some dependence on the government or are looking for some place of honour or profit. I believe if the government were to become quakers, they would have the same increase and from the same quarter.'[29] Despite Strachan's assessment that Anglicanism was the only denomination that could legally claim establishment, the reality of life in the colony of Upper Canada was that 'the benefits of the church of England are little felt or known.' Therefore, Anglican clergy could not be counted on to influence much of anything because they simply did not reach that many people.[30] However, that was not the case with the so-called dissenting churches that were, according to Egerton Ryerson, 'increasing on every side.'[31] If England truly wanted to use religion to increase adherence to their empire in British North America, it made more sense to actively seek out the dissenting churches, not the Anglicans. The Assembly *Report* argued that the former were loyal and poised to reach a large number of colonists, while the latter were viewed with increasing skepticism when they were viewed at all.[32]

In a sense, this petition showed that the people of Upper Canada were not just religious but that they were British Christians and, as such, should be allowed to choose their own denominational affiliations. The Reformers believed that perpetuating an establishment would drive the people who had willingly defended the empire into the uncomfortable position of having to choose between their King and their God.[33] M.L.A. Francis Walsh answered: 'inasmuch as our institutions are favourable to the cause of religion; it therefore cannot be reasonably apprehended that the Methodist preachers can desire to render their congregations or hearers unfriendly to [British] institutions.'[34] That statement was based on the idea that as long as the empire continued to be guided by

Christian principles, the leaders could rest assured that each brand of Christian faith could only help the imperial cause. Were the authorities to trust the people, so the petition argued, they would find such trust rewarded with a loyalty of greater strength and depth and sincerity. From the perspective of the 1828 Assembly, greater trust was being placed in the laws of the empire than in the tenets of the Gospel, and this lack of faith in both God and Upper Canadians threatened to alienate both from the crown. Yet, although the rejection of establishment may have made sense in the colonial context, it embraced the dissolution of an historical British institution in favour of a greater separation of church and state,[35] an idea that could be viewed as more informed by American policies than Upper Canadian desires and proof therefore of the reality of Strachan's concerns.

That the Assembly was looking south was confirmed by Bidwell's statement that the churches across the border in New York, 'where all denominations have by law equal rights,' were flourishing both numerically and spiritually. He argued that the 'piety and religious prosperity of a church can gain but little from men who are induced by secular motives to assume the sacred functions of the clerical office.'[36] For Bidwell, monies sent from England would not increase colonial piety but would only induce ministers to worship mammon rather than serving God. This argument, drawn from an appreciation of America's religious landscape and stressing how similar the two lands were, could be seen to support the Conservative's concern about the Reformers' allegiances. While the American incursion of 1812–1814 had been successfully repulsed, many of the militia combatants had been, in the words of Jane Errington, 'reluctant warriors' who had been happy to see the return of peaceful relations with the United States once the War ended.[37]

Strachan's concern was that the Reformers in the Assembly and the American Methodists in the colony could transform the reluctance of the previous generation into full-blown disaffection for British institutions in the generations to come if they gained a foothold in the Upper Canadian system of higher education. Bidwell, Waters, Ryerson and the other authors of the 1828 Assembly *Report* believed, perhaps naively, that they had adequately represented the sentiments of the people they were called to represent, had offered definitive proof of Methodist loyalty throughout the history of Upper Canada, and had shown the lack of American influence over that denomination. However, Strachan's chart accomplished two important goals that the 1828 *Report* was unable to defeat. The first was that the chart reinforced

the predisposition of Lord Bathurst and his Tory successors as Colonial Secretary towards Church establishment, as well as many members of the Upper Canadian Legislative Council, including the powerful Family Compact. Second, the chart brought the issue of disloyalty to the foreground and somewhat tied the Reformers and the Methodists to that moniker. The next decade would prove to be a tumultuous one for the Reformers, as they would lose power in the Assembly, only to regain it again in 1834 and then, under suspicion of disloyalty yet again, lose out in 1836.[38] Throughout the 1830s the Reformers continued to work through legal and, as was the case with William Lyon Mackenzie in 1837, even violent means to change what they believed to be outdated and impractical British policies that did not reflect the best interests of the colonists.

Methodism, while popular among the masses, would also struggle under the cloud of disloyalty raised by Strachan's chart. The Assembly's *Report* failed in its intention and the first institution of higher education in Upper Canada was instructed, by Royal Charter, to possess an all-Anglican faculty. The arguments used by the 1828 Assembly and the questions they raised offer a unique insight into the influence that both the War of 1812 and Methodist loyalty had on Upper Canadian politics and religion in the first half of the nineteenth century. Methodism was seen to hold sway over the colony in tangible ways and the fact that its earliest leaders and adherents had been American was considered a legitimate threat to Upper Canada's continued existence in the British Empire. The next half a century would also prove to be incredibly tumultuous for the various Methodist camps as Wesleyans and Episcopal and Canadian versions of the faith would combine, split, re-join and fight – both internally as well as with other denominations – over the denomination's role in Canada. Many of the internal and external issues raised during the nineteenth century reflected the same issues of loyalty and influence raised by Strachan in 1826 and rebutted by the Assembly in 1828.

The realities of life in the Province would eventually make the Anglican bid for religious dominance both untenable and unnecessary; even King's College would be dissolved in the 1850s. The turbulence of the 1830s demonstrated the disconnect between colonial officials, who viewed America as a threat, and the majority of the colonists, who saw America as a necessary ally, an idea that will return later in this article as the issues of 1828 were revisited in Ryerson's 1880 commentary. However, as it pertained to the 1828 Assembly (and a good portion of the 1830s) there remained a concern in London that, despite the

successful defence of imperial land throughout 1812–1814, the colony of British North America contained too much that was American and not enough that was British.

Late Nineteenth-Century Methodist Views of Early Nineteenth-Century Methodist Loyalty

The year 1880 proved to be another important one for Methodist interpretations of the War of 1812 with the publication of two books by prominent leaders of the denomination. The first, by famed Methodist educator and political heavyweight Egerton Ryerson, detailed the character of American loyalists from the seventeenth century and culminated in 1816, leaving the War of 1812 as the final piece of evidence to support his arguments that American loyalists were a boon to British civilization and that the war had been a critical turning-point in Canadian history.[39] The second, published by the editor of *The Methodist Magazine,* W.H. Withrow, was a hagiographic account of a brave and rugged Methodist itinerant named Neville Trueman and his exploits during the War of 1812 in support of his 'adopted country' of Canada.[40] Both books saw the war as a unifying moment for the Canadian people that 'first stirred in our country the pulses of that common national life.' It was hoped that the members of the divided Methodist denomination of the late nineteenth century would imitate the unity presented in the narratives. Withrow's work was designed to show that Trueman, and others, were no 'less patriotic than pious' and that these religious pioneers 'feared God … honoured the King, and loved their country; and many of them died in its defence.'[41] The pervading issue of early Methodist loyalty apparently remained even thirteen years after Confederation.

Although the land of Canada had finally united from the Maritimes to British Columbia, the Methodist Churches were in danger of being unable to rise above their competing regional differences to form the kind of united Methodist church that a united Canadian nation needed.[42] Unlike the Anglicans, the Methodists — and the Presbyterians as well — had no nation-wide presence and, therefore, a desire was growing to move beyond inner-denominational sectarianism into a larger, well funded, and more united version of their faith. Steps in that direction were made all the more pressing when, in 1874, Canadian Methodism officially separated from the British connexion and became independent, free, and truly in charge of its own fate.[43]

Both books heralded back to a time in Canadian history when the people were as rugged and strong as the land in which they lived.[44] The image of the brave, tough, and clever pioneer carving out a life for himself and his family was matched in the religious world with a similar picture created by Withrow of Neville Trueman.[45] Harkening back to a time when Methodist preachers possessed 'a strong back-bone of doctrine,' unlike the 'boneless jelly-fish-like preaching' of his own era, Withrow saw in those Methodists of the war a heroic image of self-sacrifice made in the name of God and in service to the people, qualities that Withrow appeared to believe were lacking in many of his religious contemporaries.[46] Withrow's work detailed the ruggedness and unity of purpose displayed by 'the godly forefathers of Methodism in Canada [who] nourished [colonists'] souls and enbraved their spirits for the heroic work in which they were engaged, of consecrating the virgin wilderness to God.'[47] In such ways were the readers of these works reminded of a simpler, harsher time from which the nation had been born, a nation that had been supported and protected in its infancy through the sacrifices of loyal and sturdy Methodists.[48]

Ryerson's account of the War of 1812 argued that the conflict had fused Upper Canadians together in ways that made them distinct from both Americans as well as later British immigrants who had not taken part in that defining colonial struggle. He saw the war as the birth of a united Canadian identity because 'it tended to cement the people together as one family' irrespective of birth place and made 'English, French, Scotch, Irish, and Americans … all become Canadians,' and granted those who had fought an 'increased devotion not only to the land of their nativity or adoption, but to the glorious mother country which had become the victorious champion of the liberties of Europe, and leader in the civilization of mankind.'[49] Withrow would advance the notion that Britain held a special place on the global stage because the empire's maritime, military, and commercial successes proved that it was God's chosen instrument for the evangelization and civilization of the world.[50] Therefore, the reasons to defend the land against Republicanism went deeper than nationalism for the 'god-fearing Canadian yeomanry … [who] nourished at once their religious feelings and their patriotic enthusiasm' to defend their land against American incursions out of their 'love of King and country.' Such love was based on the understanding that defending British territory in North America was in alignment with the Divine mandate for global evangelization and, therefore, even something as seemingly anti-Christian as war could be viewed as 'an acceptable service to God.'[51]

While both men celebrated the British connection throughout their respective works, Ryerson also believed that the colonial officials had done harm to the growth of Canada by favouring immigrants from the United Kingdom over the American-born settlers who had 'felled the wilderness, and made the country valuable and had borne the burden and heat of the war in its defence.'[52] Ryerson concluded his treatise with a brief but poignant condemnation of some British policies up to the middle of the century, including the land, education, and financial issues discussed in 1828. However, once 'Commissions of Inquiry' were dispatched from England all religious groups were placed on an even footing, the Clergy Reserve funds were utilized for public education, and the Assembly received more power over public departments. Because these prudent adjustments from London restricted Upper Canadian Conservatives' hold over education, employment, Church establishment, and infrastructure, the 'Government became strong, the people contented and the country prosperous … in wealth, education, and intelligence — rendering, at this day, the inhabitants of the vast Dominion of Canada the lightest-taxed and the freest people on the American continent.'[53] Ryerson reiterated the 1828 Assembly's *Report* condemning the abuses of certain privileged elites who desired to construct a colony suited to their needs at the expense of the majority. For Ryerson, it was the policies of those British-born men, not the influence of American Republicanism or Methodism, that had been the true threat to colonial stability. Under the pretense of defending imperial concerns in Upper Canada, the Governor and Legislative Council governed in 'opposition' to the Assembly until 'the dissatisfaction of the people' became too strong to ignore.[54] The selfish and impractical policies previously foisted upon the people in the name of loyalty were, in Ryerson's view, tools of oppression that threatened to disenfranchise otherwise peaceful and loyal subjects.

Despite the Fenian Invasions of 1866 and 1870, America and Canada had a long-standing and amicable relationship by the time Withrow and Ryerson penned their books in 1880.[55] The issues that had plagued the Methodist denomination in 1828 had been overshadowed by decades of respectable and influential service and the question of Methodist respectability was no longer at stake.[56] Both men were able to show that the American policies during the War of 1812 did not represent the beliefs of every American citizen and that the actions the people took outweighed their place of birth. While Withrow called up few witnesses for his account,[57] he did quote 'Mr. Quincy, of Massachusetts' as stating that the War was the 'most disgraceful in

history since the invasion of the buccaneers,' before laying the blame for the decision to go ahead at the feet of Madison's supporters who 'persisted in their stern policy of implacable war.'[58] Ryerson arrived at the same conclusions but based many of his arguments on facts and supported them with letters and other data. While the two approached the topic differently, at the heart of both messages was the ongoing defence of American and Methodist loyalty and patriotism.[59]

For Withrow, Trueman's awareness that 'American-born [itinerants] … will be liable to suspicion as disloyal to this country by the bigoted and prejudiced' proved both the man's astuteness and political savvy, but his decision to 'not forsake my post, nor leave these people as sheep without a shepherd' evidenced his abiding loyalty to the people of the Upper Canadian frontier.[60] Added to such patriotism was Withrow's numerous accusations regarding the unjust nature of the war and the fact that America's invasion coincided with France's attacks on England across the Atlantic.[61] These parallel assaults on Britain revealed the darkness at the heart of revolutionary lands like France and America. Withrow was particularly critical of America for attacking Britain at the very moment when 'the champion of human liberty' was 'engaged in a death-wrestle with the arch despot Napoleon.'[62] Ryerson, likewise, stated that 'Nothing could be more disgraceful and unprincipled than the Madison (I will not say American) declaration of war against Great Britain, which was at that moment employing her utmost strength and resources in defence of European nations and the liberties of mankind.'[63] The justness of the Canadian defensive position was celebrated by both authors and was juxtaposed against, in Ryerson's words, 'the democratic rulers of the United States [who] suffered both defeat and disgrace,' while the loyal inhabitants of Upper Canada 'maintained inviolate their honour and independence.'[64] Further proof of the validity of such condemnations was to be found in the recent Irish-American Fenian raids into Upper Canada in 1866 and into Manitoba in 1870, as well as the previous decade's American Civil War. Such violence confirmed that what happened in 1812 was evidence of the chaos Republicanism brought to its own subjects and the world. In Withrow's work, it was the American invasion that drove Trueman to the British side for 'this invasion of a peaceful territory by an armed host is a wanton outrage and cannot have the smile of Heaven.'[65] Ryerson was even more forthright in his attacks on the American claim that theirs was a just war. Detailing the origins of the war, he stated: 'The facts show that the real object of the American Government was to take Canada, and their invaded rights at sea was a mere pretext.'[66]

In these ways did both these men frame the war to show the evils of the American cause while simultaneously extolling the virtues of those who, while born in America, had shown their loyalty to the cause and defence of Upper Canada. Ryerson did so through sources, speeches, letters, and his own commentary while Withrow used the character of Neville Trueman to shed light on Methodist attitudes and actions throughout some of the more memorable events of the war.

The Adventures of Neville Trueman: Pioneer Preacher & Methodist War Hero

It would be remiss to conclude this article without a brief recapturing of certain tales that W.H. Withrow included in his odyssey of Neville Trueman.[67] Many of the places and people from Trueman's adventures would be well known to someone with even the most basic knowledge of the War of 1812. Withrow used Trueman's involvement in these episodes to create a character intertwined with the more defining moments of that contest that reflects later nineteenth-century nationalism much more than the events of the actual War.[68] While it is well documented how much travel Methodist itinerants endured, the number of famous places and people that Trueman encountered is nothing short of miraculous. Through his eyes, the reader is taken back to those troubling years and shown the character and integrity of that American-born Methodist who, once he had cast his lot in with the Canadian people, served the land with a determination that few patriots could rival.[69]

Trueman was described as young man with a 'forehead [that] was smooth and white and of a noble fullness' that, perhaps in a rebuttal to the Anglican charge that Methodists were uneducated, indicated 'superior intellectual abilities,'[70] as well as a passion for the Gospel and the people of Upper Canada. According to Withrow, this was not a trait unique to Trueman, as other itinerants blessed the people with their keen, well-versed minds, and story-telling abilities. Withrow records that entire households 'hung with eager attention upon their lips as, from their well-stored minds, they brought forth things new and old.' At the feet of these traveling scholars many 'an inquisitive boy or girl experienced a mental awakening or quickening' from the words of these men who possessed 'superior intelligence.' The older colonists, as well, were blessed as 'the preacher brought them glimpses of the outer world, or read from some well-worn volume carried in his saddle-bags pages

of some much-prized English classic.'[71] Through such tales Withrow portrayed the American Methodist itinerants as purveyors of education and culture to Upper Canadians in desperate need of both.

Trueman's adventures found him in Queenston during the famous battle that claimed the life of General Sir Isaac Brock[72] — the so-called Saviour of Upper Canada — as well as at the burning of Newark where Trueman provided a prophetic commentary on what that event meant for the future of the war. Relying on the insight he had gained about the Upper Canadian temperament through his travels, Trueman looked at the ashes of Newark and stated that the people 'are intensely loyal to their sovereign. They would die rather than forswear their allegiance. They will fight to the last man and last gun before they will yield.' He then went on to record that the atrocity of Newark would spawn a 'heritage of hatred' for America 'that all good men, for all time, will deplore.'[73] Such words showed that Trueman was aligned with the later understanding of the War as a point of pride for brave and loyal Canadians who stood up against American aggression and savagery.

Trueman next traveled with Methodist superintendent Henry Ryan to York and surveyed the damage done by the American occupation, and did the same in the Thames Valley, where the famed Native leader Tecumseh had been killed.[74] However, in the interest of brevity, the article will look exclusively at the ninth chapter because it was in this section that Neville Trueman found himself a key player in a crucial and famous piece of War of 1812 history.

While riding through the countryside one day on his circuit, Trueman came upon someone walking through the woods. This woman, described by Withrow as 'a worthy Canadian matron,' Neville quickly recognized. As he rode closer to the apparently exhausted woman, he noted that she was a member of his Chippewa congregation and exclaimed: 'Why, Mrs. Secord!'[75] Dropping from his saddle, he inquired what had brought her to such a remote location and discovered the important information Laura Secord was attempting to relay about an impending American invasion. While acknowledging Secord's role, Withrow explained that Trueman, the 'American-born youth,' did not hesitate for one moment in his 'duty to his adopted country' but wheeled his horse about and exclaimed to Secord: 'You brave woman, you've nobly done your part, let me take you to the nearest house and then ride on and give the alarm.' Secord's patriotic role in the War of 1812 was, and remains, legendary within the social memory of most Canadians but, in Withrow's account of the war,

she was only a secondary character in a tale that now featured the bold American Methodist itinerant as the true hero of the moment. The author went on to state that once Mrs. Secord was safe in a local house, Trueman rode to the nearest militia station and 'flung himself off his reeking steed — incurring imminent risk of being bayoneted by the sentry, because he took no notice of his peremptory challenge.' Hurtling past the confused guard, Trueman literally kicked open the door of the guard room and 'called for the officer of the day, Lieutenant Fitzgibbon,' and relayed to the famous and clever military hero 'the startling intelligence' of the American plans.[76] For a student of 1812, the rest of that encounter is a matter of military and historical pride as Fitzgibbon used that information to defeat the invaders through deception and trickery and forced the surrender of the enemy despite Fitzgibbon's vastly inferior numbers. While this is only one story among many, and while the reader is left to decide for him or herself the veracity of such a claim, the point is that, for Withrow, this 'true man' was an embodiment of the kind of selfless, brave, and ultimately beneficial actions of American Methodist loyalty that helped shape the successful outcome of the struggle.

The American declaration of war had left a 'meagre handful of Methodist preachers'[77] present and active during 1812–1815 but those that did remain, like Neville Trueman, struggled bravely 'against the various obstacles in their way — the recklessness and spiritual indifference begotten by the war — and the unjust and cruel suspicions and aspersions to which they were themselves subject.'[78] Withrow closed his account of Trueman by offering the following hope for his work:

> If this retrospect of one of the most stirring episodes in our country's history shall kindle warmer fires of patriotism in the hearts of any of its readers; if the records of the trials and triumphs, the moral heroism and brave achievements of our Canadian forefathers shall inspire a stronger sympathy with their sufferings, and admiration of their character; and, above all, if the religious teachings of this story shall lead any to seek the same solace and succour which sustained our fathers in tribulation, and enbraved their souls for conflict with the evils of the time – it shall not have been written in vain.[79]

These men proved their loyalty and even as late as 1880 their stories were, according to Withrow, worth remembering and emulating.

Conclusion

This article has argued that the War of 1812 factored into discussions about Episcopal Methodism's role in Upper Canada because, even after Confederation, the connections between the popular denomination's early days and the United States was seen by some as a liability in the loyal Province. In 1828, Methodism was still operating under the suspicion of disloyalty and was struggling to find an equal footing with other Protestant denominations in Upper Canada. The Reformers in the Assembly of that year argued that Methodists had been as loyal in defending the Province as any section of the population and did not deserve the suspicion of the colonial authorities. By 1880, Methodism was a respected Canadian denomination that had little to fear from any earlier association with the United States. However, Withrow and Ryerson both used the War of 1812 to emphasize the loyalty of their denominational forebears and the valuable contributions that American Methodists had made in the contest. While the denomination proved itself loyal to both God and King and the popularity of Methodism would falter only during the actual conflict, those who were in leadership of the so-called dissenting faction felt the need to defend their denomination's role in the War periodically when a challenge arose.

In the 1828 political disputes as well as the 1880 publications of Ryerson and Withrow, Methodists argued time and again that the war proved the value, not threat, of a continued Methodist presence. The need to provide evidence to support such a position diminished throughout the century as Methodism grew into an accepted and beneficial aspect of Canadian religious culture and, thanks to men like Ryerson, Canadian political expression. However, the stigma attached to the denomination after the War of 1812 proved difficult to shake and the 1828 and 1880 publications showed that, on some level, Methodists still felt the pressure to proclaim their loyal support of the land in which they had served from the decade immediately following the War up to post-Confederation Canada. Nineteenth-century rhetoric often referred to Canada as a place unique within the British Empire and the Kingdom of God and, as such, the people were called to see how faith was integral to the ongoing health and history of the nation. Contained within that history was the War of 1812, a war that later generations would say united a disparate collection of people into 'Canadians' because each person's loyalty, regardless of their place of origin, had been proven on the fields of battle. The Methodist interpretations of

that war argued that the denomination, despite the accusations of its detractors, had a proven record of loyally serving their God, their King, and the country of Canada.

Notes

1 Hereafter referred to as the Anglican Church. While the term Episcopal Church was frequently used to refer to the Church of England in Upper Canada, this paper will use the term Anglican because the term Episcopal was also used of the American Methodists and can be somewhat confusing.

2 The first British Wesleyan missionaries to the Canadas held similar beliefs that their duty was to 'save those colonies from the threat of republican and revolutionary subversion.' Todd Webb, *Transatlantic Methodists: British Wesleyanism and the Formation of an Evangelical Culture in Nineteenth-Century Ontario and Quebec* (Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2013), 165. By 1820 the Wesleyan Missionary Society desired unity with the American Episcopal Methodists, an arrangement that the Wesleyans in the Canadas staunchly opposed due to the lingering belief that such connections to America undermined the efficacy of Methodism in the colony. Since this issue was not presented in either of the sources being consulted for this article, it will not factor into the discussions presented here. For a fuller treatment of this issue, see Webb, *Transatlantic Methodists*.

3 Amelia Harris, daughter of the founder of the Long Point settlement, was very sympathetic to the Methodists and their attention to her isolated community. Her comments on the Methodists in the pre-war period were as follows: 'Their sermons and prayers were very loud, forcible and energetic and if they had been printed verbatim would have looked a sad jumble of words. They encouraged an open demonstration of feeling amongst their hearers, the louder the more satisfactory, but notwithstanding the criticisms and ridicule cast upon those early preachers. They shared their poverty and entered in to all their feelings and although unlearned they taught the one true doctrine to serve God in Spirit and in Truth. And their lives bore testimony to their sincerity.' James Talman, ed., *Loyalist Narratives of Upper Canada* (Toronto: Champlain Society, 1946), 141–2.

4 'The novelty of [the Methodist preachers'] appearance, and the rapidity of their motion, may like the *Comet*, attract the gaze.… But on their departure the mind is not less in ignorance and darkness than on their approach … they will be found on inspection to be dark bodies, with only the *semblance* of light.' James Kendall, *Sermon delivered before the Society for Propagating the Gospel among the Indians and Others in North America at their anniversary, November 7, 1811* (Boston: John Eliot, 1812), 21. Italics added for emphasis.

5 As found in Curtis Fahey, *In His Name: The Anglican Experience in Upper Canada, 1791–1854* (Ottawa: Carleton University Press, 1991), 10–1.

6 'The Methodists are making great progress among us and filling the country with the most deplorable fanaticism. You can have almost no conception of their excesses. They will bawl twenty of them at once, tumble on the ground, laugh, sing, jump, and stamp, and this they call the working of the spirit.' John Strachan, 'letter, 13 July 1806,' in *John Strachan: Documents and Opinions*, ed. J.L.H. Henderson (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1969), 25.

7 Fahey, *In His Name*, 10.

8 Sydney F. Wise, 'Sermon Literature and Canadian Intellectual History,' *Readings in Canadian Intellectual History Volume 2: Pre-Industrial Canada 1760–1849*, eds. Michael S. Cross and Gregory S. Kealey (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1982), 83.

9 Egerton Ryerson, *The Loyalists of America and Their Times From 1620 to 1816*, 2 Volumes (1880; reprinted Honolulu: University of the Pacific Press, 2004); William Henry Withrow, *Neville Trueman, Pioneer Preacher: A Tale of the War of*

1812 (1880; reprinted on-line by Project Gutenberg). References to Trueman's book will be given as chapter and page number.

10 Chief among the works on this topic is Norman Knowles, *Inventing the Loyalists: The Ontario Loyalist Tradition & The Creation of Usable Pasts* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1997); See also E. Jane Errington, 'Reluctant Warriors: British North Americans and the War of 1812,' *The Sixty Years' War for the Great Lakes, 1754–1814*, eds. by David Curtis Skaggs and Larry L. Nelson (Lansing: Michigan State University Press, 2001), 325–36.

11 While the Methodists took the brunt of Strachan's condemnations, it should be noted that the Chart was inspired by Scottish Presbyterian claims of their own numerical superiority. As John Moir states: 'Nothing came of these activities immediately, probably thanks to the effective counter-petition of Archdeacon Strachan and the Upper Canadian Clergy Corporation arguing that the Church of England was "by far" the largest body in the colony, and that all Upper Canadians would soon "conform" to Anglicanism provided no encouragement was offered to other denominations. To this petition, Strachan appended an ecclesiastical chart, predecessor to his controversial chart of 1826, to show the paucity of Presbyterian ministers in the province.' John S. Moir, *Early Presbyterianism in Canada* (Saskatoon: Gravel Books, 2003), 90.

12 Bulkley Waters, Marshall S. Bidwell, Edward Armstrong and Others, *Report of The Select Committee to which was referred the Petition of Bulkley Waters and Others, Entitled the Petition of Christians of All Denominations in Upper Canada; and other Petitions on the Same Subject; and the Petition of E.W Armstrong & Others* (Toronto: Legislative Assembly, 1828).

13 The petition combated this ideology as well. When asked whether or not people educated in America were a threat to British interests in Upper Canada, Waters answered: 'Among the itinerant ministers of the Methodist church only one fifth are natives of the United States, and the remainder are British born subjects.… In regards to the teachers of the other religious denominations, I believe that very few of them are from, or have formed their sentiments, or gathered their knowledge in the United States.' Waters et al., *Report*, 6.

14 Waters et al., *Report*, 4.

15 The charts at the end of the report provide, in detail, who the leaders of the various denominations were, where they were born, where they were educated, and if they were naturalized subjects and, if so, for how long.

16 Waters et al., *Report*, 8. Richardson concluded his answer by stating that he was 'brought up a member of the [C] hurch of England,' indicating that he had changed his denominational affiliation.

17 Ryerson would also state: 'Several of their clergymen voluntarily served in the Flank companies and were in several engagements. One, who is now a Preacher, was a master in the navy, and lost his arm in the battle of Oswego [Richardson]. Another was wounded on his way to the Army at Chippewa.' Waters et al., *Report*, 10.

18 Waters et al., *Report*, 10.

19 The only mention of the disloyalty of a religious person came from the Attorney General, J.B. Robinson, and was directed at a Baptist, not a Methodist, minister: 'As to any irregular or improper interference, I remember that a preacher in this district by the name of [Elijah] Bentley, I think of the Baptist society, who had come from the United States, was convicted upon very clear evidence, at the Assizes, during the last war of exhorting his congregation publickly [sic] to join the enemy, and congratulating them upon the prospect of belonging to the United States; and I recollect that some of the most respectable members of his congregation gave evidence against him, and seemed very indignant at his conduct. I have observed it to be a very general impression that the preachers of the Methodist persuasion exert themselves much to influence the elections of Members of the Assembly throughout the Province, by communicating with their several societies, but I cannot say they do, of my own knowledge.' Waters et al., *Report*, 20.

20 Waters et al., *Report*, 10.

21 In the chart at the conclusion of the report, only eight of the Methodist ministers were shown to be non-naturalized.

22 Waters et al., *Report*, 3.
23 'Question 4: Is the tendency of the population of this Province toward to Church of England? Is it spreading over the province? Is it not as well-supported by its members … as any other church in the province?' Waters et al., *Report*, 11. D. McCall answered in a similar fashion as the vast majority: 'I do not think so – very slowly. It is well supported.' Waters et al., Report, 11.
24 Waters et al., *Report*, 13.
25 Ibid.
26 Waters et al., *Report*, 14.
27 C. Fothergill, a member of the Assembly, declared: 'If missionaries of the Church of England meddle with the politics of the country, and other civil affairs, with which they ought to have nothing to do, as much as many of those already have, and particularly as much as one of their Archdeacons has done, the people generally would be less likely to become more attached to our civil and religious or any other institutions; which has already been proved to a certain extent.' Waters et al., *Report*, 13.
28 Waters et al., *Report*, 13.
29 Waters et al., *Report*, 14.
30 However, some viewed increased immigration as a potential source of people for the beleaguered Anglicans. B.C. Beardsley replied: 'I think [the denomination] is not spreading except from the consequences of emigration' Waters et al., *Report*, 14.
31 Waters et al., *Report*, 13.
32 The establishment question only became an issue in the post-war years as 'the position of the Church of England as the legally established religion of the two Canadas and as the sole beneficiary of all government largesse … was apparently unquestioned and unnoticed until after the War of 1812.' Moir, *Early Presbyterianism*, 88. This does provide some evidence that the war helped create a more unified consciousness, if not entirely a national one, among the people of Upper Canada. Moir also argues: 'did the establishment extend to all British colonies or only to those acquired after the union of 1707? Such questions seem to have remained hypothetical or even unasked as far as British America was concerned until after the American Revolution, and even then the questions were certainly not put immediately or even effectively in the residual British American colonies until after the War of 1812.' Ibid., 85–6.
33 'Religious instruction, it is true, will promote and strengthen loyalty and all other virtues; but no more when communicated by clergymen of the Church of England than by those of other sects, and probably less if they are or appear to be political teachers and servants of the state, rather than ministers of the Gospel.' Waters et al., *Report*, 12.
34 Waters et al., *Report*, 11.
35 William Westfall records a correspondence between William Knox and Charles Jenkinson in which the role of the church is deemed essential for the development of the community: 'The influence of Religion on the Opinion, Temper and Conduct of Mankind – its Tendency to promote the Internal Peace of Society, when under proper Regulations; and how capable it is of being made an Engine of Discord and Sedition – are matters too well understood, and generally acknowledged, to require any Proof in this Place. The National Religion of any state may be presumed to be best adopted to the Civil Constitution of the state, hence it claims the Countenance and Support of the Civil Magistrate, which should be considered not only as a Matter of Piety and Prudence, but of the utmost Necessity in a Political View, being connected with the Peace and Welfare of the Community.' William Westfall, *Two Worlds: The Protestant Culture of Nineteenth Century Ontario* (Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1989), 95–6.
36 Marshall S. Bidwell, *Report of a Committee of the House of Assembly, Upper Canada, 15 March 1828* [n.p.].
37 '[C]olonial leaders lived with the knowledge that some, if not most, Upper Canadians were not only reluctant, but would refuse to fight at all.' Errington, 'Reluctant Warriors,' 327.
38 This is a simplistic overview of the political events during that time. It was not solely the idea that the Reformers were disloyal that drove them from influence. Donald Akenson argues that it was the arrival of numerous 'hyper-loyal' Irish Protestants who had a desire to benefit financially and political experience in forming and organizing

popular movements that ultimately undid these earlier Upper Canadians' ability to maintain their advantages. Loyalty to England remained, as all concepts must, on some kind of scale and few could demonstrate greater loyalty than these Irish Protestant immigrants. In this sense it was the Irish Protestants, not the American settlers, who were the real threat to the hegemony that veterans of 1812 attempted to build into Upper Canadian culture. Akenson makes the following simple yet powerful critique on the use of the war: 'That the actual events of 1812–14 were so distorted as to be virtually unrecognizable is irrelevant; what counts is that the historical events were malleable and could be fashioned into a past that could be used.' Donald Harman Akenson, *The Irish in Ontario: A Study in Rural History* (Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1984), 134.

39 'The Gideon hundreds of loyal Canadians repelled and scattered, for more than two years, the Midian and Amalekite thousands of democratic invaders, until Great Britain, having chained the marauding tiger of Europe to the rock of St. Helena, despatched [sic] her thousands of soldiers to the aid of Canada, and sent her fleets across the Atlantic … taking and burning their capital in retaliation for the American raid upon the capital of Upper Canada, and soon compelling the heretofore boasting Madison partizans to seek for peace' Ryerson, *Loyalists*, 470.

40 '[Neville's] own flock, who knew the man, knew how his loyalty had been tested, and what sacrifices he had made for his adopted country. By a few religious and political bigots, however, his American origin was a cause of unjust suspicion and aspersion, which stung to the quick his sensitive nature. He was especially made to feel the unreasoning and bitter antipathy of the Indians to the nation of American "long-knives," with whom they classed him, notwithstanding his peaceful calling and his approved loyalty.' Withrow, *Trueman*, 6:34.

41 Withrow, *Trueman*, preface.

42 Neil Semple, *The Lord's Dominion: The History of Canadian Methodism* (Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1996)

43 For the most complete research on the development of Methodism in Upper and Lower Canada, see Webb, *Transatlantic Methodists*.

44 William Canniff recorded the daunting ruggedness of Upper Canada: 'a vast wilderness, and no roads. The only way of traveling from one clearing to another was by the canoe and bateau, or by foot through the trackless woods, guided by the banks of the bay, or a river, or the blazing of the trees.' William Canniff, *The Settlement of Upper Canada: With Special Reference to The Bay Quinte* (1869; reprinted Belleville: Mika Silk Screening Limited, 1971), 224. See also the introduction of Charlotte Gray, ed., *Canada: A Portrait in Letters 1800–2000* (Toronto: Anchor Canada, 2004) for her discussion on an early Canadian creation myth that grew out of the ability to survive in a windswept wilderness.

45 However, the image of the 'manly Methodist' was not reserved for Trueman alone. This is a story about a soldier who took issue with a Methodist named Jonas Evans and Evans' attempt to preach to the soldiers: 'Once a drinking, swearing bigot constituted himself a champion of the Church established by law, and complained to the commanding major that "the Methody [sic] preacher took the work out of the hands of their own chaplain," – an easy-going parson, who much preferred dining with the officers' mess to visiting the soldiers' barracks. "If he preaches as well as he fights, he can beat the chaplain," said the major. "Let him fire away all he likes, the parson won't complain; and some of you fellows would be none the worse for converting, as he calls it. If you were to take a leaf out of his book yourself, Tony, and not be locked up in the guard-house so often, it would be better for you!"' Withrow, *Trueman*, 6:36.

46 Withrow, *Trueman*, 16:78.

47 Withrow, *Trueman*, 16:82.

48 '[O]ld Jonas Evans, now a sergeant of militia, was quietly reading his well-thumbed Bible, lifted his stentorian voice in a stirring Methodist hymn: "Soldiers of Christ, arise, And put your armour on, Strong in the strength which God supplies Through His eternal Son. Stand then against your foes, in close and firm array: Legions of wily fiends oppose throughout the evil day." The

old man sang with a martial vigour … then earnestly exhorted his comrades-in-arms to be on their guard against the opposing fiends who especially assailed a soldier's life. "Above all," he said, "beware of the drink-fiend–the worst enemy King George has got. He kills more of the King's troops than all his other foes together." Then, with a yearning tenderness in his voice, he exhorted them to "ground the weapons of their rebellion and enlist in the service of King Jesus, the great Captain of their salvation, who would lead them to victory over the world, the flesh, and the devil, and at last make them kings and priests forever in His everlasting kingdom in the skies." Those rude, reckless, and, some of them, violent and wicked men, fascinated by the intense earnestness of the Methodist local-preacher, listened with quiet attention.… The moral elevation which Christian-living and Bible-reading will always give, commanded their respect, and the dauntless daring of the old man – for they knew that he was a very lion in the fight, and as cool under fire as at the mess-table – challenged the admiration of their soldier hearts.' Withrow, *Trueman*, 6:35–6.

49 Ryerson, Loyalists, 471. Withrow would also use fairly anachronistic terms like 'country' in his own telling of the tale: "'God grant, my son," said the farmer solemnly, "that we may not see more fighting than we wish. I've lived through one bloody war and I never want to see another. But if fight we must for our country, fight we will.'" Withrow, *Trueman*, 1:10.

50 'In the British Empire, and particularly in what is historically known as the 'second' era of British imperialism (1784–1867), missionary activity was frequently involved with the initial steps of imperial expansion. A heightened sense of religiosity in Britain at this time ensured that Christianisation was seen as a crucial part of the colonizing and civilizing projects of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.' C.F. Pascoe, *Two hundred years of the S.P.G. an historical account of the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts, 1701–1900* (London: Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts, 1901), 13.

51 Withrow, *Trueman*, 15:77. Withrow would reiterate such claims throughout his work through writing down the final words, or battle time phrases of certain Methodist men. The following is one example: 'Jonas Evans, who had been an old artilleryman, takes the place of a wounded gunner, lifts the big sixty-eight pound balls, rams them home, and handles the linstock as coolly as if on parade. "Bless the Lord!" he said to a comrade while the piece was being pointed, "I am ready to live or die; it's no odds to me. For me to live is Christ, to die is gain. Sudden death would be sudden glory. Hallelujah! I believe I am doing my duty to my country, to God and man, and my soul is as happy as it can be this side heaven.'" Withrow , *Trueman*, 7:40–1.

52 Ryerson, *Loyalists*, 472.

53 Ryerson, *Loyalists*, 474. Ryerson also noted: 'The administration of the Crown or Public Lands was sadly defective and partial, giving whole blocks to friends [of the Executive Government in the days following the war] and speculators, while the applications of the legitimate settler were often rejected. It also began to be complained that these large blocks of land given to individuals, and the one-seventh of the lands set apart as Clergy Reserves, greatly impeded the settlement and improvement of the country.' Ibid., 472–3.

54 Ryerson, *Loyalists*, 473.

55 However, Ryerson did not equate that invasion with America but with a 'democratic mob faction' who did not represent the 'sentiments or feelings of the industrious, business, commercial, intelligent, and Christian people of the United States.' Ryerson, *Loyalists*, 472.

56 For Withrow, the fact that the Americans chose to support Canada despite the threat that both countries might disown them was one of the most laudable evidences of their fidelity to the people and king. He wrote: 'most of [the American Methodists], although cut off from fellowship, and largely from sympathy with the Conference and Church by which they were appointed, continued steadfast at their posts and loyal to the institutions of the country, notwithstanding the obloquy, suspicion, and persecution to which they were often subjected.' Withrow, *Trueman*, 1:13–4.

57 Withrow would most likely disagree with such an assessment. He stated in his opening that the 'principal authorities

consulted for the historical portion of this story are: Tupper's Life and Letters of Sir Isaac Brock, Auchinleck's and other histories of the War, and Carroll's, Bangs', and Playter's references to border Methodism at the period described. Many of the incidents, however, are derived from the personal testimony of prominent actors in the stirring drama of the time, but few of whom still linger on the stage. For reasons which will be obvious, the personality of some of the characters of the story is slightly veiled under assumed names.' Withrow, *Trueman*, preface. However, this author examined the footnotes and quotations and discovered that there are few citations and of the ones that do exist, many were from personal interviews and Withrow's other works.

58 'In the United States Congress this unnatural strife of kindred races was vigorously denounced by some of the truest American patriots.' Withrow, *Trueman*, 6:33.

59 The following quote records the moment Trueman decided to remain and serve in Upper Canada: "'Young man, I honour your choice," exclaimed the Squire effusively, grasping [Trueman's] hand with energy. "I know what it is to leave home, and kindred, and houses and lands for loyalty to my conscience and my King…we found our way, I and a few neighbours, to this spot, to hew out new homes in the forest and keep our oath of allegiance to our King.'" Withrow, *Trueman*, 1:11. Squire Drayton was referring to his own service in the Revolution as a United Empire Loyalist. The decision of men like Trueman to side with Britain was thus given similar standing to the eighteenth-century decisions made by the celebrated and venerated United Empire Loyalists (who had also been American-born).

60 Withrow, *Trueman*, 1:12.

61 'General Smyth, who had succeeded Van Rensselaer [after Queenston], assembled a force five thousand strong, for the conquest of Canada. At the expiration of the armistice, he issued a *Napoleonic proclamation* to his "companions in arms."' Withrow, *Trueman*, 6:32. Italics added for emphasis.

62 Withrow, *Trueman*, 1:12.

63 Ryerson, *Loyalists*, 450. 'Even the patriotic and intellectual part of the American people denounced this unholy intrigue between their own President and the bloody usurper of Europe, and this causeless war against Great Britain.' Ibid., 451.

64 Ryerson, *Loyalists*, 449.

65 Withrow, *Trueman*, 1:10. Trueman did not condemn the Revolutionary War but simply the invasion of 1812 : "'I believe the colonists were right in resisting oppression in '76,' continued Neville; "but I believe they are wrong in invading Canada now, and I wash my hands of all share in their crime.'" Withrow, *Trueman*, 1:11.

66 Ryerson, Loyalists, 462 n.

67 Withrow was attempting to relay honest stories from credible witnesses despite the lack of both: 'The details of the account above given were narrated to the author by the venerable Father Brady, for many years class-leader of the Methodist Church at Niagara, who was an actor in the events described.' Withrow, *Trueman*, 7:42, n1.

68 Chapters thirteen to eighteen are dedicated solely to the religious works of the Methodists and the religious landscape of the time. After that, the book returned to the events of the war and the actions taken by Trueman, Jonas and others.

69 '[Neville] was soon busily engaged, skillfully helping the surgeon and ministering alike to the bodies and the souls of the wounded soldiers. He also found time to visit the ramparts and speak words of cheer and encouragement to the members of his spiritual flock. Although shot and shell screamed through the air, and fragments and splinters were flying in dangerous proximity, he felt himself sustained by the grace of God. Amid these dreadful scenes he knew no fear, and his calm serenity inspired confidence courage and in others.' Withrow, *Trueman*, 7:41.

70 Withrow, *Trueman*, chap. 1.

71 Withrow, *Trueman*, 2:16.

72 In the winter following the death of Brock, Withrow recorded 'A deep seriousness pervaded the entire neighbourhood [in Queenston]. The usual winter amusements and dancing parties were, to a great extent, forgone [sic].' Withrow, *Trueman*, 16:79. Trueman was not the only Methodist celebrated at Queenston. Withrow provided the

following commentary from a wounded man, Jim Larkins: 'Old Jonas Evans, the Methody [sic] local preacher, was aside me, a-prayin' like a saint and a-fightin' like a lion. "The Lord ha' mercy on his soul," I heared him say as he knocked a feller over. Well, he helped me out o' the fight as tender as a woman, and then went at it again as fierce as ever.' Withrow, *Trueman*, 4:27.

73 Withrow, *Trueman*, 12:67.

74 Henry Ryan was appointed the superintendent over the Upper Canadian circuit at the Genesee Conference of 1812. Nathan Bangs was appointed over Lower Canada. However, Bangs was in New York when war was declared and spent the entirety of the war in the United States, leaving Ryan the sole leader of Episcopal Methodism in both Canadas throughout the war. Ryan, a figure of controversy in many later Methodist fights, was remembered fondly by Withrow: 'Mr. Ryan, by his loyalty, gained the confidence and admiration of all friends of British supremacy, and, by his abundant and heroic labours, the affections of the God-fearing part of the community.' Withrow, *Trueman*, 14:73. 'Strange work for a Christian man to do! It seems the work of demons rather than of men, and yet godly men have, with an approving conscience, wielded the weapons of carnal warfare. But in this much at least all will agree: An unjust war is the greatest of all crimes, and even a just war is the greatest of all calamities. And all will join in the prayer, Give peace in our time, O Lord, and hasten the day when the nations shall learn war no more!' Ibid., 7:41.

75 Withrow, *Trueman*, 9:47–8.

76 Withrow, *Trueman*, 9:48.

77 Withrow, *Trueman*, 1:13.

78 Withrow, *Trueman*, 14:73.

79 Withrow, *Trueman*, 21:108–9.

London Journal of Canadian Studies, Volume 29 (2014). UCL Press• Print ISSN 0267-2200 • Online ISSN 2397-0928 • DOI 10.14324/111.444.ljcs.2014v29.002

Remembering 1812 in the 1840s: John Richardson and the Writing of the War

Cecilia Morgan

Abstract

Soldier, traveller, writer, and journalist John Richardson's 1840 history of the War of 1812, along with his novel, *The Canadian Brothers,* also published in 1840, were some of the first written efforts by Upper Canadians to craft histories of the conflict. Richardson drew heavily on his own experiences as a young soldier during this time, mixing autobiography and documentary sources to craft his history; he also drew on his childhood in the Windsor-Detroit area for his novel. His work drew attention to the conflict in the southwestern area of the colony, a region at times overlooked in the War's public memory in favour of the Niagara peninsula. Richardson's accounts of the War of 1812 are notable for a number of reasons. Richardson himself was a highly mobile figure in the imperial and transatlantic world of the British military: his writings are part of the context of broader discussions of the Napoleonic Wars. Equally importantly, Richardson's work highlights the effects of war on men's bodies and their deployment in wartime struggle. His history and novel tell us much about discourses of masculinity in wartime, both European and Indigenous.

> It is a humiliating, yet undeniable fact, that there are few young men of the present generation who are at all aware, except by vague and inaccurate report, of the brilliant feats of arms, and sterling loyalty displayed by their immediate progenitors, during the stern but brief struggle with the neighboring Republic. . . . Or, if they have read of these matters, their information has been derived through the corrupt channel of American party publications

> bearing on the subject, all of which have a tendency to pervert facts, and to instil into the youthful mind that diffidence and mistrust which operate as a check upon the generous aspirings, and weaken the energies of the national character.[1]

With this appeal to historical accuracy and patriotism, John Richardson opened his history of the War of 1812. Over 300 pages long, Richardson's twelve-chapter history was one of the first lengthy attempts by an Upper Canadian to craft a narrative of the War, particularly as it was fought in the southern portion of the colony.

In it, and in his other historical writing, Richardson was motivated by various ambitions, his work shaped by multiple goals. As well as setting the historical record straight for Upper Canadian youth, his history was marked by the traumas and triumphs of the conflict, ones that had left their mark on him and on his historical subjects. In his history, Richardson also demonstrated the permeability of history-writing's boundaries in this period, as he shifted from the dispassionate, disembodied voice of the omniscient spectator to an intensely personal and embodied autobiographical mode. Furthermore, Richardson's novel of the War, *The Canadian Brothers,* built on his history of the events of 1812; it also, though, expanded its chronological sweep and delved even further into the relationship between the realm of the battlefield and that of the early nineteenth-century family, the tribulations and triumphs of one inflecting and reflecting those of the other.

Born in (probably) Queenston in 1796, his father Robert, a British military surgeon, and his mother Madelaine Askin, the mixed-race daughter of fur trader John Askin, Richardson was raised in both the Niagara and Detroit frontiers. He fought for the British from 1812 to 1813 and saw considerable action on both sides of the border, although all of this ended when he was taken prisoner at the Battle of Moraviantown and sent to Kentucky. On his release at the War's end, Richardson served in Europe and the West Indies; he also spent time in Paris and London in the 1820s and 1830s, returning to Upper Canada's Western District to help suppress the Rebellion of 1837. A series of 'misfortunes' in Canada West saw him depart for the United States in 1849; he died in New York City in 1852.[2]

Although Richardson's military career marked much of his life, he also sought to make a living as a writer. To be sure, he admitted that he had always 'detested school,' a place that for him represented constant suffering – not the least of it physical. 'I had been oftener flogged than the greatest dunce in it, perhaps as much from the caprice of my

tutor as from any actual wrong in myself.' This treatment left him with 'such a disgust for Virgil, Horace, and Euclid, that I often meditated running away.' However, fear of his father – 'a stern, unbending man' – restrained Richardson from taking such action. Much to his delight, the outbreak of War was a 'day of rejoicing' for him; the arrival of American troops meant the breakup of his school and his exchange of *Caesar's Commentaries* for the *King's Regulations*. 'The transition was indeed glorious, and, in my joy at the change which had been wrought in my position, I felt disposed to bless the Americans for the bold step they had taken.'[3] Yet even if his early experiences had soured Richardson on formal education, he was eager to commit his thoughts and experiences to paper; his publications also included *Wacousta; or, The Prophecy, a Tale of the Canadas,* other fiction set in Europe, an account of Upper Canadian political history from 1838 to 1848, and the short-lived newspaper, *Canadian Loyalist, or Spirit of 1812.4* While not all of his published work, then, focused on the history of Upper Canada or the War of 1812, both the place and the event had captured his novelist's and historian's imagination.

By the time Richardson wrote his history, the War's public memory and the structures of its official commemoration focused on battlefields and, in particular, the heroic sacrifice of Isaac Brock at Queenston Heights. As Patricia Jasen's study of early nineteenth-century tourism in Ontario has demonstrated, Lundy's Lane, Fort George, and other Niagara-area battlefields were – along with Niagara Falls – some of the colony's earliest tourist attractions.[5] As well, tributes to Brock were composed both during the War and afterwards, in poetry recited at school examinations, at services at the twice-built Queenston monument and other memorials that commemorated the battle of Queenston Heights, and in early textbooks.[6] Other figures also captured the imaginations of colonial society. As Guy St.-Denis has pointed out, reports of an American vandalizing the (supposed) grave of Shawnee chief Tecumseh in 1840 led to calls for a monument to his memory and to a lengthy and protracted search for his remains, one in which John Richardson participated.[7] Moreover, on the American side of the border, debates over the War's meaning and significance had taken place even before the Treaty of Ghent had been signed.[8]

Literary scholar Desmond Pacey has described Richardson as 'an isolated figure in the early history' of Ontario literature, one who lacked a 'current of ideas to sustain him,' who had 'no depth in the cultural soil in which his roots were set.' Such an analysis does not take into account Richardson's place in the production of history in British

North America or his relationship to the wider contexts of historical writing during this period.[9] After all, Richardson's text was not the first account to be produced in Upper Canada, as in 1832 Niagara resident David Thompson, a former soldier and, by then, teacher, published his *A History of the Late War between Great Britain and the United States of America.* Thompson's text was intended to give the present generation the chance to 'review the terrific glories of those fields of blood and carnage,' thus allowing widows and orphans to 'survey the transcendent achievements of their husbands and fathers' and, like Richardson's work, to stir up patriotic sentiments for the colony's youth.[10] As well, it is more than likely that during his time in England Richardson became aware of the statutes, paintings, and services that memorialized Britain's defeat of France in 1815.[11] Thus, in his desire to provide a narrative of the events of 1812–1813, Richardson participated in colonial, transatlantic, and imperial dialogues about the effects of the Napoleonic Wars, his participation mediated by a focus on the War's specific and local effect.

To be sure, Richardson's *History* was not a comprehensive or all-encompassing narrative of the War of 1812 in Upper Canada, nor did he intend it to be. Although his geographic range spanned Michilmackinac to Queenston Heights, and took in the destruction of the British fleet on Lake Erie, Richardson concentrated most of his work on the Detroit-Windsor frontier and the surrounding area, building up to the Battle of Mora-viantown, his capture by American troops, and his journey to Chillicothe in Ohio and then to Frankfurt, Kentucky. In the burgeoning commemorative landscape of southern Ontario, one which the Niagara frontier would dominate, Richardson's detailed attention to events such as Brock's capture of Fort Detroit, the Fort Wayne Expedition, and the Battles of Frenchtown and the Miami argued for the importance of places other than Stoney Creek, Chippewa, Fort Erie, and Niagara as significant theatres of war. In *Wacousta* and in *The Canadian Brothers,* Richardson drew a map of the War that trained his readers' eyes onto the western Great Lakes region. In so doing his work also foreshadowed that of late nineteenth-century commemorators, who argued that despite its entanglement in larger imperial and transatlantic power struggles, Upper Canada's experiences of 1812 had to be understood at the local level.[12]

Yet as much as Richardson wished to draw attention to the specificity of a particular place in which the War was conducted, telling his audience of military strategies, stirring triumphs, and heartbreaking defeats in that region, to an even greater extent his

was also an embodied war. In his history men's bodies are the subject of close scrutiny, their physical appearances signifying much about the multivalent nature of early nineteenth-century war's relationship to masculinity.[13] At times these bodies are powerful yet personable symbols of British imperial honour: the most obvious one being, of course, that of Brock. While Richardson suspected that his readers might well know the other descriptions of the General that circulated within Upper Canada, nevertheless the lack of a portrait 'public or private' in 'the country' necessitated a 'slight written sketch.' 'Tall, stout, and inclining to corpulency,' Brock possessed a 'fair and florid complexion, had a large forehead, full face, but not prominent features, rather small, grayish-blue eyes, with a very slight cast in one of them – small mouth, with a pleasing smile, and good teeth.' As well as his stature and face, Brock's behaviour and character conveyed important messages. 'In manner he was exceedingly affable and gentlemanly, of a cheerful and social habit, partial to dancing, and although never married, extremely devoted to female society. Of the chivalry of his nature, and the soundness of his judgment, evidence enough has been given in the foregoing pages to render all comment thereon a matter of supererogation.'[14]

In his valourization of Brock's appearance and character, Richardson was, of course, not alone. Depicting Brock as a physically commanding, sagacious, and inspirational leader, as well as a courteous gentleman, was integral to his commemoration in nineteenth-century Ontario.[15] Although Brock might serve as the most central and significant symbol of British physical courage and virtue, Richardson did not, though, stint in his appraisal of the physical bravery and courage demonstrated by other British officers or the Upper Canadian militia. At Queenston Heights, for example, Captain Dennis of the 49th Grenadiers was shot in the thigh, yet 'with characteristic *sang froid,* stopped the effusion of blood by thrusting his finger into the wound, and in that manner supported his share in the action to the last.'[16] Youthful male bravery, particularly when displayed by a close relative and coupled with the ability to transcend horrible pain, also drew its share of praise. One of Richardson's most effusive passages was his description of his fourteen-year-old brother's conduct at the Battle of Frenchtown. A midshipman on Lake Erie, Robert ('the next and favorite brother of the author'), frustrated with the lack of opportunities to engage the enemy directly on water, left his ship to join the troops. Having disobeyed orders to stay behind the fighting, Robert was hit by a cannon ball which shattered his right leg.[17] As John and Robert's father, Dr. Richardson,

was providing medical services on the field, Robert begged to be hidden so that his father would not discover him and was treated by another surgeon (whether out of fear of his father's wrath at his having disobeyed orders or because he did not wish to upset him is left to the reader's imagination). After enduring six months of 'intense' suffering that he bore with 'manly and enduring courage,' Robert was taken to Quebec, where he endeared himself to the British military hierarchy and was given a lieutenant's commission in the provincial corps. Although his wound led to his untimely death in 1819, 'this spirited youth had the cheering consolation to know that … the noble ardor developed at so early a stage of his existence was not without its reward, in the approval of men whose high military rank and character invested their individual regard with a ten-fold value.' As proof of their approval, Richardson then went on to quote Sir John Harvey's 1839 reminiscence of the 'devoted boy.' In his capacity as Adjutant-General to the army in Canada, Harvey had met Robert and remembered his 'gallantry and merits,' as well as 'his sufferings,' all of which 'excited my warmest admiration and sympathies.'[18]

Richardson's younger and much-beloved brother might, of course, be expected to inspire such a portrait. Robert was not alone, though, in his ability to overcome physical suffering for a greater end. At Frenchtown, William Caldwell of Amherstburg found himself confronted by the treachery of an American officer. Caldwell had just rescued the officer from Indian warriors bent on scalping him and was taking him to the other prisoners when the officer took advantage of Caldwell's momentary distraction to draw his knife and 'springing upon his deliverer, made an incision along his throat, nearly from ear to ear.' Fortunately for Caldwell, the wound was shallow 'and Mr. Caldwell, who was extremely powerful and active, with great presence of mind, caught the arm which had attempted his destruction, and drawing forth a dagger … thrust it repeatedly into the body of his assailant until death had freed him from all further apprehension – Mr. Caldwell's wound was soon healed.'[19]

Men' s bodies, then, might testify to honourable sacrifices or an ability to quickly slough off the war's damaging effects. However, while Mr. Caldwell's body quickly shed the marks of conflict, others were not so fortunate. In the aftermath of Queenston Heights the 'body of the Hero of Canada' had been left behind in one of the village's homes, 'covered with a pile of old blankets in order to prevent any recognition by the enemy.'[20] To be sure, some men experienced war's depredations in a manner more farcical than tragic. In the August 1812 retreat

from the indigenous village of Maguaga, Lieutenant Sutherland was shot through the cheek by an American, a wound so severe that he was carried off the field of battle on a militia man's back. Despite the severity of his injury, though, Sutherland would have fully recovered 'had he not imprudently, some ten days afterward, made premature use of his toothbrush. This opened the wound, brought on hemorrhage, and before medical assistance could be procured (the main body of the force being then in occupation of Detroit), he bled to death.'[21]

Sutherland's unnecessarily premature demise aside, the depredations of war were just as likely to evoke disgust and repugnance, sentiments that often arose when Richardson was confronted by 'common' American soldiers. Taken prisoner at Frenchtown, they appeared 'miserable to the last degree. They had the air of men to whom cleanliness was a virtue unknown, and their squalid bodies were covered by habiliments that had evidently undergone every change of season, and were arrived at the last stages of repair.' Richardson showed some degree of empathy for men who had begun their campaign in summer clothing made of cotton and who now, in the depth of winter, lacked great coats and cloaks. Yet he also was repulsed by other aspects of their appearance: their 'slouched hats, worn bare by constant use, beneath which their long hair fell matted and uncombed over their cheeks; and those, together with the dirty blankets wrapped around their loins, to protect them from the inclemency of the season, and fastened by broad leather belts, into which were thrust axes and knives of an enormous length, gave them an air of wildness and savageness, which in Italy would have caused them to pass for brigands of the Apennines.' Moreover, while Richardson's work was marked by a general disdain for the 'various hordes of irregular troops' from Kentucky and Ohio, he remarked that little distinguished these men from their officers, except that the latter bore a short rifle and dagger instead of the common soldier's long rifle and knife.[22]

The shabby and sordid appearance of the Kentuckians and Ohioans, though, paled in contrast to the bodily indignities suffered by Richardson and his fellow prisoners after their capture at Moraviantown. During their march to Ohio they slept on wet ground, lying in 'ankle-deep' mud and chilled with the cold.[23] Mounted on 'miserable pack horses, scarcely able to sustain their own weight' the prisoners endured more 'fatigue and privation' than Richardson could describe.[24] While some of the Americans they met treated them with courtesy and attempted to provide them with material comforts,[25] matters became even worse once they arrived at their prison in Frankfurt, Kentucky,

presided over by a 'ruffian like' gaoler. One member of their party was assaulted by the gaoler with a 'ponderous key,' and left with a head wound from which 'the blood gusht(ed) forth with extreme violence.'[26] After their plan to escape was discovered, the prisoners – Richardson excepted – were put in heavy iron handcuffs, which left them unable to change their clothes or 'perform their customary ablutions.' Worse still, their hands and wrists swelled up because of the cuffs' compression; several men were left with their fingers discoloured 'with the quantity of blood propelled to those parts.'[27] To crown their humiliation, the men then were 'paraded through the principal streets of the town,' a route both 'circuitous and unnecessary,' where they were greeted by the 'taunts and hisses' of the general population and, even worse, the 'triumphant disdain' of those 'with whom we had lately associated, and who had exercised the courtesies of hospitality' who believed a rumour that the prisoners had plotted to burn the town.[28] Although Richardson's narrative of torment and indignity ended in redemption with the War's end, the contrast between the coarseness of the American troops, one that Richardson hinted was a result of their own 'natural' proclivities, and the almost-Christ-like physical suffering endured by the British and Upper Canadian troops, helped to delineate the boundaries between the United States, Britain, and her colony. A soldier's body, then, could serve as a living metaphor for his country of origin and help delineate the border between rival nations and empires.

Richardson's desire to record the marks that armed conflict bore on men's bodies was not limited to those of white soldiers. Much of his history was preoccupied with the appearances and practices of Indigenous warriors, a group about whom he held a range of perspectives. Like the other subjects of his narrative, this was a world of men. An Indigenous woman makes a brief appearance in the book's first chapter, as she strikes an American prisoner with a tomahawk in revenge for the death of her nephew, a 'heartless' act that leads to the prisoner's death and dismemberment.[29] Overall, however, Richardson chose to focus on Indigenous men.

Although much of Richardson's discussion of Indigenous men was usually about nameless warriors, he singled out a few individuals. One of the most prominent was Tecumseh, whom Richardson presents as a worthy counterpart to Brock, both in his military abilities and in his physical presence and character. While Tecumseh makes a number of appearances in Richardson's narrative, his appearance and conduct at the Battle of the Miami in May 1813 was particularly noteworthy. After the battle, a 'few cowardly and treacherous Indians who had borne no

share in the action,' began to kill American prisoners: upon hearing of this, Tecumseh rode in and quickly stopped them. In this episode it was the force of Tecumseh's character that impressed Richardson, his mercy, magnanimity, courage, and ardor. 'In any other country, and governing any other men, Tecumseh would have been a hero,' Richardson believed. Yet while 'at the head of this uncivilized and untractable people he was a savage; but a savage such as civilization herself might not blush to acknowledge as her child.' Even the American General Harrison, who had met Tecumseh in battle, 'subsequently ascribed to him virtues as a man, and abilities as a warrior, commanding at once the attention and admiration of his enemies.'[30] Later in the book, after reprinting Tecumseh's speech on the eve of the Battle of Moraviantown, in which he adamantly refuted General Proctor's proposal for a retreat to Niagara, Richardson dwelt on Tecumseh's physical appearance at more length. While the assembled warriors, with their 'diversified costumes,' formed a 'striking contrast with the calm demeanour and military garb' of the British officers, the 'most prominent' was Tecumseh. 'Habited in a close leather dress, his athletic proportions were admirably delineated, while a large plume of white ostrich feathers, by which he was generally distinguished, overshadowing his brow, and contrasting with the darkness of his complexion and the brilliancy of his black and piercing eye, gave a singularly wild and terrific expression to his features. It was evident that he could be terrible.'[31]

Tecumseh, then, might fulfill Richardson's and his readers' fantasies of nobility tinged with savagery; but he was not alone. At the Battle of Miami Richardson was struck by Metoss, the head chief of the Sacs (Sauk). A 'tall, handsome man about six feet in height,' possessed features 'essentially classic and Roman' (as did his nation overall). 'When dressed, or rather undressed for battle, his body and limbs fantastically painted, and his head ornamented with a handsome circlet of feathers, his tall and commanding figure presented the very *beau ideal* of an Indian warrior.' While not as eloquent or intellectually gifted as Tecumseh, Metoss was nevertheless resolute, a 'sagacious and active' leader, firmly attached to the British and just as firm in his hatred of the Americans (here, too, just slightly less ardent than Tecumseh).[32] Also like Tecumseh, Metoss was capable of forgiveness and mercy, a point Richardson illustrated with an anecdote that involved Metoss giving up the American soldier who had killed his son to the British. Moreover, his son's death left the chief 'frantic with grief,' a state that left the normally sanguine warrior weeping 'like a child' at the funeral and for many days after.[33]

Other Indians were not so noble and were far more savage. Indigenous men's bodies figure quite prominently in the text in a number of other ways. There were those 'cowardly and treacherous' – not to mention 'degenerate,' as they refrained from engaging in honourable battle – Chippewas, whose massacring and looting of American soldiers was ended by Tecumseh. Moreover, two days after the Battle of the Miami Richardson chanced upon a scene in the 'Indian encampment' that was a 'spectacle … of the most ludicrous and revolting nature.' The possessions of the American General Clay were being plundered and those involved were 'busily occupied in displaying their riches, carefully examining each article, and attempting to divine its use.' Here was a scene of colonial hybridity that, for Richardson, illustrated the most troubling and carnivalesque aspects of racial mimicry. Indians wearing dead officers' uniforms and footwear, 'dragging with difficulty the heavy military boots with which their legs were for the first time covered.' They 'strutted forth much to the admiration of their less fortunate comrades.' Others had simply clothed themselves in items of civilian garb or in 'clean white shirts, contrasting in no ordinary manner with the swarthiness of their skins; all wore some article of decoration, and their tent were ornamented with saddles, bridles, rifles, daggers, swords, and pistols, many of which were handsomely mounted and of curious workmanship.'[34] While all of this might be to some extent laughable, worthy only of white condescension and scorn, the scene also held far more harrowing and dire lessons about 'Indians.'

> Such was the ridiculous part of the picture; but mingled with these, and in various directions, were to be seen the scalps of the slain drying in the sun, stained on the fleshy side with vermilion dyes, and dangling in the air, as they hung suspended from the poles to which they were attached; together with hoops of various sizes, on which were stretched portions of human skin taken from various parts of the body, principally the hand and foot, and yet covered with the nails of those parts, while, scattered along the ground, were visible the members from which they had been separated, and serving as nutriment to the wolf-dogs by which the Indians were accompanied.[35]

If his descriptions of Tecumseh and Metoss relied on eighteenth-century depictions of Indigenous people that were grounded in classical imagery and tropes, the above passage presaged Francis Parkman's romantic, albeit lurid, descriptions of Indian depravity.[36] As well, with such scenes

Richardson created foils for warriors such as Tecumseh and Metoss and for white soldiers; mutilating bodies and looting clothing for racial parodies suggested the dire outcomes if honourable codes of manliness, ones that stressed self-restraint and empathy for the vanquished, were not observed.

Richardson was not without his own degree of colonial ambivalence toward Indigenous men and their attitudes towards the warrior's body. As with Tecumseh, some Indigenous men's practices demonstrated bravery and a clear ability to withstand physical pain. Indeed, the behaviour of a Sac chief showed that they were not afraid to court the latter so they might garner honour for their people. At breakfast with the garrison officers at Fort Wayne, a Sac chief 'in order to demonstrate more fully the extent to which [his tribe] carried their disregard of pain or death, drew a sharp knife from its sheath, and, having cut a piece of flesh out of one of his thighs, threw it contemptuously away, exclaiming that "he gave it to the dogs."'[37]

Furthermore, the fate that so repelled and fascinated Anglo-American readers and that also had an audience across the Atlantic – that of the white captive – makes an appearance in Richardson's account.[38] In the aftermath of the retreat from Fort Wayne, Richardson and his companions ran into an American soldier who had been taken captive and adopted. With a partly shaved head, 'covered with a handkerchief, rolled in the form of a turban,' and a multi-coloured painted face, 'so complete was the metamorphosis, that but for the whiteness of skin visible through several parts of his dress, it would have been difficult to distinguish him from those by whom he was surrounded.' The anonymous adoptee was eating his evening meal, surrounded by his 'new countrymen, with much appetite and unconcern. He expressed himself as being quite reconciled to his new condition, and spoke with warmth of the kind treatment he had received; nor did he seem to attach much consequence to the assurance given him that every exertion would be made on our return to obtain his liberation.'[39] Lest his readers think that Richardson had lost his sense of perspective and distance, he reassured them that upon running into this man at Amherstburg a few weeks later, the latter told him his lack of concern over his rescue stemmed from a preference for 'the idle life' of the Indians, in comparison to his 'active service' in the American army.[40] To be sure, this quote may well have been verbatim, albeit without the adoptee appreciating the different work rhythms and gendered divisions of labour in Indigenous societies. However, it also played to British and Anglo-Americans' concepts of Indigenous men's lack of work discipline

and, too, helped secure Richardson's place as a reliable observer who, by documenting such aberrations from white norms of masculine behaviour, could maintain the precarious boundaries that separated the 'civilized' from the 'savage.'

Men's bodies in the War of 1812, then, underwent and inflicted pain, mutilations, degradations; they also were capable of overcoming these trials to bear witness to them. As a narrator Richardson is omnipresent in his history, as he frequently uses the first person and makes it clear to his audience that his 'history' is also part autobiography and part memoir. As well as his descriptions of the War's embodied and very intimate effects on male participants, Richardson makes no pretence of being a dispassionate or disinterested observer. As the quotations cited above suggest, he constantly uses the first person, making it clear to his reader that he was personally present at the events, both as participant and observer.

To be sure, his history goes beyond the genres of memoir and autobiography, as it also includes numerous quotes from others with footnotes; in many instances, Richardson reprinted in their entirety letters, proclamations, and dispatches from military officials, both British and American. Yet Richardson hoped that because his history was written by one who had lived through the events it narrated – who, like his audience, was 'even himself a student when summoned by the trumpet of War' – it would 'relieve history of the dryness which is so great a barrier to interest with the student' and would lead to a greater identification with the past.[41]

Yet the textbook had been not enough for Richardson: he needed, it seemed, to write about his experiences and use a number of genres in which to do so. Richardson's novel, *The Canadian Brothers,* was first published in 1840 in Montreal and was intended as a sequel to his earlier tale, the 1832 novel *Wacousta.* A narrative of the mid-eighteenth century Western frontier, *The Canadian Brothers* takes place after the signing of the Treat of Paris in 1763, the reactions of the Western tribes under Pontiac, the siege of Fort Detroit and the capture of Fort Michilmackinac. *Wacousta* and *The Canadian Brothers* are linked in a number of ways. First, they testify to the ongoing nature of colonial warfare in North America, as the events of 1763 lead into those of the 1770s which then serve as the necessary backdrop and context that, in turn, help the reader understand the hostilities of 1812. Second – and equally importantly for Richardson – *Wacousta* and *The Canadian Brothers* are also tied by familial feuds and the theme of horrific revenge. While these are shaped by geopolitics, they also are the

product of personal histories that, in *The Canadian Brothers,* culminate in the vengeance sworn by the family of the American settler Jeremiah Desborough on the British family of Granthams. Although Desborough settled on the Canadian side of the Windsor-Detroit border, he treacherously identifies with America. The feud of the 1760s, as well as his own despicable character, drives him to attempt the murder of the Grantham sons, both of whom are descended from members of the British military and serve in the army and navy during the War.

As well as the interlinked military, political, and personal relationships that underpin the novel's plot, Richardson's historical treatment also has much to say about gender relations and his conception of their role in the War. British and American officers recognize each other's manliness and mutually shared conceptions of honour, so much so that removed from the battlefield they enjoy bonds of brotherhood, debating their respective nation's position and stance cordially and without vitriol.[42] Richardson's depiction of these relationships is not far removed from Alan Taylor's description of American federalist officers' appreciation for the traits of disciplined and honourable military manliness, not to mention the class status, they believed figures such as Brock personified.[43] Similar traits can be found in Richardson's portrait of Tecumseh, a striking, handsome, and intelligent military leader. As in Richardson' s history, it is the American 'common soldiers,' primarily from the backwoods of Ohio and Kentucky, who, with their vulgar, brutish, and surly conduct, decked out in clothing and weapons more suited for frontier hunting parties, and displaying no respect for codes of honour, are the true enemy.[44] Overall, then, relationships between men, both bonds and conflicts, take a number of forms in this novel and mirror those discussed in the *History.*

Unlike *Richardson' s War,* which had little or nothing to say about women' s roles in and relationship to the War, Richardson's novel does, however, present readers with a number of female characters. For one, a woman is the villainess of Richardson's piece, the supposed niece of an American Major – himself one of those well-respected enemies – who in reality is the daughter of the lowly, scheming, cowardly, and traitorous Des-borough. She attempts to manipulate an honourable, if somewhat vulnerable, Gerald Grantham and to make him the instrument of her own personal vendetta so that she might avenge her honour, insulted by an American officer. Yet while Matilda Montgomery is eventually exposed as treacherous and dangerous (not to mention being doomed, as she commits suicide), her initial courage and determination in the face of capture by the British is also recognized by their officers.

Upon her arrival at the British garrison in Windsor, accompanying her uncle who has been taken prisoner, Matilda Montgomery's bravery is described to the other British officers by no less a leader than Isaac Brock:

> One would scarcely have supposed that a female could have had courage to brave the dangers attendant on an expedition of this kind, in an open boat-but Miss Montgomery, I confess, appears to me to be one whom no danger could daunt, and whose resoluteness of purpose, once directed, no secondary agency could divert from its original aim.[45]

Unlike other depictions of women in the War of 1812, Matilda Montgomery is no helpless victim.[46]

Women – at least upper-class white women – also play a role in the novel's creation of the War's memory. Although Matilda Montgomery is a divisive force between honourable gentlemen, not least because of her lowly and tainted origins, at times other women bring them together. Officers' wives and, especially, daughters help create a world of sociability in which political distinctions are perhaps not so much forgotten as they are laid aside. Just before the War's outbreak, for example, a series of balls given by garrisons on both sides of the border are attended by 'the ladies,' American and Canadian: the balls are social spaces in which women's presence helps create relationships of amicability and good friendship that supersede national hostilities.[47] Even after the War has begun, the 'amiable daughters of General Hull' so charm the British officers that they contemplate proposals of marriage once the War has ended.[48] If men's bodies in Richardson's *History* serve as markers of national boundaries, *The Canadian Brothers* hints that women' s bodies might be a way to cross those borders – perhaps even transcend them. The anti-American sentiments that Richardson expressed so clearly in his *History* were downplayed in this aspect of his fiction.

Thus, while Richardson's novel revisited the scenes of his textbook, the genre allowed him to explore the realms of the family, of domestic and sexual intimacy in ways that the text, with its focus on battlefields, encampments, and prisons, could not do. While the latter form part of the novel's landscape, the entanglements of the Desborough and Grantham families are the sites in which the War was directly experienced and where it took on its deepest, most closely felt meanings. Perhaps not so much a 'family romance' as a revenge

tragedy, one in which few of its central characters were left to survive the events of 1812–1814, *The Canadian Brothers* placed the war in an affective and emotional framework and thus took the subjective and personal dimensions of *Richardson's War* to an even greater height. Yet despite his desire to explore the war's intensely personal impact, overall Richardson saw the conflict as an affair that most deeply affected men and involved codes of masculine behaviour, one in which women could only play supporting roles.

It is not farfetched to assume that Richardson's own deep emotional investment in the War shaped his approach. He might not have been able to move beyond the physical and psychological wounds inflicted on him by 1812, to recognize the ways in which the War swept up not just men and male children but also women and girls and to appreciate the deeply domestic nature of warfare in Upper Canada, one manifested in the burning of homes and looting of farm household's crops and livestock.[49] It also might be that the cult of military heroes – and not heroines – that emerged during the Napoleonic Wars and flourished in Britain and, on a smaller scale, in Upper Canada shaped Richardson's choices. Placing women closer to the centre of wartime commemoration, acknowledging more clearly their losses and suffering, may have required greater imagination and empathy than he could summon.

Richardson' s own ending was not a happy one: it might have come from the pages of a nineteenth-century didactic novel, featuring as it did a long slide into poverty, obscurity, and lonely death. However, he probably would have been heartened to know that he too would become the subject of both history and historiography. At the dawn of the twentieth century Ontario writer and teacher Alexander Casselman felt that Richardson's work on the War of 1812 had provided an important narrative from an Upper Canadian and British perspective.[50] To understand Richardson, though, it was necessary to try to rescue the author's own history, since 'all existing biographies were meagre, fragmentary or wrong in many important details.'[51] In his reissued edition of Richardson's *War of 1812* in 1902 (which remains the most accessible version), Casselman noted the intense labour that had gone into his reconstruction of the former's life: 'Several of his relatives had been personally interviewed, other relatives have been communicated with.'[52] The result was a genealogy of the Richardson and Askin families and the use of previously unpublished letters from Colonels John Askin and Elijah Brush, as well as from Richardson himself. The latter, Casselman was proud to announce, 'throw absolutely new sidelights on that period of our history.'[53] Equally importantly, Casselman had

checked the British and American dispatches that Richardson had used in his original edition and had found a number of them to be either 'incorrect or abbreviated.' In the interests of historical accuracy but without wishing, it seems, to draw undue attention to Richardson's deficiencies as a historian, Casselman had 'in each instance substituted without comment the full official account.'[54]

Such editing might well, of course, be the product of a concern with professional standards that by Casselman's time had begun to characterize the writing of history in Canada; such a concern placed great stock in the veracity and accuracy of documentary sources.[55] Yet Casselman also believed in the power of early influences, perhaps even more so than Richardson. While Richardson was quite explicit about the manner in which his personal history was embedded in his account of the War, Casselman reached further back into Richardson's family history as a means of locating and explaining his historical interests. Although young John's early academic achievements, expressed in his prowess in Latin, French, and mathematics, were curtailed by the War's outbreak, his home life provided a 'stimulating' environment for him and his siblings. His father, the military physician and Court Judge for the Western District of the colony, combined 'the strictness of the soldier, the kindness of the physician and the sternness of the judge,' qualities which won him the 'love and respect' of both his family and the local community. However, it was Richardson's mother, Madelaine Askin, who helped shape his approach to the writing of history, thought Casselman. Educated at the convent school of the Congregation de Notre Dame in Montreal, 'the foremost institution for young ladies in Canada,' Madelaine taught her children to speak and write French at a very young age. Her maternal influence resulted in a broader mind, a 'quickened' observation, and a 'nice perception cultivated.' 'His quick eye for natural beauty, his power in vivid description and his marvellous ability in handling the sentence, are an inheritance or an acquisition from his vivacious mother.'[56]

There is more than a little desire for 'race fusion' in Casselman's account of the Askin-Richardson family dynamics, a desire that would reach even greater heights in events such as the 1908 commemoration of Champlain in Montreal (albeit a 'fusion' in which Madelaine Askin's mixed-race background was, perhaps conveniently, forgotten).[57] Yet the Askin family influence was felt in other ways. When the family moved to Hog Island (now Belle Isle) on the Detroit River, young John was exposed to his mother's 'thrilling stories of romance, of Detroit, of Michilimackinac,' stories which 'enchanted his young imagination.'

He was particularly impressed by his mother's tales of the 'crafty and well-conceived plans of Pontiac, the great chief of the Ottawas,' and his plans to capture Detroit, not least because Madelaine Askin had lived in the fort at the time. 'The layers of time had not bedimmed one of the startling experiences of those eighteen months,' Casselman claimed, and 'proofs of the power of this accomplished lady as a story teller still exist.' The result was that her 'youthful listener even at that early age was enkindled with a desire, not to be realized until he had passed through thirty years of vicissitudes in two continents, when in 1832 he gave to the world his masterly "Wacousta."'[58]

His family was not, however, the only influence on young John. As much as the Askin-Richardson family and home are the subject of memory and history, so too is the local community in which John Richardson grew up. It offered him a 'novel and diversified life … no other place on the continent could boast of a floating population so varied in character and race, so rich in well-defined types of civilized and barbarous human nature.' For one, Amherstburg offered the sight of the 'officers and soldiers of the garrison, dressed in brilliant uniforms, moving about with apparently few duties to perform, attracting the boyish fancy and exciting his admiration and his envy.'[59] Equally exciting and 'next to the soldiers in attractiveness were the Indians' who came on a regular basis for their 'customary presents' from the Superintendent of Indian Affairs. Richardson watched them arrive on the shores of Detroit River, their 'large fleets of canoes in military array,' saw them marching to the local stores 'with a pride and haughty mien,' or observed their 'various games of leaping, wrestling, ball-playing,' at which time he 'would follow and delight in receiving recognition from some chieftain' whom he had met. Richardson was a regular visitor to their camp on the island, where he 'acquired that close and accurate knowledge of Indian character and life that he afterwards so successfully used' in *Wacousta* and *The Canadian Brothers.* Finally, the young Richardson also was exposed to the 'French-Canadian and half-breed voyageur … just returned from trafficking with the Indians at their homes in the wilds of the interior, and in dress or complexion scarcely distinguishable from the Indians themselves.' His childhood home, then, gave him the material he drew upon for his histories, poetry, and novels. 'The scenes of his boyhood are the favorite setting for his characters,' thought Casselman, 'and never after his boyhood had he the opportunity for a lengthened stay in those beloved haunts.'[60]

While notions of honour and loyalty to the British Empire helped shape Richardson's writing about the War of 1812, the brutality of its

events was never far away from his portraits of the conflict. The War might well have provided Upper Canadian youth with stirring examples of patriotic conduct: simultaneously, though, it was a force that degraded and tore apart men's bodies. No matter how much Richardson wished to insist on the War's more uplifting and finer aspects, his memory of it also included the misery, pain, and death that it brought to those who fought in it. Although the tribulations suffered by Richardson's fictional characters were not entirely the result of imperial clashes, as they emanated from local hatreds and rivalries created and festering long before 1812, nevertheless the War served as a kind of crucible in which these hatreds might, tragically, erupt. In Richardson's accounts of 1812, then, memory and history, the body, the family, and the battlefield, mingled in ways that disrupted – even if they did not dislodge – more triumphalist narratives of the War' s meaning for Upper Canadians.

Notes

1 John Richardson, *Richardson's War of 1812: With Notes and a Life of the Author,* Introduction by Alexander Clark Casselman (1840; Toronto: Historical Publishing Co., 1902), 1
2 David R. Beasley, 'John Richardson,' in *Dictionary of Canadian Biography, http://www.biographi.ca.*
3 Richardson, *Richardson's War,* 3.
4 John Richardson, *Wacousta or, The Prophecy; a Tale of the Canadas,* Edited by Douglas Cronk (1832; Ottawa: Carleton University Press, 1990); John Richardson, *Eight Years in Canada* (1847; New York: Johnson Reprint Corporation, 1967).
5 Patricia Jasen, *Wild Things: Nature, Culture, and Tourism in Ontario 1790–1914* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1995), 35–41.
6 George Sheppard, *Plunder, Profit, and Paroles: A Social History of the War of 1812 in Upper Canada* (Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1994), 177–79, 242–3, 250–1; Cecilia Morgan, *Public Men and Virtuous Women: the Gendered Languages of Politics and Religion in Upper Canada, 1791–1850* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1996), 37–8.
7 Guy St. Denis, *Tecumseh's Bones* (Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2005), 10–13.
8 The different positions of federalists and republicans vis-à-vis the War are discussed by Alan Taylor, *The Civil War of 1812: American Citizens, British Subjects, Irish Rebels, and Indian Allies* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2010). See also Nicole Eustace, *1812: War and the Passions of Emotion* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2012).
9 Desmond Pacey, *Creative Writing in Canada: A Short history of English-Canadian Literature* (2nd ed.: Toronto: Ryerson Press, 1961). 31. But see Micheline Cameron and Carole Gerson, 'Authors and Literary Culture,' in *History of the Book in Canada: Volume Two 1840–1918,* eds. Yvan Lamonde, Patricia Lockhart Fleming and Fiona A. Black (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2005). Cameron and Gerson point out that Richardson shared other British North American authors' aspiration to see their work circulate among both British and American audiences (126–7).
10 David Thompson, *A History of the Late War between Great Britain and the United States of America* (1832; Toronto: G. F. Payne, 1845). Thompson's career is discussed in R. D. Gidney, 'David Thompson,' *Dictionary of Canadian Biography, http://www.biographi.ca.*
11 Colin White, '"His dirge our groans, his monument our praise": Official and

Popular Commemoration of Nelson, 1805–1806,' in *History, Commemoration, and National Pre-occupation: Trafalgar 1805–2005,* ed. Holger Hoock (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), 23–48; Holger Hoock, 'Pomp and Circumstance in London,' in *Empires of the Imagination: Politics, War, and the Arts in the British World* (London: Profile Books, 2010).

12 Late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century commemorations of the War in Upper Canada are discussed in Norman Knowles, *Inventing the Loyalists: the Ontario Loyalist Tradition and the Creation of Usable Pasts* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1997); Colin M. Coates and Cecilia Morgan, *Heroines and History: Representations of Madeleine de Verchères and Laura Secord* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2002).

13 For explorations of these relationships in the early nineteenth-century transatlantic world, see Stefan Dudink and Karen Hagemann, 'Masculinity in politics and war in the age of democratic revolutions, 1750–1850,' in *Masculinities in Politics and War: Gendering Modern History,* eds. Stefan Dudink, Karen Hagemann, and John Tosh (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2004). See also Karen Hagemann, Gisela Mettele, and Jane Rendall, eds., *Gender, War and Politics: Transatlantic Perspectives, 1775–1830* (Houndmills, Basingstoke, UK: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010), especially the essays in Part II, 'Masculinity, Revolution, and War.' For an exploration of the impact of World War One on British men's bodies, see Joanna Bourke, *Dismembering the Male: Men's Bodies, Britain, and the Great War* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996).

14 Richardson, *Richardson's War,* 116.

15 Keith Walden, 'Isaac Brock: Man and Myth: A Study of the Militia Myth of the War of 1812 in Upper Canada, 1812–1912' (MA thesis, Queen's University, 1971).

16 Richardson, *Richardson's War,* 110.

17 Ibid., 137.

18 Ibid., 138–9.

19 Ibid., 139–40.

20 Ibid., 111.

21 Ibid., 37.

22 Ibid., 140.

23 Ibid., 245.

24 Ibid., 247.

25 Ibid., 249.

26 Ibid., 258. Their requests for some relief being rebuffed 'in the most positive and 'unfeeling terms,' the prisoners then devised a scheme to take their handcuffs off while appearing to still be chained (258).

27 Ibid., 261–3.

28 Ibid., 264. Richardson admitted that others were convinced of 'the injustice of such a charge.'

29 Ibid., 30.

30 Ibid., 154–5.

31 Ibid., 207. Early nineteenth-century American admiration for Indigenous rhetoric, especially that of Tecumseh, is discussed in Steven Conn, *History's Shadow: Native Americans and Historical Consciousness in the Nineteenth Century* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2004), 82–93.

32 Richardson, *Richardson's War,* 155–6.

33 Ibid., 157–8.

34 Ibid., 158–9.

35 Ibid., 159.

36 For Parkman, see Conn, *History's Shadow,* 202–09. I have no evidence that Richardson knew or was in contact with Parkman, whose work began to appear after Richardson's history.

37 Richardson, *Richardson's War,* 102–3. Although Richardson did not mention it, this mortification of flesh might also have been meant as a veiled warning to the British should the latter consider breaking their alliance.

38 Captivity stories told by Americans are discussed in Eustace, *1812,* esp. chap. 4, 'Demographic Strategies and the Defeat of Tecumseh.'

39 Richardson, *Richardson's War,* 101–2.

40 Ibid., 102.

41 Richardson, *Richardson's War,* 2–3.

42 John Richardson, *The Canadian Brothers or The Prophecy Fulfilled. A Tale of the Late American War,* ed. Donald Stephens (1840; Ottawa: Carleton University Press, 1992), chap. 6.

43 Taylor, *The Civil War of 1812,* 175–86.

44 Richardson, *The Canadian Brothers,* 362–3.

45 Ibid., 167.

46 Morgan, *Public Men and Virtuous Women,* 40–45.

47 Richardson, *The Canadian Brothers,* 61–2.

48 Ibid., 168–73.

49 Shepherd, *Profits, Plunder, and Paroles;* Morgan, *Public Men and Virtuous Women,* 45–8.

50 For discussions of the War's commemoration, see Knowles, *Inventing the Loyalists.*
51 Alexander Casselman, 'Prefatory Note,' *Richardson's History,* v.
52 Ibid.
53 Ibid.
54 Ibid., vi.
55 Donald Wright, *The Professionalization of History in English Canada* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2005).
56 Ibid., xiii.
57 H. V. Nelles, *The Art of Nation-Building: Pageantry and Spectacle at Quebec's Tercentenary* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1999). Madelaine Askin's mixed-race background is discussed in Beasley, 'John Richardson' and David R. Farrell, 'John Askin,' *Dictionary of Canadian Biography, http://www.biographi.ca.*
58 Casselman, 'Biography of Richardson,' in *Richardson's History,* xiv.
59 Ibid., xiv.
60 Ibid., xv. Although it would warrant further research, Casselman's depiction of a heterogenous locale, one in which racial 'others' were confronted on a daily basis – sometimes in coexistence, sometimes in conflict – seems to foreshadow some of the arguments made in Richard White, *The Middle Ground: Indians, Empires, and Republics in the Great Lakes Region, 1650–1815* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991).

London Journal of Canadian Studies, Volume 29 (2014). This is an Open Access article distributed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution Licence, which permits unrestricted use, distribution and reproduction in any medium, provided the original author and source are credited• UCL Press• Print ISSN 0267-2200 • Online ISSN 2397-0928 • DOI 10.14324/111.444.ljcs.2014v29.003

Battlefield to Baseball Diamond: The Niagara Parks Commission and Queenston Heights Park

Elaine Young

Abstract

Between the War of 1812's end and the late 1920s Queenston Heights was redefined from being primarily a place of memory associated with the War of 1812 to being for the most part a place of recreation. The site of a significant War of 1812 battle, until the late nineteenth century it drew growing numbers of tourists, many of whom wanted to feel closer to its wartime past. Beginning in the late nineteenth century the site's popularity for recreation increased, and by the 1920s Queenston Heights Park was a destination where thousands of people went to enjoy recreational activities such as picnics and sports. The Niagara Parks Commission, which owned the site from 1895, facilitated this transformation. The Commission saw Queenston Heights more as a park than a historic site and worked to create a recreational space that would draw tourists and increase revenue. By the 1920s the park featured attractions such as playing fields, picnic shelters, tennis courts, a restaurant, and a souvenir stand. There was little opposition to these changes, which at times jeopardized the historic landscape. Although Queenston Heights' commemorative meanings were no longer closely associated with its battlefield landscape, these meanings were increasingly invested in the imposing Brock Monument. This allowed the Commission's development of the battlefield to continue unabated, and under the Commission the landscape of the former battlefield became increasingly distanced from its wartime past.

In the spring of 1897 an older woman from Toronto, Ontario took a school-aged girl to Niagara Falls and stopped en route to visit Queenston Heights Park. Peppered by questions from her young cohort

about the battle, the woman attempted to distract her with the scenic view from the Heights, all to no avail. Later she would warn any adult taking a child to the Heights to study the details of its 1812 battle before going, 'lest, like me, [you] perchance be caught tripping.'[1] The older woman had not been visiting Queenston Heights for its historical associations, and had been caught off guard by her charge's interest in the place's history. Indeed, in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries Queenston Heights' identity was redefined from being primarily a place of memory to a destination used predominantly for recreation unrelated to its wartime past. Queenston Heights had been the site of an importnat War of 1812 battle, and after the war and into the late nineteenth century tourists had visited the battlefield primarily because of its historical associations. The transformation from battlefield to park was facilitated by the owners of the site, the Niagara Parks Commission (NPC).[2] The owners of the site, the Commission downplayed the battlefield's history in favour of creating a recreational space that included attractions such as sports fields, picnic pavilions, a restaurant, souvenir stand, and wading pool. The site's popularity as a recreational destination grew from the NPC's acquisition of the site in 1895 and peaked in the 1920s until the Depression of the 1930s led to declining attendance.[3] There was little opposition amongst the general public or local historians to the NPC's development of the battlefield, suggesting that by the twentieth century the landscape was no longer closely associated with the battle that took place there. The visually dominant Brock Monument came to embody the historical associations of the site, facilitating the NPC's plans to promote the surrounding landscape as an ideal location for an afternoon outing. Although the NPC promoted itself as a guardian of historic sites, the organization saw Queenston Heights primarily as a recreational destination rather than a historic site, and in the absence of opposition developed it as such.

Queenston Heights, a plateau on an escarpment 107 metres above the Niagara River, was the site of a significant battle in the War of 1812. In the early hours of 13 October 1812 American forces from Lewiston, New York landed at Queenston in an attempted invasion of Upper Canada. The American attackers were able to ascend the Heights using a steep foot path and drove the British regulars and Canadian militia into the village of Queenston at the base of the escarpment. Sir Isaac Brock was killed leading an initial attack to retake the Heights, and his aide-de-camp Lieutenant-Colonel John Macdonell was fatally wounded in another unsuccessful frontal assault. Around noon Major-General Roger Sheaffe arrived with reinforcements made up of British regulars

and Canadian militia. Sheaffe had sent a group of Six Nations warriors under John Norton ahead of his own troops. Rather than risking another frontal assault, Norton led the warriors on a circuitous route up the opposite side of the Heights and harassed the American position. Later Sheaffe and his troops followed a similar route, and the combined Six Nations, British, and Canadian force attacked the Americans. Unable to reform a proper front and fearful of the Six Nations warriors, some American troops ran in the hopes of getting back across the river, and the remaining forces quickly surrendered. The Americans suffered 300 killed and wounded, while the defenders suffered 14 killed, 77 wounded, and 21 missing.[4] The battle repelled the American invasion attempt, but the loss of Sir Isaac Brock in the attack was a blow to the British and their allies. The war would continue for over two years, and what is now Ontario's Niagara region would be the site of many other battles, such as the capture of Fort George, the Battle of Beaverdams, the Battle of Chippewa, the Battle of Lundy's Lane, and the siege of Fort Erie.

After the war's end, Upper Canadian battlefields along the Niagara River were added to the itineraries of middle and upper class tourists to Niagara Falls. Many nineteenth century tourists were searching for the natural sublime, a sense of awe and terror inspired by natural phenomena which many hoped could be found at Niagara Falls. After the War of 1812 the former battlefields were added to their itineraries, as tourists sought a sense of the historical sublime that emphasized the beauty of traces of the past.[5] Although most guidebooks still concentrated on Niagara Falls as tourists' primary goal, they also encouraged visitors to explore the area around the falls where 'many incidents [had] occurred to impart additional interest.' [6]Among these sites, Queenston Heights lent itself to the morbid contemplation characteristic of historical romanticism and the search for the historical sublime. John J. Bigsby recorded his visit to Queenston Heights in his journal, writing that his guide had pointed out the 'broken precipice … down which the American soldiers sprang to avoid the English bayonet, and so perished by a death more forlorn, lingering, and painful still, at the bottom of the cliff or in the waters.'[7] Bigsby's morbid imaginings were in keeping with the general attraction of battlefield sites in this period, which included vicariously experiencing deadly conflict and imagining suffering that the visitor does not expect to confront.[8]

Romanticism was also associated with hero-worship, especially of figures associated with the nation. Queenston Heights therefore had the added attraction of being associated with the tragic hero of the war,

Sir Isaac Brock, who had become the leading symbol of the conflict.[9] In laying out attractions near Niagara Falls an 1866 tourist guide suggested that Queenston Heights may be the one most worth visiting because it 'has a mournful interest … as the place where the brave and good Brock fell in the arms of victory.'[10] In 1814 the Legislature of Upper Canada had taken action to commemorate the hero and passed a motion to erect a monument to him on Queenston Heights. The first Brock Monument was dedicated in 1824 after numerous delays. From a square base, a Tuscan column rose 41 metres tall and was topped by an observation deck and a simple round ornament that could be seen from a great distance. This monument was severely damaged on 17 April 1840 by Benjamin Lett, an Irish-Canadian who had been involved in the 1837 Rebellion and whose brother had reportedly been killed by government troops. The public was outraged at the destruction of the monument, and over 8,000 people attended a public meeting held a few months later to discuss the matter. It was agreed that the monument should be rebuilt, and a committee was formed to steer the project. More delays followed, but the second Brock Monument was completed in 1856. The remains of the first Brock Monument were left on the site until their removal in 1853, providing a point of interest for tourists in the intervening years. The second Brock Monument provided an impressive focal point for the battlefield and the adulation of General Brock. Standing 57 metres high, at the time of its completion it was the second tallest structure in the world. Placed on a large square base, the monument's column was topped by a 4.8 metre tall statue of Isaac Brock. The remains of Brock and his aide-de-camp Lieutenant-Colonel Macdonell had been interred at the base of the first Brock Monument, and later the second.[11]Lett's destruction of the monument and the outrage that followed it indicate the symbolic importance of the monument as a representation not only of Brock, but of the War of 1812.

The late nineteenth century saw increased interest in the province's history, and local historical societies and members of the public began to organize self-styled historical pilgrimages to the Niagara Frontier, including to Queenston Heights. The Women's Literary Club of St Catharines, for example, held annual pilgrimages to historic sites in the Niagara region and visited Queenston Heights several times.[12] At the turn of the century local entrepreneurs and history enthusiasts organized pilgrimages from Toronto to the Niagara Frontier, where members of local historical societies would often meet the delegates to discuss the historical significance of the area.[13] In May 1897, for example, Toronto entrepreneur Frank Yeigh took a group from the YMCA on a pilgrimage

to Niagara-on-the-Lake and Fort George, where members of the Niagara Historical Society (NHS) guided them to different historic sites of interest. The group visited Queenston Heights next, where they heard a lecture on the events of the battle, before continuing on to Lundy's Lane where they were met by members of the Lundy's Lane Historical Society (LLHS).[14] These pilgrimages, as the name implies, visited Queenston Heights and other battlefields primarily due to their association with the War of 1812. These groups were journeying to the former battlefields because of their histories, and using them for commemorative and educational purposes. However, in the early twentieth century formal pilgrimages were far outnumbered by groups visiting the site primarily for recreational activities.

Beginning in the 1910s Queenston Heights became an increasingly popular destination for picnic groups from Toronto, Ontario.[15] Improvements in labour conditions meant that members of the working class had the leisure time to take day trips; in the early twentieth century middle class professionals were entitled to vacations with pay, and by the 1920s Canadian and American civil servants received two weeks of paid vacation per year.[16] Niagara Falls had been the most popular destination for steamer traffic on Lake Ontario since the mid nineteenth century, but later improvements in transportation made other areas along the Niagara River more accessible.[17] In 1893 the Niagara Falls Park and River Railway had opened a line connecting the Queenston dock with Niagara Falls, and many of the excursionists making their way to Niagara Falls stopped at Queenston Heights en route. Tracks were laid across the recently completed Upper Steel Arch Bridge and Lewiston-Queenston Suspension Bridge in 1899, creating a 'belt-line' that allowed visitors to disembark at different locations to enjoy various attractions. The completion of the Niagara Boulevard, connecting Queenston Heights to Niagara Falls, and improvements to the road connecting to Highway #8A, which linked to Hamilton and Toronto, made access easier for the increasing number of motorists in the 1920s.[18] As early as 1908 Queenston Heights was on some days receiving more visitors than Niagara Falls' popular Queen Victoria Park, and by 1920 it was rivalling the latter as a destination for company and church picnics and family reunions.[19] Over the span of five days in July 1920 4,850 people took part in over sixteen official company or church picnics at the Heights — numbers that do not include casual visitors or small groups.[20] Steamship and railway companies placed advertisements in local and Toronto newspapers encouraging picnics at Queenston Heights beginning in the 1890s, a trend that increased

dramatically with the growth of the advertising industry. In 1927 Canada Steamship Lines was warning readers in February to 'plan now for that summer picnic' at destinations including Queenston Heights, Niagara Falls, and La Salle Park in Hamilton.[21] The owners of the site, the NPC, had worked consistently to draw these tourists by installing such attractions as picnic grounds, playing fields, and a restaurant.

Indeed, outings at Queenston Heights seem to have been great fun for all involved. Arriving at mid-morning on the Heights, most commonly from Toronto via steamer across Lake Ontario, most groups would indulge in a picnic lunch at one of the large pavilions, and then enjoy a variety of sporting events. For instance, a day at Queenston Heights for veterans of the Fenian Raids and NorthWest Rebellion in 1904 included a tug of war, a game of baseball, and various races including a boys' race, girls' race, a fat man's race, a smoking race, a walking race, a partners' walking race, an elected officers' walking race, a pick-up race, a running race, and an open race.[22] *The Globe* Newspaper held its company picnic of over 500 staff and their families on the Heights in June 1922, where they enjoyed a picnic lunch and program of sports that included a baseball game pitting different departments against each other and a series of races for both adults and children.[23] A program of sports, as well as the occasional pie or bread roll eating contest, remained a fixture of these outings throughout the period.[24] This type of outing was enjoyed by thousands of visitors during the summer months. Queenston Heights Park was a successful recreational space, drawing locals, day-trippers, and those from further afield to enjoy its charms. Many visitors went to enjoy a relaxing and fun outing with friends, family, or work or church groups and used the recreational amenities provided by the NPC.

The NPC had been founded in 1885 to create a public park at Niagara Falls which had, in the eyes of many, become overrun with commercialism.[25] After the establishment of Queen Victoria Park near the falls, however, the Commissioners began to expand their ambitions. Over time the NPC gradually acquired lands along the Niagara River with the dream of establishing a public park system along its length. In the process they acquired several historic sites, including numerous War of 1812 battlefields, the first of which was Queenston Heights. After Confederation Brock's Monument and the surrounding 12 acres had been owned by the Dominion government, but cared for by the province of Ontario. In 1875 the province petitioned for ownership of the monument, and the structure and 31 acres of Military Reserve lands were transferred to them that year.[26] Since then the province

paid for repairs to the monument, but had not invested in the upkeep of the surrounding grounds.[27] Facing financial difficulty and noting that many people were visiting Queenston Heights and paying a fee to ascend the monument, in 1893 the commissioners publicly stated their desire that the Brock Monument and its grounds be placed under their control.[28] In 1895 the NPC proposed the government turn over the monument and grounds to them, promising to clean up the area and to improve 'this historic ground, so near to the hearts of all true Canadians.' Perhaps wanting to be rid of the expense of maintaining the area, the monument and the surrounding 31 acres were vested in the NPC that spring.[29] In 1895 the Commission also acquired a small cenotaph at the base of the escarpment marking the spot where Isaac Brock was killed, and in 1898 the Dominion Government granted the Commission additional lands on the slope of the escarpment.[30] By 1912 the park covered 88 acres, most of which had been vested in the Commission by either the Dominion or Provincial governments.[31] The plateau on the top of the Heights was the focus of the majority of the NPC's efforts, as the escarpment's steep slope made access to other areas of NPC property, such as the cenotaph marking Brock's fall, more difficult for casual visitors.

The NPC often portrayed itself as the defender of historic sites. The organization's official history, for instance, states that because of its actions 'many scenes with glorious associations have been saved from desecration and assured of protection for all time.'[32] One of the Commission's arguments for acquiring Queenston Heights was that 'the grounds around the monument are in need of better attention than they now receive,' and they wished to 'have this historic ground, so near to the hearts of all true Canadians, maintained in a creditable manner.'[33] Indeed, after some landscaping of the area had been done in1858 the grounds around the monument had been neglected.[34] Although the NPC stated that it wanted to protect the historic interest of the area, it saw Queenston Heights primarily as a recreational site rather than a former battlefield. The Commission wanted to incorporate it into their plans for a larger park system, hoping that 'in a few years … this historic ground may be restored to a Park-like appearance.'[35]

In creating the park at Queenston Heights the commissioners were influenced by the views of prominent American landscape architect Frederick Law Olmsted, who had been instrumental in the earlier movement to preserve the American part of Niagara Falls.[36] Olmsted argued that the main purpose of any park was to highlight the dominance of nature, a general view echoed in a 1903 address to the

American Park and Outdoor Art Association by the NPC's Chairman, J.W. Langmuir.[37] Langmuir encouraged his listeners to imagine

> the whole shore of the Niagara River from Lake Erie to Lake Ontario, restored and converted into one continued series of avenues and parks for the recreation and enjoyment of the millions of overworked and tired humanity, where they can come for a time from the turmoil of their busy and wearing lives to this mecca of peace and quietness, to commune with the majesty of nature.[38]

From early on, then, the Commissioners envisioned a park system that emphasized nature's restorative effects, not necessarily its historical associations.When R. Home Smith became chairman of the NPC in 1929 he inquired what arrangements were in place to preserve 'objects of historical interest' in the area.[39] John H. Jackson, the NPC General Manager, seemed taken aback by the question, and stated simply, 'the Commission has not, in the past, adopted a general policy regarding the preservation of old features of the Niagara District.'[40] This is perhaps not surprising, as the NPC's primary mandate had been to free one of the natural wonders of the world, Niagara Falls, from the grip of commercialism by creating a public park. Additionally, the NPC had no experience dealing with historic sites, and none of the commissioners had a background in preservation. John Woodburn Langmuir, chairman of the NPC from 1893 to 1915, had previously been Inspector of Prisons and Charities of Ontario, and had helped to found and manage the Toronto General Trusts Corporation.[41] Philip William Ellis, chairman from 1915 to 1929, had been the founding partner of P.W. Ellis and Company, jewellers and silversmiths, in Toronto, and had been chairman of the Toronto Transit Commission.[42] Both chairmen were well-established businessmen, but had no experience relating to the management of historic sites. It was perhaps natural, then, for the leaders of the NPC to see their new acquisition primarily as a link in a growing public park system rather than a historic site, and to develop it as such.

The commissioners did not see marking the history of the battlefield through monuments as a priority. Although they allowed historical markers to be erected and agreed to maintain them, they did not take any independent action to highlight the battlefield's history. All of the historic markers, such as the Brock Monument and cenotaph, were present when the NPC acquired the site or were undertaken at the initiative of outsiders such as members of local historical societies. For

example, in 1910 a monument to Laura Secord was erected to the east of the second Brock monument. Secord had by this time been adopted as a symbol of female heroism, and her monument commemorated not only saving her husband at the Battle of Queenston Heights, but also warning Lieutenant James FitzGibbon of an impending American attack at Beaverdams.[43] Emma Currie, a supporter of female suffrage and founder of the Woman's Literary Club of St Catharines, had been a force behind the erection of the monument. She had donated the proceeds of her book, *The Story of Laura Secord and Canadian Reminiscences,* to the project, and had worked to secure a government grant for the monument.[44] In 1908 a member of the Laura Secord Monument Committee asked the Commission for a financial contribution to the monument fund, but no grant was given and the monument proceeded without financial support from the NPC.[45] Made of grey granite, the monument stands twelve feet high and has a bronze medallion with a portrait of Secord affixed to its front above an inscription describing her wartime actions.[46] Plaques were erected by the Historic Sites and Monuments Board of Canada (HSMBC) and the LLHS further down the escarpment, but the Secord monument was the only historic marker added to the plateau until the HSMBC in cooperation with the NPC erected a marker for Fort Drummond in 1932.[47] Although the NPC was open to collaboration in marking the site's history, the commissioners clearly did not see the organization's primary function as undertaking the erection of monuments or plaques commemorating the War of 1812, focussing instead on the site's potential as a recreational destination.

Picnicking had taken place at Queenston Heights before its acquisition by the NPC, and it was an activity that the commissioners worked to capitalize on by providing amenities for large picnic groups.[48] The popularity of the site for picnicking grew dramatically throughout the early twentieth century, and the NPC undertook almost constant improvements and expansions to both keep up with and stimulate demand. The Commission provided picnic tables in a grove of trees, called the 'picnic grove,' and made further improvements in 1901.[49] In 1917 the volume of visitors so endangered the trees in the grove, whose roots were being exposed by visitors 'tramping over the ground,' that the open picnic area was moved west of the Brock monument.[50] The first large, permanent shelter at the site was erected in a clear area west of the monument in 1907.[51] In 1921 another shelter, 195 feet long and 32 feet wide, was erected between Forts Drummond and Riall, and a third was added in 1926.[52] Drinking water was also provided, and the installation of a water line from the City of Niagara Falls in 1923 allowed

modern restrooms to be built that year.[53] The NPC also installed sports facilities. In 1900 the NPC installed a proper ball ground for the use of picnic parties, and a 'convenient location' near the earthwork forts was selected, levelled, and sowed.[54] The play ground was improved in 1911, and extended in 1912 'for the sports that are always indulged in, chiefly during the school vacation.'[55] These recreations were provided free of charge, and helped to draw in ever increasing numbers of visitors, particularly parties using the grounds for picnics.

The NPC also recognized that there was a profit to be made from the popularity of Queenston Heights. Although the parks system had been created for the free enjoyment of all, the NPC had incorporated paid amusements throughout the system, and Queenston Heights was no exception.[56] Two of the founding principles of the legislation that created the park at Niagara Falls were that it not be a financial burden on the Province, and that the park be as free as possible to the public. Financial worries plagued the NPC in its infancy, and it was unable to provide for necessary park improvements and pay interest on its government debentures until 1904.[57] The NPC therefore concentrated its efforts on drawing large crowds to Queenston Heights by providing amenities, some for a price. A small refreshment stand was in operation when the NPC acquired the site, and a larger restaurant and refreshment stand were built to the east of the Brock Monument in 1900.[58] The commissioners leased the operation of the concessions to applicants, usually for a flat fee, and in 1913 began asking lessees to surrender a percentage of their gross sales in addition to the flat rate. By this time there were several different business ventures at the Heights, including the refreshment stand, a souvenir store, and a business selling photographs of visitors and scenery from a building near the Secord Monument. Lessees were expected to provide meals and refreshments to visitors, check parcels for them, sell souvenirs, and take and sell photographs.[59] The commissioners also worked to keep jurisdiction over the sale of souvenirs on the road leading to the park, acquiring this land from the County of Lincoln in 1909 in order to disperse souvenir vendors operating there. Although the NPC argued that these vendors were 'in no way amenable to Park regulations,' it is more likely that they preferred visitors spend their money inside the park gates.[60]

Security concerns associated with the First World War led to the closing of the Brock Monument to the public in 1915, and the structure was guarded day and night by a military picket or a park employee.[61] The closing of the monument, combined with a Queenston trolley accident in 1915, had a negative effect on the number of visitors and

forced the NPC to put some of its projects on hold.[62] However, after the low point of 1915 revenues gradually increased, and the NPC decided to take over the restaurant and souvenir stand in 1920 and to expand the restaurant facilities to serve the growing number of visitors. This plan seems to have paid off, as the gross receipts from the restaurant in 1920 were $35,584.60, or four times more than those in 1919.[63] Indeed, the revenues from the operation of concessions and attractions remained a key part of Commission finances throughout the twentieth century.[64] The NPC invested in improvements in these businesses, enlarging the restaurant in 1921 and the souvenir store in 1924.[65] By 1921 the park boasted 10 acres of sports fields, a supply of spring water, a souvenir stand, a check room, a restaurant and a cafeteria, two large shelter pavilions with a capacity of 1,500, tables and benches for 1,000, and plates, cups and saucers available for rental by picnic parties. The NPC also sold refreshments such as ice cream, soft drinks, and bread.[66] In 1930 the commissioners were planning to add more amenities, including a new restaurant with a dance floor and a swimming pool, but complications in planning and declining revenues necessitated that this project be put on hold.[67] The commissioners showed no reservations about the commercialisation of the park area, and worked to create a welcoming recreational environment that drew in visitors and generated revenue.

Queenston Heights and the Brock Monument also offered a beautiful and picturesque view of the Niagara River, a fact frequently commented on in the nineteenth century. Early tourists had visited the battlefield primarily for its historical associations, but were also impressed with its view of the river. Indeed, most guidebooks from the period that mentioned Queenston Heights pointed out that scaling the Brock Monument offered a view of 'the whole scene of battle, and an extended prospect of a magnificent country – now the abode of peace and plenty.'[68] One guidebook stated breathlessly that 'standing on this gallery one sees unroll before him a matchless panorama, of battlefield and vineyard, of cataract and quiet stream, of dark wood and steepled villages and breadths of peach-orchard, and fortresses no longer hostile.'[69] The NPC recognized the scenic beauty of Queenston Heights, and many of the improvements to the site emphasized its view of the Niagara River. Although the motives of the NPC in acquiring historic sites on the Niagara Frontier have been portrayed as motivated by an 'early interest in the preservation of national history, more than considerations of scenic beauty,'[70] the NPC's first expression of interest in acquiring the Brock Monument and its grounds stressed the natural

beauty of the surroundings over its historical associations. 'The outlook from these grounds is remarkably beautiful,' stated an 1893 NPC report,

> the eye commands a magnificent reach of the most highly cultivated lands in all Ontario, through which the noble Niagara River, resting after its mighty conflict with the 'Munitions of Rocks' pursues its placid way to Lake Ontario, bearing on its broad bosom many a noble steamer and tiny craft, and shimmering in the sunlight like a ribbon of silver fringed with jasper.[71]

After praising the idyllic view from the Heights, the report mentioned the site's historic associations, concluding that 'the traditions of the spot, its historic memories so dear to every loyal Canadian heart, and the natural beauty of the place, alike demand … that proper care be taken not only of the grounds immediately around the monument but of the surrounding territory as well.'[72]

However, the NPC was more interested in highlighting the scenery than promoting the site's history. At the turn of the century an arbour was built at the edge of the cliff where 'a magnificent panorama is afforded of the river valley,'[73]and in 1906 the commissioners reported that there had been an increase in the number of visitors, 'attracted … by the magnificent views which have been provided for the comfort and recreation of picnic parties.'[74] The paths around the Brock and Secord monuments along the edge of the escarpment were gently curving and reserved for pedestrian use, a configuration that encouraged visitors to stroll along their length.[75] The NPC also constructed additions that encouraged visitors to enjoy the view or take a 'delightful walk.'[76] A promenade and retaining wall were built in front of Brock's Monument in 1910–1911 so that visitors could better view 'what is said to be one of the most impressive pastoral scenes on this continent.'[77] In 1921 the NPC crowed that 'the tourist visitors from all parts of the globe voice their praise of the pastoral views from the promenade.'[78] These additions encouraged visitors to gaze outward from the Heights on the distant sights below, rather than to look inward at the battlefield landscape itself.[79] The Commission's focus on the picturesque view from the Heights was also reflected in its attitude to the Brock Monument.

The commissioners recognized the historical associations of the Brock Monument, but approached it primarily as a vehicle to help visitors obtain a better view of the Niagara River. Shortly before obtaining the site NPC Superintendent James Wilson briefly entertained a scheme to attach an electric elevator to the outside of the Brock monument

column. Wilson himself recognized that nothing should be done that would 'detract from the dignity and strength of the monument itself or that would offend the sensibilities of those who were instrumental in promoting its erection' and felt that 'any proposal suggested must have the qualification necessary to afford a reasonable excuse being given for its adoption.' Wilson's scheme to attach an elevator to the monument reflected a concern that more visitors be able to 'freely [enjoy] the sublimity of the emotions created by the delightful panorama' from the top of the monument.[80] Despite the assurances of the Fenson Elevator Works that the lift would be small, durable and safe, 'without detracting in any way from the appearance of the Monument,' the commissioners abandoned the plan in favour of maintaining the monument as it was.[81] In order that more visitors be able to view the scenery, the NPC lowered the fee for ascending the monument from $0.25 to $0.15 in1906.[82] This strategy seems to have worked, as the 1920 annual report claimed that over 23,000 people had climbed the Brock Monument 'to obtain a view of Lake Ontario and the Niagara Fruit Farms.'[83] While nineteenth-century visitors had enjoyed both the natural and historical panorama, for the NPC the focus was on the picturesque scenery that could be best enjoyed from the edge of the escarpment or the top of Brock's Monument. For the commissioners, rather than functioning primarily as a historical marker the Brock Monument was a way for visitors to obtain a better view of the Niagara River. However, as suggested by the scrapping of the elevator plan, the NPC also recognized the symbolic and historical importance of the monument for the public. In contrast to the rest of the park, the commissioners made very few changes to the Brock Monument and did not consider any major alterations after Wilson's elevator proposal was rejected. The only changes made to the monument were of practical necessity, and even then their impact on the structure was minimized. In 1900 the Commission undertook maintenance work on the interior of the monument, and extensive repairs to the interior and exterior were made in 1901.[84] The Brock Monument, then, was maintained in its original condition as much as possible. This may have been due to the sacred associations of the monument; as Wilson had recognized, the monument was a mausoleum for Brock and alterations to it may have offended the public.

In the nineteenth century the Brock Monument had not only demonstrated Upper Canadians' devotion to the hero, but had also quickly become a point of interest for tourists. Generally, monuments can pull visitors' attention away from the battlefield itself, and the eye's natural tendency is to follow the monument upward and away from

the ground.[85]As Patricia Jasen has noted, soon after its construction the first (and later second) Brock Monument became the primary focus of tourists that led to a case of what Dean MacCannell calls 'marker-site displacement' whereby the marker (in this case the monument) comes to replace the original (the battlefield) as an attraction.[86] A.V. Seaton's examination of the Waterloo battlefield demonstrates that MacCannell's sight sacralisation model, whereby objects become quasi-holy items for tourists, can be adapted to the historical evolution of a battlefield and its markers through the process of naming and mechanical reproduction.[87] The first, and later second, Brock Monument began to take on these characteristics shortly after their erection. For instance, once the second monument was in place there was a growing tendency to linguistically separate the Brock Monument from Queenston Heights when referring to the area. An article in the *Niagara Mail and Advertiser* in June 1869, for example, listed Queenston Heights and the Brock Monument as separate attractions.[88] The public outrage over the destruction of the first monument and the decision to rebuild it also indicate that the monument itself had been named as something worthy of preservation. The new monument also figured prominently in descriptions of Queenston Heights published in guidebooks of the nineteenth century, and postcards depicting it were also produced.[89] The first and second Brock Monuments were sacralised according to MacCannell's model, and became the focus of tourists who wanted to 'do' the Queenston Heights battlefield and eventually came to symbolize the battle itself.[90] Those members of the public concerned with the historical associations of the former battlefields also vested commemorative meaning in the Brock Monument. In 1929 a wind storm caused Brock's outstretched arm to fall from the monument, and further inspection showed that the top half of the statue was in poor condition. In response the NPC undertook reapirs to the monument.[91] Rumours began to circulate that the NPC was planning to alter the monument by replacing the baton in Brock's outstretched hand with something else. This provoked severe criticism from members of the public, some of whom wrote letters to newspapers protesting the change. 'In the name of common sense,' read a letter from one A.M., 'will not someone in authority veto the proposed desecration of General Brock's statue.' A.M. continued that placing a scroll in Brock's hand would be tantamount to '[inflicting] a violin, a hair-brush or any old thing, upon the gallant defender of our country.'[92] Numerous letters agreeing with A.M. appeared in the following weeks.[93] However, the rumours turned out to be unfounded, and the figure of Brock was repaired to resemble the original as much

as possible.[94] The protests regarding changes to the Brock monument suggest that the monument itself had come to embody the site's history. The association of the site's martial past with the Brock Monument is perhaps not surprising, as the Brock Monument literally and figuratively overshadows the area's historical associations.

Although built after the battle of Queenston Heights, the treatment of historic earthworks from the War of 1812 indicates how the commissioners' attitude toward historical remnants on the battlefield landscape contrasted with their attitude to the Brock Monument. Forts Drummond and Riall were both built by military labour in the spring of 1814. When the British retreated from Queenston Heights in July 1814 the fortifications were dismantled, but were reoccupied by the British in late July and held until the end of the war. The forts were located to the west of the later site of the Brock Monument.[95] Although early visitors had employed guides and sought out the outlines of old structures like the earthworks, their significance waned over time.[96] Combined with the marker-sight displacement of the well-maintained and visually dominant Brock Monument, The NPC did not consider these earthworks to be as important as the Brock monument. Little was done to protect Fort Drummond until 1921 when the NPC erected low fences to keep the growing number of visitors from walking on it.[97] No such protection was provided for Fort Riall, which a later visitor described as 'worn bare by the careless feet of sightseers.'[98] During the height of the park's development in 1922 NPC General Manager John Jackson wrote to General Cruickshank, chairman of the HSMBC and an historian, asking about placing tennis courts in the 'Westerly Earth Works.' He wrote: 'I would like to know whether it seems to you quite proper to put tennis courts in such a place. I cannot see any objection personally for it is a plot that is scarcely ever looked at now and the whole would probably be kept in better order than at present, but we would not want to have any criticism later.'[99] After clarifying that the earthworks were, in fact, Fort Drummond, Cruikshank replied that placing the tennis courts there would be acceptable if the earthworks were protected, but 'if … there be another equally eligible spot it may be advisable to locate the tennis court elsewhere to avoid possible adverse criticism.'[100] Perhaps fearing the opposition of history enthusiasts and societies, the tennis courts were placed in another area of the park. However, in 1926 the Commissioners installed a 29-metre diameter concrete wading pool in the centre of the old fort.[101]

In 1926 the commissioners were again adding recreational amenities to the park. This time the proposed development was a

permanent building to house the Commission's crèche, or nursery, which had been operating in a double tent since 1921.[102] One proposed location for the new building was within the earthworks of Fort Riall, an advanced battery also built in 1814.[103] The commissioners initially saw no problem with this proposal, but decided that 'it is well to get the different view points of other interests,' and wrote R.W. Geary, president of the LLHS, to ask his opinion.[104] Geary responded in much the way that Cruikshank had, stating that he saw no problem with the project as long as the earthworks were left undisturbed 'as much as possible.' Geary continued that the fort 'is not of the greatest importance historically' because it had no association with General Brock, and would provide an ideal location for the crèche. [105]Although the commission eventually placed the crèche elsewhere, Geary and Cruikshank's responses are perhaps surprising, as both were history enthusiasts. They expressed some concern that the earthworks not be destroyed, but they did not oppose their development on historical grounds. Geary's comment that the earthworks did not have anything to do with Brock and therefore were not significant indicates that the primary focus of the site, for both the NPC and some historical society members, was on Brock and his monument. Both the NPC and some members of local historical societies did not prioritize the war's historic landscape, focussing instead on the site's historic markers as symbols of the past. This may have been because the earthworks were constructed after the famous battle had taken place, or because the site's historical associations had been vested in the Brock Monument. In any case, the NPC did not act to protect the earthworks, instead seeing them as ideal locations for the expansion of recreational park services.

As demonstrated by the response of R.W. Geary, the development of the battlefield as a recreational destination was not contested or questioned by local historical societies. The increased interest in Ontario's history at the turn of the century had led to the creation of these historical societies, many of which were located in the Niagara Region. In the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries many of these societies, including the NHS, had invested their energy in saving other War of 1812 battlefields such as Forts George and Erie from development by an American railway company and a Buffalo Country Club, respectively. Their goal was to have these forts placed under the care of the NPC, which was perceived as their potential guardian.[106] Local historical societies may not have been as concerned about Queenston Heights, as it was already under the control of the NPC and

was not in danger of immediate large scale commercial development, especially by American entrepreneurs. Although these societies took a general interest in Queenston Heights and General Brock, the site had no active and organized local historical society to lobby for the protection of its historical relics.The members of the NHS promoted the history of Niagara-on-the-Lake, Ontario, including the battle of Fort George, and called for the preservation of the fort and the surrounding Niagara Commons.[107] The LLHS published prolifically about the war, and were concerned specifically with the maintenance of the Lundy's Lane battlefield. The LLHS conducted anniversary celebrations there almost yearly starting in 1887, and was active in calling for the preservation of the site and instrumental in erecting two War of 1812 monuments there.[108] No such concern was expressed for Queenston Heights. Beyond the unveiling of its monuments, the first large scale formal celebration of the anniversary of the battle of Queenston Heights did not take place until the centennial in 1912, and this was organized by the Toronto-based United Empire Loyalist Association of Canada.[109] With no strong local historical society to advocate for the site's historical associations, under the control of the NPC this history became subordinate to the former battlefield's identity as a site of recreation.

Queenston Heights' identities as a place of leisure and recreation were not mutually exclusive, however. The voices of twentieth century visitors are difficult to discern, but in practice it is likely that their activities in and motivations for visiting Queenston Heights were varied, as landscapes can be seen simultaneously in a variety of different ways.[110] Those visiting the site to enjoy the view of the Niagara River were likely aware at some level of the historical associations of the site through the presence of the monuments, while those visiting because of its history were doubtless struck by the beauty of the view from the Heights. Either visitor may have stopped to enjoy lunch at the restaurant, or a picnic. Indeed, some local historical societies such as the NHS held several picnics at Queenston Heights in the 1910s where members and their guests enjoyed a luncheon and heard speakers on historical matters.[111] Company or church groups likely went to Queenston Heights because of the amenities provided for large groups and the picturesque scenery, but this would not preclude participants from pausing to read the inscriptions on the Brock or Secord monuments. The development of Queenston Heights primarily as a recreational space and its subsequent popularity for groups wanting to spend a day picnicking and indulging in sports suggests that the

transformation of the former battlefield to a site of recreation was a process that was generally accepted by members of the public. This may be due, in part, to the Brock Monument's embodiment of the site's historical associations, which allowed the remainder of the battlefield to be developed as a recreational space. The NPC, however, played a large role in how the area was perceived and worked to integrate the former battlefield into a wider recreational park system that emphasized recreation over history.

In the nineteenth century Queenston Heights was the site of tourism devoted mostly to connecting with the site's past. Early tourists searched for the historical sublime, while local hitorical society members organized pilgrimages to learn about the battle in the place it happened and to commemorate those killed. Beginning at the turn of the century Queenston Heights was increasingly a site of recreational activities not directly associated with the site's War of 1812 past. This trend continued into the twentieth century, and in the 1920s Queenston Heights' popularity as a recreational destination exploded. This shift in use and meaning was due in part to the actvities of the NPC. The NPC perceived Queenston Heights more as a park than a historic site, and developed it accordingly. Although they left the Brock, and later Secord, monuments alone, the battlefield was developed and promoted primarily as a recreational space. The NPC did not take any action to commemorate the historical associations of the site, and the physical remnants from the war were given only grudging recognition. The Commission valued and emphasized the scenic beauty of the area, and encouraged the contemplation of nature while developing the former battlefield as a commercial recreational space. Through this development the NPC was able to draw large crowds of day trippers from Toronto who used the former battlefield as a site for a pleasant family outing. Indeed, the popularity of the site as a leisure destination and the lack of opposition to the NPC's program suggest that for many people the former battlefield was no longer strongly associated with its martial past. The Brock Monument's symbolic and physical dominance of the site aided in this process, as it contributed to the disassociation of the battlefield landscape from the conflict. A 1930 advertisement is telling of the site's transformation from battlefield to recreational park. It states, with questionable accuracy, 'Queenston Heights Park a century ago was a battlefield.' 'Today,' it continues, 'as children or as grown ups we thrill anew at the natural grandeur of the Park and revel in the completeness of its conveniences for family picnics.'[112]

Notes

1 'Chit *Chat,*' *Globe,* 23 July 1897.
2 Originally named the Queen Victoria Niagara Falls Park Commission, the organisation changed its name to the Niagara Parks Commission in 1927. For the sake of brevity and clarity the latter will be used throughout this paper. George A. Seibel, *Ontario's Niagara Parks: A History* (Niagara Falls: The Niagara Parks Commission, 1985), 41.
3 Seibel, *Ontario's Niagara Parks,* 220; NPC, *Forty-Eighth Annual Report of the Niagara Parks Commission 1933* (Toronto: T.E. Bowman, 1933), 5, 11.
4 J. Mackay Hitsman, *The Incredible War of 1812: A Military History* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1965), 88 – 90; Robert Malcomson, *A Very Brilliant Affair: The Battle of Queenston Heights, 1812* (Toronto: Robin Brass Studio, 2003), 170–4.
5 Patricia Jasen, 'Romanticism, Modernity, and the Evolution of Tourism on the Niagara Frontier, 1790–1850,' *Canadian Historical Review* 72, 3 (1991): 292, 297–8; Stuart Semmel, 'Reading the Tangible Past: British Tourism, Collecting, and Memory after Waterloo,' *Representations* 69 (Winter 2000): 15; Thomas A. Chambers, *Memories of War: Visiting Battlegrounds and Bonefields in the Early American Republic* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2012), 129–31.
6 Horatio A Parsons, *The Book of Niagara Falls* (Buffalo: Steele & Peck, 1838), 75.
7 John J. Bigsby, *The Shoe and Canoe or Pictures of Travel in the Canadas Illustrative of Their Scenery and of Colonial Life; With Facts and Opinions on Emigration, State Policy, and Other Points of Public Interest. With numerous Plates and Maps,* Vol. II (London: Chapman and Hall, 1850), 28–9.
8 Jasen, 'Romanticism,' 305.
9 Ibid., 284; Keith Walden, 'Isaac Brock: Man and Myth' (MA Thesis, Queen's University, 1971), ii.
10 C.R. Chisholm, *Chisholm's Hand-Book of Travel, and Tourist's Guide through Canada and the United States with Fifty Illustrations and Maps* (Montreal: C.R. Chisholm & Bro's, 1866), 6–7.
11 Robert Malcolmson, *Burying General Brock: A History of Brock's Monuments* (Niagara-on-the-Lake: The Friends of Fort George, 1996), 9, 17–25, 31–2, 43.
12 Papers of the Women's Literary Club of St Catharines, Brock University Special Collections, RG18, Box 1, Folder 1.
13 See, for example, 'An Historic Trip to the Niagara,' *The Globe,* 19 May 1898.
14 'Historical Pilgrimage,' *The Globe,* 19 May 1897.
15 NPC, *Thirty-Fifth Annual Report of the Commissioners for the Queen Victoria Niagara Falls Park 1920* (Toronto: Clarkson W. James, 1922), 43.
16 Karen Dubinsky, *The Second Greatest Disappointment: Honeymooning and Tourism at Niagara Falls* (New Brunswick, New Jersey: Rutgers University Press, 1999),118.
17 Patricia Jasen, *Wild Things: Nature, Culture, and Tourism in Ontario 1790–1914* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1995), 128.
18 Seibel, *Ontario's Niagara Parks,* 217, 220, 223.
19 NPC, *Twenty-Third Annual Report of the Commissioners for the Queen Victoria Niagara Falls Park 1908* (Toronto: L. K. Cameron, 1909), 17. For the week ending 24 July 1920, the total participants in registered group picnics was 1,250 in Queenston Heights, and 1,465 at Queen Victoria Park. John Jackson to F.D.L. Smith, 20 July 1920, Archives of Ontario (AO), NPC General Managers Subject Correspondence, RG38 3-1-1.
20 'Picnics at Queenston,' *Toronto Daily Star,* 24 July 1920.
21 'The Whirlpool Route,' *The Globe,* 22 July 1893; for Canadian advertising see Russell Johnston, *Selling Themselves: The Emergence of Canadian Advertising* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2001); 'Plan Now!' *Toronto Daily Star,* 25 February 1927.
22 'The Veterans' Celebration,' *The Standard* (St. Catharines), 28 July 1904.
23 'Over 500 Holiday-Makers, Members of Globe Family, Spend Day in Happy Reunion,' *The Globe,* 12 June 1922.
24 See, for example, 'Civic Holiday Doings,' *Niagara Falls Daily Record,* 5 August 1909.
25 For a detailed account of the creation of the Niagara Park Commission and Queen Victoria Park, see Seibel, *Ontario's Niagara Parks,* 22–30.
26 Seibel, *Ontario's Niagara Parks,* 217–20.

27 NPC, *Tenth annual Report of the Commissioners for the Queen Victoria Niagara Falls Park 1895* (Toronto: Warwick Bros. &Rutter, 1896), 47–8.
28 NPC, *Eighth Annual Report of the Commissioners for the Queen Victoria Niagara Falls Park, 1893* (Toronto: Warwick Bros. & Rutter, 1894), 10.
29 NPC, *Tenth Annual Report,* 44–8, 77.
30 NPC, *Report of the Commissioners for Queen Victoria Niagara Falls Park 1896* (Toronto: Warwick Bro's & Rutter, 1897), 6; NPC, *Thirteenth Annual Report of the Commissioners for the Queen Victoria Niagara Falls Park 1888* (Toronto: Warwick Bro's &Rutter, 1899), 6.
31 Seible, *Ontario's Niagara Parks,* 221.
32 Ronald L. Way, *Ontario's Niagara Parks: A History* (rev. ed.: Niagara Falls: Niagara Parks Commission, 1960), 205.
33 NPC, *Tenth Annual Report,* 44.
34 Malcolmson, *Burying General Brock,* 42; NPC, *Tenth Annual Report,* 52.
35 NPC, *Seventeenth Annual Report of the Commissioners for the Queen Victoria Niagara Falls Park for the Year Ending 1902* (Toronto: L.K. Cameron, 1903), 21.
36 Charles E. Beveridge and Paul Rocheleau, *Frederick Law Olmsted: Designing the American Landscape* (New York: Universe, 1998), 174–75.
37 Linda Flint McClelland, *Building the National Parks: Historic Landscape Design and Construction* (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1998), 37.
38 NPC, *Eighteenth Annual Report of the Commissioners for the Queen Victoria Niagara Falls Park* (Toronto: L.K. Cameron, 1904), 21.
39 Smith to Jackson, 27 May 1929, AO, NPC General Manager Subject Correspondence, RG38 3-2-913.
40 Jackson to Smith, 4 June 1929, AO, NPC General Manager Subject Correspondence, RG38 3-2-913.
41 Way, *Ontario's Niagara Parks,* 261, 27.
42 Ibid., 261; 'Outstanding Servant Of City and Province, P.W. Ellis, Succumbs' *The Globe,* 22 April 1929.
43 Cecelia Morgan has examined Secord's adoption by first wave feminists; see Colin M. Coates and Cecelia Morgan, *Heroines and History: Representations of Madeleine de Verchères and Laura Secord* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2002); also Beverly Boutilier, 'Women's Rights and Duties: Sarah Anne Curzon and the Politics of Canadian History,' in *Creating Historical Memory: English-Canadian Women and the Work of History,* eds. Beverly Boutilier and Alison Prentice (Vancouver: UBC Press, 1997), 51–74.
44 Norman Knowles, *Inventing the Loyalists: The Ontario Loyalist Tradition & the Creation of Usable Pasts* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1997), 131.
45 Laud to Wilson, 11 March 1908, AO, NPC General Manager Subject Correspondence, RG38 3-1-494.
46 'Honours Memory of Laura Secord,'*Globe,* 6 July 1911; for a more detailed discussion of the monument see Coates and Morgan, *Heroines and History,* 200–7.
47 Way, *Ontario's Niagara Parks,* 209.
48 See, for example, 'St. George's Society,' *The Daily Globe,* 12 June 1862.
49 NPC, *Sixteenth Annual Report of the Commissioners for the Queen Victoria Niagara Falls Park of the Province of Ontario for the Year Ending December 31st 1901* (Toronto: L. K. Cameron, 1902), 13.
50 NPC, *Thirty-Second Annual Report of the Commissioners for the Queen Victoria Niagara Falls Park 1917* (Toronto: A.T. Wilgress, 1918), 23.
51 'Specifications of Works Required in the Construction of a Shelter at Queenston Heights,' April 1907, AO, NPC General Manager Subject Correspondence, RG38 3-1-276.
52 *Thirty-Sixth Annual Report of the Commissioners for the Queen Victoria Niagara Falls Park 1921* (Toronto: Clarkson W. James, 1923), 35.
53 Seibel, *Ontario's Niagara Parks,* 223.
54 NPC, *Fifteenth Annual Report of the Commissioners for the Queen Victoria Niagara Falls Park* (Toronto: L.K. Cameron, 1901), 7; Seibel, *Ontario's Niagara Parks,* 223.
55 NPC, *Twenty-Sixth Annual Report of the Commissioners for the Queen Victoria Niagara Falls Park 1911* (Toronto: L.K. Cameron, 1912), 26; NPC, *Twenty-Seventh Annual Report of the Commissioners for the Queen Victoria Niagara Falls Park 1912* (Toronto: L.K. Cameron, 1913), 13.
56 See Dubinsky, *The Second Greatest Disappointment,* 103–4.
57 Seibel, *Ontario's Niagara Parks,* 336.
58 S. Barnett(?) to James Wilson, 22 October 1894, AO, NPC Superintendent's Office Chronological Correspondence, 1884–1902, RG38 2-0-10; Seibel, *Ontario's Niagara Parks,* 220.

59 James Humphries to Niagara Parks Commissioners, 24 February 1913, AO, NPC General Manager's Subject Correspondence, RG38 3-1-263; 'Proposal Queenston and Whirlpool Concessions,' 19 December 1913, ibid.
60 NPC, *Twenty-Fourth Annual Report of the Commissioners for the Queen Victoria Niagara Falls Park 1909* (Toronto: L.K. Cameron, 1910), 8.
61 NPC, *Thirty-First Annual Report of the Commissioners for the Queen Victoria Niagara Falls Park 1916* (Toronto: A.T. Wilgress, 1917), 21.
62 NPC, *Thirtieth Annual Report of the Commissioners for the Queen Victoria Niagara Falls Park 1915* (Toronto: A.T. Wilgress, 1916), 10, 12.
63 NPC, *Thirty-Fifth Annual Report,* 37.
64 Way, *Ontario's Niagara Parks,* 234.
65 NPC, *Thirty-Sixth Annual Report,* 23; NPC, *Thirty-Ninth Annual Report of the Commissioners for the Queen Victoria Niagara Falls Park 1924* (Toronto: Clarkson W. James, 1926), 8.
66 S.J. Murphy to John Jackson, 8 December 1921, AO, NPC General Manager's Subject Correspondence, RG38 3-1-1.
67 NPC, *Thirty-Ninth Annual Report,* 14–5.
68 *Chisholm's Hand-Book of Travel, and Tourist's Guide Through Canada and the United States with Fifty Illustrations and Maps* (Montreal: C.R. Chisholm & Bro's, 1866), 7.
69 Charles G.D. Roberts, *The Canadian Guide-Book the Tourist's and Sportsman's Guide to Eastern Canada and Newfoundland: Including Full Descriptions of Routes, Cities, Points of Interest, Summer Resorts, Fishing Places, etc. in Eastern Ontario, the Muskoka District, the St. Lawrence Region, the Lake St. John Country, the Maritime Provinces, Prince Edward Island, and Newfoundland: with an Appendix Giving Fish and Game Laws, and Official Lists of Trout and Salmon Rivers and their Lessees* (New York: D. Appleton, 1891), 14.
70 Way, *Ontario's Niagara Parks,* 205.
71 NPC, *Eighth Annual Report,* 10.
72 Ibid., 10.
73 NPC, *Fifteenth Annual Report,* 7.
74 NPC, *Twenty-First Annual Report of the Commissioners for the Queen Victoria Niagara Falls Park 1906* (Toronto: L.K. Cameron, 1907), 24.
75 Galen Cranz, *The Politics of Park Design: A History of Urban Parks in America* (Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 1982), 36, 8.
76 H. J. Moore to James Wilson, 1913, AO, NPC General Manager's Office Subject Correspondence, RG38 3-1-285.
77 NPC, *Twenty-Fifth Annual Report of the Commissioners for the Queen Victoria Niagara Falls Park 1910* (Toronto: L.K. Cameron, 1911), 22.
78 NPC, *Thirty-Sixth Annual Report,* 37.
79 Chambers, *Memories of War,* 155.
80 NPC, *Tenth Annual Report,* 54.
81 John Fenson to James Wilson, 8 September 1894, Superintendent's Office Chronological Correspondence, AO RG38 2-0-13.
82 NPC, *Twenty-First Annual Report,* 24.
83 NPC, *Thirty-Fifth Annual Report,* 20.
84 NPC, *Fifteenth Annual Report,* 7; NPC, *Sixteenth Annual Report of the Commissioners for the Queen Victoria Niagara Falls Park of the Province of Ontario for the Year Ending December 31st 1901* (Toronto: L.K. Cameron, 1902), 13.
85 Mark Piekarz, 'It's Just a Bloody Field! Approaches, Opportunities and Dilemmas of Interpreting English Battlefields' in *Battlefield Tourism: History Place, and Interpretation,* ed. Chris Ryan (Oxford: Elsevier, 2007), 35; Jasen, *Wild Things,* 52.
86 Jasen, *Wild Things,* 52; Dean MacCannell, *The Tourist: A New Theory of the Leisure Class* (new ed.; Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1999), 124.
87 A.V. Seaton, 'War and Thanatourism: Waterloo 1815–1914,' *Annals of Tourism Research* 26, no.1 (1996):140, 152.
88 'Summer Resort,' *Niagara Mail and Advertiser,* 16 June 1869; see also G. Mercer Adam, *Canada: Historical and Descriptive from Sea to Sea* (Toronto: W. Bryce, 1888), 24.
89 See, for example, Rev. J. M'Cowan, *A Tour in Canada* (Elgin Courant and Courier, 1894), 35–6 Parsons, *The Book of Niagara Falls,* 44–5; W.M.S. Hunter, Jr., *Chisholm's Panoramic Guide from Niagara Falls to Quebec* (Montreal: C.R. Chisholm, 1869), 4; *Souvenir View Book of Niagara Falls* (n.p:n.p., 1910), 28.
90 Jasen, *Wild Things,* 52.
91 Seibel, *Ontario's Niagara Parks,* 227; NPC, *Forty-Fifth Annual Report of*

the Niagara Parks Commission 1930 (Toronto: Herbert H. Ball, 1931), 15.
92 A.M., 'The Brock Monument,' *Mail & Empire,* 16 June 1930.
93 See R.T.N., 'General Brock's Statue,' *Mail & Empire,* 27 June 1930; Observer, 'General Brock's Statue,' *Mail & Empire,* 2 July 1930.
94 Seibel, *Ontario's Niagara Parks,* 227.
95 Way, *Ontario's Niagara Parks,* 208.
96 Jasen, *Wild Things,* 39.
97 NPC, *Thirty-Sixth Annual Report,* 37; Way, *Ontario's Niagara Parks,* 208.
98 U.E. Loyalist, 'Preserve Historic Spots,' *The Globe,* 1 November 1930.
99 Jackson to E.A. Cruikshank, 27 June 1922, AO, NPC General Manager's Office Subject Correspondence, RG38 3-1-263.
100 E.A. Cruikshank to Jackson, 30 June 1922, AO, NPC General Manager's Office Subject Correspondence, RG38 3-1-263.
101 Seibel, *Ontario's Niagara Parks,* 226–7.
102 Seibel, *Ontario's Niagara Parks,* 223.
103 Way, *Ontario's Niagara Parks,* 208.
104 Jackson to R.W. Geary, 1 March 1926, AO, NPC General Manager's Office Subject Correspondence, RG38 3-2-25.
105 R.W. Geary to Jackson 3 March 1926, AO, NPC General Manager's Office Subject Correspondence, RG38 3-2-25.
106 George Killan, *Preserving Ontario's Heritage: A History of the Ontario Historical Society* (Ottawa: Love Printing, 1976), 132–3.
107 Niagara Historical Society, *Tenth Annual Report of the Niagara Historical Society* (Niagara-on-the-Lake[?]: Niagara Historical Society[?], 1905[?]), n.p.; Killan, *Preserving Ontario's Heritage,* 135.
108 See, for example, 'Lundy's Lane,' *ThoroldPost,* 7 August 1891.
109 Alexander Fraser, *Brock Centenary 1812–1912: Account of the Celebration at Queenston Heights, Ontario, on the 12th October, 1912* (Toronto: William Briggs, 1913), 21.
110 Brian Grahametal, *A Geography of Heritage: Power, Culture & Economy* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000), 33.
111 See Niagara Historical Society Minutes, AO, Niagara Historical Society Collection, F1138-F-1, MS 193, Reel 7.
112 'A Glorious Family Picnic Park,' *The Globe,* 22 July 1930.

London Journal of Canadian Studies, Volume 29 (2014). This is an Open Access article distributed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution Licence, which permits unrestricted use, distribution and reproduction in any medium, provided the original author and source are credited• UCL Press• Print ISSN 0267-2200 • Online ISSN 2397-0928 • DOI 10.14324/111.444.ljcs.2014v29.004

Speaking about the War of 1812: Reinterpreting History in the Rhetoric Surrounding Canada's Inter-War Diplomacy (1919–1939)

Hector Mackenzie[1]

Abstract

A remarkable feature of Canada's external relations in the years between the two world wars of the twentieth century is the extent to which Canada's conduct and speeches by its representatives on international affairs were dominated by imagery of North American harmony. Past clashes, most notably the War of 1812, or simply differences of views were forgotten or overlooked in the construction of a myth that served to justify inaction and the denial of commitments in imperial and world affairs. An aloof, unhelpful stance internationally was depicted more positively as a worthy example of peaceful attitudes and conduct. Thus, the inter-war period was dominated by rhetoric about 'the longest undefended border in the world,' '[more than a] century of peace in North America,' and the contrast between the 'New World' and the 'Old World' in world affairs. No Canadian speech in an international forum seemed complete without some variation on these themes and without an admonition to Europeans and other miscreants to settle disputes by conciliation, negotiation and arbitration – rather than resort to war – as was the tradition in relations between Canada and the United States. This paper deals with the development, application and effect in the inter-war period of the lessons supposedly drawn from the experience and especially the aftermath of the War of 1812.

For historians and other commentators, the rhetoric employed by Canadian politicians, statesmen and diplomats to articulate and defend

a distinct perspective on world affairs between the two world wars of the twentieth century has inspired fascination, bemusement and even condemnation for its complacent and self-satisfied tone, as well as for its misrepresentation of the past. Not for the last time, speech-writers and speakers seemed fonder of myth than of history. There was a profound and pervasive tendency to depict North America – and especially the relations between Canada and the United States – as different from Europe, with a questionable interpretation of the historical experience cited as evidence of that distinction. Most analysts have noted how this depiction of continental harmony was employed to justify a negative approach to international obligations. What has attracted less attention have been the specific content and the ultimate inspiration for this curious, repetitious and often sanctimonious flow of words. In various international settings, Canadian speakers aimed to correct what they regarded as the misguided and ultimately destructive behaviour of those leaders and nations with whom they assembled at conferences. To that end, Canada's relations with the United States were presented as a model for others to emulate. That these efforts at behavioural correction conspicuously failed does not lessen what we can learn about Canadian attitudes from a closer look at the circumstances and the texts of the pronouncements.

This paper will review several key speeches delivered on behalf of the Canadian government at significant international meetings between 1919 and 1939, then link these texts to persistent and often persuasive (at least for Canadians) myths about Canada's relations with the United States and especially about the supposed legacy of the War of 1812 and its aftermath. Thus, this commentary does not deal with that conflict, nor with the scholarly evaluation of it and its actual consequences. Instead, it examines how the past was viewed and arguably distorted through the lens of later politics and diplomacy. In other words, its focus is on the depiction of history and characterization of its meaning and significance by representatives of Canada at international gatherings, including imperial and international conferences as well as meetings of the League of Nations. In those distinctly non-academic settings, with little fear of contradiction by others in the audience more knowledgeable than themselves, Canadian politicians and diplomats attempted to posit 'lessons of the past' for the edification and improvement of their listeners. The period since the end of the War of 1812 was reinterpreted and presented as an instructive example for the rest of the world about how to get along with your neighbour. This notion of learning from the experience and consequences of an earlier war had been articulated

before the Great War, but it became even more resonant after that devastating conflict.

Some of the themes favoured by Canadian speech-writers and speakers in the 1920s and 1930s, which have often been attributed to an understandable revulsion following the colossal losses of the Great War, were actually anticipated by American, British and Canadian celebrants of the centenary of the War of 1812, before the first world war of the twentieth century had exacted its toll. As it turned out, many of the projects proposed for that commemoration were delayed or abandoned in response to contemporary circumstances.[2] Consequently, some of the intended themes received less attention than anticipated by the organizers, though seeds may have been planted then which possibly germinated a decade later. One difficulty for the celebrants was a perennial one – insufficient public and political interest to justify enough funds for the grander plans for the commemoration. More significantly, global tensions altered the context for the planned activities, though many still went forward. The celebration of the centenary of the War of 1812, which had been devised by many of the participants as a celebration of peace and of the effective use of arbitration to settle international disputes, came amid rising tensions in Europe, which would prompt the outbreak of the Great War two years later.

As for the North American context, the anniversary came after a decade of Anglo-American rapprochement and an overall settlement of most differences in relations between Canada and the United States. That harmonious trend seems even more remarkable when one considers that the twentieth century had begun inauspiciously with a serious clash over the boundary between Alaska and Canadian territory, with heated rhetoric on both sides of the border as Canadian and American politicians perceived advantages to be gained from adversarial nationalistic stances. Certainly the truculent political speeches during that episode did not convey any sense of continental understanding or harmony. After that seemingly ill-starred beginning, however, the remainder of the first decade of the century had witnessed a deliberate and remarkably effective 'clearing of the slate' with respect to Canadian-American disagreements. That American-initiated process culminated in the signature of the Boundary Waters Treaty and the creation of the International Joint Commission in 1909.[3] Questions that had been posed intermittently and inconclusively for years in bilateral relations were answered in practical and reasonable ways, to the satisfaction of leaders in both countries. By the end of this process, there were hardly

any noteworthy or consequential disputes outstanding between the two countries.

That decade was also one of unprecedented growth and prosperity for Canada. Those exceptional circumstances undoubtedly contributed to extraordinary national self-confidence, which was predictably reflected in the speeches and statements of politicians and pundits, who competed for the most outrageously optimistic forecasts of Canada's future. In comparison with some of those claims, Prime Minister Sir Wilfrid Laurier's opt-repeated assertion, with minor variations in phrasing, that the twentieth century 'would belong to Canada,' seems rather tentative and modest. Likely that positive frame of mind lessened chronic anxiety in the Dominion about fair treatment in dealings with the United States and made it easier to resolve continental issues.

Even so, the year before the centenary saw a very different mood prevailing north of the border.[4] Curiously, this arose in large part from a controversial effort to draw the countries even closer together economically. In 1911, on the eve of the commemoration, there had been an especially acrimonious general election in Canada marked by strident appeals to pro-imperial and anti-American sentiment. Patriotic fervour had been aroused in English Canada by the cautious response of Laurier's government to the Anglo-German naval crisis. Those concerns about loyalty were then compounded by a proposed deal for reciprocity in trade between Canada and the United States, which was seen by some as threatening Canada's sheltered manufacturing sector as well as the Dominion's ties to Britain.

Both sides in this contest raised fundamental issues of identity and loyalty in English-speaking Canada. Appeals by opponents of the trade deal for Canadians not to turn their backs on Britain found a receptive audience. Proponents had a harder time explaining why a prosperous Canada needed such a deal, though it was strongly supported by farmers, especially in western Canada. Unwise remarks by American politicians about the implications of the pact for Canada's future as a sovereign state had reawakened dormant fears of annexation and prompted effusions of pro-imperial 'patriotic' sentiment in English Canada. Thus, the cry of 'no truck nor trade with the Yankees' uttered by foes of reciprocity apparently struck a responsive chord. Moreover, much of the electorate was evidently anxious about any major shift in commercial policy when the country had experienced more than a decade of good fortune under the current regime – why mess with success? As for attitudes in Quebec, nationalists there opposed even the Liberal government's modest commitment to a Canadian navy as

an unwelcome and burdensome form of colonial tribute. To thwart that initiative, they were prepared to risk political collaboration with more imperially-minded Tories. This lethal combination of moods, which compounded the accumulated political liabilities from fifteen years in office, led to the defeat of Laurier's government, including the first, but not the last, loss in his constituency for a ministerial novice, William Lyon Mackenzie King, who learned his own lessons from this experience.[5]

As much as possible, celebrants of the centenary of the War of 1812, including the new Canadian prime minister, Robert Laird Borden, attempted to dampen down the anti-American tone which had been so evident in the election campaign and to draw more favourable lessons from their appreciation of past experience. Unfortunately, the atmosphere did not necessarily improve a great deal after the anniversary celebrations were over. The respective responses of the two countries to the outbreak of the Great War demonstrated the differences between the neighbours, not the commonalities. When the war began, with Canada automatically a belligerent as a member of the British Empire, American neutrality and pervasive rumours in Canada of espionage and sabotage by cross-border agents of German descent worsened popular attitudes and complicated relations between the countries.[6]

Eventual American entry into the war, as well as subsequent close collaboration, eased those tensions. Even so, there was some resentment in Canada when the late entrant in the war, the United States, opposed what Canadians believed was appropriate representation for their country at the Paris Peace Conference and membership in the League of Nations, that ill-fated product of the Treaty of Versailles.[7] Canadian pundits bitterly recalled that, for much of the war, as one put it, 'America counted her profits, while Canada buried her dead.'[8] In other words, the overall experience of the Great War did not necessarily bolster the positive continental developments and sympathetic attitudes that preceded it. However, it was soon evident that the longer-term trends in continental relations could not be reversed, or even stalled, by these differences. Instead, the political, economic and social factors that drew the countries together soon had an obvious impact on how Canadians defined and described their place in the world. Against the seemingly less favourable backdrop of developments surrounding the Great War, it is noteworthy to what extent the inter-war conduct of Canada and speeches by its representatives on international affairs were dominated by the appreciation of shared values and interests on both sides of the border.

Especially when speaking abroad, there was a marked tendency to convey an impression of idyllic harmony between the neighbours and to employ this image as proof of the moral superiority of North America (sometimes enlarged to the New World generally). Past clashes or seemingly primordial differences (such as arguments between Canadians and Americans over the superiority of their respective forms of government) were forgotten or overlooked in constructing and repeating a myth of shared beliefs and concerted actions. For some, that notion of North American distinctiveness ultimately served to justify inaction in the face of overseas crises – which were so clearly the fault of others – and the refusal of responsibilities or obligations in imperial as well as in world affairs. For most in English Canada, however, this sense of detachment, which was possible in quieter times, did not withstand the searing impact of the crises that preceded the outbreak of the Second World War and the perceived threat to the United Kingdom.

Even so, it is worthwhile to look more closely at the rhetoric of the inter-war years and its implications. In that setting, history was re-written – or simply misrepresented in speeches – to serve the current aims of the Canadian government and to excuse an inglorious if temporary retreat into a North American redoubt. In scholarship and popular discourse, the overwhelming emphasis was on the progressive development of better relations between Canada and the United States over the years. Tendencies which would later be seen more critically were often depicted favourably. Thus, the neglect of national defence by successive Canadian governments, which could more accurately be attributed to a combination of parsimony, complacency and war-weariness – compounded by a recognition of the military futility of protecting the country against its powerful neighbour – was now recast as evidence of longstanding continental harmony.[9] In fact, military expenditures had been scaled back to the point of dangerous neglect for fiscal reasons, as part of the overall effort to overcome the legacy of debt from a costly overseas war and later to deal with the costs of the Great Depression. That approach was made easier by a popular but misplaced faith in the efficacy of voluntary responses by civilian recruits to major crises rather than reliance on permanent forces for security. That 'militia myth' also owed its origins to an incomplete understanding of how the War of 1812 had been fought and decided.[10]

At the League of Nations and in other settings, including imperial conferences, Canadian representatives often presumed to speak as well for the absent Americans. At times, other delegates could be forgiven for wondering aloud for which country the Canadians spoke. In fact, at the

Imperial Conference of 1921, the truculent Australian prime minister, Billy Hughes, questioned whose policy the Canadian prime minister, Arthur Meighen, advocated – that of the British Empire or that of the United States.[11] For his part, Meighen contended that Canada's relations with the United States 'have no parallel anywhere between any British Dominion and any other country' and that they 'are in their very nature so vast and so vital to us that the control of those relations has become and must remain a matter incident to our autonomy.'[12] Consequently, Canada's stake in 'British-American friendship' was exceptional and its vulnerability in the event of a breach was much greater than that of Australia or any other part of the Empire and Commonwealth. In Meighen's reckoning, what had happened since the end of the War of 1812 vindicated this assessment and justified a dominant voice for Canada in shaping imperial relations with the Great Republic.[13] Hughes and others categorically rejected this assertion, but Meighen was unshaken in his belief.

As that exchange of views indicates, this stance transcended partisan divisions in Canada. After all, though the governments of King would be most closely identified with the articulation of a distinctly North American viewpoint, it was Meighen, not King, who first affirmed this distinction in an imperial setting. Within the context of the British Empire and Commonwealth, this positive continental outlook also reinforced a push for greater autonomy – constitutionally and diplomatically – for Canada.[14] That tendency was certainly more pronounced when the Liberals were in power. In light of the overall theme of this article, it is noteworthy that, when King first asserted Canada's separate diplomatic identity, he proposed renewal of the Rush-Bagot Agreement of 1817, which had limited naval armaments on the Great Lakes after the War of 1812, as a symbolic expression of continental concord as well as national autonomy. When that initiative went nowhere, King shifted his attention to coastal fisheries accords.[15]

In Geneva, this emphasis on North American harmony – and the presumption to speak also for the United States – provided a rationale for aloof or negative policies for Canada. That was evident as Canadian delegates endeavoured successively to delete, amend or 'interpret' the commitment to collective security expressed in article X of the covenant of the League of Nations. While other countries identified that provision as the key to the supranational authority and potential effectiveness and credibility of the new institution, as well as the protection of vulnerable smaller states, Canada regarded it as a dangerous liability. Canadian representatives were determined

to limit the obligations of Canada, which had less need of help from others.[16] However, that disengaged attitude was also noticeable in other evasions of responsibility for the security of those nations less favourably located. Whether in London or in Geneva – or in the safe confines of the House of Commons in Ottawa – this unhelpful posture was not presented as a denial of international commitments by the Canadian government. Instead, emphasis was placed on the absence of any threat to Canada; were others to follow its worthy example, so it was argued, their need for help would likewise be diminished and the world would undoubtedly be a better place.

Whatever the explanation or rationale, Canadian political and diplomatic rhetoric between the First and Second World Wars was dominated by a heady blend of complacency and sanctimony which contrasted the peace and harmony on the west side of the Atlantic (and the east side of the Pacific, though that shore was mentioned less often) with the dreadful and atavistic state of affairs on the opposite coast and further inland. Canadian speech-writers and speakers composed and rehearsed a few dominant themes on the subject of international relations, which were interwoven in texts and frequently repeated for the edification of their audiences.

One unifying idea, blame Europe, was present from the start. At the first assembly of the League of Nations in 1920, a Canadian delegate, Newton W. Rowell, pointedly remarked that 'it was European policy, European statesmanship, European ambition, that drenched this world with blood and from which we are still suffering and will suffer for generations.'[17] That terrible legacy of the Great War – and the belief that it was all Europe's fault – provided the immediate background for Canadian speeches on world affairs for the next two decades.

With some reliance on the mainstays of pithy commentary and public speeches – gross over-simplification and crass generalization – the following may be presented as a template for the prototypical speech by a Canadian representative in any international forum on world affairs from 1919 to 1939. With minor variations in tone and emphasis, it was employed by Liberal and Conservative speakers alike. Perhaps the most notorious theme – and certainly the one with the longest shelf life (though rarely heard lately, at least since the events of 11 September 2001) – was the boastful description of the Canadian-American frontier as 'the longest undefended border in the world.'[18] Another hardy perennial, with the specific phrasing adjusted periodically to take account of the passage of time, was the reference to '[more than] a century of peace in North America.' Associated with that notion

was the depiction of the Rush-Bagot Agreement as the oldest and most successful disarmament treaty in the world.

Probably the most popular – and arguably primordial – leit-motif in the limited repertoire of Canadian orators, however, was the vivid contrast in attitudes and conduct between the 'New World' and the 'Old World' in international relations, most evident in the clashes that prompted the Great War, with all of its devastating consequences. By implication – and sometimes more explicitly as a lesson to be learned – this difference in outlook and experience was attributed to the moral superiority of North America. As James Eayrs has noted, however, this 'moralizing' led not to 'engagement' or constructive leadership but to 'isolation' and denial of responsibility. As he put it so evocatively, evidently 'the first duty of the missionary was to stay out of the cannibal's pot.'[19] Words, not deeds, were what distinguished Canada and its delegates. No Canadian speech in an international forum was complete without these themes and without an accompanying admonition to Europeans and other wilful and unrepentant sinners to settle disputes by conciliation, negotiation and arbitration – not resort to war. In other words, they should follow the virtuous North American example. There were occasional bouts of originality in speech-writing and speaking, but those brief departures from the script did not usually contradict the basic messages. More often, these were differences in phraseology, not sentiment or belief. Let me illustrate this argument with a few major examples, then point out some flaws in the imagery so frequently presented.

One of the major initiatives after the Great War to assure peace in Europe was the Geneva Protocol (or Protocol for the Pacific Settlement of International Disputes). Perhaps the only memorable words ever uttered by Senator Raoul Dandurand, who often represented Canada with grace and quiet dignity at the League of Nations, came when he explained why Canada would not sign the protocol, though he insisted that the Canadian government and people wholeheartedly supported its aims. In his remarks, Dandurand compared the pact to an insurance policy against fire – as befits an uneasy and fundamentally conservative people, Canadians often think about insurance. In this metaphor, the obligations of signatories for collective security corresponded to the premiums levied to fund a group insurance policy. Dandurand then argued that Canada's risks were comparatively low, almost non-existent, so that it should not have to pay the same premium as others who were much more likely to need help. 'We live in a fire-proof house, far from inflammable materials,' he declaimed. For those few in his audience

who missed the key point, Dandurand reminded them that 'a vast ocean separates us from Europe,' otherwise known as the most likely source of conflagration.

Notwithstanding that brief flurry of originality, the rest of Dandurand's speech faithfully repeated the familiar nostrums. Thus, he highlighted the peaceful settlement of disputes between Canada and the United States, as well as the extent of disarmament in North America. Dandurand then tweaked the customary passage about the peaceful continent: 'Not only have we had a hundred years of peace on our borders, but we think in terms of peace, while Europe, an armed camp, thinks in terms of war.'[20] Somewhat unfairly, Dandurand's memorable phrase about a 'fireproof house' has earned him a reputation as a spokesman for isolationism. In fact, he was sympathetic to the goals of the league and of the protocol, but simply worried about the implications for Canada of an unlimited obligation to intervene abroad. King later confirmed that Canada would not sign the protocol, though he insisted that 'Canada should continue to give wholehearted support to the League of Nations,' a questionable reassurance at best, given Canada's track record and his own attitudes.[21]

King first spoke to the assembly of the league in September 1928, not long after he and other world leaders had renounced war as an instrument of national policy by signing the Multilateral Treaty for the Renunciation of War (Pact of Paris or Kellogg-Briand Pact). His speech in Geneva unsurprisingly included all of the requisite references to Canadian-American harmony. Indeed, the principal subject of his remarks to the assembly was the relationship between Canada and the United States. To the Canadian prime minister, as he informed his listeners, it was an exemplar and an application of the principles embodied in the recent accord. Thus, the more familiar 'century of peace' was rephrased as one hundred years of the renunciation of war between Canada and the United States. The phrase 'undefended frontier' was employed twice, and minor variations on it twice more. Both the Rush-Bagot Agreement and the International Joint Commission, those instruments of continental concord, were explained carefully and at length to an undoubtedly rapt audience. With more conviction than economic evidence (or forecasting ability), King also attributed his country's prosperity and fiscal soundness to the money saved by not spending 'a single dollar through fear of American aggression.' The finance minister of a disarmed Canada, King argued, found better ways to spend public funds and imposed a lesser burden on Canadian taxpayers than his counterparts elsewhere.[22]

Later, King described parliamentary endorsement of the Pact of Paris as simply approving 'a policy which, as regards Canada in its relations with the country to the south, has been in existence for more than a hundred years.'[23] In words that have been interpreted as cynical, King's closest adviser and the principal author of the prime minister's speeches, O. D. Skelton, described the treaty as a 'verbal flourish.' To his wife, he described it simply as a 'grand gesture.' No doubt with the prime minister's chronic worries about the risks of overseas entanglements in mind, Skelton suggested to King that it could do no harm to sign it, as it entailed no meaningful obligations and consequently was harmless.[24] In fact, any cynicism about the Kellogg-Briand Pact was borne out by events, as a higher proportion of signatories than non-signatories eventually fought in the Second World War. At the League Assembly in 1930, curiously, it was the French delegate, Aristide Briand, not the Canadian delegate, former prime minister Sir Robert Borden, who stressed Canada's advantageous location. Borden had scolded signatories of the Pact of Paris for continuing to rely on armaments for security. Briand pointedly noted that Canada was among 'the nations with nothing to fear, who live in a state of blissful well-being remote from danger' – not to praise the North American example but as a plea for better understanding from Canadians of justifiable French fears, particularly those inspired by the rise of the National Socialists in Germany.[25]

On occasion, Canadian delegates conceded that their country's peculiar advantages of geography, history and other circumstances made it inappropriate for them to preach to those less fortunate, as when Sir George Perley described Canada's favourable location when he spoke at the Disarmament Conference in Geneva in 1932. 'On the east and west we face the ocean; on the north, the arctic seas. On the south we have as our neighbour a great and friendly nation, with whom we have developed machinery for arbitration and conciliation, the successful functioning of which is causing the peaceful settlement of disputes between us (and we have many of them) to become a habit rather than an event.'[26] In fact, Perley's speech was also noteworthy for its omission of the hackneyed references to Canada's relations with the United States. 'We have been congratulated by all and sundry in Geneva,' one of his departmental advisers, Lester Pearson, reported, 'on the fact that it is the first Canadian deliverance for some years which has not mentioned one or all of "the hundred years," "the three thousand miles" or "the International Joint Commission."'[27]

Originality on the part of its representatives in Geneva, however, was not always valued by their superiors in Ottawa. In fact, initiatives by C. H. Cahan in 1932 and by W. A. Riddell in 1935 ensnared the Canadian government in controversy.[28] Curiously, Cahan's infamous intervention in the debate over Japan's conquest of Manchuria – when he seemed to question China's eligibility for membership of the league and therefore its worthiness for support from other members – still managed to include, on the recommendation of his official advisers, a suggestion of 'a permanent body on the lines of our International Joint Commission' to address differences between China and Japan.[29] For his part, Prime Minister R. B. Bennett was neither original nor controversial when he attended the league assembly in 1934, as he was stricken with influenza 'and took no significant part in the discussions.'[30]

In fact, silence on international questions was another way in which Canadian delegations avoided or limited Canada's commitments to the League of Nations and its members. Unfortunately for his subsequent career, Riddell did not keep quiet as the league deliberated over how to respond to a long-anticipated clash in October 1935. Riddell's pursuit of a bold policy of stronger sanctions against Italy over its invasion of Ethiopia, in the midst of a change of government in Canada and in apparent defiance of contrary instructions, ultimately prompted authorities in Ottawa to disavow his initiative.[31]

When King spoke to the League of Nations for the second and last time, in September 1936, he was less inclined than before to preach about the North American model. On the contrary, his speech acknowledged the extent to which Canada was favoured by geography and circumstances, especially when contrasted to the problematic situation in Europe. Perhaps because the familiar themes had been repeated so often by Canadian representatives, the standard references were made only indirectly, in considering the predicament of less fortunate European nations. 'We recognize the special conditions that face a great part of Europe, the crowded populations, the scores of dividing frontiers, the bitter memories which zealots of nationalism will not let die, the heritage of ancient privilege and of class division, the unrest resulting from the redrawing of political boundaries, and the upheaval in the social structure which the great war brought in its train,' King conceded. 'We recognize that we in Canada have been fortunate both in our neighbours and in our lack of neighbours, and we agree that we cannot reasonably expect our relations and our attitude to be wholly duplicated elsewhere.'

Even so, King deplored any resort to sanctions to enforce the will of the majority of league members and reaffirmed his support for

'a policy of non-interference in the domestic arrangements of other nations,' however much their conditions and prospects would likely be improved by following the example of North America. Canada was evidently satisfied with the status quo on its own continent, but it opposed its enforcement in Europe with the authority of the League of Nations. Moreover, its denial of the national implications of international collective security, as represented by commitments to the league, did not seem to constrain Canada and its representatives from advising the league and its members on how best to fulfil its purposes.[32] The stanza may have changed, but the chorus remained the same.

Other, less prominent, Canadian speakers played variations on these themes. What remained consistent was the extent to which the experience of the War of 1812 and the settlement of that conflict, as interpreted more than a century later, helped to shape a redefinition of North American exceptionalism and to justify caution and an attempt at disengagement from world affairs in this period. Indeed, academic surveys of the history of Canadian-American relations published between the wars also tended to stress 'the long heritage of unbroken peace between the two countries' and the 'undefended frontier' as themes.[33] Moreover, the greatest bilateral historical project – the Carnegie series on Canadian-American relations – was a celebration of continental inter-relationships and overall accord. That monumental and unprecedented undertaking demonstrated in multiple volumes the myriad inter-connections of the two countries as well as the gradual development and strengthening of shared experiences and a common outlook. In that context, the end of the War of 1812 had marked the beginning of a mutually beneficial era of peace and growth.

Even so, the close neighbours again responded differently to the renewed outbreak of hostilities in Europe in September 1939. That attests to the power of the other dominant force in Canada's external relations – its imperial ties. Patriotic sentiment in English Canada would not allow the Canadian government, whatever its doubts or preferences, to stay out of a major war in which Britain was involved. For all of the inter-war rhetoric about a distinctly North American outlook, Canadians still viewed the world in 1939 largely through the lens of British attitudes, policies, and commitments. A phrase from King's diary, which was later repeated in his speeches, summed up that reality. Canada must stand 'at the side of Britain' in a just cause, as he put it. As had been the case 25 years earlier, Canadians and their leaders reacted to overseas events very differently from their close neighbours.

As we have seen, the speeches of the inter-war period tended to focus not on the war itself – which has been interpreted very differently over the years – but on the peace that followed, with mythology favoured over history. Nearly sixty years ago, the great Canadian military historian, Colonel C. P. Stacey, who had earlier punctured the prevalent views with his doctoral thesis on the British army in North America, published a brief study of *The Undefended Border: Myth and Reality,* which noted, *inter alia,* the futile attempts to fortify the border and otherwise prepare for a future war. That ultimately led to the sensible conclusion that the task was impossible and that peaceful relations through diplomacy and settlement of differences was ultimately more likely to be effective and certainly would be much cheaper.

As Stacey pointed out, there were still significant tensions along the border after the Treaty of Ghent, most obviously during the American civil war and afterward, when the Fenian Brotherhood attempted to conquer Canada. There were also intermittent strains and ill-feeling, particularly where boundaries were uncertain or ill-defined, when exploitation of resources on land or at sea was subject to dispute over control and benefit, or when British and American interests and perspectives clashed on the wider world stage with local repercussions. Perhaps the most important lesson (one so often forgotten) to be learned from Stacey's analysis was simply about the risks associated with attempting to fit the past into a mould shaped by later biases and unhistorical judgments.[34] Notwithstanding such advice, the bicentennial proceedings have demonstrated once more that history has been viewed, some would contend distorted, by the lens of the present. Whatever the evidence or likely shelf-life of more recent reinterpretations, however, the inter-war speeches certainly demonstrated, perhaps conclusively, that myth has a greater popular appeal than history!

Notes

1 The views expressed in this article of the author, not those of the Government of Canada. The theme of this paper – commenting on a peculiar intersection of history and contemporary attitudes in speeches associated with international relations – may be blamed on the author's recent work, which has combined historical research and writing with contributions to ministerial and departmental speeches. That interest has been compounded by the Canadian government's recent emphasis on the War of 1812 in its statements and speeches. On the relationship between that preoccupation and the theme of this paper, see Hector Mackenzie, 'Memory, Myth and Rhetoric: the War of 1812 and Canada's Inter-War Diplomacy (1919–1939)' in *Canadian Issues / Thèmes canadiens* (Fall 2012): 22–5. The author would like to thank Dr. Tony McCulloch

and Dr. Phillip Buckner for their helpful comments on an earlier version of this paper, which lacked the current focus.

2 On this theme, see especially Michael Patrick Cullinane, 'The Power of Sentiment: Anglo-American Relations and the Celebrations of 100 Years of Peace' (forthcoming; copy of text provided by author). See also Elaine Young, 'The Centennial Celebration of the Battle of Lundy's Lane,' *Ontario History* CIV, 1 (Spring 2012): 3–20.

3 Peter Neary, 'Grey, Bryce, and the Settlement of Canadian-American differences, 1905–1911,' *Canadian Historical Review* XLIV, 4 (1968): 357–80; Robert Craig Brown and Ramsay Cook, *Canada 1896–1921, A Nation Transformed* (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1974), 26–48, 173–9.

4 As Dr. Dean Oliver of the Canadian War Museum noted in a conversation with the author, none of the major anniversaries of the War of 1812 have been especially auspicious: at the 50th in 1862, cross-border tensions during the Civil War neared their peak in the wake of the *Trent* affair; as mentioned in the text, the centennial witnessed a surge in anti-American sentiment in English Canada; as for the sesquicentennial in 1962, the difficult relations between the administration of John F. Kennedy and the government of John Diefenbaker worsened during the Cuban Missile Crisis, with a significant impact on the defeat of the Progressive Conservatives in the general election which followed.

5 Patrice Dutil and David MacKenzie, *Canada 1911: the Decisive Election that Shaped the Country* (Toronto: Dundurn, 2011); J. L. Granatstein, *Yankee go home? Canadians andanti-Americanism* (Toronto: HarperCollins, 1996), 39–40, 54–66.

6 Norman Hillmer and J. L. Granatstein, *Empire to Umpire: Canada and the World into the Twenty-First Century* (Toronto: Thomson Nelson, 2008), 60; Barbara Wilson, ed., *Ontario and the First World War, 1914–1918: a collection of documents* (Toronto: Champlain Society for the Govmernment of Ontario/ University of Toronto Press, 1977), lxii. The arrest and conviction of a man from Detroit and a co-conspirator, both of German background, for 'planning to blow up factories and public buildings in Windsor and Walkerville' in mid-1915 lent some credence to such rumours.

7 Brown and Cook, *Canada 1896–1921,* 275–93; C. P. Stacey, *Canada and the Age of Conflict, A History of Canadian External Policies, Volume 1: 1867–1921* (Toronto: Macmillan of Canada, 1977), 227–35, 269–84, 304–17.

8 Hugh L. Keenleyside, *Canada and the United States: some aspects of the history of the Republic and the Dominion* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1929), 372 (paraphrasing prevalent attitudes in Canada between August 1914 and April 1917).

9 C. P. Stacey, *The Undefended Border: the Myth and the Reality* (Ottawa: Canadian Historical Association, 1953).

10 Stacey, *Canada and the Age of Conflict,* 1: 321–6.

11 Stacey, *Canada and the Age of Conflict,* 1: 342–3.

12 Extracts from Stenographic Notes of Meetings of Representatives of the United Kingdom, the Dominions and India, 1921 [quotations from Third Meeting, 21 June 1921, and from Sixth Meeting, 24 June 1921], *Documents on Canadian External Relations, Volume 3, 1919–1925,* ed. Lovell C. Clark (Ottawa: Department of External Affairs, 1970), 169, 171.

13 Ibid., 178 (from Ninth Meeting, 29 June 1921).

14 The development of Canadian autonomy is one of the principal themes in John Hilliker, *Canada's Department of External Affairs, Volume I, The Early Years, 1909–1946* (Montreal Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1990). See also F. H. Soward, *The Department of External Affairs and Canadian Autonomy, 1899–1939* (Ottawa: Canadian Historical Association, 1956).

15 C. P. Stacey, *Canada and the Age of Conflict, A History of Canadian External Policies, Volume 2: 1921–1948, The Mackenzie King Era* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1981), 31–4.

16 Richard Veatch, *Canada and the League of Nations* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1975); Stacey, *Canada and the Age of Conflict,* vol. 2.; Hector Mackenzie, 'Canada's Nationalist Internationalism: From the League of Nations to the United Nations,' in Norman Hillmer and Adam Chapnick, eds., *Canadas of the Mind: The Making and Unmaking of Canadian Nationalism in the Twentieth Century,* eds.

Norman Hillmer and Adam Chapnick (Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2007), 89–109.

18 See Hector Mackenzie, 'Defining and Defending a Place in the World: Canada's Vital Interests in International Affairs,' *Canadian Issues / Thèmes Canadiens* (September 2002): 31–5.

19 James Eayrs, *In Defence of Canada: From the Great War to the Great Depression* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1964), 6.

20 Speech by Dandurand, 2 October 1924, in *Documents on Canadian Foreign Policy 1917–1939,* ed. Walter A. Riddell (Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1962), 462–5.

21 Speech by W. L. M. King, 12 March 1925, in Riddell, *Documents,* 465–7.

22 Speech by King, 7 September 1928, in Riddell, *Documents,* 307–12.

23 Extracts, Speech by King, 19 February 1929, in Riddell, *Documents,* 469–76.

24 H. Blair Neatby, *William Lyon Mackenzie King, Volume 2, 1924–1932: The Lonely Heights* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1963), 264; Stacey, *Mackenzie King Era,* 97–103. O. D. Skelton to Isabel Skelton, 28 August 1928, in *O. D. Skelton, The Work of the World, 1923–1941,* ed. Norman Hillmer (Montreal and Kingston: Champlain Society/McGill-Queen's University Press, 2013), 190; contrary to the impression conveyed in other sources, Hillmer, also the author of a forthcoming biography of Skelton, contends that Skelton was 'realistic, and hopeful' (22) about the Kellog-Briand Pact, with its worthy objective, as well as about the League, so that the interpretation of his aside as cynical misses the mark.

25 Veatch, *Canada and the League,* 62.

26 Speech by Perley, 13 February 1932, in Riddell, *Documents,* 495–7.

27 Delegation Secretary [Pearson] to Under-Secretary of State for External Affairs [Skelton], 15 February 1932, in *Documents on Canadian External Relations, Volume 5, 1931–1935,* ed. Alex I. Inglis (Ottawa: Department of External Affairs, 1973), 466–7. Stacey, *Canada and the Age of Conflict,* 2: 161.

28 On Canada's response to the Manchurian Crisis and to the Italian invasion of Ethiopia, see Veatch, *Canada and the League,* 115–25, 143–69; A. Mason, 'Canada and the Manchurian Crisis' and R. Bothwell and John English, 'The Riddell Incident' in *The In-Between Time: Canadian External Policy in the 1930s,* eds. Robert Bothwell and Norman Hillmer (Toronto: Copp Clark, 1975), 113–9, 122–34.

29 Veatch, *Canada and the League,* 51.

30 Veatch, *Canada and the League,* 135.

31 'The Ethiopian Crisis, 1935: the Canadian Government Repudiates Dr. Riddell's Initiative,' in *Historical Documents of Canada, Volume V, The Arts of War and Peace, 1914–1945,* ed. C. P. Stacey (Toronto: Macmillan, 1972), 512–3.

32 Speech by King, 29 September 1936, in Riddell, *Documents,* 314–21.

33 The quoted passage is from R. A. MacKay and E. B. Rogers, *Canada Looks Abroad* (Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1938), 124, and it refers to three recent surveys: Keenleyside, *Canada and the United States;* J. M. Callahan, *American Foreign Policy in Canadian Relations* (New York: Macmillan, 1937); and, P. E. Corbett, *The Settlement of Canadian-American Disputes* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1937).

34 Stacey, *Undefended Border.*

London Journal of Canadian Studies, Volume 29 (2014). UCL Press• Print ISSN 0267-2200 • Online ISSN 2397-0928 • DOI 10.14324/111.444.ljcs.2014v29.005

The War Against Public Forgetfulness: Commemorating 1812 in Canada

Michael Eamon

Abstract

In October 2011, the Government of Canada began a two-year, nation-wide celebration of the bicentenary of the War of 1812. The widely-criticized initiative returned the public eye to a traditional 'interpretive tableau' of war heroes, namely Isaac Brock, Tecumseh, Charles de Salaberry and Laura Secord. While the scope and expense of the federal government's efforts have been unprecedented, the political battle to maintain certain memories of the War is one that is not new. A struggle against the forgetfulness of Canadians, and particularly young Canadians, has animated commemorations of the War for almost two centuries. Looking at a selection of past commemorative efforts this essay explores how the inertia of a traditional tableau of heroes has tended to overshadow other narratives and newer interpretations. Yet all is not lost. Using the example of the author's exhibition, Faces of 1812, it is suggested that publicly-constructed histories can be employed as a useful departure point for the public historian and provide a foundation from which the public can obtain a broader, more critical perspective on both the commemorated events and history writ large.

'Lest we forget, more like lest we remember … there is no better way of forgetting something than by commemorating it.'[1]

The cynical observations of Tom Irwin, the fictional history teacher in Alan Bennett's *The History Boys,* too often ring true when the past is commemorated publicly. Historical memory can be an uneven mix of pedagogy and politics serving as a means of collective forgetfulness. Bennett's words, crafted for the stage and the silver screen, are nonetheless prescient when applied to the way in which the War

of 1812 has been commemorated in Canada,[2] where both collective memory and forgetfulness have been integral parts of the legacy of the War of 1812. For almost 200 years the story of the War has been written, publicly commemorated, taught in the classrooms and then forgotten. Marking the centenary of Sir Isaac Brock's death in 1912, John Stewart Carstairs wrote that 'Brock's fame and Brock's name will never die in our history.' He praised both the efforts of Isaac Brock and John Macdonell who both died at the Battle of Queenston Heights and were later interred there. Yet Carstairs also reflected upon Brock's lesser-known victory at Detroit, lamenting the foibles of memory that even the general's legacy could not avoid. In spite of the public's erratic memory, Carstairs was optimistic for the historical interpretations of future generations, writing that 'so much of our historical perspective has been settled during the past hundred years. Perhaps, in another hundred years,' he speculated, 'when other generations come together to commemorate the efforts of these men that with Brock and Macdonell strove to seek and find and do and not to yield, the skirmish at Queenston may be viewed in a different light.'[3]

Instead of the perceived expansion in public understanding that Carstairs foretold, there has been a curious inertia in the retelling of the War. When the public is pressed to remember the conflict, they are offered the same historical set piece, trumpeting colonies preserved, the coming together of disparate peoples unified under the British flag, and the fostering of a sense of shared purpose against a common foe that would eventually lead to the creation of the Canadian nation. Along with these narrative lines can also be found an interpretive tableau of heroes, the brave Sir Isaac Brock, his Shawnee ally Tecumseh, the upright, Loyalist wife Laura Secord, and the daring French-Canadian commander Lieutenant-Colonel Charles-Michel de Salaberry. All four have been, and continue to be, framed as Canadian icons, although only de Salaberry was born within the boundaries of what is modern Canada. Together, the four form a *dramatis personae* that is returned to and publicly reiterated when deemed necessary. One wonders if this tableau has served the public and promoted a better understanding of the era, or whether it is an historical lowest common denominator that oversimplifies a complex series of past events. As one columnist with the *Vancouver Sun* recently wrote, 'I learned about Tecumseh in elementary school, then promptly forgot about him for half a century. Stephen Harper wants me [now] to brush up on my War of 1812 facts. . . .'[4] This essay will look into the peculiar retelling of the story of 1812 and the continuing war against public forgetfulness. It will also offer an insider's

view, a behind-the-scenes look at the creation of the exhibition, *Faces of 1812,* and address the challenges that face public historians who have to balance the expectations of the public, scholars and government policy in what has become a politically-charged milieu.

A Phalanx Against Forgetfulness: Creating the Interpretive Tableau of Heroes

One common thread that has linked past commemorative efforts with those of today has been an underlying fear of the public's forgetfulness. Collective forgetting is, of course, a natural and even necessary process. David Lowenthal, whose expertise transcends the disciplinary bounds of history, film studies and memory, writes that 'the artfully selective oblivion is necessary to all societies. Collective well-being requires sanitizing what time renders unspeakable, unpalatable, even just inconveniently outdated.'[5] It is this purposeful manipulation of the past that concerns contemporary writers such as Ian McKay and Jamie Swift. They would see the inertia in the interpretation of the War of 1812 as further evidence of the influence of the 'new warriors,' those individuals who 'yearn for a return to the simple stories that youngsters like Lower and Innis had been told before heading off to Harvard and the University of Chicago.' For those early Canadian historians, McKay and Swift argue, 'soldiers forged the Canada that we know and love.'[6] The efforts of the current federal government, McKay and Swift believe, to actively promote Canada's warrior past are just one facet of a much larger political ideology that fosters a 'culture of anxiety.' In such an environment public opinion is easily shifted and bolstered, as they argue, with a new, militaristic sense of Canadian identity. Newspaper columnist Jane Taber agrees that the way Canadians see themselves is shifting. The federal government, she contends, 'is working to recast the Canadian identity, undoing 40 years of a Liberal narrative and instead creating a new patriotism viewed through a Canadian lens.'[7] Museum professionals, archivists, and other types of public historians know quite well the political environment that exists, and has always existed, behind the public expression of the past. Admittedly, these professionals are often too preoccupied with the business of communicating historical messages, than voicing the multivalent contexts behind their production. The bicentennial of the War of 1812, then, offers an important opportunity to remind the public to question both the message and the messenger. It also gives pause for the public to

remember that the memory of the War was a hotbed of contestation long before the era of Arthur Lower and Harold Innis and question if there ever was an era of 'simple stories.'

Parts of the collective narrative can be lost, not because of a concerted effort to encourage forgetfulness, but rather as a result of apathy or disinterest in certain aspects of the story. It is this second kind of forgetfulness against which the early Canadian historians of the War of 1812 fought. These individuals, many of whom were veterans of the War, were less worried about information being purposely dropped from the narrative of the War than the narrative being corrupted by external influences, particularly those emanating from the United States. For them, the war over remembrance was an important one that needed fighting. It was also one that they feared the Americans were winning. Indeed, for early American writers, like Benson J. Lossing in his meticulously illustrated history of the conflict, the War of 1812 was a second War of Independence, an affirmation (along with the nation's survival through the Civil War) of the 'vitality and power' of republican institutions.[8]

At stake, early Canadian authors argued, were the patriotic hearts of Canadian youth who were easily corruptible by messages emanating from south of the border. David Thompson's history of the War provides one early example of this fear of forgetfulness and susceptibility to alternative historical interpretations.[9] In the preface of the work Thompson, a school teacher and veteran of the War, lamented that 'although many books have been circulated throughout the continent of America, purporting to be histories of the late war between Great Britain and the United States, it must be acknowledged that none has yet appeared, in the British North American Colonies, which could be considered as generally authentic….[10] Thompson argued that this lack of authenticity, or this biased interpretation — as we would observe today — would have serious consequences particularly on British American youth, 'whose minds have been endangered by the poisoned shafts of designing malevolence which have been everywhere discharged through the country, by the erroneous accounts of the late war with the causes which led to it that have been hitherto published.' By publishing his *correct* account, what he called 'a true statement of those events,' Thompson predicted that students would 'catch that patriotic flame which glowed with an unequalled resplendence in the bosoms of their fathers, and animated to action that noble few who stepped forward to oppose a relentless enemy invading their hitherto peaceful fire sides … in defence of their King, their laws and their country.'[11] A

decade later, Major John Richardson, another veteran of the conflict,[12] reiterated these fears in the preface to his history the *War of 1812*. 'It is a humiliating, yet undeniable fact,' Richardson observed, 'that there are few young men of the present generation who are at all aware,' of the conflict, its 'brilliant feats of arms' and 'sterling loyalty displayed.' If they had read of such activities, Richardson lamented, 'their information has been derived through the corrupt channel of American party publications bearing on the subject, all of which have a tendency to pervert facts … and weaken energies of national character.'[13] Thus, for the early veterans *cum* historians, a battle still raged years after the Treaty of Ghent had officially ended the War. This battle was one against the loss of memory, and while youth were the target of the assault, the primary opponent was once again the Americans and their 'perverted' perspective on the past.

The eventual passing of these early historians who had fought in the War did not diminish fears of collective forgetfulness. In 1864 William Coffin, who had been a boy during the War, published *1812: The War and Its Moral* which was designed to be a truly Canadian version of the conflict. In the vein of earlier War authors, Coffin believed that Canadians were too quick to forget their history, citing in particular how Canadian histories of the War quickly went out of print, only to have their place 'usurped' by a 'flood of American publications.' In response, he set pen to paper to create an unapologetically patriotic version of events that would resonate with the Canadian public. 'It will be the endeavor of this narration,' Coffin explained, 'to invest the story told as far as possible with a Canadian character to present the war in Canada in a Canadian point of view and while giving all honor to those to whom honor is justly due still to impart as far as can be rightly done a Canadian individuality to this Canadian Chronicle of the War.'[14] The oft-repeated template of players can be seen in Coffin's work: Brock, Tecumseh, de Salaberry and Secord. Curiously, Laura Secord is identified as 'Mary Secord' throughout Coffin's account, underscoring the fogginess that surrounded her memory at the time.[15] Nonetheless, as historian Desmond Morton observed of Coffin, 'the heroism of Sir Isaac Brock, Tecumseh, Laura Secord and the Canadian militia is presented with enough fervour to contribute significantly to a mythology known to a century of English Canadian schoolchildren.'[16]

By the 1880s, another wave of interest in the War and fear of public forgetfulness took root. Nationalistic poets such as Charles Mair waxed romantic about Tecumseh, appropriating and defining his aboriginal values as Canadian in opposition to the values of the

American nation.[17] Sarah Anne Curzon popularized Laura Secord's actions in verse in order 'to rescue from oblivion the name of a brave woman' and this work, in concert with that of historian Emma Currie,[18] elevated Secord to the status of a *bone fide* Canadian heroine. One of the reasons for the interest in Secord, at this time, was her Loyalist origins. Indeed, there was a rapid of growth of United Empire Loyalist associations in the late nineteenth century, particularly in Ontario, and they were instrumental in promoting a renewed interest in the War of 1812.[19] In the late nineteenth and early twentieth century there was also a growing enthusiasm in English Canada to play an enhanced role in the Empire, including participation in the South African War, and it was seen as important to remind Canadians that this was not the first time they had gone to war in defence of the British Empire.

In the province of Ontario, in particular, the educational curriculum of the early twentieth century also embodied this fear of youth not being in touch with their history, and thus their (Upper) Canadian identity. History textbooks took on two basic forms during this time. Secondary students were provided with larger tomes that offered more detailed accounts of historical events, battles and key agents. Elementary students, where historical instruction was first offered, were generally given compendiums, or readers of historical vignettes which offered short, dramatic, biographically-based historical narratives. These types of texts included, for example, the Copp, Clark Company's *Britannia History Reader,* first published in 1909, and the later and more famous W. Stewart Wallace's *A First Book of Canadian History,* first published in 1928. As space was limited, these texts would use one or two biographies to contextualize an entire historical era. In the case of the *Britannia History Reader,* Brock, Secord and Tecumseh were chosen as the key figures to illustrate the War of 1812.[20] W. Stewart Wallace, who incorporated the now iconic art of C.W. Jefferys throughout, used Brock, 'the hero of Upper Canada,' as the sole point of reference to the events of the War.[21] Cecilia Morgan, delving into how text books of the era addressed the particular story of Laura Secord, has observed a key difference between antebellum and post-First World War texts. Before the Great War textbooks used an authoritarian voice. After the war, texts 'invited the readers to imagine themselves as part of the narrative.'[22] It is interesting to note that while pedagogical approach did indeed change, the interpretive tableau of heroes from the War of 1812 remained and flourished, as did the attempt to craft a national identity through a study of Canada's military and political history.

Fears over the historical and civic education of Canadian youth have thus been part of the war on forgetfulness since the earliest histories on 1812. Indeed, the present government's emphasis on the War of 1812 both repeats this traditional interpretive tableau and shares a similar pedagogical epistemology that addresses the failings in the civic education of Canadian youth. Canadian Heritage Minister James Moore, quoted in the *Globe and Mail,* lamented that in only four of Canada's provinces are students required to take history in secondary school and mused that 'I think that's a sadly low number so I want to work on improving that.' His ministry, he continued, could be instrumental in the solution and added that 'we've been very, very clear within the department that we want to make sure that those organizations that have a clear agenda for promoting Canadian history or Canadian identity are things that we'd like to see get supported.'[23] In November 2012, school boards across Canada were sent special packages from the Department of Canadian Heritage. 'The War of 1812,' the cover letter addressed to social science and history teachers read, 'provides an opportunity to acknowledge and promote the contributions of people of diverse backgrounds and various regions that came together to defend their land, ensuring the independent destiny of our country in North America.' The package included a bilingual poster, a pamphlet providing an overview of the War, links to educational resources on the Department of Canadian Heritage website and a free mobile phone application inspired by the *Loxleys and the War of 1812* comic book.[24]

The Federal Government's Memory of the War

The current federal government's nation-wide focus on the War of 1812 is unprecedented. Previous federal governments and their colonial predecessors were not as preoccupied with promoting the public memory of the War of 1812 as early Canadian authors and poets had been. In March 1814, the legislature of Upper Canada did vote £500 'for the purpose of erecting a monument on the heights of Queenston near the spot where he fell.'[25] This amount was doubled the next year and, with the eventual approbation of Brock's family, a first monument was constructed and opened on 13 October 1824. In April 1840, in what is a little-known act today, an Irish-Canadian terrorist blew up that first monument. Three months later, over 8,000 people reportedly attended a public meeting at Queenston Heights, where the valour of Brock was reaffirmed and it was decided that a private committee would be set

up to reconstruct the monument. In spite an auspicious committee consisting of prominent Tories and led by Sir Allan Napier MacNab, the second monument did not receive public funding and was built entirely by private donation.[26]

This disjointed approach to the government commemoration of the War can be partly explained by the fact that there was no bureaucratic home for such a function. Before the First World War, the federal government only had two departments that could be considered to be dedicated to historical pursuits. The first, the Geological Survey of Canada [GSC] founded in 1842, was focused on measuring and collecting the natural history of the country.[27] In 1856, the GSC set up a public museum in Montreal. By 1881, it had moved to Ottawa and by the end of the nineteenth century it was receiving over 20,000 visitors a year.[28] The second history-oriented department, the Dominion Archives Branch, was formed in 1872 as a part of the Department of Agriculture. The Archives Branch not only collected the records of government, but pursued an aggressive policy of finding and transcribing documents from both the French and British colonial regimes. As the centennial of the War of 1812 approached, Arthur Doughty, the director of the Canadian Archives, had prominent military historian Lieutenant-Colonel (later Brigadier-General) Ernest Cruickshank start an index of the massive 'C' Series of British military documents (a project that was not completed until 1916).[29] The Archives also published a collection of documents on the War, again edited by Cruickshank, in 1912. In spite of these efforts, the contributions of the Canadian Archives towards the centenary of the War were modest. The relative lack of federal interest in the War of 1812 can also be seen in the absence of participation by the Dominion government at various centennial celebrations in the Niagara Region, the veritable hotbed of commemoration for the War. It was reported that the ceremonies marking the centenary of the Battle of Queenston Heights in October 2012 were attended by 2,000 people and scores of dignitaries, including relatives of Brock and Macdonell, militia officers and the local Member of Parliament and Member of Provincial Parliament. While the local turnout was impressive, the long list of federal and provincial regrets is equally telling. The Prime Minister, the Minister of the Militia, the Premier of Ontario, the Lieutenant-Governor of Ontario and several high-ranking regular force generals were unable to attend.[30] Two years later, the committee to celebrate the centenary of the Battle of Lundy's Lane in 1914 wrote that: 'invitations were sent to the H.R.H. the Duke of Connaught, Governor-General of Canada; Sir Robert Borden, Prime Minister; the Minister of the Militia; Sir Wilfrid

Laurier; Sir James Whitney, Premier of Ontario.'[31] All of them sent letters of regret that they could not attend.[32]

Timothy Forest has recently observed, in the spirit of historians such as C.P. Stacey and Donald Hickey, that from the War of 1812, 'both Canada and the U.S. constructed divergent histories to serve particular local and national interests.'[33] In the Niagara Region of Ontario, for example, the memory of the conflict has always been important; yet across the border in Niagara County and Erie County, New York, the memory of the war is downplayed. On the other hand, the War is very differently remembered and commemorated in Maryland and New Orleans. For the first century after the conflict, neither the government of Upper Canada nor new federal government attached any great national significance to the War of 1812. Commemorations were focused on the Niagara Region of Ontario and were left to be organized by local historical societies, the United Empire Loyalists and other imperialist organisations. Contributions from the Canadian Archives towards the memory of the War were therefore understandably modest.

This would change with the First World War, which saw increased public interest in the military heritage of Canada. The militia regiments that served as the base from which the Canadian Expeditionary Force was drawn had deep roots in their respective communities, and those roots, in the minds of some, reached beyond Confederation to some of the fencible and militia regiments that had served in the War of 1812.[34] During the First World War old militia depots and forts that had been long neglected saw both renewed and extended use. Several sites, such as Fort Wellington and Fort Henry in Ontario, Fort Edward in Nova Scotia and Fort Lennox in Quebec, served as arms depots, mustering points, and — in the case of Fort Henry — a prison for the Department of the Militia. In the decade following the Great War, the newly-founded Historic Sites and Monuments Board of Canada (HSMBC), with General Ernest Alexander Cruikshank at its helm, declared several of these outdated fortifications as national historic sites.[35] Former military properties were then transferred from the cash-strapped Department of the Militia to the Parks Branch or local historical authorities. Commemorative designations were then crafted by the HSMBC detailing the structures' relevance to the War of 1812 and other conflicts such as the Rebellions of 1837–38.[36] This transfer of military properties and the creation of historic designations from the newly-formed HSMBC marked the first significant and sustained federal commemoration of the War of 1812. Yves Yvon Pelletier argues that Ontario-based Cruikshank, who served for two decades at the

head of the HSMBC can be credited for the commemorative emphasis on the War[37] and that the vast majority of the existing War of 1812 designations were made during his tenure. As of 2011, approximately 76 of Canada's approximately 2,021 national historic sites, events, and people address the memory of the War of 1812.[38] It was during Cruikshank's tenure that the majority of designations for War of 1812 were created. Indeed, during the decade of the 1920s alone more sites, events and people were commemorated than in the subsequent 90 years.[39] After the initial commemoration of forts and military sites came recognition of the interpretive tableau of heroes celebrated in late-Victorian and Edwardian histories, poems and textbooks; namely, Brock, Tecumseh, Secord and de Salaberry. Over the next century, each individual would eventually become recognized nationally in addition to their associative contributions to other historic sites. Of the four heroes that form this tableau, Tecumseh holds the inauspicious honour of being the least-commemorated by the HSMBC. He was designated a National Historic Person in 1931 (just at the end of the decade that saw the highest concentration of 1812-related commemorations) and a plaque bearing witness to his actions was erected near Thamesville, Ontario.[40] On the other hand, Lieutenant-Colonel Charles-Michel de Salaberry is commemorated directly on three federal plaques. The Battle of Châteauguay National Historic Site (designated in 1920) was the first national commemoration of the Lieutenant-Colonel who, in the words of the plaque text, 'thwarted the most ambitious enemy invasion of the War of 1812 and saved the province.'[41] He was made a national historic person in 1934, and his home (constructed in 1815) was made a national historic site in 1968. A fourth plaque, unrelated to the War — though named in honour of the leader of the Voltigeurs — designated the Salaberry Armoury in Gatineau, Quebec a national historic site in 1993.[42]

Like de Salaberry, Laura Secord has been commemorated directly three times by the HSMBC. She is first mentioned in the 1921 commemoration of the Battle of Beaver Dams where the original plaque read: 'Warning of the approach of the Americans was given by the heroic Laura Secord as well as by an Indian.'[43] This original plaque was removed in the 1980s and the statement on Laura Secord rewritten as: 'Warned of their approach by an Indian scout and by Laura Secord' — a statement undoubtedly crafted to offer the anonymous 'Indian' more agency and reduce the veneration of Secord. Those who are steadfast believers in the legend of Ms Secord may be upset at the rewriting of the Beaver Dams' plaque that tempers her heroic actions. However, they

should take comfort in the fact that her deeds are officially commemorated elsewhere. For example, at the Queenston Heights National Historic Site there is a memorial to Secord, erected by the federal government in 1910, not far from the monument that honours Brock and Macdonnell who actually saw action, were killed, and are buried there. As Secord's laudatory biographer Ruth Mackenzie has observed, Secord shares publicly, 'Queenston Heights with the hero she revered.'[44] The 1968 designation of Queenston Heights as a national historic site is extended to the Laura Secord memorial and underscores its importance to the historical landscape.[45] In 2002, Secord was finally designated a national historic person. In the plaque, which can be found at Niagara-on-the-Lake, her tale of heroism is told once again (this time without any First Nations references) as is her legacy which includes inspiring 'a first generation of women historians [who] championed Secord's courageous deed with the goal of uncovering and popularizing women's contributions to the history of Canada.'[46]

It may not come as a surprise that Sir Isaac Brock is the most commemorated of the four. The actions of Brock are directly acknowledged six times in plaques approved by the HSMBC. The Battle of Detroit commemoration is one of the most elaborate and resulted in the creation of three plaques with separate texts at Windsor, Port Dover and Sandwich, Ontario. The initial commemoration was made in 1923 and the original text on the Port Dover plaque read:

> War of 1812 Major General Isaac Brock with 40 men of His Majesty's 41st Regiment and 260 of the York, Lincoln, Oxford and Norfolk militia, set out from Port Dover on the 8th August, 1812, to relieve the invaded western frontier. His brilliant capture of Hull's army at Detroit with a much smaller force saved this province to the Empire and made Brock, 'THE HERO OF UPPER CANADA.'

In the 1980s, this plaque was removed and replaced with a text that downplayed the specific local militia contribution and gave a greater political context, in particular in regard to British-First Nation relations:

> To counter the American invasion of the Detroit frontier, Major General Isaac Brock mustered a force of about 50 regulars and 250 militia here at Port Dover. They embarked on 8 August 1812 and, proceeding along the north shore of the lake in open boats, arrived at Amherstburg five days later. The enemy had already withdrawn

across the Detroit River, so on 16 August Brock made a daring and successful assault on Detroit. This important victory raised the spirits of the Canadians and ensured the continuing support of Britain's Indian allies.

Brock is also commemorated in the Fort George National Historic Site and Fort Malden National Historic Site designations (1921), in the text for the Queenston Heights National Historic Site (approved in 1968), and in the text for the Brock Monument National Historic Building, written in 1990. What might be surprising to many is that the acknowledgement of Brock as a national historic person is a relatively new addition to the corpus of federal commemorations. Brock was designated in 2010 and a plaque was unveiled on the 200th anniversary of the Battle of Queenston Heights.[47] In the newly-minted plaque the phrase 'the hero of Upper Canada' (removed from the Battle of Detroit text) returns and a specific reference is made to Brock's relationship with Tecumseh and the 'forging of a crucial alliance with Shawnee Chief.'[48] Thus, the hero status of the general from the Island of Guernsey is perpetuated for the public that makes 'the hero of Upper Canada' and 'Canadian hero' synonymous.

It is interesting to note the slight changes to interpretation that occurred during the 1980s and 1990s. While the tableau of characters that the public expected remained the same, new material was introduced that particularly underscored First Nations' participation in regard to Secord and Brock. Historian and past Historic Sites and Monuments Board member Veronica Strong-Boag notes that Parks Canada and the Board were not immune to the influence of social history. Increased recognition of women, ethnic minorities and First Nations indeed occurred over the past three decades, as the rewritten War of 1812 designations also attest. In the end, however, as Strong-Boag points our, such steps were tempered by the inherent shortfalls of the national commemorative process.[49] The return to more traditional commemorations for Secord and Brock in their recent designations indeed illustrates that public commemorations, such as NHSBC designations, are inherently conservative. Their purpose is to provide the key *facts* that will both inform and meet the approval of the public within the physical limitations of the space on a plaque. With little room for alternative interpretations, commemorative texts offer snapshots of the type of history that is believed to resonate with the public or communicate a shared point of identity at a given time. Alterations to public commemorations occur, but these changes are often small

in nature and tend to reflect perceived changes in public taste. Again, one has only to look to the recent designations of Secord and Brock as national historic persons to see the effect of the inertia surrounding the commemoration of the War of 1812.

Until 2012, official designations from the HSMBC constituted the majority of the federal government's commemorative legacy for the War of 1812. It should be noted, however, that this legacy has not been a relatively robust one. Currently, less than four percent of all national historic sites, persons or events pertain to the War of 1812. Even in the 1920s, a veritable apex of national commemoration for the War, only 18 percent of all HSMBC designations addressed the conflict. Since the Second World War, there have been barely 20 designations pertaining to people, events or sites of the War of 1812. Other federal departments have, on occasion, also evoked the memory of the War and in so doing not strayed far from the standard interpretive tableau of heroes. On the 200th anniversary of his birth, the Post Office Department issued a 6-cent Sir Isaac Brock stamp.[50] Ten years later, Canada Post released a 17-cent Charles-Michel de Saliberry stamp.[51] In 1992, in the Legendary Patriots/Héros, *Héroines Legendaires* series, Laura Secord was featured on a 42-cent stamp.[52] Intriguingly, Tecumseh has never adorned any official postage in Canada. This may be because the Shawnee leader was never a British subject, or because he traditionally has been seen as inherently linked with Brock. Indeed, the explanatory notes published with the issuance of the Brock stamp underscored Brock's greatness through his ability to reach out to First Nations' peoples: 'Upon the outbreak of war with the United States of America in 1812 Brock had some 1450 British regulars under his command; organizing militia units to bolster his strength, he sought and won [the] cooperation of the native people, particularly the Six Nations Indians on the Grand River.' The document went on to praise Tecumseh who demonstrated an 'immediate reciprocation of respect [and] consequently the famed Indian leader led his people in cooperating.'[53] In 2003, it was decided by the federal government that a Valiants Memorial be erected on the Sappers and Miners Bridge in downtown Ottawa.[54] This installation would eventually consist of nine bronze busts and five statues that depicted key figures from Canada's military past. Two artists, Marlene Hilton Moore and John McEwen, were commissioned to research and sculpt the works. The memorial was officially opened by the Governor-General in November 2006.[55] As with the commemorative postage stamps, Tecumseh was again left out of the memorial for the period of 1812 where 'Canadian' valiants such as Brock, de Salaberry and Secord

are highlighted instead. A Shawnee chief, a New England loyalist, a Briton and a French Canadian seem odd companions to share the mantle of Canadian heroism. Nonetheless, the roots of their *Canadianization* run deep forming an interpretive tableau that is repeatedly visited publicly. Unlike Brock, Secord and de Salaberry, Tecumseh, however, is the one individual who has proven a difficult character to Canadianize

Until the current bicentennial, federal efforts to commemorate the War of 1812 have been relatively modest and, with the exception of the issue of the occasional postage stamp, quite regional in scope. For example, historic plaques sanctioned by the HSMBC were erected primarily in the province of Ontario (with a handful of designations in Quebec and Nova Scotia). The Valiants Memorial depicting Canada's heroes and heroines in bronze is in central Ottawa. Whether standing in the regions or in the capital, these federal designations elevated local events and people to national status. That is to say, those who happened upon the commemorations were encouraged to find national significance from their immediate location. The current federal bicentennial celebration goes one step further, asking Canadians, from every region, regardless of their location, to turn their gaze to the early struggles in the Canadas and Nova Scotia. More controversially, the current federal campaign emphasizes a unifying role played by the Canadian military, and links the actions of the original combatants and their battle honours with the current traditions of the Canadian Forces across the country. Front and centre of it all is the traditional tableau of heroes who, in spite of their ethnic and regional differences, continue to be held up as four *bone fide* Canadian heroes from the War.

Celebrating the Bicentenary of the War

In October 2011, the Government of Canada announced that $28 million would be allocated for the bicentenary of the War of 1812 and a secretariat set up in the Department of Canadian Heritage would administer the program.[56] In the months following the announcement, Canadian journalists were inspired to write hundreds of column inches of opinion. The initially enthusiastic public dialogue over the federal government's initiative became increasingly critical. The millions that have been federally earmarked have been seen, at best, as heritage-oriented civic boosterism and, at worst, a hallmark of a militaristic government with a not-so-hidden neo-liberal agenda. Why would the government prefer to celebrate a 200-year-old war in 2012, some

queried, when the anniversary of the Charter of Rights and Freedoms was quietly forgotten?[57] Others have questioned, if the government was truly concerned about the state of history in Canada, why so much has been spent on bicentennial celebrations at the same time as both Parks Canada and Library and Archives Canada [LAC] have undergone crippling cuts in both staff and services.[58] Indeed, the commemoration of the War of 1812 has drawn new battle lines prompting accusations of government manipulation and the rewriting of history for political purposes.

The key messages that the Government of Canada is promoting in the bicentenary of the War, along with education resources, travel-tourism suggestions and applications for funding, are found on a website produced by the Department of Canadian Heritage's War of 1812 Secretariat at the address www.1812.gc.ca. The original website (launched in October 2011) prominently featured historical portraits of Brock, Tecumseh, Secord and de Salaberry as the key heroes of the conflict. In a second version of the website (which appeared online less than a year after the initial launch) the historical portraits had been replaced with images of modern actors. No information has been provided that addresses the changes that occurred. It may have been simply to reformat the site in accordance to newer federal web design standards. The changes may have also been effected to provide consistency in the depiction of the heroes. The new heroic images display the modern actors who were in the Government of Canada's official television commercial, 'The Fight for Canada.' On the other hand, the changes may also have had something to do with the ahistorical nature of the historical portraits that were originally featured. Indeed, the only portrait that had a contemporary sitter was that of Charles de Salaberry. Both the portraits of Isaac Brock and Tecumseh were painted after their deaths and the portrait used of a young Laura Secord was a modern commission.[59]

Regardless of the changes in design, the official message has remained the same. On the 'About the Commemoration' page, under the bolded heading, 'the War of 1812 was a defining chapter in Canada's history as a nation,' it is stated that 'Canada would not exist had the American invasion of 1812–15 been successful. For that reason, the War of 1812 was a defining chapter in our history.' Expanding upon this counter-factual premise, it is argued that 'the end of the War laid the foundation for Confederation, and Canada's ultimate emergence as an independent nation in North America. It also ushered in what has become two centuries of peaceful relations, mutual respect, close

cooperation and the strongest of friendship between Canada and the United States.' Under another bolded title, 'A key event in shaping our identity as Canadians,' it is made very clear that the government believes that the War is important to how Canadians *should* see themselves today. 'Had the War ended different,' it posits, 'Quebec's French-speaking identity would not exist, and the history of Canada's Aboriginal peoples would have been profoundly altered.' From an exploration of what could have been, the message then returns to tracing the roots of the modern Canada, and in particular the Canadian military:

> The War, which saw militias in Upper and Lower Canada as well as from the Atlantic region fighting together in a common cause, was instrumental in creating Canada's military; some of our current reserve regiments in Ontario, Quebec and Atlantic Canada trace their origins back to this time.
>
> It took the combined efforts of the British army and navy, English- and French-speaking militia volunteers, and First Nations allies to succeed in defeating the American invasion.

In conclusion, the statement returns to the initial sentiment that the War helped to forge Canada's unique identity and brought about 200 years of peace with the United States:

> These heroic efforts tell the story of the origins of the Canada we know today: an independent and free country united under the Crown with a strong respect for diversity. The signing of the Treaty of Ghent and other treaties that followed confirmed the border between Canada and the United States, which is now the world's longest undefended border, providing an example of nations coexisting peacefully side by side.[60]

On the surface, the federal government's interpretation of the War of 1812 is simple, straightforward and conservative. The points presented fall along the traditional boiler-plate questions that have been found in countless high school and university history exams. The drawing together of French- and English-speaking colonists along with First Nations against a common foe, ordinary people engaging in heroic deeds, and years of peaceful co-existence have all been a part of the public historical narrative for generations. Furthermore, like most public appeals to the past, the wider message is one firmly

rooted in the present. It is also a message that is shared. For example, the Historica Canada, a national charitable foundation 'dedicated to Canadian history, identity and citizenship'[61] offers a similar message in its educational guide on the 200th Anniversary of the War, as has the Ontario Heritage Trust.[62] For both the Historica Canada and the Ontario Heritage Trust, the bicentenary underscores the importance of reflecting on pivotal historical events for a better understanding of modern Canada. Sharing many parallels with the message projected by the federal government, the bicentennial of the War offers for other prominent heritage organisations an opportunity to revisit past events, and explore the origins of our present selves, our resourcefulness, our ability to work together and our shared values. Intriguingly, despite the similarities that this message has with that of the federal government, neither the Historica-Dominion Institute nor the Ontario Heritage Trust have been subject to the same level of public scrutiny.

The popular controversies that have arisen concerning the federal government's position in commemorating the War of 1812 must, then, have caught some bureaucrats by surprise. How could marking the 200th anniversary of a conflict that brought together the uneasy bedfellows of French Canadians, British Americans and First Nations against an aggressive American neighbour prove problematic? As Peter Shawn Taylor writes, in the Canadian news magazine *Maclean's,* the War of 1812 is the perfect conflict for the twenty-first century politician. Instead of offering an historical narrative where the two founding nations were at odds, each with legions of First Nations allies, the War of 1812 instead reveals the political triumph of unity.[63] Nonetheless, the commemoration engendered its fair share of criticism, due partly to the triumphant and oversimplified narrative that had been crafted, partly to the simultaneous erosion of funding to federal heritage institutions, and partly to a fear of ulterior motives on the part of the government.

Paradoxically, the twentieth-century repetition of the interpretive tableau of 1812 has occurred at the same time that the historical profession began to question the received memory of the War. In the 1920s, W. Stewart Wallace took on the memory of Laura Secord. While acknowledging the heroism of her efforts, Wallace raised doubts over the ultimate importance of the information that she related.[64] In the 1950s and 1960s, historians such as C.P Stacey and G.F.G Stanley challenged the 'militia myth,' the idea that it was everyday Upper Canadians who defended and ultimately saved the province from American invasion.[65] More recently, historians such as George Sheppard, Jane Errington and Alan Taylor have questioned the identity

and loyalties of British Americans before, during and after the War.[66] The interpretive tableau that is at the foundations of the bicentenary message of the federal government, however, sidesteps the historical revisionists of the twentieth century and papers over several other historical cracks such as the continuing tensions with First Nations and with the United States.

Not far below the initial message of the heritage organizations and the federal government are lesson plans and interpretive productions (comics, exhibitions, web-based applications) that explore the larger picture and consequences of the War. However, the initial targeting of the public purposely focused on a handful of simple and, what were hoped to be, familiar messages. Selection — both of historical facts and the narrative messages — in the creation of a straightforward message is not a foreign process in making history public, nor is it necessarily new. Nonetheless, what has upset scholars and journalists alike is that, by commemorating certain aspects of the War — such as its role in forging modern Canada or the affinity amongst certain groups against a common enemy — other parts are downplayed or even overlooked.

Mediation is the Message: Being a Public Historian of the War in the Current Environment

Underlying both past and present desires to remember the War of 1812 has been a fear of forgetfulness, particularly of the younger generation, or even worse the fear of this generation imbibing the *wrong* history. Indeed, from the earliest authors on the War through the United Empire Loyalists boosters and the HSMBC members, previous supporters of the War's commemoration were proud of Canada's military heritage and believed strongly in the value of defending both the Canadian nation and the British Empire. While the debates surrounding current federal support for commemorating the War of 1812 has politicized the bicentennial, it should be remembered that all commemorations, museum exhibitions and other expressions of public history are necessarily constructed, mediating various contemporary interests in response to predominately contemporary issues.[67] The expression of any national narrative is an unavoidably political act and the inclusion or exclusion of any aspect of the past is open to great scrutiny.[68] Just below the swirl of politics and public opinion can be found public historians, like myself, who research and write plaque texts, create popular histories or curate the exhibitions. For public historians, an entirely different

(though unavoidably connected) world also exists of internal politics and personalities, time and funding constraints. Our job is to engage the public in with the past, while mediating various, and frequently conflicting, views, directives, and opinions. As a specific case in point this chapter draws on the personal experiences of its author who, as an independent public historian, developed an exhibition for Library and Archives Canada [LAC]. Entitled *Faces of 1812,* the exhibition was hosted at the Canadian War Museum [CWM] from 13 June 2012 to 6 January 2013.[69] It was intended that it would complement the exhibition *1812,* the CWM's expansive exploration of American, British, Canadian and First Nations' perspectives of the War.

Faces of 1812 was developed in concert with staff from LAC's Portrait Program and the initial plan was to develop an exhibition entirely of portraiture from the era. The Portrait Program represented the remnants of what was once the Portrait Gallery of Canada.[70] Indeed, in early conversations, specific parameters were discussed that meshed with the Portrait Program's pre-existing mandate to develop an exhibition with portraits of 'everyday Canadians' from the War of 1812. The directive, although well-intentioned and rooted in the Portrait Gallery's original vision of focusing 'on portraits of people from all walks of life who have contributed to the development of Canada,' was nonetheless difficult to follow.[71] In the early nineteenth century, few 'everyday' people had portraits done. Secondly, the idea that a specific, or widely-held, 'Canadian' identity existed during the War of 1812 has been contested. In response to the challenging nature of the Portrait Gallery's mandate, I suggested that the exhibition should be expanded to be more historical in nature, including works of documentary art, maps, globes and other elements of material culture. It was hoped that these artifacts and documents would flesh out the story, illustrate more stories and 'faces' of the War than the portraiture collection contained. I also saw the exhibition as an unique opportunity to showcase the breadth of LAC's holdings to the public at a time that the institution was experiencing great angst over its role in Canadian society.[72]

From the first day of the project, I was wary of the continuing legacy of the interpretive tableau and wanted to push beyond the four heroes of the War. It should be noted that at the beginning of the *Faces of 1812* exhibition, the Department of Canadian Heritage's War of 1812 Secretariat had not finalized the official messages it wanted to convey. There was no indication that Brock, Secord, Tecumseh or de Saliberry would be chosen (once again) to act as the public touchstones for the upcoming bicentennial commemoration.

Furthermore, funding for *Faces of 1812* came entirely from Portrait Gallery funds and not from the much-touted $28 million budget earmarked for commemorative activities. After initial selection of items had taken place for the exhibition, the official War of 1812 objectives came down from Canadian Heritage obligating the institution to follow, in some measure, the new communication strategy. The relationship between LAC and CWM, the exhibition's host, was amicable. However, the CWM, as a Crown Corporation, prides itself on its arms-length status from government. LAC, on the other hand, does not enjoy this separation and is expected to follow government policy as communicated through the Department of Canadian Heritage. The CWM vetted every item selected as well as every word of text written, to ensure a consistency of message and quality with their exhibition. What could have been a flash point of contention between the two institutions did not materialize.

The government's official commemorative message, instead, was helpful in offering a public frame of reference that could either be incorporated or act as a point of interpretive departure. Visitors to *Faces of 1812* were greeted with an introductory text that generally followed the official government narrative for the bicentennial to which some additional contextual elements were added:

> The War of 1812 changed forever the face of British North America. It brought together French Canadians, First Nations, British American colonists and Britons — diverse and sometimes uneasy colonial neighbours — against a common foe. The social and political confidence gained through conflict would lay the foundations for a new Canadian nation.

The next interpretive paragraph then departed from the official message, offering more layers of subtlety and specifically framing the content of the exhibition:

> The War of 1812 also changed forever the faces of British North America. It was not just a conflict of armies and ideologies, but also of individuals. Depicted here are some of these individuals; men and women, combatants and civilians who had the joys of everyday colonial life suddenly shattered by the horrors of war. These are the faces of joy, sadness, bravery, hope, and resilience. These are the faces who 200 years ago witnessed a great turning point in Canadian history that we still commemorate today.

In press releases, *Faces of 1812* was officially billed as highlighting 'some of the men and women, both combatants and civilians, who experienced the War of 1812. It likewise highlights the conflict as a rich and continuing source of artistic inspiration, commemoration, and reflection.'[73] It should be noted that none of these elements, nor many issues highlighted in the exhibition, were directly related to the communication points outlined by Canadian Heritage, nor were Canadian Heritage officials concerned about this departure.

It has been argued elsewhere that scholars who engage in public history are often misunderstood by others in the academy.[74] One frequent argument is that being directly paid to produce an exhibition reduces the scholarly integrity of that work.[75] It is indeed a criticism that most public historians, including myself, have experienced. However, in the current climate, there is little patience for talk of moderation, or change from the inside. Critics of all political stripes have taken a page from the neoliberal philosophy, believing if you are not against the current government, you must be for it. One journalist, who in conversation admitted he did not have to time to see *Faces of 1812,* nonetheless wrote how the exhibition and its curator wholeheartedly supported the War of 1812 message of the federal government. Conveniently left out from the article was the larger discussion that was had over the importance of mediating conflicting political and professional interests in the hope of striking a balance palatable to scholars and the greater public alike.[76] Another journalist, taking the original critique at face value, wrote that I had 'apparently abandoned any pretense of scholarly independence' in developing the exhibition.[77] The great challenge that faces public historians is that they have to mediate between different, and sometimes contradictory, interests. This is done in the hope that public awareness can be fostered and dialogue encouraged over the past. Some outsiders believe that they are the only ones who can see the greater political realities of the day. Public historians, archivists and other heritage professionals not only know the political realities of their jobs; they continually search for innovative and meaningful ways to work within systems that they cannot change.

Like any public exhibition, the selection for *Faces of 1812* was directed as much by practical concerns originating from the condition and availability of the collection as by institutional mandates or government directives. Creating an exhibition, or any other manifestation of public history, is not a solitary endeavor and employs legions of heritage professionals. Thus, *Faces of 1812* was a collaborative effort involving conversation and consensus with graphic designers,

conservation experts, vault managers and other professionals. These efforts succeed only through shared vision. Acts of public history are also framed by physical constraints as well as by any interpretive vision. Commemorative plaques, for example, are finite in size and have strict word limits, as do exhibition texts. In the particular case of an exhibition, the selection of items is further mediated by physical condition. How much conservation is required for a particular item to go on display? Is there the time or funds to effect the necessary work? The most illustrative item might have to be substituted for one of lesser merit, but of better physical condition. Specifically for *Faces of 1812,* certain documents from the era were already spoken for, having been loaned previously to other institutions wishing to use them during the bicentennial. Other items were too fragile to be displayed for any extended period of time. Only items that could be conserved in time and within the budget were factored into the final selection. Even the amount of wall space and available display cabinets, decisions that were not settled until several months into the project, affected the design of the exhibition and its content selection. In the end, a wide variety of historically-significant items was selected to augment the portraiture of the era. These items included such things as a printed pamphlet of a sermon given in memory of Sir Isaac Brock, delivered in the newly-named village of Brockville, that demonstrated the widely-held grief experienced across the Canadas.[78] A map initially penned by Brock was also included, that illustrates the central theatre of conflict, while a globe from 1818 was placed on display to demonstrate how British North Americans may have envisaged their world after the War: a colonial existence of nominal peace, yet with several political boundaries the subject of continuing debate.[79] These are all very real concerns that require mitigation. They lead to choices that can result in fundamental changes in the nature of the exhibition and its interpretive story; changes that have no bearing on alleged political interference or public pressure. It could be argued that because of the mediation of both external influences and internal interests, public history is an inherently conservative act. Once the discussion of history leaves the academy towards a more public audience, a greater need for narrative and a distilling of historical messages are required.

Clearly, creating an interpretive exhibition for the public is a challenging and multifaceted task. Of course, *the public* is not a homogenous group and finding ways to engage an audience of various interests, backgrounds and attention-spans is a challenge. Freeman Tilden, a pioneer in public interpretation, argued in his first rule of

interpretation that any communication with a visitor that did not fall 'within the personality or experience of the visitor' would be sterile and ineffective.[80] That is to say, visitors seek out what is familiar; they crave a point of reference from which they can make a personal connection. The importance of the 'familiar' has been underscored by Gene Allen who was the Director of Research for the Canadian Broadcast Corporation [CBC]'s epic historical series *Canada: A People's History*. Allen writes that the production received over 2,400 e-mails, many of which dealt with the familiarity of the subject matter.[81] For episode five of the series that dealt with the American Revolution and the War of 1812, the production featured the traditional interpretive tableau of heroes save one, Laura Secord.[82] In response, Allen received several bewildered and angry emails asking why such an important figure was left out of the episode. He does not offer specific reasons why the CBC departed from the interpretive tableau surrounding the War, but rather observes that it is was an example of 'testing new material against what is already familiar.'[83] On the other hand, journalist Mark Starowicz, executive producer of the series, felt that the omission can be considered as a part of the documentary film process. As Starowicz observes, the director wanted to include some lesser known stories from the War and had a clear story arc that included the Battle of Lundy's Lane. There was not enough time, he argued, to add Secord, properly tell her story and then relate the story that the director also wanted. 'To pick up a character like Laura Secord for two or three minutes,' Starowicz observed, 'would be bad documentary structure.'[84] He concluded that the episode already had, 'a dramatic structure. It followed dramatic arcs. We didn't want to have a gridlock of stories. ...' Allen, philosophical over the controversy, saw it as an example of how the public receives history. The authors of the e-mails questioning the omission of Secord clearly knew her story, and were watching the series not only to find out new information, but to see the history they already knew validated. Citing the work of film historians Roy Rosenzweig and David Thelen, Allen observes that individuals develop an 'intensely personal' relationship with public constructions of the past and part of the process of authenticating a new history experience is the ability of the public to connect with what they already know, or believe they know, of the era.[85] Thus, offering audiences familiar elements is not just a courtesy, but an essential part in the creation of public history. Whether a television documentary, historic plaque, or museum exhibition, engaging the public is essential.

The interpretive tableau focusing on the four heroes of the War has simplified and overshadowed important historical aspects of the

War of 1812. Yet, it also provides a ready-made public entry to the conflict. For those who have previously learned about the War, the tableau feeds the sense of a familiar narrative, offering critical points of public remembrance. Indeed, the federal government's focus on the four heroes of the War made the challenge to engage the public with the familiar an easier task. In the case of *Faces of 1812,* the use of Sir Isaac Brock's portrait or images of Laura Second was, indeed expected, both by the government, and by the visitors. The challenge that then emerged was how to present these images in their proper historical context. For example, no known portrait of Laura Secord exists, only a much-copied daguerreotype taken in her last days.[86] The paintings of a young woman that many associate with her today were created years after her death. James Dennis' composite painting (and later print) of the Battle of Queenston Heights[87] and William Emmons's 'Battle of the Thames'[88] that depicts the death of Tecumseh were all mass reproduced as souvenirs decades after the War. Around a century after the War commercial artists such as C.W. Jefferys (1869–1951) and Lorne K. Smith (1880–1966) created a large oeuvre of commemorative paintings and sketches, many of which were subsequently used in textbooks. Much like period-inspired films today, these images of the War tapped into the public's historical imagination, their romance of the past. The fact that the collections of the LAC contain more depictions later inspired by the War than by its contemporaries is illuminating. Indeed, there is no greater testament to the longevity and power of the interpretive tableau than the fact that the most iconic images of the War of 1812 were not created until long after the conflict. In the case of *Faces of 1812,* the interpretive tableau was used not merely as a government-sponsored historical pneumonic for the public, but as a means to open up the larger issues surrounding the public memory of the War.

Freeman Tilden observed not only that a connection is required with the public, but that any exhibition or interpretation should be seen as 'provocation' rather than as instruction.[89] To make an experience memorable, it should provoke further inquiry or action. However, a fine line has to be walked. The level of provocation is relative to the nature of the exhibition patron, the space where the exhibition is seen and the audience that is seeing it. Failing to connect with the public, in particular, can have undesirable results. One renowned example of this in Canada is the controversy that surrounded the Royal Ontario Museum's exhibition *Into the Heart of Africa*[90] Designed as a scholarly, post-colonial critique, the irony was lost on many members of the public who interpreted literally the often disturbing artefacts and images

as racist and insulting.[91] Another, more recent, example is the public campaign that was taken to change the Canadian War Museum's interpretation of Bomber Command in the Second World War. In the fall of 2006, agitation began over a text panel that was seen to criticize the actions of Canadian veterans. In 2007, in light of a vociferous public lobbying campaign and the deliberation of a Senate sub-committee the Canadian War Museum changed the interpretive text.[92] Thus, curators have to strike a careful balance that, while engaging the public with new and enlightening material, is respectful of the audience and mindful of the boundaries of public space. Provocation must be a measured activity that carefully weights several factors including the limitation of the viewing space and the nature and prejudices of the intended audience.

For *Faces of 1812,* items that were selected to be provocative included portraits of Lieutenant-Colonel Francis Battersby,[93] Bishop Alexander Macdonnell,[94] the fur-trader brothers William and Simon McGillivray,[95] and the reform politician Louis-Joseph Papineau as an old statesman.[96] As being provocative in public history is a relative term, visitors were not confronted with images and ideas that were shocking, but with historical realities that may have been unfamiliar or that did not coincide with their historical memory or imagination. In the portrait of Battersby, for example, the commander of the Glengarry Light Infantry is depicted as wearing a green military uniform. This visual cue gave the opportunity to question the public's conception of the British redcoat and inform them that the early nineteenth-century British Army had coats of many different colours to distinguish the infantry (red), from the artillery (blue), and the light infantry and rifles companies (green).[97] Similarly, the inclusion of the portrait of Bishop Macdonnell who was instrumental in creating the Glengarry Light Infantry highlights a relationship between the military and religious leaders that some members of the public may not have realized existed: men of the cloth could also be military men. William McGillivray, portrayed in a gentleman's dress, was the commander of the little-known Corps of Voyageurs, a company of fur traders that helped for a brief time to secure the western frontier.[98] The inclusion of his portrait provided an opportunity to talk about the Western frontier in a War that the public traditionally associates with the Saint Lawrence River and Great Lakes. The portrait of his brother Simon McGillivray in full Masonic regalia represents those who could not serve militarily. Crippled, Simon stayed in Montreal and looked after the accounts of the North West Company during the War. In this role, he experienced first-hand the toll the conflict had on the civilian population and played a prominent roll

in the financial and social reconstruction of the colonies after the War.[99] Although few visitors would have been familiar with such individuals before the exhibition, more iconic figures also acted as provocateurs. Louis-Joseph Papineau's portrait, for example, appears here in a less familiar context. Public school students are taught to associate the name of Papineau with the 92 Resolutions and the Lower Canada rebellion, not as an officer with the Judge Advocate General during the War of 1812. It was hoped that the dissonance created by his inclusion, under the title 'Captain Louis-Joseph Papineau,' would lead visitors to reflect and learn more about both aspects of the politician's life. It should be mentioned that Charles de Salaberry was the only individual from the government's tableau of heroes with several contemporary portraits existing in the holdings of LAC. In another *provocative* twist, his relatively well-known face was purposefully left out of the exhibition to make space for lesser-known French Canadians such as Captain Louis-Christophe-Hilarion Fromenteau.[100]

The government's official bicentennial message underscores the War's role in the creation of modern Canada. While some of the individuals featured in *Faces of 1812,* such as Papineau, did see the reconstruction of the colonies and were active participants in this rebuilding, this official message was not the focus of the exhibition. However, the patriotic government messages, as with the interpretive tableau, are valuable as they can offer a known public foil for a greater story. Alongside the items that depict those who met with success after the War can also be found the images and artifacts of those who met with failure, or who faded into obscurity. A gold field medal awarded to Felix Troughton at the Battle of Detroit, for example, was displayed in this regard.[101] Troughton successfully commanded British field guns in the battle and survived the War, only to die unceremoniously on a transport ship back to Britain in 1815. Captain Francis Spilsbury and his wife Frances, whose portraits appear in the exhibition, also fall into this category. After the War, Spilsbury would become involved in an elaborate land settlement scheme in Upper Canada that would ultimately fail, leaving him near bankruptcy. Upon his death, the widowed Mrs. Spilsbury was forced to become a school mistress to make ends meet.[102] The inclusion of these items and their stories offered balance and avoided a solely laudatory interpretation of the War. The events of 1812–1815 did profoundly change the lives of those who experienced them, but their struggles did not end with the Treaty of Ghent and the success of a future Canada was clearly not assured in 1815.

Conclusion

The current tribute to the War of 1812 in Canada can be seen as another battle of what has been a continuing war against public forgetfulness. Commemorative salvos designed to perpetuate the memory of the conflict have focused on certain heroes and narratives resulting in the damaging collateral loss of other, equally significant, stories. As we have seen, historical messages for the public tend to be conservative, long-lasting and resist changes in interpretation. Early authors and poets who wrote of the War of 1812 engaged in a fight against forgetfulness. They particularly targeted young Canadians who, it was feared, did not know their history and were thus at risk of losing their identity. The federal government initially left the promotion of a shared past and a sense of collective belonging to private individuals and groups. Over the course of the twentieth century, however, it increasingly became involved in perpetuating the memory of the War and, in so doing, has reiterated core public touchstones of the War. This continuing return to a pantheon of heroes and patriotic messages casts some doubt upon the hope, articulated by John Stewart Carstairs a century ago, that future generations would shine a 'different light' upon the conflict.

The current federal celebration of the bicentenary of the War represents unprecedented government involvement in both budget and outreach. Indeed, the effort has struck a strong, though perhaps unintended, chord with the public fostering a great debate in newspapers, magazines, radio talk shows and the internet over the inherent politics of public commemoration. However, the myriad newspaper editorials, commemorative web sites, historical exhibitions, as with the impact of the three-year federal financial largesse, will have a limited public shelf life and be forgotten. The interpretive tableau will be retired, perhaps to be dusted off again in the future. Yet, more worrisome than the nation once again forgetting about the War of 1812 is the risk of it forgetting how to access and understand its past. In an era where short-term celebrations are favoured over sustained cultural funding, commemorative moments need to be used, not only to mark specific events, but to communicate the importance of history writ large. On a modest scale, the *Faces of 1812* exhibition reveals how commemorative opportunities can allow historians to both build upon and break away from the interpretive tableau that has long framed the War of 1812. *Faces of 1812* offered the public both a familiar and a new way to look at the past and how we remember it. Even a limited tableau of heroes and patriotic messages can serve as a bridge, a means of bringing the

greater importance of historical study to a larger audience. At this juncture of slashed budgets and reduced heritage services, historians need to continue to take the reductionist and political aspects of public commemoration and turn them on their head. By doing so the public can be encouraged to investigate the past for themselves. Thus, members of the public will not only view history in a 'different light,' they can be encouraged to view it in their own light, drawing their own conclusions and gaining a fuller understanding of past issues. When the fog surrounding the bicentennial of the War of 1812 dissipates the best outcome one could hope for is a victory for critical thinking of the present and the creation of a new generation of advocates for the past.

Notes

1 Tom Irwin in the film *The History Boys* (2006).
2 This collective forgetfulness is not just symptomatic of the Canadian situation. See Donald R. Hickey, *The War of 1812: A Forgotten Conflict* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1989). Reflecting on his observations a decade later, Hickey believed that interest had increased but 'there are still plenty of opportunities for those interested in pursuing research into the 'forgotten conflict'.' See Donald Hickey, 'The War of 1812: Still a Forgotten Conflict,' *Journal of Military History* 65,3 (2001): 769.
3 John Stewart Carstairs, 'Introduction: Brock and Queenston,' in *Brock Centenary: 1812–1912, Account of the Celebration at Queenston Heights, Ontario on the 12th October, 1912,* ed. Alexander Fraser (Toronto: William Briggs, 1913), 9.
4 Barbara Yaffee, 'Spending on 1812 Anniversary Odd in an Era of Cuts,' *Vancouver Sun,* 5 December 2012, http://www.vancouversun.com/life/Spending+1812+anniversary+cuts/7653138/story.html.
5 David Lowenthal in *The Art of Forgetting,* ed. Adrian Forty and Susanne Küchler (Oxford: Berg, 1999), xii.
6 Ian McKay and Jamie Swift, *Warrior Nation: Rebranding Canada in an Age of Anxiety* (Toronto: Between the Lines Press, 2012), 7.
7 Jane Taber, 'Harper Spins a New Brand of Patriotism,' *The Globe and Mail,* 19 August 2011, http://www.theglobeandmail.com/news/politics/ottawa-notebook/harper-spins-a-new-brand-of-patriotism/article618385
8 Benson J. Lossing, *The Pictorial Field-Book of the War of 1812* (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1869), 1069.
9 Born in Scotland, Thompson was a veteran of the War of 1812 and later became a school teacher in Upper Canada. See R.D. Gidney, 'David Thompson,' *Dictionary of Canadian Biography,* www.biographi.ca.
10 David Thompson, *History of the Late War Between Great Britain and the United States of America: With a Retrospective View of the Causes From Whence It Originated* (Niagara, U.C.: T. Sewell, 1832), v.
11 Ibid., vi.
12 At 15 Richardson enlisted and as a member of the 41st Regiment of foot served with forces led by Tecumseh. See the article on Richardson in this volume by Cecilia Morgan.
13 John Richardson, *War of 1812, First Series, Containing a Full and Detailed Narrative of the Operations of the Right Division, of the Canadian Army* (Brockville[?]: New Era Press[?], 1842), 1.
14 William F. Coffin, *1812: The War and Its Moral, A Canadian Chronicle* (Montreal: John Lowell, 1864), 18, 19.
15 Ibid., 147–54
16 Desmond Morton, 'William Foster Coffin,' *Dictionary of Canadian Biography,* www.biographi.ca.

17 Charles Mair, *Tecumseh: A Drama* (Toronto: Hunter, Rose and Company, 1886).
18 Sarah Anne Curzon, *Laura Secord, the Heroine of 1812: A Drama, and Other Poems* (Toronto: C. Blackett Robinson, 1887), Preface; and Emma A. Currie, *The Story of Laura Secord and Canadian Reminiscences* (Toronto: William Briggs, 1900).
19 Carl Berger, *The Sense of Power: Studies in the Ideas of Canadian Imperialism, 1867–1914* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1970), 88–90; for more on the commemoration of Laura Secord and the particular influence of the descendants of the United Empire Loyalists, see Colin M. Coates and Cecilia Morgan, *Heroines and History: Representations of Madeleine de Vercheres and Laura Secord* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2002), 149–57.
20 'The Ideal General,' 'Laura Secord,' 'Tecumseh' in *Britannia History Reader: Introductory Book, Stories from British and Canadian History* (Toronto: Copp, Clark Company Limited, 1909), 235–44.
21 'The Hero of Upper Canada,' in W. Stewart Wallace, *A First Book of Canadian History* (Toronto: The Macmillan Company of Canada, 1928), 94–101.
22 Coates and Morgan, *Heroines and History,* 166.
23 Steven Chase, 'History Goes to Head of the Heritage Class,' *The Globe and Mail,* 11 October 2011, www.theglobeandmail.com/news/politics/history-goes-to-head-of-the-heritage-class/article556874.
24 James Moore, Minister of Canadian Heritage and Official Languages, to Social Science and History Teachers, November 2012, author's private collection.
25 As cited in Robert Malcomson, *Burying General Brock: A History of Brock's Monuments* (St. Catherine's: Peninsula Press, 1996), 9.
26 Ibid., 19–28.
27 See Journal *of the Legislative Assembly of the Province of Canada,* 8 Victoria, a. 1844–45. See Christy Vodden, *No Stone Unturned: The First 150 Years of the Geological Survey of Canada* (Ottawa: Minister of Supply and Services, 1992).
28 Geological Survey of Canada, *Annual Report (New Series), Volume V, Part I, 1891* (Ottawa: Queen's Printer, 1893), 91A.
29 The 'C' Series at the time contained 1,847 (now over 2,000) volumes of records created by British forces in British North America from 1759 to 1906. For more, see Ernest Cruickshank, *Inventory of the Military Documents in Canadian Archives,* (Ottawa: Government Printing Bureau, 1910).
30 Fraser, ed., *Brock Centenary,* 44.
31 William Wallis et al., *The Centenary Celebration of the Battle of Lundy's Lane* (Niagara Falls: Lundy's Lane Historical Society, 1919), 21.
32 The letters of regret from federal and provincial politicians, key business leaders and historians were all published by the Society. See ibid., 125–33.
33 Timothy S. Forest, 'Epic Triumph, Epic Embarrassment, or Both? Commemorations of the War of 1812 Today in the Niagara Region,' *Ontario History* 104,1 (2012): 120, 122.
34 In September 2012, as part of the bicentennial commemorations, the Prime Minister officially announced battle honours for 21 current militia and regular force regiments that claimed their roots in the War of 1812. This controversial practice of military perpetuation is not new to the Canadian Forces and was employed to recognize regiments from the regions in which battalions of the Canadian Expeditionary Force were drawn. Prime Minister's Office, Press Release, 'PM Honours Regiments That Participated in the War of 1812,' 14 September 2012, http://pm.gc.ca/eng/media.asp?id=5030.
35 See C.J. Taylor, 'Some Early Problems with the National Historic Sites and Monuments Board of Canada,' *Canadian Historical Review* 64, 1 (1983): 6–8.
36 For example, Fort Wellington and Fort Edward were designated national historic sites in 1920 and transferred to the Parks Branch in 1925. Historic Sites and Monuments Board of Canada [HSMBC], Directory of Federal Heritage Designations, 'Fort Wellington National Historic Site of Canada,' http://www.pc.gc.ca/apps/dfhd/page_nhs_eng.aspx?id=497; 'Fort Edward National Historic Site of Canada,' http://www.pc.gc.ca/apps/dfhd/page_nhs_eng.aspx?id=318,.
37 Yves Yvon J. Pelletier, 'The Politics of Selection: The Historic Sites and

Monuments Board of Canada and the Imperial Commemoration of Canadian History, 1919–1950,' *Journal of the Canadian Historical Association* 17, 1 (2006): 136–7.

38 These numbers were achieved through a search of the HSMBC's online Directory of Federal Heritage Designations, looking at, in particular, National Historic Sites, Events and People. The database details both the official designation and background research into decisions by the HSMBC. Only commemorative plaque texts that specifically mention a link to the War of 1812 are included in this number. This database can be found at: http://www.pc.gc.ca/apps/dfhd/default_eng.aspx

39 From 1920 to 1930 inclusive 43 of the 238 designations (18%) made by the HSMCB directly commemorated the War of 1812. From 1931 to 2011 only another 34 designations were made in total. See Directory of Federal Heritage Designations listed above.

40 HSMBC, Directory of Federal Heritage Designations, 'Tecumseh,' http://www.pc.gc.ca/apps/dfhd/page_nhs_eng.aspx?id=1283.

41 Ibid., 'Battle of Châteauguay National Historic Site of Canada,' http://www.pc.gc.ca/apps/dfhd/page_nhs_eng.aspx?id=589.

42 Ibid., 'Lieutenant-Colonel Charles-Michel d'Irumberry de Salaberry National Historic Person, http://www.pc.gc.ca/apps/dfhd/page_nhs_eng.aspx?id=1382; 'Salaberry Armoury Recognized Federal Heritage Building,' http://www.pc.gc.ca/apps/dfhd/page_fhbro_eng.aspx?id=5700; ,de Salaberry House National Historic Site of Canada,' http://www.pc.gc.ca/apps/dfhd/page_nhs_eng.aspx?id=601.

43 Ibid., 'Beaver Dams National Historic Site of Canada,' http://www.pc.gc.ca/apps/dfhd/search-recherche_eng.aspx.

44 Ruth Mackenzie, *Laura Secord: The Legend and the Lady* (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1971), 115.

45 HSMBC, Directory of Federal Heritage Designations, 'Queenston Heights National Historic Site,' http://www.pc.gc.ca/apps/dfhd/page_nhs_eng.aspx?id=500.

46 Ibid., 'Laura Ingersoll Secord, National Historic Person,' http://www.pc.gc.ca/apps/dfhd/page_nhs_eng.aspx?id=10041.

47 Parks Canada, News Releases and Backgrounders, 'Sir Isaac Brock Commemorated as a National Historic Person,' http://www.pc.gc.ca/apps/cp-nr/release_e.asp?id=1910&andor1=nr.

48 HSMBC, Directory of Federal Heritage Designations, 'Sir Isaac Brock, National Historic Person,' http://www.pc.gc.ca/apps/dfhd/page_nhs_eng.aspx?id=12532.

49 Veronica Strong-Boag, 'Experts on Our Own Lives: Commemorating Canada at the Beginning of the 21st Century,' *The Public Historian* 31,1 (2009): 61–6.

50 LAC, Postal Archives, 'Sir Isaac Brock,' designed by Imre von Mosdosssy, POSTAL 0488.

51 Ibid., 'Charles-Michel de Salaberry,' designed by Theo Dimson, POSTAL 0777.

52 Ibid., 'Laura Secord,' designed by Ralph Tibbles, POSTAL 1364.

53 Ibid., 'Sir Isaac Brock,' designed by Imre von Mosdosssy, POSTAL 0488.

54 The Valiants Memorial: Home, http://www.valiants.ca/english.html.

55 National Capital Commission, Public Art and Monuments: Valiants Memorial, www.canadascapital.gc.ca/places-to-visit/public-art-monuments/valiants-memorial.

56 'Feds Launch War of 1812 Anniversary Plans,' *CBC News Website,* 11 October 2011, http://www.cbc.ca/news/politics/story/2011/10/11/pol-war-anniversary.html; Steven Chase, 'History Goes to the Head of the Heritage Class,' *Globe and Mail,* 11 October 2012, www.theglobeandmail.com/news/politics/history-goes-to-the-head-of-heritage-class/article556874; Jeremy Diamond and Davida Aronovitch, 'The War of 1812: Stupid But Important,' *Globe and Mail,* 20 February 2012, http://www.theglobeandmail.com/commentary/the-war-of-1812-stupid-but-important/article547554.

57 Tonda McCharles, 'Constitution Anniversary Leaves Tories Cold,' *Toronto Star,* 12 April 2012, http://www.thestar.com/news/canada/politics/article/1160497–constitution-anniversary-leaves-tories-cold; Stephanie Levitz, 'Tories Nixed Proposed Charter Birthday Party,' *Globe and Mail*, 7 June 2012, http://www.theglobeandmail.com/news/politics/tories-nixed-proposed-charter-birthday-party/article4238188.

58 Meagan Fitzpatrick, 'Conservatives Draw Fire for War of 1812 Spending,' CBC News Website, 15 June 2012, http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/story/2012/06/14/pol-war-of-1812-bicentennial-federal-events.html.

59 This original website can be seen through the Wayback Machine of the Internet Archives at http://web.archive.org/web/20120226032511/http://1812.gc.ca/eng/1305654894724/1305655293741, Date Crawled 26 February 2012.

60 Canada, The War of 1812, 'About the Commemoration,' http://www.1812.gc.ca/eng/1305658803194/1317921921396.

61 Historica-Dominion Institute, *The War of 1812 Education Guide* (Toronto: Historica-Dominion Institute, 2012), 2.

62 Ibid. and 'A Message from the Chairman,' *Heritage Matters* (February 2012): 1.

63 Peter Shawn Taylor, '1812: A Perfect War for Politicians,' *Macleans,* ca. 18 September 2012, http://www2.macleans.ca/2012/09/18/a-perfect-war-for-politicians.

64 A detailed account of Wallace and his revisionist stance can be seen in Coates and Morgan, *Heroines and History,* 157–63.

65 See, in particular, C.P. Stacey, 'The War of 1812 in Canadian History,' *Ontario History* 50 (1958): 153–8; G.F.G. Stanley, 'The Contribution of the Militia During the War,' in *After Tippecanoe: Some Aspects of the War of 1812,* ed. Philip P. Mason (East Lansing: Michigan State University Press, 1963), 28–45.

66 E. Jane Errington, *The Lion, the Eagle and Upper Canada: A Developing Colonial Ideology* (Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1987); George Sheppard, *Plunder, Profit and Paroles: A Social History of the War of 1812* (Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1994); Alan Taylor, *The Civil War of 1812, American Citizens, British Subjects, Irish Rebels and Indian Allies* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2010).

67 Many works explore this relationship, including Gaynor Kavanagh, *History Curatorship* (Leicester: Leicester University Press, 1990); Tony Bennett, *The Birth of the Museum: History, Theory, Politics* (London: Routledge, 1995); Sharon Macdonald, *Behind the Scenes at the Science Museum* (Oxford: Berg, 2002); and James B. Gardner, 'Contested Terrain: History, Museums and the Public,' *The Public Historian* 26, 4 (2004): 11–21.

68 This argument is pursued in works such as Annie E. Coombes, 'Museums and the Formation of National and Cultural Identities,' in *Museum Studies: An Anthology of Context*s, ed. Beltina Messias Carbonell (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2004), and in the Canadian context Garth Allen and Caroline Anson, *The Role of the Museum in Creating Multi-Cultural Identities* (Lewiston: The Edwin Mellen Press, 2005); Strong-Boag, 'Experts on Our Own Lives.'

69 There is no mention of the impact of federal cuts to LAC here because funds for the exhibition were earmarked before the 2012 Federal Budget.

70 The Portrait Gallery of Canada was originally envisaged as an affiliated institution with the LAC and enjoyed separate branding and curatorial staff. However, the Portrait Gallery was changed into the Portrait Program in 2009, thus signifying more direct control from the parent institution. See National Archives of Canada, Press Release, 24 January 2001, 'The National Archives of Canada Supports the Newly-Established Portrait Gallery of Canada,' http://epe.lac-bac.gc.ca/100/206/301/lac-bac/whats_new-ef/2007-10-29/E1999-2003/03/0342_e.html; James Bradshaw, 'Canada's Portrait Gallery is No More,' *The Globe and Mail,* 9 September 2009, http://www.theglobeandmail.com/news/politics/canadas-portrait-gallery-is-no-more/article1204648; and LAC, Press Release, 'Portrait Gallery of Canada Program Continues to be Accessible to Canadians,' 10 September 2009, http://www.collectionscanada.gc.ca/whats-new/013-415-e.html.

71 Portrait Gallery of Canada website, 'Vision,' March 2001, Archived at: http://web.archive.org/web/20011031065813/http://www.portraits.gc.ca/index_e.html.

72 In 2011, responding to increasing concerns amongst archivists, librarians and scholars the Canadian Association of University Teachers [CAUT] launched the public campaign Save Library and Archives Canada which details many concerns, including the perceived freeze on acquisition, reductions in access

and preservation. See http://www.savelibraryarchives.ca/default.aspx

73 Library and Archives Canada, Media Release, *Faces of 1812,* 5 June 2012, http://www.bac-lac.gc.ca/eng/news/Pages/faces-of-1812.aspx.

74 See, for example, Jack M. Holl, 'Cultures in Conflict: An Argument Against "Common Ground" Between Practicing Professional Historians and Academics,' *The Public Historian* 30, 2 (2008): 29–50.

75 Matthew C. Godfrey, 'The Problems with Publishing: Obstacles Faced by History Consultants in Publishing Their Work,' *The Public Historian* 30, 4 (2008): 28–34.

76 Paul Gessell, 'Portraits of War: Museum Show Features the Images of the Great and Not-So-Great From 1812,' *Ottawa Citizen,* 4 June 2012 http://www2.canada.com/ottawacitizen/news/artslife/story.html?id=66665b78-b7cb-4228-8ed4-c52bfeaf0b04.

77 Jamie Swift, 'Harper, Supporters Sanitizing Insanity,' *Whig Extra* (Kingston), 29 June 2012, 7. http://virtual.thewhig.com/doc/Kingston-Whig-Standard/whigextrajun29/2012062801/7.html#7.

78 LAC, AMICUS #4763040, William Smart, *Death and victory: a sermon occasioned by the death of Major Gen. Brock, who fell in the battle of Queenston, Upper Canada, on the 13th day of October, 1812: preached at Brockville, Elizabethtown, November the 15th, 1812* (Montreal: Mower, 1812).

79 LAC, National Map Collection [NMC], 'A Map of the American Lakes and Adjoining Country, the Present Seat of War Between Great Britain & the United States,' 1813, by Isaac Brock and Joseph Aubé, NMC 6757; and NMC, G3170-1818-N481, World Globe, c. 1818, Mixed Media, by Newton and Son.

80 Freeman Tilden, *Interpreting Our Heritage* (rev. ed.; Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1967), 9.

81 Gene Allen, 'The Professionals and the Public: Responses to *Canada: A People's History,' Histoire Sociale – Social History* 34, 68 (2001): 385.

82 Canadian Broadcasting Corporation, *'Canada: A People's History,* Episode Summary: A Question of Loyalties,' http://www.cbc.ca/history/EPHOMEEP5LE.html.

83 Allen, 'The Professionals and the Public,' 386.

84 Penney Clark, 'Engaging the Field: A Conversation with Mark Starowicz,' *Canadian Social Studies* 36, 2 (2002), http://www.educ.ualberta.ca/css/Css_36_2/ARengaging_the_field.htm.

85 Allen, 'The Professionals and the Public,' 386.

86 Benson Lossing's image of Secord found in his illustrated history originates from a photo he acquired from the Secord family. It was that image that stayed in the public's eye, until younger versions were created decades after her death. The public today are more familiar with one of the handful of portraits and cameos produced by the Laura Secord Candy Company from the 1920s on, or Mildred Peel's portrait painted at the turn of the twentieth century. See Lossing, *Pictorial Field-Book of the War of 1812,* 621, and the Archives of Ontario, Government of Ontario Art Collection, 619796, 'Laura Secord,' 1904, Oil on Canvas, by Mildred Peel. The current Laura Secord Company website details some of their past eponymous depictions: www.laurasecord.ca.

87 Dennis, who was with the 49th Regiment of Foot, was an eyewitness to the battle and created what we would call today a time-lapse illustration showing the American departure from Lewiston side, their travel across the Niagara River and then the battle on the heights. The printing and reprinting for a popular audience offers an interesting study into the failings of collective memory. When this painting was mass produced as an aquatint in 1836 it showed the Americans hoisting the French tri-colour and gives the erroneous date of 13 October 1813. The error with the flag can be attributed to an errant colourist who would have hand tinted the work. Yet, the wrong year attributed to the battle would have happened at an earlier stage in production in the London print shop of J.W. Laird. An 1866 Canadian reprint as a lithograph corrects the issue with the flag, but surprisingly leaves the erroneous date uncorrected. Riverbrink, Sam Weir Collection, 982.2, 'The Battle of Queenston Heights,' Oil on Canvas, by James B. Dennis; LAC, W.H. Coverdale Collection of Canadiana, 1970-188-517, 'The Battle of Queenston, Octr. 13th, 1813 [sic],' Aquatint, from a painting by Major James B. Dennis, published by

J.W. Laird, 12 April 1836, C-041502; and LAC, 'The Battle of Queenston, Octr. 13th, 1813, [sic],' Lithograph, from a painting by Major James B. Dennis, published by J.W. Laird, published by Grant, Barfoot & Co., c. 1866, C-000276.

88 LAC, 1970-188-997, 'The Battle of the Thames,' 1833, Hand-Coloured Lithograph, Painting by William Emmons, Engraved by Edward Clay, C-041031.

89 Tilden, *Interpreting Our Heritage,* 9.

90 Shelley Ruth Butler, *Contested Representations: Revisiting* Into the Heart of Africa (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2007).

91 Enid Schildkrout, 'Ambiguous Messages and Ironic Twists: *Into the Heart of Africa* and the *The Other Museum,' Museum Anthropology* 15, 2 (1991): 16.

92 For more see David Dean, 'Museums as Conflict Zones: The Canadian War Museum as Conflict Zone,' *Museum and Society* 7, 1 (2009): 1–15.

93 LAC, R12289-1, Portrait of Lieutenant Colonel Francis Battersby, c. 1816, Oil on Canvas, by Levi Stevens, e008299846.

94 Ibid., 1945-40-1, Portrait of the Most Reverend Alexander Macdonell, c. 1823–24, Oil on Canvas, by Martin Archer Shee, C-011059.

95 Ibid., 1956-7-1, Portrait of William McGillivray, c.1815–1825, Oil on Canvas, by Martin Archer Shee, e010952203; 1956-8-1, Portrait of Simon McGilivray, c. 1824, Oil on Canvas, by R.R. Reinagle, e010952205.

96 Ibid., 1978-39-6, Portrait of Louis-Joseph Papineau, c. 1871, Oil on Canvas, by Alfred Boisseau, e010952206.

97 See J.L. Summers and René Chartrand, *Military Uniforms in Canada, 1665–1970* (Ottawa: National Museum of Man, 1981) and René Chartrand, *British Forces in North America, 1793–1815* (Botley: Osprey Publishing, 1998).

98 Fernand Ouellet, 'William McGillivray,' *Dictionary of Canadian Biography,* www.biographi.ca.

99 Fernand Ouellet, 'Simon McGillivray,' www.biographi.ca.

100 LAC, R5290-0-2-E, 'Portrait of Louis-Christophe-Hilarion Fromenteau,' Watercolour on Ivory (Miniature), 1800, Artist Unknown, c125656k.

101 Ibid., National Medal Collection, 1986-079 X PIC 06890, Lieutenant Felix Troughton's 'Detroit' medal, 1812.

102 Ibid., R11928-1, Portrait of Captain Francis Brockell Spilsbury R.N., c. 1815–1816, Oil on Paper, Artist Unknown and R11928-2, Portrait of Frances Bayly Spilsbury, c. 1815–1816, Oil on Paper, Artist Unknown.