Placing Battlefields: Ontario’s War of 1812 Niagara Frontier, 1885-1930

by

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ABSTRACT

PLACING BATTLEFIELDS: ONTARIO'S WAR OF 1812 NIAGARA FRONTIER, 1885-1930

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This dissertation investigates former War of 1812 battlefields on the Canadian Niagara Frontier as places, or spaces invested with meaning, focusing on 1885-1930. These former battlefields include Fort George, Queenston Heights, Beaverdams, Lundy’s Lane, and Fort Erie. In the mid-1880s Niagara saw the creation of several local historical societies composed of amateur historians and the Niagara Parks Commission (NPC), which was created to protect Niagara Falls and which eventually acquired most of the Frontier’s former battlefields. As places the former battlefields had complex, layered meanings that shifted over time. They were both places with close connections to the War of 1812, and places of nature and recreation. After the War of 1812 political oratory and early written accounts of the conflict helped establish the war’s public memory, and early monuments and tourism helped to enforce the places’ organic connections to that memory. The local historical societies later reinforced these links by erecting monuments on the former battlefields and holding commemorative ceremonies there. The places were important in reflecting and shaping the war’s public memory, as the monuments were erected on the their highest points and speakers at the ceremonies drew on the places to add weight to a public memory stressing sacrifice, loyalty, Britishness, manliness, and peace. As places the former battlefields also gave underprivileged groups opportunities to present alternative public memories of the war. Although they met with relatively little success, women and the Grand...
River Six Nations both supplemented and contested the places’ public memories through monuments and oratory. While local historical societies were reinforcing the places’ connections to the War of 1812, the NPC was shaping the former battlefields to reflect an idealized nature where visitors could engage in various recreational activities not necessarily related to the places’ public memory. Beginning in the 1910s and accelerating after the Great War, the former battlefields were perceived and used more for recreation than commemoration. The former battlefields’ meanings as battlefields and parks coexisted, but over time the places became less significant as battlefields, and more significant as parks.
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# TABLE OF CONTENTS

Introduction: Placing Public Memory ................................................................................. 1

- Space and Place .................................................................................................................. 8
- Public Memory .................................................................................................................... 18
- Place, Public Memory, and Tourism .................................................................................. 29
- Outline ................................................................................................................................. 45

Chapter 1 – Niagara and the War of 1812 ........................................................................... 49

- Early Politics and Histories ............................................................................................... 50
- The Niagara Peninsula ......................................................................................................... 61
- Sir Isaac Brock: Hero of Upper Canada ............................................................................. 69
- 1813: American Invasion and the Torch ............................................................................ 76
- 1814: Bloody Stalemate ..................................................................................................... 86
- The Final Chapter ................................................................................................................ 93
- Tourism ................................................................................................................................. 97
- Conclusion ............................................................................................................................ 115

Chapter 2 - Guarding the Frontier: Local Historical Societies and the Niagara Parks Commission .... 118

- Niagara’s Local Historical Societies .................................................................................. 120
- The Niagara Parks Commission ......................................................................................... 137
- The NPC and Niagara’s Battlefields .................................................................................. 144
- Conclusion ............................................................................................................................ 159

Chapter 3- Placing Public Memory: Monuments and Ceremony ............................................. 161

- The Battle Monuments ...................................................................................................... 162
- Monumental Placing ......................................................................................................... 170
- Ceremony ............................................................................................................................. 180
- Conclusion ............................................................................................................................ 217

Chapter 4 - Gender and Race on the Frontier ..................................................................... 219

- Women and History .......................................................................................................... 222
- The Heroine’s Monuments ................................................................................................. 224
- Placing Laura Secord ......................................................................................................... 230
- Women and Ceremonies ..................................................................................................... 238
- The Grand River Six Nations ............................................................................................. 252
- The Voices of the Six Nations ............................................................................................. 264
- Contestation ........................................................................................................................ 274
- Conclusion ............................................................................................................................ 278
| Pilgrimage and Tourism                                                                         | 283 |
| The Ideal Nature                                                                              | 287 |
| Creating Nature                                                                               | 294 |
| Strolls and Picnics                                                                            | 302 |
| Playing                                                                                       | 314 |
| Conclusion                                                                                    | 322 |
| Chapter 6 - Continuity and Change: The 1920s                                                    | 325 |
| Local Historical Societies and the HSMB                                                        | 327 |
| Leisure on the Frontier                                                                       | 342 |
| Modern Diversions                                                                             | 349 |
| Conclusion                                                                                    | 354 |
| Conclusion                                                                                    | 356 |
| Bibliography                                                                                  | 369 |
### LIST OF FIGURES

- **Figure 0.1.** Crowds gathered in Drummond Hill Cemetery for the centenary of the Battle of Lundy’s Lane. ................................................................. 3
- **Figure 1.1.** The Niagara Frontier, 1759................................................................. 62
- **Figure 1.2.** Map of the Niagara Frontier............................................................. 95
- **Figure 1.3.** Romanticized portrait of the ruins of Old Fort Erie................................. 101
- **Figure 1.4.** Ruins of Fort George powder magazine............................................. 104
- **Figure 1.5.** “South West View of the Brock Monument, Erected on Queenston Heights, 1856”................................................................. 106
- **Figure 1.6.** “Two Observatories on Lundy’s Lane, 1860”...................................... 114
- **Figure 2.1.** “The Beaverdam Meadow as it Appears To-Day”................................. 135
- **Figure 2.2.** Brock’s Monument, ca. 1895......................................................... 147
- **Figure 2.3.** Ruins of Fort Erie, ca.1890.............................................................. 152
- **Figure 2.4.** Historical relics on display in the Lundy’s Lane Observatory Company Limited observation tower ca. 1893......................................................... 157
- **Figure 2.5.** Lundy’s Lane, ca. 1880................................................................. 158
- **Figure 2.6.** Lundy’s Lane battle monument......................................................... 164
- **Figure 2.7.** “Monument at the Beaver Dams Battlefield (Thorold, Ontario)”............ 167
- **Figure 2.8.** Fort Erie Monument................................................................. 171
- **Figure 2.9.** Map of Queenston Village and Heights.............................................. 174
- **Figure 3.5.** “Entrance to Old Fort Park and Battle Memorial – Monument to Heroes who fell in Fort Erie Siege”..................................................... 176
- **Figure 3.6.** Lundy’s Lane battle monument......................................................... 177
- **Figure 3.7.** Crowds gather to hear an address by Angus Claude Macdonell, M.P., at the foot of the Brock Monument..................................................... 190
- **Figure 3.8.** Attendees in Drummond Hill Cemetery for the commemoration of the battle of Lundy’s Lane................................................................. 194
- **Figure 3.9.** Memorial to Captain Hull, decorated for the Lundy’s Lane centennial........ 213
- **Figure 4.1.** “Secord monument, Drummond Hill Cemetery”.................................. 228
- **Figure 4.2.** Secord monument, Queenston Heights............................................. 229
- **Figure 4.3.** Placement of Laura Secord monument relative to the Lundy’s Lane battle monument......................................................................... 237
- **Figure 4.4.** Laura Secord monument on the right, with Brock monument in the background................................................................. 238
- **Figure 4.5.** ‘Maidens’ at the Lundy’s Lane centennial celebration........................... 244
- **Figure 4.6.** Six Nations representatives at the Brock centennial.............................. 259
- **Figure 4.7.** Six Nations representatives and others, including Miss Helen Merrill, at the Beaverdam celebration..................................................... 260
- **Figure 4.8.** Some of the Six Nations representatives posing in front of the Secord monument at the Lundy’s Lane centennial..................................................... 266
- **Figure 5.1.** Gates marking an entrance to Queenston Heights.................................. 296
- **Figure 5.2.** Deciduous trees at Queenston Heights Park...................................... 301
- **Figure 5.3.** View from Queenston Heights, ca.1895.............................................. 305
- **Figure 5.4.** Promenade and retaining wall at Queenston Heights Park..................... 307
Figure 5.5. William Dalton displaying battlefield relics, including two skulls ..................308
Figure 5.6. Drummond Hill Cemetery, ca. 1918 .........................................................310
Figure 5.7. The ‘picnic grove’ at Queenston Heights, ca. 1915 .....................................313
Figure 5.8. Plan of proposed park at Old Fort Erie .........................................................320
Figure 5.9. Aerial view of Queenston Heights, ca.1924 ...............................................321
Figure 6.1. Memorial erected by the LLHS to commemorate the Lundy’s Lane centennial ...........................................................................................................................328
Figure 6.2. HSMB cairn marking the Battle of Fort George .............................................331
Figure 6.3. Cairn erected by the HSMB to mark the battlefield of Beaverdams ..............332
Figure 6.4. Monument at Chippawa battlefield ...............................................................334
Figure 6.5. Playing Fields at Queenston Heights, ca.1920 .............................................346
Figure 6.6. Wading pool constructed in Fort Drummond ...............................................348
Figure 6.7. Picnic Shelter in Old Fort Erie ..................................................................348
Figure 7.1. Commemorative arch as seen from Drummond Hill Cemetery ..................357
Figure 7.2. Lundy’s Lane battle monument decorated for the bicentennial commemoration ....358
Figure 7.3. Lundy’s Lane Secord monument decorated for the bicentennial ..............366
Introduction: Placing Public Memory

The morning of 25 July 1914 dawned with the promise of a warm and sunny summer day. The Mayor had proclaimed a holiday, and by the early afternoon large crowds of spectators began to gather in Niagara Falls’ Drummond Hill Cemetery to await the arrival of a 2,000-strong procession of politicians, Canadian militia, historical society members, schoolchildren, and Six Nations representatives. The parade made its way past the crowds that lined Lundy’s Lane, which was cheerfully decorated with the Union Jack and the Stars and Stripes, towards the cemetery where the day’s main events were scheduled. There, the waiting crowd’s patience was rewarded as dignitaries made their way to a speaking platform while schoolchildren sang “The Maple Leaf Forever.”  

Around 10,000 people attended the celebration that hot July afternoon, lining the streets and crowding into the cemetery to hear the dignitaries’ patriotic speeches. The event these crowds and officials had gathered for was the centennial of the battle of Lundy’s Lane, one of the Niagara Frontier’s most famous War of 1812 battles.

This dissertation examines major former War of 1812 battlefields on the Canadian side of the Niagara River, focussing on the period between 1885 and 1930. These former battlefields include Lundy’s Lane, Fort George, Queenston Heights, and Fort Erie. The study is concerned with the relationship between the former battlefields as places and the public memory of the War of 1812, and how this relationship changed over time. It shows that these places played important roles in reflecting and shaping the public memory of the War of 1812, but that they also reflected attitudes toward nature and recreation. These meanings coexisted, but between 1885 and 1930 the battlefields began to shift from being primarily places where public memory was reflected and shaped to being predominantly places of recreation that reflected attitudes

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1 The Centenary Celebration of the Battle of Lundy’s Lane, Compiled by William Wallis, Robert W. Geary, and James C. Morden (Niagara Falls: The Lundy’s Lane Historical Society, 1919), 144, 31-32, 109, 22-23.
towards the idealized natural world. In essence, over time their association with death and sacrifice shifted to an emphasis on life and recreation.

The 1914 Lundy’s Lane centennial was held on the former battlefield due to its connection to the events being commemorated. Not only was it the place where the battle had raged one hundred years before, but the monuments erected there enhanced the place’s connection to the events being commemorated that day. The city of Niagara Falls’ growth since the battle meant that Drummond Hill Cemetery was all that remained of the battlefield of Lundy’s Lane, which had ranged over an area that extended beyond the cemetery’s limits. The event’s organizers were likely aware of this, but focussed their attention on the part of the former battlefield that had not been developed and was clearly bordered, rather than on its full range. Because this study investigates how and why groups invested the former battlefields with commemorative meaning and how those meanings changed over time, this study will share the participants’ focus on these sections of the former battlefields. On 25 July 1914 the speakers’ platform was erected near the former battlefield’s highest point, which was home to a battle monument erected in 1895 by the Dominion Government that honoured the British and Canadian troops killed in the battle. The monument was an obelisk that stood 40 feet tall, and its placement on the battlefield’s highest point had been carefully chosen so it would overlook the former battlefield and be its most discernable feature (Figure 0.1). Nearby stood a smaller monument marking the resting place of the War of 1812 heroine Laura Secord. The focus that July day was on the place’s famous battle, and while the battle monument and a smaller one to the American dead were decorated during the event programme, Secord’s monument received little formal
attention beyond the small flowers and wreaths placed there earlier in the day.

Figure 0.1: Crowds gathered in Drummond Hill Cemetery for the centenary of the Battle of Lundy’s Lane. The battle monument obelisk is visible rising behind the speakers’ platform. Reproduction of “100th Anniversary of the Battle of Lundy’s Lane Parade – July 25, 1914,” Photograph, Postcard Collection, D421410, Niagara Falls Public Library (hereafter NFPL).

“Place” is a complex concept explored further below, but as a place the battlefield was an important element of 1914’s celebration. Many speakers that hot afternoon pointed out the propriety of holding the centennial celebration in the very place where the battle had happened one hundred years ago. “Our meeting today is on a memorable spot and on a memorable occasion,” intoned James H. Coyne, former President of the Ontario Historical Society (OHS).

The place’s importance went beyond it being the setting for the commemoration, however. Some speakers tried to bring the battle to life by pointing out features in the locale, or the place’s physical setting, to encourage listeners to imagine the advances and counter-attacks of the opposing sides in the place where they happened. Representatives from the Grand River Six Nations, who had been involved with the local historical societies for some time, were invited to

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3 Wallis, Geary and Morden, 45, 77.
4 Ibid. 46.
the event and addressed the crowd. When they took the stage these speakers drew on the battlefield as a place to contest the celebration’s emphasis on Anglo-Saxon male sacrifice by staking a claim to the place’s past. Along with the participants, the Lundy’s Lane Historical Society (LLHS), which had organized the event, believed that the battlefield was a place with important ties to the public memory of not only the Battle of Lundy’s Lane, but to the War of 1812. They had held annual observances of the battle anniversary on the former battlefield, and campaigned to erect monuments there. The LLHS and other local historical organizations worked to both reflect and create the public memory of the War of 1812 through Niagara’s former battlefields. Public memory draws from the tradition of collective memory, discussed further below, but is essentially the production and exchange of ideas about the past in the public sphere. In promoting the public memory of the War of 1812 and the battle of Lundy’s Lane the LLHS’ membership and their supporters had been drawn to the battlefield because of its organic connection to the events of the war, and they had in turn worked to highlight those connections by erecting monuments and holding ceremonies like the centennial. Through these activities they had invested the battlefield with additional commemorative significance, creating a place that both reflected and shaped the public memory of the war.

The spectators gathered for the centennial celebration were not the first visitors to the former battlefield of Lundy’s Lane, as shortly after the War of 1812’s end tourists had been drawn to the Niagara battlefields to experience a connection to the past. As “places,” these battlefields had multiple, layered meanings. These tourists had been drawn not only by the places’ connections to the public memory of the war established in part by political oratory and early histories and guidebooks, but by their natural beauty. This attraction continued into the

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5Ibid., 68.
twentieth century, and the Niagara Parks Commission (NPC),\(^6\) which owned many of the Niagara Frontier battlefields, worked to create them as places that conformed to popular attitudes toward nature while simultaneously recognizing their commemorative value. In 1914 Lundy’s Lane no longer showed the scars of battle, and crowds walked over well-maintained paths and enjoyed the former battlefield’s beautiful park-like surroundings. Attendees at the Lundy’s Lane centenary were in a place that reflected and influenced the public memory of the War of 1812, but one that also reflected changing attitudes toward the role of nature in an increasingly modern, urban society.

Place, public memory, and tourism are complex, closely related concepts that together heighten our understanding of the former battlefields’ roles in both reflecting and shaping attitudes towards the past and the natural world. Although these ideas are interwoven, their individual complexity supports an examination of each concept in turn. This introduction explores these concepts and establishes how they will be employed in this dissertation. The ideas of space and place are addressed first in a section that includes a discussion of place’s components: sense of place, location, and locale. The following section interrogates memory studies literature, including the concept of collective memory, to establish a definition of the term public memory as it is employed in this study. The final section brings together the concepts of place, public memory, and tourism to explore their many interconnections. This examination will not only clarify the meanings and development of these concepts, but also explore their contributions to understanding the former battlefields. On that hot July afternoon in 1914 organizers hoped to communicate a specific public memory of the battle and the war, and drew

\(^6\)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 dissertation. George A. Seibel, *Ontario’s Niagara Parks: A History* (Niagara Falls: The Niagara Parks Commission, 1985), 41.
on the battlefield itself to support their assertions. Those who crowded into Drummond Hill Cemetery not only received and helped to shape the public memory of the battle in the place where it happened, they had also gathered in a place that had been fashioned to reflect contemporary views of an idealized nature. The place’s natural beauty and connection to the War of 1812 blended together to create an event that was, according to a local newspaper, “a scene that will live long in the memory of… [those] who participated in it.”

Two main groups strongly influenced the form and use of the former battlefields: local historical societies and the NPC. The late 1880s was a period of unprecedented interest in Ontario’s past that led to the creation of several local historical societies on the Niagara Frontier, including the LLHS, the Niagara Historical Society (NHS), and the Thorold and Beaverdams Historical Society (TBHS). The Niagara Frontier had seen the coming of the loyalists and had been the scene of the most intense fighting of the War of 1812. These two events were significant to these local historical societies which, along with Toronto’s United Empire Loyalist Association (UELA) and the OHS, were essential to the former battlefields’ development as places where the public memory of the War of 1812 was reflected and shaped. These societies were deeply concerned about the fate of the former battlefields and worked to highlight the places’ wartime pasts by erecting monuments and holding commemorative ceremonies there, including the 1914 Lundy’s Lane celebration. These were the first long-lasting organized entities that promoted not only the province’s history as a whole, but the public memories of the former battlefields specifically. The NPC also came into existence in the late 1880s. Created to protect Niagara Falls from over-commercialization, the Commission eventually expanded its holdings along the Niagara River, gaining control of the river frontage and the major former battlefields of

7“100 Years Peace Celebrated Saturday with Big Gathering on Lundy’s Lane Battle Ground,” St. Catharines Standard, 25 July 1914, 8.
Queenston Heights, Fort Erie, and Lundy’s Lane. Before the 1880s the battlefields had been seen as places with strong connections to the War of 1812 battles that happened there, as Upper Canadians erected some monuments and early tourists visited the places partly to experience a connection with their wartime events. However, beyond the earlier erection of a small number of monuments, including two honouring Sir Isaac Brock at Queenston Heights, the local historical societies and NPC were the first organizations to implement profound and long-lasting changes to the battlefields, such as erecting numerous monuments and creating ‘natural’ park landscapes.

This study’s focus on the former battlefields as places provides valuable insight into the multiple and at times conflicting interpretations of these places and their connections to wider societal concerns. As places, the former battlefields played an important role in the public memory of the War of 1812, as they both reflected and influenced it. The public memory communicated at the former battlefields stressed ideals of peace combined with Anglo-Saxon male loyalty and sacrificial death. These places also had layered meanings that extended beyond public memory to include widely circulated romantic ideals about the natural world and recreation. Approaching the battlefields as places allows an examination of the battlefields’ relationship to both public memory and attitudes toward nature. Between the mid-1880s and the 1920s the frontier battlefields underwent substantial changes that reflected and to an extent shaped changing ideas about the past and nature in an increasingly modern Canada. The battlefields’ meanings as places with connections to the War of 1812 and as places of natural beauty coexisted, but beginning in the 1910s and accelerating after the Great War there were signs that the battlefields’ significance for the public memory of the War of 1812 were beginning to fade in favour of their use as places of active recreation seemingly unrelated to the places’ connections to the war.
Space and Place

Place is a complex concept and can sometimes be confused with space, a term that is closely related to place, but has a different meaning. According to one cultural geographer space and place are, “two of the most diffuse, ill-defined and inchoate concepts in the social sciences and humanities.” In contrast, the general consensus since the mid-1970s has been that space in itself has no meaning, and the term is rarely employed in the newer historical literature. However, the term place can have multiple meanings, adding to the confusion surrounding it. For instance, one could use it to describe order in a list, such as in ‘first place’; to denote a temporal order, as in ‘took place’; to indicate position in a social order, such as ‘knowing your place,’; or as a geographical area. Although place is a nuanced term, this study presents it as composed of three main features, an approach influenced by the work of political sociologist John Agnew. The elements that make up place include: the sense of place, or individuals’ emotional and subjective attachments to place; location, which consists of both how wider social forces affect it and how it can affect these social forces; and locale, which is the physical, material area where social interactions happen. These three elements of place are interrelated and change over time, and this study includes all of these elements of place to varying degrees. Due to the nature of the historical documents available, this dissertation will focus predominantly on locale and location, although in some instances the sense of place will be examined. Approaching the battlefields as places will give insight into how they were affected by wider social forces, individuals’ perceptions of them, and their physical layout over time, leading to a nuanced understanding of the public memory of the War of 1812’s relationship to these places. This conception of place

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10 Developed from Agnew, 5-6; 28.
and its constituent elements draws on the work of geographers, historians, and others who have struggled for decades to define this multifaceted concept.

**Sense of Place**

In the 1970s some geographers began to investigate ideas of space and place and questioned the limitations of the quantitative methods traditionally used by scientific geographers. In the 1960s and early 1970s geographers had emphasized the study of space, while the term place was used as a description of a particular setting. In search of a generalized scientific mathematics, these spatial analysts often removed people from their investigations to create empty space that they could then study. In the mid-1970s several scholars voiced their doubts about this approach to space, and geographers began to interrogate the related concept of place. They expanded its meaning by incorporating human subjectivity and experience, an approach closely linked to the sense of place.¹¹ Influential geographer Yi-Fu Tuan was writing about the phenomenological understanding of place as early as 1961 when he published “Topophilia – or sudden encounter with landscape,” which contributed to 1974’s *Topophilia*, a book examining the emotional bond between people and place.¹² Writing against what he saw as geographers’ over-reliance on more easily measured sources such as maps and field surveys, Tuan’s seminal *Space and Place*, first published in 1977, theorizes the concepts of space and place through the lens of individual experience. For Tuan space is a more abstract concept than place; in his view “what begins as undifferentiated space becomes place as we get to know it better and endow it with value.”¹³ According to Tuan, what might begin as a space can through experience become a place that is a centre of meanings. Other authors built on Tuan’s work,

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adopting a view of place that sees it as more than a simple description of a particular setting. For instance, in his 1976 Place and Placelessness geographer Edward Relph argues that, in contrast to space (which provides the context for place but has no meaning in itself), people have a deeply felt involvement with the places where they live that is comparable to close personal relationships. For both Tuan and Relph the concept of place is based on the individual’s experience in and connection to a place, an approach similar to the sense of place in that it emphasizes the individual’s connection to place.

This study focusses on locale and location, but when sources are available the sense of place is also investigated. Sources that reveal tourists’ perceptions of Niagara Falls and its surrounding attractions in the early to mid-nineteenth century are readily available due to the period’s vogue for travel writing. Although these travelogues were published for a public audience, they were narratives of an individual’s travel experiences and provide insight into early tourists’ sense of place. Several historians have used these sources to examine individuals’ experiences of Niagara Frontier attractions. This study will also employ these sources to explore tourists’ sense of place in its examination of early tourism to the region, but a decline in the publication of narrative travelogues in favour of guidebooks caused by the growth of commercial tourism means that it is more difficult to access tourists’ senses of place in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Only fragmentary glimpses into the public’s senses of place are available around the turn of the century through sources such as Letters to the Editor or complaints to the NPC. The sense of place held by prominent individuals in the local historical society movement and management of the NPC are more easily accessible in the available

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records, but assessing the general public’s senses of place remains difficult. The sense of place, however, is only one aspect of the concept and can be combined with other ways of understanding place. Indeed, the concept of place adopted in this study is made up of more than personal subjectivity, and also includes location.

**Location**

Social forces that extend beyond phenomenological experience also influence the shaping and perception of place. Location, or social forces that extended beyond the places themselves, also influenced the former battlefields’ development. These forces include formal politics and economics, as well as wider social forces such as ideas about gender, class, race, and public memory. Location is not an autonomous element of place, however, and must be effected by groups. Members of groups such as the local historical societies or NPC were influenced by wider social forces, which shaped how they as group members perceived and shaped the former battlefields. As applied in this study, location therefore refers to how broader social forces both shaped the battlefields as places and were in turn influenced by them. For instance, the former battlefields were affected by the local historical societies that arose partly in response to changing social conditions such as the rise of industry and urbanization. These forces extended beyond the former battlefields’ boundaries, but had an effect on them through their influence on members of the local historical societies, who campaigned to save the places from development.

At the 1914 centennial celebration held at Drummond Hill Cemetery issues of politics, gender, and race were heightened by the politicians’ presence on the battlefields, the place’s reflection of the gendered nature of the public memory of the war through the monument to Laura Secord and the male sacrifice embodied by the battle monument, and the attendance of Six Nations delegates. Social ideas about gender and race played out on the former battlefields as women and Six Nations representatives laid a claim to the public memory of the war through place. The
concept of location therefore allows an examination of the different social forces and groups that affected these places. This concept is drawn from the work of scholars from a variety of fields who have sought an understanding of place that extends beyond individual phenomenology.

Since Tuan’s ground-breaking work on the phenomenological experience of place, scholars from different fields have sought to understand place as a concept that both includes and goes beyond individual experience. Early on Marxist French philosopher Henri Lefebvre extended the understanding of place beyond individual phenomenology. He published *La Production de l’espace* in 1974, which was translated to English in 1991. In it Lefebvre attempts to bridge the gap between what he terms the “logico-mathematical” space theorized by scientists and mathematicians and the “practico-sensory” space of lived social practice.\(^\text{17}\) Although he uses the term *espace*, or space, Lefebvre’s conceptualization of the term has more in common with the more widespread understanding of place as space invested with meaning. He argues that place is a social product, and illustrates some of the benefits of studying places’ histories. Lefebvre also points out that places are exceedingly complex and interrelated, meaning that the analysis of one place can reveal not just one, but a number of social relationships.\(^\text{18}\) Building on Lefebvre, in the 1980s humanistic geographers began to theorize that place was a construction reflective of underlying social processes.\(^\text{19}\) These scholars shifted emphasis from the individual’s experience of place to how places related to broad social and economic patterns. For instance, Marxist Geographer David Harvey’s *Social Justice and the City* examines the ideological underpinnings of the places created in cities, and argues that modern urbanism is based on industrial capitalism’s exploitation “of the many by the few.”\(^\text{20}\) These early studies are helpful in

\(^{18}\) Ibid., 86-88.
\(^{19}\) Cresswell, 51.
that they moved beyond the sense of place and began to examine the social forces that shape a
place, or in other words, its location.

Both building on and diverging from Marxist geography, in the late 1980s many cultural
geographers began to see place as not only socially constructed, but founded on acts of inclusion
and exclusion based on class gender, and race. For instance, Kay J. Anderson’s 1987
examination of Vancouver’s Chinatown concludes that the concept of Chinatown was a
racialized social construction that was given a local referent and reality though place. In a
similar vein, Doreen Massey’s Space, Place and Gender also emphasizes that both class and
gender play an important role in how places are structured, and that these places represent and
reflect how societies understand and construct gender. Both of these works assume the
imposition of a particular social construction of place based on socially constituted ideas of those
who belong and those who do not. The concept of location as employed in this study builds on
these works, as the term indicates that place is influenced by social forces that extend beyond the
battlefields, such as ideas of class, race, and gender.

In the mid-1980s some geographers such as Allan Pred took issue with the portrayal of
place as what he termed “an inert, experienced scene.” Pred worked to integrate time and
adaptation into the discourse on place, arguing that it is a fluid and evolving construction. If
place is taken to be a fluid construction, then it follows that places can be challenged and
changed. Some groups can even use place itself to contest social views. Drawing on this insight,
studies such as Kay Anderson’s stress that those excluded or defined by the power relations of
certain places retain a degree of agency and are often able to contest ideals of class, race, or

21 Cresswell, 26-27.
23 Doreen B. Massey, Space, Place, and Gender (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1994):182, 186.
24 Allan Pred, "Place as Historically Contingent Process: Structuration and the Time-Geography of Becoming
gender through place. Although they met with little success, Anderson points out that entrepreneurs in Chinatown contested “the non-Chinese concept of place” by, among other strategies, petitioning against the presence of prostitutes there. These entrepreneurs challenged the European conception of Chinatown as a place of vice, contesting the racialized social conception of Chinese-ness by trying to alter Chinatown as a place. Challenging dominant social views through place is significant because, as Doreen Massey shows, places both reflect social relations and have an effect on them. In other words, location not only shapes place, but place can also have an impact on location.

This study shows that the battlefields had gendered and racialized locations, and that those marginalized in the places’ public memory stressing male Anglo-Saxon sacrifice were able to use the places to present public memories that complimented and contested that public memory. Women and their supporters were able to change some of the battlefields’ locales by erecting monuments to Laura Secord at Lundy’s Lane and Queenston Heights among the monuments honouring manly sacrifice. These women changed the places’ locales and used them to present a public memory that supplemented the male-centered public memory of the War of 1812. As places the battlefields and the public memory tied to them also helped Six Nations representatives at the 101st anniversary of the Battle of Beaverdams and the centennials of Queenston Heights and Lundy’s Lane to challenge their treatment under the Indian Act. The representatives’ presence in the places where the events being commemorated happened was itself a claim on the places’ pasts, and the Six Nations speakers drew on the places through performance and rhetoric to argue for political representation. Location, then, includes not only social forces’ shaping place, but also gives place a role in challenging these forces. Although

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26 Massey, 186.
marginalized to varying degrees, women and First Nations representatives challenged the former battlefields’ locations through the places themselves by erecting monuments and drawing on the places to argue for greater rights, respectively. Although these places reflected and enforced a certain public memory of the War of 1812, they could also provide opportunities for supplementing or challenging it.

**Locale**

Locale is the physical, external setting in which social interactions happen. The term was first suggested by Anthony Giddens, who was part of a group of sociologists in the early 1980s who began to focus on the material setting of everyday life as a way to explain human behaviour.²⁷ Locale is a useful concept when employed in conjunction with location and sense of place, as it allows for the examination of a place’s physical setting without being overly distracted by issues of personal perception and social forces, which form part of place but are encompassed by the sense of place and location. Locale cannot be separated from the other elements of place, but the concept allows an examination of a place’s physical reality. Agnew himself emphasizes the importance of locale, although he stresses that locale is heavily influenced by location and gives rise to an individual’s sense of place.²⁸

The concept of locale can be linked to the more commonly used term landscape, which will not be employed in this study to not only avoid confusion, but to more accurately represent the battlefields’ physical realities. When one mentions landscape one often pictures a painting hanging in an art gallery. Indeed, the term landscape is often identified with landscape art, an artistic genre that originated in the fifteenth century.²⁹ Landscape, in the artistic sense, is a vista that the artist has selected and modified to conform to conventional ideals about what makes up a

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²⁷ Agnew, 5.
²⁸ Ibid., 28.
‘good view.’\textsuperscript{30} Through the efforts of scholars from a range of fields the term landscape has come to mean much more than a visual representation hanging on a wall. At the same time, although geographers and others have put forward many interpretations that enrich our understanding of the concept, it remains a fundamentally visual one. The concept of landscape emphasizes the visual over the entirety of the locale, which includes both visual elements and those intended to be experienced through a combination of senses. For example, the splash pad installed at Queenston Heights in the 1920s was not meant to be experienced only visually, but through a combination of senses. Rather than focussing solely on the visual, the term locale integrates the visual with the other elements of the external world experienced through other senses and allows a more nuanced understanding of place than the term landscape does.

For many early twentieth century geographers and historians locale was an objective reality; a world of physical features that existed ‘out there’ that could be studied empirically without reference to the sense of place or location. Some historical geographers practiced a kind of environmental determinism when thinking about locale and studied the effects that it had on people and societies.\textsuperscript{31} In reaction to this determinism in the early to mid-twentieth century some geographers began examining humans’ effect on locale. An early and influential scholar to adopt this approach was American geographer Carl Sauer, who evaluated locale as an expression of human culture. For Sauer the locale, or what he termed the cultural landscape, was a product of human intervention; in his words, “culture is the agent, the natural area is the medium, the cultural landscape the result.”\textsuperscript{32} For Sauer the cultural landscape was the visible traces, or imprints, that societies left on the natural world. Though it was written in the 1920s, Sauer’s


\textsuperscript{31}Claire Elizabeth Campbell, \textit{Shaped by the West Wind: Nature and History in Georgian Bay} (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2005), 12.

work remains influential. W.G. Hoskins adopts a similar approach in 1955’s *The Making of the English Landscape*, which examines the history of England’s locale using its historical traces, such as mounds in fields indicating ancient fences. Thomas McIlwraith also applies this approach in his 1997 *Looking for Old Ontario*, arguing that the province’s locale is a product of, “the hopes and achievements of tens of thousands of men and women,” and that “the land reveals those lives.” More recently, William Turkel’s examination of the Chilcotin Plateau draws on the locale (or, as he describes it, “the physical evidence found in the place itself”) as a physical repository of clues, and examines the ways different groups interpreted the traces on the locale.

Examining a place’s locale does provide clues about that place’s history and the meanings it holds in the present. Shortly after the War of 1812’s end tourists were drawn to the battlefields to examine the physical traces the battle had left on the locale, such as damaged trees, partly to feel closer to the battles that had happened there. By the 1880s most of these traces were gone, but the placement of monuments on specific high points of ground, the erection of picnic shelters, and other alterations to the battlefields’ locales provide insight into not only the places’ physical settings, but their locations and visitors’ senses of place over time.

Locale is a useful conceptual tool because it allows an examination of a place’s physical, external reality. The concept’s inclusion under the heading of place, however, promotes an examination of not only a place’s physical reality, but how it is shaped by, and shapes, the sense of place and location. For instance, a battlefield’s locale may include a monument, fences, picnic shelters, and sports facilities. The locale provides evidence not only about the activities that were happening there, but about the sense of place and location that both contribute to that external

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physical reality and are in turn shaped by it. Locale provides a way to examine a place’s physical reality, while its inclusion in the overall concept of place acknowledges the personal and social forces that mediate the creation and perception of that reality.

**Public Memory**

Like place, public memory is a complex concept that builds on decades of scholarship. Public memory is a kind of collective memory that is created and experienced in the public sphere, and it is meant to be widely circulated. It can happen in different elements of the public sphere such as newsprint, but also happens when groups gather to create and express a collective memory of a person, place, or event. This could be through the erection of a monument, a parade, or a commemorative ceremony. There can be multiple and at times conflicting public memories, but group members often uncritically accept public memories because they are not subject to the same ideal of investigation and scrutiny often demanded by historians. The concept of public memory is also closely tied to place. Groups select certain places, often those with organic connections to the past being remembered, and highlight these connections through various activities (such as erecting monuments) to reflect and promote a particular public memory. The former battlefields were places that had a strong connection to the public memory of the War of 1812 and were where groups often gathered to communicate, create, and negotiate that public memory.

The concept of public memory and groups’ role in creating it builds on the tradition of collective memory and the challenges it has faced. The origins of the study of collective memory are most often traced to French sociologist Maurice Halbwachs. A student of Emile Durkheim, Halbwachs authored two major works investigating the social aspects of memory: *The Social Frameworks of Memory* (1925), and *The Collective Memory*, published posthumously and
appearing in English in 1950.\textsuperscript{36} The main tenet of collective memory is that all memory is conditioned by membership in various groups such as family, class, and so on. In an oft-quoted passage Halbwachs states that, “it is in society that people normally acquire their memories. It is also in society that they recall, recognize, and localize their memories.”\textsuperscript{37} Halbwachs was interested in how memory was constituted within society, and theorized the existence of a collective memory and a social framework of memory. Halbwachs’ work on collective memory remained relatively unknown until the 1980s when the popularity of memory studies and the term collective memory exploded in both public and academic circles. Some scholars have traced this interest in collective memory to, among other things, the rise of multiculturalism, the fall of Communism, a politics of regret linked to the catastrophic events of World War II, or the rise of postmodernity and its questioning of concepts of truth and linear history.\textsuperscript{38} The concept’s popularity grew in the 1990s, spawning countless works from diverse fields including psychology, anthropology, philosophy, literature studies, sociology, and history. An analysis of the entire range of memory studies would likely form a doctoral thesis itself, but a brief examination of the theoretical underpinnings and debates surrounding collective memory will be useful in clarifying the theoretical approach and terminology adopted in this study to examine the battlefields’ role in reflecting and creating the public memory of the War of 1812.

Halbwachs recognized that society is made up of many social groups, and that individuals belong to a variety of these groups simultaneously. Writing in the interwar years, Halbwachs was in part arguing against developments in psychology that portrayed people as purely individual

\textsuperscript{36} Susan A. Crane, "Writing the Individual Back into Collective Memory," \textit{American Historical Review} 102, no. 5 (1997): 1376.


beings. Sigmund Freud was a famous advocate of this approach, and saw the individual unconscious as a repository of all memory, aspects of which are subsequently repressed. In contrast, for Halbwachs memories are recalled externally through interaction with other members of various groups; these social frameworks create what Halbwachs termed a collective memory.

Local historical societies and the NPC worked to promote a specific public memory, but these organizations and the public they were trying to influence were made up of individuals. Critics of Halbwachs’ theory of collective memory interrogate the role of individuals in it, alleging that he placed too much emphasis on the collective nature of society and did not address individuals’ roles in it. Halbwachs anticipated these criticisms and attempted to address them in *The Collective Memory*. Although people may seem to be alone, as in the case of an event that happened to one person and was never recounted to others, Halbwachs insisted that the individual is always surrounded by social frameworks. For instance, although a child may be alone in a room he or she is still a member of a family and remembers within that social framework. Halbwachs argued that every memory, though it may appear to be an individual one, is linked to social groups. As he recognized, proof of the existence of even one purely individual memory would undermine the universality of his theory. This insistence on an all-encompassing framework led Halbwachs to at times portray individuals as passive recipients of collective memory, and did not easily allow for flexibility or original thought. Several authors are not convinced by Halbwachs’ discussion of individual memory, and argue that his theory portrays the individual as “a sort of automaton, passively obeying the interiorized collective

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40Olick and Robbins, 109.
41Halbwachs, *On Collective Memory*, 38
will,” and reifies memory into an external body that is independent of individual thought.\textsuperscript{43} Historian Susan A. Crane, for instance, argues that Halbwachs’ theory assumes that groups have a single brain, and she argues instead that collective memory is, in the end, located in individuals who are thinking about the past.\textsuperscript{44} Similarly, Fentress and Wickham are critical of Halbwachs’ approach to the individual and advocate an approach that integrates both personal and collective memory.\textsuperscript{45} These critics argue that Halbwachs’ conception of collective memory relies on a reified, external memory, and they are correct that this type of external collective memory is limiting and does not allow for individual thought. Halbwachs, however, did not argue for the existence of an overpowering and external group memory. He rather suggested that the remembering we do as individuals is inseparable from our social contexts, stating that, “while the collective memory endures and draws strength from its base in a coherent body of people, it is individuals as group members who remember.”\textsuperscript{46} Halbwachs went to great lengths to situate individual memory within a social framework, but still recognized that it is individuals who do the remembering. Halbwachs and the concept of collective memory contribute the notion that there are underlying social structures that influence group memory, while recognizing that these groups are made up of individuals who are the ones doing the remembering within these frameworks. This study is concerned with groups such as local historical societies, but does not assume the existence of an externalized memory and recognizes that these groups were made up of individual members.

\textsuperscript{43}Fentress and Wickham, ix; Noa Gedi and Yigal Elam, "Collective Memory — what is it?" \textit{History and Memory} 8, no. 1 (1996): 34, 36.
\textsuperscript{44}Susan A. Crane, "Writing the Individual Back into Collective Memory," \textit{American Historical Review} 102, no. 5 (1997): 1381.
\textsuperscript{45}Fentress and Wickham, ix.
\textsuperscript{46} Halbwachs, \textit{The Collective Memory}, 48.
Halbwachs made another important contribution by recognizing that groups reconstruct their pasts, and in so doing often distort them.\textsuperscript{47} In Halbwachs’ words, “in reality the past does not recur as such...everything seems to indicate that the past is not preserved but is reconstructed on the basis of the present.”\textsuperscript{48} Indeed, the main premise of memory studies is that examining public memory reveals more about the contemporary society than about the events being remembered.\textsuperscript{49} Thus, the public memory members of local historical societies put forward that, for example, the War of 1812 was won because of the actions of loyal Upper Canadians does not provide convincing additional information about the events of the war itself.\textsuperscript{50} However, the members’ collective memory gives insight into their own concerns about Canada’s present and future position within the British Empire. Highlighting Upper Canadians’ loyalty communicated that the province’s citizens were, and remained, loyal to the Crown. Studying public memory does not necessarily add materially to our understanding of the events, person, or place being remembered, but it can reveal a great deal about group members’ present concerns.

Halbwachs’ conception of collective memory and groups’ distortions of the past raises the question of how members of a group can remember events that they or another member of the group have not witnessed. Anticipating this question, Halbwachs described two main types of collective memory: autobiographical and historical. Autobiographical memories are essentially events that a group member or that other members of the group have witnessed. Historical memory accounts for the collective memory of events from the distant past that the group has no

\textsuperscript{47}Halbwachs, On Collective Memory, 182-83.  
\textsuperscript{48}Ibid., 39-40.  
living link to and presents a condensed, simplified past. Halbwachs argued that historical memory is perpetuated by the group itself and passed down, kept alive by events such as commemorations and ceremonies. It is through historical memory that the collective memory of a long-past event is maintained. Both autobiographical and historical memory are important aspects of collective memory. These concepts strengthen the concept of collective memory by broadening its scope beyond lived memory, but by expanding the term’s meaning they simultaneously make it less precise.

Indeed, the relationship between memory and history was a heated aspect of the debates surrounding collective memory in the 1980s and early 1990s. Halbwachs argued that memory and formal history are fundamentally different. Halbwachs himself admitted that the term ‘historical memory’ is in some ways undesirable because it connects the concepts of history and memory that are in many ways oppositional. Adopting a somewhat naïve view of the role of the historian, Halbwachs asserted that formal history is different from collective memory because in writing objectively the historian is “independent of any group judgement.” Halbwachs also contended that history is only needed once a group’s collective memory begins to fade or break up. History, then, is an artificial representation of, or substitute for, collective memory. Pierre Nora’s wide-ranging and influential work on France’s lieux de mémoire furthers this argument. In Nora’s dramatic analysis history and memory are fundamentally opposed, and history’s goal is “to suppress and destroy [memory].” To Nora the modern age has seen the end of an organic tradition of memory, which has led to the creation of lieux de mémoire, remains of memory consciously created to try and regain an organic connection to the past. Echoing

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51 Halbwachs, *The Collective Memory*, 52, 54, 57, 82.
52 Halbwachs, *The Collective Memory*, 78.
53 Ibid., 83-84.
54 Ibid., 78-79.
Halbwachs, Nora contends that there is a fundamental divide between memory and history, essentially portraying history as dead memory. Both Halbwachs and Nora adopt, to varying degrees, the view that there is a fundamental difference between memory and history, and both contend that history is a replacement for collective memory.

Halbwachs and Nora faced many challenges that questioned the fundamental opposition between memory and history. This critique is best expressed in Raphael Samuel’s *Theatres of Memory*, which investigates history as a social form of knowledge embedded in everyday practices. Samuel rejects the strict opposition between public memory and history, arguing that history is not solely the prerogative of the historian, but is also created through public memory.56 Although not the first to do so, Samuel questions the ideal of objectivity proposed by Halbwachs, arguing that history, like memory, is malleable and conditioned by the needs of the present.57 Indeed, there have been many debates surrounding historians’ objectivity and the quest for ‘true’ history espoused by Ranke and assumed by Halbwachs. These debates essentially conclude that true objectivity, or ridding oneself of preconceptions and simply recounting things as they were, is impossible and may not be entirely desirable.58 However, fairly and honestly examining the past with as much detachment as possible remains, in Peter Novick’s words, “that noble dream” that historians strive towards.59 As Samuel points out, the strict differentiation between public memory and history is no longer tenable in current historiography.60 But, the fact remains that despite the growing array of non-traditional sources such as oral history and the multiple approaches taken to those sources, those who write history (and it is usually written) attempt to

59 Haskell, 137; Novick, 22- 29; See also Jacques Le Goff, *History and Memory* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1996), 114.
60 Samuel, x.
critically engage their sources in order to create as accurate a picture of the subject as possible. This is not to say that historians are independent of their group contexts, as Halbwachs suggests. As French historian Jacques Le Goff acknowledges, historians are affected by their political, social, and ideological contexts. However, Le Goff maintains that historians’ use of so-called ‘scientific methods’ and their pursuit of objectivity differentiates history from collective memory.61 As David Lowenthal argues in his wide-ranging *The Past is a Foreign Country*, history and memory differ in the approaches they take to gaining knowledge about the past.62 History and collective memory are not oppositional. They are rather different, yet linked, routes to understanding the past. Both approaches are conditioned by the present to varying degrees, but collective memory is not subject to the same critical process of investigation as history, whose practitioners attempt, with varying degrees of success, to create an accurate portrayal of the past. Despite these differences, however, in practice history and collective memory can be difficult to disentangle. Local historical society members, for instance, did not think of their activities as falling under the headings of history or collective memory. Beyond writing formal histories, for them these two understandings often blended together under the heading of a general ‘past.’ However, despite the occasional difficulty of differentiating between these approaches, the idea that collective memory and history are linked, but separate ways of understanding is useful in this study. The terms provide a way of differentiating between the more critical understanding of history presented by some of the local historical society members in their published histories and the more simplified, uncritical public memory often presented at the former battlefields.

In light of the debates about the form and meaning of collective memory, in the 1980s and 1990s many scholars became preoccupied with establishing what they saw as more specific

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61 Le Goff, xi, 10, 111.
or useful terms than collective memory. Noa Gedi and Yigal Elam in particular were concerned by the widespread and imprecise application of the term collective memory. In their spirited critique they contend that it has replaced other useful frameworks such as myth, and “has become the all-pervading concept which in effect stands for all sorts of human cognitive products generally.”

Although not all critics are as vociferous, many authors have tried to allay the confusion around the term collective memory by suggesting alternatives to it. Fentress and Wickham advocate the term social memory, arguing that it represents the combination of personal and collective memory. Other suggestions include myth, social memory studies, historical consciousness, and public memory.

Among these alternatives, public memory is a useful term that has been adopted by numerous scholars as a way to avoid the potential confusion engendered by the term collective memory. John Bodnar suggested the term in 1994. He contends that it reflects the interactions between what he calls the official and vernacular cultures in the formation of interpretations of the past. For Bodnar public memory “is fashioned ideally in a public sphere in which various parts of the social structure exchange views.”

This term is valuable in that it denotes the general body of beliefs about the past held by a society, while recognizing that these beliefs are often the product of interaction and negotiation in the public sphere. However, some scholars criticised Bodnar’s dichotomy between official and vernacular cultures due to its rigidity and

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63 Gedi and Elam, 40.  
64 Fentress and Wickham, ix.  
65 Gedi and Elam, 41; Olick, 346; Crane, 1373.  
67 Bodnar, 15.
simplicity, which did not allow for flexibility or changes over time.\textsuperscript{68} Despite these critiques, Bodnar’s linking of public memory to the public sphere is useful. It provides a more precise term than Halbwachs’ collective memory, which according to him can happen anywhere because social contexts underlie all memory, no matter the setting. Thoroughly discussed by Habermas through an examination of seventeenth and eighteenth-century Europe, the public sphere constitutes an arena of critical political discourse between bourgeois society and the state. The public sphere exists between the private sphere of the home and the official domain of the state and can include places like salons or coffee houses, or media technology such as newsprint.

Since Habermas’ pioneering \textit{The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere}, the concept of the public sphere has been debated at length and remains contested.\textsuperscript{69} Places like town squares, parks, streets, or the battlefields, along with media such as newsprint, books, or pamphlets are domains of critical public debate and constitute public spheres. Despite its contested nature, the concept of the public sphere is useful for studying public memory, as, unlike collective memory, public memory is limited to the public sphere.

Public memory is expressed in the public sphere, but once created it does not remain static. Groups create and express public memories based on their own interpretations of the past, and therefore manifestations of public memory such as monuments have an intended meaning when they are erected. However, these memories are subject to contestation and change. Edward


S. Casey has suggested that public memory is at once malleable and linked to an enduring past. Writing ten years after Bodnar’s *Remaking America* was published, Casey argues that public memory is itself based on uncertainty and fluidity. However, basing the concept of public memory solely on its inherent instability raises the spectre of a public memory that may in a sense mutate out of control, losing all connection with the past supposedly being remembered. Casey addresses this by arguing that although the essence of public memory rests in its ability to adapt, “there is a perduring past, legendary or historical, which is the persisting horizon of public memory.” These definitions of public memory stress struggle and contestation, but recognize that there is a limit to public memory’s ability to adapt and still maintain a connection with the past supposedly being remembered. Thus, although the public memory of an event, person, or battle may change, there remains a fundamental, underlying meaning behind that public memory.

Public memory was expressed at and shaped by the battlefields. Groups such as the local historical societies reflected and shaped a public memory of the War of 1812 at these places through structures such as monuments and events like the centennial. These groups and the battlefields as places communicated an intended public memory of the War of 1812, but this public memory could change over time or begin to decrease in prominence, as was the case at the former battlefields beginning in the 1910s. The public memory of the War of 1812 reflected and shaped by the battlefields was uncritical and meant to be spread amongst the population and was not subject to the same ideals of objectivity imposed on history. When participants gathered at Drummond Hill Cemetery for the centennial of the Battle of Lundy’s Lane they were both recipients of a particular public memory, and participated in creating that public memory in a place with an organic connection to the events being remembered.

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**Place, Public Memory, and Tourism**

Public memory is most often expressed in particular places, but until relatively recently the theoretical connections between place and public memory have been under-developed. For some scholars public memory plays out in anonymous and amorphous places, or a broadly conceived public sphere. This public sphere includes not only places like public squares and the former battlefields, but also the media that circulate in society such as newspapers and written histories. Recently the concept of place has begun to play a more prominent role in discussions of public memory that explore not only how certain places are selected and shaped into places where public memory is reflected and expressed, but how places can in turn influence that public memory. Groups often focus on certain locales as places where they can reflect and promote a certain public memory because the places have some sort of organic connection to the past being remembered. The former battlefields were such places because they were where the battles of the War of 1812 happened and therefore many saw them as having a special connection to the public memory of those events. Looking at these places provides insight into groups’ efforts to highlight the places’ existing connections to the War of 1812 and to promote a particular public memory through statuary and ceremony. Approaching the battlefields as places also provides a lens through which to examine multiple issues linked to those places such as the relationship between public memory and issues of gender, race, and nature. This approach is valuable in examining the public memory of the War of 1812 in Niagara, which was closely connected to that conflict’s former battlefields. The former battlefields were places with organic connections to the past being remembered that groups like local historical societies helped further shape into places where the public memory of the War of 1812 was reflected and communicated.

Some scholars use the term *lieux de mémoire* in discussions of place and memory, a term coined by French historian Pierre Nora. Nora recognizes that certain places can function as *lieux
"lieux de mémoire," or "sites of memory," which is where "memory crystallizes and secretes itself." Some authors have adopted the term *lieux de mémoire* as a shorthand for referring to locales, a practice that may be rooted in part in the English translation of the term as sites of memory or the translated title of Nora’s edited volumes as *Realms of Memory*, both of which evoke place-based images. The recent historiographical emphasis on place has also led some scholars to emphasize locales as *lieux de mémoire* and downplay the non-physical *lieux*, such as novels, that Nora also describes. Nora’s idea of *lieux de mémoire*, although it has at times been adopted as a shorthand for places, does not propose as strong a connection between place and memory as the term’s occasional use implies. Nora recognizes that places can be *lieux de mémoire*, but for him place is not essential or even necessarily desired. Therefore, the term *lieux de mémoire* will not be used here due to the conceptual confusion it may cause in a study focussing on place and public memory.

Other research has explored the connections between public memory and place and has shown that the two concepts are closely linked. In *The Collective Memory* Halbwachs devoted a chapter to the connection between collective memory and place, contending that “every collective memory unfolds within a spatial [place-based] framework.” He argued that places and groups “imprint” each other, so that different stages of group life are transferred into place, and that places have meanings that are understandable only to members of a particular group. Even those groups, like economic groups, that seem to lack a place-based framework are still linked to place, even if it is only an image of it. For instance, in thinking of economics North

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71 Nora, "Between Memory and History," 7.
74 Halbwachs, *The Collective Memory*, 140.
75 Ibid., 130.
Americans today might think of a bank, which Halbwachs terms a place-based, “framework of the institutions where we must go to sign papers and withdraw or deposit funds.”\(^76\) Although modern digital technology may render Halbwachs’ example less forceful, his detailing of the place-based memories associated with the family home as a uniting force for members of the family group rings true.\(^77\) For Halbwachs place and collective memory are inseparable, as groups both form their places according to social frameworks and these places are in turn part of that group’s collective memory.

In contrast to Halbwachs’ collective memory, public memory is negotiated and communicated in the public sphere. This study examines public memory through an investigation of the former battlefields as places and through media such as published travelogues, historical accounts, newspapers, and annual reports. Places in general can be either public or private, but public places are emphasized in this dissertation. This is not only because the relationship between place and public memory has been relatively understudied, but because the two concepts are intimately connected. In Canada geographer Brian S. Osborne has explored how place and public memory intersect to promote nationalism and state power. Drawing on Benedict Anderson’s concept of the imagined community, Osborne has argued that Canadians identifying with particular places, such as national monuments or iconic locales, is necessary for the creation of what he terms an “a-where-ness” of national identity.\(^78\) Osborne argues that the production of public memory is “acted out on, bounded by, and bonded with, particular places.”\(^79\)

Casey expands on the connection between place and public memory in 2004’s *Framing Memory*. For Casey place is essential to public memory, as according to him, “public memory is not a

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\(^76\)Ibid., 138.
\(^77\) Ibid., 129-130.
\(^78\)Anderson; Osborne, “From Native Pines,” 147-175; Osborne, “Landscapes, Memory, Monuments, and Commemoration,” 40.
\(^79\)Osborne, “From Native Pines,” 152. Emphasis in original.
nebulous pursuit that can occur anywhere; it always occurs in some particular place.”

Casey’s interpretation of place’s role in public memory may be too narrow in the context of this study, as it excludes other elements of the public sphere such as print media. Casey’s interpretation also ignores the role place images like the bank described by Halbwachs above can play in public memory. However, Casey’s observations support the contention that place plays an important role in reflecting and creating public memory. The relationship between public memory and place is a growing area of study both in Canada and beyond, with many scholars contending not only that place is important in reflecting public memory, but that places may also influence that memory.

Groups select and shape certain places to reflect and communicate a public memory, but recent research has also suggested that places are more than stages for public memory. Many scholars examining this issue do not see places as simply reflecting or triggering public memory, but suggest that places play a role in forming it. For instance, Osborne argues that groups both create places and in turn draw on them to create their identities. Claire Campbell adopts a similar premise in her examination of nature and culture in Georgian Bay, arguing that “place is a site of exchange where influence flows in both directions.” Julie Cruikshank takes this principle one step further in her Do Glaciers Listen? Cruikshank shows that in the late 18th and 19th centuries natural and cultural histories were “entangled” in a particular place, the St. Elias Mountains. Her study takes this place as its focus, and not only illustrates the different perceptions Europeans and the Athabascan and Tlingit peoples had of the locale, but argues that place itself is active in authoring its own history through its own geophysical changes, such as

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80 Casey, “Public Memory,” 32.
81 Osborne, “From Native Pines,” 149.
82 Campbell, 12.
the movement of glaciers, which in turn influence the interpretation of the locale. Few examinations of place and public memory revolve around such dramatic geophysical changes as Cruikshank’s does, but her study demonstrates that place is more than a stage where public memory is enacted. More recently, the editors of *Placing Memory and Remembering Place in Canada* argue that places, particularly local places, are shaped by memory and commemoration while simultaneously contributing to the creation of public memory. A growing number of studies also contend that certain places draw public memory to them more than others, and that they can have an effect on public memory.

A place’s relationship to public memory is often both organic and created, as groups seek out places, often those with organic connections to the past, then shape the public memory the places communicate through various activities such as erecting monuments. However, some places are more closely associated with the past being publicly remembered than others. In his examination of early Christianity and the Holy Land Halbwachs points out that groups seek out places to anchor collective memories, but that these places may change according to contemporary needs and aspirations. Groups can arbitrarily select places that may not have a clear, organic connection to the past being remembered, but they more often seek out certain places because of their organic connection to the past. Due to that connection they often then try to shape the place to further reflect and influence a particular public memory.

Local historical societies selected the Niagara battlefields for commemorative activities and structures because the places, as the former places of battle, had an organic connection to the events of the War of 1812 and its public memory. With the cooperation of the federal government and the NPC, local historical societies then enhanced the places’ connections to the

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84 James Opp and John C. Walsh, eds. *Placing Memory and Remembering Place in Canada* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2010).
War of 1812 by erecting monuments and holding commemorative gatherings there. They felt that as places the battlefields had a close relationship with the historical events that happened there; as Edward Casey argues, “a given place will invite certain [public] memories while discouraging others.”

This is not to say that there was always agreement amongst or between groups as to where to erect monuments or hold events. As Graham, Ashworth, and Tunbridge point out, once place is involved in issues of public memory some places are bound to have more, less, or different public memories than others, a process that can lead to conflict. Which battlefields should be home to monuments to Laura Secord was a source of heated debate amongst historical society members, as the benefits and drawbacks of several former battlefields as places to anchor her public memory were the subject of heated debate.

Certain places are more amenable to public memory than others, both through organic connections and created ones. These places are often modified to enhance or highlight their connection to a public memory. In their introduction to *Places of Public Memory* Carole Blair, Greg Dickinson, and Brian L. Ott argue that particular places such as museums, memorials, and battlefields “are more closely associated with public memory than others.” For his part, Casey states that certain places, such as memorials, may be more conducive to public memory than others. These places at the least facilitate memory, and in the case of monuments can “in certain cases embody the memory itself.” Indeed, wars and the monuments erected to commemorate them have been a focus of scholars examining public memory, many of whom have investigated

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89 Casey, “Public Memory,” 32.
the public memory of the Great War. In Canada the legacy of the Conquest has also been a fertile field of study, with historians from both French and English Canada contributing to an ongoing dialogue about the public memory of the events of 1759. According to Stefan Goebel in his examination of Great War monuments, memorials are “the most visible, and, arguably, the most significant manifestation of collective remembrance.” Perhaps because memorials themselves and the records about them are often available, historians examining public memory have long turned to them as sources. This study investigates the forms of monuments built on the former battlefields, as well as the organizations, events, and debates that played a role in erecting them. Those who supported erecting the monuments wanted to communicate a certain public memory of the War of 1812 through their forms and inscriptions. The place-based approach adopted in this study encourages studying the places the monuments were erected in addition to the structures themselves to give insight into the public memory they were intended to communicate. The fact that these monuments were built on the former battlefields was significant for their supporters, as they helped to solidify the places’ connections to the loyal death and sacrifice of those who fought in the War of 1812. The points on the battlefield historical society members chose as homes for the new monuments are also significant. The monuments were erected on the highest points of the locales available, a placement that supporters likely hoped would further solidify the places’ connections to the war’s public


91See, for example, Phillip Buckner and John G. Reid, eds., *Remembering 1759: The Conquest of Canada in Historical Memory* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2012).

92Goebel, 23.
memory. Changes in the uses and perceptions of these monuments over time also become more visible when one examines the places as a whole, rather than focusing solely on monuments’ lead up and construction. For instance, the monuments to Laura Secord on the former battlefields of Lundy’s Lane and Queenston Heights did not play a notable role in commemorative ceremonies there after they were erected. The study of monuments’ forms, inscriptions, and supporters is important to understanding public memory, but the places they were erected also merit study.

The late 1980s and early 1990s saw a surge of interest in the study of war memorials. Robert Shipley’s *To Mark Our Place: A History of Canadian War Memorials* appeared in 1987, and was among the first to approach war memorials as subjects of study in their own right. In 1990 Colin McIntyre approached monuments as primary sources by analysing their engravings, including the names, ranks, ages, and awards of those listed. Jonathan Vance’s study of the Canadian public memory of the Great War examines a wider variety of sources, including the iconography of many of the monuments erected in the interwar period. The analysis of memorial forms is worthwhile, but investigating the ‘behind the scenes’ aspect of memorials such as their funding sources, who was involved in their erection, and debates about their locations and forms provides a more in-depth understanding of both the public memory that supporters were attempting to reflect and promote, and of public memory’s relationship to place than an observation of the end product alone would. In his investigation of the loyalist tradition Norman Knowles examines some of the debates behind the erection of monuments to Joseph Brant, Laura Secord, and Barbara Heck, noting that “every monument has a social history.”

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95 J. Vance, see for example 17-20.
96 Knowles, 115.
Investigating the process behind erecting monuments provides evidence about the public memory the group erecting the monument was trying to communicate and their motivations for doing so. In her work on Laura Secord Cecilia Morgan has also investigated the erection of monuments to the heroine and includes details of the behind the scenes debates about the proper location and size of monuments to her.\(^97\) Although examining monuments and the story of their erection provide insights into efforts to shape the public memory of an event, with the exception of Morgan’s, most of the works discussed above do not examine the complex relationship between memorials and the places they were erected.

Examining the relationship between memorials and place is a fruitful, and sometimes neglected, pursuit. For scholars thinking about place and public memory monuments often serve as focal points that link public memory to specific places. Although public memory is fluid and the product of ongoing negotiation, those who erect monuments and hold commemorative ceremonies attempt to create a public memory that is fixed. In his examination of American Civil War monuments Kirk Savage contends that monuments anchor intangible public memory in fixed and tangible locations.\(^98\) Osborne agrees, arguing that memorials try to “freeze ideas in space and time,” hence the selection of long-lasting materials such as bronze and granite.\(^99\) Despite these efforts, once monuments are erected in the public sphere they are subject to multiple, changing interpretations. As Halbwachs noted, groups remake their pasts in light of present concerns, a process that can be applied to representations of that past such as monuments. In the United States James M. Mayo highlights the changing nature of society’s perceptions of memorials that are themselves unchanging. He argues that because memorials

\(^{97}\) Coates and Morgan, 195-207.
serve a variety of audiences multiple coexisting meanings are unavoidable.\textsuperscript{100} Public memory’s connection to the public sphere means that places and the memorials erected there can have multiple meanings for different groups. Like public memory itself, the meanings of monuments can also change over time. Osborne has demonstrated the changing meanings of Montreal’s George Etienne Cartier monument between 1910 and 1997, from an Empire-focused celebration of bi-national Canada to a symbolic centre for tam-tam players.\textsuperscript{101} Despite their potential for multiple interpretations, monuments do have intended meanings that are meant to contribute to the public memory of an event and remain unchanging through the ages. As discussed above, certain places privilege certain public memories over others, and monuments contribute to creating that meaning. They can have multiple, changing meanings, but monuments, like the places they are erected, reflect and communicate a particular public memory while obscuring or downplaying competing ones.\textsuperscript{102} While recognizing that memorials’ meanings can change through time, the form and inscriptions of the Niagara Frontier monuments will be addressed in this dissertation to give insight into the public memory of the War of 1812 that their supporters intended to communicate at the time of their erection.

Monuments and ceremonies help to tie public memory to particular places, often those with some sort of organic connection to the past. These connections to the past and the monuments erected to highlight them can become tourist destinations, as tourists may visit to experience a closer connection to the past by being in the places memorable events happened. After the War of 1812’s conclusion many tourists were drawn to the former battlefields in part to experience a closer connection with romanticized ideals of death and conflict, and although their

\textsuperscript{100} James M. Mayo, \textit{War Memorials as Political Landscape: The American Experience and Beyond} (New York: Praeger, 1988).
\textsuperscript{101} Osborne, “Constructing Landscapes of Power.”
motivations for visiting the places began to shift noticeably after the Great War, tourists continued to visit the former battlefields throughout the period under study. Tourism became the subject of scholarly investigation in the mid-1970s, and in 1976 Dean MacCannell published his influential *The Tourist*, an examination of the relationships between modern society and mass leisure that focusses on tourism and sight-seeing.\(^\text{103}\) John Urry built on MacCannell’s work and published *The Tourist Gaze* in 1990. Urry contends that this gaze seeks out experiences that are pleasurable and distinct from everyday life. Urry’s work focusses on modern society, but he emphasizes the tourist gaze’s changeable nature. The gaze is dependent not only on the views of different social groups, but on the historical period; for instance, Urry traces the rise and fall of British seaside resorts.\(^\text{104}\) Some have critiqued Urry’s focus on the visual, but despite this his work remains influential in tourism research.\(^\text{105}\)

More recently, tourism has been defined by the World Tourism Office and some authors as travel to a place involving a stay of one night, but less than one year, away from home.\(^\text{106}\) As some authors have argued, this definition is restrictive and does not reflect the varied nature of tourism, especially to nearby destinations that may be more easily accessible and not require an overnight stay.\(^\text{107}\) For instance, many tourists who visited the former battlefields were on day trips from nearby centres such as Toronto. Here Urry’s concept of seeking experiences that are different from the everyday is useful, as although many tourists did not stay for at least one


\(^{105}\) For critiques see, for example, Adrian Franklin and Mike Crang, “The trouble with tourism and travel theory?” *Tourist Studies* 1, no. 1 (2001): 14; Jennifer Iles, “Recalling the Ghosts of War: Performing Tourism on the Battlefields of the Western Front.” *Text and Performance Quarterly* 26, no.2 (April 2006): 163.


night, they were experiencing something different from everyday life.\textsuperscript{108} Either through public memory or creating an idealized nature, both the local historical societies and the NPC worked to shape the former battlefields into places that were special and separate from the quotidian. Those who visited the sites, then, can be defined as tourists in the sense that they were traveling to the battlefields in pursuit of experiences beyond the everyday.

Although E.J. Hart published an examination of the relationship between tourism and the Canadian Pacific Railroad in 1983, the history of tourism in Canada and elsewhere has only received more widespread attention in the past two decades.\textsuperscript{109} With a few exceptions, notably Patricia Jasen’s \textit{Wild Things}, little work has examined the early history of tourism in Ontario.\textsuperscript{110} Many of the available publications on the history of tourism concentrate on Niagara Falls - an understandable focus as the falls were, and remain, a dominant attraction. Several American scholars have investigated tourism to the falls in the nineteenth century, with William Irwin’s \textit{The New Niagara}, which examines the falls’ transition from a natural to technological sublime, venturing into the early twentieth century.\textsuperscript{111} Although they provide insight into the tourism industry, works such as Karen Dubinsky’s \textit{The Second Greatest Disappointment} and \textit{The New

\textsuperscript{108}Urry, 2-3.


Niagara concentrate on the falls to the exclusion of other nearby attractions. Many early visitors to the former battlefields first came to the area to visit Niagara Falls, but this does not warrant ignoring other attractions such as the former battlefields in an examination of tourism on the Niagara Frontier.

Places and their associated public memories can have multiple meanings and change through time, and the same is true of tourism. The study of battlefield tourism has been growing for the past fifteen years. Much of the literature, such as David W. Lloyd’s *Battlefield Tourism*, concentrates on travel to Great War battlefields. Despite this concentration, scholars such as Thomas A. Chambers are beginning to examine nineteenth century battlefield tourism in a sustained way. In discussing tourism after 1912 John Lennon and Malcolm Foley label travel to battlefields, along with visits to concentration camps, assassination sites, and sites of disaster, as ‘dark tourism.’ Lennon and Foley see dark tourism as a purely modern phenomenon, but A.V. Seaton traces its development back to the Middle Ages in Europe, using the term ‘thanatourism’ to describe visiting a place in order to experience actual or symbolic encounters with violent death. Applying the term dark tourist or thanatourist to those who visited the Niagara Frontier battlefields is misleading, however. Although many early tourists went there because of the places’ connections to the public memory of the war and indulged in reveries about the violent past influenced by the romantic ideal, they were not motivated solely by a

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114 Chambers.
desire to symbolically encounter violent death. Many nineteenth century tourists were originally drawn to the Niagara Frontier by its famous falls and included a visit to the battlefields as part of their search for the sublime. Additionally, although a great deal of the battlefields’ attraction lay in their wartime past, tourists were also interested in the places’ scenic beauty and incorporated it into their romantic ideals. Tourists’ motivations for visiting the former battlefields also changed over time, as beginning in the 1910s and noticeably after the Great War they seemed to enjoy the former battlefields more as destinations for experiencing nature and recreation than as places associated with death and sacrifice in the War of 1812. Despite early tourists’ interest in seeing the places of battle where violent death had happened, the terms dark tourism and thanatourism place artificial limitations on the mixed and changing motivations tourists had for visiting these places.

Interested tourists may have attended some of the many commemorative ceremonies held on the former battlefields, although this is difficult to determine through available sources. However, many prominent local politicians, local historical society members, and other representatives participated in numerous annual commemorations on the former battlefields, notably monument unveilings and the centennial celebrations in 1912 and 1914. Many scholars argue that the connection between public memory and place is often created through not only physical structures such as monuments, but through repetitive and nearly unchanging commemorative events. These events help to reinforce the intended meanings of places and their monuments. Geographers Steven Hoelscher and Derek H. Alderman confirm that although the relationship between public memory and place is perhaps most obvious through the lens of material culture, the relationship is equally a performative one.117 Paul Connerton’s How

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Societies Remember offers an influential exploration of the role of commemorative ceremonies, arguing that they play a significant part in the creation and attempted maintenance of public memory.118 The Lundy’s Lane centennial and the annual commemorations held on the battlefield in the preceding years were repetitive annual events. There was some variation in the exact details of each anniversary gathering at the former battlefields, but the overall public memory stressing loyalty and manly sacrifice remained consistent in the period under study. After the Lundy’s Lane centennial one newspaper reported that at the ceremony, “memories that Canada will not suffer to die, were revived and revered anew.”119

However, one should be cautious of placing too much emphasis on the repetitive temporality of commemorative ceremonies. Although many events, including commemorations of the Battle of Lundy’s Lane, happened at the same time and place annually, there were a wide variety of commemorative events that may not necessarily have happened with such regularity. One prominent example is the unveiling and dedication of monuments, which are by their nature most likely one-time events. Organizers may attempt to link the unveiling of a monument to the anniversary of the battle most closely associated with it, but the complex realities of planning and executing a monument can make this impossible. This does not diminish the importance of these events; on the Niagara Frontier many unveiling ceremonies were better attended than the annual celebrations. As Osborne argues, “places of memory are buttressed by…acts of commemoration.”120 Although they may not necessarily happen with fixed regularity, commemorative ceremonies serve to link memory and place together through performance, often with the added support of a monument serving as a physical place-marker.

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119 “The Battle of Lundy’s Lane,” The Mail and Empire, 27 July 1914, Lundy’s Lane Historical Society Fonds, F1137, Box MU 1747, Archives of Ontario (AO).
Because monuments attempt to create a concrete link between public memory and place, it follows that the places themselves should be studied with the same rigour as the monuments in them have been. Nora recognizes that some lieux draw their significance from their placement and “being rooted in the ground,” but he contends that the meaning of monuments is in the fact of their existence; although thought goes into their placement, “one could justify relocating them without altering their meaning.”121 Antoine Prost, however, argues against Nora in his examination of French Great War monuments in volume two of Realms of Memory. Prost contends that “the significance of the monuments stems first of all from the fact that the space in which they stand is charged with meaning,” and argues that the choice of where to erect a village’s memorial “was not an innocent one.”122 The placement of a monument can in some cases be more contested than the monument itself, as was the case with debates surrounding the potential placing of the Laura Secord monuments at Beaver Dams, Lundy’s Lane, and Queenston Heights. The general place the monument is erected is important, but its specific placement in the locale can give clues as to the monument’s intended meaning. On the frontier battlefields the placement of battle monuments on prominent points was intended to mark them as places with important connections to the public memory of the War of 1812. The placement, form, and erection of monuments provide valuable insights into a place’s intended public memory, but focussing on the monument’s form alone does not provide a nuanced understanding of the monument itself or of the relationship between public memory and place. This study addresses these issues by examining the monuments erected on the former battlefields and the debates surrounding them, as well as their connections to place.

121 Nora, “Between Memory and History,” 22.
Place and public memory are closely connected, as public memory is communicated through place and is also shaped by it. Place’s connections to public memory can be both created and organic, and groups like Niagara’s local historical societies highlighted the former battlefields’ organic connections to the War of 1812 by erecting monuments and holding commemorative ceremonies there. The public memory associated with places can change, and different groups can interpret places in a variety of ways that may or may not conform to the place’s intended commemorative meaning. Tourists began visiting the former battlefields shortly after the conflict’s end, and many of them were largely motivated to see where the war’s dramatic events had happened. Beginning in the 1910s and accelerating after the Great War the battlefields’ associations with death and sacrifice began to shift towards being more places of natural beauty and recreation not clearly associated with the places’ pasts. The numbers of tourists visiting the former battlefields grew, with most taking part in recreational activities such as picnics and sport using amenities provided to them by the NPC. The battlefields were created as places where public memory was reflected and transmitted, and although their motivations shifted over time, tourists were drawn to the battlefields both to be close to the war’s public memory and to experience a socially constructed vision of the ‘natural’ world.

**Outline**

Place, public memory, and tourism are complex concepts that interact to produce a more nuanced understanding of the frontier battlefields than an examination of one concept in isolation would. Adopting former Niagara Frontier War of 1812 battlefields at the centre of this study will give insight into how and why the War of 1812’s public memory was reflected and shaped at the battlefields, as places, over time. Adopting a place-based approach also allows for the examination of activities on the former battlefields that were not directly connected to public memory. These places had multiple, layered identities that reflected and influenced societal
ideals about the role of the past and of the natural world in a province undergoing rapid change. The Niagara Frontier battlefields had a close, reciprocal relationship with the public memory of the War of 1812. Between the 1880s and 1920s the Niagara Frontier’s War of 1812 battlefields were bound up in ideas about the past and nature and their role in an increasingly modern world. Over the period under study the battlefields were places that reflected and influenced the public memory of the War of 1812 and the role of nature in society. These meanings coexisted, but beginning in the 1910s and accelerating after the Great War the battlefields’ meanings began to shift towards becoming places of life and nature rather than places associated with death and noble sacrifice in the War of 1812.

Chapter one investigates the Niagara Frontier’s history from the American Revolution to the 1880s, with a focus on our current understanding of the events of the War of 1812 and the political rhetoric and early histories that helped shape the public memory of it. The chapter also addresses how this public memory’s organic connection to the former battlefields was strengthened through monuments, travelogues and guidebooks, and the imaginations of early tourists. Chapter two examines the establishment of two contemporary groups that had a profound effect on the frontier battlefields in the period under study: the local history movement and the NPC. The leaders of the local historical societies were mostly middle class amateur historians with familial and professional ties to the Niagara region. The NPC was a creation of the Ontario government that was granted far-reaching powers, including authority to acquire lands along the Niagara River. Many of the former battlefields were threatened by industrial development and urbanization, and the local historical societies increasingly turned to the NPC to save them. For the local historical societies the battlefields were places with close connections to the history and public memory of the War of 1812 that needed to be preserved. The NPC was
not unaware of the places’ scenic beauty, but also seemed to recognize their connections to the War of 1812, and its members promoted themselves as their guardians. By concentrating on monuments and ceremonies, Chapter 3 explores the connections between the public memory of the war and its former battlefields and shows that the places reflected and influenced the public memory of the War of 1812. Historical society members and their supporters erected monuments at strategic points on the former battlefields’ locales, and speakers at ceremonies drew on the places to add weight to the public memory of the war that stressed sacrifice, Britishness, manliness, and peace. Supplementing and contesting this public memory of the war is the subject of Chapter 4. Both women and the Six Nations representatives put forward supplementary or alternative public memories on the former battlefields. Women and their supporters erected monuments to Laura Secord to demonstrate women’s ability to contribute to the nation, while Six Nations representatives drew on their presence on the former battlefields and their ancestors’ actions there to call for political representation. The battlefields as places provided opportunities to negotiate the war’s public memory, but despite their efforts the public memory of the conflict remained focused on male Anglo-Saxon loyalty to Britain. Romantic ideals of nature also heavily influenced the development of the former battlefields as parks, as investigated in Chapter 5. At the same time that historical societies were highlighting the former battlefields’ connections to the War of 1812 the NPC was creating places of nature and recreation that reflected changing ideas about the proper role of parks in society. The organization’s development of Drummond Hill Cemetery also indicates changing attitudes towards death, and suggests that the place’s association with sacrifice in the War of 1812 may have been beginning to diminish. Chapter 6 offers some brief observations on the 1920s. In the aftermath of the Great War and in a period of rapidly expanding scholarly and entertainment options the significance of
the public memory of the War of 1812 and the former battlefields’ connections to it declined. While the activities of the local historical societies were declining, the Historic Sites and Monuments Board (HSMB) worked to perpetuate the public memory of the War of 1812 rooted in ideals of loyalty and sacrifice. Despite the seeming compatibility of these ideals with the traditionalist public memory of the Great War, the 1812-14 war’s public memory and its ties to the former battlefields faded in this period. Meanwhile, the NPC continued to develop the frontier’s popular battlefields as recreational destinations with a growing number of amenities for play and sport.
Chapter 1 – Niagara and the War of 1812

This chapter examines the history of the Niagara Frontier and its battlefields from the American Revolution to the 1880s, with a focus on the War of 1812 and early tourism to its Niagara Frontier battlefields. This account of the war is drawn from our current historical understanding of the conflict, and is supplemented by and compared with early histories of the war written up to the mid-1880s. This approach will help to illustrate the early public memory of the war these histories helped to reflect and create, and how this public memory both adhered to and deviated from our current understanding of the war’s events. In general, early historians sought to combat the influence of American publications on Upper Canada’s youth and to create a public memory that would unify the province. After the war there was a premium on loyalty to the crown, and many politicians stressed not only their own loyalty during the war, but portrayed the province’s inhabitants as making up the loyal militia who had single-handedly saved the colony, although recent scholarship has convincingly argued against this view. Writing in this climate, early historians stressed the virtue of loyalty.

The province’s public memory was reflected and influenced by the province’s politicians and early historians, but tourists’ guidebooks and travelogues also played a role in the public memory of the war and helped tie it to the battlefields as places. After the war the growing popularity of Niagara Falls as a tourist destination meant that there were many tourists in the area, and early tourism to the frontier battlefields is examined here through contemporary guidebooks and travelogues. Guidebooks encouraged tourists to travel to the former battlefields and suggested how they should experience them, while travelogues contain some visitors’ accounts of their encounters with these places. Early tourists were drawn to the battlefields in part to experience a close, place-based connection to the events of the War of 1812 through imagining the events of the battles in the places where they happened. The wartime events of the
Niagara Frontier were a focus for early historians and tourists, but also commemorators who erected monuments honouring Isaac Brock, including one on Queenston Heights in 1824.¹ The monument, as well as tangible reminders of battles such as the ruins of forts, linked the mythic events of the war to their associated places and tourists travelled to them in part to experience a closer connection to the battles that happened there. This motivation, however, coexisted with an appreciation for the locale’s picturesque beauty. The coexistence of these two perceptions of the places – as both places connected to the public memory of the war and places of picturesque beauty – was established in the early to mid-nineteenth century, and continued into the twentieth. Early histories, political rhetoric, monuments, guidebooks, and travelogues helped express and shape the public memory of the war and formed the background for the emergence of the local historical societies and NPC in the mid-1880s.

**Early Politics and Histories**

Early histories of the war and politicians’ speeches helped to shape the public memory of the conflict. This was partly due to the population’s increased literacy and knowledge of events elsewhere in the province fostered by the War of 1812. After the war many ordinary Upper Canadians became more aware of the province’s politics, a situation that erupted into heated political debates in the 1820s and 30s.² The province’s political rhetoric stressing loyalty to the Crown in part through serving in the War of 1812 was therefore circulated in the public sphere amongst a growing segment of the population. Increasing literacy rates and the province’s nascent education system³ also meant that a growing number of people could access histories of

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the conflict written between 1830 and 1880. Some scholars have demonstrated that written histories can play a role in reflecting and shaping the public memory of an event. For instance, in his examination of the memory of Dollard des Ormeaux Patrice Groulx employs written historical narratives and the contexts of their production as an effective tool for examining the changing public memory of the Québécois hero.4 Early histories of the War of 1812 were located in the public sphere through the medium of print, and their authors hoped that the works and their patriotic messages would be as widely circulated as possible. The early histories discussed below shared the goal of creating a Canadian interpretation of the War of 1812 to counter American accounts and provide a unifying past. Indeed, in his study of nationalism Benedict Anderson argues that, among other factors, print capitalism and history played important roles in creating the “imagined community” of the nation.5 Taken together, the political rhetoric and early histories addressing the War of 1812 were part of the public sphere and played a role in both reflecting and shaping the public memory of the conflict.

Early histories were written to educate and instil patriotism, and their authors further blurred the already uncertain lines between public memory and history. Although history and public memory are not entirely oppositional, early to mid-nineteenth century authors were not bound by the same professional standards as later historians, and unabashedly wrote their histories to promote certain socio-political goals to an extent that would not be acceptable by later standards. Flowery prose and elements of historical fiction made many appearances in these works and demonstrate, in Cecilia Morgan’s words, “the permeability of history-writing’s

5 B. Anderson, 43, 197.
boundaries” in the early to mid-nineteenth century. For instance, in his 1864 history of the conflict William F. Coffin added a fictional cow to the story of Laura Secord’s trek to warn James Fitzgibbon of an impending American attack, discussed further below. These authors’ works included literary flourish and at times took liberties with what we now understand as historical facts, as further demonstrated in the following section. These authors penned accounts of the war that drew on both historical research and literary devices to create stirring and inspiring accounts of Upper Canada’s loyalist founders and the War of 1812. In his examination of histories of the war from both sides of the border S.F. Wise contends that “for all [authors], not impartial history but memorable testimony to the national virtues was their purpose.”

Although the authors did pen histories that aimed to inspire patriotism and counteract American influence, it is an anachronism to expect them to produce so-called impartial histories in this time period. Those writing these histories were, like all historians, influenced by their social and political contexts, which for most of the nineteenth century did not include professional standards for historians. As Donald Wright and others have shown, in Canada history as a profession did not exist until the late 1880s and 1890s. The accounts written by authors in the early and mid-nineteenth century were products of the authors’ social and political contexts and give insight into their contemporary concerns. More importantly for this study, these works reflected and contributed to the public memory of the conflict before the creation of the local historical societies and NPC in the mid-1880s. These histories of the war, along with the political

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8 Wise, 107.
9 Donald A. Wright, The Professionalization of History in English Canada (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2005); see also M. Brook Taylor, Promoters, Patriots, and Partisans: Historiography in Nineteenth-Century English Canada (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1989).
rhetoric and early monuments discussed further below, reflected and shaped the public memory of the conflict and formed the basis for the public memory of the war at the turn of the century.

The early public memory of the War of 1812 in Upper Canada was heavily imbued with the sentiment of loyalty to the Crown, a sentiment that also played a large part in the province’s post-war political climate. A dominant theme of this public memory was that at the outbreak of the War of 1812 the citizens of Upper Canada rallied to its defence, leaving their homes and families to fight the American invaders. This public memory, known as the militia myth, originated during the war and continued into the twentieth century. John Strachan, Anglican Rector of York and later Bishop of Upper Canada, first expressed this idea after the victory at Detroit and the defence of Queenston in 1812, discussed in detail below. Strachan exaggerated the role of the militia in these victories, stating, “it will be told by the future Historian, that the Province of Upper Canada, without the assistance of men or arms, except a handful of regular troops, repelled its invaders.” After the war Strachan expressed the belief that the war had purified the province and that Upper Canadians had proven their loyalty by banding together to resist the American invasion. The militia myth holds that when war broke out so many residents wanted to join the militia that there were not enough weapons to arm them. However, recent scholarship, particularly George Sheppard’s *Plunder, Profit, and Paroles*, convincingly demonstrates that this was not the case. The militia myth continued well into the nineteenth century, kept alive in part by the province’s political climate.

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12 Coffin, 41; Sheppard.
Although loyalty had formed part of the Upper Canadian social fabric since 1750, the rhetoric of loyalty became central to Upper Canadian politics after the War of 1812.\(^\text{13}\) John Strachan and the Family Compact, an oligarchy that ensured those with complementary political views received appointments throughout the province, used the militia myth to their own political advantage by portraying themselves as loyal defenders of the province.\(^\text{14}\) Although many Upper Canadians envied the United States’ rapid economic growth, the members of the Compact believed that Upper Canada must remain a part of the British Empire and adopted measures, such as limiting American immigration, to protect the province from American encroachment.\(^\text{15}\) In the 1820s the War of 1812 increasingly came to symbolize unity and loyalty to the Empire, and a new generation of public figures pointed to their service in the war to gain political advantage.\(^\text{16}\) In the 1820s and 30s a group of reformers began to agitate for responsible government, complaining that the Family Compact ignored public opinion and ran the government as a self-serving and nepotistic oligarchy.\(^\text{17}\) The rhetoric of loyalty became more heated in the political agitation leading up to the rebellions and the union of the Canadas in 1841, with members of the Family Compact portraying reformers as disloyal.\(^\text{18}\) In this political climate being able to point to one’s loyal service in the Upper Canadian militia that had supposedly saved Canada from American invasion was a definite advantage.

\(^{13}\) Jerry Bannister, "Canada as Counter-Revolution: The Loyalist Order Framework in Canadian History, 1750-1840," in Liberalism and Hegemony: Debating the Canadian Liberal Revolution, eds. Jean-François Constant and Michel Ducharme (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2009), 102-104; Mills, 26; see also G.J. Ashworth, On Tragedy and Renaissance: The Role of Loyalist and Acadian Heritage Interpretations in Canadian Place Identities (Groningen: Geo Pers, 1993).

\(^{14}\) Mills, 26; Craig, 107.

\(^{15}\) Elizabeth Jane Errington, The Lion, the Eagle, and Upper Canada: A Developing Colonial Ideology (Kingston, Ont.: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 1987), 123; Craig, 109; Mills, 35.

\(^{16}\) Errington, 92.

\(^{17}\) Craig, 201.

\(^{18}\) Errington, 183; Mills, 93.
The public memory of the War of 1812 was also reflected and communicated beyond the sphere of political rhetoric and oratory. In the 1830s some Upper Canadians began to publish accounts of the War of 1812 in response to the flood of American publications about the conflict. These histories stressed the ideal of loyalty and concentrated on the events of the war. At this time American histories of the war were being written at a much higher rate than Canadian ones and were coming across the border, a situation due in part to the province’s fledgling publishing industry. In this atmosphere some veterans of the war became increasingly concerned about the number of American histories and their potential influence on Canada’s youth. Chief amongst these was David Thompson, who had been born in Scotland and served in the British army during the War of 1812. Thompson had seen action at Moraviantown, Lundy’s Lane, and Fort Erie. After the war he chose to stay in Niagara, where he lived for most of his life supporting himself by teaching in common schools. Thompson was concerned about the influence of American accounts on Upper Canada’s youth, and wrote History of the Late War between Great Britain and the United States, which was published in Niagara in 1832. Thompson’s book was intended to defend Britain’s actions and instil patriotism, goals that he made clear in the preface to his work. He hoped that by reading his account, “our British youths…whose minds have been endangered by …the erroneous [American] accounts of the late war” would “catch that patriotic flame which glowed with an unequalled resplendence in the bosoms of their fathers” who had defended the province from American invasion. Although Thompson’s work did not

21 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; Collected from the most Authentic Sources, to which is Added an Appendix, Containing Public Documents &c., Relating to the Subject (Niagara: T. Sewell, 1832), vi.
sell well, it remains significant as the first Upper Canadian publication on the war. Despite its poor sales it was also drawn on extensively by some later historians, some of whom simply reprinted large tracts of Thompson’s work in their own publications.

Thompson’s *History of the Late War* was the only major Canadian publication on the war in the 1830s, but the 1840s and 50s saw an upswing in interest in the conflict amongst the leaders of Upper Canada, or Canada West. At mid-century the province’s population was growing and it was the site of railroad construction and the beginnings of large-scale industry. The province’s economic growth and expansion added an element of pride and expansionism to Upper Canadian identity. The union of the Canadas and the achievement of responsible government led to a process of state formation through, among other things, the creation of a provincial education system. Political and social leaders wanted to instil patriotism, loyalty, morality, and a shared sense of British-Canadian identity through the school system, and the province’s history was a tool they could use to do so. In this climate John Richardson wrote the first volume of a planned trilogy recounting the events of the war that he hoped would be used in the province’s schools. After his *War of 1812* was published in 1842 Richardson applied for and was given a provincial grant to write two more volumes for use in the new education system. Richardson was probably born at Fort George, and at the age of fifteen he had volunteered for the 41\textsuperscript{st} foot and fought alongside First Nations forces under Tecumseh before being captured at the battle of Moraviantown. He was a prisoner in Kentucky until his release in July 1814, and after his release he joined the 8\textsuperscript{th} foot and was sent to Europe to fight Napoleon. Richardson served in Barbados, Grenada, and Spain and lived in Paris and London before returning to the Canadas to cover the

\begin{itemize}
  \item 22 Gidney, “Thompson, David.”
  \item 23 See, for example, Ryerson, 422-23.
  \item 24 Knowles, 27-9; Craig, 34-35, 51, 103.
  \item 25 Sheppard, 248-49; Knowles, 28; Gidney, “Thompson, David.”
\end{itemize}
1837-38 rebellions for a London newspaper. He made his home in various cities in the Canadas until moving to New York in 1849 to escape political enemies he had made and the Montreal rioting prompted by the Rebellion Losses Bill. Richardson was an author before he penned his history of the war, as by 1840 he had published several novels including *Wacousta; or, the prophecy* (1832), a novel about an English nobleman in British North America who in a quest for revenge disguises himself as a Native and fights with Pontiac. Eight years later he published a sequel to *Wacousta* entitled *The Canadian brothers; or, the prophecy fulfilled*, a novel which dealt with late eighteenth century colonial warfare and the War of 1812.\(^{26}\) Richardson’s *War of 1812* echoed concerns about American influence and a desire that students be made aware of and be encouraged to emulate the loyalty of their forebears. In his preface Richardson stated that it was “a humiliating, yet undeniable fact” that “few young men of the present generation” were aware of the “brilliant feats of arms, and sterling loyalty displayed by their immediate progenitors.” “Or, if they have read of these matters,” he continued, “their information has been derived through the corrupt channel of American party publications…which have a tendency to pervert facts.”\(^{27}\)

In the 1850s there was also increased interest in the loyalists’ coming to Canada, as some political leaders thought that the loyalists would provide the heroic, uniting public memory they felt the province needed. The deaths of some original loyalists and the power held by many of their descendants as members of the Family Compact meant that the loyalists were often depicted as the heroic founders of the province.\(^{28}\) Although many of the histories were vernacular and did not lend themselves to the creation of national histories, the romantic writings

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\(^{28}\) Knowles, 26-27.
of Egerton Ryerson and William Canniff laid the foundation of what has been called a loyalist
myth.\(^{29}\) Born in 1803, Egerton Ryerson was the son of loyalist Joseph Ryerson, a half-pay officer
who had left the United States for New Brunswick after the Revolutionary War, then had settled
in Upper Canada in the 1790s. Egerton was too young to fight in the War of 1812, but his father
Joseph and three of his brothers served in the conflict. A Methodist minister and later
superintendent of schools, after his retirement Ryerson devoted himself to writing the two-
volume *The Loyalists of America and their times*, completed in 1880.\(^{30}\) William Canniff was
born in 1830 north of Belleville, Upper Canada and was the grandson of late loyalists. He was a
physician, but also had an interest in loyalist history that came to the fore in the Canadian
nationalist sentiments of the early 1860s. Canniff had helped create an Upper Canadian historical
society, but the society was short-lived. His *History of the Settlement of Upper Canada* was
published in 1869.\(^{31}\) Both of these authors portrayed the loyalists as upper class people dedicated
to the British Empire who were persecuted for their principles, endured hardship in the wilds of
Upper Canada, and were anti-American.\(^{32}\) In the authors’ view, after the American
Revolutionary War those who had remained faithful to the British cause were driven from their
homes, and “sacrificed wealth, liberty, country, and chose poverty and exile, in support of their
principles” in fleeing to the British colony of Quebec.\(^{33}\) These “bold, self-denying, and energetic
pioneers” settled there and began hewing a life for themselves from the wilderness west of

\(^{29}\) Ibid., 41.
\(^{30}\) R. D. Gidney, “Ryerson, Egerton,” in *DCBO*, vol. 11, University of Toronto/Université Laval, 2003–,
\(^{31}\) Heather MacDougall, “Canniff, William,” in *DCBO*, vol. 13, University of Toronto/Université Laval, 2003–,
\(^{32}\) Knowles, 46; see also J.M. Bumsted, *Understanding the Loyalists* (Sackville, NB: Centre for Canadian Studies,
Mount Allison University, 1986), 11-12.
\(^{33}\) Egerton Ryerson, *The Loyalists of America and their Times: From 1620 to 1816*, Vol. II(Toronto: W. Briggs,
1880), 159; see also William Canniff, *History of the Settlement of Upper Canada (Ontario): With Special Reference
to the Bay Quinté*(Toronto: Dudley & Burns, 1869), 48-51.
Montreal, around the Bay of Quinte, the St. Lawrence River, and the Niagara Peninsula.\textsuperscript{34} William Kirby also contributed to this early public memory. Born in 1817, Kirby had emigrated from England in 1832 and had married loyalist Eliza Madeline Whitmore in 1847. Kirby saw himself as a loyalist, and according to his obituary his writings, including “Le Chien D’Or” and “The United Empire,” “[breathed] an intense loyalty” to the Crown.\textsuperscript{35} Shortly after his death Niagara historian Emma Currie described Kirby as a “natural Loyalist” who was “intensely patriotic and an admirer of anything English.”\textsuperscript{36} His epic poem \textit{The U.E.: A Tale of Upper Canada} was published in 1859 to, in Kirby’s words, “preserve a few peculiar traits of a generation of men, now alas! nearly passed away: The United Empire Loyalists of Canada; those brave and devoted defenders of the British Crown, Connexion and Government” who were “the Noble Patriarchs of Upper Canada.”\textsuperscript{37} These histories focussed on the loyalists’ sterling character and their perilous journey to Upper Canada, but also included some accounts of the War of 1812. Like the histories that focussed on the War of 1812, authors like Canniff and Ryerson stressed loyalty to the Crown while portraying the loyalists as founders of the province who had been persecuted for that loyalty.

The deaths of many of those who had fought in the war did not diminish fears amongst the province’s literate elite about American influence, and led to concerns that the War of 1812 and its patriotic meaning would be forgotten, or worse, that American histories would overwhelm Upper Canadian public memory of the conflict. In the late 1840s and into the 1860s Canadian authors produced some accounts of individual battles, including one of the battle of Queenston Heights, and an edited volume of Isaac Brock’s correspondence assembled and

\begin{thebibliography}{9}
\bibitem{34} Ryerson, 208; Canniff, 62; Knowles 14; A. Taylor, 23.
\bibitem{35} “W.M. Kirby, Author, Dies, Full of Years and Honor,” \textit{Thorold Post}, 29 June 1906, 1; Knowles, 38-39.
\bibitem{36} Emma Currie, “William Kirby – Author of Chien D’or or Golden Dog,” James George Currie Fonds, “Emma Agusta Currie,” R5168-0-7-E Volume 3, LAC.
\bibitem{37} William Kirby, \textit{The U.E. A Tale of Upper Canada} (Niagara: W. Kirby, 1859), 3.
\end{thebibliography}
published by his nephew.\footnote{John Symons, \textit{The Battle of Queenston Heights: Being a Narrative of the Opening of the War of 1812, with Notices of the Life of Major-General Sir Isaac Brock, K. B., and a Description of the Monument Erected to His Memory}(Toronto: Thompson & Co., printers, 1859); \textit{The Life and Correspondence of Major-General Sir Isaac Brock, K.B. Edited by Ferdinand Brock Tupper}, ed. Ferdinand Brock Tupper (London: Simpkin, Marshall, 1847).} By this time Brock was an established hero of the war who had been honoured with two monuments on Queenston Heights, discussed further below. Writers such as William Coffin, who published \textit{1812: The War and its Moral} in 1864, continued to stress the virtue of loyalty as the war’s central lesson and warned against the corrupting influence of American histories. Born in England in 1808, Coffin was the grandson of John Coffin, who had played a significant role in defending Quebec against American invasion in 1775. William Coffin’s family travelled from Bath, England to Quebec in 1813, as his father was in the army. After the War of 1812’s end the family went back to England, but Coffin returned to Lower Canada in 1830 and later became a lawyer in Montreal. He volunteered for the forces organized against the Patriotes in 1837, and in the following years held a series of government posts. Coffin was a patriotic Canadian. In the mid-1850s he formed a volunteer militia field battery in Montreal, and was appointed commissioner for ordnance lands in 1856.\footnote{Desmond Morton, “Coffin, William Foster,” in \textit{DCBO}, vol. 10, University of Toronto/Université Laval, 2003--, accessed January 17, 2015, http://www.biographi.ca/en/bio/coffin_william_foster_10E.html.} Coffin wrote \textit{1812: The War and its Moral} in a period of increased patriotic fervour, as there were new threats of war with the United States as that country’s Civil War raged and some border incidents crossed into Canada.\footnote{Morton, “Coffin,”; John Herd Thompson and Stephen J. Randall, \textit{Canada and the United States: Ambivalent Allies}, 4th ed.(Athens, Georgia: University of Georgia Press, 2008), 35-37.} Additionally, as Coffin pointed out, those who had witnessed the War of 1812 were dying out, contributing to fears that the war’s lessons would be forgotten. Coffin lamented that “of the thousands who survived the contest, how few remain to tell the tale or point to the moral!”\footnote{Coffin, 18.} His account of the war was unapologetically patriotic and aimed to provide a historical
basis for a shared French and English Canadian nationalism.\textsuperscript{42} Coffin sought to, “invest the story told…with a Canadian character; to present the war in Canada in a Canadian point of view.”\textsuperscript{43} He also bewailed the volume of American histories of the war, which according to him “[pandered] to the worst passions of a morbid nationality.”\textsuperscript{44}

While recounting the events of the war based on our current historical understanding of the conflict, the history of the War of 1812 that follows also takes its focus from early to mid-nineteenth century public memory as expressed through political rhetoric and written histories. These accounts became the basis for much of the public memory expressed and shaped by the local historical societies in the later nineteenth and early twentieth centuries which form the focus of this study. A basic understanding of the events of the war will allow the reader to better understand and identify the areas where the post-war public memory of the conflict both adhered to and diverged from our current understanding of events. This narrative account of the war is supplemented by and compared to the histories of the war written in the period up to 1885. This is not meant to be an exhaustive historiographical examination of the entire War of 1812. Rather, this account of the war concentrates on the Niagara region, while Canadian accounts of the war penned in the early and mid-nineteenth century are its historiographical focus. A narrative account of the events of the war in the Niagara region will provide an overview of the conflict while illustrating the interpretations of those events in the nineteenth century that set the context for the public memory work of the NPC and local historical societies that began in the 1880s.

\textbf{The Niagara Peninsula}

\textsuperscript{42} Morton, “Coffin,”; Eamon, 139-40. 
\textsuperscript{43} Coffin, 19. 
\textsuperscript{44} Ibid.
Spanning approximately 55 kilometers from Niagara-on-the-Lake to Fort Erie, the Niagara Frontier’s proximity to the United States, its position on the road to York, and its northern terminus on the shores of Lake Ontario (a significant water transportation route), made it the setting for many battles in the War of 1812.45 However, before the war the frontier’s strategic setting meant that it was a crossroads of trade, and its settlement had been affected by hostilities between the United States and Great Britain long before the War of 1812.

The peninsula’s situation between lakes Ontario and Erie and the transportation route provided by the Niagara River made the Niagara Peninsula an early crossroads of trade networks for various First Nations groups and French fur traders. The French briefly occupied the eastern side of the river in present-day New York State and established a portage route around Niagara Falls to serve the fur trade (Figure 1.1). The Neutral Iroquoians had settled the

peninsula as early as the fourteenth century, until Senecas from the Eastern side of the Niagara River dispersed them between 1650 and 1655 and stayed there until themselves being displaced by the Mississaugas at the end of the seventeenth century. Beginning in 1679 the French built a succession of structures on the eastern shore of the Niagara River’s mouth at Lake Ontario. Fort Niagara, the final and most lasting structure, was built in 1726 and due to its strategic location it was captured by the English during the Seven Years’ War. Once the British had control of the peninsula they began constructing a defensive fort on the western river bank where the Niagara River empties into Lake Erie. The English also erected a group of buildings called Navy Hall on the western bank of the river in present-day Ontario which were not intended as a settlement, but as storage for naval supplies.46

Sustained European settlement of the western bank of the Niagara River began during the American Revolutionary War. Around 1780 Sir Frederick Haldimand, the Governor of Quebec, fostered small farming communities at the mouth of the river and at Queenston. The British controlled the land these new settlements occupied, as under pressure from British officials in 1764 the Seneca had surrendered a strip of land three kilometers deep on the western bank of the Niagara River from Lake Ontario to the Niagara Escarpment. In 1781 the British also purchased a wider strip that ran from Lake Ontario to Lake Erie from the Mississaugas, giving them control of the river’s entire western bank.47 A new European community was created to help supply the growing number of refugees and military personnel at Fort Niagara during the Revolution. Some structures had previously been added to the western side of the river, as Captain John Butler had

built barracks for Butler’s Rangers near the mouth of the river in 1778. Some of the refugees at Fort Niagara were loyalists who supported the Crown in the conflict. During the war many loyalists were forced from their homes, used as hostages, jailed, assaulted, or had their property confiscated or destroyed. In the peace negotiations that ended the Revolutionary war the British secured an agreement that Congress would recommend that those loyal subjects who had not born arms have their civil rights reinstated and their confiscated property returned. Others who had fought on the loyalist side would also be able to temporarily return to their homes to try to regain their property. However, this assurance was difficult to enforce, as the individual states intended to keep loyalist property and Congress did not have the power to pressure them. As a result, many loyalist refugees were barred from returning and many began looking for new homes.

Some of these loyalist refugees were Six Nations Iroquois, a group that had tried to remain neutral at the beginning of the American Revolution. Pressure from both sides, including the invasion of their territory, had led most Mohawks, Cayugas, and Senecas to ally with the loyalists, while many Oneidas and Tuscaroras fought with the Revolutionaries. Those siding with the loyalists hoped that Great Britain would maintain relations that, although not ideal, were attuned to First Nations interests and affirm the border negotiated in the 1768 treaty of Fort Stanwix that had attempted to halt westward expansion. The British assured the Iroquois that in

53 Benn, Iroquois, 14,17.
return for their service their lands would be protected, but at the war’s end their interests were ignored by both the British and American negotiators and their lands as far west as the Mississippi River were transferred to the United States government.\textsuperscript{54} British authorities offered land and financial compensation to the Six Nations, and many moved to Quebec. One hundred Mohawks settled in the Bay of Quinte area in 1784, and several years later this community, known as Tyendinaga, separated from the Iroquois confederacy. Joseph Brant led approximately 1,800 of his people to settle near the Grand River on lands the British government had purchased from the Mississaugas.\textsuperscript{55} The majority of Brant’s followers were Mohawk, but the community also welcomed Iroquois from throughout the confederacy.\textsuperscript{56}

By 1785 approximately 7,500 white loyalists had settled in the province of Quebec. Six thousand settled in the upper country west of Montreal, including around the Bay of Quinte, the St. Lawrence River, and the Niagara Peninsula.\textsuperscript{57} Despite later accounts to the contrary, the loyalists were not a unified group, but rather came from all levels of society. In our current understanding most were pioneer farmers who had mixed motives for their decision to flee to British North America. Although some may have been dedicated to the British Empire, many were motivated by commercial gain, as the British Crown gave them free land, seed grain, and rations.\textsuperscript{58} A second wave of immigrants from the United States entered the province in the late 1780s, drawn by the promise of free land.\textsuperscript{59} The flood of loyalists led the British Parliament to pass the Canada Constitutional Act in 1791, dividing the province of Quebec into Lower and

\textsuperscript{54}Barbara Graymont, \textit{The Iroquois in the American Revolution} (Syracuse, N.Y.: Syracuse University Press, 1972), 259.
\textsuperscript{55}Benn, \textit{Iroquois}, 19.
\textsuperscript{56}Shannon, 199.
\textsuperscript{57}Knowles, 14; A. Taylor, 23.
\textsuperscript{58}Knowles, 15; A. Taylor, 23; see also MacKinnon, “A Fragmentary Profile,” in \textit{This Unfriendly Soil: The Loyalist Experience in Nova Scotia 1783-1791} (Kingston Ont.: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 1988).
\textsuperscript{59}A. Taylor, 23.
Upper Canada and appointing Colonel John Graves Simcoe as the latter’s first Lieutenant-Governor.  

In his quest to create a flourishing British colony, in 1792 John Graves Simcoe tried to lure American settlers who remained loyal to the British Empire by offering one hundred acres of land to new families in exchange for an oath to the King. In response thousands of late loyalists settled in Upper Canada, mostly from New York, Pennsylvania, and New Jersey. By the War of 1812 these late loyalists made up three-fifths of Upper Canada’s population. They had little ideological attachment to either the United States or Britain, but were attracted by cheap land; Alan Taylor labels them “bargain hunters” in his recent study. The population of Upper Canada on the eve of the War of 1812 was approximately 75,000, the majority of whom had been born in the United States.

Mid-nineteenth century historians such as Canniff and Ryerson heaped praise on the first wave of loyalist settlers. Both authors not only portrayed them as principled, hard-working settlers, but also pointedly argued against their portrayal in American histories, which they felt was unjust. Canniff was concerned with correcting American descriptions of the loyalists that, according to him, were “mis-statements,” and part of his goal in writing History of the Settlement of Upper Canada was to “tear away the specious covering of the American revolutionary heroes [the loyalists], and throw the sunlight of truth upon their character…” Ryerson also sought to, in his view, right the historical record, as “almost the only history of them has been written by their enemies, whose object was to conceal the treatment they received, to depreciate their merits

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60 A. Taylor, 36; Hitsman, Defending, 54.
61 A. Taylor, 52, 56, 58.
62 A. Taylor, 56; Craig, 64.
63 Canniff, 46.
and defame their character….“⁶⁴ For historians such as Canniff and Ryerson the coming of the loyalists was a historical watershed for Canada. Caniff argued that as the loyalists arrived at their land allotments on the Bay of Quinte they stood “at the very threshold of Upper Canadian history,” while Ryerson simply described them as “the fathers and founders of our country.”⁶⁵ Ryerson painted the loyalists as motivated solely by their loyalty to Britain, but Canniff admitted that along with the loyalists who fled to Canada because of their principles, there were those who would have stayed in the United States if given the chance. Canniff even admitted that some of the later immigrants were motivated not by their love of Britain, by their desire for free land. Despite their suspect initial motives, however, Canniff argued that over time they became loyal to the Crown, and that their “unmistakeable attachment to the British Crown” was demonstrated in the War of 1812.⁶⁶

When war came to the Niagara Frontier in 1812 its settlement had already been influenced by hostilities between the United States and Britain, and its strategic setting meant that it would once again be a site of conflict. Our current understanding of the build-up to the War of 1812 is that the war was caused by a variety of factors. In the early nineteenth century Britain had adopted economic and naval measures to help in its fight against Napoleon. Britain and France were involved in an escalating trade war, and in 1807 Britain imposed a series of Orders in Council that created a system of blockades targeting neutral trade that had a negative effect on American trade.⁶⁷ Britain also needed sailors to maintain its navy, and one of its strategies was to insist on the Royal Navy’s right to search American ships for some of the approximately 20,000 sailors who had deserted for the better pay and conditions offered by the

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⁶⁴ Ryerson, 191.
⁶⁵ Canniff, 185, Ryerson, 208.
⁶⁶ Canniff, 190-191.
American merchant marine.\textsuperscript{68} The spring of 1807 saw the Chesapeake affair, when the British ship \textit{Leopard} fired upon and boarded the American frigate \textit{Chesapeake} after its captain refused to allow his ship to be searched for deserters. The incident, which resulted in three deaths and numerous injuries, caused national uproar and led to American calls for war.\textsuperscript{69} Diplomatic tensions also escalated with the eruption of new hostilities on the western frontier as an Aboriginal confederation under the Shawnee brothers Tecumseh and Tenskwatawa (the Prophet) clashed with American expansionist William Henry Harrison’s forces at the battle of Tippecanoe.\textsuperscript{70} Americans had, not unjustly, long blamed the British for the Native resistance, and many began to feel that the best way to end this threat was to drive the British from the Canadas.\textsuperscript{71} However, the most pressing issues were impressment and trade restrictions, and the motto of free trade and sailor’s rights became the American rallying cry for war. Congress’ war preparations did not include building more ships for the Navy, meaning that a war with Great Britain would almost certainly play out primarily in Upper Canada. The Maritime Provinces were protected by the Royal Navy, and although Montreal was vulnerable to attack, the fortress at Quebec protected most of Lower Canada.\textsuperscript{72} The United States officially declared war on Great Britain on 19 June 1812, despite the fact that the British Orders in Council had been repealed three days previously.\textsuperscript{73}

According to mid-nineteenth century Canadian historians, the War of 1812 was not of Upper Canadians’ making. Many of the early chroniclers’ desires to counteract American histories, which often portrayed the war as a second war of Independence against Great Britain’s

\textsuperscript{68} A. Taylor, 103-104.
\textsuperscript{69} Hitsman, \textit{Incredible War}, 16.
\textsuperscript{72} Hitsman, \textit{Incredible War}, 45; A. Taylor, 128; Craig, 67.
\textsuperscript{73} Hitsman, \textit{Incredible War}, 47; Hickey, 42.
continuing meddling, were plainly visible in their analyses of the conflict’s causes. In their accounts the British colonies were victims of unprovoked American aggression, caught up in a war that Coffin described as “no Canadian quarrel.” According to Thompson, Great Britain was embroiled in a war against Napoleon Bonaparte, and the Americans, still nursing distrust of Britain from the American Revolution, interpreted “every means of policy which Great Britain employed to ensure her own success…warped and construed into acts of aggression and tyranny against neutral nations.” The narrative that Canada was an innocent bystander in the quarrel between the United States and Great Britain and had been unjustly targeted by American aggression was an important aspect of these early histories that continued to form part of the public memory of the war into the twentieth century.

**Sir Isaac Brock: Hero of Upper Canada**

Sir Isaac Brock was a central figure in the history and public memory of the conflict. He was born on 6 October 1769 on Guernsey Island, and at fifteen he was commissioned as an ensign in the King’s Regiment. In 1797 he purchased a commission as lieutenant-colonel. Brock was eventually transferred to British North America, and in spring 1803 his regiment moved to Upper Canada. Brock took command of Upper Canada in 1810, and in 1811 he became the administrator of the province. Before the outbreak of the war Brock complained of being left where there was no chance of advancement. However, when he was offered a position in the European theatre early in 1812 conflict was already looming in North America, so Brock elected to stay and began preparing for war.

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74 Wise, 113.
76 David Thompson, 10.
Brock addressed the legislature at York in February 1812. In this address he reassured the colonists that they would not be abandoned by the Crown, and expressed his confidence in the province’s militia: “Principally composed of the sons of a loyal and brave band of veterans, the militia, I am confident, stand in need of nothing but the necessary legislative provisions, to direct their ardour in the acquirement of military instruction, to form a most efficient force.”

Brock tried to rally the province’s militia, which Simcoe had created in 1793 and whose laws had remained essentially unchanged until 1812. All fit males between sixteen and sixty were expected to take part in militia service unless they were employed by the government, were essential workers, or were Mennonites, Quakers, or Tunkers. Despite his speech to the legislature, Brock himself despaired of the population’s willingness to fight, writing in 1812 that “the population, believe me is essentially bad.”

Brock showed his lack of faith in the militia when, instead of immediately sharing the declaration of war with the population, he ordered the militia companies in the Niagara Frontier to assemble at Fort George for the distribution of muskets. Not knowing war had been declared, approximately 800 militiamen turned out and were ordered to posts along the Niagara Frontier. However, they were not prepared for extended service and soon became impatient. Brock released half of them to return to their farms, and almost none of them returned to duty when he summoned them. Luckily for Brock, he could


82 Sheppard, 47-8, 56.
also draw on the approximately 1,200 British regulars of all ranks scattered in small garrisons across the province.\textsuperscript{83}

Early histories described the militia as brave, loyal subjects who rallied to defend the colony from American aggression. Thompson relates that “so well were the British government aware of the loyalty and valor of the brave yeomanry of Canada, that she actually risked the salvation of the country from the grasp of the enemy into their hands; and well was that confidence repaid.”\textsuperscript{84} Canniff adopted a similar approach, arguing that “the first year, the Militia alone saved the province.”\textsuperscript{85} As discussed above, the view that the militia had been loyal, brave, and had in fact saved the colony with very little help from British regulars was a recurring theme in many early histories and speeches. However, according to these early histories Brock was one British military official who was central to the successful defence of the colony.

Although the public memory of Brock tends to focus on his death at the Battle of Queenston Heights on the Niagara Frontier in 1812, his sights were initially set on defending the west. Brock showed his military ability in the capture of Detroit on 16 August, which he accomplished with the help of approximately 650 Aboriginal warriors. The warriors paraded in a circuit in front of the fort, taking advantage of Michigan governor William Hull’s fear of First Nations peoples, a strategy that eventually led to the fort’s surrender.\textsuperscript{86} The earlier capture of Fort Michilimackinac in July had helped rally Western First Nations groups such as the Miami, Shawnee, Ottawa and Delaware to the British cause by demonstrating that the British were serious about fighting the Americans.\textsuperscript{87} Brock’s 1812 victory at Detroit in turn helped convince the Grand River Six Nations, who had remained neutral in fear of fighting the New York Six

\begin{footnotes}
\item[	extsuperscript{83}] Hitsman, \textit{Incredible}, 32, 34.
\item[	extsuperscript{84}] David Thompson, 36.
\item[	extsuperscript{85}] Canniff, 548.
\item[	extsuperscript{86}] A. Taylor, 154,164-165.
\item[	extsuperscript{87}] A. Taylor, 153; Sheppard, 48.
\end{footnotes}
Nations, to reconsider their position, and by 7 September approximately 300 warriors under John Norton had arrived in the Niagara area.\textsuperscript{88}

Brock quickly returned to Niagara following his victory at Detroit. After a short-lived ceasefire to await the result of Britain’s repeal of the Orders in Council, Brock took command of the Niagara Frontier.\textsuperscript{89} By October Brock had around 2,000 men in the Niagara region who faced over 6,000 American troops on the opposite shore of the Niagara River.\textsuperscript{90} In the early morning of 13 October American forces crossed the river under cover of an artillery bombardment and landed near the village of Queenston.\textsuperscript{91} After a brief fight with British regulars and militia the American forces retreated to their landing point while the British retreated toward the village of Queenston. The American commander sent a detachment to try and ascend the Heights’ steep slope.\textsuperscript{92}

Brock was at Fort George, but immediately went to Queenston when he learned of the attack. As Robert Malcomson has pointed out in his detailed 2003 history of the battle, it is not clear exactly how Brock was notified of the invasion, whether through hearing the bombardment or through a messenger.\textsuperscript{93} In any case, when Brock arrived at Queenston Heights he ordered the light company of the 49\textsuperscript{th} foot from the Heights down into the village of Queenston.\textsuperscript{94} Brock did not believe that the Americans would be able to find a path up the steep face of the escarpment, but while conferring with the gunners in the redan battery on the escarpment’s northern slope the

\textsuperscript{88}Sheppard, 58; Robert Malcomson, \textit{A Very Brilliant Affair: The Battle of Queenston Heights, 1812} (Toronto: Robin Brass Studio, 2003), 98.
\textsuperscript{89}Latimer, 73; Hitsman, \textit{Incredible War}, 83, 89-91.
\textsuperscript{90}Hickey, 86.
\textsuperscript{91}Hickey, 87; Hitsman, \textit{Incredible War}, 95.
\textsuperscript{92}Malcomson, \textit{Brilliant}, 132; 138-139; 142.
\textsuperscript{93}Malcomson, \textit{Brilliant}, 143-144.
\textsuperscript{94}Hitsman, \textit{Incredible War}, 95.
American detachment appeared out of the trees. Outnumbered, Brock and his gunners fled to Queenston.95

Brock was determined to retake the high ground and redan battery, and went in search of troops. He found fifty militia at the north end of the village, and commanded them to follow him in a frontal assault on the battery.96 Brock advanced up the hill in front of his troops, his stature, demeanour and clothing making him an obvious target for the American infantry who began shooting in his direction. He was first wounded in the wrist, and then was shot in the chest.97 After his death Brock’s body was carried to Queenston and hidden in a house, while some regulars and militia continued the attack before being driven back into the village by Wool’s men.98

At this point Brock’s aide de camp, Lieutenant-Colonel John Macdonell, arrived in Queenston with two York militia flank companies. Macdonell recognized the value of the high ground and its guns and launched another attack up the escarpment. He and his troops were able to capture the redan battery briefly, but American reinforcements drove them down the hill once again and Macdonell was fatally wounded in the process.99 Later accounts of the battle tend not to devote a great deal of attention to Macdonell’s attack, and those that do link his actions back to Brock, who was portrayed as having a close relationship with his aide-de-camp. Macdonell’s death was long and lingering, as he survived for twenty hours. Despite this his thoughts were, according to early Canadian historian John Symons, only of Brock. Symon’s description in the 1859 The Battle of Queenston Heights is typical: “during this period of excruciating agony his

95Malcolmson, Brilliant, 151.
96Ibid., 152.
97Hitsman, Incredible War, 96.
98Malcolmson, Brilliant, 153.
99Hitsman, Incredible War, 96.
thoughts and words were constantly occupied with lamentations for his deceased commander and friend.”

However, at the time of Brock’s death the outcome of the battle was unknown, as American forces still controlled the high ground on the Heights and the redan battery. Our current understanding of the events following Brock’s death is that Major-General Roger Sheaffe arrived around noon with reinforcements made up of both regulars and militia. Sheaffe elected to attack the American position on the Heights, but decided against another frontal assault. Instead he and his forces skirted to the southwest of the Heights to attack from the south along the Portage Road. Some early histories contended that it was Sheaffe’s idea to skirt the heights, but Carl Benn has demonstrated that approximately 160 warriors of the Grand River Six Nations under John Norton, William Kerr, and Joseph Brant’s son John, were the first to take this route. Norton had led his warriors off the main road and through the woods, emerging to the west of the American position. Some warriors left the group to protect their families, but Norton attacked the American position from the west with the remaining 80 warriors, including John Brant. After an initial skirmish, the Six Nations warriors continued to harass the Americans. When Sheaffe and his troops arrived Norton and his warriors joined in their assault. American officers ordered a retreat and struggled to re-form their left flank while some American soldiers, terrified of the Six Nations warriors, fled. The remainder of the American force surrendered shortly after the combined attack on their position. Despite the loss of Brock the battle was a

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100 Symons, 12; see also D.B. Read, *Life and Times of Major-General Sir Isaac Brock, K.B.* (Toronto: W. Briggs, 1894), 222.
103 For emphasis on Sheaffe see Symons, 12-13; also Edgar, 309-10; for Six Nations role see Benn, *The Iroquois*, 91.
105 Malcomson, *Brilliant*, 177-78; Benn, *Iroquois*, 93.
decisive victory for the British, who lost only 14 killed, 77 wounded, and 21 missing to the Americans’ 958 prisoners and 300 killed and wounded.\textsuperscript{106}

Early historians quickly identified Brock as a hero of the war and as a unifying figure for the people of Upper Canada, later Canada West. For instance, Thompson praised the general’s bravery and sacrifice, proclaiming that his “memory will long live in the warmest affection of every British subject in Canada.”\textsuperscript{107} Richardson also asserted in his account of the war that “every thing relating to General Brock is, or ought to be, of undying interest to the people of Canada.”\textsuperscript{108} Later, Coffin also identified Brock as a hero of the war who, “in every delineation of this war…stands forth from the canvas, the central figure and commanding feature of the scene.”\textsuperscript{109} Brock’s death at Queenston Heights was a dramatic event in many nineteenth century histories, and some early historians paid particular attention to his last words. Reports varied widely: some asserted that Brock had insisted his death not be noticed and discourage the troops, others that he mentioned his sister.\textsuperscript{110} However, the most common narrative was that Brock’s last words were “Push on, brave York volunteers,” a flattering interpretation of earlier reports that his last words had been “Push on the York Volunteers!”\textsuperscript{111} According to Coffin, Brock had “ennobled by his death the soil on which he bled, and whose name remains, ever beloved and respected, a household word and a household memory in Canada.”\textsuperscript{112} In addition to the adulation piled on him by the authors of these early histories, supporters also erected two monuments to him at Queenston Heights, discussed further below. Brock’s death at Queenston Heights was a

\textsuperscript{106} Hitsman, Incredible War, 99.
\textsuperscript{107} David Thompson, 122.
\textsuperscript{108} Richardson, 16.
\textsuperscript{109} Coffin, 36; Keith Walden, "Isaac Brock, Man and Myth : A Study of the Militia Myth of the War of 1812 in Upper Canada, 1812-1912" (Master’s Thesis, Queens University, 1971), 45.
\textsuperscript{110} See, for example, Symons, 11; Coffin, 59.
\textsuperscript{111} See, for example, Canniff, 522; Miss Louise Murray, "The Niagara District," in Picturesque Canada: The Country as it was and is, Vol. I., ed. George Munro Grant(Toronto: Belden, 1882), 370 ; Hitsman, Incredible War, 96.
\textsuperscript{112} Coffin, 59.
focus of early historians, and despite his death early in the conflict Isaac Brock was a dominant figure in the public memory of the war.

**1813: American Invasion and the Torch**

Brock’s death, however, did not end the war, which dragged on for another two years. Our current understanding is that after their defeats in 1812, in the spring of 1813 the American administration badly wanted a victory and decided to attack York, the capital of Upper Canada. On 27 April 1813 American forces successfully captured and looted the town. American generals ordered the burning of fortifications, military storehouses, and barracks, but some sailors, claiming that they had found a scalp displayed near the speaker’s chair, also put the Parliament buildings to the torch. The capture of York was the decisive victory the Americans had been looking for, but holding the town had no strategic value, so the Americans left on 1 May. The burning of the capital gained widespread attention in the Canadas and set a precedent for the destruction of other towns and cities, including the burning of Washington in 1814, which was described by early historians like Coffin as revenge for the burning of York. Although authors such as Thompson praised the militia’s bravery, the ignominious defeat at York did not figure greatly in the public memory of the war, as it did not birth any heroic figures or large scale commemoration in the area.

Recent histories indicate that many American soldiers who participated in the capture of York returned to the Niagara Frontier to take part in an attack on Fort George, although they

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114 A. Taylor, 216-17.
115 Hitsman, *Incredible War*, 141.
116 Malcolson, *Capital in Flames*, 289-90; Coffin, 111.
117 David Thompson, 185; Ross Fair, "’A Standing Monument of Forgetfulness’: The War of 1812 Centennial Commemorations in Toronto, 1912-14" (paper, 91st Annual Meeting of the Canadian Historical Association, Waterloo, Ont., 28 May 2012).
suffered a gale on Lake Ontario and arrived tired and dispirited.\textsuperscript{118} Fort George is located on the east bank of the Niagara River approximately one mile from Lake Ontario opposite the American Fort Niagara, which the British had surrendered in the Treaty of Paris.\textsuperscript{119} The British had begun constructing Fort George in 1796, and by 1799 it had six earth and log bastions that were linked by a wooden palisade enclosing a hospital, guard house, barracks, a stone powder magazine, and workshops.\textsuperscript{120} On 24 May 1813 the cannons across the river in Fort Niagara opened fire on Fort George and the town of Newark, and they were joined the next day by those of the American fleet.\textsuperscript{121} On the morning of 27 May American troops crowded into boats and began crossing the river under cover of the cannonade.\textsuperscript{122} Upon learning that the American fleet was attacking Fort George, Sir George Prevost and Sir James Yeo, the British commander of Lake Ontario, attacked the American naval base at Sackett’s Harbour. They were not able to take the base, but they did destroy the property taken in the capture of York and drew the American fleet back to the base and away from Niagara.\textsuperscript{123}

In the spring of 1813 Fort George had a garrison of approximately 1,000 troops and 300 militia under Brigadier-General John Vincent’s command. The small force of British regulars and Six Nations warriors near where the American force landed was quickly overwhelmed and fell back towards the fort. Outnumbered, Vincent elected to abandon the fort and pulled his remaining troops south out of the range of the naval fleet’s guns.\textsuperscript{124} The American capture of Fort George, perhaps because it was a defeat, was not a focus of many early Canadian histories.

\textsuperscript{118} Hitsman, \textit{Incredible War}, 141.
\textsuperscript{121} Latimer, 108-09; 140.
\textsuperscript{122} Latimer, 141.
\textsuperscript{123} A. Taylor, 218-19.
\textsuperscript{124} Hitsman, \textit{Incredible War}, 144-46.
although they commended Vincent and his force for their bravery in the face of impossible odds. Many early histories, including Coffin’s, embellished the number of American invaders, some putting it as high as “at least” six thousand.\textsuperscript{125} A history of Canada written by Irish immigrant and journalist John Mercier McMullen in 1868 that aimed to “infuse a spirit of Canadian nationality into the people generally” stated that despite these impossible odds Vincent and his men “gallantly held their ground” against “a force ten times [their] own.”\textsuperscript{126} These early histories argued that Vincent’s decision to abandon the fort was a wise one, as, in Coffin’s words, “to delay further, simply to indulge the dogged rage of resistance, were [sic] to tempt destruction.”\textsuperscript{127}

Despite the praise of early historians, recent scholarship indicates that the loss of Fort George exposed the entire British line on the Niagara Frontier. Vincent ordered the frontier abandoned from Queenston Heights south to Fort Erie, pulling his troops back to regroup at Burlington Heights.\textsuperscript{128} American forces did not pursue Vincent’s troops until 1 June, and on 5 June they encamped at Stoney Creek.\textsuperscript{129} The British launched an attack that night, but despite the advantage of surprise the fighting became close and confused. In this confusion two American brigadier-generals were taken prisoner and the Americans were forced to retreat to Fort George.\textsuperscript{130}

After the victory British forces marched west to Forty Mile Creek and reoccupied a depot at Beaver Dam.\textsuperscript{131} Smarting from the loss at Stoney Creek and hoping to restore American prestige, Major General Henry Dearborn, the Commander at Fort George, ordered an attack on

\begin{footnotesize}
\textsuperscript{125}Coffin, 126.
\textsuperscript{126}Knowles, 28; John Mercier McMullen, \textit{The History of Canada: From its First Discovery to the Present Time} (Montreal: McMullen & Co., 1868), v, 276.
\textsuperscript{127}Coffin, 128
\textsuperscript{128}Latimer, 142.
\textsuperscript{129}A. Taylor, 218, 221.
\textsuperscript{130}Hitsman, \textit{Incredible War}, 150-51; A. Taylor, 221.
\textsuperscript{131}Hitsman, \textit{Incredible War}, 151.
\end{footnotesize}
the British depot. En route the American force walked into an ambush set by 465 First Nations forces. These were made up for the most part of Six Nations Grand River warriors and warriors from the Seven Nations, a confederacy that originated in the 18th century made up of Iroquoian and Algonkian speakers who had allied with the French and settled along the St. Lawrence valley. From their position in the woods to the left of the road the warriors inflicted heavy casualties on the American troops, who became increasingly exhausted by the midsummer heat and panicked by the Aboriginal war-whoops. Several hours later Lieutenant James Fitzgibbon arrived with British regulars. Bluffing about the number of reinforcements en route and suggesting that he may not be able to control his Aboriginal allies, Fitzgibbon convinced the exhausted American forces to surrender.

An in-depth study of the role First Nations people played in the early public memory of the war is beyond the scope of this study. However, the portrayal of Natives’ role in the Battle of Beaverdams is suggestive of their role in this public memory. Beyond the heroic figure of Tecumseh, in early histories the roles of many Aboriginal warriors were downplayed, as in the case of Sheaffe receiving credit for Norton’s strategy of ascending the escarpment at Queenston Heights discussed above. Despite their large role in winning the Battle of Beaver Dams, Native forces were portrayed as subservient to their white leaders, and their agency removed or downplayed. Many early histories highlighted the First Nations’ white commanders, in Coffin’s case describing the warriors on the road to Beaver Dams as “[British Captain] Kerr and his Indians.” Many early histories gave most of the credit for the victory to FitzGibbon. Thomas Archer’s A History of Canada, a book for schoolchildren published in 1876, sought to provide a unifying history for the new country. According to Archer, “by a skilful disposition of his small

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132 Hickey, 141.
133 Benn, Iroquois, 15, 115-120; A. Taylor, 225-26.
134 Coffin, 149.
force [FitzGibbon]…caused Boerstler to believe himself surrounded.”

Andrew Archer credits FitzGibbon, while the role Native warriors played in the victory was downplayed. As Cecilia Morgan has illustrated in her examination of the portrayal of Iroquois warriors in accounts of Laura Secord’s journey, when Native warriors were discussed they were often described in ambivalent terms.

Some early historians also tried to justify Britain’s use of the First Nations forces, which was likely a response to American criticism of the strategy. Richardson opened his account of the war with such a defense, stating that although the Aboriginals had sometimes been cruel in battle, Britain could not be blamed because these cruelties were, “perpetrated by an ally over whom we had no control.”

They were nonetheless valuable allies; as Richardson also argued, the employment of the Aboriginal forces had “secured to us the possession of Upper Canada.”

Coffin gave the First Nations peoples more credit for the victory at Beaver Dams than some other authors did, and pointed out that “a horror of the war-whoop hung…on the [American] national conscience, and sensational stories…had the usual effect of such stimulants on nerve and brain.” However, Coffin also included “a picturesque incident of…semi-savage warfare” in his account that showed the First Nations’ unpredictable and dangerous nature. He described an encounter between Jacob Norton, John Brant, and captured American officer Winfield Scott after the Battle of Queenston Heights. In this account Norton and Brant questioned whether Scott had used “witchcraft” to survive their attack. Offended, Scott told Norton he “shot like a squaw,” at which point “the indian blood was roused.” Luckily for Scott, Sheaffe’s Aide-de-Camp intervened and stopped Norton and Brant from killing Scott, although he had to “[draw] a pistol

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135 Andrew Archer, A History of Canada for the Use of Schools (London: T. Nelson, 1876), 293.
136 Coates and Morgan, 270.
137 A. Taylor, 435-436.
138 Richardson, 6.
139 Ibid.
140 Coffin, 149.
and hold it to Norton’s head” to do so.\textsuperscript{141} It is not clear whether this encounter took place, but the portrayal of Brant and Norton as unpredictable, dangerous, and needing the guiding control by the more ‘civilised’ British officer is revealing of early authors’ attitudes toward Britain’s First Nations allies. In most early histories of the war Aboriginal allies were ambivalent figures, capable of terrifying acts but also important to the colony’s survival.

Since the mid nineteenth century the battle of Beaverdams has been bound up more with the figure of Laura Secord than the battle itself or its Aboriginal participants. In our current understanding, during the War of 1812 Laura Secord and her husband James, who was injured at the Battle of Queenston Heights, were residents of Queenston. Although it is not clear how, Laura Secord became aware of the planned attack on Beaver Dams and decided to warn Lieutenant James FitzGibbon, commander of a company of the 49\textsuperscript{th} foot. Secord walked approximately nineteen miles on a circuitous route from Queenston to FitzGibbon’s headquarters at De Cew house near Twelve Mile Creek to alert him of the attack.\textsuperscript{142}

As Cecilia Morgan has demonstrated, until the mid-nineteenth century Secord and her family members related her husband’s sacrifice in the battle of Queenston Heights and Laura Secord’s walk to warn FitzGibbon in various attempts to gain financial compensation and/or employment from the government of Upper Canada.\textsuperscript{143} In 1860 Secord told her story to the visiting Prince of Wales and received some financial compensation. Secord’s story only began to appear in histories of the war at mid-century; Thompson’s 1832 work contained no mention of Secord, and only mentioned the battle of Beaver Dams in passing.\textsuperscript{144} In contrast, Coffin’s \textit{1812: The War and its Moral} included a detailed account of Laura Secord’s walk, and featured a

\textsuperscript{141}Coffin, 64.
\textsuperscript{143}Coates and Morgan, 122-23.
\textsuperscript{144}Coates and Morgan, 129; D. Thompson, 187-188.
fictional cow that Secord milked to convince an American sentry to let her pass. Coffin described her as “the heroine of this achievement,” while in 1868 popular American Historian Benson J. Lossing also described her as a “heroine.” These early histories mentioned Secord’s actions, but she was not a focus of their accounts and the public memory of the war continued to be dominated by male sacrifices and heroes such as Isaac Brock. Beginning in the late nineteenth century Secord’s story would be enlarged and embellished, with Secord’s fame eventually overshadowing the events of the Battle of Beaverdams itself. The public memory of Laura Secord was only questioned in the 1930s. In 1932 W.S. Wallace examined firsthand accounts of the battle and Secord’s actions to come to the conclusion that, although there was no doubt of her “courage and patriotism,” Secord did not contribute to winning the battle of Beaverdams. Although Secord’s actions in warning FitzGibbon were mentioned in histories of the war beginning in the mid nineteenth century, until the 1880s and the efforts of women historical society members her story was written about less than those of male soldiers and heroes.

Retuning to 1813, while American forces remained holed up in Fort George the war continued in the North West and Lower Canada. In the West, the Americans prioritized gaining control of Lake Erie so they could disrupt British supply lines and attack British-controlled Amherstburg and Detroit more easily. The forces at Amherstburg were under the command of General Henry Proctor, who relied heavily on his 3,000 First Nations allies, which included Potawatomi, Wyandot, and Ojibwa warriors. In the spring of 1812 Proctor had led unsuccessful attacks on the American forts Meigs and Stephenson, which strained relations between the two

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146 Coates and Morgan, 129.
Worsening Proctor’s problems, following a naval battle on September 9 the British Navy lost control of Lake Erie. Proctor elected to abandon Amherstburg and Detroit and retreat up the Thames River. In the face of what they saw as a betrayal, two-thirds of his First Nations allies dispersed, but the remainder, led by Tecumseh, reluctantly agreed to join the retreat. While Proctor’s force slowly made its way up the Thames, American forces under William Henry Harrison landed near Amherstburg and pursued the fleeing Proctor. On October 5 Harrison caught up with Proctor at the settlement of Moraviantown. The ensuing battle was a decisive victory for the Americans; the Shawnee leader Tecumseh was killed, and Proctor and his remaining troops fled towards Burlington Heights. Tecumseh was depicted in a heroic light in early histories; Coffin, for instance, described him as “the Indian hero.” Recent scholarship has suggested that while early authors depicted Tecumseh as an Other, they simultaneously co-opted his image as a way to legitimate white possession of the colony’s lands and promote a nationalistic Upper Canadian identity. The battlefield of the Battle of the Thames where Tecumseh was killed was marked by a simple grey boulder in 1911, and a larger Tecumseh Monument was erected near the scene of his death in 1963. An Ontario Heritage Trust Plaque and commemorative turtle-shaped sculpture were unveiled at the site in 2014 to commemorate the 200th anniversary of the Shawnee leader’s death.

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151 A. Taylor, 244; Antal, 306.
152 Antal, 331; A. Taylor, 244-45.
153 Coffin, 237.
Our current understanding is that American forces were also making plans to attack Montreal in the fall of 1813. Two separate armies were to take different routes through Lower Canada and rendezvous for the final assault on the city. These separate forces were under the commands of Major-General Wade Hampton and Major-General James Wilkinson, who disliked each other immensely. After waiting at the mouth of the Chateauguay River for Wilkinson’s force to be ready, Hampton began to advance up the river independently. On 25 October his troops attacked a strong defensive position at a bend in the river defended by much smaller force, including French Canadian Voltigeurs under Lieutenant Colonel Charles de Salaberry. The Americans were soundly defeated and retreated back across the border to New York.\footnote{Donald Graves, Field of Glory: The Battle of Crysler’s Farm, 1813 (Toronto: Robin Brass, 1999), 28, 31, 90, 95; Hitsman, Incredible War, 187.} For his part, Wilkinson advanced with his troops up the St. Lawrence River, but they were pursued by British forces. On 11 November Wilkinson decided to turn and attack his pursuers, who had encamped at a farmhouse on John Crysler’s property. Under poor leadership, the American forces were defeated and the American campaign in Lower Canada was effectively repulsed.\footnote{Hitsman, Incredible War, 190-91; A. Taylor, 284-85.} De Salaberry was a heroic figure in the French Canadian public memory of the war, and a statue was erected to him in Chambly, Quebec in 1881.\footnote{Inauguration du Monument de Salaberry (Montreal[?]: 1881[?]).}

Meanwhile, American forces remained holed up in Fort George, which they had expanded with trenches to enclose approximately one square mile.\footnote{A. Taylor, 227.} Few troops remained inside the fort, as most of General George McClure’s forces had been ordered east to participate in the offensive against Montreal. Lack of pay and supplies had made the militia increasingly restive.\footnote{Hickey, 141; Benn, Iroquois, 45.} On 9 December McClure learned that a force of 500 British troops was advancing on Fort George. With only eighty men to defend the fort, McClure ordered it abandoned and burned.
McClure gave the people of Newark twelve hours’ notice before putting their village to the torch and retreating to Fort Niagara.\textsuperscript{162}

Early histories pointed to the burning of Newark as proof of the American invaders’ barbarism. “With that dastardly cowardice peculiar to himself and a few of his compatriots and traitors,” Thompson railed, “and against the very spirit of the law of nations and of civilized warfare, immersed the flourishing town of Newark in one continued sheet of flame.”\textsuperscript{163} Ryerson shared similar sentiments in his history, and borrowing from Thompson, lamented that it was “not in [the historian’s] power to record one magnanimous act of that recreant General, to rescue his name from that gulf of infamy to which his nefarious conduct has forever doomed it.”\textsuperscript{164} Archer explained that McClure had “[exposed] to the bitter winter cold the young and the tender, the aged and the frail.”\textsuperscript{165} Early histories depicted the retaliatory attacks launched by Lieutenant-General Gordon Drummond, who had taken command of Upper Canada in December 1813, which captured Fort Niagara, destroyed Lewiston, and burned Black Rock and Buffalo as vengeance for the burning of Newark.\textsuperscript{166} “The state of exasperation to which the mind of every British subject had been wrought by the conduct of McClure,” Thompson reasoned, “nothing but a similar retaliation could assuage.”\textsuperscript{167} Some authors such as Ryerson argued that Drummond’s hand had been forced by the Americans, and the general “strongly deprecated the savage mode of warfare to which the enemy…had compelled him to resort.”\textsuperscript{168} The precedent of burning enemy buildings had been set at York, but the burning of Newark, perhaps because of the widespread destruction of private property, was portrayed by early historians as a particularly

\textsuperscript{162} A. Taylor, 250-51.
\textsuperscript{163} David Thompson, 216.
\textsuperscript{164} Ryerson, 422-23; Thompson, 216.
\textsuperscript{165} Archer, iii, 298.
\textsuperscript{166} Hickey, 142-43.
\textsuperscript{167} David Thompson, 218.
\textsuperscript{168} Ryerson, 425.
brutal act that justified swift retaliation. The event provided ample fodder for early Canadian historians to depict the American invaders as barbarous, while simultaneously justifying the retaliatory raids undertaken by British troops.

1814: Bloody Stalemate

According to recent scholarship, the following spring American eyes were set on Fort Erie, which in the American plans would form the first phase of an advance through the Niagara peninsula that would eventually lead to the captures of Burlington and York. Fort Erie was a strategic point that Europeans had occupied for some time. The French had had a trading post at the southern end of the Niagara peninsula in 1750, which was replaced by a timber fort in 1764 after the area was ceded to the British at the conclusion of the Seven Years’ War. A winter storm in 1779 drove large chunks of ice into the fort, damaging it so severely that a new one was necessary. The next fort was built with stone and was located further south than the first, but met the same fate in 1803. Construction began on the third Fort Erie, located on a rise further from the river, in 1804. However, on his arrival at Quebec Lieutenant-General James Craig ordered the work halted, so the fort remained unfinished when war was declared in 1812.

A nearly forgotten event from the war took place on 3 July, when over 3,500 American troops under the command of General Jacob Brown landed to the north and south of Fort Erie. After firing a few artillery rounds British Major Thomas Buck, who commanded only 137 troops, recognized the hopelessness of the situation and surrendered. Although this event was central to that summer’s subsequent Niagara Frontier battles, the capture of the fort received relatively little attention after the war. Again, this may be due to the Americans’ easy victory, or

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170 Seibel, 256-60.
171 Hickey, 185.
Buck’s quick surrender. An 1851 history of Canada West published by surgeon and dentist William Henry Smith to encourage settlement of the province concluded his three-sentence description of the encounter by stating that Buck surrendered “without even a show of resistance.”\(^{173}\) Thompson gave a short, terse account of events and quickly moved on to the summer’s other battles.\(^{174}\)

According to our current historical understanding, after their capture of Fort Erie an American brigade marched north along the Niagara River with the goal of gaining control of the Chippawa River, but on arrival discovered British regulars arrayed on its far bank.\(^{175}\) American forces attacked on 5 July, and after heavy losses on both sides the British force, made up of British regulars and Iroquois allies, was forced to retreat to Fort George.\(^{176}\) Like the capture of Fort Erie, the battle of Chippewa did not loom large in the Canadian public memory of the war, perhaps because the encounter was a defeat for British forces and was overshadowed by the battles that followed.\(^{177}\)

After the battle of Chippewa American forces advanced north along the Niagara River and occupied Queenston Heights, but after some maneuvering around Fort George they withdrew back to Chippewa to resupply.\(^{178}\) As soon as he discovered the Americans had left Queenston Major-General Phineas Riall, commander of the British right division, moved 1,000 regulars south, and they took up a defensive position on a sandy east-west ridge topped by


\(^{174}\)Thompson, 222.

\(^{175}\)Hitsman, *Incredible War*, 223.


\(^{177}\)Graves, *Red Coats and Grey Jackets*, ix.

Lundy’s Lane, a sunken road shaded by peach, apple, and cherry trees.\textsuperscript{179} The ledge was also home to a local cemetery that had been established in 1799 and would later be the site of monuments and the 1914 centennial celebration.\textsuperscript{180} In July 1814 American troops began to move north from Chippawa, and a brigade of 1,200 encountered a British force of 2,800 at Lundy’s Lane at around 7:15 PM on 25 July.\textsuperscript{181} Riall believed that he was facing the entire American army and had hastily ordered a retreat, but Lieutenant-General Gordon Drummond arrived shortly thereafter and countered the order.\textsuperscript{182} The American brigade was under Brigadier-General Winfield Scott, an aggressive commander who had taken part in the Battle of Queenston Heights and had led the successful attack on Fort George the previous spring.\textsuperscript{183} Scott perhaps rashly opted to attack the superior British position, and his forces encountered withering artillery fire from Drummond’s troops atop the ridge and suffered heavy losses. At around 9:00 PM both the American and British forces received reinforcements, and the battle began in earnest.\textsuperscript{184}

After the arrival of reinforcements the American infantry launched an attack on the British artillery that drew the attention of the artillerymen, allowing an American infantry unit to close in on the position using the cover of darkness. This American force surprised the gunners and captured the artillery. Drummond ordered an immediate counterattack, and the two forces fought at close range.\textsuperscript{185} The fighting was close and fierce, and in the face of it Drummond and his men retreated down the slope of the hill. Drummond was determined to retake the guns and the high ground, but two bloody counter-attacks were unsuccessful, and the Lieutenant-General

\textsuperscript{179} Hitsman, \textit{Incredible War}, 194, 226; Graves, \textit{Lundy’s Lane}, 100.
\textsuperscript{181} Hitsman, \textit{Incredible War}, 226; A. Taylor, 393.
\textsuperscript{182} Hitsman, \textit{Incredible War}, 228.
\textsuperscript{183} Hitsman, \textit{Incredible War}, 217; A. Taylor, 188, 217.
\textsuperscript{184} Barbuto, 221, 228.
\textsuperscript{185} Ibid., 222-23.
was wounded in the neck.\textsuperscript{186} Drummond refused to give up his guns and ordered three more unsuccessful counterattacks.\textsuperscript{187} After waiting thirty minutes to ensure the British would not attack a fourth time the battered American army, in desperate need of supplies, gathered their wounded and withdrew to camp. However, due to a lack of rope and horses the Americans were only able to take away one captured gun.\textsuperscript{188} The British re-arrayed for battle on the morning of 26 July and found that the Americans had retreated. They then began recovering supplies, evacuating the wounded, and dealing with the dead.\textsuperscript{189}

The battle was the bloodiest battle of the war so far, and was surpassed for this title only by the later Battle of New Orleans.\textsuperscript{190} British and Canadian soldiers were interred in hastily dug trenches, while most of the American dead were burned. One exception was the body of Captain Abraham Hull, son of General William Hull who had surrendered at Detroit, who had been killed in the final stages of the battle. Perhaps as a sign of respect, his body was buried on the hill near where he fell.\textsuperscript{191} In the battle of Lundy’s Lane the Americans reported 171 killed, 572 wounded, and 110 missing, while Drummond’s report stated 84 killed, 559 wounded, 193 missing, and 42 taken prisoner.\textsuperscript{192}

The battle of Lundy’s Lane captured the imaginations of some early historians, particularly David Thompson, whose 1832 account of the battle formed the basis of some later mid-century histories.\textsuperscript{193} Thompson voiced his opinion that “of all the battles…fought in America, the action at Lundy’s Lane was unquestionably the best sustained and by far the most

\begin{footnotesize}
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\item $^{186}$ Barbuto, 222-23.
\item $^{187}$ Graves, Lundy’s Lane, 145-53.
\item $^{188}$ Latimer, 296.
\item $^{189}$ Barbuto, 227.
\item $^{190}$ Graves, Lundy’s Lane, ix.
\item $^{191}$ Graves, Lundy’s Lane, 165; Barbuto, 225.
\item $^{192}$ Hitsman, Incredible War, 229.
\item $^{193}$ See, for example, Ryerson, 438-442.
\end{itemize}
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McMullen’s 1868 history of Canada agreed, calling it “the most fiercely contested, and bloody in its results, of any fought in Canada during the war.” McMullen was correct that the encounter was the bloodiest of the war in Canada, and both authors painted a macabre picture of the scene. Thompson simply stated that “the carnage was truly appalling [sic],” and according to McMullen the battlefield was “strewn thickly with the dying and the dead,” while the wounded’s “cries for water fell ominously on the ears of the still uninjured.” The fact that part of the battle took place at night also became a focus of later accounts of the battle, and early histories painted a grim picture of the close, nighttime fighting. “The moon rose dimly over the battlefield, and flung its uncertain light from behind a mass of thin feathery cloud on the hostile ranks,” McMullen related, and “long thin lines of fire marked the discharges of hostile infantry, while ever and anon the artillery shot out a red volume of flame.” Despite, or perhaps because of, the carnage in these accounts the battle was also depicted as showing the “real bravery and heroic devotion” of British and Canadian forces as they held their ground against a much larger invading force.

Early historians debated the outcome of the battle, with Americans arguing it was a victory because their troops withdrew from the field in an orderly fashion, and Canadian historians arguing it was a British victory because Drummond and his troops held their ground and were left in control of the battlefield. Thompson and others dismissed these American claims of victory, stating that “upon what grounds the American general could propose such a

194 David Thompson, 12.
195 McMullen, 309.
196 David Thompson, 231; McMullen, 309.
197 McMullen, 309.
198 David Thompson, 235-36.
claim are best known to himself.”

In these early histories General Drummond did not lose control of the high ground or his guns at any point in the battle. The retreat of the American army to Fort Erie was also pointed to as proof of the British victory. In his *History of the Late War* Thompson painted the American generals as inexperienced and “overwhelmed with disappointment at the signal defeat with which they met at Lundy’s Lane,” which led them to confine themselves inside Fort Erie. McMullen similarly pointed out that, “Brown’s victorious troops were soon cooped up in Fort Erie, or in intrenchments [sic] beside it.” While American histories painted the battle as a victory for their forces, Canadians claimed the victory – a debate that we will see was long-running and lasted into the twentieth century.

According to recent scholars, six days after the battle of Lundy’s Lane Drummond moved his army towards the American-occupied Fort Erie. When Drummond arrived on 3 August he discovered that the Americans had been busy reinforcing the fort’s defences, including constructing a breastwork from its southern wall to a sand mound to the southwest called Snake Hill. After setting up camp and bombarding the fort for two days Drummond ordered an attack for 15 August. His plan involved light troops and First Nations forces drawing the attention of the defenders by making a demonstration against the centre of the breastwork that connected the fort to Snake Hill. Then his men would launch a three pronged assault. The first prong would attack between Snake Hill and Lake Erie, surprising the Americans and using bayonets to cut through the camp. Because surprise was essential, Drummond ordered that these troops remove the flints from their muskets to avoid alerting the American sentries through accidental firing.

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200 David Thompson, 236.
201 David Thompson, 238.
202 McMullen, 311. Emphasis in original.
The second group would attack the northern wall connecting Fort Erie to the lake, while the last prong would target the fort itself.\(^{204}\)

Drummond’s plan went wrong almost immediately. American pickets spotted the main force as it advanced to attack near Snake Hill, and as the troops advanced they encountered heavy fire which they could not return with their flint-less muskets. Meanwhile, the second column also came under heavy fire and most of the troops scattered.\(^{205}\) The third group was eventually able to get into the fort’s bastion. The small force was unable to advance any further into the fort, but fought off American counterattacks for approximately one hour. While defending their position a nearby gunpowder magazine ignited and exploded. The explosion effectively ended the battle, as the able-bodied survivors fled the fort.\(^{206}\) Gordon Drummond had lost 57 killed, 309 wounded, and 539 missing or prisoners, to the Americans’ 84 casualties.\(^{207}\)

Early histories depicted the battle as a brave attempt to take the position of a larger American force that may have succeeded if not for the explosion of the gunpowder magazine. Archer’s 1876 school book did not cast any doubts on Drummond’s plan, stating simply that, “unexpected obstructions presented themselves, disasters uncontrollable occurred.”\(^{208}\)

McMullen described the battle as a, “gallant, but abortive attempt.”\(^{209}\) Some early histories of the battle contained a dramatic account of the detonation of the powder magazine, and most suggested that the British may have been victorious if not for the explosion. The detonation happened, “in the very moment when victory was declaring herself in favor of the British Arms,” according to Thompson, and led to the British forces being “literally blown into the air.”\(^{210}\)

\(^{204}\) Barbuto, 247-49.
\(^{205}\) Hitsman, *Incredible War*, 232.
\(^{206}\) Barbuto, 242; 249-52.
\(^{207}\) Hitsman, *Incredible War*, 232.
\(^{208}\) Archer, 307.
\(^{209}\) McMullen, 311.
\(^{210}\) Thompson, 240.
Archer described the explosion as, “killing and fearfully mangling the leaders and many a brave fellow.” According to these early accounts the failed attack on Fort Erie did not reflect poorly on the British forces or their commander; rather, the brave attempt faced unforeseen challenges and the unexpected explosion snatched the attackers’ victory from them.

**The Final Chapter**

In our current understanding, Drummond did not give up the siege after the disastrous attempt to take the fort, but his forces were operating at the end of a very long and unreliable supply chain. The lack of tents, cooling temperatures and near constant rain made the troops’ lives miserable, and they began to suffer from illness. The exchange of artillery fire and ongoing skirmishes also took a toll on Drummond’s force and his ammunition stores. While Drummond and his troops continued their siege of Fort Erie, British forces sailed for the Chesapeake Bay. On 24 August these forces defeated a weak defence at the village of Bladensburg, and quickly advanced on the poorly-defended Washington. The city was abandoned, and British troops set the Capitol and President’s residence ablaze and destroyed other public buildings before leaving the city.

On the Niagara Frontier Drummond continued to languish with his troops outside Fort Erie. On 17 September 1,600 American soldiers and militia attacked Drummond’s batteries, capturing two gun emplacements, spiking the guns and destroying ammunition. The American forces eventually retreated to Fort Erie, but had lost 79 killed and 423 wounded or missing. British casualties were substantially higher, with 115 killed, 176 wounded, and 315 missing. Drummond had also lost half of his siege guns and their ammunition. After this engagement

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211 Archer, 307
214 Ibid., 234.
Drummond gave up the siege of Fort Erie and on 21 September withdrew his troops.\textsuperscript{215} Convinced that the coming winter would jeopardize retention of Fort Erie, the last American forces withdrew to Buffalo on 5 November, destroying the fort before departing.\textsuperscript{216}

After months of negotiations, the treaty of Ghent was signed by the United States and Great Britain on Christmas Eve 1814. The treaty returned the border between the United States and Canada to its prewar boundaries, as it stipulated that all occupied territories were to be returned. Despite First Nations’ contributions to the war, the British abandoned the idea of creating a Native buffer state in the Old Northwest, and the First Nations allies were instead given a vague promise that their possessions in 1811 would be returned. The Treaty of Ghent made no mention of the causes that had led to the war.\textsuperscript{217} Although the treaty had been signed, word was slow to travel and the New Year saw the Battle of New Orleans, a defeat for the British and the last large-scale battle of the war.\textsuperscript{218} Early histories concluded with satisfaction that the United States had not gained anything from their aggression towards Britain and Canada. “Nothing had been gained by all the lavish expenditure of American blood and treasure” noted McMullen, “not one solitary dollar had been added to the wealth of the people of the United States, nor one inch of land to their territory.”\textsuperscript{219}

Our current understanding is that news of the peace reached Upper Canada in March 1815 and was warmly received, particularly in Niagara.\textsuperscript{220} The Niagara District had been the site of numerous major battles (Figure 1.2), and had been almost continually occupied by British or American troops. Both forces had caused extensive damage by not only destroying towns and

\textsuperscript{215}Barbuto, 279.
\textsuperscript{216}Whitehorne, 89.
\textsuperscript{217}Hitsman, \textit{Incredible War}, 272; A. Taylor, 426.
\textsuperscript{218}Hitsman, \textit{Incredible War}, 272-74.
\textsuperscript{219}MacMullen, 315-16.
\textsuperscript{220}Sheppard, 171-72.
crops, but through continuous foraging and the impressment of goods. In June 1815 Thomas Verchères, who had volunteered on the Detroit frontier under Brock, travelled through the Niagara region between Fort George and Fort Erie en route to Amherstburg. Verchères described the scene: “Everywhere I saw devastation, homes in ashes, fields trampled and laid waste, forts demolished, forests burned and blackened, truly a most pitiful sight.” Although his observations may have been exaggerated by a dislike of the invaders shared with his fellow Upper Canadians, there could be no doubt that the Niagara Frontier had suffered during the war.

An examination of the War Claims Commission that sat between 1823 and 1826 reveals that residents of the Niagara district submitted one third of all claims, and that the value of these claims made up approximately 47% percent of total losses in Upper Canada.

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221 Legare, 3-4, 24.
224 A. Taylor, 443.
225 Sheppard, 122, 124-125.
After the war’s end day-to-day life in the colony slowly began to regain a sense of normalcy. Although economic conditions were not ideal, until 1820 imperial policy subsidized immigration to Upper Canada from Britain, focussing on the settlement of demobilized British soldiers and immigrants from Ireland and Scotland.\textsuperscript{226} Between 1817 and 1821 the population of the Niagara District rose from 12,500 to 13,800, while between 1815 and 1842 the province as a whole attracted approximately 159,000 British immigrants.\textsuperscript{227} After the war Upper Canada experienced rapid deflation, and by the early 1820s the economy was in depression.\textsuperscript{228} However, the province recovered and by the end of the 1820s the Upper Canadian economy was growing and becoming more diversified, and social institutions such as libraries, schools and newspapers began appearing.\textsuperscript{229} Banks were also added to the province’s economic life, and Upper Canada began to produce surpluses of products such as grain, flour, and lumber for the British market.\textsuperscript{230} Upper Canadians were experiencing economic growth and diversification, but the public memory of the War of 1812 did not disappear. Early histories helped to both reflect and establish the public memory of the war and its battles. These histories stressed the colony’s innocence in the causes of the conflict, but also illustrated the resilience and loyalty of its people in the face of American aggression. Indeed, in a sense these early authors were again combatting American invasion, but this time the battle was fought against American literary aggression. These authors put forward Canadian narratives of the conflict. They downplayed the veracity of American accounts while painting the colony’s inhabitants in a favourable light as brave, loyal defenders. In addition to the early histories and political rhetoric discussed above, the public memory of the war was also influenced by other factors. While early historians were writing their accounts of

\textsuperscript{226} A. Taylor, 453.  
\textsuperscript{227} McCalla, 253; A. Taylor, 453.  
\textsuperscript{228} McCalla, 36-37.  
\textsuperscript{229} Craig, 145; Errington, 90.  
\textsuperscript{230} McCalla, 141; Craig, 149.
the war tourists were also visiting the battlefields to experience their scenic beauty and gain a
closer connection to past events through their presence in the places where they happened. These
tourists may have read the early histories described above or some of the many American
histories of the war. They also likely perused the era’s growing number of guidebooks and travel
accounts. From the war’s end into the 1880s the public memory of the war was further connected
to place not only through the early histories of the conflict discussed above, but by the erection
of commemorative monuments, guidebooks, and the imaginations of early tourists.

Tourism

Many tourists who visited the former War of 1812 Niagara battlefields were initially
drawn to the area, as others had been before them, by the natural wonder of Niagara Falls. The
first known written account of Niagara Falls was penned by Samuel de Champlain in 1604,
although he had not seen the falls himself and had instead learned of it from his First Nations
guides. In the seventeenth century missionaries reported on the falls in their correspondence, and
in 1683 a description by missionary Father Louis Hennepin was published and read all over
Europe.231 Despite the book’s popularity, between its publication and the Seven Years’ War only
a few tourists undertook the long and difficult journey to the falls.232 Some of these visitors were
artists and writers who produced descriptions of the falls that drove further wonder and curiosity
about them. After the Revolutionary War and into the nineteenth century travel became easier as
areas on both sides of the Niagara River were opened to settlement, providing safer roads and
more accommodations for travelers.233 A more formal tourist industry did not appear at Niagara

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232 McGreevy, 5.
233 Gassan, Birth, 92-93.
of the Erie Canal, which ran from Albany to Buffalo, New York. Many travellers were American, as beginning in the 1820s the craze for scenery had gripped that country. By the 1840s the arrival of a railroad from the coast, Thomas Cook’s packaged tours, and the launch of Atlantic steamship service brought increasing numbers of English visitors, although they remained outnumbered by their American counterparts. Many of these visitors were embarked on a Northern Tour, which had its beginnings in the early nineteenth century and was a way for upper class American tourists to demonstrate sophistication and good breeding by experiencing iconic landscapes close to home. Along with Niagara Falls, other attractions on the tour included the White Mountains, Saratoga Springs, and the Hudson River. Beginning in the 1820s the falls were also part of what Barbara Penner has termed the “northern bridal tour,” a variant of the Northern Tour undertaken by newlyweds. Amenities to cater to these tourists sprang up at the falls. The first hotel on the Canadian side was built in 1822 by American William Forsyth, who fenced in his property so that only paying guests could take in the falls from that vantage. Grand hotels were built on both sides of the river in the 1830s, notably the Clifton House, which featured a spectacular view of the falls, nightly balls and parties, and gardens. As the century progressed more and more attractions and accommodations sprung up around the falls, and by the 1860s a journey there was within the means of many in the growing American middle class.  

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236 Dubinsky, 33; Broadway, 83.  
237 Irwin, 22.  
238 Penner, 5.  
239 Dubinsky, 32.  
240 McGreevy, 7.
Tourists marvelled at the power, majesty, and terror Niagara Falls inspired. The description in an 1838 guidebook was typical: “the mind, filled with amazement, recoils at the spectacle, and loses for a moment, its equilibrium. The trembling of the earth, the mighty rush and conflict, and deafening roar of the water...produce an effect on the beholder, often quite overpowering.” Understandings of both the falls and the places associated with the War of 1812 in the early and mid-nineteenth centuries were conditioned in part by travelogues and guidebooks. Travel writing had existed in North America since European settlement, but guidebooks did not begin to appear until 1822 after the establishment of a tourist circuit in New York State that included a stop at Niagara Falls. These publications not only helped motivate tourists to visit these places and to better navigate new environments, but they also influenced them by suggesting both what was worth seeing and what emotions, sights, or sounds they might experience once there. Many of the interpretations of Niagara Falls and the War of 1812 battlefields were also heavily influenced by romanticism. As Patricia Jasen has demonstrated, romanticism, a cultural movement with its origins in late eighteenth century Europe that valued emotion and imbued nature with quasi-religious values, fuelled the attraction of Niagara Falls. Tourists visited the falls in search of the sublime, an intense feeling of wonder and terror inspired by nature.

Tourism has a tendency to cluster within compact areas, and due in part to their proximity to Niagara Falls many War of 1812 battlefields were added to these visitors’ itineraries. Queenston Heights and other Niagara Frontier battlefields were popular attractions.

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241 Horatio A.M. Parsons, Steele's Book of Niagara Falls, 5th ed. (Buffalo: Steele & Peck, 1838), 32.
from the end of the war into the later nineteenth century. Tourists added these places to their itineraries because they were places where battles had happened and offered the chance to contemplate the events of the war in those places. For these tourists being on the battlefields made the past battles seem more real and allowed for the morbid contemplation of the past characteristic of the romantic ideal, while also appreciating the places’ pastoral locales. An 1838 Upper Canadian guidebook stated that “in the immediate vicinity of the Falls many incidents have occurred to impart additional interest,” while a later American guidebook pointed out that, “the unique natural and historic attractions of the Niagara District make it a paradise for the summer visitor.” For many tourists part of the former battlefields’ attraction lay in the romantic desire, influenced in part by the Gothic literature of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, to indulge in the vicarious experience of war and fantasies of violent death. As Stuart Semmel argues in his examination of Waterloo, the “romantic imagination was drawn not only to a natural but also to a historical sublime,” a concept closely linked with romanticism that valued the marks history left on locales. Indeed, seeing the physical remains of the past can make it seem more real. As anthropologist Christopher Tilley contends, narratives about the past become more powerful when they are rooted in locale and, “[acquire] material reference points that can be visited, seen and touched.” Many of these tourists were likely drawn to the battlefields for their connection to violent past events, but they were not taking part solely in thanatourism or dark tourism. Although many indulged in reveries of violence, they also voiced appreciation for the locales’ pastoral beauty. Tourists had mixed motives for travelling to the battlefields, but being at the former battlefields allowed many visitors to

246 Parsons, 75; James Main Dixon, The Indispensable Tourist's and Wheelman's Guide to the Niagara District with Maps (Niagara Falls, Canada: Niagara Falls Advertiser, 1899), 2.
experience the historical sublime by seeing the traces of the past and imagining the war’s
dramatic events in the places they occurred.

Some tourists were drawn to the places with the most visible remnants from the war, the
remains of forts George and Erie. Ruins, which both symbolized the transience of great deeds
and provided visible evidence of the past, had become attractions by the nineteenth century.²⁵⁰
Romanticism cherished the traces of the past, and its adherents had a particular fascination with
ruins. In the absence of commemorative monuments, ruins also reinforced the
places’ connection to the war through easily visible and lasting physical remains. Many
tourists viewed the ruins of the two forts from their boats as they travelled the
Niagara River, viewing the scenery as a historical panorama much like
contemporary river-boat tourists to the Thousand Islands or the Hudson River viewed panoramas
of natural scenery on their excursions.²⁵¹ Other Niagara tourists journeyed to view the ruins and
battlefields close up, typically starting with Fort Erie and working their way north to Fort
George.²⁵²

²⁵⁰Jasen, *Wild Things*, 38; Chambers, 133; Lowenthal, 148.
²⁵²See, for example, John Disturnell, *The Picturesque Tourist: Being A Guide through the State of New York and
Upper and Lower Canada, Including a Hudson River Guide; Giving an Accurate Description of Cities and Villages,
Celebrated Places of Resort, etc. with Maps and Illustrations* (New York: J. Disturnell, 1858), 109-110; *Descriptive
and Historical View of Burr’s Moving Mirror of the Lakes, the Niagara, St. Lawrence, and Saguenay Rivers,
Embracing the Entire Range of Border Scenery of the United States and Canadian Shores, from Lake Erie to the
Fort Erie was not rebuilt after it was destroyed by the retreating American forces, and its crumbling stone bastions “[formed] a pleasing and animated feature in the landscape” (Figure 1.3).\textsuperscript{253} The fort’s front wall was left almost entirely intact after the war, but fragments of stone from its bastions were scattered around the locale, and a nearby water-filled ditch made a small pond.\textsuperscript{254} These ruins not only prompted the contemplation of the past, but provided a marker in the locale to anchor them. In 1816 an American visited the ruins and felt a connection to the events of the war: “the American traveller can never visit this spot without emotion,” he wrote, “He will examine the trees that are shattered, the ground that has been torn up by the balls and rockets…he will water the roses that are already growing on the soldier’s grave.” This traveller believed that the ruins of the fort would soon be gone, and mourned the destruction of these markers of the past and their connections to the war dead. “Then will the curious and feeling traveller seek in vain for those vestiges of the war, either on the face of the country, or in the hearts of the inhabitants, and there will be none remaining,” he lamented.\textsuperscript{255} Despite his misgivings the ruins of the fort were not replaced, and later visitors also felt a connection to the past through their presence there. Visiting Fort Erie in 1838, British tourist and author Harriet Martineau sat alone beside the pond surrounded by ruined walls contemplating the life of an American soldier she imagined had been killed destroying the fort prior to the American retreat in 1814. “I felt as if I could enter into what his feelings must have been on the last day of his life,” she mused, “at one moment all had been dead silence; at the next the windows in Buffalo

\textsuperscript{253}\textit{Descriptive and Historical View of Burr’s Moving Mirror}...., 10.
\textsuperscript{254}\textit{For the North-American Journal. Sketches of Scenery on Niagara River.” The North-American Review and Miscellaneous Journal} 2, no. 6 (1816): 321.
\textsuperscript{255}\textit{For the North American Journal},” 321.
were blown out by the explosion.”\footnote{Harriet Martineau, *Retrospect of Western Travel*, Vol. I (London: Harper & Brothers, 1838), 92.} The fort’s ruins prompted Martineau to form a powerful romanticised vision of the past that was linked to her presence on the former battlefield.

Fort George did not have the same dramatic appeal as Fort Erie, as its battles had not been the focus of early histories and its wooden palisades, damaged during the war, had been left to deteriorate. Fort George’s strategic importance had diminished toward the end of the war, and General Drummond had ordered the construction of a fort on Mississauga Point. The point was to the northwest of Fort George at the Niagara River’s outlet, and construction of the new fort began in early 1814. After the war strategic priority was given to maintaining Fort Mississauga, and Fort George was allowed to deteriorate.\footnote{Merritt, 233-34.} In the 1820s some of the military reserve around the fort was ceded to the town of Newark for industrial purposes, and part of the property was given to the Niagara Parish in 1828. Beginning in 1830 the military buildings, including a guardhouse, the military hospital, and the engineers’ quarters were rented out, presumably to locals such as the town doctor. In 1853 Fort George was leased to a John McNeilly, a practice that continued with various lessees until 1912.\footnote{Yvon Desloges, *Structural History of Fort George*, trans. Department of the Secretary of State (Ottawa: National Historic Parks and Sites Branch, Parks Canada, 1980), 54.} An 1894 traveller’s account noted that its “dismantled, moss-covered ruins are now all that remain of the stirring past.”\footnote{J. M'Cowan, *A Tour in Canada* (1894), 32.} At this time the only structure that remained in Fort George was its limestone powder magazine, which a visitor mistook for a dilapidated brewery in 1838, and was later occupied by the family of an English soldier (Figure 1.4).\footnote{Mrs. Anna Jameson, *Winter Studies and Summer Rambles in Canada*, Vol. I (London: Saunders and Otley, 1838), 81; Lossing, 418.} However, the magazine was a visible reminder of the conflict, and the fort’s breastworks remained intact and showed the outline of the fort’s defences.\footnote{Lossing, 418.} The ruins of forts George and Erie provided markers in the places that anchored the morbid contemplation of
past battles and deaths, while appealing to the historical sublime’s preference for the traces of history. Tourists could easily identify the places’ connection to the War of 1812 and could see and touch their physical remnants.

The number of visitors to the ruined forts was overshadowed throughout the period by the popularity of Queenston Heights and Lundy’s Lane. These former battlefields were closer to Niagara Falls, and also offered the opportunity to appreciate the area’s locale while indulging in romanticised contemplations of the past. Queenston Heights was, not surprisingly, linked to the hero of the war, Isaac Brock. Like the early histories, guidebooks and travelogues portrayed Brock as the brave and noble hero of the war, a public memory that was further reinforced by the erection of the monuments to him. Many tourists traveled to Queenston Heights after the war, as it was the site where, as one guidebook put it, “the brave and good Brock fell in the arms of victory.”

Brock was the focus of early efforts to erect commemorative markers on the Niagara Frontier. These monuments not only reflected and influenced public memory, but were also tourist attractions. Nineteenth century monumental practices tended to concentrate on great leaders and generals rather than the ordinary participants in war, and the monuments

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\caption{Remains of Fort George powder magazine, as portrayed by Benson J. Lossing after his 1860 visit. Reprinted from Lossing, 418.}
\end{figure}

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\begin{itemize}
\item \textbf{262} C.R. Chisholm, \textit{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.
\end{itemize}
erected to Brock were no exception.\textsuperscript{263} As Alan Gordon notes, historical heroes are constructed to embody national virtues and function as a force of cohesion, making the hero’s actions “those of a people.”\textsuperscript{264} Brock was a hero of the war, and early commemorators and writers thought that his example and spirit had secured the successful defence of Upper Canada. Brock was often seen as a representation of the people of Upper Canada, and according to Keith Walden he was “a striking specimen of the men he led,” and had distilled his spirit into the loyal militia before he died.\textsuperscript{265} This is illustrated in Caniff’s \textit{History of the Settlement of Upper Canada}, which explained that “the spirit of the brave General was infused into every Canadian,” allowing Sheaffe and his troops to advance and “conquer the polluters of Canadian soil.”\textsuperscript{266} As Archer’s schoolbook proclaimed, “by his fall the attack on the Heights was stayed” and through Brock’s sacrifice the Canadians were ultimately victorious.\textsuperscript{267} Much of the public memory of the war focussed on the figure of Brock, including the monuments erected to him at Queenston Heights that strengthened the hero’s association with the former battlefield.

Brock’s commemorators wanted to celebrate the hero by erecting a monument to him and selected Queenston Heights, the site of the famous battle and of the hero’s death, as the most fitting place. In March of 1814 the legislature of Upper Canada passed a motion to commemorate Brock with a monument, and the following March it appropriated £1,000 and selected a steering committee for the project.\textsuperscript{268} Members of the legislature hoped that private donations would help to pay for a large, extravagant monument, but the province’s postwar economic slump meant that

\textsuperscript{265} Walden, “Isaac Brock,” iii, 58.  
\textsuperscript{266} Caniff, 522.  
\textsuperscript{267} Archer, 286.  
\textsuperscript{268} Malcomson, \textit{Burying}, 9.
six years later fundraising had only brought in £1,000. The proposed monument was scaled down, and after several delays construction of a Tuscan column began on the Heights above the village of Queenston in spring 1824. On the anniversary of the battle that fall the bodies of Brock and his aide-de-camp Macdonell were exhumed from Fort George where they had been buried during the war and reinterred in the base of the still-incomplete monument on the Heights. The 1824 reinterment ceremony on Queenston Heights was attended by over 8,000 people, including militiamen and Chiefs from the Grand River Six Nations, among them John Brant. The monument was completed in 1827 and stood 135 feet high with an interior staircase that led to an observation deck at its apex.

This column stood on the edge of the escarpment until 17 April 1840 when the monument was damaged by an explosion supposedly set by Benjamin Lett, an Irish Canadian involved in the 1837 rebellion. Upper Canadians condemned the destruction of the monument, and three months later over 5,000 people gathered on Queenston Heights to discuss what should be done. David Mills has characterized this gathering as a public display of loyalty after the

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269 Sheppard, 208.
273 Turner, 229.
275 Sheppard, 243.
disruption of the rebellion.\(^{276}\) The speakers stressed that Brock was still held in high esteem, that the bombing of the monument was a villainous act, and they argued that a new memorial should be erected on the Heights as soon as possible.\(^{277}\) After highlighting his own participation in the Battle of Queenston Heights Sir John Beverley Robinson, Chief Justice of Upper Canada and prominent member of the Family Compact, described “the loyal militia of this Province” as “brave defenders of the soil.”\(^{278}\) Indeed, although their political power was reduced in the years after the Union of the Canadas, after 1837 the Tory elite still retained power and the Rebellions had strengthened their views on the importance of loyalty.\(^{279}\) Those present agreed that a new monument to Brock should be erected, and a steering committee was selected for the project.\(^{280}\) This committee was made up of loyalists headed by Tory supporter Sir Allan Napier McNab, who had been knighted for his suppression of the rebellion. Other committee members included businessman William Hamilton Merritt, who had served in the War of 1812 and for the time being still supported the Tories.\(^{281}\)

After several delays and two design competitions the foundation stone of the new monument was laid on 13 October 1853. It was 200 yards to the west of the original, whose ruins had been removed that spring and the bodies of Brock and Macdonell moved from the old vault to a Queenston cemetery.\(^{282}\) On 13 October the two men’s remains were reinterred at the

\(^{276}\) Mills, 112.

\(^{277}\) Malcomson, Burying, 25.

\(^{278}\) Craig, 264; Symons, 27-28.

\(^{279}\) Mills, 112.

\(^{280}\) Malcomson, Burying, 25.


\(^{282}\) Malcomson, Burying, 26, 28, 34, 36; Turner, Astonishing General, 231.
new monument’s base. Between 12,000 and 15,000 people gathered on Queenston Heights for the ceremony, including civilians, militia, political representatives, and First Nations warriors.\textsuperscript{283}

Construction continued on the monument after this ceremony, and it was completed in October 1857. The new monument consisted of a base mounted by a square pedestal with bas relief engravings featuring Brock’s achievements and coat of arms. From this pedestal rose a column crowned by a platform with an enclosed observation deck topped by a statue of Isaac Brock (Figure 1.5). The monument stood 57 metres high and was the second tallest monument in the world, surpassed only by the column erected to commemorate the great fire of London.\textsuperscript{284}

The monument had been paid for by public subscription, which included financial contributions from several First Nations groups, including the Mohawk of the Bay of Quinte, the Mississaugas, the Chippewas, and the Oneidas. The largest First Nations contribution came from the Grand River Six Nations, which supplied £75.\textsuperscript{285} The monument was not officially dedicated until 13 October 1859, when once again crowds numbering in the thousands gathered on the Heights to commemorate Brock and celebrate his new monument.\textsuperscript{286} The towering monument on the Heights linked the war’s hero to a specific place, helping to solidify it as a place closely linked to the public memory of the War of 1812. Although Brock had had victories in the west, such as the capture of Detroit, it was a place associated with his death that was the chosen site for his immortalization in stone. The large monument and the hero’s body in it not only marked the Heights as a place of public memory, but also provided a large and visible attraction for early tourists.


\textsuperscript{284}Malcomson, \textit{Burying}, 42, 31-32.

\textsuperscript{285}Samuel P. Jarvis to Col. Bullock, 18 February 1841, F 1151 Brock Monument Committee Fonds, “First Nations Addresses and Financial Contributions to the Brock Monument,” AO.

\textsuperscript{286}“The Inauguration of the Monument,” \textit{The Daily Globe}, 14 October 1859, 2.
The mausoleum on the heights would not, however, be the only monument to Brock. In 1860 it was decided to also mark the spot where Brock fell. William Thomas, the established English-born architect based in Toronto who had designed the second Brock Monument, was selected for the work. However, Thomas could not determine the actual site of Brock’s death. Beyond the mention of a thorn bush growing at the spot, Thomas could not determine the proper point for the new monument. He was under pressure to select a site, as a member of the British royal family was expected to dedicate the monument. Thomas decided to place the monument at the base of the escarpment in the village of Queenston, approximately 50 metres from the main street.  

On 13 September local newspapers announced that the Prince of Wales would visit Queenston Heights, and on the 19th he arrived to dedicate the new monument. The Prince ascended the Brock monument atop the Heights, then descended to the village to spread mortar over the base of the new monument and lay its corner piece. This monument was not as large or visible as that atop the escarpment, and fewer tourists visited the small tribute at the base of the Heights. These two monuments to Brock would be the only large-scale, well-publicized memorials to the War of 1812 in Upper Canada until the 1890s.

As the Hero of Upper Canada, Brock and the site of the famous battle of Queenston Heights had been an attraction for tourists even before the monuments to him were erected there. Tourists such as John Howison, visiting in the 1820s from the United Kingdom, sought out where he fell “when the fatal ball entered his vitals,” now marked by “an aged thorn bush.”

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288 “The Prince is Coming!,” St. Catharines Constitutional, 13 September 1860, 2; Malcomson, Burying, 47.
289 Henry J. Morgan, The Tour of H.R.H. the Prince of Wales through British America and the United States (Montreal: J. Lovell, 1860), 189-90; Malcomson, Burying, 47.
290 Howison, 91
Explaining why Brock was so popular amongst Upper Canadians, Howison stated that Brock “possessed, in an eminent degree, those virtues which add lustre to bravery, and those talents that shine alike in the cabinet and the field.”\textsuperscript{291} One later guidebook went further, connecting Brock’s heroism to the entire region, stating, “the death of the noble Brock has thrown a halo over the Niagara Frontier.”\textsuperscript{292} Tourists not only sought out where Brock was reportedly shot, but they also mused about the battle’s other outcomes. The American soldiers’ plunge from the Heights into the Niagara River seemed to hold a particular fascination. Taking in Queenston Heights in the 1820s British tourist Adam Hodgson described the heights, “from which the American soldiery plunged with dreadful impetuosity into the abyss below, only, alas, to find refuge in a watery grave, from the scalping knives of the Indians.”\textsuperscript{293} John J. Bigsby, visiting Queenston Heights around 1850, was given a tour of the battlefield by a Mr. Ridout of Queenston, who claimed he had been present at the battle. Bigsby later recalled that Ridout did not “forget to point 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.”\textsuperscript{294} Contemplating the scene, John Howison imagined American soldiers falling from the cliff onto their own bayonets and wrote, “I almost imagined I saw these unfortunate men writhing in all the agonies of a protracted death.”\textsuperscript{295} Visitors to Queenston Heights not only basked in Brock’s heroism and tragic death, but were also drawn to the American forces’ dramatic deaths. Brock’s monuments and the striking cliff face made visitors’ impressions of the place’s past and its association with death more immediate. For many of these visitors the

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\textsuperscript{291} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{292} Archer Buter Hulbert, \textit{The Niagara River} (New York: G.P. Putnam’s Sons, 1908), 270.
\textsuperscript{293} Adam Hodgson, \textit{Letters from North America, Written during a Tour in the United States and Canada} (London: Hurst, Robinson, & Co., 1824), 354.
\textsuperscript{294} John J. Bigsby, \textit{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), 28-29.
\textsuperscript{295} Howison, 88-89.
battlefields were places with a connection to the war’s public memory that provided a closer connection to the past and the opportunity to indulge in romantic reveries of heroism and death enhanced by their presence in the places where the battles had happened.

As Thomas Chambers has observed, the natural locale of the battlefields and their vicinity was also an attraction for these early tourists.\(^{296}\) Indeed, in addition to the historical sublime, romanticism also valued the picturesque landscape – one that was aesthetically pleasing and paintable, but lacked the sublime’s emotional impact.\(^{297}\) Shortly after the war an anonymous author described the Niagara River to the readers of *The North-American Review and Miscellaneous Journal*. Emphasizing the beauty of the surroundings, the author saw the battlefields as complementing the natural attractions of the area, writing, “[The] Niagara River has a great deal to offer to the lover of Nature, and a new interest has been added to its shores, since they became a theatre of war.”\(^{298}\) Many tourists paid to ascend the Brock monument, as doing so offered the visitor “a magnificent view…of the windings of the Lower Niagara River, of the fine fruit country around, and of the waters of Lake Ontario in the blue vista.”\(^{299}\) “From this eminence, the country around including the picturesque scenery, may be seen for fifty miles,” noted an 1838 guidebook, and another claimed that the view was perhaps the best in North America.\(^{300}\) Rather than concentrate on the former battlefield and its association with death, some visitors, including Martineau, saw the picturesque view from atop the monument as a contrast to the sometimes macabre associations of the ground below. “There was life in this magnificent scene,” she wrote.\(^{301}\) Others felt that the locale’s beauty contradicted the events that had happened there. After his tour of Queenston Heights, Bigsby commented that he and his

\(^{296}\) Chambers, *Memories of War*, 141.  
\(^{298}\) For the North American Journal, “320.  
\(^{299}\) Mercer G. Adam, *Canada: Historical and Descriptive from Sea to Sea* (Toronto: W. Bryce, 1888), 25.  
\(^{300}\) Parsons, 45; Dixon, 16.  
\(^{301}\) Martineau, 101.
companions “were sorry that a landscape so full of beauty should be connected with so sad a story.”

Contrasting the picturesque scenery with the places' macabre associations likely heightened the emotional response to both.

The battlefield of Lundy’s Lane also offered a combination of picturesque scenery and bloody historical associations. Lundy’s Lane was easily accessible from Niagara Falls, as the road in front of the Clifton House hotel led directly to the battlefield. At Lundy’s Lane the combatants’ close quarters and the battle’s nighttime setting, described in detail in early histories, caught the imagination of visitors who pictured how, “the half orbed moon…high in the heavens…shed a pale and doubtful light on the scene. Her rays were brightly reflected, from the polished arms of the front ranks of the British, while broad shadows concealed the mass behind.”

Echoing the version of the battle depicted in early histories, an 1850 guidebook painted a dramatic picture of the Lundy’s Lane battlefield for its readers, highlighting that at the end of the battle “the conflicting armies, as if by mutual consent, ceased the deadly strife, and the bloody field remained in the possession of the dead and dying.”

Many visitors were likely drawn to the place by its past; Lundy’s Lane was the bloodiest battle of the war in Canada, and the close, nighttime fighting provided ample fodder for the romantic imagination.

It was not only the public memory associated with the place that drew visitors, but also its proximity to the falls and its scenery. As one tourist who visited the site shortly after the war reported, Lundy’s Lane’s “proximity to the Falls of Niagara, the time at which it was fought…and the immense proportion of dead and wounded which were found on the field, offer

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302 Bigsby, 29.
303 Burr, 15; Dubinsky, 32.
304 “For the North American Journal,” 327.
305 *Descriptive and Historical View of Burr’s Moving Mirror*, 15.
a combination rarely to be met with.” In 1853 the owners of one of the observatories published a collection of excerpts relating to the battle for sale, as, “a great want has been felt by visitors to a spot so celebrated in History” for a description of the encounter. These towers gave visitors a “singularly fine” view of not only the battlefield, but of the wonder of Niagara Falls. According to Lossing these observatories gave tourists “a magnificent panoramic view of the surrounding country” highlighted by “the great cataract” which made the timber observation tower tremble. Indeed, for some visitors the proximity of the falls to the former battleground led to the conflation of the sublimity of the falls and the historical sublime of the battlefield. In 1816 an American tourist imagined that “during this night of horror and destruction, the thunder of the cannon was lost in the roar of the torrent, and the earth was shaken, by a mightier force than the discharge of artillery or the trampling of the war horse.” Lossing later also expressed this feeling in his *Pictorial Field-Book*, writing

> Musket, rocket, and cannon cracking, hissing, and booming; and the clash of sabre and bayonet, with the cries of human voices, made a horrid din that commingled with the awful, solemn roar of the great cataract hard by, whose muffled thunder tones rolled on, forever, in infinite grandeur when the puny drum had ceased to beat, and silence had settled upon the field of carnage. There the dead were buried, and the mighty diapason of the flood was their requiem.

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307 Seibel, 278-79.
308 An Account of the Battle of Lundy's Lane Fought in 1814 between the British & American Armies, from the Best and most Authentic Sources (Drummondville: Welland Reporter, 1853), 3.
309 Chambers, 142; Dixon, 36.
310 Lossing, 828.
312 Lossing, 824.
Here the natural sublime of Niagara Falls was contrasted with the dramatic battle of 25 July 1814, as Lossing described the horror of the night’s events while highlighting the power and majesty of the natural world. In his account the falls’ powerful roar continued its ceaseless march, while puny mortals fought and died nearby. The power of nature and the romantic imaginings of the place’s past events were closely related, and the belief in the continuity of the roar of the falls may have provided another marker that helped visitors feel more connected to the romantic past.

The popularity of these Niagara Frontier battlefields illustrates not only the growth of the area’s tourism industry, but the connection that guidebooks and travelogues encouraged visitors to draw between the public memory of the war and the former battlefields as places. Influenced by romanticism and the search for the sublime, tourists travelled to these battlefields in part to experience a closer connection to the bloody and heroic acts from the war in the places where they happened. According to travel literature and published diaries, many visitors travelled to the battlefields in search of the historical sublime and fuel for their romantic imaginations, but also appreciated the picturesque view of the countryside the Brock Monuments and Lundy’s Lane observation towers provided. The visible remnants of the past such as the ruins of forts George and Erie or the monuments erected at Queenston Heights provided reference points in the locales.
for visitors to feel more connected to the events that had transpired there during the war. As places with an organic connection to the public memory of the war enhanced by historical and touristic publications and the erection of monuments, the battlefields drew tourists in search of a closer connection to the famous events in the places where they happened.

**Conclusion**

The Niagara Frontier was a crossroads of trade and a site of struggle long before the War of 1812. The Niagara Peninsula’s strategic situation meant that it was home to different First Nations Groups, the French, and later the British. It is not surprising then that the Niagara Frontier was the scene of intense fighting in the War of 1812. The area saw many battles that were later recounted by historians, politicians, and guidebooks. Early histories of the conflict were written in the context of a growing influx of American publications and Upper Canada, later Canada West’s, political upheaval and search for a unifying public memory. These early histories put forward a Canadian interpretation of the war that argued that Canada had been caught up in a war that it had not started, but that the province was bravely defended by its loyal militia. One of the main themes of their early histories and political speeches was the militia myth, which portrayed the province’s citizens as willing and loyal fighters who had almost single-handedly fought off the American invasions. Isaac Brock emerged as a central hero of the conflict, and Upper Canadians honoured him through their histories and through the monuments at Queenston Heights. After the war tourists were likely drawn to the battlefields by their proximity to Niagara Falls, travel guides, and perhaps some early histories. The battlefields were places where visitors could feel more connected to the events of the war. Although not immune to the pleasures of the scenery, these tourists visited the former battlefields to indulge the romantic ideal and fantasize about the violent events that had happened there. The War of 1812 had a lasting effect on the Niagara Frontier, not only through the events of the war itself, but
through the historical accounts that grew out of it. The events became closely linked to their associated places in the postwar period through not only their organic connections to the conflict, but through written accounts, the erection of monuments, and the imaginations of tourists.

The public memory of the war put forward by early histories, speeches, and guidebooks formed the background for the emergence of the local history movement and the NPC in the mid-1880s. The members of these local historical societies were likely aware of these early narratives, and they continued to promote many of the views contained in them into the twentieth century. These societies would continue to strengthen the former battlefields’ associations with their War of 1812 battles, a process that had begun in the early and mid-nineteenth century through early monuments and tourism. Early tourism to the battlefields also illustrates the beginnings of another ongoing issue for this study -- that of the coexistence of differing views of these places as being both places with a close connection to the past, and places of scenic beauty. These two meanings coexisted throughout the period under study, although as we will see the emphasis on either of these views shifted over time.

Tourism to the former battlefields of the Niagara Frontier began to decline after the Civil War, as many American tourists could more easily access the more recent, and for them more meaningful, battlefields of that conflict.313 After the mid-1880s the future of the former battlefields would be increasingly controlled by local organizations rather than private individuals or the Dominion Government. The late nineteenth century would see interest in the area’s history resurge, giving rise to local historical societies whose members saw the former battlefields as places with connections to the War of 1812 that were worthy of protection. The pressures of industrialization and urbanization provoked these societies to preserve the former

313Graves, *Lundy’s Lane*, 247; Seibel, 279.
battlefields and they turned increasingly to the NPC, an organization created to preserve the area’s largest natural wonder.
Chapter 2 - Guarding the Frontier: Local Historical Societies and the Niagara Parks Commission

This chapter focusses on two groups that had a profound impact on the former battlefields in the period under study: Niagara’s local historical societies and the NPC. These organizations were separate entities, but had shared temporal and geographic origins and to varying degrees both groups recognized and valued the battlefields’ connections to the history and public memory of the War of 1812. This public memory had been reflected and shaped by early political rhetoric and historians, and its connection to the battlefields further strengthened through early monuments and tourism. The local historical societies created in the late nineteenth century inherited this public memory and subscribed to the idea that loyal Upper Canadians had defended the province in the War of 1812. The historical accounts published by some of their prominent members, however, showed that they incorporated some aspects of history’s emerging professionalization in their written histories, such as an emphasis on empirical evidence and a critical attitude towards their sources. The local historical societies, then, promoted aspects of both the public memory and history of the War of 1812 and its battlefields. The local historical societies and the NPC were influenced by and formed part of the battlefields’ locations, or their relationship with social and political forces that extended beyond their boundaries. In late nineteenth century North America a growing interest in history and mounting concern over preserving ‘wild’ nature prompted the creation of local history and preservation movements. In Ontario these social and political forces contributed to the creation of local historical societies and the NPC, which were deeply involved with the battlefields as places, but whose activities extended beyond the places’ borders. This chapter also introduces these organizations and their prominent members. As critics of Halbwachs’ theory of collective memory have pointed out,
groups are not monolithic entities, but are rather made up of individuals. Their individual senses of place can be difficult to access, as many remaining sources such as annual reports and historical society publications were mediated through their memberships in these groups. However, as Halbwachs and Casey note, individual memory cannot be totally separated from the remembering we do as members of a group. Examining the formation of these groups and the backgrounds of their membership provide insight into their senses of place and understandings of the connections between the former battlefields and their wartime pasts. These attitudes are significant to an examination of the battlefields as places because these two groups played the largest roles in shaping the battlefields as places in the period under study.

The local history movement in Niagara was made up of amateur historians who had close connections to the Niagara region, and included the Lundy’s Lane Historical Society, the Niagara Historical Society, and the Thorold and Beaverdams Historical Society. Their members focussed on the coming of the loyalists and, by extension, the War of 1812 as central events in Canada’s past and future as a British nation. Among other things, these societies concerned themselves with the preservation of places that had an organic connection to the history and public memory of the War of 1812. The members of these societies saw the former battlefields as places with deep connections to the national past, and when some of them were neglected or threatened by industrial expansion they lobbied for their protection. Their concerns led them to support the NPC, an agency created by the province of Ontario in 1885 to preserve the natural beauty of Niagara Falls, in their efforts to acquire the places. The NPC had been created to preserve an area around Niagara Falls and was granted a great deal of power, including the ability to acquire land along the Niagara River. Although the Commission had multiple motives

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1 See Introduction, 22-23.
for wanting to acquire the battlefields, including their natural beauty and a desire for increased revenue, its members still recognized that the battlefields were places with connections to the nation’s past that should be preserved on that basis. Several Commission members were active in local historical societies, and the organization seems to have respected the places’ connections to the War of 1812. Different groups can perceive places in a variety of ways; the local history movement’s members valued the places for their connections to the War of 1812, and while the NPC recognized this connection, its members were also influenced by the places’ natural beauty and their own financial considerations. The wider currents of the local history and preservation movements influenced these groups, which formed part of the places’ locations and had a profound influence on the former battlefields. The commissioners, with the support of local historical societies and provincial government officials, were able to acquire Queenston Heights and Fort Erie, and to save Fort George from development, although it was not placed in their care. By 1910 the NPC had control of these places and the former battlefield of Lundy’s Lane. These groups worked together to not only save the battlefields from destruction, but they both also profoundly shaped the former battlefields’ futures after the task of saving them was complete.

**Niagara’s Local Historical Societies**

Niagara’s historical societies were created at a time of growing interest in the province’s history, and were some of the fifteen local historical societies that appeared in Ontario between 1882 and 1896. These societies emerged out of a climate of political and social uncertainty that characterized late nineteenth century Ontario. In the later nineteenth century those living in the province were facing a multitude of changes, including increased urbanization, increased immigration, the economic expansion of industry, and the rise of social and moral reform

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movements. Economic depression, the Riel Rebellion, the Manitoba Schools’ Crisis, and the governing Liberals’ consideration of Commercial Union and Unrestricted Reciprocity with the United States had also raised questions about the country’s future. These uncertainties contributed to a new interest in the province’s history, and Ontario was home to numerous local historical societies founded in the late nineteenth century.

Many members of the province’s historical societies held imperialist views. As Carl Berger has convincingly demonstrated, imperialism was a kind of Canadian nationalism. Imperialist thought was influential in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, particularly in the Maritimes and in older parts of Ontario, including Niagara. The movement for imperial unity was initially sparked by concerns over unrestricted reciprocity with the United States and subsequent fears of annexation. Its adherents not only valued the British connection, but wanted a closer economic, political, and military relationship with the British Empire that would eventually lead to Canada having a position of equality within it. As Berger argues, the campaign for imperial unity rested on a specific understanding of the country’s past, its peoples’ character as loyal and law abiding, its critiques of the United States, and its future progress. The loyalists played an important role in that past, as according to imperialist thought they had brought British institutions and the ideal of imperial unity to the country and had subsequently defended it in the War of 1812. Not only that, but many imperialists identified with the loyalists and many either held or claimed loyalist ancestry. Their praise of British institutions and British valour not only fit within their pro-British views, but also simultaneously praised their own forefathers as the keepers and defenders of British values in Canada.

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5 Killan, 15; Coates and Morgan, 131.
6 Berger, *Sense of Power*, 3-5, 49, 78, 105-107, 259-60.
Founded in 1869, the York Pioneer and Historical Society was the first historical society in the province, and its precedent was later followed by several societies in the Niagara Region. The first of these was the LLHS, founded in 1887 to “promote as far as possible a knowledge of early Canadian history, and to urge the duty of perpetuating the memories of the brave men of 1812 and ’14 in this part of our country.” The society was founded by Rev. George Bull of the All Saints Church in Niagara Falls, who had been born in Dublin and had immigrated to Canada in 1831. Bull was an avid imperialist, praised Canada’s British connection and the loyalists, and was an early advocate of a national monument to mark their arrival in Canada. From 1894 to 1897 Bull served as the president of the Pioneer and Historical Association of Ontario (PHAO), later the Ontario Historical Society, a federation of local historical societies founded in 1888. Speaking at the annual meeting of the PHAO in 1895 he argued that, beyond uniting the province’s historical societies, “the chief purpose of the association is to foster the spirit of British Canadian nationality, which shall remain strong and steadfast for generations to come. This was the spirit of the United Empire Loyalists and others of 1783, the pioneers and founders of this and each maritime province.” He remained president of the LLHS until bad health forced him to adopt the position of honorary president in 1907. Bull was widely known and well regarded in the community; an 1899 publication contended that his “name is a household word in the Niagara District for kindness and graciousness.”

7 Killan, 9; Knowles, 69.
8 Lundy’s Lane Historical Society, 1st Annual Report of the Lundy’s Lane Historical Society (Drummondville, 1888).
9 Killan 17; Annual Address of the President of the Lundy’s Lane Historical Society (Lundy’s Lane Historical Society, 1895), 2.
10 Killan, 3, 270; Pioneer and Historical Association of the Province of Ontario, Canada (Guelph, Ontario: James Hough, 1894), 26.
11 Pioneer and Historical Association of the Province of Ontario, Pioneer and Historical Association of the Province of Ontario Canada, (Toronto: 1888) .9.
12 Lundy’s Lane Historical Society Twenty-First Annual Report: 1907, 4.
13 Dixon, 25.
A historical society in Niagara-on-the-Lake was initially formed by William Kirby in 1891 to help celebrate the centenary of the first Parliament of Upper Canada in Newark, which was held in part on Fort George’s grounds.\textsuperscript{14} The society disbanded once the centenary of the first Parliament had passed, but in 1895 “all interested” met again and decided that “in this historic spot such a society should exist.”\textsuperscript{15} The NHS took a somewhat broader mandate than the LLHS, and wanted to encourage the study of Canadian history, to collect “Canadian historical relics,” and to “[build] up…Canadian loyalty and patriotism, and… [preserve]…all historical landmarks in this vicinity.”\textsuperscript{16} The NHS was founded by Janet Carnochan, a former schoolteacher and principal who would serve as its president for over thirty years until her death in 1926.\textsuperscript{17}

Born in Stamford in 1839, Carnochan spent most of her life in Niagara-on-the Lake, although her career as a teacher took her to Brantford, Kingston, and Peterborough. She taught math, literature, and history at the Niagara High School for over 23 years. She also taught Sunday School and helped raise funds for St. Andrew’s Presbyterian Church in Niagara and was a long-serving secretary of the women’s missionary society. After her retirement Carnochan, who never married, devoted her time to the study of local history.\textsuperscript{18} Carnochan believed strongly in the importance of Canada’s ties to Britain, but her politics were fairly liberal.\textsuperscript{19} She had close ties to the Niagara region and was the NHS’ driving force for many years.

The TBHS was founded in the spring of 1894 in part because the town of Thorold was near the battlefield of Beaverdams, and the society expressed a strong connection to the place. At

\textsuperscript{15} NHS, \textit{Constitution}, 3.
\textsuperscript{16} Ibid., 1.
\textsuperscript{17} Minutes of the NHS, 26 April 1926, Niagara Historical Society Collection, F1138-F-1 MS 193 Reel 7, AO.
\textsuperscript{19} Morgan, “Carnochan, Janet.”
its first meeting the chairman pointed out that the members gathered in the town hall were on
“historic ground.” The first president of the society was Captain Hugh James Wilson, who had
been the commander of Thorold’s No.2 Company during the Fenian invasions. At its first
meeting the society voted to include the famous battlefield’s name in their own, as it was what
“made the spot historic.” In 1895 Anglican Reverend P. L. Spencer, who had originally
suggested the formation of the historical society, became its president. Although he was not the
president of the organization, Francis Keefer was heavily involved with the TBHS. Keefer was
part of a prominent Thorold family, as he was the great-grandson of George Keefer, who had
come to the Thorold area in the early 1790s and whose father had died fighting for Great Britain
in the American Revolution. Frank Keefer’s grandfather, George Keefer Jr., had been an early
supporter of William Hamilton Merritt’s canal scheme, had been the first president of the
Welland Canal Company, and had founded Thorold. Francis Keefer was born in Strathroy and
attended Upper Canada College before settling in Port Arthur (present-day Thunder Bay) in
1883. Keefer practiced law there with his brother, and represented the area as an MP from 1917-
1921. Perhaps due to his family lineage, Keefer maintained an interest in waterways and
shipping, serving on the International Waterways Commission and later advocating for the
improvement of the Great Lakes-St. Lawrence waterways. Despite his location and busy
schedule Keefer was an avid historical hobbyist, and often journeyed to Thorold both to visit his
son and to participate in TBHS activities.

20 Margaret Wetherell, Jubilee History of Thorold Township and Town from the Time of the Red Man to the Present
(Thorold: J. H. Thompson for the Thorold and Beaverdams Historical Society, 1898), 197, 97, 175, 178.
21 “Thorold and Beaverdams Historical Society,” Thorold Post, 1 June 1894, 1.
22 Wetherell, 139, 198.
23 H.V. Nelles, “Keefer, George,” in DCBO, vol. 8, University of Toronto/Université Laval, 2003–, accessed
Henry,” in DCBO, vol.15, University of Toronto/Université Laval, 2003–, accessed February 12, 2014,
24 Benedickson, n.p.
Many Ontario historical societies saw the loyalists as the heroic and principled founders of the province. Although authors such as Canniff and Ryerson had earlier contributed to the public memory of the loyalists as elites who had sacrificed their homes and endured great hardship for their principles, the loyalists did not become a focus of wide interest until after 1884. That year celebrations were held in Adolphustown, Toronto, and Niagara to mark the centenary of the loyalists’ coming to Canada. This interest led to the creation in 1896 of the United Empire Loyalist Association of Ontario (UELA) whose members took an interest in Brock and the War of 1812 and participated in commemorative ceremonies on the battlefields. There had been a failed effort to create an association after the 1884 centennial celebrations of the arrival of the loyalists in Canada, but in 1894 the idea was revived by Dr. George Sterling Ryerson. A doctor from Toronto, Ryerson had enlisted in the militia during the Fenian raids at the age of fifteen, and had seen action as a surgeon during the 1885 North-West rebellion. Ryerson was a fervent loyalist whose family traced their loyalist roots to Colonel Joseph Ryerson, who had served in both the Revolution and the War of 1812. William Hamilton Merritt, the builder of the Welland Canal and the son of a loyalist who had served in the War of 1812, was receptive to the idea of a loyalist association and provided funds for a circular and mailing list. A general meeting held on 11 May 1896 elected officers and drafted a constitution. The association’s goal was to “unite together…the descendants of those families who…sacrificed their homes in retaining their liberty to the British Crown, and to perpetuate the

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25 Knowles, 46, 48.
26 See Berger, *The Sense of Power*, Chapter 3; Fellows; Knowles, 139; United Empire Loyalists Centennial Committee.
27 Knowles, 140.
29 Craig, 154 -58; Knowles, 140.
30 Knowles, 140.
spirit of loyalty to the Empire.” The association grew from an initial membership of thirty one to over 560 by 1914. The UELA did not play a role in the early preservation of the Niagara frontier’s former battlefields, but would later be involved in large-scale commemorative events held there.

The coming of the loyalists and the War of 1812 were the two most important events for the Niagara Frontier’s historical societies. These societies claimed that geography lent their work added significance, as the Niagara Frontier, “was the great landing place not of pilgrims, but of refugees, in 1783” who “landed just where the town of Niagara now stands.” For some members Canada’s history was synonymous with that of the loyalists. The LLHS Annual report for 1894 proudly stated that “Canada has a history – a splendid history, at which we need not blush nor feel ashamed; it needs only to be unfolded and brought to light that all men may read and learn more about U.E. Loyalists and others.” The local historical societies in Ontario subscribed to the public memory of the loyalists as elites persecuted for their principles, and this public memory was increasingly intertwined with the militia myth associated with the War of 1812. The militia myth fit easily into the promotion of the loyalist public memory, as the war had supposedly been another opportunity for loyalists and their descendants to demonstrate their love for Great Britain by banding together to defend the nation with, in Strachan’s words, no help beyond “a handful of regular troops.” In contrast, our current understanding is that, much like the rest of the province’s militia, loyalists and their sons responded to militia service with ambivalence. There were certainly examples of loyalists and their sons fighting to defend the province, but these are paired with incidents of others avoiding militia service or serving with

31 The United Empire Loyalists’ Association of Ontario (Toronto: UELAO, n.d.), 7.
32 Knowles, 139.
33 Annual Address of the President of the Lundy’s Lane Historical Society, July 25th 1895, 2.
34 Seventh Annual Report of the Lundy’s Lane Historical Society (Lundy’s Lane Historical Society, 1894), 2.
35 “An Exhortation pronounced after the Sermon.”
36 Knowles, 19.
American forces.\textsuperscript{37} This was not the public memory associated with the loyalists and the War of 1812 put forward by early historians and later historical societies, however. As Ryerson had argued in the second volume of \textit{The Loyalists in America}, “the true spirit of the Loyalists of America was never exhibited with greater force and brilliancy than during the war of 1812 – 1815.”\textsuperscript{38} The LLHS Annual Report for 1891 proclaimed that the Niagara District was settled by U.E. Loyalists, “who left the United States to found a new political colony in Canada with institutions in accordance with their loyal sentiments and devotion to the crown and empire.” It continued, “this country thus settled and civilized they successfully defended in the subsequent War of 1812.”\textsuperscript{39} Connecting the loyalists so strongly to the War of 1812 and the militia myth also provided a positive outcome; as Carl Berger argues, “it was much easier for British Canadians to recall and celebrate the victory of 1812 than the defeat of 1783.”\textsuperscript{40} Through these writings and speeches early historians and local historical society members portrayed the loyalists as not only loyal, elite people persecuted for their beliefs, but as the loyal defenders of British institutions against American attack in 1812-1815. Many members’ belief in the public memory of the loyalists and subscription to its connection to the militia myth saw the loyalists and their sons as defenders of the province in the War of 1812. This belief influenced their approach to commemorating the War of 1812 on the former battlefields, as these were recurring themes in later monuments and commemorative ceremonies.

Glorifying the loyalists was not the only goal of these historical societies, nor were their members all loyalist descendants. In his examination of the OHS Gerald Killan suggests that

\textsuperscript{37} A. Taylor, 295; Sheppard, 89, 162-163.
\textsuperscript{38} Ryerson, 316. Emphasis in original.
\textsuperscript{39}LLHS, \textit{Annual Report of the Lundy’s Lane Historical Society}, (Drummondville: Lundy’s Lane Historical Society, 1891), n.p.
\textsuperscript{40}Berger, \textit{Sense of Power}, 90. See also Ashworth, 44; Killan, 16; Morgan, “History, Nation,” 503.
members had varied reasons for joining local historical societies.\textsuperscript{41} Killan points out that although some societies became “Clubs for the social or intellectual élite,” most societies included a cross-section of the middle class.\textsuperscript{42} This observation holds true for the early membership of the LLHS and NHS. For instance, the patron of the NHS was William Kirby, who worked as a tanner before becoming editor of the \textit{Niagara Mail} in 1850, and was customs collector at Niagara from 1871 to 1895.\textsuperscript{43} According to their own history, the founders of the LLHS included “a clergyman, two school teachers, a nurseryman, a grocer, a stonemason, a plasterer, a wholesale seedsman and a hotel-keeper. A more varied or representative group of villagers would have been hard to pick.”\textsuperscript{44} The LLHS may have been exaggerating the diversity of its membership, but before the professionalization of history in Canada the members of these types of organizations were indeed from a variety of backgrounds. None were professional historians; as Donald Wright has illustrated, around the turn of the century the historian as a profession did not exist in Canada, and the members of these societies pursued history in their leisure time.\textsuperscript{45} Some of these amateur historians may have also been motivated to join the societies by their antiquarian interest in collecting old books and artifacts.\textsuperscript{46} This was a middle and upper class pursuit, and members of the working class did not join these societies.\textsuperscript{47} The members of these historical societies were for the most part middle class amateur historians who held imperialist views and devoted themselves to the study of Canada’s history, particularly Niagara’s.

\textsuperscript{41} Killan, 31-35.
\textsuperscript{42} Ibid., 33-34.
\textsuperscript{44}“History of the Lundy’s Lane Historical Society,” “Lundy’s Lane Historical Society” General File, Niagara Falls History Museum, 2.
\textsuperscript{45} D. Wright, 8, 12.
\textsuperscript{46} For antiquarianism see Gordon, \textit{Hero}, 40-42.
\textsuperscript{47} Killan, 34.
It is tempting to assume that the members of these historical societies were motivated strictly by antimodernism, a reaction against ‘over-civilized’ modern life whose subscribers sought authentic experience and expressed nostalgia for a simpler past. In his examination of the Nova Scotian “Folk” Ian McKay contends that in the early twentieth century anglophilia and loyalism could be closely linked to antimodernism. The late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries did witness antimodern currents, but turning to the past does not necessarily translate to antimodernism, strictly speaking. As Jackson Lears illustrates, the relationship between antimodernism and modernity was nuanced and ambiguous. Alan Gordon builds on Lears to argue that antimodernism is more than simply a rejection of the modern, but a social conservatism concerned with preserving the values of the past while retaining a faith in progress. Members of the local historical societies were concerned about the survival of history’s lessons, but also welcomed some changes in Canadian society as evidence of the nation’s material and social progress. James H. Coyne put forward this spirit of optimism at the conclusion of his 1899 OHS presidential address, stating, “seeing the evolution of civilization and culture during the hundred years of the history of settlement, we shall be inclined to face the future with a more assured faith, strengthened by knowledge of what has been done and what is being accomplished from year to year.”

The members of local historical societies did turn to the past, but like the early historians discussed in the previous chapter they often did so to find direction for the future. For them the province’s history and public memory, particularly the loyalists and the War of 1812, provided

49 McKay, 65-66.
50 See Lears.
52 Coates and Morgan, 13, 132.
examples of patriotism the country needed and that should be passed on to younger generations. Bull fervently believed that “among our young people…a truly patriotic spirit should be cultivated.”54 The LLHS worked to instill patriotism into young impressionable minds through, for example, offering monetary prizes to area students who wrote the best patriotic essays on the War of 1812.55 Similarly, the TBHS felt that its mission was to collect relics and information and “foster a feeling of patriotism in the young.”56 Niagara region historical societies saw their mission as not only preserving and studying the area’s past, but drawing on it to help guide the country to a better future with strong links to Britain.

The Niagara region’s historical societies promoted the area’s history in a variety of ways, including publishing “good and useful historic papers.”57 The members of these historical societies were influenced by the activities of similar organizations in the United States, where over 80 state and local historical societies that published prolifically were created in the 1880s.58 The LLHS was a publishing leader in Ontario and encouraged the NHS to do the same, as according to Bull, “the greatest cause of vitality is in publications.”59 The TBHS was not as prolific, but played an active role in publishing the Jubilee History of Thorold Township and Town in 1898.60 Like the early historians of the war, many of the authors of these papers and books tended to use history to support certain social or political goals in the present or for the future, such as promoting a British Canadian identity or campaigning for women’s rights.61

54 Pioneer and Historical Association of the Province of Ontario, Canada (1895), 12.
55 George A. Bull, “Lundy’s Lane Historical Society,” LLHS Fonds F1137-MU 1747, AO.
56 Thorold and Beaverdams Historical Society,” Thorold Post 1 June 1894, 1.
57 LLHS, Lundy’s Lane Historical Society Annual Report: 25th July, 1892, (Lundy’s Lane: Lundy’s Lane Historical Society, 1892), n.p.
58 Killan, 24.
60 Wetherell.
However, writing to support these goals does not necessarily invalidate the authors’ approaches, but may simply highlight that all historians are affected by their social contexts and personal views. In this period history was beginning to be professionalized, and although members of local historical societies continued to operate outside of the university many had begun to integrate new approaches to writing history that included an emphasis on primary documentation and a more critical approach to the subject matter. In an address delivered to the OHS Janet Carnochan embarked on a laundry list of what she termed “false statements” made “from carelessness, [or] from partisan feelings,” and praised the virtues of “accuracy, impartiality, and careful research.” Historians like Carnochan and Ernest Cruikshank, discussed below, endeavoured to create as accurate a portrayal of the past as possible using documentary evidence and a critical approach. While their written histories were influenced by their own personal circumstances and were circulated in the public sphere, their incorporation of emerging professional standards into their work suggests that, at least in their published written histories, they were striving to write accurate histories rather than reflecting or shaping a simplified or axiomatic public memory of the War of 1812.

Both the LLHS and NHS published historical accounts by various local historians, but many of their publications were written by Ernest Cruikshank. Cruikshank’s first public address, an account of the Battle of Lundy’s Lane, was given at an 1888 meeting of the LLHS. By 1906 he had written eighteen of the LLHS’ twenty-five publications, including *The Battle of Lundy’s Lane, Queenston Heights, Drummond’s Winter Campaign*, and his multiple volume *Documentary History of the Campaign on the Niagara Frontier 1812-1814*. Based in part on these talks and publications Cruikshank rose to become one of the most respected military historians.

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historians of the time. Cruikshank believed in the importance of documentary evidence and in using it to find historical ‘truth.’⁶⁵ According to him, “the main task of the historian, then, is not so much a matter of vivid narrative and picturesque colouring as of a proper and honest grouping of events.”⁶⁶ Born in 1853 in Bertie Township, Cruikshank gravitated toward the military and served in the Welland militia, then as an army administrator in Calgary. After a year at the Dominion Archives in charge of military records Cruikshank left to become a military officer, and achieved the honorary rank of Brigadier-General in 1917.⁶⁷ Cruikshank also had ties to Niagara Falls, as prior to his transfer to Calgary he had been a police magistrate there and had served on local county and township councils. Cruikshank was an imperialist, and perhaps due to his birthplace and interest in the military he had a fascination with the War of 1812. Of his approximately 100 publications, 32 dealt with the conflict.⁶⁸ Although other amateur historians, such as George Bull, Janet Carnochan, and William Kirby contributed to the local historical societies’ publications, in the early years Cruikshank’s works not only made up the majority of publications, but they were also the most widely sought after.⁶⁹ These publications were exchanged with other historical societies in both Canada and the United States, sent to members of the local societies, and offered for sale. They were also sought after by members of the public with an interest in the history of the area, and were motivation for some members to join.⁷⁰ These societies saw publishing as one of their most important mandates, as it was a way to spread knowledge about the Niagara Frontier’s history to a wider audience.

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⁶⁷ Gordon, ”Marshalling Memory,” 1, 2.
⁶⁸ Ibid., 6.
⁷⁰ See, for example, W.B. Waterbury to Wilson, 23 February 1899, Alphabetical Correspondence of the NPC General Manager RG 38-4-0-87 Box MN 131 Binder 1, AO.
The local historical societies also connected their beliefs about the past to its associated places and took an active role in their preservation. In Ontario, as in other parts of North America, before the end of the nineteenth century most historic sites had been neglected, altered, or destroyed. The growing concern with saving places connected to history and public memory spurred by the late nineteenth century’s social and political uncertainty was reflected in the development of many preservation societies. The Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings was established in Great Britain in 1877, and in the 1890s six Civil War sites were established as national battlefields in the United States. In 1901 the Royal Society of Canada, a national organization formed in the 1880s that promoted studies in the arts and sciences, was in part inspired by British institutions to create the Committee for the Preservation of Scenic and Historic Places in Canada, which focussed on preserving historic sites. This committee eventually became the Historic Landmarks Association in 1907 and was involved in the early stages of developing the Plains of Abraham and later gathered information about historic sites around the country. As Karen Till has argued, if a group identity is undergoing rapid or dramatic change one way of establishing a sense of stability is to “project” the group’s narratives of the past onto place. Niagara’s local historical societies focussed on the former War of 1812 battlefields, and their members were concerned about their neglected condition. When some of these places were threatened by industrial development the members of these societies vehemently defended them.

71 Bodnar, 259.
72 Kammen, 260 – 63; Bodnar, 28.
75 See also C.J. Taylor, 9.
The LLHS members concerned themselves with the state of the Lundy’s Lane battleground, and expressed dismay at the place’s state while campaigning for a national monument there. The undeveloped remains of the battlefield of Lundy’s Lane were in Drummond Hill Cemetery, so named for the British General who had commanded there, that had been gradually expanded from ½ acre to four acres by the 1880s. The town of Drummondville had encroached on the area around the cemetery, and by the time the LLHS was created the cemetery was all that remained of the original battle site. In 1888 the society was outraged that “there is no care manifested in a reverent regard for and right keeping of the places so memorable in the annals of Canada.” The society established a committee for “keeping of the Battleground in order,” and solicited donations for cleaning up the area for special occasions such as anniversaries of the battle or the reinterment of remains from the war. The LLHS saw the care of the battlefield as one of its duties, and in 1892 assured the OHS that the battlefield “is loyally regarded by the Society and receives much care.”

The TBHS did not have a battlefield that could be so easily spatially defined, a problem that extended to other former battlefields such as Scotland’s Culloden, which was a featureless locale. A section of the Beaverdams battlefield had been marked in 1874 when workmen digging the Third Welland Canal uncovered the remains of sixteen American soldiers killed in the battle. Through the efforts and donations of prominent local citizens a small monument was erected on the east bank of the canal near where the bodies were found and reinterred. The

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76Graves, Lundy’s Lane, 248.  
77 Minutes of the LLHS, 9 January 1888, LLHS Fonds Box 1, “Minutes and Proceedings of the Lundy’s Lane Historical Society 1887 – 1914,” NFHM.  
78 Minutes of the LLHS, 2 December, 1889 and 29 June 1891, LLHS Fonds Box 1, “Minutes and Proceedings of the Lundy’s Lane Historical Society 1887 – 1914,” NFHM.  
inscription reads simply, “Beaver Dams 24th June, 1813.” The 1874 monument marked where the bodies of American soldiers were found, but some uncertainty remained about where the battle had actually happened. Unlike Queenston Heights, which had a dramatic landscape, and forts George and Erie, which had ruins, the Beaverdams battlefield did not have striking features or historical remains to act as historical markers on the locale (Figure 2.1). According to historical accounts of the battle it ranged over at least one mile of ground. The

Figure 2.1. “The Beaverdam Meadow as it Appears To-Day,” reprinted from Wetherell, 192-93.

year it was created the TBHS made efforts to locate “the exact spots on which the chief incidents of the Battle of Beaverdams took place.” It is not clear how they went about their search, but they chose a place near the monument erected in 1874 and held a celebration there the following year. The TBHS recognized that the battle had taken place in a much larger area, as a battlefield tour on the 1896 anniversary of the battle led by W.H. Merritt visited the Thorold town line, the northeast corner of a nearby farm, and then led the visitors to the 1874 monument. However, the organization chose to concentrate its commemoration and

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81 Wetherell, 47-48; F.H. Keefer, Beaverdams (Thorold, Ontario: Thorold Post Printers, 1914), 10-11; McConnell, The Location of the Site of the Battle of Beaverdams (Ottawa: National Historic Parks and Sites Branch, Department of Indian and Northern Affairs, Parks Canada, 1977), 1.
83 Wetherell, 198; “The Battle of Beaverdams!” Thorold Post, 23 June 1895, 4.
preservation activities on a plot around the small monument which was owned by the
Corporation of the Town of Thorold, and later by the Dominion Government.\textsuperscript{85}

To the members of the historical societies these battlefields had an organic connection to
the area’s wartime past, as in their view the blood of their forefathers who had defended the
country had been spilled there. The NHS made this connection clear in a report to the OHS. In
reference to historic sites in Niagara-on-the-Lake including Fort George the society urged “all
[to] unite to preserve what we have left of historic interest in ground drenched with the blood of
the heroes of the past, who so nobly stood for King and country.”\textsuperscript{86} The NHS Constitution also
stated, “the preservation of our forts and historic spots is another worthy object of our
ambition.”\textsuperscript{87} Societies undertook pilgrimages to the former battlefields and decorated the graves
of the fallen soldiers. Additionally, prominent members would sometimes provide historical
tours of the sites to groups of visitors who requested them. For instance, in 1903 Janet Carnochan
noted that she had accompanied four groups of visitors to Queenston, Fort Niagara, and Niagara-
on-the-Lake.\textsuperscript{88}

Not only had the former battlefields been left in a poor state, but industrial expansion
threatened some of them, and in response local historical societies lobbied for their protection.
There were no government policies in place for protecting historic sites, and the pressures of
industrialization and urbanization triggered or intensified local campaigns for the preservation of
places with links to the past that were under threat.\textsuperscript{89} As several authors have noted, concern
about the survival of heritage is not necessarily derived from a hegemonic state narrative, but

\textsuperscript{85}“Historical!” \textit{Thorold Post}, 10 August 1894, 1; Keefer, 12.
\textsuperscript{87}NHS, \textit{Constitution}, n.p.
\textsuperscript{88}NHS, \textit{9th Annual Report of the Niagara Historical Society} (Niagara-on-the-Lake[?]: Niagara Historical Society,
1904[?]), n.p.
\textsuperscript{89}Killan, 127-28; See also Graham, Ashworth, and Tunbridge, 14.
from local contexts. The concerns of citizens, in this case often members of local historical societies, was triggered by the neglect or the encroachment of modern industry on places with a connection to public memory and history. As David Lowenthal notes, relics that have been abandoned can become more treasured than those in continuous use, especially if they are threatened. In Quebec the possibility of the subdivision and development of the Plains of Abraham led to a public outcry in favour of creating a commemorative park. On the Niagara Frontier the local historical societies and the OHS lobbied not only to preserve its former battlefields, but to place them under the protection of the recently created NPC “to improve, preserve and keep in order.” Local historical societies saw the Commission as a potential guardian of the sites, one that respected the area’s past and would save the former battlefields from neglect and industrial development. The commissioners’ connections with the local historical societies and their apparent concern for the places’ pasts led these organizations to encourage and support the NPC’s efforts to have the battlefields put under Commission control, a situation that profoundly affected these places’ futures.

**The Niagara Parks Commission**  
The NPC was created in 1885 to preserve the natural beauty of Niagara Falls for the public’s enjoyment, as many felt that the area had been overrun with commercialism and excess. Some tourists began complaining about commercial establishments at Niagara Falls as early as the 1820s. John Bigsby, on a second visit to the falls in the 1840s, nostalgically described the area only thirty years prior: “There were no large clumsy caravansaries, no lines of white-washed lodging-houses, and no vulgar, intrusive bridges to mar the graceful outlines and harmonious

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90 Graham, Ashworth, and Tunbridge, 14.  
91 Lowenthal, 240.  
colourings of waters, rocks, and sloping woods.”

Despite his concerns, tourism development continued and by mid-century more and more visitors complained of exorbitant prices and claimed that the beauty of nature was being spoiled by “miserable little peep shows and photographers, bird stuffers, shell polishers, and collectors of crystals.”

One of those who complained was Frederic Church, a prominent landscape artist who visited the falls in 1856 and became convinced that the area around them should be set aside as a public park. In 1869 he found a supporter in Frederick Law Olmsted, a prominent American landscape architect who had designed New York’s Central Park only ten years earlier. He, along with Church and other supporters, appealed to Lord Dufferin, the Governor-General of Canada, for support. Dufferin agreed with the idea, and at an 1878 meeting of the Ontario Society of Artists in Toronto he publicly called for the establishment of an international park on the Canadian and American sides of the falls, and the Ontario Liberal Premier Sir Oliver Mowat agreed. There were disagreements between the Ontario and federal governments about which of them owned the descent to the falls, and therefore who should bear the brunt of the new park’s cost. The dispute over the park was the latest in a series of confrontations between Mowat and Prime Minister John A. Macdonald. Mowat was a vocal advocate for increasing provincial powers and pushed for the ‘compact theory’ of Confederation that saw the union as a treaty amongst the provinces that could not be modified without their consent. Further, a fifteen year dispute between the province and the federal government over Ontario’s northwestern boundary

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94 Bigsby, 4.
96 Dubinsky, 56.
97 Seibel, 22-23.
99 Seibel, 26.
had only been resolved in 1889 and had embittered relations between Mowat and Macdonald.100 These strained relations were visible in the wrangling over financial responsibility for the park at Niagara Falls, as the federal government insisted that the provincial government had control of the area and refused to pay for the park. In an effort to move the federal government to action Premier Mowat introduced “An Act Respecting Niagara Falls and the Adjacent Territory,” which was passed in February 1880. This Act empowered the Dominion Government to expropriate the lands needed in the Chain Reserve to create a public park at Niagara Falls. The Dominion government resisted, in part due to its strained relationship with Ontario and also because John A. Macdonald feared opposition from the Maritimes and Quebec to the scheme. At this point the project came to a halt on the Canadian side, while the New York State Reservation at Niagara Falls was established in 1885.101

Part of the motivation for preserving the Falls originated from seeing them as a commercial resource that should be kept attractive for visitors. However, the movement to preserve the falls was also influenced by the beginnings of the United States conservation movement in the late nineteenth century. Concerns over the protection of natural resources (in this case mineral hot springs) from exploitation led to the world’s first national park at Yellowstone in 1876.102 Yosemite National Park was created in 1889, spurred by concerns over industrial development and urbanization and spearheaded by amateurs such as John Muir.103 Canada saw the creation of Rocky Mountains Park (later Banff National Park) in 1887 after CPR

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101 Seibel, 24-26.
workers found a natural hot spring there in 1883.\textsuperscript{104} Niagara Falls was not as remote or ‘wild’ as some of these wilderness parks, but was still seen as a wonder of the natural world that should be returned to its ‘natural’ state as much as possible. In the climate of concern over the future of natural resources and facing growing public pressure partly in response to The Canadian Southern Railroad’s ambition to build a bridge over the Niagara Gorge, in 1885 Oliver Mowat introduced the “Niagara Falls Park Act – An Act for the Preservation of the Natural Scenery about Niagara Falls.”\textsuperscript{105} The Act allowed the appointment of a three member board under the title “The Commissioners for Niagara Falls Park” which was responsible for selecting and ascertaining the value of the land that would make up the park. The overall aim of the Act was to restore the natural beauty of the falls, to protect them from “further deterioration,” and to provide visitors with facilities to view “the points of interest in the vicinity.”\textsuperscript{106} The Act also meant that the provincial government was taking responsibility for the creation of the park at the falls, and Premier Mowat moved to appoint commissioners.

Mowat approached Casimir Stanislaus Gzowski to chair the new Commission, a position Gzowski accepted at the age of seventy-two.\textsuperscript{107} He had had an eventful life before his appointment to the Commission. Gzowski was born in St. Petersburg, Russia, in 1813. After graduating from the military Lyceum of Krzemieniec in 1830 Gzowski was assigned to a post in the Imperial Corps of Russian Engineers, as although the Congress of Vienna had created a Polish kingdom it was under Russian suzerainty.\textsuperscript{108} In 1830 Gzowski joined an armed uprising

\begin{footnotes}
\footnotetext[105]{Seibel, 26.}
\footnotetext[106]{“An Act For the Preservation of the Natural Scenery About Niagara Falls,” in \textit{Report of the Commissioners for Niagara Falls Park, 1885-1886}, 5-6.}
\footnotetext[107]{R. Welch, “Niagara Falls Park Commission,” (Master’s Thesis, Queens University, 1977), 91-92.}
against Russian rule, and was captured and interned in Austria for two years before being deported to the United States in 1833. Gzowski moved to New England and became a lawyer, but eventually returned to his original training as an engineer and was shortly supervising the construction of railroads. His employer sent Gzowski to Upper Canada to inquire into contracts for the Welland Canal, but through a chance meeting with Sir Charles Bagot in St. Catharines Gzowski was appointed the Superintendent of Roads and Waterways in the London District. Gzowski eventually became a private engineer in Toronto and undertook numerous railway and surveying projects, including the construction of an international bridge between Buffalo and Fort Erie. Over time he became a very successful businessman and was active in Toronto’s social scene, gaining favour with members of the Family Compact.\(^{109}\) Gzowski also developed pro-British attitudes during his time in Toronto. He converted to Anglicanism, took frequent trips to Britain, and later publicly expressing his regret when British troops withdrew from Canadian soil.\(^{110}\) Gzowski, despite being a Conservative, seemed an appropriate choice for Mowat. He had experience in engineering and knowledge of the area, and was also Mowat’s personal friend.\(^{111}\)

John Woodburn Langmuir joined Gzowski on the Commission. Born in 1835, Langmuir emigrated from Scotland in 1849 and was a merchant in Picton, Ontario, before being elected its Mayor in 1864.\(^{112}\) Langmuir had been a Major of the 16\(^{th}\) Battalion and had served in the Fenian Raids.\(^{113}\) In 1868 he was appointed inspector of prisons, asylums, and public charities for Ontario, a position he occupied until 1882. After leaving his post Langmuir returned to the business world and established the Toronto General Trusts Company and was active in several

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\(^{109}\) Kos-Rabcewicz-Zubkowski and Greening, 10-22, 27, 92, 121-27.
\(^{110}\) Welch, 88.
\(^{111}\) Kos-Rabcewicz-Zubkowski and Greening, 155-56.
associated businesses, such as the Hudson’s Bay Company and the Toronto Hotel Company. Langmuir was also involved in provincial matters, serving not only as a commissioner in the NPC, but also on a Royal Commission investigating Ontario’s prison and reformatory systems. Langmuir was an imposing figure, and even into old age carried himself in a brisk manner and had a “keen, penetrating eye” that made him appear much younger. After Gzowski’s death in 1893 Langmuir took over the chairmanship of the Commission, and would serve as president until his own death in May of 1915.

Last, the Commission included John Grant Macdonald, the chief executive officer of the London and Canadian Loans Association. Macdonald, however, was as old as Gzowski and in poor health. Consequently, he was not very active in the Commission, and did not attend a meeting after February 8, 1888. He tendered his resignation in 1887, although Mowat refused to accept it as he did not know who to replace him with. Macdonald served on the Commission until his death in 1889.

The commissioners selected an area of 118 acres bordering the falls for the park, running roughly from the Clifton House Hotel south and following the line of an escarpment that ran parallel to the gorge. The government approved of this selection, and in 1887 passed the “Queen Victoria Niagara Falls Park Act.” The Act reappointed Gzowski, Langmuir, and Macdonald as commissioners of the park, along with two additional commissioners to be appointed by the Lieutenant-Governor-in-Council. The Act gave the commission impressive powers to create by-laws and appoint staff, including gardeners, managers, and a superintendent,

115 Mr. J.W. Langmuir” The Globe, 2 March 1906, 1.
118 Welch, 100; NPC Tenth Annual Report, 10.
subject to the approval of Lieutenant-Governor-in-Council. After the Act passed James Wilson, a civil engineer working for the Grand Trunk in Montreal and a Liberal, was appointed the superintendent of the park. The commissioners saw Wilson as a good employee, and he submitted detailed reports and oversaw park maintenance and improvement until he left his position in 1908 to become the Parks Commissioner of Toronto. Wilson espoused imperialist views, especially regarding the former battlefields; his concern for the places often involved their connection to “British valor and patriotism,” which had maintained Canada as part of “the great Empire.”

The board appointed John A. Orchard of Niagara Falls as its fourth member. Orchard had come to Canada in 1835 and lived in Niagara Falls South. An auctioneer, Orchard was the reeve of Stamford Township and was an influential person in the community, as he was also the warden of Welland County and the treasurer of the local Mechanics’ Institute. In making the appointment Mowat stressed that Orchard’s local connections would be valuable, but political patronage played a part, as Orchard was also a Liberal. Orchard served until his death in 1896 at the age of 86.

“The Queen Victoria Niagara Falls Act” contained a clause that allowed the Lieutenant-Governor-in-Council to “vest in the Commissioners, to be held for the purposes of the Park…any part or portion of the Crown Lands, the property of Ontario, lying along the bank of the Niagara River.” Any land vested in the Commission would “thenceforth form part of the Park and be

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119 NPC 1888 Annual Report, 8; Welch, 98; “Park Commissioner Dies on a Train in the West,” _The Globe_, 31 October 1911, 1.
123 Welch, 200-201.
subject to the control of the Commissioners.”  Although this section was likely inserted with the view of expanding the commissioners’ holdings around the falls, the clause had implications for the future of the NPC and the frontier battlefields. Shortly after the 1887 Act was passed the Commissioners sent a letter of inquiry to the provincial Cabinet requesting that the lands along the banks of the Niagara River as far as Queenston be granted to the Commission.  In 1888, in the interest of “making the park system as complete as possible,” the Ontario government vested the Niagara River Chain Reserve from the northern boundary of the park to the military reserve at Queenston Heights in the commission. The Chain Reserve was an area a chain’s length along the Canadian side of the Niagara River that had been surrendered to Upper Canada by the Imperial Ordnance Branch in 1852. Eventually all of the sections of land in the Chain Reserve were granted to the Commission, with the exception of the military reserves at Fort Erie, Queenston, and Niagara-on-the-Lake (including Fort George). Additionally, in 1891 the Ontario government granted the Commission all of its remaining lands on the bank of the Niagara River between Fort Erie and Niagara-on-the-Lake. By the end of 1891, then, the Commission had gained large land holdings. It was in control of the Chain Reserve along the banks of the Niagara River from its southern terminus at Fort Erie to near its mouth in Niagara-on-the-Lake.

The NPC and Niagara’s Battlefields

Between 1885 and the 1900s the NPC increased its holdings along the Niagara River, acquiring the former battlefields of Queenston Heights, Fort Erie, and Lundy’s Lane. The NPC membership had several motivations for acquiring these places, but its members seem to have appreciated their connections to the War of 1812. Their subscription to imperialist ideals and

125 QVNFPC, Tenth Annual Report, 14.
126 Welch, 118 -19; 176.
127 QVNFPC, Tenth Annual Report, 18.
128 Seibel, 26.
129 Welch, 176-79.
membership in the local history movement indicate that they, like the members of the local historical societies, saw the former battlefields as places connected to the province’s past. This is not to say that the commissioners were motivated solely by their love of history, however. Like the tourists who had visited the sites earlier in the century, the NPC recognized the places’ natural beauty and they also doubtless hoped that expanding their holdings would provide them with increased revenue and prestige. But, overall the NPC seems to have been in agreement with the local historical societies that the former battlefields were places with connections to the War of 1812 that should be preserved and protected from industrial development. In turn, the local historical societies began to see the Commission as the potential guardian of the sites and contributed to having them placed under the organization’s control.

Casimir Gzowski had set his sights on acquiring Queenston Heights as early as the mid-1880s, and had sent letters of inquiry to the Dominion government about the property. This was in part a monetary concern. The Niagara Navigation Company, established in 1878, ran steamer service between Toronto, Niagara, and Lewiston on the American side of the river opposite Queenston Heights. In 1891 the commissioners had granted a franchise to the Niagara Falls Park and River Railway Company to build and operate an electric railway (using electricity supplied from the falls) on its recently acquired Chain Reserve land from the steamer docks at Queenston to the Queen Victoria Niagara Falls Park. The commissioners hoped that the railway line, running along the escarpment and offering views of the river, would “increase the already great crowds of people from all parts of the world.” Additionally, the line would discourage visitors from using private carriages which usually took them to Whirlpool Rapids.

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130 Welch, 118 -19; 176.
132 Seibel, 33.
133 QVNFPC, Report of the Commissioners for the Queen Victoria Niagara Falls Park for the Year 1888 (Toronto: Warwick & Sons, 1889), 14.
Park, a competing private park, or to the American side first where visitors would spend their money before making their way to Queen Victoria Park.\textsuperscript{134} This arrangement served to not only bring more people to the park, but the Niagara Falls Park and River Railway Company also paid an annual rental fee of $10,000.\textsuperscript{135} The Dominion Government did not grant the land needed at Queenston Heights for the railway right of way, but it did give the Commission a license of occupation at a nominal rate.\textsuperscript{136} The railway was completed in May of 1893 and was very successful, with over 400,000 riders that year. The railway line reinvigorated steamer traffic to the Queenston dock, and many visitors embarked on the train, which had stops at Brock’s Monument, the Whirlpool Rapids, Niagara Falls, the Dufferin Islands, and Chippewa.\textsuperscript{137} This railway made access to Queenston Heights and the Brock monument easier, and meant that those travelling to Niagara Falls would at least be aware of the site on their journey there from or to the Queenston dock.

In 1893 the commissioners publicly stated their desire that the military reserve at Queenston Heights and the Brock Monument grounds be placed under their control.\textsuperscript{138} An argument they repeated in 1893 and 1895 was that because the NPC had jurisdiction over the Niagara River Chain Reserve it was desirable that the military reserve be placed under their control as well.\textsuperscript{139} However, the commissioners also emphasized the place’s connection to the public memory of the war and its hero, Isaac Brock, and contrasted it to the locale’s neglected condition. In the 1850s the provincial legislature had provided funds for the landscaping of the area around the monument, and by 1859 forty acres had been fenced in, maple and chestnut trees

\textsuperscript{134} Welch, 142.
\textsuperscript{135} Seibel, 217; 33-34.
\textsuperscript{136} Welch, 179.
\textsuperscript{137} Ibid., 175.
\textsuperscript{139} QVNPFPC, \textit{Eight Annual Report}, 10; QVNPFPC, \textit{Tenth Annual Report}, 44.
planted, and a stone lodge and gatehouse erected. Since Confederation Brock’s Monument and
the land around it had been under Dominion control, but ownership of the area and monument
was transferred to the province in 1875.\textsuperscript{140} Since then the province had paid for repairs to
the monument, but had not invested in the
upkeep of the surrounding grounds (Figure
2.2).\textsuperscript{141} James Wilson was sent to inspect the
grounds, and his assessments were included in
the Commission’s annual report. After
describing the place’s beauty and its neglected
state, Wilson and the commissioners portrayed
their organization as its protector. “The
traditions of this spot,” Wilson pled in the 1893
annual report,
its historic memories so dear to every
loyal Canadian heart, and the great
natural beauty of the place, alike demand,
whether the matter be considered on
patriotic or æsthetic grounds, that proper
care be taken not only of the grounds
immediately around the monument but of
the surrounding territory as well, and this can certainly be best accomplished under
responsible control.\textsuperscript{142}

Wilson repeatedly pointed to the neglected state of the grounds, which “were not at all in
harmony with an enlightened spirit of patriotism,” and were not maintained “in a manner worthy

\textsuperscript{140}\textsuperscript{Seibel, 217.}
\textsuperscript{141}\textsuperscript{QVNFPC, Tenth Annual Report, 47-48.}
\textsuperscript{142}\textsuperscript{QVNFPC, Eight Annual Report, 10.
of the monument, or of the hero whom it commemorates.”

If given the land the Commission promised to improve “this historic ground, so near to the hearts of all true Canadians.”

It likely did not hurt that the area was a draw for tourists and that the $0.25 charge to ascend the Brock Monument would contribute to the place’s maintenance costs. In 1895 the Commission again made an appeal to the Dominion government that the lands be turned over to them, and that spring Brock’s Monument and the surrounding grounds were vested in the Commission.

Immediately after receiving the lands the commissioners began to improve them. In the first year a new pedestrian path and carriage road were laid, dead wood removed, drinking water from a nearby spring piped to a drinking fountain, a new fence erected, and the trees at the edge of the escarpment trimmed to open up the vista of the Niagara River. Although the commissioners recognized the place’s scenic beauty, it retained its identity as a former battlefield. In 1900 the Commission erected four twenty-four pounder siege guns from 1807 that they had received from the Dominion Government. They placed them near the Brock Monument, two facing north and two east. They noted in their annual report that the guns “form an interesting and appropriate addition to the famous battle ground.”

Although the addition of these guns may have been an effort to provide additional attractions for visitors, the commission also likely wanted to highlight the place’s connection to the War of 1812. It is not known if these guns were used in the War of 1812 itself, but their presence on the former battlefield nonetheless helped to strengthen the place’s connection to its martial past. The Commission’s desire to acquire Queenston Heights and the Brock Monument was likely motivated in part by a desire for tourist

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143 QVNFP, Tenth Annual Report, 47-48.
144 Ibid., 48, 44.
145 Ibid., 44, 47, 77-78.
146 QVNFP, Fifteenth Annual Report of the Commissioners for the Queen Victoria Niagara Falls Park (Toronto: L.K. Cameron, 1901), 7.
revenue, but they, like the local historical societies, saw the place as being fundamentally linked to its wartime past.

The Commission’s motives for acquiring the land at Queenston Heights and Brock’s monument were doubtlessly influenced by monetary considerations, as the organization was dogged by financial problems throughout its early years. However, their acquisition of the small monument to Brock at the foot of the Heights suggests that their interests went beyond the purely monetary. The year after acquiring the Heights and Brock’s monument there the commissioners purchased the land at the base of the heights that was home to the small monument marking where Brock supposedly fell. This place did not have the same scenic appeal or promise of revenue as the property atop the Heights did. Despite this and the Commission’s still uncertain financial situation the NPC purchased the land from a Mrs. Ashton for $250 – more than the Commission made from Brock Monument tolls that year. The commissioners purchased “this historic spot” so that it could be maintained and put in good order. In 1897 Wilson reported that the monument had been fenced and the ground cleared of stone, ploughed, and grass planted. It was, in his words, “more worthy of the events commemorated.”

Purchasing and maintaining a place that did not have the scenic beauty or potential for revenue that the Brock monument and Queenston Heights did suggests that the commissioners were at some level concerned about preserving places that were linked to the public memory of the war.

In the 1890s the Commission received petitions from local historical societies and municipalities to have the lands at Fort George and Erie placed under their control. Although

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147 Welch, 138.
148 Fre. W. Hill to James A. Wilson, 29 August 1896, Records of the NPC, Superintendent’s Office-Chronological Correspondence, 1884-1902, RG 38-2, Box MN 5, 1896-610, AO; QVNFPC Report...1896, 29.
149 QVNFPC, Report...1896, 6.
150 QVNFPC, Report of the Commissioners Queen Victoria Niagara Falls Park, 1897 (Toronto: Warwick Bros. & Rutter, 1898), 20.
151 QVNFPC, Report of the Commissioners...1896, 7.
the Commission’s mission to acquire Fort George would not be successful until the mid-
twentieth century, their efforts and those of the local historical societies illustrate the role the
Commission had come to play as the potential guardian of the former battlefields. Early in 1896
some town residents who identified themselves as UELs had urged the Department of Militia and
Defense that the Niagara Commons be protected from a rumoured lease to a private company
that wanted to erect cottages and fences there.152 That year the Commission instructed
superintendent James Wilson to inspect the ordnance lands in Niagara-on-the-Lake, including
Fort George, to assess whether it would be feasible to place the area under the Commission’s
control, “to preserve [it] from further injury and neglect.”153 Wilson’s report recognized that the
Commons were still required by the Government for military purposes, but proposed that the
area could be improved and made into a park with the assistance of the town of Niagara and the
Dominion government. Wilson reported that the fort should be improved, as it was “so sacred
in the eyes of every patriotic Canadian by reason of the noble sacrifices of both blood and treasure
made by our forefathers.”154 The Commission was still struggling financially, and although the
commissioners wanted to take control of the land they did not feel that they could justify issuing
further bonds to foot the expenses of establishing and maintaining it.155 These financial concerns
meant that the Commission did not take any action regarding the reserve, as despite the

152 “Percy Beale - Niagara on the Lake, Ontario - Urging on behalf of the Citizens of Niagara on the Lake, that the
Govt. land between the Queen's Royal Fence and Fort Mississauga, used as a recreation ground, may not be leased
to private parties to be fenced in and used for building summer cottages,” Department of Militia and Defence, RG II
A 1 File number 14918, LAC.
153 QVNFP, Report of the Commissioners... 1896, 14.
154 Ibid., 15-17.
155 J.A. Langmuir to James Wilson, 19 October 1896, Records of the NPC, Superintendent’s Office-Chronological
Correspondence, 1884-1902 RG 38-2, Box MN 5 1896 – 616, AO.
commissioners’ recognition of the place’s connection to the War of 1812 they felt that the potential revenues of the area would not be sufficient to pay for its maintenance.\footnote{Minutes of the QVNFPc, 10 October, 1896, Records of the NPC, Commission Minute Books, 1887-1974, RG 38-1, AO.}

The issue of the ownership of Fort George and the Commons arose again in 1898 when the federal government issued an order-in-council that authorized the lease of part of the Fort George lands to an American-controlled railway company.\footnote{Killan, 132} The LLHS opposed the measure and the OHS rallied to their support, urging the government to assure the protection of the military reserves at Forts George, Erie, and Mississauga, “in the interests of all loyal Canadians.”\footnote{OHS, \textit{Annual Report ...1899}, 8.} Ontario Premier Arthur S. Hardy also pleaded with Ottawa to rescind the order-in-council, and after a review by a special committee of the Privy Council the lease was cancelled.\footnote{Killan, 132.} Then, in a speech delivered at the annual meeting of the OHS in 1905 Janet Carnochan alleged that the Dominion Government planned to dispose of the Niagara Commons in plots of ten acres each, and moved that the whole area be placed under the control of the NPC for preservation.\footnote{OHS, \textit{Annual Report of the Ontario Historical Society, 1905 and 1906} (Toronto: Ontario Historical Society, 1906), 15-16.} The NHS and OHS again opposed the sale of the reserved lands, and the NHS distributed copies of a letter written by William Kirby and gathered over three hundred names on a petition to the Prime Minister.\footnote{NHS, \textit{Tenth Annual Report of the Niagara Historical Society} (Niagara-on-the-Lake[?]: Niagara Historical Society, 1905[?]), n.p.; Killan, 135.} George A. Pattullo, the president of the OHS, also sent a copy of Kirby’s letter to Langmuir along with another letter expressing his support for the place to be put under the Commission’s control, which he felt was “in harmony with Mr. Langmuir’s opinion.”\footnote{George Pattullo to Janet Carnochan, 4 August 1905, NHS Collection, Series F 1138-6: Records of societies, clubs and libraries accumulated by the Niagara Historical Society (hereafter Records of Societies), AO.} Pattullo later travelled to Ottawa where Minister of Militia and Defence...
Frederick Borden assured him that the historical societies’ agitation was unfounded. Borden stated that the government had only considered the possibility of disposing “of such portion of the Common as did not contain points of Historical interest” and that were not needed for either military or park purposes. Although the place was not granted to the Commission, Borden did announce that the government would preserve those parts of the reserve with historic interest. The NPC was still interested in acquiring the Niagara Commons and wrote to the Dominion Government again in 1906 requesting the lands, as they believed Niagara’s areas “of historic interest and of public resort” should be vested in them. Despite the efforts of local historical societies and the appeals of the Parks Commission, however, the ruins of Fort George remained under Dominion control and were used for militia training camps into the mid twentieth century. The War of 1812 fort at the southern terminus of the Niagara River was also under threat in this period. In the 1860s the 1,000 acre military reserve at Fort Erie had been divided up and almost all sold off, but 17.5 acres containing the ruins of the fort were left under the control of the Dominion Government.

Figure 2.3. Ruins of Fort Erie, ca. 1890. Reproduction of “Ruins Of Old Fort,” Local History – Slides, Fort Erie Public Library.

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163 George Pattullo to unknown recipient, 14 July 1905, NHS Collection, Series F 1138-6: Records of societies, AO.
164 Killan, 135.
165 Minutes of the QVNFC, 14 April 1906, Records of the NPC, Commission Minute Books, 1887-1974, RG 38-1, AO.
166 See Merritt, 125, 163.
(Figure 2.3).\textsuperscript{167} In 1899 the ordnance lands were still under their control, although in 1887 the municipality of Fort Erie had petitioned for the lands.\textsuperscript{168} In 1896 The Memorial of Fort Erie Park Committee petitioned that the reserve at Old Fort Erie be placed under the control of the NPC to be “preserved as far as possible intact as a memorial of the early history of this Province,” and the NPC officially expressed an interest in the site that year, a move that was supported by the TBHS.\textsuperscript{169} The Department of the Interior received numerous similar petitions the following year, including ones from the Welland Municipal Council, the Townships of Wainfleet, Willoughby, Stamford, Humberstone and Crowland, the Peel Pioneer Society, and the Corporation of Fort Erie.\textsuperscript{170} In his report to the Commission on the state of the locale James Wilson observed that the fort had been neglected and lamented the “apathy” that “would deny proper care to a place rendered so sacred by such heroic displays of British valor and patriotism.”\textsuperscript{171} The Department of the Interior was prepared to grant the lands to the Commission, and although the organization was prepared to take over the site, funding for its improvement remained a sticking point.

Langmuir wanted the provincial and Dominion governments to bear the full costs of improvement, but the Department of the Interior remained silent as to funding and the matter lingered without resolution.\textsuperscript{172} In December 1897 the Commission received a report from a concerned citizen that the ruins of the fort were being vandalized, but since it had no jurisdiction

\textsuperscript{167}QVNFPC, \textit{Report of the Commissioners...1896}, 7-8.
\textsuperscript{168}“Privy Council - Petition from the Municipal Council of the County of Welland to have the ruins of Old Fort-Erie, with the land adjacent thereto, placed under their charge,” Numbered Files R180-41-8-E, LAC; QVNFPC, \textit{Report of the Commissioners...1896}, 7.
\textsuperscript{169}Percy W. Smith to the Minister of the Interior, 6 October 1896, Records of the NPC, RG 38-2 Superintendent’s Office-Chronological Correspondence, 1884-1902, Box MN 5 1896 – 898, AO; “FROM: The Thorold & Beaverdams Historical Society Minute Book,” 2 September 1896, Esther Summers Papers, Battle of Beaverdams Collection, Mayholme Foundation, St. Catharines.
\textsuperscript{170}Department of the Interior to John W. Langmuir, 20 January 1897, Records of the NPC, RG 38-2 Superintendent’s Office-Chronological Correspondence, 1884-1902, Box MN 5 1897 – 21, AO.
\textsuperscript{172}John W. Langmuir to James Wilson, 20 November 1896, Records of the NPC, RG 38-2Superintendent’s Office-Chronological Correspondence, 1884-1902, Box MN 5, 1896 – 817, AO.
it recommended the writer pass on his complaint on to Ottawa. In its 1897 annual report the commissioners did not neglect to report that “the work of spoliation in connection with the historic remains at Fort Erie…is still going on.”

In November 1899, only a few months after the first effort to protect Fort George, there was news that the land around Fort Erie was going to be leased to a Buffalo-based country club. The OHS, LLHS, and NHS again protested to the government and recommended that the lands be placed under the control of the Commission. In its annual report the commissioners expressed their hope that “a more honorable and worthy disposition shall yet be made of this hallowed ground, the scene of many sanguinary battles in 1812-14 and where many of our honored dead still lie buried.” Facing pressure from the historical societies and being in a more stable financial situation, the commissioners, with the support of the Ontario Government, requested that the Department of the Interior place the ordnance lands under their control. After getting no response, in 1901 the Commission again contacted the department to express their willingness to take control of the place. The Department of the Interior granted a license of occupation to the Commission in 1901 on condition that the land be used for a public park and that necessary action be taken to protect the fort’s ruins. The Commission stated that it wanted

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173 Minutes of the QVNFC, 4 December 1897, Records of the NPC, Commission Minute Books, 1887-1974, RG 38-1, AO.
174 QVNFC, Report of the Commissioners...1897, 11.
175 Killan, 133.
176 OHS, Annual Report...1900, 7-8, 29-30; LLHS, Report of the Lundy’s Lane Historical Society for Year Ending April 30th, 1905, 2, LLHS Fonds, Box 1, Minute Book, 979.0.41 628, NFHM.
177 QVNFC, Report of the Commissioners for the Queen Victoria Niagara Falls Park,1899 (Toronto: Warwick Bros. & Rutter, 1900),6.
178 Minutes of the QVNFC, 13 April 1900, 29 June 1901 and 1 July 1901, Records of the NPC, Commission Minute Books, 1887-1974, RG 38-1, AO.
179 “Department of the Interior - License of occupation - For draft license of occupation of the old fort property at Fort Erie to the Park Commissioners,” R188-39-8-E, Numbered Central Registry Files, LAC.
to “preserve the Fort grounds from further desecration,” and by 1903 had repaired part of the 
ruins damaged by vandals and erected a stone gateway to the property.\textsuperscript{180}

It may at first seem surprising that the local historical societies would turn to the NPC as a potential guardian of the former battlefields. Around the turn of the century the NPC was the focus of increasing criticism for its management of leases to hydroelectric companies at Niagara Falls. In order to acquire the funds necessary to operate the park system without the revenue from entrance fees the NPC had leased rights to produce power from the falls, and by 1903 two of three of the companies in operation were American.\textsuperscript{181} These companies had been a source of tension between the federal and provincial government, as the federal government had granted the first franchise, while the provincial government had acted on its own to grant the second.\textsuperscript{182} There was growing public concern that these companies were supplying cheap electricity to the other side of the border, and the public levelled criticism at the NPC for its management of the franchises.\textsuperscript{183} Fearing that they would be unable to access cheap power made available through technological advances in the transmission of electricity, in 1902 manufacturers and municipalities in southwestern Ontario began to agitate for public power. Under the leadership of Adam Beck the public power movement eventually succeeded in getting public power transmission of the power from the Falls.\textsuperscript{184} Despite these controversies over public/private ownership of lands around the Falls and the criticisms levelled at the NPC the local history movement does not appear to have held any reservations about the commission gaining ownership of the former battlefields. This may have been in part because some of the

\textsuperscript{180} QVNFPC, Sixteenth Annual Report of the Commissioners for the Queen Victoria Niagara Falls Park of the Province of Ontario for the Year Ending December 31\textsuperscript{st} 1901, (Toronto: L.K. Cameron, 1902), 6; QVNFPC, Eighteenth Annual Report of the Commissioners for the Queen Victoria Niagara Falls Park Ontario for the Year 1903 (Toronto: L.K. Cameron, 1904), 17.
\textsuperscript{181} Nelles, Politics of Development, 32-35, 223-228.
\textsuperscript{182} Evans, 48.
\textsuperscript{183} Ibid., 40
\textsuperscript{184} Nelles, Politics of Development, 239-247; Evans, 51.
commission’s early members were also active in the historical societies. As early as 1887, after
the passage of the “Queen Victoria Niagara Falls Park Act,” some appointees had ties to the local
history movement. In 1887 John A. Orchard, for instance, served as the Vice-President of the
LLHS and as a Commissioner, holding both positions until his death.\textsuperscript{185} He seems to have been
committed to the work of the LLHS, as he was referred to as “a very zealous member,” and also
served as a delegate to the OHS.\textsuperscript{186} George Pattulo of Woodstock, who would later become the
President of the OHS and head the fight against the sale of the Niagara Military Reserve in 1905,
had been a secretary for the Parks Commission in 1886.\textsuperscript{187} Commission Superintendent James
Wilson became the secretary-treasurer of the LLHS in 1888, years before his plea for the
protection of Queenston Heights, and remained active in the society for many years.\textsuperscript{188} Wilson
was well regarded in the LLHS, which later described him as “a most able and efficient
officer.”\textsuperscript{189} Wilson was also known in the local history community beyond the LLHS; after his
death the NHS sent a letter to his widow describing him as “a warm friend of the Society.”\textsuperscript{190}
Both Wilson and Orchard were active in the formation of the Lundy’s Lane Observatory
Company, Limited to erect an observatory overlooking Lundy’s Lane in 1893, and served as
Director and President, respectively. The observatory overlooked the battlefield, “sacred to the
citizens of Great Britain, Canada and the United States,” as well as giving a splendid view of the
surrounding countryside. The observatory included a small museum that illustrated the
antiquarian fascination with old relics, displaying items from the battle and those of loyalist

\textsuperscript{185}Pioneer and Historical Association of the Province of Ontario, Canada (Toronto: R.G. McLean, 1892[?]), 17; NPC, Annual Report... 1888, 8; QVNFP, Tenth Annual Report, 6.
\textsuperscript{186}Pioneer and Historical Association of the Province of Ontario, Canada (Toronto: 1896), 14; Pioneer and Historical Association of the Province of Ontario, Canada (Toronto: R.G. McLean, 1892[?]), 17.
\textsuperscript{187}Killan, 134; QVNFP, Report of the Commissioners for Niagara Falls Park, 1885-1886, 20.
\textsuperscript{188}Ernest Green, “History of the Lundy’s Lane Historical Society,” 1946, 10, “Lundy’s Lane Historical Society” General File, NFHM.
\textsuperscript{189}Green, “History,”11.
settlers and selling LLHS publications (Figure 2.4). The LLHS membership was very happy with the observatory and museum, stating “what splendid lessons of loyalty of the past are suggested to British Canadians looking out upon the land around the famous hill…and from the fine tower now erected.” There is little evidence of these officials using their position in the Commission to influence the local historical societies or vice-versa, but the connections between the two groups likely made the Commission seem more appealing as a potential guardian of the endangered frontier battlefields. These dual members likely instilled confidence in members of the historical societies that the Commission was genuinely interested in preserving the former battlefields at least in part due to their connections to the public memory of the War of 1812.

Several years later the battlefield of Lundy’s Lane was also placed under Commission control, to the pleasure of the LLHS. Since the end of the war the area around the battlefield had been developed, and the intersection of the Portage Road and Lundy’s Lane had become the village of Drummondville in

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191 Lundy’s Lane Observatory, Niagara Falls, Ont., pamphlet, Records of the NPC, Alphabetical Correspondence of the NPC General Manager, RG 38-4-0-87, Box MN 130 Binder 1, AO; Letters Patent Incorporating The Lundy’s Lane Observatory Company (Limited), 16 December 1892, L988.D.010.165, NFHM; for an overview of antiquarianism see Gordon, Hero, 40-42.

192 LLHS, Annual Report of the Lundy’s Lane Historical Society (Lundy’s Lane: Lundy’s Lane Historical Society, 1893), n.p.
1831. In 1836 the original meeting house on the hill had been replaced by a new Presbyterian Church (Figure 2.5). The LLHS had asked the provincial and federal governments for grants to help pay for the battlefield’s maintenance, and used these occasional grants in cooperation with the Board of Trust to maintain the grounds. However, these occasional grants were not enough to maintain the area in good order. In 1909 F.E. Dalton was the only surviving member of the original Board of Trust appointed to the cemetery, and that year the Ontario Legislature proposed that Drummond Hill Cemetery be placed under the control of the NPC so that it could be made presentable to visitors. In March the commissioners expressed their willingness to take over the property, as long as it was vested in

Figure 2.5. Lundy’s Lane, ca. 1880. Reprinted from Morden, *Historical Monuments and Observatories of Lundy’s Lane and Queenston Heights* (Niagara Falls: Lundy’s Lane Historical Society, 1929), 25.

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193 Graves, *Lundy’s Lane*, 247.
194 Minutes of the LLHS, 9 January 1888 and 9 July 1906, LLHS Fonds Box 1, “Minutes and Proceedings of the Lundy’s Lane Historical Society 1887 – 1914,” NFHM.
196 Seibel, 278.
the Commission. In April F.E. Dalton, the Mayor of Niagara Falls; the Attorney-General; E.E. Fraser, M.P.P.; and members of the Commission met in Toronto to discuss the transfer of the battle ground and cemetery. They reached an agreement, and Drummond Hill Cemetery was transferred to the NPC in 1909, with an additional acre added to the property one year later. Records are sparse, and it is unclear what role local historical societies played in the transfer of the property. Although the LLHS claimed in its annual report that the grounds were transferred “through the efforts of the Society,” their role remains unclear. It would not be out of character for the society to have advocated for the former battlefield to be placed under the control of the NPC, given their concern about the locale’s neglected state and the precedent set by the transfer of other sites to the organization. According to the Commission’s annual report the former battlefield was placed under its care so that it could be presentable for the visitors “who yearly come to see where the brave men of 1814 fought and fell.” With the support of the local historical societies, by 1910 the NPC had control of Queenston Heights and the monument to Brock at its base, Fort Erie, and Lundy’s Lane.

**Conclusion**

Niagara’s local historical societies and the NPC were contemporaries, and both groups shared a concern for the preservation of the former battlefields due at least in part to their connection with the public memory and history of the War of 1812. The historical societies in Niagara were, like others across the province, enthusiastic amateur historians. Many of the local societies’ leaders had strong connections to the Niagara frontier through family lineage and were

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197 Minutes of the QVNFPC, 6 March 1909, Records of the NPC, Commission Minute Books, 1887-1974, RG 38-1, AO.
198 “Battleground Transfer,” The Niagara Falls Record, 2 April 1909.
199 Seibel, 278.
201 QVNFPC, Twenty-Fourth Annual Report, 8.
active in their local communities. The NPC was a curious provincial government agency given great power over Niagara Falls and along the Niagara River. These two groups formed part of the battlefields’ locations, as they were shaped by wider social forces such as the local history and preservation movements and in turn helped to shape the former battlefields as places. They also had an impact on the battlefields’ futures while being based for the most part outside of their boundaries, such as through political negotiations for the transfer of the battlefields to the NPC. The views and backgrounds of some of the prominent members of these groups have been explored in this chapter to give insight into how they may have viewed the battlefields, or their senses of place. Many leading members of these groups held imperialist views, and to varying degrees recognized the former battlefields’ connections to the events of the War of 1812. Members of the local historical societies campaigned to protect these places from threats of development due to their connection to the war’s public memory and history. Members of the NPC seem to have agreed that the places’ connections to the public memory of the war made them worthy of protection, but they were also likely influenced by the sites’ natural beauty and their own financial situation. The joint membership of some commissioners with the local historical societies not only attested to their interest in local history, but may have influenced the NPC’s decision to acquire the sites and the local historical societies’ support for the move. Like the members of local historical societies, the commissioners wanted to protect and maintain the sites due at least in part to their connections to the War of 1812. In the coming years the local historical societies and the NPC worked together to varying degrees to shape the battlefields’ locales, locations, and senses of place to both strengthen their connections to the public memory of the War of 1812 and to highlight their natural beauty.
Chapter 3- Placing Public Memory: Monuments and Ceremony

After most of the Frontier’s former battlefields had been placed under the NPC’s care, historical society members and their supporters continued holding commemorative ceremonies in the places, and began campaigning to erect monuments to further solidify their organic connections to the War of 1812 and those killed fighting in it. This chapter examines how these efforts both reflected and shaped the public memory of the war, and their connections to the former battlefields as places. It also illustrates that many of the commemorative practices often associated with the post WWI period, such as laying wreaths, had pre-war precedents. The campaign for a national monument at the battlefield of Beaverdams was unsuccessful, but monuments were erected at Lundy’s Lane in 1895 and Fort Erie in 1905. These monuments were erected at strategic points on the battlefields’ locales that lent them visual dominance of the places and reinforced their connections to the public memory of the war, while the monuments’ forms and inscriptions simultaneously helped to shape that memory. Commemorative events were also held on the former battlefields, including large-scale centennial celebrations at Queenston Heights, Beaverdams, and Lundy’s Lane in 1912 and 1914. These events in part reflective of a larger international narrative surrounding the centenary of the War of 1812 that focussed on peace, but they also took on a distinctly local emphasis in Niagara. These ceremonies, as well as the smaller annual celebrations held by the local historical societies, also reinforced the places’ connections to the public memory of the War of 1812 and put particular emphasis on the sacrifices of those who died in the battles. Speakers at these gatherings drew on the places and their monuments to reinforce their pronouncements stressing ideals of sacrifice, loyalty, and manliness. Despite their lingering mistrust of the United States, participants also celebrated what they perceived as the anniversary of one hundred years of peace between the two countries in the places where they had fought a century earlier. The monuments and ceremonies
on the battlefields reinforced the places’ connections to the public memory of the war, while simultaneously helping to shape that public memory. These monuments and ceremonies reveal not only the important role place played in the public memory of the war, but show that the public memory expressed on the battlefields focussed on Anglo-Saxon manly sacrifice and highlighted the places’ connections with the war dead.

The Battle Monuments

The local historical societies’ quests to erect monuments to commemorate the War of 1812 were part of a larger fervour for erecting monuments in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Around the turn of the century there were countless commemorative celebrations, and many monuments honouring great people or events were erected in Europe and North America.¹ The movement that Brian Osborne has called “statuemania” grew in the nineteenth century and peaked between 1870 and 1914.² In the late nineteenth century Ontario had its own share of monuments. On Dominion Day 1870 the Volunteers Monument was unveiled near Queen’s Park on the University of Toronto campus. This monument was erected to commemorate those killed repelling a Fenian invasion at Ridgeway, a village outside Fort Erie.³ Monuments honouring the volunteers in the NorthWest Rebellion were erected in St. Catharines and Toronto in 1886 and 1895, respectively.⁴ 1886 also saw the unveiling of a monument honouring Mohawk leader Joseph Brant in Brantford, whose promoters portrayed him as a loyal leader and praised him as a Christianizing and civilizing force amongst the Six Nations.⁵ In

¹ Knowles, 7.
² Osborne, “Constructing Landscapes of Power,” 434.
³ Peter Vronsky, Ridgeway: The American Fenian Invasion and the 1866 Battle that Made Canada (Toronto: Penguin Group, 2011), 273, 289.
⁵ Knowles, 117-122.
Ontario and beyond many organizations worked to commemorate the past in bronze and stone, and Niagara’s local historical societies were part of this larger movement. Not only were the members of Niagara’s local historical societies likely aware of these other monuments, but they felt that the War of 1812 battlefields beyond Queenston Heights were also worthy of this type of recognition.

The campaign for a monument to mark the Lundy’s Lane battlefield began in 1887 when M.M. Fenwick, principal of the Drummondville grammar school, published letters in two Toronto newspapers. In them Fenwick called for a national battle monument at Lundy’s Lane and for one to Laura Secord, whose grave was in Drummond Hill Cemetery. The LLHS, which had been formed that year, immediately supported the idea. The society’s president George Bull was an outspoken advocate of erecting a monument “to the memory of those who fell in their devotion to duty,” and spoke in support of the project at anniversaries and meetings. In 1887 Bull and several members of the LLHS launched An Appeal to British Canadians for contributions to the Lundy’s Lane Fund. Pointing to the glories of the battle and the neglected state of the cemetery, the fund’s circular appealed for donations to not only restore the military graves, but to erect a monument to both “those heroic defenders of our soil” who fell in the battle and to Laura Secord, who had died nineteen years previously. In 1888 local politicians and others unsuccessfully petitioned the federal government for a contribution to the fund. Despite this failure the minister of militia, Sir A. P. Caron, supported erecting a monument on Lundy’s Lane, and at the annual battle commemorations on 25 July 1889 he expressed his support for the

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7“Anniversary of the Battle of Lundy’s Lane,” Thorold Post and Niagara District Intelligencer, 29 July 1887, 2.
9“Privy Council (A.G.O. 24018) - Petitions (4) from Geo. T. Denison and others, praying for a grant of money towards the Lundy's Lane Memorial Fund, for the better preservation of that historic ground and the erection of a public memorial thereon,” Numbered Files, R180-41-8-E, LAC.
Caron may have backed the idea as a way to appease his critics, who felt that the militia who fought in the NorthWest Rebellion had not been properly recognized, while Caron, who had never seen combat, was rewarded by the Crown for his non-military service by being made a kcmg. Caron may have thought that erecting a monument to those who died at Lundy’s Lane would help him rebuild his reputation amongst the militia. The M.P. for Welland, John Ferguson, also adopted the cause and in early 1890 presented a petition to the House of Commons moving that the government examine how best to preserve and commemorate the battlefield. Caron moved to enlarge the motion to include all of those killed in action during the War of 1812, and the amended motion passed. Soon afterward the Dominion Government granted $1,000 for the erection of a monument at Lundy’s Lane, an amount that was disappointingly small to the LLHS members. Ferguson agreed that the grant was small, but tried to make the best of it, arguing that it was not the size or ornamentation of the monument that mattered, but that it be “a tribute of respect” to those who

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10“Lundy’s Lane. Big Celebration Yesterday.” *Thorold Post and Niagara District Intelligencer*, 26 July 1889, 2.
13Minutes of the LLHS, 13 March 1890, LLHS Fonds Box 1, “Minutes and Proceedings of the Lundy’s Lane Historical Society 1887 – 1914,” NFHM.
had fallen in the battle. The LLHS was anxious to begin work on the monument, but several delays and miscommunications followed. Government representatives thought that the LLHS wanted to delay construction so they could collect more public subscriptions for a larger monument, which Bull denied. In December 1891 an article by Sarah Ann Curzon, a British immigrant active in the Toronto Women’s Literary Club, appeared in The Dominion Illustrated. In it Curzon accused the government of inaction on its commitment to proceed with erecting the monument. On the 1893 anniversary of the battle M.P. James Lowell called on the government to make good on its promise. The monument issue was raised again in the House of Commons in July of 1894, as there were some questions about the funds allocated. Four thousand dollars had been set aside by the government to erect monuments at Chateauguay, Lundy’s Lane, and Cryslers’ Farm, but Minister of Militia and Defence A.C. Patterson did not feel there were enough funds to erect all three. Officials decided to go ahead with the construction of a monument at Lundy’s Lane because former Minister of Militia and Defence A.P. Caron had promised to erect a monument there, the LLHS had been the first organization to bring the matter of War of 1812 memorials to the Dominion Government’s attention, and the battlefield of Lundy’s Lane received more visitors than the others.

Work soon started on the monument, which was made of grey granite from Quebec (Figure 3.1). The monument’s base is approximately 20 square feet, and each side has six steps.

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14 “Lundy’s Lane: The Historical Society’s Celebration,” Thorold Post and Niagara District Intelligencer, 1 August 1890, 3.
15 Privy Council (A.G.O. 24018) - Petitions (4) from Geo. T. Denison and others, praying for a grant of money towards the Lundy’s Lane Memorial Fund, for the better preservation of that historic ground and the erection of a public memorial thereon,” Numbered Files, R180-41-8-E, LAC.
16 Boutilier, 54; S.A. Curzon, “Lundy’s Lane Historical Society,” The Dominion Illustrated, 5 December, 1891, 542-43.
18 Official report of the debates of the House of Commons of the Dominion of Canada: Fourth Session, Seventh Parliament...comprising the period from the twenty-eighth day of May to the twenty-third day of July, inclusive (Ottawa: S.E. Dawson, 1894), 6249 – 250.
leading up to a smaller octagonal base that supports a 40 foot tall central shaft, or obelisk.

Curved ornamental ramps lead from the monument’s smaller base to all four corners of the larger base, with each terminus topped by a pile of four cannon-balls. The monument also contains a seven foot square vault below it where the remains of unearthed soldiers from the battle could be housed. Half way up the obelisk is a bronze maple leaf wreath with “1812-14” above it.

“Lundy’s Lane” was carved into the granite of the smaller base below the obelisk, and below it the inscription, likely written by Bull or George Taylor Denison:19

Erected by the Canadian Parliament in honour of the victory gained by the British & Canadian forces on this field on the 25th day of July 1814 and in grateful remembrance of the brave men who died on that day fighting for the unity of the Empire.

The monument was the first of those promised by the Dominion Government to be erected, and cost $5,000.20 It was unveiled on 25 July 1895 at a ceremony organized by the LLHS.21

It is not clear whether members of the TBHS attended the unveiling of the Lundy’s Lane monument, but regardless they may have felt a twinge of jealousy at the LLHS’ success.

Although the battlefield of Beaverdams had a small memorial erected in 1874 (Figure 3.2), in August of 1894 the TBHS had written to the minister of militia J.C. Paterson to ask for ¼ of the $4,000 set aside for erecting monuments to mark the battlefield of Beaverdams with a national monument.22 Erecting a larger national memorial at Beaverdams had been mentioned in the House of Commons debates about marking War of 1812 battlefields, but the TBHS had only been created in 1894 and did not have enough time to act on this before the funds were

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19C.J. Taylor, 6.
20Mabel V. Warner, 1. Despite the uncertainty about funding, the Dominion Government did erect monuments at Châteauguay and Crysler’s Farm, and they were also unveiled in 1895. C.J. Taylor, 5.
21“At Lundy’s Lane,” The Globe, 26 July 1895, 1; Mabel V. Warner, 1.
22Wetherell, 47-48; “Historical! The Thorold and Beaverdams Historical Society” Thorold Post, 10 August 1894, 1.
earmarked for other former battlefields.\textsuperscript{23} Not only was the TBHS’ application for part of the appropriation too late, their application for a national monument also highlighted the 1874 memorial as evidence of the place’s importance, which likely did not help their appeal.\textsuperscript{24} Their hopes were dashed as Paterson replied that there were not enough funds in the existing appropriation for the project. However, he expressed hope that if more money was made available a monument could perhaps be erected to commemorate the battle “at some point.”\textsuperscript{25} The TBHS membership was understandably disappointed, but held out hope that funds might be forthcoming in the future, even writing the new Minister of Militia Arthur Rupert Dickie in 1895 to remind him of Paterson’s promise that their application would be considered in the future.\textsuperscript{26} Despite their efforts, no government funds were forthcoming, but the TBHS nonetheless continued to lobby for a national monument on the former battlefield.

The LLHS also advocated for erecting monuments on other Niagara Frontier War of 1812 battlefields. Fort Erie was one of these places. However, the LLHS needed the cooperation of the NPC, which at this point owned Fort Erie but not Drummond Hill Cemetery. Fortunately for the LLHS, the idea of erecting a monument at Fort Erie was not new. In his 1898 report on

\[\text{Figure 3.2. Reproduction of “Monument at the Beaver Dams Battlefield (Thorold, Ontario),” Watercolour over pencil, c.1913, JRR 1345 Cab IV, Toronto Reference Library.}\]

\textsuperscript{23}See, for example, \textit{Official Report of the Debates of the House of Commons of the Dominion of Canada: Fourth Session, 1807.}

\textsuperscript{24}“Historical! The Thorold and Beaverdams Historical Society” \textit{Thorold Post}, 10 August 1894, 1.

\textsuperscript{25}J.C. Paterson to Reverend J.W. Mitchell, 10 August 1894, Esther Summers Papers, Battle of Beaverdams Collection, Mayholme Foundation, St. Catharines.

\textsuperscript{26}T.E. Simson to Minister of Militia and Defence, 2 May 1895, Department of Militia and Defence, R180-41-8-E Volume 282, File No. 13980, “T.E. Simson – Thorold, Ontario – Grant to the ‘Thorold and Beaverdams Historical Society’ for erection of a Monument on the grounds of the battle of ‘The Beaverdams,’” LAC.
the feasibility of the NPC taking over the place James Wilson had observed that it did not resemble a cemetery, although many bodies were buried in the area. Wilson seemed to feel that the dead deserved recognition, and suggested that it may be “advisable to erect at some future day a memorial cairn or some simple form of monument.”

However, once it acquired the land the NPC’s first actions were to erect a fence around the property and a stone gateway leading into it. Little other work was done on the former battlefield, as the NPC was investing its limited funds in creating an idealized ‘natural’ locale at Queenston Heights. In 1903 the LLHS again brought forward the possibility of erecting a monument at Fort Erie. Ernest Cruikshank wrote to Wilson proposing a design for a memorial consisting of a stone column that “would not be expensive and I should think a sufficient memorial.”

Wilson, who had earlier suggested a monument to the NPC, agreed with the idea. He wrote to W.M. German, MP for Welland, who reported that all of the money appropriated for monuments had been spent. However, German assured Wilson, he had written to the Minister of Militia and Defence to plead the “necessity as well as the desirability” of setting aside funds for such a purpose.

Several months later German informed Wilson that the Minister had agreed to place $1,750 in the estimates for a monument at Fort Erie. The commissioners appealed for additional funds for a granite monument with a bronze inscription, which they argued “would be more lasting and better worthy of the historic

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29 Ernest Cruikshank to James Wilson, 7 March 1903, Records of the NPC, General Manager’s Office Subject Correspondence (First Chronological Grouping), 1901-1924, RG38-3-1- “Re: Monument [No Reference Number],” Box MN 29, AO.
30 W.M. German to James Wilson, 1 April 1903, Records of the NPC, General Manager’s Office Subject Correspondence (First Chronological Grouping), 1901-1924, RG38-3-1- “Re: Monument [No Reference Number],” Box MN 29, AO.
31 W.M. German to James Wilson, 30 June 1903, J.M Langmuir to James Wilson, 5 October 1903, Records of the NPC, General Manager’s Office Subject Correspondence (First Chronological Grouping), 1901-1924, RG38-3-1- “Re: Monument [No Reference Number],” Box MN 29, AO.
character of the place,” and the appropriation was later increased to $3,000. Wilson immediately informed Langmuir, the Chairman of the NPC, who was “exceedingly pleased” at the news, possibly because the project would not cost the NPC anything and would likely attract more visitors to the former battlefield. However, the grant was not available until the winter of 1903. Early in 1904 the NPC and the Minister of Militia and Defence selected a design for the monument based loosely on Cruikshank’s, but with some added ornamentation.

Work on the monument’s circular granite shaft began that summer, and it was completed in October. However, there were delays in acquiring the monument’s bronze tablets, which did not arrive until the following spring. When finished in 1905 the monument stood thirty feet high on a three-level base eight feet wide, and its circular shaft was topped by a ball bearing the Greek cross on two sides (Figure 3.3). In contrast to obelisks, memorial columns were often made with separate pieces of stone, and in antiquity they were often used as tombstones. Cruikshank may have had a similar function in mind for his design, as when the monument’s bronze tablets were affixed they carried an inscription written by him dedicating the monument.

32 W.M. German to James Wilson, 26 April 1904 Records of the NPC, General Manager’s Office Subject Correspondence (First Chronological Grouping), 1901-1924, RG38-3-1- “Re: Monument [No Reference Number],” Box MN 29, AO.
33 J.W. Langmuir to James Wilson, 3 July 1903. Records of the NPC, General Manager’s Office Subject Correspondence (First Chronological Grouping), 1901-1924, RG38-3-1- “Re: Monument [No Reference Number],” Box MN 29, AO.
34 Deputy Minister of Militia and Defence to W.M German, 2 December 1903, Records of the NPC, General Manager’s Office Subject Correspondence (First Chronological Grouping), 1901-1924, RG38-3-1- “Re: Monument [No Reference Number],” Box MN 29, AO.
35 Deputy Minister of Militia and Defence to W.M German, 2 December 1903; Deputy Minister of Militia and Defence to James Wilson, 1 March 1904, Records of the NPC, General Manager’s Office Subject Correspondence (First Chronological Grouping), 1901-1924, RG38-3-1- “Re: Monument [No Reference Number],” Box MN 29, AO.
36 J.W. Langmuir to James Wilson, 20 October 1904; J.W. Langmuir to James Wilson, 8 June 1905, Records of the NPC, General Manager’s Office Subject Correspondence (First Chronological Grouping), 1901-1924, RG38-3-1- “Re: Monument [No Reference Number],” Box MN 29, AO.
to the men killed in the siege of Fort Erie. The monument’s lengthy inscription bears the mark of Cruikshank’s attention to detail. One bronze marker reads,

In memory of the officers and seamen of the Royal Navy, the officers, non commissioned officers and privates of the Royal Artillery, Royal Engineers, Royal Marines, 1st Royal Scots 19th Light Dragoons, 6th, 8th (Kings) 41st, 82nd, 89th, 103rd, 104th, and Dewatterville’s Regiments, the Glengarry Light Infantry and the Incorporated Militia who fell during the siege [sic] of Fort Erie, August and September – 1814 –

The other reads,


The poet Horace’s words, “Dulce et decorum est pro patria mori,” or, “it is sweet and seemly to die for one’s country” are carved in the granite above the bronze tablets. The total cost of the monument was $2,465, which the NPC provided and was later reimbursed by the Dominion Government. Langmuir planned to have the unveiling ceremony while militia troops were in summer training at Niagara-on-the-Lake, but the monument was not completed in time and no official unveiling ceremony ever took place.

**Monumental Placing**

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39Ernest Cruikshank to James Wilson, 17 March 1905, Records of the NPC, General Manager’s Office Subject Correspondence (First Chronological Grouping), 1901-1924, RG38-3-1- “Re: Monument [No Reference Number],” Box MN 29, AO.
40J. Vance, 99.
Members of the local historical societies generally accepted that the monuments commemorating these battles should be placed on the former battlefields themselves. Erecting monuments on battlefields was not an innovation of the local historical societies, as various types of memorials had been erected on battlefields since antiquity, usually to mark a victory. In eighteenth century North America small monuments were erected on famous battlefields to honour generals, such as a monument to General Joseph Warren at Boston’s Bunker Hill. However, marking battlefields was a phenomenon that became more widespread in the nineteenth century. The era’s emphasis on nation-building and monuments, combined with improved transportation systems that allowed tourists easier access to battlefields, contributed to an increase in battlefield statuary. The monuments erected to Isaac Brock at Queenston Heights were in keeping with the emphasis on commemorating generals, and helped to link the former battlefield to the public memory of the war and its hero. In the United States Revolutionary War battlefields did not receive widespread recognition until the mid-nineteenth century, a process that later accelerated with the war’s centenary. After the American Civil War monuments honouring the rank and file dead were erected in war cemeteries, some of which were located near or on battlefields, such as the

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43Borg, 10.
46Chambers, 4, 2.
Soldiers’ National Cemetery on the battlefield of Gettysburg. This is not to say that all battle monuments were erected on the former scenes of battle, however. A large monument commemorating the 1899-1902 Boer war, in which over 8,000 Canadians enlisted and 242 were killed, was unveiled on Toronto’s University Avenue in 1910. Thus, Niagara’s local historical societies were not the first to want to erect monuments on former battlefields. However, little has been written about the relationship between monuments and place at the turn of the century. In choosing to erect monuments on the former battlefields the local historical societies reinforced the link between the public memory of the war and the battlefields as places.

The War of 1812 battles ranged over a much larger territory than what had been preserved by the local historical societies and the NPC. Although historical society members were likely aware of this, in their practical view the remaining undeveloped landscape, such as the 17 ½ acres at Fort Erie, represented the battlefield as a whole. Monuments served to reinforce the connection between these places to the public memory of the war. Once erected on the former battlefields, the Niagara War of 1812 monuments became part of them as places, and the places and their monuments were mutually supportive in reflecting and shaping the public memory of the war. As Kirk Savage has argued in relation to Civil War memorials, monuments help to anchor public memory in specific places. The monuments reinforced the places’ organic connections to the war’s public memory, while the places themselves reinforced the public memory put forward by the monuments. The campaigns to erect monuments on the actual sites of battle were rooted a desire to reinforce the battlefields’ connection to the public memory of

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49 Savage, 130.
50 See Savage; Mayo, 44.
the war and to reflect and promote a public memory that emphasized sacrifice, manliness, and loyalty. To further promote this public memory the NPC and members of the local historical societies selected the exact placement of the new monuments on the locales to ensure that they physically and symbolically overlooked the former battlefields.

The monuments reinforced the links between the places and the public memory of the war, and historical society members hoped that they would help to interpret the places for visitors and encourage them to seek out more information about the battles. Members of the LLHS may have shared David Lowenthal’s much later observation in *The Past is a Foreign Country*: “In the absence of signposts, how many visitors to an old battlefield could tell that it was an historical site?”  

Indeed, interpreting the former battlefield of Lundy’s Lane for tourists had been an ongoing project for the LLHS, whose members often escorted groups around the battlefield and erected markers on special occasions. For the annual celebration of the battle of Lundy’s Lane in 1889, for instance, the society placed stakes around the grounds to mark the sites of different regiments; similar markers were erected again for the 1891 celebration. However, as the society realized, once the stakes were removed its members could not always be present to interpret the former battlefield for visitors. This had been of longstanding concern to the society, whose members had expressed their apprehension that those visiting the battlefield “could not locate the points of chief interest.” Frederick Charles Denison, brother of noted imperialist George Taylor Denison, argued in favour of the Lundy’s Lane monument in the House of Commons because it would clarify the connection between the place and its wartime events. “It is greatly to be regretted,” Denison lamented, “that any student of history, on visiting

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51 Lowenthal, 265.
53 Minutes of the LLHS, 27 August 1888, LLHS Fonds Box 1, “Minutes and Proceedings of the Lundy’s Lane Historical Society 1887 – 1914,” NFHM.
these grounds, has difficulty in ascertaining where the actions were fought.” A permanent monument on the former battlefield may not be capable of indicating all of the specific points relevant to the battle, but it would indicate to visitors that they were in a place that had deep connections to the War of 1812 and might encourage them to seek out more information about the battle. In an address given at the 1890 meeting of the LLHS at Lundy’s Lane, Sarah Curzon expressed her hope that a monument might communicate the heroic story of Lundy’s Lane to future generations, proclaiming “the best efforts of the sculptor must be ours to commemorate the field of Lundy’s Lane; the best efforts of the artist to depict the story the monument shall tell.” In proposing a monument at Fort Erie in 1898 James Wilson suggested that a monument would “tell succeeding generations of the stormy events and the great sacrifices of life and treasure made at this historic spot in the War of 1812-

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For the members of the LLHS and other historical societies, erecting a monument was an important part of perpetuating the public memory of the events that had taken place at Lundy’s Lane and elsewhere, in part by making a close connection between those events and the former battlefields. Historical society members and their supporters generally agreed that the monuments should be erected on the former battlefields, but once funding was arranged their exact site had to be selected. At both Lundy’s Lane and Fort Erie the new monuments were erected on the former battlefields’ high points in areas that were easily visible. The Brock monument stood at the edge of the Niagara Escarpment and, as many visitors had noted, had a commanding view of the Niagara River (Figure 3.4). The local historical societies were perhaps inspired by this, and wanted to erect their monuments on locales that would also have as commanding a view of the former battlefields and surrounding areas as possible. The proposed monument at Beaverdams, and that erected at Fort Erie, were also given prominent locales. In their application to the Dominion Government for funding the TBHS indicated that they wanted to place their monument on a high point so that it would be a prominent and visible marker. The TBHS stressed that the proposed locale would “be a very conspicuous one for a monument.” They went on to argue that a “suitable shaft” would be seen from a great distance, including from St. Catharines, Niagara, Port Colbourne, and by ships on Lake Ontario. The Fort Erie battle monument was erected on the remnants of the Fort’s ramparts, then an earthen mound, near the remnants of the barracks wall (Figure 3.5). This placement, along with the monument’s height,

57 “Historical!” Thorold Post, 10 August 1894, 1.
58 QVNFPC, Nineteenth Annual Report of the Commissioners for the Queen Victoria Niagara Falls Park, 1904 (Toronto: L.K. Cameron, 1905), 17; Fort Erie Public Library Local History Collection, Slides Collection “The old fort at Fort Erie Ontario Canada,” c.1920.
made it visible from the park entrance and the river, and the NPC noted approvingly that the monument “forms a striking feature of the landscape.”

The Lundy’s Lane monument received a similar placement, but the nature of the battlefield made this more challenging than at other former battlefields. The LLHS’ inaugural annual report had called for a monument at Lundy’s Lane made of Queenston Limestone at least eighty feet high (exclusive of the flag staff) to be erected at the highest part of the Lundy’s Lane battlefield. More than half the height of the Brock Monument, this monument would have been visible from a great distance and easily dominated the battlefield. Although the funds available did not allow for such an ambitious project, the LLHS still wanted to place the monument on the cemetery’s highest point, which according to our current understanding also formed part of the high ground the combatants had fought over in the battle.

However, before work could start a point on the locale had to be acquired for the structure. The highest point of the cemetery where the monument was slated to be erected was previously occupied, and George Bull had to negotiate with the cemetery owners and family members to have several bodies moved from the summit of the hill to nearby plots. Officials and family

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59 QVNFP, Nineteenth Annual Report, 27.
60 LLHS, 1st Annual Report, n.p.
62 Canon Bull to James Wilson[?], 18 March 1895, Records of the NPC, General Manager’s Office-Alphabetical Correspondence, 1888-1953, RG 38-4-0-87, Box MN 130, Binder 1.
members’ willingness to move these bodies suggests that they saw the project as a worthwhile way to mark the place as a former battlefield, and agreed that the best place for the monument would be on the cemetery’s most prominent plot overlooking the locale (Figure 3.6).

The monuments erected on the former battlefields not only reflected the public memory of the war’s connections to the former battlefields, but also influenced that public memory. As many scholars have argued, public memory is a dynamic process, and events and monuments are open to a variety of individual interpretations that may or may not agree with the public memory they put forward. It is impossible to assess the reactions of these voices given the available sources, but an examination of the monuments erected on the former battlefields gives insight into how those who erected them viewed and represented the places’ public memories and how the monuments in turn influenced those memories.

After erecting the Lundy’s Lane monument the LLHS noted approvingly in its annual report that it would “perpetuate the record of doughty deeds of our troops at that place.”

Indeed, the monument’s form and inscriptions presented a specific public memory of the war and

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63 See, for example, Graham, Ashworth, and Tunbridge, 33.
64 LLHS, Report of the Lundy’s Lane Historical Society for Year Ending April 30th, 1905, 2, LLHS Fonds, Box 1, Minute Book, 979.0.41 628, NFHM.
its battles. The choice to place an obelisk atop the Lundy’s Lane monument’s base was a significant one. The obelisk form originated in Egypt, and its general style survived into the modern era as a decorative motif that symbolized both death and victory. The theme of victory is echoed in the Lundy’s Lane monument’s inscription, which asserts that the marker was erected “in honour of the victory” secured there by the British. Although it is not clear where they came from, the cannonballs placed atop the small columns at the base of the monument also bring to mind the practice of victors taking weapons as war trophies. The monument’s inscription reinforces the obelisk’s association with death by referencing “the brave men who died.” The inscription on the Lundy’s Lane monument not only asserts that the British won the battle, but expresses imperialist views by stating that those who died were “fighting for the unity of the Empire.” The inscription also highlights the significance of its placement on the former battlefield. Reminding visitors that the battle was fought “on this field” reinforced the monument’s connection to the place.

The Fort Erie monument communicates and shapes a public memory that emphasizes loyalty and sacrifice. Indeed, commemorating the siege of Fort Erie, a British defeat, may have presented more challenges than the perceived victory at Lundy’s Lane did. The Fort Erie monument itself commemorates a specific span of time: the siege of the fort by General Drummond in the late summer and fall of 1814. The local historical societies and the NPC chose this particular moment from the war, rather than the British abandonment of the fort in May of 1813 or its easy capture by the American invasion force in the spring of 1814. This is likely because Drummond’s siege of Fort Erie was more widely known than the previous events, as it was the last significant battle of the war on the Niagara Frontier. Additionally, commemorating the siege allowed those who erected the monument to highlight the ideals of romantic sacrifice.

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65 Borg, 2-3.
and bravery in the face of defeat. The Greek Cross on the sphere atop the monument is indicative of this, as in this context crosses represent both sacrifice (Christ’s death) and triumph (his resurrection). The choice to include a prominent cross reinforced the ideal of sacrifice for a greater good and an ultimate triumph – in this case the British winning the War of 1812. The lengthy inscriptions on the monument also give the reader an impression of the number of British and Upper Canadian forces killed during the siege. While the inclusion of the names of militia and regulars on monuments would not become common until after the Great War, the list of individual officers killed likely lent an added gravitas to the deadly events that had happened there and reinforced the place’s connection with the battle’s dead. Cruikshank may also have included the list of officers because, as James Wilson had observed earlier, Fort Erie did not resemble a cemetery and had no individual grave markers. The monument, then, also functioned as a kind of tombstone and highlighted the place’s connection with the battle’s dead. The monument at Fort Erie, like that at Lundy’s Lane, was erected not only on the former battlefield, but occupied a prominent point that literally overlooked it. This position symbolically imprinted the place with a public memory etched in stone and bronze that emphasized victory and sacrifice.

The historical societies, with the cooperation of the NPC and the Dominion government, worked to strengthen the connections between the battlefields as places and the public memory of the War of 1812 by erecting monuments on the former battlefields. The battlefields had organic connections to the public memory of the war as the places where battles had been fought, and these connections were reinforced through stone and bronze. The monuments’ placement on the battlefields was a conscious choice, and they were erected on the locale’s highest points. These monuments not only reinforced the organic links between the places and the public

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66Borg, 7.
memory of the war, but also put forward a public memory that emphasized the sacrifices of those killed in the battles, a connection that was further emphasized in the ceremonies held there.

**Ceremony**

The former battlefields not only hosted monuments, but commemorative ceremonies when the public memory of the war was reflected and shaped. As Paul Connerton argues, specific ideas about the past are both presented and sustained through ritual performances. In late nineteenth century Canada commemorative pageants, festivals, and parades had grown in popularity, likely due in part to the influence of similar events in Britain such as a series of Jubilees, coronations, and state funerals in the mid to late nineteenth century. In the United States there had also been celebrations marking anniversaries of events such as the centennial of the declaration of Independence and the 400th anniversary of Columbus’ discovery of North America. In Canada the tercentenary of the founding of Quebec had also been celebrated with monuments and pageantry in 1908. Annual ceremonies focusing on war dead had North American precedents as well, as an annual commemorative event known as Decoration Day had begun after the Civil war in the United States. This ceremony involved laying flowers on the graves of the war dead, usually in May when flowers were widely available. Decoration Day was adopted in Canada, as in the 1890s Toronto held Decoration Days to decorate the monument honouring those killed in the Fenian invasion, which stood in for the graves of the dead. In 1903 veterans of the Fenian raid, Northwest Rebellion, and Boer War cooperated in holding a joint

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67 Connerton, 70.
69 Nelles, *Art of Nation-Building*.
70 Blight, 70-72.
decoration day, and the monuments to all three conflicts were decorated.\textsuperscript{71} Thorold also held its own Decoration Days beginning in July of 1904 and continuing at least until 1913.\textsuperscript{72} Thorold’s decoration days were initiated by local Fenian Raid veterans and took place in the local cemetery, and although the day’s focus remained on the veterans, the event eventually grew to encompass all of the cemetery’s dead.\textsuperscript{73} These Decoration Days focussed on graves or symbolic markers such as monuments, and some elements of these ceremonies such as decorating gravestones and monuments were present in the ceremonies commemorating the War of 1812 held on the former battlefields. The commemorative ceremonies organized by local historical societies to mark battle anniversaries differed in that they happened on the former battlefields, which played a role in the public memory reflected and shaped there. These ceremonies conveyed and reinforced a public memory of the war that stressed the virtues of sacrifice, loyalty, manliness, and peace in the places where the battles happened. The battlefields and their monuments played a significant role in these ceremonies, as speakers drew on the places to support their pronouncements about the events of the War of 1812 and their legacy, while the monuments simultaneously influenced the public memory put forward at the ceremonies.

Prior to the large scale celebrations of 1912-14 local historical societies often hosted annual celebrations on the former battlefields to mark the places’ respective battle anniversaries. The LLHS was particularly active, and early in its existence it held its annual meetings on the anniversary of the battle of Lundy’s Lane. Members would often meet at the battlefield, inspect the “graves of departed heroes,” and then retire to the local mechanics institute to conduct their

\textsuperscript{73} “Decoration Day,” \textit{Thorold Post}, 29 June 1909, 1.
annual meeting.\textsuperscript{74} The LLHS celebrated the anniversary of the battle every year, and almost always visited the former battlefield to do so. However, the society at times used the anniversary to visit another War of 1812 battlefield. This was the case in 1896 when the society elected to celebrate the anniversary of the battle of Lundy’s Lane at Old Fort Erie in order to draw attention to its neglected state and to gather support for placing the site under the NPC’s control. LLHS representatives were joined there by Janet Carnochan, president of the NHS, and Ernest Cruikshank. Although the anniversary was officially being marked elsewhere, society members were sure to decorate the graves at Lundy’s Lane in the morning before departing for Fort Erie.\textsuperscript{75} Although Thorold’s local newspaper occasionally mentioned the anniversary of Beaverdams and often included an account of the battle or a poem, there is little evidence that celebrations took place on the battlefield before the formation of the TBHS.\textsuperscript{76} The TBHS saw the battlefield and its monument as important to the commemoration of the battle, and from its creation through the 1890s it held annual celebrations there that sometimes included a battlefield tour.\textsuperscript{77} The NHS was not as closely linked with the nearby Fort George as the LLHS was with Lundy’s Lane, and did not undertake annual celebrations at the fort. Similarly, formal annual observances of the anniversary of the Battle of Queenston Heights did not take place until the rise of the local history movement in the late nineteenth century. Even after the rise of these societies Queenston Heights was not the site of yearly anniversary celebrations in the same way as some other battlefields such as Lundy’s Lane, perhaps because Queenston was not home to a local historical

\textsuperscript{74}Minutes of the LLHS, 9 July 1887, LLHS Fonds Box 1, “Minutes and Proceedings of the Lundy’s Lane Historical Society 1887 – 1914,” NFHM.


society. However, like other battlefields in the region, Queenston Heights occasionally hosted commemorative ceremonies put on by the area’s historical societies. For instance, on the 1891 anniversary of the battle members of the LLHS attended a commemorative gathering of approximately 100 people “at the noble column which testifies to the memory of Gen. Sir Isaac Brock.”

Many of these smaller gatherings were dwarfed by the large-scale centenary celebrations held in 1912-14. Certain milestones, usually involving round numbers, often draw additional attention, and the popularity of centennial celebrations skyrocketed in the late nineteenth century and they continued to be popular into the twentieth. On an international scale the main focus of the war’s centenary was not so much on the conflict itself, but on celebrating a century of peace between Great Britain and the United States. The late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries had seen the “Great Rapprochement” in political, economic, and military relations between the United States and Britain. The two countries realized that their political and strategic interests could be mutually supportive, and embraced the idea of a shared Anglo-Saxon identity and a mission to civilise the world. Canada had been adjusting to this closer relationship, and after the electorate’s rejection of reciprocity with the United States in 1911 the Borden government adopted a more conciliatory attitude towards its southern neighbour. The one hundred years since the end of the War of 1812 had seen numerous political disagreements between the United States and Great Britain, such as the Oregon boundary dispute of the 1840s, disputes over fisheries, and the 1895 Venezuela crisis. Although Canada and the United States had resolved these and other

81 Alan P. Dobson, Anglo-American Relations in the Twentieth Century (New York: Routledge, 1995), 17
disputes without recourse to open war, a century of peace remained a selective reading of history. War had not been declared, but the absence of war does not necessarily equal peace, and since the end of the War of 1812 there had been several violent encounters between members of these countries. For instance, the Upper Canadian militia crossed the Niagara River into the United States at Navy Island to burn the American ship *Caroline* during the Rebellions, an episode that left one American dead.\(^{82}\) In June 1866 a force of 800 to 900 Fenians crossed the Niagara River and landed near Fort Erie, began to advance inland, and encountered Canadian militia at the village of Ridgeway. After the battle, which left six militia dead and 30 wounded, the Fenians fled across the river to the United States.\(^{83}\) The Fenians were not agents of the American government, but American authorities took little action to control their activities. Americans were also involved in the Red River resistance and unsuccessfully urged Washington to support it, hoping that it would lead to American annexation.\(^{84}\) Despite the seriousness of these incursions and conflicts, the Peace Centenary promoters glossed them over and promoted a public memory of an unblemished record of peace since the War of 1812.

The idea for the Peace Centenary originated with John Aikman Stewart, an American financier who believed that a display of amity between the United States and the British Empire might discourage opposition to reciprocity in Canada and open up more trans-Atlantic trade with Britain.\(^{85}\) At a 1910 meeting of international lawyers and arbitrators held at Lake Mohonk, New York, a resolution was passed to form a committee to organize national celebrations. The National Committee for the Celebration of the One Hundredth Anniversary of Peace among English-Speaking Peoples was formed the following spring. The committee was publicly

\(^{82}\)Thompson and Randall, 93, 31-32, 64-65, 30, 38.
\(^{84}\)Thompson and Randall, 45.
represented by Andrew Carnegie and former American president Theodore Roosevelt, and it had the support of many other powerful political figures. The committee approached representatives in the UK, and the British Peace Centenary Committee was created in December of 1911 under the chairmanship of Lord Earl Grey. Grey was the former Lieutenant-Governor of Canada and had been involved in Quebec’s tercentenary celebrations and in preserving the Plains of Abraham.\(^{86}\) The Canadian Peace Centenary Committee was formed on 4 June 1912 and was headed by Toronto businessman Sir Edmond Walker. Walker and other business leaders had recently signed an anti-reciprocity manifesto that sabotaged a trade agreement with the United States and helped Robert Borden win the 1911 election, and the project was an effort to patch up relations with their southern neighbours. The General Committee included prominent politicians like John Beverly Robinson and Wilfrid Laurier, as well as familiar names from Ontario’s historical societies including Ernest Cruikshank and J.P. Pattullo, past president of the OHS.\(^{87}\)

All three of these committees were private and did not officially represent their respective governments, although the support of prominent politicians like Theodore Roosevelt and government appropriations lent the organizations a semi-official veneer.\(^{88}\)

In May 1913 representatives from these three bodies met in New York to establish goals for the planned celebrations, which centered around erecting monuments along the international


\(^{87}\) Otte, 117; Dimmel, 6; CPCA, *Celebration of The Hundred Years of Peace Between The British Empire and the United States of America* (Ottawa: Canadian Peace Centenary Association, n.d.), 7, 11.

boundary between Canada and the United States and establishing educational programs. After this meeting all three committees were busy planning events. British efforts were focussed on saving and restoring Sulgrave Manor, George Washington’s ancestral home, and enough funds were privately raised to purchase the property in early 1914. By this time the United States’ official interest was waning, and a toned-down appropriations bill had not passed Congress. However, the idea of the Peace Centenary continued to gather momentum in Canada; W.M. German, M.P. for Welland, reported that considerable interest was being expressed in the Niagara Region.

Indeed, many communities along the border with the United States were enthusiastic about the centenary, as it might attract attention and create infrastructure. The communities of White Rock, British Columbia and Blaine, Washington were in favour of constructing a massive peace arch that would span the border. On the Niagara Frontier plans were put forward to construct three international bridges across the Niagara River: one at Niagara Falls, one near Lake Ontario, and one near Lake Erie. W.M. German, who happened to be a key shareholder in the Fort Erie Jockey Club Limited, was a vocal advocate for a Peace Bridge connecting Fort Erie to Buffalo that would bring more tourists to the Canadian side of the border. To further promote this end a huge event, attended by 45,000 people and touted as the “World’s First Peace Celebration,” was held on 30 July 1913. The Welland County Committee for the Celebration of the One Hundredth Anniversary of Peace Among English-Speaking Peoples, which German

90The Manor was originally purchased from the Crown in 1539 and was retained by the family until 1659. Otte, 112, 125, 130.
91Otte, 132, 117.
92Dimmel, 7. The Great War caused several delays, and the peace arch was not unveiled until September 1921. “Great Peace Arch To Be Dedicated Today,” *The Globe*, 6 September 1921, 5.
93Dimmel, 7.
94*The Canadian Peace Centenary Association Circular No.3* (Ottawa: CPCA, 1913), 16; Mike Cloutier, *Peace Bridge: The Dream and Its Evolution* (Fort Erie: Buffalo and Fort Erie Public Bridge Authority, 2007), 25.
chaired, organized the massive gathering. The event was held at Erie Beach, an amusement park established in 1885 that had grown to include a casino, dance hall, bowling, parks, and a menagerie of peacocks, pheasants, wolves, and bears. Part of the park was located on Snake Hill, a sand hill that American forces had used as a fortified position in 1814. Despite the event’s setting on part of the siege of Fort Erie battlefield, participants did not conceive of the place as a former battlefield as such. As part of his justification for building the peace bridge at Fort Erie German observed that it was fitting that the meeting was happening where “some of the bloodiest battles” of the war were fought. However, German’s observation was anomalous amongst the speakers; the event celebrated the public memory of the century of peace and Fort Erie’s bid to build a bridge, and was not otherwise linked to Fort Erie’s War of 1812 battles. Speakers from both sides of the border praised the century of peace, and averred that a Peace Bridge would be an appropriate and permanent memorial to the unity of the English-speaking peoples.

No members of local historical societies were involved in the Erie Beach celebration; the NHS later even took issue with some of the speeches by pointing out their historical inaccuracies. The event was also not temporally linked to the battles that happened there, as 31 July was not the anniversary of any notable War of 1812 events in Fort Erie. Additionally, the battles that took place in the area happened in 1814, not 1813, eliminating the possibility that the Erie Beach event was held to mark the centennial of the siege. Lastly, choosing to hold the event at an amusement park rather than at the ruins of Old Fort Erie lent the event a more festive tone than local historical society members likely would have appreciated. Indeed, the day was full of

95 “45,000 People Attend World’s First Peace Celebration,” Fort Erie Times, 31 July 1913, 1.
97 “45,000 People Attend World’s First Peace Celebration,” Fort Erie Times, 31 July 1913, 1.
entertainment beyond the speakers’ addresses, including two hydroplane flights, day fireworks, bands, a grand parade, evening fireworks, and dancing in the casino. The Peace Centennial’s three organizing committees continued to advance their international plans into 1914, while local historical societies held their own commemorative celebrations to mark some of the Niagara Frontier’s famous War of 1812 battles in what they saw as a more appropriate manner.

Local officials also made efforts to commemorate the centennial of the War of 1812 in other parts of Ontario, notably in Toronto. By 1909 Toronto was home to two organizations that wanted to mark the centennial of the War of 1812. The first was The Centenary Celebration Association 1812-1912, whose members wanted celebrations to be on a national scale and proposed activities such as erecting a national monument, an historical pageant at Toronto, and inviting George V to visit Canada. The organization also presented petitions in support of erecting a monument at Queen’s Park to Ontario Premier James Whitney. This association’s efforts were shortly taken over by the newly formed Memorial to the Heroes of 1812-14 Association headed by its President William Hamilton Merritt, who had been an early advocate of a memorial at Queen’s Park. Despite the association’s efforts, the proposed memorial’s $200,000 price tag and the lack of financial support from the Provincial and Federal governments were heavy blows to the project. Additionally, questions arose about the most appropriate place for the proposed monument; some argued that University Avenue (where Walter Allward’s South African Memorial had been unveiled in 1910) or Exhibition Place would be more appropriate places than Queen’s Park. Another complication was that a memorial erected by the Army and Navy Veterans in early 1907 to mark the graves of military men in

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99 Peace Demonstration Programme. Fort Erie Historical Museum, Louis McDermott Collection, Bridges – Photographs and Documents; Peace Bridge.
100 Fair, 4, 5-6, 9.
Victoria Memorial Park was widely seen as a tribute to War of 1812 veterans. In the end the Memorial to the Heroes of 1812-14 Association failed to erect a monument, but in 1913 Merritt commissioned a memorial plaque that was installed in the Parliament Building in Ottawa. The partial restoration of Fort York was perhaps a more lasting tribute to the war’s centenary. A four year struggle over the future of Fort York, which had been threatened by industrial encroachment and the building of a streetcar line, had concluded in 1909 with the City of Toronto taking responsibility for the site. In 1912 the new Mayor of Toronto, G.R. Geary, stated that the city would take steps to restore the fort as a way to commemorate the centennial of the War of 1812. Between 1910 and 1914 several thousand dollars were spent restoring the fort’s buildings, but the Great War led to the place once again being used for military purposes.

In the centenary years between 1912 and 1914 local historical and patriotic societies mostly moved independently of the larger Peace Centenary movement, although the idea of peace was not excluded from their ceremonies. For the local historical societies the focus remained on those killed in the battles and the war’s moral lessons, and they held large-scale celebrations on the former battlefields to mark their centennials. Three large scale War of 1812 commemorative events were held on the Niagara Frontier at Queenston Heights, Beaverdams, and Lundy’s Lane. No centenary events were held at Fort George. It is possible that the NHS did not want to celebrate the capture of Fort George or the burning of Newark, defeats and traumatic events that it could be difficult to celebrate. However, members of the NHS were involved in the other centennial celebrations on the Niagara Frontier, as the society’s President Janet Carnochan

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101 “Honor to Dead Heroes,” The Globe, 7 January 1907, 12; Fair, 9.
103 Killan,136-161; Fair, 10-11.
104 Fair, 11-12.
attended all three of the centennial celebrations. Fort Erie was also not the site of a centennial celebration. The community did not have a local historical society to assemble such a gathering, and the large celebrations at Erie Beach the summer before the siege’s centennial may have discouraged other societies from putting on another event. Although early historians had portrayed the siege as a heroic and noble effort, it had also been a defeat for the British. In contrast to the battles of Queenston Heights, Beaverdams, and Lundy’s Lane, which were considered British victories, marking the centennials of defeats was likely not as appealing to Ontario’s local historical societies.

The first centennial event was the so-called Brock Centennial, held at Queenston Heights on 13 October 1912. Between 1,500 and 2,000 people attended the celebration despite the previous two days’ rainy weather and the cold, grey dawn of the 13th. The attendees were rewarded, as by mid-morning the cloudy sky had cleared and the sun shone over the crowd, which “gathered around the stately monument to Sir Isaac Brock” to lay wreaths and hear the patriotic addresses of speakers including George Sterling Ryerson (Egerton Ryerson’s nephew) and George Denison

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The UELA had planned the celebration in a short time; the idea to hold a commemoration of the centennial had only been raised at a UELA meeting on 11 April 1912, and invitations were quickly circulated to patriotic and historical societies to attend a meeting on 25 September. Representatives from numerous organizations attended, including members of the imperialist British Empire League (an organization that had replaced the Imperial Federation League and that sought to preserve imperial unity) and the Imperial Order Daughters of the Empire (a female patriotic organization founded in 1900), and from the LLHS, OHS, and NHS.

Sterling Ryerson was appointed chairman of the general committee, which passed several resolutions, including one to request the Minister of Militia that salutes be fired on the day and that schools have special programs about Brock, but the central event was to be a gathering on Queenston Heights.

The ceremony began with representatives from a wide variety of organizations laying wreaths at the base of the Brock monument on the Heights. These groups included the British Empire League (BEL), the Imperial Order Daughters of the Empire (IODE), the Canadian Club, and representatives of the City of Niagara Falls. Representatives from the Niagara historical societies were also present, including T.H. Thompson, the president of the TBHS, and a large delegation from the NHS including Janet Carnochan. John Jackson, who had been appointed Superintendent of the NPC in 1908, was also there in his capacity as the secretary of the LLHS. All of these organizations also contributed wreaths. One commentator reported that the large number of wreaths almost covered the base of the monument. The day was considered a

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108 Fraser, 21-27.
success, with *The Globe* stating that it was, “a beautiful afternoon and the ceremony will not soon be forgotten.”

The 101st anniversary of the Battle of Beaverdams was celebrated on 24 June 1914. Despite a rainy morning the sun emerged in the afternoon, making some of the thousands of attendees complain of the almost unendurable heat in spite of the wind that “played high jinks with men’s hats and women’s hair – and skirts.” The TBHS had entered a period of stagnation one year before the Beaverdams centennial, and their membership in the OHS had lapsed. Their report to the provincial organization in 1904 stated simply that after the publication of their book, *The Jubilee History of Thorold*, in 1898 they felt they “had gone over the ground so thoroughly [they] could not find anything more to do.” The society, they continued, had not been disbanded, but had not had any meetings for three years. The society seems to have remained inactive for a decade, as the centenary of the Battle of Beaverdams passed without celebration. Francis Keefer, who had briefly returned to Thorold from Port Arthur, was disappointed by this and in 1914 he told the OHS that he was trying to revive the society. Keefer decided that the 101st anniversary of Beaverdams should be marked, and with the help of Helen Merrill, honorary secretary for the UELA, he organized a grand celebration to mark the anniversary. The small town of Thorold took advantage of the attention the celebration drew to the community; one report stated that the town looked “very spic and span,” and after the celebration the local

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113 “Thorold’s Great Day,” *Thorold Post*, 26 June 1914, 1; Frank Keefer to Secretary of the OHS, 9 Feb 1914, Esther Summers Papers, Battle of Beaverdams Collection, Mayholme Foundation.
newspaper declared that “Thorold is on the map.”115 Representatives from several historical societies attended the events, including those from the UELA, the NHS, the LLHS, and the OHS. They were treated to a lunch hosted by the Town of Thorold, then attended the unveiling of a memorial window in St. John’s Church honouring Frank Keefer’s grandfather, George Keefer, who had founded the town. The representatives then travelled to the former battlefield to join the main events, which included 5,000 soldiers from the Niagara Camp.116 The events on the Beaverdams battlefield centred around its small monument and began with 400 members of the 12th York Rangers performing a feu de joie and march-past before speakers took to the nearby stage to deliver their addresses to the crowd.117 During his speech Keefer once again called on the Dominion Government to create a battlefield park around the monument, and OHS President Clarence Warner introduced a resolution that the portion of the land owned by the government be set aside as a national park.118 After the speeches the representatives returned to St. John’s Church where they were served luncheon. The OHS delegation, including Janet Carnochan, reported that the day was a “decided success”; despite some grumbling about delays in starting the ceremony, the press from Thorold and St. Catharines agreed.119

A little over one month later, 10,000 people lined Lundy’s Lane and packed into Drummond Hill Cemetery to join in the Lundy’s Lane centenary celebrations (Figure 3.8).120 The celebration had been organized by the members of the LLHS, who wanted to commemorate

118 “Opening Event of Celebration of Hundred Years of Peace,” St Catharines Standard, 25 June 1914, 1; OHS, Annual Report...1915, 47.
120 “Inspiring Lessons From the War of 1812,” The Globe, 27 July 1914, 1.
the event in “an impressive, loyal and imposing manner.” Special guests, including the Lieutenant-Governor of Ontario Sir John M. Gibson, the President and members of the OHS and UELA, Janet Carnochan, and George R. Pattullo, were provided lunch at the Clifton Hotel before parading to the former battlefield with the other guests. After the speeches by politicians and historical society members from both sides of the border the LLHS presented commemorative medals to the event’s special guests, and the crowd was also treated to a display of historical relics. Many attendees and officials considered the day a success; The Globe’s chief correspondent reported that the ceremony reflected “memorable local enthusiasm and international concord.” The local historical societies were essential to the events held on the former battlefields, and, like the monuments, the events strengthened the connections between the battlefields as places and the public memory of the war. The speakers at the celebrations also promoted these connections and at times drew on the battlefields as places to support a public memory that emphasized ideals of sacrifice, loyalty, manliness, and peace.

Sacrifice

The ceremonies’ main events were all held on the battlefields, and speakers drew on the places to support the public

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121 Wallis, Geary, and Morden, 19.
122 Ibid., 27, 31, 22.
123 “100 Years of Peace Celebrated Saturday with Big Gathering on Lundy’s Lane Battle Grounds,” The St. Catharines Standard, 25 July 1914, 8; Wallis, Geary, and Morden, 73.
memory they reflected and shaped there. The deaths of Isaac Brock and of British soldiers and Canadian militia formed strong links between the public memory of the war and the battlefields as places. For the UELA, TBHS and LLHS the decision to hold the centennial celebrations on the former battlefields was an easy one. The UELA felt that there was no question that the Brock Centennial should be at the foot of Brock’s monument atop Queenston Heights. In his introduction to the official publication of the event John Stewart Carstairs, a UEL and a member of the event’s organizing committee, noted how the figure of Isaac Brock had become inseparable from Queenston Heights. “Brock’s fame and Brock’s name will never die in our history,” he wrote, “and in this glory the craggy heights of Queenston, where in their splendid mausoleum Brock and Macdonell sleep… will always have its share. Strangely enough, who ever associates Brock’s name with Detroit?”

As Carstairs implied, Brock’s name was most closely associated with Queenston Heights, where Brock had died and was interred and where the hero’s monument stood. The decision to hold the Lundy’s Lane centennial celebrations in Drummond Hill cemetery was a similarly easy one for the LLHS, which had been holding annual observances there for decades. Although part of the Beaverdams centennial was in St. John’s Church, the larger-scale public gathering and addresses took place in the area around the battlefield’s monument. F.H. Keefer, who organized the event, felt the battlefield was significant and had played an important role in the war. In his publication about the battle Keefer argued passionately for a national monument and park there, claiming that the site “lies in the centre of the historic struggle of the Niagara Peninsula.”

Holding the majority of the celebration on the battlefield gave the public memory communicated there added weight, while drawing attention to the campaign to mark the site in a more ‘fitting’ way. Holding commemorative events on the

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125 John Stewart Carstairs, “Introduction: Brock and Queenston,” in Fraser, 9.
126 Keefer, 13.
former battlefields was a choice that illustrates the importance of place in reflecting and shaping the public memory of the war. For the members of these societies the battlefields as places, including their monuments and the structures’ surrounding locales, were infused with commemorative meaning that deserved recognition through the ceremonies held there.

Many speakers highlighted the significance of being gathered in the same place where the stirring events of the war had happened. At Queenston Heights the widespread adulation of Brock was transferred to the escarpment’s plateau where the monument stood. The figure of Brock dominated the commemoration of the centennial of the battle of Queenston Heights, as his heroic sacrifice, rather than a commemoration of the battle it was a part of, was singled out as the day’s main focus. From its inception in the spring of 1912 the UELA referred to the anniversary exclusively as the centenary of Brock’s death rather than that of the battle of Queenston Heights, even referring to it as Brock’s “death-day.”127 The focus was on Brock’s heroic death rather than the battle itself, and his death reinforced the connection between the public memory of the war and the battlefield. The base of the Queenston Heights monument housed Brock and Macdonell’s remains, but some speakers suggested that Brock had been killed on the Heights, or at the very site of the monument. Toronto MP Angus Claude Macdonell, for instance, asserted that “the ground upon which we stand to-day is consecrated and distinguished by the valour of our soldier hero, who gave up his life in this spot.”128 Although several speakers addressed Brock’s famous death and last words, only one speaker suggested in passing that the hero had not died on the Heights, but at “the foot of these heights.”129 In an example of what Dean MacCannell calls marker-site displacement, the symbolic marker of the event (the Brock monument on the plateau), had replaced the site (the accepted site of Brock’s death) as the focus

127 Fraser, 21.
128 Fraser, 50-51.
129 Ibid., 67.
of attention.\textsuperscript{130} The imposing monument honouring Brock may also have influenced the commemorative ceremonies held there, as the figure of Brock atop the monument literally and symbolically dominated the former battlefield. Taken together, the monument atop the Heights and the centennial celebration linked the place closely to Brock’s death in battle.

In contrast to the Brock monument atop the Heights, the small memorial at its base possibly marking where Brock was killed received very little attention. Only one wreath was placed on the memorial, a Cross of St. George made of oak leaves from the Guernsey Society of Guernsey Island, and only three representatives descended the Heights to place it there.\textsuperscript{131} The larger, dominant monument atop the Heights that housed Brock’s remains and the place in which it stood were more closely associated with the hero’s death than the small monument at the escarpment’s base. Part of the emphasis on the larger monument and plateau came from their position overlooking the Niagara River. The highest point of land in the area may have seemed a more fitting place to commemorate a hero than at the escarpment’s base, and the plateau and its monument were closely linked to Brock’s death. The monument and ceremony also gained some prominence and authority from the locale, which seemed to compliment the tributes paid to the hero. One observer took note of the “landscape unsurpassed anywhere for spacious magnificence and scenic beauty… crowning the domed escarpment the stately column spoke forth a people’s patriotism and love, a memorial to the brave, the scene harmonizing with the feelings of the great gathering.”\textsuperscript{132} For this observer, the monument and locale complimented each other and came together to reinforce the day’s messages, which stressed the close connection between the battlefield and the death of the Hero of Upper Canada.

\textsuperscript{130} On marker-site displacement see MacCannell, 123-25.
\textsuperscript{131} Fraser,38-40; “In Memory of Gen. Brock; A Picturesque Ceremony” The Globe, 14 October 1912, 1.
\textsuperscript{132} Fraser, 33.
Officials at these events also brought the place’s past to life by linking the battle’s specific events to the surrounding locale. The Queenston Heights centennial had focussed on Brock, as his death in the battle loomed large in the public memory of the war. The other battles commemorated in Niagara Frontier centenary celebrations did not have dramatic heroes, and in the absence of a hero like Brock speakers drew connections linking the battles’ specific events and the sacrifices of the combatants to the places where participants were gathered for the celebrations. This was not a difficult challenge for the speakers, as the former battlefields had indeed been scenes of combat a century before. At the Beaverdams centenary F.H. Keefer “[related] the incidents which made the spot famous and dear,” before again agitating for a national monument at the site.  

The speakers at the Lundy’s Lane centennial also connected the place to its battle. James Coyne tried to recreate the place’s past in his speech, noting that here all around us surged the tide of battle a hundred years ago to-day. Here after nightfall thousands of brave men fought for hours through the darkness… Where the conflict was fiercest, on the very ground on which we stand, the hostile lines faced each other, at times only ten or twelve yards apart.

Coyne’s observations were accurate to our current understanding of the battle. One hundred years before Drummond’s artillery, which were captured by American forces and were the object of several close-fought British counter attacks, had been deployed within the small cemetery at Lundy’s Lane which later became Drummond Hill Cemetery. Linking the battle to the place reinforced the public memory put forward at the ceremony, as speakers drew on the participants’ presence on the battlefield to add weight to their pronouncements. After noting the peacefulness of the scene, George D. Emerson of Buffalo contended that “it is impossible on this occasion to divest ourselves wholly of the direful scenes enacted one hundred years ago in and around this

133 “Thorold’s Great Day,” Thorold Post, 26 June 1914, 1.
134 Wallis, Geary, and Morden, 46.
135 Graves, Lundy’s Lane, 101, 107, 114, 130, 131, 147, 152-153.
spot upon which we are gathered.” Emerson then suggested that if the participants could be brought back to act out their parts, “what a mighty spectacle would be unfolded to our vision. A way down yonder road…we would see Gen. Winfield Scott…out by yonder trees, perhaps a little to the right, is stationed a battery ready to belch forth death and destruction.” Emerson detailed the battle, pointing out where various actions took place, including the death of Brigadier-General Hull. Encouraging those present to imagine the actions of the War of 1812 in the location where they stood likely added emotional impact to the public memory of the battle. An editorial in *The Globe* approved of the setting of the Lundy’s Lane celebration, noting “the spot could not have been better chosen; within earshot of the cataract the dais was erected on the very crest of the hill over which the tide of battle surged forward and backward far into the pitch-dark night.” Speakers highlighted the crowds’ presence in the place where battle had raged one hundred years before, strengthening the connection between the public memory of the battles and the places they happened.

The places’ connection to public memory was reinforced by the presence of the dead from both sides. This was particularly true at Lundy’s Lane, which was not only a burying ground, but had been the scene of numerous re-interments of war remains. Although local historians had thought that there were additional remains in the area, after the war the only recognized American grave was that of Abraham Fuller Hull, which was marked by simple headstone. As the area around Drummond Hill Cemetery was developed the remains of former combatants were unearthed. These were often identified by the buttons and other insignia found with them, and the remains were re-interred in the cemetery in ceremonies held under the

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136 Wallis, Geary, and Morden, 57.
137 Ibid., 58-60.
139 Green, *Some Graves on Lundy’s Lane*, n.p.
direction of the LLHS. The first reinterment was of the remains of eleven British soldiers found while expanding a sand pit 140 yards north of Drummond Hill’s apex in 1891. At the ceremony George Bull presciently noted that this may not be the last ceremony of this kind, as “trenches deep and many, we believe, were made here and there…as might best serve the convenience and quick dispatch of burial.” Bull’s prediction proved correct, as in 1893 labourers digging a post hole on private property 200 yards north east of Drummond Hill found more remains. The 1891 and 1893 remains were buried in Drummond Hill Cemetery, and the re-interments attracted thousands of observers. After the battle monument was erected the remains of these soldiers were relocated to its vault. When additional remains were found during the expansion of the nearby sand pit in 1899 the LLHS organized a similar service, and the remains were also interred in the vault. At the 1899 ceremony Cruikshank reminded the crowd from the steps of the monument that “the spot where we now stand was the scene of the hardest fighting. Here the 89th regiment, to which most of these dead soldiers belonged, fought and fell around their colors…. Here, too, the dead were huddled in a trench with scant ceremony.”

Commemorative ceremonies held at Lundy’s Lane and other former battlefields emphasized the presence of the dead in the places, linking them more closely with the war and with the public memory of death and sacrifice. At the Lundy’s Lane monument’s 1895 unveiling fifteen year old Edward Miller, the winner of a school contest held by the LLHS, read a poem that highlighted the continuity and importance of the place as a site of death and burial. The poem was filled with the expected patriotic and pro-British rhetoric, but also made a strong link

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140 Green, “Some Graves,” 8; “Heroes of Lundy’s Lane,” The Globe, 18 October 1891, 3.
141 Lundy’s Lane Historical Society. July 25, 1893. Military Re-Interment Of Soldiers of 1814, found April 22nd, 1893, near Lundy’s Lane (Niagara Falls: Lundy’s Lane Historical Society, 1893), 3.
142 At Lundy’s Lane,” The Globe, 26 July 1895, 1.
143 LLHS, Lundy’s Lane: A Brief Account of a Third Military Re-Interment at Lundy’s Lane, Oct. 13Th, 1899, with Notes, &c. (Niagara Falls[?]: Lundy’s Lane Historical Society, 1899[?]), 7-8.
144 Ibid., 6.
between the place’s past and its present: “for here where ye tread with your footsteps so eager,” the poem read, “Where rises the pillar so proud to the heavens,/ Lay strewn with the dead who had died for their country.”¹⁴⁵ The poem reminded the audience of the place’s connection to the battle, as it was still home to the remains of heroes who gave their lives defending the nation. At Queenston Heights the plateau was connected to the heroic figure of Isaac Brock, while speakers at both the Beaverdams and Lundy’s Lane celebrations clearly linked the combatants’ sacrifices to the places. The places were an important part of the commemorative ceremonies held there, as speakers pointed to the presence of the dead there and drew on the places to add weight to their speeches on the War of 1812 and its legacy.

The connection between the battlefields as places and the public memory of the war was reinforced at the commemorative ceremonies held there. Speakers connected the battlefields with the deaths of Isaac Brock and of those who died defending the country. Death and its connection to the former battlefields as places featured prominently in the public memory communicated at these events, but these pronouncements were also interspersed with other lessons that could be taken from the war. The participants’ presence on the former battlefields and the places’ reinforced connections to the dead likely lent these virtues added weight. Speakers at the celebrations, like early historians, looked to the past for lessons for the future. They stressed the virtues of manliness, a British-Canadian identity, and the pursuit of peace as lessons to be drawn from the war.

**Manliness**

Warfare had long been seen as a masculine activity, and from the mid nineteenth century an emphasis on the connections between manliness and war provided an all-pervading set of

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¹⁴⁵ On the Erection of a Monument on the Battlefield of Lundy’s Lane,” *The Globe*, 26 July 1895, 2.
values that heightened this association. The term ‘manliness’ encompassed different and at times overlapping or opposing ideologies that evolved through time. Victorian ideals of manliness tended to focus on courage, chivalry, and Christian morality; the late nineteenth century saw increased emphasis on physical hardiness, activity, and sport, a phenomenon sometimes referred to as ‘Muscular Christianity.’ An increasing emphasis on militarism and the ‘warrior’ ideal was also evident at the close of the century. In 1912 Brock remained a potent symbol of these manly virtues, and his conduct in the War of 1812 was held up as an example of manliness. At the Queenston Heights centennial Ryerson’s opening address stated the day’s focus clearly and highlighted the hero’s bravery. “This meeting to-day,” he began, “is held to commemorate the death of a brave and wise man who died in the defence of his country.” Praise of Brock was couched in traditional language that highlighted his adherence to manly virtues. J.A. Macdonell, descendant of Brock’s aide de camp, proclaimed that Brock had earned immortality

so long as the English language can narrate what...he accomplished, and hold forth for succeeding generations...the bright example of his genius and his gallantry, and the indomitable spirit with which he contended and overcame difficulties, apparently insurmountable, and which were sufficient to appal a heart even as stout and to tax to the uttermost a mind as versatile and resourceful as his.

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147 Mangan and Walvin, 3.
150 Fraser, 45.
151 Ibid., 67.
Angus Claude MacDonell also mentioned the legend of the meeting between Brock and Tecumseh, in which Tecumseh exclaimed ‘This is a man!’\(^{152}\) By describing Brock’s “warm human heart” and his concern for the common soldier, MacDonell also highlighted Brock’s chivalry and morality.\(^{153}\) Although many speakers lamented the hero’s death, they portrayed Brock’s sacrifice as selfless and necessary to secure the victory of Queenston Heights, and ultimately the entire war. Ryerson mused that Brock’s example and sacrifice had inspired the spirit of patriotism in the people and had saved Canada for the British Empire.\(^{154}\) In contrast to other commemorative events, at the Brock Centennial a full account of the battle being commemorated was notably absent. The focus was on Brock rather than the battle itself, as examining the entire battle, including Sheaffe’s actions after Brock’s death, may have detracted attention from the heroic Brock and undermined the effectiveness of his manly sacrifice.

The militia was also held up as an example of manliness at these ceremonies. The last British garrisons had withdrawn from Canada in 1871, making the militia under a small professional army the country’s main defensive force. Ian Radforth has shown that the Toronto press drummed up support for the militia’s role in suppressing the 1885 NorthWest Rebellion and highlighted the troops’ manliness.\(^{155}\) By the time of the centennial celebrations Canadians had a growing interest in the militia, spurred in part by the 1899-1902 Boer War. In the early twentieth century many saw military service as an important aspect of male citizenship.\(^{156}\) As Mary G. Chaktsiris illustrates, attitudes toward volunteer participation in the Boer War were deeply gendered, as the Toronto press highlighted the manliness of the volunteers and created an

\(^{152}\) Ibid, 51.  
\(^{153}\) Ibid., 53.  
\(^{154}\) Ibid., 48-49.  
\(^{155}\) Radforth, “Celebrating,” 610, 622.  
\(^{156}\) O’Brien, 117, 115.
effeminate depiction of the enemy.\textsuperscript{157} After the Boer War a specifically militarist movement arose in Canada, and many of its supporters were imperialists.\textsuperscript{158} For instance, William Hamilton Merritt was a vocal supporter of universal military service; in 1910 he despaired of Canadian policy and asserted that Canadians had lost the spirit that saved the country in the War of 1812.\textsuperscript{159} At the Beavrdams celebration Ryerson concluded his battlefield address by expressing his support for universal military training, as it would be disgraceful to miss out on the advantages it conferred “mentally, physically, and morally.”\textsuperscript{160} All three centenary events on the Niagara Frontier included the militia; at Beavrdams and Lundy’s Lane they were also featured in parades through the respective towns. Parades were very popular, and the militia took part in many on occasions such as civic holidays, the Queen’s birthday, and annual reviews. These parades were partly for entertainment, but they were also an opportunity for militia members to display their manliness. Marching in orderly columns clothed in their uniforms before friends, family, and the community was a performance that reinforced the manly ideals of self-control, commitment, and a perceived readiness to defend the country through military prowess.\textsuperscript{161} In earlier conflicts such as the NorthWest Rebellion and Boer War spectators had commented on the troops’ physical appearance, a practice reflected at the 1914 celebration.\textsuperscript{162} After the ceremony on the Beavrdams battlefield many guests returned to St. John’s Church to eat a luncheon on the grass and watch a march-by of 4,000 militiamen on their way to their bivouac.

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\textsuperscript{158} O’Brien, 118; Berger, Sense of Power, 233.


\textsuperscript{161} Wood, 30-31.

\textsuperscript{162} Radforth, “Celebrating,” 627,633; Chaktsiris, 15.
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Some observers were disappointed that there was no band, but a military observer from Toronto praised their physical condition, commenting that “they look good and fit.”163

In addition to displaying the manly virtue of the current militia, the celebrations also gave speakers the opportunity to highlight the role the Canadian militia, supposedly made up of the loyalists and their descendants, had played in the defence of the province in the War of 1812. Indeed, the war’s connection to the American Revolution and the loyalists complimented the historical narrative of manliness and the participation of the militia. As Janice Potter-MacKinnon and Cecilia Morgan have shown, an emphasis on male sacrifice was not unique to War of 1812 narratives, as loyalist histories had focussed on male endurance and industry in the face of persecution.164 Although in War of 1812 narratives the focus shifted to the celebration of men’s role in successfully defending the country, to many participants the connection between loyalists (and their descendants) and the militia’s manly sacrifices in defence of the country in 1812-14 would have seemed like a natural one. Indeed, the sacrifices of both loyalists and the militia were highlighted on the former battlefields. At the 1893 Lundy’s Lane anniversary and reinterment Janet Carnochan referred to the “self-sacrifice of the U.E. Loyalists and the men of 1812” in calling for a monument on the site.165 Highlighting the manly virtue of Christian morality and bravery, Angus Macdonell contended at the Brock centennial that the hero had had to rely for the most part on “the men of the Province,” who were up to the task, as “every loyal man capable of bearing arms in the Province turned out to fight, or to help those who fought.”166 In a letter to minister of militia and defence Sam Hughes asking for financial support for the centennial LLHS president R.W. Geary contended that the people of the Niagara Frontier expected the anniversary

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166. Fraser, 53-54.
to be marked to remember “the remarkable bravery and persistence of their forefathers in
defence of the country – in repelling the several invasions of 100 years ago.” The manly
qualities of perseverance, morality, and bravery were applicable to not only Brock, but to both
the militia of 1812-14 and 1912-14. The loyalists’ perceived close connection to the militia in the
War of 1812 was also highlighted in discussions of British-Canadian identity, which stressed the
imperial connection and highlighted the importance of the loyalists in settling the province and
defending it in the 1812-1815 conflict.

**Britishness**

As discussed above, imperialist sentiments were common amongst the members of
historical and patriotic societies, and many linked the loyalists to the militia who had fought in
the War of 1812. As Berger has illustrated, these people saw Canadian identity as closely related
to British identity. However, ‘Britishness,’ as several scholars have argued, was not a single,
unified identity. Instead, it was itself a hybrid identity; as Linda Colley argues in her examination
of British identity formation, “identities are not like hats,” as people often wear more than one at
a time. Just as the Welsh and Scottish peoples retained elements of their separate identities
when unified in Great Britain, English-speaking Canadians in the pre-Confederation period
retained a hybrid identity as British North Americans. In the post-Confederation period most
Canadians continued to think of themselves as part of the imagined community of the British
Empire: as Britons living in British North America. The attachment to Great Britain was
evident in almost all areas of life; even the trans-Atlantic vacations Canadians took were

167 R.W. Geary to Sam Hughes, 22 November 1913, LLHS Fonds, Centenary Binder, 979.0.850-92, NFHM.
influenced by their identities as British Canadians. In his examination of English-Canadian commemoration of the NorthWest Rebellion and the Boer War Paul Maroney identifies a strong current of Britishness combined with Canadian nationalism. In the late nineteenth century, however, some had begun to question Canada’s Imperial connection. The discovery of gold in the Klondike in 1897 had pressed the unresolved Alaskan boundary to the forefront of relations between Britain and the United States. The American victory in the dispute caused some Canadians to question the Imperial connection, believing that British diplomats had neglected Canada in favour of strengthening ties with the United States. Canada’s participation in the Boer War had also led many English Canadians to believe that Canada deserved to be treated as an equal in the British Empire. Although most English-speaking Canadians still valued the Imperial connection, questions were being raised about the nature of Canada’s relationship with the mother country.

Not surprisingly, many speakers at the battlefield celebrations expressed their support for the British connection. Most were anglophilic and drew on and shaped the war’s public memory to support the ideal of a distinctly Canadian nationalism within the British Empire. At the Brock centennial Angus Macdonell put forward the War of 1812 and the death of Isaac Brock as the source of the country’s dual identity. He proclaimed that Brock “preserved Canada to the Empire and at the same time created a national sentiment in Canada which has ever grown and expanded to the present day,” and had made the country “British and Canadian forever.” Speakers also lauded the superiority of British institutions in an implied comparison to those of the Republican

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172 Maroney, under “As in 1885, local pride…”
173 Thompson and Randall, 67, 69.
175 Fraser, 50.
country to the south. Sterling Ryerson, a staunch loyalist, expressed his views on the British Empire clearly at the Brock centennial, lauding “British justice and administration of the law” as “something to be proud and thankful for,” before continuing on to call on Canada to contribute funds to the British Navy.\textsuperscript{176} At the Lundy’s Lane centennial James Coyne contended that the war “gave a powerful impulse to the sentiment of a United Empire, a sentiment, which is one of the most effectual guarantees of liberty and democracy throughout the world today.”\textsuperscript{177} Many speakers, especially members of the UELA such as Ryerson, asserted that the lessons of the past that were being celebrated on the former battlefields clearly pointed to Canada’s continued membership in the Empire as a British-Canadian country.

The emphasis many speakers placed on the loyalists at the ceremonies supported the ideal of a long-standing British connection, while re-emphasizing the supposedly large role the loyalists had played in the 1812-15 militia. At the re-interment of British soldiers at Lundy’s Lane in 1891 Reverend Fessenden of Chippewa, a member of the LLHS, highlighted the long-standing loyalist connection to the Empire, stating, “this freedom and Empire has been given to us, by our loyalist past, by the heroism of this battle-field. It cannot, it must not be that we shall ever surrender it.”\textsuperscript{178} Speaking at the Brock centenary at Queenston Heights Ryerson, the first speaker of the day, made an immediate link between the events being commemorated and the loyalists. Ryerson asserted that the UELs had come to Canada “solely because of their devotion to the British Crown and Constitution,” and that Brock had successfully appealed to them to defend the country in 1812.\textsuperscript{179} Other aspects of the ceremonies also made the connection between the idea of loyalty to the Empire and the War of 1812 clear. At the Lundy’s Lane

\begin{footnotes}
\item[176] Ibid., 48-49.  
\item[177] “For Dead Heroes,” \textit{The Evening Star}, 26 July 1895, 2.  
\item[179] Fraser, 45.  
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centennial, for instance, members of the LLHS were sure to invite the descendants of U.E. Loyalists in addition to the descendants of those who had fought in the battle.\textsuperscript{180} Additionally, the relics displayed from the War of 1812 at Lundy’s Lane were dwarfed by collections of items from the Revolutionary War and those associated with the loyalists such as pottery, candlesticks, and other household items.\textsuperscript{181} The celebrations held on the former battlefields expressed a pro-British Canadian identity that was closely linked to membership in the British Empire and linked to the loyalists and the War of 1812. Although individuals can hold multiple identities, those who participated in these celebrations valued Canada’s relationship with Britain and drew on the past to support their identities as British Canadians.

\textbf{Peace}

Commemorative ceremonies on the former battlefields were sites for the negotiation of the relationship between Britain, Canada, and the United States where current peaceful relations were balanced with a past of war. Although Canadian participants in these ceremonies saw themselves as British-Canadians, this identity did not presuppose anti-Americanism. Indeed, beginning in the 1890s some Canadian imperialists’ attitudes toward the United States had begun to soften, partly as a result of the Laurier era of optimism and the Anglo-American rapprochement.\textsuperscript{182} Those holding imperialist views still valued the attachment to the Crown, but their mistrust and apprehension of the United States had diminished. Although not all of those who held imperialist views were as enthusiastic, the theme of peace and cooperation, so evident in international negotiations regarding the Peace Centenary, did surface at the local level in Niagara. Speaking at the Queenston Heights celebration Angus Macdonell stated that “we hope

\textsuperscript{180} Wallis, Geary, and Morden, 21.
\textsuperscript{181} Ibid., 73-74.
\textsuperscript{182} Berger, Sense of Power, 170-175.
and pray…that this peace will ever exist between us and our American brothers.”

Some speakers were cautious about the public memory of peace, stressing that the sacrifices made in past conflicts should not be entirely forgotten. Ryerson expressed these sentiments at the 1914 Beaverdams celebration. “I am delighted…that we now bear [the United States] no ill-feeling,” he stated, but cautioned, “Canadians we are and Canadians we will remain.”

Although some references to peace were made at the centennials of Queenston Heights and Beaverdams, due to the nature of the battle of Lundy’s Lane its battlefield was the site of the most negotiation about Canadian-American relations.

These types of negotiations had been taking place at Lundy’s Lane long before the advent of the Peace Centenary movement. These negotiations reflected the place’s influence on the public memory of the war, particularly as a result of the presence of war dead from both sides there. Even before the monuments to the dead of the two sides were erected many speakers glorified the peace that existed between the two nations at ceremonies held at Lundy’s Lane. Numerous American representatives were warmly received at the 1887 anniversary celebration. After touring the battlefield they were invited to sing a verse of the American national anthem, which was in turn answered by a verse of God Save the Queen. George Bull spoke of the friendship and racial amity between the two nations, stating “we are of the same race, we speak the same language, we have the same God, and our aspirations are the same.”

When it was his turn to speak Canon Houston pointed out that those present were meeting 73 years after the battle “on the same battlefield, at the same hour, with the same valour and courage, but our relations were those of peace and friendship.”

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183 Fraser, 50-51, 29.
185 “Anniversary of the Battle of Lundy’s Lane,” Thorold Post & Niagara District Intelligencer, 29 July 1887, 2.
186 Ibid.
Although the battle monument erected at Lundy’s Lane was pro-British and honoured those killed defending the province, the members of local historical societies still respected the dead of both sides. Lundy’s Lane was unique amongst the Niagara Frontier battlefields in that the graves of two American soldiers had been marked with small headstones. When the LLHS and government officials were debating the form of the Lundy’s Lane monument in the early 1890s, the only known grave of an American soldier was Hull’s. On visiting his neglected grave in 1888 Sarah Ann Curzon imagined his mother’s grief for her son, and offered to contribute to the LLHS’ maintenance of the grave. After her visit Curzon penned the following lines:

Not that thou wert an enemy do I desire
Thy grave should be no mound of weeds or mire.
My country’s enemies are mine and I would fight
With tireless arm to guard her sacred right. –
Nor that thou wert an enemy and I forgot
The fierce incursion – unforgiven yet –
But that thou wert a mother’s son I’d keep,
For mother-love, thy bed in thy last sleep.
Lay e’er, my son, in stranger-land a foe.
I would some mother’s breast might pity know –
Some kindly hand should smooth, as I do now –
His last long pillow, and upon his brow
Drop gentle tears, for one so brave and young.
Nor leave, for enmity, a warrior’s dirge unsung.\(^{187}\)

Here Curzon expressed the view, common amongst other historical society members, that although Americans invaded Canada those who were buried in Canadian soil deserved respect and for their graves to be tended. Curzon also highlighted her own womanly virtues, portraying herself as a fellow mother. However, Curzon tempered her compassion with a reassurance that she remained loyal to her country and the Crown, and had not forgotten that Hull and others came as invaders and were “unforgiven yet.” Although Curzon and others did not forget what they saw as the injustice of an American invasion, their respect for the dead of both sides made

the care of American graves acceptable. However, Hull’s was not the only American body in the area.

In the spring of 1901 the remains of nine soldiers were discovered in Drummond Hill cemetery, and their buttons identified them as members of the 9th United States Infantry who had fought in the battle of Lundy’s Lane. Although the United States Consul at Niagara had initially suggested the remains be reinterred at Fort Niagara or Fort Porter, Canadian officials and members of the LLHS wanted the remains reinterred at the battlefield.188 The Society felt that the remains found in the area were deserving of “Christian re-burial…without respect to the uniform which may have been worn in the conflict.”189 A joint committee was formed that included members of the LLHS and of the Niagara Falls New York Historical Society, and on 19 October troops from both countries participated in a military funeral on the former battlefield. Members of historical societies from both sides of the border were also present, including Peter A. Porter in his capacity as president of the New York-based Niagara Historical Society, the president of the Buffalo Historical Society, Canon Bull, and George W. Ellis in his role as the Reeve of Niagara Falls South. The remains were re-interred beside the grave of Captain Abraham F. Hull, only yards from the Lundy’s Lane battle memorial erected in 1895.190 Six years later members of the American-based Niagara Frontier Landmarks Association erected a small monument to Hull and the nine men whose remains were reinterred next to him (Figure 3.9). 191 After the erection of the monuments to the American and British dead the LLHS decorated them each anniversary

190 The General Officer Commanding the Militia (224/01) - That application be made for permission for a Company of the United States Infantry to enter Canada under arms to attend the ceremony of re-interment of remains of soldiers found on the battleground of Lundy's Lane,” Numbered Files, R180-41-8-E, LAC; “Buried Their Dead,” *The Globe*, 21 October 1901, 6.
with the flags of their respective countries. At the Lundy’s Lane centennial James Coyne expressed a view of the opposing force’s dead shared by many local historical society members.

The American dead buried in Drummond Hill cemetery were worthy of honour, he contended, as “they, too died for their country, fighting its battles, and they share with our own soldiers the tribute Britons are always ready to pay to bravery, sacrifice, and patriotic devotion.” As this quotation demonstrates, however, the fair and honourable treatment of the American dead also reflected well on the historical societies and the civility of the British Empire.

Peace was also a major theme at the centennial celebration of the battle of Lundy’s Lane. At a 1909 LLHS meeting James Wilson asserted that “an anniversary of one hundred years of peace is even more than an anniversary of war,” and suggested that the LLHS should play a leading role in promoting this ideal. The Canadian Peace Centenary Association (CPCA) also became involved in planning the Lundy’s Lane centennial and further reinforced the message of peace. Due in part to the CPCA’s influence, the centennial of the battle of Lundy’s Lane

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192 See, for Example, “Lundy’s Lane Monument Decorated,” The Globe, 26 July 1910, 2.
193 Wallis, Geary, and Morden, 47.
194 Minutes of the LLHS, 21 October 1909, LLHS Fonds Box 1, “Minutes and Proceedings of the Lundy’s Lane Historical Society 1887 – 1914,” NFHM.
195 From R.B. Viets to C.F. Hamilton, 17 October, 1924, C.F. Hamilton Papers, Correspondence Volume 2, MG30 D 84 2, LAC.
included representatives from several American historical societies, and American speakers, including Peter A. Porter, were invited to speak. Porter’s address touched on the theme of peace and linked it to the place’s past. “Perhaps in the invisible air about,” he mused, “the spirits of all those regulars, militia and Indians on both sides, who took part in this hard-fought battle, just a hundred years ago tonight, are now hovering around us, in approval of our amity.”\footnote{Wallis, Geary, and Morden, 44.} The monuments erected to the fallen from both countries provided visible reminders of the dead and of the respect representatives from both sides of the conflict bore them. The former battlefield was pointed to as a symbol of this peace. “The quiet of peace and brotherly love,” noted one reporter, “hovers over the spot where once the roar of cannon and the crack of musketry echoed.”\footnote{“Anniversary of Great Battle of Lundy’s Lane is Commemorated in Song and Patriotic Speeches,” \textit{Niagara Falls Gazette}, 25 July 1914, cited in Wallis, Geary, and Morden, 113.}

Although most representatives lauded the idea of peace, discussions about the outcome of the battle of Lundy’s Lane were contentious. Due to the nature of the battle both sides could, and did, claim victory. These debates centered largely on whether American forces had retreated from Lundy’s Lane voluntarily, or had been forced from the field by Drummond’s troops. Ernest Cruikshank’s published history articulated the general Canadian view of the battle, and argued that British forces did in fact reclaim the higher ground and guns from the American forces.\footnote{Ernest Cruikshank, \textit{The Battle of Lundy’s Lane 25th July, 1814. A Historical Study}, 3rd ed. (Welland: Tribune Office, 1893), 39-40.} William Kirby also made his views on the matter clear in the souvenir booklet of the Lundy’s Lane battle monument unveiling, where he published a poem stating that “Canada, like Greece at Marathon, Stands victor on the field of freedom won.”\footnote{William Kirby, “Lundy’s Lane, 25th July, 1814,” LLHS Fonds F1137, Box MU 1747, AO.} Not surprisingly, the Canadian press also saw the battle as a British victory; the \textit{Toronto Daily Star} argued that “both sides have claimed it, but there can be no doubt that the American attack was repelled, and the troops
compelled to retire from the field.”  Although local historical society members firmly believed that the battle had been a British victory, the presence of American representatives at numerous commemorative gatherings likely tempered their pronouncements. Indeed, both sides claimed victory at the Lundy’s Lane centennial celebration, although some speakers tried to be conciliatory. George D. Emerson, a historian from Buffalo, put forward the American interpretation of the battle, that “by almost mutual consent the combat [ceased],” and when the British re-formed for battle the next morning they discovered that the American forces had retreated of their own volition during the night.  Many at the centennial celebrations were aware of the ongoing historical debates about the battle. Frank H. Severance, the secretary of the Buffalo Historical Society, commented on the divergent histories. Throughout the world the British have won decisive victories, Severance proclaimed, “so did they here, if you read British history; if you read Canadian history. If you read some American records of it the decision is reversed. This battle has waged in the books for 100 years.” Although the idea of peace was put forward at Lundy’s Lane, discussions about the outcome of the battle revealed some underlying tensions between the representatives from both sides of the border.

Indeed, not all observers felt that glorifying peace on the former scene of battle was appropriate. No American representatives were present at the centennial celebrations at Queenston Heights or Beaverdams. The UELA may have felt that the presence of Americans at a commemoration of the death of Isaac Brock would have been inappropriate. As Brandon Dimmel notes, the idea of celebrating an international Peace Centenary did not sit well with all Canadian officials, especially members of “Canada’s Anglophile elite.” Some local historians,

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201 Wallis, Geary, and Morden, 61.
202 Ibid., 67
203 Dimmel, 5.
including Ernest Green, were openly hostile to the idea of celebrating a century of peace at Lundy’s Lane. Upon hearing that the Lundy’s Lane centenary might be merged with the Peace Centenary celebrations Green immediately wrote to Janet Carnochan to voice his displeasure, but despite his concerns the celebration was held as a joint effort. Green was dismayed at this turn of events, and prior to the publication of the centennial’s official report in 1915 he again wrote to Carnochan, stating

The Lundy’s Lane Historical Society is…preparing to publish a report of that ridiculous ‘peace’ celebration which displaced the proper centennial observance of the battle. The success of the ‘American’ element in connection with that event gave rise to a good deal of dissatisfaction, both within the society and outside its membership.  

It is difficult to discern whether Green’s allegations about society members’ dissatisfaction are accurate. The LLHS had initially wanted the centennial to be a Canadian celebration, and it is possible that funding constraints led the society to make the celebration international to obtain a grant from the Dominion Government. However, the LLHS had included American representatives in commemorative events long before the creation of the CPCA. Some members of the LLHS were aware of the potential conflicts of combining the centennial of the battle of Lundy’s Lane with that of one hundred years of peace. As Geary later pointed out in his report to the OHS, the celebration “necessitated…considerable originality and tact in the preparation of its programme to conform agreeably with the local and international feelings, wishes, and prejudices.”  

It seems that the LLHS was successful in their efforts, as there is little evidence suggesting that the peace celebration was poorly received. Most participants were not as directly opposed as Green was to American participation, or to the celebration of the supposed century of peace.

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204 Ernest Green to Janet Carnochan, 8 June 1914; Ernest Green to Janet Carnochan, 15 May 1915, NHS Collection, Series F 1138-6: Records of societies, F1138-F-1 MS193-9, AO.
205 Wallis, Geary, and Morden, 144.
peace between the two countries. Indeed, the LLHS had extensive experience cooperating with American historical societies in commemorating battle anniversaries and reinterring combatants’ remains. However, although the LLHS members were on familiar terms with officials and historical society members from across the Niagara River, no members of the LLHS actually spoke at the Lundy’s Lane centennial. The list of speakers was a mixture of Canadian and American officials, but most of the Canadian speakers were affiliated with the OHS, including its president and past president and other members. These speakers still expressed a pro-British view, although many were careful not to offend their southern neighbours while doing so.

The small annual commemorations and the large-scale centennial events held on the battlefields drew on the places to communicate and reinforce a specific public memory of War of 1812. Speakers drew on the places to lend weight to their pronouncements on the nature of sacrifice, British-Canadian identity, manliness, and the state of relations between Britain and the United States. The former battlefields in turn influenced the ceremonies, most notably at Lundy’s Lane, where the obvious presence of the dead from both sides brought the issue of British-American relations to the forefront of many events held there.

Conclusion

In the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries the battlefields of the War of 1812 in Niagara were the sites of monument building and commemorative ceremony. These monuments and ceremonies reinforced the places’ connections with the public memory of the war. They also reflected and shaped a public memory that focussed on sacrifice, identity, manliness, and peace. The battlefields as places played important roles in these events, and were both influenced by and had an effect on the commemoration of their associated historical events. Local historical societies campaigned to erect historical markers on the former battlefields that would not only reinforce the places’ connections to the public memory of the war, but would communicate a
specific public memory to visitors. Through their forms and inscriptions the monuments stressed the connections between the places and the public memory of the war, notably by highlighting the sacrifices made by the war dead. Their placement on prominent points ensured not only that they would be seen from as great a distance as possible, but that the public memory they reflected and shaped physically and symbolically overlooked the former battlefields. Place also played a role in the commemorative ceremonies held on the battlefields, particularly those in 1912 and 1914. Speakers highlighted the significance of their presence in the places where the battles had happened to add impact to their pronouncements on the legacies of the war. The places themselves sometimes influenced the battle’s public memory. At Queenston Heights the dramatic locale, including Brock’s monument, may have influenced the day’s focus on the hero. At Lundy’s Lane the presence of the dead from both conflicts helped shape a public memory highlighting sacrifice and peace. The monumental and ritual commemoration of the War of 1812 on the Niagara Frontier was closely tied to the places, which not only added weight to the narratives presented there, but at times influenced them.
Chapter 4 - Gender and Race on the Frontier

On the afternoon of 25 July 1914 Chief Alexander Hill of the Grand River Six Nations took the stage to address the crowd gathered for the Lundy’s Lane centennial celebrations. Hill’s address was short, but like addresses given over the past two years by other Six Nations Chiefs at the Brock and Beaverdams celebrations, Hill expressed his people’s loyalty to the Crown and his dismay at their current political situation. Nearby stood a group of six Canadian and six American women dressed in white who had just decorated the British and American battle monuments as part of the official ceremony. They had not, however, decorated a nearby monument to the heroine Laura Secord.1

Both women and Six Nations peoples sought to shape the public memory of the war as expressed at the former battlefields.2 They staked claims to the places through monuments and oratory, and both hoped to use those claims as leverage for goals in the present. Complex aspects of identity such as gender and race are reflected and shaped by places and their associated public memories.3 Niagara’s former battlefields communicated a public memory that favoured male Anglo-Saxon sacrifice in defence of the country. This public memory could be challenged, however. As several scholars have noted, places are not static constructions.4 Instead they are fluid, and they offer some minority groups opportunities to put forward their own public memories which may at times conflict with a place’s more dominant public memory. Some

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1Wallis, Geary, and Morden, 68, 42.
2 African Upper Canadians played a role in the War of 1812, as Richard Pierpoint’s Colored Corps saw action at Queenston Heights, and helped to build Fort Mississauga as an Artificers Unit. The Coloured Corps was formed in 1812, and approximately 30 black volunteers enlisted. However, African Canadians were not given a role in the commemoration of the war during this period, and did not receive a site marker until 1994, when an Ontario Heritage Trust plaque was unveiled commemorating the Coloured Corps. See Steve Pitt, To Stand and Fight Together: Richard Pierpoint and the Coloured Corps of Upper Canada (Toronto: Sandcastle, 2008); also Ontario Heritage Trust, “The ‘Colored Corps’ 1812-1815,” Feature Plaque of the Month, (February 2004).
3 Graham, Ashworth, and Tunbridge, 32.
4 See, for example, Pred, 279.
groups are under-represented in the historical record for a variety of reasons, including a possible dearth of available archival evidence. Evidence directly addressing the views of underprivileged and/or minority groups can be difficult to access, but this does not mean that these groups should be excluded from historical investigation. For decades feminist scholars in Canada and elsewhere have sought to write women into history, a project that is vibrant and ongoing. Historians studying indigenous peoples have struggled with the challenges inherent in the lack of indigenous voices in the archival record, and are increasingly turning to oral history to fill these gaps. Historians such as Julie Cruickshank and Keith Thor Carlson have shown that oral history can provide valuable insights into Aboriginal peoples’ worldviews and histories. However, oral history remains outside the purview of this study, which relies on available archival evidence. Our understanding of Six Nations representatives’ participation in the commemorative ceremonies is filtered through the writings of white English-speaking Canadians who compiled the reports on the days’ events and who wrote the newspaper reports this chapter draws on. This evidence admittedly places limitations on our understanding of the Six Nations representatives’ motivations, but does not mean that their participation should be excluded from this analysis. Indeed, historians must at times make educated historical inferences based on the available evidence. Examining women and Six Nations representatives’ actions on the former battlefields as places provides clues as to their views of the past and their hopes for the future. English-speaking women and representatives from the Grand River Six Nations both used the former

5 For an examination of archives and state power see Peter Fritzsche, “The Archive,” History & Memory (Spring/Summer 2005): 15-44.
battlefields as places to put forward their own public memories of the War of 1812 that at times supplemented, and at other times challenged the places’ public memory favouring Anglo-Saxon male sacrifice.

These two groups faced different degrees of disempowerment, and used different approaches to assert their own public memories on the former battlefields. Women erected monuments to the war’s heroine, Laura Secord, but their participation in the 1912-14 centenary events was minimal. Conversely, the Six Nations did not erect monuments on the battlefields, but they participated in the centenary celebrations and addressed the crowds. Aspects of the public memory put forward by women and the Six Nations, such as an emphasis on loyalty, were in tune with the public memory reflected and shaped by the battlefields that stressed Anglo-Saxon male sacrifice. Through the monuments to Laura Secord at Lundy’s Lane and Queenston Heights women attempted to supplement the places’ emphasis on masculine sacrifice by showing through Secord that women had also played a role in defence of the nation alongside men. In their speeches at centenary events representatives of the Grand River Six Nations positioned themselves within the public memory of loyalty and sacrifice before challenging their own treatment by the Crown and calling for the franchise. Place played an important role in these challenges, especially in the erection of monuments to Laura Secord. Because of the transitory nature of her walk it was difficult to strongly link Secord and her actions to one specific place. The monuments’ supporters felt that where they were erected was important, and this led to arguments over the most appropriate place for monuments to the heroine. Ironically, these conflicts may have contributed to Secord having a small role in later large-scale commemorative events, which continued to promote a public memory privileging male sacrifice. The very presence of Six Nations representatives on the battlefields – their participation in the ceremonies
and addresses to the crowds – constituted a claim on the places’ public memories. As places the battlefields provided opportunities for groups with different degrees of disempowerment to put forward their own public memory of the War of 1812 through monuments and oratory. These public memories at times supplemented and contested the public memory of the war communicated at the former battlefields.

**Women and History**

Women played a prominent role in many of Ontario’s local historical societies, and some even created their own. For instance, Sara Calder founded the Women’s Wentworth Historical Society, and Emma Currie created the Women’s Literary Club of St. Catharines. Women also studied history in Women’s Institutes, rural women’s groups originally created to promote household science, but that also compiled local histories. The first of these Institutes had been organized by Adelaide Hoodless at Stoney Creek in 1897, and they became in a sense the rural equivalent of the more urban local historical societies. The OHS also accepted women, who in 1903 numbered thirty of its 251 members. The Niagara societies were not reserved for women, but women played an active role in them. The TBHS was headed by a male president, but a Mrs. Munro served as second vice president and later as the group’s historian, and Miss Amy Ball was the society’s corresponding secretary. When Mrs. Munro resigned her position as historian in 1901 she was replaced by another woman. Men made up the majority of the members, but two of the remaining thirteen inaugural members were women. Janet Carnochan was the driving force

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9 For a detailed examination of Calder and the WWHS see Melissa Zielke, “Here Stood the Valiant: Sara Calder, the Women’s Wentworth Historical Society and the Struggle for Battlefield House and Monument,” (Master’s Thesis, University of Toronto, 2002); Knowles, 131.


11 *OHS, Annual Report...1903*, 31.

behind the NHS, and its governing committee often included several women.⁰¹³ Although authors such as Donald Wright suggest that the LLHS did not allow women members, there is no evidence showing that they were actively discouraged from joining the society.⁰¹⁴ There were no women on the LLHS board, but this does not exclude the possibility of rank and file women members, or spouses supporting male members by preparing food for meetings and events.⁰¹⁵ For instance, the wife of James Wilson, the Secretary-Treasurer of the LLHS and Superintendent of the NPC, directed a committee of women to present a luncheon for the annual meeting of the OHS held in Niagara-on-the-Lake in 1905.⁰¹⁶ The LLHS also invited Sarah Curzon to give talks at society meetings, and she was described as a member in an 1892 pamphlet.⁰¹⁷

The first wave feminist movement in Canada had appeared in Toronto in 1877, and by 1918 (the year women over 21 years were granted the federal vote) there were 22 organizations around the country that advocated for suffrage.⁰¹⁸ As several scholars have pointed out, some women historical society members were also active in the feminist movement and used the past, particularly the figure of Laura Secord, to demonstrate women’s ability to contribute to the nation. Curzon, for instance, had been a women’s rights activist since the 1870s, and gave talks and wrote about Laura Secord.⁰¹⁹ Emma Currie, one of the founders of the Women’s Literary Club of St. Catharines, was both of loyalist descent and was an advocate of female suffrage. She received her education at several private schools, where her tuition was paid by William Kirby,

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⁰¹³ See, for example, Niagara Historical Society No.4, (Niagara-on-the-Lake: The Times Book and Job Presses, 1898), np.
⁰¹⁴ Boutilier, 66; D. Wright, 14.
⁰¹⁵ The LLHS listed several women as members of the Executive Committee in their 1910-1911 report to the OHS. OHS, Annual Report of the Ontario Historical Society, 1910 (Toronto: Ontario Historical Society, 1910), 71.
⁰¹⁶ OHS, Annual Report...1905 and 1906, 13.
⁰¹⁷ Lundy’s Lane Historical Society Monument Fund, (Niagara Falls[?]': Lundy’s Lane Historical Society, 1892), 2.
⁰¹⁹ Boutilier, 54, 59. It was not unusual for reform-minded women to be active in several organizations. Bacci notes that many women and men active in the suffragist movement were also involved in other reform activities such as temperance. Bacci, 5 – 7.
and later became an author and activist who played a key role in erecting a Laura Secord Monument on Queenston Heights. However, as Cecilia Morgan has shown, society members’ historical interests were not strictly divided by gender, and both male and female historians had an interest in a variety of topics. For instance, Janet Carnochan also wrote on the history of the Niagara Region, including *Niagara 100 Years Ago, Early Schools of Niagara*, and *Inscriptions and Graves in the Niagara Peninsula*. In turn, Ernest Cruikshank expressed support for a monument to mark Secord’s grave in his 1895 *Fight in the Beechwoods*, where he described her as “one of the bravest and most loyal Canadian women.” The majority of publications by women centered on the same topics as those by men, and often featured the loyalists or the War of 1812. Although the interests of historical society members were not strictly divided along gender lines, many women members were active in the feminist movement and pushed for recognition of women’s role in the nation’s history, notably through promoting the heroine of the war, Laura Secord.

**The Heroine’s Monuments**

Since the middle of the nineteenth century early historians such as William Coffin had embellished Laura Secord’s actions in the War of 1812. However, according to our current understanding Laura Secord was a real historical figure who did play a role in the Battle of Beaverdams. On the evening of 22 June 1813 Secord overheard American plans for an attack on Beaver Dams. She decided to warn Lieutenant James Fitzgibbon of the impending attack and set out on foot the next morning, walking approximately nineteen miles from Queenston to

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20 H.J. Morgan, 288-89; Knowles, 131.
24 D. Wright, 17.
25 See Coffin, 148.
FitzGibbon’s headquarters at De Cew house near Twelve Mile Creek to deliver her message. FitzGibbon prepared his men, and when American forces attacked on the morning of 24 June they were defeated in the Battle of Beaverdams.²⁶

Several scholars have examined the commemoration of Laura Secord that peaked in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Cecilia Morgan has explored how Secord’s image was rehabilitated by white middle class women and their supporters as a way to integrate women into loyalist histories. Morgan points out that many of the women active in commemorating Secord were also first wave feminists.²⁷ Beverly Boutilier builds on this in her examination of Sarah Ann Curzon, arguing that Curzon’s motivations, and those of other women like her, were closely linked to the campaign for female suffrage. Boutilier contends that demonstrating the sacrifices of Canadian women like Secord in the past suggested that women were worthy of participating in the nation’s political life.²⁸ Published the same year, Knowles’ Inventing the Loyalists also demonstrates Secord’s integration into the loyalist narrative and her usefulness as a symbol for female suffrage.²⁹ Morgan provides an in-depth analysis of these issues in her contribution on Secord in Heroines and History. These authors have convincingly argued that many prominent female members of the local historical societies in Ontario, specifically Niagara, used the public memory of Laura Secord to argue for women’s rights.

The above studies draw on a variety of sources, including archival documents, accounts of Secord’s journeys found in early histories and school textbooks, and the campaigns to erect monuments to the heroine.³⁰ Beyond Morgan’s analysis of the Niagara Region more broadly,

²⁶McKenzie, 48-51, 57; Hitsman, Incredible War, 154.
²⁸Boutilier, 51-52.
²⁹Knowles, 125-132.
³⁰For the published writings of prominent female members of the local history movement in the period under study see Sarah Curzon, Laura Secord, the Heroine of 1812: a Drama and Other Poems (Toronto, 1887); Sarah Curzon,
little attention has been paid to specific places’ roles in these campaigns. The nature of Secord’s walk and feminists and their supporters’ desires to erect monuments commemorating the heroine, rather than a specific battle, led to debates about the most appropriate place to honour Secord. Many monuments featuring women had been erected elsewhere, but these often presented women as allegorical, abstract figures such as Liberty or featured monarchs such as Queen Victoria. Monuments to Secord and, as Colin Coates details, Madeleine de Verchères, departed from this convention in that they memorialized real, albeit mythologized, women.

However, memorializing an individual rather than a battle raised questions about the best place for such a monument. Where to put the monuments to Secord was an important topic, and supporters of erecting these monuments at Lundy’s Lane, Queenston Heights, and Beaverdams argued that their chosen battlefield was the ideal place to honour the heroine. These debates and the decisions to erect monuments at certain points on Lundy’s Lane and Queenston Heights show that although these women and their supporters were successful in erecting monuments to the heroine, in practice the structures’ connections to the former battlefields seemed tenuous.

Examining the commemorative ceremonies held on the battlefields after the monuments were erected also suggests that despite the presence of the Secord monuments, the heroine was minimized at commemorative ceremonies held on the former battlefields.

Accounts of the campaigns to erect the monuments to Secord at Lundy’s Lane and Queenston Heights have been detailed in the works discussed above, but a brief overview will be provided here due to the structures’ impact on the battlefields’ locales. While they were

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The Story of Laura Secord 1813 (Welland: Telegraph Print, 1898); Emma Currie, The Story of Laura Secord and Canadian Reminiscences (Toronto: William Briggs, 1900).


32 Coates and Morgan, 4.
campaigning for the Lundy’s Lane battle monument the LLHS had also cooperated with Sarah Ann Curzon’s campaign to have a Secord Monument erected on the battlefield until Curzon’s death in 1898.\textsuperscript{33} The LLHS had begun a subscription list in 1892, but efforts at public fundraising stalled and by 1896 only $138 had been collected. In 1889 Curzon’s successor Elizabeth Jane Thompson interested the OHS in the project, and they struck a monument committee that year.\textsuperscript{34} The OHS had initially hoped to raise $1,000 for the monument, but in 1900 had only collected $450 from subscriptions and collections in public schools. The OHS Monuments Committee decided to go ahead with the monument using the funds on hand. Thompson advertised for designs in the \textit{Mail and Empire} and \textit{Globe}, and the OHS Monuments and Tablets Committee selected the submission of Miss Mildred Peel, sister of painter Paul Peel.\textsuperscript{35} Several members felt it was appropriate that the first monument to a woman be the work of a woman.\textsuperscript{36} The monument is a square granite pedestal topped by a bronze bust of Secord, who is represented as around thirty-eight years old – her age when she undertook her trek (Figure 4.1).\textsuperscript{37} The entire monument stands eight feet tall. The pedestal contains a lengthy inscription detailing Secord’s walk to warn Fitzgibbon of the impending American attack, a list of the combatants, and an acknowledgement of the contributors to the monument fund.\textsuperscript{38} The monument was unveiled on 22 June 1901 by Catherine Ross, wife of Ontario’s Premier, in an event organized by the LLHS.\textsuperscript{39} \\

\textsuperscript{33}Boutilier, 68.  
\textsuperscript{34}Janet Carnochan, “Laura Secord Monument at Lundy’s Lane,” \textit{Transactions of the Niagara Historical Society} 25 (1913), 12; Knowles, 129-30.  
\textsuperscript{35}OHS Annual Report 1901 – 02, 22, 26, 52.  
\textsuperscript{36}Carnochan, “Laura Secord Monument,” 13.  
\textsuperscript{38} Carnochan, “Laura Secord Monument,” 13-14.  
\textsuperscript{39}“Memory of Laura Secord,” \textit{Thorold Post}, 23 June 1901, 1.
However, the Secord monument at Lundy’s Lane was not to be the heroine’s only memorial. In 1907 a group headed by Emma Currie and including members of the UELA applied to NPC Superintendent James Wilson for permission to erect a monument to Secord at Queenston Heights. The applicants had amassed over $1,000 for the project and expected the federal and provincial governments to supplement the amount, meaning there would be no cost to the NPC. By March of 1908 the fund had grown to $1,300, but organizers were still concerned that this would not be enough to erect an appropriate monument. Senator George Ross, former Premier of Ontario, approached federal officials and in May 1909 the Dominion Government granted an additional $2,000 for the monument. A condition of this grant was that the monument be built under the supervision of

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40James Wilson to E.M. Chadwick, 14 August 1907, R.E.A. Land to James Wilson, December[?] 1907, Records of the NPC, General Manager’s Office Subject Correspondence (First Chronological Grouping), 1901-1924, RG38-3-1-480 Box MN29, AO.

41R.E.A. Land to James Wilson, 11 March 1908, Records of the NPC, General Manager’s Office Subject Correspondence (First Chronological Grouping), 1901-1924, RG 38 3-1-485 Box MN 29, AO.

the NPC and to their satisfaction, and that
the Dominion grants be payable to them.\(^\text{43}\)
Accordingly, and as owners of the property,
the commissioners were consulted as to the
monument’s placement and design. They
expressed concern over the original design
Currie had submitted, stating that it was
“rather too much on the ‘gravestone’ order,”
and suggested the design be opened to
competition.\(^\text{44}\) Currie, however, was
steadfast and insisted that the monument
follow the outlines of her original
proposal.\(^\text{45}\) The commissioners requested
that the monument be made taller, although
presumably not nearly as tall as the Brock
monument. After the alterations Langmuir
still wanted the monument to be higher, but decided against pressing the matter further.\(^\text{46}\) The
monument is a square shaft of Vermont Granite twelve feet high bearing a bronze relief portrait
of an older Laura Secord. It also has a short recounting of her exploits in saving her husband’s

\(^{43}\) James Wilson to Stanley Fraser, 3 January 1910, Deputy Minister of Finance to G.W. Ross, 21 December 1909,
Records of the NPC, General Manager’s Office Subject Correspondence (First Chronological Grouping), 1901-
1924, RG 38 3-1-485 Box MN 29, AO.
\(^{44}\) John Jackson[?] to George Ross, 26 July 1909, Records of the NPC, General Manager’s Office Subject
Correspondence (First Chronological Grouping), 1901-1924, RG 38 3-1-485 Box MN 29, AO.
\(^{45}\) John H. Jackson to J.W. Langmuir, 15 September 1909, Records of the NPC, General Manager’s Office Subject
Correspondence (First Chronological Grouping), 1901-1924, AO RG 38 3-1-485 Box MN 29, AO.
\(^{46}\) Langmuir to John H. Jackson, 24 September 1909, Records of the NPC, General Manager’s Office Subject
Correspondence (First Chronological Grouping), 1901-1924, RG 38 3-1-485 Box MN 29, AO.
life at the Battle of Queenston Heights and her trek to warn Fitzgibbon (Figure 4.2).  

Construction of the monument was completed late in 1910, but its formal unveiling was postponed until 5 July 1911 when the NPC Chairman J.W. Langmuir and Sir Charles Moss, standing in for Ross who was away on family business, officiated.  

**Placing Laura Secord**  
The decision of where to erect the Secord monuments was contentious, and the matter was complicated by the fact that the heroine could not be exclusively linked to one place. Disagreements about where to erect monuments to the heroine indicate that supporters saw the placement of the structures as significant. The initial movement to erect a monument to Secord at Lundy’s Lane had initiated questions about the most suitable place for a monument to the heroine. The LLHS, likely because of their focus on the battlefield of Lundy’s Lane, felt that the most appropriate place for a monument was at Secord’s grave, which the society pointed out was marked only by a small tombstone unbefitting the heroine. Curzon, and later Thompson, were adamant not only that the monument should be erected over Secord’s grave, but that the Secords’ remains not be moved. According to Thompson’s published account, James Secord had wanted to be buried in Drummond Hill Cemetery where the men who had fought in the War of 1812 “had left their bones,” and Laura Secord had wanted to be buried beside her husband. However, other interested parties felt that a monument to Secord would be better placed elsewhere. Upon learning of the project and the OHS’ involvement, members of the TBHS strenuously objected. Although the TBHS had enjoyed friendly relations with the LLHS, they felt they could not stand by and allow a monument to Secord to be erected in what they

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47 Way, 208.  
48 “Monument Unveiled on Queenston Heights,” *Niagara Falls Daily Record*, 6 July 1911, 1.  
50 “Thorold and Beaverdams Historical Society,” *Thorold Post*, 1 June 1894, 1.
considered an inopportune place. “This society views with regret the movement…for erecting a monument at Lundy’s Lane to commerorate the heroism of Laura Secord,” the society declared, “and hereby places itself on record as unequivocally opposing any such actions.” The society went on to state that the battlefield of Beaverdams would be a more appropriate place, as it “was the scene of a bitter struggle and grand triumph of British arms, as well as the culminuation of Laura Secord’s courage and heroism.”

Before learning of the campaign to erect a Secord monument at Lundy’s Lane the TBHS had campaigned for a national monument to commemorate the battle of Beaverdams, without a focus on Laura Secord. Their efforts, however, had been fruitless. Perhaps they recognized the amount of funds raised for a Secord monument at Lundy’s Lane and believed that they may have more success also connecting the Beaverdams battlefield to the war’s heroine, rather than focussing on the battle alone. TBHS historian Mrs. Munro brought up the matter again at the OHS annual meeting in 1900, stating that she would shortly be publishing a pamphlet “in the interest of a memorial to the memory of Laura Secord, on condition that it be erected at Beaverdams, the spot and battle which made her walk famous.” It is not clear whether Mrs. Munro succeeded in publishing her pamphlet, but the TBHS nevertheless continued to voice its opposition to the Lundy’s Lane Secord monument.

Despite these challenges, Thompson continued to advocate for the Secord monument at Lundy’s Lane. In the 1900 report of the OHS’ Monuments and Tablets Committee, which Thompson convened, she insisted that “all money recently collected has been for the erection of a monument over the grave of Laura Secord in Lundy’s Lane cemetery.”

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52 “Historical! The Thorold and Beaverdams Historical Society” Thorold Post, 10 August 1894, 1.
53 “Historical Society,” Thorold Post, 8 June 1900, 4; “Historical Society,” Thorold Post, 7 June 1901, 4.
54 OHS, Annual Report...1900, 54. Emphasis in original.
some as a heroine in her own right.\textsuperscript{55} Thompson stated that it had been Curzon’s intention that the monument be erected at Lundy’s Lane, and “it was promised her should be done.”\textsuperscript{56} Shortly thereafter Thompson published an appeal for donations to the Lundy’s Lane monument in the \textit{Thorold Post}, where she justified the selection of Secord’s grave site over the former battlefield of Beaverdams. Thompson addressed the opposing movements to erect monuments at Queenston Heights and Beaverdams, arguing that if this were done the graves of the Secords “would in time be lost sight of.” Additionally, Thompson argued, a monument at Beaverdams “would be a united one to Colonel Fitzgibbon, the men of the 49\textsuperscript{th} regiment and Laura Secord.”\textsuperscript{57} According to Thompson, only a monument at Secord’s grave would be both an appropriate place to ensure her memory and would allow Secord to be commemorated as a woman, apart from the men who had fought the battle of Beaverdams. For Thompson, Secord’s commemoration did not belong in a former battlefield where her heroism risked being lost among that of the men who fought the battle, but at her resting place where Secord, as a woman, could be granted her own commemorative marker.

Thompson and her supporters faced another challenge to the placement of the monument early in 1901, when the UELA made it clear that it would not hand over the funds it had raised for the Lundy’s Lane Secord monument.\textsuperscript{58} There was a difference of opinion over where the monument should be placed, with the UELA suggesting Queenston Heights was a preferable location, perhaps because that former battlefield was more prominent and had more visitors. In response Thompson and her supporters pointed out that the OHS’ circular asking for donations had indicated that funds were being collected for a monument at Lundy’s Lane, which left “no

\textsuperscript{55}Boutilier, 51.
\textsuperscript{56}OHS, \textit{Annual Report...1900}, 54.
\textsuperscript{57}“The Laura Secord Monument,” \textit{Thorold Post}, 20 July 1900, 1.
\textsuperscript{58}OHS, \textit{Annual Report...1901}, 32.
other decision” than to place it there. Thompson and the OHS decided to proceed without the several hundred dollars in the hands of the UELA, and the Secord Monument at Lundy’s Lane was unveiled in 1901. Members of the TBHS attended the unveiling of the monument, but still expressed hope that a monument to the battle of Beaverdams would soon be erected. A small inscription on the side of the Lundy’s Lane monument indicates that the monument marks the graves of Laura and James Secord, but despite Thompson’s argument for the placement of the Secord Monument at Lundy’s Lane the monument’s larger inscription details the actions of FitzGibbon and his forces. Approximately one third of the inscription addresses Secord’s “difficult and perilous” walk, but the majority relates the events of the battle that followed, including the names of the participants and the men and materiel captured. This may have been due in part to the presence of Miss M.A. FitzGibbon, granddaughter of James Fitzgibbon, on the OHS’ Monuments and Tablets Committee. The committee had debated the inscription, as its members wanted to “give due credit to all who shared in the victory.” Although the monument was erected to “Perpetuate the Name and Fame of Laura Secord,” its connection to the former battlefield of Lundy’s Lane and the Secords’ graves was not clearly communicated. Beyond the small engravings on the sides of the monument that marks it as the resting place of the Secords, none of the events described in the lengthy inscription happened on or near the battlefield of Lundy’s Lane – a factor that played into later commemorative ceremonies.

60 “Historical Society,” Thorold Post, 7 June 1901, 4.
61 The full text reads: “To perpetuate the name and fame of Laura Secord, who walked alone nearly twenty miles by a circuitous and perilous route to warn a British outpost at De Cew’s falls of an intended attack, and thereby enabled Lieut. FitzGibbon, on the 24th of June, 1813, with 49 men of H.M. 49th Regiment, about 15 militiamen, and a small force of Six Nations and other Indians, under Captain William Johnson Kerr and Dominique Ducharme to surprise and attack the enemy at Beechwoods (or Beaver Dams) and after a short engagement to capture Col. Boerstler of the U.S. Army, and his entire force of 542 men, with two field pieces.” See Carnochan, “Laura Secord Monument,” 15-16.
The tenuous connection between the Lundy’s Lane monument and the former battlefield may have been part of the reason for the UELA’s refusal to support the Secord monument at Lundy’s Lane. In October of 1901 R.E.A. Land, a Conservative party organizer and lawyer from Toronto who was a prominent member of the UELA, created a Laura Secord National Monument Committee with the goal of erecting a monument to Secord on Queenston Heights. Land stated that the money previously collected for the Lundy’s Lane monument would be put toward one on Queenston Heights and called for additional donations. Currie also announced that she would donate the proceeds of her publication *The Story of Laura Secord and Canadian Reminiscences*, which she wrote to “recall the high character of the mothers of this Dominion,” to the fund. The UELA hoped to raise enough funds to erect “a National Monument, that is, one worthy of the nation.” Some members of the OHS, including its president James Coyne, had expressed regret at the conflict over the Lundy’s Lane monument, and as a gesture of goodwill did not oppose the erection of a second monument to the heroine. Perhaps anticipating potential donors’ confusion, Land’s publication outlined why Queenston Heights was an appropriate place for the new monument. Land downplayed the significance of the battle of Lundy’s Lane, stating that “whilst the Battle of Lundy’s Lane remained to be fought on the historic peninsula…through this disaster [the battle of Beaverdams] the enemy lost his last real chance of winning Western Ontario.” Land then outlined the connections between Queenston Heights and Secord. First, Queenston was close to where Laura Secord had reportedly saved her husband’s life after the battle of Queenston Heights. Second, Queenston marked “the starting point of her great walk which in all probability was largely instrumental in saving Upper Canada

64 Knowles, 146; *The United Empire Loyalists’ Association of Ontario*. (Toronto: UELAO, n.d.), 3.
65Emma A. Currie, 193.
67Mary M. Dunn[?] to Emma Currie, 15 December 1900, James George Currie Fonds, “Emma Augusta Currie,” “Legal and Family Papers” folder, R5168-0-7-E Volume 3, LAC.
to the Empire.” Third, the monument’s supporters felt that Queenston was easily accessible as it was “on the line of travel used in the summer months by many thousands,” suggesting that a monument to Secord on Queenston Heights would be seen and appreciated by more people than one at other sites such as Lundy’s Lane or the battlefield of Beaverdams. The Committee clearly felt that the monument erected to Secord at Lundy’s Lane was poorly placed and an inadequate tribute to the heroine. The Queenston Heights Secord monument’s inscription tried to make plain the propriety of placing a Secord monument there, noting that Secord had “saved her husband’s life in the battle, on these heights…and… risked her own in conveying to Capt. Fitzgibbon, information by which he won the victory of Beaver Dams.”

The monument to Secord on Queenston Heights did not go uncontested, but it was the form of the commemoration, not its location, that was the root of the conflict. The Women’s Institute of Queenston wanted to build a hall that would benefit the local community, but felt that NPC property on Queenston Heights would be a more suitable place than the village. They may have selected Queenston Heights so that the hall would be a counterproposal to the proposed Secord monument on the Heights, but the members also seemed concerned about the representation of Secord and her connection to both the place and the larger community. In their initial appeal to the NPC the petitioners pointed out that Secord had a different connection to the area than that put forward by the UELA proposal, as she was “a deceased citizen of this place.” The members of the Institute were concerned that a Secord monument on the Heights would be dwarfed by Brock’s monument, and suggested that a memorial hall would be “more becoming

70 Amos Wrong to James Wilson, 19 February 1902, Records of the NPC, Superintendent’s Office Chronological Correspondence, 1884-1902, RG 38-2-0-22 Box MN 8, AO.
and creditable to this Historic spot.” The Women’s Institute, like the UELA, recognized the volume of visitors who stopped in at the Heights, and believed that a hall would be good for both the community and tourists. Currie was incensed by this proposal and continued to promote the Secord monument on the Heights and her own high opinion of the heroine, stating that if a hall was built there it would “desecrate the name of Laura Secord by giving it her name.” The Women’s Institute’s campaign for a hall on the Heights was ultimately unsuccessful, and in 1914 they opened a Memorial Hall as part of Laura Secord School in the village. The inscription near the hall’s entrance links Secord’s story to the village, stressing that she was “A Resident of Queenston.”

The Secord monuments at Lundy’s Lane and Queenston Heights were erected relatively close to the pre-existing battlefield monuments. At Lundy’s Lane there were few options as to where to place the monument. Those campaigning for it had indicated that it would be located over the graves of James and Laura Secord, whose remains were not to be moved. The decision to place the monument over the graves also stemmed from the justification for a Secord monument at the site, namely that it was the heroine’s final resting place. Fortunately for the campaigners, the Secord grave was located near the apex of the hill where the Lundy’s Lane battle monument had been erected in 1895 (Figure 4.3). The Secord monument’s placement on Queenston Heights was more open to interpretation, as its link to the place was more general and not expressly tied to a specific point. As the owners of the property, the NPC had the final say on where the monument would be erected. The commissioners had initially wanted to delay their decision until they knew how tall the monument would be, but after debating the issue and

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71 Coates and Morgan, 200; W. Armstrong to James Wilson, 21 April 1902, Records of the NPC, Superintendent’s Office Chronological Correspondence, 1884-1902, RG 38-2-0-22, Box MN 8, AO.
72 Coates and Morgan, 200.
73 Currie to Jackson, 7 September 1910, Records of the NPC, General Manager’s Office Subject Correspondence (First Chronological Grouping), 1901-1924, RG 38-3-1-485 Box MN 29, AO. Emphasis in original.
visiting Queenston Heights they decided that the “proper site for the Monument should be a short distance above the main entrance…in the middle of the path way leading to Brock’s Monument.” The site is on the edge of the Heights, beside the midpoint of a walking path from the entrance to the Brock Monument, which Langmuir described as “one of the most beautiful spots on Queenston Heights” (Figure 4.4). The point selected by the commissioners was in fact the location of the first Brock Monument, a fact that was not lost on Currie. “I am sure in giving the site of the first monument to General Brock,” she wrote to Jackson, “nothing could be more acceptable. It is a great honor, and will be fully appreciated now, and in the years to come.”

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**Figure 4.3.** Placement of the Laura Secord monument relative to the Lundy’s Lane battle monument. Number one demarcates the battle monument, and number three the graves of James and Laura Secord, later site of the Secord monument. Reprint from Dixon, 34.

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75 Langmuir to Ross, 15 June 1909, Records of the NPC, General Manager’s Office Subject Correspondence (First Chronological Grouping), 1901-1924, RG 38-3-1-485, Box MN 29, AO.
76 Langmuir to Mary H. Malcolmson, 30 June 1911, Records of the NPC, General Manager’s Office Subject Correspondence (First Chronological Grouping), 1901-1924, RG 38-3-1-494 Box MN 29, AO.
77 Currie to Jackson, 23 June 1910, Records of the NPC, General Manager’s Office Subject Correspondence (First Chronological Grouping), 1901-1924, RG 38-3-1-485 Box MN 29, AO.
The debates over where to place the Secord monuments indicate that those campaigning for monuments to the heroine saw the placement of the monuments as a significant issue. The supporters of the different Secord monuments made efforts to connect the heroine to one particular place, using her presence in or near the places to help justify a monument to her there. These supporters drew connections between the heroine and their respective choices in an effort to justify their selection and lay a claim to the places. In contrast to the battle monuments, which supporters accepted would be placed on their respective former battlefields, Secord’s story could be plausibly linked to a number of places, and debates arose about not only the most appropriate monument to the heroine, but the most appropriate place for it.

**Women and Ceremonies**

Several scholars have examined the gendered nature of War of 1812 commemoration and the use of Laura Secord as a feminist symbol in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. However, accounts of the heroine’s commemoration tend to conclude with the erection of a
monument to her. These studies provide valuable insights into how Secord was perceived by early feminists and members of the public, but pay little attention to how gendered identities were enacted in commemorative ceremonies after these structures were erected. As several scholars have noted, although monuments are meant to be unchanging structures that convey messages about the past to future generations, their meanings are contested and change through time. As Kirk Savage contends, monuments can be reappropriated or taken back down; for him “the cultural contest that monuments seem to settle need not end once they are built and dedicated.” Examining the Secord monuments’ roles in War of 1812 commemorative ceremonies suggests that, in addition to being appropriated or actively contested, monuments can be downplayed or ignored. An examination of formal commemorative ceremonies held at Queenston Heights and Lundy’s Lane where monuments to the heroine were erected shows that despite Laura Secord’s presence in the places, the public memory reflected and promoted at the battlefields remained predominantly masculine. The masculine sacrifice of Isaac Brock and the militia and regulars who followed him remained a central focus of these ceremonies, while women’s part in the war was downplayed and women participants fulfilled traditional gender roles. There was one notable exception at the Brock centennial, however. When a descendant of Laura Secord, Dr. Birdsall, was introduced the crowd gave Laura Secord three cheers. This was an exception to the dominant narratives of masculine sacrifice promoted at these celebrations, and was notably absent from the UELA’s official publication of the day’s events and from most newspaper reports. Despite the efforts of some female historical society members and their supporters to link the figure of Laura Secord to the places through monuments, in official commemorative practice the connection was tenuous.

78Savage, 143.
79“General Brock’s Memory was Honoured,” *Daily Standard* (St. Catharines), 14 October 1912, 2.
Women played active roles in the local history movement and had had success erecting monuments to Laura Secord, but women’s role in the War of 1812 and in the ceremonies held on the former battlefields was minimized. Although some women such as Currie had led small groups on tours of the battlefield and given historical lectures, women did not play as prominent a role in larger-scale ceremonies. Women had had no official role in the 1884 UEL celebrations, as they were not present on committees and were only spectators at the celebrations. Women’s participation in organizing these commemorations became more widespread in the following years, however. At the Queenston Heights centennial several women’s organizations, including the IODE, the Women’s Wentworth Historical Society, and The Women’s Canadian Historical Society responded to the UELA’s invitation. Representatives from other historical and patriotic organizations also attended, including Janet Carnochan from the NHS and John Jackson representing the LLHS and NPC. Although there were some women members of the General Brock Centennial Committee, only one woman served on the eight-member executive committee. The Queenston Women’s Institute was also enlisted to help decorate the grounds. Miss Helen M. Merrill, employee of the Ontario Bureau of Archives and recognized poet, had more of a leadership role. She was one of the co-organizers, along with Francis Keefer, of the Beaverdams celebration and served as honorary secretary on the Press committee for the Brock centenary. Merrill may have been given or taken on these roles in part because of her position at the Ontario Bureau of Archives. In this era the study of history was becoming more professionalized, and her employment may have lent her a degree of professional

80 See, for example, “An Historic Trip to the Niagara,” The Globe, 19 May 1898.
81 Knowles, 86; see UELA Centennial Committee, 8, 50, 80.
82 Fraser, 25- 28.
authority. Merrill was the exception, however, not only in that she had a leadership role, but also because her participation was not limited to traditionally feminine pursuits.

Women also participated in the Lundy’s Lane centennial’s plethora of committees, but these dealt with issues that were seemingly appropriate for women. This was not an entirely new development; as Nelles has shown, middle class women’s skills such as organizing, designing dresses, and sewing were drawn on by male organizers at the 1908 Quebec tercentenary. Women fulfilled gender appropriate roles in organizing the Lundy’s Lane celebration, including the ladies’ organizations committee, the badge and souvenir committee, and the floral decoration committee. Other committees, such as those dealing with finances, the exhibition of historical relics, and publicity were made up solely of men. This is in keeping with domestic roles women often played at other historical society events, including preparing meals and refreshments for participants. Although women were taking a more active role in organizing these ceremonies than they had previously, their traditional female occupations under male leadership is perhaps surprising given how active women were in the local historical societies. They were often members of committees under male chairmen or served as secretaries to male members. Additionally, women often helped in areas that were seen as appropriate feminine pursuits such as flower arrangements and food preparation. It is difficult to assess from available sources how much control women had over their own participation in these commemorative ceremonies, as available records do not indicate who, specifically, in these societies penned the events’ programs or what debates about them may have taken place. However, men’s leadership roles in the various organizing committees and the subordinate role played by most women in them suggest that men may have had the final word on important matters such as choosing the

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84 For professionalization of history see D. Wright.
85 Nelles, *Art of Nation Building*, 150.
86 Wallis, Geary, and Morden, 20.
events’ activities and speakers. These conventions for the most part reflected the gendered nature of society during this time, and most large-scale commemorative ceremonies in Canada and elsewhere remained under the control of men. In addition to fulfilling supportive or gender-appropriate roles in organizing these events, women’s participation in the actual ceremonies was also limited.

Women rarely addressed the crowds gathered for the ceremonies. This may have been in part a reflection of the fact that many prominent civic and other officials were male. There was one exception at the Beaverdams centennial when Mrs. Williams, the Regent of the IODE, gave a short address on the topic of duty. Members of the IODE were present at the Brock centennial, but did not deliver an address. It is not clear why a representative spoke at Beaverdams, but the IODE’s identity as a female organization made having a female speaker represent them an appropriate choice. However, the fact that Mrs. Williams’ address was not reported in the press suggested that her speech was not considered an important aspect of the day’s celebration. For the most part, women’s participation in these commemorative ceremonies was limited to reading poems. Although not exclusively the sphere of women, in Victorian Britain and America poetry’s emphasis on emotion and beauty was associated with the private, feminine sphere. Victorian conduct books described poetry as a worthy pursuit for women, as it was also associated with morality and self-improvement. Reading a poem one had composed, then, was an appropriate and respectable feminine activity. The emphasis on women’s poetry held true at the unveilings of the monuments to Laura Secord at Queenston Heights and Lundy’s Lane, which had been the projects of women and their supporters. The unveiling of the Secord

\[87\] Gillis, 10.
\[88\] For more detail on the IODE see Pickles, 19; OHS Annual Report 1915, 76.
monument at Lundy’s Lane, for instance, featured sixteen speakers. Although the bust was unveiled by Mrs. George Ross, Janet Carnochan was the only woman to speak, and she read a poem she had written for the occasion.\textsuperscript{90} Carnochan’s poetry was also featured at the unveiling of the Queenston Heights Secord monument, but all the other speakers were men.\textsuperscript{91}

Women sometimes participated in ceremonies not by speaking, but by acting. For instance, in the two Secord monument unveiling ceremonies some women placed wreaths at the bases of the Secord monuments to show their regard for the heroine. Currie, who had been instrumental in having the Queenston Heights monument erected, placed a wreath at its base next to one placed by representatives of the Ladies Historical Club of St. Catharines.\textsuperscript{92} Similarly, as a representative of the IODE Mrs. Fessenden had placed a wreath of flowers on Secord’s monument at Lundy’s Lane in 1901.\textsuperscript{93} Placing wreaths constituted participation in the ceremonies, but women’s overall role in the events was minimal, and those who took part conformed to ideals of respectable womanhood. Morgan has shown that in this period Laura Secord was portrayed in written accounts as “an icon of respectable white heterosexual femininity.”\textsuperscript{94} This portrayal of ideal womanhood extended to the women performing these silent roles in commemorative ceremonies. At the Lundy’s Lane centennial six American and six Canadian women placed wreaths on the battle monument and on the American monument. Referred to in the press as “maidens,” these young women, including LLHS president R.W. Geary’s daughter, were dressed all in white, often a symbol of purity and/or virginity, and travelled with a chaperone (Figure 4.5). These women conformed to the ideal of middle class respectability, and symbolized peace and purity. The women were also seen as a picturesque

\textsuperscript{90}“Memory of Laura Secord,” \textit{The Thorold Post}, 23 June 1901, 1.
\textsuperscript{91}“Laura Secords[sic] Memory Honored,” \textit{Niagara Falls Daily Record}, 6 July 1911, 1.
\textsuperscript{92}Ibid.
\textsuperscript{93}“Won the Battle of Beaver Dams,” \textit{Toronto Daily Star}, 24 June 1901, 7.
\textsuperscript{94}Coates and Morgan, 153.
addition; “the white dresses of the ladies [lent] a very pleasing effect to the scene” noted the 
Niagara Falls Review. Spectators approved of the performance, as according to one report, “the 
spirit of this simple incident seemed to take possession of the vast crowd who witnessed it.”
Women’s roles in major commemorative events, including the unveiling of monuments to Laura 
Secord, was minimal and their symbolic role conformed to ideals of respectable femininity.

Women’s participation in 

commemorative ceremonies had increased since the UELA 
celebrations in 1884, but their 
public appearances in War of 1812 
commemorative ceremonies tended 
to stress the domestic. At the 
unveiling of the Secord monument 
at Lundy’s Lane, for example, a 

male member of the Manitoba Historical society noted “the debt we owed to the memory of 
those early settlers, particularly the women who had been the home-makers.” At the Lundy’s 

Lane centennial there was also a dramatic reading of Duncan Campbell Scott’s poem “The Battle 
of Lundy’s Lane,” in which an Upper Canadian man joins the militia and fights at Lundy’s Lane 
only to find the next morning that his son had died a glorious death fighting beside him. The 

poem portrayed the mother of the boy killed at Lundy’s Lane as a domestic mother mourning her

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97 OHS, Annual Report…1901, 54.
son until her husband convinces her of the glory of his death in battle. Scott’s poem was “given with much dramatic effect, and its strong lines and moving narrative brought a roar of appreciation” from the crowd.

There were some rare exceptions when Secord, and women generally, were recognized outside the domestic sphere. Secord was mentioned once at the Queenston Heights centennial, which was dominated by the masculine figure of Brock. Only one speaker, Chief Inspector of Toronto schools and imperialist James L. Hughes, referenced “the terrible hardships endured willingly by Canadian women generally, as well as…the noble work done by individual women, of whom Laura Secord was so conspicuous an example.” Hughes’ speech, however, was rare in these major celebrations, as he did not define women as belonging exclusively to the domestic sphere.

The public memory communicated at the ceremonies primarily presented women as conforming to the ideals of respectable femininity, and emphasized women’s roles as homemakers and mothers. As Mary P. Ryan shows in the American context, throughout the nineteenth century women were becoming more prominent in public ceremonies. Ryan identifies a paradoxical element to these appearances, namely that women’s participation in public events conveyed the virtues of their private, domestic life. This should not be interpreted solely as a reflection of patriarchy, however. In this period feminists argued for the right to vote not only on the basis of the idea of natural justice, but on the special role women played in society. First wave feminists and reformers advocated domestic feminism, which highlighted the importance

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98 Wallis, Geary, and Morden, 51-55.
100 Fraser, 69; Berger, Sense of Power, 134.
of the family to the nation and demanded political representation for women on these grounds. Feminists in Britain and Canada, including Nellie McClung, adapted women’s traditional Victorian domestic roles and expanded them beyond the home. As ‘mothers of the race’ women would produce and raise healthy children while working to make the nation morally and socially hygienic, an idea that was in concert with the era’s reform movements. Indeed, there were close links between reform and feminist groups, and several women historical society members were also involved in these groups. Thus, positioning Secord within a domestic framework was not necessarily a blow to feminists’ political goals. Several women involved with the Secord monuments themselves positioned Secord, and women generally, within a domestic framework.

The inscription on the Queenston Heights monument, which Currie played an active role in designing, describes Secord’s efforts in rescuing her husband and, as Morgan notes, reinforces her domestic role. Sarah Curzon’s 1888 poem about the grave of William Hull, which portrayed a mother mourning her lost son, highlighted women’s universal role as caring mothers despite their different nationalities, as discussed in chapter three. Similarly, the poem Janet Carnochan read at the Lundy’s Lane Secord monument unveiling drew attention to the heroine’s domestic role. After describing her arduous trek through the woods, Carnochan lauded her as “A woman, wife, and mother tender true.” These women may not have wanted Secord to be defined primarily by her domestic role, as they also emphasized her heroic actions outside of

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103 Bacci, 11.
105 Coates and Morgan, 204-206.
107 “Memory of Laura Secord,” The Thorold Post, 23 June 1901, 1.
women’s traditional private sphere. Placing Secord within a domestic framework may not have been as direct a challenge to feminist narratives as an initial impression may suggest. However, Secord did not play a large role in commemorative ceremonies after her monuments were unveiled, and for the most part women did not address the crowds at the ceremonies.

The placement of the Secord monuments in the locale may have contributed to the heroine’s neglect in these commemorative ceremonies, as they were erected in prominent locations but were still dwarfed by the larger pre-existing battle monuments. Paradoxically, the Secord monuments were also located too far from the other monuments to be integrated into commemorative ceremonies. Although Currie saw the placement of the Secord monument on the site of the first Brock monument as an honour, this placement may have had a negative impact on the heroine’s role in the places’ commemorative ceremonies. The site of the former Brock monument was a picturesque and prominent locale, but it had previously been defined as a masculine place, as it was the site of the first Brock monument and had housed Brock and Macdonell’s remains. In her analysis of the monument Morgan points out that Secord’s Queenston Heights monument is located “metaphorically – and almost literally – at the feet of Brock’s,” stating that the larger monument easily overshadows the smaller Secord monument.108 The place’s public memory’s close link to Brock, rather than Secord, can be seen in the address given by Sir Charles Moss at the unveiling of the Secord monument on Queenston Heights. Moss stated that the spot where the Secord monument stood was, after the Plains of Abraham, “The most important in the history of Canada.” “On the Plains of Abraham, General Wolfe gave up his life for his country,” he continued, “here Sir Isaac Brock was slain for the same cause.”109

Although Moss went on to describe Secord saving her husband after the battle, the

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108 Coates and Morgan, 206.
109 “Laura Secords [sic] Memory Honored [sic],” Niagara Falls Daily Record, 6 July 1911, 1.
The commemorative importance of the place was clearly linked to the masculine figure of Isaac Brock.

The Secord monument’s placement did more than put the structure in the shadow of the Brock monument. Paradoxically, the smaller monument’s distance from the Brock monument may have also contributed to Secord being downplayed in the commemorative ceremonies held there, which centered on the Brock monument. The NPC commissioners, who had control of where the Secord monument was erected, seemed to see the Brock monument as the site’s primary commemorative marker, and stated that the Secord Monument “in no way detracts from or intrudes itself upon the site of the [Brock Monument], and occupies a recess.”110 Thus, while the Secord monument was in a prominent location, its distance from the Brock monument may have contributed to Secord’s exclusion from commemorations of the battle of Queenston Heights. Despite supporters’ efforts to connect Laura Secord to the place by highlighting her rescue of her husband after the battle of Queenston Heights, the heroine received little attention at the Queenston Heights centennial.

Similarly, although the placement of the Secord monument at Lundy’s Lane had been in effect determined by the Secords’ graves, the monument had also been erected after the battle monument and was much smaller than it. Morgan notes that the placement of the Secord monument near the larger battle monument allowed visitors to interpret it in a variety of ways, such as a “historical curiosity,” a “diversion” from male-centered narratives of the war, or as proof of women’s loyalty.111 However, this approach assumes that a visitor to Lundy’s Lane would notice the monument and engage with it. It is difficult to ascertain the public’s perceptions of the place, but in an official capacity once her monument was erected both it and Secord were

110 NPC Superintendent to George Ross, 6 October 1910, Records of the NPC, General Manager’s Office Subject Correspondence (First Chronological Grouping), 1901-1924, RG 38-3-1-485 Box MN 29, AO.
111 Coates and Morgan, 199.
effectively ignored in annual commemorative ceremonies held there. Again, the placement of the Secord monument at Lundy’s Lane may have played a role in this. Although the monument occupies a prominent locale on the former battlefield, it is also distanced from the larger battle monument which, like the Brock monument, was the focus of annual commemorative gatherings. For instance, the speakers’ platforms at these events were erected close to the bases of the battlefield monuments, placing them and their associated narratives at the center of the ceremonies and away from the Secord monuments.  

The public memory reflected and shaped by the battlefield monuments was reinscribed annually when interested parties would gather to reaffirm the memory of the war presented by their monuments and associated former battlefields. As discussed previously, these celebrations happened on the anniversaries of the battles, and participants drew connections between the public memory of the war and the places. However, perhaps because the monuments to Laura Secord were not erected on the battlefield of Beaverdams, which her journey directly affected, the Secord monuments were not the subject of annual celebrations. The Secord monuments had been erected on the former battlefields, but in practice the connections between Secord and these places seemed tenuous. Secord had rescued her husband from the battle of Queenston Heights, an event described on the monument to her. However, this was not enough to earn recognition for her deeds at ceremonies commemorating the battle. Similarly, although her monument at Lundy’s Lane was decorated for annual celebrations, Laura Secord did not loom large in the ceremonies there despite the presence of the Secords’ bodies in the place. At the Brock centennial, in contrast to the attention showered on Brock, Macdonell, and the loyal militia, Secord’s journey was brought up by one speaker, and no one mentioned her saving her husband at the battle. This is likely in part linked to the debates about where to place her monument. 

112 “Thorold’s Great Day,” *Thorold Post*, 26 June 1914, 1; Fraser, 50-51; Wallis, Geary, and Morden, 32.
some sense the public memory communicated at the battlefields had already been shaped by the battle monuments erected there. The commemorative ceremonies held on the former battlefields, which took place on the anniversaries of the sites’ associated battles, were physically and temporally linked to the battles more than to the heroine who was also memorialized there. Additionally, the events’ primary associations with military conflict may have worked against recognizing Secord’s role. Militarism, a feature of these ceremonies, was associated with men. Secord herself had also never seen battle, which also may have contributed to her exclusion from these battle-focused commemorations.

Organizers made some effort to temporally link the Lundy’s Lane Secord monument with the battle of Beaverdams, however. The Secord monument at Lundy’s Lane was unveiled on the Saturday closest to the anniversary of the battle of Beaver Dams, 22 June 1901, rather than the anniversary of her death on 17 October, which would have connected her to the Drummond Hill Cemetery. It is possible that this may have weakened Secord’s association with not only the former battlefield of Lundy’s Lane, but the battle that happened there. Monuments are rooted in place and run the risk of becoming invisible in practice while, paradoxically, remaining a permanent feature of the landscape. Monuments’ meanings need to be reinscribed on a regular basis for them to retain their significance, and this was not the case for the Secord monuments. It is perhaps ironic that the campaigners’ desire for the Secord monuments not to be located on the battlefield of Beaverdams meant that Secord would fall by the wayside of formal commemorative events held on the other former battlefields. In practice Secord was not explicitly linked to the places and their commemorative ceremonies, despite the efforts of prominent women historical society members and their supporters.

113 “Memory of Laura Secord,” Thorold Post, 23 June 1901, 1; McKenzie, 106.
114 See, for example, Coates and Morgan, 207.
Women prominent in the local history movement and their supporters were successful in erecting two monuments to Laura Secord on the former battlefields and laying a physical claim to the places by adding to the places’ locales. The public memory of Laura Secord did not directly contest the public memory at the battlefields that stressed male sacrifice, but it did present an alternative public memory in which women played a role in defending the country alongside men. Connecting Secord to place proved a challenge, as the different phases of her life led to conflict over the most appropriate place for a monument to her. Although the monuments erected at Lundy’s Lane and Queenston Heights both attempted to link the heroine to these places, in practice these connections were tenuous. The commemorative ceremonies held in these places remained overwhelmingly masculine in focus and downplayed or ignored the contributions of Secord, and women generally, to the war effort.

Although they had no monuments erected to them on the battlefields, representatives of the Six Nations were included in the centennial ceremonies and addressed the crowds. Six Nations representatives sought out spaces of negotiation within the public memory of Anglo-Saxon loyalty promoted at these events. They drew on the dominant public memory of masculine loyalty and sacrifice to support their demands for better treatment under the Indian Act. Although the Six Nations drew on the public memory of the war to advocate for greater political rights, representatives were careful to position themselves within pro-British narratives and express their loyalty to the Crown. Six Nations representatives were contesting the dominant public memory, but did so by stressing their loyalty and ‘civility’ before voicing their concerns about their unfair treatment. Representatives used both their opportunity to speak and their presence on the former battlefields to contest the public memory of the war and to call for political representation.
The Grand River Six Nations

Six Nations representatives had participated in some earlier commemorative ceremonies, but the centennial celebrations of the battles of Queenston Heights, Beaverdams and Lundy’s Lane were the first times that Six Nations representatives had participated in large scale commemorative ceremonies on the former battlefields, and they took advantage of their presence there. The places’ monuments and celebrations provided very little room for the presence of non-Anglo-Saxon peoples. However, the centennial celebrations on the former battlefields did provide the Six Nations with a platform to speak. Speaking on the battlefields was one of the few opportunities Six Nations representatives had to voice their calls for political representation; as Chief Hill noted at the Lundy’s Lane centennial, “it seems to be the only place that we can get a hearing.” The Six Nations representatives may have been invited to speak based on perceptions of their history as loyalists and their perceived status as being more ‘civilized’ than other Native groups. As abstract figures the Six Nations fit well into the places’ pro-British public memory. Once on the speakers’ platforms Six Nations chiefs positioned themselves within this public memory by stressing their past actions, loyalty to the Crown, and distinct contributions to the defense of the country. While conforming to the events’ dominant public memory, however, these speakers also used it to call for political representation. This is not to say that they were front and centre at the ceremonies. Beyond the performance of conferring honorary chieftaincies, Six Nations speakers were often given relatively short time slots at or near the end of the often long programs of speeches when the attendees’ attention may have been waning. Although the public memory reflected and shaped at the places was predominantly Anglo-Saxon, the centennial ceremonies held there offered Six Nations speakers the opportunity to draw on their peoples’ historical contributions to argue for justice in the present.

Thirteen Grand River Six Nations representatives attended the 1914 Beaverdams celebration, including the Chiefs of the Mohawk, Seneca, Onondaga, Oneida, Cayuga, and Tuscarora nations.\textsuperscript{116} The Seven Nations had also contributed to the victory at Beaverdams, but were not included in the ceremony; in the nineteenth century some of the Seven Nations had relocated with government help away from the Montreal area to more remote areas.\textsuperscript{117} Over 25 official Six Nations representatives attended the Brock centennial – a large number, especially when compared to the 19 formal officials representing the event’s organizers, the UELA.\textsuperscript{118} Twelve Chiefs attended the Lundy’s Lane centennial – two representing each of the nations.\textsuperscript{119} Two representatives, Frederick Onondeyoh Loft and A.G. Smith, were invited to speak at the Brock Centennial. Loft had been born on the Six Nations reserve and educated mostly in nearby Caledonia. Loft was a Liberal, and in 1890 Premier Oliver Mowat had appointed him as an accountant at the Asylum for the Insane in Toronto. Loft married Affa Nothcotte Geary, a loyalist descendant, and maintained an interest in First Nations issues and the UELA, writing several articles on the history of the Six Nations for the UELA’s annual transactions.\textsuperscript{120} Loft wanted the political standing of First Nations peoples improved, but was staunchly pro-British and had criticized the critical stance some Six Nations had taken toward the government’s unfulfilled treaty promises.\textsuperscript{121} Less evidence is available about A.G. Smith, a progressive

\textsuperscript{117}Miller, J. R. \textit{Skyscrapers Hide the Heavens: A History of Indian-White Relations in Canada} (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2000), 115.
\textsuperscript{118}Fraser, 36 – 37.
\textsuperscript{119}Wallis, Geary, and Morden, 28.
\textsuperscript{121}Knowles, 124-125.
Mohawk Chief and respected orator.\textsuperscript{122} Smith had participated in previous celebrations, including the 1884 loyalist celebrations where he had called for First Nations representation in Parliament.\textsuperscript{123} At the Beaverdams celebration Chief Alexander Hill read an address prepared by H.M. Smith, who was unable to attend the celebration.\textsuperscript{124} Hill also attended the Brock centennial and addressed the crowd at the centennial celebration of the battle of Lundy’s Lane. These celebrations offered Six Nations representatives an opportunity to voice their opposition to the Indian Act in front of a large audience of people who likely were, to varying degrees, interested in the province’s past. The representatives enacted their loyalty on the former battlefields and drew on their role in the places’ pasts to support their goal of political representation.

Early after the War of 1812 First Nations, especially those active in Niagara, had been portrayed as thieves and plunderers. Tensions had been brewing during the war, and after 1814 British officials distanced themselves from their employment of Aboriginal peoples, perhaps feeling uneasy about being linked to the ‘savages’ portrayed in American propaganda.\textsuperscript{125} First Nations military and political power waned after the war, and demographics was one of the largest contributors. While the non-Native population of Upper Canada grew, the Native population remained at around 8,000 into the 1840s. Aboriginals in Upper Canada saw their links with Native groups south of the Great Lakes, which had been weakening since Tecumseh’s death in 1813, destroyed as the United States government enforced treaties that forced their evacuation of the Detroit area. This further weakened their political power, as First Nations peoples in Upper Canada were isolated from their potential allies on the American side.\textsuperscript{126} The amalgamation of the North West Company and the Hudson Bay Company in 1821 was another

\textsuperscript{122} Andrea Lucille Catapano, “The Rising of the Ongwehònwe: Sovereignty, Identity, and Representation on the Six Nations Reserve” (PhD diss., Stoney Brook University, 2007), 74, 76, 150.
\textsuperscript{123} Knowles, 87.
\textsuperscript{124} OHS, Annual Report...1915, 75.
\textsuperscript{125} A. Taylor, 435-36.
\textsuperscript{126} Surtees, 112.
blow and further diminished their economic power and independence.\textsuperscript{127} Over a short time span the First Nations of Upper Canada had been transformed from military allies to obstacles to progress.\textsuperscript{128} Faced with a rapidly increasing settler population, the government of Upper Canada negotiated six major land cession agreements in the province, bringing almost three million additional hectares under its control.\textsuperscript{129} Moving from “alliance to irrelevance,” First Nations groups were increasingly the targets of assimilationist efforts, particularly after the transfer of responsibility for their governance from military to civilian officials.\textsuperscript{130} By the 1820s many observers had begun to believe that First Nations, including the Six Nations, were doomed to extinction under the stress of the encroachment of European civilization.\textsuperscript{131} Although First Nations groups retained their agency, in the immediate postwar period before early accounts of the war were written their role in the War of 1812 was minimized in the minds of many Upper Canadians.\textsuperscript{132}

European settlers continued to encroach on the Six Nations’ lands, and parcels of their territory along the Grand River were surrendered or sold by the Crown in the 1820s and 1830s. In response to the increasing fragmentation of the reserve lands and the isolation of some settlements, in 1841 with the approval of Six Nations representatives the government of Upper Canada set aside a compact block of land for their exclusive use. The government put the remaining lands on the market, with the proceeds set aside for the ‘betterment’ of the Six

\textsuperscript{127} Benn, \textit{Iroquois}, 187-88.
\textsuperscript{128} Miller, 123.
\textsuperscript{129} Surtees, 112.
\textsuperscript{130} Miller, 123-125.
\textsuperscript{132} A notable exception was the Shawnee Chief Tecumseh. As Robin Jarvis Browlie has shown, in the postwar period Tecumseh was adopted as a symbol of Upper Canadian identity. Although Tecumseh was portrayed as a Noble Savage – an Other – he was also seen as a hero who had struggled against United States aggression. Tecumseh was also an ideal hero because of his tragic death during the war, which allowed him to be idealized without addressing the ongoing existence of First Nations peoples in Upper Canada. See Brownlie, 39-63 and R.D. Edmunds, \textit{The Shawnee Prophet} (Lincoln, Neb.: University of Nebraska Press, 1983): 275-76.
Nations. By 1847 the reserve covered 22,000 hectares and was mostly in the townships of Tuscarora, Oneida, and Onondaga between present-day Caledonia and Brantford. Relocating to this reserve made the Grand River Six Nations Reserve the largest Iroquoian community in North America and for the first time brought all of the nations, including the Mohawk, Oneida, Onondaga, Seneca, and Tuscarora to live together in the same community. The reserve was also wealthy from the sale of the surrendered land, and most residents had embraced farming and adopted Christianity, although some still adhered to a more traditional Iroquoian culture. These trends continued into the 1890s and early twentieth century. Farming continued to be a primary occupation of the reserve’s residents, peaking in the 1890s. Christianity’s influence grew; Anglicanism was dominant, and Baptists and Methodists made up the remainder. By the 1890s voluntary associations such as temperance societies and the Six Nations Agricultural Society had been formed, and the Six Nations’ School Board was created to improve education on the reserve.

The Six Nations had pointed to their history to argue for more political rights before the creation of local historical societies and the War of 1812 centennial celebrations. For example, the Six Nations had attempted to draw on the past to resist the Enfranchisement Act of 1869, which built on the Civilization and Enfranchisement Act of 1859 and reflected the government’s assimilationist goals. The 1859 Act had been designed to encourage the ‘civilization’ of the First Nations by providing a way for them to relinquish their legal status as wards of the Crown. However, very few Six Nations people were enfranchised under this act. The 1869 Act expanded

133 Johnston, 178-179.
135 Weaver, 182-83, 223, 218, 220, 225.
involuntary enfranchisement by legislating that First Nations women who married white men were automatically enfranchised. The Six Nations chiefs were concerned by the 1869 act, not only because it expanded involuntary enfranchisement, but because it contained provisions for reserve band councils to be elected, which would remove the mostly hereditary band council from power. Although some chiefs were not bothered by the Act, others argued that the Six Nations were British allies, not subjects of the Crown, and were therefore not governed by it. In 1875 these chiefs delivered a petition to this effect to the superintendent general of Indian Affairs and told him they were preparing a history of the Six Nations to support this claim. Seth Newhouse, an Onondaga chief, began work on this manuscript, but the government’s reply that the Act applied to the Six Nations with or without their approval effectively ended the project.\textsuperscript{137} In 1876 the federal government created the Indian Act, which consolidated legislation regarding Aboriginal peoples and reflected the government’s concerns with land ownership, local government, and the assimilation of First Nations peoples.\textsuperscript{138} Six Nations representatives took advantage of the growing discipline of Anthropology to further their claims and establish their unique relationship with the Crown.\textsuperscript{139} In 1899 the Six Nations council allowed American ethnologist William Beauchamp to photograph the wampum belts they held.\textsuperscript{140} Some of these belts, notably the Covenant Belt and the Two Row Wampum Belt, had often been referred to in petitions sent to the government asking them to recognize the Six Nations’ sovereignty. Shortly thereafter the council also created a committee to transcribe the band’s oral traditions, and helped

\textsuperscript{137} Weaver, 199, 207.
\textsuperscript{138} Mary C. Hurley, \textit{The Indian Act} (Ottawa: Parliamentary Information and Research Service, 2009), 1.
\textsuperscript{139} Carole Gerson and Veronica Strong-Boung, \textit{Paddling Her Own Canoe: The Times and Texts of E. Pauline Johnson (Tekahionwake)} (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2000), 40-41.
anthropologists write on the band’s customs.\(^{141}\) Although these efforts were not successful in the short term, growing interest in the province’s past in the late nineteenth century provided a stage for members of the Six Nations to draw on their history to contest the Indian Act and its various amendments that had increased government interference in reserve politics and culture.\(^{142}\)

The Grand River Six Nations had been in contact with the local historical societies since early in the latter’s existence. Six Nations representatives were involved in the centennial celebrations of the arrival of the UELAs held in Adolphustown in 1884, and in 1898 the UELA made two Chiefs honorary vice presidents and admitted members of the Six Nations and Tyendinaga reserves as associate members.\(^{143}\) The Six Nations were also affiliated with the OHS, attending meetings and becoming an official affiliate in 1897; the 1898 OHS meeting was even held in Oshweken.\(^{144}\) The Six Nations were also involved in the Brant Historical Society, which had been founded in 1908 and was devoted to the study of European settlement and the historical relationship between whites and First Nations peoples.\(^{145}\) Membership in these societies provided an opportunity for the Six Nations to assert their unique history and ask for historical societies’ members’ support in the face of growing government interference.

The Six Nations’ relationship with the historical societies also contributed to their inclusion in several commemorative ceremonies. Some authors have argued that First Nations groups were invited to these types of gatherings because they were seen as exotic crowd

\(^{141}\) Weaver, 239-40; these strategies continued well into the twentieth century. See Alison Elizabeth Norman, "Race, Gender and Colonialism: Public Life among the Six Nations of Grand River, 1899-1939" (Doctoral Dissertation, Ontario Institute for Studies in Education University of Toronto, 2010), 8-10.

\(^{142}\) Miller, 254-55.

\(^{143}\) UEL Centennial Committee, 117; Knowles, 147.

\(^{144}\) PHAO, Pioneer and Historical Association of the Province of Ontario, Canada (Toronto: 1897[?]), 6; Cecilia Morgan, “History and the Six Nations: The Dynamics of Commemoration, Colonial Space, and Colonial Knowledge,” in Placing Memory and Remembering Place in Canada, eds. John Walsh and James Opp (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2010), 60.

\(^{145}\) Morgan, “History and Six Nations,” 63.
pleasers. As Elsbeth Heaman and others have illustrated, displaying Aboriginal peoples as ‘primitives’ had a long history dating back to the display of captured Natives in European courts, a tradition that continued through the nineteenth century’s national and international exhibitions. Similar portrayals of First Nations continued into the twentieth century. For instance, Native groups participated in a historical pageant marking the tercentenary of the founding of Quebec. First Nations peoples had also long been tourist attractions at Niagara Falls, where ‘Indian’ spectacles such as a Wild West show had been introduced in the 1870s and Native peoples sold handicrafts to curious tourists. Pauline Johnson, or Tekahionwake, a writer and performer born of mixed English and Mohawk parents, had been successfully touring and incorporating personas of both the Mohawk

Figure 4.6. Six Nations Representatives at the Brock centennial. Chief Alexander Hill is front row centre. Reprinted from Fraser, 88 – 89.

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146 See, for example, Knowles, 86.
148 Nelles, Art of Nation Building, 172-81.
149 Dubinsky, 64 – 66; see also Jasen, Wild Things, 41 – 43.
and modern Canadian woman in her performances. In the 1890s Johnson had created an ‘Indian’ buckskin costume to wear on stage that was adorned with various Native symbols, including fur pelts and a necklace of bear claws. Although her promoters worked to distance Johnson from the ‘Indians’ seen in traveling Wild West shows, she drew on common ideas about the ‘Indian’ to not only blur racial lines, but to entertain; in her publicity photograph Johnson appeared in her ‘Indian’ costume.\(^{150}\) Despite Johnson’s efforts to challenge dominant views about Native peoples, widespread beliefs that continued well into the twentieth century held that they were a dying race doomed to extinction through death or assimilation. Beginning in the late nineteenth century this view increasingly led to a sentimental interest in these supposedly dying cultures before they expired.\(^{151}\) Knowles contends that including First Nations representatives in the 1884 events marking the loyalist centenary was in part a symptom of a “nostalgic idealization” of the Aboriginal way of life that was itself a response to rapid social change.\(^{152}\)

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\(^{150}\) Gerson and Strong-Boag, 4, 110-113.

\(^{151}\) Knowles, 86; Daniel Francis, _The Imaginary Indian: The Image of the Indian in Canadian Culture_ (Vancouver: Arsenal Pulp Press, 2011), Chapter 3: “Writing off the Indian.”

\(^{152}\) Knowles, 86.
There may have been an element of exoticism in the historical societies’ decision to include the Six Nations in these commemorative events. It is possible that organizers thought the presence of the Six Nations would draw more attention from the press and entertain spectators. Indeed, in other contexts such as fairs the public was often more interested in the ‘primitive’ or exotic aspects of Aboriginal participation than the ‘civilized’ portrayal of Native peoples, such as the display of residential school students.\(^{153}\) At Queenston Heights the majority of the Six Nations representatives chose to wear suits, although one attendee combined his suit with an Iroquoian headdress, and another wore an eagle feather with his European-style hat. One Chief, Alexander Hill, chose to wear full traditional dress, which was described in the press as a “costume” (Figure 4.6).\(^{154}\) At the Beaverdams celebration Onondaga Chief Sky wore buckskin and an Onondaga traditional headdress (Figure 4.7).\(^{155}\) In this period people paid a great deal of attention to Native bodies in historical accounts, fixating on their dress, hair, jewelry, and physical fitness.\(^{156}\) This view was also applied to the Six Nations representatives, as evidenced by the OHS report of the event penned by Janet Carnochan. Carnochan recounted that Chief Sky had been in “regulation Indian garb” and detailed his buckskin clothing, his medals, and the eagle feathers that he wore on his head.\(^{157}\) Records of communications between the historical societies and Six Nations representatives are scarce, but there is no evidence that the historical societies instructed the Six Nations to appear in traditional garb. This is in contrast to Ian Radforth’s examination of the 1860 Royal Tour, when Indian Department officials went to great

\(^{153}\)Heaman, 285-86, 305-06.
\(^{154}\)Fraser, 88 – 89.
\(^{156}\)Morgan, “History, Nation, and Empire,” 509.
\(^{157}\)OHS, *Annual Report...1915*, 74. Although the report was filed by the three representatives present (Janet Carnochan, Justus A. Griffin and H.L. Morphy), Carnochan was responsible for writing it. Justus A. Griffin to Janet Carnochan, 20 March 1915, Niagara Historical Society Collection, Records of Societies, F1138-F-1 MS193, Reel 10, AO.
lengths to ensure that First Nations representatives appeared as spectacles in their “paint and feathers.”\textsuperscript{158} No records suggest this sort of instruction, but this did not stop commentators, including some historical society members, from focussing on the exotic ‘costumes’ worn by Six Nations representatives, suggesting that their participation may have been motivated in part by exoticism.

Six Nations representatives also adopted honorary Chiefs at some of the celebrations. After F.H. Keefer’s address of welcome to the Beaverdams gathering, for instance, Sterling Ryerson was made an honorary Mohawk chief and given the name “Re-de-vi-yohs,” translated as “Great warrior.”\textsuperscript{159} At the Brock centennial a ceremony conferred honorary tribal membership, and the name “Kah-ya-tohns” or ‘Keeper of Records’ on the UELA’s secretary Helen Merrill, an event that entertained the crowd and received special attention in the press.\textsuperscript{160} Six Nations representatives had their own motivations for bestowing these memberships, which had a long genesis and were often used to create and maintain friendships with members of the white community who held influence.\textsuperscript{161} However, the attention the press and members of historical societies paid to the adoption of honorary chiefs and their clothing suggests that exoticism played at least a small role in including Six Nations representatives in these ceremonies.

The relationship the members of local historical societies had with the Six Nations was complex and at times contradictory. While organizers may have thought that their exoticism would entertain the crowd, the Six Nations representatives were also easily incorporated into, and in fact supported, the pro-British public memory communicated at the battlefield.

\textsuperscript{159}“Thorold’s Great Day,” \textit{Thorold Post}, 26 June 1914, 1.
\textsuperscript{160}Fraser, 44; “In Memory of Gen. Brock” \textit{Globe and Mail} October 14, 1912 1, 3.
\textsuperscript{161}Gerson and Strong-Boag, 39.
commemorative ceremonies. Their incorporation into pro-British views may have been rooted in the idea that the Six Nations were a more civilized and advanced race than other Aboriginal groups. For contemporary reformers race was not a purely biological concept, but incorporated ideas such as parliamentary rule and Protestantism. Members of the Six Nations’ adoption of farming and Christianity, as well as their comparative wealth, likely made them models of ‘civilized’ Native peoples. Local historians had pointed to Joseph Brant as contributing to the civilization and loyalty of the Six Nations peoples since the 1850s, a view that was highlighted at the unveiling of a monument to him in Brantford in 1886. Members of historical societies, particularly the UELA, pointed to the success of the Six Nations reserve as evidence of the benevolence of British institutions. Speaking at a UELA meeting in 1904, Colin G. Snider, a Judge in Wentworth County, related his meeting several weeks earlier with Chief Smith, stating, “He was dressed like any successful white man, good tweed suit, well made, good overcoat with beaver collar and a good fur cap. He lives on his 200 acre farm on the Reservation in a good large brick house, and has plenty of good outbuildings and a good barn.” The perceived success of the Six Nations likely not only reflected well on the benevolence of British institutions, but also meant that Six Nations representatives could be more easily incorporated into the places’ pro-British public memory.

As Gerson and Strong-Boag show, many Canadians believed that Canada’s overall treatment of Native peoples was humane and just, an opinion that continued to hold sway even after the repression of the Red River uprising. Some observers came to this conclusion by comparing the situation of Canada’s Native peoples to the United States’ Indian wars,

163 Knowles, 118-123.
dislocations, and massacres. Imperialists also held these beliefs, and contrasted the situation of Native peoples in Canada to that of Indians in the United States. Speaking at the centennial of the landing of the loyalists in 1888, noted imperialist Col. George T. Denison embarked on a critique of the United States. In addition to other perceived weaknesses of the Republic, Denison pointed to Canada’s treatment of First Nations peoples as an example: “the contrast between us and our neighbours is…remarkably striking, and the reason is, that there is some honour with us in our treatment of them, while across the border they have been treated by the agents most unfairly, and by all classes most cruelly.” This view was extended to and enforced by the perceived success of the Six Nations and their supposed fair treatment by the Crown. Janet Carnochan’s *History of Niagara*, published in 1914, described the participation of Six Nations representatives in the 1884 centenary of the landing of the UELs. “The chiefs and warriors, some of them survivors of the War of 1812,” she wrote, “reminded us of treaties faithfully observed alike by white and red man.” To Carnochan, the presence of First Nations representatives demonstrated the British government’s fair treatment of the Six Nations peoples. Local historical societies seem to have perceived the Grand River Six Nations as being both more civilized and loyal than other First Nations groups. In addition to providing a note of exoticism, their presence at the centennial celebrations marking the battles of Queenston Heights, Beaverdams, and Lundy’s Lane may have highlighted the success and humaneness of British policy.

**The Voices of the Six Nations**

Although whites displayed ‘primitive’ First Nations bodies and customs in spectacles and fairs, Aboriginal peoples retained their agency and often used it to not only obtain income, but to

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165 Gerson and Strong-Boag, 27.
166 UELA Centennial Committee, 97.
retain their cultural identities and subvert dominant white views. The Six Nations’ participation in the battlefield centennial celebrations provides an example of how a specific group, the Six Nations, asserted their unique connection to the public memory presented and shaped by particular places through their presence, actions, and speeches there. There is no evidence that the Six Nations had attempted to erect monuments on the frontier battlefields honouring their own participation in the war. In 1877 the Six Nations council had contributed $5,000 towards the erection of the Brant monument in Brantford, a project spearheaded by Allan Cleghorn, a Brantford businessman. Six Nations representatives had also participated in the unveiling of the statue, where Chief John Buck stressed that Brant had been an ally, not a subject, of the Crown. For reasons that remain unclear, members of the Six Nations did not put forward a proposal to erect a monument on the Frontier battlefields. In any case, when they were invited to address the crowds at the celebrations they took advantage of the opportunity. Their presence in the places where their ancestors had fought one hundred years before was itself a claim for their inclusion in the places’ public memory, and representatives also used their presence there to argue for political rights.

The presence of Six Nations representatives, some in traditional garb, on the battlefield was significant. The choice of one representative at both Queenston Heights and Beaverdams to wear traditional clothing may have been a strategic decision to draw extra attention to their presence from the press and the audience, and to therefore reinforce the Six Nations’ claim on the battlefields. Conversely, the presence of Six Nations chiefs wearing modern suits may have suggested that they were members of the modern world and prepared to take on political

\[^{168}\text{See Raibmon, Authentic Indians; Nelles, Art of Nation Building; Radforth, Royal Spectacle: The 1860 Visit of the Prince of Wales to Canada and the United States (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2004), Chapter 6: “Performing Indians”; Heaman, Chapter 10: “Making a Spectacle: Exhibitions of the First Nations.”}\]

\[^{169}\text{Knowles, 116, 119-123.}\]

\[^{170}\text{For First Nations traditional clothing as strategy to draw attention see Radforth, “Performance,” 16.}\]
responsibility. It is possible that the choice of two representatives to combine their suits with traditional headwear at the Brock centennial suggested to those present at the celebrations that the Six Nations had hybrid identities that embraced ‘progress’ while retaining their cultural autonomy. At Lundy’s Lane Six Nations representatives all chose to appear in ‘modern’ dress (Figure 4.8). The clothing of Mohawk performers such as Pauline Johnson and John Ojijatekha Brant-Sero in England carried political messages. These performers employed both ‘Indian’ and modern clothing as a way to manipulate cultural symbols to indicate their hybrid identity and to challenge gendered and racialized imperial identities.\textsuperscript{171} The Six Nations representatives were not performers in the sense that Johnson and Brant-Sero were, but they were taking part in a visible, public display on the former battlefields. The Six Nations representatives at the War of 1812 centenaries may have adopted a similar strategy to challenge dominant racial views, showing not only that their traditional culture had not disappeared as expected, but that they were able to integrate the modern and ‘civilized’ world with it. Rather than changing costume like Johnson did halfway through her performances,\textsuperscript{172} as a group the representatives could


\textsuperscript{172}Gerson and Strong-Boag, 113.
potentially use their bodies as a visual representation, or tableau, to illustrate their hybrid identities.

Once they took the stage Six Nations representatives adapted the places’ pro-British public memory to demonstrate their own inclusion in the places’ pasts before drawing on it to argue for political representation. At Queenston Heights Chief A.G. Smith made this claim explicit in his speech, stating, “I came to celebrate the victory of a handful of Canadians, who, on this spot, turned the tide of invasion, and I rejoice [that] in that victory my forefathers had a part.”¹⁷³ The Six Nations positioned themselves within the places’ public memory by stressing their loyalty to the Crown through their association with the hero of the war, Isaac Brock, and their historical support of Britain.

At the Queenston Heights centennial the Six Nations representatives both demonstrated their loyalty to the Crown and reminded observers of the part their ancestors had played in the place’s past, in part by stressing their connection to Isaac Brock. Beyond the fact that the centenary of Queenston Heights centred on Brock, Six Nations representatives likely also recognized that the hero was a powerful symbol in the public memory of the War of 1812. Highlighting their connection to Brock was in keeping with the day’s focus on the hero, who was painted as uniting the residents of Upper Canada including, in Minister of Education R.A. Pyne’s words, “our dear old friends the Indians.”¹⁷⁴ Canadians had long seen Britain as having a history of peaceful relations with First Nations peoples, and the figure of Isaac Brock had been used in patriotic discourse to highlight the poor treatment of ‘Indians’ by the Americans.¹⁷⁵ In this view Brock, and by extension all Canadians, had treated the First Nations peoples fairly, rather than

¹⁷³ “‘Flags Would Not Be Waving But For Us,’” *Daily Standard* (St. Catharines), 14 October 1912, 5.
¹⁷⁴ Fraser, 55.
trying to exterminate them as the United States had. Those who had campaigned for the Secord monument at Queenston Heights had adopted a similar strategy, some making imaginative efforts to link the heroine to Brock. The Laura Secord National Monument committee, for example, suggested that James Secord had helped carry Brock’s body from the field, and that “it was near if not in [Laura Secord’s] home that the dead hero lay.” For both women and the Six Nations Isaac Brock was a powerful symbol, and linking themselves to him likely strengthened their claim on Queenston Heights.

The first commemorative activity at Queenston Heights that afternoon was the laying of wreaths, which one writer described as “costly and beautiful floral offerings.” Laying wreaths was a highly symbolic and ritualized performance. Colonel Ryerson formally received the tributes one by one. The names of the wreath givers, which included the Six Nations, were read aloud before representatives of the various organizations placed them on the Brock monument’s base. This formal ceremony’s symbolic importance was suggested by the UELA’s efforts to include the names of every group that supplied one of the over thirty wreaths in their commemorative publication, as well as several photographs of them. The Six Nations’ participation in this ceremony was significant. Laying a wreath, especially in a formal ceremony before a large audience, amounted to a performance of loyalty; it was a gesture that symbolically linked the Six Nations to the former battlefield and its hero. A Six Nations representative, Allen W. Johnson, added another element of performance by accompanying the secretary of the UELA, Miss Helen Merrill, to the top of the Brock Monument to unfurl a Union Jack. This act was reminiscent of one that had taken place over fifty years before. At the public meeting held a few months after the destruction of the first Brock monument a British sailor had supposedly

177 Land, 14-15.
178 Fraser, 40.
scaled the remains of the shaft of the monument and affixed a Union Jack.\textsuperscript{179} \textit{The Globe} reported that the flag used at the centennial celebration was in fact the same flag that had been used in 1840 that had been loaned especially for the occasion, lending the act added significance.\textsuperscript{180} Johnson’s presence atop the monument constituted a claim to the structure. The presence of a First Nations representative atop the Brock Monument may also have reminded the audience of the financial contributions the Six Nations had made towards building the second Brock Monument.\textsuperscript{181} Once again, the participation of a Six Nations representative in this aspect of the ceremony was significant. It not only affirmed the loyalty of the Six Nations people, but linked them to the heroic figure of Isaac Brock. These actions were a performance of loyalty; they were highly visible markers of participation in the nation’s past.

In addition to performing their connection to Brock on the battlefield, Six Nations speakers also connected their own bravery and sacrifice to Brock’s. Chief A.G. Smith stressed his ancestors’ devotion to the hero, stating that “no followers of the illustrious Brock...fought more bravely than the Six Nations; their very admiration of the great and brave general was as a spur to their bravery.”\textsuperscript{182} Stressing the inherent bravery of the Six Nations and connecting them to the most celebrated figure of the day served to not only associate the Six Nations with the focus of the day’s celebration, but also linked their masculine sacrifice to Brock’s. The second Six Nations speaker, Frederick Onondeyoh Loft, adopted the Shawnee hero Tecumseh as a representative of the Six Nations, stating, “it is not altogether my wish that I should be looked upon on this occasion as a mere representative of my nation, but rather as a representative of the

\textsuperscript{179} Ibid., 43.
\textsuperscript{180} \textit{In Memory of Gen. Brock” Globe and Mail} October 14, 1912, 1.
\textsuperscript{181} Benn, \textit{Iroquois}, 190-191.
\textsuperscript{182} Fraser, 72.
noble native Indian race.” He went on to compare Tecumseh to Brock, stating that “like General Brock, this noble red man, as a leader of his kinsmen, also sacrificed his life in the cause of king and country.”

Loft’s speech linked the two heroes, as representatives of their two peoples, through the masculine sacrifice of their bodies in defence of the nation. The image of Tecumseh was also linked to a recognition of white masculinity, as a reference to Tecumseh likely also brought to mind the often told story of the meeting between Brock and the Shawnee leader in 1812, in which Tecumseh famously said of Brock: ‘This is a man.’ Indeed, this story had been referenced earlier in the afternoon, with the speaker, Sterling Ryerson, concluding that “the correctness of this opinion was borne out in the life and death of Brock.”

At the Brock centennial the Six Nations representatives’ performances and speeches linked them to Isaac Brock, the hero of the war and a potent symbol in the war’s public memory.

In addition to highlighting their connection to Brock and his monument, Six Nations representatives at Queenston Heights, Beaverdams, and Lundy’s Lane pointed out their ancestors’ actions in those places to not only remind listeners of the role they had played in the battles, but to highlight their continuing loyalty to the Crown. This again fit within the pro-British public memory communicated at the celebrations and the views of historical society members, who had long seen the Six Nations as loyalists. At the 1898 OHS meeting held at Oshweken Janet Carnochan implored, “let us not forget the part borne by our red bretheren who may also be called United Empire Loyalists,” and continued on to laud their actions in the War of 1812, stating that they “well and nobly played their part” at Queenston Heights, Beaverdams

\[\text{183 Ibid., 74.}\]
\[\text{184 Ibid., 75.}\]
\[\text{185 Morgan, “History, Nation, and Empire,” 510; Coates and Morgan, 143.}\]
\[\text{186 Fraser, 51.}\]
and Moraviantown. Similarly, a paper delivered by Edward Chadwick to the UELA in 1899 outlined the reasoning behind including the Six Nations in the organization. Chadwick and others argued that the Six Nations had immigrated to British North America “at the same time and under practically the same circumstances” as the loyalists, and had been “hunted like wild beasts until neither house nor fruit tree nor field of corn nor inhabitant remained” in their villages. Chadwick then linked the Six Nations loyalists to the War of 1812, stating that in the war, “the Six Nations stood shoulder to shoulder with the other U.E. Loyalists and their descendants.”

F.H. Keefer’s Beaverdams also highlighted the role played by the Six Nations, “many of whom, like other United Empire Loyalists, came into Canada at the time of the War of Independence to be under the British Crown.” Six Nations representatives built on these perceptions at the celebrations, expressing their past and ongoing loyalty to Britain. At Beaverdams H.M. Smith opened his address by stating that the Six Nations were proud of the support they had given to the Empire, before listing the help they had provided “from the time of Frontenac” through their offers to serve in the Boer War. Smith could also have pointed to Six Nations Iroquois’ enrolment in the militia, which had begun to increase in the 1900s; at the 1908 Niagara training camp over 200 Six Nations soldiers had made up more than half of the 37th Haldimand Rifles’ active strength. In his Queenston Heights speech Frederick Loft praised the commemoration of the battle and of Brock, stating that those in attendance should never forget “the duty we owe to our children to do all we can to impress their minds with the precepts of loyalty to the king.

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189 Keefer, 9.
191 O’Brien, 124.
and crown, that should be ever steadfast and immovable.”

Loft also suggested that if the mother country was threatened the Six Nations would once again rise to the occasion, a sentiment he would live out five years later as a member of the Canadian Forestry Corps in France during the Great War. At the Lundy’s Lane centennial Chief Hill stated that the Six Nations were glad that they had assisted the British in the past. Speakers conformed to the ideals of loyalty to the Crown, arguing that they had been loyal in the past and promising to uphold that loyalty in the future.

While Six Nations representatives performed their loyalty and their connection to Brock, their speakers also stressed the unique contribution the Six Nations had made to the defense of the country, connecting themselves to the actions of their ancestors there one hundred years before. Perhaps due to time constraints, none of the Six Nations speakers detailed their ancestors’ parts in the battles, preferring instead to concentrate on the themes of loyalty and general statements about the importance of Six Nations participation. A.G. Smith drew on popular ideas many whites held about First Nations, such as perceptions about the warrior tradition, throughout his speech. Although whites held many contradictory perceptions of First Nations peoples, one popular romantic view saw them as retaining some of the traits of the so-called Indian Warrior, including strength, bravery, calmness, and physical endurance. Despite the idea that the Six Nations were more ‘civilised’ than other groups, some members of the historical societies retained stereotypical views which were expressed in their descriptions of the Six Nations’ actions in past wars. For example, in a 1904 address to the UELA Colin G. Snider described the Six Nations’ conduct in the Revolutionary War: “wherever soldiers of the King engaged the

192 Fraser, 74.
193 Fraser, 75; Smith, n.p.
194 Wallis, Geary, and Morden, 68.
rebels, there were these red men, silent as night, swift as their own arrows, and terrible as death itself.” In his Brock centennial speech Smith drew on these so-called Indian Warrior strengths to make a case for the Six Nations’ central role in the nation’s defence. Drawing on the idea of bravery, the first thing he said when addressing the crowd was, “if a Mohawk Chief had in his make-up a particle of timidity I fear that your cheering would have frightened or disconcerted me.” Smith also stated that one reason his people had become involved in the American Revolution was “their own love of war” because “war with them was as religion.” Smith also contended that “had it not been for the bravery of the Six Nations the Union Jack would not today be waving over these historic heights,” and that none “fought more bravely than the Six Nations.” Smith stressed that he and his people were the true inheritors of this warrior tradition. At the conclusion of his speech Smith stated that “I am descended from too long a line of brave warriors to be afraid to speak the truth.” Here Smith demonstrated the continuity of his people; that those Six Nations representatives taking part in the ceremony on the battlefield were the direct descendants of those whose participation in the War of 1812 and in the events being celebrated was so central. The presence of representatives in traditional clothing on the battlefields would likely have reinforced this connection. By asserting that the Six Nations were traditionally a brave and war-like people whose bravery played a central role in the Revolution and the War of 1812 Smith demonstrated their unique contribution to the defence of the nation. As if to punctuate this narrative, at the close of Smith’s speech several chiefs present led “three rousing warwhoops.”

196 Snider, 28.
197 Fraser, 71.
198 Ibid., 71, 73.
199 Ibid., 72.
200 Ibid., 73.
201 Ibid.
Contestation

Through their presence on the battlefields and their speeches Six Nations representatives conformed to the places’ pro-British public memory. However, they also contested this public memory, particularly regarding their treatment by the Crown. Having presented their important and unique contributions to the defence of the country in the past and their ongoing loyalty to the Crown, representatives highlighted their current plight under the Indian Act. As Olick and Robbins contend, the past can be used by different groups to establish their power, or conversely to show their lack of power. After demonstrating their membership in the celebration’s dominant pro-British public memory Six Nations representatives contrasted their current position with the promises made in the past, in contradiction to Britain’s supposed fair treatment of First Nations peoples.

Six Nations representatives used their loyalty to try to undermine the public memory that stressed their fair treatment by the Crown. At Queenston Heights A.G. Smith stated that part of the reason the Six Nations had sided with the British was the promise of “perpetual independence and self-government, and also that they would be amply indemnified for any and all losses that they might sustain in their services.” However, the peace signed between Great Britain and the United States in 1783 had completely ignored the First Nations. A.G. Smith continued: “Now we know that these pledges were not adequately fulfilled, yet, notwithstanding this fact, the Six Nations remained faithful in their adherence to the British Crown.” Smith went on to point out “one or two samples of justice doled out to my people,” namely that immigrants were given citizenship after living in the country for six months, while “the original owners of this country” who had fought and died for Britain were denied the franchise. Smith called on

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202 Olick and Robbins, 127.
204 Olive Patricia Dickason, A Concise History of Canada’s First Nations (Toronto: Oxford University Press, 2006), 100.
Canada to do justice for his people by respecting their treaty rights and granting them representation in the House of Commons. Smith’s Queenston Heights speech was the longest and best-documented address delivered by the Six Nations representatives, but other speakers made similar assertions. After reading his list of 200 years’ worth of Six Nations service at the Beaverdams celebration, H.M. Smith questioned what the future held for his people. Fearing the removal of reserves, Smith suggested that “the Six Nations may travel from the North Pole to attend your next celebration.” He went on to question why the Crown’s promises to them had been ignored, especially since the Six Nations had served faithfully and had fulfilled their part of the treaty “to the letter.” The Six Nations had positioned themselves within the places’ pro-British public memory by highlighting their loyalty to the crown in the celebrations, then subverted this public memory by pointing to Britain’s ‘reward’ of unfair treatment. Perhaps sensing that appealing to English Canadians’ sense of justice might not produce results, at Lundy’s Lane Chief Hill took a different approach. Instead of advocating for justice from the Crown, Hill compared the situation of Natives in Canada unfavourably to that of Natives in the United States. Smith stated that sometimes the Six Nations were envious of Natives living on reserves in the United States, as they had fewer expenses and, in contrast to Canada, the United States Government maintained Reserve roads. Suggesting that the First Nations in the United States were being better treated than those under the British Crown was an attack on the belief in the superiority of British institutions. At the centennial celebrations Six Nations representatives used pro-British narratives to call for justice by pointing to their ongoing loyalty to the Crown and by suggesting that the

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205 Fraser, 71 – 73.
207 “Inspiring Lessons from the War of 1812,” Globe, 27 July 1914, 3; Wallis, Geary, and Morden, 68.
United States, traditionally seen as violent in their treatment of Natives, was superior to Britain in its treatment of First Nations peoples.

The Six Nations speakers appealed directly to their battlefield audiences to help them in their struggle. At the end of his Queenston Heights speech A.G. Smith placed the onus on those present to right the wrongs of the past, stating “I hope that each individual of influence will go back to his or her sphere of usefulness and listen to the cry for justice on behalf of the Six Nations, fully appreciating that it is ‘up to you’ to see to it that justice is done this people who have rendered such inestimable service to this country and to Britain.”

Similarly, at the Lundy’s Lane centennial Chief Hill asked the audience to use their influence to help the Six Nations attain political representation, as they were “brothers who had shared in the defence of Canada.”

A.G. Smith and the other Six Nations representatives may have felt a guarded hope after the Queenston Heights celebration, as according to several reports their speeches had received “frequent outbursts of applause,” and had “awakened more enthusiasm than that of any other speaker.” At the conclusion of Smith’s speech a medalled veteran from Toronto, referring to the franchise and representation in the House of Commons, called out “you’ll get both, Chief.”

Two years later at the Beaverdams celebration local newspapers reported that H.M. Smith’s speech, especially his call for the franchise, was “punctuated by cries of approval from the assemblage.”

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208 Fraser, 73.
209 Wallis, Geary, and Morden, 68.
210 “In Memory of Gen. Brock” Globe and Mail October 14, 1912, 3; Niagara Historical Society Minutes “Historical 263,” page 70, NHS collection, AO.
211 “General Brock’s Memory was Honored by Thousands on the Old Battle Ground,” The Standard (St. Catharines), 14 October 1912, 5.
However, perhaps predictably, the cheers of the crowd did not translate to political action on behalf of the Six Nations. In her examination of Kwakwaka’wakw participation in the 1893 World’s Columbian Exposition Paige Raibmon shows that expressing a distinctly First Nations identity as a form of resistance can backfire and lead to the participants being relegated to the past.\(^{213}\) This may have been the case for the Six Nations’ traditional dress and emphasis on their ‘Indian’ traits. A *Globe* article made no mention of the content of their speeches, but said that the Six Nations, along with the military contingents, “lent a picturesque touch in the celebrations,” adding that “some of the Indians were in tribal dress.”\(^{214}\) Others adopted a paternalistic attitude, implying that the Six Nations represented a dying race. One reporter at the Lundy’s Lane centennial noted that Chief Hill’s speech “added a pathetic note to the proceedings.”\(^{215}\) F.H. Keefer was one of the few who expressed his support for the goals of the Six Nations after the close of the proceedings, suggesting to other historical society members that they should help the Six Nations gain the franchise. This was because they were “so much superior to other tribes…in so many ways” that the Dominion Government could grant their request not only in recognition of their past service, but to encourage other Native groups to “rise to their standard.”\(^{216}\) However, nothing came of Keefer’s idea. As Norman Knowles has shown, many UELA members chose not to advocate for the Six Nations by pointing to the organization’s constitution, which banned involvement in political issues. Facing the same lacklustre response they had after the 1884 Loyalist centenary, the Six Nations became increasingly frustrated and let their membership in the OHS lapse.\(^{217}\) Although their efforts did not translate to political change, Six Nations’ participation in the centennial celebrations at Queenston Heights, Beaverdams, and Lundy’s

\(^{213}\)Raibmon, 72-73.
\(^{214}\)“In Memory of Gen. Brock.” *Globe and Mail* October 14, 1912, 1.
\(^{216}\)F. H. Keefer to Helen Merrill, 30 June 1914, “Military – Battles – Centenary of the Battle of Beaverdams (24 June 1914)” # 994.005.1 File 19, UELA Archives – Toronto Branch.
\(^{217}\)Knowles, 149; Killan, 44.
Lane illustrate the possibilities the former battlefields as places offered to marginalized groups. Six Nations representatives used their presence on the former battlefields and the public memory communicated there to highlight their past contributions to the country and their present unfair treatment to call for change.

**Conclusion**

Places communicate certain social roles and relations; as Yi Fu Tuan notes, when places are human designed people know who they are and how they are supposed to behave.\(^{218}\) However, the public memories reflected and shaped through places are not static and unassailable, and can be subject to contestation. Although they used different approaches, both women and Six Nations representatives used the places to put forward alternative public memories of the War of 1812 that at times supplemented and contested the places’ emphasis on Anglo-Saxon male sacrifice. Women altered the battlefields’ locales by erecting monuments to Laura Secord, and although the monuments were not a direct challenge to the ideal of male sacrifice, they put forward a supplemental public memory that emphasized women’s contribution to the past and future of the nation. Where to erect the monuments to Secord was important to the monuments’ supporters, and the transient nature of Secord’s famous walk led to debates about the placement of these monuments. Supporters were able to erect monuments on the former battlefields of Lundy’s Lane and Queenston Heights, but Secord did not play a notable role in formal commemorative ceremonies held on the battlefields, suggesting that efforts to link the heroine to the places the monuments were erected were not entirely successful. The Six Nations representatives took advantage of their opportunities to speak at the centennial celebrations held at Queenston Heights, Lundy’s Lane, and Beaverdams. Although they had no permanent monuments on the battlefields, Six Nations speakers’ presence laid a claim to the

\(^{218}\) Tuan, *Space and Place*, 102.
places, and in their speeches they positioned themselves within dominant pro-British narratives to argue against the Indian Act.

Although they were both fighting for political representation, women and the Six Nations did not share an equal power relationship. Many women active in the local historical society movement were also feminists, and although some feminists had been inspired by the seeming freedom Iroquois women enjoyed, the majority embraced racial hierarchies that placed First Nations below whites, including white women.²¹⁹ These views may have been exacerbated by a period of increasing racial awareness and anxiety about the future of the Anglo-Saxon ‘race’ around the turn of the century. Many feminists shared this concern, and drew on these anxieties to promote their own position as defenders of the race from a variety of threats, including increased immigration and the continuing existence of Native peoples.²²⁰ This may seem paradoxical given the high regard some historical society members expressed for the Six Nations, but more ‘civilized’ Natives were still Natives, and not equal to whites.²²¹ In their written histories women portrayed Natives in a variety of contradictory ways, but often as Others who were at times childlike and at others prone to violence.²²² As Morgan points out, these women, “despite their subordinate status relative to their male counterparts, did not occupy the same position as Native men.”²²³ Direct evidence for these views at the ceremonies themselves is rare, but Janet Carnochan’s report of the Thorold and Beaverdams celebration reveals not only

²²⁰ Devereux, 180; Bacchi, 104.
²²¹ Valverde makes a similar comparison regarding Chinese Christians. See Valverde, The Age of Light, Soap and Water, 107; see also Coates and Morgan, 139-140.
²²² Morgan, “History, Nation, and Empire,” 521-23.
²²³ Ibid., 525.
praise of Laura Secord, but her implied superiority as an historical actor. After noting the presence of the Six Nations representatives, Carnochan argued that, “but for Laura Secord and her warning those warriors and the small band of British and Canadian red coats would have been taken unawares.” Although this observation was for the most part a reflection of the author’s interest in the Heroine of 1812, it also indicates that, despite their important role in the Battle of Beaverdams, the Six Nations and the smaller group of British soldiers required the guidance of a white woman to secure victory. Both women and the Six Nations were supplementing and contesting the public memory of the War of 1812, but did not share the same social standing.

According to the historical record the two groups, like their different efforts to shape the public memory of the war, did not interact a great deal at these celebrations beyond Helen Merrill’s ceremonial adoption as a Six Nations Chief and sharing her position atop the Brock monument with Allen W. Johnson at the Queenston Heights centenary. Just as women accepted the relative exclusion of the Six Nations, the Six Nations seemed to tacitly accept the exclusion of women, even omitting women from their own ranks in the celebrations. Indeed, although Six Nations women played an important role in their home communities and as performers, they were not included in these commemorative ceremonies. This is perhaps surprising, as despite their traditional matrilineal authority having been undermined by colonialism, Six Nations women remained active in the Grand River community in the early twentieth century as teachers, nurses, and moral reform advocates. Historical evidence giving insight into the motivations of Six Nations representatives is lacking, but it is possible that they did not include women because of the Six Nations’ efforts to position themselves within the battlefields’ public memory of

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224 OHS, Annual Report...1914, 74.
225 Norman, 2-3; Weaver, 241-42.
masculine sacrifice and military prowess. Additionally, the members of the Six Nations were there to argue for the franchise, which, despite the efforts of feminists, only applied to males. For whatever reason, Six Nations women did not receive a hearing at these centenary celebrations, as the Six Nations representatives tacitly accepted their exclusion from the places.

In the end Euro-Canadian women had more lasting success than the Six Nations in shaping the public memory communicated at the battlefields. Although women and the figure of Laura Secord did not play large parts in commemorative ceremonies, the presence of monuments in the places communicated women’s claim on them. The meanings associated with these monuments and the degree to which visitors engaged with them are hard to determine and doubtless changed through time, but the physical markers themselves remained on the locale. In contrast to the physical permanency of the Secord memorials, Six Nations’ claims on the places were limited to only certain times. Although they seized the opportunity to subvert the places’ Anglo-Saxon public memory, their claim on the places was transitory and did not lead to political change. Despite these groups’ differing degrees of success, both put forward alternatives to the places’ male Anglo-Saxon public memory in hopes of achieving political change. The battlefields, as places, both communicated a public memory that privileged male Anglo-Saxon sacrifice while providing opportunities for the presentation of alternative public memories through monumental representation and performance.
Chapter 5 – The Romantic and the Rational: Places of Nature

While the Niagara Frontier’s former battlefields were places where the public memory of the War of 1812 was reflected and shaped, they were also places where tourists went to enjoy a relaxing afternoon with friends, family, or coworkers. Rather than concentrating on commemorative activities to the exclusion of other, more quotidian ones, approaching the battlefields as places integrates the wide array of activities on the former battlefields that did not necessarily revolve around their connections to the public memory of the War of 1812. Just as monuments and ceremonies could be interpreted in multiple ways by different audiences, the former battlefields could be experienced in a variety of ways. While historical society members reinforced the places’ organic connections to the War of 1812 and members of disadvantaged communities used them to present a alternative public memories, everyday tourists may have visited the places simply to enjoy a contemplative stroll or a group picnic. While the local historical societies were erecting monuments and holding their large scale commemorative ceremonies, in the early twentieth century, notably the 1910s, the popularity of the former battlefields as recreational parks increased. Available sources do not provide detailed information about how everyday visitors in this period viewed the former battlefields, but looking at how the NPC developed them and their popularity for recreation provide insight into their use as both commemorative and recreational places, as well as pointing to changing attitudes towards death. The NPC’s approach to developing and maintaining the battlefields as recreational parks was heavily influenced by prevailing societal attitudes towards nature and its role in society. In part a response to industrialization and urbanization, these ideals emphasized the restorative physical and moral effects of time spent experiencing nature. In this climate the NPC worked to create ‘natural’ locales in keeping with a romantic ideal of the natural world and
parks’ role in both creating and promoting it. Places that may appear natural are in reality heavily influenced by societal concerns, and these concerns were evident in the NPC’s efforts to create ‘natural’ places at the former battlefields. The organization carefully implemented park plans that were influenced by the English landscape park model, as the Commission provided paths for strolling and areas for picnicking. Over the period under study a new, rationalistic approach to park planning that viewed nature in a more mechanistic way began to influence the NPC’s plans. At the turn of the century the Commission began to integrate new facilities for active recreation into the former battlefields, notably at Queenston Heights. These new facilities added another layer to the former battlefields’ meanings, and by the eve of the Great War they were places where public memory, passive recreation, and active recreation coexisted. The Commission’s activities at Drummond Hill Cemetery, where they worked to minimize the evidence of the dead in the locale, also points to a growing discomfort with death and human remains. This discomfort also suggests that at the beginning of the twentieth century some of the former battlefields may have been beginning to be seen less as commemorative places home to the war dead and more as parks. While the local historical societies, women, and the Six Nations were reinforcing the places’ connections to the public memory of the War of 1812 for different ends, the NPC was working to create places of nature where tourists could go to passively or actively engage with the benefits of the outdoors.

**Pilgrimage and Tourism**

In addition to campaigning for monuments, members of local historical societies often organized so-called pilgrimages to the former battlefields. At the turn of the century local entrepreneurs and history enthusiasts undertook pilgrimages from Toronto, and members of local historical societies would often meet the delegates to discuss what they saw as the places’
historical significance. In May of 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 NHS guided them to different places of historic interest. The group visited Queenston Heights next, where they heard a lecture on the events of the battle there before continuing on to Lundy’s Lane where they were met by members of the LLHS. Although they were there because of the places’ connections to the War of 1812, members of historical societies and pilgrims were still aware of the places’ natural beauty. In 1893 a local group, including some members of the LLHS such as George Bull and James Wilson, erected an observatory opposite the Lundy’s Lane battlefield to educate visitors about the place’s past and allow them to enjoy the locale’s scenic qualities. The LLHS wanted to educate visitors about the battle, but also understood the draw of the surrounding locale’s natural beauty, stating that the platform would offer “a place from which the Lundy’s Lane battle ground and the whole country for miles around can be viewed.” For the members of the LLHS Lundy’s Lane was a place with close connections to the War of 1812, but they were not unaware of the draw of the locale’s natural surroundings and incorporated them into their efforts to attract tourists to the site. Similarly, when the OHS held its 1905 annual meeting in Niagara Falls the program included an excursion to Queenston Heights under the direction of the LLHS and with the cooperation of the NHS. Here participants were “delighted not only with the prospect from the hill…but with the picturesque description which was given by Col. Cruikshank, of the main events connected with the military engagements of the War of 1812.” Although these participants were taken with the view, the central motivation for their visit was the places’ connections to the war. These

1 See, for example, “An Historic Trip to the Niagara,” The Globe, 19 May 1898, 12.
2 Historical Pilgrimage, The Globe, 19 May 1897, 10.
3 James C. Morden, Historical Monuments and Observatories of Lundy’s Lane and Queenston Heights (Niagara Falls: Lundy's Lane Historical Society, 1929), 24; LLHS, Annual Report (1893), n.p.
4 OHS, Annual Report...1905 and 1906, 14.
pilgrimages, as the name implies, visited Queenston Heights and other battlefields mostly due to their association with the War of 1812; they were journeying to them primarily for commemorative and educational purposes.

The local historical societies hosted their gatherings at numerous former battlefields, but other organizations favoured Queenston Heights for their gatherings, likely due to its relatively easy access from Toronto and its scenic beauty. There is also evidence that other groups held picnics on the Heights before the advent of the local history movement. For instance, in 1862 the Toronto-based St. George’s Society held its “annual excursion” on the Heights to raise money for its charitable fund, and in 1864 members of the Orange Order held a picnic at Queenston Heights that included a brass band and speeches by members of the Order.\(^5\) Although the public memory associated with Queenston Heights may have been a draw for these groups, they were more likely attracted by the locale’s picturesque beauty. The St. George’s Society, for instance, did not mention the War of 1812, and arranged for visitors to ascend the Brock monument for free, promising “increased facilities…for viewing the beautiful scenery of this far-famed locality.”\(^6\) There is also no evidence indicating that these gatherings featured historical addresses. Thus, by the turn of the century the frontier battlefields had seen both pilgrims and picnickers drawn by the places’ public memories and scenic beauty.

The popularity of some of the former battlefields as destinations for group gatherings and picnics increased steadily from the turn of the century to the beginning of the Great War. Queenston Heights was easily accessible to Toronto via steamer to the Queenston dock, where tourists could board the International Railway Company’s belt line which took them to various

stops, including Queenston Heights. The NPC did not maintain detailed records of the number of visitors to the former battlefield, but an examination of the tolls collected to climb the Brock monument provides a clue. In 1906 the Commission lowered the price of admission from $0.25 to $0.15 to encourage more tourists to climb the shaft and experience the scenic view of the Niagara River. The 1907 receipts show that over the course of the season 6,645 people scaled the monument – a number that increased fairly steadily to 11,961 in 1913. Clearly not all tourists climbed the monument, making it difficult to obtain a precise count. However, the high and increasing number of people scaling the monument indicates that the area was popular and that its popularity increased consistently in the early twentieth century. Fort Erie did not receive the same number of visitors, but still saw a steady stream. In 1909 the Fort Erie caretaker reported that on most days the park received 25 to 50 visitors, with 50 to 150 visiting on Sundays. The number of recreational visitors to Fort Erie may have been lessened by the attractions, including picnic grounds and rides such as merry-go-rounds, offered at the nearby Erie Beach Park.

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, most groups indulged in a picnic lunch and then enjoyed 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, smoking race, walking race, partners’ walking race, elected officers’ walking race, pick-up race, running

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7 Seibel, 220.
9 Frank Kivell to John Jackson, 31 August 1909, Records of the NPC, General Manager’s Office Subject Correspondence (First Chronological Grouping), 1901-1924, RG 38 3-1-488 Box MN29, AO.
10 Spear, 71-72.
race, and open race. Although not always as comprehensive as that above, a program of sports
and the occasional pie or bread roll eating contest remained fixtures of these outings throughout
the period, especially in the summer. Many went to the former battlefields to enjoy a relaxing
and fun day with friends, family, or work or church groups. These outdoor activities, and the
places created to support them, were products of changing ideas about nature’s role in society.
These evolving ideals were reflected in the former battlefields, as seemingly natural
surroundings were created to cater to societal expectations about the natural world.

The Ideal Nature

The NPC designed the former battlefields to appear natural and to encourage the
enjoyment of that nature. Ideas about the natural world influenced thinking about parks and park
design, as park locales were created to fulfil different personal and societal needs and
expectations. In creating this park environment the commissioners were influenced by prevailing
late nineteenth century perceptions of the role of nature in society, which had a long genesis.

The Western origins of the park-like idea can be traced to the idea of the Garden of Eden,
an enclosed space full of flora and fauna where Adam served as the “leading horticulturalist.”
This natural state had a strong influence on Judeo-Christian cultures, with future park designers
looking to representations of the Garden of Eden as the ideal locale. Eden represented a tamed,
controlled natural world where man had been granted dominion over plants and beasts. The
Greek and Roman civilizations also had an influence on the thinking about nature’s role in
society. Aristotle argued that nature and culture were fundamentally opposed, and suggested an
ideal Golden Age of Perpetual Spring, a time before civilization when humans lived in harmony

12 See, for example, ‘Civic Holiday Doings,’ Niagara Falls Daily Record, 5 August 1909, 1.
13Karen R. Jones and John Wills, The Invention of the Park: From the Garden of Eden to Disney’s Magic Kingdom
(Cambridge, UK: Polity, 2005), 11.
with nature. The Romans saw nature as an antidote to the negative effects of civilization, but believed that humans also had the right to transform it. During the Middle Ages some elites kept an interest in the park, and the wealthy created enclosed deer parks where they kept game animals for sport. The view of nature as mechanistic that began in the sixteenth century, combined with Renaissance humanism’s emphasis on reason and ancient civilization, was reflected in park design. In the 16th and 17th centuries parks were formal regulated areas with straight paths and clipped hedges, the most prominent example being the grounds at Versailles. These early ideas about nature stressed that it was something that could, and should, be controlled. The beginning of the eighteenth century saw a new trend in landscape design that dispensed with both formality and enforced symmetry: the English landscape park.  

14 This style was partly influenced by artistic representations of landscapes, and its supporters tended to approach landscape though an artistic lens, as a vista that the artist (or landscape architect) selected and modified to conform to conventional ideals about what makes up a ‘good view.’  

15 Pioneered by Lancelot “Capability” Brown, this style created a vision of idealized rural places by smoothing the locale and removing rugged obstacles and ‘accidental’ defects from it. Brown also included gentle hills and curves, clumps of trees (rather than rows), and curved walkways in his designs, which strove to maintain the illusion of a natural landscape.  

16 French and British settlers in North America brought these park ideals with them and created small private gardens and later large estates that were laid out in the English landscape style, such as Hamilton’s Dundurn Castle.  

17 In promoting a supposedly natural locale, the English landscape park was a departure

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14 Jones and Wills, 12-18, 22,25.  
15 Jones and Wills, 26; Andrews, 4; for a more detailed discussion see Clark.  
from earlier views of nature that saw it as something to be feared and tamed. Prior to the late nineteenth century wild nature, or wilderness, had deeply negative connotations drawn in large part from biblical stories that described wilderness as a place of despair and moral confusion, in contrast to the human-dominated Eden. Beginning in the mid nineteenth century this conception of nature changed, and wilderness began to be valued for its aesthetics. This change was influenced in part by the growing popularity of the sublime landscape where, according to theorists like Edmund Burke, one had a chance to see the face of God, a development that had a strong influence on the early popularity of Niagara Falls.\footnote{William Cronon, "The Trouble with Wilderness; Or, Getting Back to the Wrong Nature" in Uncommon Ground: Rethinking the Human Place in Nature, ed. William Cronon (New York: W.W. Norton, 1996), 70-73.} Rather than an obstacle to be feared or controlled by humans, nature had become aesthetically pleasing and desirable.

In response to the industrial revolution and the rapid growth of cities in Europe and North America, in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries parks became more closely associated with urban environments as a foil to the overcrowded city.\footnote{Jones and Wills, 43; Roy Rosenzweig and Elizabeth Blackmar, The Park and the People: A History of Central Park (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1992), 4.} Urbanization and the rise of large cities in the mid to late nineteenth century led to growing anxiety about the moral hazards of urban life, as commentators pointed to a perceived high concentration of crime, disease, and prostitution.\footnote{Paul Rutherford, "Tomorrow’s Metropolis: The Urban Reform Movement in Canada, 1880-1920,” Historical Papers 6, no. 1 (1971): 203.} These commentators saw nature, which was supposedly preserved in parks, as inherently good and necessary to the maintenance of a well-functioning society.\footnote{Terence Young, Building San Francisco’s Parks, 1850 - 1930 (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2004), 14, 4.} As Terence Young argues in his examination of the development of San Francisco’s parks, “urban disorders did not arise because society was evil \textit{by nature} but because its members were out of touch with nature.”\footnote{T. Young, 2. Emphasis in original.} Park planners sought to create picturesque locales in the city that followed
in the English landscape style by stressing the appearance of naturalness.\textsuperscript{23} Indeed, social reformers thought a connection with nature had both physical and moral benefits. Moral reform movements in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries advocated notions of purity, including the moral benefits of natural environments. In her study of these movements Mariana Valverde illustrates the widely held view that rural environments and ‘fresh air’ were seen as physically and morally healthy, as opposed to the crowded and dark urban environment.\textsuperscript{24} In response to the growth of urban centres in the late nineteenth century large cities including Toronto began creating parks as a way to encourage morality and community-mindedness amongst the working class.\textsuperscript{25}

Belief in the physical benefits of nature was not new in this period; wealthy patients had long been prescribed fresh air for various ailments. However, in the late nineteenth century there was an increase in the number of people who believed they were suffering from various maladies (or potential maladies) associated with modern city life. Outdoor activities were often prescribed for either the treatment or prevention of these maladies.\textsuperscript{26} As Sharon Wall demonstrates in her study of Ontario summer camps, the belief in the physical and moral benefits of rural environments persisted at least to the mid twentieth century.\textsuperscript{27} Advertisements for transportation to Niagara touted the physical benefits of nature. Canada Steamship Lines placed advertisements in Toronto newspapers in the 1910s and 20s promoting their service to Niagara-on-the-Lake, Lewiston, and Queenston. These advertisements emphasized the physical and psychological

\textsuperscript{23} T. Young, 15.
\textsuperscript{24} Valverde, Chapter 6, “The City as Moral Problem.”
\textsuperscript{25} Keith Walden, Becoming Modern in Toronto: The Industrial Exhibition and the Shaping of a Late Victorian Culture (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1997), 225-26.
\textsuperscript{26} Jasen, Wild Things, 106-07.
benefits of the outdoors, and promoted the “healthful tonic of the lake air.”

One Canada Steamship Lines advertisement promised that day trippers from Toronto would return to the city with their “health improved [and] mind refreshed – you [will] come back to town a better man or woman.”

The idea of the restoring power of nature, and more specifically of parks, was one shared by members of the NPC. In a 1903 address to the American Park and Outdoor Art Association, Commission Chairman J.W. 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.

Here Langmuir expressed his view of the moral and physiological role of the parks system. The natural surroundings provided by parks were portrayed as an escape from everyday city life that provided moral uplift and restoration.

Before the advent of the city parks movement in the United States rural cemeteries, often located adjacent to large cities due to overcrowding and growing health concerns, had provided the closest approximation of a public park where people could go to experience a connection with nature. The 1830s to 1860s saw numerous major North American cities, including Philadelphia, New York, Quebec City, Kingston, and Montreal established rural cemeteries. These cemeteries were heavily influenced by the English landscape tradition, and many such as Mount Auburn Cemetery in Cambridge, Massachusetts featured the winding paths and emphasis on the appearance of naturalness characteristic of the later city park movement.

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28 “No Finer Tonic Than a Boat Trip,” Advertisement, Toronto Daily Star, 26 September 1923, 13.
30 QVNFP, Eighteenth, 21.
31 Rogers, 334; Laurie, 64.
32 Brian J. Young, Respectable Burial: Montreal’s Mount Royal Cemetery (Montreal: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 2003), 16; Jones and Wills, 43.
contemporary literature on these cemeteries included not only the theme of the deceased’s reunion with God, but a new emphasis on his or her communion with nature. The names of early American cemeteries such as Laurel Hill, Green-Wood, Greenmount, and Spring Grove also suggested a close relationship with nature. These rural cemeteries predated the creation of urban parks, and between the 1830s and 1860s they were used by the upper classes for the genteel and moral activity of meditative strolling. However, the cemeteries also drew groups that used them as pleasure grounds for activities not in keeping with cemetery planners’ expectations. Throngs came to urban cemeteries such as Mount Auburn on a regular basis, especially on the 4th of July. They transgressed the planners’ emphasis on a connection with nature and quiet contemplation by damaging trees, breaking fences, and gathering flowers, activities that elicited stricter monitoring and control of the area. These activities also suggest a familiarity and informal attitude towards death and burial, as revelers used the cemeteries as pleasure grounds. The lawn cemetery plan gained influence in the late nineteenth century, and it was promoted by influential Chicago cemetery superintendent Ossian Cole Simonds. The lawn cemetery ideal was adopted by Ormiston Roy at Montreal’s Mount Pleasant Cemetery, and influenced the development of the Drummond Hill Cemetery. Supporters of this design maintained an emphasis on nature, but wanted to give cemeteries a more park-like atmosphere by cutting down on monuments such as large headstones and iron fences in favour of a spreading lawn broken by

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well-maintained shrubs, plants, and flowers.\textsuperscript{36} The lawn cemetry model was very successful, and by the late nineteenth century it was the dominant type of burial ground.\textsuperscript{37}

In the late nineteenth century the city park ideal spread quickly, spurred by societal concerns about modern life and a belief in the benefits of time spent in nature. The creation of New York’s Central Park in the 1850s is emblematic of the city park movement. The park’s designers, Frederick Law Olmsted and Calvert Vaux, drew on elements of the English landscape tradition to create a city park that provided access to ‘natural’ scenery; it was an escape to nature for city dwellers.\textsuperscript{38} Toronto’s Queen’s Park opened in 1860 as the country’s first municipally-operated park.\textsuperscript{39} The park movement also influenced the creation of that city’s Island Park in 1880 and the Exhibition Park in the last quarter of the nineteenth century.\textsuperscript{40} In 1883 Ontario also implemented an act to give municipalities the power to establish parks boards to encourage the creation of parks.\textsuperscript{41}

The NPC differed from these parks boards in that it was a creation of the provincial, rather than municipal, government and owned property that extended over several townships. The commissioners were well aware of the growing park systems of North American cities, and pointed to them to not only show how well the Commission was managing its own funds, but to advocate for increased revenue. The organization’s 1896 annual report, for instance, lists the size and expenditure of no less than 12 North American city park systems, including those in Montreal and New York City. By demonstrating how much was being spent on these other parks the NPC hoped to show the “utter inadequacy” of the $20,000 available to them each year for the

\textsuperscript{36} B. J. Young, 107-111; Phillippe Ariès, \textit{The Hour of our Death} (New York: Knopf, 1981), 532-33.
\textsuperscript{37} Sears, 118.
\textsuperscript{38} Rosenzweig and Blackmar, 5.
\textsuperscript{39} David Bain, "The Queen's Park and its Avenues: Canada's First Public Park" \textit{Ontario History} XCV, no. 2 (Autumn 2003): 197.
\textsuperscript{40} Bain, 208; Walden, \textit{Becoming Modern}, 226-27.
\textsuperscript{41} J.R. Taylor, 6.
maintenance of their own park system.\footnote{QVNFP, \textit{Annual Report...1896}, 21-23.} Although the Niagara Parks system was smaller than some of the other systems, the commissioners felt that its natural beauty made it “unique and unrivalled,” and stressed that these comparisons emphasized the need for “greater efforts being put forth for the development of the property in accordance with the plans of the Commissioners in order to make the artistic condition of the grounds…harmonize with the great natural charms which the Creator has impressed on the character of the surrounding scenery.”\footnote{Ibid., 23.} Clearly, keeping up with other park systems in North American cities and highlighting the former battlefields’ natural beauty was an undertaking that required a great deal of money and skill.

\textbf{Creating Nature}

In general, people went to parks to experience a closer connection with nature, but the natural landscape was in fact anything but. As Alan MacEachern and others have illustrated, areas that appear natural are in fact the product of decisions influenced by social and cultural concerns.\footnote{Alan MacEachern, \textit{Natural Selections: National Parks in Atlantic Canada, 1935-1970} (Montreal: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 2001), 4; see also William Cronon, “Introduction: In Search of Nature” in \textit{Uncommon Ground: Rethinking the Human Place in Nature}, ed. William Cronon (New York: W.W. Norton, 1996), 25.} The late nineteenth century’s social climate heavily influenced ideas about nature’s role in society and the best way to experience that nature. In response to growing concerns about industrialization and the belief in the restorative properties of nature, park designers increasingly sought to create places where people could experience a connection with the natural world. Although the Niagara Parks system was not in an urban setting, the NPC managed it in keeping with concerns about the enervating effects of modern city life. Creating natural places to fulfil societal expectations required conscious planning and hard work, and the NPC worked to improve on nature to create idealized natural locales on the former battlefields.
The first step in creating a natural locale was to mark it as separate from the outside world. As Keith Walden demonstrates, the construction of fences or barriers was a symbolic demarcation of place -- a way of indicating a threshold between two places. The NPC was concerned with clearly marking the boundaries of the former battlefields under its control. Once it received control of the various battlefields the organization quickly moved to demarcate and separate the places by either erecting fences around their property or repairing existing ones. When the NPC took control of Queenston Heights Park one of its first actions was to replace a wooden picket fence on one side of the park with a new chain railing and wooden posts. At Fort Erie the commissioners erected an ornamental wire garden fence at the front of the property and built a simple fence of cedar posts on the southern edge. According to the NPC the area had previously been an open pasture field. Lundy’s Lane likely already had some sort of fence, as it was still being used as a cemetery. Shortly after the NPC acquired the land, they planted border of shrubs on the south side of the cemetery and the chief gardener then proposed erecting a more substantial wall fence around the former battlefield. As entry to the places was free of charge, these barriers were meant to mark their boundaries rather than to facilitate collecting tolls. The fences and designated entries to the places imposed order on those entering them, as they encouraged visitors to enter at a designated point where paths would lead them to the park’s different features. Some of these entrances, such as that at Queenston Heights, were large and imposing (Figure 5.1), a design that Galen Cranz argues impressed on visitors that parks should

45 Walden, Becoming Modern, 216.
46 QVNFP, Tenth Annual Report, 56.
48 “Report of the Chief Gardener for the Month of November, 1910,” 8 December 1910, 1, “Report of the Chief Gardener for the Month of December, 1910,” 9 January 1911, 2, Records of the NPC, General Manager’s Office Subject Correspondence (First Chronological Grouping), 1901-1924, RG38-3-1-285 Box MN 18, AO.
be seen as a cultural achievement and taken seriously. These barriers also differentiated the parks from the outside world, setting them aside as visibly bounded places where one could escape from modern urban life.

When they took control of Queenston Heights the commissioners emphasized that they were constantly improving the grounds under their control, “and...bringing them as far as possible in harmony with the natural surroundings.”

However, the ‘natural condition’ did not imply allowing nature to have an unguided hand. The eventual locale of the former battlefields was heavily influenced not only by the aesthetics of the English landscape park, but the Commission’s original mandate. The first paragraph of the Act that established the NPC stated that action needed to be taken “to restore to some extent the scenery around the Falls of Niagara to its natural condition.” Much of the Commission’s attention to nature was focussed on Niagara Falls, which was the commission’s raison d’etre. In

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51 QVNFP, *Report of the Commissioners...1885-1886*, 5.
1914 the NPC commissioned a report from Frederick Law Olmsted Jr., who set out to determine the Niagara Parks System’s main underlying purpose, which he concluded was “enabling the public...to enjoy the spectacle of the river and falls of Niagara.”\textsuperscript{52} The NPC applied the same approach to the former battlefields under its control as it had at the Falls, attempting to bring the locale more into harmony with current ideas about nature.

Overall, the NPC wanted to beautify the grounds under its control in keeping with the English tradition, that of a “designed natural landscape” that showcased an idealized nature rather than wilderness, while simultaneously disguising human intervention.\textsuperscript{53} The thrust of this approach was to present a heightened ideal of naturalness using forms suggested by the natural world, but not to rely too heavily on nature’s actual condition.\textsuperscript{54} All of this work, however, was intended to seem in harmony with nature. In 1911 the NPC’s chief gardener reported that “a consistent effort has been made to beautify the park system in a manner compatible with the environment.”\textsuperscript{55} The commissioners were influenced by the views of prominent American landscape architect Frederick Law Olmsted, who had been instrumental in the movement to preserve the American part of Niagara Falls.\textsuperscript{56} Olmsted was a supporter of the English landscape park, feeling that managed wilderness would both be practical in an urban setting while providing a heightened contrast with the highly regimented city.\textsuperscript{57}

In part thanks to Olmsted’s influence there was a growing cadre of professionals whose job was to design and maintain these natural locales. These professionals and their mentor

\textsuperscript{52}QVNFP\textsuperscript{C}, Twenty-Ninth Annual Report of the Commissioners for the Queen Victoria Niagara Falls Park, 1914 (Toronto: L.K. Cameron, 1915), 43.
\textsuperscript{53}Rosensweig and Blackmar, 3-4.
\textsuperscript{54}Cranz, 24-26.
\textsuperscript{55}QVNFP\textsuperscript{C}, Twenty-Sixth Annual Report of the Commissioners for the Queen Victoria Niagara Falls Park, 1911 (Toronto: L.K. Cameron, 1912), 31.
\textsuperscript{57}Cranz, 24.
Olmsted were skilled in concealing human intervention, so much so that few people recognized
the work of landscape architects.\textsuperscript{58} The field of landscape architecture was established and grew
in the early twentieth century in the United States and Canada.\textsuperscript{59} The commissioners were aware
of these developments, and after the departure of Park Superintendent James Wilson in 1908
they expressed their desire to seek out the services of a “skilled landscape architect of the very
highest standing in that profession” for the “decorative treatment of the whole Park territory.”\textsuperscript{60}
Despite these ambitions the commissioners did not hire a landscape architect. After Wilson’s
removal to Toronto John H. Jackson of Niagara Falls was appointed as his replacement in the
Parks Commission, and he also took up Wilson’s former post with the LLHS.\textsuperscript{61} Henry J. Moore
was also hired as the new Chief Gardener, and he and Jackson were in control of park design.\textsuperscript{62}

The commissioners, particularly the former park Superintendent James Wilson, expressed
disapproval of locales that appeared wild and disorderly. Indeed, although the places were meant
to appear natural, many observers thought that uncultivated nature was unattractive.\textsuperscript{63} Part of the
Commission’s criticism of the state of Queenston Heights before they acquired it was that “the
balance of the Reserve is but wild lands, receiving no attention whatever,” and they contended
that the Commission would be able to maintain the area “in a creditable manner.”\textsuperscript{64} Apparently
little had been done to maintain the Queenston Heights grounds since the initial landscaping in
the 1850s. Upon acquiring the monument and its surrounding grounds in 1895 the Commission
began to clean up the area, notably by trimming juniper bushes which had obscured the view of

\textsuperscript{59}J.R.Taylor,6.
\textsuperscript{60}QVNFPC, Twenty-Third Annual Report, 5, 9-10.
\textsuperscript{61}QVNFPC, Twenty-Third Annual Report, 5; OHS, Annual Report...1910, 71.
\textsuperscript{62}QVNFPC, Twenty-Fourth Annual Report, 1.
\textsuperscript{63}Cranz, 24.
\textsuperscript{64}QVNFPC, Tenth Annual Report, 44.
the Niagara River.\textsuperscript{65} Similarly, Wilson recommended that if the NPC acquired the Fort Erie grounds they should be maintained and “kept nicely by constant attention,” while the Lundy’s Lane grounds were described as being in a “neglected and unkempt condition.”\textsuperscript{66} Indeed, the commission’s Chief Gardener and Superintendent stressed that the locales should appear respectable and presentable while maintaining the appearance of naturalness. In accordance with this view the NPC’s horticulture department worked to ensure that the places were well maintained and presentable.

While maintaining an appearance of naturalness, Jackson and Moore’s approach to nature suggests that they saw it as something that could be subtly controlled and improved upon. This was consistent with the views of late nineteenth century observers who appreciated the aesthetics of wilderness, but believed that it needed improvement to reach its full potential.\textsuperscript{67} The NPC took a great deal of pride in its horticulture and locales, seeing them as important parts of its mandate. The Commission had been interested in the park system’s horticulture for some time and had been collecting and cataloguing the park’s flora since 1890.\textsuperscript{68} When Queen Victoria Park was created the Commission planted 269 trees of various varieties, and in 1894 it had erected two small greenhouses there. As early as 1888 the Commission had a horticulture department that employed a Chief Gardener and on average seven labourers.\textsuperscript{69} 1908’s annual report stressed that the park system “should not only be used for the recreation and enjoyment of the public, but should also be utilized…as a Provincial School of Practical Forestry, Horticulture, Floriculture and Botany.”\textsuperscript{70} Flowering and foliage plants were planted in beds and borders throughout the park system, and Henry Moore oversaw several floral displays at the Commission’s greenhouses.

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\item\textsuperscript{65}Ibid., 52.
\item\textsuperscript{66}QVNFP, \textit{Report of the Commissioners...}1896, 8; QVNFP, \textit{Twenty-Fourth Annual Report}, 8.
\item\textsuperscript{67}Sean Kheraj, \textit{Inventing Stanley Park: An Environmental History} (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2013), 183.
\item\textsuperscript{68}Way, 157.
\item\textsuperscript{69}Seibel, 284-285, 281.
\item\textsuperscript{70}QVNFP, \textit{Twenty-Third Annual Report}, 10.
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for those interested in learning more about horticulture. Moore was quick to point out in his report, however, that “the displays in the beds are not designed to obtrude upon the vision,” and that “everything that is done horticulturally is done in a modest way, so as to be subservient to that which is natural.”\textsuperscript{71}

An examination of the park system’s trees gives insight into the NPC’s approach to managing the locales’ naturalness. In addition to flowers, Moore was also responsible for the care of these trees and was occupied fighting the natural world’s threats to them. Shortly after he was hired Moore began a systematic inspection of the trees, which showed some were at risk from insects and fungus.\textsuperscript{72} As Sean Kheraj observes in his examination of Stanley Park, planners not only sought to minimize the presence of humans in the landscape, but also tried to control non-human forces that interfered with idealized nature.\textsuperscript{73} Moore firmly believed that nature needed help for diseased trees to survive, stating, “while nature creates she likewise destroys. Art must, therefore, be introduced as in the case of the human being to check the natural processes which result in disintegration and decay. Wounds which nature cannot heal must be scientifically treated.”\textsuperscript{74} Trees suffering from insect infestations or fungus were treated with chemical sprays, and in extreme cases “tree surgery” was performed.\textsuperscript{75} The healthy trees also required attention, and new ones needed to be planted so as to appear natural. Too many trees or those of the ‘wrong’ variety were undesirable, while too few were not aesthetically pleasing. While engineering the number, type, and placement of the park system’s trees the Commission’s Superintendent and Chief Gardener strove to maintain the appearance of naturalness. Once the Commission acquired Queenston Heights clearing away dead brush and the “rank overgrowth of

\textsuperscript{71}QVNFPC, \textit{Twenty-Ninth Annual Report}, 32.
\textsuperscript{72}QVNFPC, \textit{Twenty-Sixth Annual Report}, 32-33.
\textsuperscript{73}Kheraj, 93.
\textsuperscript{74}QVNFPC, \textit{Twenty-Ninth Annual Report}, 33.
\textsuperscript{75}QVNFPC, \textit{Twenty-Sixth Annual Report}, 31-33.
wood” from the bases of the trees around the former battlefield was a yearly undertaking. The commissioners favoured planting deciduous trees over coniferous ones to “secure a brightness in the landscape, which is not possible where the juniper tree monopolizes the ground.” These trees would also provide pleasant shade for visitors and, as opposed to dense growths of coniferous varieties, open up more areas for visitors to walk (Figure 5.2). In keeping with the ideal of naturalness NPC gardeners favoured planting trees that were indigenous to the area, such as maple and elm. The locale surrounding the ruins of Fort Erie was seen as bare, so in 1906 the NPC planted native deciduous trees there “to relieve the bareness of the grounds.” The following year James Wilson happily reported that the trees around the ruins had “already greatly improved” the site. The Chief Gardener also reported on the planting scheme for these trees, noting that “a system of natural grouping has been adopted wherever conditions will allow.” The selection, placement, and management of trees on the former battlefields was one strategy to beautify the places while minimizing the evidence of human intervention. Trees

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76 QVNFPC, Eleventh Annual Report, 36.
77 QVNFPC, Thirteenth Annual Report, 12.
78 QVNFPC, Twenty-Ninth Annual Report, 25.
79 QVNFPC, Twentieth Annual Report, 25; see also Cranz, 37.
80 QVNFPC, Twenty-First Annual Report, 39.
81 QVNFPC, Twenty-Second Annual Report of the Commissioners of the Queen Victoria Niagara Falls Park, 1907 (Toronto: L.K. Cameron, 1908), 19.
82 QVNFPC, Twenty-Sixth Annual Report, 31.
also provided physical benefits, as some believed they prevented malaria and other germs, and their scent was associated with good health.\footnote{Cranz, 40.}

Members of the Commission, including its Superintendent and Chief Gardener, were heavily influenced by the ideal of the English landscape park and created locales that conformed to late nineteenth century ideals about the appearance and role of parks in society. While promoting the ideal of naturalness, staff worked to shape the locale to both conform to societal attitudes toward nature and to help shape them. They put their efforts into creating places separate from the outside world where people could go to contemplate nature through respectable activities such as strolling and eating outdoors.

**Strolls and Picnics**

The object of creating these natural locales was for tourists to visit the park system and commune with nature. Indeed, these engineered natural places were meant to be enjoyed in specific ways that were in harmony with romanticized ideals about the benefits of time spent outdoors. Scholars of park development generally agree that there were two phases of park development in the mid nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, although elements of both often coexisted in park design. The first phase, dubbed the romantic phase, lasted from approximately 1850 to 1900.\footnote{Cranz originally separated these phases into the pleasure ground and reform park eras, but the terms used here are adopted from T. Young, 5. See also Cranz, 3, 61.} This approach was in tandem with the creation of scenic parks based on the English landscape model and stressed the contemplation of nature through passive, non-strenuous recreation. The second phase of park design, the rational phase, came later. In her classic study of park design Galen Cranz argues that 1900 marked the beginning of the rationalistic era, but recent scholars have adopted a more nuanced approach. These scholars suggest that the transition was not an absolute displacement of the romantic approach by the
rationalistic one, and note that the process of transition began at different times depending on the district. Elements of these two phases coexisted, but the NPC’s approach to park design roughly paralleled this chronology. While the NPC worked to create places of nature, they encouraged passive recreational activities that encouraged its contemplation and experiencing its physical and moral benefits.

In the mid to late nineteenth century urban parks such as the exhibition grounds in Toronto had been intended for passive use; strenuous activity was frowned upon in favour of pastimes such as strolling. In the pre-Romantic period in England walking was associated with the lower classes, as walking on the dirty and dangerous roads was a product of necessity rather than pleasure. Those who could afford to travelled by horse or carriage, and their walking was limited to the smooth (and relatively clean) surfaces of indoor courts or private gardens. In the second half of the 18th century walking by choice became popular amongst the upper middle classes, who walked along England’s improving road system and made travelling by foot respectable. Romanticism further popularized pedestrian travel and redefined it as a way to achieve freedom, solitude, and a communion with nature; many upper class practitioners went on outings alone or in small groups to remote or forgotten places. At the beginning of the twentieth century walking was also touted for its health benefits, and many members of the middle class undertook country walks for both health and pleasure as an escape from the cramped and crowded city.

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85 Cranz, 61; T. Young, 4; Kheraj, 10.
86 Taylor, Becoming Modern, 231.
89 Amato, 101; Jarvis, 17; Solnit, 83.
90 Amato, 102; Jarvis, 29.
91 Amato, 204.
These attitudes toward walking were echoed in the Canadian context. They were applied to former battlefields beyond the Niagara Frontier, as in the mid-nineteenth century residents of Quebec City began to request that the nearby Plains of Abraham be reserved for walking so that residents of the city could enjoy the fresh air and scenery. The NPC also embraced these ideals, and encouraged visitors to stroll and enjoy the former battlefields’ natural settings, particularly the view from Queenston Heights. Indeed, appreciating a picturesque view had been linked to walking since the Romantic period. As Robin Jarvis argues in his examination of walking and Romantic writing, “pedestrianism and the picturesque came into vogue together.” Many park officials elsewhere promoted strolling as a way to achieve “psychic renewal,” and the commissioners followed suit by installing winding paths that encouraged the activity and the appreciation of the locales’ scenic views. When the commissioners sent James Wilson to assess the desirability of acquiring Forts George and Mississauga as part of the park system in 1896, he concluded that “a most charming park [could] be made at this point.” Wilson’s plan focussed on creating a promenade on the bank of the water, “with numerous attractive and commanding outlooks over lake and river.” However, the NPC was not successful in obtaining the property and instead turned its attention to Queenston Heights. The Heights offered a beautiful and picturesque view of the Niagara River, a fact frequently commented on in the nineteenth century. The NPC recognized the scenic beauty of Queenston Heights; its 1893 report on the grounds highlighted the view:

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,

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93 Jarvis, 53; see also Solnit, 90.
94 Cranz, 8.
95 QVNFPc, Report of the Commissioners...1896, 15.
96 Ibid.
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 (Figure
5.3).  

At the turn of the century the Commission built an arbour at the edge of the cliff where “a
magnificent panorama is afforded of the river valley,” and in 1906 the commissioners reported
that there had been an increase in the number of visitors, who they assumed were “attracted…by
the magnificent views which have been provided for the comfort and recreation of picnic
parties.” 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 tourists to
stroll along their length. The Commission also constructed additions that encouraged visitors
to take in the view or take a “delightful walk.” They also built a promenade and retaining wall
in front of Brock’s Monument in 1910-11 so visitors could better view “what is said to be one of
the most impressive pastoral scenes on this continent” (Figure 5.4). Walking had long been a
respectable leisure
activity, and the
experience was
heightened by exposure
to the picturesque
scenery that Queenston
Heights, more than the
other battlefields,
provided to visitors. The NPC highlighted this view and installed winding paths and retaining walls to encourage both strolling and gazing at the picturesque scenery.

Passive recreation and appreciating nature were also promoted at Lundy’s Lane where the Commission worked to minimize the human presence, in this case the presence of death and decay, in the locale in favour of a park-like setting where visitors could stroll and contemplate nature’s beauties. In Drummond Hill Cemetery the remains from the War of 1812 were outnumbered by those of local residents interred there both before and after the conflict. The NPC’s work on this place, although in some regards similar to the approaches rooted in the English landscape park applied at other former battlefields, was also influenced by changing attitudes towards death and the role of cemeteries, notably in the application of the lawn cemetery model. This approach shared many aesthetic values with the still influential English landscape park ideal, such as an emphasis on nature. Although the lawn cemetery was still popular, its use for recreation had changed over the nineteenth century. Even at the height of the rural cemetery’s popularity some of its supporters felt that the cemeteries’ use for recreational activities such as picnics was inappropriate. In the late nineteenth century the popularity of cemeteries as places of active recreation and picnicking had waned due to the creation of the public park and its spread across North America. People still visited cemeteries beyond the interring of remains, but their use as pleasure grounds for sport and picnicking declined. Once the NPC gained ownership of Drummond Hill Cemetery in 1909 they undertook improvements

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100 Cranz, 36, 8.
101 H. J. Moore to James Wilson, 1913, Records of the NPC, General Manager’s Office Subject Correspondence (First Chronological Grouping), 1901-1924, RG38-3-1-285, Box MN18, AO.
103 Sears, 116.
104 Linden-Ward, 323.
that transformed it into an example of a lawn cemetery. In contrast to the efforts of local historical societies to link the places to the public memory of the War of 1812 through the war dead, the NPC worked to minimize the presence of death in favour of a park-like setting that encouraged visitors to stroll and enjoy the restorative effects of the natural world.

A large contributor to the lawn cemetery’s popularity was an increasing discomfort with the Victorian fascination with death, and in response cemetery planners and managers began minimizing its presence. This is in contrast to the local historical societies’ emphasis on the war dead’s presence in the locale. Most telling of the growing aversion to death was Moore’s distaste of the treatment of some of the Lundy’s Lane war dead interred in the battle monument’s vault. In his 1910 report to the NPC Moore felt compelled to point out that

the skulls, bones, etc, contained in the Caskets in the Vault are not sufficiently protected, therefore an offensive odour is at times detected as it permeates the surrounding atmosphere in the vicinity of the Monument. Further I would

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recommend that the Caretaker be notified that the bodies are not for public inspection, unless they be viewed through a glass cover and not handled as is the practice at present.  

The caretaker was William Dalton, who had been appointed the Sexton of Drummond Hill Cemetery and its Superintendent in 1876, and who served until shortly before his death in 1916.  

Local historian Ernest Green described Dalton as “[knowing] more about the graves on the hill than any other living man.”  

Dalton was familiar with death and with showing the relics, some human, that he had found on the former battlefield. These displays were even reproduced as a postcard (Figure 5.5). Dalton’s showing the relics, and that the remains interred in the monument were handled by visitors, not only shows a degree of familiarity and acceptance of death and human remains, but that before the NPC took over the place the conflict’s dead had been clearly visible in the locale. The visible presence of the battle’s dead in the monument vault and on display would have reinforced the place’s connection to the public memory of the War of

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106. Report of the Chief Gardener for the Month of October, 1910” H.J. Moore to John H. Jackson[?], c1910, Records of the NPC, General Manager’s Office Subject Correspondence (First Chronological Grouping), 1901-1924, RG38-3-1-285 Box MN18, AO.


1812, whose promoters linked the former battlefields to the sacrifices of conflict’s dead. However, the NPC did not approve of these displays, and they quickly ordered a cover for the entrance to the monument vault and a pine casket to hold the remains.109

Just as the Commission’s approach to nature sought to create an idealized natural world, their approach to Lundy’s Lane sought to create an idealized vision of death, minimizing its grisly details in favour of the tranquility of nature. In this design burial mounds, traditionally used to identify graves without headstones, were unwelcome.110 Once the cemetery was under the NPC’s control the Chief Gardener began cutting the names of the known dead in these mounds on headstones, allowing workers to “[level] down the mounds leaving nothing to indicate to relatives of the dead the position of the latters [sic] graves.”111 Levelling the burial mounds presented a more park-like appearance, as the mounds of the dead were replaced with more sanitized and symbolic markers (Figure 5.6); as Park Superintendent John H. Jackson reported, this method was “the modern way of taking care of the habitations of the dead.”112 Removing the fences of private plot enclosures that were popular in the Victorian period and levelling the grounds also allowed what James Farrell calls “a marriage of aesthetic ideals to the gospel of efficiency.”113 Indeed, after the graves were levelled the NPC annual report noted that these changes had permanently reduced maintenance costs.114 These developments suggest that societal attitudes towards death and human remains were beginning to shift, and that early in the twentieth century the places were not linked solely with death and the War of 1812. The NPC’s

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109 “Report of the Chief Gardener for the Month of November, 1910” H.J. Moore to John H. Jackson[?], 8 December 1910, Records of the NPC, General Manager’s Office Subject Correspondence (First Chronological Grouping), 1901-1924, RG38-3-1-285 Box MN18, AO.
110 B.J. Young, 51, 111.
111 “Report of the Chief Gardener for the Month of January 1911,” H.J. Moore to John H. Jackson[?], 9 January 1911, Records of the NPC, General Manager’s Office Subject Correspondence (First Chronological Grouping), 1901-1924 RG38-3-1-285 Box MN18, AO.
113 Farrell, 120; Curl, 18.
114 QVNFP, Twenty-Sixth Annual Report, 27.
efforts to minimize the presence of death in the locale in favour of idealized nature also suggests that the place’s association with death may have been beginning to erode even before the War of 1812 centenary celebrations.

Drummond Hill Cemetery’s continuing use as a burial ground differentiated it from the other former battlefields, but many of the same aesthetic ideals influenced its development as a park where one could go to commune with nature. Lundy’s Lane saw many improvements familiar from other Frontier battlefields, such as new paths of crushed stone, improvements to entranceways, and new plantings of trees and shrubs. In fact, the former battlefield was so attractive and well-maintained that some people began selling their cemetery plots at inflated prices. By the spring of 1911 H.J. Moore reported that Drummond Hill Cemetery “has now the appearance of a well-kept burial ground, the grass, trees, shrubs and flowers are all growing nicely and everything is very attractive.” Although the former battlefield of Lundy’s Lane was not as popular a destination for activities such as picnicking and sport, the Commission worked to create a park-like setting there that would encourage passive

115Ibid.
117“Report of the Chief Gardener for the Month of June 1911” H.J. Moore to John H. Jackson[?], June 1911, Records of the NPC, General Manager’s Office Subject Correspondence (First Chronological Grouping), 1901-1924, RG38-3-1-285 Box MN18, AO.
and respectable recreation such as strolling and contemplating nature, while minimizing and sanitizing the presence of death there.

In addition to the headstones of those buried in Lundy’s Lane, the battlefields were also home to the commemorative monuments discussed in Chapter 3. Park designers in this period often frowned on statuary because it reminded visitors of human intervention and was not seen as being part of the traditional English landscape park. However, the former battlefields had initially been acquired and developed by the NPC primarily because of their connections to the public memory of the War of 1812 and the public memory of the war, including the monuments, had strong connections to the places. Despite their disharmony with the ideal of minimizing human intervention, the NPC treated the monuments as objects of interest that park visitors could gaze at and contemplate along with the wonders of nature. They maintained the grounds around the monuments, being sure to provide them with a “dignified setting,” and the winding paths they installed led walkers to them. For their part, the local historical societies seemed to approve of the NPC’s efforts in beautifying the former battlefields. They did not often discuss these efforts, but at a meeting of the NHS at Queenston Heights around 1910 many attendees urged that the NPC “[make] this historic spot attractive to the holiday travelers.” As discussed above, historical society members were well aware of the places’ natural beauty, and may have hoped that those visiting to commune with nature would notice the monuments and take an interest in the places’ pasts. Although the presence of monuments clashed with the idealized wholly natural park, the monuments reflected and shaped the public memory of the war and provided tourists strolling the grounds with added points of interest.

118Cranz, 55; Bain, 199.
119QVNFP, Eighteenth Annual Report, 17.
120“Improvements at Queenston,” Records of the NPC, Scrapbooks of Press Clippings, 1893-1894, 1907-1982, RG 38-7-0-1, Container #1, AO.
In addition to strolling, picnicking was also a well-regarded activity that, although discouraged at Lundy’s Lane, was very popular at Queenston Heights and Fort Erie. The popularity of picnicking at these places increased steadily in the early 1900s. Eating outdoors had been a necessity for many people such as agricultural labourers for hundreds of years, but in the nineteenth century eating outdoors by choice became increasingly popular. No longer mainly the preserve of the lower classes, picnicking became a respectable activity, especially in England where in 1861 the much-respected guidebook for young women, *The Book of Household Management*, included a detailed account of how to organize a picnic and what to serve at it. Impressionist paintings such as Monet’s 1865 *Déjeuner sur l’herbe* followed the naturalist tradition and depicted the act of eating outdoors in a natural setting. The respectability and popularity of picnicking in many ways went hand in hand with the restorative moral properties of time spent in nature. For instance, in the early twentieth century Toronto’s Fred Victor Mission undertook ‘fresh air’ work with women and children from the city’s slums, often taking them on picnics on Toronto Island as part of their larger reform and social uplift movement. Picnicking was also seen as an acceptable activity for Sunday Schools, which made up a significant share of the large excursion groups at Queenston Heights. The park commissioners wanted to draw in more tourists and worked to create an environment that provided picnic amenities to help visitors enjoy the benefits of nature.

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The Commission undertook a building program to accommodate the large picnic parties visiting Queenston Heights Park. They provided picnic tables in a grove of trees, called the ‘picnic grove,’ and made further improvements in 1901 (Figure 5.7). The grove proved popular; in 1917 the volume of visitors so endangered its trees’ roots that the open picnic grounds were moved west of the Brock monument. The first permanent shelter for the use of large groups was erected west of the monument in 1907. That year the commissioners also erected a small picnic shelter near the fortifications at Fort Erie Park to accommodate the smaller number of picnickers there. The locales’ designs, including some of the amenities provided for visitors, encouraged them to undertake passive activities that would, it was hoped, counter the dangers of city living.

Figure 5.7. The ‘Picnic Grove’ at Queenston Heights ca. 1915. Reproduction of “Picnic Grounds Queenston Heights Canada” (Niagara Falls: F H Leslie, c1915), Francis J. Petrie Collection, D423275, NFPL.

125 QVNFPF, Sixteenth Annual Report, 13.
127 “Specifications of Works Required in the Construction of a Shelter at Queenston Heights,” April 1907, records of the NPC, General Manager’s Office Subject Correspondence (First Chronological Grouping), 1901-1924, RG38-3-1-276, Box MN 18, AO.
128 QVNFPF, Twenty-Second Annual Report, 10.
Playing

The value of time spent passively enjoying nature through activities such as strolling and eating outdoors was motivated by a perception of nature as an antidote to the perils of modern life, which was promoted through park design. However, perceptions of the role of nature in society, and consequently of the function fulfilled by parks, changed over time. After the romantic phase of park development began to wane there was a second, rationalistic phase whose supporters were less convinced that time spent in nature alone would provide the necessary social benefits. The rationalistic approach to park design was rooted in changing attitudes toward the role of nature in society. While advocates of the romantic approach saw nature as intrinsic to the betterment of society, rationalistic advocates saw nature in a more mechanistic light as a system subject to control.\textsuperscript{129} In this approach parks were more organized and regimented, and their designers put more emphasis on sport and play.\textsuperscript{130} While the romantic approach to park planning frowned on organized activities and athletics because they would interfere with the visitor’s enjoyment of nature, beginning in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries park planners not only promoted passively enjoying nature, but engaging in active outdoor activities such as play and sport.\textsuperscript{131} The NPC’s activities roughly followed this model, as the Commission began installing facilities for active recreation around the turn of the century. However, these two phases of park development were not mutually exclusive, and the NPC installed playing fields at the same time it was intensifying its cultivation of the natural environment. Indeed, elements of both views coexisted at the NPC’s more popular former battlefields of Fort Erie and Queenston Heights.

\textsuperscript{129}T. Young, 5.
\textsuperscript{130}Cranz, 61-62
\textsuperscript{131}T. Young, 5; Jones and Mills, 58; Cranz, 13.
Sport was not entirely new to the former battlefields at the turn of the century. The Fort George battlefield had previously been a golf course, a practice that had also been seen earlier on Quebec’s Plains of Abraham. In the late nineteenth century Niagara-on-the-Lake had become a destination for haute bourgeois Torontonians to escape the heat of the city and engage in public displays of proper behaviour through polite athletics such as bicycling, lawn bowling, tennis, and golf. Although golf did not become popular in Canada until the 1890s, in 1877 J. Geale Dickson built a small number of practice holes on the Niagara Commons near his home and one year later established a nine-hole course on the Fort Mississauga Common. The Niagara Golf Club was organized in 1881, and when the popularity of the sport began to increase Dickson laid out a second course on the Fort George Commons. Starting in 1895 Niagara International tournaments that attracted amateur golfers from the United States and Canada were held on these courses. In 1896 the Fort George course was expanded to 18 holes using some of the land within the ruins of the fort, which was rented to the golf club by the Dominion government. The names of some of the new holes reflected the setting, and included Rifle Pit, Magazine, Fort George, Officers’ Quarters, and Barracks. Although some residents were critical of the placement of the course, Janet Carnochan praised the golf course and its historic environs in her 1914 book History of Niagara. “Surely never had the players of a game such historic surroundings,” she wrote, “the very names of the holes are suggestive of those days when, instead of the white sphere, the leaden bullet sped on its way of death or the deadly shell burst in

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132 Guay, 160.
134 Merritt, 195.
136 Merritt, 196; Barclay, 193-94.
137 See Barclay, 194.
fragments to kill and destroy.”  

In the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, much like today, golf was seen as a respectable pastime for both men and women, and due to the expenses associated with the game it was usually an upper class activity. Golf’s respectable reputation was demonstrated in 1895 when a Toronto judge ruled that it did not fall under the purview of laws forbidding sport on the Sabbath, as it was “on a parallel…with a gentleman going out for a walk on Sunday.” This view of the sport may explain Carnochan’s enthusiasm, as the Fort George course exposed upper class golfers to the former battlefield in a unique way while undertaking respectable sport. The popular view of golf as comparable to a walk also meant that it fell under the rubric of passive recreation that would not interfere with the enjoyment of nature. However, the courses’ placement made them vulnerable to the needs of the Dominion Government, and during the Great War they were converted to military training camps. The eighteen-hole Fort George golf course did not reopen after the war, but the Mississauga Commons course was reopened and is still in operation today.

The late nineteenth century saw the rise of organized amateur sport as urbanization and improved transportation encouraged the formation of sports clubs and interregional competition. Due to its association with the working class, baseball was not as respectable as other sports like golf, but its popularity in Ontario was undeniable. The sport had been in the province since the early nineteenth century, and it became more popular starting in the 1850s. Baseball was as popular outside the athletic club in streets and open fields as it was on regulation

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138 Carnochan, History of Niagara, 259-60.
141 Merritt, 198.
142 Redmond, 93-95.
143 Hall, 37.
diamonds. The sport’s popularity skyrocketed in the 1880s and 90s, driven in part by the establishment of professional baseball in Toronto. The NPC had provided areas for sports such as baseball and tennis in Queen Victoria Park as early as 1900, and by 1905 that park had a cricket crease, tennis courts, and a baseball field. These facilities were intended for casual recreation, and do not appear to have been used by the growing number of organized amateur leagues. Including playing fields at other parks had been on the minds of NPC officials prior to the inclusion of facilities at Queen Victoria Park, however. When James Wilson was assessing the feasibility of the NPC acquiring Fort Erie in 1898 he submitted a plan to the Commission that included acquiring a 25-acre adjacent property where the town’s railway station had been. Wilson proposed converting these grounds into “ball grounds” measuring 200 yards by 150 yards. Part of this area could be used for lawn tennis and croquet, and the remainder for baseball and other games. This plan never came to fruition, as the NPC was only granted the 17 ½ acres immediately surrounding the fort’s ruins. The Commission did, however, allow ice skating on the pond within the ruins, providing it did not cause damage to the property or take place at night. In 1900 the NPC decided to install a proper ball ground at Queenston Heights for the use of picnic parties, and in 1910 the Commission reported that the play area was “in constant

145 QVNFPC, Fifteenth Annual Report, 5; Seibel, 313.
147 John Jackson to F. Layle, 8 June 1914, Records of the NPC, General Manager’s Office Subject Correspondence (First Chronological Grouping), 1901-1924, RG38 3-1-491 Box MN29, AO.
Due to demand the playground was improved in 1911, and extended in 1912 “for the sports that are always indulged in, chiefly during the school vacation.”

In her examination of park design Cranz argues that playing fields were included in turn of the century park designs purely to meet the demand for these areas “rather than the more important [goal] of stimulating and orchestrating a special kind of psychological experience.”

Undoubtedly park designers, including the NPC, created sports fields in order to meet demand, but sport also had a moral and psychological underpinning that Cranz does not take into consideration. Like time spent in nature, sport was widely seen as a physically and morally healthful pursuit, demonstrated in part by the growth of supervised playgrounds for urban (mostly male) children in the late nineteenth century. Amateur sport was increasingly seen as a respectable activity, as its ethic stressed self-restraint, ‘fair play,’ and a chivalrous attitude towards opponents. In the late nineteenth century’s context of increased anxiety over gender roles, sport was also a way for boys and men to reassert their masculinity in the face of increased public roles for women and the constraints of factory work. The influence of Muscular Christianity, a view that held that sport fostered patriotism and moral character, had also grown in the last part of the nineteenth century and had effectively ended prohibitions against sports on the Sabbath. A famous example of these views is the YMCA, which promoted amateur athleticism and was the home of basketball, a sport designed to promote exercise and

148 QVNFPc, Twenty-Fifth Annual Report, 22.
149 QVNFPc, Twenty-Sixth Annual Report 26; QVNFPc, Twenty-Seventh Annual Report of the Commissioners for the Queen Victoria Niagara Falls Park 1912 (Toronto: L.K. Cameron, 1913), 13.
150 Cranz, 40.
151 Hall, 34.
152 Gary S. Cross, A Social History of Leisure since 1600 (State College, PA: Venture, 1990), 147; Bouchier, 196.
153 Mark Moss, Manliness and Militarism: Educating Young Boys in Ontario for War (Don Mills, Ontario: Oxford University Press, 2001), 127; see also Varda Burstyn, The Rites of Men: Manhood, Politics, and the Culture of Sport (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1999), Chapter 2: “‘To Raise the Wolf in a Man’s Heart’: Sport and Men’s Culture in the Nineteenth Century.”
154 Redmond, 98-99.
competition with a decreased risk of injury.\textsuperscript{155} The YMCA promoted sports as a way to instil desirable qualities in youth and felt that sport complimented a Christian way of life.\textsuperscript{156} These attitudes continued to circulate, and in the early twentieth century sport was increasingly seen as a moral endeavour. As a greater variety of amateur sports became respectable, women began to participate in athletics beyond non-strenuous activities such as golf and lawn tennis.\textsuperscript{157} Women were not entirely excluded from the activities of picnic parties, but they often took part in gender-segregated competitions. Notably after the Great War, many Queenston Heights picnic sports programmes included a women’s footrace and/or a game of women’s baseball.\textsuperscript{158}

The NPC’s facilities for active recreation coexisted with the romantic era’s emphasis on the quiet contemplation of nature, a feat that was accomplished through the segmentation of popular parks such as Queenston Heights. Whereas the romantic approach had stressed holistic park design, the rationalistic era saw increasing fragmentation in park designs, which often featured locales singled out for specific activities.\textsuperscript{159} This fragmentation was visible at the popular Fort Erie and Queenston Heights. The proposed ball grounds at Fort Erie would have been in an area far from the fort’s ruins and paths, accessible through the park only via a promenade at the water’s edge (Figure 5.8). Similarly, the ball grounds at Queenston Heights were built away from the promenades and monuments, near the ruins of Forts Drummond and Riall (Figure 5.9).\textsuperscript{160} There was a practical aspect to placing sports fields on the edges of parks, as it allowed easy access to them, but this placement also left the rest of the park relatively

\begin{footnotesize}
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\item[\textsuperscript{155}] Cross, 146.
\item[\textsuperscript{156}] Ron Lappage, “Sport Between the Wars,” in A Concise History of Sport in Canada, eds. Don Morrow and Mary Keyes (Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1989), 107.
\item[\textsuperscript{157}] Cross, 146.
\item[\textsuperscript{158}] See, for example, “Glove Family at Queenston,” \textit{Globe}, 16 June 1919, 8; “Ward Four Conservatives Hold Family Picnic at Queenston,” \textit{Toronto Daily Star}, 23 August 1923, 3.
\item[\textsuperscript{159}] T. Young, 6, 8-9.
\item[\textsuperscript{160}] QVNFPC, \textit{Fifteenth Annual Report}, 7; Seibel, 223.
\end{itemize}
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undisturbed for those who wanted to commune with nature through passive recreation.\textsuperscript{161} Indeed, the design of the parks, including the placement of recreational amenities, encouraged visitors to undertake certain activities in specific locales. After entering the parks through the entrance gates paths led visitors to different parts of the parks, which were clearly designed for different purposes. At Queenston Heights and Fort Erie the facilities provided for picnickers, such as picnic tables and later permanent shelters, made it clear what locales were acceptable settings for these activities. Additionally, in contrast to the crafted natural appearance of the remainder of the park the play areas were cleared, levelled, and sodded to create an ideal locale for sport.\textsuperscript{162} Lundy’s Lane was an exception to this type of segmentation, as it was not divided into different recreational sections. The absence of picnic tables or pavilions

\textsuperscript{161}Cranz, 40.

\textsuperscript{162}QVNFPc, \textit{Twenty-Sixth Annual Report}, 26.
and playing fields clearly indicated that Lundy’s Lane was to be used as a place of passive recreation, such as strolling and contemplation, rather than sport. The turn of the century was a transitory phase between different park ideals, and by clearly separating these activities in the locales the NPC was able to accommodate both views in its most popular former battlefields.

Figure 5.9. Aerial view of Queenston Heights, ca.1924. Note the open area at the centre-right foreground, where a baseball diamond is visible. Reprint from Seibel, 232.

Ideas about the natural world change through time, and these changes were reflected on and influenced by the former battlefields. While many of them began as places to contemplate nature that discouraged active recreation, around the turn of the century the reform ideal led to visible changes. The NPC worked to create places that emphasized the physical and moral benefits of nature and sport. Exposure to a natural environment and the benefits of passive and active recreation combined to create a place where middle class visitors could enjoy a day of
respectable recreation that according to the NPC would “confer reciprocal physical, mental and moral benefits.”

Conclusion

In the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries the former battlefields had multiple and coexisting meanings. While local historical societies were erecting monuments and holding major commemorative ceremonies, the NPC was working to create recreational places that emphasized the benefits of time spent outdoors. Influenced by the romantic ideal and the English landscape park, the NPC employed its resources and the skills of its Superintendent and Chief Gardener to create engineered natural locales. While appearing natural, these locales encouraged passive recreation such as strolling and picnicking. The NPC also applied this approach at Drummond Hill Cemetery, where human intervention, in this case human death, was minimized in favour of strolling and contemplating nature. Although the English landscape ideal frowned on statuary, the NPC treated the battlefield monuments as additional objects for tourists’ contemplation. The NPC maintained the areas around the monuments and installed winding paths to encourage strolling around them. From a romantic approach that valued a ‘natural’ nature with minimal evidence of human intervention, the NPC incorporated a turn of the century rationalistic approach that saw more value in active outdoor recreation than the passive communion with nature. These changing attitudes were manifest on the former battlefields, as the NPC incorporated more play areas and sports facilities. These romantic and rationalistic designs coexisted, and the NPC worked to separate these different activities on the former battlefields. The NPC’s development of the former battlefields as places of nature and recreation

163QVNFP. Thirty-Fifth Annual Report of the Commissioners for the Queen Victoria Niagara Falls Park, 1920 (Toronto: Clarkson W. James, 1922), 22.
happened at the same time that the local historical societies were emphasizing their close connections to the public memory of the War of 1812.

Individuals may have gone to the former battlefields to look at the commemorative monuments, enjoy a social outing with family and friends, or a combination of both. Available sources do not permit insights into tourists’ motivations, but the places’ popularity for recreational outings and the large crowds that gathered for the centennial celebrations suggest that they were perceived and used as both commemorative and recreational places. After the NPC initially acquired the former battlefields there is little evidence that local historical societies and the NPC interacted a great deal regarding the development of the former battlefields beyond the former’s request for permission to erect monuments. However, the two organizations seemed to respect the other’s approach to the places, whether as battlefields with close ties to the War of 1812, or as recreational parks. The NPC approved applications for monuments and was generally supportive of the historical societies’ activities, while the local historical societies seem to have approved of the NPC’s care of the places. In some ways the two groups’ approaches to the places were mutually supportive; the commemorative monuments and ceremonies provided attractions and points of interest in the locale, while the recreational facilities drew more visitors to the sites whom local historical society members may have hoped would engage with the statuary or commemorative events and been motivated to learn more about the War of 1812. The supposed moral benefits of time spent outdoors and of patriotism also may have complimented each other. The idea of the combined moral benefits of outdoor recreation and history had been articulated by the commissioner of the Dominion Parks Branch, J.B. Harkin, in 1913.164 As part of his campaign to promote the importance of parks Harkin proposed that some parks could be created around sites of historical interest, and that these “would be doubly beneficial…[for] Canadian

164 C.J. Taylor, 28.
children who, while gaining the benefit of outdoor recreation, would at the same time have opportunities of absorbing historical knowledge under conditions that could not fail to make them better Canadians.”

It is not clear whether members of the local historical societies and NPC shared this specific view, but for some observers patriotism and nature were compatible. Although the former battlefields’ different meanings as places of public memory and recreation coexisted, attitudes towards death demonstrated at Drummond Hill Cemetery also suggest that the places’ associations with the war’s dead may have been beginning to wane, despite the efforts of the local historical societies. This process was accelerated after the Great War, as the former battlefields became less associated with death, and more with life.

Chapter 6 - Continuity and Change: The 1920s

Several years after the beginning of the Great War the LLHS unveiled a small monument at Lundy’s Lane without much fanfare. Little information is available about this monument, but its unveiling may have been a more sombre affair than the centenary celebration held there in 1914, as the new marker had been planned and erected during the upheavals of the Great War. The new monument at Lundy’s Lane was unique in Niagara in that it commemorated a commemoration. Its bronze plaque prominently displays the crest of the LLHS, and reads, “This memorial is erected to commemorate the celebration of the one-hundredth anniversary of the Battle of Lundy’s Lane, held here July 25th, 1914, under the auspices of the Lundy’s Lane Historical Society” (Figure 6.1). The monument stands a short distance south-east of the battle monument on land that was donated by John H. Jackson on behalf of the NPC. After its erection the LLHS proclaimed that “this new landmark is a decided addition to the noted group of monuments and memorials upon this historical battlefield, and will be one of interest to visitors, and to those who were present at that memorable patriotic function.” The monument was, in effect, one to the LLHS. By erecting a monument to their own celebration the members of the LLHS may have been attempting to create their own public memory on the former battlefield in the face of an uncertain future. The LLHS’ activities were curtailed during the Great War. In 1917 its membership dropped to ten, and the society produced very few publications and it held at most one public meeting per year. The area’s wider local history movement also suffered losses during the war as old age claimed members, prominent among them Mary Agnes

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1Wallis, Geary, and Morden, 148-49.
2 Ibid.
Fitzgibbon in 1915; Emma Currie had died in 1913 at 84 years of age.⁴ Indeed, many of the founders and prominent members of the local history movement were of an advanced age by the end of the Great War. Janet Carnochan, for instance, was nearly eighty and would die in early 1926.⁵ After the Great War’s end there was a growing concern, notably amongst OHS officials, about its membership’s advancing age. After listing the members who had died in 1924-25 OHS secretary A.F. Hunter theorized that history “appeals more to persons of mature thought…to those with whom the shadows begin to lengthen, and memories of the past and reminiscences of their long experience fill their minds more than formerly.”⁶ In fact, although the LLHS remained active after the war’s end, in this period the small granite monument commemorating the centenary celebration would be the last one it erected. A full and detailed examination of the interwar period is beyond the scope of this study, but this chapter provides some observations on the former battlefields in the 1920s. This preliminary investigation suggests that although the public memory of the War of 1812 did not disappear, after the Great War the former battlefields’ associations with the War of 1812 began to fade in favour of the places’ identities as recreational parks, particularly at Queenston Heights and Fort Erie.

Niagara’s local historical societies survived the Great War, but after its end they faced many challenges to the former battlefields’ prominence as places connected to the public memory of the War of 1812. The public memory of the War of 1812 was perpetuated at these places by the HSMB under the leadership of Ernest Cruikshank, while the NPC accelerated the development of its popular former battlefields as recreational destinations. The former battlefields remained linked to the War of 1812, but after the Great War they were increasingly developed and used as recreational parks. The recent and large loss of life in the Great War

⁴ OHS, Annual Report...1915, 33; OHS, Annual Report...1914, 100.
⁵ Minutes of the NHS, 26 April 1926, Niagara Historical Society Collection, F1138-F-1 MS 193, Reel 7, AO.
competed with the War of 1812 for commemorative attention, as despite the emphasis on loyalty and sacrifice common to the commemorations of both wars, the more recent and deadly conflict seems to have partially displaced the public memory of the War of 1812 as expressed and shaped on the former battlefields. Paradoxically, a growing interest in Canadian history amongst both amateur historians and the growing historical profession also may have drawn attention away from the War of 1812, as there was a growing array of subjects that extended beyond local and military history. The decade’s rapidly expanding commercial leisure opportunities also challenged the former battlefields’ significance as places connected to the War of 1812. The postwar period was one of rapid change that marked the end of the prominence of the former battlefields’ close association with death and sacrifice in favour of their use more as recreational parks. The monument commemorating the Lundy’s Lane centennial was not only a concrete, place-based legacy for the LLHS, but it signalled the coming decline of the places’ close connections with the public memory of the War of 1812.

Local Historical Societies and the HSMB

The Great War, which began less than two weeks after the Lundy’s Lane centennial, was a difficult period for the local historical societies. The OHS curtailed its activities during the war in the hopes that member societies would direct their efforts to war work, and the organization’s membership declined from 400 to a little over three hundred by the conflict’s end.\(^7\) The TBHS had gone dormant in the first few years of the twentieth century, and did not recover. F.H. Keefer’s move to commemorate the 101\(^{st}\) anniversary of the Battle of Beaverdams was the last effort by a member of that society to mark the battlefield in this period.\(^8\) The LLHS’ membership declined significantly during the Great War, but one notable event happened in

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\(^7\)Killan, 169-171.
1918 when the bodies of two American soldiers killed in the battle of Lundy’s Lane were discovered and reinterred at the American monument in a ceremony under their direction. The NHS weathered the Great War under the leadership of the indefatigable Janet Carnochan and, in the society’s words, “kept steadily on.” The society continued to hold its regular meetings throughout the war and to host its annual picnics, three of which were held at Queenston Heights. Over the course of the war the society’s membership held steady at around 250, and it continued to publish. The NHS had perhaps a closer connection with the country’s soldiers than the other societies. During the Great War Camp Niagara was enlarged and served as the training camp for the Second Division of the Canadian Expeditionary Force. Increased facilities were created to accommodate the thousands of recruits, and a military hospital was built within the ruins of Fort George. Members of the NHS did not seem to mind, perhaps because of the place’s patriotic use,

Figure 6.1. Memorial erected by the LLHS to commemorate the Lundy’s Lane centennial. Photo by author.

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9 LLHS, “Thirty-Second Annual Report of the Lundy’s Lane Historical Society,” LLHS Fonds Box 1, 979.0.41.1406, NFHM, 2-3.
13 Merritt, 126, 131.
and were pleased that the camp drew attention to the neglected state of nearby Fort Mississauga.\(^\text{14}\) The Niagara Camp also bolstered the number of visitors to the society’s small museum in Niagara-on-the-Lake, which had opened in 1907.\(^\text{15}\) After the war the NHS maintained a healthy membership of over two hundred and continued to hold its annual picnics, many at Queenston Heights. The society remained active in other areas, continuing to accept donations to its collection of historical relics, and in 1920 offering medals for the best historical essays to students from the local public and high schools. That year the society also celebrated its 25\(^{th}\) anniversary with a large picnic in Niagara-on-the-Lake, which over 100 members attended.\(^\text{16}\)

The federal government’s establishment of the HSMB in 1919 provided an opportunity for the work of the historical societies to mark War of 1812 battlefields to continue under the leadership of the new organization’s chair, Ernest Cruikshank.\(^\text{17}\) In the 1920s members of local historical societies, the NPC, and the HSMB worked together to erect several monuments on the Niagara Frontier’s former War of 1812 battlefields. These monuments continued to reflect and shape a public memory of the War of 1812 that stressed Anglo-Saxon male sacrifice. The HSMB was created in 1919 to advise the parks branch of the Dominion Government on the identification and preservation of sites of national historic interest. It was made up of prominent members of the local history community, including former OHS president James Coyne and Ernest Cruikshank; the latter was elected chairman at the first meeting and held the position for


\(^{17}\) C.J. Taylor, 32.
twenty years. Cruikshank was a noted local historian who had written extensively on the War of 1812 and who had been active in Niagara’s local historical societies for years. Cruikshank consulted members of the local history movement regarding the places that should have new monuments. The HSMB marked the beginning of a period of greater state intervention in the management of historic sites. Through the HSMB the federal government was moving beyond simply granting funds to erect monuments to having a more active role in their placement and design. Various levels of government intervention continued, notably when the federal and provincial government worked with the NPC to restore forts Erie and George as work relief projects in the late 1930s. The growing role of government agencies in marking and restoring historic sites meant that the local history movement, although still active, had a smaller role in decisions about the future of Niagara’s former battlefields.

In his examination of the HSMB’s site selection process, Yves Yvon Pelletier argues that the board functioned as “a Victorian gentlemen’s club” made up of members who were young adults when the focus on the loyalists was at its height, a fact that was reflected in their selection of places worthy of commemoration. Indeed, board members often advocated marking places that reflected their own interests. Cruikshank, for instance, focussed on the loyalists and the War of 1812. At the 1920 HSMB annual meeting nine of the twenty-five accepted recommendations had to do with the War of 1812. By 1921 Cruickshank had recommended

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19“Colorful Pageant Follows Impressive Rededication of Old Fort,” *Niagara Falls Evening Review*, 3 July 1939, 5; Seibel, 267; see also Coates and Morgan, 242-43.

20Pelletier, 133-34.

21C.J. Taylor, 48; Pelletier, 135.
nine sites in the Niagara Peninsula, including the Niagara Frontier War of 1812 battlefields of Chippawa, Fort George, and Beaverdams.22

The HSMB had a standard form for their monuments, and the new Niagara Frontier battlefield monuments were no exception. The battle of Fort George monument was a cairn made of smooth stones approximately eight feet tall with an HSMB tablet attached (Figure 6.2). Beaverdams also had cobblestone cairn ten feet tall with a tablet (Figure 6.3).23 For their part the commissioners agreed to erect the stone markers on NPC land at Chippewa and Frenchman’s Creek, and bronze plaques provided by the HSMB were attached to them (Figure 6.4).24 The finished monuments on NPC property were limestone pillars approximately three feet tall on concrete bases with the HSMB tablets affixed.25 The monuments’ inscriptions, like the long one on the Fort Erie battle

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22 The sites recommended included: Battle of Chippawa, Frenchman’s Creek, Vrooman’s Battery, Tete du Pont Battery, Weishun’s Redoubt, Cook’s Mills, Battle of Fort George, Beaver Dams, and Ridgeway. To Janet Carnochan from JB[?], Canadian National Parks, 18 February 1921, NHS Collection, Records of societies, F1138-F-1 MS193, Reel 9, AO.
23 “Battle of Beaverdams is Recalled,” St. Catharines Standard, 2 August 1923, 1.6.
24 John Jackson to Frank Yeigh, 4 November 192, Records of the NPC, General Manager’s Office Subject Correspondence (First Chronological Grouping), 1901-1924, RG38-3-1- 272 Box MN17, AO.
25 “Plan Improvements in Park at Niagara,” Globe, 24 August 1923, 3; “Historic Spots on the Frontier will be Marked this Summer,” Niagara Falls Evening Review, 31 May 1922, 1.
monument, once again showed Cruickshank’s influence and attention to military detail by identifying the battlefield and listing the officers killed.26

Organizers were still concerned that the monuments be erected not only on the former battlefields, but on the places’ most appropriate points. Previous monuments had been erected on the battlefields’ highest points, but in the 1920s historical society members and members of the NPC recognized the growing influence of automobiles. In response, they may have thought that the monuments should be visible from nearby roads in order to reach the most people, although they were still erected on land they considered to be part of the former battlefields. Both Carnochan and Cruickshank agreed that the monument marking the battlefield of Fort George should be located in as visible a locale as possible, and it was erected at the northwest end of Queen St. near the ruins of Fort Mississauga on land acquired from the Department of National Defence.27 The HSMB erected the monument marking the battlefield of Chippawa on the Niagara Boulevard on land owned by the NPC in a locale highly visible to motor traffic.28

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26 See, for example, the inscription of the battlefield of Fort George monument in “Cairn Marks Field Where Gallant Men Fell at Fort George,” *Globe*, 17 August 1923, 16.
Review noted that the monuments would be visible from the road, and that “even the most casual and careless tourist [will know] that he is upon the scene of events ever famous in the history of Canada and the United States.”\textsuperscript{29} The land the HSMB selected for the cairn at Beaverdams was a 20 by 20 foot plot at the Southwest corner of the Thorold-Niagara Falls Road and the road between lots 26 and 27.\textsuperscript{30} Cruickshank was pleased with the decision, pointing out that the battle itself had ranged over a wide area, but that the locale selected was advantageous because it was at a road junction and the Thorold-Niagara Falls road was well-travelled.\textsuperscript{31}

The members of the local historical societies and the NPC cooperated with the HSMB in marking these places. The Fort George monument unveiling was under the auspices of the NHS, while the Chippawa unveiling was organized by the LLHS.\textsuperscript{32} The HSMB cairn unveilings were in effect continuations of the commemorative gatherings held in the prewar period, a perhaps not surprising observation given that many of the same organizations and people were involved. At the unveiling of the memorial cairn on the battlefield of Fort George Cruickshank reiterated the public memory of loyalty, sacrifice, and the importance of place. Although the attack on Fort George had been a defeat for the British, Cruickshank highlighted the bravery of the “less than six hundred” defenders in the face of thousands of American invaders, and stated that, “they have already dedicated the ground on which [the monument] stands and hallowed it with their blood. Their bodies have mingled with this fruitful soil.”\textsuperscript{33} The cairn unveilings also illustrated

\textsuperscript{29} “Historic Spots on the Frontier will be Marked this Summer,” \textit{Niagara Falls Evening Review}, 31 May 1922, 10.
\textsuperscript{30} J.B. Harkin to W.W. Cory, 3 August 1923; J.B. Harkin to German & Brooks, Barristers, 19 July 1922.; Mr. Peek to J.B Harkin, 10 June 1921; Dominion Parks Branch, Historic Sites – Western Ontario – 1921-1957 Battle of Beechwoods (or Beaver Dams), RG84 A-2-a Vol. 1339 HS9-5-4 Part 1 – 1921-1928, LAC; File no. 99063.
\textsuperscript{32} “Unveiling Monument on the Site of Fort George,” \textit{Welland Tribune and Telegraph}, 21 August 1923, 1; To J.C. Morden from Ellis, 21 August 1923, Parks Canada Registry Files, Headquarters, 1897-1969, RG84 A-2-a Vol 1339 File HS9-5-2-1 Part 1 – 1923-1938 (reel 14110), file no. 01130, LAC.
\textsuperscript{33} “The Brave Defence of Fort George: An Address at the Dedication of the Monument Commemorating the Battle of Fort George 27\textsuperscript{th} May 1813,” \textit{Welland Tribune and Telegraph}, 21 August 1923, 1.
the ongoing public memory of peace with the United States. Upon learning of the planned monument at Chippawa George D. Emerson, a Buffalo historian who had taken part in the Lundy’s Lane centenary, wrote to the HSMB and others expressing hope that representatives of American historical societies would be invited to the unveiling.\footnote{George D. Emerson to F.H.H. Williamson, 23 November 1921, Parks Canada Registry Files, Headquarters, 1897-1969. RG84 A-2-a Vol 1338, File HS9-5 RG84 A-2-a Vol 1338 File HS9-5 Part 1 – 1920-1921, File no 00174, LAC.} Emerson’s appeals were accepted, and at the unveiling Canadian and American young women placed the colours of the regiments that took part in the battle on the monument. MPP W.G. Wilson stated that he hoped the one hundred years of peace between the two countries would continue.\footnote{“Impressive Ceremonies at Unveiling of Monument on Chippawa Battlefield,” Niagara Falls Evening Review, 15 October 1923, 5.}

Prominent local women historians such as Janet Carnochan spoke at these ceremonies, but most women continued to be on the sidelines or in silent, symbolic roles despite women gaining federal universal suffrage in 1920.\footnote{See, for example, “Dedication of Memorial Cairn at Battlefield of Beaverdams,” Welland Tribune and Telegraph, 2 August 1923, 4; “Commemorate Battle of Fort George,” St. Catharines Standard, 17 August 1923, 10; “Unveiling Monument on the Site of Fort George,” Welland Tribune and Telegraph, 21 August 1923, 1; “Impressive Ceremonies at Unveiling of Monument on Chippawa Battlefield,” Niagara Falls Evening Review, 15 October 1923, 5; John Herd Thompson, Canada, 1922-1939: Decades of Discord (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1985), 70.} Notwithstanding her close connection to the battle of Beaverdams, Secord did not play a large role in the ceremonies held there, although Cruikshank paid brief tribute to her in his address. He noted that most Canadians likely knew about the battle because of “Secord’s long night-journey to warn the British outpost of the danger,” and stated that there was no doubt about the importance of her intelligence. Not
surprisingly, given Cruickshank’s interest in military history, the vast majority of his address was taken up with a detailed description of the battle itself. Six Nations representatives were notably absent from the unveiling ceremonies. This was especially conspicuous at the unveiling of the monument to the Battle of Beaverdams, which had been fought largely by Seven Nations and Grand River Six Nations warriors. It is unclear whether Six Nations representatives were invited to attend these ceremonies, but the local history movement had continued to be deaf to the Six Nations’ ongoing requests for political support. For instance, Secretary of the Six Nations Council Asa R. Hill had attended the 1921 OHS annual meeting and read a paper entitled, “Historical Position of the Six Nations.” The paper outlined the history of the Six Nations, focussing on their loyalty to the Crown and emphasizing that the Six Nations had always been its allies, never its subjects. The Council Chiefs also sent a letter with Hill stating that if the society approved of Hill’s paper they should place themselves on record as supporting the recognition of Six Nations rights. The appeal was referred to the OHS council, where once again it quietly died due to the society’s ban on discussing political differences. The OHS’ continuing refusal to support the Six Nations in their fight for political representation may have contributed to that group’s absence from the unveiling ceremonies, as they may have declined any potential invitations to attend. The OHS’ refusal to support the Six Nations must have seemed especially galling given that 292 Six Nations men had fought under the Crown in the Great War. Despite the Six Nations’ contribution to the Great War and women’s growing political power, both

37“Dedication of Memorial Cairn at Battlefield of Beaverdams” Welland Tribune and Telegraph, 2 August 1923, 4; “Battle of Beaverdams is Recalled,” St. Catharines Standard, 2 August 1923, 6.
38 Benn, Iroquois, 114-120.
41 OHS, Annual Report...1921, 16, 34.
groups continued to play a minor role in the public memory of the War of 1812 perpetuated through the HSMB monuments and unveilings.

Although some new monuments were being erected and unveiled by the HSMB and local historical societies, few other commemorative activities were happening on the former battlefields. There is no evidence suggesting that Queenston Heights was the scene of commemorative ceremonies during or after the war; after the celebration of the Brock centennial the UELA appears to have lost interest in the place. Perhaps not surprisingly, given the disappearance of the TBHS, the battlefield of Beaverdams did not host any commemorative ceremonies beyond the HSMB cairn unveiling. More pronounced was the disappearance of annual commemorations at the Lundy’s Lane battlefield. Neither LLHS reports nor local newspapers indicate that any anniversary events happened on the battlefield in the 1920s. Granted, the LLHS was active in organizing the unveilings of the HSMB monuments, but their annual efforts to reinforce the place’s connections to the public memory of the War of 1812 waned.

Beyond the lack of annual commemorations, the number of people attending the HSMB unveiling ceremonies showed a marked decline from the monument unveilings of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Estimates of the number of attendees are not available for all the events, and estimations can also be prone to exaggeration. However, there was an unmistakeable decline in the number people who attended these ceremonies, moving from thousands of spectators to hundreds. For instance, only 200 citizens of Thorold attended the unveiling of the memorial cairn on the battlefield of Beaverdams, and two weeks later the unveiling of the cairn at Fort George attracted 300 “lovers of early Canadian history.”

contrast to the earlier unveilings of other Niagara Frontier War of 1812 monuments, which had attracted significantly more public attention. The 1895 unveiling of the Lundy’s Lane battle monument, for example, drew 2,000 spectators, and over 3,000 people witnessed the 1911 unveiling of the Queenston Heights Secord monument. These figures suggest that the public memory of the War of 1812 was still being expressed at and shaped by the battlefields, but that the places may have been becoming less closely associated with death and sacrifice in the War of 1812.

The recent death and destruction of the Great War also laid a claim to commemoration in this period. Over 600,000 Canadian troops had served in the war, and approximately 60,000 of them died in the conflict. In addition, there were over 170,000 injured, many of whom were permanently disfigured. The immediacy of the war experience and the number of dead may have contributed to the War of 1812 being displaced from area residents’ public memory. For instance, the decline in attendance at HSMB War of 1812 monument unveilings was in obvious contrast with the May 1927 unveiling of a Niagara Falls Great War Monument in Queen Victoria Park commemorating the 129 of the town’s soldiers who died in the conflict, which attracted thousands of spectators. After the Great War ended its war dead were widely commemorated through monuments and ceremonies. The practice of observing two minutes of silence at 11:00 on the morning of 11 November had begun in 1919, and starting in 1921 the federal government formally recognized the practice of commemorating the war on 11 November by declaring the Monday closest to the 11th a formal holiday. Communities across Canada erected memorials

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44 “At Lundy’s Lane,” The Globe, 26 July 1895, 1; “Honors Memory of Laura Secord,” The Globe, 6 July 1911, 8.
45 Brown and Cook, 286.
honouring their war dead, often at or near the centre of towns, cities, and villages. Numerous monuments were erected in Niagara, including that at Queen Victoria Park, one at Queenston, and one on NPC property approximately 2.5 kilometers north of Queenston Heights at the junction of the Niagara River Parkway and the Old River Road. Commemoration also took other forms, and one of the NHS’ most popular publications after the war was “Whose Debtors We Are” by Catharine Creed, an account of students at Niagara schools who had fought in the Great War which featured portraits of the nineteen students killed. The immediacy of the Great War and the number of dead may have contributed to displacing the commemorative focus on the War of 1812 from area residents’ minds. R.W. Geary, president of the LLHS, seemed to recognize this potential competition for commemorative capital. When discussing proposed monuments for the area in the 1920s Geary admitted that he had long felt that the Niagara Frontier lacked monuments for some important War of 1812 events. Geary believed that “with the additional recognition of the Great War’s patriotic claims the need has become more imperative.” Geary recognized the importance of commemorating the Great War, discussed further below, but also expressed concern that the public memory of the recent war could displace the public memory of the War of 1812.

Some elements of the commemoration of the Great War echoed the themes of loyalty, duty, and sacrifice emphasized in the public memory of the War of 1812. Some authors, notably

48 J. Vance, 155; Minutes of the QVNPFPC, 7 June 1926, Records of the NPC, Commission Minute Books, 1887-1974, RG 38-1, AO; To J.M. Crysler from John Jackson, Niagara Township Clerk, 12 June 1926, Records of the NPC, General Manager’s Subject Correspondence (Second Chronological Grouping), 1901-1924, RG38 3-2-851 Box MN59, AO.
Paul Fussel, argue that the Great War ushered in a new mode of memory that was essentially ironic and represented a fundamental break with the prewar past. However, others have maintained that the public memory of the Great War was essentially a continuation of so-called traditionalist narratives that were rooted in the nineteenth century. Jonathan Vance’s examination of the memory of the Great War in Canada demonstrates that non-combatants’ commemoration of the war was couched in these traditionalist narratives that emphasized ideals of heroism, and the honour and sacrifice of fallen soldiers. Some practices, such as laying wreaths on Great War monuments, were also continuations of pre-existing practices that had been seen at the former battlefields and elsewhere. Vance also argues that the public memory of the War of 1812, notably the heroic figure of Isaac Brock, provided the public with context that helped them to understand the overseas fighting. The public memory of the Great War also echoed the emphasis members of the local historical societies and their supporters put on the heroic masculine sacrifice of the defenders of Upper Canada in the War of 1812, a connection that members of the local historical societies tried to point out. During the war a Niagara resident using the pen name “the Old-Timer,” possibly Ernest Green, had published several articles in the *Niagara Falls Review* that drew connections between the War of 1812 and the conflict in Europe. Noting the names of regiments and of those killed in battle, the author traced their lineage back to their involvement in the War of 1812, or even the Revolutionary War. “Regiments which are doing splendid service on the continent today,” noted one editorial, “were, a hundred years ago, fighting as nobly right here on the Niagara frontier.”

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51 Fussell; see also Eksteins.
52 See, for example, Winter.
53 Vance.
George cairn unveiling G. Sterling Ryerson, who had spoken at the Brock centennial, reiterated the theme of loyalty to the Crown and tied it to the recent European conflict. He praised the Union Jack, which stood for liberty, justice and right. “If it had not been for that,” he concluded, “we Canadians would never have sent our five hundred thousand young sons over there to fight for that flag.”

Despite these editorials and speeches, the local historical societies did not make a clear, lasting connection between the Great War and the former battlefields. Some communities such as Stoney Creek chose to link the Great War to the War of 1812 by placing its honour rolls in Battlefield House, site of the Battle of Stoney Creek. In contrast, the frontier battlefields were not connected to the Great War beyond occasional mentions of the recent conflict at one-time HSMB monument unveilings. This was despite the efforts of members of the LLHS, who had wanted to erect a Great War monument at Lundy’s Lane. In submitting his suggestions for significant sites to the HSMB R.W. Geary suggested erecting a monument honouring the dead of the recent conflict at Lundy’s Lane. Geary argued that near Drummond Hill would be the most appropriate place in not only the province, but the Dominion, for such a monument. “Where,” asked Geary, “is there another more deserving, more Historic, or more eligible place therefor?”

It is not entirely clear why this proposal did not move forward, but the members of the HSMB may have felt that Drummond Hill was not an appropriate place, not only because it represented a different war, but because Great War memorials were often erected in central locations such as town squares. Although there were some commonalities in the commemorations of the two conflicts, they were, obviously, different wars, and Niagara’s former battlefields were not clearly

57 J. Vance, 155.
linked to the recent war. The large scale destruction and loss of life of the Great War had likely changed the public’s commemorative focus. Most Canadians knew of someone who had died in the war, whether a family member, friend, or acquaintance. For many members of the public commemorating the dead of the more recent conflict likely eclipsed commemorating those who had died in the War of 1812, despite the efforts of local historical society members to link them.

The local historical societies had survived the Great War with varying success, and along with the HSMB continued to promote a public memory of the War of 1812 rooted in loyalty, sacrifice, and peace by erecting and unveiling new monuments on the former battlefields. Cruikshank’s leadership of the HSMB played a large role in the selection of the places, the monuments’ inscriptions, and the tone of the unveiling ceremonies. A Victorian man who had been involved in Niagara’s local history movement for decades, it is not surprising that under his leadership the public memory reflected and communicated at the places did not change after the upheavals of the Great War. The HSMB also marked a new era of increasing government intervention in the management of historic sites that would later be fully manifested in the large-scale restorations of Forts George and Erie in the 1930s. The decrease in the number of commemorative ceremonies and the smaller audiences attending War of 1812 monument unveilings suggests that in this period the battlefields were becoming less closely associated with sacrifice and the War of 1812. This was likely due at least in part to the more recent and larger losses of life in the Great War, which likely changed the public’s commemorative focus. Additionally, just as in the prewar period, the battlefields were places of not only commemoration, but of recreation. The popular battlefield parks retained their natural beauty, but also reflected changes in ideas about nature and the NPC’s intensification of rationalistic park planning.
Leisure on the Frontier

During the Great War Queenston Heights continued to be a popular destination for tourists, although the Commission suffered several setbacks. Due to security concerns the Brock Monument was closed to the public beginning in July of 1915, and remained closed until the end of the war.⁵⁹ That month a trolley carrying excursionists, including Sunday school picnickers, lost control on the descent from Queenston Heights and jumped the track, killing thirteen and injuring fifty.⁶⁰ An inquest into the crash found that it was caused by a combination of a brake malfunction and an overloaded car.⁶¹ This accident deterred some tourists, and the number of visitors to Queenston Heights declined for the rest of the season.⁶² That year the Commission’s long-serving Chair J.W. Langmuir died and was replaced by Philip William Ellis, who had been a commissioner since 1905.⁶³ Ellis had been born in Toronto in 1856 to a family that had emigrated from Liverpool, England four years earlier. Educated in Toronto, at 21 Ellis had started a successful jewelry business and was later president of the Canadian Manufacturer’s Association. In the early 1900s he became involved in issues of public ownership; he was appointed as a member of the Ontario Hydro-Electric Power Commission in 1906 and in 1911 was made chair of the Toronto Hydro Commission, and he also served as the Chairman of the Toronto Transportation Commission.⁶⁴ Despite the NPC’s wartime setbacks Queenston Heights remained a popular recreational destination, as many companies and churches continued to hold picnics there. For instance, one weekend in June 1916 saw two large church picnics and a

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⁶⁰ “Holiday-Makers are Crushed When Car Jumps Track,” The Globe, 8 July 1915, 1.
⁶³ QVNFP, Twentieth Annual Report, 2; QVNFP, Thirtieth Annual Report, 9-10.
company picnic, and in July of that year the Bell Telephone company alone brought 775 people
to the former battlefield for its picnic.65

The popularity of Queenston Heights as a recreational destination exploded in the
postwar period. Many members of the public had access to more leisure time, and growing
numbers chose to spend some of it enjoying leisure activities at parks like Queenston
Heights.66 According to the Toronto Star, 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, and these numbers do
not include casual visitors or small groups.67 That year the NPC reported that over 23,000 people
had climbed the Brock Monument.68 By 1920 Queenston Heights rivalled Queen Victoria Park
as a destination for company and church picnics, and family reunions.69 Many of the popular
prewar picnic activities continued into the postwar period. For instance, The Globe Newspaper
held its company picnic of over 500 staff and their families on the Heights in June of 1922,
where they enjoyed a picnic lunch and program of sports that included a baseball game pitting
different departments against each other. There was also a game of women’s baseball and a
series of races for both adults and children.70 Fort Erie hosted a smaller number of picnics and
baseball games in the 1920s, but was not as widely used for large-scale, organized picnics. Fort
Erie seems to have been popular with local residents, who used it for smaller-scale gatherings.
When in 1927 the Mutual Club of the Horton Steel Works in nearby Bridgeburg contacted the

65From C.W. Bath (Canada Steamship Lines Excursion Agent) to John Jackson, 22 June 1916; from C.W. Bath to
John Jackson, 4 July 1916, Records of the NPC, General Manager’s Office Subject Correspondence (First
Chronological Grouping), 1901-1924, RG38-3-1-40, Box MN10, AO.
66Dubinsky, 118.
67Picnics at Queenston,’ Toronto Daily Star, July 24 1920, 2.
69For the week ending 24 July 1920, the total number of 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, Records of the
NPC, General Manager’s Office Subject Correspondence (First Chronological Grouping), 1901-1924, RG38 3-1-1,
Box MN9, AO.
Commission about holding its annual picnic on the Fort Erie grounds the Commission was excited to note that this would be the first organized picnic there, and made special arrangements with the caretaker to make the guests feel welcome. The motor traffic and number of visitors increased after the Peace Bridge connecting Fort Erie and Buffalo was completed later in 1927. Fort Erie was used as a recreational place, but Queenston Heights’ dramatic view, amenities, and relatively easy access from Toronto meant that its popularity largely dwarfed Fort Erie’s.

Picnicking and sports continued to be popular pastimes in the 1920s, and the Commission continued to promote these outdoor activities. The growing influence of the rationalistic approach to park management was evident in the creation and expansion of services. Many of these new amenities were housed in new or expanded buildings. In 1921 another picnic shelter, this one 105 feet long and 32 feet wide, was erected at Queenston Heights between Forts Drummond and Riall, and another was added in 1926. The NPC also provided drinking water to visitors, and installed a water line from the City of Niagara Falls in 1923 which allowed modern restrooms to be built that year. In 1922 Old Fort Erie was supplied with water for visitors, and washrooms were built at Lundy’s Lane two years later. By 1921 Queenston Heights had two large picnic shelters with a total capacity of 1,500 and tables and benches to accommodate up to 1,000 picnickers. Plates, cups and saucers were available for rental in

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71 L.C. McMurty to Queen Victoria Park Commission, 2 June 1927; Superintending Engineer to J. Oakes, 3 June 1927, Records of the NPC, Subject Correspondence of the Superintendent of the NPC RG 38 -2-605 Box MN 54, AO.

72 Douglas B. Oliver, “Spokesmen for Nations Of Anglo-Saxon World Pledge their Good-will,” The Globe, 8 August 1927; Seibel, 249.

73 Thirty-Sixth Annual Report of the Commissioners for the Queen Victoria Niagara Falls Park 1921 (Toronto: Clarkson W. James, 1923), 35.

74 Seibel, 223.

75 QVNPFPC, Thirty-Seventh Annual Report of the Commissioners for the Queen Victoria Niagara Falls Park, 1922 (Toronto: Clarkson W. James, 1923), 34; QVNPFPC, Thirty-Ninth Annual Report of the Commissioners for the Queen Victoria Niagara Falls Park, 1924 . Toronto: Clarkson W. James, 1926), 16.
quantities of one hundred and milk, tea, coffee and sugar were available for sale. In 1926 the Commission could rightly claim that, regarding Queenston Heights, “the efforts of the Commission are continually being directed toward adding to the comfort and enjoyment of picnic parties and visitors.” Activities such as picnicking were in concert with the romantic view of parks that emphasized time spend in nature, but the growing number of facilities made the illusion of nature harder to maintain.

The NPC’s building plan also included creating and expanding revenue generating services. Commercial enterprises were seen as out of harmony with the natural landscape, but Queenston Heights had been home to modest businesses, including selling tickets to ascend the Brock monument, for decades. A small refreshment stand had been in operation when the NPC acquired the site, and in 1900 a larger restaurant and refreshment stand opened east of the Brock Monument. The commissioners leased the operation of the concessions to applicants, usually for a flat fee, and in 1913 also 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 aforementioned refreshment stand, a souvenir store near the International Railway stop, and a business taking photographs of visitors and scenery to sell out of a building near the Secord Monument. The NPC expected lessees to provide meals and refreshments to visitors, check parcels for them, sell souvenirs, and take and sell photographs. After the Great War the commissioners began to take control of these businesses and expand them. They felt that

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76 S.J. Murphy to John Jackson, 8 December 1921, Records of the NPC, General Manager’s Office Subject Correspondence (First Chronological Grouping), 1901-1924 RG38 3-1-1 Box MN9, AO.
77 A.J. Twose to NPC Account and Service Manager, 16 January 1926, Records of the NPC, General Manager’s Subject Correspondence (Second Chronological Grouping [ca.1921]-1943, RG38 3-2-2175 Box MN 85, AO.
78 Cranz, 10.
79 S. Barnett(?) to James Wilson, 22 October 1894, Records of the NPC, Superintendent’s Office – Chronological Correspondence, 1884-1902, RG38-2-0-10, Box MN 3, AO; Seibel, 220.
80 James Humphries to Niagara Parks Commissioners, 24 February 1913, “Proposal Queenston and Whirlpool Concessions,” 19 December 1913, Records of the NPC, General Manager’s Office Subject Correspondence (First Chronological Grouping), 1901-1924, RG38-3-1-263, Box MN 17, AO.
the Queenston Heights restaurant and souvenir stand had “grown from a small beginning to a considerable business,” and in 1920 decided to expand the restaurant facilities to better serve the growing number of tourists.81 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 in 1919 – a noted improvement, even when inflation is taken into account.82 The NPC invested in improvements in these businesses, enlarging the restaurant in 1921, and the souvenir store in 1924.83 In 1921 the Commission undertook what they deemed “an experiment,” providing a crèche, or nursery, where women could leave their children in the care of a nurse during their visit to the park system.84 The crèche’s popularity grew, and the following year its original double tent was replaced with a permanent fieldstone building.85 In 1930 the commissioners were planning to add more amenities, including a new restaurant with a dance floor and swimming pool, but complications in planning and declining revenues necessitated that this project be put on hold.86

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81 QVNFPC, Thirty-Fifth Annual Report, 37.
82 Ibid.
83 QVNFPC, Thirty-Sixth Annual Report, 23; QVNFPC, Thirty-Ninth Annual Report, 8.
85 Seibel, 223.
The NPC continued to encourage play and sport by increasing its facilities. In 1928 they built tennis courts and also added another playing field south of the Brock Monument. These areas were popular, and were often filled with visitors in the summer months (Figure 6.5). The expansion of facilities for sport and play had an impact on the battlefields’ locales, however. During the height of Queenston Heights Park’s development in 1922 NPC General Manager John Jackson wrote to Cruickshank, 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.” 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.” Forts Drummond and Riall had both been built by military labour in the spring of 1814. When the British retreated from Queenston Heights in July 1814 the fortifications were dismantled, but British forces reoccupied the area in late July and held the earthworks until the end of the war. The forts were located to the west of the later site of the Brock Monument. Perhaps fearing opposition from history enthusiasts and societies, the NPC placed the tennis courts in another part of the former battlefield. However, in 1926 the commissioners installed a 29 metre diameter concrete wading

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87 Seibel, 227; NPC, Forty-Third Annual Report of the Niagara Parks Commission, 1928 (Toronto: Printer to the King’s Most Excellent Majesty, 1929), 13.
88 Jackson to E.A. Cruikshank, 27 June 1922, Records of the NPC, General Manager’s Office Subject Correspondence (First Chronological Grouping), 1901-1924, RG38-3-1-263, Box MN 17, AO.
89 E.A. Cruikshank to Jackson, 30 June 1922, Records of the NPC, NPC General Manager’s Office Subject Correspondence, AO RG38-3-1-263.
90 Way, 208.
pool in the centre of Fort Drummond (Figure 6.6).\textsuperscript{91} Placing recreational amenities within historic earthworks was not entirely new to the NPC, however. At Fort Erie they had erected a 37 foot diameter permanent picnic shelter “within the lines of the fortifications” in 1907, and in 1922 had installed a water line from the road to the shelter (Figure 6.7).\textsuperscript{92}

\begin{figure}[h]
\centering
\includegraphics[width=\textwidth]{wading_pool.png}
\caption{Wading pool constructed in Fort Drummond. Reproduction of “Children’s Wading Pool at Queenston Heights Park,” Francis J. Petrie Collection, D417785, NFPL.}
\end{figure}

\begin{figure}[h]
\centering
\includegraphics[width=\textwidth]{picnic_shelter.png}
\caption{Picnic shelter in Old Fort Erie. Reproduction of “Post Card,” 1920, Local History Collection – Slides, Fort Erie Public Library.}
\end{figure}

There is very little evidence suggesting opposition to the development of Queenston Heights and Fort Erie as recreational places not centered on the places’ connections to the War of 1812. One voice of opposition belonged

\textsuperscript{91}Seibel, 226-7.
\textsuperscript{92}QVNFP, \textit{Twenty-Second Annual Report}, 19; “Assistant Superintendent’s Report,” 7 March 1923. NPC General Manager Subject Correspondence RG38 3-1-305 Box MN19.
to a Mr. Campbell of St. Catharines, who wrote to his MP to oppose the proposed installation of
a swimming pool at Queenston Heights. Mr. Campbell’s chief concern was not based on the
place’s connection to the War of 1812, however, but on his belief that the pool would attract too
many noisy children and ruin the appreciation of the “beautiful surroundings.”93 However, one
writer, describing him or herself as a “U. E. Loyalist” described his/her shame on visiting
Queenston Heights in 1930 and clearly still saw the former battlefield as being associated with
death and sacrifice. The writer decried the commercialisation of the area, and was incredulous
that Fort Drummond had become a wading pool, writing that “to me it seemed as though a grave
had been hollowed out.”94 Protestations such as this were extremely rare in the 1920s and were
far outnumbered by those who happily used the former battlefields for recreation. The unopposed
installation of recreational amenities within historic earthworks and the marked decline in
attendance at War of 1812 monument unveilings both suggest that in the 1920s the Niagara
Frontier’s War of 1812 battlefields were becoming less closely associated with the public
memory of the War of 1812. Interest in the conflict did not disappear, but both scholars and the
general public had a growing interest in other aspects of modern life, including the
diversification of topics of historical study and a wide array of new leisure activities.

**Modern Diversions**

In addition to the aftermath of the Great War’s upheavals, the 1920s were also a period of
rapid change in many areas of intellectual and popular life that saw a growing diffusion of
interest in not only the country’s history, but in a variety of leisure pursuits as well. Further
research is needed to more fully understand this change, but a preliminary examination of these
developments suggests that the declining significance of the War of 1812 and its battlefields as

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93 To J.D. Chaplin, MP, from MR. Campbell, 27 May 1929. Records of the NPC, General Manager’s Subject
Correspondence (Second Chronological Grouping [ca.1921]-1943), RG38 3-2-83 Box MN 44, AO.
places reflecting and shaping public memory was, ironically, linked to the growth of interest in the study of Canada’s history. These developments, combined with generational changes and the rapid growth of commercial entertainment, challenged the significance of the public memory of the War of 1812 as expressed at its associated battlefields. The public memory of the War of 1812 did not disappear, as evidenced by the continued activities of the local historical societies and the HSMB. However, after the Great War the public memory and history of the War of 1812 was competing with a wide and growing array of other historical and recreational interests.

The 1920s saw a considerable growth in studies about Canada’s history. This was part of a wider professionalization of history that included the growth and revitalization of the country’s history departments, an emphasis on scholarly publication, the formalization of graduate studies, and the creation of the Canadian Historical Association and The Canadian Historical Review (CHR). The field of history was growing rapidly, and new aspects of Canada’s past were being studied. The interests of these professional historians both included and went beyond the more traditional studies of wars and politics to encompass a wide array of topics such as the growth of self-government, Canada’s identity as a North American nation, economics, and geography. Despite the widening array of topics in the 1920s the War of 1812 continued to hold interest, although most of those who published on the topic were amateur historians. Despite the changes brought by the Great War and history’s development as a profession, the general narratives and interests of local historical societies as shown in their publications did not change greatly between the 1890s and 1920s. Members of historical societies, such as Ernest Cruikshank,

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95 D. Wright, 51-53.
97 Morgan, “History, Nation, and Empire,” 498.
continued to supply the majority of the publications on the War of 1812, which were supplemented by those of other amateur historians.98

The postwar explosion of historical scholarship led the *CHR* to expand from an annual publication to a quarterly that could publish original articles in addition to its reviews.99 While the scope of scholarship investigating Canada’s history grew, traditional topics were not abandoned, and interest in the War of 1812 remained relatively stable. While the total number of publications on the history of Canada as reviewed in the *Review of Historical Publications Relating to Canada (RHPRC)* and its successor, the *CHR*, more than doubled from 1897 to 1930, the number of works on the War of 1812 remained fairly consistent. Overall, there was an expected increase in the number of publications on the War of 1812 in the centennial years of 1912 and 1913, although the beginning of the Great War put a damper on the number of publications in 1914.100 There was a small decline in War of 1812 publications close to the Great War’s end, but beyond this and the centennial years the number of Canadian publications on the War of 1812 remained fairly consistent from 1897 to 1930, with an approximate average of two to three publications per year.101 For instance, the 1897 RHPRC featured 83 publications on the history of Canada, three of which dealt specifically with the War of 1812: Cruikshank’s *The Battle of Fort George* and part I of his *Documentary History of the Campaign on the Niagara Frontier in 1814*, and *The Expeditions of Zebulon Montgomery Pike*, edited and with a memoir

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98 See, for example, “Review of Historical Publications Relating to Canada,” *Review of Historical Publications Relating to Canada* 9, no.4 (1928), 88, 89, 188.

99 Shore, 412.


by American Elliot Coues.\textsuperscript{102} Excluding the Ethnology, Anthropology, and Archaeology section, the \textit{CHR}'s 1930 Recent Publications section featured 740 entries. Once again, three publications investigated the War of 1812, including an article on military songs from 1812, \textit{Artillery services in North America in 1814 and 1815}, and \textit{Some Buckingham Soldiers in the War of 1812}.\textsuperscript{103} The number of publications relating to Canada’s history expanded by nearly a factor of ten in this time, yet the number of publications on the War of 1812 remained the same. Almost all of these publications seem to have been penned by amateur historians, indicating a limited interest in the conflict amongst the growing number of professional historians. While the study of Canada’s past had become increasingly professionalized and new approaches and topics were being investigated, interest in the War of 1812 did not disappear and was kept alive by amateur historians, notably Ernest Cruikshank. Historians were studying a wider array of topics, and the War of 1812 did not seem to interest professional historians as much as it did amateurs. The War of 1812 remained the subject of study, but it was one topic amongst a growing number of others that competed for amateur and professional historians’ attention.

In addition to the increasing interest in Canadian history, the 1920s witnessed substantial growth in the variety and popularity of modern commercial entertainments made possible by mass production and technological advances.\textsuperscript{104} Among these, magazines, film, dance halls, and radio provided a wealth of new and exciting entertainment options that competed with monument unveilings and historical society meetings as pastimes. Newsprint continued to circulate, but by the end of the Great War magazines from both the United States and Canada were becoming increasingly popular. Canadians were reading more, and despite the competition

from American magazines the Canadian industry prospered in the 1920s. In 1920, for instance, *Maclean’s* went from monthly to semi-weekly publications, and the magazine’s owner, Col. John B. Maclean, expanded his holdings by purchasing *Canadian Homes and Gardens* in 1925, and launching *Mayfair* and *Chatelaine* in 1927 and 1928, respectively.105 The cinema’s steady growth also laid a claim to leisure time. Moving pictures had been invented in the late 1880s, and Canada’s first moving picture exhibition had taken place in Montreal in 1896.106 It was not until after the Great War, thanks to the development of feature length films, promotion, and the Hollywood star system, that the cinema became a respectable and popular entertainment.107 In 1920 Canada had 830 commercial cinemas, a number that reached 1,100 in 1929, with sales of two million tickets per week.108 Niagara Falls boasted the Queen Theatre, opened in 1913, which showed theatre along with movies. In 1926 Famous Players Canadian Corporation bought it, renovated it for sound technology, and reopened it as the Capitol Theatre amid great public excitement.109 Dance halls also drew growing audiences in the 1920s as a dance craze gripped the province’s youth. Dancers packed into darkened commercial dance halls to perform the foxtrot, the Charleston, and the tango and to listen to jazz music, much to the chagrin of moral reformers.110 Radio also altered the cultural landscape in this period, with enthusiastic supporters claiming that it would change the world.111 A descendant of the telegraph, the telephone, and the wireless telegraph, radio broadcasting was a new concept in 1920. The technology grew in

110 Comacchio, 173-74.
popularity, and the growing number of listeners sat close to their sets fiddling with its knobs to get the best reception from stations broadcasting from both Canada and the United States. In 1923 the country had over 30 operating radio stations, a number that expanded to over sixty by 1930.\textsuperscript{112} The number of radio sets owned by Canadians also grew rapidly, from less than 10,000 in 1923 to over 297,000 in 1929.\textsuperscript{113} Radio gave listeners the sense that they were, in Mary Vipond’s words, “in the concert hall, the church sanctuary, the dance pavilion, or the hockey arena.”\textsuperscript{114} Although people continued to visit parks for Sunday School, work, or family picnics, a range of new entertainment options also likely drew the public’s attention in this period away from more traditional entertainments and interest in the public memory of the War of 1812.

**Conclusion**

The 1920s marked the beginning of a new chapter in the battlefields’ stories. Despite the efforts of historical society members, the public memory of the War of 1812 was facing increasing competition from changing scholarly and popular interests. The former battlefields continued to reflect and influence the public memory of the War of 1812, but the public memory of the war and its associated places were facing a changing world of historical thought and popular culture that, while not discarding the War of 1812, was increasingly pursuing more diverse interests. A full examination of this transition is beyond the scope of this study, but these developments suggest that in the 1920s Niagara’s War of 1812 battlefields were beginning to be seen more as parks than as places of death and sacrifice. While the HSMB under Ernest Cruikshank worked to perpetuate the War of 1812 and its connections to ideas of Anglo-Saxon male sacrifice, the organization itself represented a new era of government intervention in the

\textsuperscript{113}J.H. Thompson, 181.
\textsuperscript{114}Vipond, *Listening In*, 101.
management of historic sites. While the HSMB, local historical societies, and the NPC were working together to erect War of 1812 monuments on the former battlefields, the number of attendees at these ceremonies declined sharply. Annual commemorations, important to the maintenance of the places’ connection to public memory of the war, disappeared in this period. Despite the several commonalities in the public memory of the War of 1812 and the Great War, and the efforts of historical society members to link them, the more recent and devastating conflict likely also displaced the War of 1812 from the minds of the public, who seemed to favour commemorating the Great War’s dead over those of the War of 1812. At the same time, some sites, notably Queenston Heights, were increasingly developed as recreational places that emphasized play and sport rather than the contemplation of nature and the War of 1812. When these developments endangered historic locales there was little opposition from the public, which used these amenities in growing numbers. The public memory of the War of 1812 did not disappear, but despite the efforts of the HSMB and local historical societies the former battlefields were becoming less prominent as battlefields, and more prominent as parks. The 1920s brought a wider variety of interests and entertainments that competed with the public memory of the War of 1812 reflected and expressed at the former battlefields. The increased diversity of interest in Canada’s history and the new and growing world of modern commercial entertainments marked a change in how the battlefields as places were perceived and used. The monument commemorating the Lundy’s Lane centenary celebration still stands in Drummond Hill Cemetery, recalling the height of War of 1812 commemoration and the beginning of its decline.
Conclusion

On a warm summer evening in 2014 hundreds of people, some in period dress, made their way to the former Battlefield Public School site adjoining Drummond Hill Cemetery. Many set up lawn chairs to watch the speeches of politicians and members of the LLHS. A little over one week earlier a 50,000 pound steel commemorative arch known as the Lundy’s Lane Gateway had been installed over the busy four-lane road of the same name. The arch includes silhouettes of soldiers, and its rounded top is symbolic of the locale and highlights the battlefield’s elevation. The Lundy’s Lane road is now home to fast food restaurants and cheap motels, but the arch is meant to inform tourists and locals that they are passing by place with close links to the War of 1812 and to encourage them to visit it. The structure was a striking presence when seen from the battlefield at dusk on 25 July 2014(Figure 7.1). After the speeches attendees were encouraged to participate in a candle-lit walk through the well-maintained Drummond Hill Cemetery and to place their candle on the monument of their choice while official representatives placed wreaths on the bases of the battle monument and others (Figure 7.2). These ceremonies complete, attendees returned to the adjoining grounds to watch a performance by neXt Theatre Company that gave a dramatic interpretation of the events of the night 200 years before, punctuated by the musket cracks of re-enactors and the roar of their cannon positioned amongst the headstones.

This event was one of many held across the country in 2012-2014 commemorating the bicentennial of the War of 1812. The federal Conservative government invested $28 million in the commemorations, a figure that seemed particularly high to some, considering that same

government was imposing significant cuts to Library and Archives Canada. Activities funded by the government included upgrades to historic sites, museum exhibits, re-enactments, a commemorative coin, and a mobile phone app. In discussing the funding, then-Heritage Minister James Moore (who is from British Columbia) contended that the public realized that the war was something that should be celebrated across the country, not just in the areas where the battles took place. However, a poll in early 2013 revealed that people outside of Ontario were unimpressed by the celebrations. Quebeckers were more likely than those in other provinces to respond that they felt “more positive” about Canada after the initial celebrations, while respondents elsewhere were ambivalent. As Nik Nanos, president of the firm that conducted the

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poll, asked, “what does the War of 1812 have to do with British Columbia? …not a lot.” An earlier survey showed that few Canadians were even aware of the anniversary, and even fewer were able to identify the War of 1812 by name. Although not high, the research showed that residents of the Niagara Region had more awareness of the 200th anniversary than those in other areas.

In 2012-14 Niagara’s Frontier battlefields were once again hosts to large-scale commemorative ceremonies like that at Lundy’s Lane. “Everywhere you turn, there they lie. The persistent footprints of history.” So opened the first instalment of a five-part series in the St. Catharines Standard marking beginning of the War of 1812 bicentennial in the Niagara region. Although melodramatic, this passage and the battlefield commemorations capture a long-standing perceived connection between the events of two hundred years ago and the present through particular places. More tellingly, the Niagara 1812 Bicentennial Legacy Council adopted

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“Niagara is 1812” as its unofficial slogan. In addition to reflecting local boosterism, the slogan again illustrated the connection between the war’s events and the region that had seen its most intense fighting. The footsteps of history, though metaphorical, must be imprinted somewhere, and can mostly be found where the remnants of the war and its public memory can still be seen two hundred years later. It is not only the Niagara Region as a whole, however, that embodies this history, but the specific places understood to be where battles unfolded, and that were later marked with commemorative structures and ceremonies.

Just as one hundred years before at the Lundy’s Lane centennial celebration a speaker had pointed out that it was “impossible…to divest ourselves wholly of the direful scenes enacted one hundred years ago in and around [this] spot,” so in 2014 Sherman Zavitz, Vice President of the LLHS and Niagara Falls’ City Historian, intoned that the battle on Lundy’s Lane “was 200 years ago tonight, at this exact time on this exact spot.” A reporter for Niagara This Week recorded his impressions:

When…Zavitz said those words, a hush gathered over a crowd assembled at what remains of…the site of the Battle of Lundy’s Lane. It was as if collectively, the assembled dignitaries, history buffs and members of the military – both current and past – were searching inwards, imagining the sounds from a bloody battle which occurred there 200 years ago on July 25, 1814.

Zavitz went on to give an account of the battle, pointing out the positions of troops and their movements on the locale. Zavitz was not the only speaker to highlight the participants’ presence in the place of battle 200 years before, as others including the Mayor of Niagara Falls, Ontario and the Reverend Wally Hong also pointed out the place’s significance. The presence of re-enactors and the dramatic re-enactment later that night also made it easier for spectators to

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9 Richard Hutton, “What a sight it must have been to behold’ : Memorial, re-enactment recalls battle of Lundy’s Lane,” Niagara This Week, 28 July 2014, http://www.niagarathisweek.com/community-story/4723240--what-a-sight-it-must-have-been-to-behold/, accessed 22 August 2014.
imagine the events of two hundred years before. The nighttime roar of cannon and muskets was even enough to drive a boy in the audience to screams of terror.

At its most basic level, place is space invested with meaning by people. Places can have multiple, layered meanings, and the battlefields remain such places. They were sites not only of armed conflict, but of tourism, commemoration, contestation, and natural beauty. As Lefebvre suggests, examining places gives insight into wider social networks and concerns.10 The former battlefields’ use as places for reflecting and shaping the public memory of the War of 1812 and as places of natural beauty and recreation coexisted throughout this period. However, between the 1880s and 1920s there was a decided shift from the places being seen and used primarily as former battlefields to being primarily recreational parks.

The Niagara Frontier was recognized as a strategic geographical area even before the War of 1812, and was the site of First Nations settlements and French outposts. After the Revolutionary War it was settled by Euro-Americans, many of whom were loyalists. The War of 1812 ranged over many theatres of action, including such far-flung localities as Detroit, Lower Canada, Washington, and New Orleans. However, the Niagara Frontier was the site of the most sustained and sanguinary conflicts and gave rise to the war’s most famous hero, Sir Isaac Brock. Early political oratory and Canadian authors helped to create a public memory of the war before the 1880s that stressed loyalty. This public memory was created in part for political expediency, and to counter American publications on the war that Canadian authors felt were corrupting the country’s youth. This public memory became more closely linked to the battlefields through the erection of monuments to Brock and Niagara’s early tourism industry. Tourists had long been drawn to Niagara Falls, and after the war’s end a growing number were drawn to the Frontier battlefields in search of the historical sublime. The continuing public memory of the war became

10 Lefebvre, 86-88.
more closely linked to the battlefields through tourist guidebooks, travel accounts, and early monuments.

In the 1880s two groups arose in Niagara that had profound influences on the Frontier’s former battlefields. The local historical societies and the NPC appeared around the same time and in the same geographical area. Although they were separate organizations, they shared some members and both organizations shared pro-British attitudes. The group members’ backgrounds and the establishment of both organizations affected how they perceived the former battlefields. Many leaders of the local history movement had deep connections to Niagara and believed that the loyalists and the War of 1812 were central to the province’s past. When industrial expansion threatened some of these places the local historical societies and OHS vehemently defended them. Their efforts led them to support the NPC, which not only owned the land around Niagara Falls, but sought to expand its holdings along the Niagara River. The NPC had already gained control of Queenston Heights, but with the support of the local historical societies and others by 1910 the NPC also owned Fort Erie and Lundy’s Lane. Like the local historical societies, the NPC’s members also thought the former battlefields were connected to the public memory of the War of 1812 and that they deserved protection. The NPC was also drawn by the places’ natural beauty and the added revenue and prestige they might produce. In the coming years the local historical societies and the NPC both worked to shape the former battlefields to conform to their own perceptions of what the places should be.

Between the 1880s and the Great War the former battlefields’ connections to the public memory of the War of 1812 were strengthened through erecting monuments and holding commemorative ceremonies there. Members of local historical societies campaigned for monuments at Beavertdams, Lundy’s Lane and Fort Erie. While the movement for a monument at
Beaverdams was unsuccessful, Lundy’s Lane and Fort Erie became home to their own battle monuments honouring the engagements’ dead. The form of these monuments communicated a public memory that stressed loyalty and sacrifice, but their placement was also important. Not only were they erected on the former battlefields, but the Queenston Heights, Lundy’s Lane, and Fort Erie battle monuments (and the proposed monument at Beaverdams) were all placed on the battlefields’ highest points that physically and symbolically overlooked the locales. These monuments were meant to impress on visitors that they were in places connected to the death and sacrifice of loyal soldiers in the War of 1812. This public memory was strengthened by the monuments’ prominent placement on the locale. The battlefields’ connections to the public memory of the War of 1812 were not only communicated through monuments, but were also reinforced through the commemorative ceremonies held on the battlefields. Local historical societies had long held such ceremonies to mark their battle anniversaries, but these were dwarfed by the centennial celebrations of 1912 and 1914. These events were part of larger Peace Centenary celebrations, and in Niagara celebrations were held on the Frontier’s former battlefields. Speakers drew on the places themselves to add weight to their speeches about the war and its legacy. They pointed out the lines of battle and encouraged listeners to imagine the struggles that had happened in the very place they stood. Speakers drew on their presence in the former places of battle to support a public memory of the war that was rooted in ideals of Anglo-Saxon male sacrifice. In some cases the places influenced the ceremonies, as at Lundy’s Lane when the visible presence of the dead of both nations and the battle’s debated outcome brought discussions about the nature of Canadian-American relations to the fore. In Niagara much of the war’s public memory was reflected and communicated at the former battlefields, and these places lent weight to a public memory that stressed loyalty, manliness, and sacrifice.
The public memory communicated at the former battlefields favoured Anglo-Saxon male sacrifice over the contributions of women and the Grand River Six Nations. However, the places also offered opportunities for less privileged groups to supplement and contest this public memory. Both women and Six Nations representatives tried to shape the public memory communicated at the former battlefields to support their political goals in the present. Women played prominent roles in the local historical societies and campaigned to have monuments honouring Laura Secord erected in an effort to not only commemorate the heroine, but to demonstrate women’s ability to contribute to the defence of the nation, and by implication its political life. This goal was more complex than it first seemed, however, and complications soon arose. Secord could plausibly be linked to several different places, and disagreements arose about the most appropriate place for a monument to her. In the end Secord received two monuments on the Niagara Frontier, one at Lundy’s Lane and one on Queenston Heights. However, despite the presence of these monuments women continued to play minimal, gender-appropriate roles in the commemorative ceremonies held on these battlefields.

The Grand River Six Nations also drew on the former battlefields to support their political goals. They did not erect monuments marking their participation in the conflict, but were invited to address the crowds at the centennial celebrations of Queenston Heights, Lundy’s Lane, and Beavertons. Six Nations representatives used the opportunity to lay a claim to the places’ pasts by positioning themselves within the public memory that stressed loyalty and bravery. They participated in performances such as laying wreaths, and stressed their peoples’ unique contribution to the country’s defence. While they demonstrated their inclusion in the war’s public memory, they also pushed against it by highlighting their unfair treatment despite their unique contributions. While they both supplemented and contested the places’ dominant
commemorative narratives, women and the Six Nations were not on equal footing and seemed to tacitly accept each other’s exclusion from some commemorative activities. Although these groups did not get the immediate results they desired, the battlefields had not only communicated dominant male Anglo-Saxon narratives, but had provided opportunities to supplement and contest them.

While local historical societies were emphasizing the battlefields’ connections to the War of 1812 and marginalized groups were negotiating the narratives presented there, the NPC was working to create natural places where tourists could go to escape the pressures of modern life. Seeing the former battlefields as places involves looking beyond their connections to the public memory of the War of 1812 to examine more quotidian activities that happened there. Just as ideas about the past and its legacy were reflected and influenced by the battlefields, so too were ideas about the role of nature in an era of industrialization and urbanization. Influenced by the romantic ideal and the English landscape park, NPC staff worked to create places that would appear natural. In contrast to their seemingly unaltered appearance, the battlefields were carefully crafted to minimize evidence of human intervention, and the NPC treated the monuments as objects for contemplation. Tourists were encouraged to undertake passive recreation such as strolling and picnicking to gain the benefits of time spent outdoors. The NPC’s development of the Drummond Hill Cemetery also suggests that attitudes towards death were shifting and that the place’s connection to the war dead may have been beginning to fade despite the local historical societies’ efforts. The period under study also saw a new, rationalistic phase of park development begin to be implemented on the battlefields. This approach saw nature as more mechanistic and encouraged active recreation such as play and sport. These different phases of park development coexisted on the battlefields, partly through the segmentation of the
places into different recreational zones. The NPC built new playing fields, but these were located away from the winding paths and picnic areas intended for passive recreation. The commemorative and recreational meanings of the former battlefields coexisted, as tourists could both enjoy a recreational outing with coworkers including picnics and sports and perhaps stop to read a monument’s inscription.

After the Great War the public memory of the recent conflict, a more diffuse interest in Canadian history, and the explosion of commercial entertainment options challenged the battlefields’ close connections to the public memory of the War of 1812. The local historical societies survived the Great War, and continued to promote the public memory of the War of 1812 on the former battlefields under the leadership of the HSMB and Ernest Cruikshank. The new monuments and their unveiling ceremonies continued to promote a public memory of the war that stressed loyalty and manly sacrifice in defence of the Empire. While the local historical societies supported the HSMB, the new organization also marked the beginning of an era of increased government intervention in managing and promoting heritage. After the war the local historical societies, notably the LLHS, stopped holding annual commemorations on the frontier battlefields. Attendance at the HSMB monument unveilings showed a marked decline from prewar levels, in contrast to attendance at the unveiling of Great War monuments. Elements of the public memory of the War of 1812, such as loyalty and sacrifice, were in harmony with the commemoration of the Great War. However, despite the efforts of local historical society members to link the two conflicts through rhetoric and memorials, the more recent and deadly conflict seemed to displace the War of 1812 as a focus of public memory. After the Great War the former battlefields’ associations with death and sacrifice appeared to wane in favour of an emphasis on life and recreation.
After WWI Queenston Heights and Fort Erie’s popularity for non-commemorative activities such as company and church picnics exploded, with thousands of tourists crowding into these former battlefields on summer weekends. The rationalistic approach to park planning continued to grow, and at its more popular parks the NPC expanded its commercial ventures and installed new amenities that at times threatened the locale’s historic remnants, such as forts Drummond and Riall. There was little opposition to the accelerated development of sites such as Queenston Heights, however. New scholarly and recreational pursuits meant that interest in the battlefields and their connection to the public memory of the War of 1812 was becoming more diffuse. The growing historical profession was examining a wide array of topics that went beyond military history, and most publications on the War of 1812 continued to come from amateur historians. In a similar vein, members of the public had access to new diversions such as cinema, radio, and dance halls that competed with the public memory of the War of 1812. The 1920s marked the decline of the former battlefields’ significance as places connected to the War of 1812, as the public memory of the Great War and new and diffuse diversions competed with the 1812-14 war’s public memory.

The Niagara Frontier battlefields have been places of tourism, commemoration, contestation, and recreation. They have provided a window not only into these activities, but into wider societal concerns and worldviews. While the former battlefields in many ways reflected ideas about the past and its role in society, the agency of disenfranchised

![Figure 7.3. Lundy’s Lane Secord monument decorated for the bicentennial. Photo by author.](image)
groups, and of the ideal nature, in some ways they also influenced these ideals. Decisions about where to place monuments to both the battles and the war’s heroine on the battlefields’ locales not only reflected the value placed on these structures, but also affected how they were perceived and the shape of the commemorative ceremonies to follow. For the Six Nations the battlefields provided a rare stage they could use to assert a claim to the places’ past to demand justice. The NPC worked to create places of nature, and their creation of scenic locales was influenced by the pastoral beauty of places such as Queenston Heights. Their view of the English landscape park had to adapt to the cemetery at Lundy’s Lane and fight against the incursions of the natural world such as fungus and insects. While as places the battlefields were reflections of wider social concerns at the turn of the century, in Niagara they also played a role in influencing how these views were expressed at a local level.

The public memory reflected and shaped at the former battlefields still echoes the themes from the turn of the century, although the prominence of that public memory may have waned. In Niagara the recent bicentenary celebrations again highlighted the ideal of peace, and at Lundy’s Lane the importance of being in the place where the battle happened 200 years ago was highlighted, as Zavitz’s invocation of the battlefields’ ghosts demonstrates. First Nations peoples once again asserted their own histories and identities on the battlefield, as Six Nations representative Keith Jamieson asserted his peoples’ role in the defense of the nation. Jamieson argued that the war did not end for his people, and that they continue to pay the price for their loyalty. Echoing the attitudes of one hundred years before, Laura Secord’s final resting place was recognized with some wreaths and candles, but her exploits were not part of the official ceremony (Figure 7.3). Popular battlefields such as Queenston Heights continued to be

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developed as recreational destinations; in addition to the picnic pavilions, splash pad, tennis courts and restaurant Queenston Heights now offers a band shell, snack bar, and formal children’s playground. The park’s entrance is home to carpet bedding horticultural displays, and the NPC website proclaims that “garden and nature lovers, hikers and picnickers have used this park for generations.” The LLHS continued to be involved in commemorating the battle of Lundy’s Lane. In the ceremonies of 25 July 2014 the organization’s president pointed out the monument commemorating the first centennial and unveiled a new plaque commemorating the bicentennial gathering. Once again the plaque prominently features the crest of LLHS, and reads “In commemoration of the bicentennial of the Battle of Lundy’s Lane [...] Remembering sacrifices made on both sides and celebrating 200 years of peace [...] Dedicated 25 July 2014 by the Lundy’s Lane Historical Society.”

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