

War of 1812 Grave Marker Program

This project began when the Mount Pleasant Historical Society wanted to recognize War of 1812 Vets who were interred in the Mount Pleasant Cemeteries. It was brought to the attention of the County of Brant Heritage Committee that there were a number of other veterans interred throughout the County who should also be recognized. And so it began a quest that has taken hundreds of hours of research that finally located the number of veterans that we have reached today.

Of the 330 War of 1812 Veteran's markers that have been awarded through this Provincial program, the County has claimed 85 of them for veterans resting in 28 cemeteries.

In order to complete the recognition program, we hope that you will understand that the unveiling of the plaques has been simplified but is no less important than the other veterans unveiled at the "Last Shot Fired" ceremony in 2014.

Many of our War of 1812 veterans were members of local militias who came to the defense of this Country, that to many of them, was a new home. Some had left their homes in the United States as Loyalists who had fought on the side of Great Britain in the War of Independence and were now being ostracized. Others were new settlers from Ireland, Scotland, England and France in search of the promise of low cost land and a new start.

In June of 1812, U.S. President Madison had brought his message to Congress that taking Upper Canada would be nothing but a march through a sparsely populated and weakly defended area. When Madison declared war on Upper Canada he spoke of liberating the settlers from British rule and asked them to not take up the fight against the American army.

But he was wrong. Sir Isaac Brock, who was the military and civilian leader of Upper Canada called for the settlers to take up arms and defend the land that they had worked so hard to clear. The settlers, alongside native warriors, fought courageously, some of them not much older than

children when they took up the fight. Many of them suffered great losses with the American Army's tactic of burning crops, homes, and mills as they swept through the district. Members of the militia lost their lives to not only battle wounds but to dysentery that flourished in the camps. The war raged on until December 24th 1814 when the Treaty of Ghent was signed. There were no clear winners, both sides declaring victory but it took many years for the settlers to rebuild what they lost.

No one knows what the consequences would have been if the United States would have won the War of 1812. Would we now be part of the United States? Would we now be deciding who to vote for in the next Presidential election? The possibilities are endless. But they didn't win and we stand here today, proudly Canadian, honouring the men, some of them your ancestors, who fought for our freedom.

We ask that if there are any family members of the veterans being honoured today, to please stand beside the plaque for the unveiling. As their name is read, please remove the flag from the granite marker.

(roll call begins)

Blessing

(After the blessing)

We have a number of other cemeteries to visit today but we ask that if you would like to remain, please do so. We encourage everyone to introduce yourselves to each other. We have had a few families, who after being separated by time and space, were reacquainted at one of the services.