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Differing Approaches

With the approach of the one hundred and fiftieth anniversary of the Battle of Queenston Heights helping to raise a new awareness of Brock, the early 1960s were somewhat reminiscent of the glory days at the turn of the twentieth century, when his reputation as a national hero was unsurpassed throughout much of Canada. Having also become a potent role model for educational purposes, Brock's biography was an attractive proposition to publishers, and especially those in the field of children's literature. While his life was not celebrated to the same degree in the extended postwar era, it was still well regarded and for the same reasons as earlier in the century: patriotism and nationalism. After some fifty years, however, the tenor of these sentiments had shifted from thoroughly British to mainly Canadian.

Although Canada had long been evolving toward a more autonomous relationship with the British Empire, the process quickened in the decades following the Second World War. As the empire transformed itself into a commonwealth of former colonies, and Canada increasingly aligned itself militarily, economically, and culturally with the United States, diversified immigration helped to hasten a societal movement toward multiculturalism and away from an imperial attachment. But even as burgeoning Canadian nationalism began to usurp former pro-British tendencies and traditions, there remained a deep—if somewhat shrinking—appreciation for Brock. There was also a growing propensity to regard him as something more than just the Hero of Upper Canada. He transformed easily into a Canadian hero, and in this expanded role he warranted the recognition of a rising nation-state whose youth were still taught to look up to him as a role model worthy of patriotic emulation. Toward the end of this same postwar period, Brock began to attract greater attention from beyond the juvenile realm. Although much of his

enduring popularity was perpetuated in children's literature, he was also becoming the subject of greater adult interest with a mix of academic and popular treatments of his military life. A noteworthy example was W. Kaye Lamb's literary contribution to the sesquicentenary of Brock's death. When *The Hero of Upper Canada* was published in 1962, Lamb was Canada's Dominion archivist, national librarian, and the first of Brock's academic biographers to write something other than children's literature.[1] Yet, Lamb's book was hardly the scholarly production his peers might have expected of him. With bright-red fabric covers meant to imitate a British officer's uniform and a text written in a simple and unassuming style, it was a charming little volume that could easily be mistaken for a school primer of some kind. In reality, Lamb produced what amounted to a salesman's sample, a booklet showcasing the printer's talents and advertising the wide range of printing services offered by Rous and Mann Limited of Toronto. The basic arrangement was described by a writer for the *Globe and Mail*, who revealed "the custom of Rous and Mann Press Ltd. to bring out, from time to time, books for private distribution. These are prestige pieces of typographic design and fine pages of text or illustration. They are always noteworthy for nicety of tone in paper, ink and type itself as relevant to the subject."[2]

Distributed to clients in appreciation for their patronage, these little keepsakes became very popular among a general, albeit limited, audience of adult readers.[3] It was a clever marketing ploy, and Lamb's name lent credibility to the latest iteration of the scheme.[4] Moreover, Lamb had a strong ally in the person of William Stewart Wallace. As one of Canada's pre-eminent historians, Wallace complimented Lamb for a "calm, restrained sketch" that also shunned "the language of hero-worship."[5] Ignoring the fact that Lamb's research was completely wanting in original sources, Wallace went on to proclaim that *The Hero of Upper Canada* "is history as it should be written."[6] With this seal of approval, it is perhaps surprising that Lamb's booklet was never put to greater educational use. Rather, it remained a limited-edition souvenir courtesy of Rous and Mann.[7]

When Lamb was first approached by Rous and Mann in December of 1960, the Canadian fur trade was tentatively agreed upon as the theme for his contribution. However, Brock came to take precedence during the lead-up to the special anniversary of his death in October of 1962.[8] But less than three months prior to the arrival of that auspicious date, there was

an unnerving discovery relating to the sesquicentenary. A feature writer for the *Globe and Mail* had detected a lackadaisical attitude toward the commemoration. To Kay Kritzwiser, who "always had such a romantic thing" for Brock, this seeming indifference suggested a disturbing trend, and the investigative journalism she conducted at Brock's Monument pointed out a shocking degree of ignorance.[9] After interactions with both visiting tourists and local residents, Kritzwiser decided to write an exposé based on her experiences. Under a rather provocative title ("Has Everyone Forgotten Brock?"), Kritzwiser presented her findings in the form of a damning indictment by which she hoped to shame Canadians into taking notice of the quickly approaching sesquicentenary. As the wordy subtitle of her article clarified, "A memorial to the general who led Queenston Heights defenders is seen by thousands each week but few know its significance."[10] Yet, while Kritzwiser was dismayed by the shrugging attitude that greeted many of her inquiries about Brock, she was not entirely pessimistic. "Hazy on history they may be," she acknowledged, "but incurious the visitors are not."[11] To Kritzwiser, it was not a lack of interest but a stodgy presentation of the past that prompted the many aggravating "Who's Brock?" retorts she was forced to endure. The solution was difficult to gauge, until the monument's "ticket-taker" beckoned her to read a yellowed newspaper article, one of many he tacked up for reference purposes. Heeding his call, Kritzwiser soon realized what she thought was missing from the story about Brock. It was romance, and specifically that which he supposedly shared with Sophia Shaw. Whether or not Kritzwiser actually believed the old love story, historical accuracy was not really the issue, because "here was the magic ingredient to bring the tourists sighing, a Jeanette MacDonald-Nelson Eddy epic in technicolor, as potent as a new moon and a bright relief to the sober accounts of history in the schoolbooks."[12] But while historical romance was an important consideration, it was not the only one. Marketing was another.

At the top of Brock's Monument, Kritzwiser had a chance encounter with Thelma Reid Lower, a well-known poet from Vancouver, British Columbia. Along with her historian husband, J. Arthur Lower (not to be confused with Arthur R. M. Lower), she had travelled to Ontario to satisfy an "appetite" for Canada's heritage. In the Niagara Peninsula, the Lowers found history at every turn. Yet, they deplored the banality of its promotion: "There are plaques to mark the sites, Mrs. Lower said, but nothing visual to kindle the imagination."[13] Likely referring to the

region's various battlefields, given that there were full-scale reconstructions of Fort Erie and Fort George to inspire tourists with a sense of the past, Lower perhaps envisioned better signage and brochures to enhance the visitor experience—presumably by providing additional context to historic sites like Brock's Monument. In any case, she seems to have expressed a common complaint in the early 1960s: the failure to effectively market Canadian history. A soaring neoclassical monument, though impressive to behold, soon lost much of its appeal when tourists had to wait on the ticket taker to learn something more about Brock, the Battle of Queenston Heights, and the War of 1812. And so, while Ontario's Niagara region was blessed with historic sites, and tourism had been on the rise since the end of the Second World War, there was an increasing need to somehow bring its history to life. The same situation held true for Brock, and Kritzwiser touched on the problem when she mentioned the original stone arm from Brock's statue atop the monument's column, which had fallen during a storm in 1929 and was put on display as a curiosity to engage visitors. The importance of making history accessible and interesting was especially evident among young people, and Brock's arm appealed to their imaginations. But in observing how "children reared on television monsters stand enchanted by its awesome size," she also alluded to a much greater challenge: the negative influence of a relatively new cultural phenomenon.[14] Television, and American television in particular, threatened to supplant Canadian heroes like Brock with those of foreign countries. Such was the conclusion of Charles P. Stacey, whose feature article on the subject was titled with a question for readers of the *Globe Magazine*: "Who Are Canada's Heroes?" In this piece, he explained the reasons behind what he perceived to be a general decline in the popularity of traditional Canadian heroes—an attitude not unlike the indifference Kritzwiser encountered at Brock's Monument.

Stacey argued that while Canadians had heroes worthy of notice, it was their American and British counterparts who had come to dominate the country's imagination. In enumerating the reasons for this misdirected enthusiasm, he acknowledged that an increasing recognition of the country's multicultural origins, as well as intensifying sectionalism between French and English Canada, made it difficult to embrace the country's old standard set of heroes (including Brock, who was foremost among them). By 1964, when Stacey's article was published, Canada was developing a greater confidence in its own future as an autonomous

nation. However, the country's ties with the United Kingdom remained strong and affectionate—a special relationship that failed to move Stacey, who viewed all external influences as detrimental to the recognition of a distinctly Canadian brand of heroism. Imported heroes, notably British and American, were a particular problem as much of the preferential treatment afforded them was due to a widespread inferiority complex. As Stacey remarked, "for a long time it was hard for Canadians to believe that a colonial could be as important as a genuine Englishman, or even an American; and to a certain extent this feeling still holds."[15] Brock remained in high esteem because he was a British general, but the military prominence he gained during a war from Canada's colonial past also made him something of an anachronism—a national hero who hailed from elsewhere. To Stacey, it was a mere technicality, and one that had to be accepted: A Canadian hero did not have to be born in Canada. Moreover, Brock rated special consideration. His "successful defense of Upper Canada against tremendous moral and material odds," as well as the courage he demonstrated at the Battle of Queenston Heights, entitled him to full recognition as a Canadian hero.[16] What Stacey failed to consider, however, was the strong and sustaining influence of the Militia Myth and the Loyalist tradition on Brock's enduring popularity. To Stacey, it was simply a hero's natural ability to secure a "place in his countrymen's hearts and minds for generations."[17] No thought was given to anything more contrived, such as social engineering. And the fact that most of Brock's still considerable popularity was mainly an Ontario phenomenon did not strike him as being an issue. Nor was this regional trend sufficient grounds to remove his name from Stacey's list of Canadian heroes. Ontario was the nation's leading province, and as such its heroes were also Canada's heroes.

As Stacey suspected, Canadians of the mid-1960s were losing interest in great men like Brock—and he held them partly to blame. In trying to account for what he saw as a failing to take their heroes seriously, Stacey briefly considered that his fellow citizens were perhaps too sophisticated "to go overboard for this sort of thing."[18] More convincingly, he also thought that, like the widespread inferiority complex he theorized, it had something to do with inherent feelings of inadequacy, in the sense "that we are unsure of ourselves as a nation."[19] A major contributor to this condition was the perfect deluge of "books and periodicals written by British and U.S. authors who hardly know that Canada exists, leading

Canadians to admire other countries' great men, whose lives consequently become part of our folklore. Canadian authors have suffered because of the same colonial prejudice. Canadians have found it difficult to believe that a Canadian book could be as much worth reading as one by an Englishman or American."[20]

Exacerbating the problem were foreign movie and television industries, which immortalized the heroes of other nations, especially those of the United States and Britain. Stacey looked upon these external cultural influences as a type of propaganda, "which is all the more effective because it is not intended as propaganda at all. Hollywood, U.S. television and English film-makers are not interested in Canadian subjects. The result is that Canada's history and biography reach the Canadian viewing public only through films and programs originating with agencies financed by the Canadian government—the Canadian Broadcasting Corp[oration] and the National Film Board."[21] It was not surprising to Stacey that young Canadians were becoming more aware of American and British heroes than their own, even one as outstanding as Brock.[22] Moreover, advances in broadcast technology were clearly having detrimental effects on the way Canada's past was being taught in school. "Canadian historians and textbook writers (the two are not necessarily the same) may not always do as well as they should," Stacey grudgingly admitted, "but even the best textbook will usually lose the battle for the attention of the young when the competitor is a television set."[23] With this relatable observation, Stacey pointed out the degree to which public education in Canada was failing to inspire an interest in the country's heroes.

Some fifty years earlier, in the opening decades of the twentieth century, the patriotic curriculum of schoolchildren in Ontario and much of the rest of English-speaking Canada included a healthy dose of Brock hero worship. By the 1960s, much less emphasis was placed on his heroic story. While it was impossible to ignore Brock completely, given the prominent role he played in Canadian history, there was an increasing tendency to treat his accomplishments in a less celebratory and more matter-of-fact manner. This new, toned-down approach to teaching about Brock and other national heroes was evident in both the country's history textbooks and its classrooms, where War of 1812 studies were reserved for older students—adolescents who were generally apathetic when it came to outmoded attempts to teach them about Canadian history. The extent of the

problem became painfully obvious in 1968, after a history master at the Trinity College School in Port Hope, Ontario, published a controversial report on the state of civic education in Canada, and especially "the influence of formal instruction in developing the feelings and attitudes of young Canadians toward their country and its problems."[24]

Written by Alfred Birnie Hodgetts for the National History Project (which he founded to facilitate his research), the report's findings presented a damning assessment of the teaching methods used to promote the study of Canadian civics, social studies, and history. Based on observations carried out in schools across the country, Hodgetts concluded that the methods employed were "not stimulating as many young Canadians as they should to take a responsible interest in the affairs of their own country."[25] And while good citizenship was the justification for improving the way in which Canadian history was taught, history as a patriotic exercise was frowned upon for fear that "our school systems should be perverted to develop intense nationalism."[26] However, "low-key patriotism" and the promise it held for "an intelligent, knowledgeable affection for one's country" remained legitimate educational goals.[27] To Hodgetts, history for its own sake was simply untenable, and the greater civic purpose had been squandered through a pedantic pedagogy.[28] Such teaching was a "bland, unrealistic consensus version of our past; a dry-as-dust chronological story of uninterrupted political and economic progress told without the controversy that is an inherent part of history."[29] As Hodgetts elaborated,

> Seventy-five percent of the classes in our survey were struggling with one or other of the two most universally condemned teaching methods. In some cases, the students were "bench-bound listeners," lined up in rows, sitting passively, while a "talking textbook" [teacher] rhymed off material that they could have read and digested for themselves. More frequently, they were going through the mechanical, question-answer routine based on the discrete, factual recall of a few assigned pages in the textbook.[30]

And history textbooks were a large part of the problem.

For Hodgetts, who wanted students to become more active participants in the lessons they learned, it was imperative that they be exposed to new and critical interpretations of the past in order to attain a greater

awareness and appreciation of Canadian history. A major obstacle to Hodgetts's progressive ideas was the heavy reliance of Canadian education on outdated textbooks, by which he meant the concept of textbook learning itself. Textbooks by their very nature were stultifying, and as Hodgetts complained, "The material is a compendium of facts; the manner of presentation is chronological story-telling, seldom analytical and practically never interpretative."[31] One textbook was just as bad as another, and none of them succeeded in giving students "an interesting, controversial, interpretative or meaningful view of history."[32] The inevitable consequence was the potential for students to become bored and frustrated by their history classes. In almost a quarter of those classes monitored by Hodgetts's team, the students were "actively bored," as he termed it, and used "a variety of rather interesting techniques to relieve the monotony," including such antics as "scuffing their feet in unison; deliberately dropping books on the floor; dueling with rulers; sticking compass points into each other; tormenting the teacher," and so on.[33] A high percentage of the English-speaking students surveyed "definitely dislike Canadian studies and, in one way or another, indicate that they find them boring and meaningless."[34] Much of this hostility was directed against constitutional and political history, both of which Hodgetts summarily dismissed as irrelevant subjects.[35] It was military history, including the War of 1812, that generated the most interest among these same students.[36] However, the historical preferences of French-speaking students were more to Hodgetts's liking, as they gravitated toward a non-militaristic appreciation of the pioneering spirit displayed by their ancestors.[37] But regardless of their approach and content, long-established methods of teaching history were not the complete failures that Hodgetts seemed to imply.

As a certain feature writer for the *Globe and Mail* named Kritzwiser could attest from personal experience, students with an interest in the past could still benefit from the curriculum Hodgetts tried to overturn—especially that part of it dealing with the more thrilling chapters of Canadian history, including Brock's heroism during the War of 1812. There had long been a generally accepted perception that public school education in Canada failed to inspire an appreciation for the nation's history, and yet Kay Kritzwiser found little evidence of it as she strolled about Queenston Heights in July of 1962.[38] Certainly, in gathering material for her article on the sesquicentenary of Brock's death, she encountered a

good deal of indifference toward this significant moment in Canadian history, particularly among the adults she interviewed. Yet, much of what passed for indifference was merely ignorance. And as a number of adolescent children demonstrated, their history lessons (despite a toning down of patriotic rhetoric) could still leave a lasting and favourable impression of Brock on successive student cohorts. In observing some playful teenagers as they bunted one another on the gently rising steps leading up to the lawn in advance of Brock's Monument, Kritzwiser described how the imposing structure suddenly caught their attention: "They stopped their horseplay to look up at the carved figure of Gen. Isaac Brock atop the shaft rising cleanly more than 200 feet [actually some 185 feet or 56 metres] above the historic countryside. The girl in the white pedal pushers squinted against the sun. 'Who's Brock, anyway?' One boy bunted her again. 'Don't you know? Where'd you go to school anyway? Brock beat up the Americans.'"[39] Elsewhere, two exhausted girls emerged from the base of the monument and collapsed on a bench at its entrance. When Kritzwiser asked them why they had felt compelled to climb the claustrophobic spiral staircase, one of them replied, "I dunno. I guess because we learned about Brock in school."[40]

Obviously, the exposure of these senior public school students to Brock during classroom studies, though brief, could also generate a deep and lasting appreciation for the man whose heroism inspired the monument. It was at Brock's Monument that Kritzwiser had occasion to meet one of the more exceptional recipients of this elementary education. When she overheard a thirteen-year-old lad from St. Williams, Ontario, giving his family a "quick lesson in history," Kritzwiser approached his proud father, who admitted to being told things about Brock he had never known.[41] Yet, if Kritzwiser felt reassured by this prodigy's enthusiasm for Brock, she must have had a rude awakening at a cherry stall just a few kilometres up the Niagara Parkway. There, near the site of a War of 1812 gun emplacement, she interrogated a fourteen-year-old boy behind the counter as to what he knew about Vrooman's Battery. "Don't ask me about that gun, ma'am," the young proprietor replied impassively. He was no better informed about the War of 1812 generally, claiming that "we haven't taken that in school yet." When a persistent Kritzwiser asked about the identity of the general whose statue crowned the monument on Queenston Heights, all she got in return was, "No, ma'am, I don't know about him either."[42] To Kritzwiser, this last torpid response

only served to confirm her initial suspicion that Brock was largely forgotten. Disregarding the boy's expectations of being better informed about the War of 1812 once he got to a certain point in his school studies, Kritzwiser left her readers with a gloomy concluding observation: "It's almost impossible not to see that monument when you pass nearby and yet possible for many not to see it at all."[43]

Of course, Kritzwiser's lament was really intended to drum up interest in Brock and thus avoid much of the indifference she encountered at Brock's Monument. But, as it happened, the fast-approaching sesquicentenary required little by way of journalistic intervention to ensure its success. Plans were already in the works, and by mid-September of 1962 a full slate of ceremonies infused with martial traditions was announced.[44] Honouring Brock's memory with such soldierly gestures of respect was entirely apropos, and such formalities served a broader purpose as well. Tourism in the Niagara Peninsula had been long noted for its abundance of forts and battlefields, all of which complemented the premier tourist attraction that was Niagara Falls. But the significance of military history to the wider region became especially pronounced during the postwar economic boom, as J. Edward Wright of the Ontario Department of Travel and Publicity emphasized during a 1952 speech to the Women's Canadian Historical Society of Toronto.

It was partly their influence that ensured the preservation of Fort York, one of the heritage-themed attractions that appealed so much to tourists—the American sightseeing type in particular. Such tourists, Wright explained, tended to limit their cross-border experience to short jaunts, and so it was important to develop a strategy that kept them in the province a little longer. History was an important component of the tourism industry, and a vast sum of money was at stake. "Since the war," Wright impressed upon his audience, "tourism has become very big business, with Ontario alone receiving $250,000,000 a year, and 1,343,000 cars coming into the province from the U.S. Most of the government's promotional efforts are concentrated on the United States . . . because 70 per cent of the U.S. population lives within a day's drive of our border."[45] But as the Canadian Tourist Association had come to realize by the early 1960s, Canada seemed "old hat and oh-so-familiar to a big percentage of the American tourists who flocked here in the 1920s, 1930s and wartime 1940s because Canada happened to be the nearest foreign country they could visit."[46] Coaxing Americans to "explore the attic," as it were, would

make Canada a more enticing holiday destination, and promoting the country's distinctiveness was thus a key priority. Achieving these goals was largely a matter of developing uniquely Canadian attractions, especially ones with thrilling historical associations.

In addition to the many new historical plaques erected by the government of Ontario each year, that province also maintained a long line of historic forts on its side of the Great Lakes, as well as scores of battlefield monuments.[47] Among this latter number, none was more splendid than Brock's Monument. Soaring and magnificent, its elegant neoclassical design impressed everyone who laid eyes on it—or nearly everyone. A noteworthy exception was Bruce Hutchison, an outspoken British Columbian journalist and writer with an extreme distaste for the stately old relic from Ontario's colonial past. In a withering denunciation first published for an American audience in 1942, Hutchison utilized an unfavourable comparison to bolster his argument:

> The stark single column soars up as [Nelson's] in London on the foundation of four carved lions, but at Queenston they are poor emaciated creatures, hardly better than snarling cats. The figure [of Brock] at the top of the column is bulbous, ill-shaped, in absurd cocked hat, hand out in stupid gesture. It wears, as a final insult, a web of steel lightning rods (without which, perhaps, a merciful nature would shatter it in a single flash and make way for a worthier memorial).[48]

Despite the severity of his disapproval for Brock's Monument, Hutchison's hostility did not extend to Brock himself, because it was Brock who had shown the Canadian people "that they could make an independent nation."[49] Given that the monument was symbolic of this determination, Hutchison's carping was purely aesthetic. But regardless of what Hutchison thought about Brock's Monument, it remained a popular tourist destination. This appeal was further enhanced by the special events that took place there on the eve of the sesquicentenary in 1962, which fortuitously enough—from an attendance point of view—coincided with a weekend.

Beginning with a late-afternoon assembly below Queenston Heights, a joint contingent of American and Canadian troops, as well as a party of Mohawk warriors, ascended the escarpment in a symbolic re-enactment

of the battle in which Brock lost his life.[50] At the monument's base, this combined force mounted an honour guard while dignitaries solemnly laid their wreaths. Several hundred onlookers witnessed the spectacle in silent reverence, but many of these same attendees, perhaps encouraged by the fine autumn weather, had come to witness something far more riveting: the firing of a muzzle-loaded cannon by a costumed gun crew.[51] With a thunderous blast, the artillery exercise brought the sunset ceremony to an abrupt close and left the overawed multitude anticipating the promised pageantry yet to come. It began the next day with another honour guard, this time at Fort George, followed by a drumhead service at St. Saviour, the Brock Memorial Church in Queenston. Then, after marching to a nearby squat obelisk marking the spot where Brock was mistakenly thought to have been killed, the honour guard formed and another wreath was laid. Soon afterwards, the proceedings shifted to nearby Niagara-on-the-Lake. There, large crowds eagerly awaited the main event: a grand military parade.

Unlike those staged earlier during the celebrations, this procession was geared to be more popular than reverential. For an event taking place well beyond the normal tourist season, the public's enthusiastic response to the parade made it a resounding success. A Buffalo, New York, newspaper went so far as to frame the phenomenon in suitably militaristic terms. The "invaders," estimated at some fifteen thousand people, gathered ten deep to watch a thirty-unit military parade replete with floats representing various War of 1812 themes. Swarming into town by car and bus, the multitudinous visitors caused a "monumental traffic jam" in their enthusiasm to help commemorate Brock and the Battle of Queenston Heights.[52] Afterwards, there were closing ceremonies at Fort George, including an art and essay contest. The judge, a special guest in the person of J. Keiller Mackay, Ontario's lieutenant-governor, had a special message for his young audience. And when he told them that "they should study well—especially history," he seemed fully convinced that a basis for better citizenship could be achieved "through a profound knowledge of Canada's rich historical heritage."[53] The sesquicentenary was a major advertising coup for the local tourism industry at Niagara-on-the-Lake, but it also reinforced the positive image most Canadians still attached to Brock's name. And yet, rather than as a militaristic role model for children to emulate, Brock's place in Canadian history, Mackay seemed to suggest, should be less overtly patriotic and more subtly nationalistic—so

that his excellent character would serve as an inspiration for the ideal citizens expected of the country's youth. Presenting Brock in this new light was in keeping with the civics approach to Canadian history then gaining favour among Canadian teachers.

By the late 1960s, according to education historian Ken Osborne, "history could no longer take its place in the curricular sun for granted."[54] That which had formerly enjoyed sacrosanct status was coming under increasing—and not always sympathetic—liberalizing scrutiny. But Canadian educationists, instead of taking up Alfred Birnie Hodgetts's clarion call to reform the teaching of history, began to look beyond antiquated pedagogy in search of something not too radical but more relevant to their modern outlook on society.[55] As Osborne pointed out, the nation-building narrative was not completely discarded, just reinterpreted. The newer version focused on social rather than political history by recounting the experiences of ordinary people, and by this means provided the framework of a nation-building narrative from a new and different perspective.[56] This bottom-up treatment of history, although well-intentioned, was not entirely successful in making the subject more appealing to students; nor were they necessarily inspired to become better citizens through a reframing of the country's history. What they needed was action, adventure, and a hero to arouse their appreciation for Canada. In this regard, nothing much had changed since Walter R. Nursey's time at the turn of the twentieth century. Yet, the once vital components for a stirring treatment of Brock's life were far less effective by the middle of that same century, given his marginalization by educational authorities seeking to provide a more representative history based on the experience of the country's masses. Nursey's success in writing a popular biography of Brock for Canadian schoolchildren was one that no textbook could ever match, and something Charles P. Stacey, the military historian, did not think was necessary to duplicate. In philosophizing about the importance attached to heroes, Stacey had concluded that they should not be important in the least. Furthermore, as he firmly believed, "an ideal society should be able to get along without them. But that is not the sort of society we are living in, and anything that contributes to national consciousness is useful in a country that is still struggling toward genuine unity. An established hero of the sort I have been discussing [including Brock] is an expression of nationality."[57]

For Stacey, a certain amount of patriotism was necessary for national unity "before we find ourselves enjoying genuine nationhood."[58] Trade publishers, however, were mainly interested in the market potential of their patriotic-themed history and biography series, which they developed to promote the sales of their children's books. The 1957 publication of Samuel Hopkins Adams's *General Brock and Niagara Falls* proved the feasibility of such a project, and before long a new Brock biography was top of mind for another publisher. This time, the idea originated from north of the border, and the Canadian publisher had a Canadian author in mind. Having a recognized wordsmith from Canada, someone whose writing could stimulate an interest in Brock among a new generation of Canadian children, was qualification enough. The prospective Canadian author, however, came possessed of special additional credentials, which made him ideally suited to the commission.

Major Donald J. Goodspeed was attached to the Canadian Army's Historical Section, where he established a solid reputation for the military studies he published. But there came a radical departure when he agreed to write a children's book. It was then 1963, and once again the Macmillan Company of Canada looked to Sir Isaac Brock as a source of subject material (just as it had in 1918 with Hugh S. Eayrs's *Sir Isaac Brock*).[59] The earlier decline in educational publishing, brought about by the Great Depression and exacerbated by the Second World War, meant that there had been no financial incentive for a Canadian publisher to revisit Brock's biography. But by the early 1960s, Macmillan's president, John Gray—who inaugurated the Great Stories of Canada series in 1952—saw an opportunity to add another title to his growing backlist. Book sales depended on making history as interesting as possible for young readers, and so Brock's heroism during the War of 1812 must have seemed a perfect fit for the series.[60] Having a well-respected military historian as the book's author was a bonus, but Goodspeed's writing style was the main consideration.[61] As a closet novelist, he knew how to hold the reader's attention.[62] Equally important was his ability to administer a healthy dose of nationalism.[63] The patriotic Goodspeed ably demonstrated his talent on this point as well, and in 1964 Macmillan published his book with *The Good Soldier: The Story of Isaac Brock* as a suitably descriptive title.[64] It was an exercise in idealized biography, and while its tendency toward hero worship ruffled anti-hagiography historians like William Stewart Wallace, the book was extremely popular among junior

readers. As Gray confidently predicted, "there will be no point in anybody writing a short life of Brock for another fifty or a hundred years."[65]

As for Goodspeed's immediate circle of military historians, they tended to view the teaching of Canadian children about Sir Isaac Brock as an acceptable deviation from the accepted norm of martial topics. It also helped that the book's author was one of their own, meaning a Canadian professional historian, as opposed to a popular writer from the United States. In point of fact, however, Goodspeed's book was very similar to that of Samuel Hopkins Adams. The research was just as limited, and in both cases many of the personal details about Brock's life were either assumed or fabricated. The only major difference was the style of narrative, with one holding a distinct advantage over the other. Whereas Adams wrote with admirable restraint and circumspection, Goodspeed made use of an unabashedly patriotic tone, and it was this latter approach that proved more engaging with impressionable young readers. As a reviewer in the *Edmonton Journal* confidently predicted, a boy who picked up *The Good Soldier* would "scarcely be able to set it down until he has consumed the last page."[66] Presumably, the book was expected to hold just as much interest for girls, and while *The Good Soldier* was not limited to a scholastic market, Brock's heroic patriotism was an especially important consideration from the standpoint of school and library sales. The significance attached to this positive association between Brock and Canadian education soon became abundantly obvious on another and far grander scale.

In October 1964, Canada's governor general participated in the official opening of a recently chartered university at St. Catharines, Ontario.[67] After turning a ceremonial gold key to open this new hall of academe, Georges Vanier addressed a capacity crowd of eight hundred people in a former factory repurposed for use as Brock University. Speaking on the merits of a post-secondary school education, Vanier's views were fairly typical for the times: "Whatever it may once have been, higher education is not now a mystical process to be conducted in ivory towers."[68] The many complex demands of modern society required training "far beyond what was once considered necessary," especially as Canada continued its transition from an agrarian to industrial economy.[69] Vanier saw a special responsibility for universities and their graduates, which he considered to be of paramount concern: "It is the responsibility of making a positive and creative contribution to our sense of purpose and to our unity as a

nation."[70] University graduates had important national leadership roles to fulfill, especially at a time when separatist forces in Quebec threatened to pull the country apart. It was appropriate, therefore, that the new university be named after Brock—a great leader, and one who "served at Quebec twice as long as he had in Ontario [or Upper Canada]."[71] The unifying potential of Brock's good name, while an intriguing concept, carried little, if any, weight among French Canadians, particularly those craving independence. In contrast to Vanier's strong binational convictions, many Canadians still looked upon Brock as Ontario's particular hero. But as Canada's governor general, Vanier was not about to be dissuaded by critical realities, and so he proceeded with his praise for the university and its namesake. "There are many monuments to Brock," he stated with an air of certitude, but none was more fitting than Brock University.[72] Brock was recalled "in its name, its coat of arms, its colors and its motto."[73] Then, with a suitably optimistic tone, Vanier finished off with a solemn observation: "I trust that he will also be remembered by the great things I know you will accomplish here."[74] By encouraging the new university's future graduates in this manner to take their inspiration from Brock's achievements, Vanier effectively elevated his status as a role model for good citizenship and Canadian nationalism to a higher level of education. In reality, however, the decision to name the university after Brock was not the natural choice it appeared.

Responsibility for christening the new university had been assigned to a special subcommittee of the Niagara Peninsular University Organizing Committee, otherwise known as the "Founders' Committee." Composed of several prominent local gentlemen, this subcommittee—the Naming Committee—held its first meeting in August of 1962 and promptly decided to forgo any attempt at public consultation. "It was evident that the committee should do the choosing," given some of the unsuitable names that had already been suggested.[75] After having discussed the pros and cons of each, it was agreed that the moniker should avoid duplication with other institutions or any reference to a particular municipality in the Niagara Peninsula. The committee further considered it desirable "to select a name that would over the years, give the new university a distinct national reputation."[76] There was also a desire for something inspirational and as short as possible. While it might have appeared obvious to certain committee members that a university named after Brock was the only logical choice, there was a distinct divide that seemed to favour

a geographical rather than historical designation. At the committee's second meeting, held in September, a process of elimination promptly ruled out the University of Niagara as there was a similarly named institution in nearby New York State.[77] The other geographical choice, the University of Southern Ontario, was deemed so nondescript that Brock—not surprisingly—became the preferred name among several of the members then present. However, despite having confirmed Brock's "excellent reputation," the ensuing vote still revealed a very close margin of victory over the University of Southern Ontario. A "poll of those present indicated a 5–4 preference for Brock University."[78] Ultimately, however, the result of all this effort was merely a recommendation. The final decision rested with the executive of the Founders' Committee, who announced their unanimous approval in conjunction with the sesquicentennial of Brock's death in October of 1962.[79] As chairman of the Founders' Committee, Arthur A. Schmon justified the choice in a news release: "Keeping in mind the history and traditions of this area of Canada and the part played by General Brock as a national hero and leader of Canadian [militia] forces in the War of 1812, the committee was of the opinion that no more appropriate name could be selected than Brock University."[80]

The name Brock was definitely appropriate, and particularly so to the gentlemen who chose it. Had their number been more inclusive and diverse, the outcome might have been rather less predictable.[81] Ultimately, however, no other historical figure with a connection to the Niagara Peninsula could have conveyed the same inspirational qualities as Brock, and at some subliminal level the school was probably named for his humanity as much as his military achievements. For a burgeoning university anticipating its future greatness, the name recognition associated with an esteemed hero of Canadian history offered a distinct advantage in forging a solid academic reputation.[82] It was no less true in the real world of Canadian finance.

For the Royal Trust Company's general supervisor of public relations, a Brock-themed celebration offered the perfect angle for promoting the opening of a new branch in St. Catharines, Ontario. The event was scheduled to take place on 24 June 1965, and Thomas R. Lee was already pressed for time when he set his plan in motion. Writing from Montreal in mid-March, he explained his idea in a letter to one of Brock's relatives in Guernsey:

> When we open a new office, we like to mark the occasion by doing something to reflect our interest in the community of which we are about to become a member. In this case, naturally the name "Brock" came to mind, particularly since a new university has been founded in St. Catharines recently bearing that name. We thought of the possibility—and it's all very unofficial at the moment, may I stress—of presenting a rare piece of Brockiana which could be treasured by the university.[83]

The "rare piece of Brockiana" Lee had in mind was a ceremonial "tomahawk," or rather war club, said to have been presented to Brock by the famous Shawnee war chief Tecumseh—a provenance that made the artifact in question all the more significant for a symbolic handover to Brock University. The owner of the war club and the recipient of Lee's rather bold letter was Captain Michael H. T. Mellish, who politely declined the overture by writing back, "I feel certain you will understand that I do not want to part with it."[84] As the collateral descendant who was fortunate enough to inherit this and other heirlooms connected to his famous ancestor, Mellish treasured the war club far too much to ever consider selling it. Lee, however, was not easily dissuaded and, having anticipated some resistance, persisted in his determination to build an event around Brock and the war club. In his next letter, he glossed over Mellish's counter-offer of a photograph and focused instead on the possibility of a loan. As Lee explained, he now wanted to display the war club as the centrepiece of a temporary exhibit.[85] Once again, Mellish had to decline because, just as Lee himself had suggested, sending the war club to Canada was a "somewhat risky proposition."[86] But there was still reason to hope, as Mellish was beginning to warm up to Lee's enthusiasm. After asking for the war club's history, Lee was pleasantly surprised when Mellish provided a lengthy provenance. While Mellish was not entirely sure how the war club had come into his branch of the family, he assumed that it "must have been sent back to Sir Isaac's relatives in Guernsey, after his death."[87] As for Brock's ownership, Mellish relied on another assumption: that of W. Kaye Lamb, Canada's Dominion archivist, who simply parroted what he had been led to believe—namely, that the "ceremonial tomahawk" had been "given to Brock by Tecumseh."[88] The idea of such a handover had become the most obvious explanation, and the only one by which Mellish could account for this unusual heirloom. What he failed

to consider, however, was the very real possibility that the war club might have come down through the generations not from Brock, but rather one of his brothers.

In 1825, Irving Brock arranged an audience with King George IV for a delegation of visiting Huron-Wendat chiefs.[89] While the possible presentation of a ceremonial war club in recognition of this important service was no less feasible than one from Tecumseh to Brock, it certainly lacked the romance associated with the fall of Detroit. But Lee had no reason to question the war club's connection to Brock the conquering hero, nor was he disheartened by the extraordinary measures that would be needed to bring it to Canada. With seemingly little difficulty, he persuaded the top brass at Royal Trust to back his extravagant plan for a loan agreement. And Mellish, who was understandably opposed to the idea earlier, suddenly had a change of heart when Lee offered him an all-expense paid trip to Canada to personally deliver the war club for the exhibition at the branch opening in St. Catharines.[90] Having a Brock descendant to parade about for several days not only enhanced the promotion—it also helped to justify the extra costs associated with bringing Tecumseh's war club to Canada. This because Mellish, in his capacity as secretary and aide-de-camp to the lieutenant-governor of Guernsey, was happy to play the part of a visiting dignitary searching for reminders of his great-great-grandmother's brother. Mellish gave a commendable performance, and in a speech afterwards he followed up with a suitable expression of gratitude for all the kindness shown him. "It has given me most tremendous pleasure," he acknowledged, "to be in Canada for the first time and I am sincerely grateful for this invitation. As you know, Sir Isaac Brock is very much a part of the history of Guernsey and since I am a [collateral descendant] of his, I am naturally most interested in this great man. At the same time, I am deeply moved to know [what] a wonderful place he holds in the hearts of the people of Canada."[91]

Mellish continued with a glowing allusion to the tour that Royal Trust had arranged for him, and which received considerable press coverage. In tracing the popular scenic route along the Niagara River from Niagara-on-the-Lake to Queenston, Mellish was treated to many of the same historic sites visited by generations of earlier tourists.[92] The climax of this "sentimental journey," as one newspaper reporter described it, was Brock's Monument.[93] Gazing up to its pinnacle, Mellish verbalized his initial reaction: "Tremendous," was all he said.[94] After collecting his

thoughts, he elaborated by confessing that he "never thought it would be anything like this. It's absolutely marvellous."[95] Before returning to Guernsey, Mellish paid a visit to Brock University. There he viewed an exhibit of Brock memorabilia and treated the university's president, Dr. James A. Gibson, to a special viewing of the war club. Despite finding some disconcerting mistakes among the various items on display at Brock University, Mellish was no less impressed with the eponymously named institution of higher learning, or the fact that Canadians were still honouring Brock more than one hundred and fifty years after his death.[96] Immensely gratified, he was content in the knowledge that he had done his bit to celebrate Brock—even if it meant a brief stint as Royal Trust's front man.

Mellish, of course, was not the first person to take advantage of a distant genealogical connection with Brock for the sake of a holiday in Canada; Arabella Stuart Howell-Jones had done much the same thing in 1937. But Mellish, because of the heirlooms he possessed, was the only one of Brock's distant relatives who enjoyed de facto corporate sponsorship. Nor was Royal Trust alone in making good use of Brock's enduring fame for what amounted to a posthumous celebrity endorsement. Playing on Canadian patriotism and Brock's reputation in the early 1960s, especially in the country's English-speaking regions, business advertising departments occasionally incorporated Brock into their advertising campaigns. One of the more effective was part of a larger customer service promotion sponsored by the Toronto-Dominion Bank. In March of 1963, a full-page colour advertisement appeared in *Maclean's* featuring a display case with what appeared to be a number of artifacts belonging to a British Army officer of the early nineteenth-century.[97] The most eye-catching was a brigadier general's coatee (or short uniform coat), which happened to be the same one Brock was wearing when he was killed. Based on Toronto-Dominion's slogan that "people make the difference," Brock was chosen for one of the advertisements in order to develop a "stronger Canadian tone" than was evident with the historical figures already profiled.[98] The advertising agency hired to get the bank's message across decided to broaden the scope of the commission through the use of "symbolism," by which items linked to significant events and individuals in Canadian history were showcased in photographic ads.[99] Amassing the collection representative of Brock required the loan of several items and their delivery to the Public Archives in Ottawa, where his coatee

was immovable due to high transportation and security costs. After three months and the combined efforts of five people, the display was finally arranged and photographed.[100] The advertisement that followed carried a lengthy caption that provided context to the cabinet of curiosities. Under the heading "This is a Man," Tecumseh's widely recognized description of Brock was put to good use in lauding the latter's enterprising capture of Detroit. To the copywriter, it "was a pure example of how the quality of people transcends any difficulty in any enterprise" and a perfect segue to the bank's "philosophy that people, rather than circumstances, make the difference," a guiding principle that "has been our belief for many years. We encourage every member of our staff to take pride and pleasure in offering you the kind of friendly service that makes banking a warm, human thing, of benefit to all. You'll find from your first visit to any branch of the Toronto-Dominion Bank that *people really make the difference*."[101]

The advertising potential of such a mental connection, between Brock's heroism and personalized banking, had been evident to Allen Cupples from an early date. As the creative director at the Toronto-based James Lovick and Company advertising agency, as well as the "key man" behind the Toronto-Dominion account, Cupples knew only too well that "officials don't usually allow museum pieces to be used commercially."[102] Fortunately, however, the Dominion archivist was partial to Brock. When the layout was described to W. Kaye Lamb, and how it would allow Canadians across the country an opportunity to see the coatee, the necessary "clearance was obtained."[103] Just as the elaborate advertisement sponsored by the Toronto-Dominion Bank would seem to suggest, there was a belief in corporate Canada that Brock was a popular cultural icon whose legacy could be appropriated to sell a product—or even a full range of banking services. Cupples for one, recognized that Brock was held in high regard by most English-speaking Canadians. Certainly, the interest generated by an elaborate sesquicentenary commemoration of his death at Queenston Heights was ample evidence of Brock's enduring popularity. Drawing a parallel between Brock's services to Canada and those of the Toronto-Dominion Bank was a shrewd and effective form of advertising. It was also well-timed, given that there were further Brock commemorations to come.

After the viceregal opening of Brock University in October of 1964 and the June 1965 Mellish visit, there was another major recognition of Brock in the autumn of 1969.[104] In September of that year, the Canadian

post office issued a commemorative stamp in honour of the bicentenary of his birth. To some degree, it was an offshoot of plans organized by President Gibson of Brock University, and just one of a number planned to mark the event.[105] But other than his suggestion for such a stamp, Gibson had no further say in the matter, and the layout that ultimately won approval featured a portrait of Brock superimposed on a distant view of his monument. It was a well-designed stamp, even if the portrait used was actually of someone other than Brock.[106] But ignorance being bliss, the stamp met with an enthusiastic reception at its first public viewing, which, coincidentally or not, took place at the Royal Trust branch in St. Catharines.[107] To Gibson, the stamp honouring Brock served to elevate the university's profile well beyond the Niagara Peninsula by providing national exposure to its namesake. Fortuitously, perhaps, earlier suggestions for the stamp—all of which preceded the university's opening and therefore lacked the potential for promoting Brock University—were ineffectual.[108] It was no less providential that the speech of one of the honorary degree recipients at the fall convocation in 1969 seemed to echo the Toronto-Dominion Bank's earlier advertising campaign, the one emphasizing Brock and the human touch.

Gibson could not have asked for a more distinguished advocate than Roland Michener, Queen Elizabeth's representative in Canada. After singing Brock's praises, the governor general turned his attention to the newly minted university. Expressing a hope that "it will be able to preserve the sense of community and communication which exists among students, teachers and researchers," Michener explained how it was "a place where the individual still counts, which is more than can be said of the vast complexes which pass as universities in some of the great overcrowded cities of North America and elsewhere."[109] Michener gave a very good plug for Brock University, but with a rather curious and slightly scolding proviso: "I hope that in this place you will be able to turn the restless currents of the times to constructive rather than destructive uses."[110] Much of the inspiration behind this comment was likely an odd sort of protest that had taken place earlier in the day. It came about when Sir William Arnold, the bailiff of Guernsey, attempted to speak at the unveiling of a plaque to commemorate the bailiwick's gift of a block of granite from Brock's boyhood home in St. Peter Port. As Gibson recalled, before "the Bailiff had a chance to speak, a sombre procession of five undergraduates, wearing black gowns and bearing a garland of

a pine bough and brown oak leaves," made an ominous entry into the Thistle Complex, whereupon the leader of the Brock Radical Students Movement recited a document protesting against "American imperialism."[111] The mock wreath-laying ceremony was a sign of the times, and there was no doubt but that the times were changing.

All in all, the Swinging Sixties were good to Brock. Despite the concerns expressed by Kay Kritzwiser early in the decade, he was not forgotten. Quite the contrary: He was celebrated and held in high regard throughout much of the country. But even so, the 1960s revealed a disturbing trend that threatened the cultural framework that held Brock in such high patriotic regard—namely, the end of the British Empire. While Canada's attachment to the mother country appeared indomitable on the surface, there was an eroding undercurrent of Americanization brought about predominantly by trade dependence. As Phillip Buckner has pointed out, "During the 1920s and 1930s the proportion of Canadian trade with Britain and of British capital invested in Canada decreased while the proportion of trade with the United States and of American capital increased."[112] Yet, most English-speaking Canadians continued to view themselves as more British than American. Throughout the 1940s and '50s, the British Empire (latterly the Commonwealth of Nations) gave Canadians the impression of membership in a continuing and potent force in world affairs, despite the concomitantly growing influence of American popular culture.

By the early 1960s, there were signs of a fundamental shift in the way most Canadians viewed themselves, and one that their federal government was determined to encourage along more independent lines. In response to the ongoing American threat, and also that of a rising Quebec separatist movement, the Liberals under Lester B. Pearson spearheaded a number of measures designed to instill Canadian nationalism while at the same time tamping down French Canadian visions of independence.[113] One of the most notable and contentious was Pearson's fixation on replacing the country's imperialistic flag with one entirely devoid of British symbolism, a gesture undertaken in hopes of fostering a distinct Canadian identity.[114] Unfortunately for Pearson, who also toyed with the idea of replacing the queen as head of state, there was still a good deal of respect and admiration among English-speaking Canadians for their British heritage.[115] But in 1965, after much wrangling, Pearson finally got his "pennant," or rather a vastly improved version of it. As for

the queen, she remained firmly ensconced upon her Canadian throne—mainly because removing her would have been infinitely more difficult than replacing a flag. Brock's reputation was also securely fixed in the Canadian psyche, despite all the nationalistic upheaval, and he proved no less popular in the 1960s than he had half a century earlier at the centenary of his death.[116]

Although Brock had come to be associated with a profoundly British period in Canadian history, he also held a strong appeal among adherents of the new nationalism. To some of their number it appeared that, by having saved Canada for the British Empire, he also established the basis for Confederation in 1867. This notion had long been a fond aside to Canadian history, referenced occasionally to lend greater credence to Brock's military genius. That his reputation for proficiency on the battlefield should have contributed to the establishment of a new nation was especially fitting at the beginning of the 1960s. The centenary of Canadian Confederation was beginning to loom high on the horizon, and it appeared that Canada's Dominion archivist was prepared to lead the charge on the important, if hypothetical, question of Brock's nation-building legacy. In December of 1961, W. Kaye Lamb presented a paper on Brock before the Algonquin Club of Detroit, Michigan, and Windsor, Ontario. Lamb's lecture was one of six presented by leading authorities on the War of 1812, all of which emphasized events in the conflict's western theatre.[117] At the end of his presentation, Lamb mused about the significance of Brock's place in Canadian history: "It is probably an exaggeration to say that if there had been no Brock there would now be no Canada; but there is sufficient doubt on the point to make it a reasonable topic for discussion."[118]

Lamb's idea was a novel one, but his fellow historians were rather more interested in discussing the country's political history, given the upcoming centenary of Canada's founding as a nation in 1967. Canadians generally, and particularly those with an interest in their history, were similarly predisposed. This attitude was especially pronounced in the five years following the short-lived hype associated with the sesquicentenary of Brock's death in 1962, when—except for the Fathers of Confederation (those English- and French-speaking politicians who came together for the founding of the Canadian dominion)—scant attention was paid to other historical figures.[119] One of the few exceptions to this trend involved a six-piece series of specially commissioned prints depicting the

most noteworthy men in Canadian history.[120] In 1965, anticipating a growing demand for Canadian souvenirs as a result of the approaching centennial, the Ospreay Picture Company of Toronto launched a line of products based on a thoroughly bicultural sales strategy. "We sell portraits of six famous Canadians [meaning pre-Confederation historical figures]—three English and three French," an Ospreay spokesman informed a *Globe and Mail* reporter. "You realize, of course, that we must keep a bilingual balance."[121] Although the Ospreay series completely ignored the Fathers of Confederation, its equal treatment of Anglo and Franco historical figures aligned with federal government policy—and also Pearson's fear of the Quiet Revolution in Quebec. The prime minister was convinced that national symbols should reinforce the new emphasis on Canada's two founding peoples. There was a similar attitude toward Canadian heroes, which meant a lesser regard for those inextricably linked to the British Empire. Brock was foremost among this suddenly unfashionable set, although his prominent place in Canadian history could not be diminished without alienating much of the country's English-speaking majority. It was much the same situation in the home decor and souvenir picture industry. But while Brock was one of the lucky few Ango-Canadian heroes to warrant inclusion in the Ospreay portrait collection, he was nonetheless largely overlooked during the centennial. It was of no particular consequence, given all the honours already bestowed upon his memory throughout the 1960s. Thereafter, however, Brock's heroic legacy was increasingly relegated to the status of a tourist attraction.

Whether represented as a neoclassical monument high upon the brow of Queenston Heights, or a wax museum exhibit in downtown Niagara Falls, Brock remained popular in the public imagination. A similar interest was becoming evident among academic circles, where Brock's achievements were now more likely to attract greater scholarly attention. Prompted by the sesquicentenary in 1962, there was a minor flurry of publishing activity relating to the War of 1812. In addition to various articles, several books were published, two of which, *After Tippecanoe* and *The Defended Border*, presented an eclectic mix of old and new material written by specialists and non-specialists alike. With contributions from such late quinquagenarian admirers as Dominion archivist W. Kaye Lamb as well as Charles P. Stacey, the country's eminent military historian, the occasion of the sesquicentenary was, not surprisingly, put

to good use in perpetuating Brock's legendary status. As Lamb blithely stated,

> It is a measure of Brock's greatness that his death was not the end of the Brock story. His loss was a shattering blow to his troops; to the people it was an occasion for national mourning. But it is significant that his army survived his loss. Reinforcements hurried to Queenston, as he had planned that they should do; a British force worked its way carefully around the American position on the heights and attacked it from the rear; well-directed fire caused the flow of American troops across the river to drop to a trickle; and the day ended in a famous victory and the taking of over nine hundred prisoners. The difficult amalgam of regular forces, militia and Indians that Brock had contrived to achieve stood the strain, and continued to do so during the two years of war that lay ahead.[122]

And Stacey, despite his extensive knowledge of strategy and tactics, was no more critical:

> The manner in which Brock rose superior to discouragements which a lesser man would have used as excuses for inactivity may serve as an object lesson to every officer who would learn the arts of command. . . . It would be difficult also to adduce a better example of the dividends to be gained from *offensive action*. In spite of the odds against him, Brock saw the importance of seizing the initiative from the enemy and taking the offensive; and the results achieved should be an inspiration to every commander who is faced by superior forces.[123]

Had it been left solely to the discretion of Lamb and Stacey, Brock's reputation for military genius would have continued unabated. Yet, a more analytical approach in assessing Brock's leadership was beginning to take hold, and most notably with a somewhat younger Canadian military historian, the late-forty-something J. Mackay Hitsman. Like Donald J. Goodspeed, who published his juvenile biography of Brock in 1964, Hitsman was a member of the army's Historical Section and someone

who shared a similar but more objective, less patriotic interest in Brock's military career. In 1965, he published a book on the War of 1812 that offered a new and critical analysis of British leadership during the conflict. Although a scholarly publication, *The Incredible War of 1812* held a strong popular appeal. And by means of a treatment of the subject that was well-grounded in academic rigour, Hitsman was able to offer his readers a convincing reappraisal of Brock's superior officer.

During doctoral research conducted several years earlier, Hitsman had come to suspect that Sir George Prevost, in his capacity as commander and governor-in-chief of the Canadas, "had been greatly maligned by Canadian historians and that the conduct of the War of 1812 and events in it had been in many respects different from what they had been in many places declared to be."[124] In presenting his findings to the annual conference of the Canadian Historical Association in June 1962, Hitsman expressed his decided opinion that Prevost had been unfairly condemned by historians who were obsessed with the idea of his ineptitude as a field commander. Consequently, they "failed to recognize or appreciate the extremely competent defensive strategy displayed in his overall direction of the war."[125] Sitting in the audience was Francess G. Halpenny, an editor with the University of Toronto Press, who became intrigued with Hitsman's revisionist views—not only regarding Prevost, but also the Militia Myth and the War of 1812. Halpenny was so intrigued that she invited Hitsman to write a new history of the conflict based on his extensive original research. The offer was accepted and Hitsman soon began work on a manuscript.[126] The book that rolled off the presses three years later was advertised as a welcome departure from the usual fare of a monotonous Canadian history curriculum.[127] Taking a dig at this chronic educational failing, the University of Toronto Press offered its readers an account "of the War of 1812 unlike anything studied once upon a time in school. It is engrossing, exciting, and even entertaining, with descriptions of campaigns and battles, and of the officers and men who manned the frontier. Based on a careful reading of official documents and accounts by participants on both sides."[128]

True to the marketing ploy that preceded it, Hitsman's book was a great success and—in a testament to his ability as a historian—is still considered a seminal work on the subject.[129] According to Canadian military historian Donald E. Graves, *The Incredible War of 1812* "remains possibly the best single-volume account of that strange and far-off conflict

. . . and the standard against which all other works must be judged."[130] Furthermore, Graves was confident that by "providing the wider historical context for Prevost's record in command, Hitsman for the first time produced an objective view of that officer."[131] As with Prevost, Hitsman was balanced in his discussion of Brock. Although favourably impressed by the famous general, he was not prepared to treat him as some sort of military genius—as had generally been the case for far too long. Rather, Brock was merely a keen soldier, bold by nature, and with considerable experience of the frontier he might have to defend.[132] An impartial Hitsman could well appreciate Brock's opposition to the abandonment of Upper Canada as proposed by Prevost, but he also saw the merit in Prevost's defensive policy and the greater strategic importance of retaining the fortress at Quebec.[133] Hitsman's well-developed sense of fair play also extended to the injustice perpetuated against Major General Roger Hale Sheaffe, who won the Battle of Queenston Heights after Brock's death early in the action. For the better part of a paragraph, Hitsman challenged conventional thinking about the outcome: "Canadian history has emphasized the death of Brock while leading an unsuccessful and hurried counter-attack, but the British government rewarded Major-General Sheaffe with a baronetcy for the skillful manner in which he marshalled and manoeuvred his little army to victory."[134] This determination to give Sheaffe the credit he deserved was characteristic of the objectivity that governed Hitsman's work. In a broader sense, it was a reflection of the professionalism that was beginning to transform the standard interpretation of Brock as a military hero.

Hitsman's critical approach to history was a refreshing departure from the usual brand of heroic narrative; yet, while his contribution garnered the most notice, it was by no means the first academic reassessment of Brock's legacy. There were other such studies, inspired by the sesquicentenary of the War of 1812 and no less innovative. But they were beyond the reach of most Canadians, as they came in the form of unpublished master's theses written by graduate students at Canadian universities. One of the first was that of A. M. J. "Jack" Hyatt at Carleton University. Defended in 1961, Hyatt's thesis argued that the preservation of Upper Canada in 1812 was usually "ascribed to the military talents of Major General Sir Isaac Brock," an old misconception that confused the respective roles of Brock and Prevost.[135] But as Hyatt ably demonstrated, Prevost's adherence to the broader defensive policy of the British

government was the better strategy. However, by rejecting Brock's preference for offensive warfare in favour of a Quebec-centric resistance, which Prevost ensured by limiting reinforcements to Upper Canada, he became the "cause of all that was ill for the British during the war: his weaknesses are magnified and his strengths overlooked."[136] Brock, conversely, was extolled for the vigorous defence he mounted within the tight parameters set by Prevost. Hyatt's astute analysis on these points placed him in lockstep with Hitsman's views—or possibly vice versa, as Hitsman was allowed to read Hyatt's thesis during the preparation of his manuscript for *The Incredible War of 1812*.[137] And while Hyatt was thanked in the book for his generosity, it was Hitsman's reputation that benefited from the publication of this new, more critical way of thinking about Brock. One can only imagine the degree to which Hitsman's book might have been further enhanced had he incorporated the work of another graduate student.

Wesley B. Turner's purpose in writing a master's thesis was to provide "the most up-to-date, thoroughly documented and accurate account of the life and work in Canada of Isaac Brock."[138] Defended at the University of Toronto in 1961, several months after Hyatt submitted his thesis to Carleton University, Turner's study examined the overlooked administrative component of Brock's service in the Canadas. By focusing on the general's pre-war efforts to achieve a more orderly military arrangement while strengthening defensive installations and improving the lot of his soldiers, Turner recognized that Brock was laying the foundation for his future greatness. It was not against an inept enemy alone that Brock won his victory at Detroit, and neither did it result from a few months of hurriedly organized defences. Rather, as Turner concluded, the whole range of Brock's preparations for war were instrumental, and understanding them gave an added dimension to the Hero of Upper Canada. This broader view led Turner to further conclude that while Brock was a great man, "he was not perfect; he made mistakes and the worst of these cost him his life."[139] This critique of Brock was in keeping with then current trends in historiography, and yet Turner held fairly traditional views of Sheaffe and Prevost insomuch as he agreed with the long-standing negativity associated with their respective commands.[140] It was perhaps as a result of these traditional views—views that Hitsman was likely to have found unacceptable—that Turner's thesis was not included along with the other graduate papers cited in *The Incredible War of 1812*.

At a time when certain leading Canadian historians still viewed Brock as the undisputed Hero of Upper Canada, when the Militia Myth went largely unchallenged, and the Loyalist tradition continued to hold considerable sway, the new interpretations of graduate students provided a much-needed and more objective view of Brock.[141] This positive trend continued with two unpublished master's theses from Queen's University—namely, Reginald Arthur Bowler's 1964 study of propaganda in Upper Canada during the War of 1812, and Keith Walden's 1971 investigation into the mythologization of Brock and the Upper Canadian Militia.[142] To Bowler, there was evidence of a pervasive feeling in Upper Canada

> that opposition to the overwhelming might of the United States was senseless. When the war broke out, this feeling resulted in a tendency on the part of the militiamen of the province to fail to report to duty, or to fade away from the scene of prospective battles. Brock's public response to this problem was an excellent example of his competence as a propagandist: he ignored it, and acted and spoke as if the militia had responded to the call of duty with magnificent courage and willingness.[143]

Bowler was careful to note that Brock was by no means willing to overlook cowardice or treason during the emergency. Rather, the degree of his indulgence was interpreted as a strategy by which he aimed to "prevent panic by keeping the extent of disaffection and desertion in the militia a secret," and by commending the militia's performance he encouraged these civilian soldiers, as well as the public generally, to believe his show of enthusiasm for the defence of Upper Canada.[144] But there was an unintended consequence: "This remarkable facade was maintained with great vigour, and the lavish praise of the militia which appeared constantly in Brock's general orders and overflowed into the newspapers was no doubt the origin of what has been called the 'militia myth' of Upper Canada."[145] As Bowler further emphasized, British propaganda during the war "appeared largely due to the efforts and influence of General Brock."[146] In effect, Bowler contended that Brock was responsible not only for the inception of the Militia Myth, albeit unintentionally through the clever use of propaganda, but also that he was the inadvertent architect of his own enduring popularity, given that

the Militia Myth kept Brock's memory alive. Although Bowler failed to make the connection between Brock and his enduring popularity, his revelation concerning Brock's role in the Militia Myth's origin was an intriguing, if not entirely convincing, take on that peculiar aspect of Upper Canadian history (and one that Hitsman did not employ). While Brock's propaganda might have been a contributing factor in the emergence of the Militia Myth, it would have become a mere relic of the War of 1812 without the sustaining patriotic and nationalistic sentiments of colonial elites, militiamen, and Loyalists. Regardless, the revelation about Brock's use of propaganda was an important new consideration. Unfortunately, Bowler's thesis remained in manuscript and for many years was largely inaccessible, except by a select few scholars who were allowed the loan of it from Queen's University Library. The general populace, however, had no such borrowing privileges.

A similar fate befell Walden's thesis, which was left unpublished and beyond the reach of most Canadians. This deprivation was especially unfortunate, given that his graduate work was devoted entirely to Brock and the Militia Myth. Building on the idea of a linkage between the two, Walden explored the possibility that Brock's heroic image was itself largely a myth. "Although Brock died in the first battle after Detroit," Walden contended, "he became the leading symbol of the whole conflict, and in the century which followed his figure was the object of much praise."[147] Believing that insufficient attention had been paid to the "historical figure of the man to see if it conformed to the ideal model" of a hero, Walden became convinced that much of the enthusiasm for Brock was bound up in legend and, as such, "complemented the Upper Canadian perception of the role of the militia. Brock was merely a striking specimen of the men he led; they shared his courage, daring and dedication to principle. When Upper Canadians praised Brock, therefore, they also praised their forefathers and by implication, themselves."[148]

Brock's heroism was further exploited to promote the idea of a thoroughly British colonial society. The main instigators behind this manipulation of thought were adherents of the Militia Myth and the Loyalist tradition, whose social aspirations were facilitated by taking an overly romantic view of the past. There was a similar tendency regarding Brock's martial reputation, which was seen by most Canadians as nothing short of military genius. This popular impression remained firmly in place well into the mid-twentieth century, when Walden's thesis—like those

of Hyatt, Turner, and Bowler—challenged the way in which historians treated Brock's military character. Without question, these graduate papers held the potential to alter strongly held misconceptions about Brock. Indeed, some might have proved just as popular as Hitsman's *Incredible War of 1812*, had there been greater opportunities for their publication. But master's theses were not normally put into print, and the presses of academe—like academe itself—tended to be antipathetic toward military history.

Writing in 1969, Gwynne Dyer summed up the scholarly attitude toward military history as having "traditionally been a rather despised province of the academic kingdom of history."[149] But Dyer sensed that things were changing for the better, and as an up-and-coming military historian who had conducted a survey of the situation, he was in a good position to report about recent favourable developments. Moreover, he was able, based on his experience as a military historian, to comprehend the disdain of more conventional professional historians regarding his field of study. There were two reasons for their contempt: "The first is that military history in the proper sense has not usually been distinguished from the 'drum and trumpet' history which antedated the establishment of the historical profession, and which that profession rejected and deplored—this is why such words as 'antiquarian rummaging' have been applied to all military history indiscriminately, when the work of many military historians has been of a demonstrably high standard."[150]

Dyer's second reason was society's abhorrence of war. The twentieth-century experience, he explained,

> has made our own time certainly among the most pacifist-inclined in the recent history of Western culture, at least within the intellectual community, and it is not surprising that many people have concluded that if we refuse to think and study about this dreadful phenomenon, war, then perhaps it will be less likely to happen. This has been the real rationale behind the opposition of many academics to the study of military history on the grounds that it will encourage warlike tendencies.[151]

Whether it was the preservation of hard-won professional standards or the encouragement of peace, Dyer could well appreciate the motivation behind each of the arguments. Yet, he made no bones about pronouncing

them to be irrelevant: "The profession of history is surely secure enough in the latter half of the twentieth century to be able to distinguish between military historians and antiquarians, and to reject only the latter, without endangering its academic standards."[152] As for the baneful effect of military history, Dyer questioned the necessity of having to elaborate "that war is one of the most common patterns of human behaviour throughout history," in order to dismiss opposition to the serious study of it.[153]

Dyer's views had much to commend them, but another historian—one who specialized in the historiography of Canada—held a rather broader view of the challenges facing the country's military history. Carl Berger, not unlike Dyer himself, believed that this particular field of study had "suffered from neglect partly because it was associated, especially by exponents of the 'new history,' with 'drum and trumpet' romanticism and the preoccupation with heroes and the great ones of the earth."[154] Much of the problem stemmed from a persistent trend among professional historians to embrace the "new history," as Berger termed it. Otherwise known as "progressive history," this new history had developed in the United States during the late nineteenth century and was squarely focused on the experience of the common man. Along with the pacifist and anti-militarist ideologies that defined much of the interwar and postwar years, it is little wonder that Canadian historians became thoroughly engrossed with non-militaristic subject matter including constitutional, economic, and social history.[155] By neglecting military history, the fresh historiographical approach did nothing to encourage young historians to take up specialized studies of martial figures like Brock.[156] That Turner and Walden did so was something of an anomaly, especially as neither of these graduate students—unlike Hyatt—went on to pursue careers in military history. Moreover, Turner's largely biographical thesis came particularly close to crossing another line laid down by trendsetting professors in university history departments across the country, insomuch as the only thing worse than military history was great man biography—or even the mere suggestion of it. With the new history emphasizing the experiences of common people en masse, individual biographies of the elite were dismissed as "propagating a false consciousness about historical change."[157] Such was Berger's finding, and in quoting fellow Canadian historian Robert Craig Brown, Berger obviously accepted his observation that biographers were apt to feel "something like an eccentric cousin: a bit old fashioned in his insistence that individuals can and do shape the

historical process."[158] Berger also observed that as history became ever more collective in scope, "very seldom did a writer of insight, literary skill, and luck with sources manage to render penetrating and memorable glimpses of human beings."[159] And considering the negativity associated with military history, it was almost a given that none of these "human beings" could ever happen to be Brock.

The beginnings of this historiographical shift away from biography can be traced to the end of the First World War. In the two decades following this conflict, there developed a growing hostility among professional historians toward romantic hero worship. Much of their hostility stemmed from a harsh reconsideration of famous historical figures who had been "put up on pedestals," as Berger phrased it.[160] The efforts of this debunking class of historians was especially evident in the United States and Europe, where—according to the American historian and biographer John A. Garraty—the most zealous among their number attempted to make "the intelligent seem stupid, the dignified foolish, the earnest hypocritical, and the humble vain."[161] It was an iconoclastic fervor that originated with a new generation of historians who were disillusioned with the horrific slaughter of the First World War, and also with the wartime leadership, both military and civilian, they considered complicit. In Canada, this dissatisfaction found expression in revisionist essays, and during the interwar years a number of these papers deconstructed the legends and myths of Laura Secord, James Wolfe, and even Adam Dollard.[162] The goal was a more balanced view of Canada's persons of national historic significance, with the author of one such paper stressing the importance of original research. In writing about Sir Guy Carleton, 1st Baron Dorchester, the Canadian historian Alfred L. Burt emphatically wrote that "tradition made Carleton divine; research makes him human."[163]

Research was a vital component of the new revisionist approach to biographical writing, and historical scholarship was greatly assisted by the expanding collections of the Public Archives of Canada. But the new history, which held such great appeal for professional historians of the 1920s and '30s, relegated biography to a subsidiary position where it became an unpopular pursuit. Ascendant were the impersonal forces of history; yet, in the midst of this movement toward the masses, there was also a recognition that individuals played a significant part in their own history.[164] The most notable follower of this school of thought was

Donald Creighton, who went on to research and write a masterful biography of Sir John A. Macdonald. Creighton's original intention had been to pursue the question of values in Canadian history, but he failed to see a manageable framework for his project. Finally, he struck upon the idea of a biography as the medium for a study of what it meant to be Canadian. The subject had to be someone of "defining significance" in Canadian history, and to Creighton that person was Canada's founding prime minister.[165] But given all the negative traits now associated with Macdonald, Creighton might have been better served had he embarked on a new biography of Brock—whose own conduct has yet to offend modern sensibilities.

Carl Berger has written that a reaction against the new history became evident in the late 1930s and '40s, as professional historians like Creighton pursued "a determination to delimit the dominance of material forces and desire for a more intimate, human, and vivid experience of the past."[166] But while biography "became a vehicle for reasserting the ability of men to make their own history," Brock remained hidden in the shadows of academe.[167] Taken for granted, even by the promoters of this new manner of biography, his life story was consigned to "heroic accounts" and "patriotic renderings."[168] None of these same biographically inclined professional historians saw the need for an objectively written history of Brock's life. Instead, they seemed content to let his biography remain ensconced within the realm of children's literature. There it continued to serve as a highly useful patriotic tool, particularly in persuading succeeding generations of young Canadians to emulate his noble qualities in order to become better citizens. In this regard, there was a sense of agreement between professional historians and the biographers among them. There was also a general acceptance of the basic tenets associated with new history, and by the early 1960s any research suggestive of antiquarianism (or obsolete amateur history) was coming to be heavily frowned upon. Military history was included in this taboo category, and an anti-war sentiment inspired by the American involvement in Vietnam had a further alienating effect. In this type of academic environment, there was no incentive for professional historians of any kind to revisit Brock's militaristic life. His biography might have been doomed to academic indifference as a consequence, except that there was a "great and surprising upsurge" of work in both military history and war studies over the course of the 1960s.[169] This is what Dyer noticed toward the

end of that decade: a renewed academic interest in the country's martial achievements (including those attributed to Brock). And it was amateur historians who helped to keep this military sub-discipline viable.

Military history had long been a core component of Canadian history, and it remained so well after the professionalization of the overall discipline began in earnest during the opening years of the twentieth century. It was at the University of Toronto that the champions of historiography set about transforming the leisurely pursuit of amateur historians into a more rigorous approach, albeit through a gradual process that was slow to differentiate between old and new perspectives. Professional historians continued to value the work of their antiquarian counterparts, but changing attitudes would soon begin to have an ostracizing effect on the old guard amateurs.[170] Increasingly disparaging and indiscriminate, these dismissive attitudes became sweeping and frequently unwarranted. Yet, certain antiquarian historians still managed to elicit the respect of their professionalizing peers, and a prime example was William Wood of Quebec City.

A career soldier with a special interest in the War of 1812, Wood was one of the Militia Myth's earliest skeptics—a fairly controversial attitude to espouse in early twentieth-century Canada.[171] It was late in 1914, not quite forty-four years before Charles P. Stacey took the Upper Canadian Militia to task, that Wood forcefully rejected its reputation as an effective fighting force. Speaking before a luncheon audience of the Canadian Club in Toronto about Canada's lack of military preparedness, and while criticizing the country's neglect in providing adequate training for its modern militia forces, he dropped the following bombshell: "There is a general impression that militiamen of the kind we have in time of peace to-day did wonders at the front on both sides in the War of 1812. Ridiculous as this must appear to the present audience, or to any other composed of men who have their country's real interests at heart, it certainly is a general impression, of the usual baseless, intangible, and dangerously subtle kind."[172]

After five years spent sifting among the original documents relating to the war, Wood was able to positively show "that no such militiamen ever affected the issue of a single battle."[173] But before any grounds for outrage could register with his audience, so it would seem, Wood amended his harsh assessment of these civilian soldiers—likely as a means of accounting for those militia units that had occasionally performed in an

admirable fashion during the War of 1812. This he did by describing the varying degrees of militia organization, an important but overlooked point.[174] As Wood ultimately pronounced, the "long and the short of the whole vexed question of militia and regular is this: that there would never have been any regulars in any army if they hadn't been as much better than militia as any other professionals are better than mere amateurs."[175] Nor did Wood's views on the Upper Canadian Militia change very much by 1920, when he began publishing his four-volume *Select British Documents of the Canadian War of 1812*. With the release of the first volume, Wood offered his readers an explanation in support of his amended argument regarding the militia's organization and effectiveness. "It cannot be repeated too often," he urged, "that the war was not fought on the British side by what is usually called 'militia'; that is, it was not fought by men who had only a few days' training during the year under their own militia officers."[176] Training made all the difference and some militia units received greater consideration in this regard than others. Therefore, it was "the greatest mistake to suppose that the Canadian Militia who fought so well were really militia in the common acceptance of the word."[177]

While there was some merit in Wood's clarifications, the overarching truism remained the same: The militia had not saved Upper Canada during the War of 1812. That honour was reserved to the British regulars, although certain units of the militia did play an important supporting role, as did Britain's Indigenous allies. Yet, by having elucidated his stance somewhat, it seems that Wood managed to avoid alienating historiographical colleagues (whether amateur or academic). It was quite impossible, however, to mollify the new professional historians, who looked down upon military history and especially its hobbyist practitioners. Unlike historical biography, which was re-moulded to suit the purposes of professional historiography, military history was tainted by antiquarianism and could not be rehabilitated. Ironically, however, it was the dedicated research of stigmatized amateurs like Wood that held the greatest promise of bringing about a deeper understanding of Brock's character, despite the nearly impregnable heroic persona created by the Militia Myth.

Another amateur historian with interests similar to those of Wood was Ernest A. Cruikshank, who spent his latter years at Ottawa and whose numerous studies on the War of 1812 frequently touched upon

Brock. Like Wood, Cruikshank made a career of the military, a dedication that ultimately led to his appointment as director of the military history section of the Department of Militia and Defence. Upon his retirement in 1921, Cruikshank's predilection for the past continued unabated with his chairmanship of the Historic Sites and Monuments Board of Canada.[178] Instituted a few years earlier, in 1919, this federal government advisory body was tasked with making recommendations for national commemorative monuments. Those sites determined to be worthy of the honour received an ornate bronze plaque, as well as a fitting unveiling ceremony to publicize the board's good works. High on the list of priorities were plaques touching upon Cruikshank's particular area of interest and expertise: the War of 1812, especially as it played out along the Niagara River, which he considered to be the war's main theatre.[179] Brock, however, only ever received passing consideration. While he was certainly deserving of the board's attention, his fame had already been suitably memorialized through the erection of a majestic monument on Queenston Heights. For this reason, and possibly Cruikshank's preference for Canadian-born Lieutenant-General Gordon Drummond, Brock received little or no notice—that is, until Cruikshank hit upon an idea for not one plaque, but a whole series of them.[180]

At the Historic Sites and Monuments Board meeting in May of 1921, he suggested marking the routes of consequential military marches, beginning with Brock's expedition to Amherstburg in August 1812, which culminated in the capture of Detroit.[181] After receiving the board's approval, Cruikshank met with James H. Coyne the following August and together they set out to inspect potential plaque sites.[182] Coyne was another amateur historian and a fellow member of the board from St. Thomas, Ontario. Like Cruikshank, Coyne had an extensive knowledge of local history, which made him a valuable partner in what turned out to be a fairly involved project. Early in 1922, with the various plaque recommendations having been accepted, Coyne was called upon to draft inscriptions for no less than seven of them, to be placed at various locations between Port Dover and Sandwich (now part of Windsor), Ontario.[183] Cruikshank's idea for a series of plaques was a good one, in theory at least, because it offered the new motoring tourist class an excellent opportunity to trace Brock's expedition for themselves, and from the relative comfort of their newfangled automobiles.[184] There was also the all-important educational component, by which patriotic virtues were

imparted through encapsulated history lessons taken along the side of the road.[185] Unfortunately for Cruikshank's grand vision for the commemoration of Brock's expedition, much of its effect was lost to financial constraints, under which all but two of the proposed plaque texts were combined with other historically significant events. Cruikshank, however, still succeeded in linking Brock to the wider landscape beyond the Niagara Peninsula. Furthermore, the research that went into these plaques represented early contributions to a long and laudable tradition of rigorous historical inquiry.

Over the ensuing half century, the thrust of nationally significant historical commemoration in Canada expanded beyond the plaquing priorities of the Historic Sites and Monuments Board and grew to include a program for the preservation and interpretation of Canada's built heritage. This augmentation required a greater emphasis on both academic and professional training, along with the maintenance of an expansive knowledge base of useful information to support the development of relevant properties and the implementation of restoration projects. Another useful resource was made available in 1970, when the National Historic Sites Service—then a division within the National and Historic Parks Branch of the Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development—began publishing a series of occasional papers highlighting the work of its research division.[186] Many of the articles were specialized archaeological studies on such esoteric topics as excavated glass beads, clay pipes, and animal remains. However, there were also articles of a more general interest, including one on the Battle of Queenston Heights published in 1974.[187] Its author, Carol Whitfield, was a recent graduate of the University of Western Ontario who had taken Jack Hyatt's military history course.[188] Whitfield was well served by the renewed academic interest in Canadian military history toward the end of the 1960s, and she had successfully interviewed for a research contract with the National Historic Sites Service prior to her graduation in 1968 based, in part, on Hyatt's course.[189] This happy sequence of events was part of a natural progression for Whitfield, whose parents inadvertently fostered her interest in Canada's military history through family trips to historic sites such as Brock's Monument. These childhood experiences, coupled with a propensity for research and scholarship, would lead to a lifelong career with Parks Canada, the government agency that evolved out of the Parks Branch. Among Whitfield's early research assignments

was a rigorous examination of the Battle of Queenston Heights, one that conformed to the new academic standards demanded by professional historians and their military history subset.[190] Recognizing that the battle was essentially a test of leadership, she focused her study on the personalities of the commanders on both the British and American sides. By providing an unbiased evaluation in each case, she offered her colleagues fresh insights into Brock's military abilities.[191]

At a time when Brock was still held in unquestioningly high regard, Whitfield critically analyzed both his civil and military commands. In treating his "direct charge" up the escarpment as a brave but ill-considered manoeuvre, she observed that "People began to forget his faults, remembering only the man who had shown them that victories were possible. Thus began the legend that would call Isaac Brock 'the hero, defender and saviour of Upper Canada.'"[192] Whitfield's historiographical treatment of Brock was on par with her academic contemporaries, the graduate students who devoted their master's theses to meticulous studies of Brock. Adhering to modern academic standards, she used a methodological approach to explore Brock's military background and the influence it had on his leadership at Queenston. But while Whitfield's article was widely used by mainstream and military historians looking for the most current scholarly treatment of the battle, its limited circulation as a government publication meant that the main thrust of her findings was kept well beyond the reach of a popular readership. This result was unfortunate. Revealing something of Brock's hidden nature could have renewed interest in him, especially among a rising generation of Canadians who were becoming quite receptive to historical revelations—even when they diminished the mythological stature of their greatest heroes. By the early to mid-1970s, however, the lingering effects of the sesquicentenary celebrations of the previous decade had all but faded away, and Brock's relevance was beginning to wane.

Still, there was the occasional reminder of Brock to keep his memory alive, if only through passing references in newspapers, books, or journals. Far less frequent were special museum exhibits featuring some relic of Brock, although a display organized in 1972 by the Manitoba Museum of Man and Nature (today's Manitoba Museum) included the loan of his coatee, the short uniform coat worn by Brock at the Battle of Queenston Heights. Morbidly fascinating for the hole left by the musket ball that ended his life, this prized garment—which was seldom allowed out of the

Canadian War Museum in Ottawa—was given a much-needed airing in Winnipeg. Curiously, while the curators responsible for this exhibit of Canadian military history between 1812 and 1914 "decided very early on (in the planning) that it would not be a glorification of war," they felt no compunction whatever in prominently displaying one of the country's more graphic examples of war memorabilia.[193] All contradictions aside, the display of this cherished relic in another part of the country was a significant gesture toward a greater sense of shared nationalism. More of the same would have helped to make Brock's name and reputation better known among Canadians at large. As it was, the end of June 1973 brought another, somewhat unusual, opportunity to emphasize Brock's important place in Canadian history. It was prompted by a brief visit to Niagara-on-the-Lake by Queen Elizabeth and Prince Philip, and an entertainment at nearby Fort George gave the royal couple a taste of the average tourist's experience.

Reconstructed in the late 1930s, Fort George was a major draw for anyone seeking history tourism relating to the War of 1812. Besides the buildings and their associated artifacts, tour guides in period costumes demonstrated various skills from a long-bygone era. Notable were the military re-enactors who thrilled audiences by firing off replica muskets. The visiting royals were treated to much the same type of educational entertainment, except that John Graves Simcoe and Brock were resurrected by a couple of re-enactors for a special appearance. As Ontario's first lieutenant-governor, Simcoe's character dutifully recited a speech praising the Loyalists for having "left the old colonies rather than relinquish their adherence to your crown."[194] Someone posing as Brock then came forward and performed a solemn reading of his declaration in response to the American invasion of western Upper Canada, but the stage was soon stolen by the antics of a contingent of military re-enactors who loaded their muskets with blank cartridges and summarily fired them into a crowd of nearby children. The youngsters played along, screaming and falling over, while the royal couple burst out laughing at the sight. Nor did the merriment end there: "A reporter from the Buffalo Courier Express, seated on the lawn trying to capture the proceedings on a tape recorder, was blown over when a cannon went off about 10 feet [3 metres] from him. Prince Philip stamped his foot when he saw it. Another member of the press party waved a white handkerchief [in mock surrender] and both the Queen and Prince Philip laughed again."[195]

Although Brock was not the most commanding attraction at this event, as he had been when re-enacted during the sesquicentenary in 1962, the history-based entertainment enjoyed by the royal couple at Fort George helped to keep his name before the Canadian public—if only through fleeting news reports, which served as reminders of his illustrious military exploits. But by the early 1970s, as Canada continued to evolve into a country that was more bilingual, multicultural, and less enamoured with its British heritage, Brock's relevance was becoming largely confined to Ontario's Niagara Peninsula. Like the British War of 1812 commanders who followed him, he might have slipped into obscurity, had it not been for the Massey Commission report of 1951 and the financial support it drummed up for Canadian history and heritage.

Inspired by a former diplomat who was also Canada's leading patron of the arts, Vincent Massey chaired the national inquiry formally known as the Royal Commission on National Development in the Arts, Letters and Sciences, whose final report "painted a bleak picture of the precarious state of Canadian culture."[196] However, there was also the optimistic recognition that with increased government oversight and adequate levels of funding, the situation was likely to improve. Included among the recommendations of the Massey Commission was the call for a greater sense of cultural nationalism. Conceiving it desirable that Canadians should know as much as possible about their country's history and traditions, it was also "in the national interest to give encouragement to institutions which express national feeling, promote common understanding and add to the variety and richness of Canadian life, rural as well as urban."[197] To this end, the preservation of existing historic sites and structures, as well as the acquisition of additional heritage properties, was encouraged. Accordingly, in 1969, negotiations with the Department of National Defence and the Niagara Parks Commission resulted in the transfer of several historic sites in and around Niagara-on-the-Lake, including Fort George, Brock's Monument, and a portion of Queenston Heights, to the federal government to be managed by the National and Historic Parks Branch (which in 1973 became part of Parks Canada).[198] Given that educating tourists about significant events in the nation's history was viewed as an important component of the Parks Canada mandate, new signage was arranged to explain the Battle of Queenston Heights. It was just the sort of thing that was needed to "kindle the imagination" of tourists like the Lowers, who would have been glad to know that the Parks Canada

historians were implementing a unique interpretative opportunity to explain about Brock, his monument, and the battle—all without having to rely on the seasonal schedule of a ticket taker, as was Kay Kritzwiser's experience in 1962.[199]

In a move reminiscent of Cruikshank's attempt to commemorate Brock's expedition, a series of plaques marking various stages of the battle were installed in the early 1970s. Nine free-standing narrative plaques were fashioned out of stainless steel, each accompanied by a tall rusting iron sculpture of "stylized futuristic design." These distinctive artworks were intended to unify the plaques, attract attention, and enhance the tour—which was meant to be experienced not by car, but rather on foot. It was an imaginative "walk through history" approach to the past, and the first "module" combining history and art looked out over the Niagara River, a short distance from Brock's Monument, where most visitors to Queenston Heights were expected to congregate.[200] Located at the beginning of the approximately three-kilometre-long tour, the initial plaque in the series provided an overview of the battle and a map of the route to be followed. As an American newspaper reporter shared with readers of the *Niagara Falls Gazette*, by "following the battle lines and the designated modules shown on the map, the tourist will be able to locate the major points of the combat and upon reaching them will be able to read the history of that particular spot."[201]

Cecil Farrell, the reporter so clearly impressed with this novel approach to marking expansive historic sites, went on to describe how it was "possible for the visitor to almost recapture the sound of cannons and the groans of the wounded and dying as they fought for the heights above the swiftly-flowing Niagara River 200 feet [61 metres] below."[202] The effect was clearly overstated, and the degree to which these new installations helped or hindered the viewer's imagination is debatable, especially as they were relatively short-lived. While certainly more cohesive and focused than the series of plaques commemorating Brock's expedition, the modules were replaced in the mid-1980s for various reasons, not least of which was their modern design.[203] Gone were the abstract designs of the 1970s, and in their place was a set of five new and more traditional bronze plaques. Angled on low concrete plinths and regrouped within an easier walking distance of Brock's Monument (not to mention the amenities offered by an on-site restaurant and nearby public washrooms), the replacement plaques provided greater context to Brock's participation in

the Battle of Queenston Heights.[204] The extent to which the walking tour was revamped epitomized the emphasis that Parks Canada placed on history tourism. Both the accuracy and the presentation of its installations had to meet exacting standards, and there was a great deal of importance attached to the question of how best to engage the curiosity of tourists.

Beyond the historic site itself, one of the more effective means of connecting the masses with their history was marketing in the form of commissioned newspaper articles—pre–tourist season travel features meant to highlight historical attractions and raise attendance levels. This type of advertising could become quite sophisticated, as evidenced by a promotional piece Kay Kritzwiser wrote on Fort George in 1976 for the *Globe and Mail*. Designed to entice visitors to the Niagara Peninsula from far and wide, it capitalized on Brock's association with the fort, mainly through the discovery of a skeleton that Parks Canada staff thought might belong to Alfred, the horse he rode into battle at Queenston Heights.[205] By this point in the article, readers were fully engaged in a discussion of the ongoing quest for an authentic reconstruction of Fort George, including a faithful interpretation of daily life there in the early part of the nineteenth century. Unlike Kritzwiser's pessimistic article of fourteen years earlier, there was none of the previous foreboding that Brock was on the cusp of being forgotten by Canadians. Yet, the potential for such an outcome should have been all the more concerning to her, especially when considering the country's young people.

Despite Alfred Birnie Hodgetts's prior attempts to enliven the teaching of Canadian history, the process remained largely textbook-based, and the history texts used for this purpose continued to treat historical figures like Brock in a cursory, factual, and lifeless fashion. There were, however, occasional attempts to break the cycle of boredom by introducing reading material that was more interesting. In an article on Canadian history textbooks that was also published in 1976, Patricia E. Roy, a history professor from the University of Victoria, referenced a growing trend in which "enterprising editors and publishers have brought out an assortment of readings, document collections, and 'problem' studies" to supplement standard survey textbooks of Canadian history.[206] Of the three types, document collections offered perhaps the most effective means of engaging students. An outstanding example was published in that same year of 1976 by a Toronto high school teacher, and in *Call Us Canadians* Larry Martinello made a commendable effort to infuse his own passion

for the subject. By doing so, he hoped to improve the learning experience of younger English-speaking students through an interdisciplinary and social science–oriented textbook. Complementing Canadian history with documents relevant to basic themes of individualism, diversity, courage, and compromise, *Call Us Canadians* went

> beyond a mere factual backdrop to Canada's history. It asks the students as involved Canadians to discover and participate in the richness of our past, brought to life through source materials, such as letters, diaries, stories and illustrations, which require each student to analyse, evaluate and interpret the information, and to make individual judgments. It is the author's hope that in this way the old myth that Canadian history is dull and boring will be laid to rest.[207]

Although meticulously planned and implemented, Martinello's mission to make budding history enthusiasts of public school students likely failed to excite the degree of interest he anticipated. Without statistics to gauge his success, it would still be safe to say that most of the students he hoped to inspire continued to view Canadian history as dull and boring. A majority of the country's English-speaking youth probably favoured the sports and entertainment stars they saw on American television programs, as opposed to the mostly dead Canadian heroes held up for emulation in *Call Us Canadians*, and so Martinello's efforts would have been largely for naught. Another textbook, no matter how innovative, was not about to interest students in a subject that did not appeal to them in the first place. However, for those young people with an appreciation for Canadian history, Martinello's textbook offered a source of inspiration—especially among the relatively few who happened to be intrigued by the country's military past. An entire chapter was dedicated to the War of 1812, and Brock, not surprisingly, was featured prominently. Along with transcripts of several documents he penned during the conflict, there were also a number of questions intended to encourage critical thought about his actions. Yet, by having portrayed Brock in a favourable light, Martinello effectively discouraged any serious debate about his leadership—not that it really mattered all that much. By the mid-1970s, Brock had all but lost his status as English Canada's premier role model.

While of no particular concern to older Canadians, especially those born prior to, during, or between the world wars, as they had grown up thoroughly instilled with a patriotic appreciation for Brock, there was now a great multitude of postwar baby boomers for whom his relevance had become largely passé. Far back in the distant past of the early twentieth century were the sort of indoctrinating school days remembered by William Lewis Morton, a Western Canadian historian who as a child cherished an exercise book simply because its cover depicted Brock's death.[208] Some sixty years later, few if any school-aged children would have felt a similarly strong attachment to Brock, especially since education in Canada was becoming increasingly multicultural. As Ken Osborne recognized, the traditional nation-building narrative was not so much rejected as it was transformed. Rather than drawing on political history, it utilized social history to tell Canada's national story.[209] In the process, Brock was largely overlooked as students were taught to view their history through a wider lens including class, race, gender, and ethnicity. The resulting indifference shown toward the country's elites, including Brock, extended to Canadian universities, where it was heightened by competing historiographical philosophies. While old guard national historians were still willing to give Brock an occasional nod, the new social historians were loath to make even this small gesture. Curiously, however, when it came to social engineering and treating Canadian history from that new perspective, no thought was given to Brock's enduring popularity. There was a similarly dismissive attitude among Canada's professional military historians, with very little dedicated interest shown in Brock. Most of these academics adhered to the broader historiographical trends gaining in popularity, and those few with biographical interests preferred to break new ground by examining the military careers of lesser-known commanders.[210] While Brock remained one of Canada's foremost military heroes, he had also become symbolic of an obsolete amateur historiography that, like the plague, was best avoided.

6

Enduring Popularity

Despite Brock's continued relevance to history tourism, especially that of the Niagara Peninsula, his popularity began to slump badly as the 1970s wound down. Evolving educational priorities were major contributors to the decline, as Brock was no longer a role model to Canadian youth or a person of interest for publishers seeking to pad their supplemental reading lists with patriotic biographies. To anyone raised on a steady diet of Brock hero worship, and interested enough to notice, it must have seemed that his vaulted reputation was soon destined for the ash heap of history. Yet, there was an abrupt change of fortune in 1980. In September of that year, Brock was reintroduced to Canada's reading public through a new and popular history of the War of 1812.

The book's manuscript had made quite an impression on Jack McClelland, who was Pierre Berton's publisher at Toronto's McClelland and Stewart. Based on prior experience, McClelland knew how much Berton's prominence as Canada's most successful writer of adult non-fiction literature enhanced the profitability of the books he authored. But there was an appeal to Berton's manuscript that transcended financial gain, and McCelland was intrigued by the way it treated the War of 1812 as foundational. For Berton, the book he envisioned was "the story of the first stirrings of the new country, the beginning of a national identity, and the great conflict that helped define the nation."[1] As his biographer, Brian McKillop, further elaborated, "the subject was a perfect one to choose as Canada entered the 1980s, for it linked an early nineteenth-century war that was arguably the seedbed of Canadian nationalism to twentieth-century readers eager to discover their roots and affirm their identity. In the wake of the American involvement in Vietnam, it would also be the story of a costly conflict no nation had won, an indictment of the folly of all war."[2]

Berton derived much of his literary inspiration from cultural and nostalgic themes, but by 1978, after having written several histories dealing with Canadian topics, he turned his hand to the specialized field of military history.[3] Berton, however, had no particular interest in making a name for himself as a military historian.[4] He was simply casting about for a book project "in which large numbers of people move through time and space," and the War of 1812 met this criteria.[5] The conflict presented Berton with all the intrigue and action necessary for a two-volume page-turner, the first installment of which was titled *The Invasion of Canada*, and whose success became evident through the printing records it set prior to publication. In May of 1980, the *Globe and Mail* reported that the initial domestic print run was expected to be in excess of one hundred thousand copies. It was an astonishing number for a book on Canadian history, representing more than two million dollars in retail sales.[6] The icing on Berton's cake came several months later, as literary critics "praised the liveliness of his prose, the immediacy of his story, and the value of his effort to make Canadians better acquainted with their own past."[7]

William French, the *Globe and Mail*'s influential literary editor, gave *The Invasion of Canada* a thumbs up, while at the same time taking a potshot at Canadian educators: "If history could be taught in our schools the way Berton writes about it, there wouldn't be a more popular subject on the curriculum."[8] French was especially approving of Berton's sense of national spirit, particularly in the way he restored the War of 1812 to a respectable place in Canadian history. Yet, French's review of *The Invasion of Canada* also displayed a particular knack for snidery by suggesting what he supposed was a major factor in Berton's success. "We all know he hires researchers to do the slogging," French not so innocently volunteered, "but there must be a trick to getting such competent ones."[9] Berton had only one such person in his employ at the time, and Barbara Sears was a freelance researcher who initially shared and then allayed his fears of a possible dearth of information. After conducting a preliminary investigation, she cautiously concluded that there "has to be a legitimate reason for all those historians churning out boring stuff [on the War of 1812]. . . . I hope that the lack of evidence isn't it."[10] Her hunch proved correct, and with the material she was able to provide, Berton finished the manuscript of his first volume early in 1980. It was soon after that another collaborator helped him transform it into a successful book.

Berton, much to his credit, recognized the importance of having a good editor, and the person he chose for the job was Janice Tyrwhitt, whose own important contribution to his success went unnoticed by French. As an author herself, Tyrwhitt's many editorial comments proved invaluable and resulted in a complete reworking of what Berton thought was already a masterpiece.[11] It was this openness to teamwork that allowed Berton to vanquish the stigma of boredom associated with Canadian history. In the words of McKillop, his biographer, "For a nation deemed dull by others—and whose citizens tended to believe the canard—Berton offered up a history stitched together with outsized personalities."[12] Brock was one of them, and Berton's handling of his character was generally in keeping with traditional views of the hero.

Apart from Brock's "tragically foolish" dash at Queenston Heights, Berton portrayed him as a military commander who possessed an uncommon share of strategic prescience.[13] This impression was largely based on Brock's preparations for war and his bloodless capture of Detroit. The only major criticism levelled against him involved an impulsive temperament, mainly because it deprived the province of his unique talent.[14] As Berton described the consequences, "The British have lost only fourteen killed and seventy-seven wounded, but there is one loss that cannot be measured and by its nature evens the score at the Battle of Queenston Heights. Isaac Brock is gone. There is no one to fill his shoes."[15] Here was the type of hero that Berton and many of his fellow Canadians remembered from their school days. It was a universally positive, if somewhat fuzzy, mental image, and one that Berton brought into sharp relief by his skillful use of the historical present tense. This style of writing was highly effective, and Berton put it to good use in reminding Canadians of their long familiarity with Bock, hinting at the nationalistic importance of such an association. As Berton projected, "The picture of Brock storming the heights at Queenston, urging on the brave York Volunteers, and saving Canada in the process is the one that will remain with the fledgling nation."[16] While Berton also had to admit that there was evidence to suggest that Brock was dissatisfied with his postings to the Canadas, he was able to show that it was of no consequence to the hero's many admirers. The people of these provinces simply overlooked the slight and built a towering monument in his honour—a symbolic gesture and a means of "shoring up power against republican and democratic trends seeping across the border."[17]

In writing about Brock's heroism, Berton provided his readers with a relatively valid description of the Militia Myth and its nationalizing tendencies. Canada's rise as a nation was a dominant historical theme at the turn of the 1980s, and for Berton it was one that extended all the way back to the War of 1812.[18] At Detroit in particular, Brock's spectacular repulse of American expansionism bolstered an alternative form of democracy that originated with the Loyalist-dominated colonial oligarchy a few decades earlier. As a consequence, Canada was allowed to continue on its own distinctive political course according to an emerging nationalism typified by a loyalty to and patriotism for the British Empire—both of which were expressed according to a peculiar Upper Canadian concept that demonized the American idea of a republic.[19] As Berton recognized, this evolving matrix of nascent nationalism and the Militia Myth gave rise to a "special form of state paternalism that makes the Canadian way of life significantly different from the more individualistic American way. Thus, in a psychological as well as in a political sense, we are Canadians and not Americans because of a foolish war that scarcely anyone wanted or needed, but which, once launched, none knew how to stop."[20]

The one redeeming feature of the whole unfortunate affair was Brock's death, insomuch as his sacrifice advanced a firm attachment to Britain. "So Brock in death," as Berton disentangled for his readers, "is as valuable to the ruling class as Brock in life."[21] And whenever Canadians heard his name, the image that formed in their minds was that of a splendid British general setting off on his "final impetuous dash."[22] Such was the appealing character Berton presented: the traditional hero most everyone expected, but one who was mildly chastised in keeping with modern historiographical conventions. It should have been a relatively safe approach. Unfortunately for Berton, his uncanny ability to write interestingly about the past did nothing to endear him to academe.

Many professional historians in Canada, particularly the military history scholars among them, resented Berton's intrusion upon their area of specialization. Notwithstanding the acclaim his book received from various newspaper critics, there was a good deal of academic scoffing at Berton's lack of scholarly qualifications. It must have been galling to the historiographical establishment that he was not merely an amateur historian, but an exceedingly popular one to boot. Charles P. Stacey was especially outspoken in his criticism, and as the grand old man of Canadian military history, his reaction to *The Invasion of Canada* carried

considerable weight. In reviewing Berton's book, Stacey was somewhat mystified as to the point of the exercise, "for there is a large literature on this war and historians and near-historians have produced a good many books and articles about it in recent years."[23] After conceding that there was perhaps still room for a popular book on the War of 1812, Stacey persisted in his negativity by questioning not only Berton's lack of proper training but also the anecdotal rather than analytical structure of his text—and its historical accuracy as well. *The Invasion of Canada* left much to be desired, as far as Stacey was concerned, and its treatment of Brock was no less bothersome. A major issue was Berton's interpretation of the hero's famous last words. Although Stacey agreed that Brock's call to push on the York Volunteers was not likely made on the battlefield, he rejected Berton's suggestion that the militiamen were hailed by their general as he passed them on the road to Queenston.[24] Stacey preferred the evidence provided by a letter Berton had apparently missed, in which it was claimed that Brock made his famous remark to someone near him on the battlefield. This particular letter, however, proved nothing of the kind and was really only useful in allowing Stracey to demonstrate that Berton's research lacked rigour—the inference being that his entire foray into military history was equally deficient.[25]

Not all professional historians were so prejudiced, however, and one of their number gave *The Invasion of Canada* a more even-handed assessment. In the decade following his 1971 master's thesis on Brock and the Militia Myth, Keith Walden had embarked on a professorial historian's career at Trent University. And while his interests had shifted toward cultural history, he was sufficiently familiar with the War of 1812 to review Berton's book. After a brief introduction, Walden bemoaned Berton's lack of interest in the "broader interpretive aspects of the war."[26] But in acknowledging the book's popularizing qualities, Walden applauded its success in connecting with readers: "The participants—soldiers and politicians, Indians and frontiersmen—are brought to life as gorgeous figures of romance."[27] Berton, as Walden recognized, was someone who took his responsibilities seriously, and

> as a popular historian this creates certain dilemmas. He is caught between the need to be truthful and the need to provide a colourful and absorbing narrative to attract a wide readership. This creates some curious inconsistencies in his approach to evidence.

> He tries hard, for example, to dispel some of the myths there were so central to the old Upper Canadian view of the war, emphasizing that most of the fighting was done by the British regulars and not the militia, questioning whether Brock and Tecumseh exchanged sashes, clarifying the matter of Brock's last words.[28]

At this juncture, Walden offered up his greatest criticism of Berton's use of historical evidence. In some places, "he queries the veracity of the record left by nineteenth-century commentators, in other places he accepts it to give his story drama and immediacy."[29] Normally, such selective methodology would have been extremely vexing for professional historians, but Walden was rather philosophical in observing that "much of the historical evidence which any historian uses is suspect, and Mr. Berton has written a readable and, in places, gripping book."[30] Unlike Stacey, Walden understood that Berton was "trying to explain to the people of his country something of the formative events in their past."[31] Stacey, conversely, seemed more intent on ridiculing a rival from beyond the academy.

Walden's review, perhaps because it was more balanced, elicited no public response from Berton or his overly protective publisher. But McClelland was not about to let Stacey's smears stand uncontested, not when they were directed against one of his most prized authors. In an angry response published a short time later, McClelland lowered the boom on Berton's nemesis: "C[harles] P. Stacey is all too representative of a body of scholars who think Canadian history should be reserved for historians. His petty nit-picking makes clear not only his envy but also his concern that Berton might succeed in bringing the War of 1812 out of the dusty closet in which historians have enshrined it."[32] Unlike McClelland, who was infuriated with Stacey's review, Berton was left feeling merely annoyed and somewhat perplexed.[33] To his mind, popular and academic historians served different purposes and readerships—neither being more legitimate or worthy than the other. As his biographer McKillop summarized it, "Berton's approach was never to aim at the mind or intellect; he targeted the heart and will of those readers for whom it was less important for history to explain processes than to convey meaning."[34]

Berton published his second volume on the War of 1812 in September of 1981, and it was received with the same degree of public approval and financial success as the first. Once again, there was an academic tempest in a teacup as military historians closed ranks against Berton's latest

assault on scholarly illusions of supremacy. And this time there was no holding back. In what can only be described as a peculiar double standard—in which a professional historian could write popular history, but not the other way around—Berton was never completely forgiven for having upset the established order of things.

Yet, the military historian who had once been his greatest detractor was now rather more tolerant. Not long after *Flames Across the Border* was released, Stacey all but congratulated Berton's expertise in reaching a mass market. And having changed his tune somewhat, Stacey believed that his colleagues "ought to think twice before they denigrate Berton" because, as someone who made a success of popularizing Canadian history, "he knows how to communicate, an art the professionals [professional historians] have not troubled to cultivate."[35] Stacey's new stance toward Berton's brand of history continued to moderate, and when he wrote Brock's entry for the next volume of the academically prestigious *Dictionary of Canadian Biography*, which was published in 1983, both *The Invasion of Canada* and *Flames Across the Border* were recommended for further reading.[36] Not inconceivably, Stacey (who was quite elderly by this time) perhaps wished to make amends—even if he still felt fully justified in his criticisms. However, a more dispassionate reading on his earlier part might have concluded that neither of Berton's books was severely lacking in terms of historical accuracy, not even by the most unbending of academic standards, as each had synthesized the works of various professional historians. But Berton's success in popularizing the War of 1812 was entirely of his own doing, and through the skillful use of his innate storytelling abilities, he instilled a greater sense of national pride among Canadians by breathing life into historical figures who were otherwise lacking in depth. The only drawback was an unfortunate tendency to reinforce a traditional view of Brock. By giving his readers the type of hero they had come to expect, Berton unintentionally validated the impression of a military genius. For someone whose bibliographies included considerable new and original research, Berton was inexplicably archaic in his portrayal of Brock. But preserving the leading hero's allure was essential for dramatic effect, not to mention a captivating story and brisk book sales.

Whether it constituted good or bad history, Berton's *Invasion of Canada* had a positive effect in promoting Brock's heroic legacy and perpetuating his enduring popularity. Berton's success also marked the

beginning of a new era of literary commemorations of Brock. In terms of monographs, there were the obligatory and generally favourable references in any number of books touching upon the War of 1812 and, once the bicentenary of that conflict began to draw near, more detailed treatments in each of the several new biographical studies prompted by the approaching occasion. While there had been a long and fairly constant supply of articles dealing with Brock, most of them were lightweight feature stories in magazines and newspapers meant for a general circulation; more substantial scholarly works were far less common and directed toward a much smaller audience of academic readers. Brock had also figured prominently beyond the print realm, mainly through the medium of plaques and monuments. And nowhere was his contribution to Canada more keenly felt than in Ontario's Niagara Peninsula, where tangible reminders of his exploits served the tourist trade in such heritage venues as Brock's Monument and Fort George. Of course, Brock's contribution to Canadian history was still taught in schools across the country, although with varying degrees of teacher enthusiasm and without much student interest. A good deal of the problem had to do with the loss of Brock's role model status. By the early 1980s, it had been largely overshadowed in favour of more modern and relevant sources of inspiration for young people—notably Terry Fox, the celebrated cancer research marathoner. Yet, as a heroic figure from a bygone time, Brock still appealed to Canadian children and the writers of their literature. Moreover, and much to Berton's pleasant surprise, there was a nostalgic interest among the nation's adults for their childhood heroes—so long as these same heroes were featured in popular histories tailored for a general readership. Berton's success offered a valuable lesson, but in professional historiographical circles the importance of an engaging approach was lost on the few academic historians who decided to take another look at the War of 1812 and Sir Isaac Brock.

One of the more eminent of these academic historians was the septuagenarian George F. G. Stanley, a distinguished scholar of Canadian military history and a public servant who began his own history of the War of 1812 several years before Berton embarked on his. Despite this head start, Stanley did not manage to publish his hefty tome until 1983, by which point both *The Invasion of Canada* and *Flames Across the Border* had already received their generous accolades. And having written his book at the invitation of the Canadian War Museum, Stanley expressed

some concern in the preface that he might have nothing new to say about the war.[37] But, while most academic reviewers seem to have ignored or overlooked this trite authorial misgiving, the *Globe and Mail*'s associate travel editor was less inclined to let the matter drop, and Robert Martin's review came down hard on Stanley's ill-timed publication. "Poor George F. G. Stanley," Martin derided, "his impeccable credentials as a historian, Rhodes Scholar and Lieutenant-Governor of New Brunswick don't mean much when you come up against Pierre Berton."[38] Martin then latched on to Stanley's admission about his inability to provide anything in the way of new material and questioned the need for any more books on the War of 1812: "In fact, after the release of Pierre Berton's exhausting if not exhaustive examination of Canada's own little war, we might even ask why Stanley has bothered. The world is not waiting breathlessly for another two-volume history of the War of 1812, a conflict that rates little more than a footnote in European military histories of the Napoleonic era."[39]

This dismissive attitude toward Stanley's book was more than a little rich, considering that Martin had just recently written a series of articles on the various battles of the War of 1812, some of which had already been published in the *Globe*'s travel section. Perhaps for this reason, given the research that would have been necessary for his series, Martin professed to understand the "cottage industry in books" on the conflict.[40] This flurry of activity had come about, he insisted, because the War of 1812 was Canada's "one brush with glory, the stuff of which myths and nationhood are made."[41] And in this "peaceful land," it was the only truly Canadian war, having been fought mainly on Canadian soil. "Sans confederation or constitution," Martin hazarded, "Canada the proto-nation nevertheless banded together, French and English, to defend itself against a common enemy."[42] The story of the war, Martin had to admit, was nonetheless a stirring one, and as such it justified the publication of additional books on the subject. Unfortunately for Stanley, his book, "lacking Pierre Berton's research personnel, got to the market-place second," and consequently Berton's two volumes got "the glory and the money, while Stanley sits on the shelf."[43]

Despite Martin's seeming hostility toward Stanley's book, he could still appreciate the "becoming felicity" it employed in telling yet another version of the same old story.[44] This recognition led to a backhanded compliment against Berton when Martin suddenly took an unmistakable swipe at his ego by observing that Stanley's "sprightly but dignified

prose shows that one doesn't have to write breathlessly in the present tense like some historical Harlequin romance in order to be accessible."[45] Another mark in Stanley's favour was his demythologizing tendencies, particularly as they regarded the Militia Myth. And yet, Martin was silent when it came to the doubts Stanley raised about Brock's legendary status. This omission was curious, especially given the hard questions Martin raised only a few months later in an article he published on the Battle of Queenston Heights. The research that went into that piece, one of his articles promoting tourism to Canada's War of 1812 battlefields, gave Martin the grounding necessary to lambaste Brock's "mad dash to martyrdom." Having convinced himself that Brock's death was an unmitigated waste, Martin challenged traditional views about Brock's leadership: "Would Isaac Brock have been so revered had he lived? His charge up Queenston Heights was undoubtedly heroic, but was it wise? Should he not, as his successor, Roger Hale Sheaffe, did, have waited until reinforcements were in place and then sweep the hill before him?"[46]

Martin obviously harboured serious doubts about Brock's tactical ability, which makes it surprising that he failed to give Stanley his due for a similar round of demythologizing—such as Stanley plainly set forth in the conclusion of his book: "Isaac Brock was a brave man who took chances. He was a hero. But are heroics the role of the commanding officer, or are they the responsibility of those of more junior rank? Orderly logic and disciplined action are the qualities required of a good commander."[47] Otherwise, Stanley's impression of Brock was fairly traditional and in keeping with the standard heroic view of earlier generations. There was one significant deviation, however, which was evident in the way Stanley acknowledged Sheaffe's contribution to the British victory at Queenston Heights. The result was a more balanced take on Brock's leadership. After resorting briefly to the old line that Sheaffe "had not the panache of Brock, nor his successful way of dealing with men," Stanley admitted that he was at least "deliberate and methodical, perhaps just the kind of officer needed at this moment. He saw no purpose in any dramatic charge up the slope behind the village in the face of the enemy's advantageous position. Instead, he led his men along a lengthy detour inland, running parallel to the escarpment, hoping thereby to gain the heights without having to battle for the position."[48] The indulgence Stanley extended to Sheaffe suggests that academic attitudes toward Brock—those that were

not entirely dismissive—were becoming somewhat more analytical, and less prone to positive generalizations.

Of course, there were holdouts from the old school of thought, mainly aging professors who were content to look upon Brock in a congratulatory fashion, as they had always done. Beyond academe, it was on the whole popular historians who underpinned this stereotype. But their cutting-edge professional counterparts, both social and political, were just as susceptible to making glossy references about Brock. Military historians occasionally fell into the same trap, as was the case with Desmond Morton in 1985 when he published *A Military History of Canada*.[49] By accepting the standard view of his teachers and mentors at the Royal Military College, which was that of Brock as a competent and effective leader, Morton helped to keep the positive image alive. A good deal of this doctrinal influence was gleaned from Stanley's own overview of Canadian military history: *Canada's Soldiers, 1604–1954: The Military History of An Unmilitary People*.[50] In turn, Stanley disseminated many of the same views entrenched in Charles P. Stacey's *Introduction to the Study of Military History for Canadian Students*. Issued by the Directorate of Military Training, this concise manual for future officers of the Canadian Army was the last vestige of the indoctrinating style of education that had made Brock a role model. Deeming that "some knowledge of military history is an essential part of any officer's education," Stacey used Brock's zealous exploits during the War of 1812 to validate the importance of a bold and determined leadership.[51] "There have been few campaigns," he assured his readers, "in which the vision, energy and decision of a commander have been more influential than in this one of 1812. The manner in which Brock rose superior to discouragements which a lesser man would have used as excuses for inactivity may serve as an object lesson to every officer who would learn the arts of command."[52]

But nowhere was Stacey's high regard for Brock's brand of leadership more evident than in the *Dictionary of Canadian Biography* entry he prepared for the series editor Francess G. Halpenny. In summing up Brock's character, Stacey held firm to the heroic image of a bold leader while peremptorily dismissing the well-grounded criticism levelled against him for "being unduly rash."[53] Boldness "was his way," and "boldness almost always succeeds when the enemy is ill-prepared and irresolute."[54] There was no room for debate, if only because Stacey looked upon Brock as "one of the people to whom it is given to change the course of history."[55] Brock

certainly had a messianic quality about him, and Stacey subscribed to the old Upper Canadian belief when he pronounced, "But for the presence in Upper Canada in the summer of 1812 of this able and magnetic general officer (and a single battalion of British regular infantry), the province would certainly have fallen to the United States."[56] As it was, however, Brock's "spirit continued to animate the people of the province for the rest of the war."[57] These manoeuvres around Brock's failings came dangerously close to the hagiography that professional historians strictly guarded against. Yet, Stacey was far from alone in his antiquated regard for Brock, and Donald J. Goodspeed, for one, offered a persuasive argument in support of the hero's foibles.

In May of 1980, Goodspeed—the same author who had written the children's biography of Brock nearly twenty years earlier—addressed a more mature audience in an article explaining why one of two British generals at the Battle of Queenston Heights was better remembered than the other. Harkening back to 1943 and Churchill's flying visit to Brock's Monument, Goodspeed led off by paraphrasing the British prime minister's bemused observation about "a monument to the man who lost the battle," with "nothing to commemorate the man who won it."[58] Goodspeed agreed, adding that Brock "has been remembered with affection and hero worship, while General Roger Hale Sheaffe, who won the victory after Brock's death, has been all but forgotten."[59] But Goodspeed was also confident that when more of Brock's story was known, the seemingly unreasonable allocation of fame would no longer appear strange, as it had to Churchill. Rather, as Goodspeed postulated, tradition and popular memory would prove reliable guides. Such was frequently the case, and so Brock was "rightly remembered as an excellent soldier, a sound strategist and above all as an inspiring leader, and the people of Upper Canada, who were Brock's contemporaries, instinctively recognized that the man was bigger than his accomplishments, whereas Sheaffe was smaller than his."[60] In attempting to assess Brock's popularity, Goodspeed realized that no analysis of his abilities as a strategist, administrator, leader, and tactician could do justice to the whole man. The "warmth of his personality, the depth of his humanity and that essence of his character which made so many diverse persons love him—all this will likely slip through our fingers."[61] After 167 years, it was impossible to feel a similar sense of emotional attachment for the Hero of Upper Canada. Yet, Goodspeed was at least able to form a solid opinion of Brock's military capabilities:

So far as his overall generalship was concerned, he was an officer capable of sound judgments on military policy.

But any attempt to evaluate Brock as a tactician, a leader adept in battlefield deployments, invariably suffered from a lack of evidence, since his direct combat experience was limited to just three battles.[62] And after the last one, at Queenston Heights, he was blamed for his own death at the head of a charge that perhaps should have been undertaken by someone who was more expendable. There was some justification to this criticism, and Goodspeed could not come up with a sound tactical explanation to justify Brock's reckless behaviour. Instead, he linked Brock's fate to a heroic character trait that was uncontrollable. In a similar battle situation, Goodspeed thought it "might have been wise and prudent for the commanding general to have delegated to some other officer the task of driving Captain Wool's men from the heights, but Brock was completely incapable of that kind of prudence. It was something that simply would never have occurred to him. And if this was a flaw, it was surely a flaw that no one would wish to see eradicated from his character."[63]

Goodspeed preferred to think that, "as a tactician, Brock was as sound as he was a strategist, with the same instinctive good judgment and common sense illuminating his actions."[64] The fact that he launched a counterattack without reinforcements—some of which he knew were militiamen on the march not far behind him—had no negative bearing on Goodspeed's firm belief that Brock possessed an "unshakeable common sense that resulted in shrewd judgment and in practical virtue. There is no intellectual capacity that is rarer or more valuable. His character, which was the source of his common sense, was found upon charity, courage and a flawless sense of duty. All those who cherish an independent Canada owe him a debt of gratitude."[65] Goodspeed's inclination for hero worship, which he himself acknowledged as being out of style, undermined an otherwise laudable attempt to probe Brock's psyche. This flaw in Goodspeed's research, combined with his unwillingness to admit the possibility of Brock's battlefield failings, placed him in the same league as Stacey and other professional historians with strongly held traditional views of Canada's military past.

Goodspeed's article was essentially intended for Brock enthusiasts like himself, with the opening references to Sheaffe merely a pretext to endorse Brock's heroic pre-eminence. There was no similar attempt to understand Sheaffe, or to comprehend Brock's generalship more fully

by means of a comparative framework. Such an innovative approach would fall to a younger professional historian—one of the promising few who, as a graduate student in the early 1960s, had chosen to write about Brock for his master's theses, and the only one to revisit the subject. In 1999, sixteen years after Stanley's book failed to excite much interest, this younger professional historian, by then a retired history professor from Brock University, published *British Generals in the War of 1812: High Command in the Canadas*. It was the first in-depth study of British generalship during that conflict, and the crowning achievement of a long and distinguished academic career. The book's author had retained a special interest in the War of 1812 during that time, and in the late 1980s Wesley B. Turner took up the necessary comparative research to achieve his ambitious goal.[66] Included was a major reconsideration of Brock's leadership, which went well beyond his perceived missteps at Queenston. Turner, who never thought of himself as a military historian, was motivated by "the vast difference in the commemoration" of Brock and his superior, Sir George Prevost (the governor-in-chief and commander of the forces in British North America).[67] "Why," Turner reiterated for his readers, "has Brock been more commemorated than any other military or civilian leader from that conflict?"[68] This simple question inspired a systematic, decade-long compilation of data on Brock and four other British generals.[69] And because Brock was the best known of these officers, as well as the "benchmark" by which the others were judged, he also rated the most attention. In a chapter titled "Audacity," Turner presented a picture of Brock as a relatively inexperienced but impetuously bold officer who bristled at the independence of civil authority as he formulated his plans for the defence of Upper Canada. Rather than simply criticizing his failings, Turner tried to explain and rationalize Brock's battlefield behaviour. The central question was Brock's motive in risking his life by leading the attack at Queenston, but the historical record revealed little in this regard, except that in Brock's limited experience "the tactic he seemed to prefer was a frontal assault led by himself."[70]

Like Goodspeed, Turner made a determined effort to understand Brock's particular leadership qualities. There was certainly evidence of a predisposition for his acting impulsively in combat, but there was also the possibility of a rational motivation to what appeared an emotional response. When, for example, he saw the American forces above the redan battery,

> Brock probably believed that he had no choice but to launch an immediate counter-attack. He had provided for counteraction by artillery against the Americans around Fort Niagara and Black Rock which would likely keep them off balance, but enemy control of the heights would outflank his entire defensive line along the river. The extremities of Fort Erie and Fort George could hardly be held with an American army between them and able to move by interior routes towards Burlington Bay. If the Americans did advance, the British would be forced out of the Niagara Peninsula and communications with Procter's forces and native allies would be severed. These may have been Brock's thoughts as he fell back through the village.[71]

While Turner still had to accept that Brock's death indicated an "absence of skill and care rather than the epitome of combat leadership," he also recognized the immense importance of the bold initiative that neutralized the threat of an American invasion from the Michigan Territory.[72] In Turner's estimation, the preservation of Upper Canada in 1812 was indicative that British sovereignty would prevail, and of all those generals under his consideration, Brock's efforts in retaining the colony for Britain were the most significant because his judicious military preparations and tactical audacity ensured a successful outcome.[73] There was not the slightest suggestion of incompetence in this regard, although Brock's generalship was soon forced into line with the commanders who came after him. Among this number was Roger Hale Sheaffe, who provided a valuable lesson in the use of caution while exercising military command. In comparing Brock's leadership with that of his successor, Turner paid special attention to Sheaffe's achievement at Queenston Heights. But while he judged that both commanders deserved credit for having repulsed American invasions of Upper Canada early in the war, thereby altering its course and influencing the final peace settlement, Turner tended to favour Sheaffe over Brock: "Whatever the exact amount of credit he deserves for the victory, Sheaffe's leadership proved appropriate for the situation. His was the course of methodical professionalism, rather than brilliance or dash. He rallied the defenders, steadied them, and won by following the rules, rather than by giving way to impulse."[74]

Turner's findings were in keeping with other modern interpretations, and the next book to examine Brock's leadership in something other

than a purely positive and affirming manner was Robert Malcomson's *A Very Brilliant Affair: The Battle of Queenston Heights, 1812*, published in 2003. Malcomson, a public school teacher who lived most of his life within a short drive of Queenston, had long been fascinated with the battle that was fought there.[75] In trying to bring its various scenes into greater focus, Malcomson encountered one frustration after another: "There were always so many questions, so many loose ends. Where did Brock die? What was he doing there anyway? Who was with him? Who was against him? How did they get there? Why did the battle happen here? Why that day? What difference did it make? Who else was a hero? Who never went home again?"[76] Malcomson's book was "a product of those questions and countless others," and by satisfying his curiosity, he hoped to produce a "thorough military study of the campaign and battle," while at the same time filling a gap in the literature that had existed since 1890, when the last dedicated study was written by Ernest A. Cruikshank.[77] From the outset, Malcomson made his views about Brock perfectly clear:

> Isaac Brock has usually been identified as the hero of Queenston Heights. There is no doubting his competence, dedication and awe-inspiring charisma, as his masterful defence of Upper Canada revealed, but he was not as infallible as legend would have us believe. When Brock died others quickly stepped forward to defend Canada as bravely as he had. The much-maligned Roger Hale Sheaffe coolly assessed the setbacks of the early morning at Queenston, concentrated his force and deployed it to win the day; it was his victory to celebrate, though, given the treatment he has received in most history books, one would hardly know it.[78]

Although not a professional historian, Malcomson was a recognized expert on the War of 1812 whose detailed study of the battle—from both the British and American perspectives—resulted in a balanced and fair account. It was also one of the few vettings that treated Brock dispassionately within the context of his last battle. In writing about Brock's reaction to news of the American attack at Queenston in the early morning hours of 13 October 1812, Malcomson questioned the way in which Brock received intelligence about the battle. Rather than sending a subordinate officer to the scene of the action, Brock went himself—behaviour Malcomson found mystifying, as Brock supposedly considered the

cannon fire coming from the direction of Queenston to be an American feint, and that the real assault would be against Fort George.[79] More damaging to Brock's reputation was Malcomson's list of the general's three critical battlefield errors. The first involved an order issued to the light company of infantry guarding the redan battery near the top of Queenston Heights. Having been summoned down to the village, the departing company left a void that was soon filled by an American detachment that scaled the escarpment and drove Brock and the gun crew out of the battery and down the heights. Malcomson blamed Brock for the order that left the heights undefended. The second critical error was Brock's decision to collect together whatever men he could muster and dash up the heights to regain the battery, an action Malcomson believed was taken without determining the enemy's strength. This failure to assess "the tactical situation surrounding the loss of the redan battery revealed a weakness in Brock's ability as a commander."[80] Brock's third and final critical error was his decision to lead the countercharge himself. Rather than ordering one of his junior officers to perform the dangerous task, Brock put himself at the head of his men. In doing so, he singled himself out for a fatal gunshot wound to the chest.

While Malcomson could well appreciate Brock's heroism, he also saw it as symptomatic of a doomed combination: careful generalship and rash leadership. True, he "balanced the strengths of the four key posts on the [Niagara] River between regulars and militia," and only the absence of a large body of reinforcements "kept his plan from being a classic example of how a river front should be defended."[81] But in the heat of battle, Brock's impetuosity caused him to make his three critical errors on the battlefield. Having enumerated them (the calling down of the light company, the launching of a charge without reconnaissance, and the leading of this same dangerous charge), Malcomson went on to deflate the myth of Brock's infallibility and the age-old impression of his military genius. These goals were accomplished by giving Sheaffe the recognition he deserved for taking a more cautious approach: "Unlike his predecessor who charged headlong into the fray, Major General Sheaffe carefully determined the strength of his enemy's position before deciding on a course of action."[82] Yet, Malcomson also divulged Sheaffe's own capacity for fallibility—which, even if it did not involve risking his own life, might very well have brought defeat down upon him. In forming his troops for their march into battle, Sheaffe somehow managed to confuse

their "front," or the direction in which they turned upon receiving that command. This mix-up was potentially catastrophic, as it meant—in theory, at least—that Sheaffe's troops were organized in such a way as to arrive "on the battlefield in reverse order, and if they had been ordered to 'front' they would have offered their backs to the enemy."[83] Had the Americans actually been presented with such an absurd sight, they "could have attacked the British at a point of obvious vulnerability" and with devastating consequences.[84] As it transpired, however, Sheaffe was able to adjust the situation after much confusion and "moving about."[85]

To Malcomson, the result of this error was nothing less than a botched attack, and one that revealed how "even the relentlessly trained British could get fouled up at a critical point in a battle."[86] As for Sheaffe specifically, the incident did "not speak well for his practical skill and forethought."[87] Malcomson considered Sheaffe's leadership only slightly less flawed than that of his predecessor. This insight, along with those touching on Brock's battlefield behaviour, formed a noteworthy contribution to the scholarship on the Battle of Queenston Heights, and Malcomson was fully deserving of the kudos given by approving reviewers of *A Very Brilliant Affair*. Included were those of a captain in the Canadian Armed Forces whose only reservation was that "most of the material presented about Brock is glowing praise."[88] As Steven Nolan pointed out, the criticism Malcomson offered was limited to the tactical considerations associated with Brock's attempt to regain the redan battery. In Nolan's view, the three critical errors Malcomson assigned to Brock's downfall were "merely the tip of the iceberg."[89] Convinced that Brock could be held responsible for these and other blunders as well, Nolan assumed they were the collective result of inexperience at the tactical and strategic levels. More damningly, with regard to Brock's three critical errors, was his "lack of presence of mind in the heat of battle."[90] Nolan took particular aim at Brock's leadership ability: "Even though he was the provincial military commander with all the regular and militia forces of Upper Canada under his command, he could not conduct a simple platoon attack."[91] It was a stinging rebuke of Brock's presumed military genius and also the long-held impression of Canada's heroic origins, yet there was not the slightest public reaction to this unapologetic revisionist challenge.

By the early 2000s, Brock had become largely peripheral to Canadian history. Professional historians—both social and political—generally failed to notice him, except when providing context for broader

discussions of the past. Military historians were just as apt to shun Brock, except on the rare occasion when their specialist knowledge could be put to good use in critiquing his generalship. As for amateur offerings touching on Brock, they, too, were few and far between during this period. Consequently, for most Canadians, Brock was a little-known relic of the distant past. Years of multiculturalism and sectionalism only made matters worse, and Brock's heroic legacy lost much of its patriotic appeal as a result. Consequently, his significance in the grand scheme of Canadian nationalism was greatly diminished—as was the Militia Myth and the Loyalist tradition. Lacking pre-eminence in a storied past, the combination of which had helped to perpetuate his memory, Brock was further eclipsed by a new societal trend promoting diversity and inclusion. Nowhere perhaps was the emphasis on equality encouraged more forcefully than in the teaching of Canadian history, which reduced Brock to the ranks of worthy but comparatively unknown actors in the national saga.[92]

But as the first decade of the new millennium drew to a close, Brock's life once again became the focus of considerable public attention—as well as a fair degree of publisher interest. The approaching bicentenary of the War of 1812 made his biography a bankable proposition, just as similar celebrations had done in the past. And despite the plethora of children's books on Brock's life, including several published in the decade or so prior to the bicentenary of his death in 2012, the market was not entirely restricted to children's literature.[93] Indeed, the time was judged right for an adult-oriented biography. There had been no similar undertaking since the last reprinting of Lady Edgar's *General Brock* in 1926 and the publication of Hugh S. Eayrs's *Sir Isaac Brock* in 1927. The main reason for the indifference shown toward this aspect of the Canadian book market was a chronic lack of financial incentive. But as the two hundredth anniversary of Brock's death approached, the idea of a new book on his life held enough lucrative potential for not one, but two book-length biographies.

First off the mark was a retired British Army general who jumped at the chance to write about his illustrious predecessor. Jonathon Riley's interest in Brock ran very deep. As a young boy, he was enthralled by the heroic story told in Donald J. Goodspeed's *The Good Soldier*, whose effect on young Riley was so great that he dreamed of becoming a soldier himself.[94] It was no passing fancy, and after a long career in the British Army that saw him reach the rank of lieutenant general, he took his retirement

in 2009.[95] Not long afterwards, with plans to celebrate the bicentenary of the War of 1812 beginning to take shape, Canadian military historian Donald E. Graves proposed that Riley should write a new biography of Brock. Riley's reaction was unreservedly enthusiastic. As he phrased it, "there was nothing on earth that was going to stop me."[96]

A fresh look at Brock's life was long overdue, and Riley's background gave every indication that he was capable of producing a definitive study. As a general officer who commanded British and allied forces, coordinated his actions with those of civil authorities, and experienced the interplay between regular troops and tribal fighters, Riley believed he could grasp the problems Brock faced in a way "no purely academic writer ever can."[97] To Graves, *A Matter of Honour* differed materially from earlier accounts of Brock's life because it was "a study of the man by a fellow general—a member of the same profession and a peer, as it were."[98] Riley's assessment of Brock as a soldier was the most important feature of this new biography, and when he discussed "the art of command, the principles of leadership, the conduct of operations and the effect of terrain and weapons capabilities on tactics," his words had "the ring of not only truth but experience."[99] With two graduate history degrees under his belt, as well as a body of published works on early nineteenth-century military history, Riley was confident that he could analyze the entirety of Brock's life as well.[100] Utilizing these extensive qualifications, he proceeded to focus the full force of his expertise on the concept of honour and how "the moral compass of the late eighteenth century" governed every facet of Brock's life—including his fatal charge at Queenston Heights.[101]

The 2011 release of *A Matter of Honour* was eagerly anticipated among military history circles in Canada, where it was seen as a welcome departure from all the children's literature that had come to predominate among Brock biographies. Yet, despite his long experience as a British soldier, Riley failed to attach much importance to Brock's missteps at Queenston, including the three critical errors pointed out by Malcomson, whom Riley lauded for having produced "by far the best account of the battle on Queenston Heights."[102] Instead, Riley's admiration for Brock remained "undimmed with the passing of years," although he confessed "some doubts about his grasp of strategy and the political imperatives of the time."[103] At the tactical level, in particular, Riley "never really understood how it was that he met his death doing a captain's job."[104] But in writing *A Matter of Honour*, Riley became convinced that Brock's

otherwise incomprehensible behaviour could be explained by his acute sense of honour: the complex moral code, based on personal integrity, that governed gentlemanly conduct and reflected a good reputation.[105] There was no need to consider other possible factors, and so impressive were Riley's credentials that no one presumed to question his authority on the subject—except in one notable instance.

Wesley B. Turner, whose own expertise on British generalship during the War of 1812 was well-established, wrote a review of Riley's *A Matter of Honour* in which he took issue with what he saw as its unsupported claims, inadequate documentation, and many factual errors. Clearly frustrated with Riley's offering, Turner issued a warning to all and sundry: "For those familiar with the details of the War of 1812, this work has only limited value; for those unfamiliar with the conflict, the work must be treated with skepticism and with caution."[106] In closing, Turner observed that there was still plenty of scope for further research on Brock: "The definitive study of Canada's leading hero from the War of 1812 has yet to be written."[107] It was a peculiar observation, given that Turner had already published his own biography of Brock.[108] And like Riley's book, the title Turner chose for his own—*The Astonishing General*—reflected the theme he chose to explore. After explaining how Brock "was the most unlikely of heroes," Turner expressed his astonishment that a British major general could secure everlasting fame having won just one victory, as was the case after Brock's capture of Detroit in August of 1812.[109] While acknowledging the effect of this remarkable feat, Turner argued that Brock's mass appeal had begun even before the declaration of war. By bolstering Upper Canada's defences, which he implemented in the months preceding the outbreak of hostilities, Brock had earned a degree of trust from the loyal segment of the populace. News of the British victory at Detroit galvanized their belief that he could repel any future designs upon the upper reaches of British North America. Nor did his death a few months later lessen his fame, since the Battle of Queenston Heights proved another spectacular British triumph. The fact that it was really Sheaffe's day was immaterial; Upper Canadians preferred their martyred hero, and so it was Brock who gained "both a victory and immortality."[110]

Turner, however, still had reservations about Brock's leadership, most notably at Queenston. But far from casting doubt on the well-worn mantra that Brock had saved Upper Canada, Turner reinforced the idea with a singular explanation: "Whatever course the fighting in the Canadas

took in subsequent years, regardless of whatever victories American invaders achieved, it would have been impossible for the British government to abandon Upper Canada—one of their bravest generals was buried there."[111] To Phillip Buckner, this was overstating the case a bit, "but Turner is surely right to emphasize the astonishing legacy of Brock, how a general whose role in the War of 1812 lasted less than five months and who won only one battle came to be the best-known hero of the war."[112] Rather more concerning to Buckner was what he perceived to be Turner's inadequate explanation of Brock's enduring popularity in the English Canadian memory: "that seems to me the book that has yet to be written about Brock."[113] While this social history aspect was certainly an important missing component, it held no particular consequence for a history professor at the Royal Military College of Canada.

Major John R. Grodzinski was in full military mode when he reviewed Turner's *Astonishing General*, and he had no hesitation in stressing the importance of reassessing Brock's leadership and legacy. Though understandable, considering the subject matter, Grodzinski focused much of his criticism on the counterfactual history Turner proposed in trying to explain Brock's glorification. Dismayed by the hypothetical military consequences that might have occurred if not for Brock, Grodzinski rejected Turner's suggestion that Brock prevented the American conquest of Canada in 1812, and had he "not taken Detroit, Brigadier-General William Hull would have marched into Upper Canada, outflanking Fort Mackinac in the north, and the Niagara Peninsula in the south. Another American army would have crossed the Niagara River and advanced towards Burlington Bay, leaving all of Upper Canada west of Kingston in American hands."[114] As Grodzinski pointed out with absolute military precision, "How the Americans would have achieved this, especially since their logistical capability was almost non-existent, and their lack of command of the lakes is never considered. Hull was defeated by his lack of will, and he returned to the United States on his own. American forces collecting in the Niagara region and near the border of Lower Canada were in disarray. What Turner proposes was simply impossible."[115]

Not surprisingly, Riley's command study was more to Grodzinski's liking. Besides offering a specialist's insight into Brock's military career, it also served a useful revisionist purpose. For Grodzinski, who was determined to restore Sir George Prevost to his rightful place in Canadian history, a critical reappraisal of Brock formed an integral part of the

exercise. But Grodzinski faced an uphill battle in trying to exonerate Prevost's reputation, given that his military career had long been defamed in order to boost Brock's popular appeal. Especially problematic was the still widely held belief that Brock alone had saved Canada, as if he acted entirely independently of any higher authority. In point of fact, Brock answered to Prevost, and it was Prevost who implemented and coordinated defence policy for the British North American colonies.

From long experience, Grodzinski knew that the hagiography so evident in the literature about Brock remained pervasive, even two hundred years after his death. "The cult associated with his legacy is so strong," Grodzinski declared, "that when I dared present a different perspective in which Brock vacillated over some decisions, was credited with victories not his own, and that the Americans were incapable of conquering Canada in 1812, the Parks Canada employee I was speaking with at the Brock Memorial [Brock's Monument] on Queenston Heights asked me to leave the grounds."[116] An undeterred Grodzinski continued to champion Prevost at every turn, and his next opportunity came a short time later when a political scientist at York University in Toronto combined history and biography for a reinterpretation of the War of 1812. As its bicentenary approached, James Laxer embarked on a novel plan to tell the story of that conflict through the joint experiences of Brock and his Shawnee ally Tecumseh. During the course of this project, Laxer availed himself of the opportunity to explain and expand upon the frequently marginalized Indigenous participation. Apart from this praiseworthy attribute, the publication of Laxer's *Tecumseh and Brock* in the spring of 2012 met with only a lukewarm reception from historians such as Roger Hall at the University of Western Ontario. "There is not much new to be learned here," Hall apprised readers of the *Globe and Mail*, "but Laxer and his researcher have done a good job of summarizing and integrating much recent scholarship, especially about native issues."[117] Among other historians stepping forward to offer an opinion about Laxer's book was Grodzinski himself, who saw another means by which to take Brock down a peg or two.

In reacting to Laxer's echoing of the old assumption that Brock prepared the Canadas for hostilities against the Americans, Grodzinski revealed that it was Prevost and not Brock who developed a coherent and reasonable strategy for the defence of Upper Canada. Furthermore, it was Prevost who rejected the prevailing attitude "that Upper Canada could

not be defended—a view that Brock once supported."[118] There were other problems as well, and after raking Laxer over the coals for his unoriginal perspectives, numerous errors, and evident lack of original research, Grodzinski went on to deliver the *coup de grâce*: "The publication of this book coincided with the beginning of the bicentenary of the War of 1812, and like so many titles seeking a market share of this event, *Tecumseh and Brock* rides over heavily trodden territory and, despite the praise given it in several newspaper reviews, it offers little for serious students of the War of 1812."[119]

While Laxer's fairly standard perceptions were simply shrugged off by most military historians, or at least those with a special interest in the War of 1812, Grodzinski had no intention of letting the issue slide. He had far more to say about the special status bestowed upon Brock. Not unlike the occasional attempt to give Sheaffe the laurels he so richly deserved for winning the Battle of Queenston Heights, Grodzinski's revisionist crusade on Prevost's behalf was meant to cast new light on a military reputation that similarly suffered from Brock's battlefield dash and heroic death. Encouraged by Donald E. Graves nearly a decade earlier, Grodzinski wrote his doctoral dissertation on Prevost for a much-needed reappraisal of his essential role in implementing British defensive policy during the War of 1812.[120] The objective Grodzinski set for himself was the restoration of Prevost "as a central figure in the history of that conflict."[121] It was a commendable exercise, and one that had been attempted earlier but without much effect. One of the more notable of these revisionist measures occurred in 1962, when J. Mackay Hitsman informed a meeting of the Canadian Historical Association that "Canadian historians have unfairly condemned Lieutenant General Sir George Prevost's conduct of the War of 1812."[122] Hitsman's presentation coincided with the sesquicentenary of Brock's death, and it was against this backdrop that he attempted to reorient the "muddled thinking" of his fellow historians. His efforts were largely futile, however, and the negative stereotypes associated with Prevost's command remained deep-seated.

Grodzinski saw his views on Prevost, however, enjoy a greater scholarly exposure when he published a volume in the Campaigns and Commanders series sponsored by the University of Oklahoma Press. With the release of Grodzinski's *Defender of Canada* in 2013, Brock's leadership came under an incidental but sustained form of historiographical scrutiny. Determined to resist the same hagiography that tainted the

objectivity of most other historians, Grodzinski formed a somewhat hostile attitude toward Brock. And he made no effort to conceal it:

> In Canada, Brock has emerged as the iconic figure of the War of 1812. He is often portrayed as a "brilliant strategist" whose loss caused irreparable damage to the British war effort. Traditionally, historians have been gentle in their criticism of Brock and generous in their praise. They have described him as the most significant British commander of the war and the man who prevented the American conquest of Upper Canada. They claim it was Brock's leadership that overcame both overwhelming odds and Prevost's ineptitude to change the entire course of the war. To many, Brock provides the yardstick by which other War of 1812 generals should be measured. This Brock hagiography has reversed the roles of the two commanders, creating the impression that it was Brock and not Prevost who set operational plans and priorities and who led British forces to victory during the early months of the war. Only a handful of historians have attempted to turn the tables and give Prevost credit over Brock.[123]

Here was a strong stance, but one that Grodzinski backed up with an equally strong argument. In tracing the origin of the role reversal between Prevost and Brock, he was able to lay the blame squarely with an anonymous early nineteenth-century contributor to the *Montreal Herald*, one who had a peculiar penchant for disparaging Prevost. Following in the footsteps of the several earlier historians he described in terms of a handful, Grodzinski made his own attempt to "turn the tables" in Prevost's favour—which he did by renewing the charge against Veritas for having insinuated that Brock, acting without "any written order or instruction" from Prevost, successfully defended Upper Canada.[124] This, of course, was a gross misrepresentation, and an accusation that had long been a source of vilification against Prevost.

In attempting to restore Prevost's military reputation, Grodzinski began by firmly establishing that Brock's superior officer, despite his lofty position in the Canadas, was still "subordinate to the secretary of state for war and the colonies [Lord Liverpool], who transmitted the wishes of the government."[125] British policy toward the belligerent United States was initially one of forbearance, and in hoping to prevent the escalation

of an unwanted conflict should it come to pass, Liverpool directed Prevost to maintain a defensive posture. Prevost sent the same caution to Brock, with particular reference to Detroit. While he recognized the advantages to be derived from "giving rather than receiving the first blow," Prevost suspected that reports of military weakness at the outpost were being used as "bait to tempt us to an act of aggression" and thereby uniting Americans to a common cause.[126] So it was in March of 1812 that Prevost ordered Brock "not to adopt any measure bearing the character of offence."[127] Grodzinski contended that these instructions were "often used as evidence of Prevost's timid leadership and the tight restraint he supposedly placed on Brock, who saw the early occupation of Detroit as necessary for defending the upper province and to cement support from the western Natives."[128] But as Grodzinski clarified, Prevost was "acting under very specific instructions from London."[129] These instructions, however, did not preclude the possibility of a military response to some future American aggression, and Prevost advised Brock to take such precautions as would, "upon a change of affairs, enable you to carry any disposable part of your force against the common enemy."[130]

This evidence of Prevost's military capacity and willingness for aggressive warfare was a revelation to Grodzinski, who found it surprising that most historians attributed "British successes in the early months of the conflict to his subordinate."[131] Even military historians had a tendency to assume "that it was Brock's plan for the defense of Upper Canada and not Prevost's that had proven successful."[132] And when the time finally came for military action, Grodzinski contextualized, "Brock's aggressiveness was tempered initially by insufficient British forces, but it was the ill-concerted military preparation of the United States that allowed these forces to be unleashed. Once American weakness was revealed, Brock exploited British control of the inland waters to concentrate against Hull, which fit with Prevost's strategy."[133] Very definitely, Prevost deserves recognition for ensuring that the pacific wishes of the British government during the crucial opening phases of the War of 1812 were met. But Brock's creative response to the defensive framework imposed on him warrants a similar, if not greater, appreciation for its diplomatic finesse. Mindful of Prevost's earlier injunction against attacking Detroit, Brock could point to the short-lived occupation of westernmost Upper Canada in July of 1812 as justification for the siege that made him famous. Thus, Brock's move

against the Americans, so obviously necessary to consolidate Indigenous alliances, was done in strict accordance with Prevost's instructions.

In *Defender of Canada*, Grodzinski made a credible effort to redeem Prevost's military reputation by re-examining the command structure of the British Army in the Canadas during the War of 1812. Putting Brock's responsibilities in proper perspective was a necessary part of this reassessment, but it also bore the unfortunate impression of an exercise in sniping. Nonetheless, Grodzinski's study astutely revealed the degree to which Brock's success at Detroit was the result of factors beyond his control, not to mention a good dose of luck. It also demonstrated that the defensive strategy for Upper Canada was not entirely one of Brock's own making. However, by playing up Prevost's important but purely administrative role in that defence, Grodzinski consigned Brock to the sidelines of history, where he became a mere upstart bent on glory—glory that Grodzinski thought rightfully belonged to the commander-in-chief of British North America:

> The historiography of the War of 1812 rarely attributes the success of the British war effort in the northern theater to Sir George Prevost. Instead, the credit had gone to subordinate commanders, such as Isaac Brock, Sir James Yeo, and a host of lieutenant colonels and more junior officers that commanded tactical actions. Prevost was not in the thick of the fighting, nor should he have been, as his task was to lead the war effort in the Canadas—a point that is often forgotten. As a result, historians have effectively written him out of the narrative. Prevost—not Brock or Yeo or any other more junior officer, for that matter—held ultimate responsibility for winning or losing the war in North America.[134]

Beneath this heavy overlay of military hierarchy, the undeniable fact remained: It was Brock who made the decision to attack Detroit.[135] And having assumed the entire risk of the operation, he alone deserved all the glory for the victory that ensued. Grodzinski, however, by having laid bare Brock's command limitations, found an effective means of rehabilitating Prevost's own questionable battlefield behaviour. It was done at Brock's expense. But like Sheaffe at York, and whether rightly or wrongly, Prevost was his own worst enemy. During an amphibious

expedition Prevost led against Sackets Harbor, New York, in April 1813, he retreated before giving the Americans much of a fight. Later, during a combined land and naval operation against Plattsburgh, New York, on Lake Champlain in September of 1814, he retreated once again. The optics were hardly heroic, no matter how evenly the blame was spread for these aborted exercises.

At any rate, Grodzinski's criticisms of Brock were solidly reasoned and those relating to Queenston Heights were particularly advantageous in dispelling the false impression of a military genius. Brock had seemingly "demonstrated poor judgment during the battle," which Grodzinski specified in no uncertain terms:

> On learning of the American attack, he left his headquarters at Fort George for Queenston without giving any orders or briefing his subordinate Sheaffe on the steps to be taken in his absence. There is contrary evidence as to whether Brock had ordered the troops at Fort George and Chippewa to reinforce the defenders at Queenston and whether he made too hasty an evaluation of the situation when he arrived there. By ordering a company to withdraw into the village from the heights, Brock contributed to the American occupation of these same heights and the capture of an important artillery position overlooking the American crossing site. His rash decision to lead a charge to retake the battery was tactically unsound—and he paid for it with his life.[136]

It was obvious to Grodzinski that Brock was no military genius: "Instead of rallying the defenders at Queenston and organizing his forces to contain the Americans on the riverbank and then halt the flow of reinforcements across the river, Brock acted prematurely in attempting to recapture a well-defended battery midway up the heights."[137] Like certain other military historians before him, Grodzinski took serious issue with Brock's battlefield savvy.

In keeping with a general understanding of the battle, the criticisms Grodzinski levelled against Brock's conduct at Queenston appeared to have been well-founded. The most egregious of his battlefield miscalculations was the decision to lead a charge against the redan battery. Having performed the duty normally assigned to a junior officer, Brock gave future military historians ample cause to question his leadership. The

manner of his attack was a demonstrable misstep, and not even Jonathon Riley, who was favourably inclined toward Brock, could explain away this "one big unanswered question: how was it that the general officer commanding all British and Canadian troops in Upper Canada met his death doing the job of a captain?"[138] There was no good answer, but Riley was not about to cast stones. Having been a high-ranking British officer himself, he could well imagine the challenges Brock faced:

> Whatever decision Brock made, he made according to the available information and [while] exercising his own intuitive judgment. That information was bound to be partial and subjective and coloured by the responsibilities that he held. We, on the other hand, have a complete picture and none of the burden of responsibility. To criticize a commander like Brock is therefore not only futile, it is downright wrong. All that we can do is to examine how and why that decision was made.[139]

Riley's call for a better understanding of Brock's decision to lead the charge made perfect sense. There was just one problem: The detailed record of the Battle of Queenston Heights, or the "complete picture" as Riley called it, simply does not exist—certainly not so far as Brock's command is concerned.

A paucity of reliable eye-witness accounts makes it exceedingly difficult to clarify and corroborate Brock's actions during the battle's early phase. Given this general lack of evidence, the only charge that would appear to hold against him is the seemingly flawed decision he alone could have made: to lead his troops in an attempt to win back control of the redan battery. And since Brock held overall command at this stage of the battle, there has been a tendency to accuse him of foolhardiness for not delegating that duty. But in the absence of a minutely detailed battle report, it is impossible to know the actual situation Brock faced when he gave the order to advance against the Americans. Standard versions of the battle describe how he organized a hasty assault after his inglorious expulsion from the redan battery during a surprise attack, and his death soon after completed what has long been regarded as a fairly straightforward explanation of his part in the battle. However, a re-evaluation of disparate contemporary sources has revealed that the advancing Americans did not halt to a man at the redan battery, but rather sent part

of their force down the slopes and to the very outskirts of Queenston. It was there that Brock was killed as he tried to rally his troops in a heroic struggle to repel the enemy, apparently after a back-and-forth action that, in addition to winning back the redan battery, perhaps also included a determined effort to prevent the Americans from linking up with their comrades who were pinned down below the riverbank. Brock's reaction to the onslaught, therefore, might have been more of a desperate attempt to regain control of a rapidly deteriorating situation, and not the entirely impulsively heroic misadventure that Canadian history has come to characterize. Given the want of corroborative testimony, it is impossible to be more definite, and it is precisely for this reason that most of the allegations levelled against Brock can be set aside as unsubstantiated—with the exception of his heroic but misguided decision to lead from the front.

By doing the job of a captain in rallying his men to the charge, Brock lost his life and deprived his troops of a senior commander's leadership. But this presumed mistake, so patently obvious to our modern reading of the situation, might have been shaped by circumstances beyond his control. Moreover, leadership was the prerogative of British generals in the early nineteenth century, and courageous leaders like Brock were admired as heroes, saviours, and martyrs. As the UK-based military historian Michael Glover remarked, "A reckless bravery was one of the hall-marks of British generals, good and bad."[140] Most Britons of the time probably would have voiced concurrence that Brock's own reckless bravery had resulted in the loss of an excellent officer, but they were not likely to have done so within hearing of the uppermost echelons of their society. At the pinnacle of that hierarchy was the prince regent, who fancied himself a soldier along with the best of them. Having felt Brock's death intensely, the future King George IV lavished posthumous honours upon him for the heroism he displayed during the war with the Americans. But far more than the heroic death that Brock suffered at Queenston, the prince was moved by his courageous behaviour at Detroit, where it had given "a lustre to the British army."[141] Such exploits served as good examples for other generals, and no official criticism could be allowed to mar Brock's brilliant reputation. Without question, aspersions were cast, and there was likely much second-guessing. Yet, any censure that attached to the heroics of a dead but victorious general would have been expressed privately.

A prime example of this sort of veiled discretion involved no less a personage than the Duke of Wellington, who offered an opinion on the subject of leadership that could have included Brock. In referencing the dangerously enthusiastic conduct of British officers during the Battle of Fuentes de Oñoro, an action that was fought along Portugal's northern border with Spain in May 1811, Wellington observed how the

> desire to be forward in engaging the enemy is not uncommon in the British army; but that quality which I wish to see the officers possess, who are at the head of the troops, is a cool, discriminating judgment in action, which will enable them to decide with promptitude how far they can and ought to go with propriety; and to convey their orders, and act with such vigor and decision, that the soldiers will look up to them with confidence in the moment of action, and obey them with alacrity.[142]

In much the same fashion, Wellington was likely to have disapproved of Brock's perilous behaviour at Queenston, although the circumstances might have softened the duke's censure. After all, the ability to command obedience in the thick of a desperate fight required a good deal of respect, and it was by displaying zeal on the battlefield that officers like Brock were rewarded with the confidence of their troops. Unquestionably, Brock was rather too far forward when he was killed at Queenston. Yet, his brave behaviour animated his troops to carry on with the charge. It was the same zealous military spirit that Brock had exhibited at Detroit, the outcome of which merited a positive reaction from the highest levels of the British government. The secretary of state for war and the colonies, Henry, 3rd Earl Bathurst, was certainly impressed. In a letter to Wellington about the state of affairs in Spain, Bathurst made a point of mentioning that "Major-General Brock seems to be a man of energy and resource: I wish we had had him at Alicante," where a less energetic and less resourceful Spanish general suffered a crushing defeat.[143] As Bathurst admitted, "This news [of the British victory at Detroit] is a great relief to me. After the strong representations which I had received of the inadequacy of the force in those American [presumably Upper Canadian] settlements, I know not how I should have withstood the attack against me for having sent reinforcements to Spain instead of sending them for the defence of British possessions [in North America]."[144]

Presumably, Wellington would have felt a similar—if somewhat less pronounced—sense of relief for operations in the Canadas. And even if he had reservations about officers like Brock and "their desire to be forward in engaging the enemy," knowing the full range of military character traits as well as the duke surely did, it would require no great leap to imagine that he would have been willing to overlook the rambunctious leadership of a motivated and popular general. After weighing Brock's alleged slip-ups at Queenston, Wellington was likely to have been rather more forgiving than the military historians who passed their damning judgments against the Hero of Upper Canada without the slightest reservation. At the same time, however, their attempts at dispelling myths and misconceptions were and remain an important element of the historian's craft—even if they resulted in the unsavoury conclusion that one of the country's greatest military soldiers was not actually a military genius, despite his having possessed some of the necessary attributes. Nonetheless, and fortunately for Brock's enduring popularity, the academic critiques about his military competence seem to have had little or no negative effect on his recognition as one of Canada's most notable heroes. And it would appear, especially in the decade or so leading up to the bicentenary of Brock's death in 2012, that those Canadians who continued to honour his memory did so because they got their history from sources other than scholarly publications.

On Canada Day 1999, *Globe and Mail* readers were treated to the results of an internet poll conducted by two nationalist organizations, the Dominion Institute and the Council for Canadian Unity, to determine the nation's greatest hero. Nominations were restricted to those heroes who helped to shape Canada "but have since passed on."[145] This posthumous eligibility requirement prevented "living legends" such as hockey superstar Wayne Gretzky from having an unfair advantage, and all but guaranteed that the most widely recognized of Canada's then recently deceased heroes, Terry Fox, got the most votes for his fundraising efforts on behalf of cancer research. But if Fox was the number one greatest Canadian hero of 1999, Brock still managed to make it into the top ten. One might imagine that much of his support came from aging baby boomers and earlier generations of Canadians, whose choices were based on what they remembered about him from their history classes, particularly those in English-speaking Canada. However, after analyzing the survey results, pollsters at the Angus Reid Group determined that

Brock generated the most even distribution of nominations across all adult age groups.[146] Furthermore, according to the results of an Angus Reid national telephone survey, one that was intended to provide a better understanding of Canadian perceptions of heroes and heroism, "the majority (55%) of Canadians first learned about their hero through movies, television or books."[147] These books were most likely popular as opposed to scholarly publications, and the same survey also revealed how knowledge about heroes came much less frequently "through formal schooling (18%)."[148] This finding seemed to reflect common knowledge, since it suggested that anyone who cast a vote for Brock as Canada's greatest hero was unlikely to have been influenced by a school subject that was dismissed by most students as boring.

The problem, as political historians saw it, and as Jack Granatstein—a political and military historian at York University—vehemently argued, was one in which social history had come to dominate the teaching of history in Canada.[149] Along with the decline of political history, Canadian nationalism had become increasingly immaterial to provincial curricula. Concurrent with these developments, once-great historical figures had come to be largely ignored. And so it was with Brock. As noted earlier, Brock was no longer presented to Canadian students as a role model worthy of emulation. Even in Ontario, once the hotbed of Brock indoctrination, his contributions to the nation were downplayed in keeping with preferred historical figures whose characteristics were more acceptable to modern progressive attitudes.[150] To some degree, this new and almost post-national form of curricularization was offset by the few children's books that continued to be published about the War of 1812. Included among them were several titles devoted entirely or largely to Brock himself, and while not nearly as influential as the supplemental reading materials approved by earlier departments of education, they at least offered students the opportunity for some dedicated self-study into his eventful life.

One of the more promising books in this Brock-related publishing trend was *The Death of Isaac Brock*, released in 1991 as part of McClelland and Stewart's Adventures in Canadian History series, and one of a sub-series dedicated to the major battles of the of the War of 1812. The author of both the book and the series was Pierre Berton, whose phenomenal success with *The Invasion of Canada* and *Flames Across the Border* must have augured well for a repeat performance. But

Berton's popularity failed to register with younger Canadians. As his biographer, Brian McKillop, acknowledged, he was "largely an unknown entity" to them.[151] For Generation X, Berton "was simply a curious blast from the past."[152] That was putting it mildly. While Berton's new series was promoted as one of "fast-paced narratives," the children's literature critic at the *Globe and Mail* found herself struggling to stay awake during her reading of it.[153] Obviously not a fan of Berton's prose, Elizabeth MacCallum had only grudgingly directed her attention to his battle series, including *The Death of Isaac Brock*. "At the very least," she granted, it offered a chance "to look at the way history is being delivered to our children."[154] But MacCallum was far from impressed with Berton's latest offering on Brock and the Battle of Queenston Heights. "I found my eyes kept glazing over," she complained, and finally "they just closed."[155] To MacCallum, among other things, this new series was suspiciously similar "to certain adult works already published by Berton," which did nothing to raise her estimation of his standing as a children's writer.[156] There were other complaints as well:

> Berton's style of pouring on minute personal details, like the close-up descriptions of soldiers' wounds and fights, his intimate pop-psychology character analysis, the short, breathless sentences following one after another—all these things appear to pander to semi-literate, television-saturated, juvenile and young adult audiences. If this is the case, though, the crudely drawn black-and-white illustrations will be scoffed at by the visually oriented children we raise today, whether they are literate or not. We are not advancing here.[157]

Then, as if to jab the still tender wounds inflicted by certain professional historians of a decade earlier, MacCallum dismissively observed that even "the prose in [the] Focus on Canadian History Series published in the early eighties—dull-looking, textbook style, with conservative layout and black-and-white pictures—when written by a first rate writer and historian such as Michael Bliss, can be more interesting than Berton's 'real-life adventures,' such as *The Death of Isaac Brock*."[158]

For all this bad press, however, Berton's volume dealing with Brock succeeded in effectively blending fact and fancy based on the experiences of a fifteen-year-old boy. As a real-life gentleman volunteer in the

49th Regiment, George S. B. Jarvis not only participated in the Battle of Queenston Heights but was near Brock when he fell. While less fact and more fiction might have resonated to a greater degree with young readers, it appears that Berton was far too intent on girding himself against academic criticism to risk such a popular approach—as per the following curious disclaimer: "The events in this book actually happened as told here. Nothing has been made up. This is a work of non-fiction and there is archival evidence for every story and, indeed, every remark made in this book."[159] Berton's defensive assertion to the contrary, *The Death of Isaac Brock* rates as a work of fiction, and one that failed to reach its intended audience. Such was the challenge faced by all popular writers, and Berton was not alone in trying to make Brock's life interesting to young readers. Yet, not every popular writer who turned his or her pen to Brock and the War of 1812 was leery of professional historians; one in particular actually enlisted their expertise to his advantage.

In 1991, the same year in which Berton's *The Death of Isaac Brock* was published, John Ibbitson, the city columnist at the *Ottawa Citizen*, came out with his own children's novel featuring Brock. Ibbitson's *1812: Jeremy and the General* recounts the story of Jeremy Fields, a fictitious fifteen-year-old Upper Canadian orphan of Loyalist parents who made his way to York and there became Brock's "batman," or personal servant, at the outset of the War of 1812. Having proved himself indispensable, young Jeremy was allowed to accompany Brock to Detroit and then to Queenston. There he witnessed his master's death on the battlefield and learned what it meant to serve and fight with the man who held the fate of the country in his hands. The *Globe and Mail*'s Elizabeth MacCallum, who several months earlier had lambasted Berton's similarly themed children's novel, gave a more favourable and far shorter reaction to Ibbitson's production. With passing approval, she noted "John Ibbitson's traditional but quite effective historical fiction."[160] Arlene Perly Rae, a reviewer of children's literature at the *Toronto Star*, agreed with MacCallum, adding, "It's usually difficult to give history the excitement and urgency of fiction, but Ibbitson has done just that with this story about a very plausible teenage boy who 'assisted' Gen. Isaac Brock at Queenston Heights."[161] After Ibbitson's book was nominated for a Governor General's Literary Award, the extent of his talent became evident. It was a great honour, and Ibbitson owed some of his success to the several professional historians who read the manuscript and made helpful suggestions.[162] For

young readers, *1812: Jeremy and the General* held a great deal of appeal, and Brock's inclusion no doubt accounted for at least some of this interest—both for his heroism and humanity. These same character traits helped to inspire other authors of children's literature to write about him, particularly those authors with a passion for the past, even if they were not born in Canada.

In September of 2000, XYZ Publishing of Montreal released Saskatchewan writer Ven Begamudré's *Isaac Brock: Larger Than Life* as part of its Quest Library, a series of biographies for young people featuring prominent Canadians. Its author, a native of India, was not only a professional writer but a self-professed author of "realistic and speculative fiction, creative nonfiction, and poetry."[163] But on this occasion, just as Pierre Berton had done before him, Begamudré sought to distance himself from his fictional writing. "Although this book often reads like a novel," he admitted, "it's meant to be a work of nonfiction. That is to say, it's as factual as I could make it given the many challenges that anyone writing about Isaac Brock must face. Among these is the fact that, although he wrote many letters to his family and friends, he rarely wrote about his personal life."[164]

After expressing himself like a true historian, Begamudré proceeded with a largely fictional account of Brock's life—and one with a romantic subplot. As Begamudré surmised for his readers, the degree of uncertainty surrounding Brock's love life explained why so few of his biographers "mention his fiancée. Even those who do mention her—sometimes in a footnote—are not sure of her name or whether, indeed, she was his fiancée. I've decided that she did exist, that her name was Susan Shaw, and that they were engaged. In secret."[165] Unfortunately for Begamudré's musings on the subject, there is not a shred of evidence that Brock and Sophia Shaw (not Susan Shaw) were ever engaged, and the suggestion that it was arranged secretly is a fictionalization obviously designed to heighten the amorous aspect of his book. But while *Isaac Brock: Larger Than Life* was more novel than biography, the author's talent as a first-rate storyteller made it a welcome addition to Canadian literature. Sadly, the same could not be said of the next attempt to write an engaging biography of Brock for a young audience. That book, which came out a few years later in 2004, was Mary Beacock Fryer's *Bold, Brave, and Born to Lead: Major General Isaac Brock and the Canadas*.[166]

A local historian from eastern Ontario, Fryer developed a deep interest in Canadian military history and Brock's prominent role in it.[167] Having grown up in the eponymously named town of Brockville, Ontario, Fryer admitted to being "Brock-conscious," by which she seemed to suggest a predestination to write his biography.[168] If so, it was not until 2004 when the feisty senior citizen had her manuscript published by a division of Toronto's Dundurn Press. And Fryer was not shy in taking Begamudré to task over Brock's fiancée: "I agree with C[harles] P. Stacey, who wrote the piece on Brock in the *Dictionary of Canadian Biography*, that there is no evidence on what ladies Brock might have been romancing in Upper Canada. That is not to deny he enjoyed the company of women, partying, and dancing. If he had a serious attachment and was entirely discreet about it, more power to him."[169]

But if Fryer was liberated enough to turn a blind eye to Brock's imagined dalliances, she was positively old-fashioned in her opinion of Roger Hale Sheaffe. It was especially annoying to her that he seemed to be "receiving more credit [than Brock] as the winner of the Battle of Queenston Heights."[170] Of course, by 2004 it was generally conceded that Sheaffe was in fact the victor of Queenston Heights. But Sheaffe was not Fryer's idea of a hero, and the notion that he could rival Brock touched a nerve. Defensively, she retorted, "a hero is a person who dies young and not in his or her own bed. This was Brock. Sheaffe died at age eighty-eight, in his bed in Edinburgh."[171] *Ergo*, Sheaffe was no Brock and certainly no hero. But besides the several paroxysms brought on by a strict adherence to a traditional reading of history, Fryer's treatment of Brock's life was merely another rehashing of the same old story. Perhaps anticipating just such a criticism, she took a defiant stance in her preface: "Another book about Sir Isaac Brock? Why not? Perhaps I have something different to say."[172] In the final analysis, however, she did not, which led one extremely perturbed reviewer to disparage her book as "little more than a turgid recital of facts," and one that reinforced the commonly held belief that "Canadian history is boring and irrelevant."[173]

Canadian history, however, was really not the issue. As long as Brock's biography could be used to sell children's books, publishers would continue to seek out authors willing to revamp his life for pseudo-educational purposes. The last offering along this line, at least the last children's biography of Brock to make its appearance prior to the bicentenary of his death, was Cheryl MacDonald's *Isaac Brock: Canada's Hero in the*

War of 1812. A writer and local historian from near Nanticoke, in southwestern Ontario, MacDonald published her book in the spring of 2012 as one of the titles in James Lorimer and Company's Amazing Stories series. Curiously, however, the story told by MacDonald was spared the abuse visited upon Fryer's *Bold, Brave, and Born to Lead*, even though the two books were very much alike with regard to content and presentation. The major difference was MacDonald's willingness to ask some difficult questions about Brock's leadership. She began by wondering "what might have happened if Brock had not conveniently died at the height of his popularity."[174] There then followed a deep line of questioning, which was relatively advanced for youthful reading material. "As the war progressed, and the Americans' military competence increased," MacDonald began, "would his [Brock's] bold impatience have led to a rash decision and a disastrous defeat in which too many lives were lost? Given his minimal combat experience and his devotion to his men, how would he have reacted to a defeat? More importantly, how would the population have reacted? Would the 'Saviour of Upper Canada' have fallen from the heady heights he reached after Detroit? Did he ever deserve the title in the first place?"[175] Here was an exceptional attempt to encourage young readers to think critically about the past, especially with regard to the famous people who inhabited it. Yet, MacDonald seems not to have been entirely comfortable with her critique and quickly restored the hero to his pedestal. After accepting that there were legends surrounding Brock and his accomplishments, MacDonald got to what she saw as the crux of the matter: "the truth is that he was an exceptional man in an exceptional time who accomplished something probably no other individual could have."[176] Clearly, although Brock's cult appeal had been greatly diminished by the time MacDonald's book was published, there was still more than a hint of hero worship in her interpretation of his life.

Of course, even before MacDonald began her manuscript, the degree to which any children's or young adults' books could influence juvenile impressions of Brock was at best negligible. Despite the well-intentioned efforts of authors who continued to contribute these children's books, young Canadians, not unlike the country's older demographics, were just as likely to learn about Brock from the television screen as the printed page, if not more so. The Greatest Canadian poll of 1999 probably reflects a fairly accurate picture of Brock's relevance to the technologically advanced and multicultural makeup of Canada at the turn of the new

millennium. And despite having slipped in popularity by 2004 with the televised airing of *The Greatest Canadian*, a similarly inspired ranking exercise produced by the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation, Brock remained well within the fifty-greatest category.[177] Part of the reason for this poor showing was the increased competition he faced. As was reported in the *Globe and Mail*, "any Canadian is theoretically eligible, living or dead, as long as he or she was born here, or lived here, or made a major contribution to the country."[178] The ultimate goal, of course, was to proclaim *the* greatest Canadian, and the format of this thirteen-episode television special was anything but traditional CBC programming. Rather, it was reminiscent of a political convention stateside, "a carnival of democracy" according to Canadian commentator Rex Murphy, and one that took its cues from the quantified viewer participation of nationwide polls.[179] The show's co–executive producer, Mark Starowicz, clarified the premise behind *The Greatest Canadian* by stressing that the "aim isn't objectivity or absolute historical accuracy, but an irreverent, heated debate."[180] For Starowicz, it was more about the process than the outcome. "The ultimate winner isn't really the point," he explained. "Clearly there is no such thing, in a certain sense, as the greatest Canadian."[181]

The journey was what mattered most, and Starowicz offered Canadians "a style of documentary that tries to argue and incite as much as educate."[182] Brock, however, failed to garner enough votes for a spot in the top ten category, where a celebrity commentator would have argued his merits. Even if Brock had rated this special consideration, his spokesperson was not likely to have been an elderly Pierre Berton. Although one of the show's more notable participants, Berton took a very dim view of Brock because he "was not a Canadian and I wouldn't call him a great Canadian because he was British to the core, and he wanted to get the *hell* out of Canada!"[183] Berton was right, of course, except that he forgot to mention that Brock's determination to leave Upper Canada diminished as the threat of war with the United States became ever more ominous. In any case, Tommy Douglas, a former socialist premier of Saskatchewan, leader of the New Democratic Party, and champion of public health insurance in Canada, went on to win the contest—whether or not the NDP actually rigged the vote as Christie Blatchford of the *Globe and Mail* alleged.[184] Yet, despite Brock's relatively poor showing (twenty-eight spots behind Douglas), he still rated one of the dramatized biographical sketches allotted to the fifty greatest Canadians in the opening episode's

countdown to the top ten.[185] This was the same sketch in which Berton vehemently rejected Brock's eligibility. And while Brock's all-too-brief appearance on *The Greatest Canadian* must have disappointed many of his admirers, those with longer memories might have taken some consolation from the fulsome treatment he had been afforded by other CBC programming over the years.

The Canadian Broadcasting Corporation had a well-established reputation for pandering to nationalist sentiment, arguably through federal government social engineering exercises and the production of historical documentaries, including its War of 1812–themed specials, one of which was televised to coincide with the 1962 sesquicentenary of that conflict. Written and hosted by Canadian political and constitutional historian John T. Saywell, the four-part series was tellingly titled *A War for Survival*. To Saywell, whose main interest was the study of historical crises underlying contemporary problems, the War of 1812 was the single most important event in the history of Canadian nationalism, given that Canada's preservation as a British colony ensured its subsequent development as a nation-state quite apart from the United States.[186] This great defining event, he claimed, was made inaccessible by a "formidable wall of myths" that impaired historians' ability to view the war's effect objectively.[187] For this reason, Saywell designed his series as a fresh exploration of ideas surrounding the conflict rather than the usual recital of war-related facts. Equally unorthodox was the format Saywell chose for his programs: a combination of play and commentary, with actors recreating events from the war, which were then debated by historians sitting in the wings.[188] Although novel for a historical documentary, Saywell's approach was in keeping with CBC programming. According to Canadian public historian Monica MacDonald, "historical dramas and docudramas were more familiar to CBC audiences than were historical documentaries," the former entertainments having been popularized on national radio since the 1930s.[189]

While infusing a complex story with actors recreating past events was an effective means of holding viewer attention, Saywell's programs, by their very nature, were meant for a cerebral rather than a mass audience. And his dissection of Canadian and American ideas "about conservatism, radicalism, and loyalty" made them all the more erudite.[190] Nor did it help that he was determined to avoid the familiar old personalities of the War of 1812, including the most popular among them. But try

as he might, Saywell was unable to revisit the conflict without there being some mention of Brock. During the fourth and last episode, a panel discussion dealing with fact and myth, the focus abruptly shifted from the Battle of Chateauguay as a mythological source of French Canadian cultural identity to the myth that Upper Canada's successful defence was attributable to its militia. This sudden departure came about when one of the historians, Charles P. Stacey, challenged the importance of the militia at Chateauguay and elsewhere. What amounted to the taking of a stand against the Militia Myth brought a happy rejoinder from Saywell, who participated as a panellist and announced that the historians had hit upon one of the main features of the war—namely, its "hordes of myths."[191] However, it soon became evident that this new avenue of discussion was not going to bring about an entirely serious exchange of ideas.

Initially, there was an important recognition: that myths had "created an artificial foundation for Canadian nationalism," a contrived type of nationalism that might collapse if too many of the myths underpinning it were made known and discarded.[192] Arthur R. M. Lower, one of Canada's old guard professional historians and a participant in the discussion, responded to this historiographical heresy by repeating the usual line about the militia of Upper Canada having won the War of 1812 for the British.[193] And when the session's facilitator, a political scientist from the University of Toronto by the name of Paul Fox, read a statement by the Anglican Bishop John Strachan dating from late in 1812, claiming that the militia had "twice saved this county [at Detroit and Queenston]," a now thoroughly contradicted Stacey reacted in a light-hearted but still somewhat defensive fashion: "I've always rather regretted that Sir Isaac Brock was killed before that was said because it would have amused him very much."[194] Ignoring Stacey's wisecrack, Lower proceeded to recite a quote by Brock in which the general articulated his appreciation for the militia. But Stacey, still wanting to have a bit of fun, feigned astonishment "at the Canadians doing so well!"[195] Unfazed, the magisterial Lower tried to answer his impudent colleague with another quotation in support of his argument, an undertaking that appears to have petered out as he fumbled through his notes.

The airing of this curious exchange involving Brock and the militia was unlikely to have had viewers sitting on the edge of their seats, which was perhaps just as well given that Saywell's revisionist attitude toward the War of 1812 and Canadian nationalism was not quite in

keeping with the CBC's mandate. As Monica MacDonald revealed in her 2019 book *Recasting History: How CBC Television Has Shaped Canada's Past*, television producers at the public broadcaster incorporated stories of historical figures like Brock into an existing conceptual framework that "blurred distinctions between time periods and frontiers, and allowed the dominant Canadian ideologies and values of the television era to be superimposed on the historical characters." These same producers further "helped to establish an idea of national continuity and identity from the earliest days of European exploration and colonization up to the present day."[196] In essence, they built on existing historical myths to create new ones aimed at nurturing the idea of a unified Canadian nation, when it was really an artificial construct that leading political historians like Lower tried to theorize into a false narrative of continuity. For their part, the producers "tended to downplay or resolve disruptions to that continuity, especially in connection to the ideas about national identity they wanted to promote," including "through programs on war, national politics, relations between French and English Canada, and conflict between Canada and the United States."[197]

The effect of CBC's televised historical programming was profound in shaping modern impressions of Canada's history, with the medium giving emphasis to the message. Or, as MacDonald expressed it: "Television: ubiquitous, immediate, and intimate, it greatly influences our understanding of both current and past events. History in books or museum exhibitions does not capture mass audiences like history on television. And the CBC is the only television broadcaster, indeed the only form of electronic mass media, that has regularly produced and broadcast Canadian history."[198] Included in these television productions were traditional and slightly jingoistic portrayals of Brock, all of which helped to maintain his relevance to the national narrative. They were especially popular in the early to mid-1960s and also around the time of the centennial celebrations in 1967, insomuch as they conformed to the idea that Canadian Confederation had its origins in the War of 1812—a concept that was accepted as historical fact by one of the nation's best-known and most nationalistic historians. In reinforcing this belief, Arthur R. M. Lower used a comforting analogy: "The essence of the War of 1812 is that it built the first storey of the Canadian national edifice."[199] Had Brock not saved Upper Canada from the Americans, the future country would have been lost along with the colony. It was an extremely attractive notion,

despite Saywell's attempts to expose the underlying myths associated with the War of 1812 and Canadian nationalism. But no matter its apparent relevance, filmmaking interest in Canada's colonial struggle proved to be short-lived. After a National Film Board documentary featuring the conflict was produced in 1967, the War of 1812 seems to have lost its appeal among Canadian directors and producers.[200] This was certainly the case at the CBC after the war's sesquicentenary in 1962. Viewers of the public broadcaster were instead treated to historical programming that encompassed other aspects of their national character, such as the 1974 docudrama miniseries based on Pierre Berton's book *The National Dream*, which chronicled the building of the Canadian Pacific Railway in the 1880s. Like the book that inspired it, the dramatized version was a great success and something that Berton hoped to repeat.

In 1981, a major project based on Berton's bestselling books about the War of 1812 was contemplated by the CBC. But in a considerable disappointment to all involved, the proposal was rejected on account of the high cost to finance such an epic production.[201] Consequently, Canadian television audiences were deprived of a captivating storyline that only Berton could have delivered, not to mention a compelling portrayal of Brock's character. The concept, however, remained a popular one, and funding proved to be less of an issue in the latter 1990s, when a couple of journalists-turned-filmmakers began work on a lavishly produced bilingual docudrama on the conflict. In April of 1999, with the first of four parts featuring Brock in a leading role, TVOntario—the provincial educational television network—began airing *The War of 1812*, a collaboration by brothers Brian and Terence McKenna (whose unflattering portrayal of Canadian bomber pilots during the Second World War, in the CBC's production of *The Valour and the Horror*, had gained them much notoriety earlier in the decade). Not ones to shy away from controversial topics, the McKennas employed a similarly uncompromising approach in recreating the War of 1812. The rooting out of historical injustice was a major component of their filmmaking style, and much of their effort on this occasion highlighted the broken promise of a homeland for Tecumseh and his confederacy. Despite the McKennas' best efforts, however, *The War of 1812* was found somewhat lacking, and by one of their journalistic own, no less.

As John Allemang, television critic at the *Globe and Mail*, detected in his review of the McKenna brothers' production, "There's a strong

sense of anachronism here, unqualified by historical analysis—instead of expert commentary, actors in period headgear make stiff and earnest speeches to the camera."[202] It was how the McKennas preferred to tell their story, "through historical figures reading from their own letters, diary entries and other sources," or so John Barber, another *Globe and Mail* journalist, gathered from an interview with Brian McKenna, the film's director.[203] And as far as Brian was concerned, journalists such as he and his brother were every bit as qualified to write about Canada's history as professional historians.[204] McKenna let his position be known while defending *The Valour and the Horror*, when he emphatically stated that historians did not understand the fundamental importance of asking "the toughest questions."[205] Yet, as Monica MacDonald would come to observe in *Recasting History*, "professional historians were already asking these kinds of questions, and they were increasingly writing about women, Indigenous people, and the rank and file over high-ranking military."[206] It was a valid argument, and the McKennas—had they known of it—might have responded with a similar argument to defend their use of actors in telling the nation about its history—a method that had already been long used in conjunction with Canadian documentary filmmaking. But Allemang was correct in observing how the onscreen absence of professional historians, and their expert commentaries, constituted a missed opportunity.[207] The McKenna brothers certainly stood to benefit from an exposure to modern historical scholarship on the War of 1812, if only for the sake of a less dated interpretation. Canadian military historian Jack Hyatt was one of many potentially good choices, especially given that he had championed Prevost's cause with a revisionist interpretation of his defensive policy during the War of 1812.[208] With such expertise at their disposal, the McKennas might have avoided a major gaffe in representing Prevost as an inordinately cautious commander.[209] It was an old stereotype that should have been challenged. Unfortunately, however, Prevost was portrayed in an excessively traditional light, and so, too, was his subordinate in Upper Canada.

The McKenna view of Brock was favourable, indulgent, and closely aligned with the impressions of aging baby boomers and their antecedents. To this segment of Canadian society, especially those individuals among the English-speaking population, Brock was still a military genius whose greatest challenges in defending Upper Canada resulted from Prevost's blind compliance to government policy. These assumptions

were badly in need of a rethink, which the McKennas failed to provide. However, the brothers were rather more progressive in other respects. Prevost might have failed to impress them, but they developed a very high regard for his daughter—mainly because her diary offered a much sought-after "woman's perspective on the war."[210] While Anne Prevost actually had a fairly limited view of passing events, the McKennas treated her experiences as though they were representative of all women across the Canadas.[211] Such was not actually the case, and yet this fine point was not likely to have altered her usefulness. The frequently overlooked role of women in the war was an important consideration; however, the conflict's importance relative to the origins of Canada warranted scant attention. The McKennas were not much interested in using their docudrama to promote the nationalist cause that some Canadians expected of them. Not surprisingly, Allemang failed to see a foundational basis for all the dramatic recreations, and "as comforting as it may be to see the fight against the American invaders as a defining moment for the Canadian identity, it still looks here like a less-than-glorious expression of British colonialism."[212] Yet, Victor Suthren, the author of the illustrated popular history that accompanied the television broadcast, very definitely saw the origins of a new nation in the War of 1812. Formerly a director of the Canadian War Museum, Suthren likened the conflict to a form of bloodletting, and in the "clash of contentious forces and ideas, decisions are made and perceptions are altered that force change upon individuals and upon nations and create new realities."[213] Among them was an enhanced sense of two North American nations, whose respective peoples emerged from the war with a marked understanding "of who they were or who they were not."[214] One of Suthren's reviewers was of a similar mind, and as Roger Hall opined, "the American invasion gave Canadians both backbone and opportunities for bicultural mythology—the stuff of which nations are, if not built, then fabricated."[215]

While the McKenna docudrama might have been wanting in national feeling, it still offered a solidly engrossing film, a competent overview of the War of 1812, and one that placed a goodly emphasis on the part played by Brock. Writing in *Broadcast Week*, the *Globe and Mail*'s television magazine, John Doyle reacted with a trendy colloquialism: "This is all good—there are way too many people living on streets named after Brock and Tecumseh who don't have a clue about any of this."[216] In other words, Doyle approved of the way in which the McKenna brothers

utilized the docudrama format to engage with Canadians about a crucial event in their nation's history, which was more than any historian had ever managed to achieve in the pages of a book—with the exception of Pierre Berton and his two-volume set on the War of 1812, which unfortunately appealed mainly to an older audience of readers. Yet, its success was a significant accomplishment, and not merely in the world of Canadian publishing. As Monica MacDonald recognized, Berton's similar success with the television adaptation of *The National Dream* marked "a turning point" in historical filmmaking that witnessed the transfer of authority "from professional historians to professional journalists."[217] But whether good, bad, or indifferent, it was the McKenna brothers—a pair of professional journalists—who gave many Canadians, especially those of a younger generation, their first introduction to the War of 1812.

It was also in the latter half of the 1990s that the idea for a major historical docudrama took hold at the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation, where the time was judged right for a big-budget bilingual production on the history of Canada.[218] After several years and much determined effort, the series was launched in October of 2000. The year-long, seventeen-episode series that followed offered Canadians an unparalleled opportunity to experience the entirety of their national experience, from the pre-contact period right up to modern times. The creator and executive producer of this twenty-five-million-dollar extravaganza was Mark Starowicz, who as we saw would go on to develop the concept behind CBC's *The Greatest Canadian* series in 2004. As for his earlier docudrama project, the ostensible purpose was to instill a greater appreciation among Canadians for their country's collective history, hence the slightly socialist-sounding *Canada: A People's History.*[219] This all-embracing sort of title, no matter how well-intentioned, proved something of a misnomer, especially when several professional historians noticed that ordinary people were largely overlooked in favour of the elite and their leaders.[220] One of these leaders was Brock himself, whose image of selfless civil and military devotion to the fledgling nation earned him a prominent place in the fifth episode.

Brock's treatment was remarkably similar to that which he received from the McKennas. There was also a general similarity that extended to the preference for dialogue spoken directly into the camera. As for historian participation, it was likewise limited to off-screen consultations—none of which were taken too seriously by senior-level documentary producers at CBC.[221] The result was a journalistic interpretation of what

comprised good history on television: a linear narrative of chronological events supported by first-hand accounts, event recreations, and emotive acting.[222] The on-air expertise of professional historians, provided it was given due consideration, might have enhanced the viewing experience with a more objective analysis of Canada's past. Instead, viewers were treated to an overly dramatized exercise in presentism (or the interpretation of history based on present-day standards), something that John Allemang touched upon when he described *Canada: A People's History* as "simply a series of stories, some good, some dull, some carrying the ring of truth, others twisted to serve a more modern cause."[223]

Despite Allemang's indifference, the docudrama produced by Starowicz still served a very useful historiographical purpose. It introduced Canadians to little-known figures from their nation's past, and reintroduced famous but forsaken ones like Brock. Moreover, it did so in an interesting fashion. To an entertainment-obsessed society, as Canada had become in the half century since the founding of the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation in 1952, *Canada: A People's History* was immensely popular. This appeal extended deep into the ranks of professional historians, even if most of them were unwilling to publicly admit as much. Irving Abella, who taught history at York University, was among the more candid of the academic set. After the airing of several episodes, he reminded *Globe and Mail* readers of the situation that existed prior to the series' debut. "A year ago," the professor recalled,

> prominent historians and others were lamenting that Canadian history was dead. As a subject, they said that it was badly taught and researched, and for most Canadians it had become irrelevant. In books, articles, conferences and debates, they pointed fingers and demanded to know who had killed Canadian history and why. But suddenly, over the past month or so, millions of Canadians have been glued to their television sets every Sunday night watching, and apparently savouring—guess what?—a documentary series on Canadian history. It's alive and well, and reports of its death are greatly exaggerated.[224]

Abella was clearly a fan of the series. But as Allemang had let it be known, not everyone was quite so smitten, and few, if any, were more outspoken than one of his own colleagues.

Although John Doyle, who also worked for the *Globe and Mail*, had earlier decided that the McKennas' War of 1812 docudrama was "all good," he was not prepared to extend the same indulgence to the Starowicz production—no matter the similarity in style. Instead of praise, there was panning. "As every man, woman and child in Canada must know by now," Doyle huffed in his new role as the newspaper's television critic, "*A People's History* is a hit and has saved CBC Television from a fate worse than death—irrelevancy. What hardly anybody is willing to admit in public is that the whole thing is a joke."[225] It was a staggering remark, which Doyle promptly clarified: "What I mean is, depending on your sense of humour, much of what happened in Canadian history was ridiculous, idiotic and ripe for a good laugh."[226] This, too, was an eye-opening statement, but one that proved accurate in at least one sense. It was just a few years later, in 2004, that the success of *The Greatest Canadian* underscored the ratings potential of a light-hearted and almost flippant attitude toward history. And when the CBC decided on a documentary as its contribution to the bicentenary of the War of 1812, the preference was for a tongue-in-cheek tribute. *The War of 1812: Been There, Won That* was a special two-hour long *Doc Zone* episode that offered viewers history "with a thoroughly modern take."[227] This "modern take" was code for a humorous and condescending re-evaluation of "all our cherished assumptions about the War of 1812."[228] With comedic actor Peter Keleghan serving as host and playing the part of a graceless lout intent on arguing Canadian pretensions to having won the War of 1812, the program, scheduled for early October 2012, ran the risk of becoming a joke—not like that expressed in Doyle's low opinion of Canadian history generally, but rather a joke on the CBC itself.

There was a very real threat that CBC viewers might switch the channel, based on nothing more than a negative reaction to all the patronizing media hype that preceded the broadcast of *The War of 1812: Been There, Won That*. But unlike Doyle's skeptical attitude toward the CBC's earlier and overly dramatic attempt at purveying Canadian history, he now offered some timely words of support. While acknowledging the program as "slightly mad" and "flaky as all get-out," he also gave it credit for being genuinely informative and worth viewers' time.[229] What they got in return was a curious mix: a fairly standard retelling of the War of 1812 interspersed with intriguing details about lesser-known facets of the conflict, as well as the expert commentary that was excluded from CBC's

The War of 1812 and *Canada: A People's History*. By this measure, it was a true documentary as opposed to a docudrama; the main difference being casually dressed experts who took the place of actors in period garb. Moreover, and despite covering a conflict that extended over three and a half years, *The War of 1812: Been There, Won That* devoted nearly a third of its air time to Brock—and for good reason. A number of the "cherished assumptions" tackled by the documentary involved him directly.

The first of these assumptions, or myths, was investigated at the Canadian War Museum in Ottawa, where a staged discussion of the musket ball hole in Brock's coatee led to a debate about his last words. Based on the size of the hole and the obvious severity of the wound it inflicted upon the wearer's chest, Keleghan concluded that Brock had been unable to speak once he was shot and so any further consideration of the subject was pointless. But Dr. Christopher Milroy, the forensic pathologist invited to share his skill and knowledge, repeatedly insisted that Brock could have spoken after he was mortally wounded, whereupon Keleghan pulled out a mock pistol and shot the contrarian expert point blank in the chest. After Milroy fell to the floor moaning, but without vocalizing a word of any kind, Keleghan turned to the camera and smugly said, "Nothing—told you."[230] Having proved his point, if only for the sake of the skit, Keleghan proceeded with the equally contentious myth of Brock's engagement to Sophia Shaw, whose first name Milroy thought Brock might have mustered just enough strength to enunciate before he died. Unlike his scripted opinion about Brock's final utterance, Keleghan was less definite in his attitude toward the reputed love affair, despite having hinted that a very distant relative seemed to have a secret knowledge of the romance. But when Oliver Brock was shown making a gesture zipping his lips, it was not because he really had anything to hide. Rather, it was a nervous reaction to an uncomfortable line of questioning. "There may have been a Sophia, yes," Brock stumblingly admitted. "I understand there was someone called Sophia in that time, in that time-frame, in that place, and he may well have been courting her. I don't know."[231] However, as Keleghan had already decided, "I think cousin Olly knows something he's not telling!"[232] And so the myth of Brock's betrothal to Sophia Shaw was allowed to stand, if only because it made for good television.

Another misconception pertaining to Brock was touched upon by way of a reference to the Canadian Militia's contributions to the War of 1812, which brought the rather enlightened acknowledgement that

British military successes in Upper Canada had actually resulted from the involvement of army regulars. Yet, besides this brief and passing repudiation of the Militia Myth, the program did little to offset other misconceptions, including those relating to Brock. He was instead imbued with the same old mythical status that should have been called into question. Consequently, viewers encountered many of the familiar milestones in Brock's life—except for the preposterous moment where he and Tecumseh were outed for having enjoyed the "original bromance" at Detroit. Apart from this lame attempt at shock humour, Brock was represented to be just as daring and clever as everyone at CBC seemed to assume, which Keleghan coyly implied was in compliance with some directive from far on high. During the opening sequence of *The War of 1812: Been There, Won That*, he ruefully pondered the conflict as a "weird, forgotten and confusing mess. So, why are we bothering with it? Why are we asking you, well begging you, really, to sit with us here for two hours as we talk about a 200-year-old war between the British and Canadians on one hand, and our pals the Americans on the other? Well, simple, because the federal government wanted us to."[233] This clever little jab, in addition to being a snide CBC-sanctioned criticism of the Conservative government of Prime Minister Stephen J. Harper, was also part of a broader reaction to its perceived goal of stimulating Canadian militarism.

As early as the summer of 2011, Canadian journalists had begun to focus their attention on the Harper government's plans to commemorate the War of 1812, and in October of that same year a formal announcement was made on the subject by Heritage Minister James Moore. During his presentation, Moore stressed the importance of that particular conflict by stating, "Without the War of 1812, Canada as we know it would not exist," and how having "a mindset within the department [of Canadian Heritage] that tips and tilts a little more toward teaching and supporting the history of Canada is something I think Canadians would welcome."[234] To this end, the newly established 1812 Commemorative Fund was designed to provide financial assistance to such worthy projects as monuments, plaques, battle re-enactments, films, plays, and even musical performances.[235] With an estimated cost to taxpayers of approximately twelve million dollars over four years, the Conservatives justified their initiative based on the results of a survey conducted several months earlier for the Department of Canadian Heritage. According to

an unidentified official, the survey showed that the War of 1812, "while being a seminal event, may not be something that a lot of Canadians recognize or understand."[236]

Actually, the situation was more dire than even this anonymous official was willing to admit. Out of 1,835 respondents, just 257 (or 14 per cent) could correctly identify the countries involved in the conflict. "Only about half of those aware of the war could correctly identify at least one historical figure, such as Laura Secord, who warned British forces of a U.S. attack or Isaac Brock, a military hero killed in the conflict," even when provided with a list of their names.[237] As if this high degree of ignorance was not bad enough, there was also a corresponding level of apathy. Only three in ten respondents "strongly agreed that the war was an important chapter in the history of Canada," and only four in ten somewhat agreed.[238]

Overall, the survey found that people's enthusiasm to learn more about the war was regional and age-dependent, meaning that there was less interest among younger Canadians and those living beyond Ontario. This finding was not entirely unexpected, as it was in Ontario (Upper Canada in 1812) where many of the war's battles were fought. Regardless of the potentially divisive nature of this Ontario-centric history project, the Harper government felt an obligation to "show Canadians why the war mattered," insomuch as it laid the foundations of their nation.[239] Promoting this awareness was part of the Conservatives' winning 2011 election platform, specifically Harper's determination to make the heroic aspect of Canadian military history a more prominent feature of the country's national identity. With this recognition, especially in the news media, Harper's plans for the War of 1812 bicentenary quickly became a partisan issue. To Jane Taber, a political journalist at the *Globe and Mail*, there was a Conservative agenda, and it was as plain as a pikestaff: "Stephen Harper is working to recast the Canadian identity, undoing 40 years of a Liberal narrative and instead creating a new patriotism viewed through a conservative lens. . . . For Mr. Harper and his Conservatives, the payoffs could be great: a new pride in the country, an ability to shape the view of new Canadians and, politically, the potential to marginalize the Official Opposition NDP [New Democratic Party]."[240] Additionally, along with suspicions of Harper's desire to restore a greater degree of regal symbolism to Canada's constitutional monarchy, there also came accusations amounting to social engineering.[241]

Sounding the alarm most resoundingly was leftist historian Ian McKay and social activist Jamie Swift, who took it upon themselves to counteract what they viewed as the Harper government's dangerous attempts to militarize Canadian society by encouraging a sense of pride in the country's combat achievements.[242] In their extreme disdain for anything smacking of militarism, McKay and Swift touched upon a larger issue still at play in academe: the history wars. As progressive social historians continued to battle their more traditional counterparts for supremacy over history departments across the land, the ideological contest between liberals and conservatives took a curious turn by focusing on the perceived threat that the Harper government's new "warrior nation" mentality posed to an inclusive retelling of Canadian history. For vocal critics like veteran journalist Jeffrey Simpson at the *Globe and Mail*, the Conservatives were actively going about "dusting off of fragments of the past that suit their politics—which is why the military and the monarchy are their favoured subjects for historical attention."[243] It was a damning accusation, and equally detrimental to this particular Conservative cause was the Harper government's own budget cuts to federal institutions tasked with preserving and promoting Canadian history, especially the county's national library and archives. Historians such as Jack Granatstein, who believed that the Harper government was genuinely "more concerned with honouring history than most of its predecessors," were shocked by the double standard.[244] That the Harper government had well and truly shot itself in the foot became obvious when Granatstein, the leading proponent of nationalist history in Canada, delivered a scathing verdict on the Conservative belt-tightening measures: "It shows nothing so much as contempt for the past and, regrettably, for the future as well."[245]

Similar objections continued to mount, ultimately resulting in a standing committee investigation into the Harper government's alleged misuse of history for political purposes.[246] Before that eventuality came to pass, however, Peter Jones, a professor of public and international affairs at the University of Ottawa, put things in perspective when he wrote, "there is nothing inherently Conservative in trying to manipulate the past for political purposes. The Liberals spent many years trying to create an image of Canada that evolved around supposedly historic attachments to concepts of multiculturalism and 'peacekeeping,' both of

them frequently misunderstood ideas that had little to do with Canadian history until relatively recently."[247]

Moving on from his what-goes-around-comes-around interpretation, Jones proposed that the War of 1812 helped to bring about what he termed the "North American Regional Consensus." It was a largely unspoken recognition "that the cost of fighting for any possible treasure on the other side of the border is patently ridiculous when it is simply easier and cheaper to exchange these things by trade; that two quite different systems of government can coexist perfectly well; and (for Canadians) that maintaining stability and security in the northern half of the continent ourselves means that the United States will not feel compelled to do it for us."[248] It was this legacy—one of peace and stability through economic interdependence—that made the war worth celebrating. While certainly visionary, this new spin lacked the appeal associated with the long tradition that the War of 1812 gave rise to the Canadian nation.

"Had the war ended differently, had the American invasion not been repelled, Canada as we know it would not exist."[249] Such was the "defiant syllogism" of the Canadian Heritage Minister James Moore, and John Allemang of the *Globe and Mail*, like many Canadians, found it difficult to contradict this particular party line. However, the perceived foundational relevance of the War of 1812, particularly with regard to Canadian Confederation in 1867, was by no means original to the Harper government; it was older than the nation itself, and a frequent theme of discussions dealing with the long-term effects of the war. The quasi-syllogism, for example, was a take on the popular latter nineteenth-century nation-building rationale that Brock saved Canada; Canada became a nation; and thus, without Brock, there could be no Canadian nation. This linkage between Brock and Canada had become extremely popular among Anglo-Canadians around the turn of the twentieth century, and particularly so in the several decades on either side of the 1912 centenary of Brock's death. In that patriotic era, greater emphasis was placed on Canada's relationship with Britain, and just as the plaque on Brock's boyhood home in Guernsey was seen to proclaim upon its unveiling in 1934, he "saved Canada for the empire."[250] Of course, by 2012 Brock's significance to Canada had become entirely nationalistic in tone, and to some deep-thinking individuals he deserved rebranding as *the* Father of Confederation. This, however, would have been a step too far for the Harper government, whose preference for that high honour was belied

by a spokesman for Moore in October of 2011. It was then that James Maunder confidently described how the War of 1812 had "paved the way for Confederation."[251] Such an interpretation presented the bicentenary as a lead-up to yet another commemoration, and the Harper government had grand plans to mark the one hundred and fiftieth anniversary of Confederation in 2017 (before going down to defeat in the 2015 federal election). It must have been a happy coincidence that Canada's first prime minister, Sir John A. Macdonald, was himself a Conservative and therefore one of their own.

Since Macdonald figured more prominently in the founding of the nation, it was probably thought best to restrict any treatment of Brock's influence to the earlier period in Canada's colonial history. Brock might have saved the country for Confederation, but he did not fit the Conservative image of a founding father—or the Canadian equivalent of George Washington, which is how one American congressman equated Brock's significance. William E. Miller, who relied a little too heavily on his own country's history for inspiration, formulated this peculiar comparison during the 1962 sesquicentenary of the Battle of Queenston Heights, well before much thought was given to historical figures other than great men. In the Canadian context, this tended to mean great men of British persuasion, and few could compare with Brock's greatness.[252] By 2011, however, when the Harper government announced its elaborate plans for the War of 1812 commemorations, there was also a conscious effort to include people beyond the usual cast of characters for a more egalitarian representation. In a manner similar to that employed by school systems throughout the country, Brock's legacy was harmonized with the contributions of other outstanding historical figures from the War of 1812, including the Shawnee war chief Tecumseh, Laura Secord of Beaver Dams fame, and the French Canadian military hero Lieutenant Colonel Charles de Salaberry. It was a nice mix, and a reflection of the Harper government's willingness to promote both a diverse and inclusive society. Although Brock's importance was further levelled as a consequence, this commitment to equality suited the politics behind the commemoration. And nowhere was it more evident than in the pocket change of the average Canadian.

On the eve of the bicentenary of the Battle of Queenston Heights, Rob Nicholson, the federal Conservative member of Parliament for Niagara Falls, participated in a special ceremony at Fort George, near

Niagara-on-the-Lake. He was there to unveil the "first of four circulation coins which commemorate key historical figures who influenced the fight for Canada from 1812 to 1814."[253] The inaugural coin, a twenty-five-cent piece, featured a pseudo-portrait of Brock on its reverse side set against a background of repeating bilingual text referencing the War of 1812, a banner identifying Brock by his surname, and a maple leaf with "1812" superimposed on it (being the Government of Canada's commemorative War of 1812 logo). There was little else to recommend the design, and Nicholson did not dwell on numismatics, preferring instead to cite his government's high regard for Brock and the battle in which he was killed. "Honouring the 200th anniversary of the War of 1812 with this special circulation coin," Nicholson declared, "pays tribute to one of our greatest national heroes and a crucial moment on the road to Confederation."[254] Ian E. Bennett, speaking as president and chief executive officer of the Royal Canadian Mint, went one better by reinforcing the otherwise debunked Militia Myth. This he did by declaring the name of Brock to be "synonymous with the heroic deeds of our forefathers who valiantly defended Canada 200 years ago."[255] So began the Harper government's attempt to edify Canadians about the War of 1812 by means of the time-honoured tradition of transforming coins into collectibles.[256] Similarly designed commemorative quarters followed in fairly rapid succession, honouring Tecumseh, then Secord, and finally de Salaberry. Introduced with comparable fanfare, tens of millions of these coins flowed through the Canadian economy, where they helped to reinforce the Conservative message about the War of 1812 and its importance as the precursor to Confederation.

As for Brock, he was afforded a sort of first-among-equals status—not that it really counted for much. While most Canadians were oblivious to any such distinction, a number of historians were less than comfortable with the Harper government's assertions about Brock's contribution to Canada's rise as a nation-state. Christian P. Champion, for one, although normally an outspoken supporter of the bicentenary, gave a rather muted opinion regarding the Harper government's interpretation when he wrote, "Not everyone would agree with Moore's 'direct linkage' of 1812 and 1867."[257] Another Canadian historian, the military specialist John R. Grodzinski, offered a more nuanced explanation by observing how "the war was the beginning of the process that led to Confederation" and how, in "the face of a common foe, the provinces of British North America

developed a sense of similarity, and realized they had shared ideas and values."[258] It was through this "sense of similarity" that the English-speaking colonists in the Canadas became determined to remain British, and central to this idea of Britishness—especially in Upper Canada—was the Militia Myth and the Loyalist tradition. Reinforced by the constant threat of American domination, this strong attachment to the British Empire was the overriding factor that ultimately brought the colonies together as a nation, an outcome that was just as likely to have occurred whether or not there had been a war with the United States in 1812.

Two hundred years later, despite all the angst and opposition directed toward the Harper government's bicentenary commemorations, the events went ahead as planned, but without attaining the desired educational and patriotic results. In January of 2013, Nanos Research conducted a survey for the Institute for Research on Public Policy to determine the effectiveness of the celebrations to that point. The Canadians polled were asked about the types of historic events they believed warranted the expenditure of time and money by the federal government, and the War of 1812 was not high on the list of priorities. As Gloria Galloway of the *Globe and Mail* reported, "many Canadians say they feel no greater sense of affinity for their country as a result of the federally instigated hoopla."[259] In fact, the survey proved disappointingly similar to the one conducted for the Department of Canadian Heritage in 2011, with only about three out of every ten Canadians supporting the government's celebration of the War of 1812.[260] Once again, it was respondents in Ontario who were most likely to feel a greater sense of patriotism in response to the government's initiatives, while people in Quebec were far less inclined and the rest of the country remained largely ambivalent. A greater enthusiasm was expressed for celebrating the centenary of women's suffrage in 2019, and there was considerable disappointment that the thirtieth anniversary of the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms (a Liberal achievement) had been all but ignored by the Conservatives in 2012. The semblance of politicized commemorations had an alienating effect, as did all the petulant bickering that went along with them. A notable example of off-putting partisanship came early in 2013, when New Democratic Party leader Thomas Mulcair claimed that the Harper government's commemorative plans consisted more of "political branding and jingoism than anything else." It was a characterization that was promptly rejected in a *Globe and Mail* editorial: "If it is an act of 'jingoism' to communicate such events,"

the paper argued, "or to mark the bicentennial of the War of 1812, then let's have more of it. These are critical opportunities to educate Canadians about their history and thereby enhance their identity."[261] There was just one problem: A Conservative-shaped Canadian identity was not to everyone's liking, especially to those individuals who lent their support to the country's major left-leaning political parties. And so it went, a battle for public opinion that was more about Harperism than history. But no matter how rife with dissension, the Conservative commemoration of the War of 1812 effectively reaffirmed Brock's historical significance. And it was the Harper government that resolved a long-standing controversy surrounding his monument.

Some years earlier, in the summer of 2006, Robert Malcomson had become more than a little riled with what he perceived to be an unacceptable situation on Queenston Heights. The tourist season was already well underway, and yet Brock's Monument was off-limits to visitors—just as it had been since 2003, when serious safety concerns were raised by reports of falling debris.[262] After some three years of inaction, and with the monument still surrounded by the temporary fencing that kept people five metres away, Malcomson, as the author of a definitive history of the Battle of Queenston Heights, decided to advocate for its immediate restoration. Upon learning that repairs originally slated to begin in the spring of 2007 were likely to be delayed until the following year, he opted to go public in an attempt to shame the government of Stephen Harper into taking action: "It's one of the most important sites in our history, and the neglect of this distinguished landmark has been shameful."[263]

Besides showing a lack of respect for Brock and the Battle of Queenston Heights, there was also the matter of lost economic activity. As Malcomson explained, "You hear a lot about tourism in Ontario these days, the problems it's having. . . . Well, if ever there was a gateway with some tradition and some panache, absolute panache, my goodness, it's Brock's Monument, which welcomes people across one of the busiest borders in the country. How could people not be taking advantage of that?"[264] Malcomson knew full well that the monument's historical significance was not a sufficiently motivating impetus for a timely restoration, one that was expected to cost upwards of two million dollars. However, the negative effect of its closure on local tourism would have been difficult for any anyone associated with the federal government to ignore, and Malcomson used this angle to his advantage. Bob Andrews

could well appreciate the frustration of people like Malcomson. As the Parks Canada superintendent of historic sites in the Niagara region, Andrews was himself disappointed by the lack of progress. After detailed engineering studies recommended a "thorough compatible restoration program," he expected that work would begin in 2007 at the latest—but "the money just wasn't there."[265]Although Andrews agreed that Brock's Monument was a "very significant Canadian icon," he also had to accept that Parks Canada was responsible for the maintenance of many historic sites and monuments across the country. "Is this," he asked in reference to Brock's Monument, "more significant than a native site in Saskatchewan or a French site in Quebec City?"[266]

It was "a tough call," and one made all the more difficult by the Harper government's budget cuts.[267] But thanks to the determined efforts of Malcomson and a number of other like-minded Brock enthusiasts, pressure was brought to bear and soon resulted in some good news. In early July 2007, the Conservative member of Parliament for Niagara Falls was pleased to announce that the restoration was on track for the spring of 2008 (with the government having already committed the necessary funding). However, Rob Nicholson's claims of support for "anything that honours that great man [Brock]" did not sit well with Malcomson—not after Nicholson blamed the restoration's delays on Paul Martin's Liberal government.[268] According to a *Globe and Mail* report,

> Mr. Nicholson was elected MP for the region less than 10 months after Brock's Monument was closed [in 2003] and "he did not take his own responsibility as a public representative to make its restoration a priority, no matter who sat on the throne in Ottawa," Mr. Malcomson said. Moreover, the Harper government has to have known that repairing the monument was a priority since the study calling for just that was published in February, 2006, one month after the election that brought the Tories to power.[269]

Perhaps Nicholson unfairly blamed the Liberals for delaying work that had yet to be specified, and Malcomson might have struck a more gracious tone once the Harper government agreed to foot the bill. Ultimately, however, there was no question that the restoration of Brock's Monument warranted a fair share of the public financial assistance that would be distributed for Canada's commemoration of the War of 1812. But although

Andrews hoped that the work could be completed in a timely fashion, with a rededication in October of 2008, that timeline proved a little too optimistic.[270]

It was not until nearly six months later, in April 2009, that the restoration of Brock's Monument was finally completed.[271] And with the removal of all the hoarding and scaffolding, the way was cleared for the monument's opening—just in time for that year's tourist season and well in advance of the bicentenary of Brock's death. It was something of a continuum, as there had been various other events commemorating Brock since the closure of his monument in 2003. Such interim measures were hardly surprising, given the significant anniversary that was beginning to attract attention. Among the more noteworthy of these other events was the 2006 unveiling of an unjustifiably pudgy bust as part of Ottawa's Valiants Memorial.[272] In that same year, a pre-existing freeway running through the Niagara Peninsula was named the General Brock Parkway.[273] There was a similar sort of naming exercise in 2012, when the Ontario legislature proclaimed every thirteenth of October as Major-General Sir Isaac Brock Day.[274] These sporadic reminders of Brock helped to keep his name before the Canadian people. But in terms of the public interest they generated, none—including the restoration of Brock's Monument—could hold a candle to the elaborate commemoration that was set to rattle the normally placid little village of Queenston on 13 October 2012.[275]

As was the case with earlier occasions in honour of Brock and the Battle of Queenston Heights, there were the usual rounds of speeches and dignitaries to deliver them. A new feature, however, included added attractions such as guided tours of the battlefield, musical entertainments, and various ceremonies, all spread out over three days. The main event was a massive re-enactment of the Battle of Queenston Heights, albeit one that was rather loosely choreographed. As Canadian geographer and historian Adam Shoalts viewed it, the re-enactment was "very different from how things would have looked two hundred years ago. For one thing, the average age and waistline of a soldier seems to have exponentially expanded since 1812."[276] Shoalts explained himself by pointing out that re-enactors tended "to be aging baby boomers able to afford an expensive hobby."[277] But to the estimated fifteen thousand spectators, strict historical accuracy mattered less than an entertaining spectacle— and the many re-enactors (numbering upwards of a thousand) certainly delivered a thrilling simulation of the battle. For Shoalts,

his participation as an American militiaman put him in the very thick of the action. In describing the experience, he recalled that through

> the smoke I could see a portly re-enactor [Scott Finlay] attired in the resplendent dress of a British general emerge in front. This was the lucky fellow who was the designated Brock. Maybe he had pulled the longest straw for the coveted honour. Our officer hastily yelled for us to make sure we were ready. As "Brock" charged across the field with his sword drawn a roar of applause emanated from the partisan crowd. By some strange bit of luck, among the hundreds of re-enactors, [a friend named] Blair and I found ourselves deployed in the very front centre of the American line directly across from the charging Brock. Orders were given to fire a timed volley. We leveled our muskets. Blair, overcome with the excitement of the moment, forgot the rules [not to point at anyone] and with undisguised glee, took aim directly at Brock. We all fired. Brock fell down as a very audible collective "awwh" echoed from the multitude.[278]

Although lacking in certain crucial details, the re-enacted fate that befell this stand-in for Brock was at least correct in portraying him at the head of his troops. In any case, it was a performance that proved extremely popular, and given the crowd's enthusiastic response, it would be safe to assume that most of the people on Queenston Heights that day had some idea of Brock's renown as the Hero of Upper Canada, even if none of them could actually account for his enduring popularity. With Brock's Monument rising high in the background, providing incontrovertible proof of his patriotic worth, it must have been generally assumed that he was deserving of all the praise that continued to be lavished upon him so long after his death. Even so, there might well have been any number of detractors among Brock's many thousands of admirers that day. But, as it happened, only one was brave enough to come forward and make himself known.

Stephen Sheaffe, a collateral descendant of Sir Roger Hale Sheaffe, had flown in all the way from Australia to make a case for the actual victor of Queenston Heights.[279] A few days before the bicentenary, this very determined fellow was interviewed for the *St. Catharines Standard*, and there was no holding back his frustration with Brock's pre-eminence.

"Everything's named after him. Brock roads. Brock University. Brockville," and yet there was hardly any recognition of the man who actually won the battle, except for a plaque on the terrace alongside Brock's Monument.[280] Stephen Sheaffe was insistent that the "playing field should be made more level. History should be accurately told."[281] It hardly seemed fair that Brock could have bungled the Battle of Queenston Heights and yet still be rewarded with a magnificent monument. Sheaffe had a valid complaint, and there was nothing particularly unusual about his protests against the flagrant injustice against his ancestor. The honour denied the true victor of Queenston Heights had long been an occasional source of historical grievance, not that the raising of it ever brought greater recognition for Sir Roger. This time around, however, the aggrieved soldier was represented by a peeved relative who raised the issue in person and at a rather inopportune time, which made him and his complaint considerably more difficult to ignore. It was something of a forced courtesy, therefore, when Stephen Sheaffe was allowed to speak during the commemoration at Brock's Monument. By all accounts, his comments were discreet, good-natured, and well-received. But Adam Shoalts was later informed that Sheaffe had planned to speak at some length about his ancestor as the unsung hero, advancing the idea that there were actually two battles at Queenston Heights: one that Brock lost and another that Sheaffe won.[282]

This reading of events, while not original to Sheaffe's descendant, apparently caused a minor furor among event organizers. The upshot was an undisguised threat that if he "dared make such a suggestion in the very gaze of Brock's Monument," as Shoalts related the incident, "he would have the microphone yanked out of his hands."[283] Queried about this affair nearly a decade later, Sheaffe had no recollection of any such attempt at intimidation, although he did recall being "certainly aware of the sacredness that was bestowed on Brock and the location." He also remembered that many things were said in jest behind the scenes, including one witty remark about renaming Brock's Monument in Sir Roger Hale Sheaffe's honour. Despite the jocularity, Stephen Sheaffe sensed that he "had to be a little diplomatic" in what he said about Brock.[284] At no point during his speech, however, did he refrain from emphasizing that it was his ancestor who emerged victorious from the Battle of Queenston Heights. And in the end, the oratorical exercise was far from satisfying, as Sheaffe's message failed to generate any discernible support

for his wronged ancestor. It was all very galling, since nothing about the mania for Brock made any sense. His monument was equally perplexing. While it appeared highly reminiscent of Nelson's Column in London's Trafalgar Square, Brock's services to the Crown could hardly compare with those of the famous admiral. There was simply no logical justification for Brock's having been honoured with such an extravagant memorial, except that he was killed in the heat of battle and there was a certain mystique to a general who fell in action. The implication, of course, was that Brock only rated a magnificent monument because he died a heroic death at Queenston. "People were looking for a hero and that's it," Sheaffe bitterly complained as he resigned himself in accepting the misdirected monument and the peculiar historical circumstances surrounding his ancestor's exclusion from Canada's roll of honour.[285]

Baffled by the seemingly special and utterly illogical treatment afforded Brock the loser over his ancestor the winner, Stephen Sheaffe laboured under the completely understandable misconception that the impressive monument commemorated the Battle of Queenston Heights, when, in fact, it was always intended as a mausoleum for Brock and his aide-de-camp, Lieutenant Colonel John Macdonell. Much of the confusion surrounding the monument's intended purpose stemmed from the decision to re-site its precursor—from the place of Brock's fall, down in Queenston village, to the top of the heights, where General Sheaffe won the battle. In doing so, the aesthetic consideration of a beautiful vista took precedence over strict historical accuracy, all while the victor of the Battle of Queenston Heights sank away into obscurity. Like Sheaffe's descendant some two hundred years later, most visitors to Brock's Monument—including those from Canada—would have been just as flummoxed had they given it a second thought. Instead, there was an unquestioning acceptance of Brock's heroic worth. A greater emphasis on the contorted backstory to the monument might have helped to clarify matters. But in the period between the late 1970s and the bicentenary in 2012, there was no real incentive to contradict the old established views of Brock's military ability, as Pierre Berton's highly successful volumes on the War of 1812 so clearly demonstrated. Thus, while military historians and their graduate students had all but eradicated the Militia Myth from academe and were beginning to make headway in challenging the concept of Brock as a military genius, a task made easier by the loss of his status as a role model in teaching young Canadians about their history, popular interest

in Brock's exploits remained curiously non-judgmental, despite the occasional attempts to afford Sheaffe greater consideration. But publications, documentaries, and contests aside, it was the monument on Queenston Heights that had the greatest long-term effect in assuring Canadians that Brock was just as great as they had been led to believe. This greatness, to which the warlike symbolism of his monument alluded, was of a purely military nature. What the impressive neoclassical column failed to convey, however, was the degree to which social engineering had contributed to Brock's enduring popularity.