Introduction

On a warm October afternoon in 2012, large crowds gathered on the escarpment above Queenston, Ontario, to watch an elaborate re-enactment of the famous battle in which Major General Sir Isaac Brock had been killed two hundred years earlier. In the evening, fireworks illuminated Brock's towering monument to the strains of Tchaikovsky's *1812 Overture*, and the next day a mock funeral was held for the long-dead British general.[1]

While these bicentenary festivities were great crowd-pleasers, they were also rather questionable affairs—and not merely because they tended to be overly theatrical. Far more problematic was the false impression they gave of Brock as the victor of Queenston Heights. That honour rightfully belonged to Major General Roger Hale Sheaffe, as Brock was killed while leading an abortive charge during the opening phase of the battle. But such fine distinctions were lost on audience members, who came to be entertained rather than enlightened. To most of the people attending these events, there was no question that Brock was worthy of all the adoration. Yet, and although hardly an appropriate venue for airing critical appraisals, one of Sheaffe's collateral descendants used the commemoration at Brock's Monument as an opportunity to set the record straight.[2] Unfortunately for the message he tried to convey, it was quickly lost to the crowd's overwhelming preference for hero worship. Farther afield, however, beyond the popularizing hype of historical re-enactments, Brock's role in the Battle of Queenston Heights was coming under increasing scrutiny. Professional historians (typically university professors) were becoming especially active in this regard, and one of their number had already focused his attention on a tantalizing clue he found in some recently published literature—a clue that seemed to suggest a new line of inquiry.

In reviewing the two publisher-commissioned biographies of Brock that had been timed to coincide with the bicentenary, Phillip Buckner, a Canadian historian at the University of London, expressed satisfaction with what he judged to be "these fine studies," while at the same time making it perfectly clear that enough was enough.[3] After all, scores of books and articles had already been devoted to Brock, who achieved fame for his bold capture of Detroit early in the War of 1812 and immortality for his heroic death at Queenston Heights. The latest contributions varied little from the same old story, although one of the authors managed to pique Buckner's curiosity by explaining the rationale behind his choice of a book title. Wesley B. Turner, a retired history professor from Brock University at St. Catharines, Ontario, found it astonishing that Brock participated in the war for only a short time, won just a single battle, and yet became the best-known of its British heroes.[4] Hence, Turner's title: *The Astonishing General*. Sensing that Turner might be on to something, Buckner characterized the anomaly of Brock's fame as evidence of his "enduring popularity in the English-Canadian historical memory."[5] To emphasize the importance of this new perspective, Buckner concluded his review by suggesting a further study of the question. "Indeed," he observed, "that seems to me the book that has yet to be written about Brock."[6]

Buckner raised a valid point. If Brock was not quite the seasoned soldier we have been led to believe, and if he was not alone in saving Canada from American domination, why do Canadians continue to hold him in such high regard? What accounts for his enduring popularity? As this book contends, besides having been fostered by a widespread appreciation for his heroic sacrifice, Brock's enduring popularity was encouraged through a top-down system of recognitions and rewards designed to achieve a heightened sense of national identity among the colonial population. During Upper Canada's long evolution following the War of 1812, from a colony of the British Empire to a province in an independent North American state, this process of nationalism was perpetuated through a complex interplay of patriotism and myth. The effectiveness of this combination, however, was always contingent upon the heroism and sacrifice of an inspirational leader.

Brock's early military career offered little indication of the hero he would become in the last year of his life. In 1785, when he was just fifteen years old, Brock entered the British Army with the purchase of an

ensign's commission in the 8th (or King's) Regiment of Foot. At that time, there was no national military academy, and presumably Brock derived much of his military education from the officers' mess.[7] Five years later, in 1790, he used the purchase method once again, this time to become a lieutenant. When the opportunity to raise an independent company presented itself soon after, Brock was rewarded with a captain's rank on half-pay (or semi-retirement). It was also in 1790 that he returned to full service by exchanging into the 49th Regiment of Foot, which he joined the following year in Barbados. After a nearly fatal illness there in 1793, Brock resumed his military career by recruiting in England. A majority was purchased in 1795, as was a lieutenant colonelcy two years later. In 1808, three years after a promotion to full colonel in 1805, he was appointed a brigadier general on the staff of Sir James H. Craig at Quebec City.[8] Toward the end of 1811, during a return to the command of Upper Canada, and having been promoted major general, Brock was designated to administer the government of that province in the absence of Francis Gore, the lieutenant-governor. He was still acting in that capacity when news of the American declaration of war reached him in June of 1812.

As news of the impending conflict spread across Upper Canada, it was met by an increasingly defeatist attitude from the inhabitants, which threatened to undermine Brock's ability to defend the province. War with the United States had long been dreaded, and Upper Canadians feared that Britain's remaining territories in North America would make for an easy conquest. With much of the British Army countering Napoleon's designs on the Iberian Peninsula, it was generally held that American forces would quickly overwhelm the weakly defended and remote garrisons of Upper Canada. The potential for such a crisis might have debilitated a lesser general, but the odds against success invigorated Brock. True, the army under his command was small and widely dispersed, but it was also well trained and highly disciplined. A far greater concern to Brock was the level of support he could expect from the provincial militia, the populace of Upper Canada, and Britain's Indigenous allies. However, there soon came an opportunity to win over these disparate groups.

On 12 July, the American commander at Detroit launched a half-hearted invasion of the southwestern extremity of Upper Canada, and it was not long afterwards that Brock was apprised of the enemy's offensive. Although he was preoccupied with a less than compliant provincial parliament and restrained by a superior officer trying to prevent an

escalation of the war, Brock began preparations to oust the invaders. A month later, after an arduous rowboat expedition along the north shore of Lake Erie, he landed at Amherstburg, near the mouth of the Detroit River. Finding that Brigadier General William Hull had withdrawn to his own territory, Brock consolidated his forces across the river from Fort Detroit and demanded its surrender. At first, Hull refused. But then came a heavy British bombardment. With his garrison isolated and practically surrounded by hostile Indigenous warriors, the American commander became increasingly disconcerted.

In the short time it took Brock and his Shawnee ally Tecumseh to make landfall and advance upon Detroit, the American commander lost his nerve and capitulated—thus exemplifying a lesser general debilitated by crisis. Brock, for his part, had won a stunning victory. And by demonstrating that Upper Canada could well and truly be defended, he encouraged much of the population to take up the cause while intimidating the rest into a silent submission.[9] No one in the colony could deny that this outcome was a direct result of Brock's initiative; after all, it was Brock who had saved the day at Detroit, and it was Brock who would continue to do so (provided he stayed out of harm's way, which he steadfastly refused to do). The decision to attack Hull was a calculated risk that worked in Brock's favour, but a similar gamble the following autumn backfired with deadly consequences.

Early in the morning of 13 October 1812, cannonading was heard at Fort George, on the outskirts of Niagara—or what is now known as Niagara-on-the-Lake, Ontario. The Americans had launched an invasion across the Niagara River ten kilometres upstream at Queenston, with the intention of seizing the heights and securing a foothold in Upper Canada. In responding to the threat, Brock rode to the scene of action and was soon observing the situation from the redan battery—a gun (or cannon) emplacement located below the crest of the escarpment. While it appeared that the Americans were pinned down below the riverbank, a detachment had secretly scaled the heights and were preparing to descend upon the battery when Brock arrived there. Shortly thereafter, Brock, along with the gun crew, was compelled to make a hasty retreat down the slopes to Queenston.

Somewhat later, without awaiting the militia reinforcements he passed on his way from Fort George, Brock remounted and led his small force on a determined mission to retake the enemy-held battery. Arriving

at a stone wall in a field adjacent to the village, Brock took cover while his troops grouped around him. Then, clambering over the top, he drew his sword and began running toward the enemy's lines. This display of heroism was soon met with a musket shot to the chest. Within a few minutes, Brock was dead and carried off the field. While a further attempt to dislodge the Americans also failed, an additional reinforcement of regular troops eventually arrived on the scene and, under the leadership of Major General Roger Hale Sheaffe, managed to turn the tide. Sheaffe wore the hero's garland until the following spring of 1813, when he inadvertently alienated the Upper Canadian elite by his evacuation of York (now Toronto) during an American attack. With this severe blow to Sheaffe's reputation, and despite the effectiveness of his command at Queenston Heights, it was Brock whose name came to be associated with that British victory.

Thanks to his brilliant success at Detroit, Brock was hailed as the Hero of Upper Canada—the man who saved Canada for the British Empire. It was a solid reputation, and by the time of his early death, Brock's had become a household name among the king's subjects in Upper Canada. In the immediate aftermath of his sad demise, these colonists expressed a spontaneous and genuine outburst of grief for their fallen hero. Brock's memory was cherished and commemorated in various ways, both public and private. Along with all the hero worship, there also came an insidious form of exploitation masquerading as patriotism. Brock's heroic legacy became an effective means of influencing Upper Canadians and manipulating their support for the ruling elites' societal goals—namely, a continuation of the conservative loyalism that formerly existed in Britain's North American colonies prior to the American Revolution. While these intense imperialistic attitudes would come to be moderated over time, toward a more autonomous form of imperial relationship, the strong attachment to Britain remained inviolable well into the twentieth century.

After the Second World War, however, an increasingly independent attitude of successive federal governments began to complicate Canada's close relationship with Britain. During this same period of postwar economic expansion, the recommendations of a Royal Commission—one that was tasked with instilling the idea of nationalism through arts and culture—also served to maintain the historical continuity associated with the Militia Myth, a national creation myth that was decidedly

Upper Canadian, Loyalist, and pro-British. With the implementation of multiculturalism as official policy in the early 1970s, the importance previously assigned to the British imperial aspect of Canada's origin was greatly diminished. The same modernizing pressures overturned established norms for the teaching of history, with a bottom-up approach that emphasized the masses over their leaders. Under this new system of education, great men tended to be relegated, and Brock was no exception. But despite this ongoing marginalization, Brock remains one of the country's leading historical figures.

Of all the means by which Brock's enduring popularity was perpetuated over the course of two hundred years, literature was by far the most important. Until relatively recently, however, much of the literary output on Brock has been hagiographic and juvenile in nature. Despite the increasing professionalization of historical research and publishing in Canada, beginning at the turn of the twentieth century, this academic trend all but ignored Brock and the patriotic significance associated with his memory by most segments of Canadian society. While professional historians, particularly older ones in English-speaking regions, had a tendency to hold Brock in the highest regard, his colonial associations failed to meet the evolving nationalist criteria of those few career-conscious academics still willing to engage in great man biography—an outdated method of historical inquiry that was shunned by younger and more progressive scholars, whose preferences inclined toward the collective lives of ordinary people. The elite were generally regarded with contempt and aversion, especially elite men with military reputations. The consequence was a nearly complete disregard for Brock that prevailed for the better part of a century, and to within several decades of the bicentenary commemorating his death in 2012. Apart from a small number of antiquarians, the literature dedicated to Brock was mainly that of popular writers who targeted a wide general audience, including children and young adults.

With the exception of occasional newspaper and journal or magazine articles, much of this non-academic literary output took the form of short book-length biographical treatments. The earliest example was that of an admiring nephew, whose documentary-style memoir from the mid-1840s became the standard work on Brock's life. It was not until the 1890s that additional biographies began to appear, and while only marginally less hagiographic, they carried strong patriotic and moral overtones for the

benefit of a younger demographic. Intended as a manual for good citizenship, Brock's biography was promoted as supplemental reading material for educational purposes. It was an innovative and lucrative publishing business model, and one that set the stage for additional children's literature featuring Brock's heroic life. By the end of the 1920s, however, there was a lull in the demand for books that used famous biographies to blend patriotic indoctrination and educational publishing, and frequent reprints of the more popular Brock titles also caused something of an oversupply—a glut that finally gave way to the financial constraints arising from the Great Depression and Second World War. The detrimental effects of these economic shocks effectively blocked the publication of new heroic biographies until late in the 1950s, well after the return of peace and prosperity. Only then did Brock once again become a subject of interest for children's book publishers, although not to the same extent as before.

Another notable difference of the postwar period was the brief flourish of academic interest in writing about Brock's life, something that coincided with the approaching sesquicentenary of his death. A general apathy had long been the professional norm, and what transpired in the early 1960s was limited to popular publishing intended for either light reading or a youthful audience. Still, this brief departure from the norm was noteworthy—if only as a gauge of Brock's enduring popularity among these groups. Otherwise, most of the scholarly attention afforded Brock was limited to passages in academic books and journals dealing directly or indirectly with the War of 1812. The overall output of Brock literature continued in this meagre fashion, despite the rise of Canadian military history as a recognized academic discipline. However, the void left by these and other professional historians was filled by popular writers and children's authors, whose lightweight productions continued to make an appearance—albeit without the same frequency of Brock's earlier biographies, when his life served as a role model for the patriotic and nationalist indoctrination of Canadian schoolchildren. But in the decade or so preceding the bicentenary of Brock's death, there was another upsurge in activity among academic or academically inclined authors, who now wrote about Brock with a nuanced understanding of his military career and mainly for a mature audience. Since 2012, however, there has been a return to the academic indifference that existed for most of the preceding century. But of all the many professional historians who chose to pursue

subjects other than Brock during that long and relatively unbroken period of Canadian historiography, a project undertaken by Arthur R. M. Lower proved highly significant to this study. It had to do with the importance he assigned to myth, and the new dimension it brought to the study of Brock's enduring popularity.

Lower's major treatise on myth dated to 1975, when the University of British Columbia Press published a collection of his articles titled *History and Myth: Arthur Lower and the Making of Canadian Nationalism*.[10] Significantly, his observations regarding the connections between myth and nationalism suggested a similar relationship between Brock and his enduring popularity—one in which the dead hero's fame was used to foster a sense of national community among like-minded loyal and patriotic British subjects. While Lower couched his ideas in abstract concepts of nationhood, he could well have had Upper Canada in mind when he wrote about groups of people united through common interests and aspirations and how myths gave "colouring and force to the group's conception of its own destiny."[11] Viewed from the Upper Canadian perspective, Lower's mythological insights provided important clues to understanding Brock's enduring popularity, and his essay on history and myth offered an interpretive grounding for further study that helped to situate the evidence as it came to light. It proved especially useful in understanding how Upper Canada's own national creation myth originated, and also how it was perpetuated. As Lower well understood, such myths provide "an account of the origins of the group, makes this account acceptable as actual fact, and buttresses it with piety."[12] So it was with the Militia Myth, or the misbegotten belief that Upper Canada's militia played a vital role in the colony's defence during the War of 1812, thus ensuring the Canadian nation's subsequent rise.

Like the founding stories of Christianity, which Lower used to illustrate his argument, the Militia Myth similarly acquired "all the hardness of actual fact: all the verisimilitude, all the picturesque and local detail, the minute detail, of what might be assumed to have actually happened. It supplies words for speakers and works them out in logical relationship to their circumstances. The imaginative mind of man allows no detail to escape."[13] Over time, such a myth became so fortified as to be "capable of withstanding the heaviest assaults; one of its main bastions, adding to its accepted authenticity, is its emotional colouring. It becomes impiety to doubt the myth. Those who question are disloyal, heretical, outcast."[14]

Thus, Lower unwittingly explained how the Militia Myth had come to be so thoroughly accepted.[15] Moreover, his study of history and myth inspired a further examination of heroism and nationalism that ultimately led to the author's finding of social engineering, with Brock at its core. The idea that such broad societal influences were at play suggests connivance on such a grand scale that it challenges the very foundations of our strongly preconceived notions regarding Brock's heroism. Yet, by following the interconnections between his military exploits and the Militia Myth they fostered, the centrality of Brock's enduring popularity to a succession of patriotic ideologies—ranging from British imperialism to Canadian nationalism—becomes manifest. It also becomes evident that Brock's enduring popularity was largely the result of a highly favourable impression, one that was endorsed for patriotic purposes over a long period of time. In other words, Brock's enduring popularity had more to do with societal aims than his own heroic legacy.

Having examined the influence of a national creation myth (meaning that associated with the Upper Canadian Militia), it was possible to discern the reasons for Brock's enduring popularity. Early public sentiment toward his heroism was shaped by a strong sense of British patriotism, along with a psychological manipulation that melded Brock's enduring popularity with the Militia Myth. An additional finding was that the government of Upper Canada, as well as a majority of the British North American population, both adhered to and proselytized this Militia Myth belief system. These revelations altered the original concept behind this book from a fairly focused attempt to gain a better understanding of Brock's generalship, or the skill by which he exercised command, into something considerably more expansive in terms of both political and social history. It was during this shift away from a pure form of military history that an unnerving realization began to take shape: Brock's enduring popularity was largely manufactured through social engineering in order to promote the evolving interests of the rising Canadian nation-state. No less disconcerting was the pervasiveness of the Militia Myth in shaping favourable attitudes toward the maintenance of close ties with Britain, and the lengths to which Brock's heroic legacy was cultivated to perpetuate a British world view in Canada. These intriguing insights have added new dimensions to Canadian history, across a broad expanse of time and over the course of this book's six core chapters.

The first of these chapters examines the origins of Brock's fame as Upper Canada's hero-cum-saviour during the War of 1812, and how ephemeral, oral, and newsprint remembrances were enhanced by the colonial government's sponsorship of a monument to commemorate his death and enshrine his remains. A long construction period provided frequent reminders of Brock's worth, all of which were further reinforced by the monument's significance in terms of tourism along the Niagara River. However, it was the widespread belief that Upper Canada's civilian troops played a vital role in the colony's defence (the Militia Myth), together with an overriding and romanticized devotion to the British Crown (the Loyalist tradition), that ensured Brock's enduring popularity well into the next century.

Chapter 2 continues with the perpetuating nature of Brock's Monument as a tangible reminder of its namesake and a powerful rallying point for staunch adherents of the Militia Myth and Loyalist tradition, most notably after a terrorist bombing in 1840 forced its replacement with a more magnificent iteration in the mid- to late 1850s. Despite the passage of nearly twenty years and the decline of conservative political domination, Brock remained firmly entrenched as the personification of early Ontario's increasingly nationalist outlook, and his memory was glorified with all the reverence of a patron saint. As increasing numbers of aged militiamen died off, their myth continued to be championed by younger comrades who perpetuated the key component of an evolving ideology—namely, the defensive utility of a colonial militia.

The considerable influence of the United Empire Loyalists' Association is explored in chapter 3, with particular regard to the promotion of a conservative, Ontario-centric world view based on an anti-American, pro-British belief system. Espousing romanticized concepts of their ancestral past, influential Loyalist descendants joined forces with leading provincial educationists in presenting Brock as a role model for Canadian schoolchildren. By utilizing curricular activities and educational publishing, these groups ensured that Brock's enduring popularity was firmly entrenched. With 1912 and the centenary of Brock's death, these same indoctrinating influences had become increasingly militaristic and alarming to the country's pacifists. Just a few years later, with the Militia Myth still holding sway over Canadian attitudes toward national defence, Brock's effectiveness in grooming future recruits to fight in defence of the British Empire became painfully obvious.

In chapter 4, Brock's importance as a role model for young Canadians is examined within the context of rising anti-militarist sentiments before, during, and after the two world wars. Following the First World War, after a period of unrestrained hero worship and the publication of several biographies of Brock, there was a rising reaction against war and militarism. But despite the determined efforts of pacifists to eliminate these perceived evils from every aspect of public education and Canadian society, however, Brock's popularity remained relatively unaffected as it was deemed a patriotic adjunct to good citizenship, a status it enjoyed through the Great Depression and the Second World War. In the postwar period, Brock's image remained positive and was utilized for educational publishing during the rise of a more independent type of nationalism.

A discussion of Brock's enduring popularity during the historiographically contentious 1960s and '70s is explored in chapter 5. Apart from the surprising amount of enthusiasm that greeted the 1962 sesquicentenary of his death at the Battle of Queenston Heights, educational compliance with multicultural and other societal pressures diminished Brock's standing as Canada's premier hero. A further complication was the growing appeal of foreign heroes, particularly those from the United States, and the indifference toward Brock exhibited by Canada's professional historians, who rejected the study of great men as elitist, militaristic, and antiquarian. Along with the decline of the Militia Myth and Loyalist tradition, Brock's heroic biography appeared destined to remain a fixture of children's literature—except that it continued to find a wide popular following among adult readers.

Chapter 6 takes in the period between the late 1970s and the bicentenary of Brock's death in 2012, a curious span of time in which his reputation maintained an equilibrium between positive and negative interpretations of his worth. Although Brock's generalship was coming under increasing scrutiny, especially by military historians, most professional historians and popular writers continued to express their approval of his zealous conduct, despite serious allegations regarding his tactical decisions at Queenston Heights. Ultimately, the generally favourable impression of Brock proved impervious to all manner of negative opinion, the loss of his role-model status, as well as the near eradication of the Militia Myth along with the Loyalist tradition. Bolstered by various publications, documentaries, contests, and considerable federal funding of

the War of 1812 bicentenary, Brock's popularity was all but guaranteed to persist deep into the twenty-first century.

As this book concludes, Brock's appeal was not sustained over two centuries by the lingering effect of his victory at Detroit or the tragic death he suffered at Queenston; it had more to do with colonial ambition and political expediency. By exploiting and manipulating Brock's fame, Upper Canadian elites promoted and perpetuated the Militia Myth—a national creation myth that blurred reality to foster the conservative and monarchical society they envisioned for British North America. As an extension of the Loyalist tradition, there was a strong imperial aspect to the Militia Myth—something to which Brock's heroic legacy was well adapted. Immortalized as a British military genius, his zealous leadership and love of humanity also made him an important symbol of Upper Canadian nationalism. It was a peculiar form of social engineering, one that both encouraged and promoted Brock's enduring popularity.

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Some of the more esoteric terminology used in this book requires clarification, so that the reader can better relate to the discussion. The phrase "social engineering," while now frequently used to describe a type of cyber deception, formerly referred to various control mechanisms, and particularly those utilized by industrialists in the early twentieth century to regulate the lives of their workers and families. There is also a broader meaning to this concept of control (the meaning intended here), evidence of which extends far back into the distant past and across the entirety of human governance.[16] In these instances, social engineering means the centralized management of a society's development and behaviour. Governments have long used social engineering to exert influence over their citizens, and legislation remains the most common means of doing so. But beyond the laws they enact, governing bodies have also employed more subtle strategies to effect desired outcomes, including policies designed to encourage certain types of patriotism. In Upper Canada, much of what passed for a natural outpouring of patriotic feeling toward Brock—and by extension the militia he commanded—was actually an early and long unrecognized form of social engineering that reinforced the colonial government's agenda for a pro-British society. As militiamen of all classes eagerly forged a collective association with Brock's heroic qualities and achievements, the rest of Upper Canadian society accepted

the Militia Myth as an accurate reflection of their wartime experiences. It was a thorough job, and so convincing that the contrived connection between Brock's enduring popularity and the colony's political evolution went undetected.[17]

Like social engineering, the notion of military genius carries built-in assumptions and requires elaboration. However, a basic definition is not easily come by; nor was it any better understood in Brock's time, when a British military lexicographer began a long-winded description of the concept with an apt preface that framed it as "a natural talent or disposition to every kind of warlike employment."[18] Although modern interpretations tend to emphasize the importance attached to strategy and tactics, or the ability of a commander to visualize and implement battle plans, a military genius in Brock's time also possessed other important characteristics of leadership, including those outlined by the Prussian military theorist Carl von Clausewitz. According to his interpretation, a military genius possessed the right temperament for war, and not merely a thorough understanding of it attained through study or experience. Beyond strategic and tactical abilities, other inherent qualities were necessary as well. Courage was the most important, especially in the face of danger, where it inspired subordinates. However, courage also required presence of mind in order to command an army unaffected by mishaps or reversals. A *coup d'oeil* (glance), or strategic intuition, allowed the military genius to grasp a battlefield situation and predict how the terrain would affect its outcome. Stubbornness and obstinacy verging on egotism were to be avoided, while a firm grasp of government policy impacting military operations was encouraged.[19] Although victorious more often than not, a military genius was still susceptible to the unpredictable nature of war. It was for this reason that the Russian writer Count Leo Tolstoy rejected the concept of military genius, which he rather famously did in the pages of his epic historical novel *War and Peace*.[20] Despite Tolstoy's emphasis on the attainment of victory, however, military genius in the early nineteenth century was predicated on the entirety of a commander's aptitude for war, and not solely his rate of success on the battlefield.

"Heroism," although its meaning might seem obvious, is another word in need of clarification. As the celebrated British historian and philosopher Thomas Carlyle demonstrated in 1840, at a time that was still within living memory of Brock and the War of 1812, there are different

kinds of heroism, and so a brief consideration of that exhibited by Brock is not without merit. During a series of lectures, Carlyle distinguished between six distinct types of heroes: divinities, prophets, poets, priests, scholars, and kings. It was the last of these heroic classifications that could be said to encompass Brock, as Carlyle likened kingship to the command of men. For British North Americans, Brock's civil and military authority over Upper Canada would have placed him squarely in the same league as Oliver Cromwell and Napoleon Bonaparte, both of whom met Carlyle's kingship criteria based on their leadership qualities as generals and statesmen, as well as for the subordination and loyalty they expected. Followers who accepted this manner of heroism, and found a patriotic benefit in doing so, developed a high regard for the type of hero that Carlyle "reckoned the most important of great men."[21] There was little recognition in the mid-nineteenth century that women could be similarly classed as heroines, even those like Joan of Arc who took on the role of an illustrious warrior in defence of a noble cause. So, while Laura Secord received accolades late in her life for warning the British at Beaver Dams of an impending American attack during the War of 1812, she could never quite achieve the same ideal of warrior heroism.[22] But to Brock's admiring multitudes in Upper Canada, he epitomized this exclusive class of hero: a competent colonial administrator, a military genius on the battlefield, and a gallant leader in their cause. Much of the impetus behind Brock's heroic image, however, was derived from an over-inflated sense of nationalism—the final word in need of some careful attention.

In its purest form, the term "nationalism" denotes a particular group identity wherein the members of a like-minded community share a common language, ethnicity, history, and culture.[23] Nationalism is also a word that can be used in conjunction with an existing nation-state, or one in the making. As it relates to the dominant Anglo-Canadian experience, however, nationalism—as it pertains to a group identity with aspirations for political self-determination—tends to be excluded from historical discussions of the pre-Confederation period, as if Canada's rise to nationhood was somehow achieved independently of its colonial past. Admittedly, Upper Canadians were generally British and imperial in their national attitudes, just as they had been since the influx of Loyalist settlement into what is now southern Ontario during the American Revolution. Yet, having survived all the privations associated with the War of 1812, they also developed a unique sense of themselves and the

future course of their colony. It was not a craving for independent nationhood as such, but rather a tinge toward nationalism within the protective confines of the British Empire. In effect, the war's long-term impact on the self-awareness of Upper Canadians served to bolster an earlier concept of pro-British nationalism—an idea that evolved and shaped the implementation of Confederation as well as the subsequent rise of Canada as a nation-state.[24] Given these considerations and the different meanings that can be assigned to nationalism, it is a word that must be treated with due regard for time, place, and circumstance.

Finally, although the Militia Myth and the Loyalist tradition are explained elsewhere in the text, it is important for the reader to note that these concepts were not in common use for most of the period covered by this book. So, for example, even if Upper Canadians had recognized the effects of the Militia Myth and the Loyalist tradition, they could not have referred to them with such collective and concise labels.