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Paying Respects

Three days after the battle in which Major General Isaac Brock and Lieutenant Colonel John Macdonell were killed, their coffins were carried out of an imposing residence in Niagara, placed on makeshift funeral cars, and ceremoniously conveyed to nearby Fort George.[1] As one of the pallbearers later related, it was the "grandest [and] most solemn" burial ever witnessed in Upper Canada.[2] It was also the closest thing to a state funeral that circumstances allowed, and Brock, as the colony's civil and military leader, warranted all the posthumous honours bestowed upon him.

Brock's funeral, however, was far more distressing than it would have been had he died at the head of a frontier society during peacetime. Because he was killed in battle while defending the province against an American invasion, the people of Upper Canada felt a heightened sense of loss. One old Niagara Loyalist, Isaac Swayze, never forgot the distress caused by Brock's death. As captain of the car (or wagon) brigade, a detachment of the Provincial Artillery Drivers, Swayze was responsible for transporting the general's corpse back to Niagara after the Battle of Queenston Heights. Word of the devastating blow preceded Swayze, and with his arrival in the village, a crush of women, "weeping boisterously," begged to see the body. Obligingly, it was uncovered "and immediately the air was filled with their cries."[3] Such an outpouring of grief might seem melodramatic in this day and age, but to the loyal inhabitants of Upper Canada, Brock's death was nothing short of calamitous: Without his leadership, their situation seemed desperate—just as it had during the early days of the War of 1812. At that time, however, Brock's overwhelming victory against the Americans at Detroit eliminated the imminent threat of invasion from the west, and most Upper Canadians justifiably regarded him as a veritable godsend during their time of extreme crisis.

It is hardly surprising that Brock's memory was held in such high regard at the time of his sudden and unexpected death. Only three months had passed since his triumphant return from Detroit, and his conquest of that American post countered an equally dangerous threat from within the colony. Despite the resolute determination of older and more fully established Loyalist communities to remain British, disaffection was rife in much of Upper Canada. It was especially prevalent among the nascent frontier settlements in the western regions of the province. In these remote interior communities, treasonable oaths had a tendency to be vocalized with little fear of reprisal. Disloyal sentiments emanated from American immigrants as well as British subjects, and two of the most notable offenders from the latter category were Andrew Westbrook and Simon Zelotes Watson.[4] Motivated by grievances against local authorities and the colonial government, these malcontents became enemy agents for Brigadier General William Hull at Detroit. By settling old scores and intimidating former neighbours, their treasonable activities served to heighten the sense of defeatism that pervaded every level of Upper Canadian society. Matters took a turn for the worse when Hull invaded the colony and issued the proclamation by which he intended to subjugate the British non-combatants, whom the fortunes of war had placed under his control. After Brock issued his own proclamation, a patriotic rebuttal of everything the American commander professed, he promptly organized an expedition to relieve Amherstburg. Before the British force could arrive on the scene, however, Hull abandoned his foothold in Upper Canada and took refuge in Fort Detroit. Unperturbed, Brock prepared to lay siege, and after a severe bombardment, followed by the threat of an Indigenous-led massacre, Hull was unnerved into surrendering his garrison and the entire Michigan Territory.

The taking of Detroit had a profound impact on the morale of loyal Upper Canadians, and "Brock returned amidst the acclamations of an almost idolizing public."[5] The magnitude of his accomplishment became especially apparent upon his arrival at Fort George toward the end of August, where news of his victory had preceded him by several days and prompted a delegation of the principal inhabitants of Niagara and vicinity to ride out "in carriages and on horseback" to present their returning hero with a congratulatory address.[6] It was a testimony to their "sense of the important services he had rendered to the province and his recent brilliant achievement at Detroit," and while the substance of this

document appears to have gone unrecorded, no one disputed the impact Brock's success had on the populace of Upper Canada.[7] The surrender of Detroit was "so unexpected, that it produced an almost electrical effect throughout the Canadas: it was the first enterprise in which the militia had been engaged, and its success not only imparted confidence to that body, but it inspired the timid, fixed the wavering, and awed the disaffected."[8] To the Loyalists among them, Brock's resolve meant that they were spared the "the ignominy of submitting to a conqueror," and it was well remembered

> that in the short space of nineteen days he had not only met the legislature and settled the public business of the province under the most trying circumstances that a commander could encounter, but, with means incredibly limited, he had gone nearly 300 miles [483 kilometres] in pursuit of an invading enemy of double his own force and compelled him to surrender; thus, without bloodshed, extending the British dominion over an extent of country almost equal to Upper Canada.[9]

Brock was the man of the hour, and the fame he garnered from his daring exploits made him a larger-than-life figure upon whom a grateful people conferred a singular distinction: "The Hero of Upper Canada." Having become the colony's saviour, Brock was also expected to provide further safeguards against American threats to the province and its inhabitants by additional demonstrations of his military skill. Unfortunately for Brock and all those depending on him, the next opportunity to prove his mettle—which came the following October at Queenston—resulted in his death. Little or no blame was publicly attached to Brock for the manner in which he conducted himself on that occasion; it was another matter in private, however, where Brock's conduct was more likely to be censured than praised. It would appear that many people at the time thought Brock's behaviour to be prodigal, by which they meant unnecessarily reckless. Captains James Dennis and John Williams of the 49th Regiment of Foot, who were with Brock at Queenston that fateful day, both agreed that he "threw away his life."[10] Judge William Dummer Powell of York thought he acted that day with the "rashness of a grenadier."[11] Brock's brigade major, Thomas Evans of the 8th Regiment, blamed an "impetuosity of disposition."[12] James Raye, paymaster of the

41st Regiment of Foot, was convinced that "poor Genl Brock lost his life by his usual impatience," while Gustavus Nicolls of the Royal Artillery recalled a "hastiness of temper."[13] But Anne Prevost, whose father was governor-in-chief of the Canadas and Brock's superior officer, perhaps summed it up best when she confided to her diary that "a general ought sometimes to recollect how valuable his life is."[14]

Despite the frequently questioned rationale behind Brock's decision to launch a headlong charge against a heavily defended American position, with himself conspicuously leading the way, the aura of military genius was not denied him, at least not in polite society. And when rumours of prodigality were detected by a contributor to the *Kingston Gazette*, they were promptly countered with the following reproof: "if General Brock was hurried by his ardent spirit, beyond the marked duties of a leader, to expose himself to certain destruction, we must admire and regret, but not condemn. The sacrifice was for us."[15] This positive spin, besides making the loss less pointless, helped to clear the way for hero worship on a grand scale. But unlike the great pantheon of British heroism, there was really only room enough in Upper Canada for one dominant hero, and that hero was Brock. As the Kingston contributor tellingly observed,

> although the glorious event [meaning the Battle of Queenston Heights], has consummated the character of his successor [Sheaffe], as a military leader, uniting a cool head with exalted courage, yet the memory of our lamented president [Brock] and of his chosen and faithful companion, Lieut. Col. M'Donell [*sic*], the pride of our youth, and the example of our men, who fell in the same glorious struggle, and is united to his general in the same grave, must live [endeared] to every feeling mind as long as the recall of their fate subsists, and we continue to enjoy the purest constitution, for the preservation of which they were [self-devoted].[16]

While Macdonell died a hero in his own right, he had not attained the same level of leadership as Brock, and so the loss—while tragic—was not as profound. Sheaffe, had he died a similarly selfless death at the Battle of York in April of 1813, might have been viewed as Brock's equal, and perhaps the two of them would have become the joint Heroes of Upper Canada. As it was, Sheaffe was given short shrift because of his perceived

lack of zeal in defending the provincial capital.[17] And Brock's heroic death was a hard act to follow. Yet, Sheaffe and the other commanders who followed him in prosecuting the war can hardly be faulted for having subscribed to a less extreme, if not suicidal, sense of duty. Brock's more bounding approach to leadership practically ensured a sudden death in the thick of battle, and having died at the height of his fame, his reputation seemed likely to remain forever undiminished. For Upper Canadians badly in need of a saviour, Brock was the perfect knight, and they lavished his memory with the most profound respect and gratitude.

Of course, not everyone was enthralled with the name of Brock or its imperial connection.[18] The degree to which these contrarians proliferated in the Upper Canadian landscape is unknown, but they seem to have represented a small minority of the population. Moreover, any semblance of negativity on their part appears to have been cancelled out by a prevalence of popular opinion in favour of Brock, as one of his brothers discovered in 1817. During a tour of the Canadas, Savery Brock encountered a common refrain: "To your brother, sir, we are indebted for the preservation of this province."[19] It was a generalization, of course, but one that was repeated so often that mere flattery seemed out of the question. It would have been difficult to believe otherwise, given the emotional reactions Savery encountered during his travels. At a tavern on the lower Niagara River, the landlord and former militiaman tearfully told him that his brother "was a friend and a father to me. I was close to him when he was shot."[20] Having uttered these words, and "unable from his feelings to add more, he walked away quickly up his orchard."[21] This tendency for weepiness became all the more pronounced at York, the colonial capital and a bastion of British loyalty. "On paying my respects to Mrs. [Anne] Powell," Savery wrote to another brother, "the lady of the present chief justice [William Dummer Powell], and to Mrs. [Catherine, wife of William] Claus, they were greatly affected, and shed tears; and [the former chief justice] Mr. [Thomas] Scott, on whom I called yesterday, was equally so. Every one here is most kind—Isaac truly lived in their hearts: from one end of Canada to the other, he is beloved to a degree you can scarcely imagine—his memory will long live among them."[22] While this and other heartfelt expressions were deeply appreciated, they also served as painful reminders of a close bereavement. Still, Savery Brock could not help but feel gratified, especially as his brother's name was venerated while those of his fellow generals who commanded during the war were

"spoken of with much indifference."[23] A similar preference for Brock found frequent expression in Upper Canada's several newspapers, and served to establish an unimpeachable reputation for the man who saved the colony.

In the days and weeks following Brock's victory at Detroit, his place in the collective memory of Upper Canadians was permanently fixed and actively disseminated through the medium of newsprint. With printing presses in operation at Niagara, York, and Kingston, the province was well supplied with accounts of Brock's expedition. Of course, the content was always rather dated by the time printers had a chance to set up their type.[24] And because newspapers of the time tended to be given over in large part to proclamations and advertising, there was limited space in the four-page folio formats for general and local items. But with the American declaration of war in June of 1812, battle reports and other such news about the conflict came to dominate the newspapers of Upper Canada. Consequently, these "papers" became important sources of information. As such, they warranted all the trouble of a supplement, the most notable of which was the *York Gazette*'s "Glorious News!!!" broadside, which announced the surrender of Detroit in August of 1812.[25] Like this supplement, much of the available newspaper copy about the war was contributed and generally consisted of either official or private correspondence. A good deal of it originated locally.

A prime example of the type of official correspondence published in Upper Canadian newspapers during the War of 1812 appeared in the Niagara *Bee*, which reported Detroit's capitulation based on a communication addressed to Lieutenant Colonel Christopher Myers at Fort George.[26] No less important was private correspondence and particularly the first-hand accounts of various engagements, including a young militiaman's description of the Battle of Queenston Heights—the opening phase of which ended Brock's run of good luck, as well as his valuable life.[27] And whether the source was public or private, word of Brock's death invited communal grief throughout the Canadas. There was an especially strong reaction to it in the upper province, where traumatized colonists found solace in elegiac poems. Lamenting Brock's fall while at the same time glorifying his heroism, these mournful lines were anonymous and of questionable artistic merit, such as those "To General Brock, a Garland," which appeared in the *York Gazette* a few days after his death and offered readers a rhyming tribute to Brock's victory at Detroit.[28]

Though frequently overly maudlin, the verse inspired by Brock's death was nevertheless pure of sentiment. Such poetry was a typical coping mechanism for anguished populations in the early nineteenth century, and the newspaper publication of any such composition—regardless of poetic quality—served a useful purpose in making Brock's heroic reputation known to a wider audience. Nor was the reach of this early form of broadcasting limited to subscribers and their immediate households.

Taking a newspaper in Upper Canada was an expensive proposition, and so they were not generally discarded after only one reading. Instead, they were shared, in some cases even before they were delivered.[29] As a subscriber to the *Colonial Advocate* complained about the issues he received in 1825, "by their appearance they must have made the tour of Brockville half a dozen times."[30] Upon receipt by its rightful owner, a newspaper might then go the rounds of family and servants, and perhaps even those of other households, before being discarded or sent for reuse in some more public setting such as a tavern.[31] And while the amenities offered by such establishments varied considerably from one end of the province to the other, they all shared a common purpose beyond the consumption of alcoholic beverages—namely, as places to exchange information.[32] It was in taverns that news of the war was read silently or recounted aloud, and also where Brock's heroism was first glorified in a community's public sphere. Much of the tavern talk regarding his victory and death was likely based on information derived from newspapers. But as the well-thumbed issues containing these reports became increasing scarce, any such discussions must have become increasingly vague and unreliable.

This lack of reference material created the perfect environment for storytellers, who filled the void by sharing questionable Brock anecdotes with their barroom audiences.[33] Many of their tales originated in Upper Canadian households, particularly those in which male members had seen military service during the War of 1812. As William Kirby of Niagara recalled, such narratives could become quite animated. Kirby, a literary-minded English immigrant who came to Upper Canada in 1839, developed a deep fascination with the Loyalists and listened in rapt attention to the stories from their past. When these recitals turned to war, as they invariably did, "their proud recollections ascended to the beamed ceilings, and carried through the rooms."[34] A similarly exuberant retelling, this time complete with improvised props, occurred during

Edward T. Coke's tour of the Canadas in 1832. A lieutenant in the British Army, Coke went on to publish an account of his travels, including the exploits of an old soldier from Brock's regiment who he chanced to meet in Lower Canada, today's province of Quebec:

> He was a true Corporal Trim [or enthusiast of past battles]: in the first instance, he fought the battles of Chippewa and Lundy's Lane, for my edification, upon the white hearth-stone with a piece of charcoal, but, finding my undivided attention was bent upon something more substantial, he transferred the scene of action to the breakfast table, where he most gallantly carried the heights of Queenston upon the top of the loaf of bread, and stormed Fort Erie through the spout of a tea-pot.[35]

Whether told in a pioneer's humble abode or the fine home of a provincial squire, reminiscences about the War of 1812 and Brock's heroics found receptive audiences. There were many such opportunities, especially during long winter evenings around a blazing fireplace. While frequently the preserve of male actors, these stories were not exclusively confined to the experiences of a family's menfolk. Women and even children could also figure in famous associations with Brock, two of which were themed around his sword.

As an old farmer from the Niagara Peninsula recited for the United Empire Loyalists' Association of Ontario in 1898, his mother encountered Brock while he was spurring his horse toward the Battle of Queenston Heights. Although it was early morning and still dark, Sarah Otway-Page noticed that Brock had forgotten his sword and hastened to point out the oversight.[36] Brock, however, made light of his carelessness by predicting that his next battle would be the last, "which subsequently proved only too true."[37] Unfortunately for the Otway-Page descendants, their dubious claim to fame was contradicted by the memoirs of Major Thomas Merritt, which included an affecting story about his young daughter. On the morning of the Battle of Queenston Heights, Susan Merritt had the distinct honour of assisting Brock to buckle on his sword. By some quirk, it would appear that this was the same sword he was supposed to have forgotten.[38] Obviously, both the Otway-Page and Merritt family traditions leave much to be desired, as do many similar stories regarding Brock. The majority of them were no doubt fabrications, and given this

tendency, it is perhaps just as well that most of them were lost to posterity. Some, however, made their way into print, where they continue to distort perceptions of Brock to this day. While not every story told about Brock was deliberately contrived, the intended outcome was usually the same: a degree of self-aggrandizement for the storyteller.[39] But, despite the problematic origins of these stories, they provide a sense of the oral history that helped to keep Brock's memory alive.[40]

Although verbal remembrances of Brock appear to have been relatively common in the two decades following his death, tangible reminders were few and far between. Those most frequently encountered in Upper Canada began to appear several years after Brock's death and were numismatic in nature. Savery Brock, during his tour of the province in 1817, would have noticed that many of the coins in circulation were copper tokens about the size of a British halfpenny. Commemorating Brock as "The Hero of Upper Canada," the most common version of this token is dated 1816 and depicts two cherubs adorning Brock's funerary urn with a laurel wreath (symbolizing victory over death). The design of these tokens appealed to the patriotism of the colony's citizenry, and while previously thought to have been issued by some high-minded merchant to commemorate Brock's memory, the truth of the matter is far less savoury.[41] As Christopher Faulkner, a retired film studies professor from Ottawa's Carleton University, discovered in an issue of the *Kingston Gazette* from June 1817, these Brock tokens were actually the result of criminal intent. Writing under the *nom de plume* "A Green Grocer," one of the newspaper's anonymous contributors brought the fraudulent scheme to light:

> The coin alluded to is made in the neighbouring States, and in order to give it currency in this province is stamped with the name of the illustrious Brock, a name ever to be revered by the inhabitants of Upper Canada—but unfortunately, in this instance, used for the concealment of base and unworthy purposes. As each piece of this money is issued for a halfpenny, although its intrinsic value is not supposed to equal half that amount, the profit accruing to the speculators is evidently considerable, and as it is drawn from the pocket of the community, on them of course the loss must eventually fall.[42]

These fake tokens were a despicable affront to Brock's memory, and yet there was no better commemoration of the "Hero of Upper Canada." While a pioneer community in eastern Upper Canada was becoming known as Brockville in his honour, the connection was tenuous at best. The Niagara frontier had a far stronger claim to Brock, particularly Queenston, where a curious form of secular pilgrimage developed around the sites associated with his final hours. One of the earliest of these battlefield tours took place at the end of January 1813, only a few months after Brock's death, when Major John Baskerville Glegg accompanied a fellow British officer to point out "the field of battle at Queenston."[43] In his former capacity as Brock's military aide-de-camp, and as one of the few men who actually witnessed his commander's death, Glegg made for a very well-informed guide. The dramatic scenes he recalled for his sightseeing companion had taken place in a field on the west side of the village where Brock fell, and in the nearby stone house where his body was sequestered for the duration of the battle.[44] Without Glegg's input, none of the stops on this tour would have held any obvious connection to past events. Nor was the most poignant site associated with Brock discernible without some knowledge of his interment. Located ten kilometres to the north at Fort George, it was the place where Brock and his provincial aide-de-camp were laid to rest. Although buried in a conspicuous location, the grave they shared was unmarked and hidden from casual view. It was an unacceptable situation, and within a few years it became a significant problem.

In 1819, a Scotsman arrived in Upper Canada intent on visiting his brother, who happened to be the Anglican rector at York. Soon afterwards, James Strachan set out with the Reverend John Strachan for a tour to Niagara Falls. Making a stop at Fort George, they found Brock's grave in one of the bastions,

> without any stone or memorial to mark the spot where the saviour of Upper Canada lies. It is said that the legislature, some years ago, voted one thousand pounds for a monument, and that a committee [commission] was appointed to procure and set it up; but nothing has been done. Such conduct requires explanation. Was the sum too small? It might have been easily increased by private contributions; and, till the monument is erected, the province is disgraced.[45]

Possibly acting on cues from his influential brother, James published this stricture about the lack of a Brock monument in 1820, soon after his return to Scotland—but not before another Scotsman, Robert Nichol, had been compelled to act.[46] As one of the three commissioners appointed to superintend the monument's construction, and a sitting member of the Upper Canada House of Assembly, Nichol was under considerable pressure to explain the delay.

It all began in March 1814. With the war still raging, Nichol proposed a government-funded monument to Brock. The motion was carried unanimously, with the granting of £500 for the purpose.[47] Nichol, expecting a further appropriation during the next session, wrote to Brock's brother, William Brock, seeking his assistance in procuring a design and cost estimate.[48] Despite these important papers having failed to arrive in time, the government went ahead and granted a further £500 to the worthy cause in March of 1815.[49] But the proposition stalled, and it was Nichol who had to face the reckoning, as he had charge of the £1,000 granted by government.[50] Early in January 1820, Nichol explained the situation to Lieutenant-Governor Sir Peregrine Maitland. He also rejected any notion that he considered himself bound "to answer anonymous attacks in the public prints."[51] These further delays had been caused by Nichol's difficulty in coordinating with the other two commissioners during his extended absence from the province while on personal business in England.[52] With Upper Canadians' patience obviously wearing thin, Nichol provided Maitland and the colonial government with a status report.[53] The clarifications it contained did little to assuage the discontent, but the lack of progress did at least provide a constant reminder of the hero who inspired the monument. Like Brock's tokens, however, it carried a distinctly negative connotation.

Fortunately for the commissioners, Maitland was a staunch supporter of their cause who tolerated the delays—which persisted throughout 1820 and 1821—in part so that interest could accrue on the government grant. Determined that the work should convey a sense of Brock's importance to the province, as well as an appreciation for his service and sacrifice, Maitland thought it only proper to augment the amount of the grant for the monument. At the same time, however, he was aware of the limited and embarrassed state of Upper Canada's finances, and so he encouraged the House of Assembly to adopt the measures by expressing his own "most cordial concurrence and support."[54] Effectively, he exerted

his influence. Maitland's viceregal pleasure was communicated in a message along with a subsequent report he received from the commissioners in December 1821.[55] In it, they provided context to the difficulties arising from their plans for a monument. Because they lacked local artists and architects to advise them, they had decided to seek the assistance of William Brock in March 1815. With his help, they hoped to procure a monument design and cost estimate. Nichol, writing on behalf of his fellow commissioners, expressed their joint "desire that the monument should do perfect justice to the character of the late lamented general both in respect to his civil administration and military command—one which shall convey to posterity with the fame of his great actions—the estimation in which he was held by all ranks in this province, their gratitude for his distinguished services and sorrow for his untimely fall."[56] William Brock finally complied with the request in May of 1817, but not without some reservation.[57]

Although he was conscious of the potential expense attending a monument to his brother, William Brock could not have failed to notice that the commissioners did not seem particularly constrained by their grant from government. As Nichol himself insisted, there "are numerous personal friends of the late Sir Isaac who are desirous of contributing to this laudable work and it would be hard to deprive them of this opportunity of testifying their respect for his memory."[58] Even if their funds did not allow for a magnificent monument, the commissioners were determined to have something built on a respectable scale with impressive features. It was here that things became somewhat mixed, as Nichol and one of the other commissioners still expected something grand—including a monumental column surmounted by a statue of Brock, appropriate ornaments, and suitable inscriptions on the base.[59] What they really wanted was a monument that was worthy not only of Brock, but also of themselves, the militia, and the people of Upper Canada.[60] Unfortunately, by playing down any concern over the project's expense, the commissioners unwittingly set themselves up for a nasty surprise.

Taking Nichol at his word, William Brock consulted Richard Westmacott, a Royal Academician and the sculptor responsible for Brock's neoclassical tabular monument in St. Paul's Cathedral.[61] Westmacott came up with two designs of varying scale, as well as cost estimates for the bronze work, including an 8-foot (2.44-metre) bronze statue of Brock, a bronze relief depicting his capture of Detroit, and a

bronze laurel wreath for a grand total of £2,500. While there was also the option of a smaller statue, which reduced the cost to about £2,000, the lower of the two quotes was still twice the amount originally allocated for a monument by the Upper Canadian government.[62] Perhaps anticipating an awkward and embarrassed reaction to Westmacott's grandiose proposals, William Brock offered the commissioners the choice of something more modest: a "plain [and] neat tablet" placed in a church somewhere or possibly the Upper Canada House of Assembly.[63] This economical alternative, however, was not to the liking of the commissioners or the lieutenant-governor, all of whom wanted something more impressive by which to remember Brock. Realizing the inadequacy of the sum granted by government, the commissioners briefly considered taking it upon themselves to open a public subscription to augment the private donations they expected would be forthcoming from Brock's "numerous personal friends." But the possible negative ramifications of such a fundraising exercise gave them pause.

Apprehensive of their roles and responsibilities as public servants, and fearing that by "acting under the solemn authority of a parliamentary enactment, it would be construed into an indelicate assumption of power," not to mention a poor reflection on the provincial government "should they resort to an appeal to the private sympathies of the people for the means to give effect to a public act of the government," they put the entire project on hold.[64] Although several years' worth of interest had accrued on the government grant, the resulting £1,500 fund for Brock's monument was still insufficient. And with clamourings for construction to begin, the commissioners reacted by referencing the report they submitted to Maitland in December 1821. As well as explaining the delays in starting construction of Brock's monument, it reaffirmed their dedication to the undertaking and their determination to abstain from seeking further government funding. Hoping to deflect petty cavilling, they optimistically anticipated that operations would commence during the ensuing construction season. To strengthen the impression of a major work about to begin, the commissioners expressed their preference for a tower on Queenston Heights with a vault underneath to serve as a mausoleum. This they thought would be looked upon as "a more appropriate testimonial of the strong feeling of veneration for the memory of the deceased," and more desirable than the other plan also under consideration. This other monument was a column "resembling that erected

to the memory of Lord Nelson in Montreal, surmounted with a funereal urn."[65] With their critics silenced for the time being, the commissioners resumed their activities. These efforts consisted primarily of trying to raise the funds necessary to build the monument. Fortunately for them, the lieutenant-governor shared their determination to erect a fitting memorial to Brock.

On the first day of 1822, Nichol moved for an address in the House of Assembly thanking Maitland for the message of support he had sent (along with the commissioners' report) the previous December. Nichol then reiterated the importance of doing justice to Brock's memory. He also acknowledged that any measure Maitland deemed expedient in accomplishing the goal would be gratifying, and a "proof of his excellency's desire to meet the intentions of the legislature in a matter so deeply interesting to the feelings of all classes of his majesty's subjects in this province."[66] In other words, the government of Upper Canada was willing to let Maitland assume authority over the monument without further recourse to the legislature. This authorization extended to fundraising and soon resulted in a public subscription sanctioned by Maitland himself. Using his considerable influence, Maitland launched a well-organized drive for contributions. With agents in each of Upper Canada's ten districts, he confidently appealed for financial aid to assist in constructing the monument to Brock on Queenston Heights. To its proponents, and likely to Maitland himself, this site seemed "so appropriate to the object, that it is presumed the selection cannot fail to meet the general feeling of the country."[67] Taking the lead, Maitland made the first of what he must have hoped would be many generous donations.

Unfortunately for the well-intentioned lieutenant-governor, Upper Canadians' esteem for Brock could not be exchanged for much in the way of hard cash. The problem was the same across the province, and no amount of patriotic persuasion could loosen people's purse strings. In reminding its readers of the subscription toward the end of February 1822, the *Kingston Chronicle* took advantage of the opportunity for a bit of jabbing: "What district indeed ought to be more grateful than this [the Midland District], when it is recollected that to the energetic measures adopted by Sir Isaac Brock on the commencement of hostilities we are principally indebted for the comparative tranquility we enjoyed throughout the contest?" Continuing in the same vein, the author of this shaming diatribe observed that

> so far from suffering from the war, our farmers were enabled to continue in their ordinary vocations, to till their lands, to reap their harvests, and quietly pocket the golden proceeds, while other less fortunate districts became the theatre of war, and were subjected to all the miseries incident to such a situation. For our happy exemption from a similar lot, our farmers have to thank Sir Isaac Brock, and they are consequently bound by every tie of gratitude, and reverence for his heroic character, to contribute liberally on this occasion.[68]

In the end, and after almost two years, the subscription drive was found to have generated a paltry £219. But with an additional £500 worth of interest on their grant from government, minus various expenses, the commissioners decided to proceed with the nearly £2,000 at their disposal.[69] But then came a complication.

In mid-January 1824, Maitland was informed of suggestions "from various quarters" advocating the construction of a church on Queenston Heights with a memorial dedicated to Brock.[70] To its proponents, a church must have seemed a more fitting remembrance. And the proposal was sufficiently similar to William Brock's earlier suggestion for a "plain [and] neat tablet" that the commissioners felt obliged to give it credence. Ultimately, they concluded that they were not authorized to "depart from the letter of the act," unless the legislation was altered to allow for a church.[71] Maitland, however, laboured under a mistaken belief that Brock's family actually preferred a church, and so he was fully prepared to recommend a modification to the original proposal.[72] In fact, all William Brock had suggested was his family's preference "that some plain [and] neat tablet should be erected either in one of the [colony's] churches or [the] House of Assembly."[73] In any case, when the government voted on the bill to amend the act for a Brock monument, it was soundly defeated and the idea of a church was rejected.[74] All that remained was to make a choice of columns, either Tuscan or Gothic. Since Maitland preferred the former, the commissioners went along with a Tuscan column, replete with a lantern (or cupola) and abacus (or viewing platform).[75]

As to the location of Brock's proposed monument, the act allowed considerable latitude "for the constructing and erecting at Queenston, near where he fell, or such spot as may be agreed upon by the commissioners."[76] But as one of them later recalled, "By the statute of 1815, the

monument was to be erected near where General Brock fell, which was on the private property of the late Mr. Thomas Dickson (one of the commissioners for building it)."[77] Clearly, the commissioners envisioned a monument down in the village, as opposed to up on the heights. But with Maitland's "concurrence," they decided to construct the monument in the more commanding location.[78] And by the end of February 1824, the Brock family had also approved the site, which Nichol described as "a kind of promontory directly overhanging the main street of [Queenston]."[79] It was then just a matter of tendering for contracts so that construction could begin. The project was advertised in the last week of February 1824 and called for a monument consisting of a vault extending 2.7 metres below ground, a base 5.5 metres tall with an area of 1.9 square metres, a tapering column rising 19.8 metres, as well as an abacus and lantern, which together added another 2.3 metres. The combination of these component parts brought the total height of the monument to 30.6 metres.[80] It was a major public work for so young a colony, but nothing less would suffice in paying homage to the Hero of Upper Canada. Before the column was finished, however, two separate incidents at the worksite threatened to overshadow the sacred symbolism of Brock's rising monument.

Construction began in the spring of 1824, and by the beginning of June it had progressed sufficiently for the laying of a foundation stone. A few days later, a brief account of the Masonic ceremony held in honour of the event was published in the *Colonial Advocate*, which was then published in Queenston by the political agitator William Lyon Mackenzie (whose increasing frustration with the colony's oligarchical elite would transition into open rebellion just over a decade later).[81] In addition to describing the songs sung and the convivial meeting of Freemasons held afterwards in a Queenston hotel, Mackenzie enumerated the various items contained in a glass bottle that was sealed and placed in a hollowed-out stone. Along with a selection of old coins, this improvised time capsule contained a copy of the *Upper Canada Gazette*, the official government newspaper, and also the first issue of Mackenzie's own muckraking *Colonial Advocate*.[82] There was nothing particularly unusual in the newspapers Mackenzie chose to preserve, except that his own paper was known for its tendency to infuriate Maitland. And the issue placed under the lieutenant-governor's pet project was the most exasperating yet published. As Mackenzie himself admitted, it accused Maitland of indolence while also blaming him for the slow progress of Upper Canada's

development.[83] Not surprisingly, Maitland was incensed when he learned of Mackenzie's impudence, and to such a degree that he demanded the removal of the offending article. Delighted by Maitland's consternation, Mackenzie made great fun of the exercise to retrieve an "old newspaper."[84] However, it did not necessitate pulling down the monument, as the *Colonial Advocate* seemed to imply. A hole in the monument's foundation sufficed, and the damage was soon restored—along with Maitland's honour. In the process, however, Brock's own honour was overlooked.

Among those who deplored the lost opportunity to imbue patriotism among Upper Canadians was a "Militia Man of 1812." While John Clark, as he was otherwise known, initially expressed his pleasure at the "manifestation of respect shewn for a fallen hero," he was also keenly disappointed that the event had been held without prior notice. In writing to Mackenzie, Clark expressed his conviction that hundreds of people "should have rejoiced at so favourable an opportunity of evincing a further trait of respect for the memory of the gallant general who so gloriously fell in repelling the then invaders from our soil and whose meritorious example at the commencement of the war united in drawing forth our unabated energies in defence of the rights of our sovereign and country."[85] But what Clark viewed as an auspicious occasion to celebrate Brock's virtues in a formal setting, the surviving commissioners had earlier dismissed as unmanageable given the time constraints they faced. Soon after Nichol's sudden and tragic death at the beginning of May 1824, they had debated the propriety of going ahead with the Masonic ceremony previously envisioned for the laying of the foundation stone.[86] It was decided, however, to defer the ritual until the following October, after the monument was finished and the bodies removed from Fort George.[87]

As far as the commissioners were concerned, there was no need for a ceremony in the meantime. But Mackenzie and other residents of Queenston were not satisfied with this decision, and they resolved that something should be done to commemorate the monument's construction. Having recalled that Nichol was making plans for a Masonic ceremony before his death, Mackenzie took it upon himself to finalize the arrangements.[88] However, poor organization resulted in a sparse attendance—an outcome that might actually have suited Mackenzie, as the absence of Maitland and the commissioners allowed for a more direct participation on his part. While Mackenzie appears to have held Brock's

memory in high regard, his behaviour suggests that the ceremony he orchestrated was less about Brock the hero than Mackenzie the egotist.[89] And whether his antics were intended for financial gain from the increased sales of his newspaper or the desire to make a political name for himself, Mackenzie managed to insinuate himself upon Brock's legacy. But even if it originated with the best of intentions, Mackenzie's ceremony precipitated an unseemly squabble. Brock's memory deserved better, but there was more indignity to come.

The reinterment of Brock and Macdonell was intended to be an entirely decorous affair, but the removal of the bodies to their respective vaults necessitated some gruesome preparations, which in turn resulted in some unfortunate gawping.[90] On 2 October 1824, anticipating the removal of the bodies for transport to Brock's still unfinished monument, Clark set off on various errands in connection with his macabre duty. Accompanying him was William Claus, known primarily for his long association with the Indian Department, who made a note of the events in his diary. At noon, Claus and a number of other gentlemen made their way to Fort George in order to examine the results of the exhumation. Finding Macdonell's coffin sound but Brock's rather decayed, and neither body "in that state to allow them to be removed into new coffins," it was decided that they should be bound with strong linen, covered in black cloth, and temporarily returned to the ground.[91]

The king's printer was rather more descriptive in recounting the incident. That gentleman, Charles Fothergill, found it remarkable that, "on inspecting the remains, the body of Col. McDonell [*sic*] was found to be almost entirely decomposed—whilst that of the general was still firm and nearly entire;—some of the flesh, and lineaments of his martial countenance, being yet visible."[92] All these ghastly details went into the government's official *Upper Canada Gazette*, where they caused not the slightest stir. Nor, it appears, was there any attempt to shield the townspeople of Niagara from these open-air mortuary practices. Nearly seventy-five years later, in 1898, a Methodist minister living in Moberly, Missouri, remembered viewing the bodies as a boy. As Rev. John McEwen recalled, "I was present when the remains of Gen. Brock and his aid[e-de-camp] were taken from the ramparts of Fort George and deposited in the monument on Queenston Heights, when Gen. Brock's coffin was opened the flesh was still on his face. It continued there however only a moment or two after the air struck it."[93] Though ghoulish, these exhumations held

a morbid fascination and generated considerable interest in the reinterment of Brock and Macdonell.

Two days before the burial procession, which was set to coincide with the anniversary of the Battle of Queenston Heights, the bodies were "taken up [and] put into the church [St. Mark's] to have the coffins [etc.] prepared."[94] The bodies were once again temporarily reburied in their former resting place within Fort George. On 13 October 1824, Claus was up at daylight in order to superintend yet another exhumation of the bodies and to ensure that the coffins were properly prepared for their journey to the still unfinished monument.[95] Half an hour before the procession's ten o'clock start, "numbers of people in carriages and on foot were pouring into the plain on which stands Fort George."[96] This was the first-hand observation of the *Colonial Advocate*'s editor, and Mackenzie became so caught up in the patriotism of the day that he put aside his animosity for the lieutenant-governor. "General Maitland," he reported, "was in full dress, and his look well betokened the anxious interest he took in that day's work." There were "all ranks and all ages" assembling to witness the reinterment of Brock and Macdonell.[97] And those who missed the earlier chance to gaze upon the decomposed countenances of the hero and his aide-de-camp were given one last opportunity. "Before the procession took place," editor John Carey of the York *Observer* reported, "we viewed the bodies."[98] Upper Canadians, it seems, had strong stomachs. So, too, did their neighbours from across the Niagara River.

Although the numbers varied, somewhere between five and ten thousand people attended the reburial ceremonies, and of this number it was estimated that many hundreds were Americans. At the appointed hour, the plain coffins, covered in black mourning cloth and unadorned except for silver coffin plates, were loaded onto a hearse, also covered with black cloth and drawn by four black horses, each with a Black man acting as a handler and a driver who was a Black man as well.[99] Although taken to extremes, these trappings of woe made for an affecting tableau, especially against the gloomy atmosphere of a "cold and cheerless" dawn. As Mackenzie remembered it, the "aspect of the day was in unison with the scene, and seemed to remind the immense multitude of human beings around, that the fall of the leaf—the winter of the year—the evening of life, and the dark night of death, are fast approaching."[100] It must have come as something of a disappointment when the day became "remarkably fine" once the procession began to form.[101]

With a band playing the mournful strains of Handel's "Dead March" from *Saul*, Mackenzie noticed the "carriage of death" beginning to "move slowly on its heavy wheels."[102] Passing through the gates of Fort George, the procession was led by a staff officer followed by a contingent of grenadiers, the right wing of the 76th Regiment of Foot, and the band. Once the hearse came into view, an honour guard presented arms while a nineteen-gun salute began to fire. The Lincoln Militia, evenly spaced at forty yards (or thirty-seven metres) apart, lined both sides of the road toward Queenston and for some distance from the fort. Following the hearse down this ceremonial lane were the chief mourners, including several of Macdonell's relatives, various provincial officials, Maitland's suite, the left wing of the 76th Regiment, Indigenous chiefs, and various militia officers. Falling in behind were the militiamen from alongside the road, and the great throng of people who came to witness the event. Carey estimated that there were nearly 300 assorted conveyances, some 550 gentlemen on horseback, and numerous pedestrians.[103]

The cortège proceeded slowly at first, but after some distance its pace quickened, and certain members of the procession took to their carriages until Queenston came into sight some three hours later. In making its way through the village, the procession came to a halt "opposite the spot where the lamented hero received his mortal wound."[104] After a few minutes' pause, the hearse pulled away and proceeded up the Portage Road to the top of the heights. Once again, soldiers from the Lincoln Militia lined the route from the entrance of the monument down the escarpment toward Queenston. Upon reaching the lower extremity of this ceremonial passageway, the procession resumed its formation. To Fothergill, who managed to get ahead of this rolling commemoration, "nothing could be finer than the effect of the lengthened column winding slowly up the steep ascent, in regular order—surrounded by scenery nowhere surpassed for romantic beauty."[105] At the summit, after the coffins were reverently deposited in their respective vaults, another guard of honour presented arms while an additional salute of nineteen guns concluded the proceedings. As the troops formed into their parades, small groups of interested parties were allowed to enter the vaults and view the final resting places of Brock and Macdonell.[106]

While the reinterment ceremony and funeral procession bore all the fitting attributes of mourning and lamentation, and must have been deeply moving to most everyone who witnessed or participated in these

elaborate displays of respect, they also held additional layers of meaning. For most if not all of the Upper Canadians and other British subjects drawn to Queenston Heights, there was likely a surge of patriotism among them such as Mackenzie experienced. It began earlier in the day, when he saw the British flag waving in the wind above Brock's partially completed monument. Favourably impressed, Mackenzie pronounced the "Union Jack of the sea-girt isle" as "a sight well calculated to raise emotions of pleasure in the mind of a Briton." It was the symbol of everything that Brock and Macdonell had fought and died for, a "token of joy and rejoicing in the unity of the empire."[107] Reflecting on this theme, Mackenzie had little doubt "but that many of the 'gallant militiamen of 1812,' who had so often braved death in war, in defence of Canada, their wives and families, looked up to that flag as it floated aloft in the breeze, and bowed their hearts in thankfulness to the Father of Mercies, for the manifold blessings we enjoy, far removed from war and its attendant [horrors]."[108] But for the American attendees, who were not likely so enamoured by the fluttering reminder of Britain's continued presence in North America, their interest was focused on Brock. As Fothergill overheard several Americans explain, "they lamented his death as much as they would have done that of any of their own generals, on account of his humanity, and the great attention which he had uniformly shewn to his prisoners."[109]

The battlefield at Queenston offered another strong inducement to participate in the proceedings. It was hallowed ground for grieving Americans, who began crossing the river to seek out the final resting places of their fallen countrymen soon after the return of peace in 1815.[110] One of these mourning pilgrims was Eleanor Valleau, whose son was killed early in the battle. In August of 1817, having travelled to Queenston, she became quite distraught upon "viewing the place where the Americans fell[;] she wanted to find out where her son lay, but no one could give her any intelligence—poor woman, what must have been her feelings when she saw the dreadful steep [cliff] her son and his intrepid country[men] climbed up to obey the calls of their country and enter the field of death?"[111] For those Americans not personally vested in the tragedies that befell their troops at places like Queenston, battlefield tours appealed to their sense of morbid curiosity by offering "a grisly kind of thrill."[112] As many of their war dead were hastily buried in shallow graves that subsequently heaved in the frost, sun-bleached bones frequently

came into view.[113] But to the many other tourists who sought out less grotesque pastimes, viewing a monument to Brock offered a more dignified excuse to explore the battlefield on Queenston Heights. As the *Niagara Sentinel* of Lewiston, New York, predicted in the autumn of 1824, "it will attract much notice from those who travel for pleasure and curiosity to visit the Falls of Niagara and other peculiar wonders proverbial in this part of the country."[114] Put another way, Brock's Monument was destined to become a major tourist attraction.

Coinciding with the rise of Brock's Monument in the 1820s was the emergence of tourism in Upper Canada, particularly from the United States. During that time, transportation improvements facilitated travellers (or tourists) in making the previously onerous journey to what was then North America's most outstanding natural wonder: Niagara Falls.[115] Along with the main attraction, other points of interest were incorporated into the guidebooks that began to take advantage of the increased tourist trade. Battlefields, which had been a central feature in most travellers' itineraries from an early date, continued to hold great appeal, and Queenston Heights was particularly noteworthy because it included Brock's Monument. With a ferry connection to Lewiston, New York, and a good road linking it to various points on the Canadian side of the Niagara River, Queenston was within easy reach of the Falls and was therefore a popular stop on the Niagara tourist circuit.[116] Such had been the case even before construction started on Brock's Monument. Patricia Jasen, who has written extensively about Upper Canada's tourism industry, captured the essence of the enterprise:

> Traversing battlefields and imagining conflicts they had only read about was a popular pastime for nineteenth-century tourists, for it afforded such romantic pleasures as the worship of the warrior-hero, the melancholy fantasy of violent death, the tangible presence of the remains of battles (bones, damaged trees, crumbling forts), and the association of landscape with history. Tourists' interest in such sites complemented the Upper Canadians' wish to keep memories of their ordeal alive and to cherish the relics of war, and an itinerary quickly developed that commenced at the ruins of Fort Erie, took in the battlefields of Chippewa, Lundy's Lane, and Queenston Heights, and extended northward to include Fort George.[117]

Jasen further conceptualized that the "real attraction was the romance of war and the new layer of historical meaning it had given to the scenery of Niagara."[118] Tangible remembrances of Brock were no less captivating, and Jasen found that the "adulation of General Brock was one emotion that a majority of the travellers could share with the local populace."[119] For any tourist who was so inclined, it was relatively easy to find a local person to point out the salient features of the various battlefields. The Englishman William Dalton was particularly fortunate in this regard, as he discovered in July of 1819 while collecting information for an emigrant's guide. His cicerone was a local militia officer who obligingly pointed out "the whole plan of the fight" at Queenston.[120] And as Jasen's work reveals, visitors to Upper Canada "found that the colonists continually referred to the war, as if they had lacked a collective history until invasion knit them together."[121] The colony had been saved for Britain, "and the idea of loyalty now governed public life, becoming the defining characteristic of an Upper Canadian *Volksgeist* while at the same time reinforcing the controlling hand of the Tory elite."[122] Delving deeper into this postwar phenomenon, Jasen identified the component parts of a similar sort of national spirit in which the War of 1812

> supplied the raw material for romantic and purposeful myth-making, and the militia legend, which exalted the role of local men over the British regular troops, and the story of General Brock, who died repelling the invasion at Queenston Heights, not only contributed to local pride and cohesion but formed part of the image the colony presented to strangers. This image had a definite political thrust. To the British visitor, it was meant to confirm a self-respecting loyalty to king and empire, while to Americans, it was meant to convey a sense of the colony's moral and military invincibility.[123]

In light of Brock's early demise, his role in bringing about this new school of thought, while crucial, was also incidental. It was the colonial elite and their Loyalist supporters who advanced the militia legend, or the Militia Myth as it is more commonly known. Variations on this traditional story exaggerated the role of Upper Canada's militia in defending the province during the War of 1812, which was done at the expense of Brock's regular troops and Indigenous allies.[124] In the process, Canadian

militiamen succeeded in passing themselves off as heroes in their own right and the worthy beneficiaries of what became known as the Loyalist tradition—a state of mind that was encapsulated by an English professor at the University of Toronto in the early 1980s. In describing and analysing "the effects of United Empire Loyalism on the literary culture of what is now Ontario," Dennis Duffy explained how the Loyalist tradition both spawned the Militia Myth and developed a symbiotic relationship with it.[125] Under "a leader they made into a mythic hero," a "martyr to the principles of justice and the preservation of British North America," the Loyalists "had emerged [from the War of 1812] as the citizen defenders of their territory."[126] And the "militia of Upper Canada, rather than the British regulars who formed the basis of Brock's holding strategy, became joined with Brock as the chief factors in the preservation of Upper Canada."[127]

To Duffy, "it was no great trick" to substitute the provincial militia for Brock's regulars, and there was no need for the perpetrators of the Militia Myth to forcefully deny the role played by professional soldiers during the war. All the mythmakers required was "a shift in emphasis that bruised historical fact in placing another group in the forefront of the fight."[128] The group Duffy had in mind consisted of civilian soldiers, and just as the Upper Canadian Militia had a personal stake in celebrating Brock's heroism, so, too, did other stripes of Loyalist. Willing partners in the deception were found among the colony's leadership and upper classes, whose status and position were enhanced by a zealous participation in the deceit. So, while oral traditions, patriotic tokens, and tourism helped to nurture the adoration of Brock, it was really the Militia Myth, as a component of the social engineering process, that gave rise to his enduring popularity.

The origins of the Militia Myth can be safely dated to the summer of 1812, after Brock and the militiamen who volunteered for duty on his expedition to Detroit returned triumphant, but the earliest known reference to the concept was uttered with great effect by the Anglican rector at York in November of 1812. As a representative of the Loyal and Patriotic Society of Upper Canada, a charity dedicated primarily to alleviating the sufferings of militiamen and their families, John Strachan lent his considerable influence to the cause—including the following well-worn passage from an after-sermon exhortation: "It will be told by the future historian, that the province of Upper Canada, without the assistance of

men or arms, except a handful of regular troops, repelled its invaders, slew or took them all prisoners, and captured from its enemies the greater part of the arms by which it was defended."[129] A little further along, Strachan continued extolling the militia by stressing that "never, surely, was greater activity shewn in any country, than our militia have exhibited, never greater valour, cooler resolution, and more approved conduct; they have emulated the choicest veterans, and they have twice saved the country."[130] Strachan's tribute to the militia was as much a rallying call as it was a fundraising pitch, and the Loyalist connection lent the undertaking additional pathos. "The loyalists," he sermonized, as well as "their children and connections, who have been so long the peculiar care of the British empire, have proved that they are deserving of their attention—that they merit the farther protection of not being allowed to fall a prey to their former implacable enemies, or of being long left without the most powerful assistance."[131] Strachan, of course, was fostering a myth for the sake of a good cause.

Nor was he alone in his endeavour. Most Upper Canadians, regardless of their social class, political views, or religious affiliation, helped to perpetuate the Militia Myth by their unquestioning acceptance of it. And the gentlemen of the Loyal and Patriotic Society found a strong supporter who was willing and able to do his part at the very heart of the empire. Francis Gore was lieutenant-governor of Upper Canada in the autumn of 1811, when he returned to England on leave. He was still there in 1813, which prompted the Loyal and Patriotic Society to seek his assistance with their subscription drive.[132] Gore, who was happy to comply, must have been gladdened by the favourable reports he received of the Upper Canadian Militia's performance, including the following:

> Theirs was not the enthusiasm of the moment, it still burns with unabated vigor, and not only enables a raw militia to suffer with patience the greatest privations, to face death with astonishing intrepidity, but also to emulate veteran soldiers in deeds of honor and glory. Many, though exempted by age from military duty, scorn to claim the privilege, and it is not uncommon to see men of seventy leaving their homes, and demanding arms to meet the enemy on the lines. Others too feeble to bear arms themselves, are seen leading their sons to the military posts, and so strong is the spirit of patriotism among the people, that it infects

> the greater number of those who have recently come to settle in the province, from the United States, and makes them efficient soldiers. Indeed this noble spirit which animates all our inhabitants, is most affecting, and can only be inspired by the justice of our cause.[133]

As a military man himself, Gore might have harboured secret doubts upon reading such an obviously panegyrized description, but publicly he did his part for the charity and also the colony.

By participating in a public meeting, held in London, England, and organized in support of the Loyal and Patriotic Society, Gore hoped to raise an awareness of—and financial support for—the hardships endured by the members of the Upper Canadian Militia and their families. Chaired by no less a figure than Prince Edward Augustus, the Duke of Kent, another military man with ties to the British North American colonies, the meeting was called to order in July of 1813 and promulgated the idea that

> three successive invasions of the Province of Upper Canada, to which the chief exertions of the enemy were directed, have been repelled by the valour of the volunteers and militia, in aid of a small number of His Majesty's forces, and the invading army has invariably been compelled to surrender to a force, collectively of a much smaller amount, and of which the regular troops, have seldom exceeded one tenth of the number of the enemy.[134]

The Militia Myth would continue to skew British impressions of the Upper Canadian and Canadian Militias well into the second half of the nineteenth century and beyond. While the lack of an objection from Britain's Indigenous allies is understandable, given that many of them were dispersed or marginalized after the War of 1812, the silence of British Army officers is difficult to fathom. Minimizing the contribution of their troops should have ignited a vigorous response, but the Militia Myth was tolerated. And in at least one instance, it was actively encouraged.

Such was the case when the Scottish reformer Robert Gourlay unintentionally triggered the wrath of James FitzGibbon. Known for his heroics during the War of 1812, FitzGibbon had served in the 49th Regiment and was subsequently employed as a clerk with the adjutant

general of militia for Upper Canada. His strong support for the militia was expressed in December of 1818, after Gourlay reacted angrily to the passage of legislation in the House of Assembly designed to outlaw the meetings of discontented landholders (meetings he was instrumental in organizing). By means of a newspaper article provocatively titled "Gagg'd—Gagg'd, by Jingo!," Gourlay expressed his extreme displeasure with the government and also the lieutenant-governor, Sir Peregrine Maitland. According to Gourlay's charge, Maitland was in receipt of scandalous reports that Upper Canadians were a disloyal, discontented, and ungrateful people.[135] Maitland supposedly had it on good advice from "military men," which was all the pretext FitzGibbon appears to have required before launching a spirited rebuttal. In an open letter to the militiamen of Upper Canada, he assured them that there "were few officers in Upper Canada during the late war, who were not known to me, and I have ever heard them speak of you with respect, and frequently in terms of admiration."[136] Continuing with his vigorous defence of the militia, FitzGibbon solemnly vowed that "I do therefore step forward to repeal this impudent calumny, and to expose to your honest indignation, the man who would seek to destroy the cordial good will which has hitherto subsisted between us, and which, under the blessing of divine providence, contributed so much to our glorious successes during the late contest with our neighbours."[137] Curiously, however, the reputation of the Upper Canadian Militia had not figured in the article that provoked so much resentment on the part of FitzGibbon, and it appears that much of his irritation actually stemmed from a petition that was orchestrated by Gourlay.

The intended recipient of this petition was George Augustus Frederick, the prince regent, and its purpose was to bring his attention to various grievances of the Upper Canadian Militia. Much of the document was taken up with complaints relating to war-loss claims and militia land grants, all of which bore Gourlay's trademark accusatory style.[138] As if to highlight the militia's sufferings, an entire paragraph was devoted to the alleged condescension of the British Army in Upper Canada during the War of 1812:

> It was a matter of much provocation to the people of this province, to see, even during the war, which afforded such striking proofs of their loyalty and valour, reports sent home, highly

> rating the merit of regular troops, while the tribute, due to Canadian levies, was unfairly let down. Nay the principles of the most loyal subjects here, were often stigmatized by British officers, ignorant of human character, and still more so of circumstances which affect it, in this part of the world. It was not so with the immortal Brock. He justly appreciated Canadian worth; and his memory will happily long cherish, in the minds of the Canadian people, a due regard for the genuine spirit of a British soldier, at once generous and brave.[139]

As a former and favourite sergeant major under Brock, few people held his memory in greater esteem than James FitzGibbon.[140] Yet, none of the praise Gourlay heaped on Brock could mollify FitzGibbon's outrage over the gadfly's negative remarks about the militia. Much of FitzGibbon's defence of their worth had to do with his recent entry into the public service, which firmly aligned his loyalties with the Upper Canadian establishment. Like the militiamen whose service during the War of 1812 was rewarded with appointments and other patronage, FitzGibbon moved easily in this high Tory strata. But a lack of education impeded his colonial ambitions.

Had FitzGibbon been one of the students who benefited from John Strachan's tutelage as a school master at Cornwall, he might have been better qualified for public life in Upper Canada and perhaps a situation beyond that of a loyal but impoverished outlier. However, as Jane Errington, a history professor at the Royal Military College of Canada, cautioned, the eligibility requirements for full membership in the colonial elite involved rather more than a stint at Strachan's school and a conspicuous military service:

> For some, this service together with their proven ability and previous political connections was immediately recognized by the colonial officials, who appointed them to lucrative and influential administrative posts. Though a number of others received no immediate political recognition of their service, their participation in the war did gain them invaluable political support later. Particularly in the 1820s, the War of 1812 became an increasingly important symbol to many Upper Canadians of the colony's

> unity and loyalty to king and country. All the public figures who had fought in the war had the advantage of this growing myth.[141]

To the more fortunate militiamen, especially those who lacked proven ability or political connections, desirable appointments were sometimes granted them as Strachan's former students. A number of them followed their old teacher to York, where they formed a close and highly conservative brotherhood of like-minded men known pejoratively as the Family Compact.[142] At the head of this select group was Strachan himself, who became an influential member of the Upper Canadian ruling class. Through the skillful management of Loyalist sympathies, he formulated a national agenda that borrowed heavily from the myth he helped create.

Strachan and the other members of the Family Compact had a definite vision for Upper Canada as an ideal British society in North America inspired by patriotic example. Included was that which FitzGibbon identified as the colony's reverence for Brock's memory. In a letter to Ferdinand Brock Tupper, Brock's nephew, FitzGibbon described his impression of the reinterment ceremony in 1824, including its imperial effect:

> What I witnessed on this day would have fully confirmed me in the opinion, had confirmation been wanting, that the public feeling in this province has been permanently improved and elevated by Sir Isaac Brock's conduct and actions while governing its inhabitants. These, together with his dying in their defence, have done more towards cementing our union with the mother country than any event or circumstance since the existence of the province. Of this our leading men are aware, and are careful to seize every opportunity of preserving recollections so productive of good effects.[143]

As Gerald M. Craig recognized in the early 1960s (although not in terms of social engineering), the "cardinal point in the design was that this pioneer North American community [of Upper Canada] was and must remain an integral part of the far-flung British Empire, which they [the Family Compact] regarded as the grandest, the freest and noblest political organization that man had ever developed."[144] To accomplish this worthy goal, the political influence of their society had to be checked, immigration from the mother country promoted, and education as well

as religious progress encouraged in a suitably English and Anglican manner. "The Family Compact's design for the province," according to Craig, "had to be consciously fostered; it would not come about of itself."[145] To the leaders of the Family Compact, there was "a strong sense of nationality but it was one of British nationality, and they had no desire for any other."[146] Craig put their collective frame of mind in proper perspective: "Outside the empire, they would live in a grubby little backwater; within it, they were equal members of the world's proudest and foremost political community."[147] Viewed this way, Upper Canada was not merely a colonial possession, but an extension of the British nation. Yet, along with the Family Compact's illusions of British grandeur, there were also echoes of colonial inferiority. Fortunately for Strachan and his associates, the Militia Myth elevated the self-esteem of Upper Canadian manhood by allowing them to reimagine their prowess during the War of 1812.

While seeking a source for the Militia Myth, which had become something of an issue for certain historians of that conflict around the time of its sesquicentenary in the early 1960s, a graduate student at Queen's University in Kingston, Ontario, came up with an intriguing but untenable explanation. In his 1964 master's thesis on British propaganda during the War of 1812, Reginald Arthur Bowler linked the Militia Myth with the "lavish praise" Brock heaped upon the militia, which then "overflowed" into the colony's newspapers. "This myth of the loyal and willing militia," Bowler averred, "was maintained throughout the war in official public statements, despite the private comments of every commander to the contrary."[148] No doubt, Brock praised the militia for good effect, and perhaps this contributed to a false impression of its effectiveness in defending the colony. Yet, Bowler's suggestion that Brock's favouritism gave rise to the Militia Myth failed to take into consideration the negating viewpoint of a strongly nationalistic Toronto-based journalist, poet, and feminist with a strong interest in Canadian history. In 1891, while critiquing the accuracy of Brock's famous last words (long thought to have been "Push on, brave York Volunteers!"), Sarah Anne Curzon argued that it "would have been a discrimination of one corps above another unworthy the judgment, the military training, the impartiality of any officer."[149] Whether or not this rule applied to Brock's situation during the War of 1812, Curzon's observation regarding the negative effects of partiality serves as a useful caution against Bowler's assumption that Brock had a hand in knowingly creating the Militia Myth. It seems that

Canadian historian Carl Berger came closer to the truth in 1970 when he wrote about Brock's "exalted place in the loyalist tradition," and how

> his death at Queenston Heights was associated with the victory of the militia. That battle occurred during the opening phases of the war when Canada was almost denuded of British troops and the defence had to rely upon the yeomanry more than at any other time during the conflict. Since it was under the leadership of Brock that the people rose up to preserve Canada for the empire, the hero-worship of Brock and the militia legend were indissolubly fused.[150]

While the importance Berger attached to the Battle of Queenston Heights in October of 1812 actually extended back to the surrender of Detroit in August of that same year, his point was well-taken: Brock's heroism inspired the Militia Myth and gave a boost to the Loyalist tradition—both of which helped to solidify the authority of the colonial elite. As lawyer-turned-historian Max L. Magill noted before his death in 1973, "the leaders of the [Family] Compact and the members of the party generally looked back on Queenston Heights with almost as much pride as the Athenians did to the Battle of Marathon. They believed that this battle saved Upper Canada and that it had been won, as indeed they held that the whole war had been, by the militia."[151] Over a decade earlier, a Canadian military historian had taken a more expansive view by recognizing the important legacy of the War of 1812. During a speech to the Ontario Historical Society in 1958, Charles P. Stacey felt certain that

> the memory of the War of 1812 was enormously important in the political life of Upper Canada in the next generation. It loaded the dice against Upper Canadian political radicalism and in favour of conservativism. It did a very great deal to strength[en] the Loyalist tradition. It provided the stuff of a nascent Canadian nationalism—and I do not doubt that the militia legend of which I spoke, however shaky its foundation in fact, itself made a very considerable contribution to national feeling.[152]

As for Brock, there can be no reasonable doubt that his role in shaping Upper Canadian nationalism was unintentional; he surely had no prescient ideas on the subject. Raising the morale of the militia was not the same thing as creating a myth of the militia. But attributing the Militia Myth to Strachan (as there is a tendency to do) is likely giving him more credit than he really deserves, and evidence has yet to be found that it was original to him. A more plausible explanation is that the myth, inspired by Brock's success at Detroit and the militia's participation in that expedition, was a broad reaction to a very fortuitous change in the colony's beleaguered circumstances—and one that Strachan used his influence to popularize among the Loyalists and their descendants.[153]

While the nationalism fostered by Brock's victory and the Militia Myth was decidedly British, there was also a patriotic Upper Canadian strain, and this began to emerge soon after the capture of Detroit. To Keith Walden, a history graduate student at Queen's University who defended his master's thesis on Brock's unwitting role in founding the Militia Myth in 1971, the attention focused on him "complemented the Upper Canadian perception of the role of the militia," with Brock "merely a striking specimen of the men he led."[154] In this way, the militia was seen to have been just as courageous, just as daring, and no less principled than Brock himself. "When Upper Canadians praised Brock," Walden deduced, "they also praised their forefathers and by implication, themselves."[155] As the heroic counterpart of his military peers in Europe, Brock helped to convince Upper Canadians that they were not in an obscure corner of the British Empire and that Detroit and Queenston were victories no less significant than Trafalgar or Waterloo.[156] Brock's name, like that of Nelson and Wellington, became "a catchword, and the memories it triggered were ones which encompassed the deeds of the whole Canadian people and the larger significance of the war."[157] Taking this rationale one step further, Walden concluded that "those [people], who by their own efforts, seemed to be able to master their environment and affect the course of civilization, reinforced the hope that man could act in a positive manner to achieve positive results. For the Upper Canadians, Brock was an excellent symbol to express this ideal. The course of the war bore the distinct imprint of his genius and by his efforts a very important aim—the preservation of Upper Canada—had been secured."[158]

If nothing else, the War of 1812 provided Upper Canadians with a "potent usable past."[159] But Walden also detected the irony inherent in the

demonstration of a nationalistic feeling that involved praise for Brock. By doing so, Upper Canadians affirmed their attachment to the British Empire and also their subservience to a country not their own.[160] To the Loyalists, however, as well as their Family Compact leaders, integration within the British Empire was the paramount consideration. The War of 1812, or at least that portion of it made palatable by Brock's campaigns and the militia's participation in them, led Upper Canadians to embrace an attitude of equality with their countrymen living in the British Isles. This colonial brand of British nationalism began to take hold of Upper Canada's collective imagination with the first news of Brock's victory at Detroit. Thereafter, it developed but slowly as the effect of his victory was mitigated by the ravages of war and a slow recovery after the return of peace. However, patriotic nostalgia compelled action, or at least the semblance of action, on the part of Upper Canada's government and in the form of a suitably impressive monument.[161]

As work on Brock's Monument progressed, tourists began to situate it within the surrounding expansive vista as an intrinsic aspect of the sublime landscape.[162] Unfortunately, not everyone was enamoured with the monument's form. Construction was still ongoing in June of 1826, when the American superintendent of Indian affairs found fault with it.[163] After walking the battlefield looking for earthworks and other reminders of the past, Thomas L. McKenney directed his attention to Brock's Monument. "It resembles, at a distance, the monument of Washington, in Baltimore, but without its due proportions at the base; the base of this being too small."[164] But whereas McKenney at least approved of the view from the heights, a touring Scotsman was quite indifferent to it—and no less critical of the monument. Intent on probing the social and political features of American democracy, Thomas Hamilton subjected Brock's Monument to a similar level of condescending scrutiny. During his visit to the monument in June 1831, Hamilton promptly began sizing up its architecture. "The shaft struck me as wanting height in proportion to its diameter, and the general outline somewhat resembles that of an apothecary's phial [vial]."[165] These negative comments about Brock's Monument were widely published and might well have taken a toll on visitor attendance, except that America's foremost travel promoter of the early nineteenth century helped to ensure that tourists would continue to be drawn to Queenston Heights. In 1828, Gideon M. Davison published a revised edition of his tourist guidebook, and the first in his series

to include a description of Brock's then recently completed monument. Contradicting all the naysayers, he described it as a "fine specimen of architecture."[166] The only complaint Davison recalled was the "extremely fatiguing" ascent, but the "prospect afforded of the surrounding country for 50 miles [80 kilometres] in extent, will richly repay a tourist for the time and trouble in visiting its pinnacle."[167] It was a positive review, but by no means the best endorsement.

Of all the early visitors to Brock's Monument, Harriet Martineau appears to have had the most fulfilling experience. Arriving in October 1834, this famous English writer managed to curry great favour with its "portress." Along with the rest of her party, Martineau originally intended to take in the view from the top of the monument and then have dinner on the heights, but she and her friends made such a positive impression on the woman in charge of Brock's Monument that they were invited to dine in her cottage nearby.[168] Interestingly enough, this woman, Theresa Boyd, was originally married to Robert Nichol, the monument commissioner who died a sudden and tragic death in 1824.[169] Left an impoverished widow with a young family to raise, she was given a remunerative position as keeper of Brock's Monument. It came despite some stiff competition from an equally worthy and cash-strapped Laura Secord, who went on to become famous for her particular War of 1812 adventure.[170] Mrs. Boyd's situation, however, was seen as more pressing, and so the superintendence of Brock's Monument was given to her instead. Delighted "to meet ladies from the old country," she told her guests all her affairs and perhaps might even have regaled them with the story of her first husband's important commission under the man whose monument crowned Queenston Heights.[171] If so, Martineau preferred to dwell on the sweeping panorama in the travel book she subsequently published. Brock's Monument was mentioned only in passing and the inscription above its door not at all.[172] This epitaph was a key element of the experience, and one meant to instill an appreciation of Brock's heroism in everyone who visited his monument. However, it was done in a toned-down fashion, presumably to avoid causing offence to American tourists.[173]

Despite the admiration of most Americans toward Brock, some harboured a deep-seated antipathy against anything or anyone seen as representing British interests. For these ill-disposed people, Brock's Monument taunted rather than enticed.[174] Looming over the battlefield

as if commemorating a humiliating defeat, it is not surprising that some Americans might have viewed the monument as an insult to their national pride. There were signs of trouble from an early date. In January of 1833, an English tourist learned of a disturbing report involving a "capital swivel-telescope bought in London." It had been installed on the viewing platform of the monument for the entertainment of visitors, but "two Yankees having lately ascended, unattended, wantonly destroyed it" by throwing the instrument to the ground.[175] No less infuriating was the story of an American tourist who behaved badly by disrespecting Brock's memory. Set in the mid-1830s, the incident involved a surly fellow who paid his admission fee and began to climb the stairs to take in the scenery. Ascending a few steps, he abruptly turned around, stamped his feet, and with a sneer said, "Now I'll tread on the remains of Brock."[176] After continuing to the top of the monument and enjoying the view, the ill-mannered tourist came back down and tried to leave, only to find—much to his mortification—that he was locked in. Exhausting "his vocabulary, alike of curses as of entreaties," he implored to be released. But it was in vain, as the "old veteran who had charge of the monument" was determined to have "ample satisfaction for the insult offered to the remains of his gallant leader." The prisoner, who was incarcerated for some hours, was no less impertinent upon his release. He "reckoned, guessed and calculated [that] it was pretty considerable behaviour on the part of the old soldier to imprison a free born American," and threatened to lodge a complaint with the president. A kick "convinced Jonathan that he had caught a tartar [or met his match], and off he went to use one of his own phrases like a flash of lightning through a gooseberry bush."[177]

The recounting of American abuse toward Brock always brought a strong, indignant reaction from Upper Canadians. But as Harriet Martineau's visit revealed, the tourists who threw the telescope from the top of Brock's Monument were actually English cretins as opposed to the American variety.[178] Stories of hostile tourists from the other side of the border were not always what they seemed and could be easily misrepresented for purposes of anti-American propaganda. The disrespect that "Jonathan" was supposed to have shown Brock's remains might have been similarly distorted, exaggerated, or perhaps even invented. And yet, there can be little doubt that certain Americans felt considerable resentment toward any and all symbols of British colonialism.[179] This rancour

also extended to disaffected Upper Canadians, one of whom focused much of his anger on Brock's Monument.

Little is known of Benjamin Lett or how he came to be so virulently anti-British; however, his hatred appears to have been deep-rooted. Born in Ireland in 1813, Lett's family immigrated to Lower Canada in 1819. After his father's premature death some five years later, the remaining family members relocated to a farm about sixty kilometres northeast of York.[180] Although Lett's rebellious inclinations were variously attributed to some brutal outrage committed against his family, a source close to him claimed that "Lett himself never offered any but political reasons for his actions."[181] At local militia gatherings and other public meetings, Lett and his brother were known to espouse the cause of Upper Canadian reform. And while they did not actively participate in Mackenzie's uprising against the Family Compact in 1837, the bitter enemies they made of their Tory neighbours forced them into hiding. It was not long afterwards that Lett joined the so-called Patriot Army, whose loosely organized bands of raiders launched a series of guerrilla-style attacks into Upper Canada. Lett was particularly energetic in devising and executing a number of these destructive incursions. Over the course of a few years, he was implicated in several lawless acts, of which the bombing of Brock's Monument was one of the more spectacular.

Lett's contempt for the monument appears to have been derived from a repugnance for Britain, as opposed to any resentment for Brock himself. As a close associate of Lett recalled, the monument's towering column on the Upper Canadian shore became an "eyesore" to him, and he soon concocted a means by which to remove it.[182] Furnished with a keg of gunpowder, he put his plan into action in the early pre-dawn hours of Good Friday, 17 April 1840. Taking a boat from the ferry at Lewiston, New York, he crossed the Niagara River and made his way to the top of Queenston Heights. Breaking into the monument, he placed the charge under its winding staircase and then laid a trail of powder. But the fuse was too short and the keg exploded sooner than expected. As the force of the blast travelled upward and through the top of the monument, "stones rained about Lett's ears so that he came near losing his life."[183] Although Lett's nefarious scheme failed to bring down Brock's Monument, the column's destruction might not have been his main objective. Rather, the attack appears to have been more symbolic in nature, part of some

broader strategy to raise border tensions "for the purpose of promoting a revolution in Canada."[184]

Coming between four and five o'clock in the morning, the bombing of Brock's Monument was a rude awakening to the slumbering inhabitants of Queenston. Shocked and confused, they struggled to make sense of the unnerving disturbance.[185] Fortunately for their collective peace of mind, the Queenston-based contingent of the border patrol quickly had the situation under control. But in the absence of a magistrate or other civil authority, it was the local member of the House of Assembly, David Thorburn, who reported the incident to Lieutenant-Governor Sir George Arthur. As Thorburn explained, the keeper of the monument (meaning Theresa Boyd's second husband) hastened to investigate the explosion accompanied by a sergeant with a file of men, but finding the heights shrouded in thick dust and smoke, they failed to apprehend any suspicious characters.[186] It was only later that the full extent of the damage became evident. After a thorough examination, Lieutenant Colonel William C. Ward of the Royal Engineers determined that very

> considerable damage has been done to the monument, which from external appearance, would seem not capable of repair. The pedestal is slightly cracked on the four sides, and the key-stone of the arch over the door blown out. The shaft of the column is likewise cracked more than half way up on four sides, one and two most extensively, the cracks being in some places ten inches or a foot wide. The gallery and cupola are very much shaken. The interior could not be examined, being filled with the ruins of the wooden stair case.[187]

Along with this and similar accounts of the devastation, there soon followed a general venting of frustration in the Canadas. Among the many editorials decrying the outrage, that of the *Toronto Patriot* was one of the first, expressing "mingled feelings of deep sorrow and burning indignation—grief for the wrong, and hatred for the wrong-doers."[188] The damage inflicted upon Brock's Monument was not only shocking, but baffling, considering the "high esteem in which his character was held even with the enemy."[189] Many American editors echoed this sentiment, and one even questioned what "possible motive could have induced this worse than vandal outrage," especially when no man "was more

universally respected on both sides [of] the line than General Sir Isaac Brock."[190] Continuing in this vein, Brock was likened to a *preux chevalier* (chivalrous knight) whose bravery, courtesy, and humanity "commanded the esteem of his country's foes even in the time of war."[191] But while such soothing expressions from across the border helped to ease anti-American feelings, especially once the prime suspect was recognized as a disaffected Upper Canadian, there was still much resentment toward the United States over the perceived lack of action in suppressing incursions such as the one that targeted Brock's Monument.[192] The violation of the hero's tomb, combined with this underlying sense of grievance, enflamed Upper Canadians with an unfettered patriotism. It was something that was absent during earlier and more sombre demonstrations of Brock's worth.

This surge of patriotism was especially concerning to Sir George Arthur, who worried about upsetting the Americans and perhaps reigniting border tensions—just as Lett appears to have hoped would be the case. To this end, it might have been politic to encourage a quiet patch job on the monument. Certainly, Colonel Ward of the Royal Engineers thought it might stand for many years without anything being done to stabilize the structure.[193] Upon a personal viewing, Arthur tended to agree, and he even philosophized that if the monument was left in a ruined state, it would "be a monument of something more than the gallant deeds of lamented Sir Isaac Brock!"[194] Presumably, he meant a romantic reminder of the indomitable will of Upper Canadians to remain British. Despite Arthur's defiant symbolism, the condition of the monument was soon found to be more precarious than originally thought.[195] With this finding came formalized demands for a replacement, and a public meeting at Queenston in June 1840 resolved that "energetick [*sic*] measures should be immediately taken to insure its re-construction, on a scale commensurate with the importance of the object, and in accordance with the feelings of the people of the Canadas."[196] This had been Arthur's preference all along. As a soldier himself, he was sensitive to the insult cast upon Brock's memory, vowing, "We shall, however, of course, soon raise another trophy to his honor, [and] I trust there will be funds enough to elevate it higher than it stood before."[197]

The idea of a classical ruin was thoroughly abandoned as Arthur and his associates turned their attention to drumming up support for the new monument. Coincidently, one of the resolutions of the public meeting

called for a further meeting at Queenston, which was intended to share the findings of the committee overseeing the project and later came to be styled the "Indignation Meeting." Thanks to the intervention of Sir Allan Napier MacNab, a militia hero of the recent Mackenzie Rebellions of 1837 and 1838, this next meeting took the form of a martial extravaganza, and one that Arthur feared might get out of hand.[198] As the appointed day drew near, Arthur began to worry that the proceedings would be commandeered in order to provoke the Americans. Even those imagined to have sympathetic tendencies toward Brock were a source of anxiety.[199] And a telltale sign of the possible trouble to come was an article in the *Toronto Patriot* that seemed to encourage an attitude of combativeness. Promoting the event as a tribute of respect to Brock and a vindication of the effrontery against him, the *Patriot* was

> satisfied that the same gallant spirit will be evoked on this occasion, which urged hundreds, aye thousands to rush to arms at Windsor and at Prescott, and that the mustering on the heights where the soldier's mortal agony was forgotten in the moment of victory, where the turf of the battle-field became the warrior's sepulchre, will present a band of brothers, who, whether viewed as the respectful restorers of the desecrated memorial, or the brave defenders of their native or adopted soil, will be equally regarded as an honour to their country and a terror to her enemies.[200]

With this kind of vaguely provoking rhetoric, Arthur had good reason to be concerned. But the meeting on Queenston Heights came off without a hitch. It was mainly due to Arthur himself, as he presided over the event and thereby managed to contain the threat of anti-Americanism.[201]

The thirtieth of July dawned a fine summer day in Toronto, where it was declared a holiday to encourage attendance at Queenston Heights.[202] At about half past seven that morning, four steamers set out for Niagara, on the southern shore of Lake Ontario. One of them, *Traveller*, carried Arthur and his retinue. Approaching the mouth of the Niagara River, they were joined by four additional steamers and together received a hearty welcome from a large crowd. Included in the bargain was a "thundering salute" from an old eighteen-pounder gun, or cannon.[203] After repositioning, the eight steamers formed abreast and ascended the river toward Queenston. There, in the midst of military honours, cheering

crowds, and martial airs, Arthur advanced to the heights and opened the proceedings. It was by then about two o'clock in the afternoon, and with somewhere between six and ten thousand people in attendance, Arthur recited the general order Sheaffe issued after the Battle of Queenston Heights. It must have been a rather loose reading, however, as Brock came across as having been killed while leading his troops to victory—a victory he never achieved. As for Sheaffe, who actually won the battle, he was all but ignored.[204] What followed was a series of resolutions, prefaced for the most part by long-winded introductions, and occasionally interspersed with "rapturous applause."[205] By this means, the crowd was worked up into a patriotic fervour, agreeing by acclamation to each of the resolutions put before them. Most were eulogistic reminders of past glories, and together they culminated in a strong public display of determination to build a new monument.

Since the whole purpose of the meeting was a new monument, the resolution regarding its construction came as no surprise. However, there was an unexpected twist: The new monument was to take the form of an obelisk rather than a column, a decision that was likely governed by Arthur's preference.[206] While it would never come to fruition, the obelisk—like everything else that day—met with a hearty approval.[207] Nor was there the slightest objection to having the militia pay a good deal of the cost. And the newly constituted Brock Monument Building Committee, whose members were responsible for overseeing the work, was found to be perfectly acceptable. So, too, was the proposed request to the provincial government for assistance in protecting the monument.[208] After thanks were tendered to various high-ranking officials, and just before some six hundred people went for dinner in a pavilion erected on the site of Brock's death down in the village, a motion was moved that an address be presented to Queen Victoria.[209] This patriotic gesture was a direct response to a recent attempt on the queen's life by a would-be assassin. It was also a convenient opportunity to remind the sovereign of Upper Canada's loyalty, while emphasizing that of the militia.[210]

Viewing themselves as the co-saviours of Upper Canada, these aged veterans had a special interest in Brock's Monument and a tendency to reimagine the War of 1812 to suit their own narrative of the past. There was nothing to stop them in this latter regard, but Arthur at least managed to subdue their eagerness to defend Brock's honour at the risk of causing an international incident. The governor general of the Canadas, Charles

Edward Poulett Thomson, Lord Sydenham, complimented Arthur on his success: "You seem to me to have arranged your Queenston meeting admirably—jockeying our friend M[ac]Nab, and what is of far more consequence, keeping the people clear of any outrage to the Yankees, which I thought very probable."[211] Having roused the patriotism of Upper Canada in order to support a new monument for Brock, the project appeared ready to proceed immediately . . . except that it did not.

While Lett's extremism very nearly brought down Brock's Monument, it failed to bring about a revolution in Upper Canada. However, his villainy did manage to sow discontent among many of his former countrymen, who became increasingly frustrated by what they perceived as inordinate delays in starting construction on the new monument. As was the case with the first monument, a lack of sufficient funds was at the root of the problem. Unlike their predecessors, the new monument commissioners did not have a base of financial support in the form of a government grant. Instead, they proceeded in the mistaken belief that the province was sufficiently populated and developed that the project could be funded through public subscriptions. It was a popular idea in the days and weeks following the bombing of Brock's Monument, and one old Niagara militiaman seemed to reflect the mood of his fellow Upper Canadians by confidently arguing that the province had resources enough for a new monument built on "a much more magnificent and splendid scale." Colonel Daniel MacDougal's assumption was based on the fact that there were more "British hearts and hands" in the province than there had been at the time of the first monument's construction.[212] Therefore, the logic went, a public subscription drive was entirely feasible.[213]

Sharing this view was Sir Allan Napier MacNab, who was the recently appointed president of the committee charged with rebuilding Brock's Monument. Along with his old comrades-in-arms, MacNab anticipated covering the new monument's expense through generous donations from the militia.[214] But despite their best efforts to coerce financial assistance from both martial and civilian sources, including generous Indigenous donations, the fund for Brock's new monument increased but slowly.[215] After a year of fundraising, only about £3,000 of the estimated £5,000 for Brock's obelisk had been raised, and given that "some undue impatience seems to have been manifested at imputed apathy of the [building] committee," John Richardson took it upon himself to clarify the matter. As Richardson—then the proprietor and editor of the *New*

Era newspaper at Brockville, in what is now eastern Ontario—pointed out, there was "not money enough subscribed for the purpose; and it would not only be the height of absurdity, but would most assuredly subject them to severe censure, were the committee to commence building a monument, with a certainty that it must remain incomplete, from want of the necessary funds."[216] An early Canadian literary figure and former soldier, Richardson blamed the militiamen of Britain's other North American colonies, duly noting that those in Upper Canada "have certainly subscribed liberally."[217] Richardson was no less harsh on the British Army stationed across the Canadas: "Why do not the regiments of the line contribute their share towards the noble design?"[218] After all, he reasoned, Brock was a general officer in that same army. A parting shot was reserved for "the country generally, who have the name of Brock ever on their lips, but self only in their hearts."[219]

Richardson threatened to shame parsimonious Upper Canadians by revealing the identities of those "who do and who [do] not support the national project."[220] When this threat fell flat, he proposed a series of fancy balls. But this manner of fundraising was quickly called into question.[221] One objector was George Anthony Barber, the articulate editor of the *Toronto Herald*, who deprecated Richardson's proposal as being unworthy of the high object it was intended to promote:

> The quadrille band finds no echo in the battle trumpet—nor can the exciting waltz harmonize with the solemn rites of sepulture. The motley throng which should grace the ball room would ill assort with the funeral tread of armed mourners, and the gay costume of the dancers would be an insult to the hero's winding sheet. The want of fitness of the means to the end would provoke painful recollections—every burst of festivity would by contrast conjure up some grisly vision,—every foot-step would sound as if treading upon a soldier's resting place.[222]

Barber's puritanical objection was a metaphorical wet blanket on Richardson's good intentions. Yet, there was always a celebratory tone to the commemoration of Brock remembrance. And his monument was not the lonely sepulchre that Barber might have had in mind, as evidenced by the innumerable tourists who continued to flock to Queenston Heights from one year to the next.

Throughout the 1840s, as a lack of funding delayed the construction of Brock's new monument, the old one remained standing—more or less—and continued to attract much unwanted attention from the visiting public.[223] Such scrutiny was far from welcomed, especially when American tourists constantly brought up reminders of Lett's bombing and their British counterparts continually pointed out the need for a replacement. To the English novelist Charles Dickens, who visited the ruined monument early in May 1842, repairing the damage was "of much higher importance than it may seem, that this statue should be repaired at the public cost, as it ought to have been long ago."[224] The reasons were as follows:

> Firstly, because it is beneath the dignity of England to allow a memorial raised in honour of one of her defenders, to remain in this condition, on the very spot where he died. Secondly, because the sight of it in its present state, and the recollection of the unpunished outrage which brought it to this pass, is not very likely to soothe down border feelings among English subjects here, or compose their border quarrels and dislikes.[225]

Dealing with Brock's Monument in a timely manner was easier said than done, and the monument's building committee must have felt the pressure to show some sort of progress.

Toward the end of the following November, they advertised a call to architects for the design of "an obelisk on pedestal, to be erected on Queenston Heights, the total not to exceed 170 feet [52 metres], nor to be less than 150 feet [46 metres], and the cost not to exceed £5000."[226] To encourage participation, the committee offered a cash prize of £25 for the winning design (along with second and third prizes of £15 and £10, respectively).[227] In February of 1843, the first honour was awarded to Thomas Young of Toronto.[228] Unfortunately for Young, it would prove a hollow victory as the monument he proposed would never be built. To make matters worse, the better part of a decade would pass before his disappointment was fully realized. In the meantime, tourists passed harsh judgment on the delay: "tottering to its fall!"[229] This was the verbalized reaction of more than one visitor upon seeing Brock's blasted monument for the first time, and the incongruity of the situation was difficult to comprehend. While Upper Canadians had paid homage to

Brock by raising a monument in his honour, which was ruined through no fault of their own, they now seemed content to neglect it from one year to the next. But these same Upper Canadians were not indifferent toward Brock's new monument, and by the latter 1840s many of them began to suspect malfeasance on MacNab's part.

In March of 1848, the Niagara District Council petitioned the then Province of Canada for an investigation into the building committee's affairs.[230] However, MacNab—ever the parliamentarian—was able to defeat the motion by emphasizing the private nature of the project, and also by assuring his colleagues that construction on Brock's new monument would begin the following spring.[231] Still, things did not go as planned. Despite MacNab's assertiveness, the £5,000 necessary for the letting of a contract was not raised until January 1850, by which time a newly appointed special committee had decided that an entirely different design would be more appropriate.[232] While this committee was tasked with reporting on the propriety of beginning construction forthwith, its three members also expressed their joint and strong conviction that the resolution calling for an obelisk should be reconsidered.[233] It was generally accepted that an obelisk of solid stone construction would be less susceptible to vandalism, but the committee questioned whether such a monolith was really intended.[234] Believing the monument was more likely meant to be constructed of stone blocks and masonry, they thought it would not be "by any means imposing in its appearance, while in other respects it would not be so well suited to the beautiful site which it is to occupy, as a monument of another character would be."[235] In the end, the special committee got its wish; however, several years would pass before a more suitably designed monument could begin to take shape.

While the Brock Monument Building Committee had over £5,000 to its credit, there was a sizeable catch to their investment strategy. The funds, most of which were tied up in Bank of Upper Canada stock, could not be sold due to the heavy losses they would sustain from an economic downturn then gripping the province.[236] It was a predicament, but one that was of relatively short duration. A return to more prosperous times allowed the committee to proceed with their plans in June of 1852, and the first order of business was a new design for Brock's Monument.[237] There was a further competition, and in mid-August another architect from Toronto was announced the winner.[238] William Thomas drew inspiration for his design from the Roman Composite order, combining

a tall column with decorative sculpture. The effect was far more elegant and elaborate than the proposed obelisk, which the canal promoter William Hamilton Merritt disapprovingly likened to "a pile of stones, squatted down on top of the mountain, attempting to ape a pyramid."[239] Moreover, a rustic-looking obelisk was inconsistent with the tenor of the times. By 1852, Upper Canada—known as Canada West after the union of the Canadas in 1841—was seen by its inhabitants as having transitioned from a faltering pioneer society with an uncertain future to a firmly entrenched colonial adjunct of the British Empire. Thomas's design better reflected the optimism of this new era, and he did not skimp on the symbolism of glory and greatness. However, the full effect of this prodigious monument was still in the offing (as per the agreed-upon completion date of October 1856), and the immediate task at hand was the clearing away of Brock's first monument.

While the contract for the construction of the second Brock monument—which included the removal of the first—was not awarded until June of 1853, arrangements for the demolition proceeded apace.[240] Several weeks later, after "an ineffectual attempt had been made to blow it up," a larger blast reduced the old monument "into atoms."[241] The job was a complete success, but there was an unintended consequence when rumours began to circulate that the sanctity of the vaults had been violated. Before long, someone writing under the pseudonym of "A Loyalist" complained in a letter communicated to the Niagara *Mail* that "the grave of General Brock had been opened, and his remains taken up and removed in a very irreverent and summary manner."[242] During this sacrilege,

> it was discovered that the coffins of Gen. Brock, and of his *aid[e]-de-camp*, Col. McDonell [*sic*], had both been crushed in by the effects of the explosion caused by the felon Lett in 1840; and that the remains of the illustrious pair, consisting of their bones, the skulls quite entire, and dust, were much mixed with the fragments of lime and stone which had once formed their tomb. Two rough pine boxes, quite unplaned, which had been brought from Toronto, were ready to receive all that remained of the "Hero of Upper Canada,"—into which the clownish and ignorant workmen proceeded, without ceremony, to *shovel* up the bones, dust and dirt, all together.[243]

It was a shocking allegation, and insult was heaped upon injury by an additional report that the desecrated remains had been unceremoniously carted off for temporary reburial in a nearby cemetery. The informal nature of this transfer meant that the public was denied both an opportunity to show its reverence for the two heroes and the chance of catching a glimpse of them, as was the case after their first exhumation in 1824. Had there been some advance notice, "hundreds would have flocked to look even upon the dust of so great a man" as Brock.[244] In his defence, Thomas remonstrated that he had received no instructions for a ceremony, "only to take proper care of the remains," and neither did he think a ceremony necessary until the date of their interment within the new monument.[245] As for the imputed disrespect shown Brock and Macdonell, Thomas claimed to have "very carefully had the vaults opened, and placed all the remains, and the whole of the fragments of the broken coffins into each separate shell [temporary replacement coffin], and fastened the original silver plates, with the inscriptions engraved thereon, to each respective shell, that they might be properly identified when again removed."[246] As the exhumation imbroglio played itself out, Thomas redirected his energy to the erection of Brock's new monument.

The most pressing concern Thomas faced was the construction of the two vaults, which had to be ready to receive the remains of Brock and Macdonell for their reburial, planned for October 1853. When that time finally came, it was highly reminiscent of the reinterment ceremony conducted in 1824. The day was fine, the crowds were large, and the funeral procession was basically the same sort of arrangement (albeit considerably shorter).[247] The one major difference was the funeral car, which was far more elaborate than the hearse of 1824. One of the duly impressed onlookers was the Niagara *Mail*'s editor, William Kirby, who gave his readers a detailed description: "It was a massive carriage, composed of three stories, the highest probably 12 feet [4 metres] from the ground, with corner pillars still higher, surmounted with black plumes and wreaths of laurel."[248] Covered with fine black cloth and heavily ornamented with heraldic shields and military trophies consisting of muskets, there was also an array of bayonets, swords, and other weapons, as well as draped British flags and other funerary motifs. The patriotic effect was profound, just as it had been in 1824, and Kirby predicted that the morbid scene would leave a lasting impression on the young men in attendance "by teaching them what their gallant fathers did and suffered

in defence of the country, and how true patriotism and fidelity to our flag is honoured by the Canadian people."[249] After Brock and Macdonell were formally laid to rest for the third time, construction on the new monument resumed.

A year later, in October of 1854, workmen were still "busily engaged," but by the following September, 1855, the project was nearing completion.[250] A month later, during the first week of October, Brock's massive statue was set in place high atop the column.[251] Other aspects of the work, however, did not proceed quickly enough to allow for a dedication celebration to be held on the anniversary of the Battle of Queenston Heights.[252] There were still massive stone sculptures to be hoisted into place around the base of the monument, as well as the landscaping of forty acres (sixteen hectares) of grounds. And some of this land, while destined to become ornamental gardens, had yet to be legally severed from the old military reserve.[253] It was for these last reasons, especially, that the official inauguration did not take place until October 1859. And just as the 1853 reinterment shared many similarities with that of 1824, so, too, did the inauguration of 1859 resemble the so-called Indignation Meeting of 1840. The latest extravaganza, however, held one notable difference over the morbid remains and bombastic rhetoric of earlier proceedings—namely, the sublime beauty of Brock's new monument, which became progressively more evident once the project neared completion. As Kirby had dryly commented in 1855, "we could almost thank the infamous Lett, for having been the occasion of so noble a work being erected on the battle ground at Queenston."[254] Rising fifty-six metres above the summit of Queenston Heights, Brock's Monument proved to be a well-proportioned neoclassical composition, and one that elicited great pride among all those Upper Canadians fortunate enough to cast their eyes upon it.[255] The monument was the perfect backdrop for the opening ceremony, which featured an enthralling speech by a highly lauded keynote speaker. And Sir Allan Napier MacNab was in his element. Without a lieutenant-governor to subdue him, as was the case during his earlier stint for Brock's sake, MacNab was free to exercise his natural gift of eloquence. Addressing an estimated ten thousand people, he soon had the crowd in a frenzy—but not merely for Brock, or for his colossal new monument.

While the inauguration of Brock's Monument commemorated the formal completion of a major building project, the occasion was no less

significant for the "gathering of Canadian militia" it brought about.[256] To the casual observer, the emphasis on the militia was not unexpected as it was assumed that the oldest among them had served during the War of 1812. It was also no secret that the most recent version of Brock's Monument was inspired and largely funded by a younger generation of these same citizen-soldiers.[257] Moreover, MacNab was one of their greatest supporters. As a militia colonel and chairman of the Brock Monument Building Committee, he ensured that the militia was well represented, and he did so with a rather hyperbolic flair. After providing the obligatory background to Brock's death and the destruction of his first monument, MacNab reminded the assemblage of the militia's prominent role in rectifying the insult to Brock's memory. MacNab then used most of the rest of his speech to single out and elevate the role of the militia in the War of 1812. By giving the impression of a conflict wherein the militia served as the bulwark against American invasion, he downplayed the important contributions of regular British soldiers and their Indigenous allies, who were simply glossed over as MacNab recounted the sacrifices of the militiamen and the sufferings of their families:

> My friends—When we extol the gallantry of our militia, we do them but half justice, and do commend but a part only of the merit which distinguished them. We should not overlook the exposure and the privations which (thinly clad and ill provided as many poor men were) all endured throughout three long years of trial. There were the out-lying picket; the frontier guard; the sentinel[']s vigilance; the midnight patrol; the morning watch;—there were the storms of the seasons, there were the sickness and death. Add to this wives and children—mothers and sisters—the aged and infirm—houses and barns—the cattle and the grain—all but deserted, at the imperative call, to arms, of their invaded country. It required the highest moral courage to relinquish, as our militia did, their peaceful homes when summoned away by the loud blasts of war.[258]

MacNab was effectively preaching to the choir, as many of the people in attendance had a long-standing appreciation for the militia. They could well approve MacNab's speech, especially when he brought the full force of his oratorical abilities into play: "Well done noble militia! Well done

people of Canada! Let this spot be hallowed to the latest time. Honor to the remains of the heroic dead. May they repose in peace until the judgment morning, when the sound of the last trump shall rend this pillar—burst the tomb—and awaken the sleepers to the resurrection of eternal life."[259] It was a stirring performance, and one that was felt keenly by Ferdinand Brock Tupper in far-off Guernsey. Although Brock's nephew and earliest biographer could only experience the speech through a transcript, the allusions to life everlasting moved him to tears.[260] But if MacNab's biblical references were affecting, they were also enabling, as Canada's aging militiamen would soon demonstrate.