

## **Hamilton War of 1812 Bicentennial**

### **Smith's Knoll Monument**

#### **Historical Background**

- The year 2013 marks the 200th anniversary of the Battle of Stoney Creek, one of the most important events in Canada's history.
- On June 5, 1813, approximately 3,500 American forces advanced as far as the Gage family homestead in Stoney Creek, now Battlefield House Museum & Park, and established camp for the night. A surprise night attack by the British was initiated in the early morning hours of June 6, 1813 from Burlington Heights (where Dundurn Castle now stands).
- Approximately seven hundred British regulars from the King's (8th) Regiment of Foot and the 49th Regiment of Foot were supported by a small contingent of native warriors, led by John Norton, during the Battle of Stoney Creek. During an intense 40-minute battle, the British captured two American Generals and two field guns. The Americans were forced to retreat, never to advance as far into the Niagara Peninsula again.

#### **Site Information**

- During the Battle of Stoney Creek, the American artillery was positioned on a rise of land located north-east of the Gage homestead and was the site of some of the fiercest fighting during the battle. Historical records indicate that, following the battle some of the soldiers were buried here.
- In 1899, Allan Smith, while ploughing on this rise of land, uncovered human remains and bits of cloth with the insignia of both British and American regiments. The area became known in the community as Smith's Knoll.
- On May 3, 1908, an area known as the Soldier's Plot at Smith's Knoll was consecrated and by 1910, a stone cairn and statue of a lion were installed. On August 1, 1910, a ceremony was held to mark the unveiling of the Lion's Monument (as it came to be called) at Smith's Knoll as a memorial to the soldiers who fought in the Battle of Stoney Creek.
- The British victory at the Battle of Stoney Creek was crucial in preventing the Americans from seizing Upper Canada. The Battlefield Monument stands as a symbol of peace and commemorates those soldiers who died on June 6, 1813.
- After significant restoration of Smith's Knoll, Battlefield Cemetery was re-opened as a National Historic Site.

## **McMaster University Research at Smith's Knoll**

Dr. Megan Brickley, Professor and Canada Research Chair (Tier 1) studied bones recovered from the Battle of Stoney Creek site 10 years ago. Working with a high tech microscope, helped to reveal what happened to the soldiers during the June 6, 1813 battle.

Anthropologist Megan Brickley supervised the examination of the soldiers' bones taken from the Stoney Creek memorial. Using sample bones reviewed at Fort George and her studies in the United Kingdom, she found that some of the wounds suffered by the American and British soldiers during the June 13 Battle of Stoney Creek were possibly the cause of a bayonet and reflect defensive wounds.

Brickley, who moved from the United Kingdom to McMaster University more than two years ago as a Canada Research Chair, has been involved in numerous studies of 19th century skeletons in England.

## **SPECIAL EVENT: Smith's Knoll Memorial Parade and Service**

Location:	Battlefield House Museum & Park
Date:	Friday, May 31, 2013
Time:	7pm to 9pm
Ages:	All
Cost:	Free

- The year 2013 marks the 200th anniversary of the Battle of Stoney Creek, an important battle during the War of 1812 and the only conflict to take place in the Hamilton region.
- To commemorate this important moment in our City's history and to honour those who fought in the Battle, the City of Hamilton in partnership with the Royal Canadian Legion Battlefield Branch 622, American Legion Post 18 and Her Majesty's Army & Navy Veterans Society invites the public to attend a Memorial Parade and Service.
- The service will include a rededication of Battlefield Cemetery at Smith's Knoll, revealing a commemorative landscape that reflects values including "commemoration, peace, reflection and equal acknowledgment".
- The Smith's Knoll Commemoration project is possible through financial support from the City of Hamilton, Heritage Green Community Trust and the Government of Canada.

## **1812 Hamilton Signature Events Series**

- Re-enactment of the Battle of Stoney Creek (June 1-2, 2013)
- Canadian International Military Tattoo (June 8-9, 2013)
- TALL SHIPS® Hamilton (June 28-30, 2013)
- Hamilton & Scourge Memorial (September 4 and 21, 2013)

## **More Information**

Website: [www.1812hamilton.com](http://www.1812hamilton.com)  
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