

War of 1812 still holds significance for Brant

Part 1 in a series by local history enthusiast Zig Misiak

Published: Thu, 21 Oct 2010

brantnews.com

The following is the first in a series of articles by local history enthusiast Zig Misiak leading up to the 200th anniversary of the War of 1812.

So why should I be interested in the War of 1812?"

1. One simple answer is because it's a part of our collective histories. If our families go back 200 years, or if we just moved here yesterday, we all own the events of this area's past. We are obligated to know and understand how we evolved into the communities we are today.
2. The 200th anniversary of the War of 1812 is just around the corner, officially beginning in 2012. We have an opportunity to tag along with the rest of the country and the United States, taking advantage of the massive media campaigns being launched.
3. Elementary and secondary schools study the War of 1812 in their curriculum, so the profiling of this event will have significant value to the schools and students. The students themselves can become teachers to their parents.
4. We must and will take advantage of this event as a wonderful chance to build a "bridge" between our communities (Six Nations, Brantford and the County of Brant). It is a chance to rally around something good.
5. We can and will review our interpretations of the War of 1812 and how it impacted our ancestors, especially our Six Nations friends and allies. If not new details, then certainly new perspectives will be evolving over coming months and presented to you.
6. General Isaac Brock, Tecumseh, John Brant (son of Joseph Brant), John Norton and General Proctor are all names we know from our history books, but we don't associate them with our area. Each one has a direct connection to our local history. Brock made several visits here to negotiate an alliance with the Six Nations and other First Nations. This likely took place in the Mohawk village, where the Mohawk Chapel is located today.
7. The famous Tecumseh made trips to the Grand River valley and Six Nations representatives travelled west to his part of the world. The main road connecting the western part of Upper Canada (the Windsor area) to the Niagara Peninsula and towns north of Lake Ontario crossed the Grand River in and around the Lorne Bridge area. It was very busy, especially during the War of 1812.
8. We did not have forts such as Fort George or Fort Erie in the Niagara region, nor did we have great naval battles between tall masted ships in our waters. But our local militia and warrior allies took part in every major event, such as the taking of Fort Detroit, the Battle of Lundy's Lane, the

Battle of Beaver Dams, the Battle at Chippewa, the Battle at Queenston Heights and many more.

9. Because we had good mills and were a relatively safe area, we supplied much of the food needed for the British Army, for the Haudenosaunee and local settlers located here.

10. The 200th anniversary of the War of 1812 is clearly a “beacon of opportunity” shining a light to show us the way. It will show us how we can celebrate our common history and culture, as well as how we can understand, share and respect our differences.

Visit www.realpeopleshistory.com or www.warof1812rph.com for more information.

Zig Misiak is co-author of the Six Nations Iroquois Program Teachers Resource Guide, created to assist educators with national curriculum and First Nations educational mandates. Cook family dedicates window at Sydenham Street United