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The Centennial Celebration of the Battle of Lundy's Lane and of One Hundred Years of Peace

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Article abstract

This article examines the centenary celebration of the Battle of Lundy's Lane, held under the auspices of the Lundy's Lane Historical Society on 25 July 1914. At this time Canada was attempting to define its place in the world, and was coming to terms with a growing Anglo-American rapprochement. At the prodding of Canadian federal bodies, what had originally been intended as a Canadian celebration was transformed into an international one involving Canadian, and American representatives. In this way the celebration of the anniversary of the Battle of Lundy's Lane was combined with that of one hundred years of peace between Britain and the United States. The resulting ceremony was filled with conflicting messages about Canada's history and its relationship with its southern neighbour as participants tried to balance Canada's attachment to the empire and its growing closeness with the United States, while commemorating the last great battle between them.

The Centennial Celebration of the Battle of Lundy's Lane and of One Hundred Years of Peace

by Elaine Young

On 25 July 1914 Lundy's Lane, site of one of the bloodiest battles of the War of 1812 only one hundred years before, was a scene of celebration. The mayor had declared a holiday, and fifteen to twenty thousand people reportedly gathered at Drummond Hill cemetery for the occasion.[1] American and British flags draped the road to the site, and festooned the speakers' platform where both Canadian and American orators spoke in commemoration of not only the Battle of Lundy's Lane, but of a century of peace between Britain and the United States. However, combining the celebration of one hundred years of peace with the centennial of a still-disputed battle proved a tricky proposition. A perceptive 1909 *Globe* editorial pointed out the potential problems of such a venture:

> whether it would be feasible to turn from 'whooping it up' over Lundy's Lane... and reviving the memories of how we had trounced Uncle Sam... and then ask him to contribute to and assist at the unveiling of some memorial of peace... may well give rise to some doubts. It would need discrimination to draw the line between the glorification of Canadian victories in battle and the final curtsey to the goddess of peace.[2]

Despite some misgivings, this was what the participants in the centennial celebrations at Lundy's Lane attempted to do. Under the direction of the Lundy's Lane Historical Society (LLHS), and influenced by the Canadian Peace Centenary Association (CPCA), what had originally been intended as a commemoration of the Battle of Lundy's Lane was combined with the century of peace celebrations planned for 1915. The LLHS, which harboured a mistrust of the United States rooted in a loyalist interpretation of the past, had originally wanted to commemorate the Battle of Lundy's Lane alone, with an emphasis on Canada's imperial connection. The CPCA, while not denying Canada's traditional attachment to Britain, wanted

[1] *The Centenary Celebration of the Battle of Lundy's Lane*, Compiled by William Wallis, Robert W. Geary, and James C. Morden (Niagara Falls: The Lundy's Lane Historical Society, 1919), 31; "Inspiring Lessons from the War of 1812," *The Globe*, July 27, 1914.

[2] "The Centenary of 1812," *The Globe*, 28 July 1909.

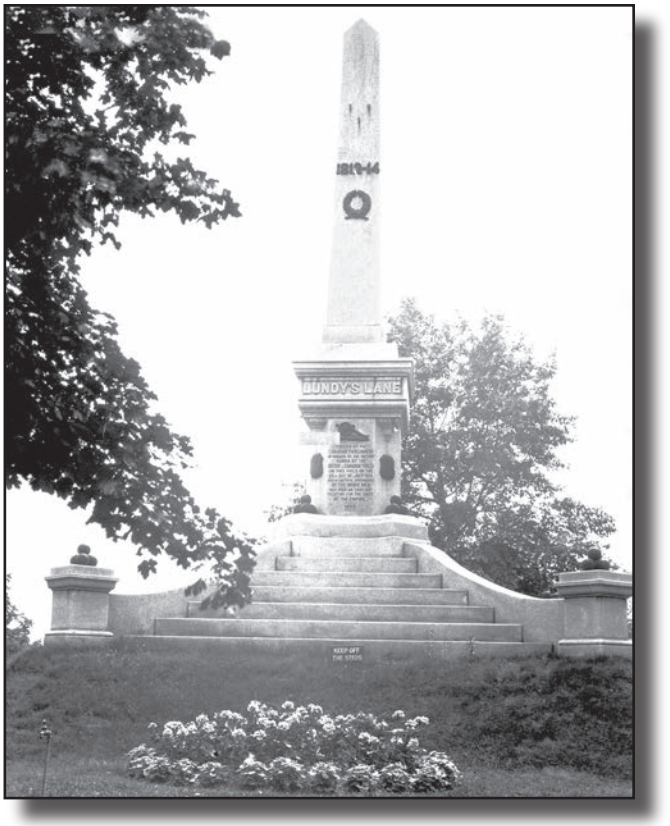
Abstract

This article examines the centenary celebration of the Battle of Lundy's Lane, held under the auspices of the Lundy's Lane Historical Society on 25 July 1914. At this time Canada was attempting to define its place in the world, and was coming to terms with a growing Anglo-American rapprochement. At the prodding of Canadian federal bodies, what had originally been intended as a Canadian celebration was transformed into an international one involving Canadian, and American representatives. In this way the celebration of the anniversary of the Battle of Lundy's Lane was combined with that of one hundred years of peace between Britain and the United States. The resulting ceremony was filled with conflicting messages about Canada's history and its relationship with its southern neighbour as participants tried to balance Canada's attachment to the empire and its growing closeness with the United States, while commemorating the last great battle between them.

Résumé: *Cet article examine la fête du centenaire de la bataille de Lundy's Lane célébrée sous les auspices de la Lundy's Lane Historical Society le 25 juillet 1914. À cette époque-là le Canada essayait de définir sa place dans le monde et de s'adapter au rapprochement anglo-américain. La société historique avait envisagé une célébration purement canadienne, mais l'intervention d'autorités fédérales canadiennes l'a transformée en un événement international, avec la participation de représentants britanniques, canadiens, et américains. L'anniversaire de la bataille de Lundy's Lane est devenu ainsi l'occasion de célébrer cent ans de paix entre la Grande Bretagne et les États-Unis. La cérémonie attribuait donc des significations contradictoires à l'histoire du Canada et ses relations avec son voisin du sud: les participants devaient trouver un équilibre entre l'attachement du Canada à l'empire et son rapprochement avec les États-Unis, tout en commémorant la dernière grande bataille qui les avait opposés.*

the ceremony to be a cooperative venture between Canada and the United States and saw their southern neighbours as friends and allies. Although the organizers tried to emphasize Canada's imperial identity, the Lundy's Lane centennial celebration brought together not only representatives from Canada and the United States, but also different views of history and of Canada's relationship with America. These different views coexisted in the celebration, sometimes uneasily. While discussions of present peaceful relations and the ideals of bravery and sacrifice created a narrative of friendship, dialogues of the origins of the war and the Battle of Lundy's Lane created a counter-narrative, espousing closer relations with Britain and indicting America's past actions. The resulting ceremony was filled with sometimes conflicting messages as the participants attempted to balance the commemoration of the Battle of Lundy's Lane and its connection to British imperialism with the celebration of one hundred years of peace and pursuing closer relations with the United States.

The centenary celebration of the Battle of Lundy's Lane provides unique insight into how celebrations of past events can contain multiple meanings and goals, as well as the role international relations can play in commemoration. Some historians, notably Cecelia



The inscription on the front of the Soldiers Monument at Lundy's Lane, Niagara Falls, Ontario, reads: "Erected by the Canadian Parliament in honour of the victory gained by the British & Canadian Forces on this field on the 25th day of July, 1814 and in grateful remembrance of the brave men who died on that day fighting for the unity of the Empire. 1895." Courtesy of Thunder Bay Historical Museum Society, 972.275.26M

Morgan, have examined the make-up of Ontario historical groups and how their movements were influenced by concepts of gender and race, including their interactions with First Nations peoples.[3] Representatives of the Six Nations were present at the Lundy's Lane centennial, and women played a symbolic role by dressing in white and placing flowers on monuments. However, this article will not seek to add to this literature, as previous studies have addressed the roles of women and First Nations, and a proper examination of their role in the Lundy's Lane centenary would require more space than is available here. The focus instead will be on what the centennial celebration reveals about attitudes toward the United States and Britain at both the local and federal level on the eve of the First World War, and how the War of 1812 fit into these views. Much research on historical societies suggests that action came from a grassroots level, with governments responding to campaigns organized by these societies for the preservation of a site, the erection of a monument, and so on.[4] Similarly, smaller scale commemorations were often local affairs that sometimes received

[3] Cecelia Morgan, "History, Nation, and Empire: Gender and Southern Ontario Historical Societies, 1890-1920s." *The Canadian Historical Review*, 82, no.3 (September 2001): 491-528; Colin M. Coates and Cecelia Morgan, *Heroines and History: Representations of Madeleine de Verchères and Laura Secord* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2002); Cecelia Morgan, "History and the Six Nations: The dynamics of Commemoration, Colonial Space, and Colonial Knowledge" in *Placing Memory and Remembering Place in Canada*, James Opp and John C. Walsh, eds. Vancouver: UBC Press, 2010; also Melissa Zielke, "Here Stood the Valiant: Sara Calder, the Women's Wentworth Historical Society and the Struggle for Battlefield House and Monument" (Master's thesis, University of Toronto, 2002).

[4] See above note; also Norman Knowles, *Inventing the Loyalists: The Ontario Loyalist Tradition & the*

government funding. An examination of the Lundy's Lane centennial suggests that federal agencies may have had more say in commemorative activities than previously thought. H.V. Nelles' *The Art of Nation-Building* touches on the complex relationship between the organizers of the Quebec tercentenary and various levels of government, concluding that due to the involvement of many different groups it was unclear what exactly was being celebrated at the festivities.[5] This article builds on Nelles' work by examining the role of local and federal bodies in how Canada's place in the international community and its relationship with the United States were portrayed at commemorative events. Drawing on the official publication of the event, newspaper accounts, and historical society records, this paper explores how these ceremonies were organized and the role international relations played in them.

In the decades before the centennial celebration Canada was trying to find its place in relation to Britain and the United States. In the late nineteenth century Great Britain, recognizing the rising power of the United States, had begun to court American friendship, and by 1904 had eliminated preparations for war with the United States from its defence plans. The two countries came to recognize that their political and strategic interests could be mutually supportive, and had embraced the idea of a shared Anglo-Saxon identity and a mission to civilise the world.[6] Growing Anglo-American amity was illustrated by the discovery of gold in the Klondike in 1897, which pressed the unresolved Alaskan boundary to the forefront of relations. The American victory in the dispute caused some Canadians to question the Imperial connection, believing that British diplomats had neglected Canada in favour of strengthening ties with the United States.[7] Canada's participation in the 1899-1902 Boer War and Britain's poor showing early in the conflict also led Canadians to question their position in global affairs. Some felt that Canada had acted as a colony aiding the mother country and that Canada deserved to be treated as an equal in the British Empire.[8] Canada began to adjust to the growing friendship between the two powers, and by the time of the centennial most outstanding issues between Canada and the United States, such as fishing rights, had been settled.[9] However, trade issues, and their perceived connection to American annexation, were

Creation of Usable Pasts (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1997).

[5] H.V. Nelles, *The Art of Nation-Building: Pageantry and Spectacle at Quebec's Tercentenary* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1999), 63, 11.

[6] Alan P. Dobson, *Anglo-American Relations in the Twentieth Century* (New York: Routledge, 1995), 17.

[7] John Herd Thompson and Stephen J. Randall, *Canada and the United States: Ambivalent Allies,* 4th ed. (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 2008), 67, 69.

[8] Robert Craig Brown and Ramsay Cook, *Canada 1896 – 1921: A Nation Transformed* (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1974), 162-63.

[9] C.P. Stacey, *Canada and the Age of Conflict: A History of Canadian External Policies, Volume I: 1867-1921* (Toronto: Macmillan, 1977), 104-5.

a different matter. For instance, Borden and the Conservative Party won a landslide victory in 1911 by running, in part, against reciprocity, an ongoing issue that had become entwined with imperial relations and the future direction of Canada.[10] Many Canadians equated reciprocity with eventual political absorption by the United States, and rejected it on that basis.[11] Canadian memories of the War of 1812 were stirred in this election, and an article in the *Toronto Daily Star* made the connection explicit:

> They used to think that they could come across and take this country by a few American soldiers. Queenston Heights, Laura Secord, and Lundy's Lane had disproved this theory. The Americans seeing the futility of their efforts in 1812 were now trying to take Canada by diplomacy. Mr. R.L. Borden and the Conservative party took the place of General Brock and the patriots, in this modern struggle.[12]

Although Great Britain and the United States had reached a rapprochement and attitudes in Canada toward their southern neighbour had been softening, Canadians remained suspicious of American motivations, demonstrated by the rejection of reciprocity in 1911. Shortly after his election Prime Minister Borden proposed his "linchpin" theory: that Canada, due to its history and geographic location, was in a unique position to act as a mediator between Great Britain and the United States.[13] According to Borden, good relations between these two countries were key to Canada's well-being.[14] Therefore, by the time of the centenary of the Battle of Lundy's Lane in 1914 the Conservatives had made an about-face from the anti-reciprocity rhetoric of the election to a more conciliatory approach to the United States.[15] However, recalling the events of the war and fears of annexation, some Canadians still harboured doubts and suspicions of their southern neighbour.

The centennial celebration took place under the direction of the LLHS, one of approximately fifteen local historical societies created in Ontario between 1882 and 1896.[16] The War of 1812 had, however, played a role in how Upper Canadians thought of themselves long before the advent of formal historical societies and the reciprocity debates. As early as the 1820s the war had become a symbol of Canada's loyalty to the empire, and soon became the basis of an early Canadian nationalism that, as Carl Berger has argued, was closely linked with imperialism.[17] The war had also fostered unity, as Upper Canadians felt they had been

[10] Brown and Cook, *Canada 1896-1921*, 183, 161.

[11] Carl Berger, *The Sense of Power: Studies in the Ideas of Canadian Imperialism* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1970), 4.

[12] "Borden Leaves Ontario, Harping on Annexation," *Toronto Daily Star*, August 29, 1911.

[13] Thompson and Randall, *Ambivalent Allies*, 93.

[14] Brown and Cook, *Canada 1896-1921,* 204.

[15] Thompson and Randall, *Ambivalent Allies*, 93.

[16] Berger, *The Sense of Power,* 96.

[17] Jane Errington, *The Lion, the Eagle, and Upper Canada: A Developing Colonial Ideology* (McGill-Queen's University Press: Montreal & Kingston, 1987), 92, 102; Berger, *The Sense of Power,* 259.

drawn together in response to a common threat from the south.[18] In the late nineteenth century an unparalleled interest in the province's history developed for a variety of reasons, including passionate debates about Canada's future spurred by the crises described above.[19] This interest in turn gave rise to local historical societies, which sought to create a national identity that emphasized loyalty to the Empire, and stressed that Canada's past (and future) lay with its imperial ties.[20] Many historical societies, including the LLHS and the Pioneer and Historical Association of Ontario, emphasized loyalist interpretations of the province's history, stressing devotion to Britain, anti-Americanism, and conservatism as the basis of Canadian identity.[21] These historical societies were drawing on the past in an effort to show that Canada had its own history of devotion to Britain and was a valuable member of the empire.

The War of 1812 was a significant event for Ontario historical societies, and the LLHS was a leader of its commemoration. The society was formed in 1887 to "promote...a knowledge of early Canadian history, and to urge the duty of perpetuating the memories of the brave men of 1812 and '14."[22] Many believed that the militia that had defended Upper Canada was made up largely of loyalists and their families, so the War of 1812 fit easily into the loyalist tradition and could be pointed to as another expression of Upper Canada's loyalty to the mother country.[23] The LLHS promoted this idea; an 1891 annual address states, "this country thus settled and civilized they [the loyalists] successfully defended in the subsequent War of 1812."[24] Canon George Bull, founder of the LLHS, was an avowed imperialist and also embraced the connection between the loyalists and the defence of Upper Canada in 1812-14.[25] The LLHS was a leader amongst Ontario historical societies, being not only the earliest founded, but hosting annual celebrations at the Lundy's Lane battlefield and publishing prolifically on the war. The LLHS pressured the Dominion government to erect a memorial on the battlefield, which they did in 1895,

[18] Allan Smith, "Old Ontario and the Emergence of a National Frame of Mind," in *Aspects of Nineteenth-Century Ontario: Essays Presented to James J. Talman*, edited by F.H. Armstrong, H.A. Stevenson, and J.D. Wilson (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1974), 198.

[19] George Killan, *Preserving Ontario's Heritage: A History of the Ontario Historical Society* (Ottawa: Love Printing, 1976), 15.

[20] Several authors have written on this subject. The classic work is Carl Berger's *The Sense of Power*. See also Killan, *Preserving Ontario's Heritage*, Morgan, "History, Nation, and Empire," and Smith, "Old Ontario."

[21] Beverly Boutilier, "Women's Rights and Duties: Sarah Anne Curzon and the Politics of Canadian History," in *Creating Historical Memory: English-Canadian Women and the Work of History*, edited by Beverly Boutilier and Alison Prentice (Vancouver: UBC Press, 1997), 65; Knowles, *Inventing the Loyalists*, 3.

[22] Lundy's Lane Historical Society 1st Annual Report.

[23] Killan, *Preserving Ontario's Heritage*, 16.

[24] The Annual Report of the Lundy's Lane Historical Society, 1891.

[25] Killan, *Preserving Ontario's Heritage,* 17.

Sizeable crowds attended the centennial celebrations of the Battle of Lundy's Lane in 1914. Courtesy of Niagara Falls Public Library (Ont.) D416024.

and with the help of the Ontario Historical Society campaigned for the erection of a monument to Laura Secord, unveiled in 1901.[26] They also called for the property to be transferred to the Queen Victoria Niagara Parks Commission in 1910, which enhanced the site by installing paths, repairing fences, restoring gravestones, and planting flowers.[27] The members of the LLHS understandably saw themselves as the guardians and proprietors of the site, and were therefore the obvious choice to propose and organize the celebrations to be held there in 1914. The society also had a great deal of experience organizing historical celebrations, and these often favoured ties with Britain and the role of the Loyalists.[28] They therefore undertook organizing the centennial celebration of the Battle of Lundy's Lane, appointing committees for decorations, invitations, military display, floral decoration, exhibition of relics, and publicity.[29] Their view of history clearly favoured the imperial connection, and their planning of the centennial of the battle reflected this.

The LLHS initially focussed on commemorating only the centenary of the Battle of Lundy's Lane; no reference was made to the one hundred years of peace in their early plans. In a letter to Minister of Militia Sam Hughes asking for support, the society's president R.W. Geary

[26] George A. Seibel, *Ontario's Niagara Parks: 100 Years* (Niagara Falls: The Niagara Parks Commission, 1985), 279; Killan, *Preserving Ontario's Heritage,* 81.

[27] Seibel, *Ontario's Niagara Parks*, 279.

[28] See, for example, "Lundy's Lane," *Thorold Post and Niagara District Intelligencer*, 27 July 1888.

[29] Wallis, Geary, and Morden, *The Centenary Celebration,* 19-20.

Display of Historical Relics - Lundy's Lane Historical Society. Niagara Falls Public Library (Ont.) D415807

contended that the people of the Niagara Frontier expected the anniversary to be commemorated with "some patriotic expression" to remember "the remarkable bravery and persistence of their forefathers in defence of the country—in repelling the several invasions of 100 years ago."[30] Geary later echoed these sentiments in a letter to Prime Minister Borden, writing that the celebration "would be a fitting tribute to the memory of the gallant British & Canadian forces who defended the country with indomitable courage on that day."[31] Geary clearly felt that the celebration should honour Canada's imperial identity and emphasize Canada's defence against American intruders. However, what was originally planned as a Canadian celebration of the anniversary of the battle was combined with the commemoration of one hundred years of peace between the United States and Britain "despite," as one newspaper noted, "the scarcely suppressed protests of several national enthusiasts."[32]

The LLHS had originally intended the celebration to be purely Canadian, but received "intimation... from Ottawa" that it should be an international one.[33] This 'intimation' came from the Canadian Peace Centenary Association (CPCA), a group created in 1912 to cooperate with similar bodies in Britain and the United States to commemorate the one hundred year anniversary of the Treaty of Ghent that had ended the War of 1812.[34] The international peace celebration was to take place on 14 February 1915 and would include special thanksgiving Church services in the respective

[30] Niagara Falls History Museum (hereafter NFHM), 979.0.850-92, Centenary Binder, Letter from R.W. Geary to Sam Hughes, 22 November 1913.

[31] Borden Correspondence Volume 170, page 92843, Letter from R.W. Geary to Borden, 20th March 1914.

[32] "Inspiring Lessons from the War of 1812," *The Globe*, July 27, 1914.

[33] NFHM LLHS Fonds, Box 1, 979.0.41 629 May 1 1914 meeting minutes; NFHM, General File: Lundy's Lane Historical Society, Ernest Green, "History of the Lundy's Lane Historical Society," read at 60th anniversary of LLHS.

[34] Library and Archives Canada (hereafter LAC), C.F. Hamilton Papers, Correspondence Volume 2,

countries.[35] The CPCA was not directly affiliated with the Canadian government, but was funded by government appropriation, was required to report to it, and had its official "sympathy."[36] Although the association was formed to commemorate the signing of the Treaty of Ghent, the centenary of Lundy's Lane would also have seemed appropriate, as many Canadians saw it as the last battle of the war and the de facto beginning of the one hundred years of peace.[37] There is no evidence that the decision to hold another celebration before the scheduled 1915 peace centennial was linked to the possibility of war in Europe; even after the assassination of Franz Ferdinand in June Canadians did not realize the danger of a general war.[38] The LLHS believed that the 1915 celebration would happen as scheduled, as their minutes reveal that part of their decision to make the celebration international was "for the purpose of securing the success of the Peace Centennial Celebration of 1915."[39] When they were contacted by the CPCA the LLHS was in a vulnerable position, as despite an increased membership drive and appeals to local, provincial, and federal governments, it still needed funds for the celebration.[40] Additionally, the society wanted both regular troops and militia to participate, which necessitated the cooperation of the Dominion government.[41] It is not clear whether the federal government suggested it would withhold its support if the society did not make the ceremony international, but the group's need for government finances, combined with the CPCA's suggestion that the ceremony be international suggests that this may have been the case. Regardless, the government eventually granted $2,000 to help pay for the celebration.[42] Later the society admitted that "government financial assistance, and the presence of bodies of both regular troops and militia, were factors in giving this unique observance a setting appropriate to its importance, but," they continued, "the planning and direction were carried out by the Society."[43] Despite its initial wish for a Canadian ceremony, the LLHS agreed to make it international, and began adjusting its programme and sending invitations to American representatives. The influence of the CPCA meant that the celebration would now concentrate

MG30 D 84 2, letter from R.B. Viets to C.F. Hamilton 17 October, 1924.

[35] The Canadian Peace Centenary Association, *Celebration of The Hundred Years of Peace Between The British Empire and the United States of America* (Ottawa: Canadian Peace Centenary Association, n.d.), 2.

[36] LAC C.F. Hamilton Papers, letter from R.B. Viets to C.F. Hamilton 17 October, 1924.

[37] See, for example, "Lundy's Lane," *The Niagara Falls Gazette*, July 25 1914, in Wallis, Geary, and Morden, *The Centenary Celebration,* 118.

[38] Stacey, *Canada and the Age of Conflict,* 173.

[39] NFHM LLHS Fonds, Box 1, 979.0.41 629 May 1 1914 meeting minutes.

[40] NFHM LLHS Fonds, Box 1, 979.0.41 629 February 13 1914 meeting minutes.

[41] Ernest Green, "History of the Lundy's Lane Historical Society," 10.

[42] Wallis, Geary and Morden, *The Centenary Celebration,* 21.

[43] Ernest Green, "History of the Lundy's Lane Historical Society," 10.

not only on the centennial of the battle, but on the century of peace following the end of the war. Both of these emphases embodied very different views of the United States and of Canada's place in the world. Therefore, when the LLHS bowed to the request to make the ceremony international, differing views of the past were brought together on one speaker's platform.

The goal of the LLHS had not been to improve relations with the United States, but to foster Canadian imperial patriotism, and as the organizers of the centennial the LLHS had control over who would be invited. To fulfil the request that the event be international, invitations were extended to members of American historical societies, such as the New York based Niagara Frontier Historical Society, the Buffalo Historical Society, and the Niagara Falls Landmarks Association, which they had worked with previously on the re-interment of American remains unearthed at the site. The LLHS clearly favoured members of American historical societies, many of whom they had worked with before and who shared their interest in local history, over others, such as American politicians or military representatives. The Centennial Peace Celebration Committees of both Niagara Falls Ontario and Niagara Falls New York were also invited. Representatives of various levels of Canadian government, from the prime minister and the minister of militia to the premier of Ontario were asked to attend, but unfortunately only the mayor of Niagara Falls, Ontario, and the lieutenant-governor of Ontario were able to. The only American political representatives invited were the mayor and council of Niagara Falls, New York. Invitations were extended to all twenty-eight Ontario historical societies; groups whose views were similar to those of the LLHS.[44] Beyond the expected invitations to elected officials and historical societies, the LLHS also favoured other Canadians who were likely to share their imperialist views. All forty-three chapters of the Imperial Order of the Daughters of the Empire, a group formed in the patriotic fervour of the Boer War whose primary goal was imperial patriotic expression, were invited.[45] The Canadian Defence League, which advocated improved defence, universal military training, anti-Americanism, and keeping ties with Britain also received invitations.[46] Both the president and members of the U.E. Loyalists Association of Canada were invited, and the LLHS made a special effort to "include the Old Settlers of this community and the descendants of U.E. Loyalists" in the event.[47] The society

[44]Wallis, Geary and Morden, *The Centenary Celebration,* 22.

[45] Katie Pickles, *Female Imperialism and National Identity: Imperial Order Daughters of the Empire*, (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2002), 19.

[46] NFHM, 979.0.41.850-37, Centenary Binder, Letter from R.W. Geary to George M Elliott, Secretary of the Canadian Defence League, 17 July 1914; James Wood, *Militia Myths: Ideas of the Canadian Citizen Soldier, 1896-1921* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2010), 199.

[47] Wallis, Geary and Morden, *The Centenary Celebration,* 21.

also organized an exhibition of military relics, which included loyalists' "household heirlooms" amongst the buttons and belt-plates.[48] The emphasis on patriotic organizations and the presentation of loyalist items with the war relics demonstrates the connection between the loyalist ideal and the defence of Upper Canada in the War of 1812. The speakers from Canada were also overwhelmingly affiliated with Ontario historical societies. For instance, James H. Coyne was the first president of the Pioneer and Historical Association of Ontario (later to become the Ontario Historical Society), and Clarence M. Warner was the president of the Ontario Historical Society at the time of the centennial.[49] Although the LLHS did invite American representatives, they were far outnumbered by the invitations extended to Canadians and imperialist groups. Whether intentionally or not, the LLHS favoured not only Canadians above Americans, but also those Canadians who were more likely to share the society's views on Canada's imperial identity. Therefore, although the British connection and friendship with the United States are generally not mutually exclusive concepts, the Canadian organizers and some of the speakers likely shared a view of history that viewed Americans with suspicion, and whose goal was maintaining close ties with the mother country.

All branches of the Canadian military also attended, including the 48th Highlanders, Queen's Own Rifles, Royal Grenadiers, 37th Regiment, and other corps, which led the procession from the luncheon at the nearby Clifton House to the battlefield.[50] The participation of the Canadian militia seems logical, but the symbolism of their involvement goes beyond merely marching in the procession. According to Carl Berger, "imperialism, military preparedness, and militarism... were inextricably bound together," suggesting that the militia's presence emphasized Canada's imperial identity.[51] Additionally, at this time the regiments were judged by how closely they resembled British soldiers, and some regiments were garbed in uniforms from the Boer War, reminding observers of their participation in Britain's conflict in South Africa.[52] The inclusion of so many members of the Canadian armed forces suggests that the organizers may have wanted to make a show of Canada's military ability and emphasize its connection to the British Empire. In contrast, the American military was not present at the event. There is no evidence of invitations being extended to members or representatives of the American armed forces, despite their participation in previous ceremonies at Lundy's Lane, discussed further

[48] *Ibid.,* 21, 73.

[49] Fred Landon, *James Henry Coyne: 1849-1942* (Reprinted from the Proceedings of the Royal Society of Canada, 1942), 84; Wallis, Geary and Morden, *The Centennial Celebration*, 63.

[50] "Inspiring Lessons from the War of 1812," *The Globe*, 27 July 1914; Wallis, Geary and Morden ,*The Centennial Celebration,* 22.

[51] Berger, *The Sense of Power,* 233.

[52] Wood, *Militia Myths,* 135.

All branches of the Canadian military also attended, including the 44th Regiment seen here, marched from the luncheon at the nearby Clifton House to the battlefield. Courtesy of Niagara Falls Public Library (Ont.) D417054.

below. Although ostensibly a celebration of friendship and peace between the two countries, the event emphasized the Canadian military and its connection to Britain at the expense of the American forces who also fought in the battle. Again, it seems that the LLHS made efforts to ensure that the celebration would emphasize Canada's attachment to Great Britain as much as possible despite the inclusion of American representatives. The society could not, however, control how the speakers would balance the two commemorative themes of the day, or what attitudes they would express towards the United States.

The speeches at the centenary reflected the changing relationship between Canada, Britain and the United States. Most Canadian speakers attempted to balance their country's traditional loyalty to Britain with the growing relations with its southern neighbour, some with more success than others. This is perhaps best exemplified by the address of Sir John Gibson, Lieutenant-Governor of Ontario, who stated, "it was our ambition to attain a high position among the nations, to hold the best relations with the United States, but never ceasing to sing 'God Save the King."[53] James Coyne, past president of the Ontario Historical Society, pointed to the Boer War to demonstrate that "nowhere in the Empire is the imperial sentiment stronger," but went on to say, "immigrants from the

[53] Wallis, Geary and Morden, *The Centenary Celebration,* 34.

States are among our greatest loyalists."[54] Lastly, the President of the Ontario Historical Society, Clarence M. Warner, contended that "we are loyal Canadians, and such we are proud of the record made by our pioneers during the War of 1812, and we know that after a century of peace the power of the United States... will always be a menace to our enemies."[55] These comments may or may not have been a direct expression of Prime Minister Borden's 'linchpin' policy, but suggest that officials were trying to balance Canada's imperial ties with its relationship to its southern neighbour. Warner went on to assure the American guests "that there is a genuine, deep-rooted, good feeling for them and their country in the hearts of all intelligent Canadians. Both countries have a few who like to make believe that they are enemies, but they make a poor showing when the real pulse of the two countries is tested."[56] Although loyalty to Britain and close relations with the United States are not always at odds, these speakers were in the difficult position of trying to balance the different emphases of commemoration of both the Battle of Lundy's Lane and the celebration of the peace between the nations after the end of the war. Most orators expressed this by emphasizing Canada's attachment to Britain, tempered with nods to American friendship.

For the most part the speakers at the event made an effort to emphasize the friendship between the two nations, and the most unambiguous expressions of this friendship stressed present relations and skirted the issue of the war itself. Speakers from both nations referred to present amity between the two countries, stressing that "war between the two countries is an unthinkable as a relapse into primitive barbarism."[57] The Lieutenant-Governor of Ontario contended that there "[is] room on this continent for two great Anglo-Saxon peoples to live in amity."[58] George Emerson, a historian from Buffalo, also stated that war now was impossible, as the two nations were "essentially of the same origin, speak the same language, read out of the same Bible and pray to the one ever-living and true God."[59] These speakers were drawing on a discourse of Anglo-Saxon unity that had arisen from the Anglo-American rapprochement and the subsequent redefinition of Canadian-American relations of the previous decades.[60] The discourse of friendship was for the most part expressed by drawing on present relations to emphasize the commonalities of the two nations, while avoiding the topic of the Battle of Lundy's Lane. Here the emphasis was on the celebration of the

[54] *Ibid.,* 49.
[55] *Ibid.,* 66.
[56] *Ibid.,* 65.
[57] *Ibid.,* 48.
[58] *Ibid.,* 34.
[59] *Ibid.,* 56.
[60] Edward P. Kohn, *This Kindred People: Canadian-American Relations and the Anglo-Saxon Idea, 1895-1903* (McGill-Queen's University Press, 2004), 4.

Crowds at the parade. Courtesy of Niagara Falls Public Library (Ont.) D421406

peace between the two nations, which engendered very little conflict.

Representatives of both nations were also in complete agreement regarding the respect due those who fell in the conflict. The LLHS, although it may have disagreed with American interpretations of the battle, had showed a great deal of respect to the remains of American soldiers, a tradition that continued at the centennial. One of the society's early acts had been to improve the area of American Captain Abraham Fuller Hull's grave, and they had also coordinated with the U.S.-based Niagara Frontier Landmarks Association when the remains of American soldiers were discovered on the battlefield, giving them military funerals in 1901 and 1910.[61] By the time of the centennial, then, the LLHS had experience dealing with British and American remains, and continued their custom of showing respect to the dead of both nations. To this end the society ensured that the monuments of both countries were decorated with flowers, "and the known graves of fallen heroes decked with small flags of their respective countries."[62] For many observers one of the most memorable parts of the ceremony was the additional decoration of the Canadian and British monuments to the dead by six American and six Canadian women. "The spirit of this simple incident seemed to take possession of the vast crowd who witnessed it," said one editorial.[63] Former Ontario Historical Society president James Coyne expressed the mood of the gathering towards the dead on both sides, saying of American soldiers that "they, too, died for their country, fighting its battles, and they share with your own soldiers the tribute Britons are always ready to pay to bravery, sacrifice, and patriotic devotion."[64] Janet Carnochan, President of the Niagara Historical

[61] Ernest Green, "History of the Lundy's Lane Historical Society," 7; "Soldiers to be Buried Tomorrow," *Niagara Falls Daily Record*, 7 October 1910; "An Important Service," *The Thorold Post*, 25 October 1901.

[62] "Enormous Crowds at Celebration of Battle of Lundy's Lane," *Niagara Falls Review* (n.d.), in Wallis, Geary and Morden, *The Centenary Celebration,* 97.

[63] "Inspiring Lessons from the War of 1812."

[64] Wallis, Geary and Morden, *The Centenary Celebration,* 47.

Society, also read a sonnet, part of which read, "We meet to tell the tale, but not in hate./ We meet their loyal names to consecrate/ Who fought and fell, shall we forget?/ Oh, no,/ But high emblaze their names and proudly show/ How nobly stood our sires in dangers great."[65] Drawing on a common discourse stressing the virtues bravery and sacrifice, both nations agreed on the respect due to the dead of both sides.

Friendship between the two nations was easily expressed when the emphasis was placed on the present, or their respective heroic dead. However, an examination of the discourse relating to the events of one hundred years before suggests that interpretations of the War of 1812 and Lundy's Lane were a source of tension. For instance, the American and Canadian perceptions of the origin of the war were clearly at odds. The Americans present tended to downplay the origins of the war, likely in an attempt to minimize American responsibility for the conflict. Peter Porter, the grandson of an American Commander during the battle, stated that "both of us have forgotten the animosities of long ago," while an American historian stressed that "which side was right and which was wrong... need have no part in our thoughts to-day."[66] In his address Porter expressed a popular American view, that the War of 1812 was a second revolution: "It was inevitable that there should be a second appeal to arms for the maintenance of our new nation," he stated, and continued, "that came in the War of '12, which forever established the position of 'The States' amongst the peoples and the powers of the earth."[67] However, Ontario Archivist Alexander Fraser had a different view. Fraser opened his address on the history of the conflict by reading the American Act of Congress declaring war, and delivered a strong critique, calling the American government unreliable, and "about a century behind the times in its estimate of the value of truth in international affairs."[68] Fraser went on to describe America's goal of capturing Canada "a wholly discreditable one," from "the point of view of Canada, and the world."[69] Discussing why America did not win the war, he stated that, "the satisfaction we feel to-day is that to us the War of 1812-1814 was a war of defence, not of offence or aggression."[70] Fraser was giving voice to a long-standing Canadian perception of the war that emphasized American aggression and saw Canada's role as purely defensive.[71] Here we can clearly see the expression of two different interpretations of the origins of the war, with both speakers painting it as necessary for their

[65] "Inspiring Lessons from the War of 1812."
[66] *Ibid.,* 45, 61.
[67] *Ibid.,* 43.
[68] *Ibid.,* 37.
[69] *Ibid.,* 41.
[70] *Ibid.,* 41.
[71] Keith Walden, "Isaac Brock: Man and Myth" (Master's thesis, Queen's University, 1972), 61.

nation's survival. The Canadian view that the war was one of aggression was clearly given voice at the ceremony, and Fraser's speech could hardly be seen as an effort to improve the relations of the two nations. Fraser, perhaps feeling it his duty as official provincial historian, tried to place the emphasis of the day back on to the commemoration of the war and the Battle of Lundy's Lane, rather than the commemoration of peace. He also clearly expressed his views when it came to the events of the battle itself.

Perhaps the most predictable point of contention at the celebration was the long-lasting debate over who won the Battle of Lundy's Lane. This was by no means a new debate; both nations had claimed victory since the day the battle was fought.[72] The battle had unfolded in such a way that each side could conceivably claim victory. The first phase of the battle had seen hard fighting between American forces and the British, who had a superior position on top of a long, low ridge. The British artillery fired relentlessly from this location, inflicting losses on the American forces. However, the Americans launched several attacks on the ridge, and the British guns were eventually captured. Drummond launched several unsuccessful counter-attacks in an effort to regain the ridge, but in the end the British forces were forced to retreat.

When the British re-arrayed for battle at dawn the next day the American forces had retreated, leaving Drummond's men free to re-occupy the ridge and reclaim their artillery.[73] The British could claim victory because they were left in control of the battlefield, while the Americans could claim it because they had not been driven from Lundy's Lane, but had retreated in orderly fashion. Examining the number of casualties did not resolve the question, as the losses on both sides were essentially the same, while the commanders of both forces claimed victory in their official reports.[74]

Since then the debate about who actually won the Battle of Lundy's Lane had been passionate and ongoing. In the spirit of international cooperation, speakers from both sides of the border played down the historical debate, painting it as a harmless entertainment while avoiding explicitly favouring either side. James H. Coyne, founder of the Ontario Historical Society, stated "the battle of the historians is happily a bloodless one, and may it continue its harmless course for another hundred years."[75] "The Battle of Lundy's Lane was not only one of the world's greatest battles, but it was one of the longest," said a historian from Buffalo, "[it] has waged in the books for 100 years," and is "a merry war."[76] Some, such as the Lieu-

[72] Donald E. Graves, *The Battle of Lundy's Lane: On the Niagara in 1814* (Baltimore, Maryland: The Nautical & Aviation Publishing Company of America, 1993), x.

[73] Richard V. Barbuto, *Niagara 1814: America Invades Canada*, (Kansas: University of Kansas, 2000), 216-26.

[74] Barbuto, *America Invades Canada,* 229; Graves, *The Battle of Lundy's Lane,* 182.

[75] Wallis, Geary and Morden, *The Centenary Celebration,* 47-48.

[76] *Ibid.,* 67.

tenant-Governor of Ontario, also tried to minimize the debate by pointing out the bravery of both sides.[77] In a similar vein a Buffalo historian stated, "it is sufficient for us of this generation to know that there was nothing on either side to cause us to feel the blush of shame."[78] These speakers avoided discussing the particulars of the battle or taking a position on its outcome, preferring to minimize the debate on the topic, and vaguely stressing the combatants' bravery. The general reluctance among many speakers to discuss the details of the battle at an event commemorating it seems out of place, especially as many of the speakers were local historians who clearly had a passion for history. Those who did not discuss the battle or the war may have been attempting to emphasize the idea of one hundred years of peace rather than the battle itself, although not all of the speakers adopted such a conciliatory approach.

Many Canadians, including members of both the Peace Centenary Association and the LLHS, had long felt that America histories of the war were inaccurate. Fraser criticized these histories, explaining that "as long as one-sided accounts still remain on the pages of accredited American history, it is the necessary and patriotic duty of Canadians to point out discrepancies, but," he added, "to do so in a spirit of friendly brotherhood."[79] The LLHS' official publication of the celebration contains a description of the battle written by the society's president, R.W. Geary. In it he echoes the popular Canadian interpretation of the battle, and paints the British as victorious in no uncertain terms.[80] In Geary's version of events, the British were able, "by a splendid effort, [to regain] the British guns and heights." "The fighting continued," he goes on, "until midnight, when the Americans... fell back... leaving the British in possession of the field."[81] In this interpretation the British successfully retook their artillery during the battle and forced the Americans to retreat, leaving no question that the British had been victorious. Although it was downplayed by many of the speakers at the centennial, clearly the debate over who won the battle was important and ongoing for some Canadians such as Fraser and the LLHS.

The centenary of the Battle of Lundy's Lane was promoted and perceived primarily as a celebration of peace between the two countries. Further examination, however, complicates this assumption. The LLHS and the CPCA each had different views on the significance of the centennial, and both played

[77] See *Ibid.,* 34.

[78] *Ibid.,* 61.

[79] *Ibid.,* 40.

[80] For similar accounts, see Ernest Cruikshank*, The Battle of Lundy's Lane 1814: An Address Delivered Before the Lundy's Lane Historical Society*, (Welland: Wm. T. Sawls, 1888); also Charles Anderson, *A True and Impartial Account of the Actions Fought at Chippawa & Lundy's Lane During the Last War with the United States*, (Niagara: John Simpson, n.d.).

[81] R.W. Geary, "A Short Account of the Battle of Lundy's Lane," in Wallis, Geary and Morden, *The Centenary Celebration,* 15.

a role in it. Political considerations led to an international ceremony filled with conflicting messages about Canada's history and, closely connected, its place in relation to Great Britain and the United States. Canada's struggle to redefine its place in the world was reflected in the ceremony, where participants tried to balance the country's traditional attachment to Great Britain and its growing friendship with the United States. The fact that the setting was the celebration of a bloody battle between the two nations only one hundred years before further complicated this balancing act. In a later report to the Ontario Historical Society LLHS President R.W.Geary admitted that the ceremony "necessitated... considerable originality and tact in the preparation of its programme to conform agreeably with the local and international feelings, wishes, and prejudices."[82]Although, likely in an effort to avoid confrontation, the speakers attempted to sidestep the issue of the war and its historiography and agreed on the role of the heroic dead, the events of the war itself remained contentious. Most speakers adopted a conciliatory approach, but debates about the origins of the war and who won the battle brought tensions to the fore. The centenary celebration brought together two different views of Canada's past and its future, creating a ceremony filled with ambiguity and contradictory narratives.

In retrospect it is perhaps fortunate that the Lundy's Lane centenary was adopted as the opening of the grand peace celebrations planned for 1915, as only a few weeks later Great Britain would declare war on Germany, effectively putting an end to the 1915 plans. R.W. Geary's personal copy of the LLHS's official publication, *The Centenary Celebration of the Battle of Lundy's Lane*, is filled with bitter handwritten notes. "While the speakers were talking of 'World Peace' on this memorable day," he wrote in 1931, "the Greatest War of all the ages had commenced in Austria."[83] For a time the carnage of the Great War would overshadow the events of the War of 1812 in the minds of the public, and in international affairs. However, the centennial celebration of the Battle of Lundy's Lane demonstrated that, although difficult and sometimes contradictory, peace between nations can be celebrated without losing sight of past wars between them.

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[82] R.W. Geary, "Special Report to the Ontario Historical Society, at the Annual Meeting, Toronto, June 2, 1915," in Wallis, Geary, and Morden, *The Centenary Celebration*, 144.

[83] NFHM 980.0.41.1770 LLHS Fonds Box 1, Geary's Copy of *The Centennial Celebration of the Battle of Lundy's Lane*, 18.