

during the Civil War in America and laid the foundations of the province of Ontario on the basis of staunch devotion to the Crown and Empire. The Niagara peninsula is full of the memories of these loyal people to whom Canada owes a debt of gratitude which she can never repay. Among them was one Robert Land, a fugitive from the banks of the Delaware River near Coshecton, New York, who was the first proprietor of the farm, afterwards known as Lundy's, where a great battle was fought on a midsummer's night in 1814. Subsequently he left the banks of the Niagara and built a rough cabin or "shack," in 1781, at "the head of the lake," or Burlington Bay—called Lake Geneva until 1792. His wife, a relative of General Wingfield Scott, thought he was dead, and sought refuge with her children at the close of the war in the new province of New Brunswick. Several years later they wandered to the banks of the Niagara, where they had tidings of the husband and father, long believed to have fallen a victim to the revolution, and were soon able to join him in his solitary home at the head of the bay.⁵ Another contestant for the honour of first settlement in the same district was Mr. Richard Beasley, an Indian trader, whose name is especially interesting to the historian of Dundurn, since he was the first claimant of the land on which it stands, and must be certainly admitted to have been one of the earliest pioneers of Wentworth. More fortunate, however, than either of these two pioneers from the point of view of fame were George Hamilton and James Hughson, who owned two farms below the Mountain, and have had their names perpetuated in the city and in one of its streets.⁶

But I shall not venture into the domain where the local historian and antiquarian can more profitably and intelligently delve. Mine the easier task to touch lightly on the most conspicuous events in the history of these historic grounds. It was during the war of 1812-15 that Burlington Heights became first famous in Canadian annals. From the beginning to the end of this conflict Upper Canada was the principal battle ground for the armies of the hostile nations. Here the United States believed that they could successfully occupy a province with a relatively insignificant population, and an ill-defended frontier, easily crossed by an invading army. This war brought out in bold relief the devotion and courage of the Loyalists and their descendants, who composed the greater proportion of the militia who fought by the side of the regular troops and saved Canada to England. It is a war full of illustrations of the heroism of Canadian men and women, and even of boys who, we are told, fled from their parents that they might fight in the ranks. In this memorable struggle the Heights became most important as a base of military operations. In 1713, towards the end of this very