

The Fight at Battle Hill.

A Paper Read by Mr. J. I. Poole, B.A., Before The
Middlesex Historical Society at London, Ont.,
on the Evening of May 19th, 1903.

INTRODUCTION.

The following narrative of the fight at "Battle Hill," or rather of Longwood (which is the name set forth in nearly all the early records), is written with a three-fold object.

In the first place, I was anxious, from a personal standpoint, to become familiar with its details; secondly, it occurred to me that this piece of local history should be rescued from the oblivion into which it had apparently fallen, and thirdly, this account is given to the public at the instance of the Middlesex Historical Society, through my friend, Mr. Frank E. Leonard, of London, Ontario, one of its officers, who communicated with me to the above effect, while I was residing and practicing at Comber, Ontario, and the good work of which society, I fear, is not being sufficiently appreciated by the county generally.

No doubt it will be conceded on all hands that the details of this, the only fight that took place within the limits of the present county of Middlesex during the war of 1812-14, should by all means be kept in remembrance from the fact that unlike such counties as Lincoln, Welland, Essex, Kent and some others, its historic ground is very considerably circumscribed.

The writer has tried by all available means in his power to make the statements contained within the pages of the accompanying story correct to a degree, and in the interests of historical accuracy, criticism, from whatever source it may come, is cheerfully invited.

Traditional evidence in the writing of this narrative has been almost entirely left out of the question. It has, in nearly every instance in which it was taken into consideration, been so flatly contradictory of the official and other contemporary documents as to be practically worthless, and thus has been, for the above reasons, laid aside almost altogether.

From my own experience as a legal practitioner, I find that a writer of any sort cannot be too particular in thoroughly sifting and weighing the various kinds and degrees of evidence placed before him, and that idea has, it is hoped, been constantly kept before me in the preparation of this short historical sketch.

This recital, as it now appears, varies in some particulars considerably from the narrative as it appeared in my paper read at London, Ontario, in May, 1903, for the reason that I have discovered since that time much new documentary evidence, which has been used in correcting and adding to my manuscript. If failures have been made in the production of this rehearsal, either through errors, or in any other way, it is earnestly trusted that some of my readers at least will take the trouble to set me right.

I cannot conclude without expressing my thanks to the following gentlemen who, among others, have assisted me by all means in their power in the production of this pamphlet, namely:— Judge Woods, of Chatham, Ontario; Colonel E. Porter Thompson, late of Frankfort, Kentucky; Mr. C. M. Burton, of Detroit, Michigan; Mr.