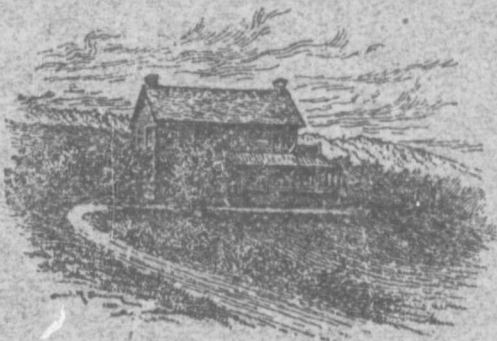


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SOUVENIR
—OF—
Stoney Creek
Battlefield Park.



The Property of the
Women's Wentworth Historical Society,
HAMILTON, ONTARIO.

Compiled by
MINNIE JEAN NISBET.



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1904
Box 2

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2^d " " " W. R. Waddell

3^d " " " John Lewis

4th " " " John Gibson

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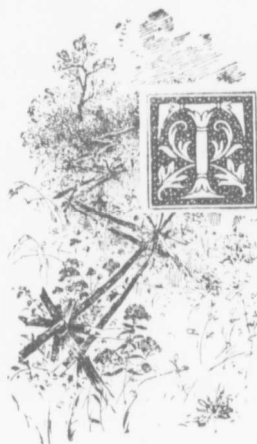
Secretary Mrs. Smith

Treasurer Mrs. Golder

Historian Miss Kibet,



JAMES GAGE.



O the Women's Wentworth Historical Society of Hamilton, Ontario, belongs the honor and privilege of being the only Society in Canada, which has secured and owns one of the spots closely connected with the early history of Canada.

In the Summer of 1899, Mrs. John Calder, president of the society, learned that the old Gage home-

stead and 4½ acres of land surrounding it, which formed the centre of operations during the Battle of Stoney Creek, was about to be sold.

She at once secured it, becoming personally responsible for the purchase money until it would be raised by subscription, etc.

The house was found to be in a very dilapidated condition, and about \$1,000 has been spent in putting house and grounds in good order.

When the society took possession of the property, they appointed William Hendrie, Esq., *Hon. A. T. Wood and John Calder, Esq.,

*Deceased.

trustees, and Mrs. Calder deeded the property, over to them to hold in trust for the society, and so this historic ground will be preserved forever, and be a perpetual object-lesson in early Canadian history.

In June, 1813, about 1500 American soldiers were camped on the Gage farm. Generals Winder and Chandler and some of the chief officers, were quartered in the Gage house, which was then a one-story building, with a large cellar. His store, which stood opposite, was the only store between Niagara and Toronto. This building was standing until quite recently, and over the door would be faintly seen—"J GAGE'S STORE."

During the battle, Mrs. Gage and her children were fastened in the cellar, under the east end of the house, for safety. This cellar remains exactly as it was at the time of the fight, with its heavy oak beams. James Gage was held a prisoner in a little log hut near the road. When the stampede began his two guards fled, and he ran up the lane to his house, anxious for his family's safety, with bullets flying about him, one going through his hat.

When Mrs. Gage opened the front door, she was horrified to have a body fall into the open doorway, and was still more shocked to find it was a young American officer who had been quartered in the house and to whom the family had become much attached.

Many of the wounded were brought into the house and Mrs. Gage and her eldest daughters tore up sheets and tablecloths for bandages.

Traces of the battle may still be found, as bullets, buttons, etc., are constantly being picked up. The late Daniel Dewey, who died in 1887, at the age of ninety years, came to Canada from the United States in 1818, five years after the battle. In coming from Niagara to the Head of the Lake, as Hamilton was then called, he stopped to examine the battlefield. His children and grandchildren have often heard his description of the place as it was then. He found bullets and bullet-holes in the Gage house, and also in the trees and fences, and he said the house and surroundings plainly showed the effects of a severe fight, and no other house in the vicinity showed any other marks of the struggle.

A gentleman, now living in Toronto, who used to visit the Gage farm when a boy, states that a large chest, which stood on the verandah to store heavy bedding and blankets in summer, when opened the Fall after the battle, was found to be riddled with bullets, many being lodged in the bedding.

James Gage's father was killed at Wyoming and his mother came to Canada with a party of U. E. Loyalists. She received a grant of land from the Government, of which this property forms a part, James Gage, her only child, was a small boy, and she worked the

farm herself until he was old enough to assist her.

Mrs. Calder, president, and Mrs. R. R. Waddell, second vice-president of the W. W. H. S., are granddaughters of James Gage.

The society has adopted the Wentworth Coat of Arms for its badge. The following description is given by permission of J. H. Smith, Provincial School Inspector Wentworth Co., who compiled it and who secured a copy of the Coat of Arms.

The Coat of Arms of the Wentworth family, after whom the county of Wentworth is named, consists of a shield surmounted by a crest. This crest is a gryphon rampant, an animal famous in mythical history as the guardian of the mines of gold, silver and precious stones, in Asiatic Scythia. It is described as half eagle and half lion, and is symbolical of strength combined with swiftness.

On the shield, in the centre, is a smaller shield, containing the hand of benediction, which suggests the thought of right dealing and right living. Beneath this, are two bars running obliquely and meeting in the centre like rafters in a building. On these are two antique keys, which were ordered to be placed there by George III. as a token of the fidelity of the Wentworths to Great Britain, they having sacrificed wealth and position in their fidelity to their king and country. On either

side of the smaller central shield, and below the two bars, are three leopard's heads, symbolical of courage—physical, mental and moral. This Coat of Arms and crest are beautiful in design, suggestive in thought and patriotic in sentiment.

It is conceded by writers of Canadian history, that the battle of Stoney Creek was the turning-point in the war of 1812-13, and was what saved Canada for the British Crown. Kingsford, in his history of Canada says: "The success of this bold and energetic attack was a turning-point in the war. It gave confidence to the British soldiers, and to the militia who went forward to the battlefield side by side. Toronto had been taken, its public buildings burned, its private dwellings plundered. Fort George had fallen, and there was much to lead to depression, but the defeat of a force more than five fold that which attacked it, by which it was driven back to seek refuge in Fort George, awoke confidence, determination and self-reliance which were never lost. The character of the war changed from that day."

Sir James Carmichael Smith, in his "Precis of the Wars in Canada," says: "The preservation of the Niagara district may, however, with the strictest justice, be fairly attributed to the attack upon the enemy at Stoney Creek. The nature of the war seems instantly to have changed after that most manly and energetic affair, and the campaign on that frontier

terminated in the capture of the American stronghold (Fort Niagara), and the destruction of the stores, provisions and ordnance they had collected in that part of the country for the further prosecution of the war."

A brief account of the battle may be of interest to visitors to this historic place.

When General Vincent and his army retreated from Fort George, they marched along the road parallel to the Niagara River to St. David's and then to Burlington Heights, May 27, 1813. The ground they occupied embraced the western part of what is now Hamilton Cemetery, and where the barricade thrown up by them still remains, the whole of Harvey Park and a portion of Dundurn Park. Although the position was a strong one they were in peril. They were within forty miles of the powerful United States army, and had only nineteen rounds of ammunition to each gun. General Dearborn saw the necessity for dislodging Vincent and Finn with their 3,500 men, and eight or nine field pieces. Under command of Generals Winder and Chandler, the Americans marched to Stoney Creek, within seven miles of the British camp. Here they camped on the farm of the late James Gage.

Colonel Sir John Harvey, after obtaining positive information as to the position and strength of the invading army, proposed to General Vincent to make a night attack on them, to which he consented. At

half past eleven on the evening of June 5th, Colonel Harvey started with about 750 men.

They marched down what is now York street and Main street. It was a very dark night and they marched in perfect order and in silence. When they reached the Red Hill they met the late Peter Gage (then a boy), driving home his father's sheep to hide them, as the American army had already used James Gage's fences for firewood and helped themselves liberally to his produce and stock. Peter Gage, who was no relation to James Gage, said Colonel Harvey stopped him to enquire about the road to Stoney Creek, and he told him of the ravine running nearly parallel with the road. The British marched through the ravine which brought them out near the enemy's camp.

A British scout saw a sentry standing by a tree, and advanced towards him. When the sentry challenged him he said "a friend," and walking up drove his bayonet through his heart, pinning him so tight to the tree he had to wrench his musket off to regain it. Next morning the sentry was found standing against the tree as if alive. Colonel Harvey ordered his men to charge, and they first siezed the arms, which were stacked between the camp and the creek. This created a panic, as the men were without arms, and their officers being across the wood were not there to rally them, and there was a general stampede. One of the officers after wandering about the woods all night surrendered to a farmer next morning, who found him sitting on a log about where the pumping house of the Hamilton waterworks now stands.

There have been various accounts given of the means by which Colonel Harvey obtained his information. Peter Van Wagner, who was twelve years old at the time of the battle, is authority for the statement that Peter Corman was taken prisoner by the detachment stationed at Stoney Creek, and questioned as to the position of Vincent's men. He "taffied up" the soldiers who had him in charge and they let him go, giving him the countersign to enable him to get home. He gave it to the British scout, William Green, who at once reported to Colonel Harvey all the information he had received from Corman. The surprise was so complete, Harvey scored a signal victory. Generals Winder and Chandler, with over 100 officers and men, were taken prisoners. The loss of the British was 23 killed, 136 wounded, 55 missing. And the great value of the victory was the driving away of a formidable enemy who retreated to Fort George and sent the bulk of their baggage across to Fort Niagara.

The ravine through which the army marched can be seen along the line of the Hamilton, Grimsby & Beamsville Railway.



