

## Research concerning Kahnawake's Participation in the War of 1812

This memo briefly presents the findings of our research on Kahnawake Mohawk participation in the War of 1812. The memo is accompanied by a collection of 34 primary and secondary source documents, a document list, and an annotated listing of sources reviewed (records researched).

### **Robert Allen's *His Majesty's Indian Allies***

In the text of his book *His Majesty's Indian Allies*, Robert Allen stated that the combined number of warriors for Kahnawake (Caughnawaga), St. Régis (Akwasasne) and the Lake of Two Mountains at Oka (Kanesatake) was 670.

The Indians of Upper Canada were estimated as numbering about 1,590 and included 400 Mohawk from the Grand River and another 50 from the Bay of Quinte (Tyedinaga); 220 Mississauga from the area of York, and 70 Ojibwa from Matchedash (Georgian Bay) and Lake Simcoe; 670 "Iroquois" from St. Régis (Akwasasne), Caughnawaga (Kahnawake); the Lake of Two Mountains at Oka (Kanehsatake); 130 Nipissing or Algonkin (Algonquin) in the same area; and 100 Abenaki from the St. Francis River (Odanak)...<sup>1</sup>

An appendix in Robert S. Allen's *His Majesty's Indian* entitled "List of Indian Warriors as they Stood in 1812 at the time war was declared", consists of a transcript of an 1814 document from the Strachan Papers at the Archives of Ontario. Allen's transcript states that the number Indians of Upper and Lower Canada were few in numbers, but claimed the list provided was "nearly a correct enumeration of them". In contrast to the text of his book, cited above, the appendix lists 670 warriors for the "[Iroquois] of Canawaga" solely:<sup>2</sup>

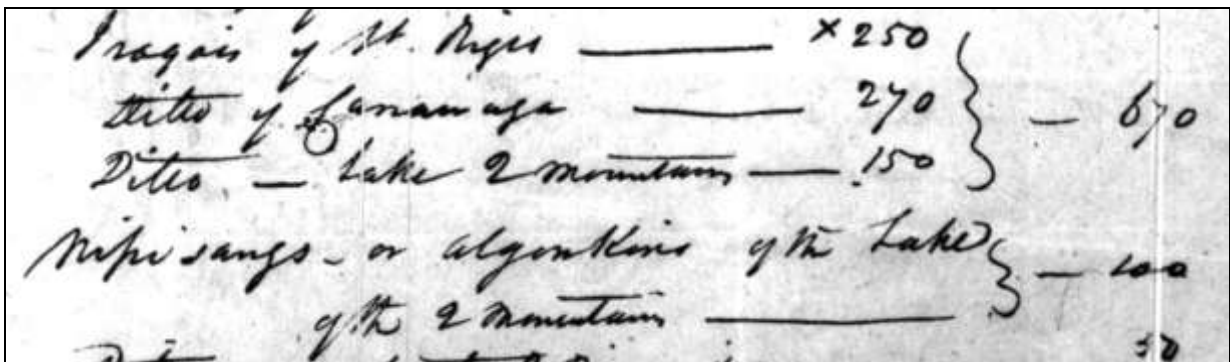
<sup>1</sup> Allen, Robert S. *His Majesty's Indian Allies: British Indian Policy in the Defense of Canada, 1774-1815*. Toronto and Oxford: Dundurn Press, 1992 [Doc. 29], p. 122.

<sup>2</sup> Allen, Robert S. *His Majesty's Indian Allies: British Indian Policy in the Defense of Canada, 1774-1815*. Toronto and Oxford: Dundurn Press, 1992 [Doc. 29], pp. 219-221.



Iroquois of St. Regis	250
Ditto of Canawaga	670
Ditto - Lake 2 mountains	150
Nipisangs or Algonkans of the Lake of the 2 mountains	100

A comparison of Allen's transcript and Strachan's original document reveals that Allen's transcript contains an error. Strachan's document states that there were 270 warriors available from "Canawaga". The number 670 actually represents the combined strength of "St. Regis", "Canawaga" and "Lake of 2 Mountains":<sup>3</sup>



E. A. Cruikshank, a Canadian military historian who studied and documented the War of 1812, considered the actual number of Indian warriors in the Canadas at the time of war. Cruikshank concluded that the number was slightly lower than Strachan's estimates.

The Seven Nations of Lower Canada, living at Caughnawaga and the Lake of Two Mountains, could muster about 500 fighting men; the Six Nations, at the Grand River, in Upper Canada, nearly 400, and the Missassaugas about the same number.<sup>4</sup>

### Formation of the Indian warrior corps of Lower Canada

According to E. J. Devine, British recruiting officers were met with reluctance when Kahnawake warriors were informed that their services were required on the Niagara frontier. They expressed a willingness to fight in defence of Lower

<sup>3</sup> "List of Indian Warriors as they Stood in 1812 at the time war was declared", Montreal, 1814, OA, Strachan Papers [Doc. 9].

<sup>4</sup> Cruikshank, E. A. *The Employment of Indians in the War of 1812*. Washington: Government Printing Office, 1896, [Doc. 20] p. 326.

Canada, close to their homes, but had little interest in being sent to defend Upper Canada.<sup>5</sup>

Nevertheless, on September 22, 1812, a General Order was issued by the Adjutant Generals Office in Montreal, to form an Indian warrior corps consisting of “Coghnawagas”, “St. Regis, or Oghquasagay”, “Lake of the Two Mountains”, and “St. François”. Chevalier de Lorimier was appointed Resident and Captain and several divisions of “Indian Warriors” were stationed at outposts of the Camp of Blairfindy.<sup>6</sup>

For the remainder of 1812, Captain de Lorimier and the Indian corps operated along the Richelieu River in support of British militia at L’Acadie<sup>7</sup> and the Canadian Voltigeurs. Charles-Michel de Salaberry was the commander of the Canadian Voltigeurs in charge of border defence south of Montreal. On November 1, de Salaberry received information that U.S. forces, commanded by Major-General Henry Dearborn, had moved across the border from Plattsburgh. De Salaberry gathered a force of 1,200,<sup>8</sup> including 230 Kahnawake warriors, and repelled the Americans from Lacolle in late November.<sup>9</sup> The Americans retreated back to Plattsburgh after their defeat at the first battle of Lacolle. Dearborn ordered his troops into winter quarters, and did not threaten the region with invasion again until 1814.<sup>10</sup>

### **The Niagara Campaign and the Battle of Beaver Dams**

The United States launched a new offensive into Upper Canada early in 1813. By May, the Americans had captured and sacked the capital at York, captured Fort George, and gained control of the Niagara Peninsula. On May 26, Sir John Johnson wrote to Colonel William Claus, informing him that much needed reinforcements were being sent from Lower Canada.<sup>11</sup> This included “all the

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<sup>5</sup> Devine, E. J. *Historic Caughnawaga*. Montreal: Messenger press, 1922, [Doc. 25] p. 321.

<sup>6</sup> General Order, Adjutant Generals Office Head Quarters Montreal, September 22, 1812, [Doc. 1] in Wood, William Charles Henry. *Select British documents of the Canadian war of 1812*. Vol. I, Toronto: University of Toronto, 1920, p. 332.

<sup>7</sup> Devine, E. J. *Historic Caughnawaga*. Montreal: Messenger press, 1922, [Doc. 25] p. 322.

<sup>8</sup> Cruikshank, E.A. *From Isle aux Noix to Chateauguay: a study of military operations on the frontier of Lower Canada in 1812 and 1813*. Ottawa: Royal Society of Canada, 1914, [Doc. 23] p. 168.

<sup>9</sup> Benn, Carl. *The Iroquois in the War of 1812*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1998, [Doc. 30] p. 102.

<sup>10</sup> Carstens, Patrick Richard & Sanford, Timothy L. *Searching for the Forgotten War: 1812*. [Philadelphia]: Xlibris Corporation, 2011, [Doc. 32] p. 308.

<sup>11</sup> Stanley, G. “Indians in the War of 1812” in Zaslow, M. *The Defended Border*, Toronto: The Macmillan Company of Canada Ltd., 1964, [Doc. 26] p. 182.

Indians I can spare, with six officers, to Sir George, so that I think he will have about three hundred either to attack or defend.”<sup>12</sup>

This group was the Indian warrior corps raised in September 1812, and now under the command of Captain Dominique Ducharme. According to Ducharme’s personal account:

“On the 26<sup>th</sup> day of May, 1813, I was ordered by Sir John Johnson to set out from Lachine at the head of a body of 340 Indians namely: **160 from Sault St. Louis** [emphasis added], 120 from the Lake of Two Mountains and 60 from St. Regis. I was accompanied by Lieutenants J. B. DeLorimier, Geodeon G. Gaucher, Louis Langlade, Evangeliste St. Germain and Isaac Leclair.”<sup>13</sup>

The 160 Kahnawake Mohawks from Seigneurie of Sault St. Louis represented a substantial proportion of the Lower Canada Indians under Ducharme. In June, Ducharme’s group was joined by Captain William Kerr, John Brant and 100 additional Mohawk warriors from the Six Nations. With the help of these new reinforcements, the British could once again challenge American forces for control of the Niagara Peninsula. Although nearly triple the strength of British forces (approximately 6,000 U.S. to 2,000 British, militia and Indians), the Americans mainly stayed within the safety of Fort George. Frequent foraging and reconnaissance parties ventured from Fort George, but were constantly harassed by the militia under British command.<sup>14</sup>

On June 20, a British light infantry brigade set up headquarters at Twenty Mile Creek, with the “Caughnawaga Indians” taking up an advance position.<sup>15</sup> That night, Lieutenant James FitzGibbon took his company even closer to set up a forward supply house near Fort George. Ducharme and a party of “Caughnawaga” accompanied FitzGibbon, and a small party of 25 warriors departed the next day to scout the Niagara up to Fort George. The scouts attacked two American parties, killing and capturing several hostages before returning that afternoon. The harassment annoyed General Dearborn to the point

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<sup>12</sup> Sir John Johnson to Colonel William Claus, 1813-05-26, [Doc. 2] in Cruikshank, E. A. *The Documentary History of the Campaigns upon the Niagara Frontier in 1812-14*, Vol. V, Welland: Tribune Office, 1920, p. 245.

<sup>13</sup> D. Ducharme’s account of the Battle of Beaver Dams, 1826-06-05, [Doc. 11] in Cruikshank, E. A. *The Documentary History of the Campaigns upon the Niagara Frontier in 1812-14*, Vol. VI, Welland: Tribune Office, 1920, pp. 124-7; D. Ducharme’s account of the Battle of Beaver Dam, 1826-06-05, [Doc. 12] in Johnston, Charles M. *The Valley of the Six Nations*. Toronto: Champlain Society, 1964, pp. 201-202.

<sup>14</sup> Cruikshank, E. A. *The fight in the Beechwoods: a study in Canadian history*. Welland: W.T. Sawle, 1895, [Doc. 18] p. 10.

<sup>15</sup> Cruikshank, E. A. *The fight in the Beechwoods: a study in Canadian history*. Welland: W.T. Sawle, 1895, [Doc. 18] pp. 9-10.

that a decision was made to send out a force of 600 men, under the command of Colonel Charles Boestler, to dislodge the British.<sup>16</sup>

On the night of June 23, Laura Secord stumbled upon a group of “sleeping Indians” on her way to warn Fitzgibbon of the advancing American column. The Indians took Secord to FitzGibbon, and she passed on the information she had collected. Shortly after, Ducharme’s scouts arrived reporting of a skirmish with the Americans. According to historian E.A. Cruikshank:

Ducharme immediately requested permission to advance and waylay the column at a spot which had fixed his attention the day before, as being favorable for an ambush. FitzGibbon readily gave his assent, and the entire body of Indians set off at a run.<sup>17</sup>

Subsequently:

Choosing a point where one of the widest and deepest of these ravines crossed the road, Ducharme stationed his warriors, Lieutenant De Lorimier and Le Clair, with twenty-five Caughnawagas, on the right; Captain William Johnson Kerr and Lieutenant John Brant with sixteen Mohawks, on the left, while he retained the remainder under his own command on the further slope, to check the advance of the enemy, and force them back into the hollow.<sup>18</sup>

Ducharme’s ambush location provided advantages in terrain that offset the numerical superiority of Boerstler’s column. The initial barrage from the Indian warriors wiped out an advanced guard of Dragoons. Ducharme had to restrain the urge of his warriors to charge out of cover, and instead maintain discipline to deal with advancing infantry. As Boerstler’s infantry approached, the “Caughnawagas” on the right, and the Mohawks on the left attacked the flanks of the enemy, driving them back to the road. It was only when the American artillery was deployed that Ducharme’s forces retreated.<sup>19</sup>

Unable to pursue his enemy with his artillery, Boerstler marched the main body of his regiment single-file through the woods. As they approached the edge of

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<sup>16</sup> Cruikshank, E. A. *The fight in the Beechwoods: a study in Canadian history*. Welland: W.T. Sawle, 1895, [Doc. 18] pp. 11-12.

<sup>17</sup> Cruikshank, E. A. *The fight in the Beechwoods: a study in Canadian history*. Welland: W.T. Sawle, 1895, [Doc. 18] p. 15.

<sup>18</sup> Cruikshank, E. A. *The fight in the Beechwoods: a study in Canadian history*. Welland: W.T. Sawle, 1895, [Doc. 18] pp. 16-17.

<sup>19</sup> Cruikshank, E. A. *The fight in the Beechwoods: a study in Canadian history*. Welland: W.T. Sawle, 1895, [Doc. 18] pp. 16-17.

the tree line, the Americans were again ambushed on their right flank, sending them into confusion and eventually retreating back to their artillery. Ducharme quickly ordered three detachments to encircle Boerstler's broken unit, and trap them with musket fire.<sup>20</sup>

Around this time, a British cavalry officer arrived to witness the battle before riding off to deliver his report. Lieutenant FitzGibbon arrived nearly an hour later and was eventually successful in negotiating and securing Boerstler's surrender.<sup>21</sup> In total, 23 officers, 487 non-commissioned officers and men of the regular army and 30 militia were taken prisoner. Approximately 30 were killed and 60-70 wounded.<sup>22</sup>

According to Ducharme's account, he had allowed FitzGibbon to take the surrender since he knew little English. However, he later stated that the British officers did not participate in the action, and "[t]he victory was entirely due to the Indians, who were not only deprived of the booty which had been promised them but of the honour and glory which they had won."<sup>23</sup>

Early reports indicated that 7 Indians were killed, and 16 wounded. Ducharme's account written in 1826 increased the numbers to 15 killed and 25 wounded.<sup>24</sup> William Claus's letter book recorded two "war chiefs of the Caughnawagas" having been killed in the battle. They were identified as Deyahokethe and Aheatagea.<sup>25</sup>

Controversy soon followed in the aftermath of the battle. The Indians under Ducharme, principally the Kahnawake, were discontented with a General Order published on June 28, 1813, giving FitzGibbon and British forces most of the credit for defeating and capturing the Americans at the Battle of Beaver Dams.<sup>26</sup>

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<sup>20</sup> Cruikshank, E. A. *The fight in the Beechwoods: a study in Canadian history*. Welland: W.T. Sawle, 1895, [Doc. 18] p. 17.

<sup>21</sup> Cruikshank, E. A. *The fight in the Beechwoods: a study in Canadian history*. Welland: W.T. Sawle, 1895, [Doc. 18] pp. 19-20.

<sup>22</sup> Cruikshank, E. A. *The fight in the Beechwoods: a study in Canadian history*. Welland: W.T. Sawle, 1895, [Doc. 18] p. 21.

<sup>23</sup> D. Ducharme's account of the Battle of Beaver Dams, 1826-06-05, [Doc. 11] in Cruikshank, E. A. *The Documentary History of the Campaigns upon the Niagara Frontier in 1812-14*, Vol. VI, Welland: Tribune Office, 1920, p. 127.

<sup>24</sup> Cruikshank, E. A. *The fight in the Beechwoods: a study in Canadian history*. Welland: W.T. Sawle, 1895, [Doc. 18] p. 20; D. Ducharme's account of the Battle of Beaver Dams, 1826-06-05, [Doc. 11] in Cruikshank, E. A. *The Documentary History of the Campaigns upon the Niagara Frontier in 1812-14*, Vol. VI, Welland: Tribune Office, 1920, p. 127.

<sup>25</sup> Col. Claus's Mss. Letter Book, n.d., [Doc. 18] in Cruikshank, E. A. *The fight in the Beechwoods: a study in Canadian history*. Welland: W.T. Sawle, 1895, p. 27.

<sup>26</sup> General Order, Kingston, 1813-06-28, [Doc. 4] in Wood, William Charles Henry. *Select British documents of the Canadian war of 1812. Vol. II*, Toronto: University of Toronto, 1923, pp. 167-168.

Protests and criticism were expressed by some officers, including the Mohawk Captain John Norton, who stated: "The Cognawaga Indians fought the battle, the Mohawks or Six Nations got the plunder, and FitzGibbon got the credit".<sup>27</sup> Captain William Kerr was reported as saying that "Not a shot was fired on our side by any but the Indians. They beat the American detachment into a state of terror, and the only share I claim is taking advantage of a favourable moment to offer protection from the tomahawk and scalping knife."<sup>28</sup> Captain W.H. Merritt reported that "the greater part of the Cognawagas were so much displeased [that] they returned home a few days later, which at this time was a very great loss."<sup>29</sup> After receiving the protests, a new General Order was issued on July 6, 1813, giving the Indian detachments credit for their role and conduct in the battle, as well as compensation to the wounded and families of the fallen.<sup>30</sup>

On July 11, 1813, the warriors of Kahnawake and the Lake of Two Mountains returned to Montreal with Captain Dominique Ducharme.<sup>31</sup>

## Return to Lower Canada and the Battle of Châteauguay

It was not until October 1813 that the threat of invasion again shifted back to the St. Lawrence. In response to U.S. troop movements, the British used "Caughnawaga" as an outpost and marshalling point. On the 8<sup>th</sup>, a General Order was issued deploying troops under Major-General Stovin, Lieutenant-Colonel Williams, Lieutenant-Colonel Robertson and militias on the south shore of the St. Lawrence to "Caughnawaga".<sup>32</sup> Furthermore, the order was given: "The Cochnawaga Indians with all their Officers to reinforce immediately Colonel Dechambault on the South Side of the Boharnois Channel."<sup>33</sup> Deschambault was assigned the task:

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<sup>27</sup> Notes by Capt. W.H. Merritt, n.d., [Doc. 34] in Cruikshank, E. A. *The Documentary History of the Campaigns upon the Niagara Frontier in 1812-14*, Vol. VI, Welland: Tribune Office, 1920, p. 123.

<sup>28</sup> Captain William Kerr, [Doc. 24] in Wood, William Charles Henry. *Select British documents of the Canadian war of 1812*. Vol. I, Toronto: University of Toronto, 1920, p. 66.

<sup>29</sup> Notes by Capt. W.H. Merritt, n.d., [Doc. 34] in Cruikshank, E. A. *The Documentary History of the Campaigns upon the Niagara Frontier in 1812-14*, Vol. VI, Welland: Tribune Office, 1920, p. 123.

<sup>30</sup> General Order sent to Sir John Johnson, Kingston, 1813-07-06, [Doc. 5] in Wood, William Charles Henry. *Select British documents of the Canadian war of 1812*. Vol. II, Toronto: University of Toronto, 1923, pp. 169-170.

<sup>31</sup> *Montreal Gazette*, 1813-07-12, [Doc. 6] in Cruikshank, E. A. *The Documentary History of the Campaigns upon the Niagara Frontier in 1812-14*, Vol. VI, Welland: Tribune Office, 1920, p. 222.

<sup>32</sup> Devine, E. J. *Historic Caughnawaga*. Montreal: Messenger press, 1922, [Doc. 25] p. 323.

<sup>33</sup> General Order, 1813-10-09, [Doc. 7] in Wood, William Charles Henry. *Select British documents of the Canadian war of 1812*. Vol. II, Toronto: University of Toronto, 1923, p. 377.



“... to oppose every possible resistance to the Enemy's passing their respective posts-and Should he notwithstanding succeed in passing they are directed to fall back rapidly with the Regulars and a proportion of Militia on Montreal in the event of the Enemy forcing their Passage past the Coteau du Lac and Cedars.”<sup>34</sup>

During this period, the United States was in the process of combining the troops of General James Wilkinson and General Wade Hampton into a powerful army, numbering 14,000, to attack Montreal.<sup>35</sup> Hampton moved down the left bank of the Chateaugay River on the way to meet with Wilkinson at the village of Châteaugay. On October 25, Hampton's 7,500 troops approached Canadian defences near La Fourche.

On the north bank of the Châteaugay, Lieut-Colonel Charles de Salaberry had selected the last strong natural feature along Hampton's path to prevent him from meeting with Wilkinson. De Salaberry's 300 troops manned strong *abattis* fortifications at several tributary creeks of the Chateaugay River. These defences were capable of holding up a superior force of attackers.<sup>36</sup> In addition, three companies totalling 160 were positioned on the south bank of the river, bringing the total number of the British firing line to 460.<sup>37</sup>

Beyond this first line of defence were an additional 1,131 troops. However, the numbers for British troop strength in the battle are educated estimates based on available data. In his first volume of *Select British Documents of the Canadian War of 1812*, William Wood explained:

The exact numbers present are very hard to ascertain. Perhaps they never will be ascertained. No general official return of men actually engaged and men present in other parts of the field seems to have ever been made up. Even the "300" under De Salaberry at the first *abattis* are not precisely accounted for either by him...<sup>38</sup>

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<sup>34</sup> General Order, 1813-10-09, [Doc. 7] in Wood, William Charles Henry. *Select British documents of the Canadian war of 1812. Vol. II*, Toronto: University of Toronto, 1923, p. 377.

<sup>35</sup> Wood, William Charles Henry. *Select British documents of the Canadian war of 1812. Vol. I*, Toronto: University of Toronto, 1920, [Doc. 24] p. 75.

<sup>36</sup> Wood, William Charles Henry. *Select British documents of the Canadian war of 1812. Vol. I*, Toronto: University of Toronto, 1920, [Doc. 24] p. 76.

<sup>37</sup> Wood, William Charles Henry. *Select British documents of the Canadian war of 1812. Vol. I*, Toronto: University of Toronto, 1920, [Doc. 24] p. 79.

<sup>38</sup> Wood, William Charles Henry. *Select British documents of the Canadian war of 1812. Vol. I*, Toronto: University of Toronto, 1920, [Doc. 24] pp. 83-84.



Wood specifically mentioned the “Caughnawagas” participating at the Battle of Châteauguay, but did not provide exact numbers.

A special word is due to the Indians, particularly the Okas and Caughnawagas, who did effective work in scouting and harassing the enemy in the bush. There seems to be no satisfactory reason why all his Indians never came into action in the way De Salaberry wished. The 22 with Ferguson did remarkably well. The 150 with Lery only yelled. But war-whoops counted for a good deal when the enemy began to get nervous.<sup>39</sup>

The 22 Indians with Captain Ferguson’s Fencibles were under the command of Captain Joseph M. Lamothe. Lamothe was made the captain of “the Abenakis and Iroquois” when the Indian warrior corps were formed in September 1812.<sup>40</sup> The *Canadian Dictionary of Biography* provides the following information on his contributions at Châteauguay.

Lamothe and his group of Abenakis, Algonkins, and Iroquois were deployed at the right front of the Canadian line, and were thus involved in some of the fiercest fighting. They acquitted themselves with distinction, and Lamothe received a personal commendation for his part in the battle and for his pursuit of the Americans during the two following days.<sup>41</sup>

Neither source indicates whether the 22 Indians with Lamothe included any “Caughnawaga”. It is possible that some or all of the 150 Indians at the right-rear of de Salaberry under Lt.-Col. de Léry may have been “Caughnawaga”.<sup>42</sup>

Other sources have claimed that Kahnawake men participated in the Battle of Châteauguay. Carl Benn wrote: “At Châteauguay, Kahnawake warriors participated in both the preliminary skirmishing and in the pursuit of the defeated Americans as part of a larger light infantry force.”<sup>43</sup> Benjamin Sulte wrote that de Salaberry ordered Ducharme to take 150 men to reconnoitre the enemy on the 27<sup>th</sup>. Three days later, Ducharme’s scouting party brought back intelligence that

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<sup>39</sup> Wood, William Charles Henry. *Select British documents of the Canadian war of 1812. Vol. I*, Toronto: University of Toronto, 1920, [Doc. 24] p. 83.

<sup>40</sup> Irving, L. Homfray. *Officers of the British forces in Canada during the war of 1812-15*. Welland Tribune Print, 1908, [Doc. 22] p. 217.

<sup>41</sup> *Dictionary of Canadian biography. Index, Vol. VI*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1991, [Doc. 28] p. 388.

<sup>42</sup> Wood, William Charles Henry. *Select British documents of the Canadian war of 1812. Vol. I*, Toronto: University of Toronto, 1920, [Doc. 24] p. 86.

<sup>43</sup> Benn, Carl. *The Iroquois in the War of 1812*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1998. [Doc. 30] p. 144.

the Americans broke camp at Piper's Road and were on their way to Four-Corners.<sup>44</sup> The *Dictionary of Canadian Biography* states that Ducharme was placed under the command of de Salaberry,<sup>45</sup> and medal records confirm that he received a Military General Service Medal for Châteauguay in 1847.<sup>46</sup> It is likely that Kahnawake warriors accompanied him during the battle. Finally, an account of the last surviving eye-witness was published in the Montreal *The Gazette* on May 11, 1895, claiming:

De Salaberry did not pursue the enemy. The third day after the encounter he reported at De Watteville's headquarters at Baker's. Hampton fell back unmolested, save by the Indians, who cut off several of his men near Dewittville. The Okas and the Caughnawagas were really the heroes of the campaign, and their services ought to be commemorated.<sup>47</sup>

However, William Wood wrote that the accuracy of this account could be questioned due to the witness's age, the passage of time since the events, and the possible bias of the writer.<sup>48</sup>

### **Reserve Corps of Indian warriors formed, August 1814**

The sources do not indicate when the Indian warrior corps formed in September 1812 was disbanded, but a second corps was formed by General Order on August 8, 1814. The corps was intended to serve as a reserve force, "[consisting] of Four Companies to be selected and brought forward as circumstances may Require from the Villages of Caughnawaga the Lake of the two Mountains, St Regis, St François Becancour and Three Rivers." The officers were instructed to "hold themselves in readiness at all times to move at the shortest possible notice. The "Company of Caughnawaga" was placed under the command of Captain Lorimier Verneuil, who had two Lieutenants, Jarvis Maccombe and Ignace Taisson. Captain Dominique Ducharme commanded the

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<sup>44</sup> *Quebec Mercury*, 1813-11-09 [Doc. 8], in Wood, William Charles Henry. *Select British documents of the Canadian war of 1812. Vol. II*, Toronto: University of Toronto, 1920, p. 409; Sulte, Benjamin. *La Bataille de Châteauguay*. Québec: Raoul Renault, éditeur, 1899, [Doc. 21] pp. 73, 77.

<sup>45</sup> *Dictionary of Canadian biography. Index, Vol. VI*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1991, [Doc. 27] p. 245.

<sup>46</sup> Graves, Donald E. *Field of glory: the Battle of Crysler's Farm, 1813*, Toronto: R. Brass Studio, c1999, [Doc. 31] p. 370.

<sup>47</sup> *The Gazette*, 1895-05-11, [Doc. 19] in Wood, William Charles Henry. *Select British documents of the Canadian war of 1812. Vol. II*, Toronto: University of Toronto, 1923, p. 422.

<sup>48</sup> *The Gazette*, 1895-05-11, [Doc. 19] in Wood, William Charles Henry. *Select British documents of the Canadian war of 1812. Vol. II*, Toronto: University of Toronto, 1923, p. 421.

Company of the Lake of the Two Mountains, and J.B.C. de Lorimier led the Company of St. Regis.<sup>49</sup>

The records do not indicate the number of warriors recruited for each division, or if this new corps participated in any additional actions during the war.

### Identifying Kahnawake veterans and notes regarding sources

Patricia Kennedy, an archivist at Library and Archives Canada, was consulted for her expertise on records on Indian Affairs.<sup>50</sup> Patricia Kennedy had this to say concerning military records from the period.

It cannot be too strongly emphasized that the practice of keeping personnel files is a “modern” phenomenon, that the best we can expect for military forces two centuries ago would be nominal muster rolls and pay lists - for the regiments on the Army establishment, for “independent” corps and for the militia. Few casualty lists named anyone below commissioned officer rank. Unless the Aboriginal allies were paid individually, there would be no incentive to compile nominal lists - and the linguistic challenges of Aboriginal languages offered further dis-incentives. Note that the covering letter with that 1847 list (RG 10, vol. 264, page 161468) refers to applications submitted, and to investigation of claims, but makes no mention of consulting musters or pay lists - even for the regular forces. The board appointed to review applications may well have relied entirely on certificates and letters of recommendation.<sup>51</sup>

A return listing warriors of the Six Nations who participated in the Battle of Beaver Dams<sup>52</sup> was located, but no similar list could be found for the Kahnawake.

William Claus’s letter book recorded Indian casualties from the Battle of Beaver Dams. In it, he wrote that two “war chiefs of the Caughnawagas” had been killed

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<sup>49</sup> General Order, 1814-08-08, [Doc. 10] in Wood, William Charles Henry. *Select British documents of the Canadian war of 1812. Vol. III*, pt. II, Toronto: University of Toronto, 1928, pp. 728-729.

<sup>50</sup> This inquiry was made in connection with an earlier project.

<sup>51</sup> Email of Patricia Kennedy, Library and Archives Canada to Joan Holmes & Associates, Inc., 2012-06-26, [Doc. 33]. Note: Kennedy forwarded the list and cover letter included in our collection as [Doc. 15] and [Doc. 16].

<sup>52</sup> “A Return of the Six Nations Tribesmen at Beaver Dam, 1813-06-24, [Doc. 3] in Charles M. *The Valley of the Six Nations*. Toronto: Champlain Society, 1964, pp. 203-205.

in the battle and identified them as Deyahokethe and Aheatagea.<sup>53</sup> Also noted earlier were the names of “Caughnawaga” Lieutenants Jarvis Maccombe and Ignace Taisson.<sup>54</sup>

The names contained in the lists for the Military General Service Medal (1847)<sup>55</sup> with the Battle of Châteauguay clasp were compared with the names of chiefs listed in a memorial from the “village of Caughnawaga” from 1841<sup>56</sup> and a petition of a “Caughnawaga Nation” claim with the state of New York in 1843.<sup>57</sup> Below is a list of some matches and possible matches between the lists:

**Matches:**

<b>Veterans of the Battle of Châteauguay</b>	<b>Confirmed Kahnawake names</b>
Tekanasontie, Martin <sup>58</sup>	Tehanasontie, Martin <sup>59</sup>
Katstirakeron, Saro <sup>60</sup>	Katsirakeron <sup>61</sup> Katserakeron <sup>62</sup>
Tiohatekon, Atonsa <sup>63</sup>	Tueatakon <sup>64</sup> Tiokate kon <sup>65</sup>
Atenhara, Henias <sup>66</sup>	Atenharha <sup>67</sup>

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- <sup>53</sup> Col. Claus’s Mss. Letter Book, n.d., [Doc. 18] in Cruikshank, E. A. *The fight in the Beechwoods: a study in Canadian history*. Welland: W.T. Sawle, 1895, p. 27.
- <sup>54</sup> General Order, 1814-08-08, [Doc. 10] in Wood, William Charles Henry. *Select British documents of the Canadian war of 1812. Vol. III*, pt. II, Toronto: University of Toronto, 1928, pp. 728-729.
- <sup>55</sup> Alphabetical List of the Canadian Militia and Indian Warriors whose claims for medals, 1847 [Doc. 15] LAC RG 10 Vol. 264 pp. 161459-161467.
- <sup>56</sup> “Memorial of a council head at the Village of Caughnawaga”, 1841-06-26. [Doc. 13] LAC RG 10 Vol. 3249 File 600,441X pt. 1.
- <sup>57</sup> Petition of the Caughnawaga Nation to the State of New York, 1843-12-26, [Doc. 14] LAC RG 10 Vol. 3249 File 600,441X pt. 1.
- <sup>58</sup> Graves, Donald E. *Field of glory: the Battle of Crysler’s Farm, 1813*, Toronto: R. Brass Studio, c1999, [Doc. 31] p. 370.
- <sup>59</sup> Petition of the Caughnawaga Nation to the State of New York, 1843-12-26, [Doc. 14] LAC RG 10 Vol. 3249 File 600,441X pt. 1.
- <sup>60</sup> Graves, Donald E. *Field of glory: the Battle of Crysler’s Farm, 1813*, Toronto: R. Brass Studio, c1999, [Doc. 31] p. 370.
- <sup>61</sup> “Memorial of a council head at the Village of Caughnawaga”, 1841-06-26. [Doc. 13] LAC RG 10 Vol. 3249 File 600,441X pt. 1.
- <sup>62</sup> Petition of the Caughnawaga Nation to the State of New York, 1843-12-26, [Doc. 14] LAC RG 10 Vol. 3249 File 600,441X pt. 1.
- <sup>63</sup> Graves, Donald E. *Field of glory: the Battle of Crysler’s Farm, 1813*, Toronto: R. Brass Studio, c1999, [Doc. 31] p. 370.
- <sup>64</sup> “Memorial of a council head at the Village of Caughnawaga”, 1841-06-26. [Doc. 13] LAC RG 10 Vol. 3249 File 600,441X pt. 1
- <sup>65</sup> Petition of the Caughnawaga Nation to the State of New York, 1843-12-26, [Doc. 14] LAC RG 10 Vol. 3249 File 600,441X pt. 1.

**Possible matches:**

<b>Veterans of the Battle of Châteauguay</b>	<b>Confirmed chiefs/members of Kahnawake</b>
Kariwakeron, Sak <sup>68</sup>	Katsirakeron <sup>69</sup>
Thoientakon, Simon <sup>70</sup>	Tueataken, Simon <sup>71</sup>
Tehiaase, Atonsa <sup>72</sup>	Tehaisache <sup>73</sup>
Karakontie, Arenne <sup>74</sup>	Karakchte <sup>75</sup>
Sakorathenta, Sawatis <sup>76</sup>	Sao8entiso8wane, Sa8atis <sup>77</sup>
Saskwenharowane <sup>78</sup>	Sao8entiso8wane <sup>79</sup>

It is important to remember that the list of medals awarded to veterans of the Battle of Châteauguay is not a complete list of participants. The decision was made in 1847 to award medals to surviving officers and soldiers who had participated in battles of the Napoleonic period. Clasps for critical engagements were issued with the medals, and were presented to eligible veterans who made

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- <sup>66</sup> Graves, Donald E. *Field of glory: the Battle of Cryslers Farm, 1813*, Toronto: R. Brass Studio, c1999, [Doc. 31] p. 370.
- <sup>67</sup> "Memorial of a council head at the Village of Caughnawaga", 1841-06-26. [Doc. 13] LAC RG 10 Vol. 3249 File 600,441X pt. 1.
- <sup>68</sup> Graves, Donald E. *Field of glory: the Battle of Cryslers Farm, 1813*, Toronto: R. Brass Studio, c1999, [Doc. 31] p. 370.
- <sup>69</sup> "Memorial of a council head at the Village of Caughnawaga", 1841-06-26. [Doc. 13] LAC RG 10 Vol. 3249 File 600,441X pt. 1.
- <sup>70</sup> Graves, Donald E. *Field of glory: the Battle of Cryslers Farm, 1813*, Toronto: R. Brass Studio, c1999, [Doc. 31] p. 370.
- <sup>71</sup> "Memorial of a council head at the Village of Caughnawaga", 1841-06-26. [Doc. 13] LAC RG 10 Vol. 3249 File 600,441X pt. 1.
- <sup>72</sup> Graves, Donald E. *Field of glory: the Battle of Cryslers Farm, 1813*, Toronto: R. Brass Studio, c1999, [Doc. 31] p. 370.
- <sup>73</sup> "Memorial of a council head at the Village of Caughnawaga", 1841-06-26. [Doc. 13] LAC RG 10 Vol. 3249 File 600,441X pt. 1.
- <sup>74</sup> Graves, Donald E. *Field of glory: the Battle of Cryslers Farm, 1813*, Toronto: R. Brass Studio, c1999, [Doc. 31] p. 370.
- <sup>75</sup> "Memorial of a council head at the Village of Caughnawaga", 1841-06-26. [Doc. 13] LAC RG 10 Vol. 3249 File 600,441X pt. 1.
- <sup>76</sup> Graves, Donald E. *Field of glory: the Battle of Cryslers Farm, 1813*, Toronto: R. Brass Studio, c1999, [Doc. 31] p. 370.
- <sup>77</sup> "Memorial of a council head at the Village of Caughnawaga", 1841-06-26. [Doc. 13] LAC RG 10 Vol. 3249 File 600,441X pt. 1.
- <sup>78</sup> Graves, Donald E. *Field of glory: the Battle of Cryslers Farm, 1813*, Toronto: R. Brass Studio, c1999, [Doc. 31] p. 370.
- <sup>79</sup> "Memorial of a council head at the Village of Caughnawaga", 1841-06-26. [Doc. 13] LAC RG 10 Vol. 3249 File 600,441X pt. 1.

application. Many veterans did not survive to 1847 and likely many were not aware of the application process, or simply did not apply.<sup>80</sup>

In December 1890, Wa-te-Ka-wen-nen-te of the “Caughnawaga Reserve” submitted a petition to claim the pension of her husband, Rusar-Ka-ne-ha-ri-io, for his service in the war of 1812-15. She stated that she had a medal in her possession which had been awarded to her husband at Chateaugay.<sup>81</sup>

## Possibilities for Further Research

The majority of time on this project was spent researching the War of 1812 battles in which Kahnawake warriors participated. Additional research could be done in archival correspondence files that may contain a return of the 160 Kahnawake warriors recruited in September 1812 who served under de Lorimier and Ducharme, and possibly the second reserve Indian warrior corps formed in August 1814. Returns may or may not exist, but such a list was found of warriors of the Six Nations at Beaver Dams.<sup>82</sup>

The matching of known Kahnawake names on the medals lists was also limited to the use of two documents containing the names of petitioning chiefs.<sup>83</sup> Additional work on the identification of individual Kahnawake warriors could be done by collecting lists of all known Kahnawake names from the War of 1812 era (lists, census, additional petitions and other records), and comparing them to the medals lists. However, the only battle that the Kahnawake participated in with a medals list was Châteaugay and it is not a complete list of all officers and soldiers who participated in the action.

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<sup>80</sup> Graves, Donald E. *Field of glory: the Battle of Crysler's Farm, 1813*, Toronto: R. Brass Studio, c1999, [Doc. 31] p. 370.

<sup>81</sup> Wa-te-Ka-wen-nen-te to the Right-Honourable Sir Frederick Stanley, 1890-12-04 [Doc. 17] LAC RG 10 Vol. 2544 File 111,735.

<sup>82</sup> “A Return of the Six Nations Tribesmen at Beaver Dam”, 1813-06-24, [Doc. 3] in Johnston, Charles M. *The Valley of the Six Nations*. Toronto: Champlain Society, 1964.

<sup>83</sup> We had these documents on hand from other research.