

Centennial and Bicentennial Commemorations of the War of 1812

by Marc Keirstead

Suggested grade level: Intermediate/Senior

Suggested time: 2 class periods

Brief Description of the Task

In this lesson students will explore to what extent there was continuity and change between the commemorations of the war of 1812 in 1912 and 2012.

Historical Thinking Concepts

- Continuity and Change
- Use of Primary Source Evidence

Learning Goals

Students will be able to:

1. Examine sources outlining the focus of the commemorations of the war of 1812 in 1912 and 2012
2. Identify to what degree there was **change and continuity** between the two commemorations

Materials

Copies of the appendices and an Internet connection.

Prior Knowledge

It would be an asset for students to be familiar with:

- the role General Brock played in the war of 1812
- the major engagements on the Niagara and St. Lawrence fronts

Assessment

Students will complete an organizer to be assessed for learning (formative)

Detailed Lesson Plan

Part 1

1. To begin the lesson, point out to students that from the period 2012 to 2014 there will be numerous commemorations of the War of 1812. But was this always the case? As a comparison, commemorations from 1912 will be compared with those occurring in the 2012-2014 period.

2. Display Appendix A - a *Toronto Star* article from 1912 - to begin the lesson. Students should consider the headline in the article that declared: How General Brock's Great Victory Helped Save Canada to the British Flag. Ask them to consider:

- Who is the focus of attention in the headline?
- Why is Brock considered important?

3. Now have students examine the title used in the Heritage Canada 2012 website on General Brock: Major-General Sir Isaac Brock: The Hero of Upper Canada (1769-1812). How does this title differ from the one in 1912? How are they similar?

4. Students will be divided into groups with some examining descriptions of commemorations in 1912 and others examining commemorations in 2012. Groups should start with one primary source each, although some groups might be able to review two sources in the same time period.

The groups will examine:

Appendix B: Editorial in the *Toronto Star* from 1912

Appendix C: Headlines for the centennial of the Battle of Queenston Heights

Appendix D: Commemorations in small communities, 1912

Appendix E: Commemoration of Brock's death

Appendix F: Heritage Canada website,

<http://1812.gc.ca/eng/1305654894724/1305655293741>

Appendix G: Niagara 1812 Legacy Council, www.visit1812.com/

Appendix H: War of 1812 on the St. Lawrence,

<http://celebrate1812.ca/>

4. Students will post the work they complete and then the class will do a walkabout. During the walkabout groups should review the various appendices and comments and complete the Walkabout Organizer. In the organizer they will note the common and elements that appear in both time periods, as well as what has changed.

5. To conclude the lesson students could be asked to consider the following:

- How have the commemorations remained the same from 1912 to 2012?
- How have the commemorations changed from 1912 to 2012?
- Why do you think some commemorations were changed while others remained?

You might also want them to suggest ideas or projects that they feel the government should fund to help raise students' awareness and appreciation for the bicentennial.

Walkabout Organizer

A brief description of my appendix:

Main points of the other appendices? (A, B, C, etc.)	How is the appendix similar to my appendix description?	How is the appendix description different from mine?

What is the main similarity? What is the main difference?

Questions For Appendix Analysis

Appendix B

1. Where does the government of Ontario expect the anniversary of Brock's death to be commemorated?
2. Does the article consider the event to be important? What quotes or references can you find to support your answer?
3. Does the article indicate that there is a change in the attitudes of the government from 1812 to 1912? What points can you find to support your answer?

Appendix C

1. What parts of the Battle of Queenston Heights do the headlines highlight?
2. Could these headlines have been written in 1812 as well as 1912?
3. What one headline would you suggest should be written in 2012?

Appendix D

1. What groups are involved in the commemorations according to this source?
2. What do all three commemorations have in common regarding the ceremonies?
3. Why might celebrations in 2012 be different compared to those described in 1912?

Appendix E

1. What parts of the War of 1812 is the government promoting in their website?
2. What assistance is the government giving Canadians to help celebrate this anniversary? (see Commemoration Fund)

3. Examine the news releases and briefly outline some of the events for the commemoration.

Appendix F

1. Examine the events listed on the calendar for June 29, July 13, and October 12. Briefly describe the type of events.
2. What do the events have in common?
3. What type of events do you think would appeal to students your age?

Appendix G

1. What do the events planned for the commemoration of the war of 1812 have in common?
2. What type of events do you think would appeal to students your age?
3. What aspects of the war of 1812 do you feel are not being mentioned in these events?

Appendix H

1. What type of events are commemorated in the "Major Events" Tab? What do they have in common? How are they different?
2. Examine the "Events' Tab and examine the Traveling Trunks". Which trunk would you like to examine? Why
3. What new trunk would you like to see created? Why?

The Toronto Star, October 10, 1912

1812-1912-2012

We are on the eve of the celebration of the death of Sir Isaac Brock. It carries the mind backward to 1812. It should also carry the mind forward to 2012. New occasions bring new duties. Brock did his duty. How is the young Canadian, the schoolboy or schoolgirl, who will listen to patriotic addresses on Friday or Monday to do his or her duty?

It does not seem probable that there will be another war with the United States. Since the war of 1812 we have had many troublesome disputes with the United States, and they have all been settled without war.

...It may help to show what Canada and the United States may together accomplish before October 12, 2012 in fighting against the common enemies of the human race

Ideals of Brock

The Minister of Education has issued a circular as to the commemoration of the death of General Brock, who was killed at the battle of Queenston Heights on October 13, 1812. As October this year is Sunday, the commemoration day for the school will be either Friday, the 11th, or Monday, the 14th.

It is the utmost importance that the incident should be treated so as to yield the highest possible education value. It need hardly be said to teachers that any idea of enmity (*hatred*) toward the United States should be carefully excluded. The lesson taught should be heroism, not hatred.

...We have had a century of peace with the United States. We ought to impress upon children the fact that peace-international peace-does not mean the end of heroism, or of occasions for honorable death and sacrifice and unselfishness. Instead of fighting each other in the twentieth century, Canada and the United States may be fighting side by side against filth and disease, against adulterated food (*spoiled food*), against the white plague (*tuberculosis-disease that affects lungs*), against white slavery, against slums, against ignorance, against the oppression which grinds the faces of the poor. Here are splendid opportunities to work, as our ancestors worked in the forests in 1812; perhaps to die as Brock died at Queenston Heights, as Canadians, yes, and American died in order that their ideals might live. Let us try to celebrate this anniversary of death and heroism in the spirit of greatness which animated (*inspired*) Brock and not fall below the majesty of death for duty and ideals.

Toronto Star, October 12, 1912

“How General Brock’s Great Victory Helped Save Canada to the British Flag”

“Invaders were Thrown Back at Queenston”

“Story of Famous Canadian Victory of Just One Hundred Years Ago”

“Canadian Heroes Gave Up Lives”

“Americans Were Driven Over Cliff’s Edge or Else Forced to Surrender”

“Gen. Brock’s Bravery”

“Fearless of Fire He Charged at Troops’ Head - US Leader Also Slain”

1. What parts of the battle of Queenston Heights are stressed in the headlines?
2. How could the battle be seen as a victory if Brock was killed?

Lesson 7, Appendix D

The Toronto Star, October 14, 1912

Commemoration in St. Thomas

The Brock Centenary was observed here today in many churches, especially in Trinity Church, where Ven Archdeacon Hill preached a stirring patriotic sermon to the local militia. The Twenty-fifth Regiment, the Collegiate Cadets and the Veterans of '66 marched in a body to the church.

Boy Scouts at Church (Ingersoll)

In commemoration of the hundredth anniversary of the Battle of Queenston Heights, the Boy Scouts this morning attended service at St. Paul's Church. They paraded in a body in full uniform and listened to an impressive and inspiring sermon appropriate to the occasion by the rector, Rev. R. J. M. Perkins.

Militia and Cadets Parade (St. Catharines)

Services appropriate to the memory of Sir Isaac Brock were held in practically all of the churches in the city today. The St. Catharines garrison, and what is known as the Lincoln Brigade, including the 2nd Dragoons, 7th Field Battery, 19th and the Lincoln companies of the 44th Regiments, and the Veterans paraded to St. Thomas' church with the Collegiate Institute and Ridley College Cadets. Ven Archdeacon Perry delivered the sermon. Tomorrow patriotic exercises will be held in all the local public schools.

1. What groups were involved in the celebrations?
2. What is the common location for the ceremonies in each description? Do you think ceremonies in 2012 would be held in similar locations?

Globe and Mail, October 14, 1912

IN MEMORY OF GEN. BROCK; A PICTURESQUE CEREMONY

His Great Victory Commemorated by Patriotic Gathering on the Heights of Queenston - Many societies and Institutions Represented

Gathered about his stately monument overlooking the Niagara River, patriots in the number of fifteen hundred met on Saturday afternoon on the historic battleground of Queenston Heights to honor the name of General Sir Isaac Brock to place wreaths upon his grave, to recount the story of his sacrifice and heroism, and to celebrate the hundredth anniversary of his death.

The presence of three descendants of Brock's chivalrous (*brave*) aide-de-camp, Lieut-Colonel Macdonell, who fell at the same time as Brock, a score of Indian chiefs and warriors, representing the Six Nations Indians whose fathers, led by Tecumseh, fought side by side with the hero of Queenston Heights, the Veterans of '85, and the military, lent a picturesque touch in the celebration. Some of the Indians were in tribal dress. Two of the descendants of General Brock's brother were unable to be present.

It was a beautiful afternoon and the ceremony will not soon be forgotten.

1. How would this ceremony be similar to what could happen in 2012 and how might it be different?