

History of the Area

Statically located on the South shore of St. Lawrence River where she meets the headwaters at Lake Ontario, Cape Vincent has been a witness to the military conflicts that defined both the United States and Canada.

During the French and Indian War, armies of both the Imperial French and the British sailed by and stopped on the shores of Cape Vincent. In 1760, eleven thousand soldiers under British General Jeffery Amherst moved past and camped near Cape Vincent on their epic journey to the Battle of Isle Royal at present day Ogdensburg and their Conquest of Canada.

A few years later in 1777, a British Army would camp for several weeks on Carleton Island under Col. Barry St. Ledger on their way to the Mohawk Valley and the siege at Fort Stanwix (Rome NY).

The British found the town of Cape Vincent's location to be so strategic that it built a major supply base and Fort Haldimand on Carleton Island in 1778. This military base played an important role in the supply of the western posts at Niagara and Detroit. Several ships of the line were built at the naval yard at the head of the Island.

During the Revolutionary War, many raids were launched from the base on Carleton Island. Many notable and notorious people visited there including Joseph Brant the Indian chief, Walter Butler the Tory Commander and Captain George McDougall, who was an ancestor of Hillary Clinton, to name a few.

From the end of the Revolution to the beginning of the War of 1812, the base at Carleton Island acted as a relocation point for British Loyalists from the Mohawk Valley including Molly Brant and many others.

With the outbreak of the War of 1812, Cape Vincent became one of the most exposed locations on the US and Canadian border. It was necessary to have armed forces at Cape Vincent since the enemy had a large force nearby at Kingston, Ontario, Canada.

The first combat of the War of 1812 took place in Cape Vincent in June 1812. Abner Hubbard, a Cape Vincent resident captured Fort Haldimand on Carleton Island which was still occupied by the British even though the island had been ceded to the US in 1796.

On several occasions in the summer of 1813 both Americans and British soldiers and sailors came to conflict at the Village of Cape Vincent, then known as Gravelly Point.

The history books tell of several attacks that took place in Cape Vincent where soldiers fought to the death. There were ship landings, stores were plundered, and barracks were burned.

For a few weeks in late 1813, an American Army of 10,000 under General Wilkinson used Grenadier Island near Tibbetts Point as a staging area for an invasion of Canada. The Army rowed a flotilla of 250 whale boats down the St. Lawrence in early November. General Wilkinson briefly stopped at Cape Vincent while the American Lake Ontario Fleet under Commander Chauncey with over 1000 sailors and 10 major war ships sailed past to protect the exposed army in transit. For a week while the Army under Wilkinson moved, the Fleet stayed at anchor off the still formidable remains of Fort Haldimand on Carleton Island to prevent its being reoccupied.

With the end of the War of 1812 Cape Vincent moved to a period of peaceful prosperity, growth and commerce.

– by Dennis McCarthy

Cape Vincent Historical Weekend



2017

Saturday, June 24th and Sunday, June 25th

Brought to you by:

Cape Vincent Chamber of Commerce
With the Village & Town of Cape Vincent
Cape Vincent Arts Council, Bad Apple Bin Inn and
Kronenbourg 1664

Encampment Events

Saturday, June 24th

Camden Continentals Fife & Drum Corps
perform throughout the day

9 AM Opening Ceremony— Singing of the National Anthems (Nick Brizee), raising of the symbolic flags, artillery salute— Veterans Flag Pole, Esselstyne

9 AM Encampment Grounds Opens to the Public— We encourage the public to peruse through the encampment grounds, interact with our Living Historians, and explore the camp life of soldiers and camp followers of the War of 1812

11 AM Historical Lecture Series— Ron Patterson will represent the Oneida Nation and will discuss Battle of Oriskany and why Oneida is known as the "First Allies"

11:30 AM Children's Muster— Children are invited to fall into formation, shoulder a wooden musket and follow orders of their commanding officer

12 PM DUEL— Two soldiers will settle their differences like 19th century gentlemen. Our narrator will describe in detail the protocol and details of a traditional 19th century duel

1 PM Historical Lecture Series— David More will discuss the thousands of unsung French-Canadian mariners who constructed, crewed and commanded warships and bateaux on the St. Lawrence River and Lake Ontario from 1775-1814.

2 PM "From Plattsburgh to Peace" — Kyle Jenks will portray President Madison during the War of 1812 along with John Quincy Adams and Albert Gallatin.

3 PM Cooking Demonstrations— several throughout encampment

4 PM Historical Lecture Series— The British Soldier and the Archaeology of Fort Haldimand by Doug Pippin

8:30 PM Evening Battle Skirmish

Period watercraft will stage an attack on "Gravelly Point," with guns and muskets ablaze. Experience the bursts of flame and black powder smoke!!

Encampment Events

Sunday, June 25th

9 AM Encampment Grounds Opens to the Public— We encourage the public to peruse through the encampment grounds, interact with our Living Historians, and explore the camp life of soldiers and camp followers of the War of 1812

10:30 AM Historical Lecture Series— Historic Shipwrecks of the Thousand Islands by Dennis McCarthy

Various Encampment Demonstrations and Displays throughout the day

11:30 AM Historical Lecture Series— Bits and Pieces of The Second War with England-- Pat Regan presently Administers a number of Genealogical and Historical websites and operates "As your Tree Grows" specializing in documenting Lineage work for various societies of DAR, UEL, War of 1812, Civil War, French and Indian Wars.

12 PM Artillery Demonstration— See if you can feel the BOOM of the canon!

1 PM Battle Skirmish Re-enactments

2 PM Children's Muster— Children are invited to fall into formation, shoulder a wooden musket and follow the orders of their commanding officer

3 PM— 2017 Cape Vincent Historical Weekend concludes

Thank you to all who came out and attended our events, thank you to the Cape Vincent Village Green Inc, and a very special thank you to all of our Historical Re-enactors. Without these passionate people, this event would never take place.