

commitment to the coming battle. Songs were sung, war drums beaten and the war dance followed. One eyewitness described such dances:

I have seen Mr. Norton go through it Several times in his Country when properly performed Three or four stand near & sing a particular tune [celebrating the dancer's exploits] which is accompanied by the drums; they then get up in pairs & represent a battle; they first advance leaping from side to side with astonishing agility . . . I observed when Mr. Norton danced that his whole appearance was instantly changed - instead of being mild and humane, his countenance assumed a most savage & terrific look . . .

Sir George Prevost ordered that the officials in the Indian Department (namely Claus) not to interfere with Norton. By July 1812 Norton had a force of 200 Haudenosaunee warriors assembled at Niagara. Brock was very disappointed in the lack of warriors.

At the same time, Maj. Gen. Jacob Brown with a force of 500 Buffalo Creek Haudenosaunee, including Seneca, Onondaga, Tuscarora and Oneida warriors under the command of General Porter and Seneca war chief Red Jacket crossed over to Fort Erie and quickly took the fort. Then they headed to Chippewa.

The Events of August 13, 1812

John Norton, of Scottish and Cherokee ancestry, was the adopted nephew of Joseph Brant, and by some accounts was made a Pine Tree Chief at Grand River. Prior to the war Norton was pursuing his uncles' campaign for justice from the Crown for the land rights on behalf of the Council at Grand River. He was also at odds with the head of the Indian Department William Claus and there was a constant battle within the pro- and anti-Norton factions at Grand River.

Major-General Francis de Rottenburg who served as the military administrator of Upper Canada remarked: "All my endeavours to reconcile . . . [Claus] and Norton are in vain, the latter is certainly a great intriguer, but is a fighting man – and may do a great deal of mischief if not supported.

Norton and the 200 warriors who fought at Queenston have been credited by both eye witnesses and subsequent historians as providing essential support and diversion to hold off the American advance until British reinforcements arrived from Fort Erie.

One eye witness gave this account:

The Indians were first in advance. As soon as they perceived the enemy they uttered their terrific warwhoop, and rushing rapidly upon them commenced a most destructive fire. Our troops instantly sprung forward from all quarters, joining in the shout. The Americans gave a volley, then tumultuously fled by hundreds down the mountain [towards the river].

Another account: