

It was fortunate for Upper Canada and the Empire that in 1812, when war broke out between United States and Great Britain, the civil and military government was in the hands of a man like General Brock. He was a brave, fearless soldier who never thought of danger in the face of an enemy. Brock captured Detroit with a handful of British troops and a few militia supported by the Indians under Tecumseh. Following this event, the Americans began to organize a large force on the Niagara frontier with a view to making a second attack on Canada. Their force probably numbered seven thousand, scattered between Buffalo and Fort Niagara. Brock, on the other hand, had not more than 1,500 or 1,600 to oppose them on the Canadian side of the river. He was perfectly satisfied that an attack would be made early in the month of October. On the night of the twelfth of October, the light company of the 49th regiment, under the command of Captain Williams, was stationed in the redan battery, which was situated half way down the hill and toward the river bank. Down in the village of Queenston was the other flank company of the 49th—the Grenadiers, numbering only 46 men under the command of Dennis. In addition to those companies, there was Captain Chisholm's company from York and Captain Hatt's company from the 5th Lincoln Battalion. A small detachment of artillery had two guns—called "grasshoppers." They were well named, for they only carried a ball weighing 3 lbs. These guns were under the command of Lieut. Crowther, assisted by the late Captain Ball, who lived at the Four-Mile Creek.

The morning of the 13th of October was very stormy and blustering. It rained and blew heavily, and under cover of the darkness, and before daylight—probably between two and three o'clock a.m.—the Americans commenced crossing the river, their first landing being near where I am pointing. There was quite a bank then which protected them. They were seen, however, by the militia sentinel who ran to the guardhouse instead of firing his musket, and giving an alarm. When the Grenadier Company of the 49th (Brock's own regiment) and the militia companies saw the invading force, they commenced firing upon them, using the two little "grasshoppers" which did capital execution. The officer in charge of the Americans was severely wounded, as well as a great many of the rank and file before they got far from the river bank, in fact, they were driven back. There was a gun planted at Vrooman's Point which commanded the river, and several American boats were injured by its fire in their attempts to land early in the engagement. Some of the battered boats drifted down to a point in the shore known as "the deep hollow," which they ran ashore and between seventy and eighty of their occupants were made prisoners.

In the meantime, Captain Wool, of the American service, took some of his men up the river and in shore until they came to the fisherman's path, traces of which can still be seen under and near the old ruined bridge. They succeeded in reaching the heights by means of this steep and narrow pathway without being discovered.

When this early morning invasion was commenced, General Brock was in the barracks of Fort George in Niagara, seven miles away. He was an early riser, but the night previous he sat up until after midnight writing dispatches, and wrote also what was to be his last letter to a brother in England. By daybreak he was aroused by the sound of distant firing, immediately ordered his horse and galloped up the road leading from Fort George.

On that morning the battery at the first point (Vrooman's) was guarded by Captain Heward's volunteer company from Little York. A battery at Brown's Point was