

Six Nations Legacy Consortium

War of 1812

June 24, 1813: Victory at Beaver Dams



Ahyonwaeghs (Capt. John Brant) & William Johnson Kerr (Burlington Historical Society)

The Americans were defeated at Beaver Dams primarily by the warriors. Capt. Francois Dominique Ducharme headed the St. Lawrence Mohawk warriors for the Indian Department. Ahyonwaeghs (Capt. John Brant) and Capt. William Johnson Kerr (1787 – 1845), his brother-in-law, provided leadership for the Grand River warriors. Also attending were Jean-Baptiste, Chevalier de Lorimier, Charles Gedeon Gaucher, Louis Langlade, Evangeliste St.-Germain, and Isaac Lecalir. De Lorimier is a Kahnawake Mohawk, his mother being Anne Skaouennetsi (also known as Louise Schuyler) of Kahnawake.

The Mohawks did the scouting and planning for the ambush. Half way through the battle the Grand River warriors stopped fighting and retreated. Capt. Brant was sent to get them back into the fray. The warriors were tired of fighting and not receiving promised compensation, as there were hints that the head money might not materialize. The British promised their new service would go rewarded; and that their wounded and families would be well taken care of, if they would advance again. Somehow, the warriors were convinced to go back in the fight, which is why they received the captured arms and goods, rather than the St. Lawrence Mohawks.

In addition to superior fighting, the fear of warriors also played a part in this victory. “For God’s sake, keep the Indians from us,” pleaded defeated American Lieutenant Colonel Charles Boerstler who surrendered his troops rather than to keep fighting the Haudenosaunee.