

15,000 hear of Grand River role in War of 1812

By Chase Jarrett
Writer

General Isaac Brock knew he couldn't win the Battle

he could not repel the American advance at this site, on this day 200 years ago," he said.



"Warriors" head out to the field

of Queenston Heights without the Grand River warriors, elected Chief Bill Montour told more than 15,000 gathered Saturday to mark the death of Brock.

He said General Brock, knew of the "prowess of our warriors in battle and recognized without them,

Saturday marked 200 years since Brock's death with speeches and unveiling of a historic plaque to the general who died within minutes of leading a charge of British regulars towards the heights that had already been captured by Americans.

Saturday's 1812 com-

memoration focused on General Brock's death.

Tourists flooded Queenston Height's Park home of General Brock's monument for the commemorations and a chance to re-live history through a four part re-enactment of The Battle of Queenston Heights.

Elected Chief Bill Montour kicked off the day telling the crowd, "In honouring the memory and leadership of Isaac Brock we of Six Nations are uniquely aware of his dedication to our people. He knew of the crown's commitments to us, and acted on them," he said.

"He had a complete appreciation and respect for the prowess of our warriors in battle and recognized without them he could not repel the American advance at this site on this day 200 years ago," said Montour.

The re-enactment of Queenston Heights followed, but after the actors



Elected Chief Bill Montour looks over plaque to General Brock he helped unveil Saturday (Photo by Chase Jarrett)

representing Norton's warriors fired in lines and mirrored British tactics, Jamieson was not impressed knowing that warriors fought scattered from the bush. "They're not from Six Nations," he said.

Six Nations Legacy Consortium historian Rick Hill presented two wampum belts to the 15,000 gathered including Ontario Lieutenant Governor David Onley, explaining what they were.

"About 170 years ago our Chiefs authorized a significant financial contribution to be given here to help refurbish the Brock's monument to make it possible for what you see today," he told the crowd. "And then 100 years ago, 1912, they sent a delegation down here from Grand River to this very same spot to honour veterans and take a look at our long standing alliance with Great Britain," he said.

"We would finalize our business by putting the agreement together in what we call a wampum belt. Wampum isn't money it's made from clam shells," he told the crowd as he held up the Covenant Chain belt.

"What would happen is he [English King] would shake the chain and we would

always send our warriors as he needed them," Hill said.

He introduced the "Pledge of the Crown belt" given to the Haudenosaunee in Burlington by Sir William-Clause.



Rick Hill and Keith Jamieson explain wampum belts.

"The crown pledged to always respect the sovereignty of our people, to not interfere with our culture and our government. It's a very important point at the end of the war they still recognized and honored us as allies, not subjects of the crown," he said.

Hill spoke of "polishing" the Covenant Chain. "We have to look to the future. If we can condole each other... forgive each other for the transgressions that have take place. If we commit to a new, respectful, honest exchange we can become true partners in building a lasting peace."

Keith Jamieson, Director

of SNLC, was pleased with the turnout.

"There were no surprises," said Jamieson. He said he felt relieved especially after what happened in June.

Last time the SNLC at-

tempted to have the First Nations roll in 1812 recognized through wampum belts, at a similar event featuring Governor General David Johnston Six Nations were relegated to what Jamieson called "singing and dancing Indians." The SNLC was forced to pull out.

Elected Chief Montour was also positive about Saturday's commemoration. Montour was excited and said the response to his speech from the crowd was great. "It went pretty good. There's a lot of support from the people of Canada to [acknowledge] our contribution," he said. "It's really uplifting."