

<http://www.scribd.com/doc/87875767/War-of-1812-An-Oshawa-Perspective>

JENN BARR, The Chronicle

Oshawa's 200-year-old past is starting to unfold. This year is Canada's bi-centennial of the War of 1812. Battles and war happened along the border of Niagara, Windsor borders and in Toronto, protecting the borders against the United States invasion. A well-known standing fort in southern Ontario is Fort York, in Toronto. However, the aftermath of that war created many positive reactions, such as the creation of Oshawa. "The war (of 1812) is almost a forgotten war," said Joan Kerr, founder of The Foundation for Building Sustainable Community, the lead organization researching the War of 1812 in Oshawa. She also mentioned that it wasn't just the soldiers who were affected. "It was the bartenders in the taverns, the farmers, and the many people who kept the towns running." The main goal of the organization is to show this was the war that sparked movement to the Oshawa area.

The War of 1812 Oshawa is a project that is founded solely by volunteers, and is the new crunch event for 2012. It's the third event hosted by FBSC, coming after the Second World War event and the Korean War event. "It's our way to celebrate Canada, and we try to celebrate Canada as locally as we can." FBSC wants the 150,000 residents of Oshawa to understand the heritage created after the war. The non-profit organization wants to create a 30-minute video interpreting discussions the founding fathers could have had while creating the community now known as Oshawa

Joe Marion, one of the volunteers of the War of 1812 Oshawa, says that it's still unsure why this area was the place to move to after the war. Many of the founding fathers of Oshawa fought in the war. "John Kerr, who was the first settler of Oshawa, was a part of the militia during the war," explained Marion, adding that this is shown through transcripts. "John McGregor, the second settler, also has transcripts from the war." Kerr, who is not related to Joan Kerr, bought the northern part of the land of Oshawa, near Harmony Road and King Street, according to Marion. McGregor bought the southern part in Oshawa, according to The Samuel Pedlar manuscript from 1970 in the Oshawa Library archives.

Another positive reaction was the jobs created for Oshawa. Dispatch riders, which sent the news to and from Oshawa to various surrounding towns, supply drivers, and innkeepers in the town brought income to Oshawa, helping it thrive and become the city that it is today. An additional manuscript, called Ontario County from Oshawa's library archives, referred to Oshawa as the Manchester of Canada, and not for soccer. Manchester is also known for its manufacturing facilities, much like Oshawa. "Pianos, iron work, woollen goods and carriages were what created the manufacturing spots of Oshawa," said Marion. "It wasn't just the General Motors plant that helped us."

FBSC is organizing several activities throughout the year to celebrate the heritage that started 200 years ago. A one-kilometre walk called Jane's Walk is named after an early resident of the city. The walk will go through the heritage site and is scheduled for the first week of May. "It's to show people an everyday walk through the original town," added Kerr. There will also be re-enactments on stage at the Oshawa Little Theatre to portray what could have been situations during 1812. Because of Marion's self-proclaimed "obsessive hobby," the community has been able to shine some of its history that seems to have gone unnoticed to the rest of Canada. Without the war, there may not have been an Oshawa like it is today, according to Marion. "We didn't just make Ontario history, we made Canadian history."

Story supplied by Jennifer Barr, Durham College Print/Broadcast Student