

Food, Farming & the War of 1812



“An army marches on its belly,” it is said. Without adequate supplies during war time, armies have died of disease or starvation, or deserted in disgust and desperation.

Supplying troops during the War of 1812 was a serious problem. At almost every opportunity, American invaders burned mills, rustled cattle, and otherwise depleted essential resources. British-Canadians coped with the problems by “liberating” supplies from farmers, or by raiding American stores. In one raid on Black Rock [Buffalo], New York in July 1813, British-Canadian forces suffered 23 casualties as they loaded vital supplies of salt into waiting boats.

Because of food shortages, especially in border communities like Niagara, places further inland became key areas for supplying food for troops and civilians. Without the efforts of local farmers, the war may well have been lost.



Cheryl MacDonald has developed an informative and entertaining presentation on food and farming during the War of 1812, including information on what crops and livestock were commonly raised, what rations were needed, what tactics were used to cope with shortages, and how farm women, as well as men, were essential to the war effort.

The talk runs about 45-60 minutes, with ample time for questions and discussion. Cheryl also brings along a portable display on the topic, and has prepared a handout with some sample recipes from the period.

**905-776-2406 • heronwood@exculink.com
www.heronwoodent.ca**