

## North Country Experts Loom Large at War of 1812 Lectures

**OGDENSBURG, NY March 28, 2012** – The four American scholars giving presentations at the War of 1812 lectures at the Freight House Restaurant in Ogdensburg, Saturday, April 28 have connections to the North Country.

Dr. Melissane Shrems, St. Lawrence University; Dr. Tim Abel, Jefferson Community College; Mr. Keith Herkalo from the Battle of Plattsburgh Association; and Dr. Scott Stevens, who was raised in Akwesasne, are bringing a regional perspective to the fourth annual event sponsored by the Fort La Présentation Association.

“When we kicked off our annual event four years ago, we wanted a strong North Country point-of-view on the history of the War of 1812,” said Barbara O’Keefe, President of the Fort La Présentation Association. “This year our American speakers with solid connections to Northern New York will offer interesting and wide ranging talks, along with their four Canadian colleagues.”

Professor Schrems is looking at the challenges of teaching a college class about a distant war in an area close to the action. For some students the War of 1812 vaguely understood or even unknown.

She has found students can appreciate the war as a civil war. After all, many of the people settled in Upper Canada (Ontario) were recent immigrants from the United States or had settled there immediately after the American Revolution.

“Dr. Schrems has told me some students seem quite surprised that Canadians believe they won the War of 1812,” said Mrs. O’Keefe. “The causes for America entering into war had been mostly resolved before war was declared by the United States in June 1812; slow communications prevented the news from arriving from England until literally days after the declaration of war.”

Mr. Heraklo and Dr. Abel will unveil the research and archaeology leading to the discovery of Col. Zebulon Pike’s long-lost military camp on the banks of the Saranac River.

Mr. Heraklo left no stone-untuned as he followed the evidence trail leading to Pike’s lost encampment located between a ridgeline east of Route 22 and the Saranac River. He credits a letter written by Captain John Scott in October 1812 which gave the number of troops at the site and descriptions from the hillside down to the river.

Dr. Abel hears almost every day from someone who has a site he should see. Fortunately, the dig by the Saranac River, encouraged by Mr. Heraklo’s in-depth research, overcame his skepticism. “The investigation began like so many others. Dig a hole, find some undiagnostic stuff, bag it and fill in the hole,” said Dr. Abel. “Then came the first diagnostic artifact, a 69-caliber lead round ball - the kind they used during the War of 1812. It raised our spirits, and piqued my interest.”

He went onto say they found the scabbard chape (tip) the same day. They now had something because not many people are in the habit of carrying bayonets.

Zebulon Pike, for whom Pike’s Pike was named, was a brigadier general in 1813. April 27, 1813, Pike commanded the successful attack on York, (now Toronto), where he was killed by debris thrown from a powder magazine exploded by the retreating British garrison. His body was shipped to Sackets Harbor, where his remains are buried in the military cemetery.

Dr. Stevens is coming from Chicago to talk about the War of 1812 Mohawk/ Indigenous alliances with roots reaching back to when Abbé Picquet founded Fort de La Présentation in 1749.

If you want to learn more and enter into the discussion about the War of 1812 at the lectures, information is available at [www.fort1749.org](http://www.fort1749.org).

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For more information the media may contact:  
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## Topics and Presenters

### Americans

#### Research leading to the discovery of Col. Zebulon Pike's encampment on the Saranac River

KEITH HERKALO is an 1812-era re-enactor, author and a founding member and current president of the Battle of Plattsburgh Association. As an amateur historian, his research is the catalyst behind the archaeological discovery of Pike's encampment on the Saranac River and the location of the Crab Island graves. Mr. Heraklo edited *The Journal of H.K. Averill, Sr.: An Account of the Battle of Plattsburgh and Early North Country Community* and is the author of *September 11<sup>th</sup>, 1814: The Battles of Plattsburgh*. He is involved in restoration projects as the City Clerk for Plattsburgh.

#### The archaeology confirming the site of Col. Zebulon Pike's encampment on the Saranac River

TIMOTHY J. ABEL, Ph.D., has interests spanning the prehistoric and early historic archaeology of the Great Lakes. Since 2003, he has conducted more than a dozen projects related to the military and domestic archaeology of the War of 1812 in northern New York. Recently his archaeological investigations have produced conclusive evidence in Plattsburgh of Pike's encampment on the Saranac River by its commanding officer Zebulon Pike. Dr. Abel is an instructor at Jefferson Community College in Watertown, New York.

#### Teaching the War of 1812 as a civil war

MELISSANE SCHREMS, Ph.D., is a professor of history at St. Lawrence University in Potsdam, New York, where she is a member of the Native American Studies Advisory Board and teaches courses focused on Native American and Colonial American history. Dr. Schrems doctoral dissertation was on the Mashpee Wampanoag Indians on Cape Cod, and her minor fields were Native American history, the history of Colonial America and Comparative Slavery. She is on the board of the Fort La Présentation Association.

#### Abbé Piquet and the legacy of Indigenous/Mohawk alliances during the War of 1812

SCOTT STEVENS, Ph.D., is the Director of the Newberry Library's D'Arcy McNickle Center for American Indian and Indigenous Studies in Chicago. His research interests concern the diplomatic and cultural strategies of resistance among North American Indians in the face of colonialism, as well as the political and aesthetic issues surrounding museums and the indigenous cultures they display. Dr. Stevens is currently working on a book-length research

project entitled *Indian Collectibles: Encounters, Appropriations, and Resistance in Native North America*. He is a member of the Akwesasne Mohawk Nation.

## **Canadians**

### Medical practices during the War of 1812

GREGORY BARAN, MD, a private practitioner and medical consultant in Kingston, Ontario since 1992, is the regimental surgeon for the re-enacted Regiment of Canadian Fencible Infantry and King's Royal Regiment of New York. He regularly presents on War of 1812 medical practices at Upper Canada Village and continues to consult as a medical historian with various bicentennial projects and productions related to the War of 1812. Dr. Baran collects antique medical equipment.

### The discovery, investigation and the preservation of the Schooners Hamilton and the Scourge

NANCY BINNIE, MSc, is a Senior Conservation Scientist with Canadian Conservation Institute in Ottawa, Ontario. Her career began in 1988, and she has had a long association with the wrecks of the *Hamilton* and *Scourge*. An experienced scuba diver, her scientific interests have also taken her on the recovery of historic aircraft, such as the Fokker Universal from Lake Charron in northern Manitoba, and the search for Avro Arrow models in Lake Ontario. Ms. Binnie is the author or co-author of many papers related to artefact conservation and preservation.

### The Battle of Queenston Heights and the role of Fort George in the War of 1812

RONALD J. DALE was the Superintendent of Niagara National Historic Sites, including Fort George and Brock's Monument and is now the 1812 Bicentennial Project Manager at Parks Canada. As an historian, he is the author of *The Invasion of Canada: Battles of the War of 1812*, *The Fall of New France: How the French lost a North American empire 1754-1763* and *Niagara-on-the-Lake: Its Heritage and Its Festival*. He resides in Niagara-on-the-Lake, Ontario. (Featured in the PBS War of 1812 production.)

### Planning for and conducting of War in North America, 1808-1815

MAJOR JOHN GRODZINSKI, PH.D., is an assistant professor of history at the Royal Military College of Canada in Kingston, Ontario. His doctoral thesis is *The Constraints of Strategy: Lieutenant-General Sir George Prevost as Commander-in-Chief of British North America during the War of 1812*. His MA discussed the War of 1812 on the Upper St Lawrence River. Since joining the army in 1983, he has held several appointments with his regiment, Lord Strathcona's Horse, and various staff positions. Major Grodzinski conducts War of 1812 battlefield tours for the Canadian military. (Featured in the PBS War of 1812 production.)

## **Symposium Pricing Options**

Friday Meet-&-Greet \$10

Student rebate \$5

### Members

Meet-&-Greet, Seminars & Dinner \$100

Student rebate \$50

Seminars & Dinner \$90

Student rebate \$45

Non-Members

Meet-&-Greet, Seminars & Dinner \$110

Seminars & Dinner \$100

Other Options

Seminars only \$80

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Dinner & Speaker only \$35

Student rebate \$15

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