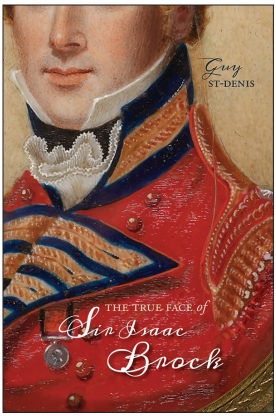

THE TRUE FACE OF SIR ISAAC BROCK
by Guy St-Denis

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7

A Very Close Call

Although Ludwig Kosche was convinced that Brock's profile portrait (fig. 3) had been painted in Montreal or Quebec City, he struggled to find the evidence necessary to account for how it ended up in Guernsey. Kosche regarded Major John B. Glegg's statement that he "never possessed a good likeness" of Brock as potentially relevant, if only because it did not rule out the possibility that the profile portrait was sent to William Brock. But even this clue was ultimately dismissed for being "anything but explicit."[1] Admittedly, Major Glegg's statement was vague; however, I was not prepared to reject it out of hand. Instead, I steeled myself for yet another in-depth analysis. While I knew my diligence might result in more confusion than clarification, the major's close association with Brock justified the extra effort.

I started off by checking to make sure that Kosche had copied Major Glegg's statement verbatim. It squared perfectly: "I regret to say," the major wrote, "that I never possessed a good likeness of your Brother, nor did he ever sit for it being taken in this Country."[2] After several readings, not only of this passage but also the entire letter in which it was contained, I began to wonder what had suddenly prompted Major Glegg to raise the matter of Brock's portrait. With a few more readings, I realized that the major was answering a question posed by William Brock after he inherited his brother's personal effects. This query was originally contained in a letter written to Major Glegg in early June of 1813. But by the following September, William Brock had reason to believe that his letter had been lost to an enemy privateer on the high seas, and so he wrote again, enclosing a copy of his first letter with the second—both of which Major Glegg acknowledged in his reply.[3] I knew full well that any attempt to locate

these additional letters would be futile. However, by reading between the lines of Major Glegg's letter, I could see that William Brock had not only thanked him for the delivery of his brother's personal effects, but also asked if there might be a better portrait. Such a request would account for Major Glegg having to admit in his reply that he never possessed a "good likeness" of Brock, by which he simply meant to say that had nothing better to offer. There was no doubt in my mind that William Brock had received a portrait of his brother from Major Glegg, but for some unknown reason it was found wanting.

In trying to account for the profile portrait's whereabouts, Kosche had uncovered what he thought was better evidence that Brock's profile portrait had been sent to Guernsey at an early date. It was Mrs. De Beauvoir de Lisle's recollection, which was written down for Colonel Charles W. Robinson in 1882. According to Mrs. de Lisle, who was the former Miss Caroline Tupper, there were two portraits of her uncle Isaac, and these portraits were the property of his brothers, Irving and Savery Brock, respectively.[4] Considering Mrs. de Lisle's longevity and relationship to Brock, her recollection was welcomed as evidence "of a slightly more solid quality" than Major Glegg's statement.[5] That Mrs. de Lisle remembered two portraits was easily explained: one was the original (fig. 3), and the other was the copy (fig. 4). Kosche thought it was feasible enough, but he was still unable to definitively link either one of them to the profile portrait owned by Captain Mellish.[6]

While searching for a viable solution to this dilemma, Kosche happened upon the footnote in Ferdinand Brock Tupper's biography of his famous uncle. In it, Tupper recited an attempt by the officers of the 49th Regiment to obtain a portrait of Brock for their mess room. When they approached the family in 1845, these officers were disappointed to learn that Brock's relatives "possessed no good likeness of the general"—suggesting that there was no such portrait.[7] This, of course, was the same misconception that had given Lieutenant Governor John Beverly Robinson so much cause for concern. But as Kosche learned from the lieutenant governor's experience, which he found published in an old magazine article, the officers of the 49th Regiment were disappointed not because the family possessed *no likeness* of Brock, but rather because they "possessed *no good likeness*."[8] This latter wording was suspiciously similar to Major

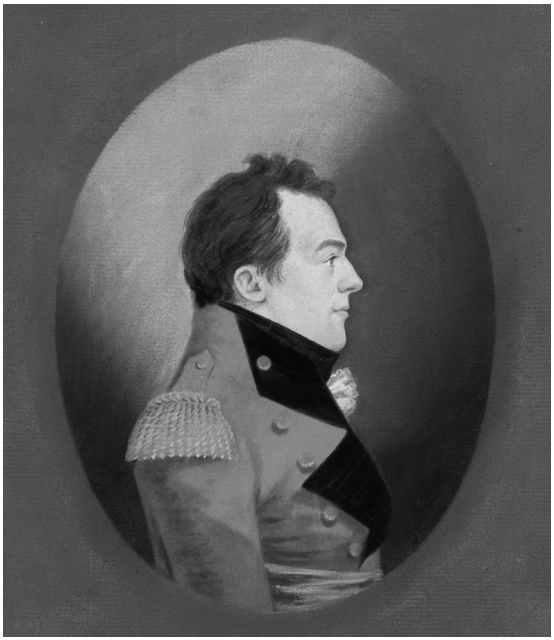

Figure 3.

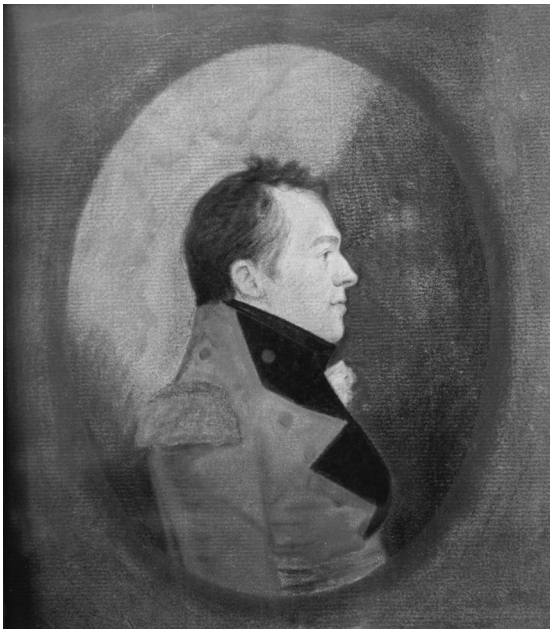

Figure 4.

Glegg's statement that he "never possessed a good likeness" of Brock, and so it appeared to Kosche that Tupper was influenced by what he must have thought was the major's low opinion of the profile portrait.[9] Kosche might not have been any further ahead in terms of making a connection, but thanks to Mrs. de Lisle's recollection, he could argue that whether good, bad, or indifferent, one of the portraits she remembered was the profile portrait owned by Captain Mellish. Then, just when Kosche was beginning to think the matter well enough resolved, the question of quality came back to haunt him.

From what Kosche could tell, the profile portrait was of a very fine quality—and its copy, of which he was aware, was nearly as good. Why Tupper should have considered either one of them to be "no good" was a great mystery, and so Kosche tried to determine why the copy was made in hopes that it might somehow explain Tupper's negative attitude. Unfortunately there were no revealing records. Yet, because the profile portrait owned by Captain Mellish excelled in "clarity, precision of execution, and strength of colour," it was obviously the original and the version that warranted the most attention.[10] This determination, however, did nothing to bring about closure, as Kosche soon began to question whether Tupper referred to the profile portrait (fig. 3) or the bronze profile (fig. 8).[11] In the end, he decided that Tupper must have been thinking of something other than the bronze profile, or bronzed silhouette, as it could not possibly depict Brock. The sitter was wearing the Garter Star, and Brock was never a Garter knight. And to think that Tupper might not have been able to differentiate between the insignia of the Order of the Garter and that of the Order of the Bath, the honour which was actually bestowed upon Brock, would have been "straining credulity."[12] In eliminating the bronze profile, Kosche was left with the profile portrait owned by Captain Mellish and the very real likelihood that it was one of the two portraits Mrs. de Lisle remembered seeing when she went to visit her uncles.[13]

I had to agree with Kosche as to the validity of Mrs. de Lisle's evidence, and I also judged him correct in his rejection of the bronze profile as a possible silhouette of Brock. But I was not satisfied with his interpretation of Tupper's footnote. While I gave him much credit for having recognized that Tupper's reference to Brock's family was really an allusion to Tupper himself, it was surprising to me that Kosche did not suspect

Figure 8.

any other chicanery on the part of Brock's nephew and biographer. As already mentioned, he seemed to think that Tupper was echoing Major Glegg's supposedly low opinion of the original profile portrait.[14] It was clear to me, however, that the major did not disparage the quality of the portrait he sent to William Brock. I had already established that person was Tupper himself, and that he was motivated by a desire to suppress a portrait he thought to be no good—a possible characteristic of his obsessive hero-worship, and one that Kosche failed to notice. Kosche, however, redeemed himself somewhat by emphasizing Mrs. de Lisle's recollection that a portrait of Brock was known to have been in Guernsey from the time of her youth.[15] His review of this evidence was spot on. But he also thought he knew how the profile portrait made its way to Guernsey, and in that regard he was decidedly wide of the mark.

A Canadian origin for the profile portrait required a transatlantic crossing for the person entrusted with delivering it, and Kosche could find

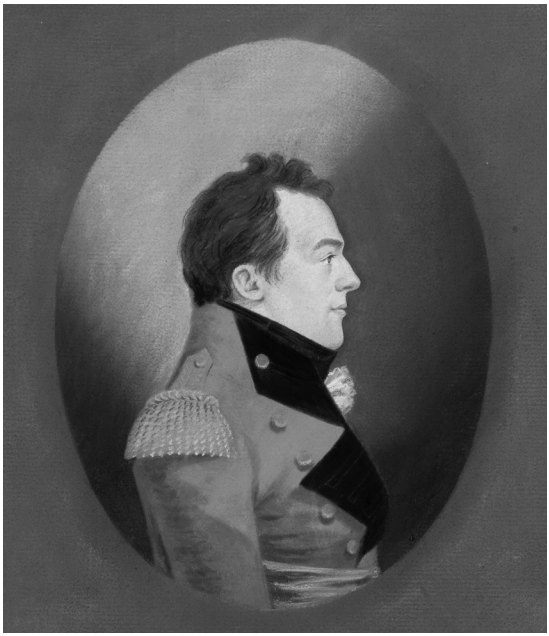

Figure 3.

no evidence that it was Major Glegg.[16] However, one of Brock's younger brothers soon became a more likely candidate. Among the transcribed letters Kosche read in Miss Sara Mickle's notebook, one was written by Savery Brock early in January of 1818. This was the letter he addressed to his nephew, Ferdinand Brock Tupper. Much of it dealt with his uncle's tour of Upper Canada, but there were also these instructions: "tell Mrs. Charles de Jersey to be particular in looking over every book for a miniature, that I fancy is placed between the leaves in one or other of them, and to give it with my compliments to the sister of the gentleman."[17] Intrigued by the idea that this miniature could have been the profile portrait of Brock (fig. 3), Kosche readily embraced Miss FitzGibbon's assumption that it was acquired by Savery Brock and brought back to Guernsey with him.[18]

It all made perfect sense to Kosche, especially as the profile portrait was a relatively small item. Unframed, it was only about the same size as a modern sheet of letter size paper.[19] Still, there was no way of knowing if the miniature Savery Brock described in his letter to Ferdinand Brock Tupper was actually the profile portrait. But despite the inherent risk of

making a mistake, Kosche suppressed his doubts because of the "simple fact that John Savery thought, rightly or wrongly, that there was a miniature which was presumably a portrait of Brock; why else the excitement?"[20] Unlike Kosche, I did not perceive that Savery Brock was in an excited state when he penned his instructions for Mrs. de Jersey, and my reading of the situation also differed markedly from that of Miss FitzGibbon. While I concurred with her in so much as the unidentified "gentleman" mentioned in the letter was probably the sitter, I was not willing to accept that the miniature Savery Brock wanted Mrs. de Jersey to retrieve was necessarily Brock's profile portrait.

I had my reasons for being a doubting Thomas, not least of which was all the effort it would have required to make the profile portrait more compact. I simply could not understand why anyone would have gone to the trouble of removing a small portrait from its frame, only to make it fit in a book of about the same size. Even with its frame, the profile portrait was still small enough to be packed away in a trunk.[21] I also had to reject Miss FitzGibbon's insistence that the "sister of the gentleman" who figured so prominently in Savery Brock's instructions was Mrs. John Elisha Tupper.[22] True enough, Mrs. Tupper was the only one of Brock's sisters who was still alive when Savery Brock returned from Canada at the end of 1817, but it did not follow that she was the lady he intended to receive the miniature. Miss FitzGibbon, however, had not the slightest hesitancy in assigning this identification to the mystery woman, as Brock's profile portrait (which she assumed to be the miniature mentioned in Savery Brock's letter) was handed down through several generations of the Tupper family. To Kosche, Miss FitzGibbon's argument was credible, but I was having none of it. The miniature could have portrayed anyone, although I suspected it was some gentleman from Guernsey who, along with his sister, was not especially well known to Savery Brock. Thus, a lack of familiarity set the tone for his instructions that the miniature be delivered "with my compliments to the sister of the gentleman."

While the language of polite society during the Regency was governed by a strict etiquette, it was not so formal as to be utterly devoid of feeling. Close friends and relatives could be quite intimate, while still maintaining the necessary level of decorum. But instead of referring to his supposed brother and sister on a first name basis, Savery Brock wrote of

them as if they were strangers, albeit esteemed strangers. Granted, there was no reason for him to have mentioned Elizabeth by name, as she was his only surviving sister. Yet, I thought it very peculiar that he should have described her as "the sister of the gentleman," rather than "my sister," and that he could have treated his late brother in such a detached and emotionless manner. Miss FitzGibbon might have scored more points had Savery Brock instructed Mrs. de Jersey to be particular in looking over every book for a miniature of "my ever-to-be-lamented brother," or something to that effect.

Having rejected Savery Brock as the person who conveyed the profile portrait to Guernsey, I turned my attention once again to Major John B. Glegg. I had already gathered that in replying to William Brock's request for a better portrait of his brother, Major Glegg was merely admitting that he had nothing else to offer. I took the major at his word. He did not have a "good likeness," or a better portrait of Brock, and neither was such a portrait ever painted in "this Country," or Upper Canada.[23] It was as simple as that, and Major Glegg's statement in no way compromised the profile portrait attributed to Gerrit Schipper. In fact, the major's statement agreed with my findings, namely that the profile portrait had been painted in Lower Canada, that Brock must have taken it to Upper Canada, and that it remained in his quarters at York (now Toronto) until Major Glegg sent it off to England. Much to my surprise, this sequence of events also included a very close call on Lake Ontario.

On 8 November, 1812, Commodore Isaac Chauncey boarded the brig *Oneida* at Sackets Harbor and sailed out into Lake Ontario. Along with a flotilla of six schooners, he led the way through storms of sleet and snow towards the Upper Canada shore. The shipping season was rapidly coming to an end, and Commodore Chauncey was eager to wrest control of the lake from the British naval force known as the Provincial Marine. The commodore decided on this bold action after receiving intelligence that several British warships were making their way back to Kingston from York. Running before the wind, the British fleet had the advantage of speed as it raced down along the lakeshore. But Commodore Chauncey was optimistic that he might "fall in" with some of the enemy's ships before they reached their destination.[24] This was all the inducement he needed to ignore the dangers of a boisterous lake.

After an overnight anchorage at the Duck Islands off Prince Edward Point, Commodore Chauncey's flotilla began cruising early the next morning. Eventually, the Americans caught sight of the corvette *Royal George* and gave chase, but in the evening they lost track of the British warship during a squall in the Bay of Quinte. Early on the tenth, after another overnight anchorage, the Americans descended upon Ernestown—today's Bath, Ontario—where they captured the merchant schooner *Two Brothers*. But the slow sailing prize was soon ordered burned. This drastic action was taken because the *Royal George* had come into view for a second time. There was a quick pursuit, but the British ship succeeded in reaching Kingston harbour. Disregarding the shore batteries and adverse winds, Commodore Chauncey's flotilla followed after the *Royal George* and gave it a severe pounding. After nearly two hours of battle, and with darkness descending upon them, the Americans were obliged to break off the attack. The commodore planned to return the next day from an anchorage close by, but with the wind threatening to blow a gale, he decided that any further attempt against the *Royal George* would be imprudent. However, in beating out for the open lake during the morning of the eleventh, the American flotilla encountered the *Governor Simcoe*, a merchant schooner in the employ of the Provincial Marine. As before, the American guns inflicted heavy damage, but the *Governor Simcoe* made its escape—only to sink within sight of the wharf at Kingston.[25] Later that same day, another opportunity resulted in the seizure of the merchant schooner *Mary Hatt*.[26] It was a nice prize, but there would soon be a better one.

On the afternoon of 11 November, as Commodore Chauncey's flotilla menaced the eastern end of Lake Ontario, the merchant sloop *Elizabeth* sailed out of York harbour bound for Kingston.[27] On board was Captain James Brock, paymaster to the 49th Regiment, and a cousin to Major General Isaac Brock. Captain Brock was heading home with his wife, along with their trunks and other baggage. But there was considerably more than the usual impedimenta of a travelling officer and his lady.[28] Stowed away in the *Elizabeth*'s hold was all the silverware that Captain Brock had just bought from his deceased cousin's estate.[29] And while he would later deny it, Captain Brock also appears to have been transporting the general's personal effects as well.

Although Captain Brock's posting was at Kingston, the death of his

cousin prompted a sudden and unexpected trip to York. As Brock's only relative in the Canadas, Captain Brock was appointed a co-administrator of the dead hero's estate. It was a temporary measure, until such time as Brock's next-of-kin could apply for letters of administration.[30] The other administrator was Major Glegg (then a captain), who must have been deemed eligible because he was Brock's military aide-de-camp. Under this co-operative arrangement, Captains Brock and Glegg were allowed to proceed with a settlement of Brock's affairs, thereby avoiding any unnecessary delays in the midst of an escalating war. And there was no question as to who was the rightful heir. More than once, Brock was heard to say: "I have no occasion for a will, for all and much more than I have belongs to my brother William."[31] It was only fair, given that William Brock provided the funds necessary for the purchase of his brother's commissions.

On 5 November, 1812, Captain Brock petitioned the Probate Court on behalf of himself and Captain Glegg for the administration of his late cousin's estate.[32] The two men then sailed to Niagara(-on-the-Lake), where they accounted for the remainder of Brock's chattel property. They returned to York on 7 November, no doubt having paid their respects at Brock's grave in Fort George.[33] Three days later, the Probate Court granted them letters of administration. With his testamentary duties completed, Captain Brock was free to take his leave. On the eleventh, he and his wife embarked for Kingston.[34] They had little to dread, as the *Elizabeth* sailed in convoy with the *Earl of Moira*—one of the British warships dominating Lake Ontario.[35] But back in York, there was a growing unease and Brock's successor was especially apprehensive. On 14 November, after receiving dispatches informing him of the attack on the *Royal George*, Major General Roger Hale Sheaffe began to worry that the *Earl of Moira* might become the enemy's next target. However, he took some comfort in gauging the weather, which had begun to worsen soon after the *Earl of Moira* and the *Elizabeth* set out for Kingston. Strong winds from the northwest were sure to hasten the ships into the occasional and concealing flurry of snow. Major General Sheaffe also reassured himself that the rising tempest might even force the prowling American flotilla to seek shelter in their own port.[36] What he could not have known, however, was that Commodore Chauncey paid little heed to the weather.

During that same night of 11 November, Commodore Chauncey

was compelled to anchor off the Duck Islands because his pilots "refused to keep the sea." But conditions improved the next morning, allowing the American flotilla to tack against the wind for another adventure at Kingston. Hoping to lure the *Royal George* out from beneath the British batteries, Commodore Chauncey ordered the *Growler* to take the prize *Mary Hatt* in convoy and sail past the harbour. But the decoy failed, and so the American ships anchored for the night in the lee of a nearby island.[37] The following day, which was the thirteenth, Master Mervine Mix of the *Growler* sent the *Mary Hatt* to Sackets Harbor.[38] He then got underway to meet Commodore Chauncey at the Duck Islands. En route, Master Mix had the great good fortune to capture the *Elizabeth*. The commodore was immediately apprised of this development, and also that the British sloop was intercepted while sailing nearly two miles (or just over three kilometres) behind the *Earl of Moira*.[39] Without hesitation, Commodore Chauncey "weighed and stood for Kingston," hoping that his flotilla might succeed in gaining another victory. But the wind and heavy snow worked against him. When he finally spied the *Earl of Moira*, late in the morning of 14 November, it was entering Kingston harbour. Reluctantly, Commodore Chauncey called off the pursuit and signalled a return to port.[40]

Back in Sackets Harbor, word quickly spread that one of the prisoners taken in the *Elizabeth* was a relative of the famous General Brock—but there was a great deal of confusion as to the exact relationship. Some people thought that Captain Brock was a nephew, while others believed him to be a brother. In fact, he was a first cousin—not that it made much difference to Commodore Chauncey. He was happy to make the acquaintance of anyone related to such a well-respected foe. This favourable opinion was a great benefit to Captain Brock. As an officer, he could expect a certain level of civility from his American counterparts. However, as General Brock's cousin, he was shown a much greater degree of courtesy. Gratified and rather unguarded, Captain Brock reciprocated with considerable intelligence about the strength of Kingston's defences.[41] Soon after, and not surprisingly, the commodore issued a parole for Captain Brock.[42] The captain was also allowed the return of his baggage, all of which was understood to be the private property of General Brock.[43] It was a very noble gesture—but the consent of the *Growler*'s crew was also required,

as all the baggage under discussion was partly their prize. Fortunately, the American tars were just as high-minded as their commodore.[44] Within a few days of their capture, Captain Brock, his wife, and most of the other British prisoners were sent to Kingston under a flag of truce.[45] Things had turned out much better than Captain Brock could have imagined, but he would not emerge from the ordeal completely unscathed.

In meeting with Lieutenant Colonel John Vincent, the commanding officer at Kingston, Captain Brock shared what he knew about the naval preparations at Sackets Harbor.[46] Of course, there was no need to confess what he had blabbered to the Americans, including his indiscreet assurance that they now had "command of the lake."[47] Captain Brock should have been a little less forthcoming in what he told the enemy, but Commodore Chauncey's genial nature was hard to resist. And Captain Brock knew what was likely to happen if he were to spurn his captor's hospitality and friendly overtures. For one thing, he could count on having his baggage confiscated. A parole might also be denied (as was the case with the *Elizabeth*'s captain, who angered Commodore Chauncey by concealing his ship's papers).[48] Captain Brock avoided the same misstep, and in the process he recited everything he knew about Kingston's defences. There was no harm in it . . . not until his deceit began to appear in print.

The taking of the *Elizabeth* necessitated an addendum to the report Commodore Chauncey had just finished writing for Paul Hamilton, the Secretary of the Navy. But because the commodore was in a hurry to go after the *Earl of Moira*, the extra paperwork fell to his own secretary, Samuel T. Anderson. Dutifully, Anderson wrote out a covering letter informing Secretary Hamilton that the *Growler* had "returned with a prize, and in her captain Brock, brother [sic] to the late general of that name, with the baggage of the latter."[49] In addition, Anderson cited Captain Brock's remark that Kingston was strongly defended, which was harmless enough. But then Anderson went on to describe Captain Brock's astonishment at being told that the American flotilla held its own against the defences of Kingston, as the 49th Regiment was "quartered there, 500 strong, besides other regulars and a well-appointed militia."[50] Inadvertently, Captain Brock had provided valuable intelligence to the enemy. Yet, his unfortunate slip of the tongue might have gone unnoticed, had it not been for Anderson's letter and its publication in the American press. Consequently,

and within a matter of weeks, the incriminating document was communicated far and wide throughout the United States. Eventually, the news of Captain Brock's indiscretion reached Upper Canada, where it caused a sensation—most notably in Kingston.

Near the end of December 1812, a suitably embarrassed Captain Brock took up his pen to offer a public explanation, and he was in no mood to mince words. In response to Anderson's offensive letter, he flatly denied having given the Americans any information about the strength of the British forces at Kingston. "Indeed," he angrily retorted, "Commodore Chauncey, had he even expected any such communication, was too much the Gentleman to ask any questions on the subject." Instead, Captain Brock blamed Anderson for having made a false statement, "as the Commodore knew that I was neither General Brock's Brother *nor had any of the General's baggage with me*."[51]

Captain Brock's vehement denial about the military intelligence he passed to Commodore Chauncey seemed logical. Nor was it unreasonable to think that the captain would have wanted to refute Anderson's incorrect assertion that he was a brother to General Brock. But the bit about the general's baggage was mystifying, as it implied that neither one of the trunks containing Brock's personal effects—including the profile portrait—was consigned to the *Elizabeth*.[52] This unnerving discrepancy called for a further investigation, but first I wanted to see if Captain Brock's letter to the editor had prompted a reaction from the American side. It had not, which led me to conclude that the captain was able to salvage his good name without causing any offence to Commodore Chauncey. The commodore's secretary, however, must have felt unfairly besmirched. As the author of Captain Brock's embarrassment, and a person of no particular consequence, Anderson could be maligned with impunity. It was fortunate for Captain Brock that he did so without alienating Commodore Chauncey, given an incident that occurred a short time later. After the British retreat from Fort George in May of 1813, the commodore very decently let Captain Brock's wife board an American vessel so that she could be safely evacuated.[53] Evidently, Commodore Chauncey was still favourably inclined towards the Brocks, despite the gratuitous abuse inflicted upon his secretary.

It appeared to me that Anderson had accurately represented Captain

Brock's statement about the strength of Kingston's defences. As for the captain's claim that he had none of his cousin's baggage with him when he was captured, I had ample evidence to show that Anderson was correct on that head as well. Most of this evidence came in the form of contemporary newspaper accounts, all of which contradicted Captain Brock. Nevertheless, I was careful to scrutinize these sources—given one news item claiming that Brock's body had been discovered in the hold of a British ship, embalmed "*in a hogshead of spirits*."[54] But apart from this absurdity, and a few minor errors here and there, the main points relating to the *Elizabeth*'s loss were consistent. The general consensus, both in and around Sackets Harbor, was that Brock's baggage had fallen into American hands.[55] Commodore Chauncey thought as much, according to his letter books, and his secretary was of the same mind. So too was Henry Murney, the *Elizabeth*'s master.[56] The only person who disagreed, so it seems, was Captain Brock.

At first, I thought Captain Brock's angry denial vis-à-vis his cousin's baggage had something to do with the intelligence he passed on to Commodore Chauncey. However, it soon became clear that Brock's baggage was its own sore point. In contemplating Captain Brock's reaction, or overreaction, I became curious to know how the American sailors had come to believe that General Brock's baggage was included among their spoils of war. Eventually, I found the answer in an issue of the *Buffalo Gazette* dating from December of 1812, which included an interesting account of the generosity manifested by the *Growler*'s crew.[57] Their decision to relinquish Brock's personal effects was unanimous, and based entirely on Captain Brock's claim that all the baggage he had on board the *Elizabeth* was the property of his dead cousin.[58]

Yet, Captain Brock then went on to disavow any responsibility for the safekeeping of his cousin's baggage. This attempt to distance himself from Brock's personal effects struck me as being very odd, as it was not likely a fluke that Captain Brock just happened to embark in the same sloop assigned to transport his cousin's baggage to Kingston.[59] I also found it hard to believe that Captain Brock, as one of the administrators of Brock's estate, would not have been in charge of his cousin's baggage during the voyage. The captain's dodgy behaviour was more than a little suspicious, and it was beginning to look as though he had something to hide—such

as all the silverware in his baggage.

Ferdinand Brock Tupper certainly believed that this silverware, or plate as it was called, formed part of his uncle's personal effects, and obviously so too did the Americans.[60] But while Brock was known to have owned a good deal of plate at the time of his death, none of it went to his brother in England. Like most of his chattel property, these items were sold at York to settle Brock's estate. One of the people making purchases was Captain Brock, and among his various acquisitions was a quantity of silverware.[61] The captain might have thought his plate was as good as lost when the *Elizabeth* was first captured, but he later managed to secure his recent purchase by letting on that it comprised part of Brock's personal effects. This ploy probably explains why Captain Brock was so adamant that he had nothing to do with his cousin's baggage. It was unfortunate that Commodore Chauncey had to be duped in such an underhanded manner, but Captain Brock must have known that his plate was more likely to be restored by the Americans if they thought it belonged to the estate of the dead British general they had come to admire. The captain was guilty of bad form, but his transgression was minor and there was little fear of it being exposed—that is, until Anderson's letter was published.[62]

While the duplicity by which Captain Brock preserved his property would have been viewed as distasteful by many of his contemporaries, he stood a good chance of being forgiven in light of the wartime circumstances. But the exploitation of a dead soldier's fame would have been considered most ungentlemanly, and given that an unblemished reputation was of paramount importance to a British officer in the early nineteenth century, a scandal—even one emanating from the enemy's camp—threatened to impair a promising military career. It is not surprising, then, that Captain Brock was so anxious to distance himself from his cousin's baggage. And there can be no question that he deceived Commodore Chauncey into believing that it belonged to Brock in order to secure his own property as well. Yet, were it not for this artifice, Brock's profile portrait would have been lost.[63] Thankfully, however, there was more than enough plate in the *Elizabeth*'s hold to alter this outcome.

Upon his return to Kingston, Captain Brock did not participate further in the conveyance of his cousin's personal effects, other than possibly arranging for them to be sent on to Quebec City. Although winter was

closing in, there was still time to ship the trunks by means of a batteau (one of the many flat-bottomed coasting vessels used for heavy transport). And if the trunks got no farther than Montreal before the freeze, they could still be sent overland by wagon the rest of the way, perhaps even by sleigh once the roads were sufficiently snow covered. While the trunks were unlikely to arrive in Quebec City before the close of navigation, they would at least be ready for shipment in the spring.[64] Unfortunately, there are no records to verify any of these conjectures, and yet William Brock acknowledged the receipt of his brother's personal effects in June of 1813.[65] The timing of this delivery meant that Brock's trunks must have been sent to England soon after the opening of navigation at Quebec City, which was in the first week of May 1813.[66] For the trunks to have been dispatched so early in the season, they were likely stored near the wharves of the lower town well in advance of their lading. Despite the absence of detailed shipping records for the period, which made it impossible for me to say anything more definite about the trunks, there was still much to be learned from Brock's servant and the role he played in their delivery.

When Thomas Porter joined the 49th Regiment in 1797, he was just another young recruit.[67] In time, however, he was singled out to be Brock's servant. It was a great honour, and apparently one occasioned by the death of Private James Dobson in 1805.[68] Private Dobson was an earlier servant, and the same one who faithfully nursed Brock back to health in the West Indies (after a near fatal illness almost killed the young officer).[69] Private Dobson's was a hard act to follow, but Private Porter proved himself no less devoted and so he was chosen to accompany Brock's personal effects to England. Upon his arrival at William Brock's residence near London, Private Porter made a very favourable impression. Brock's family were touched by the young man's kindness—so much so, in fact, that they requested his discharge from the army.[70] The Duke of York, as commander-in-chief of the British Army, willingly complied with this "small tribute" to the memory of a gallant officer.[71]

Initially, Private Porter's delivery of Brock's personal effects seemed to substantiate Captain James Brock's claim that he had nothing to do with his cousin's baggage. This was no little complication for me, as Private Porter's involvement suggested that perhaps it was he who accompanied Brock's personal effects on board the *Elizabeth*—and that Captain Brock's

passage in the same vessel was nothing more than a coincidence. But as I soon began to appreciate, if Brock's personal effects were in Private Porter's custody at the time of the *Elizabeth's* capture, then he should have been listed as one of the British prisoners at Sackets Harbor. Yet, Private Porter's name was absent. I went back over my sources, but after all was said and done, it still appeared to me that Captain Brock had been assigned the task of looking after his cousin's trunks. As I racked my brain trying to comprehend the arrangements made for the delivery of Brock's personal effects, two scenarios emerged. Either Private Porter was selected for the job right from the outset, or he was a later substitute for Captain Brock.

The muster books and pay lists of the 49th Regiment revealed that Private Porter was in garrison at York until the early spring of 1813.[72] This information precluded the possibility that he was taken prisoner on the *Elizabeth*, or that he was employed in transporting Brock's personal effects to Kingston. Still, it was Private Porter who eventually delivered the general's trunks to William Brock. But as I was beginning to realize, this assignment was not the result of Captain Brock's imprisonment. Rather, it was because the trunks were never intended to go farther than Quebec City until the opening of navigation in 1813, and so Private Porter's services were not immediately required. Since there was no urgency for his departure from the regiment, he remained at York over the winter. The trunks, however, were sent ahead, no doubt in the care of Captain Brock, and in his capacity as a co-administrator of Brock's estate.[73]

While it was Private Porter's sad duty to convey Brock's trunks to England, Captain Glegg had all the worry over their safety. The thought of enemy privateers menacing Britain's transatlantic shipping must have made him extremely anxious.[74] But little did he realize, there was a more immediate peril on the storm-tossed waters of Lake Ontario. And when Captain Glegg received news of the *Elizabeth*'s misfortune, he was surely horrified. Yet, Brock's personal effects would have been subjected to far greater risk had they been left at York. It was a threat that became painfully apparent the following spring. During an American attack at the end of April 1813, Captain—or rather Major—Glegg had no choice but to abandon the few keepsakes he still retained from Brock's estate. As the British army under Major General Sheaffe beat a hasty retreat towards Kingston, these sentimental items were confiscated by the Americans and sold for

the relief of their wounded soldiers.[75] Brock's profile portrait would have suffered the same fate, had it not been sent out of harm's way in a timely fashion.