



Clockwise: Joel Stone; Re-enactors with cannon in Joel Stone Heritage Park; Early Gananoque; Firing of the cannon in Joel Stone Heritage Park during the 1812 re-enactments

The Americans declared war on Britain on June 18, 1812, raiding Gananoque in September.

"It was on September 21, 1812 that Captain Benjamin Forsyth and his American Riflemen landed at Sheriff's Point a couple of miles west of Gananoque..." said Scott. "The Leeds militia gathered at the south end of the bridge in an open area, likely close to International Square, and picked up the muskets, lead shot and powder that was available. They drew up in battle order and proceeded to meet Forsyth and his men, head on..."

"This was indeed a humiliation for Colonel Stone," said Scott. "At age 63 he was unsuccessful in defending his home and his military post. The Americans burnt the government stores, destroyed the bridge, ransacked Colonel Stone's home and shot Mrs. Stone in the hip. She recovered but walked with a limp for the rest of her life."

This attack by Americans in the 1000 Islands frontier showed British commanders in Kingston that the river crossing at Gananoque was vulnerable.

"If the enemy captured Gananoque and cut the vital land communications link between Prescott and Kingston, a thriving Upper Canada would be just a memory," he said.

In 1813, Gananoque became a British garrison with a blockhouse and accommodations for 200 highly trained fighting men. Cannons were brought in, and they were never again attacked during the War of 1812.

After the war, the Stones took great interest in their community.

"He was known to be an upright and faithful magistrate whose word was his bond," said Scott. "He was a loyal subject; esteemed and respected by those who knew him and a generous benefactor." Of Mrs. Stone, Historian Agnes Machar related, "She would mount her horse and ride through the forest for miles to nurse the sick or comfort the dying. Her natural medical instinct and simple medicine chest made her the closest thing there was to a doctor within a forty mile radius."

Together, they did all they could to help their community for the rest of their lives, with Joel passing on in 1833 at the age of 84, and Abigail in 1843 at 94. Their graves can be found in the Willowbank Cemetary on Highway 2. [LH](#)

JOEL STONE

Father of a Town, Defender of Canada

By Lorraine Payette

Joel Stone, entrepreneur loyal to King and country, was well on his way to establishing himself in the world when war broke out and everything changed.

"During the American Revolutionary War, which started in 1776, he was a Loyalist and remained staunchly supportive of Britain and King George," said Paul Scott, local Historian. "His loyalty cost him dearly. His home, businesses and personal property in Connecticut were all confiscated. He was arrested for high treason, escaped from jail, and found safety in New York City."

Moving north in 1786, he found opportunities to the west of New Johnstown (Cornwall) in the area of the "Lake of a

Thousand Isles", and moved to what would become Gananoque.

Hiring men he knew in Connecticut and New Johnstown, he cleared land on what was described as 'the peninsula' (south of the King St. bridge between the Gananoque River and Bay Rd.) By 1793, he had a schooner built, and by 1795 added a large saw and grist mill.

Business was booming, and the town grew up around it. He was appointed Collector of Customs, Postmaster, Justice of the Peace, Magistrate and Commissioner of Roads, receiving a commission as Colonel and commanding officer of the 2nd Regiment Leeds Militia in 1809.