

Charles de Salaberry (1778-1829)
Hero of Châteauguay

Born: November 1778 in Beauport Quebec



Background: A French-Canadian who served as an officer in the British army in Lower Canada (Quebec). Raised and commanded a unit of light infantry known as the Canadian Voltigeurs.

Heroic Action: With French Canadian militia and Mohawk warriors Salaberry was called to the Châteauguay River where an American force was attempting to attack Montreal in order to cut off the British army in Upper Canada.

Salaberry formed a blockade with his troops while sending a small group across the river, and keeping the majority of his troops in reserve about a mile away.

The Americans attacked and were successfully repulsed after several hours of fighting. Salaberry had used trickery and illusion to convince the Americans that his numbers were much larger than they actually were, saving the town from attack.

Historiography:

Salaberry's role at Châteauguay has been viewed differently and even disputed at times *"In the mid 19th century he was perceived as an experienced, courageous, intrepid soldier who enjoyed the confidence of his men. At the turn of the century English-speaking historians put greater emphasis on the roles played by Macdonell or Wattenwyl, but French-speaking ones defended Salaberry... In the early 1950s Salaberry was looked upon as the French Canadian who had given an outstanding demonstration of the courage of the race... Finally, more recently Salaberry's victory has been attributed to a fruitful collaboration by various elements against a common enemy. "* (Michel Guitard, www.biographi.ca)

Abridged from www.1812.gc.ca/eng/1317828221939/1317828660198#a8