

Editors Note: Images are available at [www.philpott.ca/Black\\_Creek/Battle\\_of\\_Black\\_Creek/](http://www.philpott.ca/Black_Creek/Battle_of_Black_Creek/)

\* For Immediate Distribution \*



## **Re-Enacting the Dramas of our Past in “The Battle of Black Creek” The Ultimate Father’s Day Weekend at Black Creek Pioneer Village**

TORONTO: June 14, 2010... On Father’s Day weekend, Black Creek Pioneer Village will become the scene of fierce fighting between Loyalist forces and American revolutionaries in the annual Battle of Black Creek. Volleys of musket fire will crash through the air as smoke billows and orders are shouted through the din. Fortunately, the muskets are firing blanks, and the “casualties” are just acting. Dads, and their families, can enjoy the spectacle, speak with the soldiers in their encampments, and watch them drill before the battle. Afterwards, the whole family can enjoy a special Father’s Day feast of barbecued ribs with authentic Black Creek Ale for the adults.

The Battle of Black Creek is organized by Reg James, Lt. Col. of the King’s Royal Yorkers, a re-enactment group who research the minutia of 18th century life in North America and stage dramatic mock battles with other re-enactors in Ontario and the northern U.S. The original King’s Royal Yorkers were Loyalist soldiers who fought in the American War of Independence before moving to Canada, where they were the founders of Cornwall and Kingston.

Other groups participating in the Battle of Black Creek include the Queen’s Rangers, whose commander was once John Graves Simcoe, the first Lieutenant Governor of Upper Canada, the Company of Select Marksman, and the Second Connecticut, which is actually made up of a group of Canadian re-enactors. All but the last group were involved in the founding of Upper Canada.

“The history they taught in school was nowhere near as interesting to me as doing my own research and experiencing the life of a soldier for myself,” said Reg James. “When you step into character, you can’t help but wonder about how they lived, what they wore, what they ate, and even what they thought about. It’s a rich and fascinating experience and you really never stop learning.”

Re-enactors are constantly refining their knowledge about the details – clothing, military procedures, equipment and so on. “It’s like archeology,” explained James. “We’re always looking for old manuscripts for more information. When we meet other groups at the battles we regularly exchange ideas and talk about recent discoveries we’ve made.”

Despite ongoing efforts, total authenticity is not always possible or practical. For example, not all modern prescription glasses can be fitted into period frames. At Black Creek, the soldiers will be camping in tents; in the past soldiers on a campaign would have slept out in the open. Shoes in that period had a “straight last,” so the same shoe could be worn on either foot. Few modern re-enactors are willing to endure that!

The highlight, both for re-enactors and for the public, is the actual battle. “It’s like real warfare, but without the fear of death,” laughed James. “Staying organized under battle conditions would have been very difficult. The smoke, the noise – you can’t hear yourself shout. You have to concentrate so much on your routines. It’s easy to misunderstand orders.”

The chaos of battle in those times explains why so much emphasis was placed on drills. Soldiers needed to be able to keep reloading and shooting, regardless of what was going on around them. “You can only learn that by repetition,” explained James. “If a soldier doesn’t know the routines, emotions can take over. That is when soldiers might break and run. In battle in those days, that would spell disaster.”

The soldiers in the King’s Royal Yorkers can load, aim, and fire four times per minute. There is something for everyone on this special weekend at Black Creek Pioneer Village. Children can join the Mini Militia and participate in drill exercises. Families can tour the Black Creek Historic Brewery, where period ales are brewed the way it used to be done, and adults can even sample ales and porters right from the oak barrels. Visitors can also have a look in the numerous period homes and workshops throughout the Village.

“It’s one of our most colourful events of the year,” said Marty Brent, General Manager, Black Creek Pioneer Village. “The village really comes alive and it’s packed full of people in period uniforms and costumes. It’s an amazing spectacle that happens only once a year.”

The Battle of Black Creek takes place on Father’s Day Weekend: Saturday, June 19 and Sunday, June 20, 2010, from 11:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. A special Father’s Day feast of barbecued ribs will be served. Admission to Black Creek Pioneer Village is \$15 for adults; \$14 for students and seniors; \$11 for children (age 5 – 15); free for children 4 and under, and free for members. Memberships are available at the admissions desk.

Black Creek Pioneer Village is located at 1000 Murray Ross Parkway, Toronto (one block east of Jane St., south off Steeles Avenue, right next to York University). For more information visit [www.blackcreek.ca/whatson](http://www.blackcreek.ca/whatson), or call 416 736-1733.

-30-

**Media contact:**

Eric Philpott  
philpott | communications  
[philpott@philpott.ca](mailto:philpott@philpott.ca)  
(905) 773-6651

**About Black Creek Pioneer Village**

Black Creek Pioneer Village is Toronto’s premier outdoor living history museum. Visitors can explore 40 heritage homes, shops and buildings restored to re-create an 1860s Ontario village. Historic interpreters in period dress demonstrate how villagers lived, worked and played. The Village hosts learning programs and special events that highlight local heritage and culture. The tranquil setting, rural landscapes, heritage gardens and period farm animal breeds make Black Creek Pioneer Village the perfect place to break out of the modern world and journey into the past. Located in north Toronto, Black Creek Pioneer Village is owned and operated by Toronto and Region Conservation (TRCA).