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The National Battlefields
Commission

Commission des champs
de bataille nationaux

PRESS RELEASE
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Human bones discovery Analysis results reviewed by the Commission

Québec City, December 3, 2008 – Following the discovery of human bones on its territory last February, the National Battlefields Commission (NBC) today reports on the analysis performed by bioarchaeologist Vanessa Oliver-Lloyd in recent months, whose results are published in the report *The Plains of Abraham Graves*.

At the time, the random discovery of human remains stirred a great deal of interest for this place steeped in history. While the excavation work was being carried out behind the administrative offices of the Commission, heavy machinery partially removed and damaged the skeletons of two people laying side by side. When the ground thawed the bones were recovered so that a bioarchaeological analysis could tell us more about their presence.

The analysis of burial methods and archaeological data, combined with analysis of the actual bones, uncovered elements that were interesting but incomplete. The two skeletons were dressed at the time of burial, and the remains were laid on their back in wood coffins without any objects of worship. A few artefacts were found, including shoe buckles, coffin nails and a screw. The graves are apparently part of a family or private cemetery, possibly Protestant, dating back to the late 18th or early 19th century. The remains most likely belong to civilians, a young man between the ages of 18 and 20 bearing a dramatic facial pathology, and a woman between the ages of 25 and 35. They probably enjoyed a relatively high socio-economic living standard and were buried at the same time.

The identity of the deceased as well as the cause of death and their burial in this location are still a mystery. An infectious disease may have caused their demise. Several nearby buildings may also have had an effect on the occupancy and use of the land under consideration. More in-depth studies regarding the title deeds and census of the period may provide additional information regarding this matter.

In the meantime, the National Battlefields Commission has entrusted the bones to the Canadian Museum of Civilization for research purposes for the next five years. Following this lending period the graves will be interred, this time in a contemporary, probably Protestant cemetery, with a plate referring to the original gravesite.

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