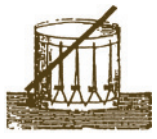


The Fife and Drum

The Newsletter of the Friends of Fort York and Garrison Common

v. 12 No. 1 March 2008

Contents



- | | | | |
|---|---|---|--|
| 1 | Thomas Williamson's View of Fort York | 4 | Beyond the Fringes |
| 2 | The Artillery at the Capture of York | 5 | The Library of Major General Sir Isaac Brock |
| 3 | Province Proceeds on First Parliament Site | 7 | Administrators' Report |
| 4 | 1812: War with America
Jon Latimer's Book Reviewed | 7 | Mackerooms |
| | | 8 | Upcoming Events |

Thomas Williamson's Wonderful View of Fort York

by Stephen Otto



Fort York from the east, 1840, by Thomas Williamson (Courtesy of Upper Canada College Archives, Toronto)

A wonderful new view of Fort York in the 1840s has been discovered by chance in a school boy's sketchbook. In an article entitled "Art Education in a Manly Environment: Educating the Sons of the Establishment in a 19th Century Boys' School," (Studies in Art Education, vol. 42, no. 2, Winter 2001), Prof. F. Graeme Chalmers tells how pupils at Toronto's elite Upper Canada College (UCC) learned to draw as part of their gentlemanly education. Listed as an example are the contents of a sketchbook produced by third-form pupil, Thomas Williamson, aged 17, which is now found in the UCC

Archives. On page 24 are drawings in pen and wash of a child, houses in a landscape, and the Toronto Garrison from the east.

Williamson's sketch adds much to what is known of how the fort looked after it had been strengthened following the 1838 rebellion, says Dr. Carl Benn, chief curator for City of Toronto museums and an authority on the fort's history.

In the sketch the fort appears as a low-lying group of buildings surrounded by ramparts and log palisades. Outside its walls in the Garrison Creek ravine (right foreground) is seen the so-called artillery square composed of horse stables, straw stores and a gun shed. Inside the garrison's gates most buildings in the view are still easily identified even though only their roofs are visible. The guardhouse, commandant's house and new 'D' barracks are all there. However, one flat-roofed structure near the east blockhouse (extreme left) is still a mystery.

Williamson's work brings new life to what had previously just been outlines on a map and provides a better understanding of what the east side of the fort looked like. For example, the palisading and stockading are more extensive and impressive than previously thought.

Thomas Williamson, the son of a prominent Stoney Creek merchant and farmer, entered UCC as a boarder in September 1839. He signed and dated the sketchbook's title page Dec. 10, 1840. In schoolboy fashion he described his hometown there as "the Capital of Canada," likely a sly poke at a matter then under discussion: where the seat of government would be following the Act of Union that joined Upper and Lower Canada. Shortly the honour would come to rest on Kingston. The title page also includes a specimen of his handwriting: "Let us not expect too much pleasure in this life: no situation is exempt from trouble. The best persons are no doubt the happiest but they have their trials and afflictions." In some ways Williamson was one of the latter people. Recognized at the end of the Fall term, 1840, for both his good conduct and proficiency, he secured firsts in Greek, Latin,

arithmetic, writing and geometrical drawing in perspective, all the while grieving the death of a younger brother who had passed away only a month before.

At UCC geometrical and ornamental drawing were taught as separate subjects; the sketchbook holds examples of the latter. Williamson's ornamental drawing teacher was James Hamilton (1810-1896) who emigrated from England about 1830 to join his parents who had settled in Upper Canada a short time before. Initially, Hamilton made his living by teaching school, though not at UCC. By 1834, however, he had gravitated to a more secure position as a bank clerk. Art was a hobby that prompted him to do occasional sketches around town. It also brought him into contact with the architect John G. Howard and others who, inspired by Toronto's incorporation as a city in March 1834, organized its first exhibition of art. Afterwards Howard and Hamilton remained close. Probably it was through Howard who taught geometrical drawing at UCC that Hamilton came there in mid-1839 to teach ornamental drawing. Hamilton remained at UCC only two years before resigning in 1841, possibly because his young family demanded more of his time or his workload at the bank became heavier.

Williamson left UCC later that same year, perhaps to work for his father. Little more is known about him. He died at age 27 in Stoney Creek from an inflammation of the lungs on Sept. 9, 1851, and was buried in a family plot in the Methodist, now municipal, cemetery.

“Covered with snow and frozen mud.”

The Artillery at The Capture of York

by Robert Malcomson

Writing military history would be so much easier if the people involved in long-ago events had been more conscientious about making accurate lists of their men and arms on the eve of battle. Instead, we are left with official reports that exaggerate success and underplay disaster and a scattering of other archival documents.

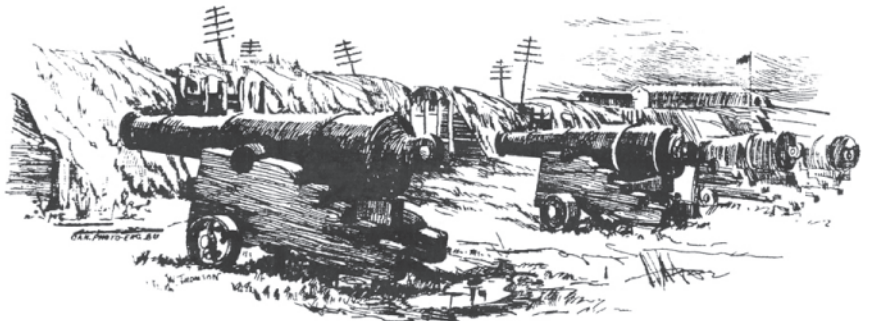
The previous article in this series showed the inaccuracies in the data that Major General Sir Roger Sheaffe reported after the Americans captured Little York on 27 April 1813. Generally, historians have repeated Sheaffe's numbers, backing them up with anecdotal information from other participants in the action. A more realistic picture has emerged, however, based on the evidence of regimental records and other military documents held in Canadian, British and American archives, revealing that Sheaffe had nearly twice the number of men in arms than he reported.

The same sort of “revision” in the telling of the battle of York was wanted in relation to the popular idea that the British lost the Battle of Lake Erie in September 1813, in part, because guns intended for their squadron were captured at York. This is simply untrue.

It is understandable, however, that such an idea is still being repeated. William James, the British lawyer-turned-historian described the battle in 1818, writing about how the guns intended for the frigate *Sir Isaac Brock* “lay on the ground partly covered with snow and frozen mud.” James had never been to York, especially not at the end of a balmy April, but his prose appealed to others, including Theodore Roosevelt who repeated the loss of the guns in his naval history in 1882. The tale has been retold again and again and even Canada's renowned historian C. P. Stacey wrote, “The armament and equipment for the British squadron on Lake Erie was at York in April 1813, waiting to be sent to the base at Amherstburg.”

Where did they get such a notion? Blame Sir George Prevost, the governor-in-chief of British North America who, covering his own culpability for the defeat at York, lied to his superiors in England in July 1813 when he alleged, “The ordnance, ammunition and other stores for the service on Lake Erie... were either destroyed or fell into the enemy's hands when York was taken.” No one, it seems, ever pointed out to Prevost that, during the previous January, his military secretary had informed officers in Upper Canada that guns intended for the new ships on Lakes Ontario and Erie would not reach Quebec until May, at the earliest, prompting those officers to patch together temporary, and awkward, batteries for the vessels. William James and other historians missed this latter document and related letters completely in their research.

So, what sort of artillery was at York? Do not rely on Roger Sheaffe's rendition to ferret out the truth. In the two versions of his official report he referred to “two twelve-pounders and two old condemned eighteen-pounders without trunnions and... a twelve-pounder of the same description.” To his close correspondent Bishop Jacob Mountain he wrote, “Two twelve pounders and two field sixes were furnished for the defence of an open untenable town.” Three weeks before the battle, however, Sheaffe mentioned, “2 12-prs mounted, 6 18-prs and hope to have more ready in a few days.”



The Battery, Fort York, by W. J. Thomson (The Globe, 8 Feb. 1890)

Sheaffe's remembrance is undone quickly, however, by two "returns" (status reports found in Record Group 8 at Library and Archives Canada) of artillery mounted, or in the field, at York, dated 31 March 1813, that show 20 guns:

- 2 6-pdr. brass field guns (long stationed at York)
- 2 18-pdr. long guns (brought by Simcoe)
- 2 12-pdr. long guns (sent from Lower Canada)
- 6 6-pdr. long guns
(off the schooner *Duke of Gloucester* under repair)
- 8 18-pdr. carronades (sent from Fort George)

After the battle, however, Commodore Isaac Chauncey wrote that he had "found at this place 28 Cannon of different calibre, from 32 to 6 pounders," a figure also noted in a letter sent by a surgeon in the squadron.

Where did the other guns come from? No one mentioned a shipment of artillery reaching York in April, so it seems most likely that the remaining eight pieces were old weapons brought to York in the 1790s by Lieutenant Governor John Graves Simcoe as part of his plan to create a strong fortress and arsenal at York. The "condemned" 18-pdrs. mounted in the Western Battery were among these as was the trunnionless 12-pdr. that was brought into action during the battle and probably the trunnionless 9-pdr. that is on display at Historic Fort York. Other documents refer to 15 carronades, 5 18-pdrs. and 10 12-pdrs., transported to York during the Simcoe era.

The suggestion that there were other Simcoe guns in storage at York is supported by the fact that Chauncey did not keep all 28 guns. Two American army officers and one seaman mentioned spiking and sinking unwanted pieces in the lake before leaving York. Ned Myers, the seaman whose life story was popularized by James Fenimore Cooper, recollected, "Embarked on board of the fleet the 1st May in the afternoon after Destroying their Brest Works, taking some of the Guns on Board and Sinking the Remainder in the Lake."

When Chauncey put in a claim for prize money he listed only "16 cannon of different calibres." The various legal documents in the paper trail concerning this claim repeat this number and reveal that eventually the government paid nearly \$29,000 for the guns. As commodore, Chauncey's share was 3/20, which put a tidy \$4,350.00 in his pocket.

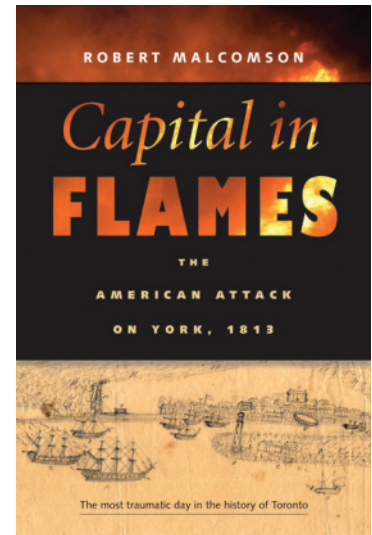
No alteration was made to the guns in Chauncey's squadron during this time and it appears that the pieces captured at York remained unused at Sackets Harbor.

Ordnance for the *Isaac Brock* arrived at Kingston in the late spring and summer and were put into the warships there. The only guns specifically intended for the new ship on Lake Erie (*HMS Detroit*), ten 24-pdr. carronades, were not unloaded at Burlington for shipment overland to Lake Erie until late August or early September 1813 and never reached Amherstburg. As for other naval supplies intended for the upper lake, some had already been forwarded from York before the battle, although there is little doubt that other cordage, sails and fittings, meant for Lake Erie, were captured

or destroyed during the American occupation. But did the fall of York doom the British to defeat on Lake Erie? No, that battle saw too few skilled seamen sail poorly armed vessels into action where they suffered from balky winds and plain, old rotten luck.

Robert Malcomson's latest book, Capital in Flames: The American Attack on York, 1813, will be published by Robin Brass Studio in April and launched at Fort York on Sunday the 27th of April at 2:30pm.

Free Admission to Fort York to attend the book launch for those who register in advance. (416-392-6907 or fortyork@toronto.ca)



Province Proceeds On First Parliament Site

With the appointment of Sheila Larmer as project director, the Ontario government has signaled its interest in moving ahead on interpretation of the site of the province's first parliament buildings. The two plain brick structures, erected in 1797 at the southeast corner of Front and Berkeley streets, Toronto, were burned by U.S. invaders in 1813, rebuilt and enlarged after the war, destroyed again by fire in 1824, and finally demolished in 1830.

After the Parliament Buildings were taken down the Home District Jail was built on the land. In 1888 it was replaced by a retort house for the Consumers' Gas Company, which gave way in the 1960s to automotive-related uses. Today the Ontario Heritage Trust owns part of the site, which is occupied by an automotive dealership and a car wash.

Sheila Larmer comes to her new job with impressive experience. After training at Waterloo and Carleton universities in architecture and art history, she arrived at Queen's Park in 1978 to work as a heritage conservation officer for the Ministry of Culture & Recreation. Later she headed the ministry's Libraries Planning and Operations unit. Since 2001 she has been Director of Policy and Research at the Ministry of Tourism. In her new responsibilities she is based at the Ontario Heritage Trust, 10 Adelaide St. E. (tel. 416-314-6885).

It is hoped that initiatives to conserve and interpret this important site, sometimes described with Fort York as early Toronto's bookends, will coincide with province-wide celebrations marking the Bicentennial of the War of 1812.

1812: War with America

Jon Latimer's Book Reviewed

by Michael Peters

For Americans, the War of 1812 is an under-rated conflict—then and still today, most assume they were the winners! For the British, the real fight was with the French. In spite of all the 'local' excitement up here in Canada, the War of 1812 remains largely overshadowed by other events that were happening on the world stage between the two superpowers of the time. But for most Canadians, the War of 1812 is one of our country's defining moments. It strengthened our sense of nationalism and helped us to set a course for independence and Confederation in 1867.

Jon Latimer's *1812: War with America* is the first comprehensive history of the War of 1812 written from a British point of view. It is an authoritative account of the events leading up to the conflict and of the many battles and struggles involved during the war years. It draws on a significant number of personal accounts found in letters, diaries and memoirs of the politicians and military professionals, regular soldiers, sailors and ordinary folks and weaves them in with first-hand descriptions of the activities of war, the tactical events and logistics into a compelling account of the world at war. There are vivid accounts of the major land and naval battles across North America with some good maps and illustrations for reference and, very thorough descriptions of the many lesser battles along the Great Lakes corridor such as the victory at Crysler's Farm in 1813 and success at Lundy's Lane in 1814. These and more, will have particular interest for Canadians as Bicentennial celebrations of the War of 1812 begin to take shape in the many communities who trace their ancestry back to the conflict.

At first, armed with a middling grasp of the events involved (some of the more famous players and some of the important battles, on Canadian soil at least), I found the depth of historical detail to be overwhelming—so many battles, so many people, so much going on. But, as the book progressed, and I saw the interconnectedness of it all, I began to enjoy it. It is a great story.

1812: War with America is a comprehensive read, well written and engaging, and it provides a balanced account of the actual events of the war. It makes me want to go and learn more about specific events of the time. This is our compelling history, and it is full of interesting and exciting stories that are waiting to be explored, unraveled and re-told.

Finally, it's with a sense of assurance that one reads in Jon Latimer's *1812: War with America*, that while American accomplishments during the war were many, the outcome of the war "must be seen as a British victory, however marginal." That's nice to know.

Beyond the Fringes

Four projects that are about to begin may dramatically change the landscape beyond the fringes of Fort York. These improvements, if well executed, could result in bringing the Fort York Neighbourhood closer to the promise of a well planned community. All four projects are important to the National Historic Site, but it is too early yet to say with certainty whether everything will go according to plan

On the east the Bathurst Bridge, renamed last September for Sir Isaac Brock, will close late in 2008 for rebuilding to permit streetcar turns where Bathurst intersects Fort York Boulevard. (See *Fife & Drum*, Sept. 2006). Within the next few months designs for the new structure will emerge from a consortium of engineers, architects, archaeologists and others led by McCormick Rankin. We expect the result will be a highly distinguished public work that provides safe, generous pedestrian and cycling connections under Bathurst Street, and hope we are not disappointed.

South of the fort, the TTC plans to run a streetcar in a dedicated right-of-way along Fort York Boulevard. The Friends of Fort York have supported the proposal in the earliest phases of its Environmental Assessment, while reserving any final endorsement until we see detailed plans that honour two fundamental principles: **Ease of Access** to the site, and **Respect for Its Integrity**. There are only two road entrances to Fort York. The one off Fleet Street west of the Armoury is now limited by the newly-rebuilt Fleet streetcar line to right-in and right-out turns only. It is essential, therefore, that cars and buses entering or leaving by the fort's main gate on Fort York Blvd. be allowed a full range of turns. As for the second principle, any encroachment on the site for a streetcar line will be resisted vigorously as short-sighted, destructive of the fort's integrity and prejudicial to the preservation of the city's birthplace. The streetcar must stay in the road.

Strachan Avenue to the west of Fort York is the third edge where something's happening. A study has been commissioned to provide alternative designs for how the present level crossing of the GO rail corridor to Georgetown and Milton might be grade-separated while ensuring that Strachan continues as an important link between the Waterfront and the neighbourhoods north of King Street. The result must also be more aesthetically pleasing and pedestrian- and cyclist-friendly. DuToit Allsopp Hillier have been awarded the contract for this study, to be completed by the end of 2008.

Finally, an Environmental Assessment has begun on the imaginative proposal to provide a link by means of a bridge that would carry only pedestrians and cyclists across the rail corridors from the open area west of the fort to the parklands beyond (See *Fife & Drum*, Dec. 2007). Following a competition, the name of the successful proponent to carry out this assessment will be announced shortly.

The Library of Major General Sir Isaac Brock

by Patricia Fleming

The dramatic circumstances of Isaac Brock's death - shot in the heart as he rushed up a hill occupied by the enemy, conspicuous by his splendid red uniform and his height of six feet two - have overshadowed what is known of his life. Born into a prosperous family in Guernsey in 1769 he entered the army in 1785. Before his regiment, the 49th, was ordered to Canada in 1802 he had served in England and the West Indies and had seen action in north Holland in 1799 and with Nelson's squadron in 1801. Promoted major general in 1811, Brock was president and administrator of the government of Upper Canada as well as military commander of the province. A bachelor, he turned 43 a week before his death at Queenston Heights on 13 October 1812. A final honour was granted in England just four days earlier when he was knighted in recognition of his victory at Detroit in August.

Brock's fame as the hero of Upper Canada has been built page by page. As C.P. Stacey wryly notes in the *Dictionary of Canadian Biography*, 'The power of the Brock legend in Canada is reflected in the fact that no important known documents concerning his Canadian activities seem to have escaped publication.' The basic collection was compiled early, by his nephew: F.B. Tupper *The Life and Correspondence of Major-General Sir Isaac Brock* (London, 1847).

One document which appears to have escaped publication (but not notice) is a fifteen-page estate inventory drawn up after Brock's death and now located in the William Allan Papers in the Baldwin Room, Toronto Reference Library. Robert Malcomson cites it in *Burying General Brock* (1996) and one page is reproduced in *History of the Book in Canada* (2004). The first seven pages itemize goods purchased from Brock's estate in November 1812, primarily by Major General Roger Hale Sheaffe, his successor in civil and military command. Brock's cousin Captain James Brock and Captain John Glegg, an aide-de-camp, bought more modestly. Some 170 lots of 'Furniture &c' confirm the general's reputation for hospitality with mahogany and cut glass, damask for the table, and a Brussels carpet in the drawing room. His cellar held more than 560 bottles of port-wine, 48 of claret, and 24 of Quebec ale, as well as champagne, brandy, and porter, while the pantry was stocked with Hyson tea, green coffee, savoury condiments, and preserved fruits.

Two years earlier, in July 1810 when Brock was ordered to Upper Canada, he confided to a sister-in-law his regret at leaving Quebec where he had been stationed since 1806. He had there 'the most delightful garden imaginable, with abundance of melons and other good things' and he hesitated about moving his household: 'Unless I take up every thing with me, I shall be miserably off, for nothing beyond eatables is to be had there; and in case I provide the requisites to make my abode in the winter in any way comfortable, and then be ordered back, the expense will be ruinous' (Tupper 79-80).



FRIENDS OF FORT YORK ANNUAL GEORGIAN DINNER

The Friends of Fort York and Garrison Common cordially invite you to attend our TENTH Annual Georgian Mess Dinner at Historic Fort York in the Blue Barracks on Thursday, 12 June 2008.

An authentic Georgian Dinner has been created, based on research by our team of Bridget Wranich, the Volunteer Historic Cooks of Fort York, and our caterer, Berkley Hospitality, to ensure that you will enjoy a formal Officers' Mess dinner as it would have been in 1813.

The Dinner is a fundraising event of the Friends in support of the Fort York Drums, a volunteer student group wearing the uniform of the Company of Canadian Fencibles that served at the fort during the War of 1812.

A formal notice of the Dinner will be mailed in April. The cost remains the same as previous years, \$175 per person. A tax receipt for the maximum allowable amount will be issued.

To be sure that your name is on our mailing list for this popular event please e-mail us at <fofy@sympatico.ca> and include your postal address.

Dress for the occasion is:

Period costumes Military uniforms Masquerade costume (as worn in 1813!) Black Tie (miniatures and decorations may be worn)

On 14 January 1813 the 'Effects of the late Major General Brock' were sold at auction. The sale opened with his library, followed by silver, furniture, pieces of harness and a gig, 17 sets of window curtains, and 15 sheep. His library consisted of 38 titles, many in sets, totalling more than 150 volumes, together with periodicals and one 'Lot of books.' Literary works included sets of Sterne, Pope, and Johnson, two sets of Shakespeare, 32 volumes in all, and another 5 volumes of plays. Among the classics we find Horace and Virgil, both in 4 volumes; rounding out the ancients are 12 volumes of Rollin's *Ancient History* and 6 of Plutarch. Most of Brock's military books were French, including Guibert's *Oeuvres militaires*, probably the Paris edition of 1803. As well as Voltaire on Henry IV and the age of Louis XIV, he had memoirs of Conde' and Talleyrand.

Since entries in the inventory are cryptic, old friends may emerge through a search. "Wolfs Orders" is surely *General Wolfe's Instructions to Young Officers; Also His Orders...* while "Expedition to Holland" would be *A Narrative of the Expedition to Holland in the Autumn of the Year 1799* by surgeon Edward Walsh of the 49th who served there with Brock and is remembered for his painting of the town of York in 1803.

Some of Brock's books may have been sent by his brothers in response to letters such as one to Irving, himself an author, dated at Niagara on 10 January 1811: 'I wish you to send me some choice authors in history, particularly ancient, with maps, and the best translations of ancient works. I read in my youth Pope's translation of Homer but till lately never discovered its exquisite beauties. As I grow old I acquire a taste for study.' Others he may have bought at Quebec

where John Nielson, printer and bookseller, carried on a family business established in 1764. We know from his advertisements and catalogues that he stocked a substantial number of the titles in Brock's library: *Court Calendar*, *Edinburgh Review*, *European Magazine*, *Elegant Extracts*, Johnson's Dictionary, Whitelock's trial, Murray's and various French grammars, and standard literary works.

Whatever the source, Brock was an attentive reader who valued his library: 'I read much, but good books are scarce, and I hate borrowing. I like to read a book quickly, and afterwards revert to such passages as have made the deepest impression, and which appear to me most important to remember - a practice I cannot conveniently pursue unless the book be mine' (Tupper 88).

When Brock's books came on the market in January 1813, ten buyers divided the collection. Although the military was represented by officers such as Major Alexander Clerk of the 49th who carried off Walsh, Shakespeare, and MacArthur on courts martial, the most active buyers were prominent citizens of York: William Allan, George Crookshank, Edward McMahan, and the Reverend John Strachan. This last purchaser is of particular interest because many of his books are now in the Strachan Collection at the library of Trinity College, University of Toronto. Among them is one of the six titles he bought at the Brock sale, *The Works of Samuel Johnson* (London 1810) in twelve volumes. Although they bear no mark linking them to Isaac Brock, the signature on each title page (one volume is missing) of John Strachan above the date 'Jany. 1813' is strong evidence that Brock's library has not been entirely lost.

Fort York: A Short History and Guide

by Carl Benn, chief curator, City of Toronto Museums and Heritage Services.

Dr Benn frames the historical background of Toronto's birthplace in four periods: Anglo-American relations and the establishment of Fort York, 1793 to 1807; the war years, 1807 to 1815; British troops at the fort, 1815 to 1870; and the Canadian military years, 1870 to 1932, when work began on conversion of the fort into a museum. To guide visitors around the site he introduces the setting and the barracks, blockhouses, and magazines. Generously illustrated with scenes of military life, maps, plans, diagrams, and photographs, the text includes graphic interpretations by Kevin Hebib of key events such as the War of 1812, the Battle of York, and the 1837 rebellion in Toronto.

Priced at \$9.50 plus GST, the guide is available at the Fort York canteen.



News From

The Birthplace of Toronto

Contributions from the Staff at the Fort

Administrator's Report

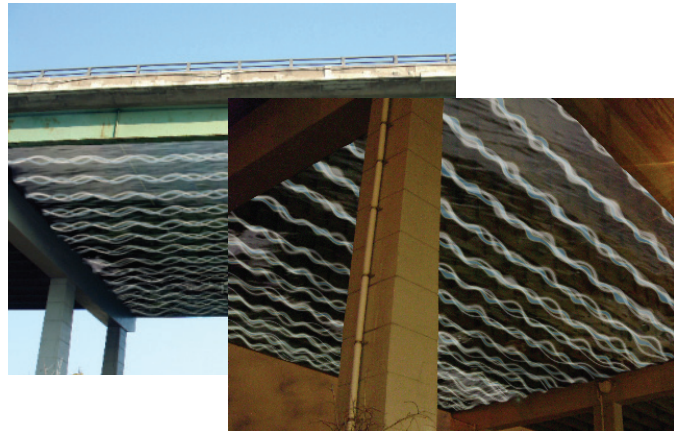
by David O'Hara, Site Administrator

As massive redevelopment of the lands surrounding Fort York continues, with over 15,000 new units of housing and major municipal infrastructure projects (see 'Beyond the Fringes' page 4), we continue to implement our plans to improve the entire 18 ha national historic site. In addition to enhancing site access and the overall physical presence of the fort, we continue to look for new and creative ways of conveying the messages associated with the site's history and significance.

Recently Toronto Culture held a competition to commission a unique site-specific public artwork for the area. Interested artists were asked to consider working with light and/or new-media technologies in a way that articulates the historic significance of the original Lake Ontario shoreline in a contemporary language. The open competition began with a call for Expressions of Interest in September of 2007, and after review by a Selection Panel, five short-listed artists or teams were invited to participate in the proposal phase of the competition: Daniel Laskarin and Robert Youds (Victoria, BC), Maha Mustafa (Toronto), Melissa Shiff (Toronto), Tony Stallard (UK), Lisa Steele and Kim Tomczak (Toronto).

After careful deliberation, the Jury unanimously chose WATERTABLE, a light and sound work by Lisa Steele and Kim Tomczak. According to Steele and Tomczak, "To reveal the original shoreline of Lake Ontario, WATERTABLE will create the look of shimmering water, appearing to float under the surface of the Gardiner Expressway. Waves of softly glowing undulating LED lights will begin from the southern edge of the underside of the Gardiner and move towards the north side, directing our gaze to the new entrance to Fort York. Immediately below, the sound of actual lake waves will echo subtly throughout the area, triggering another layer of memory of the early settlement of what would become the City of Toronto. WATERTABLE will be attached to a small anemometer (measuring the wind velocity at the site), thus responding to the actual wind conditions of the moment."

This is a wonderful way of using one of our biggest constraints, the Gardiner Expressway, to our advantage. Over the next few years, additional opportunities to interpret Fort York through a variety of means will be considered. The development of the parkland to the east of



Bathurst Street, where the mouth of Garrison Creek and the Russell Fort once existed, will certainly be one of the more interesting projects to follow over the next year or two.

Mackeroons

by Bridget Wranich

Today mackeroons (now macaroons) are a meringue made with coconut, but until the mid-19th century they contained finely chopped or ground sweet almonds. Recipes for them have appeared frequently in cookery books since the 17th century, with varying ratios of sugar to egg whites. Mackeroons were served with wines and liquors or were crushed and served in trifles or with syllabubs and creams. An original recipe from Hannah Glasse's *The Art of Cookery Made Plain and Easy* (London 1796; facsimile edition 1971, 331) reads: Take a pound of almonds, let them be scalded, blanched, and thrown into cold water, then dry them in a cloth, and pound them in a mortar, moisten them with orange-flower water, or with the white of an egg, lest they turn to oil; afterwards, take an equal quantity of fine powder sugar, with three or four whites of eggs, and a little musk, beat all well together, and shape them on wafer-paper, with a spoon round: bake them in a gentle oven on tin plates.

Orange-flower water is made by steeping orange blossoms in either brandy or distilled water. The delicate perfume of both orange flower water and rosewater were once characteristic of all types of British cakes, confections and beverages, although rosewater was much more common.

By the mid-19th century they were being displaced by vanilla essence. Musk, however, although still an important ingredient in perfumery, is no longer considered edible. It is an aromatic substance produced by the male musk-deer. Instead of buttering the baking sheets, wafer paper was used to line them for baking delicate biscuits and meringues.

Our Modern Equivalent:

675 ml (2 ¾ cups) blanched almonds

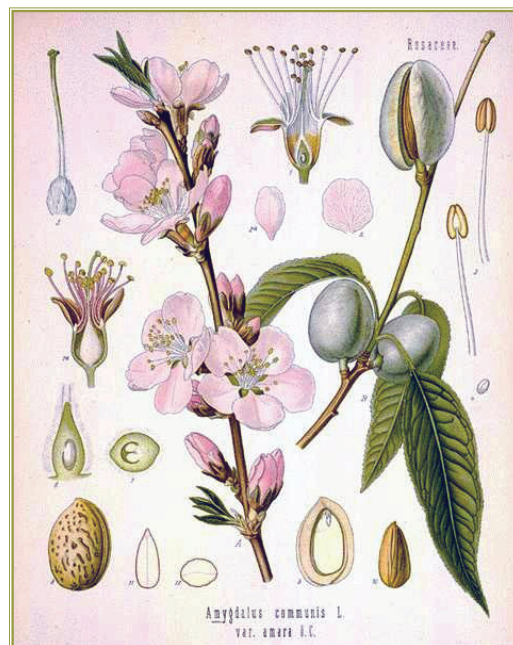
10 ml (2 tsp) orange-flower water

4 egg whites

500 ml (2 cups) white sugar, pulverized with mortar and pestle or in food processor

Pulverize almonds to a paste with orange-flower water either in a mortar and pestle or in a food processor; set aside. Whisk egg whites to a stiff froth. Beat in sugar a bit at a time to create a glossy meringue. Fold in almond paste. Drop by teaspoonfuls onto baking sheets lined with baker's parchment paper. Bake in a slow oven, 160 ° C (325 ° F) for 12 – 15 minutes, or until dry but before they start to brown.

Yield: about 5 ½ dozen macaroons.



Sweet almonds, from an old botanical illustration (anon.)

2008 Upcoming Events Historic Fort York

Compiled by Melanie Garrison

APRIL

Mayor Miller's Community Cleanup Day

Sat. Apr. 19, 10 a.m. to 1 p.m.

Meet at the west gate outside the canteen/museum store for coffee. Garbage bags will be provided. Dress appropriately and bring gloves.

Commemoration of the Battle of York, 1813

Sat. Apr. 26 and Sun. Apr. 27, 10 a.m. to 5 p.m.

Special activities include the launch of Robert Malcomson's new book on the American attack on York in April 1813, a Battle School for re-enactors, artillery firing demonstrations, walking tours of the Battle Field, and the laying of a wreath in Victoria Memorial Square by the 48th Highlanders in memory of the Royal Newfoundland Regiment at York, 1813.

Regular admission rates apply to activities within the fort.

History Fair, Toronto District School Board, West District

Wed. Apr. 30, 10 a.m. to 3 p.m.

View the best and the brightest history projects selected from local schools in this annual history competition. Participants create projects using a wide-range of media - panel displays, computer presentations, dioramas, and more - or write and perform theatrical or musical pieces.

Regular admission

MAY

Victoria Day - Annual Event

Mon. May 19, 10 a.m. to 5 p.m.

What better way to celebrate Victoria Day than to visit the birthplace of Toronto. Tours, kids' drill, baking in the kitchen, fife and drum music.

Regular admission

Doors Open - Annual Event

Sat. May 24 and Sun. May 25, 10 a.m. to 5 p.m.

Tours of some of Toronto's oldest architecture and Canada's largest collection of original War of 1812 buildings.

Free admission

JUNE

Friends of Fort York

Thurs. June 12

Annual Fundraising Georgian Mess Dinner held by the Friends of Fort York, in support of the Fort York Guard

Father's Day

Ontario Model Soldier Society Annual Show & Competition

Sat. June 14 and Sun. June 15, 10 a.m. to 5 p.m.

Displays include various levels of toy soldiers, connoisseur figures, dioramas, as well as larger displays of more than a thousand pieces. Demonstrations include painting and casting and groundwork techniques. Many vendors will also be on site. See www.omss.ca for further details. Special activities for Dad and the whole family with food vendors and a beer garden.

Free admission

JULY

Canada Day - Annual Event

Tues. July 1, 10 a.m. to 5 p.m.

Come see those other redcoats, the Fort York Summer Guard, perform musket and artillery drill as well as fife and drum music. Tours all day, and lots of fun for the family.

Regular admission

Regular admission to Fort York is Adult: \$6.00 (\$5.66 + GST); Senior (65+): \$3.25 (\$3.07 + GST); Youths (13-18 yrs.): \$3.25 (\$3.07 + GST); Children (12-): \$3.00 (\$2.83 + GST)

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