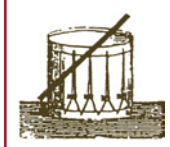


# The Fife and Drum

The Newsletter of the Friends of Fort York and Garrison Common

v. 14 No. 3 October 2010

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## A Landscape of Memory: Coronation Park

by Gary Miedema

Directly south of Fort York, between Lakeshore Boulevard and the lake, lies Coronation Park. A grove of mature trees dominates the site, while a sea wall on its south side slices water from land, trees from marina, quiet green from the noise of Porter aircraft as they launch themselves out over the lake.

A provincial plaque marks the park as the approximate site of the second American attack on Fort York in 1813—where American ships may have anchored as the army was rowed ashore. But that was about 125 years before the Park became a park—when it was, in fact, lake.

Just over one hundred years after that attack, in 1917, Fort York was still close to the lake. Over the next number of years, however, the land beneath today’s Fleet Street, Lakeshore Boulevard, and Coronation Park rose from the sandy depths.

In a detailed and well-researched article, “A Living Memorial: The History of Coronation Park” (published in *Urban History Review* in February 1991), John Bacher has documented the subsequent history of the site. What is now Coronation Park remained sandy, and not much more, into the 1930s. The Great Depression then inspired change. Infrastructure projects offering “relief” pay for otherwise unemployed men became the equivalent of today’s federal infrastructure funds dedicated to keeping some of us at work. Within shouting distance from the Fort, restored as one relief project, other desperate men worked through the summer of 1935 to complete a sea wall that still

stands along Coronation Park’s southern edge. (The sea wall, it’s worth noting, did not expand the earlier filled area, but actually allowed for the dredging of a deeper basin at land’s edge for a new marina.)

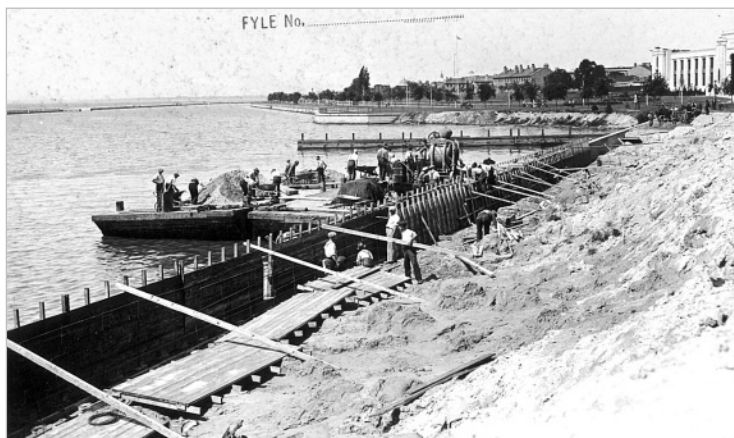
While steam shovels did the dredging, men with shovels moved most of the dry land, wheelbarrow by wheelbarrow. In the midst of a heat wave, and without any shade on the site, at

least one man collapsed, and three horses died. But by August 1935, the glittering new concrete sea wall and leveled land were complete at less than its projected cost.

The park itself would come nearly two years later. In the wake of the death of King George V in January of 1936, the coming coronation of a new king sent officials in a then-still-very-British-minded Toronto into planning for celebrations. Thomas Hobbs and

Andrew Gillespie, members of the Toronto Ex-Servicemen’s Coronation Committee, joined forces with the Toronto Chapter of Men of the Trees to propose a “Coronation Park” dominated by ceremonial tree plantings.

The Men of the Trees, an organization formed by war veteran Richard St. Barbe Barker, rode the rising wave of conservationism in the interwar period to preach reforestation as “the most constructive and peaceable enterprise in which nations could cooperate.” It had appealed particularly well to veterans. And in Toronto, where 90,000 veterans of WWI



Creating Coronation Park in the 1930s. (Credit: Toronto Port Authority Archives)

had held a three day reunion in 1934, veterans apparently carried weight. City Council approved the proposed concept, and left a Coronation Park Advisory Committee, dominated by veterans, to finalize the design and planting details.

In short, they created a park that was part avenue of trees, part war memorial. In the centre of the park still stands a Royal oak, planted in honour of King George VI. Around it are maple trees symbolizing the strength and loyalty of the Empire, and of the Canadians who fought to defend it during WWI. The Royal oak itself is ringed by a wide circle of seven maple trees representing parts of the British Empire. Beyond that circle, other trees were planted to represent the four divisions of the Canadian Expeditionary Force, with each tree representing a unit of a division. Trees were also added to represent the veterans of the Fenian raids of 1866, the 1885 Northwest Rebellion, and the Boer War. In all, nearly 150 trees were planted along gently curving pathways during a mass ceremony on 12 May 1937—Coronation Day, and a public holiday in Toronto.

But they weren't done yet. After the 1937 planting, the Coronation Park Advisory Committee organized the placing at each tree of a granite stone with a brass plate naming the unit which it commemorated. Funded by veterans and the Men of the Trees, the plaques were unveiled during another impressive show of veteran solidarity, a 1938 reunion which brought an estimated 100,000 veterans to the city. On August 1, on one signal, veterans at the base of each tree simultaneously unveiled the plaques.

Veterans and the Men of the Trees organized a final planting to mark the Royal visit of King George VI and Queen Elizabeth. On 22 May 1939, the car carrying the Royal couple passed slowly down the drive which still exists through the park. Along each side of the drive were arrayed 123 hard maples each representing a public or separate school in the city. A veteran held each tree steady. As the car passed, school children emptied a shovel of dirt onto the roots.

In spite of its rich symbolic importance as a living memorial to Canada's war veterans, Coronation Park nearly didn't survive. Like the continually beleaguered Old Fort York, the park was threatened by the construction of the Gardiner Expressway—it became a proposed lake edge site for the reconstruction of the Fort, itself in the way of the highway. Later, at some point prior to 1965, all original paths but that around the central ringed grove were sodded over, destroying the visibility and meaning of the original groupings of trees. In the early 1970s, the park was almost razed to make room for the relocation of the CNE midway.

Coronation Park remained to become the backbone of a nucleus of armed forces sites and commemorations, from HMCS York on the east (located next to the park in 1947) to Battery Park on the west (which from 1965 to the 1990s contained a cluster of aging weapons of war, including a Lancaster bomber), to the creation of a new WWII memorial in the mid-1990s, just a stone's throw from the Royal oak.

The park today is a shadow of what it should be, and a

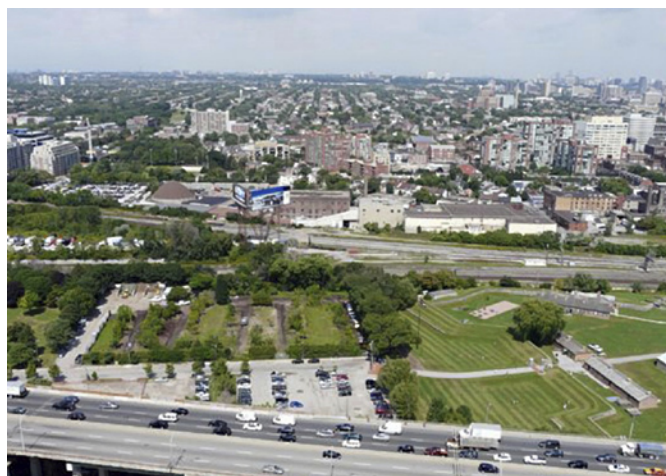
discouraging comment on our collective ability to care for our past. While most of its trees tower above the grass, one is now only a stump, and a good number of the brass plates have gone missing. Worse, with the loss of the original pathways, the beautiful tree-lined vistas along their former routes are no longer noticed or enjoyed. In short, a moving, carefully planned landscape of memory has simply become another grove of trees in a park, separated from HMCS York on the east by an off-leash dog area.

The 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the beginning of WWI is but four years away. The restoration of the lost elements of Coronation Park might be a fitting tribute to those Torontonians who fought in that war and then, decades later, laid out new pathways, planted new trees, and unveiled new plaques on landfill, next to a new seawall.

*Gary Miedema is Chief Historian and Associate Director of Heritage Toronto.*

## *The Garrison Nursery*

*by Richard Ubbens*



*The Garrison Nursery is located to the left of the West Gate of Fort York. (Credit: John Early and Kam Fei Leung, Garrison Nursery staff, Toronto Parks)*

Since 1959, the City of Toronto has had significant tree planting operations supplied with trees from a little two-acre site located on the west side of Fort York. Known affectionately as Garrison Nursery by Urban Forestry staff from the Parks, Forestry and Recreation Division, this site has changed over the decades from an actual nursery to more of a holding yard for trees.

During the summer of 2010, construction of a new facility to replace the Garrison Nursery was undertaken at a former log storage yard on Unwin Avenue in the Port Lands. Hopes are for the new facility to be almost fully functional by fall of this year.

In earlier years, trees were actually bought as liner stock from southwestern Ontario tree growers and grown to larger size

at Garrison Nursery. When a certain species or size tree was needed, it was dug by hand by skilled staff who knew the old methods of tying root balls with burlap and twine. The trees would be moved to their new locations to be planted in parks, along streets, and in ravines.

When perhaps a thousand trees per year would be needed, the site was sufficient to meet demand. As the program grew to the present 110,000 trees per year, and as tree growers supplied more diversity and at more competitive prices, the site has changed into a holding yard where tractor trailers of trees are supplied just in time for them to move out on trucks to be planted. The site now mainly serves the downtown, lakefront district of the City of Toronto.

Notable events over the history of Garrison Nursery seem to centre around birds. For the past eight years or so, a pair of mallard ducks, named Lunch and Dinner by the present day Nursery Technician, has graced the site each spring. They have their young and move on. One can't help wondering if mockingbirds were present when the Fort was active. For the past decade or more, since cell phones and mic radios have been the mainstay of communication for staff, local mockingbirds have often sent staff running for the phone as the birds mimic the tones exactly. Killdeer have nested over the years preventing staff from moving trees from certain parts of the nursery each year. And many birds frolic in the puddles that sometimes form after irrigation.

The north side of the site, the former Garrison Creek slope, was once used by nursery staff to grow vegetables which could be eaten over the lunch hour.

For more than fifty years the main purpose of Garrison Nursery has been to welcome new trees from their places of origin to the urban forest of Toronto. As a new welcome centre replaces this one, the memory will hopefully remain that the Fort York site was a launching point for urban forest renewal in Toronto.

*Richard Ubbens R.P.F is Director, Urban Forestry, for the City of Toronto.*

## Stocking the Toronto Library in 1810

by Alan Walker

On 17 January 1810 a group of prominent citizens of Toronto (then the Town of York) met to establish the Toronto Library, in all likelihood the first public library in Toronto. To fund the library £100 sterling was allocated, presumably money raised from members, to the library's secretary, John McDonell, to purchase through their agent in London, a list of titles that would provide the basic collection of this new library. In February of 1810 McDonell sent the list of suggested titles reproduced here (see sidebar) to a Rev. Mr. Walker in London.

This library, unlike the public, tax-payer supported library that we know in Toronto today, was a subscription library, a model in which a group of individuals joined to purchase books in common and then paid an annual fee to sustain its operation. Being that most of the subscribers to the Toronto Library were British migrants they would have been familiar with the subscription libraries started before the mid-18th century in English cities such as Leeds, Liverpool, Norfolk, and Norwich, all of which survive to this day.

The Toronto Library had a brief but remarkable history. There is little record of its success. We do know from long-time Toronto librarian and local historian Edith Firth's account in *The Town of York* (1962, 1966) that the library was kept in Elmsley house, former home of the late Chief

Johnson's Dictionary, Quarto.....	2 volumes
Rapin's History of England, Folio.....	2
Doctor Henry's History of Great Britain, Octavo.....	12
Robertson's Works, Octavo.....	8
Laings History of Scotland.....	
Leland's D' of Ireland, Quarto.....	3
Biographia Britannica.....	12
Ro[ll]ins Ancient History, Octavo.....	7
Russell's D' and Modern D' Octavo.....	4
Annual Register for 1809.....	1
Blairs Lectures.....	3
Johnson's Works.....	12
Spectator, Guardian, and Tatler.....	
The Mirror and Lounger.....	
The Looker on.....	
Pa[y]ley's Moral Philosophy.....	1
Blair's Sermons.....	5
Sherlock's Sermons.....	2
The Bishop of London's Lectures.....	2
Fordyce's Sermons to Young Men & Women.....	2
Milton's Poetical Works.....	1
Thomson's Poems.....	1
Goldsmiths Works, Octavo.....	5
Smollets Works.....	6
Fieldings Works.....	8
Drydens Works.....	
Popes Works.....	5
Swifts Works.....	9
Sully's Memoirs.....	5
The Gentlemans Magazine beginning 1800.....	20
Plutarch's Lives. By Langhorn.....	8
Middletons Life of Cicero.....	
Monthly Review for 1809.....	2
Fergusons Roman Republic.....	5
Gibbon[s]'s Roman Empire.....	12
Gillies Green.....	4
Volney's Travels thro' Syria & Egypt.....	1
Lady Mary Wortley Montagues Letters.....	5
Burrow's Travels in China.....	
Blagdens Modern discoveries.....	
Johnson and Stephen's Shakespeare.....	8



Justice of Upper Canada, located on the southwest corner of King and Simcoe Streets.

However, the most unusual episode in the library's history occurred in late April 1813, when, in the midst of the War of 1812, the town of York was captured and sacked by the American forces. Amongst the items looted from the town by the American soldiers and sailors were the books from the Toronto Library.

We know this from the correspondence of Commodore Isaac Chauncey, the commander of American naval forces on the Great Lakes, who reported this fact later in 1813: "When the Squadron under my command visited York in April last, much to my mortification I discovered that Some of the Men had pillaged a number of books belonging to the Toronto Library." Chauncey ordered that the stolen books be gathered and returned to York. It took six months, but two boxes containing the books were returned on a second "visit" by the Americans, a visit conducted under a flag of truce in November of 1813.

This may not have been such a benevolent act as it might seem. There is a suggestion that Chauncey's generosity was perhaps a deception to allow the American officers returning the books to see first hand, what progress had been made in repair to the town.

It appears that the library never recovered from the disruption of the War. The books remained boxed and stored with William Allan, one of the original library members and leading merchants of York, who complained about their disposal in 1822, prompting a sale at auction in December of that year.

Although no account of the auction has surfaced, and the ultimate disposition of the library remains a mystery, it's reasonable to assume that the library was auctioned to its members; William Allan appears to have purchased an unlisted number of the titles as a payment of £10 appears in his ledgers in 1823.

*Alan Walker works in the Special Collections Centre of the Toronto Reference Library.*

## *New Directors Appointed to Friends' Board*

Recently the board appointed Sid Calzavara and Marc Nufrio to serve as directors of the organization until the next annual meeting when all directors have to be re-elected.

A self-employed professional photographer for more than two decades, Sid Calzavara started with the Toronto Historical Board in 1966, serving in the Fort York Guard and working as a guide and blacksmith at the fort and as an interpreter and printer at Mackenzie House. His connection with Black Creek Pioneer Village as an interpreter and volunteer

dates back to his student days at York University where he completed a degree in Historical Geography.

Marc Nufrio is Development & Acquisitions Manager for the ONNI Group of companies, the owner of significant holdings south of Fort York, where it has begun to build "Garrison at the Yards" at the corner of Bathurst and Fort York Blvd. Previously Marc worked for CB Richard Ellis in Toronto and Vancouver. A graduate of the University of Western Ontario, he is licensed as a real estate broker in Ontario and British Columbia.

## *Battle of the Brandywine Parade Held by the Queen's York Rangers at Fort York*



*At the the change of command ceremony for the Queen's York Rangers (1st American Regiment) at Fort York on Sept. 11 the Guidon, or regimental flag, was marched on in the presence of the Lieutenant-Governor. It is embroidered with the names of some of the battles in which the Rangers have distinguished themselves. Led by John Graves Simcoe during the American Revolution, more recently they have seen service in Afghanistan. (Credit: Kathy Mills)*

## *Friends' Friends Sweep Jane Jacobs Prize Awards*

This year the Jane Jacobs Prize was awarded to two recipients with close connections to the Friends of Fort York: Cathy Nasmith and the editorial team at *Spacing* magazine. Cathy was a director of the Friends from 1995 to 2004, while Matt Blackett, the publisher of *Spacing*, sits on the board currently. As well, Shawn Micallef, a senior editor at *Spacing*, is a member of the Fort York Management Board.

Cathy was recognized for an impressive list of achievements in the heritage field including introducing Doors Open to Toronto and North America in 2000, organizing support for amending the Ontario Heritage Act in 2005, serving as president of the Architectural Conservancy from 2007-09, when she found time also to start and edit *Built Heritage News*, a free e-newsletter. In 165 issues to date it has covered a wide variety of situations and issues across Canada and beyond.

Matt and his colleagues founded *Spacing* in 2003 as a quarterly magazine dedicated to examining Toronto's public spaces—its streets, sidewalks, laneways, parks, ravines, green spaces, transit, walking patterns, and underground systems. They have made an art of observing carefully how the city works and drawing parallels with other places by way of gently urging us to set our sights higher.

The Jane Jacobs Prize is an annual award that celebrates those who contribute to the fabric of Toronto life in unique ways that exemplify the ideas of Jane Jacobs. Each recipient receives \$5,000 each year for three years to spend in any way he or she chooses.

## *Fort York Foundation*

The Fort York Foundation has appointed its first executive director, **Curtis Barlow**, who has held many senior positions in the arts and government, including, most recently, executive director of the Institute for Canadian Citizenship.

*Fort York Invigorated*, the foundation's \$6-million private-sector fundraising campaign, is fortunate to have five prominent Ontarians serving as honorary chairs. They include former Lieutenant-Governors of Ontario: Their Honours **Lincoln Alexander**, **James Bartleman**, **Henry N.R. Jackman**, and **Hilary Weston**; as well as best-selling historian-author **Dr Margaret MacMillan**.

**Andrew Pringle**, an early champion of ours, partner and chair of RP Investment Advisors and a director of the Canadian Centre for Diversity, is assembling a team of volunteers who will lead our private-sector fundraising effort, all with impressive public service records in Toronto. They include: **Dr Darrell Bricker**, CEO of Ipsos Public Affairs and Honorary Colonel of the Queen's York Rangers; **John C. Eaton**, former chancellor of Ryerson University; **Shaun Francis**, Chairman

and CEO of Medcan Health Management Inc. and a founder of the True Patriot Love Foundation; **Claudia Hepburn**, Executive Director of the Centre for Entrepreneurship, Leadership and Innovation, Rotman School of Management, University of Toronto; **Robert G. Kearns**, founder and chair of the Ireland Park Foundation; **Thomas MacMillan**, chair of CIBC Mellon Global Securities; **John Matheson**, principal of StrategyCorp; **Blair McCreadie**, partner of Fraser Milner Casgrain; **Charles Pachter**, artist and historian; **John Prato**, managing director in the Equity Capital Markets group of TD Securities Inc; **John H. Tory**, chair of the Toronto City Summit Alliance; **William Woodworth**, founder of Beacon to the Ancestors Foundation and member of the Six Nations of the Grand River; and **Alexander Younger**, founder of Design Lab.

You can read more about the Fort York Foundation and get the latest news about *Fort York Invigorated* at: [www.fortyorkfoundation.ca](http://www.fortyorkfoundation.ca).

## *Upgrades to Victoria Memorial Square at Niagara and Portland Streets Are Nearing Completion*



Scott James of the Wellington Place Neighbourhood Association, which has pushed for improvements to Victoria Memorial Square, stands in front of some of the seventeen markers surviving from before 1863 when the park was a military cemetery. ERA Architects of Toronto designed the installation. The Square is part of the Fort York National Historic Site. (Credit: Mary Wiens, CBC)



# The Birthplace of Toronto

Contributions from the Staff at the Fort

## “The Vault”: An Exhibit Space Planned for the Fort York Visitor Centre

by Wayne Reeves

“The Vault,” known formerly as “The Treasury,” is the working name for one of five exhibit spaces planned for the Fort York Visitor Centre. At 678 square feet, the Vault is the smallest of these spaces, yet it should be one of the most popular, thanks to its unusual, hard-to-display and ever-changing content – a varied group of prized artifacts all associated in some way with Fort York.

Each artifact in the Vault will have a unique story to tell, and will demonstrate how material culture is used to understand the past. Visitors will start with the visible character of the artifact, and then uncover its hidden meanings through discovery learning. The artifacts will be grouped into categories based on the way they help visitors understand the past:

- Objects of mythical power: these have meaning and resonance beyond their obvious qualities (colours of the 3rd York Regiment of Militia, sewn by young women in York in 1812-13; see *Fife and Drum* July 2007)



Exhibition-design consultants Reich + Petch prepared this sketch of the Vault for the team planning the interior of the Visitor Centre

- Objects associated with known individuals: these help us see the past as a living place, populated by real people (a letter written by Louis Riel in 1885)
- Objects that capture daily life: the day-to-day life of ordinary people is often evident only through

archaeological materials (aboriginal trade silver and tinkling cones) or institutional documents (early Fort York account books)

- Objects that represent historical mysteries: in some cases, the survival of an object is the mystery (the never-issued “Upper Canada Preserved” medals that were supposed to be destroyed in 1840); in other cases, an object’s relationship to events can be obscure (a Spencer repeating rifle, likely lost in 1866, recovered from Toronto Harbour)



A Queen's Rangers jacket with silver-gilt buttons made for Capt. William Jarvis in 1791 is one of the rarest items in the fort's collections. Originally it cost only £1/1/1½. (Credit: City of Toronto Museums Collections)

- Objects that bear evidence of past events: dramatic events can inadvertently leave their imprint on everyday objects (mangled barrel hoops from the 1813 Battle of York) or be deliberately inscribed on objects (prisoners’ boxes from the 1837 Rebellion)

From a design perspective, the intent is to exhibit a limited number of artifacts, treating each one as an important object that has a larger story to tell. While the overall five-part interpretive framework is permanent, artifacts will be changed periodically within each grouping. To support this approach, permanent casework will be combined with both permanent and changeable graphic panels. The exhibit displays will be designed as a “kit of parts” that allow for future flexibility.

And how will the two large colours of the York Militia find their way into the Vault? Though both flags are currently undergoing conservation treatment at the Canadian Conservation Institute in Ottawa, they cannot be exposed to light for long periods. To balance conservation needs with public access, we will alternate the display of the colours – one of the two will always be on view, dramatically occupying nearly the full width of the room’s east end.

Wayne Reeves is the Chief Curator, Museums & Heritage Services, Toronto Economic Development & Culture Division.

# Captain Robert Stephens

by Chris Laverton

Recent research in the British military records held by Library and Archives Canada (LAC) has revealed one of the many British officers who once strode the barrack yard, paraded his troops, and otherwise lived and breathed a year of his life at the garrison of York—one Captain Robert Stephens, of the 37th (North Hampshire) Regiment of Foot. The file pertaining to this particular corps is a scattered collection of correspondence, mostly by—and about—its various officers during the regiment’s long tour of the Canadas between 1814 and 1825. The Letter Books contain only a scant few respecting Captain Stephens, but nevertheless allow a glimpse into the frail humanity of one man (LAC, RG8 “C” Series, vol. 899, pp.36-41).

When his company was posted to York, Stephens was already a veteran officer who had, by 1816, served for fourteen years, twelve of these with the 37th Regiment, “continually on active & arduous foreign Service with this Corps in the West Indies, Gibraltar, the Peninsula, France, Africa and America.” The Army List reveals that Stephens had held rank in the army from 16 January 1802; at the height of the wars in which his country was involved—on 10 June 1813—Stephens purchased promotion to Captain in the regiment.

Stephens had embarked for Canada with the 1st Battalion 37th Regiment, from Boulogne, France, and arrived at Quebec on 3 August 1814. The battalion was soon under orders for Kingston where its ten Companies—of which Stephens commanded one—were split into two Divisions. The 1st proceeded to Burlington Heights, where it established regimental Head Quarters, while the 2nd Division spent its first Canadian winter on detached service at the Lake Erie posts.

The regiment had arrived in Upper Canada to find a military landscape devastated by the ferocious fighting of the year before, and spent much of this period assisting in the reconstruction of military posts in the province. News of peace arrived in Upper Canada the following spring, denying the 37th the opportunity of distinguishing itself in action and its officers any chance of quick promotion. However, the regiment was retained for garrison duty in Upper Canada and continued the work of rebuilding the military defences (eventually moving to Lower Canada, and ordered home to England in 1825). Head Quarters and 1st Division was moved from Burlington to Amherstburg, on the Detroit Frontier, that summer of 1815, then to Fort George in July 1816, and Kingston that September. At this point, two companies were detached for service at York—of which Stephens’ was one.

By the time the detachment of the 37th Regiment arrived at the capital, the rebuilding of the garrison had been substantially completed and Stephens and his men would have been amongst the first troops to occupy the newly-



Pewter button from the 37th Regiment of Foot, found at Fort York.  
(City of Toronto Museums Collections)

completed barrack accommodations at the post, along with a detachment of the 70th. Up to this point, the 37th had been living rough for two years—many of its men having been engaged in assisting the Royal Engineers in the construction/reconstruction of barracks and defences at other posts. Here at York, at last, some of its men could finally enjoy the fruits of others’ labours.

There is only one document in the LAC Letter Books that mentions the presence of the 37th Regiment at York at this period, and it concerns Captain Stephens. Evidently, while still with Head Quarters at Amherstburg—or possibly Fort George, Stephens had been nominated as Acting Deputy Judge Advocate to preside over any future regimental Courts-Martial. His official deputation arrived in November upon the desk of Major General Sir John Wilson, District commander at Kingston, who soon discovered that the Captain was in fact no longer with the regimental H.Q., but at York. Given Stephens’ absence, Wilson decided to temporarily appoint a local regimental officer in his place.

The next—and final—series in which Captain Stephens’ name appears in the 37th Letter Books, is dated 1819. Sadly—and ironically—it concerns Stephens’ own Court-Martial. At some date that spring, he had been placed under arrest at Montreal for “Drunkenness and irregularity when on duty.” A flurry of letters was written on the 10th May beginning with a letter by Stephens himself to his commanding officer, Lt. Colonel Gabriel Burer, by which he tendered his resignation and requested retirement to Half-pay. Burer’s duty had compelled him to notify the Commander of the Forces and recommend the removal of this officer from the service but he clearly known Stephens personally, and generally respected his abilities at command of an infantry company.

That day, he urged Stephens to compose a memorial to the Commander of the Forces, the Duke of Richmond, reiterating the request and highlighting his long service. Burer supported Stephens with a strong recommendation tempered by the irrefutable fact that Stephens had, by his “long habits of drinking rendered himself unfit for the important duties of an Officer.” In the end, the Duke recommended Stephens’ retirement based on Burer’s

comments and the Captain's "general good Character." Mercifully, as well, the Duke decided to forego a trial by Court-Martial, permitting him to be released from arrest and return home to England. Upon arrival, Stephens was to report himself to the Adjutant General of the Forces at Horse Guards, London.

Some unknown factor had compelled him to return to England, for he might well have opted to remain in Canada. Various "military settlements" had been set up in Upper Canada—notably at Perth, Lanark, and Richmond—at which an officer such as himself might easily have been awarded 400 acres, and a chance at a promising new life.

The date of Stephens' embarkation for England is unknown but, within a short time of his arrival, there is evidence to suggest that he was not settling comfortably into retired civil life. Besides which, he was clearly having difficulty in attracting a candidate willing to assume his Full-pay Commission. Usually the most popular commissions—due to the opportunity for brevet promotion—a Full-pay Captaincy in the army was then valued at a regulated price of £1,500. In order to retire on the Half-pay list, Stephens was required to find a subaltern seeking to purchase a promotion and willing to pay the regulated difference in value between the two commissions.

By the end of August 1819, residing at a less-than-fashionable address in East London, he had apparently given up and had sent a letter to Horse Guards requesting permission to rejoin his regiment. He was informed by letter the following day that the Commander in Chief could not permit him to rejoin, and that unless some interested party came forward within three months, Stephens would either have to sell his Commission outright, or retire on Half-pay without benefit of receiving that sum.

Britain was then still in the grips of a deep recession brought on by the peace of 1815. Suddenly thousands of British soldiers found themselves discharged, and hundreds of officers relegated to straitened circumstances by being placed on the Half-pay list. For example, the Canadian establishment in 1815 was estimated at some 17,266 men; by 1819 it numbered no more than 3,805.

Stephens eventually managed to sell his commission and retired on the English Half-pay of the 56th Foot, on 3 February 1820. His situation finally sorted—and likely missing the comradeship of the officers of his former regiment—he soon booked a passage back to Canada and lost little time in returning to its Head Quarters at Montreal. By January 1821, Lt. Colonel Burer noted that Stephens had "been a permanent Guest at the 37th Regt. Mess for some time." Now under the straitened circumstances of Half-pay, Stephens may have been motivated to return for more than just companionship. About the time he had been forced to resign, his friend Major Edward Barwick had introduced gambling into the Mess, much to the Colonel's dismay. Except for the fact that Stephens remained on the Half-pay

of the 56th Foot until his retirement from the army in 1836, the details of the remainder of his life are unknown.

*Now with Cultural Affairs, Chris Laverton was an interpreter at Fort York from 1983 to 1986.*

## Administrator's Report

*by David O'Hara, Site Administrator*

In early September the design development component of the Visitor Centre design process was completed. The working drawing stage is now underway with the calling of construction tenders scheduled for early January 2011.

Parallel to this process, work continues with the exhibit design team on the development of interpretive concepts within the 24,000 square foot building, the design of exhibits, and on other components such as the retail shop and food service.

With the Visitor Centre design well underway, the focus has turned once again to what can be accomplished within the historic buildings and across the rest of the site in 2012 and 2013. With the relocation of the tree nursery this Fall, and building of the Fort York Pedestrian/Cycling Bridge next year, we look to complete detailed design of the Garrison Common in the next few months. A delay in the reconstruction of the Bathurst Bridge until possibly 2015 will prompt a review of what interim improvements might be considered at the east end of the site.

The fort's staff will also be taking a closer look at, among other things, what additional exhibit work can be completed within the historic buildings and in implementing an overall way-finding/interpretive signage system to interpret the 18 hectare site in its fullness.

The development of new programs and events, which has always been identified as a high priority, is well underway. Following a series of public consultation/brainstorming sessions over the summer and meetings with various partners and stakeholders, an overall framework has been drafted to assist with the development of new programs and events.



*The fort's Fife & Drum Corps is well turned out and in perfect step after a summer of practice. The Fort York Guard is in the background. (Credit: Andrew Stewart)*



# 2010 | Upcoming Events Historic Fort York

Compiled by Alok Sharma, Supervisor, Special Events

## OCTOBER

### Ghosts of the Garrison

Thurs. Fri. and Sat. October 28, 29, and 30, 7:30 to 9:30 pm

Fort York comes alive at night with the Ghosts of the Garrison. Hear stories from our friendly ghostly visitors who roam through the corridors of Fort York at night! Great fun for the whole family. Suggested for 5 years of age and up.

Please call 416 392 6907 x 225 for more information or to pre-register.

Cost: \$10 + tax for adult, senior, or youth, \$5 + tax for children under 12

### Hearth Cooking Class

Sun. October 24, 11 am to 3 pm

Come to the Officers' Brick Barracks at Fort York National Historic Site and enjoy a day learning to cook in the historic Officers' Mess Kitchen. Cook over the open hearth fire using authentic tools and equipment. Learn about British cookbooks and the diverse food of the early 19th century. Recipe package and samples are included.

Please call 416 392 6907 x 225 for more information or to pre-register

Cost: \$50 + tax



The Old Soldier, a sculpture by Walter Allward who later designed the Vimy Ridge Memorial in France, stands in Toronto's Victoria Memorial Square. Erected in 1907 by the Army and Navy Veterans' Association to honour those who died in 1812-14, it reminds us of the heavy toll that war exacts. (Credit: Matthew Blackett)

## NOVEMBER

### Parler Fort (Fort York's new Speaker Series)

Mon. November 8, 7:30 pm

During Remembrance week, award-winning historian J. L. Granatstein will be speaking in the PARLER FORT series at Fort York. His presentation will focus primarily on his newest book, **The Oxford Companion to Canadian Military History** (co-authored with Dean Oliver). Published by Oxford University Press Canada in association with the Canadian War Museum, this lavishly illustrated volume includes over 200 rare photographs, historic works of wartime art reproduced in colour, original wartime maps – many never published before now. Entries cover biographies from James Wolfe to Rick Hillier; key military and political issues; famous battles and lesser known conflicts.

Cost: \$8.85 + tax

### Remembrance Day

Thurs. November 11, 10:45 am

City of Toronto – Fort York National Historic Site and the Toronto Municipal Chapter IODE (Imperial Order Daughters of the Empire) are proud to present one of this City's most evocative Remembrance Day Services at the Strachan Avenue Military Cemetery on Garrison Common. Commencing at 10:45 am on Thursday, November 11, from the west gate of the old fort, a procession led by period uniformed military staff and standard bearers of the IODE will make their way to the adjacent Strachan Avenue Military Cemetery. There, at the eleventh hour, all soldiers of the Toronto Garrison who fell in the War of 1812, the Rebellion Crises, Crimean War, Northwest Rebellion, South African (Boer) War, two World Wars, and recent conflicts around the globe will be remembered and honoured.

Free admission

### Citizenship Ceremony

Fri. November 12, 11 am

Citizenship and Immigration Canada and the Institute for Canadian Citizenship, in partnership with Fort York's volunteer Citizenship Committee and Fort York National Historic Site, will host candidates for citizenship at a special community ceremony at the fort on Friday, November 12. Prior to the ceremony, the Institute for Canadian Citizenship will hold another in its series of community roundtable discussions between established citizens and the new Canadians. These unique ICC-designed roundtable discussions aim to strengthen the connection between new Canadians and their communities, and remind all in attendance of the rights and responsibilities of Canadian citizenship. The event includes guest speakers,

Free admission

## DECEMBER

### Parler Fort, presents

Dorothy Duncan, renowned expert in heritage foods

Mon. December 6, 7:00 pm

Mrs. Duncan will discuss her new book **Feasting and Fasting: Canada's Heritage Celebrations**. This will be followed by a demonstration of some of its seasonal recipes by the fort's Historic Cooks.

Cost: \$8.85 + tax

*Fife and Drum is a quarterly publication of the Friends of Fort York and Garrison Common*



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 **TORONTO Culture**  
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 **HISTORIC FORT YORK**  
THE BIRTHPLACE OF TORONTO

Regular admission to Fort York: Adult: \$8.61, Senior (65+) & Youth (13 – 18 yrs.): \$4.31, Children: \$3.23, Children (5 and under) FREE (all prices include HST, where applicable)