

The Fife and Drum

The Newsletter of The Friends of Fort York and Garrison Common

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Kill Conquer Rule: Charles Pachter on the War of 1812

Commemorating military anniversaries, in this case of a war that took place 200 years ago, can be problematic. Faded memories and revisionist histories often gloss over the grim realities of long-past conflicts.

I am equivocal about how today's re-enactors portray soldiers from 200 years ago. At any given historic site, most of the emphasis is on crisp uniforms, polished rifles and boots, immaculate white triangular tents, and more on what they wore, than on the suffering and horrors of battle.

During a re-enactment I witnessed in 2010 at Fort Erie, a few "soldiers" actually passed out from the August heat. Imagine what the real thing must have been like on the battlefield in 1812 in those itchy woollen uniforms!

Add MOSQUITOES and MALARIA to MISERY. As many soldiers died from disease as got wounded. A whole lot of blundering, plundering, pilfering and pillaging, went on, as well as scalping and eviscerating, amputating of limbs, and other body parts. Not to mention starvation. And not one inch of territory got exchanged when it was all over. Two emerging settler nations, white tribal cousins, many former compatriots, killing one another for power and turf. The real losers, of course, were the First Nations peoples.

After reading various histories from the Canadian side—the Rev. William Withrow, Castell Hopkins, Pierre Berton, Gerald Craig, and JMS Careless, I then read Pulitzer prize-winning American professor Alan Taylor's new book *The Civil War of 1812*, (NY: Knopf, 2010) a refreshing addition to the list, as Taylor provides the reader with well researched detail on the major players, and doesn't take sides. (For our review please see March 2011 issue of *The Fife and Drum* <http://www.fortyork.ca/newsletter.htm>)

Based on these readings, I completed a new series of paintings called DRESSED TO KILL.

These paintings are less about the Horrors of War—I leave that to Goya and Daumier—as about the peculiar military fashion of the times. Those high heavy hats, those tailored woollen coats with tails (!), those coarse linen trousers... How could anyone survive in the forest—winter or summer—or any season for that matter, in those clammy getups?



Brock's Premonition

I painted the icons on the British side—General Isaac Brock, hero of the battle of Queenston Heights, who died while scaling the heights even though the battle was won by the British, Laura Secord, a young Niagara area housewife who traipsed through the woods and swamps to Beaver Dams to warn the British of an impending American attack, and the Shawnee warrior chief Tecumseh, a charismatic and respected leader who fought with the British

because they had promised him and his tribes their own buffer nation in territory that now includes the American states of Michigan, Ohio, Wisconsin, Indiana, and Illinois. But it was not to be. Tecumseh was killed by the Americans while fighting in Upper Canada. And it was the beginning of the end for Indian hegemony in North America.

From the pioneer settler's perspective, add to the atrocities of war the destruction of private property, the stealing of livestock, burning of barns, homes, pilfering of grain, vegetables, clothing, etc. and you get some idea of the futility of it all.

Human depravity at its worst... But in one painting, *Neighbor to Neighbour*, I chose to depict two young American and British soldiers, in an idealized, formal but friendly confrontation,



Laura Secord



Tecumseh



Dressed to Kill



Neighbor to Neighbour

softened by the sands of time. The painting is an allegory about military prowess, but in the best of all possible worlds, enemies can and do become friends.

Much will be made in the months to come of this conflict that finally put an end to the fighting between two restive nations in the making. And, lest we forget, the senseless sacrifices of

so many led eventually to the peaceful co-existence that we now take for granted between our two great democracies in the twenty-first century. May that peace abide.

Charles Pachter is a Toronto painter, printmaker, sculptor, designer, historian, and lecturer.

“A very unpromising prospect” *Thomas Plucknett and the ship Sir Isaac Brock*

by Gary M. Gibson

In November 1812 the 24-gun *Madison* was launched at Sackets Harbor, New York. The Americans would now control Lake Ontario in the spring unless the British built at least one new warship.

In mid-December 1812 Acting Deputy Quartermaster General Captain Andrew Gray wrote Governor General Sir George Prevost asking permission to build a ship at York to carry 30 guns. A week later Prevost approved Gray's request and appointed Thomas Plucknett, “an experienced Officer in the Kings Naval Yards,” to build new warships at York and Kingston. While at York Gray chose a building site for the new ship. He planned to personally supervise shipbuilding at Kingston and send Plucknett to York to manage things there.

Plucknett himself had recruited over 120 shipwrights and carpenters at Quebec and Montreal. When they arrived at Kingston at the end of December, 50 men remained to build a 22-gun ship and the rest went with Plucknett to York.

The new ship at York would be armed with twenty-six 32-pound carronades and four 18-pound long guns. It would be the most powerful warship on Lake Ontario.

Gray told Prevost that the new ship at Kingston would be launched in April 1813. However, he heard there were “some difficulties” at York which might delay that ship's completion.

Difficulties there were. Plucknett inspected the site Gray chose to build the new ship, now named *Sir Isaac Brock*, and he did not like what he saw. That place was too level and too

shallow off shore to launch the *Brock* in the usual way. Gray's solution was to build the ship on a wooden platform 100 feet wide, 25 feet high at the shoreline and extending 500 feet offshore. Plucknett travelled to Fort George and informed Gray's superior, Acting Quartermaster General Lieutenant Colonel Christopher Myers, that it “would be highly imprudent and dangerous to build the Ship on it.” Plucknett found a better place a “short distance higher up the Harbour.” He then directed the workmen to abandon Gray's site and begin work at the new location.

Two weeks after meeting with Plucknett at Fort George, Myers and Royal Engineer Lieutenant Colonel Ralph Bruyeres visited York to see how things were going. They were not going well. Apparently both men had concerns before they arrived but once there they found “a very unpromising prospect” that the *Brock* would be ready in time and the reason was Plucknett. While they were not competent to determine if Plucknett was a “regular ship builder or not” they definitely knew that “he wants system and arrangement.” They recommended that Prevost replace Plucknett with someone “whose judgment and skill may be relied on as a builder.” That never happened.

By mid-March it was clear that the launch of the *Sir Isaac Brock* would not occur until mid-May at the earliest. Plucknett blamed the foreman, John Dennis. Dennis would have been discharged if not for Assistant Quartermaster General Alexander Clerk at York who recognized that the real problem was Plucknett and took steps to retain Dennis.



Detail from George Williams' map of York made in Nov. 1813 shows the slipway for the frigate *Sir Isaac Brock* slightly west of Bay Street where Union Station stands today. Chief Justice Thomas Scott's mansion was at the foot of Yonge Street where the Sony Centre is now located. Credit: Library & Archives Canada C-15981

Two weeks later it was clear that the launch would be further delayed until sometime in June. The problem remained Plucknett. Clerk observed that Plucknett “does not appear to have any method in regard to the workmen or their distribution.” Furthermore, Plucknett was “in the habit of disobeying or at least of evading every order he gets.” Clerk told Gray that Plucknett wanted his personal servant, Charles Dawson, put on the payroll at the shipyard. Myers, who had arrived at York to see how things were going, disapproved of that as it was “absurd” to pay the man “for keeping the keys which was all he had to do.”

The Americans were not oblivious to these developments. As early as 24 January 1813 deserters informed that warships, one of 30 guns, were building at York.

On 19 April 1813, François Lelièvre, of the Quartermaster General’s office at York, reported that the launch of the *Brock* was still many weeks away.

Those weeks never arrived. Eight days later the Americans captured the town of York. Before retreating to Kingston, Major General Sheaffe ordered the incomplete *Sir Isaac Brock* to be burned. He need not have bothered. With the vessel so incomplete the Americans would have destroyed it themselves.

Shipbuilding at Kingston was more successful and the 22-gun corvette *Wolfe* was launched on 28 April, one day after the destruction of the *Brock*. That ship would be ready for sea by mid-May.

When he arrived at Kingston, Royal Navy Commander Robert Barclay quickly realized the impact of the loss of the *Sir Isaac Brock*. He asked Prevost to approve building a ship at

Kingston “of the same force” using the shipwrights from York. No such approval was ever received. Once the Americans completed their 28-gun frigate *General Pike* that summer, the British would struggle to maintain a presence on the lake for the rest of 1813.

Thomas Plucknett, however, was not yet out of the picture. He now wanted the pay due him for his work at York, plus lodging money. Also, Plucknett had yet to account for most of the expense money he received before going to York. He claimed he had lost his records when the Americans attacked and was unable to document his expenses. In addition, Plucknett wanted compensation for the loss of personal items at York. These proceedings dragged on for years after the war. Plucknett received his back pay but nothing for the loss of his property.



In early April 1813 a layer of snow covers the incomplete 30-gun corvette Sir Isaac Brock in a view done specially to accompany this article by distinguished marine artist Peter Rindlisbacher. Still weeks from completion, the Brock would be burned when the Americans attacked on April 27.

Strangely, if Plucknett had been more efficient, and the *Brock* ready for launch when they arrived, the Americans might have made a greater effort to capture it intact

or to arrive in time to extinguish the flames. The *Brock* could then have been launched and towed back to Sackets Harbor to be completed. The result would have been an overwhelming American superiority on Lake Ontario in 1813 and defending Canada that year would have been a much harder task.

Dr. Gary Gibson of Sackets Harbor, NY, is a vice president of an Internet service company and a distinguished historian of the naval war of 1812 on Lake Ontario and the St. Lawrence. He is a trustee of the Sackets Harbor Battlefield Alliance and a director of the Sackets Harbor Area Cultural Preservation Foundation.



Become a Volunteer

Our volunteer program within the Fort York Drum Corps encourages youth (ages 11–16) to enroll and learn the fife or drum and accompanying military drill from the War of 1812 period. In the summer, volunteers are encouraged to come out as often as possible, and to perform with us during our daily demonstrations and special events.

Official volunteer practices will be every Sunday throughout the summer months (May–August) from noon to 3 pm, but volunteers are welcome to attend more regularly and to stay until the end of the day. We provide a supportive team environment and always welcome enthusiastic volunteers during July and August when the Guard is active. However, only those volunteers who show a dedication to the corps by practicing and coming out to volunteer practices at least once a week, will be allowed to participate in special events.

As a volunteer you will be treated with the respect given to a member of the Drum Corps, and will learn how to work with other members of a team to create an impressive, historically accurate performance. The overall experience is fun and rewarding and it instills confidence and team values in every member.

Applications are considered at the start of May of each year.

For more information contact us at: joseph.gill@rogers.com or The Friends of Fort York, 260 Adelaide Street East, P.O. Box 183, Toronto, ON M5A 1N1

Defending a Nation

by Thomas H.B. Symons, Chair, the Ontario Heritage Trust

With the kind permission of Dr. Symons we present here an excerpt from his remarks at the launch of Heritage Week and the Opening of the Parliament Interpretive Centre, featuring the exhibit Foundations & Fire: Early Parliament and the War of 1812 Experience at York.

This year, Heritage Week takes on a particular significance as Ontario reflects on the theme of “defending a nation” through its commemoration of the Bicentennial of the War of 1812. The opening of the Interpretive Centre here today, and the numerous special events and initiatives taking place across Ontario this week, and in the months to come, demonstrate the central place of this conflict within the collective memory and symbolic experience of the Province.

In this year of its Bicentennial, the War of 1812 can be remembered as the most traumatic event in the history of Ontario. Put simply, the Province was attacked and invaded. It resisted and, indeed, successfully expelled the invaders, but not before its young capital city, including this very site, was captured and burned. And, in an early example of a different kind of reciprocity, the Royal Navy and British forces responded by capturing Washington and burning the White House.

In what was then Upper Canada, the War brought together disparate elements of the Province’s small population in defence of its territory and institutions. Aboriginal Peoples, United Empire Loyalists, French-speaking inhabitants, members of the Black community, and many other settlers, fought alongside British Regulars, achieving a remarkable degree of success against a much larger opponent.

While much of the fighting, and a good deal of the fiercest fighting, took place in or in relationship to Upper Canada, the War of 1812 was of course not confined to this Province. Quebec and Atlantic Canada were also directly affected and involved in the struggle with the United States. The War precipitated a closer relationship between the British North American colonies, reminding them of common interests and much shared heritage, and laying the seeds for a confederation to come and for its extension in due time to the West and to the North.

There may be debate as to who won the War of 1812. But for Canadians the answer is clear. Had there been a different outcome, as desired by the invaders, there would be no Canada today. The successful defence of this Province was the cornerstone in the struggle for a yet unborn nation to survive.

The War of 1812 therefore represents a crucial point in the evolution of this Province’s identity, institutions, and values. But, as we commemorate the War’s Bicentennial here in Ontario, and across the country, we should realize that there is also much for Canada and the United States to celebrate

together. In particular, the gradual emergence of a state of permanent peace between our two countries arising from the steady growth of the view that discourse and negotiation are the correct and only way for two such neighbours to resolve differences. This, too, is ample cause for rejoicing.

Out of the ashes of 1813, came the opportunity to build a province and a nation with an identity distinct from that of its neighbour to the south, and with a unique and evolving role to play within North America, within the Commonwealth, and on the world stage.

As we gather here today, at this historic site, to celebrate Heritage Week, I cannot think of a more appropriate place from which to consider the growth of a province and a nation.

This site is of great heritage value to Toronto, to Ontario, and to Canada. As the location of Upper Canada’s first purpose-built parliament buildings, it played an important role in the evolution and development of the Province’s democratic traditions.

Legislation passed at this site contributed to the further development of the Province’s military, legal, political, social, and economic institutions and practices. Much of the planning and preparations for the successful defence of the Province was done here. At the same time, more was added to an already significant legislative record, which included the adoption of a resolution as early as June 1793, acknowledging French language rights in the Province by stipulating “that such Acts as have already passed or may hereafter pass the Legislature of this Province be translated into the French language for the benefit of the Western

District of this province and other French settlers who may come to reside within this Province.”

The first anti-slavery legislation in the British Empire was also passed by the Province’s Legislature, meeting at Newark in 1793. This legislation set the stage for the abolition of the transatlantic slave trade by Britain in 1807 and the outright abolition of slavery across the British Empire on August 1, 1834, three decades before its abolition in the United States. An important point of pride not only for Ontarians, but for people concerned with parliamentary government and civil liberties everywhere.

Legislation specific to this site continued to promote the welfare and well-being of the citizens of Upper Canada, including *An Act to provide for the Education and Support of Orphan Children*; *An Act for the better regulation of the practice of Law*; and *An Act to establish Public Schools in each and every District of this Province*. Such measures represented a truly impressive record of progressive legislation for such a young province.

With the opening of the Interpretive Centre here today, the Ontario Heritage Trust looks forward to continuing to work with members of the community; with local, provincial, and federal organizations; and with First Nations, whose members played such a key role in the successful defence of the Province, to achieve and maintain the shared goal of protecting and commemorating this significant site.



Dr. Thomas H.B. Symons, chair of the Ontario Heritage Trust, speaks at the opening of a special exhibit at the Parliament Interpretive Centre at 265 Front Street E., Toronto, on Heritage Day, 17 February 2012. Photo by David Lee, courtesy of The Ontario Heritage Trust.

Bicentennial Timeline: April to June 1812

Apr. 4 Anne Powell to her brother in New York City: "The navigation cannot yet be said to be open;-- the *Gloster* was cut out of the ice yesterday, but the wind has been against her sailing to Niagara; - we never experienced such a Winter, for it cannot yet be called Spring."

Apr. 5 Dr. John McNab and three companions arrived in Montreal after a long and dangerous trek of 76 days from Moose Factory. Travelling via Abitibi, Temiscaming, and Fort Coulonge, they were said to be the first Europeans to complete the overland journey.

Apr. 15 Private Thomas Belford of the 41st Regiment and his ten-year old son fell through the ice in Block House Bay off Gibraltar Point, York, and drowned. They were buried in the Military Cemetery, now part of Victoria Memorial Square, Toronto.

Apr. 28 Owners of swine were cautioned not to let them run at large in town.

Apr. 29 President Brock recommended that each man of the militia provide himself with a short coat of dark cloth made to button well round the body and "a Round Hat." (*York Gazette*)

Jun. 4 King George III's birthday was celebrated at York with a 21-gun salute from the Garrison. "The Third Regiment of York Militia, also paraded very strong and fired three Vollies."

Jun. 5 Americans seized the British schooner, *Lord Nelson*, in Lake Ontario. Renamed the *Scourge*, it was part of the US squadron until it foundered in a squall and sank 8 Aug. 1813. In 1973 the ship was found upright on the bottom in 290 feet of water off St. Catharines, ON. It is now encrusted in zebra mussels.

Jun. 18 President James Madison declared war on Great Britain; the news reached York on Jun. 26.

Jun. 21 David Willson had a religious vision that led to his founding of the Children of Peace at Sharon.

Jun. 24 Napoleon began an ill-fated invasion of Russia; he retreated from there five months later.

Jun. 25 George Ridout told his brother that Brock had received word "that a Body consisting of 4,800 Indians are ready at a moments warning to offer their services to the British."

Jun. 29 *The Quebec Gazette / La Gazette de Québec* printed a handbill with the text of the American declaration of war and excerpts from New York and Montreal papers. News of war had reached Montreal by the 24th and Quebec the following day

Timelines are popular this year; here's one Parks Canada has produced on behalf of Canada's Historic Places. <http://www.historicplaces.ca/media/26282/w1812%20timeline%20-%20en.pdf>

Major-General Sir Isaac Brock Day

Recently the Ontario Legislature passed a bill proclaiming October 13th as Major-General Sir Isaac Brock Day, this year and annually thereafter. Often known as "the Hero of Upper Canada" for his valiant defence of the Province, Brock died in battle on 13 October 1812, successfully defending Queenston Heights from US attack. The bill will become law when it is given Royal Assent by the Lieutenant-Governor on a date to be announced. However, it will not be a holiday, perhaps because it falls close to Thanksgiving weekend.



Guard Performs at Garrison Ball

The Fort York Guard played a prominent part in bringing pomp and circumstance to this year's Garrison Ball held on January 28 at the Liberty Grand, Exhibition Place, for Toronto-area Reserve units. Besides dressing up the facility's entrance hall the Guard formed part of the procession that piped the head table guests to their places.



Credit: Jennifer Roberts

Friends Appoint a Precinct Advisory Committee

Recently The Friends' board of directors appointed six people having relevant expertise to help it monitor and assess new developments in the neighbourhoods around Fort York. It is hoped this committee can help us respond better to the range of issues encountered as new buildings go up on all sides, and public-realm improvements are designed and carried out. The members of the Precinct Advisory Committee are: Jeff Davies (lawyer, senior partner in Davies Howe), Meg Graham (architect and Friends' board member), David Grant (Niagara Neighbourhood resident), Antonio Gomez-Palacio (architect-heritage planning consultant), Pamela Robinson (Ryerson town-planning professor), and Stephen Otto (co-chair, Friends' board).

Save-the-date for Friends' AGM, June 21

Two hundred years ago, on 18 June 1812, President James Madison declared war on Great Britain. Please save the evening of Thursday, 21 June 2012, for the eighteenth Annual General Meeting of The Friends of Fort York and Garrison Common. Besides hearing reports and electing directors, we will socialize and look forward to a busy 2012 Bicentennial year. Notices will be sent to members of the organization in good standing in mid-May.

News From

The Birthplace of Toronto

Contributions from the Staff at the Fort

Administrator's Report

by David O'Hara, Site Administrator

The year 2012, as expected, is already proving to be very busy. On the heels of another successful Queen Charlotte's Ball in January, it was an honour to partner with Senior College of the University of Toronto on a daylong event to commemorate the 200th anniversary of the War of 1812. *From the Ashes of War, A Nation is Born* was sold out, thanks to our wonderful partners at Senior College and to all of those who participated in the event.

The Visitor Centre Project and rehabilitation of the Garrison Common are proceeding as planned. Construction of the new building is expected to be tendered in April for a mid-year start. Rehabilitation of the Garrison Common will begin by the end of March with the seeding of the former tree nursery site, which is almost 2 ½ acres in size. The area will be ready to support activities by the time of the launch of the War of 1812 Bicentennial in June.

Over the next two months, the Fort York staff and our partners will be working on various components of the 2012 program. Our largest undertaking, led by artists Thom Sokoloski and Jenny-Anne McCowan and commissioned in partnership with *Luminato*, is *The Encampment*, a large-scale art installation comprising 200 A-frame tents erected within the fort's walls. Each tent will contain a visual representation of an aspect of the war's civilian history. Like archaeologists, selected 'Creative Collaborators' will commit to "getting their hands dirty" by unearthing and transposing civilian stories from the War of 1812 into art installations that will be set up in each tent. If you are interested in becoming a Creative Collaborator, please visit www.thomasandguinevere.com for more information. See all the other Toronto Bicentennial programs and events at www.toronto.ca/1812.

Within the walls of the fort, our current archaeology exhibit has been recently removed from the Brick Magazine to allow for various capital improvements to the building itself. Some components of the exhibit have been relocated to the Blue Barracks. Work on the Stone Magazine has just been completed and the installation of an exhibit on Black Powder is anticipated in the next few weeks.

Recently too a request for proposals (RFP) has been issued for the detailed design of the national historic site lands to the east of Bathurst Street adjoining the Library District Condominiums. By May of this year a team will be on board to assist with the long-term planning and development of

these parklands. Meanwhile, a cleanup of the east entrance from Bathurst Street was also completed a short time ago. In future, this entrance will function more as a secondary entry point, open for special events only, so we can direct museum visitors to our main entrance and Visitor Centre at 250 Fort York Boulevard where they can be properly oriented to the site as they begin their visit.

A New Look in One of Toronto's Oldest Buildings

*by Bridget Wranich, Program Officer
Fort York National Historic Site*



Cheryl Dilisi (l.) and Kelly Nesbitt (r.) are the backbone of the Canteen's revival as an admired feature at the Fort York National Historic Site.

Credit: Antonio de Lima

The Canteen, which is both museum store and entrance to Fort York National Historic Site, has been undergoing a transformation. Two young women who love a good challenge are on a campaign to update the merchandise in the charming atmosphere of a soldiers' barracks.

The gift shop, as it was called, was understaffed in recent years and its potential handicapped. Dusty metal shelves held lacklustre displays of the obligatory plastic soldiers, mugs, postcards, booklets, and candy. All that has changed. After extended vacancies, the key positions responsible for the Canteen were filled by two people who care about the Fort's history, love what they do, and work well together.

Today, the Canteen sparkles with elegant displays that make the most of the 1815 brick building. Kelly Nesbitt,

Administrative Coordinator, and Cheryl Dilisi, the new Museum Store Coordinator, took on the task of refurbishing the shop with enthusiasm. Taking advantage of the historic atmosphere of the barracks, and using antique display cases culled from the City of Toronto's own collection, they have created imaginative displays of new products. They insist on excellent quality reproductions: vintage blue and white transferware china and glass, beautiful Italian writing implements and leather journals, and replicas of wooden and brass compasses and telescopes, as well as naval and military instruments in wooden cases. The book selection has been enlarged to include many titles on the

War of 1812 and Canadian history, cookery, and military life. The Canteen also features delicious goodies from the Fort's historic kitchen prepared according to 18th and 19th century recipes. There are crafts made by Native People and good quality games and wooden and brass toys for the kids. Whenever possible the products are Canadian-made.

Chip Cummins, Canada Bureau Chief for the *Wall Street Journal*, wrote of his visit: "I ended up buying gifts for the kids and made a note to come back ... it was great. Fort York probably has the best gift shop of any historical site I've ever been to."

Finding the Fallen: The Battle of York Remembered **A New Museum Services Exhibit**

by Wayne Reeves
Chief Curator, City of Toronto Museum Services

An exhibit commemorating the Bicentennial of the War of 1812 opened recently at the Market Gallery. Curated by Richard Gerrard and the author, *Finding the Fallen* looks at how the Battle of York unfolded, its impact on the British, First Nations, Canadian, and American combatants, and the challenges of knowing its human toll. We honour the collective sacrifice made when Toronto was a battleground two centuries ago.

Finding the Fallen features rarely seen artifacts recovered archaeologically from the battlefield, maps produced by Andrew Stewart, a painting of the death of Captain Neal McNeale (newly acquired thanks to Ed Anderson), and first-person accounts of the battle. The stories of the fallen were researched by Janice Nickerson, Ken Joyce, Mark Ragan, and the late Robert Malcomson.

The exhibit's centrepiece is a book of remembrance designed by Frank Moniz of Mondegro Inc. with a poem by Stacey LaForme. The book identifies 181 dead from the



The Death of Captain Neal McNeale at the Battle of York, 27 April 1813, by B.T.A. Griffiths, c. 1930. City of Toronto Museum Services.

Battle of York and another 35 townsmen who died at other times and places while on military service during the war. The book can be explored at www.toronto.ca/1812.

Finding the Fallen is at the Market Gallery (South St. Lawrence Market, 95 Front Street East) until September 8, then moves to a permanent home in the soon-to-be-refreshed Brick Magazine at Fort York.

2012 | Upcoming Events **Historic Fort York**

Compiled by Richard Haynes

APRIL **Fabled City**

Allies in Troubled Times: The Mississauga First Nation in the Battle of Fort York

Mon. April 2, 7 to 9 pm

The Mississauga Nation chose to fight alongside British troops to defend Fort York against the invading Americans. Poet and storyteller Stacey LaForme of the Mississaugas of the New Credit First Nation brings to life these troubled times. The evening will also include a short tour of the Fort, focusing on First Nations involvement in the War of 1812. Refreshments are included.

Pre-registration is required by calling 416 392-6907 x 0
Admission \$15 adults, \$12 youth & senior, \$10 child (all prices plus HST)

Ontario Women's History Network: Annual Meeting and Conference: *Women and the War of 1812* **Sat. April 14, 8 am to 5 pm**

Eleven speakers address the topic under broad themes: Setting the Context: Race, Gender, Ethnicity and Class in Colonial Canada before the War; Women's Roles and Experiences during the War of 1812; Gender and the War of 1812 in Upper Canada: History, Memory, and Commemoration; and Remembering and Commemorating Women's Roles in the War of 1812: Possibilities and Challenges. The day concludes with a tour of Fort York.

Participants must pre-register. For further information about speakers and fees please visit <http://arts.uwaterloo.ca/~owhn>

Community Cleanup Day **Sat. April 21, 10 am to 12 noon**

Help us give a much-needed spring cleaning to the Fort's Garrison Common. Join us for Mayor Rob Ford's Community Cleanup Day at Fort York National Historic Site. All equipment will be provided.

A FREE Family Pass to the site will be offered to all those who give their time. Meet at the front gates.

Parler Fort: Exploring Toronto's Past, Present, and Future Toronto: A Natural City? Building Our City to Harmonize Ecological & Human Systems

Thurs. April 26, 7:30 pm (doors open at 7:00)

How can Toronto and other cities re-envision their built environment to create a more sustainable foundation for growth and community? The editors of *The Natural City* (U of T Press, 2011), Stephen Scharper and Ingrid Leman Stephanovic, will lead an urgent but hopeful panel discussion including a philosopher, an architect, an ecologist and an urbanist.

Admission \$8.85 + tax, Students admitted FREE

Canadian Citizenship Ceremony at the Fort Fri. April 27, 11 am to 12 noon

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. The event includes community roundtable discussions, guest speakers, music, and a reception for the participants.

FREE admission to the public on this day.

Battle of York Commemoration Sun. April 29, 10 am to 5 pm

Discover Fort York National Historic Site and commemorate the 199th anniversary of the Battle of York, fought on 27 April 1813.

- To start the day the Royal Canadian Sea Cadet Corps (RCSCC) will parade from HMCS York to a flag-raising ceremony.
- All day long displays of naval shore gunnery, 19th-century seamanship, musket firings and military drills will be offered.
- Tours will depart regularly explaining the Battle of York, science of fortification, and 1812-lifestyles. In the fort's 1826 kitchen there will be demonstrations of Georgian-era cooking techniques
- Children will be able to "fall-in" to learn the same drills practiced by the Canada militia in 1812, or to talk with period-animators in the Soldiers' Barracks.

Regular admission.

MAY

Toronto District School Board History Fair Wed. May 2, 10 am to 2:30 pm

Regular admission.

Fort York Historic District Walking Tours in association with Jane's Walks: Fort York and 200 years of Development Sun. May 6, 1 to 2:30 pm

Explore the history and evolution of Fort York, the Garrison Common, and the nearby Lake Ontario shoreline from the early British colonial era to the present day. The tour highlights the Battle of York, the fortification and development of the harbour, and the eventual industrial, recreational, and residential growth of this vital area.

FREE admission to Fort York following tour.

Parler Fort: Exploring Toronto's Past, Present, and Future A Celebration of June Callwood and the new June Callwood Park

Wed. May 16, 7:30 pm (doors open at 7:00)

Join June Callwood's many friends, colleagues and family members for this evening of storytelling and remembering one of Toronto's most beloved people. Coinciding with the publication of *It's All About Kindness: Remembering June Callwood* (Cormorant Books, 2012, ed. Margaret McBurney) and the start of construction on a stunning new park adjacent to Fort York, designed to embody her words, "It's All About Kindness."

Admission \$8.85 + tax, Students admitted FREE

Victoria Day

Mon. May 21, 10 am to 5 pm

What better way to celebrate Victoria Day than to visit the birthplace of Toronto. Tours, kids' activities such as soldier's drill, demonstrations of Georgian-era cooking techniques, and English country dancing.

Regular admission.

Doors Open

Sat. and Sun. May 26 and 27, 10 am to 5 pm

Fort York will open its doors to the public for this annual celebration of history and architecture. Enjoy special tours of some of Toronto's oldest architecture (and home to Canada's largest collection of original War of 1812 buildings) or stroll the grounds of this National Historic Site.

Sunday only: 1 to 2 pm

Enjoy a featured walking tour, *City Building: "Simcoe to Skyscrapers."* The tour highlights the founding of York (Toronto) by Lt. Governor John G. Simcoe, the Battle of York (1813), the fortification and development of the harbour, and the eventual industrial, recreational, and residential growth of this vital area.

FREE admission all weekend.

JUNE

The Encampment (Luminato) June 8-24

A large-scale public participatory art installation, *The Encampment* proposes the archaeological encampment as its metaphor. A dig for artifacts is replaced by a dig into the collective memory of a public space and its history. This acclaimed installation will celebrate the launch of the Bicentennial of the War of 1812 as part of *Luminato* 2012. The installation will be open to the public in the evenings.

Admission is FREE.

Bicentennial Commemoration Launch June 15-24

Enjoy Bicentennial events across the City, as well as at the Fort, that commemorate the Declaration of War in June 1812:

- Experience the grandeur of Tchaikovsky's *1812 Overture* and a new specially commissioned work, as the *Luminato* Festival presents a free outdoor concert performed by the Toronto Symphony Orchestra in David Pecaut Square.
- Explore *The Encampment* at Fort York National Historic Site, an interactive installation by artists Thomas & Guinevere of 200 tents, each detailing the stories and lives of civilians touched by the war. Presented by the City of Toronto and *Luminato*.
- Honour those who died and reflect on the outcomes of their sacrifice at an all-night vigil in St. James' Cathedral.
- Think about the war from the contemporary perspectives of five young multi-media artists in an exhibition at Harbourfront Centre.
- Join us as we revisit our community at the onset of war. Courtesy of the St. Lawrence Market BIA, engage in conversation with actors in 1812-era dress as they wander through Toronto's Old Town relating "events of the day."

National Aboriginal Day

Thurs. June 21, 5 to 10 pm

Dance, Music, Traditional food, Storytelling, and Entertainment. Learn more about First Nations spiritual traditions honouring the land, the season, and the environment.

FREE admission.



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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)