

The Fife and Drum

The Newsletter of The Friends of Fort York and Garrison Common

v. 16 No.4 Sept 2012

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Rather Dead than Enslaved: The Blacks of York in the War of 1812

by Peter Meyler

In 1812 York may have been a “dirty straggling village,” but Upper Canada’s capital was also a place of diversity. Government officials, soldiers, merchants, and artisans mixed with clerks, servants, and even slaves in a town of barely 700 persons.

The number who were Black can only be guessed at. Some were freeborn, others had escaped slavery from the United States, but a number were slaves. Lieutenant-Governor Simcoe’s 1793 Act prevented the further importation of slaves into Upper Canada, but did not free those who were enslaved.

Among the province’s slave-owners was Robert Gray, the solicitor general. His household at York included his manservant, Simon Baker, Simon’s brother John, and two Black female servants. In 1804 Gray and Simon both perished when the *Speedy*, a ship on which they were travelling, was lost in a storm on Lake Ontario. Under Gray’s will, all his slaves were freed. During the War of 1812 John Baker left York and served with the 104th New Brunswick Regiment. He later returned to Upper Canada to live in Cornwall where he died in his nineties.

William Jarvis, the provincial secretary and registrar, also owned slaves. In March 1811 he charged two of them, a boy named Henry, commonly called Prince, and a girl, with stealing valuables from his desk. A free Black, one “Coakley,” was arraigned for advising and aiding them. The Court remanded the boy to jail for sentencing and ordered the girl returned to her master. “Coakley” was discharged. By fall, 1812, Prince Henry and Daniel Cokely were privates in the all-Black militia unit mustered at Niagara.

Britain’s war with the United States carried a much more sinister meaning for Upper Canada’s Blacks than for others. An American victory might reduce many to the legal status of chattel, a piece of property that could be used, abused, and sold at the whim of an owner. A number of African-Canadians joined their local militia companies. Generally such units were integrated, but Richard Pierpoint, a 68-year-old African veteran of the Revolutionary War, proposed the raising of an all-Black militia unit in Niagara. Pierpoint joined the Coloured Corps, as it became known, as a private. William Thompson, a sergeant in the Coloured Corps, recalled that he and thirteen men transferred there from the 3rd



Ivor Christopher is probably the only re-enactor who has interpreted the Coloured Corps. It is not known what uniforms the Corps were issued, if any, during the War of 1812. Those who want more information about this re-enactment or about Richard Pierpoint can inquire through info@fortyork.ca. Credit: Laynna Meyler

York Militia in time to fight at Queenston Heights, bringing the unit critical strength. The new recruits included the brothers John, Richard, and Stephen Kaul [Coll, Call] who had served formerly in Capt. Duncan Cameron’s Company.

Another member of the Corps was Robert Scott who owned a house on Hospital (now Richmond) Street, York. The dangers of war were on his mind as he prepared his will, “taking into consideration the uncertainty of life the more especially as I now am about to embark for Niagara as a volunteer to defend my King.” When he died from disease in January 1813 he left his estate to Sarah Long and her son David. Sarah and her husband Peter had been among York’s first Black settlers. A few weeks

after Scott's demise, his townsman and comrade in arms, John Jackson, also succumbed in hospital leaving a widow, Margaret.

The history of the Coloured Corps is fairly sketchy. It was mentioned as fighting alongside John Norton's Six Nations warriors at Queenston Heights. In March of 1813, it formed part of the force that battled the Americans at Fort George "at a distance of six to ten yards" with "destructive and rapid fire." A report lists two killed in action and, absurdly, that two members of the Corps had deserted to the enemy. It is much more likely that they were taken as booty by American soldiers.

By 1814 the Coloured Corps had been attached to the Engineer Department as a labouring unit. Lt. Col. Gustavus Nicolls, their commander, wrote, "When I visited the Niagara Frontier... I found that a corps of Free Men of Colour had, during the war been raised for the Quarter Mr. General's Department, but had been turned over to that of the Engineers, any necessity for this I never could learn, but

it seems to have been the fashion to heap all kinds of duties upon the latter." Black soldiers were given some of the most dirty and dangerous jobs, their military role reflecting their contemporary place in society. But they persevered and most survived the war. Even the old warrior Richard Pierpoint lived long enough to receive a military land grant, as did several other York men: Daniel Cokely, Samuel Edmunds, John and Richard Call. The veterans lived out their lives quietly, getting married, raising families, and passing away.

Peter Meyler was born and raised in the Fergus area. He has been researching African Canadian history since 1994. This has resulted in two books, A Stolen Life: Searching for Richard Pierpoint and Broken Shackles: Old Man Henson, from Slavery to Freedom, both published by Dundurn Press. His articles have appeared in a number of publications including the Toronto Star and the Globe and Mail.

"Particularly Torontoesque": Commemorating the Centennial of the War of 1812

Part 1: 1912

by David Roberts

As 1912 opened, only sketchy plans existed at Toronto's city hall and Queen's Park to mark the Centennial of the war. It had not faded, however, from public consciousness in the decade before 1912. Historical societies and archives helped sustain a flow of articles, books, and letters on the war, many published in Toronto. In both Toronto and the Niagara region homage to General Isaac Brock of Queenston Heights fame and Laura Secord, the "heroine of Beaver Dams," never abated.

The laying of wreaths at Secord's portrait at Queen's Park had become an annual event on Empire Day. One military pageant proudly enacted scenes from the war, and displays of relics attracted interest. Further attention had been stimulated by the erection of a monument to the soldiers of 1812-14 at the military burial ground at Victoria Square in 1902-7. As the Centennial drew closer, the completion of the South African War memorial on University Avenue in 1910 spurred Toronto's imperial and military leaders to step forward



Dominated by gasholders on the north and a meat-packing plant at its east end, Fort York's future was uncertain as the Centennial of the War of 1812 approached and some early proposals for its restoration were put forward. Credit: Toronto Public Library, T 11614 - 11617

once more. A public meeting at city hall in December 1910 boldly called for a “great national monument” to the war’s heroes. In 1911, the year a Second monument was unveiled at Queenston, the province received deputations and petitions for an 1812 monument at Queen’s Park. Played out in the press and civic gatherings, the preoccupation with a monument in Toronto spilled over into 1912. Based there and headed by William H. Merritt, an inveterate militarist who had been inspired by an 1812 monument in Washington, the Memorial to the Heroes of 1812-1814 Association unsuccessfully petitioned the federal government to fund a memorial arch at Queen’s Park. Some attention was diverted to the local drive to raise funds for a new monument to James Wolfe in Quebec and to squabbles over repatriating the standard captured by the Americans at the battle of York in 1813. In October 1912, on the approach of the actual centennial of Brock’s death at Queenston Heights and the involvement there of the York militia, the 1812 commemoration gained new attention. It was recast in local newspapers, garrison parades, and sermons as the “Brock anniversary,” with the idolized general and “citizen of York” (as administrator of Upper Canada) worthy of a monument. Again, with no organization able to assume full responsibility, nothing happened.

Toronto-centric interpretation, however, was too much for the newspapers of other cities. Picking up a critique by the Hamilton *Herald*, the Ottawa *Citizen* sarcastically characterized Toronto’s call for a federal monument as “particularly Torontoesque.” “Considering that all Toronto did was to get captured during the war, there does not seem to be much ground for the claim.” Within Toronto, there was a divergence of focus. Some saw 1912 as a centennial of peace. In Buffalo a “peace society” had been formed in 1911 to celebrate by building a “peace bridge” across the Niagara River, though nothing would result until the 1920s. In May 1912 the New York *Sun* counted twenty-four ways to mark the century of calm, including the bridge project, international highways and parks, and border monuments. The drive soon crossed over into Canada. Late that year, as the culmination of efforts by Quebec and Ontario, the federally funded Canadian Peace Centenary Association would be formed to mark the treaty that ended the war.

By the end of 1912 no new monument had been erected in Toronto. The memorial sought by the 1812-1814 Association would materialize, but in Ottawa. Absent from talks to monumentalize Toronto was the city government, though its seeming disinterest belied its long-term goal: to preserve the “old fort” (Fort York), the site of the battle of York. Rebuilt after the war, it was in a near-ruined state in 1912, with little residual reverence. In 1903 Toronto had nonetheless taken it over under an agreement with the federal militia department that bound the city to a course of preservation (*Fife and Drum* August 2009). Fending off encroachments on fort lands

consumed enormous energy. The approaching Centennial, combined with pressure from historical societies, brought city council to declare in January 1912 that full restoration would provide fitting commemoration. Money was allocated. Some work was completed that summer and fall, but by year’s end, few structures showed substantial improvement and further expenditure was uncertain. Council adopted no other commemorative project. In November the Women’s Canadian Historical Society was still pushing for preservation of the fort.

The thrust for monuments gives rise to questions: why did people want to mark the war and why the emphasis on monuments? In the evolving sense of Canadian identity, 1812 and the role of the Canadian militia had taken on mythic meaning. References to 1812 infused national and imperial debates, including the need for a navy to defend Canada. A Toronto minister sermonized, alluding to Brock’s loss and mounting tensions in Europe, that one lesson of any commemoration was the need to resist evil. The peace display superficially smoothed over rough edges in Canadian-American relations, ranging from the possession of war trophies to the boundary water problems addressed by the International Joint Commission that began work in 1912. In vogue and simple to execute, monuments could be funded over time through subscriptions, like the South African memorial. The preservation of sites and buildings took stronger championship, as Toronto was discovering.

Was Toronto doing better, or worse, in its commemorative achievements than other towns? It had Victoria Square and a shaky commitment to Fort York. Through nominal association, Brockville had a Brock monument unveiled in August 1912 while at Niagara, where Fort George had been reduced to remnants, a strong-willed historical society succeeded in getting federal funding for the restoration of Navy Hall. In a strange twist, according to Niagara historian Janet Carnochan, Toronto antiquarian John Ross Robertson secured an old timber from Navy Hall and had it made into a chair for Convocation Hall at the University of Toronto in 1912. The chair bears a plaque stating that Robertson actually had it fashioned from oak taken from a wartime schooner. This private monument and some work on Fort York were what Toronto could show in the first year of the Centennial.

This story continues in our next issue for the years 1913-14. Readers familiar with any War of 1812 monuments erected in Toronto in 1912-14 (private or public) are encouraged to contact *Fife and Drum*.

A former editor and historian with the Dictionary of Canadian Biography/Dictionnaire biographique du Canada, David Roberts lives in Scarborough.

Brock Day in Guernsey

by Jason Monaghan

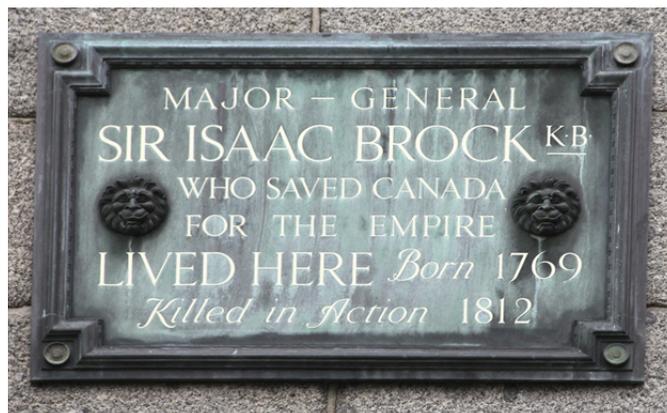
Sir Isaac Brock has been almost forgotten by the wider population of Guernsey. He has been overshadowed by his contemporary, Admiral James de Saumarez, who had the fortune to survive the Napoleonic wars and return to make his mark on this small island in the English Channel.

Now, 2012 has given us the opportunity to set the record straight. By good fortune Guernsey Museum & Art Gallery was able to buy Gerrit Schipper's pastel made around 1810, which is the only known portrait of the adult Brock (see *Fife and Drum* July 2012). We had no hesitation in agreeing to loan the pastel to the RiverBrink Museum in Queenston for the Bicentennial, and I had the pleasure of speaking at its unveiling this spring. The island has only a small number of other items relating to Brock, but the Museum is putting these on display in the autumn. It includes the figure from the model of the Brock Monument at Queenston, which Canada had made for the Paris Exposition of 1855.



Before and after photos show damage to the top of the model of the Brock Monument in the Guernsey Museum restored in 1985 by Parks Canada as a goodwill gesture. The bird (circled in red) was included as a conservator's joke. Credit: Conservation Division, Nat'l. Historic Parks & Sites Branch, Parks Canada, Ottawa

Other initiatives have started to roll, beginning with a stamp issue and a commemorative coin. Our former Bailiff, Minister for Culture and Leisure, and others will be attending celebrations in Canada. We have arranged for the plaque on his birthplace to be cleaned, whilst Ontario is helping us refurbish a second plaque on the Town Church wall. Brock spent little time in Guernsey after leaving to join the British army as a teenager, never married, and left no descendants. Without a physical legacy to focus on, we chose the anniversary of his death on 13 October 1812 as "Brock Day," landing fortuitously on a Saturday.



This handsome bronze plaque graces the front of the building where Brock was born in St. Peter Port, Guernsey, now occupied by "Boots the Chemist." Credit: Guernsey Museum & Art Gallery

The Canadian flag will be hoisted on the seafront mast, and another will fly over Castle Cornet, the ancient harbour fortress. Local cadets, veterans, and special guests from Canada will join a parade through the capital, St. Peter Port. Men of his old regiment, the 49th Foot, will be there and we hope to welcome the Canadian military attaché and representatives of the First Nations. The parade will stop in front of the tall merchant's house where Brock was born, now "Boots the Chemist." Here it will be joined by dignitaries including the Bailiff of Guernsey, and a wreath will be laid. All will then process down to the Town Church for a service of remembrance. More wreaths will be laid at the altar screen dedicated to Brock's memory and the newly refurbished plaque will be unveiled.

Meanwhile, Castle Cornet will be opened to the public, with re-enactors in Napoleonic scarlet, Regency period dancers, and family activities. A certain Museums Director will even be seen playing Brock in a short historical re-enactment. The dignitaries will assemble for a 15-gun salute fired from the Castle's battery and some of the VIPs will join the gun crews. The Commonwealth Association is organising a reception we call a *vin d'honneur*, at which a new bust of Sir Isaac Brock made by Canadian artist Christian Cardell Corbett will be unveiled. Finally we will toast the Queen and the memory of Brock.

I say "finally," but the British redcoats will be encamped all weekend and there will be a Regimental Dinner held on the Saturday evening. We will be using the occasion to officially launch a project to erect a statue to Brock in the heart of St. Peter Port. Initiated by a Canadian expatriate two years ago, the project is finally gaining momentum. We have identified a site in front of the Markets built by his brother and are talking to Canadian sculptor Adrienne Alison about the project. Brock may be the "Hero of Upper Canada," but one day soon, we hope to have a fitting memorial in his hometown.

Dr. Jason Monaghan is Museums Director for Guernsey. His background is in Roman archaeology, but he has a strong interest in military history. He is also a published crime writer.

The Soldiers at Fort York Armoury

by Captain Bob Kennedy

Fort York Armoury stands at the intersection of Canada's wars and the social history of Toronto. The first soldiers marched into the new armoury in January of 1935, at the depth of the Depression, when only the prescient could see the approach of war. That first decade was the most intense: thousands of troops passing through on their way to war; community-wide efforts to overcome the country's unreadiness; the seemingly endless casualties of the units based there. Yet the basic routines of a Militia regiment in garrison, even during war, have not changed very much over the past eighty years.

That is because regiments in the Militia—now called the Army Reserve—are composed entirely of part-time soldiers, men (and, since the 1980s, women) who hold down full-time jobs or are still in high school, college, or university. They are your neighbours and co-workers, and they don't have much spare time.

They're expected to be at the armoury one evening each week and to spend at least one weekend a month in uniform, either at the armoury or out in the field. During the summer, they might give two weeks of vacation to a career course and then beg another ten days off work (and away from family) for a large-scale field exercise. On top of this are many social and ceremonial occasions, plus a steady stream of extra tasks from headquarters—everything from carrying the flag at a Blue Jays game to filling a slot in a Regular unit heading overseas.

For most of its career, Fort York Armoury has been the home of four regiments, and two of the current occupants—the Queen's York Rangers and the Royal Regiment of Canada—have been there, in one form or another, since 1935. By 1939 most of the men had some sort of a job but the leadership of at least one regiment made sure that those who didn't were slipped a couple of streetcar tickets and a chit for a meal in the canteen. When the Royals were mobilized in September, 1939, they quickly set up recruiting offices around the city. It took about two weeks to fill the ranks. "Most recruits," records the regiment's history, "had nothing but thin civilian shoes" and many were underfed as well. "The Women's Auxiliary undertook to provide a pint of milk per day for 40 undernourished recruits," continues the history, "in the hope of raising their medical category."

Mobilizing and dispatching these regiments to Europe revealed the depth of the city's involvement. When it was announced that unheated, unfurnished buildings at the

CNE would house the expanding regiments, donations of everything from sweaters to typewriters poured in. The first regiment to head overseas from Fort York was the Toronto Scottish, marching to Union Station on 5 December 1939. "Tears and liquor flowed without restraint," records a brief history written just after the war. "One last-minute marriage was performed on the station platform," recalls the writer, and "much excitement was occasioned when two wives arrived to bid farewell to the same husband." When the Royal Regiment of Canada left the CNE grounds the following spring, some 5000 people attended the farewell picnic.

Left behind by each regiment was a cadre at headquarters that became the nucleus of their new 2nd Battalions, part of the Reserve for home defence and raising and training replacements for overseas. They mounted countless band concerts and sham battles to support recruiting.

Throughout the first three years of the war, as the news went from bad to worse—the fall of France, of Hong Kong, of Singapore—men were leaving Reserve battalions weekly for units that had a prospect of action. The low point came in August 1942, when our 2nd Division—including all of the Royals, a quarter of the Scottish, and many of the engineers from Fort York—mounted the disastrous raid on Dieppe. Of 554 members of the Royal Regiment of Canada who embarked, 207 were killed in a few terrifying hours on the beach. Only 65 made it back to England; the rest were taken prisoner. These were the men who'd joined the army for a decent meal and \$1.30 a day.

By the summer of 1945, ships were beginning to bring nearly half a million soldiers and airmen home, and the great reunion parades began from the Summerhill and Union stations.

The new challenge at Fort York Armoury was to integrate the Reserve battalions with the few veterans from overseas who wanted to remain in the peacetime regiments. Every soldier who joined in the 1950s and 1960s can remember the war veteran who was his most rigorous teacher and who told the best stories. And for the first time, just after the war, small cadres of the Regular army were added to each Militia regiment.

The 1950s brought the civil defence fad to the Militia, then thought to be irrelevant in a nuclear age. Those who'd joined to learn soldiering had little enthusiasm for, say,



*A young Army Cadet gets an introduction to signalling equipment on a parade night of the Toronto Scottish during the early 1950s. They are in the Lower Brigade Room at the western end of the armoury.
Credit: Toronto Scottish Museum*



Troops of 32 Canadian Brigade Group—the Army Reserve in the GTA and the Niagara Frontier—wait with their equipment for transport to the airport in March 2009. In the foreground is a soldier's sleeping kit strapped to a rucksack. The troops were heading to Fort Irwin, California, for an exercise with an American brigade in the High Mojave Desert.
Credit: Cpl Igor Korpan, DND

directing the mass evacuation of the city. But Mother Nature found something else for them: Hurricane Hazel. In October of 1954, the destruction in the Humber valley led to intense activity at Fort York. Troops were deployed to search for bodies while engineers quickly built a series of wartime Bailey

Bridges across the upper ravines. This task of responding to a natural disaster remains a principal role of the Army Reserve.

Social history and warfare intersect at the armoury because these soldiers, being part-time, remain integrated into Canadian society in a way that Regular soldiers, now sequestered on bases, are not. Reservists, men and women, typically spend their entire career in a single regiment not far from home. Especially in the cities their regiments are more exposed to trends in immigration. A survey a few years ago found a twenty-one-member reconnaissance troop of the Queen's York Rangers that among them could speak fourteen languages.

The peacekeeping missions of the Cold War rarely involved many troops, and few Militiamen were required. That changed in the first big postwar operation in the Balkans, when Reservists were required in large numbers, usually deploying as individuals to fill in the gaps. During the last decade, a steady stream of soldiers has left Fort York Armoury for service in the far corners of the globe: more than 200 to the Balkans, the Middle East, Africa, and especially Afghanistan. They follow a calling as old as the armoury itself.

Captain Kennedy is the Public Affairs Officer of 32 Canadian Brigade Group, the headquarters of the units at the armoury, and has himself spent years of his life inside the place.



RESPECTED CITIZENS OF THE TOWN OF YORK

As President of the Officers' Mess of His Majesty's Garrison at York, I wish to advise you that the annual Friends of Fort York and Garrison Common "Georgian Mess Dinner" will be enjoyed on Thursday, 1 November 2012. The Friends respectfully invite you to join us in commemoration of the Bicentennial of the War of 1812.

This year's Dinner will mark the 14th year for a special fundraiser to support the Fort York Guard and Fife and Drum who provide lively animation at Fort York National Historic Site. The money raised this Bicentennial year will be especially important given increased programming and travelling to represent Fort York at other historical sites and events.

The Friends are fortunate again to have the Volunteer Historic Cooks, Berkley Hospitality, and the staff at Fort York, who help us to offer the only authentic Georgian fine dining experience in Ontario. Don't miss this special opportunity to dine as the officers did in the Georgian era at Fort York. You are guaranteed a fabulous meal and you will be helping an irreplaceable asset in the Fort York Guard.

This event is by invitation, and is extended only to members of The Friends of Fort York and Garrison Common and to Corporate Sponsors. To receive your invitation, become a member today by joining online at our website www.fortyork.ca. Space is limited. To become a sponsor please inquire at sponsor@fortyork.ca.

Sincerely,

Richard Dodds

President of the Officers' Mess of His Majesty's Garrison at York

Bicentennial Timeline: October to December 1812

Oct. The Coloured Corps of Black volunteers, formed in August, reached full strength when 14 men joined from the Third York Militia. The unit saw its first action at the Battle of Queenston Heights.

Oct. 10 The Rev. John Strachan, newly arrived in York, advertised that he had opened a school. Common education was £6 per annum; Classical education £8. Rates reduced somewhat for poorer parents provided they kept their children neat and clean, and supplied them with proper books.

Oct. 13 Sir Isaac Brock was killed at Queenston Heights while repelling an American invasion. To his successor, Roger Hale Sheaffe, fell the credit for securing victory in these tragic circumstances. Sheaffe also succeeded Brock as administrator of Upper Canada.

Oct. 24 A plan of the funeral procession for Isaac Brock and his aide-de-camp, Lt. Col. John Macdonell, was published in the *York Gazette*. Showing the position of their coffins among the troops, Native allies, muffled drums, and mourners, the plan was copied in the *Quebec Gazette/Gazette de Québec* (29 Oct.), *Montreal Gazette/Gazette de Montréal* (3 Nov.), and *Kingston Gazette* (17 Nov.).

Oct. 29, 31 After issuing a supplement (24 Oct.) with news of the victory at Queenston and the death of the "gallant and ever-to-be-lamented Chief, Major Genl. BROCK" the *Quebec Gazette* published a lengthy editorial which opens: "THE news of the death of this excellent Officer has been received here, as a public calamity. The attendant circumstances of victory scarcely checked the painful sensation. His long residence in this Province, and particularly in this place, had made him, in habits and good offices, almost a citizen, and his frankness, conciliatory disposition, and devoted demeanor an estimable one."

Nov. The earliest-printed view of York, engraved by William S. Leney, was published by S.F. Bradford of Philadelphia. It shows the Berkeley Street blockhouse with Lake Ontario and the town beyond.

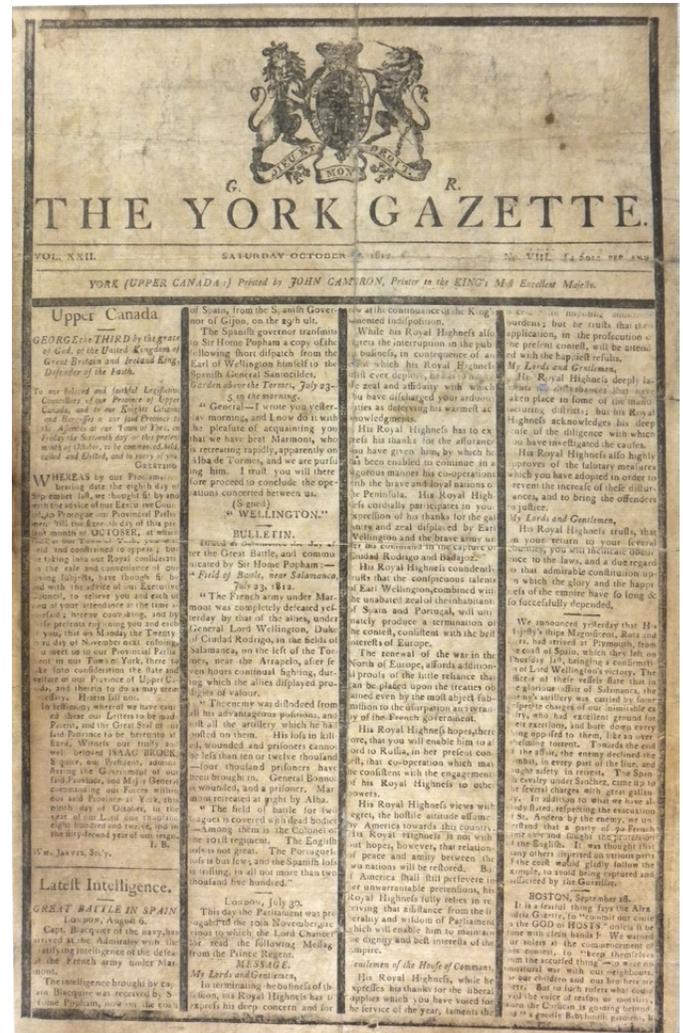
Nov. 1 Dr. John Strachan, Missionary at York, to the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts: "...the bustle and confusion occasioned by the war gives him but little opportunity of ascertaining the state of the Parish, most of the people being on the lines resisting invasion... They daily expect an attack from the enemy; but the Province is wonderfully animated, & with a few more troop will have nothing to fear."

Nov. 12 An American standard taken in the Battle of Queenston was displayed in the Castle Yard at Quebec. According to the *Gazette* "It had altogether a mean appearance."

Dec. 12 John Sandfield Macdonald, first premier of Ontario after Confederation, was born at St. Raphael's, Glengarry County, Upper Canada.

Dec. 15 The Loyal and Patriotic Society of Upper Canada was organized to provide care and modest relief to soldiers, their families, and the poor. Some of its donations were used to found the Toronto General Hospital. The Society also had more than 600 gold and silver medals struck but couldn't decide who should receive them. Only three escaped being melted down in 1841; they are now on display at Fort York (*Fife and Drum* March 2011).

Dr. Carl Benn, Chair, Department of History, Ryerson University, Toronto, has written an authoritative essay on the medals that is found on The Friends' website: <http://www.fortyork.ca/index.php/resources/historical-essays>



The columns in the York Gazette of 17 October 1812, where Brock's death was reported, were bordered in black. Credit: Niagara Falls Museums

Thanks to the wonders of the Internet this very rare issue of Toronto's first newspaper can be read on-line, including the report of Brock's death on the second page. <http://images.ourontario.ca/1812/70882/data> Just click on the red links to Pages 1 and 2, then click again to engage the Zoomify function and read the report that brought news of the battle at Queenston and plunged the capital of Upper Canada into deepest mourning.

News From

The Birthplace of Toronto

Contributions from the Staff at the Fort

Administrator's Report

by David O'Hara, Site Administrator

After more than three decades of planning and a tremendous amount of hard work, the construction of a new Visitor Centre at Fort York National Historic Site is finally about to begin this fall.

The building, designed by Patkau Architects Inc. of Vancouver with Kearns Mancini Architects Inc. of Toronto, and costing \$18 M will be constructed under a contract between the City of Toronto and Harbridge + Cross, a Canadian company with many years of experience and a wealth of industry expertise.

When complete, the Visitor Centre will house reception and visitor amenities, multimedia programming, exhibits, and facilities for education, research, and staff. Its completion will allow the fort's administrative functions to be relocated from their present quarters within the historic structures inside the ramparts. The building, which won *Canadian Architect* magazine's Award of Excellence in 2011, has been designed to reinterpret the original shoreline bluff along Lake Ontario and create a strong visual presence for the fort along the Fort York Boulevard frontage.

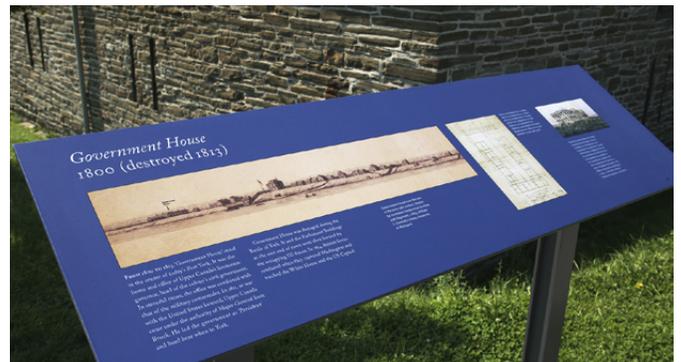
The whole project—construction and fixturing of the Visitor Centre, installation of exhibits, and landscaping of the surrounding Garrison Common—has been budgeted at \$25 million. Of this some \$19 million has been pledged by all three levels of government. The balance of \$6 million will be raised from among private donors by the Fort York Foundation. For more information about the Foundation's campaign, please visit www.fortyorkfoundation.ca.

The landscape master planning, working with landscape architects/urban designers DTAH, continues. This exercise will include the development of a detailed revitalization plan for the Garrison Common as well as a careful look at how some of the projects in areas adjacent the fort, such as the future construction of the Fort York pedestrian bridge and the reconstruction of the Bathurst Bridge, should be planned and designed to complement plans for the national historic site itself. The very basic landscaping undertaken early in the year on the Garrison Common has already allowed for extensive use of the grounds throughout the 2012 season. The next major phases of landscape improvements to the Common and the rest of the area

outside the fort's west gates will be coordinated with the Visitor Centre construction and undertaken in 2013 and 2014. Advancing this critical landscape restoration project has only been made possible by a lead gift of \$1 million from the W. Garfield Weston Foundation to the Fort York Foundation.

The landscape design work at the east end of the national historic site, just to the east of Bathurst Street, was recently awarded to Public Work, a Toronto-based design studio. Public Work describes their approach to the design of the site where Garrison Creek once emptied into Lake Ontario as "A project that weaves together multiple narratives. Of geologic time, the ecology of the creek, the heritage of the fort, and the archaeological traces of the site that together uncovers the foundation of our city."

Work also continues on various exhibit-related projects. A Parks Canada exhibit, which includes three interactive screens and one touch-table, was installed in the Centre Blockhouse earlier this summer, and the Black Powder exhibit in the Stone Magazine is now in place. After various capital improvements are completed in the Brick Magazine, the exhibit *Finding the Fallen: The Battle of York Remembered*, which was recently on display at the Market Gallery, will be installed in the building (*Fife and Drum* March 2012). Our first set of twelve exterior interpretive panels was installed in early September and a second set is currently being fabricated for locations outside the fort's walls. These signs, which were designed by Leonard Wyma of Donderdag (who also designed our new Fort York wordmark), and fabricated by WSI Sign Systems Ltd./King Architectural, will add a new layer of interpretation to the entire site.



One of the dozen new interpretive signs installed recently is found in front of the Stone Magazine. Credit: Andrew Stewart

Tracking Nature at Fort York

by Patrisha Robertson

Surrounded by development, Fort York appears to be a green oasis of peace and serenity. But that would be a lie. Nature is busy there. You can see it on summer nights when groundhogs chew endlessly on the lawns. You can see it in the aerial dynamics of the swallows that swoop and dive like the Canadian Air Force, exhibiting their ability to fly in formation. In spring there is blossom, in the fall rustic colour and beating wings as the airborne head south. In the winter, while the snow is fresh, tracks reveal that coyotes and rabbits are still in on the hunt.

A nature tour of Fort York's 41 acres might start at the west entrance off Strachan. Here you can look east over Garrison Common and its array of trees. A green habitat that was never formally designed, it remains a deliciously deciduous buffer against the concrete of the Gardiner and Liberty Village. Here the trees are large and majestic, with the look of an English park. In spring the long flowers of the non-native horse chestnut bring colour; in the fall, conkers!

Inside the fort the landscape changes; while the interior remains lawn-groomed and visitor-ready, the north, south, and eastern edges offer a different, wilder story.

And what you may notice first are the sounds of nature. Starting in spring the grounds are a-chatter with robins and red-winged blackbirds. What brings them here? In the case of the sandpiper or redwing it is the land's marshy Garrison Creek past. Generally drawn to watery haunts, the migratory red-winged blackbird has multiplied over the past years. In the fall, a yellow flash and the goldfinches have arrived to feast on seeds. Of course there are other birds: the common pigeon can be found pecking for grass seed, and in the late afternoon, an entire "murmuration" of starlings will blanket the grounds searching for a grubby supper. For natural insect control, the swallow does its part and visitors should rejoice. Other sightings: a hawk circling for prey and, at fall's commencement, the Canada geese.



Forget the cliché of the human cannonball...We hope this inquisitive groundhog knows how to say, "Don't shoot"! Credit: Rene Malagon, Fort York staff

More colourful are the butterflies: monarchs and the look-alike viceroys, red admirals, black swallowtails, mourning cloaks, and various sulphurs, and in high summer dragonflies that sail through the air quiet as drones.

Perhaps if there is a star turn at Fort York, the star is the groundhog. And if Fort York is their theatre, then the Bathurst Street Bridge is front row with delighted pedestrians watching the kits start their explorations. Most enchanting is their "trouble is coming" pose, standing vertical as if listening for enemy footfalls; it makes one wonder whether groundhogs should be conscripted. Groundhogs are also diligent burrowers. At the head of any new tunnel you will find debris thrown up in the dig.

Then there is the rabbit. A favourite of hawks and coyotes, their population fluctuates and yet, how Beatrix Potter on a summer's night to catch sight of a rabbit's tail bobbing over the lawn. Or the black and white flags of skunks as they skirt a blockhouse.

As for the coyotes, when they are hungry they can be seen as late—or early—as midday, but generally they keep to the dawn and dusk hours. Last winter, a coyote crossed my path and literally, like a ghost, evaporated through the fence onto the coyote run next to the railway tracks. The fort also plays informal host to a few of the city's homeless cats. Some pass through, others, spayed or neutered by local cat rescue, have stayed on.

And of course, not every creature in Fort York has a paw. The milk snakes that took up residence by a drain near the shop, slither.

Although the flora may be glorious at first glance, it needs attention. Capable of thwarting American soldiers, the fort has been unable to avoid an attack of invasive species; these generally arrive via birds, in the wind, or on a visitor's shoe, and take root around the fort's less-groomed periphery to create mayhem. Not all are bad. Some are beneficial such as healing goldenrod and milkweed which acts as host to the monarch's caterpillars. Queen Anne's Lace and thistle are for the birds, while the apple trees—the fruits now being foraged



Hot and thirsty, this northern mockingbird can't wait for a shower. Credit: Patrisha Robertson

by the groundhogs, remind us that someone in the mid 19th century planted an orchard. There are also rushes that stand as a memorial to Garrison Creek and the marshland past. But other plants such as dog strangling vine, Japanese knotweed, purple loosestrife, Manitoba maple, and more need to be controlled or eliminated.

Fort York is not only a national historic site but a habitat capable of being renewed with native species to educate the next generation. This requires partnerships, money, and volunteers. But ridding the fort of invasive species and

returning the land to “native” would be a natural complement to the Fort’s historic architecture and military re-enactments. A place where military history and natural history might fuse in a gloriously green salute to the past.

A communicator by profession, Patrisba Robertson is a Fort York Community gardener and friend of Fort York. She founded Garrison Ferals which looks after feral cat communities in the Garrison Common area.

Hon. Peter MacKay, Minister of National Defence, Visits Fort York To Award Battle Honours

On August 15, the 200th anniversary of the great victory Brock and his Native allies won over US forces at Detroit, the Hon. Peter MacKay, Minister of National Defence, came to Fort York to announce that the Government of Canada has awarded the battle honour DETROIT to six Reserve Regiments in southern Ontario. They will now be able to emblazon this honour on their regimental colours. Receiving the award were the 56th Field Artillery Regiment of Brantford; Queen’s York Rangers (1st American Regiment) of Toronto; Royal Canadian Regiment of Petawawa; Royal Hamilton Light Infantry of Hamilton; Lincoln and Welland Regiment of St. Catharines; and Essex and Kent Scottish of Windsor. As well, the honour was accorded to the Royal Newfoundland Regiment of St. John’s at a separate ceremony there. All units are successors to those who fought under General Brock and alongside Tecumseh.

On September 14 Mr. MacKay returned to Fort York to announce additional battle honours were being awarded to a wide number of regiments for QUEENSTON, MAUMEE, CHATEAUGUAY, CRYSLER’S FARM, NIAGARA, and the DEFENCE OF CANADA.



*Seen following the Toronto ceremony are (l. to r.) Ted Opitz, MP- Etobicoke Centre, Sandra Shaul of Toronto’s Bicentennial Project staff, Mr. MacKay, City Councillor Paul Ainslie, and Kevin Hebib of Fort York.
Credit: MCpl Dan Pop, DND*

Was There a Winner?

Good old Yankee opportunism is found in a pair of bumper stickers being sold at re-enactors' events and on the Internet by <http://cyruswakefield.com/>. They are identical except for differing flags to suit US or Canadian purchasers. Bowing to general opinion that the War of 1812 produced no clear victor (but ignoring how much it set back Native interests), both stickers read "War of 1812 Bicentennial—Been There, Won That!"



Ontario Model Soldier Society

The Ontario Model Soldier Society held its annual show at Fort York on September 8, where this diorama by Scott Dummit of the charge led by General Isaac Brock at Queenston on 13 October 1812 was a standout.



Credit: Kathy Mills

2012 | Upcoming Events Historic Fort York

Compiled by by Kristine Williamson

OCTOBER

JOIN US FOR HISTORY MONTH

1812 Films under the Stars Wed. October 3, 10, 17, 7 pm

Enjoy three weeks of 1812 films under the stars:

Oct 3 premiere of the CBC documentary *The War of 1812: Been There Won That*

Oct 10 PBS *The War of 1812*

Oct 17 *Explosion 1812* Presented by HISTORY® in association with yap films, the film is an in-depth exploration of what happened during the Battle of York on April 27, 1813, with a focus on the huge explosion of the Grand Magazine at Fort York.

Free admission, shown in the open air.

The Untold Stories of the War of 1812: Lecture Series Thurs. October 4, 11, 18, 25, 7 pm

You know Secord and Brock but do you know the untold stories of the War of 1812? Come to Fort York over four weeks to hear these experts:

Oct 4 Major John Grodzinski with Anthony Wilson-Smith *"The Savour of all the Canadas: The Leadership of Lieutenant-General Sir George Prevost during the War of 1812"*

Oct 11 Dr. Melissa Schrems and Dr. Henry Bishop with Rosemary Sadlier *"Fighting for Legitimacy: Black Military Service in the War of 1812"*

Oct 18 Dr. Susan Hill and Dr. Jane Errington *"Uneasy Alliances: First Nations and Canadians and the War of 1812"*

Oct 25 Dr. Ross Fair and Maria Moncour *"Saints or Sinners: Canadians, Americans and the War of 1812"*

Visit toronto.ca/1812 for more information.

Admission \$10 + tax. Pre-registration not required.

To purchase tickets, call 416-392-6907 x221.

Isaac Brock: Pro Patria Mori Fri. to Sun. October 12, 13, 14, 10 am to 4 pm

Marking the 200th anniversary of Brock's death, this mini-exhibit looks at his career and legacy in Canada. Among the rare artifacts on display is the charge of arms granted to Brock in 1813, an object never before exhibited to the public.

Included with regular admission.

Best before 1812: A Bicentennial Food Symposium Sat. October 20, 10 am to 2:30 pm

Experience a taste of our shared past. This all-day food symposium will feature demonstrations, discussions, and samples of 19th century French, British, North American, and First Nations cooking styles.

Admission \$40 + tax. Pre-registration required.

Call 416-392-6907 x221.

Fort York after Dark Lantern Tours Tues. to Sat. October 23 to 27, 7:30 to 9:30 pm

Tour the grounds of Fort York at night to hear stories about this national treasure, from the haunted lighthouse to the bloody Battle of York during the War of 1812. The tour will also visit two military cemeteries near the fort, in particular Victoria Memorial Square, the oldest surviving European burying ground in Toronto. Not recommended for children under 8 yrs. Complimentary refreshments.

Admission \$12.50 + tax. Pre-registration required.

Call 416-392-6907 x221.

NOVEMBER

Citizenship Ceremony Fri. November 9, 10 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 round-table discussions and a special community ceremony at the fort.

Free admission to the fort until 12:30 pm.

Remembrance Day Sun. November 11, 10:45 am for the procession

All soldiers of the Toronto Garrison who fell in the War of 1812, the Rebellion Crises, the Crimean War, the Northwest Rebellion, the South African (Boer) War; the two World Wars, and recent conflicts around the globe will be remembered and honoured at one of this city's most evocative Remembrance Day services at the Strachan Avenue Military Cemetery on Garrison Road.

Free admission to the ceremony, and free admission to the fort until 12:30 pm.

An Elegant Trifle Sun. November 25, 11 am to 3 pm

Join us in the 1826 Officers' Mess kitchen to discover the origins of this delicious many-layered dessert. Using traditional recipes and techniques from the late 18th and early 19th centuries, you will learn how to build a beautiful trifle. Lunch, recipes, and samples are included. Space is limited to a maximum of 8 participants, so sign up today.

Admission \$60 + tax.

For more information or to pre-register call 416-392-6907 x225.

DECEMBER

Christmas Mince Pies Sun. December 2, 11 am to 3 pm

Learn how to make traditional mincemeat pies using authentic recipes and equipment in the Officers' Mess kitchen. Lunch, recipes, and mince pies to take home are included. Space is limited to a maximum of 8 participants.

Admission \$40 + tax.

For more information or to pre-register call 416-392-6907 x225.

Fort York Frost Fair Sat. and Sun. December 8 and 9, 10 am to 5 pm

Feel the excitement and charm of the festive season in Upper Canada some 200 years ago when the local Christmas Market was one of the social and shopping highlights of the year. Wander through the historic buildings of Fort York where merchants in period dress will be selling quality goods inspired by the 18th and 19th century. Try your hand at one of the many activities scheduled throughout the day, including printing your own Frost Fair souvenir. Warm yourself by the bonfire or in the cheerful glow of the Officers' Mess kitchen.

Included with regular admission.

Holiday Season December 15 to December 31, 10 am to 4 pm on weekdays and 10 am to 5 pm on weekends

Enjoy a visit to Fort York National Historic Site this festive season. Sample some baking from the 1826 Officers' Mess kitchen and soak up the warmth of a crackling wood fire. Be sure to browse the Museum Store to find that special gift for all ages and interests.

Regular admission.

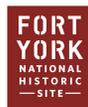
Fort York is closed December 25, 26, and January 1

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



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Editor Patricia Fleming
Designer Ted Smolak (Arena Design)
Circulation Elizabeth Quance

 **TORONTO Culture**
www.toronto.ca/culture



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)