

# The Fife and Drum

The Newsletter of The Friends of Fort York and Garrison Common

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## Contents



- 1 A Large New Park North of Fort York
- 2 Canvas Houses Suited the Simcoes
- 4 Fort York Memory
- 4 And in Other Important News
- 5 From the Gallery: "But 'twas a famous victory."
- 5 What The Friends of Fort York Do: Our Accomplishments for 2014
- 7 Manager's Report
- 8 The Garrison Road Bridges Pass into History
- 10 In Review: *Archaeology of the War of 1812*
- 11 Upcoming Events



## A Large New Park North of Fort York

by Robert Allsopp

Garrison Creek, which was so important in first siting Fort York and defining the "founding landscape" of the town of York, has long been covered and replaced by the Garrison Sewer. Yet the Creek's course is still observable in the contemporary city: Trinity Bellwoods Park and Stanley Park, north and south of King Street, sit above the Creek. Now, a newly planned park, south of the present Stanley Park, will be a further step in the recovery of the Garrison Common and an additional link in a chain of parks following the line of Garrison Creek. <http://goo.gl/Yqlh8m> "South Stanley Park" will be connected across the rail corridor to Fort York National Historic Site by a new pedestrian/cycle bridge that crosses another new park in the Ordnance Triangle lands. In this location South Stanley will open up views to the fort from Wellington Street and provide more authentic northward views "up the creek" from the Common and from inside the fort's ramparts.

Recovery of a portion of the heritage landscape of Garrison Common and creation of a new, large park linked to the fort is part of the Official Plan Amendment for the South Niagara

Area approved by City Council in August. This much needed 7.4 acre park will benefit the fast growing population in this western part of the downtown, including Liberty Village, and will immensely increase the dignity, visibility, and accessibility of Fort York.

The Plan, officially referred to as the South Niagara Planning Strategy, envisions the area between Strachan Avenue and Bathurst Street and between Wellington Street and the rail corridor, now supporting mainly industrial uses, becoming a mixed-use community complementing the existing Niagara Neighbourhood. Much of the land is in City ownership, including a decommissioned incinerator, the "Wellington Destructor," an unused, hidden gem of a building that is on the City's list of heritage properties but is not designated and is in a sorry state of repair. Its site, along with other city-owned land, is zoned for parkland; its preservation and adaptive reuse as a "community and cultural space" prompts visions of Tate Modern. Expansion of the local street system and the pedestrian and cycle network are other essential parts of the Plan.



Area within dashed red line illustrates proposed new park area.

Photos by Sid Calzavara  
joined by René Biberstein,  
dTAH

Thanks to the steady hand of Councillor Mike Layton; perseverance by City's Planning's project planner Graig Uens and Community Planning Manager Lynda Macdonald; the commitment of members of the Niagara Neighbourhood and The Friends of Fort York, aided and abetted by its Fort York Precinct Advisory Committee, the South Niagara Planning Strategy attempts to balance the aspirations of the local community, the landowners, and the cultural heritage values of this part of Garrison Common.

City Council's approval of the Plan has been appealed by a major landowner. Moving the City's Works Yard may take some time. But so far, it is all good news for Fort York on this file.

*Bob Allsopp is a partner in dTAH who has been involved with Fort York for twenty years, from 1999 to 2005 as a director of The Friends of Fort York. Currently he sits as a member of the Precinct Advisory Committee of The Friends.*

## Canvas Houses Suited the Simcoes

*written in collaboration*

Sydney, Australia, and Toronto, settled five years apart, share some early connections. Their founders, Governors Arthur Phillip and John Graves Simcoe, are both well known for living in canvas houses while establishing their capitals. This was no coincidence: Simcoe having heard of the structure Phillip took to Australia asked for something similar. In both cases the supplier was Nathan Smith of St. George's Fields, London, an established manufacturer of patented floorcloths, waterproof tents, awnings, and the like. His specialty was oilcloth: stout canvas suffused using heat and pressure with rosin, pitch, iron oxide, beeswax, and linseed oil.

On 26 January 1788, seven and a half months after leaving England, Capt. Phillip sailed into Sydney Cove, named for Lord Sydney, the home secretary. Phillip's canvas house, erected within a few days of his arrival, served for several months while a more permanent residence was built. It was said to be "45 feet long 17 ft. 6 ins Wide 8 under the Halls [hauls] ... with five windows of a Side 3 ft. 9 by 3 ft." and was reported to have cost £130. In his first dispatch home, however, the Governor noted it was neither wind nor water proof.

Notably less auspicious were Simcoe's first accommodations in Newark, Upper Canada. On arriving in July 1792 he found his quarters at Navy Hall under renovation and inclined to excite the severe asthma from which he suffered. Worse still, the two canvas houses he ordered in England were late in arriving. Hence, he and his family spent their first month in a marquee and tents pitched on the heights behind Navy Hall. In late August, feeling obliged to give over the marquee to a royal guest, HRH Prince Edward, they moved into the Hall itself.

The dimensions of Simcoe's houses are known from Nathan Smith's invoice. They were each 38 ft. 4 in. long, 12 ft. wide, and 7 ft. 2 in. high at the sides, with six glazed windows and a partition. The interiors were papered and the outsides painted in oil colour. Smith charged £100 for each structure, £200 the pair. A hundred square yards of wove haircloth sewn and fitted for the floors cost extra, as did six pine tables and two dozen camp chairs with cane seats from another supplier. This equipment was packed and loaded aboard the *Scipio* when it sailed from London for Quebec on 27 April 1792.

Though singular in name, Navy Hall was in fact a mouldering group of wooden storehouses. It was Simcoe's home and headquarters in Newark, to which at the first opportunity he annexed one of the canvas houses. In this he was being selfish rather than romantic: it made breathing easier for him. Mrs. Simcoe sketched this hybrid, and General William Hull, the governor of Michigan visiting on official business, remarked on it too:



The clearest picture of a canvas house we have is this detail from a sketch by Mrs. Simcoe ca. 1793 showing one of the houses annexed to Navy Hall at Newark. Courtesy Archives of Ontario, I0006951 Reference Code: F 47-11-1-0-99, Elizabeth Simcoe, (1766-1850), wash/paper.

On my account the Governor ordered supper in his canvas-house, which he brought from Europe. It was joined to his dwelling house. It is a room twenty-two feet by fifteen, with a floor, windows, and doors, and warmed by a stove. It is papered and painted, and you would suppose you were in a common house. The floor is the case for the whole of the room. It is quite a curiosity.

Mrs. Simcoe occupied one of the portable houses during her pregnancy at Newark with daughter Katharine, born in February 1793. "I have taken the canvas house we brought from England for my own apartment; it makes two very comfortable and remarkably warm private rooms," she said. "The comfort I derived from these apartments was extremely great when I lay in, because, being in a manner separate from the rest of the house, it was so very quiet."

But it was at York, *olim* Toronto, the Simcoes' home from July 1793 to May 1794, where the oilcloth houses came into their own. A site for them was chosen the day after the Simcoes arrived, "a rising ground, divided by a creek from the camp, which is ordered to be cleared immediately." The camp was on the west side of Garrison Creek where Fort York stands today; the houses stood on the east side of the Creek. In the beginning only one was erected as their bedroom. An adjoining arbour and marquee served as their dining and sitting rooms. When it got colder at the end of September the second canvas house was put up for a dining room.

In winter the houses were boarded for warmth and protection from the snow while the interiors were divided into smaller spaces with carpets and hangings for easier heating. When the viceregals returned to Newark both buildings were left at the capital. Occasionally the houses attracted notice, for example, when Peter Russell, administrator of the Province, was lining up accommodation for the Provincial Parliament meeting at York in June 1797:

I beg likewise that you desire Mr. Graham to examine the two Canvas Houses and report the practicability of removing the best of them to the Town, to be raised there for giving Dinners in to the Members of the two Houses; Mr. Pilkington tells me that the Screws which fasten them together will no longer act, and that larger ones must be provided if they are again removed.

They were still standing in 1799 when the officers of Queen's Rangers invited the town's upper crust to a Ball "at the Canvas Houses." Also in August 1801 when a dozen carpenters and four masons made repairs to the structures, likely to level and rebuild the floors, weakened perhaps by too many dances.

How to explain the tradition that Simcoe acquired the canvas houses at a sale of Capt. Cook's effects? In fact, neither Simcoe nor his wife mention their equipment having a Cook connection and no record of a sale of Cook's effects has been found. Henry Scadding writing in 1873 may have been the first to assert a link: "The canvas house had been the property of Capt. Cook." But we know this is untrue; both houses came from Nathan Smith's factory in London, as confirmed by his invoices. Undeterred, John Ross Robertson said Simcoe may have acquired a tent that Cook used in 1769 to observe the Transit of Venus on Tahiti. But could a tent which last saw hard service before 1770 have survived in usable condition into the 1790s? For our part, we leave it to others to confirm this myth where we have failed.



Mrs. Simcoe sketched the Garrison at York in 1794-95, then copied it on birchbark as part of a series of Canadian views presented in October 1796 to King George III. Courtesy: British Library, cat. no. K.Top.119.15.x.

# Fort York Memory

by Edward Keenan

Truth is, I don't remember the first time I went to Fort York. I don't recall learning of its existence. It's just always been there all my life, it seems I've always known about it—like the CN Tower, or the lake, or electricity. A fact of Toronto life.

Being born and raised here, I'm sure there were lots of school trips, side ventures on our way through the Exhibition Grounds with Boy Scout groups, family parties of one kind or another in buildings rented to showcase the historic backdrop. It's a place, you could say, I have always taken for granted.

In that it's like my Canadian citizenship, which I was born with and never really gave a second thought to growing up. Something that just is, a part of my world, who I am, where I live.

I do remember the time I first gave serious thought to both. It was in 2011, when I was invited to participate in a citizenship ceremony taking place at Fort York. I was one of the existing citizens invited—as a local newspaper columnist who writes about the city—to help welcome those new Canadians taking their oath of citizenship for the first time.

Over coffee and snacks, I participated in a “community roundtable discussion” with the new Canadians, who came from Eastern Europe, Africa, and South America, about our impressions of Canada. They had, as expected, marvelled at the weather. They also had, unexpectedly, all marvelled at how Torontonians obey traffic laws. They spoke a bit about the difficulties of adjusting, but they spoke mostly about the sense

of opportunity Canada represented to them—a place where they and their families could achieve great things.

I joined them to swear the oath of citizenship, affirming my own. I had never even heard the words of the oath before, never mind uttered them or reflected on them. And as we said them together, promising to “faithfully observe the laws of Canada and fulfil my duties as a Canadian citizen,” while small children and extended families beamed and cried with joy, I considered the meaning of that citizenship, what a lucky, remarkable thing to be born with it was. At the site of this historic landmark where the sovereignty of the colony that would become Canada was defended, I thought for the first time in detail about the chain of events that led me to be born with that remarkable luck.

It was a momentous day for those receiving their citizenships. And for me, the first time in my life I consciously became aware of my own citizenship, and considered the obligations that come with it.



In a way, it is when I became aware of Fort York then in a whole new way, too. Not just as a place in my city, but as a symbol in my mind of the ongoing history of Canada, and all that being Canadian means.

*Edward Keenan is a columnist for the Toronto Star and the author of Some Great Idea: Good Neighbourhoods, Crazy Politics, and the Invention of Toronto (2013).*

## And in Other Important News

Public consultations will occur Nov. 20 through Dec. 22 on an Addendum to the Environmental Assessment for the Fort York Pedestrian and Cycle Bridge. In simple terms this Addendum updates the EA for the design set aside for reasons of cost in 2011. The revised report contains a great deal of information deserving the closest study. It can be seen at the Fort York Library, 190 Fort York Blvd., or more conveniently perhaps at <http://goo.gl/Q7J9HH>

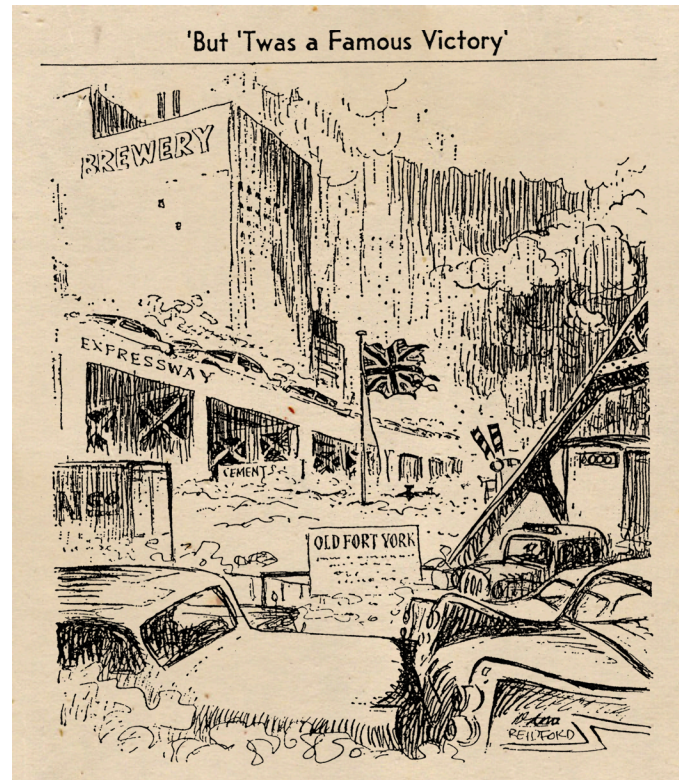
The other week in a masterful piece of appreciative writing the *Globe and Mail's* Alex Bozicovic put the case effectively for the Visitor Centre as one of the City's best new buildings and called on Torontonians to come forward with donations sufficient to complete its construction. <http://goo.gl/Qgg5kr>

The website of Kearns Mancini Architects, one of the firms responsible for the Visitor Centre's design and construction, includes some fresh photographs of it by Tom Arban taken in October 2014. <http://kmai.com/case-study/fort-york-visitor-centre>

## From the Gallery: “But ‘twas a famous victory.”

Scottish-born James Reidford (1911-2001) grew up here and hoped to be an architect except there was no work in that field when he graduated from the Ontario College of Art in the 1930s. Instead, he became a commercial cartoonist, even working two years for Disney before finding his way back to Canada and on to the *Globe's* pages from 1953 to 1970. He was recognized nationally several times over for his award-winning cartoons, which often had a reproachful tone.

Reidford took the last line of Robert Southey's “After Blenheim” in reflecting on Metro Chairman Gardiner's decision to abandon efforts to move Fort York to Coronation Park and instead, to allow the expressway being built under his aegis to bend slightly around the fort at an extra cost of \$1,000,000. It represented a major victory by the Associated Historical Societies in what is now a half-century of unbroken effort by their successors to defend and enhance the fort, leading to the opening of the new Visitor Centre in September 2014, and other improvements to the site to come shortly.



BUT 'T WAS A FAMOUS VICTORY, 1958. James Reidford (1911-2001)  
*Globe & Mail*, 25 Nov. 1958. Reprinted with permission

## What The Friends of Fort York Do: Our Accomplishments for 2014

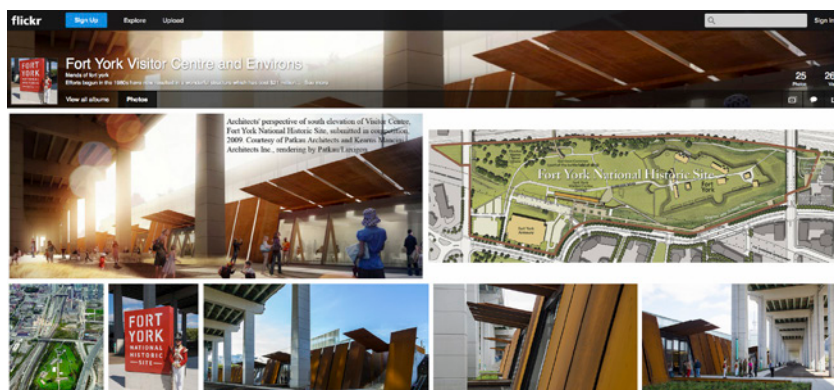
- with our revenues from operating parking lots during the CNE and other events having ceased, our accumulated cash surplus from previous years now has been invested so we can continue to support the Fort York Guard in partnership with other sponsors.
- funded most of the cost for an eighteen-person Guard and Drum Corps in 2014. Skins were obtained for use in making ten sets of belts, and the tinsmith at Black Creek Pioneer Village made ten brass fife cases. The Guard's effort and achievement were rewarded with its standing a very close second at the annual drill competition at Fort George, and our Patrick Jennish tying for first in the speed loading competition. The Guard also performed and was well received on three occasions at Black Creek Pioneer Village.
- marked the second anniversary of our new website [www.fortyork.ca](http://www.fortyork.ca), which had over 80,000 hits this year, an increase of 21% over last year, and 192,000 hits since launching in May 2012. Online an additional 152 people subscribed to our *Fife and Drum* newsletter, numerous new members joined, and a number of donations were received.
- published four issues of *Fife and Drum*, which now reaches about 3900 readers quarterly. This year's highlights included wide-ranging research and articles on archaeology at the Visitor Centre site, the burning of Washington in 1814, photographs of soldiers training for World War I, and current neighbourhood improvements. A Special Edition in November celebrated the opening of the new award-winning Fort York Visitor Centre.
- held eleven monthly board meetings. One or more directors also attended each public event and function at the fort.
- held several meetings of our Precinct Advisory Committee, comprising three directors, the Site Manager, and six planners from private practice, to help shape the

recommendations of the South Niagara Planning Study before it was brought to City Council and adopted in late August. One of the most far-reaching clauses added 7.4 acres of open space to the area reserved for parks in the neighbourhood.

- maintained a watching brief on the Fort York Armoury and adjacent area at 800 Fleet Street. While recognizing things will be in flux as the neighbourhood surrounding the site develops, we are opposed to anything that compromises permanently Fort York's integrity.
- engaged in ceremonies in April and November, where eighty people, joined by family and friends, received their Canadian citizenship. This year, new citizens enjoyed the participation of West Neighbourhood House (formerly St. Christopher's), and the April ceremony, which was a collaboration with First Nations, included a lunch of traditional moose stew and bannock.
- partnering with the City, two new site guides for visitors to the Fort were completed in advance of the opening of the new Visitor Centre.
- saw the Fort York Volunteers flourish in their third year as partners in helping guide visitors around the fort, particularly on high traffic occasions.
- welcomed the chance for more people to get to know the fort when they attended concerts and events on the Common that attracted tens of thousands of visitors.
- agreed to fund partial costs with the City for CyArk, a non-profit organization based in California, to create virtual models of the Fort York archaeological site. The project is intended to document the site for preservation and the model that is created can be used for exhibit purposes. It has been undertaken for a number of locations including Mayan sites.

- secured two \$10,000 grants from Ignite Ontario to partially fund a steel band festival and a Pride festival at Fort York in support of Toronto 2015 Pan Am / Parapan American Games. Of each grant, \$2000 will be allotted for Guard activities associated with the two events.
- collaborated with the University of Toronto Daniels Faculty of Architecture which has designed a computer-based model of the Fort York neighbourhood useful for discussion of proposed developments.
- after the necessary research and financing, in early 2014 installed in the Great Room of the Blue Barracks the "At Ease" exhibit of more than two dozen pictures showing 19th century soldiers and officers at leisure.
- following a Palatine Hills Winery special promotion of its 1812-brand wines using neck-tags and point-of-sale materials in over 300 LCBO stores, received payment of \$3000.
- to draw attention to fundraising on behalf of the Fort by the Fort York Foundation and The Friends of Fort York, put two notices in *Spacing* magazine.
- celebrated the 20th anniversary of The Friends of Fort York at the Directors' Dinner in April.
- provided a portrait of George Waters, long-time Director and unwavering Friend of Fort York, for installation in the new library in the Visitor Centre.

For comparison, our accomplishments for 1994-2013 can be found on our website <http://www.fortyork.ca/about-us/our-accomplishments.html>



The Friends of Fort York and Garrison Common invite you to view the new Fort York Visitor Centre through the eyes of Flickr. Visit us today and be sure to leave a comment, mark a favourite image and share with your friends.

Visit the site [here](#).



*News From*

# *The Birthplace of Toronto*

*Contributions from the Staff at the Fort*

## **Manager's Report**

*by David O'Hara, Site Manager*

After years of hard work by so many individuals, the Fort York Visitor Centre was officially opened on 19 September 2014. In its first few months of use the building has already hosted a wide variety of events, including a prominent role as part of Nuit Blanche which brought thousands of people down to Fort York to experience twelve different installations across the site. Visit <http://www.scotiabanknuitblanche.ca/>

While the Visitor Centre is complete and open to the public, several additional site improvements will be undertaken as we move into 2015. By the end of January the Fort's hydro service will be placed below grade, allowing us to remove the overhead power lines and street lights along Garrison Road. Once the hydro work is complete, demolition of the Garrison Road Bridge will begin. The bridge, along with the earthen abutments, will be removed and dropped to a lower elevation allowing for a connection with the new Visitor Centre parking lot, and making the connection from parking at Fleet Street and Strachan Avenue more accessible.

Completion of these components will allow us to phase out the gravel parking lot immediately in front of the west gates and restore the area as part of a fully landscaped Garrison Common. Those arriving by vehicle will park in the area of the Visitor Centre before moving through the new building and across this newly restored portion of the Common to the walled fort. While parking will be slightly farther away from the fort, these changes will provide for a more coherent visitor experience across the site and integrate the Common and Garrison Road into the fort's physical interpretation.

Garrison Road itself, along with the sidewalks and curbs, will be removed and replaced with a more appropriately designed and detailed road. While the redesigned Garrison Road will still provide service and emergency access, it will also serve as a primary pedestrian and cycling route

and bring visitors from the Visitor Centre to the walled fort. The lands along Garrison Road, including the existing gravel parking lot, will be returned to green space. Much of this work is similar to some of the recent landscaping undertaken in the Strachan Avenue Burial Ground where, prior to our Remembrance Day Ceremony which over 1000 attended, we implemented improvements including a new pedestrian walkway. The design was completed as a result of a grant received from TD Bank Group.

Another project that we will hear more about in 2015 is the Fort York Pedestrian and Cycle Bridge. The City of Toronto has recently completed the addendum to the 2009 Municipal Class Environmental Assessment (EA) and, as costs for the bridge as originally designed exceeded the project budget, the bridge will be redesigned and constructed using a design-build process led by Build Toronto. More on this process and on the EA addendum can be found at <http://goo.gl/V5W8M4>

With another busy year ahead, the objective is to get as much as possible of the physical work done by June of 2015 (the Pedestrian and Cycle Bridge will take longer). In addition to many of our regular annual events, we will be participating in the Toronto 2015 Pan Am / Parapan American Games when Fort York will host the Toronto Aboriginal Pavilion ( <http://goo.gl/3kxCev> )

Unfortunately, at the same time as much of our own construction is nearing completion, the reconstruction of the Gardiner Expressway deck in the area of Fort York will be moving into high gear so that we will be faced with ongoing construction extending into mid 2016.

Our work on exhibits will also keep us busy throughout 2015. Work will continue on projects within the Visitor Centre, with fabrication and installation coordinated with the Magna Carta Exhibit planned for October. Details on both 2015 exhibits and events will follow in the next issue.

# The Garrison Road Bridges Pass into History

by David Spittal

Construction of the new Visitor Centre has attracted much public attention in the last two years but another major transformation is about to take place at the fort. Within the next short while the Garrison Road Bridge will be removed.

Fort York now has a prominent street presence and a new entrance road from Fort York Boulevard, but for a generation, finding a way into the fort was confusing. Access was via the nearly hidden Garrison Road and then across an unexpected elevated bridge under the towering Gardiner Expressway. The need for the Garrison Road Bridge was not immediately apparent but it was built to cross the former rail bed of the Canadian Pacific (Grand Trunk) Railway. Known as the Queen's Wharf Lead, the old single track led from the west side of Strachan Avenue in a deep cut. West of Bathurst Street this important lead served Molson Breweries and the Canada Cement Company. The track ran east underneath Bathurst Street Bridge serving, among others, the Loblaw's warehouse, the Canada Malting elevators, Maple Leaf Mills, and the Terminal Warehouse (Queens Quay Terminal). The lead, which once ran all across the waterfront, was shortened from time to time until finally it ended at Bathurst Street; the tracks were not removed until 1990. Now the land is owned by the City of Toronto.

## 1854-5

When the major new railways entered Toronto from the west and north in the early 1850s, it was necessary for them to cross military lands to reach their destinations on the waterfront. One company, the Grand Trunk Railway (GTR), not only crossed military lands but extended its tracks along the south side of Fort York and constructed an engine house southeast of the fort. In order for tracks to descend from the level of the military common to the level of the lake, a long, deep cut was required southwest of the fort. This excavation, up to 20 feet in depth and about 1200 feet in length, extended from west of present Strachan Avenue to the edge of the lake, at that time just south of the new Visitor Centre. This cut provided the material necessary to fill the lake in front of the fort for the new tracks and engine house. All of the work was completed by the GTR despite a vigorous and sustained opposition by the military. Significantly, the excavation for new tracks southwest of the fort cut the road that was considered indispensable for the defence of the City and made traffic between the Old Fort and the New Fort impossible. The digging of the railway cut essentially isolated Fort York and the adjoining

Common Ground from the rest of the Military Reserve to the southwest.

In a letter dated June 1854 the commanding officer at the New Barracks complained and asked for information respecting the work in progress that broke the road. Casimir Gzowski, chief engineer of the GTR, promised to reinstate the plank road to the New Fort without delay and to report when it was done. According to the General Railway Clauses Consolidation Act of 1855 and the act to incorporate the railway itself, the GTR was not allowed to interfere with highways and was responsible for bridges. A wooden bridge was consequently built by the GTR across the railway cut and the road to the New Fort reopened; we can assume that it was constructed fairly soon after the letter of 1854. A plan of the fort by Charles Walkem, Royal Engineers, in 1856, shows the road to the New Barracks southwest of the fort with a structure over the railway cut labelled 'New Wooden Bridge.' The GTR bridge was 90 feet long (counting approaches) and 16 feet wide with an 8 Ton load limit.

It might be remembered that the old railway cut has been spanned by other bridges not related to the Garrison Road. In 1879 a wooden trestle carrying the road to the Exhibition crossed the old cut west of Strachan Avenue, and Strachan Avenue itself spanned the track, first in 1915 and then in its present form in 1926. The construction of Strachan Avenue required elevated approach ramps to carry the road over both the GTR lines in the old cut and Great Western Railway (GWR) rail lines to the northwest, and this road, effectively, forever isolated the Garrison Common from other military lands to the west.



*A wonderful photograph of the Garrison Road Bridge shows us what the bridge looked like in 1915; this is probably the actual structure built in 1854-5.*

## 1916

Another bridge was constructed across the old railway cut in 1916. This long timber trestle bridge supported the two tracks of the Toronto Railway Company which extended from



the foot of the Bathurst Street Bridge across the north side of the fort, southwest across the Common, diagonally across the railway cut west of the old GTR Bridge, and then southwest across 800 Fleet Street to the Exhibition Grounds. The bridge was removed in 1931 when the tracks were rerouted south down Bathurst Street to Fleet Street. The trestle bridge with its street car tracks was part of the controversial plan to provide an East Entrance to the Exhibition Grounds. In 1915 the City approved \$123,000 to build the tracks and platforms and, presumably, the trestle bridge.



*The Toronto Railway Company Bridge over the railway cut, August 26 1916, looking south-west.*

### 1953

The old wooden GTR bridge from the 1850s provided access to the fort across the railway cut for nearly 100 years. Finally, in 1953, it was replaced by a new steel and timber bridge that extended diagonally across the railway cut a short distance west of the original bridge. The old ramp on the south side of the original GTR bridge still exists and can be seen north of the Armoury opposite the Visitor Centre. The new bridge was 140 feet in length with a 24 foot pavement and a 5 foot sidewalk; it had a 20 Ton load limit. Cost of the bridge, estimated to be about \$273,000, was split between the City and the railway, by now the CPR.

### 1960

This substantial new bridge provided much better access to the fort but plans for the new Gardiner Expressway, aligned as close to the fort as it was, made the bridge an obstacle to construction. In order to cross the old railway cut amid the forest of concrete bents required to support the new expressway it was necessary to demolish the 1953 bridge, realign the Garrison Road across the Common, create north and south earthen approach ramps, and construct the present Garrison Road bridge in a more direct line across the railway cut. Removal of a substantial magazine or arsenal building under the north ramp was also required. Construction of the new Garrison Road Bridge took place in 1960.

The Garrison Road Bridge we now know is a 148 foot single span beam bridge supported by two concrete piers with a pile reinforced concrete abutment at each end. The deck of the bridge supports a 24 foot wide road. When the new bridge was built in 1960 the existing north slope of the old railway cut was straightened by a new, nearly vertical concrete retaining crib wall extending over 1500 feet from the Strachan Avenue Bridge east to the southwest corner of the fort. The bridge was fully paid for by Metro Toronto and built by the City of Toronto Department of Roads (A.D. Margison & Assoc. and de Leuw Cather & Co. of Canada, Engineers) in 1960.

### 2015

In 2015 the Garrison Road Bridge will be taken down. This major project includes removing the bridge span, piers, and abutments. Very importantly, the approach ramps on both north and south sides will be levelled by the removal of several thousand cubic meters of soil. The earth will be added to soil from the construction of the Visitor Centre already in the railway cut to provide a level crossing between the Common on the north side of the cut and Garrison Road and 800 Fleet Street on the south. Removal of the bridge will have the effect of restoring the historic landscape of the Common, extending it south across the railway cut, opening up the Common, and recovering almost one acre of park land. Subsequent landscaping of the Common is being planned to include a road more appropriate to a historic park, without sidewalks and railings and with new underground wiring for lighting. Ordinary visitors will no longer use the Garrison Road to enter the fort but the new earthen link across the old railway cut and the new Garrison Road will provide a general service entrance to the fort and special events in the Common, as well as access for emergency vehicles.

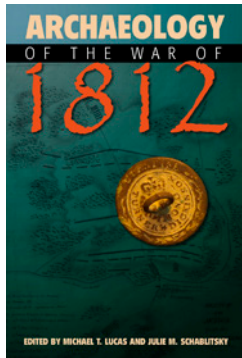
Removal of the Garrison Road Bridge is a major project that will result in a significant change to the landscape of Fort York and the Common. Access to the fort will be forever changed and it is hoped that a connection between the new Visitor Centre and the Garrison Road can now be facilitated. When the last of the Garrison Road Bridges is removed, lands of Garrison Common Park will be recovered and Fort York and the Common will, for the first time in 160 years, be reconnected to the rest of the old Military Reserve.

*David Spittal began working for the City of Toronto in 1987, first as project archaeologist for the Fort York Restoration Project and then as a senior project coordinator with Cultural Affairs, responsible for capital maintenance and improvement projects, including the new Fort York Visitor Centre, at Culture Division sites across the city. He retired in 2014.*

# In Review:

## *Archaeology of the War of 1812*

by Richard Gerrard



Michael T. Lucas and Julie M. Schablitsky (eds.)

*Archaeology of the War of 1812*

Walnut Creek, CA: Left Coast Press, 2014

337 pages

<http://www.lcoastpress.com/book.php?id=502>

The fifteen original papers that comprise this book offer an excellent introduction to the archaeology of the conflict. They

cover the war in five separate theatres of operation, from the Great Lakes region (including a paper on Fort York), the Chesapeake Campaign, the Western Frontier, and the US South. The subjects of the studies range through military encampments, fortifications, shipwrecks, battlefields, and landscape reconstruction.

Although all the papers are interesting the three that make up the section on the Great Lakes theatre will probably be of most interest to *Fife and Drum* readers since archaeology has been part of the research program at Fort York from the 1970s. Eva MacDonald, David Robertson, and David Spittal provide a brief summary of this forty-year legacy in Chapter 2. In particular they describe the work undertaken in the search for Government House and the crater left by the explosion of the Grand Magazine during the American attack in 1813.

Timothy Abel's paper (Chapter 3) examines the American Army's cantonment at Plattsburgh, New York, in the winter of 1812-13. It provides a prelude to the battle of York as it was here that many of the US troops involved in the attack spent the winter before being moved to Sackets Harbor. His excavation of a hastily constructed temporary officer's cabin provides interesting details about the lifestyle of the men who captured York.

In the final paper of this section (Chapter 4) Susan Maguire describes her work on Fort Niagara's "Red Barracks occupied by the Artillery." Originally constructed by the British in the

1790s, it was held in turn by the Americans, then the British after the capture of Fort Niagara, then the Americans again after the war. Her hypothesis, based on cartographic evidence, was that it was painted red (and so named) to distinguish it from the "Yellow Barracks" that housed officers. This raises interesting questions about Fort York's own "Blue Barracks."

Since the papers often summarize decades of field research this brief review can scarcely do justice to the vast amount of information contained in the volume. Although the contributions are written for an audience of professional archaeologists and historians I would suggest that a more casual reader with an interest in the war can learn much from this book. I applaud the editors, authors, and publisher for making available research which, up to now, would have only been available through "grey literature" – unpublished or limited circulation archaeological reports.

My single complaint about the volume is with the maps. The book is illustrated in black and white, but many of the maps have been reproduced at a scale so small that a magnifying glass is required to read the labels and occasionally the lines are so faint as to effectively disappear. This is clearly a case where illustrations designed for a larger format were reduced too much for the 6 x 9 inch layout. Since maps and plans are vital aids to understanding an archaeological context this is a serious shortcoming.

In conclusion, this collaboration is an important addition to the archaeological literature about the War of 1812, not only in its summary of fieldwork, but also in its description of new ways in which archaeologists are approaching the landscapes and historical accounts with KOCO analysis (Key and decisive terrain / Observation and fields of fire / Concealment and cover / Obstacles / Avenues of approach and withdrawal) and with remote sensing tools tied to Geographical Information Systems (GIS). We have been given an opportunity to challenge, and possibly reinterpret, events that occurred two hundred years ago.

*A recovering archaeologist, Richard Gerrard is Historian, City of Toronto Museum and Heritage Services.*

# 2015 | Upcoming Events Historic Fort York

Compiled by Richard Haynes

## JANUARY

### Queen Charlotte's Birthday Ball Sat. Jan. 17, 1 to 10:30 pm

This annual event features an illustrated talk by Dr. Larry Ostola, director of Museum and Heritage Services with the City of Toronto. The theme is the Treaty of Ghent and the promise of peace after the War of 1812.

Queen Charlotte's Birthday Ball celebrates a significant moment in Toronto history: a ball offered by officers of the Garrison at York (Fort York) on 23 January 1817. Our event is a costumed ball which recreates an early 19th century social gathering. It includes instruction in period dance, an extensively researched and authentically prepared Georgian dinner representing the culinary history of early 19th century Toronto, and concludes with an evening of English country dancing.

Costumes welcome.

Pre-registration required. Call 416-392-6907 x0

## FEBRUARY

### Family Day Mon. Feb. 16, 11 am to 4 pm

Explore the history of Toronto and Fort York. Visit the historic kitchen and sample baking from the hearth. Hot chocolate and a roaring fire will make this a heartwarming and memorable visit. Kids can try an 1812 drill class, officers' sword drill, and some old-fashioned games, as well as a fun-filled kids' activity book.

Regular admission

### Mad for Marmalade, Crazy for Citron! Sat. Feb. 21, 10 am to 3:30 pm

Join Fort York National Historic Site in partnership with the Culinary Historians of Canada for our sixth annual celebration of marmalade. Enjoy a marmalade themed workshop, lunch, and tastings, or enter the Marmalade Competition. Your ticket includes a tour of Fort York.

Pre-registration required

For more information or to register please call 416 392-7455 x0

## MARCH

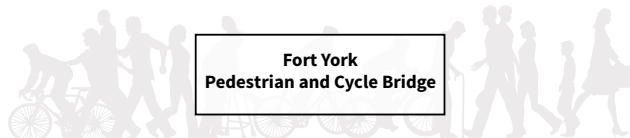
### Fort York March Break Mon. Mar. 16 to Fri. Mar. 20, 10 am to 3 pm

Bring the kids down to the fort during March Break for fun-filled activities. Families can learn about Fort York through colourful exhibits, costumed education staff, tours, and participation in an 1812 drill class. There is also a free kids' activity book for the younger visitors. Souvenir guides and audio tours are available in our Museum Store, which carries a wide selection of gifts and books for all ages.

No registration required

Regular admission

## COMMUNITY INFORMATION MEETING



### Fort York Pedestrian and Cycle Bridge

BUILD TORONTO is hosting a Community Information Meeting to re-introduce the Fort York Pedestrian and Cycle Bridge project. We invite you to drop in, learn more about the project and meet our team.

Our project website is up and running. We will be updating this site throughout the course of the project. If you are not able to attend our first Community Information Meeting, all information shared will be posted on the website. [www.fortYorkbridge.mmm.ca](http://www.fortYorkbridge.mmm.ca)

### YOU'RE INVITED to a Community Information Meeting

January 8th, 2015

Feel free to drop in anytime  
between **6:30pm to 8:30pm**,  
there is no formal presentation  
scheduled.

The meeting will be held at:  
**Fort York National Historic  
Site Visitor Centre**

250 Fort York Blvd  
Toronto ON  
M5V 3K9

For more information, please contact  
BUILD TORONTO at  
[fortYorkbridge@buildtoronto.ca](mailto:fortYorkbridge@buildtoronto.ca)

### BACKGROUND

The Fort York Pedestrian and Cycle Bridge has been proposed as a way to connect people and communities around Fort York, creating a park-network stretching from Trinity Bellwoods Park to Toronto's waterfront.

In February 2014, City Council directed BUILD TORONTO to work with the Waterfront Secretariat to manage the bridge design and construction using a Design-Build procurement model. As the City's representative, BUILD TORONTO has retained MMM Group Limited to administer the Design-Build process. It is expected that construction will begin in the fall of 2015.



BUILD  
TORONTO

MMM GROUP



Visit our website at: [www.fortYork.ca](http://www.fortYork.ca). Learn more about Fort York, subscribe to the [free newsletter](#), become a [member](#), [donate](#) or browse our [historical image gallery](#).



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Regular Admission to Fort York (all prices include taxes)  
Adult: \$9.00, Senior (65+) & Youth (13-18): \$5.50,  
Children (6-12): \$4.25, Children (5 and under): FREE

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