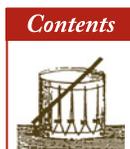


The Fife and Drum

The Newsletter of The Friends of Fort York and Garrison Common

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New Exhibits Introduce Historic Fort York

by Brian Leigh Dunnigan

Historic sites are universally challenged with the task of preparing large numbers of people for the visitor experience and putting into context for them the importance of a particular place in history. All the more so for an urban site such as Historic Fort York, today surrounded by a forest of high-rise buildings and elevated expressways and with the harbour entrance it was designed to protect out of sight and hundreds of metres away. The new exhibits in Fort York's visitor reception area effectively accomplish this goal and offer a straightforward introduction to its important collection of early nineteenth-century military architecture.

The wedge-shaped visitor reception building is surprisingly unobtrusive thanks to its plain exterior, subtle color, and location on the south side of Garrison Common nearly beneath the Gardiner Expressway. The centre welcomes visitors through an entrance located at the edge of the historical shoreline, the direction from which most would have approached the place at the time of the War of 1812. That conflict is at the heart of the introductory exhibits as well as the overall interpretation of the site itself.

The spacious and brightly-lighted lobby was not yet completely furnished when I visited in November 2016, but it provides the room needed for future events and changing or travelling exhibits. Initially it will house three smaller exhibits

(not yet installed) that place Toronto within the all-important water transportation network of the early Great Lakes region. The lobby feeds visitors into a multi-purpose room that also serves as a theatre for a ten-minute, three-panel orientation film combining historical images and modern footage of recreated troops of the War of 1812. This video presentation also gives a clear, graphic explanation of how Fort York changed through time and how the modern city grew up around it.

From the theatre visitors are directed through another doorway and into the main exhibit gallery. At that point one is presented with a tangential experience in a room to the right that displays some of the "treasures" from the storage collection of City of Toronto Museums and Heritage Services. Four of its five large exhibit cases address topical themes such as prominent individuals, expressions of power, historical mysteries, and objects directly associated with historic events. These displays are designed to change regularly in order to rotate collection items. At the time of my visit they featured the uniform coat of William Jarvis, a display of gorgets, a US-made Spencer rifle, and a Métis shotgun recovered from the 1885 battlefield of Batoche. The contents of the four cases offered a tantalizing peek into the behind-the-scenes operations of City of Toronto Museums and Heritage Services and its rich and diverse collection. The fifth and largest

Credit: Left to right - Sid Calzavara and Wayne Reeves, Toronto Culture





Credit: Toronto Museums & Heritage Services

case presents the War of 1812 colours of the 3rd York Militia Regiment and tells the story of their survival and conservation. Always rare objects, regimental flags of earlier times provide an emotional

connection with the men who served beneath them.

The way to the primary exhibit gallery is literally paved with descriptions of events that led to conflict between the US and Great Britain in 1812 and terminates with a panel that introduces the four combatants—United States troops, British regulars, Canadian militia, and First Nations warriors. An exhibit to one side includes a neatly designed cylinder that a visitor can rotate to learn more about each of the combatants, their attitudes toward the war, and the number of casualties suffered in relation to the number of men who served from 1812 to 1815.

Rather than retell the individual events of the war, the first of the primary exhibits recounts the story of the treaty of peace signed in Ghent, Belgium, late in 1814. A flip book reproduces the fourteen pages of a rare, surviving manuscript copy of the treaty in the hand of Henry Clay, American negotiator and politician. This preliminary copy of the treaty includes the signatures and stamps of the peace commissioners from both sides. The original document is one of the treasures of the William L. Clements Library of the University of Michigan, where it was found among the papers of British commissioner Henry Goulburn when they were acquired in 1941. A reading of the treaty provides a sense of what was (and what was not) accomplished by the conflict of 1812-1815.

The rest of the main gallery focuses on the long-term impact of the War of 1812: definition of the Canada-US border; the emergence of a Canadian national identity; and the negotiation of a “new world” by Native peoples. The last result is emphasized and clarified by video presentations outlining the current position and attitudes of the Mississauga

or Anishinaabe people, whose ancestors lived in the Toronto area at the time of the war. The Native inhabitants of Upper Canada and adjacent parts of the United States, the majority of whom loyally participated in the defence of Canada, were largely overlooked in the treaty of peace. It is good to have their voices recorded in the story of Fort York and the War of 1812. The other topical sections of the exhibit are enlivened with a small but choice selection of relevant historical artifacts.

Only one final barrier separates the visitor from the fort itself. A ramp leads from the exhibit gallery to the exit. As the visitor ascends to the level of Fort York, he or she passes through a sound and light program that attempts to evoke the experiences and scenes of the Battle of York fought on 27 April 1813. The recreated battle environment combines images with flashing lights to simulate some of the confusion and chaos of close-range, early nineteenth-century battle. This is, I think, one of those interpretive techniques that will receive mixed reviews. Personally, I found it rather distracting after having passed through a thought-provoking exhibition in the main gallery. The treatment of the long-term results of the War of 1812 on Canadian culture and national autonomy was perhaps my favourite part of the exhibit.

Overall, the new Visitor Centre and exhibits for Historic Fort York are a success—spacious, effective, and as unobtrusive as possible in its setting adjacent to the welcome downtown green space of Garrison Common and the nearby historic structures of the fort. The exhibits are attractive and thoughtful, with a minimum of high-tech features. Best of all, the experience provides a solid background allowing visitors to better appreciate the fort and its place as Toronto’s premier historic site.

Brian Leigh Dunnigan is associate director and curator of maps at the William L. Clements Library of the University of Michigan at Ann Arbor. Earlier in his career he was the director of museums at Fort Wayne, IN, and Old Fort Niagara near Youngstown, NY. He has been a regular visitor to Fort York and Toronto since 1968.

Faith and the Fort

by Michael Peterson

Introduction

"Why, single men in barracks don't grow into plaster saints;"
Rudyard Kipling, "Tommy"

Religion at Fort York is an elusive subject. The records preserve information about official religion: the names of chaplains, their duties and remunerations, church plans, baptisms and burials. It is harder to speak of lived religion, meaning what was believed, practised, and prayed within the garrison community. In the absence of data, it is tempting to accept stereotypes about the hard-drinking and profane redcoat, and to think that religion had little to do with the British soldiery of the 1800s. While the average soldier may have been more comfortable in a tavern than on church parade, he may also have been more devout than is commonly supposed.

Official Religion

The Establishment of the Church of England defined the role of the state and the Church: the former had an obligation to provide support for the Church in the form of salaries and buildings; the latter had a duty to cultivate a pious and loyal population. From 1759 to 1870, Canada was garrisoned by the regular British army. Officers customarily were English and Anglican, while the ranks were heavily Scots and Irish and, if religious, often were Roman Catholic, Presbyterian, or members of a 'dissenting' denomination such as the Methodist or Baptist. While the chaplains the government provided to the army were nearly all from the established Church of England, there were some exceptions, drawn from the Catholic and Presbyterian traditions, among the Scottish regiments.

Chaplains' duties found them leading church parades, compulsory worship in full dress that was probably not wildly popular with the troops, and occasionally consecrating regimental colours. Chaplains also visited the sick in hospital and took the opportunity for moral instruction, since "sickness is for the young and heedless a time of reflection," according to John Owen, the British Army's first Chaplain General.

Besides burying the dead, pastoral responsibilities included performing weddings and baptisms for soldiers allowed to raise families. In all these duties, he said the chaplain was expected to turn his flock into "an association of Men more decent & moral than can be found in any Other form."

In Canada, where garrison and regimental chaplains were few, the Crown often paid local Anglican clergy to minister to troops. Ignoring Edward Drewe, a Simcoe-period officeholder



A young John Strachan is seen in this portrait by an anonymous artist, probably in the 1820s. Credit: Trinity College Archives, Toronto

who served for twenty years *in absentia*, the first resident chaplain to the garrison at York was the town's rector, the Rev. John Strachan. Indeed, the additional salary he would receive as chaplain was key to overcoming his reluctance to leave his previous church in Cornwall, U.C. Arriving at his new post in June 1812, just as war with the United States broke out, he faced a substantial increase in his work as chaplain and in his civic role as rector.

Strachan's predecessor, the Rev. George Okill Stuart, had been sent to York as "minister and missionary" by the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts (SPG) and was expected to serve the soldiers' spiritual needs among his many obligations. Missionary societies like SPG helped build and sustain the early church in Canada, and ran extensive outreach and evangelism programs to soldiers.

Elizabeth Simcoe, the lieutenant-governor's wife, noted in her diary two weeks after York was founded that the first service of worship had taken place: "Sunday 11th [August 1793] Lt Smith of the 5th Regt (who is here as Acting Surveyor Genl:) read Prayers to the Queens Rangers assembled under some Trees near the Parade." From 1797 until 1807 when the town's first Anglican church (known as St. James from the mid-1820s) was completed people worshipped in the Parliament Buildings. During the War of 1812 the church building itself served as a hospital.

In 1826, Strachan received help discharging his parochial and garrison

On Tuesday last the 23d inst. the Colours wrought by the Patriotic young Ladies of York, were consecrated by the Rev. Dr. Strachan, and presented to the third Regiment of York Militia. As the scene was novel in this country, and at the present moment, and from peculiar circumstances highly interesting, some account of it is due to the public. From motives more laudable than a wish to gratify mere curiosity, I shall attempt to describe it.

A week before the Battle of York the Kingston Gazette published an account by 'A Spectator' on the consecration of the colours of the Third Regiment of York Militia by the Rev. John Strachan in York's Anglican church. Restored by the Canadian Conservation Institute, Ottawa, the colours are a highlight of the exhibits in the Fort York Visitor Centre. Credit: Kingston Public Library

duties when the Rev. Joseph Hudson was appointed chaplain to the forces. Later, Hudson became Strachan's assistant at St. James. This combining of responsibilities continued with the Rev. Henry Grasset in the 1840s. As an example of their workload, we know that during the last five months of 1823 Strachan performed "Divine Service for the use of the troops now in Garrison," with an average of fifty-four men attending each service. He also visited the sick twice a week when able, and reported an average of five sick men per visit. While York was a healthier posting than many British garrisons abroad, sickness took its toll, along with accident and drink. The year 1837 was typical, with seven burials: three young children between eleven months and two years of age, a "young lady" aged twenty-two, and three soldiers, two privates and a sergeant, in their early thirties.

Baptisms were happier pastoral occasions, averaging a dozen a year in the 1820s and 1830s. Presumably local clergy also officiated at military weddings. The clergy's role in educating York garrison children evolved. The Rev. G.O. Stuart, having founded what later became the Home District Grammar School, educated at least one child from the garrison there, Edward Hartney whose father was barrack master. In 1812 new army regulations coinciding with Strachan's appointment as chaplain and move to York established regimental schools based at the fort. They required chaplains to oversee and report on the schools. In light of Strachan's experience with the Cornwall Grammar School the new orders are assumed to have sat well with him.

For the handful of Anglican clergy in York, their garrison duties remained a part-time obligation in the midst of other parochial responsibilities. For York's relatively well-organized Presbyterian community, the want of proper ministry to their own in red was a matter of concern. Citizens wrote to the editors of the *Colonial Advocate* (1825) and *British Colonist* (1839) complaining that garrison soldiers were not allowed to attend in St. Andrew's Presbyterian church.

Lived Religion

The archives say little about the spiritual lives of individual redcoats at York and their families. Was the common soldier a foul-mouthed and irreverent guttersnipe? Some undoubtedly were. A Dublin man who enlisted in the 1840s wrote that his comrades had "vice and ruffianism stamped indelibly on their faces" and used "the most foul and abominable language."

To be sure, the average ranker was no gentleman or plaster saint. However, some examples remind us that there were also religious soldiers.

George Ferguson, a soldier-preacher who served in the War of 1812, offers one example of Methodism's influence in the army. With its assurance of grace, lively preaching, and hymns Methodism enjoyed an advantage over the more formalized and rational Anglicanism of the day among many people, especially from the poorer elements of society. Ferguson's commander supported his ministry and "treated me in a kind and gentlemanly manner, and nearly all in the garrison were very obliging to me." Wounded at the Battle of Chippawa, he offered spiritual care to his fellow sufferers. "Not a word was said to them about their souls. When the men saw me they began to speak to me on the subject. I talked, advised and prayed

with as many as I could." Evacuated to hospital at York, he met Dr. Strachan and was unimpressed with his Calvinist theology, writing "May God save us from such spiritual guides." Strachan himself was no friend of Methodists, whose wide-ranging preachers threatened the Anglican Church's dominance of colonial society. Before he left the army, Ferguson had made many connections with local Methodist civilians, where it was "a matter of wonder and astonishment to see a military man ascend the sacred desk and preach Jesus

and the resurrection." A Methodist church was established in York in 1818, and undoubtedly attracted other Methodists in the York garrison.

Catholic soldiers at York depended on whatever local priest they could find, though their lot improved in 1822 when St. Paul's, the town's first Catholic parish, was founded. While many Catholics were enlisted men of Irish origin, some English officers were also Catholic. Sir Charles Chichester, commanding the 81st Regiment, had his regimental band conduct him to Mass. Chichester died suddenly in Toronto in 1847, and was the first to be buried in the crypt of St. Michael's Cathedral.

Finally, some Anglicans in the ranks were also active followers of their faith. Michael Harris came from a good Dublin family. Following studies at Trinity College, in late 1815 he was commissioned an ensign in the 100th (Prince Regent's County of Dublin) Regiment of Foot and saw service in Canada in 1816-17. He then took leave from his regiment, presumably to prepare himself for the ministry, and reappeared here in 1819 as a missionary on the payroll of the SPG. He was ordained an Anglican priest in Quebec City by Bishop Jacob Mountain,



The Anglican Church of St. John the Evangelist, Victoria Square, Toronto, was designed by William Hay and built in 1857-8. Known also as 'The Garrison Church,' it was attended by soldiers stationed at Fort York, since it was more convenient than the other Anglican churches in town. Credit: Toronto Public Library, 942-3 Cab. II

and enjoyed a long clerical career in the Perth and Lanark areas of Upper Canada. Soldiers turned preachers like Harris and his Methodist colleague Ferguson, who served congregations in the Kingston area, played an important role in developing Christianity in early Victorian Canada.

Without additional diaries and memoirs, it is difficult to say more about lived religion at Fort York during the British army's time there. Further research might focus on the numerous missionary and evangelical societies active at the time, examining their presence in York and contacts with the fort. The circulation of devotional works such as *Pilgrim's Progress*, religious tracts, and periodicals amongst the garrison can only be guessed at. Finally, the influence of the Garrison Church of St. John's from the 1850s on as a centre of spiritual life at Fort York must be considered.

As a serving chaplain in the Canadian military, I can attest that soldiers can be rough and irreverent, but their spiritual needs and concerns are felt as keenly as are those of any civilian, and often in surprising ways. Whether they found solace in the Anglican parson or the Catholic Mass, in a Wesleyan hymn, or in the privacy of solitary prayer, redcoats followed their own sense of faith, sometimes piously, more often infrequently. The fragments of soldiers' tombstones collected at Fort York and nearby Victoria Square speak to their mortality and hopes for an afterlife. In our increasingly secular age, we can only begin to imagine the lives of faith inside Fort York's walls.

Captain (Padre) Mike Peterson is course director, CAF Chaplain School and Centre, Base Borden, Ontario.

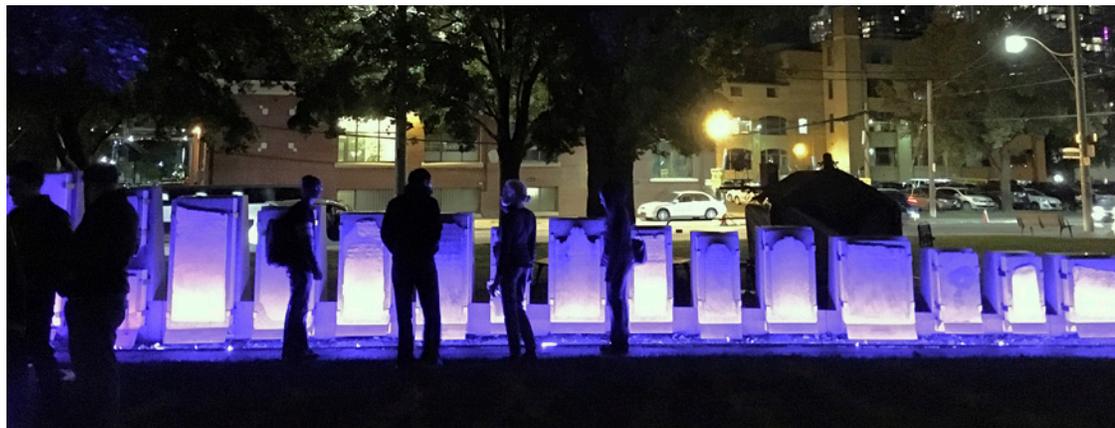
Illuminating Victoria Memorial Square: CITYLights 2016

by Lee Jacobson

As part of Nuit Blanche 2016 the Toronto Lighting Collaborative created and organized CITYLights—two installations in Victoria Memorial Square featuring the innovative use of lighting to illuminate the park and its rich history. According to CITYLights co-founder and lighting designer Paul Boken “Light brings a powerful element of visual intrigue, and due to its versatility and impact it allows artists to animate public spaces like never before. It’s a great opportunity to engage the public in a contextual narrative while demonstrating the technical and artistic merits of the discipline of lighting design.”

A dozen design and architecture students and young professionals signed up to work in two teams under the direction of professionals with extensive experience in major lighting projects. They began their projects with a workshop featuring a talk by Steve Otto about the history of the square and the neighbourhood. The teams then developed their designs and technical requirements and finally, did the hard work of installing and fine-tuning the equipment.

The Toronto Lighting Collaborative is made up of lighting designers Paul Boken, Stephen Kaye, and Mary Ellen Lynch, lighting product executive Diane Pott, and brand and communications consultant Lee Jacobson



For Nuit Blanche this year, October 1–2, Victoria Square was transformed into a number of lighting installations. Here the surviving grave markers are visited by some of the many hundred people who came through. Credit: Lee Jacobson

Facing Fire

Architect and artist Dereck Revington, his associate Jonathan Tyrrell, and their team were inspired to respond to the history of the park as the cemetery of Fort York and location for the Walter Allward memorial for the War of 1812. They brought the past into the present by forging connections with contemporary global conflict and the changing weather of the Anthropocene.

Their installation referenced the recent fires in Fort McMurray where a state of emergency and mandatory evacuation order was declared. Convoys of escaping vehicles jammed the only safe route out of the city. Abandoned cars and trucks that had run out of gas were scattered along the highway as inhabitants fled their homes. Meanwhile, world experts gathered in Washington, DC, for the Climate Action Summit 2016. Local, national, and global forces converged and the idea for *Facing Fire* was born.

Drawing these forces together in Victoria Memorial Square a cogent scene of “Fire and Flight” recalled the burning of the Town of York during the War of 1812. The design used moving light: the forest burning, emergency road flares arcing through the park between the raging fire projected on the trees, and an abandoned truck, door flung open, lights flashing, an empty gas can on the side of the road, a blue haze around the vehicle falling onto the Walter Allward memorial alongside. Around the truck visitors heard three interwoven audio narratives. One was about history—the War of 1812, Fort York burning, Parliament burning, the burning of the White House in Washington. A second featured audio clips from live radio broadcasts from day one of the Fort McMurray evacuation. And the third, was a refrain with both a male and female voice drawing the relations between them.

City Souls

Mary Ellen Lynch and Julia Ly’s team produced a companion installation to *Facing Fire* that served as a portal to the park, introducing visitors to the gravestones and the reason the park exists. It urged them to contemplate and engage with the historical significance of the space beneath whose grounds lie the remains of more than four hundred British soldiers, officials, citizens, local militia, their wives, their children: the

souls who shaped the Town of York, Toronto, and Canada.

A field of illuminated blank screens in different hues became momentary canvases of light and shadow, capturing multiple shadows from visitors. These shadows, cast on and through the translucent fabric, implied the possible presence of other souls in the park that night. The placement of the screens encouraged visitors to walk among them, as if in a crowded old cemetery, and then ground lights guided them off the paved path to the actual remaining gravestones. The stones were lit with a subtly changing linear uplight that shifted from a very warm glow to a cool ghostly violet white.

As visitors turned away from the graves to face the fires of *Facing Fire*, they saw the ground in front dotted with four hundred fleeting lights representing the lost souls of the city buried here in Victoria Memorial Square. The installation reminds us of who we are, that our lives are fleeting, and that our actions leave impressions.

Lee Jacobson is a Toronto-based brand and marketing consultant. A founder of the Toronto Lighting Collaborative www.torontolightingcollaborative.com, he has a master’s degree in architecture from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology and is one of the founders of the Wellington Place Neighbourhood Association.

The Bentway Update: Programming the Space

by Kasia Gladki

One of the most challenging parts of The Bentway project is envisioning the future of the 1.75km stretch from Strachan to Spadina—imagining the bustle of a public arcade; visualizing a winter wonderland surrounding the new skating trail; and picturing the vast array of activities and events—from skating lessons to local running meet-ups, multimedia installations to free concert series—that will engage the local community, a city-wide audience, and beyond.

This past month we were excited to ask Toronto’s programming community to share its vision. We reached out to more than 500 organizations across the city, including arts and culture associations, recreational clubs, environmental groups, and many more with our formal Request for Expressions of Interest (REOI). This process offered a way for us to share our programming plans thus far, and more importantly to hear from others—to hear all the creative and inspiring ways people would like to use the space.

We were so pleased with the response. Both of our Information Sessions—where potential partners could learn more about the project, the site, and the REOI process—



Interest in programming The Bentway saw two information sessions offered to full houses on successive days. Credit: Artscape for The Bentway

were packed, with approximately 120 attendees over the two meetings. The Sessions were hosted at the Fort York Visitor Centre, which provided the perfect venue, offering wonderful vistas of the site and easy access for a post Information Session tour.

By the submission deadline we had

received more than 150 different and unique ideas from organizations, collaboratives, groups, and individuals across the city, including Luminato, the CNE, Tribe Fitness, Ontario Nature, Kaejad’Dance, and many more. We’ve seen proposals for a world music block party, yoga classes, street art mural exhibitions, skating lessons, and even a winter carnival. Over the next few months we will look over the submissions and follow up with interested groups. We can’t wait to see The Bentway in all its glory—full of activities, events, and community members celebrating this new public space.

Kasia Gladki is project co-ordinator, Creative Placemaking Lab, at Artscape

Toronto's Big Bang

by Christopher Hume

It's too soon to say whether Toronto will end with a whimper, but we know for sure it began with a bang, a very big bang. Bigger, some say, than anything until the Halifax Explosion in 1917, more than a century later.

Toronto's Big Bang, which occurred during the War of 1812, has been largely forgotten, as has the great global conflict of which it was part. For visitors today, the scene of the disaster, Fort York, is a quaint reminder of earlier times, an almost elegant relic of an era when warfare was conducted by men in white pants and bright red jackets.

From the perspective of an age accustomed to destruction on a much vaster scale, an age that even has an acronym (WMD) for weapons of mass destruction, it's hard to take such events seriously. After all, only a few hundred were killed and injured. That's paltry by contemporary standards. And, of course, there was little around to damage or destroy, not much for American infantry to burn and loot.

But like Toronto, the city that it became, York was a community of people from somewhere else. At the time, that usually meant the United States. Though the term wouldn't come into use until much later, most "Canadians" then were actually Americans. The fighting pitted family against family, brother against brother. At issue was the future of Upper Canada, whether it would become part of the US or stay with the British Empire. Historians still argue about who won and lost, but one thing is clear: Canada was invaded but not conquered by American forces.

If the explosion affected the outcome in any way; it was purely accidental. Like so much of what unfolded during this distant battle waged by local proxies, one of the main factors was luck, both good and bad. When British General Sir Roger Hale Sheaffe ordered the grand magazine torched to keep it from falling into enemy hands, he was likely unaware it would kill his troops as well as Americans. When the magazine blew, the blast could be felt 50 kilometres away. Debris rained down on the stunned participants. As historian Carl Benn explained, "The explosion was devastating: 250 Americans fell dead or wounded from its blast, including their field commander, Brigadier-General Zebulon Pike. Total losses in the six-hour battle were 157 British and 320 Americans."

In her 1986 novel, *The Shrapnel Academy*, English author Fay Weldon wrote, "The British commander... had underestimated what was in [the arsenal]. The whole ground shook for miles around; a cloud rose, in the most majestic manner, assuming the shape of a vast balloon. It was the nearest thing to a nuclear explosion the world had ever seen before Big Boy in New Mexico in 1945. Both sides sat down together and wept. This was not what they meant at all. Officers fell in the same way as soldiers: it was not war, it was disaster. It was not planned, it was an accident."

Two centuries later, the site of the explosion, just west of Bathurst, north of the Gardiner Expressway, is impossible to



Following the explosion of the Grand Magazine during the Battle of York in 1813, General Zebulon Pike, the American commander, died after being hit by a piece of falling debris. His demise is depicted in this engraving from Charles J. Peterson's *The Military Heroes of the War of 1812 and the War with Mexico*, 1848. Credit: Library & Archives Canada, C-007434

discern. We go about our daily lives oblivious of the terrible disaster that wracked the landscape. But for a few details, the outcome could have been quite different. We Canadians might well have ended up Americans.

The title of Robert Fulford's 1995 book, *Accidental City: The Transformation of Toronto*, is, perhaps, more apt than intended. There is something decidedly accidental about Toronto. Even now, the idea we are in control remains illusory. Fort York itself, almost ruined by a city that sees it as an obstacle to progress, has suffered worse indignities from Torontonians than its enemies. Early in the 20th century, the city ran a streetcar line along its ramparts. In the '50s, engineers proposed the fort be moved to Coronation Park to avoid having to curve the Gardiner. Long separated from Lake Ontario by decades of landfill and surrounded now by dozens of anonymous condo towers, Fort York still feels marooned, but at the same time, more connected than ever.

With the marvellous new Visitor Centre and more populist planning, Fort York is becoming a bigger player in the life of the city. It also makes a difference that the Fort York neighbourhood is now home to thousands. A new library on Bathurst as well as plans for a supermarket are signs of the profound transformation unfolding around the fort.

But before it is celebrated as a major historical location, Torontonians will have to develop an awareness that this is a city with a past. The overwhelming newness of Toronto and the fact that more than half its residents come from somewhere else combine to make this a community focussed on the future, not the past. In our rush to see what tomorrow holds, we tend to ignore what happened yesterday.

Christopher Hume was the Toronto Star's architecture critic and urban affairs columnist for many years. He left the paper in March 2016 to pursue other opportunities. Hume is working on several documentary projects and a book about 21st-century Toronto. He can be reached at jcw@hume4@gmail.com

Fort York, Friends of Fort York, and Fife and Drum Honoured at Toronto Heritage Awards

by Christopher Moore

At the annual Toronto Heritage Awards, held 17 October 2016 at the Isabel Bader Theatre, Joseph Gill and Patricia Fleming stepped up to accept Toronto Heritage's Community Heritage Award for 2016 on behalf of The Friends of Fort York and Garrison Common. The award citation noted the Friends' newsletter *Fife and Drum*, its role in bringing into being the new Visitor Centre, and its ongoing support for Fort York. The win came with a small cash prize.

Joe Gill, a long-serving chair of The Friends of Fort York and founder of *Fife and Drum*, said afterwards, "The Friends brought together literally hundreds of Torontonians who understood the importance of preserving our early history and the importance of Fort York to that history. They enthusiastically volunteered their time and talents to that end and all deserve a piece of this award."

Awarded each year, the Community Heritage Award salutes one of Toronto's many heritage groups or historical societies and, given the great range of work they do, competition is typically fierce. This year The Friends of Fort York were nominated alongside the Leslieville Historical Society and the Lakeshore Asylum Cemetery Project.



Fort York had two other nominations at the Heritage Awards. Eamonn O'Keeffe's *Fife and Drum* article "New Light on Toronto's Oldest Cold Case," [link: <http://www.fortyork.ca/images/newsletters/fife-and-drum-2015/fife-and-drum-dec-2015.pdf>] was nominated in the Short Publication category. O'Keeffe, well-known as drum major of the Fort York Guard, sorted out what is known about the 1815 killing of John Paul Radelmüller, the keeper of the Gibraltar Point lighthouse. The story was long suspected of being largely an invention, but O'Keeffe established conclusively that two soldiers from Fort York, probably serving at the Gibraltar Point blockhouse, were tried—but acquitted—of the murder. Radelmüller seems to have been killed in an alcohol-fueled quarrel.

Fort York itself was in the spotlight of the William Greer Architectural Conservation and Craftsmanship Award. The City of Toronto's Museums and Heritage Services, in conjunction with Stevens Burgess Architects and Clifford Restoration, were nominated for the 2015 refurbishment of walls, stonework, and embrasures at the fort.

The Bader Theatre was sold out for the annual award ceremony. Again this year, the event showcased the work in heritage preservation and appreciation being done by many people all over Toronto. Nominees and winners included property owners, architects, craftspeople, consultants, museologists, community groups, writers, historians, and filmmakers, many of whom attended the event.

A highlight of the evening was the Special Achievement Award presented to Carolyn King, former chief of the Mississaugas of New Credit First Nation, who was recognized for her decades of extraordinary work in drawing attention to Indigenous heritage and the role of the Mississaugas in the history of Toronto. King, a longtime friend to Fort York and a member of the Heritage Advisory Committee for Toronto's Official Plan, gave a moving speech, based on her constant reminder that Toronto is much more than 200 years old. "We were here, and we are still here," she said before a standing ovation.

Historian Steven High of Concordia University gave the 20th Kilbourn Lecture on lessons from oral history around old Montreal. The event was followed by a reception in Alumni Hall, Victoria University.

Writer and historian Christopher Moore is a Friend of Fort York.

Patricia Fleming, editor of The Fife and Drum, and Joe Gill, past chair of the Friends of Fort York who founded the newsletter in 1998, took to the stage to receive our Community Heritage Award. Credit: Heritage Toronto



The Fort York Neighbourhood was abuzz when Ethan Henderson (l) and his brother Finn (r) went trick-or-treating in their redcoat uniforms made by their father, Jeffrey. Ethan, aged 3, who enjoys spending time at Fort York with his mother or grandmother, likes the cookies that the Volunteer Cooks in the fort's kitchen give him, but not the loud sound of the cannon.

Credit: Ashleigh Hendry

Of Importance and Noted

Traditionally private letters and diaries have provided the few insights we've had into military life at a personal level. Now Eamonn O'Keeffe, an eleven-year veteran of the Fort York Guard currently in his third year studying history at Oxford, has opened up another source that's seldom been plumbed before: the proceedings of military courts-martial. With the publication of his groundbreaking article, "Such Want of Gentlemanly Conduct:" The General Court Martial of Lieutenant John de Hertel," in the Fall 2016 issue of *Canadian Military History*, we get an intimate glimpse into a drunken altercation, an event that took place in Fort York's Blue Barracks in May 1815. <http://scholars.wlu.ca/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1829&context=cmh>

Plenty of intrigue ensued, including allegations that one officer was beaten with a broomstick and thrown out of a window at Fort York for his "boyish indiscretions."



Fort York National Historic Site

Renew Your Membership

Today

to continue to enjoy the benefits of membership, support the Fort York National Historic Site and the Fort York Guard and Fife and Drums.

- Free Admission Year Round
- Members Only Events
- Guest Passes for Special Friends and Patron Members
- Fort York Museum Store Discounts



The Friends of Fort York
and Garrison Common

What The Friends of Fort York Do: Our Accomplishments for 2016

- held ten board meetings at monthly intervals. Individual directors try to attend as many other programmed events at the fort as their time allows.
- convened meetings of our Precinct Advisory Committee to deal with issues such as an OMB appeal from the owners of 65 Grand Magazine St. for greater height; Councillor Layton's proposal for a park at 28 Bathurst St.; and the completion of a computer model of the fort precinct by Samuel Vandersluis, a graduate student at Ryerson. His work was grant-aided by the George C. Metcalf Foundation.
- expected our Finance Committee to report regularly on its oversight of our investment portfolio.
- participated in planning for The Bentway (formerly Project: Under Gardiner) by attending community consultation and briefing sessions. The fort staff is also heavily involved in the project.
- invited members of The Friends to a reception and chief curator's tour of the new exhibits in the Visitor Centre.
- accepted with regret Geordie Beal's decision to retire after twenty years of exemplary service and wise counsel on the board; welcomed two new directors (Mike McDonnell and Tyler Wentzell) joining the board.
- felt enormous pride in the Fort York Guard's winning the arms drill, marching, and perfect volley competitions at Fort George, Niagara. The Guard also appeared in a commercial for Sick Kids' Hospital. Responsibility for the Guard is shared between the City of Toronto and The Friends who provided about half its operating budget this year.
- published four issues of *The Fife & Drum*, full of news and articles of interest about the fort. Some two dozen different authors had bylines in the issues of 2016.
- received Heritage Toronto's Community Heritage Award, with special mention of *Fife & Drum*, now in its twentieth year.
- asked readers of *Fife & Drum* with journalistic skills to volunteer for our Editorial Committee.
- our volunteers in the Resource Centre devoted a day a week to organizing the collections of reference materials for the use of fort staff and visitors. Much of the last year was spent accessioning the research papers of David Spittal following his retirement.
- revised the protocols covering our website in consultation with city officials, which will lead to a newly-designed opening page.
- converted our *Fife & Drum* mailing lists to 'Mail Chimp' to take advantage of its stronger platform. In doing so, we weeded out several hundred obsolete addresses and now send about 2130 issues a quarter. Others receive *F&D* from friends or by groups they belong to.
- began converting our membership records, including renewal notices, to an electronic data base.
- said adieu to four members of the Guard who retired in 2016: Drum Major Eamonn O'Keeffe (an eleven-year veteran), Sergeant Conran Cosgrove (six years), Marika Pynn (four years), and Michael Locksley (four years). Their experience and contributions are going to be greatly missed.
- tallied 80,000 hits on our website www.fortyork.ca, 360,000 hits since its launch May 2012. The site continues to be a source of donations; it enables new subscribers to sign up for our newsletter; and helps new members join and old ones renew their memberships.
- having initiated citizenship ceremonies at Fort York eight years ago, we continue to assist with organizing two ceremonies each year. They are well-received and include speakers from governments and Indigenous groups, as well as past immigrants. The ceremonies are complemented by a memorable luncheon featuring moose or bison stew, as well as vegetarian options.
- organized a supper on a cost recovery basis for current and past directors of The Friends.

For comparison, our accomplishments for 1994-2015 can be found on our website <http://www.fortyork.ca/about-us/our-accomplishments.html>



100th Anniversary of World War 1 Exhibit Announcement

The Medallic Art Society of Canada (MASC), and the City of Toronto, Museum and Heritage Services are hosting an exhibition of commemorative medals celebrating the 100th anniversary of World War 1. The exhibition will be held from 3 December 2016 through 30 April 2017 in the entrance lobby of the new Fort York Visitor Centre, Toronto. A catalogue will be available. The Medallic Art Society of Canada is dedicated to the creation, promotion, appreciation, and education of the fine art of the medal.

News From

The Birthplace of Toronto

Contributions from the Staff at the Fort

Manager's Report

by David O'Hara, Site Manager

Much of the construction that has made it more difficult than normal to access Fort York was completed at the end of October. Although the reconstruction of the Gardiner Expressway deck has been completed, we will now move on to landscape improvements that will be implemented as part of The Bentway (visit www.thebentway.ca).

The Bentway, formerly known as Project: Under Gardiner, is a unique and innovative public space that will transform the area underneath the Gardiner Expressway into a new gathering place for our city's growing population. While the project stretches 1.75 km from Strachan Avenue to Spadina Avenue, the main section of the first phase of the project extends directly through Fort York from Strachan Avenue to where the Gardiner Expressway crosses Fort York Boulevard. Fort York staff have been working closely with the team responsible for moving this initiative forward, knowing that the overall strategy for The Bentway goes a long way towards realizing the vision for Fort York's 43 acres.

The Bentway provides an opportunity to properly landscape the area immediately adjacent to Strachan Avenue ('The Strachan Gate') and the area in front of the Visitor Centre (The 'Liquid Landscape'). It also brings a new dimension to programming at Fort York with the planned skating rink at the east of the Visitor Centre. While the idea of winter uses, and skating in particular, is not new for the fort, this skating trail is unique in that it opens an opportunity to trace the original Lake Ontario shoreline, playing a role itself in interpreting the site.

This initiative also offers us a unique opportunity to partner with the recently formed Bentway Conservancy to develop a strategy for programming, operations, and maintenance of these newly developed areas of the National Historic Site. Opportunities exist to activate the variety of spaces along The Bentway with events, public markets, public art, special exhibitions, festivals, theatre and musical performances, and more.

Further details will be available in the coming months, with the first phase of construction expected to be complete for July 1st 2017.

Construction is also underway on the Fort York pedestrian and bicycle bridges, with the goal of opening the bridges at

some point in late 2017.

Planning for 2017 events and programs, involving several significant Canada 150 initiatives, continues. This includes marking the 100th Anniversary of the Battle of Vimy Ridge with a two-day commemorative event at Fort York on 8-9 April 2017. National Aboriginal Day, our Indigenous Arts Festival, and opening events related to The Bentway are also identified as key signature events. In addition to our own Canada Day programming, a large citizenship and reaffirmation ceremony is being scheduled during the summer in partnership with the Institute for Canadian Citizenship (ICC) and Fort York's Volunteer ICC Committee. Many other events, programs, and exhibits are being developed throughout the city's museums. Details to follow in the coming months.

Restoring Henry Evatt

by Wayne Reeves

More than four years ago Chris Laverton wrote a short biography of Captain Henry Evatt for *The Fife and Drum* (July 2012). Born into a military family in Ireland in 1774, Evatt came to Canada in 1817. Within two years, he was appointed assistant barrack master at Côteau-du-Lac in Lower Canada, rising to barrack master by 1832. Evatt served as barrack master in Toronto during 1835-41, then held the same position in Hamilton, where he died in 1857.

Accompanying Laverton's article was an oil on canvas portrait owned by Parks Canada. In it, Evatt wears the blue uniform of an officer of the Ordnance Department, with epaulettes denoting the equivalency of a barrack master to the rank of major. Neither the date of the painting nor the artist is known.

Parks Canada has since loaned the Evatt portrait to City of Toronto Museums & Heritage Services for a ten-year period. We agreed to undertake a condition assessment and then proceed with conservation treatment before exhibiting the portrait. The Fort York Foundation provided funding through its Fort York Acquisitions Fund.

Evatt came to us in poor and unstable condition. Previous attempts at restoration had resulted in the partial removal of varnish, minor overcleaning, and the application of

overpaint and replacement varnish. More critically, the canvas had been cut away from the original stretcher frame and then glued to semi-rigid cardboard. Warping of this auxiliary support resulted in paint/ground losses and planar distortions. Materials in the glue and the cardboard had accelerated the chemical deterioration of the canvas. The glue's high temperature and moisture content had also caused heat blisters in the oil paint.

The painting presents a remarkable example of a relatively recent phenomenon identified in oil paintings: the formation of tiny, round, white protrusions consisting of metallic soaps. Fortunately, the protrusions on the Evatt portrait had not broken off, which would have created visually distracting crater-like structures in the paint layers.

The present conservation treatment involved the application of a protective facing on the front of the painting, followed by removal of the cardboard and heavy, too-thick glue residues from the back. The heat blisters were secured and stabilized; in some cases, the degree of blistering was reduced with controlled applications of moisture and heat and pressure.

After the structural restoration work was completed, the painting was cleaned. Two layers of discoloured resin varnish were removed, eliminating the hazy grey film that had

diffused and desaturated the paint colours. A new, non-yellowing coating of varnish was added, bringing out the colour and modelling of the figure.

Remarkably, for a painting of this age, very little paint loss has occurred to the original design layers except along the cut edges. Only minor inpainting was required during the present treatment.

Once the original canvas has been mounted on a new lining and attached to a new custom-built stretcher frame, the portrait will go on display in the Officers' Mess Dining Room at Fort York. It is a fitting place for this painting. The room has been restored to its 1830s appearance, and Evatt would have spent considerable time there during his tenure in Toronto.

I would like to thank the Fort York Foundation, and especially Steve Otto, for supporting this project in so many ways. Credit must also go to: Therese Charboneau, for her condition assessment and treatment recommendations; Barry Briggs, for performing the treatment; and Joan Fussell, the city's artifacts conservator, for coordinating the restoration of Henry Evatt.

Wayne Reeves is chief curator, Museums & Heritage Services, City of Toronto.



*From left to right.
The front of the portrait, before and after treatment.
Removal of the cardboard auxiliary support on the back
of the portrait during treatment, with glue below.
Credit: Barry Briggs*



Simcoe's Guns

by Richard Gerrard

A few months ago Robert Hamilton, an alert reader of *The Fife & Drum*, sent us a link to a forthcoming sale in New York City. The objects on offer from Peter Finer, a noted arms and armour dealer based in London, UK, were a pair of bronze cannon once owned by John Graves Simcoe. Cast in Seville (Spain) in 1747 they were taken by the British as trophies-of-war from a revolutionary garrison on Santo Domingo (now

Haiti) in 1793. Gifted by King George III to Simcoe in 1798 following the latter's brief command of British forces on Haiti following his departure from Upper Canada the cannons were proudly on display at the Simcoes' estate, Wolford Lodge, until its demolition in 1923.

But this wasn't my first encounter with these guns. I had noticed them when they appeared in 2005 as lot 129 in a Christie's (London) Antique Arms and Armour sale: "A very fine pair of Spanish bronze cannon by Mathias Solano. Royal Gun Foundry, Seville." They were being sold by the Mole Valley District Council (Dorking, Surrey, UK) who'd owned

them since 1940 when they were donated by Herbert Reeves, who in turn had purchased them from the sale of the Wolford Estate in 1922. Christie's lot 129 was expected to fetch between £30,000 and £40,000; the hammer came down at £90,000. Needless to say, we did not bid.

Nor would we twenty years later. Any time the expression 'price on request' is employed it usually translates to astonishingly expensive, and I expect these guns would be. But that's not the reason we wouldn't bid for Simcoe's Spanish cannons. The real reason is sound collecting practice. They have little to nothing to do with his time in Upper Canada, and therefore, fall outside our collecting mandate. (We actually do turn down much more than we acquire for just this reason.) But, to be honest, I probably would think long and hard for a reason to take them if they were on offer as a gift—it's just very difficult to justify spending hundreds of thousands of dollars on something, however splendid, with little research or exhibition potential.

Also we don't have hundreds of thousands of unrestricted acquisition dollars just sitting around. What we do have is a small, but growing, fund managed by the Fort York Foundation that we can draw upon to acquire objects or undertake special conservation projects that would normally be beyond our ability to fund.

Richard Gerrard is historian for Museums & Heritage Services in Toronto's Economic Development & Culture Division.

To donate to the fort's Acquisition Fund, please click here:
<http://www.fortyorkfoundation.ca/acquisition-fund/>



English antiques dealer Peter Finer offered the Simcoe cannons at the Fall show of the European Fine Art Foundation (TEFAF), New York, 2016.
 Credit: Peter Finer, London, UK

2017 | Upcoming Events Historic Fort York

Compiled by Richard Haynes

JANUARY

Queen Charlotte's Birthday Ball Sat. January 21, 1 to 10 pm

Queen Charlotte's Birthday Ball recalls a significant event in Toronto's history, a Ball organized by the officers of the Garrison at York (Fort York) on 20 January 1817.

Our event is a Ball recreating an early 19th century social gathering. It offers instruction in period dance, a guest lecturer, an extensively researched and authentically prepared Georgian supper, lunch, guest speakers, tastings, and marketplace, or enter the Marmalade Competition.

Costumes welcome. Pre-registration required 416-392-7484.

Tickets are \$100 plus tax.

FEBRUARY

Mad for Marmalade Sat. February 18, 10 am to 4 pm

Join Fort York National Historic Site in partnership with the Culinary Historians of Canada for our tenth annual celebration of marmalade and all things citrus. Enjoy a citrus-themed workshop, lunch, guest speakers, tastings, and marketplace, or enter the Marmalade Competition.

Pre-registration required 416-392-7484.

For more information please visit www.culinaryhistorians.ca

Early bird tickets \$65 plus tax are available until February 6, \$75 plus tax afterwards.

Family Day at Fort York Mon. February 20, 10 am to 4 pm

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

Regular admission.

MARCH

March Break Family Drop-in at Fort York Mon. to Fri. March 13 to 17, 10 am to 4 pm

Looking for a day of adventure during March Break? Just bring your family down to Fort York National Historic Site. At this authentic War of 1812 fort, children will have fun trying soldiers' drill classes, officers' sword drill, and dressing up in costumes. Visitors can sample treats from the 1826 historic kitchen. Learn about the fort's exciting history through colourful exhibits including the new Visitor Centre and Battle of York Experience. Pick up a Kids' Guide to Fort York and have fun finding the clues to complete its games and puzzles throughout the tour.

No registration required.

Regular admission.

Visit our website at: www.fortyork.ca. Learn more about Fort York, subscribe to the **free newsletter**, become a **member**, **donate** or browse our **historical image gallery**.



Editor Emeritus Stephen Otto
 Editor Patricia Fleming
 Graphic Design Ted Smolak (Arena Design)
 Circulation Elizabeth Quance, Chris Henry

TORONTO Culture
www.toronto.ca/culture



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