

# The Fife and Drum

The Newsletter of The Friends of Fort York and Garrison Common

v. 21 No. 1 Mar. 2017

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## John Graves Simcoe's First Fort York

*In collaboration*

The first Fort York, built by John Graves Simcoe in 1793, had mostly been demolished by the end of the eighteenth century. When in 1987 archaeologists investigating a feature in the area between the South Soldiers' Brick Barracks and the Southwest Bastion within Fort York's ramparts uncovered what were thought to be remnants of a limestone-cobble foundation for one of the first fort's buildings, they weren't exactly surprised. (Fig. 1) But neither did it lead anywhere. The find was carefully recorded before being covered up again.

What is known today about Toronto's original garrison is embarrassingly little. No site plan has been found. Only a few contemporary sketches survive, but they are not detailed ones. The absence of diaries and letters of soldiers stationed there in the 1790s leaves much to be inferred from military muster rolls, spending estimates, and reports.

Simcoe was appointed lieutenant-governor of Upper Canada in August 1791. Nearly a year passed, however, before he, his wife, and two of their six children—the four eldest were left at home in the care of friends—were able to take up residence at Niagara, the seat of his government. Before leaving England he had signaled his intent to move the capital to a safer location than the village of Newark under the guns of Fort Niagara opposite. Perhaps in the near term it would be to Toronto, its still-forested site surveyed but not settled. Eventually he hoped the capital would be at the forks of the Thames where present-day London, Ontario, stands.

Soon after his appointment he proposed also raising a corps of soldiers and artificers to help with the back-breaking work of land clearing and settlement. Two companies of Queen's Rangers modeled on the unit Simcoe had commanded during the Revolutionary War were authorized. The regiment would boast just over 400 officers and men when they arrived in Canada. Many were recruited from among those who had served in his old corps, including officers James Givins, John McGill, David Shank, Aeneas Shaw, and Samuel Smith. The first contingent of soldiers arrived at Quebec in June 1792 and by September all were encamped at Queenston where they spent the winter.



(Fig. 1) Archaeologist David Spittal stands in an impressively stratified trench where remains thought to be those of the first Fort York were found in 1987. Colleagues Andrew Murray, Frank Dieterman, and Sue Neale (l. to r.) look on. Credit: Toronto Culture collections



(Fig. 2) Elizabeth Simcoe, View of the Camp/at Toronto July 30th 1793, inscribed on verso. Toronto Public Library



(Fig. 3) Elizabeth Simcoe, *In Ye York Harbour*, showing Fort York at the left margin, ca. 1796. The image has been digitally enhanced. Credit: Collections of the Macdonald Stewart Museum, Montreal



(Fig. 4) Elizabeth Simcoe, *The Garrison at York*. Mrs Simcoe made this sketch while she was in Canada then copied it on birch bark as part of a series of Canadian views her husband presented in October 1796 to King George III. Credit: British Library, cat. no. K.Top.119.15.x



(Fig. 5) Joseph Bouchette, Detail from a map showing the Garrison at York ca. 1799, after several of the original 'huts' had rotted and been torn down. Credit: National Archives of the United States, Records of the Office of the Chief of Engineers, Map G 77, drawer 113, sheet 1

Early the following spring, Simcoe and seven of his officers reconnoitered the site and harbour of Toronto. Returning to Niagara eleven days later the governor was determined to begin settlement at the new seat of government immediately. By 1 July 1793 Capt. Samuel Smith's company was at Toronto clearing land for the garrison and town, and building roads in the vicinity. Housed in tents on the site of today's Fort York, they were joined by Capt. David Shank's company a few weeks later. The Rangers' Monthly Returns show that regimental 'Head Quarters' and the whole corps had moved to York by 1 August.

On 30 July Mrs. Simcoe, newly arrived from Niagara with her husband aboard *H.M.S. Mississauga*, sketched the soldiers' 'camp.' (Fig. 2) The vice-regal couple and their children were soon settled into two canvas houses erected on the east side of Garrison Creek, opposite the camp. The story of these unconventional dwellings has been well told elsewhere. <http://www.fortyork.ca/images/newsletters/fife-and-drum-2014/fife-and-drum-dec-2014.pdf>

Through August and September Simcoe's letters to his superiors proposed which permanent buildings might be erected for the garrison at York, as Toronto was renamed on August 24. As well, he listed the materials needed to 'hut' the Rangers in the coming winter. Thirty log barracks, each 24 feet by 20 in the clear, were proposed, though thirty-one were built eventually. Majors David Shank and Samuel Smith

were assigned more than one unit for their quarters. Major Edward B. Littlehales, Simcoe's secretary, and Lieut. Arthur Brooking had half a hut each. Some barracks were given over to special uses: 'musick,' 'taylors,' a bake house, and a hospital where severe or contagious cases might be isolated. By mid-November construction on the first huts was well along.

While no site plan of the first Fort York survives, it is safe to say it was arranged around a square; a contemporary account says the quarters of Major Aeneas Shaw were 'outside the square.' Although Mrs. Simcoe sketched the fort on several occasions between July 1793 and her return to England in mid-1796, these views add little more detail to what we know. (Figs. 3, 4) Curiously, the most informative image of the fort may be one drawn by Joseph Bouchette in 1799, when it was half demolished. (Fig. 5)

It was expected the green logs used to build the huts would last for about seven years, but this proved optimistic. In February 1798 Major Smith and two fellow officers formed a Board of Survey that recommended, with advice from Capt. William Graham, superintendent of public buildings at York, that twenty-one of the original huts be torn down, leaving only four standing. In 1802 these too were demolished. A comment on the huts' fitness as quarters for the troops may lie in the monthly return for 1 December 1794. It shows 51 men sick 'in quarters' with another 18 'in hospitals,' a total of almost a quarter of the 276 men in garrison at that time. Was

there a connection between the healthiness of the huts and the level of illness in the regiment? At this distance in time we cannot know.

The last of the huts overlapped only briefly the next building on the site of Simcoe's garrison. This was the lieutenant-

governor's residence erected in 1800 for which Lieut. Robert Pilkington provided a plan while materials for its construction were shipped from Fort George at Niagara. The residence stood until Fort York was attacked and destroyed by the Americans in 1813.

## *Thomas Jefferson Sutherland's Incarceration and Trial at Fort York*

by John C. Carter

While the *Dictionary of Canadian Biography* described Thomas J. Sutherland (1801-1852) as a "Patriot filibuster and author" [http://www.biographi.ca/en/bio/sutherland\\_thomas\\_jefferson\\_8E.html](http://www.biographi.ca/en/bio/sutherland_thomas_jefferson_8E.html), his detractors called him many disparaging things—a pirate, borderer, brigand, intense ruffian, rapscallion rabble, blustering Bobadil, and plumed popinjay.

Americans referred to the civil rebellions in Upper and Lower Canada in 1837-38 as the "Patriot War." Sutherland first came to prominent notice as a Patriot activist in December 1837 when he addressed two of the largest public meetings ever held in Buffalo, announcing that the Patriots were intending to invade Canada immediately. In a direct violation of American neutrality laws, he called for volunteers and contributions of arms and supplies to the cause. On December 13, "Colonel" Sutherland (as he was now styled), William Lyon Mackenzie, "General" Rensselaer Van Rensselaer, and 25 to 50 followers invaded Canada when they set up camp on Navy Island in the Niagara River. Within a week the Patriot ranks there had swelled to 500 men. At the end of December, Van Rensselaer sent newly promoted "Brigadier-General" Sutherland to Detroit to co-ordinate Patriot plans to invade Upper Canada's Western District. Two weeks later Sutherland was arrested for violating US neutrality laws. Found not guilty, he was released but also relinquished his command in the Patriot army.

On March 4 while on route back to Buffalo, Sutherland and his aide-de-camp Captain Patrick Spencer were captured by Lieutenant-Colonel John Prince on the ice of Lake Erie, west of Colchester. As Prince recorded in his diary: "About 8 miles below Malden I had the good fortune to capture *General Sutherland & Capt Spencer* of The Patriot (or Rebel) Army! Conveyed the Prisoners to Malden." His military colleague, Lieutenant Henry Rudyerd, also noted the seizure of the two men: "Brig Genl. Sutherland and Captn Spencer were captured by Lt. Col'l Prince they were observed by him on the ice 2 miles from our shore ... we escorted them to Amherstburg."

At Fort Malden the next day Sutherland and Spencer were examined by the magistrates. The military authorities there were of the opinion, "... it is not safe that [the prisoners] should remain here long," and believed they should be sent immediately "under a strong escort to Toronto, in charge of Captain



*Sutherland was imprisoned in the Brick Magazine at Fort York. Constructed in 1814, it was rebuilt in 1824 when it became a storehouse. Credit: Toronto Public Library*

Rudyerd [sic], of the loyal Essex Volunteers." Rudyerd and the prisoners reached Toronto on March 12. Sutherland was taken to Government House where he met Lieutenant-Governor Sir Francis Bond Head who assured him that the intention of the government was to conduct a speedy trial. Sutherland would have the dubious honour of being the first captured Patriot to be tried under the Lawless Aggression Act, passed in January 1838 giving the civil authorities the power to try enemy aliens by court martial. The two prisoners were then moved to "the garrison" and incarcerated. On March 13, Spencer was transferred to the Toronto Gaol, and the Militia General Court Martial of Sutherland began. Officials served Sutherland with a copy of the charges preferred against him, and then adjourned to allow the prisoner to prepare his defence. Sutherland was delivered into the custody of Major George Gurnett at Fort York.

Gurnett, a Toronto city alderman chosen by his peers on council to serve as mayor for 1837, was later appointed as an unattached major in the militia. He was a magistrate of the Home District and a clerk of the peace besides. His responsibility for running certain aspects of Fort York was probably a consequence of the departure of most of the regular soldiers and their officers for Lower Canada to deal with the Patriote rebellion there.

Sutherland described his situation at Fort York: "I was conveyed to the garrison ... [and] confined in a room of a magazine whose walls were four or five feet thick, with treble-locked doors and massive grates at the windows. This of itself would have forbidden all idea of getting out, if I had been left there alone; but the security against my escape was made doubly so by a chain of five sentinels posted on the outside of the

building, with another who walked by the side of my bed. Then to these there were added three Irish Orangemen sworn in as special constables, who remained in the room near my person to ensure the fidelity of the soldiers, who are always distrusted by their officers.”

The next morning, Major Gurnett was called to Sutherland’s quarters where, “He found him in a state of great exhaustion, from loss of blood. Sutherland had opened veins in both his arms and his feet, evidently with the intention of destroying himself.” Dr. Lennie, assistant surgeon of the 24th Regiment, was called to attend. In consequence of the attempted suicide, the court adjourned until Sutherland had recovered sufficiently to stand trial. Lieutenant Charles Allan Parker, a Royal Marine stationed at Kingston who had fought at the Battle of the Windmill in Prescott, recorded his thoughts about Sutherland: “The deportment of Sutherland is said to have been calm and collected. On his trial he stated himself to be a lawyer. He was furnished with a copy of the charges against him, and allowed to consult counsel [Mr. Ridout] who were not however allowed to plead for him ... The second day of the trial was interrupted in consequence of the prisoner having during the night, attempted to bleed himself to death ... An end worthy of a bandit. Suicide may have been considered in the days of Brutus a manly virtue. In the days of Victoria it betrays a coward heart!”

On March 19, Dr. Lennie stated that Sutherland had sufficiently regained his health and was ready to be brought before the court. The proceedings continued until March 29, when Sutherland presented his defence, abandoned using counter evidence, and trusted his case wholly to points of law. For his detailed account of the trial see T.J. Sutherland, *A Letter to Her Majesty the British Queen* (Albany, NY: C.

Van Benthuyzen, 1841). The trial was brought to a close and Sutherland remained locked up at Fort York for nearly a month, awaiting the verdict. In the [Kingston] *British Whig* of March 31, it was suggested why a verdict had not been reached: “There

is some difficulty in deciding on his case, arising from a technicality in the statute, which applies only to foreigners taken in arms with subjects of Her Majesty.” The May 19 issue of the [London] *Spectator* opined that “Sutherland it was said, would be transported for life, as no act of violence was proven against him.” Subsequently, he was found guilty and he was sentenced to transportation for life. Sutherland was then transferred to the Toronto Gaol. In June, he was sent to the Citadel in Quebec “for the sole purpose of safe custody,” and there awaited his fate.

Serious doubts and questions were brought forward as to the legality of Sutherland’s conviction. The matter was referred to Law Officers of the Crown in England. After their deliberations, a decision was made proclaiming that the conviction was clearly illegal. Lord Durham set aside the guilty verdict,

and put in motion actions that led to Lieutenant-Governor Sir George Arthur signing a pardon. Sutherland was then repatriated to the United States. One of Fort York’s most infamous prisoners would never return there again, and was set free to live out the rest of his life in relative obscurity in his homeland.

*Acknowledgements: The author would like to thank Bob Garcia, John Grenville, Pat Kennedy, Steve Otto, Chris Raible, Jean Richardson, and Jo Stanbridge for their assistance in preparing this article. Dr. John C. Carter is a research associate, School of Humanities, University of Tasmania. He can be contacted at drjohncarter@bell.net.*



Paul Kane, Portrait of George Gurnett (ca. 1792-1861), mayor of Toronto in 1837 and a major in the militia. Kane executed this portrait ca. 1845. Credit: City of Toronto Art Collection



## Oops! We Erred!

The portrait of the Rev. John Strachan in our December issue appeared in reverse by mistake. But the upside to this is that the painting has been cleaned in the meanwhile, so we are now able to publish it in its conserved state. As yet no artist has been credited with the work, which may date from the 1820s when Strachan was carrying a large part of the chaplain’s duties at Fort York.

Credit: Trinity College Archives, Toronto

## Ceta Ramkhalawansingh, Woman of Distinction



Announced on the occasion of International Women's Day in March, Friends of Fort York director Ceta Ramkhalawansingh was named a 2017 Woman of Distinction by YWCA Toronto. The award honours "extraordinary women who are improving the lives of women and girls and driving

positive and long-term change across our city, country and globe."

Apart from serving on The Friends' board, Ceta has spent nearly all of her adult life serving Toronto and Canada as a social justice advocate, city builder, and public servant,

sometimes behind the scenes, often on the front lines. Her day job for three decades was as the equity and diversity manager at City Hall, which would be enough for most, but in her spare time she was equally busy with a second, volunteer career. For twenty years she served in various civil society roles including president of MATCH International Women's Fund. She helped establish the Commonwealth Women's Network, and was a strong advocate on the Ontario government's advisory council on women from 1983 until 1988.

At the neighbourhood level Ceta was interim city councillor for Ward 20 in 2014, and has long been a force in her own Grange neighbourhood, advocating for good development, green spaces, affordable housing, and heritage preservation. A member of many other boards, we're pleased she's been with The Friends of Fort York since 2012.

## Our Call for Help Answered



Last September the editors of *The Fife & Drum* called for help in producing this newsletter, inviting those interested to get in touch. At its board meeting in February, the directors of The Friends of Fort York approved the following persons to fill four new positions on the editorial committee:

**Robert Kennedy** has five years of service in the Parliamentary Press Gallery; was a senior proofreader for the *National Post*; and long-serving officer in the media relations branch of the Canadian Army, from which he retired in 2014 with the rank of captain. As 32 Canadian Brigade Group's officer i/c public relations, he was involved with the fort and The Friends during the War of 1812 commemorations. He has an MA in War Studies, and lives in the neighbourhood.

**Adrian Gamble**, a PhD candidate in History at York University, is a volunteer researcher for Heritage Toronto and a journalist/writer for the Urban Toronto and Skyrise Cities websites.

**Carole Stimmell** is a senior archaeologist with experience in the US, Japan, and the Arctic, as well as in southern Canada. She edited the *Canadian Journal of Archaeology* for five years, and currently edits the Ontario Archaeological Society's newsletter, *ArchNotes*. A former vice-chair of the Toronto Historical Board, Dr. Stimmell has been managing editor for the *Beach Metro Community News* for almost two decades.

**Daniel Dishaw** works for the Ontario Historical Society as the communications and outreach coordinator where he manages and edits its newsletter, the *OHS Bulletin*, as well as its social media and online presence. When he was a student at Ryerson he founded and edited a student-run magazine about art and music.

This quartet has already begun its contributions to our columns.

## Breaking News: Disabled Fort York Maps Site Will Be Restored

Nathan Ng and The Friends of Fort York, the co-proprietors of the very useful collection of maps of Fort York and of the Garrison Common found through links on Nathan's websites and at [www.fortyork.ca](http://www.fortyork.ca), were upset to learn that the site was taken down effective 15 March 2017 when the hosting service Dropbox terminated its support for Public Folders. We had been using Dropbox to store the very large image files accessed through the thumbnails that were the heart and genius of the system.

Nathan now reports very good news: Marcel Fortin, head

of the University of Toronto Map and Data Library, has generously offered to provide image hosting for the Fort York and Garrison Common Maps site, traffic permitting. The library's general mandate aligns with and supports the goal of having these cartographic resources and accompanying commentary available to the public for educational and research purposes. Barring any unusual developments, this arrangement should provide a home for the images indefinitely. Restoration of the map links will take place over the next few days as time permits.

## *Friends Propose Name for New Neighbourhood School*

The Friends submitted the name of Jean Earle Geeson to the Toronto District School Board for its new JK to Grade 8 elementary school to be built later this year east of the fort on Fort York Blvd. at the corner of Brunel Court. Naming proposals were due by March 10. The Board held a public meeting on March 22 to report on the total of 213 submissions received, 53 of them unique. Many proposals related to the late Rob Stewart, the environmentalist and filmmaker who died off Florida recently—so many that the TDSB officials had a certificate and a gift for members of Mr. Stewart’s family, who attended the briefing.

Thirteen names were chosen by the TDSB for study, including research and verification from Toronto Public

Libraries. Three finalists were selected by a committee of Ward School Trustee Ausma Malik, three superintendents, and a local principal:

**Jean E. Geeson Public School**  
*(described as ‘an early female educator’);*

**Jean B. Lumb Public School**  
*(described as a Chinese-Canadian community leader, business woman, and recipient of the Order of Canada);*

**Railway Lands Public School**

The TDSB as a whole is expected to choose among these names at its April meeting.



*The public school will share its building and many facilities with a separate school which will carry a different name, expected to be approved by the Toronto Catholic District School Board in April. The firm of ZAS architects of Toronto and Vancouver designed both schools, the community centre, and the daycare.*

# Lawren Harris and Victoria Memorial Square

by Scott James



Lawren S. Harris, Canadian (1885 – 1970), *The Gas Works* (1911 – 1912) oil on canvas, overall: 58.6 x 56.4 cm (23 1/16 x 22 3/16 in.) Gift from the McLean Foundation, 1959. Credit: Art Gallery of Ontario

Harris's painting shows a corner of Victoria Square looking west to Bathurst Street. A gas holder looms in the background. For a century until Toronto was supplied with natural gas from western Canada, gas for industrial use, heating, and light was manufactured from Ohio coal. The problem of storing it ahead of customers' needs was solved by gas holders: ingenious steel structures within frames that rose and fell as gas was pumped into them and drawn off.

The square remained in the public consciousness and in 1907 the sculpture of *The Old Soldier* by Walter Allward (later famous for his Vimy Memorial) was installed in the centre of the park. It had been commissioned by the Army and Navy Veterans' Association as a tribute to the War of 1812 dead.

The condition of Victoria Square, however, can be imagined from Katharine Hale's 1919 description of how to find the sculpture, namely in "a slum of Toronto, a shabby little park or baseball ground called Portland Park."

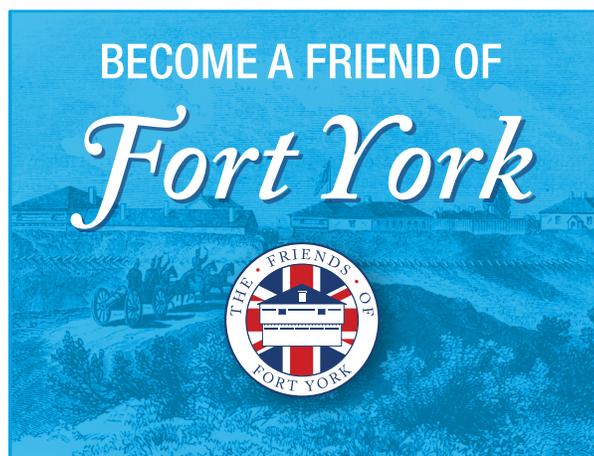
This is how it appears as a previously unidentified image in a painting of 1911-1912 by Lawren Harris entitled *The Gas Works*. The view is looking southwest from the edge of the monument fence towards the gas holders that stood on the west side of Bathurst Street where Front Street ends, the same structures that are seen from the south in J.E.H. MacDonald's contemporaneous painting *Tracks and Traffic*, 1911-12. A close examination of the Goad's *Fire Insurance Atlas* of the period led me to conclude that only one open space in the vicinity of any gas holders in the inner city would present this view: Victoria Memorial Square. I found further evidence in the painting to confirm that Victoria Square was its setting by spotting what all others had missed—the "terrace" of surviving headstones lined up against the fence in the middle distance.

Today the square is the central feature of a thriving new neighbourhood named Wellington Place which has emerged over the past twenty years as a result of the city opening up the King-Spadina area to mixed use development.

Scott James, former city archivist and managing director of the Toronto Historical Board, lives on Niagara Street overlooking Victoria Memorial Square. He is the current secretary of the Wellington Place Neighbourhood Association.

From 1794 until 1863 today's Victoria Memorial Square, just east of Fort York, was the cemetery for the garrison. In the latter year it was deemed full and new burials were begun at a location closer to Strachan Avenue.

The original site was effectively abandoned, suffering some twenty years of neglect until 1884 when its scandalous condition caused the city to establish a Military Burial Ground Commission to record the surviving monuments and restore the dignity of the place. The headstones were arranged in a "terrace" along the western edge of the area and the cemetery thereafter functioned as a public park. John Ross Robertson commissioned a local artist to prepare a sketch of the scene for his series of articles on Toronto history that became the six-volume *Landmarks of Toronto*.



**Membership in The Friends** includes a subscription to *The Fife & Drum* newsletter and updates about what's going on at the fort and in its neighbourhood. Your membership strengthens advocacy with donors, developers, politicians, and others having sway over what's happening at Toronto's premier historic site. There are additional perks such as invitations to exclusive activities and exhibitions.

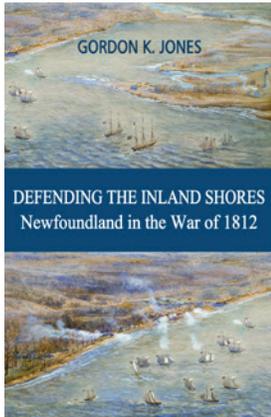
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## In Review:

# *Defending the Inland Shores: Newfoundland in the War of 1812*

by Ewan Wardle



Gordon K. Jones. *Defending the Inland Shores: Newfoundland in the War of 1812*. Markham: BookLand Press, 2016. 168 pages, seven maps, one illustration, three photographs, notes, bibliography. \$19.95 (paper). ISBN 9781772319443

Despite all the focus the War of 1812 received during the recent bicentennial years, many people remain unaware of how pivotal “Canadian” units were during

the conflict. This is particularly true of the six regular fencible regiments raised to augment British forces in North America in the years leading up to the war. Recruited in Newfoundland, Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, and Upper and Lower Canada, these fencible regiments were in every respect no different from other corps of the British Army save for one: their service was limited to North America. The sacrifices made by the men of these regiments in the defence of what would become Canada are stories worth telling. Gordon K. Jones's new work, *Defending the Inland Shores: Newfoundland in the War of 1812*, attempts to do just that by telling the story of the Royal Newfoundland Regiment of Fencible Infantry through “the battles where there was a significant number of Newfoundland men involved” (p. 10).

Formed on 6 June 1803, the Royal Newfoundland Regiment spent much of its early existence in the Maritimes before being transferred to Lower Canada. With the outbreak of the War of 1812, five companies were sent to Upper Canada to serve as sailors and marines on the ships of the Provincial Marine on the Great Lakes. Over the course of the war, the Newfoundlanders were involved in many actions, including the capture of Detroit, the battles of York and Lake Erie, and the successful defence of Mackinac Island in August 1814. With its numbers gravely diminished after months of hard service, the regiment was sent back to St. John's near the end of the war in order to recruit, and was finally disbanded on 24 June 1816.

More than one hundred men of the Royal Newfoundland Regiment were stationed at York when it came under attack on 27 April 1813. One officer of the regiment, 58-year-old French émigré Captain François Tito LeLièvre, was given the crucial responsibility of detonating the garrison's Grand

Magazine, destroying the harbour's dockyard facilities, and burning the *Sir Isaac Brock*, a sloop-of-war then under construction in the harbour. His actions denied the victorious Americans these spoils of war and provided the withdrawing Anglo-Canadian forces with the additional time they needed to make their escape to Kingston.

While Jones's book offers a glimpse into this oft-neglected unit, the regiment's pre-war activity is covered in only one very brief chapter. Elsewhere, the author takes many pages to describe campaigns or battles, drawing primarily upon secondary works, and even dedicates limited space to providing brief biographies of Brock and Tecumseh, but leaves the reader wanting to know much more about the officers and men of the regiment. That said, I would be remiss not to acknowledge the second-to-last chapter, which is devoted to the extensive wartime service of Andrew Bulger, the only member of the Royal Newfoundland Regiment the reader gets to know.

The author's writing is generally good and uncomplicated. A couple of typos do not distract from the narrative but several errors were noted, such as variations in the names of Captains Neal McNeale and LeLièvre, as well as the author's claim that the war ended with the signing of the Treaty of Ghent in December 1814 (p. 127), although it actually continued until February 1815 when the treaty was ratified.

Overall, Jones's volume is an adequate introduction to the Royal Newfoundland Regiment during the War of 1812, but it is far from comprehensive for serious students of the war. Nevertheless, I would recommend it to those looking for a good, quick read on the meritorious wartime service of one of British North America's fine fencible regiments.

*Ewan Wardle is a program development officer at Fort York National Historic Site. He received the Queen Elizabeth II Diamond Jubilee Medal in recognition of his contributions to Fort York through the Fort York Guard and the City of Toronto.*



The author, Gordon K. Jones of Toronto, is a member of The Friends. Credit: Teena Dawson

*News From*

# *The Birthplace of Toronto*

*Contributions from the Staff at the Fort*

## Manager's Report

*by David O'Hara, Site Manager*

It seems each year that we look forward to the next with the hope that our calendar of events might somehow combine with the ongoing world of construction in and around Fort York in a much more manageable way. Unfortunately, it's never been the case.

Our 2017 calendar is a full one with many regular events and programs planned to return and with new and enhanced offerings—many forming a part of the City of Toronto's year-long TO Canada with Love program of celebrations, commemorations, and exhibitions honouring Canada's 150th birthday.

The fort has already hosted our annual Queen Charlotte's Ball and the 10th annual, and sold-out, Mad for Marmalade to begin the year. Our Vimy 100 Toronto event is planned for April 8 and 9, honouring the 100th anniversary of those who fought at Vimy Ridge. On April 8 the public will experience First World War re-enactor displays of infantry, artillery, cavalry, medicine, music, and food alongside Great War themed exhibits and films. On April 9 a military remembrance parade and commemorative service by the Canadian Armed Forces will be followed by the dedication of a Vimy oak tree within Garrison Common. The commemorative service will be attended by the Lieutenant-Governor of Ontario, the Honourable Elizabeth Dowdeswell, and Mayor John Tory. Vimy 100 Toronto is part of the city's TO Canada with Love program. More information on the weekend events is available at [toronto.ca/fortevents](http://toronto.ca/fortevents).

There is a citizenship ceremony planned for April 19 and we'll then move through to Doors Open and other events in May before an extremely busy June. On the heels of the annual Field Trip (<http://fieldtriplife.com/>) and Taste of Toronto (<http://toronto.tastefestivals.com/>), mark your calendars and please visit us for National Aboriginal Day and the Indigenous Arts Festival, running from June 21st through to the 25th. Watch for much more to come throughout the remainder of 2017.

We continue to work with The Bentway Conservancy (<http://www.thebentway.ca/about/>) on the design and implementation of its first phase across the frontage of Fort York National Historic Site and on various programs and events throughout 2017. We were pleased to hear that

Julian Sleath was recently appointed chief executive officer of The Bentway. In addition to his extensive background with cultural events and venues across Canada, the UK, and beyond, Julian knows Fort York as a former program manager for cultural events with the City of Toronto, and is familiar with its significance and the many years of work that have gone into getting the site to where it is today. We look forward to working with Julian and The Bentway Conservancy to build on what we've accomplished already by bringing a new and dynamic year-round program of events to The Bentway and Fort York.

Construction of The Bentway throughout 2017 will impact several areas of Fort York. This, combined with the construction of the Garrison Crossing (see page 10), scheduled to be complete by this fall, will complicate the year.

One of the projects next on the to-do list at Fort York involves the north perimeter of the site between Bathurst Street and Garrison Crossing. Working with staff in the city's Parks, Forestry and Recreation Division, a trail will be constructed connecting CityPlace and lands east of Bathurst Street with Fort York lands under Bathurst and to the west. The multi-purpose trail will extend west at the lower rail corridor level, before climbing the slope to connect with the landing point of the new bridge. This trail follows the traces of the original Garrison Creek ravine system and the original ramparts of Fort York, providing a unique ravine-like experience in the core of the city. Opportunities exist to interpret the multi-layered history of the site, to remove invasive plant species and plant native species, to provide better access to the community gardens, and to find a more secure location for the beehives currently on site. News of this project will be reported as it proceeds.

Vandalism of the beehives at Fort York late last year drew significant attention to the fact that our program offerings go beyond military history. Toronto Honeys, who manage beehives at various locations around the city, have been working at Fort York since the spring of 2012. The bees thrived here while contributing to pollination in and around the fort. What began as two colonies had grown to seven, producing approximately 550 lb of honey in 2016. This honey, which captures



the distinct taste of the local flowers, is incorporated into several of the recipes used in our historic kitchen and is available for sale in the museum store. The vandalism to the hives has left Toronto Honeys and our Fort York bees in a very unfortunate situation. Should you wish to contribute towards the rebuild, please donate to the Friends of Fort York in trust for the Toronto Honeys. Tax receipts will be issued for gifts in excess of \$25. Cheques may be mailed to The Friends at 260 Adelaide St. E., Box 183, Toronto, M5A 1N1.

On the staff front, we're pleased to announce that Erica Roppolo has joined the Fort York team as our acting museum outreach officer. Erica has been with Museums & Heritage Services as a support assistant and as a museum attendant for over two years, and has experience working at six City of Toronto Historic Sites. Prior to joining M&HS, Erica had a number of internships and contracts with City of Toronto special events, including Nuit Blanche, Luminato Festival and TIFF.

## The Bentway Update

by Kasia Gladki

These are exciting times for The Bentway. First, on March 6, Waterfront Toronto's construction manager Kiewit started their work on site. Trailers and fencing were put up as they readied themselves for initial construction—mainly removals and grading—in the coming weeks. Construction will continue through the winter and spring of 2018. Throughout this process access to the Fort York National Historic Site and the Fort York Visitor Centre, as well as events, will be maintained.

Second, The Bentway Conservancy announced that Julian Sleath has been appointed chief executive officer of The Bentway, effective 27 March 2017. A skilled event planner and producer of theatrical and cultural events in Canada and the UK, and an experienced steward of new performing arts venues, Sleath brings more than 35 years of leadership to The Bentway.

As the first full-time hire for this new not-for-profit organization, Sleath will focus on developing the public space, initiating its operations, securing new resources and partnerships, and bringing it to life with a dynamic year-round program of events that will embrace the unique aspiration and vision of The Bentway Conservancy. Sleath says, "Since hearing of the concept, The Bentway has captured my imagination as to what a modern and

developing city like Toronto can offer to its communities. The project asks us all to reconsider how we view the Gardiner Expressway and our ongoing relationship with city infrastructure. As construction of the design by Ken Greenberg and PUBLIC WORK moves ahead, our task is to deliver an equally compelling program of events and activities. I wish to take this opportunity not only to thank Judy and Wilmot Matthews, the City of Toronto and Waterfront Toronto for their leadership in this project, but also the many Toronto organizations and individuals who have shown their initiative, vision and commitment to making this project happen."

Sleath leaves his post in Alberta as executive director of performing arts at the Banff Centre, where he worked with an array of national and international artists in theatre, dance, opera, and all genres of music.

It's thrilling to watch this project come to life. We look forward to seeing how construction progresses and what our new CEO has in store.

Your support and feedback are invaluable. We're looking forward to speaking with you soon—in the meantime, sign up for our newsletter, check out our [Instagram](#), visit us on [Facebook](#), and follow us on [Twitter](#). For general inquiries feel free to reach out to [hello@thebentway.ca](mailto:hello@thebentway.ca). Please email [construction@thebentway.ca](mailto:construction@thebentway.ca) with any construction-related inquiries.

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

## Fort York Bridge Now Has a Name

Garrison Crossing will be the name of the paths and bridges being built to span the railway tracks from Garrison Common to the Ordnance Triangle, and beyond to a new southward extension of Stanley Park. With its name confirmed by a committee of city council on January 17, the Crossing—two stainless steel bridges by Spanish firm Pedelta, landscaping by DTAH—is due to be open by the end of the year.



Image courtesy of DTAH

# 2017 | Upcoming Events Historic Fort York

Compiled by Richard Haynes



## APRIL

### TO Canada with Love Event

#### Vimy 100 Toronto

Sat. April 8 and Sun. April 9, 10 am to 5 pm

Fort York National Historic Site pays tribute to the men and women who fought for Vimy Ridge on 9 April 1917 with a remembrance ceremony and Great War exhibits. On Saturday experience the sights and sounds of First World War Canadian soldiering through fascinating re-enactor displays of infantry, artillery, cavalry, medicine, music, and food. On Sunday at 2 pm attend a remembrance parade by the Canadian Armed Forces which includes the dedication of a Vimy oak tree.

This event is presented as part of TO Canada with Love, the City of Toronto's year-long program of celebrations, commemorations, and exhibitions honouring Canada's 150th birthday.

Free admission.

### Battle of York Weekend at Fort York

Sat. April 22 and Sun. April 23, 10 am to 5 pm

Spend some time with actual survivors of the Battle of York.

Now on display in the special collections Vault at Fort York's new Visitor Centre are the original Regimental Colours of the 3rd Regiment of York Militia who fought gallantly against American invaders at the Battle of York on 27 April 1813. Produced by the young women of York during the War of 1812, the colours were secreted away to keep them from being seized as a war trophy by American troops. Donated to the City of Toronto in 2009, they have not been on public view for many years but now, after laborious conservation work, they return to the post as a testament to what historians have called Toronto's most traumatic day—the attack and occupation of the Town of York.

Admission: Adult: \$7.96, Senior / Youth: \$4.87, Children (6-12yrs): \$3.76 (plus tax). Children (5 and under) free.

### Sun. April 23, 10 am to 5 pm

Honour the 204th anniversary of the Battle of York fought on 27 April 1813. The fort comes alive with musket firing demonstrations, Georgian cooking in the Officers' Quarters kitchen, site tours, and period animation. Kids can try soldiering drill.

### Battle of York Walking Tours

Sun. April 23, 11 am and 2 pm

In addition to scheduled demonstrations and activities there will be a special walking tour focusing on the Battle of York. Beginning at the canteen/museum store, the tour uses Garrison Common and areas of the original shoreline to highlight the dramatic battle that took place here 204 years ago.

## MAY

### Victoria Day @ Fort York

Mon. May 22, 10 am to 5 pm

What better way to celebrate Victoria Day than to visit the birthplace of Toronto?

Take tours, see demonstrations of Georgian-era cooking techniques in one of the oldest kitchens in Toronto, as well as English country dancing. The kids will enjoy activities such as soldiers' drill.

Admission: Adult: \$12.40, Senior: \$8.85, Youth: \$7.10, Children (6-12yrs): \$5.31 (plus tax).

Children (5 and under) are free.

### Doors Open Toronto

Sat. May 27 and Sun. May 28, 10 am to 5 pm

Fort York opens its doors for this annual celebration of history and architecture. Enjoy special tours of some of Toronto's oldest buildings or stroll the grounds of this National Historic Site.

Free admission.

## JUNE

### Field Trip: Downtown Toronto's Community Music and Arts Festival

Sat. June 3 and Sun. June 4

Toronto's boutique community music and arts festival will be headlined by celebrated Canadian music collective Broken Social Scene and international rock act Phoenix. Other highlights include Ottawa-based DJ crew A Tribe Called Red, Canadian indie favourite Feist, Portugal. The Man, Toronto's own BADBADNOTGOOD, Thundercat, and singer-songwriter James Vincent McMorrow. Children 12 and under are free with an adult ticket-holder. Single day tickets and weekend passes available at: <http://fieldtriplife.com>

**Please note:** Fort York's historic buildings will be closed to the public from June 2nd to June 5th inclusive.

### TO Canada with Love Event

#### National Aboriginal Day and the Indigenous Arts Festival

Wed. June 21 to Sun. June 25, times and admissions vary

Presented by Fort York and the Mississaugas of the New Credit First Nation, National Aboriginal Day followed by the Indigenous Arts Festival will celebrate the very best in Indigenous and Metis culture. Plan to spend the days under the open skies in downtown Toronto enjoying traditional and contemporary music, educational programming, storytelling, dance, theatre, and food. The series of events will energize the grounds of this historic site with powerful ancient traditions and compelling contemporary creations by Indigenous artists. This event is presented as part of TO Canada with Love, the City of Toronto's year-long program honouring Canada's 150th birthday.

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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TORONTO Culture  
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The Fife and Drum is a quarterly publication of The Friends of Fort York and Garrison Common.