

The Fife and Drum

The Newsletter of the Friends of Fort York and Garrison Common v. 10 No. 4 December 2006

Contents



- | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| 3 | The Proof Was in the Pudding | 5 | Site-work Update |
| 4 | Friends' Board Now Includes Henry D'Auchapt | 6 | Early Newspaper Bought for Fort on eBay |
| | | 6 | Upcoming Events |

Compliments of the Season

The Board of Directors wishes all members of the Friends and supporters of Fort York the very best of the Holiday Season. As the Bi-centennial of the War of 1812 approaches, we can look forward to many exciting developments at Fort York and we wish the fort and all of you a very happy and rewarding 2007.



Where the Bodies Lie Buried

by Stephen Otto

Much is made today of the death of our soldiers in Afghanistan. Solemn ceremonies are held with flag draped coffins, the strains of bagpipes are often heard, prayers are said and a tribute to the fallen may be paid by a firing party. But formalities like this were rarely seen when Canada was fighting for its very survival during the war of 1812. Often soldiers were buried where they fell, their graves unmarked, their names unknown.

On the day following the Battle of York of 27 April 1813 the American victors buried scores of casualties, British as well as their own, who died either in the conflict or from their wounds soon after. Counting war casualties is difficult, since reports are often incomplete and conflicting. The Battle of York is no exception. Likely the most reliable estimates of how many were killed, wounded or missing are ones made recently by Robert Malcomson for his forthcoming book on the Battle of York. Addressing only those who were killed on the field or expired soon after, he calculates that 75 men were lost by the British while about 57 U.S. army and navy personnel perished. When deaths among British artificers, their Native allies and the local militia are added, the total number who perished on both sides at York rises to near 140. While other men may have succumbed elsewhere or had lingering deaths, they are not included in this total. Casualties including the dead and wounded were 168 on the British side and about 305 on the American.

Because the magnitude of the job of burying the dead was enormous, most men were laid in mass graves on the battlefield rather than in the Garrison Burying Ground near the fort, now part of Victoria Memorial Square at Portland and Niagara streets. There were some interesting exceptions. The body of Brigadier-General Zebulon Pike was placed in a barrel of spirits and taken back to Sackets Harbor, NY, for burial, while the remains of a Native ally of the British were laid in a grave said by Scadding to be within sight of Yonge Street at Clover Hill, just above Wellesley. Maybe too the bodies of some of the four members of the local militia who fell were recovered by their families for private burial, but this is speculation.

Eli Playter, who lived 'over the Don' and was a lieutenant in the militia, recorded in his diary his impression of these doleful labours: "The Yankies had buried all the Dead & I perceived they had done it very ill." On 11 May, after the U.S. forces had withdrawn from York and a period of rain ended, services of Christian burial were read over these shallow and hasty graves by

Visit our website at www.fortyork.ca



The mortal wounding of Brigadier-General Zebulon Pike during the explosion of the Grand Magazine from a print c. 1815.

the Rev. John Strachan, who also made them more secure with the aid of some townfolk. It is no surprise that the American authorities left no maps or plans to show where they buried the dead. The resting places of a few of the latter have come to be known from discoveries made during the following century.

The first of these occurred in Spring, 1829, when the graves of Capt. Neal McNeale and several of the men he had commanded in the grenadier company of the 8th (King's) Regiment of Foot were exposed by wave action on the Lake Ontario shoreline near the present-day Boulevard Club. They had died opposing the first American landings. When the washout was drawn to the attention of the military authorities at York, they ordered the defenders' remains conveyed with suitable military ceremony to the Garrison Burying Ground for re-interment there.

The next discovery took place near Bathurst and Front Streets, according to *The Globe*, 13 Aug. 1860. Workmen employed to excavate footings for a bridge across the railway there came upon the bones of fifteen soldiers buried in a trench 'opposite Dillon's Tavern.' They were identified from buttons, a bayonet, pieces of an officer's epaulette and some coins as having been both British and American casualties. While the remains were collected carefully, put in a large box, and buried in the Garrison Cemetery by a fatigue party from the Royal Canadian Rifles, the artifacts were entrusted to Sergeant Major Barlow of the 100th Regiment. A few days later he was able to show them to the author Benson J. Lossing who, coincidentally, was visiting Toronto at the time to gather material for his *Pictorial Field-book of the War of 1812*.

The findings in a third instance may or may not have been related to the Battle of York. In August, 1888, some human remains were found near the newly constructed monument marking the site of Fort Rouillé. When they were shown to Dr. Henry Scadding his opinion was that they dated from the decade 1749-59 when the French occupied the site. Fort Rouillé's site was still in 1813 a clearing in the woods along

the shore, and an attractive place for the Americans to dig new graves for those who fell nearby in the Battle of York? Could these have been soldiers' bones that were found, and not those of fur traders? No reports have come to notice telling us how the remains were dealt with.

The fourth discovery of a single grave, made in 1894 near the corner of Adelaide and Berkeley, and well-reported in *The Globe* of 27 August, is enigmatic to say the least. From buttons found with the bones, the remains were identified as those of a soldier of the 8th Regiment. A number of questions followed. Who was the soldier? where was he during the battle? and why was he buried here instead of in the Garrison Cemetery. But there's no uncertainty about where his remains ended up. A misreading of some of the archaeological evidence in the grave led those in charge to believe that the man was Capt. Neal McNeale; they had forgotten or never known about the 1829 washout and reburial. Hence, a new coffin was purchased, the remains put therein and the lot paraded with much ceremony to Union Station where it was sent off to Halifax in care of the King's Liverpool Regiment, successors to the 8th.

Miss Jean Geeson of Parkdale, a teacher with a great interest in Toronto's early history, had cause for concern when in October, 1903, barely two weeks after the Government of Canada agreed to transfer Fort York to the City, the municipality sold a slice of the fort's east bastion to Park, Blackwell Co., meat packers, for an addition to its plant. When she went to see the encroachments in process she scarcely expected to witness 'soldiers' bodies . . . unearthed and their remains carted away with the debris.' Many of the bones were recovered later and were confirmed by one Lieut.-Col. Gravely to be those of five American soldiers whose nationality was known by coins in their pockets. The well-named Gravely had custody of the bones but we do not know what he did with them.

Only two years later, in May, 1905, the last of the gruesome discoveries, a single skeleton, was made by some officers inspecting some trench-digging near the lake midway between Strachan Avenue and Stanley Barracks. The find was made at a depth of about two feet; two short pipes and one corroded brass button had accompanied the soldier to his grave. The newspaper report concluded on a languid note: "It is believed that there were other bodies buried about the spot, but that the lake had washed that part of the land away." Again, the fate of the bones is unknown.

From this brief account comes a recognition that the greater number of nearly 140 soldiers who died at York and were buried in haste were nonetheless well buried. Their graves have not yet been found, and may never be. They slumber eternally in peace.

The Proof Was In The Pudding!

by Dorothy Duncan

It was April of 1969 and the Officers' Quarters at Fort York was scheduled to open to the public after months of research, repair and restoration. The team that had been working on this project was led by Brigadier John McGinnis, the Managing Director of the Toronto Historical Board, Deputy Director and Design Chief Chris Matthews, restoration architect B. Napier Simpson Junior, Curator of Fort York, George Waters and myself. Brigadier McGinnis and members of the Toronto Historical Board decreed that this opening must be unique – a series of historic dinners served at mid-day to the media, members of Toronto City Council and members of the Toronto Historical Board.

My heart lurched when Brigadier McGinnis announced that this new duty fell to me, as well as the expectation that these meals must not only be historic, but tasty as well! I was already knee deep in finishes, furniture and furnishings for the newly restored rooms and knew that only a miracle would transform the building in time for the public opening on April 26, the eve of the anniversary of the Battle of York, April 27, 1813.

I flew to my historic food files and limited number of historic cookery books, searching for historic and tasty recipes. Unknown to Brigadier McGinnis I was also searching for easy solutions, as I was aware that the newly hired interpretive staff, Ruth Keene and Jeanne Lomas, would have to be trained, not only to use the recently restored bake ovens and cooking fireplaces, but look as if they prepared meals there daily! I had lots of questions and very few answers. What could the officers and men at the fort, as well as the residents of York, be eating and drinking in the first quarter of the 19th century? What was available in the town or in the garrison? What could be made palatable to 20th century tastes? These were just a few of my challenges.

After a few panic filled days the Bill or Fare began to take shape, with the exception of a dessert to conclude the meal. I finally settled on Indian Pudding with Hot Rum Sauce as I had found several versions of this recipe in my historic files, spanning the late 18th century and continuing well into our time period. I always began research on a historic dish by trying it at home and serving it to my family for their comments as to palatability. The first attempt was dreadful! I tried another version the following evening and found that it was marginally better. So began the dance of the desserts. Every evening I would make a new version of Indian Pudding as well as a real dessert, each time announcing to my husband Gordon, and daughters, Carol and Barbara, that they could not have the real dessert until they had voted on the latest version of Indian Pudding. Thankfully, the Hot Rum Sauce was never in question, for it was an unqualified success from the first taste.

As the calendar and the clock raced towards the opening it appeared that everyone in the City of Toronto and beyond who received an invitation to one of the dinners planned to attend! The two kitchens became hives of activity as Ruth, Jeanne and I prepared for the wave of guests that would appear on each of the three days. Helen Gagen, Food Editor for the Telegram reported to her readers: "The meals were prepared on the hearth and in the hearth ovens and consisted of apple cider; ham glazed with dry sherry, ginger and celery seeds; scalloped potatoes; old fashioned relishes; green salad with a hot, mustardy dressing; homemade bread and freshly churned butter; Indian Pudding with Sauce; and green and black tea."

Meanwhile, Anne Wanstall, Food Editor for the Toronto Daily Star painted a word picture for her readers: "The new-old kitchen is a copious room with an enormous brick fireplace and huge pine Welsh dressers. The restored floor planks are joined by old-style wooden pegs and bleached white as though from years of constant scrubbing. Over the crackling wood hangs a massive copper kettle and other authentic cooking implements of the age, and the women (Ruth and Jeanne of course) work together at a long wooden table. From this Saturday (April 26, 1969) the Officers' Quarters will be open to the public, and visitors will be able to sample delicious breads and cookies straight from the oven. Admission to the Fort is 75 cents for adults, 25 cents for children, and there is a family rate for two adults and two or more children at \$2."



"Canada's Printing Pioneers," *Provincial's Paper*, v. 31, no. 2, 1966

Anne Wanstall went on to give several of the recipes for the meals and of course Indian Pudding had pride of place in her article. This is the recipe that we finally used for those special meals (scaled down so that visitors could try it at home).

Indian Pudding

*1/4 cup corn meal
2 cups of hot milk
1/4 cup sugar
1/2 teaspoon salt
1/2 teaspoon ground ginger
1/2 teaspoon ground cinnamon
1/4 cup molasses
1 cup cold milk*

Stir the corn meal, a little at a time, into the hot milk and cook over low heat, stirring constantly for 15 minutes or until thick. Remove from heat. Mix the sugar, salt and spices and stir into the corn meal mixture. Add the molasses and cold milk, mixing thoroughly. Pour into a 1 quart casserole or oven proof dish and bake in a preheated oven at low heat for 2 hours. Serve with rum sauce or whipped cream. Serves 6.

The guests as well as the media approved our humble Bill of Fare and our modest attempt to bring some of the foods of the past to the visitors of the present at a time when there was very little interest in our culinary history. Ruth Keene and Jeanne Lomas proved to be perfect interpreters for, as they continued to work in the kitchens, they became “hooked on historic foods” and true pioneers in researching, experimenting, and preparing a multitude of recipes for the visitors to Fort York to enjoy. They were to lay the foundation for the fine historic food programme that Fort York has to-day.

Note: Dorothy Duncan is a distinguished authority on heritage foods and customs who, among other things, has been a museums advisor for the provincial government and the executive director of the Ontario Historical Society. Her most recent book, Canadians At Table: A Culinary History of Canada, has just been published by Dundurn Press.

Friends' Board Now Includes Henry D'Auchapt

In October Henry D'Auchapt was invited to join the board. Under our bylaws the directors are empowered to appoint additions to their numbers between Annual Meetings to maintain board strength. Directors are elected, or re-elected, by the membership at the Annual Meeting in June.

Henry is a vice-president of SCOR Canada Reinsurance, a subsidiary of a global French reinsurer. He has 25 years of experience in the field, which included a temporary posting in France. A graduate of Royal Military College in 1976 with a degree in International Studies, he served as an officer with the 2nd Battalion, Royal Canadian Regiment, based in Gagetown, NB. His duties as an infantry platoon commander included a tour of duty with the UN Peacekeeping Force in Cyprus; later he was deputy-commander of a heavy weapons platoon. His last posting was staff officer at the 5th Canadian Brigade-Group HQ in Valcartier, QC.

Henry's membership on the board of the Wellington Place Neighbourhood Association will strengthen our connections with the area around Victoria Square. His interest in cycling is going to be useful as we position Fort York as a hub for cycling in the downtown. He trains regularly and most recently completed the Friends for Life Bikerally, cycling from Toronto to Montreal as a fundraiser for the Toronto People with AIDS Foundation.



“Canada's Printing Pioneers,” Provincial's Paper, v. 31, no. 2, 1966

As the tax year closes...

We encourage all of you not to forget the Friends of Fort York in your year-end donation list.

Cheques may be made out to The Friends of Fort York and mailed to:

*The Friends of Fort York
Toronto's First Post Office
260 Adelaide Street East, P.O. Box 183
Toronto, Ontario M5A1N1*

Please enclose your address so we can mail your tax receipt. The fort thanks you.

News From

The Birthplace of Toronto

Contributions from the Staff at the Fort

Site-work Update

by David O'Hara, Site Administrator

The Return of the Cannons

Under the watchful eye of the Culture Division's Public Art Conservator, Sandra Lougheed, six of the fort's cannons were taken off site this summer to be conserved by MST Bronze Limited. After careful cleaning, rust-stabilization and repainting, the cannons have been returned recently. However, before some can be placed in their final locations, the existing wooden platforms in the Circular Bastion and North Bastion must be properly reinforced to take the load. Each cannon weighs between 5320 and 7207 lbs., its carriage not included.

Once the platforms are reinforced, one 24 Pounder and one 32 Pounder will be located on iron Garrison Carriages in the Circular Bastion. Another 24 Pounder will sit on a cradle in the North West Bastion awaiting replacement of the wooden truck on its traversing platform.

Three years ago the fort acquired three iron Garrison Carriages cast from moulds made for Parks Canada. Two of these will be used in the Circular Bastion, as above, but the intention is to place the third with a 32 Pounder—maybe a reproduction cannon if one can be located—on the poured-in-place concrete plinth at the corner of Fort York Blvd. and Bathurst Street to advertise the site.

The two 8 inch shell guns from the 1862 Trent Affair Battery will be mounted on cast aluminum cradles placed in the area of the Trent Affair Battery, just inside the south ramparts to the west of the Memorial Area. Additional information regarding the cannons will be provided as details are finalized.

The Strachan Avenue Burial Ground

The memorial wall at the east end of the Strachan Avenue Burial Ground was restored in time for this year's annual Remembrance Day Service. This work was also coordinated by Sandra Lougheed, and included conserving the commemorative plaque presented by the Imperial Order of the Daughters of the Empire (IODE) in 1922. (See *Fife & Drum*, v. 9, no. 5, November 2005)

At the west end of the site where a concrete retaining wall holding up a bermed portion of Strachan Avenue failed in April, 2005, a test on the area at the base of the wall was made this Fall by Archaeological Services Inc. (ASI) to confirm burials did not extend that far west. This will allow the City's Technical Services staff to rebuild the wall with deeper foundations.

Additional rehabilitation work on the Strachan Avenue cemetery, similar to the approach taken at Victoria Memorial Square, will be scheduled in the coming years.

Fort York Entry Gates at Fleet Street

Over the past few months Gordon Lok, Project Coordinator, has managed the restoration of the stone gateposts at the entrance to the site at Fleet Street and Garrison Road, west of the armory. Constructed probably in the 1930s, the gateposts were deteriorating and posed a health and safety concern.

TCHC and Bathurst Bridge Archaeology

Test trenches were completed this Fall by Archaeological Services Inc. on the Toronto Community Housing Corporation site east of Bathurst Street, and also under the Bathurst Street bridge. This work was done to help identify actions to mitigate impacts on archaeological resources of development on the TCHC site and in the reconstruction of the bridge. The findings of the test excavations are expected in early 2007.

The work under the Bathurst Bridge, in particular, was undertaken to inform the planning for both the bridge and park connection below it (See *Fife & Drum*, v. 10, no. 3, Sept. 2006). The design of the parkland connecting Fort York with a projected linear park along the rail corridor between Bathurst and Spadina is being undertaken by du Toit Allsopp Hillier as part of the TCHC development. The part of the new parkland immediately east of Bathurst Street is the site of the original 'Russell' fort and mouth of Garrison Creek. It is included within the national historic site and municipal Heritage Conservation District.

Early Newspaper Bought for Fort on eBay

An interesting item has just been added to Fort York's collections, thanks to the sharp eye of David Juliusson, Program Officer at Fort York, who spotted for sale on eBay a copy of a Boston newspaper, *The Weekly Messenger*, for 14 May 1813. It carried a front-page report on the battle at York, U.C., now Toronto, on 27 April and the death of US Brigadier-General Zebulon Pike. Chief Curator Dr. Carl Benn was consulted and gave his blessing, an anonymous donor came forward to back the bidding to an agreed maximum and the chase was on! Bidding closed on December 11 and David was the successful purchaser at US\$44.00, which Carl describes as "a surprisingly low price." It is expected the newspaper will be used in an exhibit on the Battle of York proposed for the Blue Barracks.

The fort has very limited funds for acquisitions to enrich its collections. Hence, gifts or, as in this case, backing to purchase things that are needed to interpret Toronto's history are welcome. Anyone wanting to help add to Fort York's collections should contact Dr. Carl Benn, chief curator for the City of Toronto Museums & Heritage Services, tel. 416-338-0028 or <cbenn@toronto.ca> He'd be happy to discuss opportunities with potential donors.

2006 Upcoming Events Historic Fort York

Compiled by Melanie Garrison

JANUARY

Recreation in Miniature of the Battle of Crysler's Farm Saturday, Jan. 6, 2007, 11:00 a.m.

A sculpted terrain of the actual battlefield is the backdrop and each military unit that participated will be represented. The rules for the wargame are simple and will be taught. Those with an interest in military history will see first hand the interplay of early 19th Century military tactics and weaponry. New participants welcome. Those interested contact Michael Manning at (905) 826-1200 or at michael.manning@rogers.com Casual observers welcome.

Regular admission rates apply.

Queen Charlotte's Birthday Ball:

Rule Britannia, Britannia rule the waves!

Saturday, Jan. 20, 2007, 1 p.m. to 10:30 p.m.

Entertaining in the Canadas in the late 18th and early 19th centuries always included a ball in January to celebrate the Queen's Birthday. Our event echoes this tradition with a day-long celebration of music, food and dance. This year, Queen Charlotte honours His Majesty's senior service—the Royal Navy and the Provincial Marine in the Canadas. Plan on attending the whole day for \$95.00 and save \$15! The full day includes an afternoon English Country dance workshop, a presentation by noted naval historian Victor Suthren; a rum tasting; an elegant Georgian-style buffet supper; and an evening ball with live musicians. Beginners are welcome. No partners required. Costumes are encouraged, but not necessary.

\$95.00 (all day), \$65.00 (dinner/ball only), \$25.00 (dance workshop & speaker) or \$20.00 (rum tasting). Pre-registration required.

FEBRUARY

The annual Volunteer Appreciation Brunch is in the planning stages for February. Details will be released as they become available.

MARCH

An Evening of the Music of Thomas Arne (1710-78): Celebrated English Composer

Part of Fort York's Authentic Experience Series Saturday, March 3rd, 2007, 7 p.m. to 9 p.m.

A recreation of a late 18th century/early 19th century salon recital featuring authentic vocals by soprano Antonella Cavallaro accompanied by a keyboardist on a reconstructed harpsichord. The event will also feature historical interpretation and background interspersed throughout. This event will be a ticketed, pre-sold event with price likely being \$20. The event will feature a cash bar, and select hors d'oeuvres (mix of historical and modern).

March Break

Mon, Mar. 12 to Fri. Mar. 16, 2007, 10 a.m. to 3 p.m.

Family drop-in style event with activities including Soldiers' Drill, Officers' Sword Drill, Cooking in the Officers' Kitchen, Discovery Gallery, Dress Up, and Guided Tours.

For reservations and ticket prices call 416-392-6907 after January 15

Fabled City – Annual Festival of Storytelling organized by the Toronto School of Storytelling Sunday, Mar. 25, 2007, 1:30 to 3:00 p.m.

The story to be told at Fort York by a professional storyteller is entitled: James Guidney's Composition. James Guidney was an English drum major in the Napoleonic wars. He spent the latter days of his life drumming up business in the streets of Birmingham for what he called his "composition", a cure for coughs and colds. In recent months, Fort York has been fortunate to have acquired James Guidney's drum for its collection. We are pleased to present his story - another "composition".

Price: \$12 adults; \$10 Seniors; \$8 Children - Your ticket includes period refreshments. Pre-registration is required. 416-392-6907 Ext.100

APRIL

Launching Event for the Friends of Fort York Foundation Date To Be Announced

Mayor Miller's Community Clean-up Day - Annual Event Date To Be Announced (probably Sat. Apr. 21)

Please join the Friends of Fort York and Garrison Common for our Fort York clean-up. (meet at 10:00 a.m. at the Blue Barracks) We will be picking up litter starting at 10:00 a.m. and working until approximately 1:00 p.m. Coffee will be ready at 10:00 a.m. in the Blue Barracks. Please bring your own gloves and wear appropriate clothing for the day such as gloves, boots and long-sleeve shirts. Items such as bug repellent, bottled water, sunscreen and a pail for sharp objects can be useful (Garbage bags will be provided).

Battle School

Saturday, Apr. 28 – Sunday, Apr. 29, 2007

Fort York will play host to a number of re-enactors who will be honing their weapons skills in preparation for the summer military re-enactment season. These weekend warriors entertain and edify crowds all over Canada and the U.S. by voluntarily participating in historically significant events that recall Canada's exciting history. Fort York's annual Battle School is an opportunity for the re-enactment and Museum community to share information and safety tips for the benefit of all.

Regular admission rates apply.

Battle of York Commemoration

Sunday April 29, 2007, 10:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.

Tours, kids' drill, military music.

Regular admission rates apply.

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

 **HISTORIC FORT YORK**
THE BIRTHPLACE OF TORONTO

Graphic Design: Tempest Design Group Inc.