

# The Fife and Drum

The Newsletter of the Friends of Fort York and Garrison Common

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## Contents



- 1 Under the Floor in the South Soldiers' Barracks
- 2 The Battles for the Preservation of Fort York, 1905-32
- 3 Eva MacDonald Appointed to the Board
- 4 Passing of Robert Malcomson
- 4 In Review: *Niagara 1814: The Final Invasion*
- 5 Charles Fothergill's Provincial Museum on the Garrison Common: A Dream Too Far
- 9 Administrator's Report
- 10 Upcoming Events

## Under the Floor in the South Soldiers' Barracks

by Andrew M. Stewart and Eva MacDonald

When in Rome, each of us has had the opportunity to look down into the extraordinary *area sacra* – containing the exposed foundations of 2000-year-old buildings, among them the steps where Julius Caesar was struck down on the Ides of March. Late this past winter, on the anniversary of that event in Roman history, a group of archaeologists (directed by Andrew Stewart of Strata Consulting and Eva MacDonald of Archaeological Services Inc.) excavated part of a room of the South Soldiers' Barracks near the west gate of Fort York.

Archaeological deposits at the fort, one of Canada's largest and most significant urban archaeological sites, have great integrity. They provide an unbroken record of cultural deposition, evidence of past buildings and events extending downwards through various layers to the natural ground surface on which the garrison was established in 1793.



Hearthstones exposed in front of fireplace.

The South Soldiers' Barracks housed generations of soldiers and their families following its construction in the summer of 1815, two years after the garrison had been destroyed by U.S. soldiers. By 1865, the room in which we were digging, the southern of three rooms in this barracks, was a school for the Royal Artillery. (see *Fife and Drum*, March 2009, p.7)

Our excavations were open only for about five days before the individual squares within this 10 by 6 metre room were buried again, in time for a new floor to be installed in the south room. Five days of digging through broken pottery, glass and rusty nails do not exactly make a new *area sacra*. The remains of Upper Canada's first parliament buildings, under a carwash at Front and Parliament Streets, or the foundations of the New Fort under the parking lot around Stanley Barracks, would be our best contenders for that comparison. Nevertheless, every new excavation has the potential to change our understanding of history. Previous knowledge of Fort York's archaeological evidence is contained in about thirty thick reports on work expertly directed by David Spittal and Catherine Webb over ten years starting in the late 1980s. Near the South Soldiers' Barracks, their work uncovered hints of a third blockhouse that was being built in 1814 when it may have burned accidentally.

Inside the south room of the barracks, excavating nearly a quarter of its floor area, we recorded seventeen layers (or "lots") to a maximum depth of more than a metre. Some were small, shallow deposits of soil seen in single, 1 by 1 metre excavation squares – perhaps the remains of floor boards. Others are deep, occurring in many squares across the entire room. A thick, extensive layer of organic silty sand (lot 4), rich in artifacts and demolition debris, lay directly below a layer of builder's sand laid down in the 1930s to support a concrete floor. The presence of children in the fort is attested by stone marbles found in lot 4 in several units. Smoking pipe fragments were common, including a mustachioed human effigy with shoulder epaulets above the bowl spur.

*The Editors regret the late arrival of this issue on account of the strike by municipal workers, but will make up time between now and the end of the year so our December issue arrives on time.*

The range of domestic artifacts including animal bone from discarded meals and ceramic sherds indicates that this is a fill layer, originating in a midden or dump (outside the building and brought in for construction) as these things would not have slipped through the original wooden floor when the barracks was in use. The dressmaker's straight pins and buttons that were found in some units were, however, small enough that they could have been lost during activities inside the room.

We also exposed some large boulders from the original hearth apron in front of one of two fireplaces. The hearth was badly disturbed, the rocks scattered by work in the 1930s in advance of laying the concrete floor. The limited (original) width of the apron suggests that little cooking was done here – most occurred in a separate cookhouse. Bridget Wranich, Senior Domestic Interpreter, and her team of volunteer historic cooks who employ the impressive fireplace and wide hearth in the Officers' Mess kitchen, were able to lend their expertise and judgement in the interpretation of this feature during the excavation.

Perhaps the most exciting find, at a deeper level, in lot 10, was a rare button from the 89<sup>th</sup> Regiment which served at York from November 1814 to February 1815, just before construction of the South Soldiers' Barracks. It is possible that some soldiers from the 89<sup>th</sup> stayed behind to fill up the ranks of the incoming regiment.



Brass button of the 89<sup>th</sup> Regiment.

Part of the challenge is in connecting layers across many isolated squares, as this project was too limited in scope to allow the whole room to be excavated. Is a layer of silty clay containing mid-nineteenth century ceramic sherds, iron nails and ash at one end of the room equivalent to a layer of clayey silt containing a slightly wider range of materials (perhaps with brick fragments; perhaps with an earlier average date) at the other end? This is the kind of distinction on which our interpretation of the room's history turns.

## *The Battles for the Preservation of Fort York, 1905–32*

by David Roberts

The campaigns to save Fort York present a saga of opposing public interests, political vacillation, commercial encroachment, and contextual issues of identity. In the 1840s Fort York had been replaced by new fortifications, named Stanley Barracks in 1893. Though the "Old Fort" continued to serve military purposes, by century's end it displayed scattered relics, an ill-kept dirt road, and run-down storage facilities and living quarters, including the birthplace of burlesque star Florence Bennett.

Still, Toronto recognized the Old Fort as an important site. The Canadian Club was allowed to place markers there; elsewhere, veterans erected a memorial to the defenders of Canada during the War of 1812, among them those killed at Fort York. The city applied to the federal government in 1889 for possession of the fort but it was not until 1903 that an agreement was reached with a sympathetic Department of Militia and Defence, which bound the city to a course of preservation. The transfer was to be concluded once the militia had constructed new buildings.

Between 1905 and 1909 preservation was derailed by efforts to run a street railway through the fort to the Canadian National Exhibition. In the midst of the dispute, which pitted tenacious historical societies against wily railway officials, the militia department gave the city five cannon once mounted at the fort, with the intention "that they shall again be placed in position when the Old Fort is restored." That same year (1908), the property was encroached upon by the Grand Trunk Railway on the north and the construction of the Park-Blackwell meat-packing plant at the southeast, where an old guardhouse was torn down. An undeterred Ontario Historical Society produced a comprehensive plan in 1909 to restore the fort, the streetcar line was put on hold, and federal pressures culminated in the actual transfer of the fort to the city.

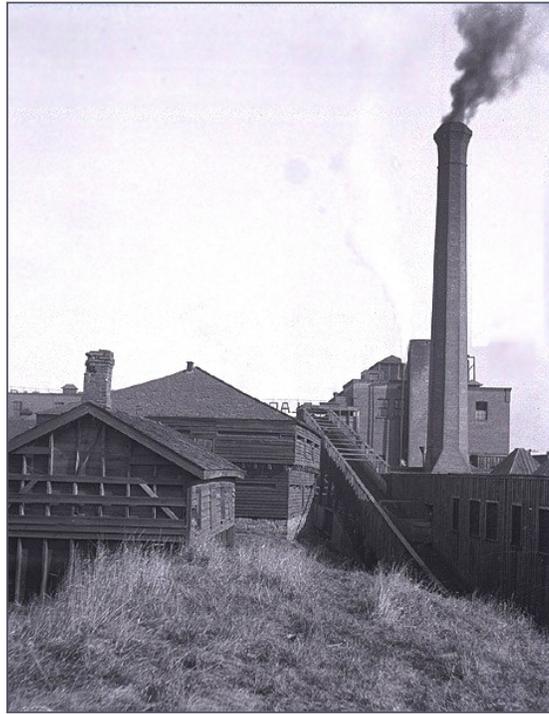
The movement was enlivened by press coverage and publications that drew attention to both the fort and the approaching centennial of the 1812 war. C. W. Jefferys' famous sketch of "The Spirit of 1812," ghostly redcoats blocking the street railway, appeared in the *Toronto Daily Star* in October 1905. Jean Earle Geeson's pivotal *The old fort of Toronto, 1793–1906*, L. H. Irving's *Officers of the British forces in Canada*, E. A. Cruikshank's documentary collections, and legend-feeding biographies of General Isaac Brock are also representative.

Toronto's takeover of the fort was no prelude, however, to implementation of the OHS plan. Committee scrutiny and stringent budgetary allocation produced minimal maintenance. The fort still housed ordnance stores and the 9th Battery Field Artillery, and responsibility for conditions there bounced between the city and the militia, which pressed for repairs, and restraint. In 1911 one officer complained that

the parks department was using the old ramparts for infill along the lake-shore. As the anniversary of 1812 edged closer, organizations such as the Women's Canadian Historical Society of Toronto revived the historical call; fresh debate about the war and related monuments ensued. In January 1912, city council, with some bluster, felt full restoration would provide fitting commemoration. Some work was undertaken that summer and fall. Between 1912 and 1914 funds were allocated to the roadway, which was "in an almost impassable condition" as a result of wagon and truck traffic, and repairs were made to the gun shed, blockhouse, remaining guardhouse, and barracks. New gates were pictured in the *Star* on 25 August 1913. Literary support kept pace. The indomitable Barlow Cumberland, who had led the OHS in the earlier campaign, wrote about the 1813 battle of York for a series marking the centennial. Other heroic figures, among them Laura Secord, Brock, and the York Rangers, also received attention, but for the fort, this celebratory momentum would soon stall.

The use of the grounds by the militia gained priority as war clouds in Europe darkened. In August 1914 the city turned over the fort road to the military. Strengthening floors in old buildings for storage purposes and installing telephone poles trumped conservation. So too did the CNE's needs, which again rendered the fort vulnerable. In the summer of 1916 the sad state of the roadway, which led to the exhibition, and the reputed impact on the fort grounds of its new eastern entrance sparked renewed debate. That year, in a seeming compromise, a streetcar line to the CNE sliced through the fort's northern defensive wall. At the same time the road was widened and diggings from harbour improvements were dumped on the grounds. Sharing the view of acceptable reduction, the *Star* reasoned that the railway, regardless of its intrusion, gave exhibition goers "the historic scene of the defence of Toronto from American invaders over a century ago." Following the war, the fort continued to be used for military needs, though it was little more than a subsidiary of Stanley Barracks.

City attitudes soon shifted once more. Efforts by the Toronto Harbor Commission to revive a programme of restoration were rebuffed by officials intent on guarding municipal turf. A battery was restored and the packinghouse was demolished. By 1926 the city's continued re-engagement had been secured through the concerted push of the St George's Society, St John's Garrison Church, and the Military, National, Historical and Patriotic Societies. In 1931, in the midst of the Great Depression, the city agreed to let the Women's Canadian



Fort York showing the encroachment of Park Blackwell Meat packing plant. Date Nov. 20, 1908 by M.O. Hammond (courtesy of Archives of Ontario, image # 10000766)

Historical Society erect a cairn to the 1812 war and new gates at the fort's western entrance. The street railway to the north was rerouted and small but important parcels of land around the fort were acquired. With Toronto's own anniversary year (1934) nearing, a joint parks and centennial committee adopted in 1932 a "historically correct" plan for the fort's full restoration. Though the Board of Control initially approved only work on the ramparts, the centennial, the need for relief work during the depression, and a strong restoration committee drove a comprehensive project forward in 1933-34.

Further Reading: Carl Benn, *Historic Fort York, 1793-1993* (Toronto, 1993); Gerald Killan, "The first Old Fort York preservation movement, 1905-1909: an episode in the history of the Ontario Historical Society," *Ontario History*, 64 (1972): 162-80.

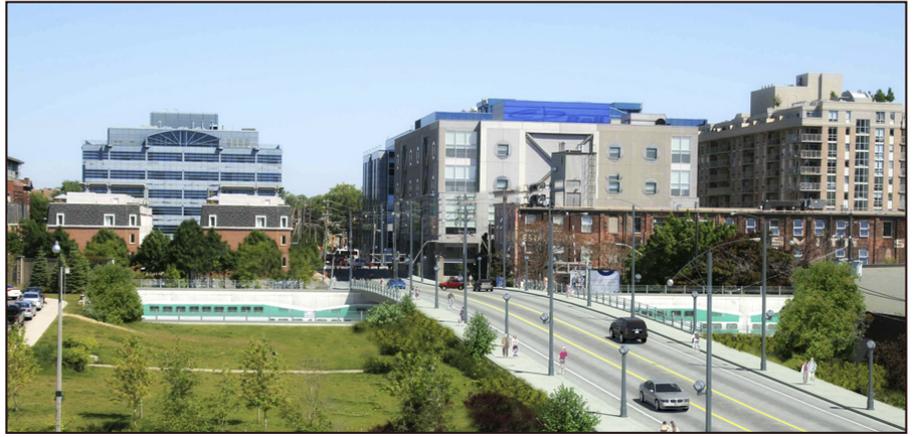
A former editor and historian with the *Dictionary of Canadian Biography/Dictionnaire biographique du Canada*, David Roberts lives in Scarborough.

## *Eva MacDonald appointed to the Board of the Friends of Fort York and Garrison Common*

A professional archaeologist with twenty-four years of experience in Ontario, Eva MacDonald works at Archaeological Services Inc. where she is manager of Historical Archaeology and Senior Archaeologist. In this role she develops corporate policy with respect to the evaluation, excavation, interpretation, and analysis of historical sites, as well as managing two field crews. Interested in researching and writing about material culture, immigrant communities in Ontario, and settlement patterns on rural nineteenth-century homesteads, she recently guest-edited a collection of articles for the journal *Ontario Archaeology* 83/84 (2007), which explores the notion of best practice in historical archaeology. In 2001 she joined the Volunteer Historic Cooking Group of the Culture Division, City of Toronto, and enjoys cooking on the wood stove as a costumed volunteer cook at Mackenzie House.

## Strachan Bridge

In an impressive show of common sense and speedy agreement, the new board of Metrolinx, the provincial body responsible for building a rail link to the airport and beyond, including a grade separation at Strachan Avenue, concurred with the City of Toronto whose position argued by Deputy Mayor Joe Pantalone was that lowering the Georgetown rail corridor so the road bridge could be lower was better than what GO Transit had advocated previously. GO's proposed road bridge would have cut off all cross streets south of King and compromised the delivery of hogs to Quality Meat's plant at the foot of Tecumseh Street. The Friends played a small part in the solution, having been among the first to note that a higher bridge which put Quality Meats out of business would have left over 700 highly skilled workers out of a job and cost more in compensation than the difference between the two bridging solutions.



Perspective View of Strachan Avenue Crossing. (courtesy of du Toit Allsopp Hillier Architects)

## Passing of Robert Malcomson

by Stephen Otto

The Friends of Fort York lost a great supporter and friend on July 21 when Robert Malcomson died in St. Catharines, aged 60, from a brain tumor that beset him for the last 17 months. Canada's dean of historians of the War of 1812, Bob won the North American Society for Oceanic History's John Lyman book prize three times for three of his works: *Lords of the Lakes: The Naval War on Lake Ontario* (1998); *Warships of the Great Lakes* (2001); and *Capital in Flames* (2008). The last, an account of the Battle of York that was fought across Fort York, was launched at the fort in April 27, 2008 (the 195<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Battle) during a remission from cancer that Bob enjoyed then.

He was also very generous in contributing articles to The Friends' newsletter, *Fife & Drum*, on no fewer than a half dozen occasions over the last year and a half, each piece a polished insight into some less well known aspect of the war as it touched York.

My own first warm memory of Bob was in 2003 when I was researching an article on Robert Irvine, an early artist who painted York from the island, then a peninsula, in 1816. In the course of two or three evenings Bob, his brother Tom, Gary Gibson of Amherst, NY, Jonathan Moore of Parks Canada, Peter Rindlisbacher of Amherstburg and I exchanged over 100 e-mails to identify the year the ships in York harbour were painted from evidence of recent changes in their deck configurations. Said Gary Gibson, "In my opinion Bob was the finest War of 1812 scholar Canada, and probably the world, has ever produced. His works have a featured place on my shelves and on the shelves of every other War of 1812 historian I know."

Bob taught elementary school within the Niagara South and Niagara District boards for 34 years before retiring in 2002.

He leaves his wife Janet, two daughters, Carrie and Melanie, and two granddaughters to whom The Friends express deepest sympathy in their unjustly early loss.

## In Review

### *Niagara 1814: The Final Invasion*

Jon Latimer. *Niagara 1814: The Final Invasion*. Oxford: Osprey Publishing, 2009. 96pp. paperback; ISBN 9781846034398. \$22.95

by Ross Fair

The late Jon Latimer's detailed study of the American invasion of the Niagara frontier during the War of 1812's last year is a lavishly illustrated book that provides a treasury of information regarding the American and British officers, the men they led, the uniforms they wore, and the weapons they used. Large topographical diagrams for each battle, clarifying British and American formations and movements, are a most useful reference.

That said, Latimer might have better contextualized his detailed military accounts with some consideration of the Niagara frontier itself. Oddly the Lake Champlain theatre creeps into his study, yet the disaffection within the war-torn Niagara peninsula receives only brief attention via mentions of Joseph Willcocks and of raiding parties. A conclusion that jumps to matters surrounding the Treaty of Ghent also leaves the reader wishing Latimer had instead provided a conclusion equally meticulous as his battle narratives to better assess what consequences the last year of conflict had upon the local Niagara communities, the war, Great Britain, and the United States.

*Dr. Fair is an adjunct professor in the Department of History, Ryerson University*

*News From*

# *The Birthplace of Toronto*

*Contributions from the Staff at the Fort*

## **Charles Fothergill's Provincial Museum on the Garrison Common: A Dream Too Far**

*by Ulana Baluk*

The public opening of the Royal Ontario Museum in March, 1914, was the culmination of almost a century of efforts to establish a provincial museum in Toronto. The most comprehensive, ambitious and tragic of these was Charles Fothergill's plan to develop a publicly-funded museum in the 1830s. Fothergill made significant contributions to the cultural, political and entrepreneurial enterprises of the young city but is now remembered as one of Canada's first ornithologists.

Charles Fothergill was born in York, England in 1782 into a distinguished Quaker family that had made significant contributions to art, medicine and science. His father, an ivory and comb manufacturer, was the nephew of the eminent physician, naturalist and philanthropist, Dr. John Fothergill (1712-1780). His mother was the sister of the renowned artist and traveller, James Forbes FRS (1749-1819), whose four-volume *Oriental Memoirs* documenting seventeen years of studies of the culture, flora and fauna of India was published in 1813.

Fothergill was drawn to the study of natural history, particularly ornithology, from early childhood. At the age of seventeen he published *Ornithologica Britannica*, an eleven-page folio listing 301 species of British birds. As a young adult, Fothergill rejected his father's trade, pursuing various careers and entrepreneurial ventures with little success. In 1804, he moved to London to pursue a short-lived career as a stage actor but was soon disappointed that there were few opportunities in the theatre world. Throughout 1805 and 1806 he travelled to northern Yorkshire as well as the Orkney and Shetland Islands to prepare a publication about the birds of the northern isles of Britain. Although he had engaged the noted engravers Thomas Bewick, Samuel Howitt and John Thurston to illustrate this work, only his introductory *Essay on the philosophy, study, and use of natural history* was published in 1813.

After his marriage to Charlotte Nevins in 1811, Fothergill began studying medicine in Edinburgh but soon thereafter was forced to flee to the Isle of Man to escape creditors. Here he turned to farming, but his investments were destroyed



*Charles Fothergill (1834) by Grove Sheldon Gilbert. With permission of the Royal Ontario Museum © ROM.*

by the collapse of agricultural markets after the Napoleonic Wars. These financial problems eventually led to his decision to emigrate and in July, 1816, Fothergill sailed to Canada with his wife and their two infant sons. In 1817, he settled in Smith's Creek, Port Hope, where he opened a general store and became the first postmaster of the village. By 1821 he had opened a brewery and distillery in Port Hope as well as a saw mill and grist mill at Scott's Mills.

Throughout his years in Upper Canada, Charles Fothergill played an active part in local politics. He was a member of the Land Board and a Magistrate of the Court of Requests. He served as King's Printer of Upper Canada from January 1, 1822 to January 31, 1826, publishing the only official government paper, the *Upper Canada Gazette*. In 1822, he started an unofficial newspaper, the *Weekly Register*, and in its May 30, 1822 issue, published the first nature column to appear in any Canadian newspaper. His wife and an infant son died in 1822 while Fothergill himself contracted a lingering illness; in 1825 he married Eliza Richardson of Pickering.

In 1824, he was elected to Parliament, campaigning under

the motto "AGRICULTURE and INTERNAL IMPROVEMENT, without the aid of those who EAT more than they EARN." During the session of 1825-26, Fothergill was recognized as a leading member of parliamentary opposition.

It was once said of Charles Fothergill that he "had every sense but good sense." Although he voted against the administration on a number of occasions, Fothergill was equally critical of William Lyon Mackenzie, branding him a "crack-brained demagogue" and "a caterer of loathsome food for depraved appetites." His financial extravagances and high charges for printing, along with political reasons, led to Fothergill's dismissal from his position as King's Printer in 1826.

Throughout these difficult times, Fothergill remained committed to the study of natural history. In 1830, he petitioned the governments of Upper and Lower Canada, the Hudson's Bay Company, the Natural History Society of Montreal and the Literary and Historical Society of Quebec to fund a three-year expedition to the Pacific Coast to explore the possibilities of settling the West and to study the natural resources *en route*. He continued his own studies of the unique animals of Upper Canada and in 1830 was awarded a silver medal by the Natural History Society of Montreal for his *An essay descriptive of the quadrupeds of British North America*. His essay about the dangers facing the Lake Ontario salmon fishery was read at the Literary and Historical Society of Quebec in 1835.

Nor was his commitment to art ignored. In 1834, Fothergill joined the Society of Artists and Amateurs of Toronto founded by John G. Howard. Among the thirteen associates of the Society were Paul Kane and Captain (later Sir Richard) Bonnycastle. Fothergill contributed ten watercolours of English birds, scenery, plants and fishes for the Society's inaugural exhibition.

In 1831, Fothergill together with Drs. William (Tiger) Dunlop and William Rees formed the York Literary and Philosophical Society to "investigate the natural and civil history of the colony and the whole interior as far as the Pacific and Polar Seas, throughout the Animal, Vegetable and Mineral Kingdoms, also to promote the study of Natural History, Natural Philosophy and the Fine Arts." The Society, conceived partly as a museum, was interested in collecting the records of "the aboriginal cultures." However, it faced competition from its inception: at the same time, a Mechanics' Institute was set up in York with the intention of building a public library and to promote the "diffusion of useful knowledge by means of lectures and experiments." The inaugural address of the Society was delivered by Rev. Dr. Strachan but it collapsed in 1833.

Despite the collapse of the Society or perhaps because of it, Fothergill was determined to establish a museum in Upper Canada. The establishment of a Toronto museum had the potential to combine Fothergill's passion for natural history with his need to provide a sound financial footing for his growing family. Fothergill's 1823 visits to Peale's Museum in Philadelphia and Scudder's Museum in New York City had provided him with proof that museums could be profitable

ventures. In 1810, more than 33,000 visitors (the equivalent of one-third of the population of Philadelphia) had visited Peale's Museum. Although Peale's and Scudder's museums were privately owned, both enjoyed rent-free premises thanks to government support. Fothergill hoped to minimize his expenses and increase his chances for success by petitioning for a publicly-funded museum in Toronto.

In April, 1835, Fothergill published an address announcing his hope to establish a Lyceum of Natural History and the Fine Arts in Toronto. It was a disgrace that the provincial capital had no museum, when every American city boasted one. He announced the appointment of a curator of the new facility, an unnamed individual who had extensive experience in the museum world, having worked at Peale's museum in New York and at the British Museum.

Fothergill assured the public that he had already acquired collections of: "Several hundreds of well preserved specimens of Natural History; of Quadrupeds; Birds; Fish; Reptiles; Insects; Shells; Fossils; Minerals; Vegetables; &c &c., and a few good PICTURES, and other valuable subjects of VERTU. Are already in store for exhibition in the proposed INSTITUTE; quite sufficient to make a respectable beginning..."

He was most interested in acquiring natural history specimens, particularly those native to British America. Collectors were encouraged to donate their specimens outright or place them "in temporary deposit" with the assurance they could be withdrawn at any time. In an effort to entice donors, Fothergill offered to display donors' names prominently and to feature their names in a museum catalogue to be published at a later date.

Fothergill praised the study of nature as "The Book of Nature is opened only in all its magnitude and power to the clear and intellectual head and to the uncorrupted heart; - to the foolish and sordid, or the utterly dissipated, it is as a treasure hermetically sealed; and all that is vast and comprehensive in design, and excellent in contrivance, and admirable in arrangement; and all that is most beautiful or interesting in united simplicity and grandeur in the widely extended scenes which surround us, must to the uninitiated, remain forever in obscurity or utter darkness."

Until a suitable building could be custom built, Fothergill had engaged "commodious" rooms in the centre of Chewett's Buildings, near the British Coffee House on King Street. A picture gallery and portraits of eminent individuals would form a part of this institution. In describing the mandate of the Lyceum Fothergill turned to Sir William Jones, proclaiming that it be dedicated to the study of "MAN and NATURE, whatever is performed by the one, or produced by the other!"

Fothergill's emphasis on natural history as the foundation of the museum collection seems unusual to twenty-first-century museum goers. However, it was typical of most North American museums of the nineteenth century. Unlike their European counterparts, North American museums had no reminders of an illustrious past. The lack of artistic traditions and mistrust of art as a decadent luxury further limited the scope of these early collections. While many public museums in Europe were created from the collections of monarchs,

early North American museum owners had to establish their own collections. These early collections responded to a public which was curious and eager to see the objects and peoples encountered in a period of ever expanding travel, exploration and settlement. As the continent was mostly uncharted, and much of its flora and fauna were as-yet not described scientifically, natural history specimens were of interest to foreign visitors and settlers alike. An additional factor influencing these collections was the rapid disappearance of many species as settlement encroached upon their habitats. But there were also pragmatic reasons to highlight natural history: not only could natural history specimens be acquired readily by hunting, but a thorough knowledge of a nation's natural resources could contribute to the advancement of its economic potential.

In January, 1836, Lieutenant Governor Sir Francis Bond Head succeeded Sir John Colborne. Fothergill introduced himself to Bond Head in a letter dated June, 1836. He requested land either on the military reserve adjacent to Fort York or on Toronto Island to be the site of his proposed institution. Fothergill's request was referred to the Chief Ordinance Officer in Toronto, Captain Richard Bonnycastle, for report. In August, Fothergill again wrote to Bond Head, requesting four to five acres to accommodate the botanical and zoological gardens now included in his proposal. Bonnycastle, a supporter of science (he had proposed the construction of an astronomical observatory in the city in 1836), recommended a grant of only two acres on the military reserve suggesting two more acres when the reserve was laid out in streets. Fothergill complained that this was too small to accommodate his new plans.

William Rees, who had also unsuccessfully petitioned for public funding for a museum in 1835, wanted to join Fothergill in this venture but his offer was rejected. Fothergill wanted the venture to be his alone as he had suffered "very foolish and prodigal expense" in assembling his collection.

Confident that the grant was forthcoming, Fothergill issued a revised prospectus for the Lyceum on December 13, 1836. While it re-iterated most of his earlier hopes for the project, Fothergill now announced that he was creating a repository for specimens "that might otherwise be lost or which are so widely scattered amongst private individuals as to be but of little service to the advancement of science in this country." He used the address to announce that a piece of ground at the west end of the city had already been surveyed and would be the eventual site of the necessary buildings.

As interest in Phrenology and Comparative Anatomy was developing, Fothergill asked that appropriate specimens illustrating these subjects be submitted. As well, geological specimens were requested. Of particular interest were "those fossil remains which show us, beyond controversy, what manner of beings have sported upon, and what vegetables have clothed a former world – upon the remains of which we now live, move, and philosophize." The Lyceum would now include Botanical and Zoological Gardens as these had proved extremely popular in London and other large English towns.

A Picture Gallery would be created "especially for subjects connected with Science, and Portraits of Individuals." Lastly, Fothergill appealed for "INDIAN ANTIQUITIES, ARMS, DRESSES, UTENSILS and whatever may tend to illustrate, and make permanent, all that we can know of the Aborigines of this great continent: a people who are rapidly passing away, and becoming as though they had never been; who are, indeed, with all their striking characteristics of stirring interest, vanishing like a vapour from the face of the earth, and whose very history, if we do not immediately attempt to preserve what yet remains, will be lost in forgetfulness..." Fothergill encouraged Communications about the institution while specimens were to be directed to "commodious rooms engaged in the city."

Fothergill's revised prospectus reflects his knowledge of museum trends throughout North America and England. Early nineteenth-century museums sought to recreate the world in miniature and were repositories for every art and science. They revealed the boundlessness of nature and of God's creation while celebrating human achievements in taming the natural world. As products of Enlightenment thinking, they proclaimed the unity and utility of knowledge. In an era when print lithography was too costly to mass produce pictorial images and when international travel was dangerous and too costly for the average citizen to consider, museum collections offered their visitors glimpses of the past and of the vastness of nature. But museums also competed with popular education movements, such as mechanics' institutes. Lectures, scientific demonstrations and even artifact collections were prominent features of this movement. As a result, reliance upon science and edification was insufficient to ensure the longevity or appeal of many museums. In the absence of government or philanthropic support, museums relied upon ticket receipts to survive. Special presentations were critical to their financial stability. By the late 1820s, live entertainments, both human and animal, were featured regularly in proprietary museums along with scientific specimens. Fothergill's inclusion of a zoological garden featuring live animals and his desire to create a sheet of water, possibly in the shape of Niagara Falls, was consistent with current museum practice and demonstrated his interest in appealing to the greatest number of visitors.

Shortly after the publication of the second prospectus, Fothergill petitioned the legislature for a grant or loan of £2000 to assist with the construction of the building. On January 20, 1837, the Select Committee report submitted by Allan MacNab recommended that Fothergill's petition be supported. MacNab noted that Upper Canada had no comparable museum and that the strength of nations depended on an accurate knowledge of their natural resources. Private individuals willing to establish public institutions were to be encouraged as merely a loan was requested. MacNab concluded that the completion of a museum would be an ornament to the city and a credit to the province.

The report documented the existing collection, noting that it included "nearly *all* the *birds*, and *most* of the quadrupeds, known to the Canadas, with many fish, reptiles, insects and shells; a number of the most beautiful birds of South

America, with more than forty beautifully colored snakes, the *Iguannah*, and two small Alligators from that country; a very fine specimen of the Sharp-nosed Crocodile from the river Ganges, in Asia; a numerous collection of Minerals, Fossils, and Geological specimens. Indian antiquities, Arms, Dresses, & tc, a small but valuable collection of Coins, and about a hundred very choice specimens of Art, by the best masters, both ancient and modern; together with a number of living animals which have been collected and maintained at considerable expense. In all, Mr Fothergill's contributions amount to nearly two thousand specimens, got together at a cost of certainly not less than £1500." It was further noted that Fothergill's collection was "nearly if not quite equal to the original stock of the British Museum."

The report commented favourably that a number of other donors had come forward with offers to augment Fothergill's own collection. Captain Bonnycastle had promised 3000 mineral, fossil and geological specimens classed and arranged in scientific order. Major Raines had offered to donate ancient and modern coins. More than 1000 shells from around the world were promised by another donor. Nor was the art gallery to be neglected. An unidentified supporter in England had promised to forward casts from the originals of four of the most celebrated Greek and Roman sculptures: the *Venus*, *Apollo*, *Gladiator Repellens*, and the *Hercules* as soon as the building was ready. The Literary and Historical Society of Quebec and the Natural History Society of Montreal, organizations familiar with Fothergill's work, had offered to exchange duplicate specimens.

In view of the contribution these collections would make to the city, MacNab recommended that the sum of two thousand pounds be loaned for a period of ten years without interest. He was optimistic that the establishment could be expected to yield a productive sum within that time. MacNab suggested that the money be invested in the hands of three Trustees: Captain Bonnycastle, Receiver-General John Henry Dunn and Attorney-General Robert Sympson Jameson.

Despite this favourable response, the House did not act upon the report. Fothergill's recurring gout prostrated him for seven months. When he well enough to resume work, Fothergill discovered that the license of occupation had not been issued and no work had begun.

On July 31, 1837, Fothergill petitioned the Toronto city council for a five-year lease for the "two long rooms up stairs

at the south end of the Market Square building, which had been used as printing offices," as it would take time to design the zoological gardens and construct the building for the Lyceum. He proposed connecting the two rooms with a gangway to create a long gallery. An observatory housing "a telescope of superior power" was to be constructed at the centre. Fothergill asked that the lease be granted to his son George Alexander Fothergill, who was identified as the curator of the collections.

Fothergill further asked that the rent charged for the space would be moderate as the endeavour would not only benefit the public but would also honour those involved with establishing the enterprise. He hoped that cost he incurred in the renovations would be deducted from the rent as had "been the case in Wm Mackenzie." Fothergill noted that he had contributed significant personal funds to develop the already extensive collection and hoped that his efforts would be rewarded.



Red-breasted Nuthatch by Charles Fothergill. He added below the drawing "I certainly saw a bird of this species on the tongue of land describing the southern side of the York Harbour on Lake Ontario on the 30<sup>th</sup> of May 1823." *Canadian Researches Chiefly in Natural History 1816-21, MS COLL 140, v 20, p 247. Thomas Fisher Rare Book Library, University of Toronto*

Although Fothergill's petition was submitted in July, it was not referred to committee until early November. There it remained for four weeks but no decision was made. The state of emergency created by the Rebellion further delayed the decision as Council's proceedings did not resume until a year later.

In the fall of 1837, Fothergill launched his last entrepreneurial venture, a newspaper, the *Palladium of British America*, and *Upper Canada Mercantile Advertiser* under his son Charles' proprietorship. Announcements in the early issues of the *Palladium* indicated that rooms in the south-west corner of the Market Square buildings were being prepared to

house Fothergill's temporary museum. Later numbers of the paper indicated the venue had relocated next door to the *Palladium's* office at King and York Streets. However, it is not known whether the temporary museum was ever opened to the public.

Fothergill died suddenly on May 22, 1840, one day prior to his 58<sup>th</sup> birthday, with his dream of a provincial museum unrealized.

On May 26, Thomas Dalton wrote in the *Patriot*: "It is well known that Mr. Fothergill had been engaged for many years previous to his disease, in collecting a museum of natural and other curiosities – this collection – the labour of a life – is both instructive and interesting, and we certainly hope that it will not be permitted to be broken and dispersed...A

Cabinet of nature and of art is an almost necessary ingredient in the composition of a University, and we earnestly hope that the present opportunity of forming a *Nucleus* of a future Provincial Museum, at a very moderate outlay, will receive proper consideration from the Directors of King's College."

Samuel Thompson, employed as manager of *Palladium* until its demise in May, 1839, recalled that: "Mr Fothergill was a man of talent, a scholar and a gentleman, but so entirely given up to the study of natural history and the practice of taxidermy that his newspaper received but scant attention...money that should have gone to feed his family was spent on a rare bird or strange fish..."

Within days of Fothergill's death bailiffs seized the family's property, leaving only the museum collections. The family hoped to open the museum to the public but tragedy soon struck. On June 19, 1840, children playing with Lucifer's Matches set fire to Northcote's Grocery Store and Ginger Beer Brewery. Strong northwest winds carried the flames onto the premises occupied by Fothergill and quickly engulfed the building. Soon the entire block of buildings at the corner of York and King Streets was ablaze. Most of the businesses affected by the fire were uninsured. The *Toronto Patriot* reported: "We are sorry to learn that a portion of the late Mr. Fothergill's MUSEUM was destroyed – Mr. Bickerstaff (painter and gilder) is also a great sufferer in the materials required in his business."

It is not certain what happened to the remaining collections from Fothergill's museum. Shortly after his father's death, George Fothergill wrote to Robert Baldwin Sullivan seeking his help in selling the remnants of the museum to King's College. Teaching collections were a standard feature of nineteenth-century Canadian colleges and universities. The Bursar of King's College, Dr. Boys, examined the remains of the collection and found "it to consist principally of birds – it being deficient in other branches of natural history. There are 17 glazed cases of specimens of Natural History and of other objects of curiosity lying about the room.  
Of birds there are about 800 specimens  
Of animals about 60 specimens  
Of Fish and reptiles about 40 specimens  
There are a few insects; a few shells; some minerals; some birds' nests and eggs; horns of deer; skulls & bones human and animals; some Indian and South Sea ornaments; some casts in wax of Indians; three paintings of Indian chiefs; a few gross artificial eyes for specimens of animals and birds; the following books – a presentation copy from Dr. Richardson of the 3<sup>rd</sup> volume of his *Fauna Borealis Americana*, being the volume on fishes, the American edition of Wilson's *Birds*; portraits of Indian chiefs, 12 numbers. The specimens of Natural History are, generally, speaking, in good preservation, Most of them require to be properly set up & displayed."

In the years following Fothergill's death, the Fothergill family continued its efforts to create a museum on the military reserve near Fort York. On September 20, 1856, George Fothergill wrote to Dr. Rees reaffirming his claim to the land that had been granted to his father. A letter dated April 21, 1864, from the Department of Crown Lands in Quebec ordered "that the grant be forthwith made under the

restrictions pointed out by Major Bonnycastle in his Report, the Grant to be for the quantity therein specified, and the rest prayed for, as a License of Occupation only." It is unlikely that Council complied with this order. However, in an 1868 letter to the Governor General, William Rees detailed his credentials as a major collector and asked to take over Charles Fothergill's interests as they had been assigned to him.

Rees's efforts to fulfil Fothergill's vision were not realized. In April, 1878, the western segment of the garrison reserve was leased to the city of Toronto for the re-construction of the Crystal Palace for exhibition purposes associated with the provincial fair. The structure was destroyed by fire in October, 1906.

*Ulana Baluk has been employed in the cultural sector for more than twenty years. Her doctoral dissertation explored the proprietary museum movement of pre-Civil War America. Currently she is the administrator at Todmorden Mills Heritage Museum and Arts Centre.*

*A fully documented version of this essay will be posted in the History section of the Friends' website ([www.fortyork.ca](http://www.fortyork.ca)).*

## Administrator's Report

*by David O'Hara, Site Administrator*

The clock continues to tick as we enter the second half of 2009 and look towards having the entire 43 acre national historic site ready for the upcoming Bicentennial of the War of 1812. The largest initiative, and the most time-sensitive, is the design and construction of a new Visitor Orientation Centre. Working with a grant of up to \$617,000 from Canadian Heritage, the 'pre-construction' phase of work has been initiated, which includes a two-stage design competition. As a result of the Stage I call for expressions of interest, thirty-one submissions were received. The five teams short-listed to compete in Stage II of the competition, which involves conceptual design of the building, are led by: Baird Sampson Neuert Architects, Diamond Schmitt Architects Inc., du Toit Allsopp Hillier/du Toit Architects Ltd., Patkau Architects Inc. with Kearns Mancini Architects, and rawdesign Inc. with Gareth Hoskins.

Once a winning conceptual scheme is selected, the objective will be to expedite the design and construction processes and then into the construction, working towards having the facility completed for beginning of 2012. City Staff, the Friends of Fort York and the Fort York Foundation, are all working closely together in an attempt to make sure all funding is in-place to complete the project as planned. A second grant application has just been submitted to Canadian Heritage's Cultural Spaces Canada program for construction funding, and staff are optimistic that the Province will be able to assist as well.

In addition to the design process, which will be undertaken over the next few months, other components, such as Stage II archaeological investigations for the Visitor Centre, retaining a Project Manager, and rezoning Fort York NHS are being undertaken. The requirement to rezone the site is

due to the fact that Fort York is a 'legal non-conforming use'. Although the majority of site is currently zoned 'G' (parkland), the proposed retail gift shop and any café-type operation within the Visitor Centre are commercial uses that are not permitted in a 'G' zone. The proposal is to amend the General Zoning By-law 438-86, as amended, to permit the existing public museum and a Visitor Centre with a restaurant/café component and retail gift shop.

In June the 1813 Colours of the Third Regiment of the York Militia (see *Fife and Drum*, July 2007) were carefully removed from St. James Cathedral Archives and packaged for shipment to Ottawa where they will be conserved at the Canadian Conservation Institute. The York Militia Colours, along with other iconic artifacts, or sensitive artifacts requiring specific environmental conditions, will eventually be displayed within the new Visitor Centre.

In April, a grant application was made to Parks Canada under the National Historic Sites of Canada Cost-Sharing Program. The project proposal is for the rehabilitation of the Garrison Common, the 5.67 ha (14 acre) portion of the site just outside the fort's west gates. Proposed work includes the restoration and rehabilitation of several landscape components, including the 2 acre Strachan Avenue Military Cemetery, historic military structures such as the palisades and ravelin, and the portion of the battlefield now occupied by a tree nursery and surface parking lots. It is not known when a decision will be made regarding successful applicants.

As described in the article "Under the Floor in the South Soldiers' Barracks" by Andrew Stewart and Eva MacDonald, work continues on the South Soldiers' Barracks. Once the restoration work is complete the room will once again be outfitted as the Garrison School Room.

## 2009 | Upcoming Events Historic Fort York

### SEPTEMBER

**Festival at the Fort presents: Great Voices**  
*Great Voices is a site specific theatrical adventure and feast at Fort York.*

**Tues. September 1 to Sun. September 6, 8 pm nightly**  
Featuring Billy Merasty as Tecumseh and Simon Richards as General Brock with the Fort York Honour Guard and Fife and Drum Corp. Special guests and animation from Red Spectacle Theatre. Script by Rick Salutin and Dale Hamilton, with original music by James Gordon, Artistic Producer Director Sid Bruyn.

*\$20 incl. tax. Tickets available at the venue and TOtix.ca. Visit [www.festivalatthefort.ca](http://www.festivalatthefort.ca)*

**A Fort York Historic District Walking Tour in association with Heritage Toronto: Fort York and the Garrison Commons: Battlefields, Graves and Urban Development**

**Sun. September 13, 1 to 2:30 pm**  
Explore the evolution of Fort York's 'Garrison Common,' land outside the Fort which was originally set aside for military purposes. Through the years, from the early British colonial era to the present day, the Commons has witnessed some of Toronto's most dramatic events and changes.  
*Free admission to Fort York following tour*

**The French Forts of Toronto Bike Tour**  
**Sat. September 19, 8:30 am**

Start at Blue Barracks in Fort York and conclude at Etienne Brule Park. The Humber River was designated as a Heritage River in 1999. To commemorate its anniversary there is a celebration on September 19.

The theme is the shared paths between the French, English and First Nations. In celebration, there will be a bike ride to the event from Fort York. We will visit the sites of Fort Rouille, the Rousseau site and Teiagon, the 17<sup>th</sup> century Seneca village. Using the 21<sup>st</sup> century shared pathways to connect with the past, we will take the Martin Goodman Trail and the combined walking and cycling paths along the Humber River to arrive at the celebration.

*For more information, please call 416-392-6907. Cost: Free*

**Volunteer Historic Cooks Open House and Recruiting**  
**Sun. September 20, 11 am to 2 pm**

Interested in volunteering in the historic cooking program at Fort York? Come and talk with staff and volunteers to find out all about the Volunteer Historic Cooking group. Applications forms for those interested in joining will be available.

**Dance and Danceability**  
**Fri. September 25, 7:30 to 10 pm**

Learn how to dance Jane Austen style. Everyone is welcome to try some English Country Dancing at Fort York. Neither experience nor partner is necessary. Can you walk to the beat of a lively tune?

*Pre-registration is required, 416-392-6907 extension 100. \$15 per person, (\$14.29 + GST)*

### OCTOBER

**Important Symposium - Sense of Place and Heritage Trails**  
**Realizing the War of 1812 Bicentennial**

**Wed. October 7, 12 noon through Fri. October 9, 2pm**  
*Organized by Centennial College's School of Hospitality, Tourism & Culture at Fort York*

- Join senior government officials and tourism industry leaders in lively discussions on growing cultural tourism market
- Hear how preservation, management and development of heritage trails is carried out at provincial, national and international levels
- Debate strategies for the future of Canadian heritage assets and trails

To see the agenda, impressive roster of speakers and resource people being brought together for this event, and to register go to [www.centennialcollege.ca/chi/symposium](http://www.centennialcollege.ca/chi/symposium).

**Ghosts of the Garrison**

**Fri. and Sat. October 16, 17, 23, 24, 7:30 pm to 9:30 pm**  
Tour the grounds of Fort York at night, and hear stories from some ghostly visitors. Great fun for the family... but not too spooky for the younger crowd. Suggested for 5 years of age and up.

*Tickets \$10 per adult, senior or youth (\$9.43 + gst), \$5 per child (\$4.71 + gst)*

**Hearth Cooking Class**

**Sun. October 25, 11 am to 3 pm**  
Come to the Officers' Brick Barracks at Fort York National Historic Site and enjoy a day learning to cook in the historic Officers' Mess Kitchen. Cook over the open hearth fire using authentic tools and equipment. Learn about British cookbooks and food of the early 19<sup>th</sup> century. Hands on. Recipe package and samples are included. Space is limited to a maximum of 8 participants, so sign up today.

*Please call 416 392 6907 x 225 for more information or to pre-register. Cost \$40 (+ gst)*

### NOVEMBER

**Remembrance Day**

**Wed. November 11, 10:45 am**  
Remembrance Day ceremony at the Strachan Avenue Military Burial Ground at the west end of Fort York National Historic Site.  
*FREE admission to the Fort until 12 noon.*

### DECEMBER

**Holiday Closure**

The Fort will be closed from December 18th and will re-open January 2nd, 2010.

*Regular admission to Fort York is Adult: \$8 (\$7.62 + GST); Senior (65+): \$4 (\$3.81 + GST); Youth (13 - 18 yrs.): \$4 (\$3.81 + GST); Children: \$3 (\$2.85 + GST)*

 **TORONTO Culture**  
[www.toronto.ca/culture](http://www.toronto.ca/culture)

  
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