

The Fife and Drum

The Newsletter of The Friends of Fort York and Garrison Common

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John Bentley Mays Reconsiders Fort York

Soon after moving from America to Toronto, fifty years ago, I discovered the Fort York neighbourhood. It then possessed certain undomesticated qualities I did and do seek out in every city: an atmosphere of industrial-strength urban melancholy, a material palette of concrete and asphalt and steel, lonesomeness, the monumental quiet that gathers, despite the clatter of traffic, under massive bridges and elevated expressways. Gentrification and the business interests of developers would soon tame such places in Toronto and other great cities. But for the moment, these seemingly desolate spots endured as refuges from the rush of metropolitan life.

I didn't want to dwell there all the time, of course, or much of it. But, every now and then, usually around midnight, I would take off on foot from my mid-town digs toward the intersection of Bathurst and Lake Shore Boulevard, and stroll through what was then the zone of factories, warehouses, railway tracks, and emptiness in which Fort York found itself.

Prompted by The Friends' recent invitation to comment on something I wrote about the fort and its supporters in 1994, I decided to return to my old haunt late one night in February, 2016, more than two decades after the real-estate boom had begun to transfigure the district. Over this place, after all, was joined the battle from which I absented myself in an open letter to former mayor John Sewell. <http://www.fortyork.ca/images/historical-essays/fort-will-endure-1994.pdf> The issue was then, as it has been down to the present day, residential and commercial intensification in the fort's vicinity—how much of it should be allowed (if allowed at all), how tall, how dense.

The physical integrity of the historic site was not at risk in 1994, and had not been since the 1950s, when activist citizens successfully thwarted the fort's stomping by the Gardiner Expressway. Rather, at stake in the 1990s (and afterward) was Fort York's dignity. If I understood their point correctly, the fort's supporters opposed the erection of what they (and I, in



In 1994 nothing but railway sidings and heavy industry surrounded Fort York. Today in an eastward view the new Fort York branch library sits proudly in the centre of massive condo development. Credit: KPMB architects, © James Brittain

my letter) called a “wall” of high-rise condominium blocks between the fortification and the present-day shoreline of Lake Ontario. The site had been separated from the water long before by a kilometre-wide apron of landfill, and by industrial and transportation projects. Raising towers south of the fort, it was believed, would be yet another insult, and a grievous one.

These apprehensions were grounded in painful recent experience. Fresh in urban memory, for example, was the helter-skelter high-rise exploitation of the inner harbour west of Yonge Street. It could easily have seemed that all the port lands and related properties south of Front Street were doomed to undergo similarly thoughtless treatment.

Looking back over a distance of twenty-two years at the letter I wrote to John Sewell, I was struck by how airily I dismissed the largely justified (or at least justifiable) concerns he and others had. I was, and am, inclined to be pro-development and pro-high-rise. But I was naïve (if not worse) to assume that the fort’s site, or any other treasured spot in the downtown fabric, would somehow take care of itself merely because many people treasured it. It’s clear to me now that, in 1994, when cultural conservationists founded The Friends of Fort York, the site and the inner city beyond surely needed all the friends they could get.

How has the city benefited from this friendship? Disentangling and evaluating the contributions to the contemporary cityscape around Fort York by advocacy groups, developers, and by professional urban designers and planners are interesting tasks that lie beyond the scope of this short article. But, as I found on my most recent walkabout of the neighbourhood, certain things have worked out less well than one might have hoped in 1994—and some better than anyone could have predicted.

I set out late one windy, mild weekday evening, and reached the area south of the fort around midnight. Apart from the odd dog-walker, the streets were empty. Few cars coursed along curving Fort York Boulevard. Though thousands of people now inhabit the tall buildings and townhomes in the district, the

sense of it was as lonesome as it had been when I walked there a half-century before.

In most other respects, the place has changed utterly. But the condo towers, dreaded in 1994, do not loom like a wall between the fort and the water. Broad esplanades and streets, opening sightlines from the earthen ramparts toward the water, mercifully penetrate the residential blocks. The names of these passageways, which recall people whose lives were linked to the fort, or architectural features of it, further bind the new human settlement to this frontier outpost of the British Empire.

In fact, the Fort York neighbourhood, urban as it is, has something of the frontier about it. There is a bank and a tax-preparation office, but too few civilized hangouts—pubs, coffee shops, restaurants or such. Yet civilization is on the way. The graceful, sharply designed Toronto Public Library’s ninety-ninth branch has opened across the street from the fort. The transformation of the long-derelict Loblaw Groceries building into a store is under way. Plans to connect the fort to the denser downtown areas via a pedestrian and cycle bridge have been unveiled, and the sweeping renovation of the expressway’s underside into a cultural and recreational corridor will strengthen the fort’s bond to the new pieces of city emerging along the lakeshore.

And, for its part, Fort York has a striking new visitor’s pavilion that has become a gathering-place for the community round about. The current chapter of the area’s history is not over, of course. But from the looks of things on the winter night I revisited the place, I think the story might end better than anyone guessed when the ongoing controversy about the site began, twenty-two years ago.

John Bentley Mays is an award-winning Toronto writer on art, architecture, and the city. In the 1990s he wrote a weekly column in The Globe and Mail about local places and historic buildings that piqued his curiosity. Today his reviews of new houses and other residential projects appear each Friday in Globe Real Estate.

The Fort York Visitor Centre has two aspects: the familiar one looking south under the Gardiner Expressway, distinguished by a Cor-Ten steel screen interrupted at intervals by tilt-up panels for windows and doors, and the less well-known north side facing over the Garrison Common. The latter’s cool presence, particularly at night, and the diffuse light it casts over the field is captured perfectly in this photo by Tom Ridout. The building’s glow will be a safety feature for users of the pedestrian/bicycle bridge over the rail corridor that is set to open in about a year.

Tom Ridout is a partner in the Toronto firm of Fleisher Ridout Partnership Inc., landscape architects, who have designed a number of parks and urban spaces in the City. Tom is also a photographer who has captured the excellence of Fort York’s design in a series of images available on his website www.industryous.com/series/#/fort-york-1 and in a trade book offered there.



Defenders of the Fort in the Early Twentieth Century

by John C. Carter



On 7 October 1905 the Ontario Historical Society, alerted by reports in *The Globe*, convened a large meeting at Fort York to object to threats to the site by commercial interests and the city administration. This was the first protest of its kind in Ontario's history. The lieutenant-governor, Chancellor Burwash of Victoria College, and several prominent citizens addressed the crowd. Credit: Dorothy Duncan/ Ontario Historical Society

Between 1905 and 1909 it wasn't a foreign invasion but an internal attack that threatened the very existence of Fort York. When a proposal to run a street railway through the Toronto landmark was presented to City Council, battle lines were drawn to save this important historic site. The struggle was waged by a coalition of historical, patriotic, and military groups which banded together to fight the destructive initiative put forward by civic administrators and municipal politicians.

In the 1904-05 Secretary's Report to the Women's Canadian Historical Society (WCHS), the organization's position was spelled out: "Your Society has lent its aid and influence in opening the campaign against the demolition of the remains of Old Fort, Toronto. This is, without doubt, the most pressing interest of the moment, and one in which all who value the past and hope to build well for the future will support ... it should be a matter of interest to every citizen and to the Province in general."

Another partner in the battle was the Ontario Historical Society (OHS). A special meeting was held on 7 October 1905 "... to consider a proposition made by Mr. E.B. Biggar, that the O.H.S. should lend countenance to a civic movement (started by Miss Jean E. Geeson) for the preservation of the Old Fort Grounds." After a very well-attended public gathering held at Fort York, a motion was approved by the

OHS Council; it was agreed that the OHS would follow through with "... continued vigilance and action to prevent further desecration, and to restore and maintain the fort as an historical monument." Frederic Barlow Cumberland, the 2nd vice-president, was at the forefront of the OHS campaign.

This issue became an instant public cause. Petitions were signed, meetings held, and deputations made to the Board of Education, the City Council, and Board of Control. Toronto newspapers supported attempts to save the fort, and sided with efforts for its preservation. The WCHS was cautious in its reflections: "Whether the objections made to such vandalism have been strongly enough voiced, or the public made to see the commercial value as well as the sentimental value of the preservation to the city of the only stockade fort in the land, remains to be seen."

As a result of public pressure, Toronto mayor Thomas Urquhart stated that the city did not intend to interfere with the fort's preservation. Plans for the Bathurst Street streetcar were

tabled. In an interview, Urquhart proclaimed: "It was no doubt due to the energetic action of the Women's Canadian Historical Society, the Daughters of the Empire, and those who worked with them, that the by-law was defeated." It appeared that the building of the Bathurst Street Bridge and the trolley line through the Old Fort grounds had been rejected.

Unfortunately this was not the case. In April of 1906 a newly elected mayor and City Council resurrected the project. In addition, Mayor Emerson Coatsworth proposed that a portion of the fort become a shunting yard for the Grand Trunk Railway. The OHS immediately responded with a resolution that condemned the plan. It also orchestrated a letter writing campaign by affiliated historical societies to protest. These efforts proved to be momentarily successful. Public sentiment against the project resulted in defeat of the by-law. However this victory turned out to be short-lived. By October 1907 civic officials again called for new plans. Barlow Cumberland, now the OHS president, moved quickly to bolster the fortunes of the preservationists. He organized the Old Fort Protection Association (OFPA) which would "... make every effort to secure the proper restoration of the Old Fort and its historic grounds." The WCHS joined and issued the following optimistic statement: "The controversy over the Old Fort ... has waged intermittently throughout the year.

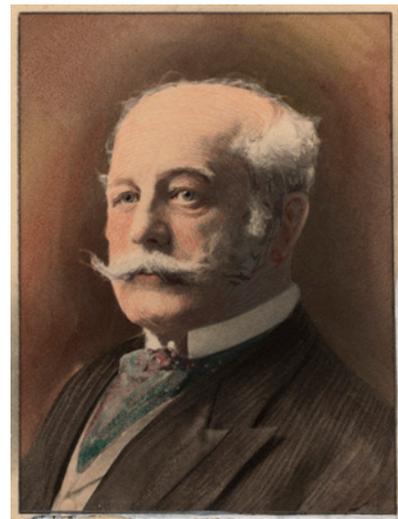
It is not settled yet, but it is hoped some definitive concession by which the Fort will be preserved may be arrived at during the coming year.”

In January 1908 new mayor Joseph Oliver announced plans to continue with the trolley track.

Preservationists responded with another round of protest. Growing public reaction resulted in deferral of the city’s plans. A tentative agreement was struck: the city would re-survey the land, and the OHS would pay for reconstruction plans of the fort. Under Cumberland’s supervision, an architect was hired to draw up this plan. Political jockeying continued. The OHS sent a circular asking its members to lobby municipal, provincial, and federal politicians. In an abrupt move, Prime Minister Wilfrid Laurier prohibited streetcars running through Fort York, and required that the city restore it. The proposed restoration model was unveiled in January 1909.

Fort York had been saved from imminent destruction. The preservationists had won the day. In the future, more challenges would arise, but these would be battles that others would have to fight!

*Barlow Cumberland (1846-1913) led the Ontario Historical Society's bitter four-year struggle to protect Fort York from despoliation, and to foster a sense of national pride among Canadians.
Credit: Toronto Public Library, JRR 3712*



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THANKS *To Our Donors*

The Friends of Fort York and Fort York Foundation co-operate closely in their work in the interests of Fort York. The Friends exists to support the staff and programs at the municipally-owned National Historic Site, including the Fort York Guard, while the Foundation was created to raise and hold monies given in trust for capital improvements to the fort and its collections. Both are registered charities that have the capacity to receive and receipt gifts in cash or kind.

Since January 2015 the Foundation has received a total of over \$500,000 from individuals and institutions including Donald Cranston and Megan Hill, The Hon. William C. Graham, Richard M. Ivey, Rosamond Ivey, The Hon. Margaret McCain, Stephen Otto, Greg Piasetzki & Laura Woods, Frances & Tim Price, Andy & Valerie Pringle, Andrew Stewart, The George Cedric Metcalf Foundation, and the Estate of Michael B.C. Davies.

During the same period The Friends of Fort York has been the grateful recipient of donations totalling more than \$24,125 from many generous supporters including Frank M. Adare, Nancy Baines, Win Barclay, Geordie Beal, John Bolitho, Lisa & Walter Bowen, Mary Brown, John Catto, Robert Cook, James Cowan, David Crombie,

J. Crook, Douglas Davis, Anthony De Giusti, Honor de Pencier, Janet Dewan, Richard Dodds, Jeff Evenson, Patricia Fleming, Joe Gill, Greta Golick, Barry Goodyear, Douglas Grant, Philip W.M. Green, Donald Greer, William Greer, William R. Herridge, Paisley Hill, R.Scott James, Frances Johnson, John Kell, R.J. Logan, Murray Lund, Kathy Mills, Christopher Moore, Jackson Murphy, Cathy Nasmith & Bob Allsopp, Rob Penyk, Patricia Petruca, Ceta Ramkhalawansingh, Shelagh Roberson, David Robertson & Eva MacDonald, Lee Robock, Paul Russell, David G. Scott, Rod Seyffert, Judith E. Skinner, Peter Smith, Andrew Stewart, James Stewart, John Stewart, V.N. Styrmo, Ronald M. Tam, Barbara Tangney, Michael Vaughan, J. Roy Weir, Sharon Wong, Coach House Press, Eldonview Investments Inc., The George Cedric Metcalf Foundation, and the United Empire Loyalists Association (Governor Simcoe Branch).

Both the Fort York Foundation and Friends of Fort York have received generous support from the Governments of Canada and Ontario, as well as from the City of Toronto, which is acknowledged.

A big, broad thank you to all who have made a difference to Fort York commensurate with its importance to Toronto and Canada.

Who Was Gustavus Nicolls?

by Stephen Otto

Between 1802 and 1837 Gustavus Nicolls of the Royal Engineers served twenty-seven years over three tours of duty in British North America working on most of the major forts here. For more than two decades he was Commanding Royal Engineer, twice in both Halifax and Quebec City, which saw him contribute to military preparedness on a national scale across six provinces. However, he is not to be found in the *Dictionary of Canadian Biography* because of a missed deadline in the 1970s. What follows is an incomplete portrait, needing more research among records such as the Board of Ordnance papers in the UK National Archives.

Gustavus Nicolls was born 24 October 1779 in Empacombe on the Rame Peninsula, opposite Plymouth, Devon, the second son of Capt. Gustavus Nicolls of the 1st Regiment of Foot ('the Royals') and Elizabeth Dann. About 1785

the senior Nicolls sold his commission, moved his family to Dublin, and purchased the office of Town Major where he functioned like a chief of police. Clearly, the job didn't require good looks: De Gustibus (his nickname) was said by a contemporary, Oliver Moore, author of *The Staff Officer*, to be the ugliest man in Dublin.

After Elizabeth Nicolls died in 1788 Gustavus junior was sent to a school taught by the Rev. Anthony Darby in nearby Ballygall, as was his elder brother, Jasper. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jasper_Nicolls Five years later Gustavus entered the Royal Military Academy, Woolwich, to train as a Royal Engineer. Gazetted a second lieutenant in 1795 and a first lieutenant two years later, he became a second captain in 1802. He first saw active service in 1796 when he accompanied British regiments sent to reinforce Gibraltar in the war with Spain. He spent 1799-1800 in Martinique and Dominica in the West Indies, but was ill for much of that time with langour and drowsiness from undiagnosed causes that he first experienced during an earlier posting at Gravesend.

After regaining his health in England, Nicolls was ordered on his first tour of duty in Canada late in 1802. It began uneventfully at Fort George, UC, overseeing repairs and the making of barrack furniture. By 1804, however, he had caught the eye of Lieutenant-Governor Peter Hunter and was tasked to design a lighthouse at Niagara; to make repairs and

small additions to Fort St. Joseph at the head of Lake Huron (which he welcomed as "an opportunity of seeing a little of the Indians"); and to appraise Chief Justice John Elmsley's house at York for possible purchase as public offices or a school. That year too he crossed paths with Lt. Col. Isaac Brock with whom he shared a day of quail shooting in the Niagara Gorge; the skilled artist-surgeon Edward Walsh of the 49th Regiment who travelled with him to St. Joseph; and Chief Joseph Brant with whom he took tea *en famille*.

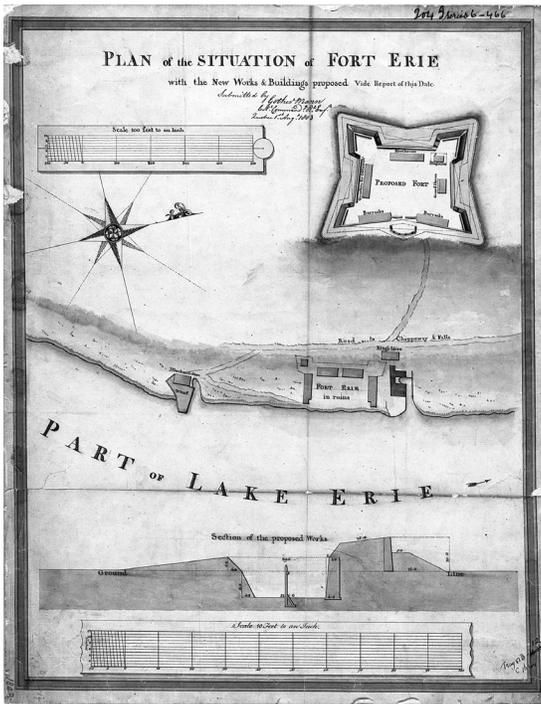
Nicolls was at Fort Erie from May 1805 through July 1806 overseeing a party that built a new fort near the 1763 one, then in ruins. When this was finished he was promoted to captain and recalled to England, likely on the same ship as Paymaster James Brock and Lt. Sempronius Stretton, both of the 49th Regiment. In April 1807, after four months of home leave, he was given charge of a crew of military artificers at Chatham dockyard.

His time there was brief, however, before he was ordered somewhat against his wishes to join Sir George Prevost in Halifax as Commanding Royal Engineer for the Maritime provinces. Prevost was newly appointed as commander of the troops there, and was also lieutenant-governor of Nova Scotia. After Nicolls arrived in spring 1808 and had reported to Prevost on the state of fortifications, he began a series of upgrades and new works in anticipation of war with the United States. These included Martello towers in Saint John, NB, and Halifax; the Officers' Mess in Royal Artillery Park, Halifax; blockhouses to protect St. Andrews; and proposals to strengthen defences in New Brunswick's Saint John River valley that included an unrealized fort and base for a flotilla of boats on Washademoac Lake. He may also have repaired the fortifications at Moose Island and Castine, Maine, after accompanying a force there led by Sir John Coape Sherbrooke that captured those places in summer 1814.

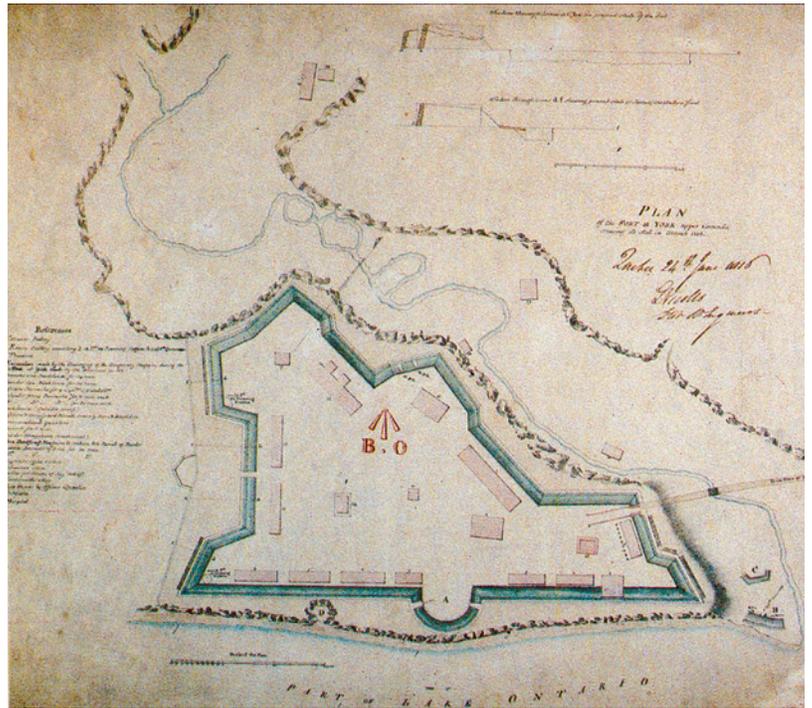
Promoted in 1813 to major and then to lieutenant colonel, Nicolls was transferred to Quebec in late 1814 as Commanding Royal Engineer for the Canadas to assume the duties vacated by Lt. Col. Ralph Bruyeres who had died suddenly in May. Bruyeres' death was likely hastened by his 'professional zeal' in travelling to Upper Canada in January 1814 to inspect work at Niagara and York. Nicolls saw through the last stages of rebuilding the York Garrison after the war, visiting there himself in January 1815. He also oversaw the first stages of



Gustavus Nicolls was painted by his wife c.1814-15 in the newly-adopted uniform of the Royal Engineers. Credit: Halifax Citadel collection, photo by René Chartrand



The locations of the first and second Fort Erie are shown on a plan dated August 1803 and signed by Gother Mann, Commanding Royal Engineer at Quebec. Nicolls later held that position. Credit: Library & Archives Canada, NMC 3801



This plan of Fort York as rebuilt after its predecessor was destroyed by the Americans in 1813 was signed by Gustavus Nicolls in June 1816. Credit: Library & Archives Canada, NMC 23139

construction of Fort Mississauga at Niagara; the planning of Fort Lennox at Isle-aux-Noix on the Richelieu River; and sundry smaller works at Quebec and Kingston.

What occupied him between leaving North America in 1816 and his return in 1825 is not known except that he and his wife, Heriot Frances Thomson, had four more sons, three in England and one in Guernsey. Their first son had been born in Halifax where they were married in 1812. But no service record or private papers for this time seem to have survived and his obituaries are sketchy.

When Nicolls was reposted to Halifax as Commanding Royal Engineer in 1825, he was soon drawn into helping frame a wide-ranging report by a commission chaired by Sir James Carmichael Smyth, his contemporary at the Royal Military Academy. Among its recommendations was that Fort George on Halifax's Citadel Hill be rebuilt. Nicolls' contributions and habitual deference are well described by Joseph Greenough in a 1977 publication from Parks Canada <http://parkscanadahistory.com/series/chs/17/chs17-1h.htm> The Citadel occupied most of his time until he left Halifax, but he also oversaw completion of the 'Sherbrooke' Martello tower and lighthouse on McNab's Island in Halifax harbour. Other designs he made at this time were not realized, for example, barracks and ordnance buildings at the lower cove in Saint John, NB, and additional

fortifications on Partridge Island there.

Nicolls returned to Quebec as Commanding Royal Engineer for the Canadas from October 1831 to May 1837 which coincided with the building of Fort Henry at Kingston to plans by several earlier Royal Engineers. As construction proceeded he modified the designs though lacking authority to do so which drew disapproval from his superiors. He also originated the first detailed proposals for the New Fort, now Stanley Barracks, at York [Toronto], but his plans were changed before construction went ahead in 1840-41.

Appointed a major general in 1837, Nicolls was called home to England later that year. He became Colonel Commandant of the Royal Engineers in 1851 and a full general in 1854. He died at his residence near Southampton on 1 August 1860.

This article would have been impossible to write without generous contributions from many people, among whom were Jim Burant, René Chartrand, Bob Dallison, Tim Dube, Ron Dunning, Robert Fraser, Bob Garcia, John Grodzinski, Joe Greenough, Anne-Marie Jonah, Chris Laverton, Eamonn O'Keefe, Danielle Sellers, Garry Shulak, and Harold Wright.

Stephen Otto is a director of The Friends of Fort York and editor emeritus of The Fife & Drum.

In Review: *'Another World': William Ord Mackenzie's Sojourn in the Canadas, 1839-1843*

by Jennifer J. Connor



Sandra Alston and C.M. Blackstock, eds. *Another World': William Ord Mackenzie's Sojourn in the Canadas, 1839-1843*. Toronto: The Champlain Society, 2015. General Series Number LXXVI, Lvi, 645 pages, illus. ISBN 978-1-4875-2025-0 (bound). Available only to members of the Champlain

Society in print and digital versions: <http://champlainsociety.utpjournals.press/doi/book/10.3138/9781487510862>

"A Journal," wrote army surgeon William Ord Mackenzie in 1840, "is meant for the amusement of both writer and reader." In *'Another World,'* a scholarly edition of Mackenzie's own journal in five volumes, co-editors Sandra Alston and C.M. Blackstock ensure that a journal's purpose also supports later goals of historical research. Mackenzie, a Scotsman whose bilingualism uniquely qualified him for work in Canada, documented his travels from England to his military posting in Toronto in 1839, and through Upper and Lower Canada to other postings and vacation jaunts until his return to England in 1843. Mackenzie adorned his narrative with sketches of maps and of unfamiliar North American items (mainly modes of transport such as stage coach, sleigh, canoe, snowshoe), along with clippings from newspapers and books. His journal has been digitized and will soon be available on the website of the Fisher Library of the University of Toronto.

Mackenzie's journal promises something for everyone interested in this critical period in the history of the Canadas: descriptions of people and places, including architecture, transport, hotels, geography, climate, industry, agriculture; food and drink; pastimes, especially dances, theatre, music, reading, and tourist attractions; customs and speech; religion; politics and government; military organization and personnel. It includes his travels through the United States to reach Toronto before spring thaw, and his comparisons of Americans and Canadians still ring true. Mackenzie also reacts to world events, notably any news about the royal family and military conflicts (for example, the Anglo-Afghan War). He always provides his informed perspective on the

matter, often with humour. In keeping with his aim to write for relaxation and reminiscences, Mackenzie conveys little about the garrison hospitals, military patients, or his medical care of Canadians outside the garrisons. Nevertheless, when he portrays the physiognomy, character, and physique of real people—sometimes at their expense—his keen eye for detail resembles a clinical assessment of them and their traits.

Mackenzie's volumes in this way offer the raw material not just for history, but also for fictionalization. Individual volume titles suggest changes in the narrator's focus, while their time frames lengthen: 'in Canada' (Vol. 1, February-April 1839), to 'sojourn' (Vols. 2, 3: May-October 1839; October 1839-May 1840) and then 'scribbler' (Vol. 4, September 1840-September 1841) 'in another world,' to 'Journal of an Officer in Canada' (Vol. 5, September 1841-October 1843). Indeed, Mackenzie's character analyses along with his frequent depictions of women and his romantic inclinations towards them lend his work an overall sense of a picaresque novel. Mackenzie would have been familiar with this genre, for his reading was formidable: he had so much time on his hands that he regularly refers to his boredom, and he read continuously, methodically annotating every item. Bedridden in Rivière-du-Loup with a broken leg, he took advantage there of an exquisite library and current English magazines; his wide reading included recent Canadian books such as Haliburton's *Clockmaker* and Jameson's *Winter Studies*. A momentous occasion for him was the visit in 1842 of Charles Dickens, whom Mackenzie delighted in entertaining.

Volume 2 relates Mackenzie's Toronto-based service with the 93rd Highlanders, yet even here, he notes his hospital work by November 1839 was diminishing to a "sinecure." Apart from some Toronto events such as the horse race week, regimental inspection, dances, a concert, a duel, a brigade day accident, the athletic games, and a description of Toronto itself, much of the discussion focuses on activities outside the town: the Methodist camp meeting near Brighton, and a trip to Niagara Falls. Historians seeking details of garrison life will be disappointed.

Military historians will, however, find much of general interest in this Champlain Society edition, for co-editors Alston and Blackstock outline military and medical backgrounds in their introduction and, most importantly, provide thorough biographical and historical information for all the military men and context for all of Mackenzie's military allusions. Still, a paragraph at the outset about William Ord Mackenzie and his life would orient the contemporary reader more quickly to the man and his significance. Reference to the long medical topography tradition in which Mackenzie compiled his meteorological notes (four months for Toronto) would also explain their context; in 1819, for example, another assistant army surgeon from Scotland, John Douglas, published his topographical studies of Upper Canada in

the War of 1812 (including services and medical ailments of troops and provincial militia). Similarly, Mackenzie's collection of specimens for the army's medical museum could be explained within another longstanding medical—and army—tradition.

The value of this Champlain Society edition is delineated in the co-editors' textual note on the bibliographical arrangement of the manuscript volumes and the editorial practice used to transcribe them; in photo facsimile pages of volume titles to show Mackenzie's calligraphic representation of a printed title

page; and in the index and an appendix listing every work that Mackenzie read. It therefore forms an essential companion to the original journal volumes themselves.

Jennifer J. Connor is Professor of Medical Humanities in the Faculty of Medicine, cross-appointed to the Department of History, Memorial University of Newfoundland. Her research on Canadian medical history, with emphasis on book culture and medical discourse, has appeared in various publications, including the History of the Book in Canada volumes.

Redevelopment of the Quality Meats Site

by Staff

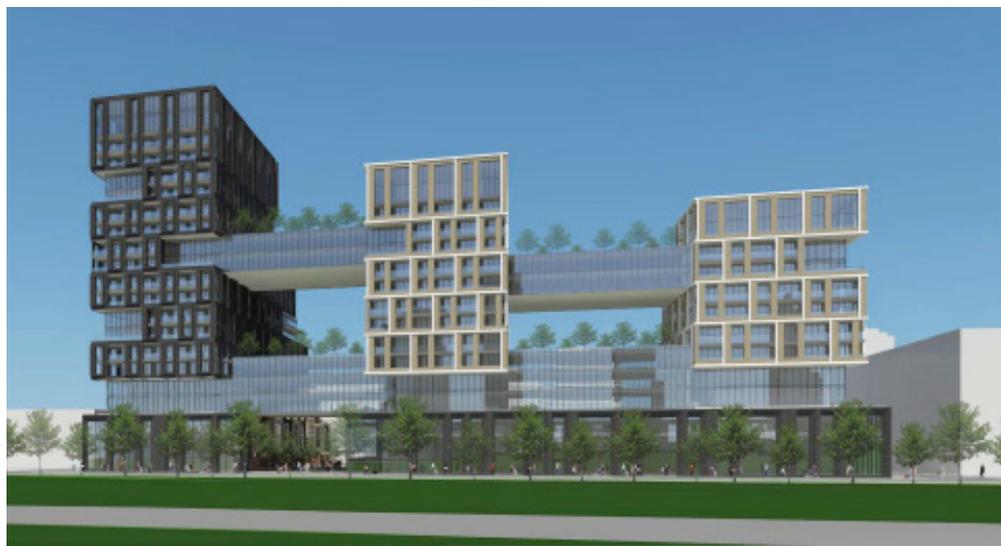
Councillor Mike Layton hosted a public meeting on January 26 to consider preliminary development plans put forward by the new owner of the site of the former abattoir. The Easton's Group of Hotels has purchased the odd-shaped property (municipal address: 2 Tecumseth St.) and retained Page+Steele/IBI Group Architects to design a complex of townhomes and apartments adjacent to and over ground floor commercial spaces. The initial design has three buildings of 11, 14, and 19 storeys decreasing in height as they get further from the rail corridor and closer to the lower-scale nineteenth-century housing in the Niagara Neighbourhood. The proposed site plan also includes a new street, enlarged park to the west, and a pedestrian and cycling trail along the railway.

After Councillor Layton welcomed the fifty to sixty people attending the meeting Graig Uens, city planner for the area,

gave a short presentation of the South Niagara Planning Strategy, approved by city council in August 2014, that will guide development. http://www.fortyork.ca/images/management-docs/south-niagara-planning-update_jan-26-2016.pdf This was followed by an explanation of the owner's proposal by Mansoor Kazerouni of the architectural team. http://www.fortyork.ca/images/management-docs/design-proposal_former-quality-meats_2-tecumseth-st_jan-2016.pdf

The next step in the process is up to the Easton's Group. When it has had sufficient feedback on its preliminary plans, it will proceed with a formal development application. Meanwhile, a window for comment and questions remains open. Please e-mail feedback to Councillor Layton councillor_layton@toronto.ca with a copy to Graig Uens guens@toronto.ca

Preliminary design proposal for Quality Meats site viewed from Fort York, across the rail corridor. Credit: The Easton's Group of Hotels, Page+Steele/IBI Group Architects



News From

The Birthplace of Toronto

Contributions from the Staff at the Fort

Manager's Report

by David O'Hara, Site Manager

2016 will likely go down as one of the most difficult years in which to access Fort York since the late 19th century. With ongoing work on the Gardiner Expressway continuing through until the fall, work on Garrison Road and Garrison Common, exhibit work within the Visitor Centre, and the start of construction on the Fort York pedestrian/bicycle bridge, access to the fort will be less than ideal.

While construction will continue into 2017 with *Project: Under Gardiner* and the completion of the pedestrian/bicycle bridge, many of the major site improvements we have been working towards will begin to materialize over the next year or so. This includes stronger connections from the north via the new bridge, a more direct connection from the large parking lot at Fleet Street and Strachan Avenue to the Visitor Centre, and improved connections and landscaping across the Fort York Boulevard frontage of the site.

As reported in the November issue of *Fife and Drum* (www.fortyork.ca/images/newsletters/fife-and-drum-2015/fife-and-drum-nov-2015.pdf), *Project: Under Gardiner* (www.undergardiner.com) is the result of a \$25 million donation from Wil and Judy Matthews. Extending from Exhibition Place in the west to Spadina Avenue in the east, the largest portion of the project runs through Fort York National Historic Site. This provides an unprecedented opportunity to implement the next major phase of our landscape master

plan across the Fort York Boulevard frontage. While the final components of the first phase of the project have yet to be confirmed, we are hopeful that the initiative will spark interest in completion of the east extension of the Visitor Centre's weathered steel façade. The full façade, as originally envisioned by Patkau Architects and Kearns Mancini Architects, has yet to be constructed and is currently unfunded.

With work proceeding across the grounds of the fort, exhibit installation is well underway within the Visitor Centre. Our staff team has been working closely with Toronto-based exhibit designers Reich + Petch and fabricator The Taylor Group. Exhibits in the lobby, exhibit gallery, vault, and 'Time Tunnel' will be put in place over the next couple of months and will open to the public at some point in early summer (date to be confirmed). A new orientation film is also being developed by Hillman & Carr of Toronto and Washington, DC.

Even with major construction and access restrictions, our 2016 calendar of events and programs remains a busy one. With Queen Charlotte's Ball, the Art of Peace, and Mad for Marmalade (sold out) already behind us, next up and taking us through until June will be our Battle of York Commemorative Weekend, World Fiddle Day, Doors Open, Artillery Day, and the 48th Highlanders 125th Parade and Mini-Tattoo. The summer months will again be busy with many events big and small.

We hope visitors are patient throughout the year as we work through many of the improvements noted above.



Gardiner Expressway deck rehabilitation construction as seen in front of the Visitor Centre, Fort York National Historic Site. Credit: Ted Smolak

Project: Under Gardiner – Upcoming Public Meeting and a New Name

by Christopher McKinnon

Earlier in March, the *Project: Under Gardiner* launched #ReclaimTheName—a campaign calling for the public to help come up with the permanent name for this new kind of public space. The campaign began with a city-wide brainstorm that invites Torontonians to submit their suggested names online at www.undergardiner.com/name.html

The deadline for submissions is 1 April 2016. Following that, a jury composed of some of Toronto's most creative, engaged, and diverse citizens will review all the name submissions and whittle down the list. Between three and five of the top names will be put to a public vote in May and Torontonians will be asked to campaign for their favourite.

Since our last update, the project team has been hard at work. We have now held a series of meetings with local stakeholders and community members to discuss the project and understand how it can be integrated into

surrounding plans. An early draft of the schematic design for the site is nearly complete and will be presented at an upcoming public meeting scheduled for 7 April 2016. Waterfront Toronto will be seeking feedback from the public on the design and programming for the site.

PUBLIC MEETING
Thursday, April 7th from 6:30 to 9:30pm
Harbourfront Community Centre
627 Queens Quay W
For more information about
Project: Under Gardiner
visit www.undergardiner.com

Christopher McKinnon is manager of digital and social media, Waterfront Toronto.

The Friends' Website: Four Years and Counting

by Ted Smolak

The Friends will mark the fourth anniversary of the launch of our current website, www.fortyork.ca, in May 2016. This initiative coincided with an exciting time at the Fort York National Historic Site when construction of the Visitor Centre and numerous events such as the Bicentennial of the War of 1812 and the Battle of York, Pan and Parapan Am Games programming, the Magna Carta exhibit, and concerts and festivals all made the fort a destination of note within a relatively short period of time. This increased activity was reflected in a marked building of traffic to our website.

First and foremost, the goal of The Friends' website has been to encourage attendance at the fort and to advocate in its best interests. To this end the website contains a brief history of Fort York, a listing of the latest news and upcoming events, visitor attractions and educational programming information, historical articles, the *Fife & Drum* newsletter archive, and an extensive chronological gallery of historical and current images. In short, the website strives to be both informative and engaging.

In support of exhibits, events, and programming the website has promoted more than 175 events and published 40 news items in the last four years. The most popular menu category has been 'Plan Your Visit' with over 190,000 hits. 'A Brief History of Fort York' was the highest website menu item with over

45,000 hits, while the Field Trip Festival garnered the most event hits at 8500. During this period we have had a total of more than 235,000 visitors to the website. These numbers suggest that it is achieving its goal of encouraging and facilitating visitation and confirms that there is significant interest in Fort York.

The second purpose of www.fortyork.ca is to serve our organization. Here a visitor or member can learn about The Friends, our vision and mandate. Online it is easy to become a member, renew a membership, or make a charitable donation. <http://www.fortyork.ca/join-us/become-a-friend-of-fort-york.html>

A retrospective would not be complete without looking forward. It is recognized that the website must continue to evolve by staying current with technology and visitors' viewing trends. This may require a transition to a mobile-friendly responsive design, but rest assured that any change will be built upon the solid foundation that currently exists.

Visit www.fortyork.ca today to find out why it is the top ranked Google search destination in every Fort York-related search.



Magna Carta Puts Visitor Centre in a New Light

by Christopher Moore

A cold Friday night in November 2015: we went to see Magna Carta, nearing the end of its five-week run at the Fort York Visitor Centre. There is nothing like a buzzing crowd at a busy museum or historic site to reassure you that history is not some fragile flower confined to the academic hothouse. That night, it felt like Fort York had a hit on its hands.

People flowed into the Visitor Centre and the exhibit steadily, and they were staying: watching the orientation film, observing the exhibits, engaging with the scrolling text and the interactive globe, and the other touch-me elements. Above all, they stood at the sealed display cases to drink in whatever sensation it is that comes from contemplating a pair of seven-hundred-year-old parchments covered in words we could not decipher in a language we did not understand: Magna Carta and the Charter of the Forest.

The exhibit space and the Visitor Centre were busy, almost crowded: lots of youngish couples, a few families, some older people. They engaged with the displays, read and listened, and made their own routes. For a small, powerful exhibit like this, the space was perfect. It looked like what the Visitor Centre was built for.

"It was an honour and a privilege to be the venue in Toronto," said Larry Ostola, Toronto's Director of Museums and Heritage Services, of the Magna Carta show. "It was the first time for the Visitor Centre to host a major travelling exhibition. Marketing, environmental control, security, signage ... the team came through on all fronts."

Visitors to the Magna Carta exhibit at the Visitor Centre totaled 12,797, or more than 2500 a week—not as many as the Canadian Museum of History in Gatineau or at the

Alberta Legislature, which each drew over 22,000 people, but very good numbers for a new venue not yet known as an exhibition centre. Fifty per cent of the Magna Carta visitors were "walk-ins"—not groups or invitees to an event, but simply people who turned up and bought a ticket. "It was great as a way to draw attention to Fort York," said Ostola. "This helped many Torontonians to see the Visitor Centre and the whole site in a new light."

There will not be a constant flow of Magna Carta events at Fort York. This spring the space Magna Carta filled in the Visitor Centre will become home to the new permanent exhibition on the history of Fort York. But the redevelopment of Garrison Common and of the Under Gardiner in front of the Visitor Centre will keep Fort York in the public eye. Already there have been inquiries about other travelling exhibitions, and Fort York does have other space available, both in the Visitor Centre and inside the fort.

What does an exhibit like Magna Carta do for Fort York? Thousands of Torontonians have a new way to associate Fort York with history. And with passion: Suzy Rodness, who with her husband Len initiated Magna Carta's Canadian tour, remembers a security guard who was there five days a week for the full five weeks. "Every time I came down, she would ask me question after question about the document. She was spellbound ... One afternoon, I noticed her walking through the space—out of uniform—with a man, pointing out various elements of the exhibit. When I approached her to say 'hello' she introduced me to her husband. It was their day off and she was spending it at Fort York showing her husband, with pride, what it was she had been guarding."

Opening day visitors reflected in the entrance to the Magna Carta exhibit at the Visitor Centre, Fort York National Historic Site. Credit: Andrew Stewart



2016 | Upcoming Events Historic Fort York

Compiled by Alice Flabive

APRIL

Cooking with Hannah Glasse Sun. April 10, 10 am to 3:30 pm

Before Martha Stewart and Julia Child, even before Mrs. Beeton, Hannah Glasse was the best-known British cookery writer of the 18th century. Using recipes from *The Art of Cookery Made Plain and Easy* (1747) and *The Complete Confectioner* (1760) you will learn to create a menu from roast to pudding.

Lunch and recipe packages are included.

\$75 plus HST. Pre-registration and payment are required.

To register please call 416-392-7484.

Battle of York Commemorative Weekend Sat. and Sun. April 23 and 24, 10 am to 5 pm

Honour the 203rd anniversary of the Battle of York fought on 27 April 1813 and celebrate the bicentennial of today's Fort York – the 1816 rebuilt peacetime garrison. The fort comes alive with musket firing demonstrations, Georgian cooking in the Officers' Mess Kitchen, site tours, and period animation. Kids can try "falling-in" for 1812-era soldiering drill.

On Saturday tread the ground of the US attackers and York defenders as you follow Walking in Their Footsteps, a 1.5 hour walking tour with five stops along the way relating to details of the battle. Tour commences at 11 am outside the Palais Royale (1601 Lakeshore Blvd. west). The walking tour is free, and will continue rain or shine.

On Sunday a special walking tour at 11 am and 2 pm will focus on the Battle of York. This tour will begin at the canteen/museum store at Fort York and highlight the dramatic battle using the fort, Garrison Common, and areas of the original shoreline.

Regular admission

MAY

Little Cakes and Biscuits Sun. May 1, 10 am to 3:30 pm

Learn to make delicious Georgian baked cakes and biscuits using the wood-fired brick oven in the 1826 Officers' Mess Kitchen. Enjoy the delightfully decorated Queen Cakes, (based on a 19th century still life painting), Oat Cakes, Shrewsbury Cakes, Filbert Biscuits, Chocolate Biscuits, and more. Lunch and recipe packages are included.

\$75 plus HST. Pre-registration and payment are required.

To register please call 416-392-7484.

Meagan's Walk Sat. May 7

Since its inception in 2001 Meagan's Walk has raised more than \$4 million for groundbreaking research on the care of and outcomes for young brain tumour patients around the world. The signature event is a 5km walk starting at Fort York which culminates with thousands of people joining hands to encircle the Hospital for Sick Children in one large hug, sending strength and love to those within.

<http://www.meaganswalk.com/>

Ontario Model Soldier Society Show and Sale Sat. May 14, 10 am to 5 pm

All ages will enjoy the Society's annual show and competition: demonstrations of casting and painting; displays of connoisseur figures, dioramas, and tableaux of more than a thousand pieces. Many vendors will be offering toy soldiers for sale.

Free with regular admission

World Fiddle Day in Toronto Sat. May 21, 10 am to 6 pm

Fort York welcomes a day-long celebration of bows on strings as players from several traditions teach and perform, leading up to our community "Around-the-World Jam" where players of all levels bow their way through forty tunes from twenty-five countries.

Visit <http://worldfiddledaytoronto.ca/> for music, practice sessions at Long & McQuade, and more information.

Victoria Day @ Fort York Mon. May 23, 10 am to 5 pm

What better way to celebrate Victoria Day than to visit the birthplace of Toronto. Tours, kids' activities, demonstrations of Georgian-era cooking, and English country dancing.

Regular admission

Doors Open Toronto Sat. and Sun. May 28 and 29, 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 architecture and original War of 1812 buildings, or stroll the grounds of this National Historic Site.

Saturday is Artillery Day featuring displays of historic and modern guns and demonstrations, presentations, and firing through the day.

Celebrate the 125th anniversary of the 48th Highlanders of Canada at the Tattoo on Saturday from 2 to 3:30 pm

<https://www.facebook.com/Dileas-125-48th-Highlanders-822313774510542>

Free admission all weekend

JUNE

Field Trip Sat. and Sun. June 4 and 5

Toronto's downtown community music and arts festival.

<http://fieldtriplife.com>

Indigenous Arts Festival @ Fort York Fri. to Sun. June 17 to 19

Energizing Fort York with powerful traditions and contemporary creations the 4th annual festival celebrates traditional and contemporary music, dance, theatre, storytelling, visual arts, crafts, and food by Indigenous peoples from across Turtle Island. Produced by Fort York in collaboration with the Mississaugas of the New Credit First Nation.

www.toronto.ca/fortevents

Na-Me-Res Traditional Outdoor PowWow Sat. June 18, 12 noon to 5:30 pm

Native Men's Residence Traditional PowWow is held to recognize National Aboriginal History Month. The event features traditional dancing, drumming, feast, giveaway, kids' area, and craft vendors. More than one hundred traditional dancers are expected to participate. The day begins with a sunrise ceremony and the Grand Entry takes place at 12 noon.

www.toronto.ca/fortevents

<http://www.nameres.org/annual-traditional-pow-wow/>

Taste of Toronto Thurs. to Sun. June 23 to 26, times vary

Fort York is hosting upwards of 20,000 visitors across four days. Featuring world-class chefs, Toronto's top restaurants, and over 70 exhibitors, this is foodie heaven.

<http://tasteoftoronto.com/>

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



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 Toronto Culture
www.toronto.ca/culture



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

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