

# The Fife and Drum

Journal of The Friends of Fort York & Garrison Common

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## Relics of the Rebellion of 1837: the money vaults at Fort York

by Carl Benn

Two intriguing architectural relics stand in the Officers' Brick Barracks and Mess Establishment at Fort York. They are dark, low, cellar rooms that many visitors mistakenly think are dungeons. Instead, they are specie, or money, vaults. They were installed at the end of 1838 to protect bank and army money from guerilla raids on Toronto during the tense aftermath of the Upper Canadian Rebellion.

A year before, in December 1837, William Lyon Mackenzie marshalled supporters at Montgomery's Tavern on Yonge Street north of today's Eglinton Avenue. He intended to take the city, overthrow the government, capture Fort York, and set up a provisional government. Before he attacked, minor skirmishing occurred between his followers and government supporters on 4 December.



**The Bank of Upper Canada** on Adelaide St East at George St, circa 1859. (Toronto Public Libraries Digital Archive, Baldwin Collection of Canadiana, PICTURES-R-3103.)

Continued on page 2

As Mackenzie prepared to march, loyalists in the city organized Toronto's defences as best they could. They had little support from the British army because most soldiers in the province had been sent to Lower Canada where the threat of insurrection was worse. One of the major concerns for Toronto's loyal citizens was the vast quantity of money in the banks. If the rebels robbed the banks, they not only could finance their cause, but they could threaten the province's economic stability, already strained by the American financial panic of 1837.

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**The banks were a political as well as an economic target**

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The Bank of Upper Canada alone had £138,000 in gold and silver in its vault along with large quantities of negotiable paper. Loyalists, therefore, recruited a corps of "Toronto Bank Guards" and deployed some of them around the hastily-fortified bank on Duke (now Adelaide) Street, and positioned others at the Commercial Bank of the Midland District on King Street.

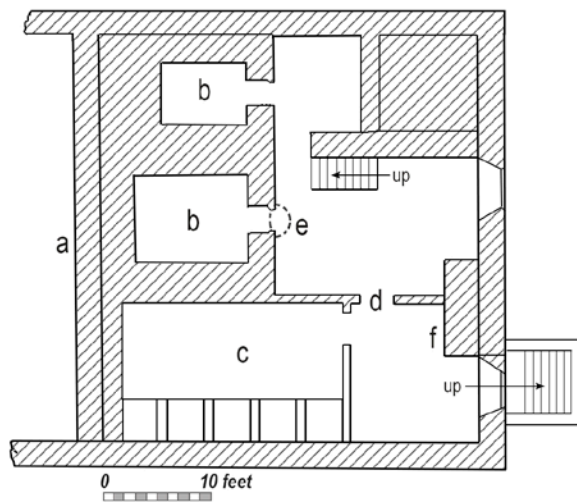
On 5 December, Mackenzie led 500-700 rebels down Yonge Street. Other rebels waited in the city, ready to join the rising upon their arrival. However, a small government force led by Sheriff William Jarvis ambushed Mackenzie near today's

Yonge and College streets and sent the rebels retreating back to Montgomery's Tavern (and those in the city quietly stayed home). More skirmishing occurred on the Sixth. On the Seventh, one loyalist force beat off an assault at the Don River bridge while another dispersed the rebels at Montgomery's Tavern in a short battle.

Mackenzie escaped to the United States where he attracted both Canadian and American supporters to his cause. These people launched a number of raids into Canada in 1838. Some of the attacks were serious,

rivalling War of 1812 engagements. The gravity of the raids, combined with the crisis of the Lower Canadian Rebellion, kept Upper Canada on a wartime footing until the end of the decade.

Within days of the Yonge Street skirmishes, hundreds of loyal Canadian militiamen from the surrounding countryside moved into Fort York while others guarded key points around the city and harbour. The government restored the fort's deteriorating War of 1812 defences, enlarged its harbour battery, and constructed blockhouses and other defences around the city perimeter. Meanwhile the British army reinforced Upper and Lower Canada



- a - internal foundation wall.
- b - money (or specie) vault.
- c - wine cellar from the mid-1820s (larger than today).
- d - security wall built in 1838 to protect the vaults (no longer extant).
- e - catch basin (part of building's drainage system).
- f - 1815 fireplace (there was another on the opposite wall between 1815 and 1826).

*Plan of 1815 cellar in the Officers' Mess Establishment after modifications in 1838 to include money vaults. (The cellar had been renovated in the 1820s and would be changed later, after 1838.). This plan is a 2022 redrawing and adaptation (by A. Stewart) of an 1853 document, "Sketch showing the proposed method of fitting up the Mess Establishment in the Old Fort as a Commissariat Office," published in Excavation and Preliminary Analysis Report, Volume 3, by Catherine Webb, Fort York Archaeology Programme, 1990 (Toronto Historical Board, 1992).*



*The interior of one of the money vaults, circa 1981. Note the stonework, vaulted ceiling, and 19th-century iron door. The door had to be removed because of severe deterioration caused by excessive humidity in the cellar; but it could be displayed elsewhere after conservation treatment. (Toronto History Museums)*



**Three-dimensional model from lidar** (light/laser detection and ranging) data showing the Officers' Mess Establishment cellar, including the two money vaults (foreground), with creative projection of vault ceiling photographic imagery onto the external structure of the vaults, which are inaccessible to the lidar scanner. The room's configuration is somewhat different from the way it was in the 19th century. The recording, using a Faro Focus 3D scanner, and subsequent modelling, was completed by volunteer Stephen Vickers (Carleton University) working with Ellis Don and ASI Heritage, during excavation of the schooner southeast of Fort York (see "Mystery ship arrives at Fort York" F&D, July 2015). After the excavation, Stephen volunteered to work with City of Toronto Museums staff to try recording the cellar. The successful scanning of the cellar prepared the way for the full 3D recording of Fort York by CyArk (see "The electronic capture of Fort York" F&D, December 2017).

substantially (and in the early 1840s replaced much of Fort York's facilities with the "New Fort" in today's Exhibition Place).

Yet, the security of bank and government money continued to trouble loyalists through 1838. The banks were a political as well as an economic target. Mackenzie had condemned the banks, describing them as "vile associations" controlled by the colony's elite. In his denunciations, he singled out the Bank of Upper Canada because of its close association with the government. Mackenzie had gone so far as to promise that there would be no banks in his independent Upper Canada.

While loyalists worried, rebels made a dramatic foray into Upper Canada in November 1838. A force of 250 crossed the St. Lawrence River at Prescott. They hoped to capture Fort Wellington, cut communications between Upper and Lower Canada, and inspire a widespread uprising against the Crown. Once ashore, the invaders fortified themselves at a strong stone windmill a short distance from the fort. Hundreds of British regulars, Royal Marines, and Canadian militia – supported by steam-powered gunboats – counterattacked over several days before the invaders surrendered.

At the same time as the Prescott raid occurred, there were political assassinations in the Niagara area and rumours of invasion in southwestern Upper Canada. Fearful of a widespread uprising, the Bank Guards moved back into position after several months of inactivity. Nevertheless, this did not seem to be enough. The banks – and the army's money at the Commissariat Office on Front Street – still were vulnerable. Therefore, officials decided to build two vaults inside heavily guarded Fort York as quickly as possible. One was constructed new for the banks. The other was dismantled from the Commissariat Office and reassembled in the fort. Both were located in the 1815 Officers' Mess cellar.

While construction went on in November and December 1838, a worried cashier of the Bank of Upper Canada, Thomas Ridout, sat barricaded inside his office, protected by the Bank Guards. If attacked, he hoped he would be able to hold out until troops from the fort came to his rescue. Ridout must have been relieved when the army finished the vaults towards the end of the year and transferred the money to the fort.

Both vaults were made of thick cut stone and had heavy iron doors to make them fireproof. To improve security, the army constructed a wall between the vaults and a (no-longer-extant) exterior door of the cellar as a second line of defence, and put a heavy lock on an interior door which connected the cellar to the ground floor of the Officers' Mess. No doubt soldiers were deployed around the building in addition to the force that guarded the fort as a whole.

Eventually, tensions died down and the money vaults fell into disuse in the 1840s. In the early 1850s, however, the army restored the vaults for the Commissariat, which took over the Officers' Mess for an office. After the Commissariat left a few years later, the army tore down the security wall in the cellar, but the vaults survived, and may be seen by visitors to the fort today.

While not as romantic as dungeons at first glance, the vaults are fascinating because of their associations with one of the most dramatic periods in the city's history, and, like many other treasures at Fort York, provide tangible and evocative links to Toronto's complex past.

*This is a revised version of an article Carl Benn wrote in 1995 while Curator of Military History for the Toronto Historical Board. He now is a history professor at Toronto Metropolitan University. We thank Allison Bain, Executive Director of Heritage Toronto, for granting permission to publish this revised version of an article that first appeared in Explore Historic Toronto (issue 8, spring/summer 1995), the newsletter of the Toronto Historical Board (now Heritage Toronto).*

# Mike Filey: the people's historian

by Karen Black

When Mike Filey died this past summer at the age of 80, tributes from his *Toronto Sun* readers started pouring in, many people asking the paper to rerun his columns. If my parents were alive today, their voices would have been among them. For them, his Sunday column was the highlight of the paper, stirring long-forgotten memories of the people and places he was writing about. It made them feel part of the city's history.

They were just two of the tens of thousands of Torontonians that connected to the city's past by reading *The Way we Were*, Filey's popular *Toronto Sun* column that he wrote every week for 40 years.

"He was the people's historian," says former Toronto Mayor David Crombie. "He was a self-taught guy both in terms of content and writing style." Crombie, a friend of Filey's, says his writing reflected his personality. "He took a very direct, clear and straight forward approach. He was like the guy you sat down beside who had a story to tell. And he was always looking for some kind of interesting twist to catch your attention."

"He had a "major influence on the way ordinary people saw history," says Scott James, former City Archivist at City of Toronto and former Managing Director, Toronto Historical Board, now known as Heritage Toronto.

Filey has left us a huge body of work with four decades of weekly columns, two dozen books including *The TTC Story*, *I Remember Sunnyside* and *Discover and Explore Toronto's Waterfront*. It's a unique contribution to Toronto history and a legacy both Crombie and James say deserves recognition and celebration.

Victor Russell, a friend of Filey's and former manager, City of Toronto Archives, says Filey was a storyteller first and foremost. "He loved to find things out and then write about them."

He loved to share his discoveries with anyone he thought would be interested, says Wayne Reeves, retired Chief Curator, Toronto History Museums. "Found this while looking for something else," was the typical subject line of many of his emails, says Reeves.

Filey wrote stories about streetcars, ferryboats, street names, royal visits, prominent sports personalities, Fort York and much more. He didn't just present the facts. He created a dialogue with his readers, often featuring a photo someone had sent him. He shared with his readers his joy of research and discovery, always applauding and putting in print the name of the expert, librarian

or clerk who helped him along the way.

"He had a knack for making people feel like they were discovering the city's history right along with him," says Crombie. "There was a real freshness to his writing."

Filey had a great visual sense of the city. He started collecting historic photographs in 1967 and by 1970, University of Toronto Press had published his book, *A Toronto Album*, featuring 109 of his historic black and white photographs documenting the growth and change in the city. The book quickly became a bestseller and sold over 50,000 copies.

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**He had a "major influence on the way ordinary people saw history,"**

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Mike and Yarmila Filey talking with David O'Hara (right) at Fort York in April, 2017, during the commemoration of the 100th anniversary of the Battle of Vimy Ridge. (Photo by Kathy Mills)

*A Toronto Album 2*, featuring another hundred photographs from his collection, was published in 2002 and won a Heritage Toronto award. "One of the most interesting visual archives of the city's history," is how the Toronto Public Library describes the book.

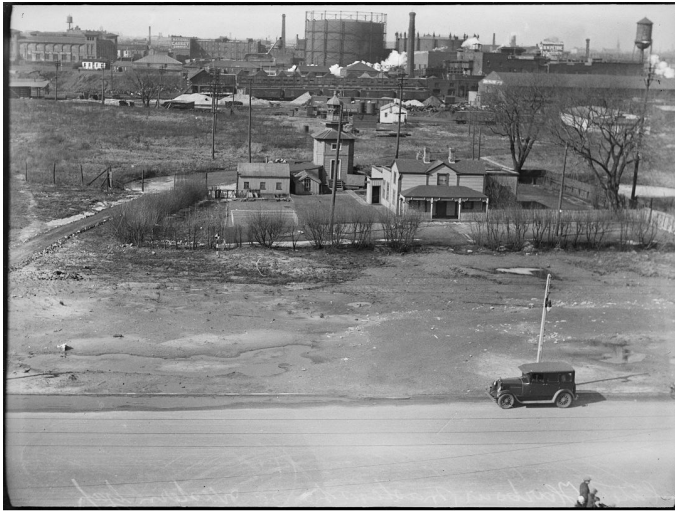
Together the two books document the city's evolution for more than 100 years covering the period 1860 to 1970. There are photographs depicting the remarkable changes to Toronto's skyline, the evolution of the Hospital for Sick Children, Toronto women's sports teams, and even cottage-bound traffic on Highway 400 in 1954.

Despite the success of his books, Filey remained modest about his contribution to Toronto history. "I am not a

historian and the work does not claim to be a balanced social history of Toronto," he wrote in the preface to his second *Toronto Album*.

His uniqueness was his ability to connect with a lot of people in a way that academic historians aren't able to," says Michael Moir, University Archivist and Head, Clara Thomas Archives and Special Collections, York University. "A lot of people will say that history is boring, that they took it in high school and have no time for it. And yet when people like Mike come along who are like balladeers, they realize how much of what they see around themselves, has historical roots.

Filey's column-writing began in the summer of 1971 when the editor of the real estate section of the now-defunct *Toronto Telegram* asked him to provide a few lines of text and a couple of photographs to fill space that had resulted from an insufficient number of ads being sold. This arrangement went on for a few months until the "Tely" folded and the *Toronto Sun* appeared in news boxes around town. "Perhaps desperate for material to fill the struggling tabloid, the *Toronto Sun* made my columns a



**A photo taken in 1926** looking north from the waterfront towards Fort York, very similar to one in Mike Filey's collection "Looking north from the 'Old Western Gap'" that appears in *A Toronto Album*. It shows Blockhouse No. 2 (background left) and Blockhouse No. 1 (silhouetted against white smoke or steam in front of the cylindrical coal gas holder (background centre). Typical of the photos that Mike collected, it shows lots of detail about a particular place at an identified time, illustrating the evolution of the city. (City of Toronto Archives, Fonds 1244, Item 1512)

semi-regular feature," Filey wrote in the preface to one of his books. With the introduction of the *Sunday Sun* in 1973, *The Way we Were* became a weekly feature.

Filey was born in Toronto in 1941 and spent his early years living near Bloor and Bathurst streets where he got his first taste of travel by streetcar. His family later moved uptown where he attended North Toronto Collegiate Institute and from 1962 to 1965, Toronto Metropolitan University, (formerly Ryerson) where he received a diploma in chemical technology. Following a nine-year stint with the Ontario Water Resources Commission (later renamed the Ontario Ministry of the Environment) Filey got a job doing event planning and public relations with the CNE from 1974 to 1979 and then with Canada's Wonderland until 1982.

After that "he was one of the lucky people who made his hobby his job," says Crombie "He never went in to work. He was always at work."

In addition to writing and collecting, Filey gave lectures and walking tours, often on a volunteer basis. He was heavily involved

in the resurrection and restoration of the Trillium Ferry Boat. He served on the boards of both the Ontario Heritage Foundation and Toronto Historical Board. From 2002 to 2012 he had his own radio show on Zoomer Radio called *Mike Filey's Toronto*. He was awarded the Jean Hibbert Memorial award from the Etobicoke Historical Society in 2009 for his decades-long contribution to Toronto's history.

Filey often shared tidbits about his personal life with his readers. And his wife, Yarmila, received regular mention. In one column he recounted the story of how Yarmila surprised him on his 55<sup>th</sup> birthday with his dream car, a gleaming turquoise and white 1955 Pontiac. Yarmila had gone to the trouble of enlisting the help of a vintage car expert and searched for more than four years to find the exact car in the specific colours Filey had coveted since high school.

The story is symbolic of how vital Yarmila was in Filey's success. "His interest in history was all consuming and Yarmila always supported that," says Russell. "She supported everything he did whether by proofreading, spellchecking or others means. She was a significant part of the support system that underpinned his success."

Filey dedicated each of his books to Yarmila, often referring to her as his greatest fan. Though each dedication was slightly different this one is typical. "For Yarmila who has been my friend and made me look good in print."

*Karen Black is a journalist in Toronto, formerly Manager of City of Toronto Museums.*

## An Appreciation

We are happy to be able to bring you this fall issue of *The Fife and Drum*. (Note that there was no summer issue this year.) At the same time, we bring the unfortunate news that Bob Kennedy resigned as editor of *F&D*, and from our board, in June.

Even before Bob's taking on the role of editor from Steve Otto in 2017, public historian Chris Moore wrote an appreciation of this publication, "Twenty years of Fife and Drum," for the July 2016 issue. He pointed out the steady transformation of what began, in 1996, as a newsletter into a "magazine" by 2016, offering "a flood of historical and cultural articles, always inspired by Fort York but with an endless range of informative, surprising, and sometimes simply amusing topics."

We thank Bob for his work building on this expanding foundation, producing sixteen magnificent issues over the last five years. Bob always aimed for his goal of presenting "better history" and, in doing so, he brought a more diverse and inclusive lens to bear. We appreciate the tremendous time and effort Bob devoted to making *F&D* a better read and in working closely with former director Ted Smolak in its design and presentation. It cannot be overemphasized that such efforts have always been, and remain, voluntary. The *F&D* depends entirely on the good will and generosity of the people who freely devote their time and expertise to writing its content and its production.

# George Crookshank chest donated to City of Toronto

by Robert W. Bell

The City of Toronto has received a generous donation in the form of a very fine antique chest whose original owner was George Crookshank, a colleague and confidant of John Graves Simcoe, Lieutenant-Governor of Upper Canada. Crookshank arrived in York in 1796 and entered the commissary department supplying Fort York and other garrisons in the area. He went on to serve as Assistant Commissary General at Fort York in 1814, Receiver General in 1819, Legislative Councillor (1821-1841), and Director of the Bank of Upper Canada (1822-1827). The Crookshank house was one of the first in York and was famously commandeered and looted during the American invasion of York in 1813 (see Stephen Otto's "Art as evidence of history: two paintings by Robert Irvine" *F&D*, July 2018)

I was delighted and grateful when Tim and Sue Walker, reached out to me and the Fort York Foundation to express their interest in a possible donation of their treasured heirloom to the City of Toronto. The chest is an oak chest with brass reinforcements designed to hold silverware and two carry handles on the sides. It measures 42 inches L x 28 inches W x 23 ¾ inches H (raised on a 8 ½ inch stand). It dates to 1820-1840 and features an engraved name plate bearing George Crookshank's name. The reference on the plate identifies Crookshank as "The Hon" and also identifies the location as "Toronto" rather than York. Crookshank was appointed to the Legislative Council in 1821 which gave him the designation of Honourable. Toronto was named York in 1793 and then re-named Toronto in 1834. If the brass plate was attached at the time the chest was created, the Toronto reference suggests the chest dates to c. 1834.

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## The chest always had a special place in my parents' home and our homes due to our family history

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Tim Walker is a descendant of George Crookshank and he and his wife, Sue, have enjoyed having the chest for many years at their country home (located very appropriately on Lake Simcoe). Tim and Sue reflected on their decision to donate in Tim's words below:

"The chest always had a special place in my parents' home and our homes due to our family history, its beautiful period shape and structure and also its special place in Canadian history. We think it is now more appropriate for the chest to be returned to Fort York where its original owner played an active role in the operation of the Fort."

Fort York Foundation was pleased to arrange for an appraisal of the chest to facilitate its donation to the City of Toronto in 2021. The chest has undergone conservation and is now proudly on display in the dining room in the Officers' Mess Establishment at Fort York National Historic Site.



Donors Tim and Sue Walker flank their family heirloom – the George Crookshank chest. (Photo by Robert Bell)



The Crookshank chest in the dining room of the Officers' Mess at Fort York. (Toronto History Museums)

Robert Bell is Executive Director of The Friends of Fort York and the Fort York Foundation.

# *A Canadian Tribute to Elizabeth the Faithful*

*By Nathan Tidridge*

What is there to say that hasn't already been said about the remarkable reign of Queen Elizabeth II or, as she is increasingly being called, Elizabeth *the Faithful*. One of Her Majesty's great legacies will be that amongst all the extraordinary moments following her death, including the genuine outpouring of grief from across the Commonwealth, the Crown passed benignly to her son during a decade marked by considerable turmoil. The ease in which Charles III ascended the throne in this realm and across the Commonwealth was in no small part thanks to the high esteem and respect accorded to Her Majesty. What happens next rests on the shoulders of The King, a man well-suited and well-trained for what at times will be an unforgiving responsibility in our 21st century.

Many of us watched the funeral, attended by an impressive Canadian delegation headed by the Governor General, Prime Minister, and Indigenous leadership. Americans were quick to point out on social media that while only the President and First Lady were invited (and not seated prominently at Westminster Abbey), Canada's invitees included former governors general, prime ministers and other prominent Canadians. It was a reminder that there are consequences for rebellion.

The procession of Her Majesty's coffin from Westminster Abbey to the Wellington Arch was led, at her request, by members from the Royal Canadian Mounted Police. The Mounties were followed, amongst other members of the Commonwealth forces, by representatives of sixteen regiments of the Canadian Forces. For those present, both in-person and virtually, it was a day that will not soon be forgotten – one that truly turned a page on an age. Those poignant final moments during the committal service at St George's Chapel were especially moving.

Throughout it all, there was something very comforting knowing that soon in the George VI Memorial Chapel, a quiet corner of St. George's Chapel, "We Four" (the name George VI used for their close-knit family) would now be reunited. Of course, it was not "We Four + 1," as The



*HM Queen Elizabeth's visit to Fort York in September 1984 (see "The royal and viceregal fort at York" in F&D, October 2013). Photo by George Rust D'Eye.*

Queen's beloved Philip, her strength and stay, was reinterred beside her after their brief time apart.

The Crown is an institution that casts a wide net over a history shared by millions of people that goes back more than a millennium. For Canada, it is the bedrock of our democracy, including the Treaties and other Crown-Indigenous relationships that are meant to animate the life of this land.

When it was feared in the last century that Prime Minister Pierre Trudeau was minimizing the role of the Crown in Canada's federation (the infamous Bill C-60), provincial premiers ensured it was entrenched during the negotiations that led to the Constitution Act (1982). Indeed, thanks to their efforts to protect the provincial sovereignty (which is embodied by the provincial Crowns), our constitutional monarchy became the most protected in the Commonwealth.

During the heady days of 1990, when Quebec's future in the federation seemed to be unraveling before our eyes, The Queen declared, in person, on Canada Day:

"I am not just a fair-weather friend, and I am glad to be here at this sensitive time."

That address (in both French and English) to a crowd of 70,000 people underscored the Queen of Canada's deep commitment to the country. Some may also recall when Pierre Brassard, a 29-year-old radio show host in Montreal impersonating Prime Minister Jean Chretien in 1995, was connected to The Queen, via telephone, at Buckingham Palace. Unaware she was being pranked with the intention of being made to look foolish, The Queen surprised Brassard by demonstrating her knowledge of recent events and commitment to the federation by immediately agreeing to help her prime minister in the face of the upcoming Quebec Independence Referendum.

This genuine concern for Canada was echoed by her son in his recent commitment, as King, to furthering reconciliation and renewing the Crown-Indigenous relationships threaded into this continent (The Covenant Chain, which allowed for settlers to enter the Great Lakes Region was first established between the Haudenosaunee Confederacy and King Charles II, 1660-1685, and remains in place to this day).

Indeed, The Queen (and Prince Philip) were involved in many important national and international events in the development of this country, including 23 Royal Tours since 1951. Elizabeth II opened the St. Lawrence Seaway (1959), proclaimed the new National Flag (1965), established the Order of Canada (1967) and Order of Military Merit (1972), proclaimed the Constitution Act and Charter of Rights and Freedoms (1982), rededicated the Canadian National Vimy Memorial (2007), unveiled the cornerstone of the Canadian Museum for Human Rights (2010), and created the third Canadian Chapel Royal at Massey College (2017). Whether it was marking the centenary

of Confederation (1967), opening and attending the Montreal Olympic Games (1976), or marking the centennials of Manitoba (1970), Northwest Territories (1970), British Columbia (1971), Prince Edward Island (1973), or Saskatchewan and Alberta (2005), Her Majesty was there for moments of unity and celebration.

The Queen was also there to share in moments of great sadness as demonstrated

by the last official statement of her reign: a message of condolence to the James Smith Cree Nation and people of Weldon, Saskatchewan, following the horrific attacks endured by those communities.

“Better days will return,” she assured the Commonwealth in her address during the dark days of the COVID-19 Pandemic. I’m sure many people, including the Royal Family, took comfort as they contemplated

anew The Queen’s words, quoting Vera Lynn and alluding to her own Christian faith, at the end of that historic address:

“ . . . we will be with our friends again; we will be with our families again; we will meet again.”

Thank you Ma’am.

*Nathan Tidridge is vice-president for the Institute for the Study of the Crown in Canada.*

## NEWS

### *Councillors Cressy and Layton: a legacy of fort-centred public space planning*

This year both Councillors Cressy and Layton retired after years of service to the Fort York neighbourhood, as well as to the city at large.

Joe Cressy represented Ward 20, including the part of Fort York National Historic Site located east of Bathurst St (Victoria Memorial Square and the future site of Lower Garrison Creek Park), from 2014 until the city-wide reduction and reorganization of ward boundaries by the province in 2018. After re-election in 2018, he continued to represent Spadina-Fort York (Ward 10), which now included the whole of the national historic site, until his taking up a new appointment at George Brown College in spring of 2022.

Mike Layton represented Ward 19, including most of the national historic site (west of Bathurst St), from 2010 until 2018, when he was re-elected to represent University-Rosedale (Ward 11). In this newly-defined ward, he was no longer overseeing any part of Fort York National Historic Site. Councillor Layton did not seek re-election this fall.

Both councillors, always approachable and generous with their time, worked toward resolving complex ward issues and provided much attention to and support for Fort York.

Councillor (and Deputy Mayor) Joe Pantalone, who represented Ward 19 before Mike, provided leadership for the planning, budgeting and construction of the Fort York Visitor Centre. Mike inherited this file in 2010 and continued to secure Section 37 funding vital to constructing the Visitor Centre. At a time when the City’s commitment to the long-envisioned pedestrian/bicycle crossing over the railway from Garrison Common was faltering under Mayor Ford, Mike championed its revival, overseeing a very successful design-build process by the City’s real estate arm.

Mike’s presence was felt within the fort walls, too, as he recalls: “I entered into a 2012 Mad About Marmalade contest but came dead last because my Campari Grapefruit



*Joe Cressy with his wife, Grace, at Field Trip Festival at Fort York, 2017. (Courtesy of Joe Cressy)*



*Mike Layton in the Fort York neighbourhood. (Courtesy of Mike Layton)*



marmalade was ‘too boozy.’” Along with his work supporting bicycle infrastructure, affordable housing and climate action in Toronto, Mike established the Aboriginal Affairs committee, moved the declaration of Truth and Reconciliation, fought for the Indigenous Affairs Office and championed the Reconciliation Action Plan.

For Joe Cressy, opening up Fort York to the wider city has always been a priority. Having grown up and spent most of his adult life working downtown, Fort York was ever-present: “School trips to the Fort as a young kid, concerts and festivals (often on a date) as a young adult, countless evening meetings as a City Councillor at the Visitor Centre, and annual Remembrance Day ceremonies – Fort York has played a big role in my life.” Inheriting the Garrison Crossing project from Councillor Layton, and working seamlessly with the private and public sector, Joe made sure this project, including

## Victoria Memorial Square

Victoria Memorial Square (VMS) is due for a “refresh”, following a major restoration that was completed in 2010. An earlier rehabilitation of this cemetery, which is part of Fort York National Historic Site, occurred in the 1880s. Planning for the 2010 restoration, begun in 2001, was driven by a dedicated team of volunteers in the Wellington Place Neighbourhood Association, working with City of Toronto Museums staff, particularly David O’Hara, who was manager of Fort York National Historic Site at the time. The Friends of Fort York played a role in that restoration (see “Victoria

## A landmark designated in the Fort York Neighbourhood

Over the past 20 some years, the transformation of Fort York Neighbourhood, to the south and east of Fort York, has been astounding. From former sites of industry and railway infrastructure have risen residential towers on new streets.

Amidst that change, the intersection of Bathurst Street and Lakeshore Blvd has remained anchored by beacons of progress from another age, all three designed with elements of the then popular Art Deco style. Two of those buildings, the Tip Top Tailors Building (1929) and the Loblaw’s Groceteria (1928) have been converted to other uses, including residential condominiums. A third, the Crosse and Blackwell building (1927) was recently designated under the Ontario Heritage Act, and is currently the subject of a planning application.

The staff report recommending the designation of the property at 545 Lakeshore Blvd West was researched and written by Heritage Planner Tatum Taylor, and adopted by City Council in December of 2021. Like other such designation reports, it provides an important summary of the history of the recommended property, identifies its architects, original owner, and subsequent uses, and places the building in its past and present context. Drawing on all of that research, it then

its two-span bridge, bike paths and South Stanley Park, was completed successfully, opening to the public in September 2019 (see *F&D*, October 2019). Joe, and Mike before him, worked closely with David O’Hara, the Fort York Manager, to secure a future system of both north-south and east-west connections and public green spaces following Garrison Creek and the railway lines, with Fort York at the centre, helping to fulfill the vision set out in *Fort York: Setting It Right* (June 2000). With much of the groundwork now done, Fort York and neighbourhood stakeholders will continue to work with Spadina-Fort York Councillor Ausma Malik, to ensure this vision is made whole.

We are grateful to both Mike Layton and Joe Cressy for their skill in working with staff and stakeholders alike, and for their dedication to the public good in advancing both the protection and opening up of Fort York National Historic Site.

Memorial Square Restoration Complete” *F&D*, December 2010). Today, with David gone to Parks, Toronto History Museums appears to have relaxed its involvement in this part of the National Historic Site. Most of the responsibility now lies with Parks, Forestry and Recreation where, fortunately, David can still keep an eye on VMS. The Friends will be sharing our own “thoughts and ideas”, as called for by Park and Recreation Facility Planning and Construction here: [www.toronto.ca/VictoriaMemorialSquare](http://www.toronto.ca/VictoriaMemorialSquare)

succinctly describes the cultural heritage values of the property, arrived at through an evaluation using provincial criteria.

For those familiar with the property (and that’s likely anyone who has moved through the Bathurst-Lake Shore Blvd intersection over the last 95 years), its status as a heritage property won’t come as a surprise. The industrial complex fronts the southeast corner of the intersection with a playful 2.5-storey hexagonal building, partially roofed with a dramatic large glass skylight capped by a copper pinnacle, and containing a prominent arched main entrance surrounded in stone. Behind this building run two other



Front elevation of 545 Lake Shore Boulevard West, Chapman and Oxley, 1927. (City of Toronto Records)

more typical three storey industrial buildings.

The entrance building fronting the corner looks like it should be on Exhibition Place, or further west on Lake Shore Blvd. Not coincidentally perhaps, it was designed by prominent architects Chapman and Oxley, who also designed the nearby Princes' Gates and the Sunnyside Pavilion.

The building is valued for more than its design, however. The designation report notes that the building was one of the first to be constructed on new lands created directly south of the Fort through landfilling operations in the early 1920s. Its intriguing design and prominent corner location was purposefully created to contribute to the identity of Lake Shore Boulevard West (then Fleet Street) as a quite new waterfront thoroughfare across Toronto.

Finally, the report points to the value of the building related to its history and past use. It was constructed for Crosse & Blackwell, a centuries-old British foodstuffs company, that was then prized in a very British Toronto. More intriguing to the Toronto of today, perhaps, the property was adapted into a media centre for CFMT-TV, Canada's first multi-lingual, multicultural TV station, headed by Dan Iannuzzi.

And that makes a final link to the Friends of Fort York. When the new streets in the Fort York neighbourhood were being named, the Friends contributed to the street naming process (see "Names chosen for streets and park in FY neighbourhood" in *F&D*, May 2005). Today, running parallel to Grand Magazine Street and intersecting with Sloping Sky Mews, is Iannuzzi Street.



*Crosse and Blackwell building seen from the north side of Lakeshore Blvd. (Photo by A. Stewart)*

## *AGM for 2021 and new board member appointed*

The 2021 Annual General Meeting of the The Friends of Fort York and Garrison Common was held virtually at 7:45 pm on June 22, 2022. Chair Don Cranston reported that the activities of The Friends, though impacted by the COVID lockdowns, were at a high level. The Precinct Advisory Committee was busy, specifically on issues surrounding the Bentway Bridge designs, inappropriate usage of Victoria Square, and impacts of the proposed Ontario Line by Metrolinx.

The Guard Committee under Scott Woodland's exemplary leadership was able to stand up a reduced Guard with reduced activities due to COVID restrictions, but which were nevertheless very well received by the public. Sid Calzavara's excellent service over 12 years as the former committee chair was recognized upon his announced retirement from the board.

Robert Kennedy put through another outstanding year as Editor of *The Fife and Drum* and his decision to resign as a

Director and as Editor was accepted with regret.

The Chair advised that the board will be holding a strategic review shortly to determine the organization's future.

The Nominating Committee presented the following proposed slate of directors for the upcoming year: Davida Aronovitch, Don Cranston, Jeff Evenson, Bruce Gooding, Shawn Micallef, Scott Mullin, Anna Okorokov, Len Rodness, Suzy Rodness, Alison Rose, Neeraj Seth, Andrew Stewart, Tyler Wentzell, and Scott Woodland. The slate of directors was unanimously approved.

Suchorita Sen was added as a director by directors' resolution shortly after the meeting. As the managing director of corporate finance at the University Pension Plan Ontario, she brings important financial and networking skills, and volunteer experience, to our board. We warmly welcome Suchorita.

## Lynda Macdonald retires



Courtesy of Don Loucks

Lynda Macdonald, LOALA, OPPI, RCIP, Director, Community Planning, Toronto and East York District, has retired after more than 30 years with the City of Toronto. As a planner, manager, and then director of Community Planning, Lynda's career at the City kept her close to Fort York.

A graduate of the University of Guelph, Lynda started her career

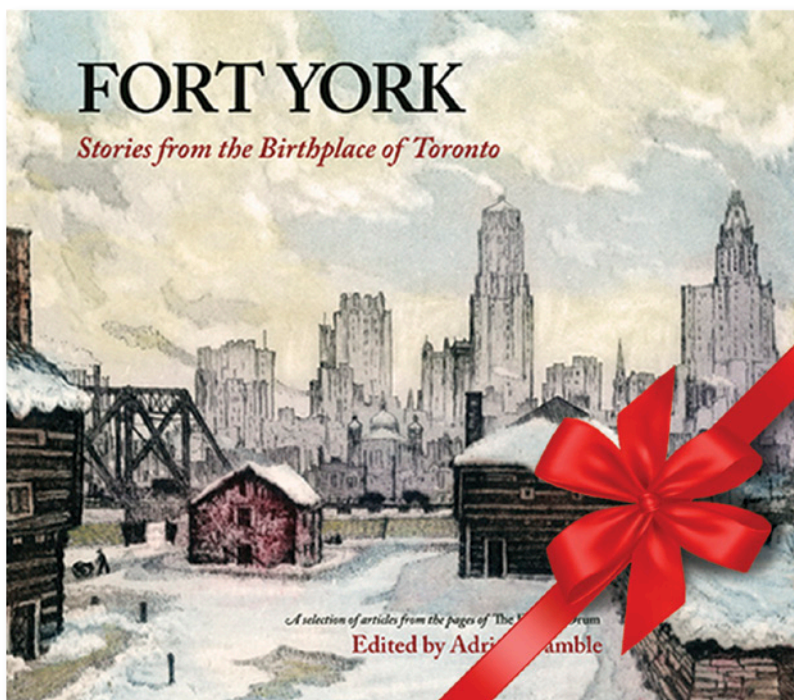
as a consulting landscape architect. She joined the former City of Toronto in 1989, becoming a planning manager in 1998 and director in 2017. She has been instrumental to many projects across the City including Secondary Plans for the Central Waterfront, the Fort York Neighbourhood, the Railway Lands, King Spadina, CityPlan '91 and TOcore as well as planning for Rail Deck Park. As Director, Community Planning, Toronto and East York District, she has overseen a team responsible for all development applications and planning studies in central Toronto, balancing unprecedented growth with the need to

provide amenities and services to residents, workers and visitors to the City. Lynda has always led and inspired her team through her passion for city building and worked closely with the director team, her colleagues in other divisions, community stakeholders and the development industry. Throughout her career, she has put the public interest and the environment first.

Lynda has been a friend to the Friends of Fort York throughout her career. As the representative of Toronto Planning, Lynda first worked closely with the Toronto Historical Board (responsible for the fort prior to amalgamation) and the Friends who, together with City Planning, organized a design charrette for the Fort York neighbourhood. The subsequent report influenced the Fort York neighbourhood public realm, and established the Friends of Fort York as a respected participant in the development and growth of the area, a role that continues. As planning manager, south district, Lynda oversaw the transformation of the fort environs from industry and rail yards to the vibrant community we know today.

Lynda's volunteer work has included co-leading the Beaches Community Tree Planting Project and being a founding member of the 10,000 Trees for the Rouge Valley project celebrating its 30th year in 2019. She intends to continue to pursue her passion for the environment and work with the Canadian Society of Landscape Architects in her new appointment as vice chair of the College of Fellows.

We congratulate Lynda on her remarkable career, and wish her the very best in her well-deserved retirement.



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