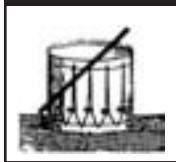


The Fife and Drum

The Newsletter of the Friends of Fort York and Garrison Common

v. 11 No. 3 October 2007

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Searching For The Better Way: Streetcar Service To The CNE

Mike Filey, Godfrey Mallion, Ray Martin, Shawn Micallef and Stephen Otto contributed to this article

For more than a century, running streetcars to the Canadian National Exhibition (CNE) has been one of the most challenging transit problems on Toronto's waterfront. Various routes have been tried, and later replaced by others better suited to the circumstances of the time. In some cases, these changes have literally battered down the fort's ramparts or cut it off from the community, while in others something has been given back. From the fort's perspective, the perfect solution has proved elusive. Today, as Environmental Assessments are about to begin on streetcar or LRT service through the CNE to the suburbs along the western waterfront, it is timely to reflect on what has been learned in upwards of 100 years.

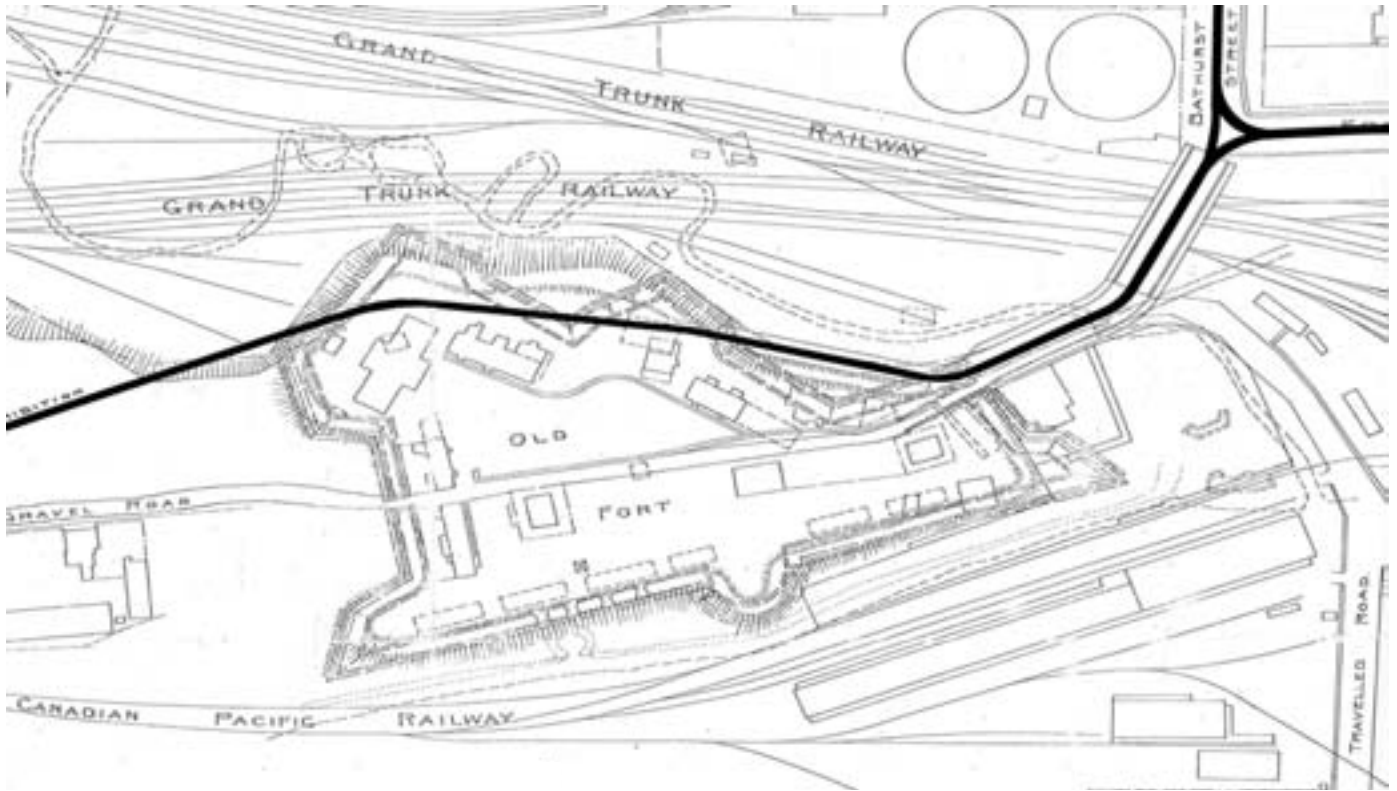
Visitors to the first annual Toronto Industrial Exhibition in 1879 travelled there by horse-drawn cars along King Street to Bathurst, where they got off and walked the rest of the way to the main buildings just east of Dufferin Street. Within two years, car-service had been extended west on King Street to Strachan Avenue and south to Wellington. But people still had a long walk, until 1885, when one of the fair's more popular exhibits - an electric streetcar drawing power from an overhead wire - was introduced to carry fair-goers from the foot of Strachan into the grounds, a distance of almost a mile. Even then, it would be another seven years before the King line was electrified and passengers could step off, thanks to a stub line, in front of the Dufferin Gate.

The lack of suitable bridges over the Toronto-Hamilton and Toronto-Georgetown railway tracks stopped streetcars from going right into the fairgrounds, and Fort York presented an additional barrier to easy entry. These handicaps came to be seen in a new light by city council when, in 1899, it assumed the assets and liabilities of the hitherto-private exhibition association, receiving in return the bulk of any profits from the fair. From then on, council considered its interests and those of the CNE (as it soon was to be known) to be closely aligned.

When in 1903 the Government of Canada offered to transfer control of the fort and fairgrounds, some 184 acres in total, to the City of Toronto, most local politicians saw it primarily as a boon to the CNE rather than a chance to preserve an important historic landmark. That much was obvious by 1905 when council proposed to run a double tramline to the CNE through the middle of the fort—in one end and out the other—which would have demolished both the east and west gates as well as the buildings known today as the Blue Barracks and North Soldiers' Barracks.

The fort's partisans put up a spirited defence, holding public meetings, lobbying officials and prompting editorials and petitions of protest. And when in early 1907 council asked the electors' approval to borrow \$125,000 to defray the costs of bridge-building for the streetcar line, it was defeated by a margin of more than two to one. But the siege didn't end there. Within a year council sought a Private Member's Bill from the Ontario Legislature to exempt it from needing the electors' consent to borrow. The request was refused by the Private Bills Committee. Not content, council tried again and, second time lucky, carried the day. Its success was thwarted, however, when the government of Premier J. P. Whitney, who was personally sympathetic to the fort, said that it would tack an amendment precluding streetcars running through the fort on any private bill.

Meanwhile, the skirmishing had moved to Ottawa, where pressure was put on Prime Minister Wilfrid Laurier to intervene. He opted not to get involved, not wanting to alienate Mayor Joseph Oliver and the majority of councillors who were Liberals. Only



"Plan of Old Fort showing present conditions..." Sept. 13, 1921, with streetcar line in bold, 2007. (Toronto Harbor Commission Archives; dTAH)

when opponents of the streetcar began to arm the Opposition with documents intended to embarrass the government did Laurier execute a *volte-face*, announcing that a condition prohibiting streetcar tracks through the fort would be inserted in the deed granting the fort and CNE lands, which had been working its way slowly through the transferral process since 1903. The actual wording was less specific: a trust clause was included requiring the City to restore the fort to its 1816 condition and maintain it thus forever, failing which the grant was null and void, and the Government of Canada had a right of re-entry.

These fine words proved inadequate to the municipality's next foray, carried out in the darkest days of the Great War while the country was preoccupied with the war effort. In 1916, when a steel bridge built in 1903 to carry the heavy trains of the Grand Trunk across the Humber River was replaced, its trusses were dismantled, moved and rebuilt by the City and the Grand Trunk at the foot of Bathurst Street to carry road traffic and streetcars over the rail corridor. As this was happening, the Toronto Street Railway Company constructed a wooden trestle along Fort York's north ramparts, cutting through the north and northwest bastions, then continuing across the open area west of the fort and on to the CNE.

Although this route atop the ramparts was said at the time to preserve the fort, its effect was to define the fort's north boundary. Within a dozen years, the railways had secured title from the City to those parts of the bastions cut off by the streetcar tracks. When Fort York was restored in 1932-34 to mark Toronto's centennial of incorporation, the northern

ramparts had to be rebuilt some distance south of their original line. Not until 1997 and 2000 was the City, at the urging of the Friends of Fort York, able to reacquire these lands from CN Rail, opening up the possibility that some day the bastions would be rebuilt in their original locations.

Even as the truss bridge was set in place in 1916, its alignment at a 22-degree angle off the line of Bathurst Street was seen as temporary; in future it would be shifted to carry Bathurst Street straight south to meet Lakeshore Boulevard. Hence, three of the bridge's four piers were designed as ad hoc supports; the fourth would be the pivot round which the bridge would be moved into its new position and set on permanent piers. This happened in 1930-31, and streetcars passed down Bathurst on their way to the CNE via Fleet Street. The fort benefited from the demolition of a pork-packing plant that sat astride its eastern ramparts, but lost the road access from the east that it had enjoyed for nearly 140 years, which was replaced by a footbridge. Those coming to the fort by car or bus were forced to use a roundabout route off Fleet Street and along Garrison Road. The fort's second entry drive north off Fort York Boulevard was not opened until 2006.

George Santayana once observed that those who cannot learn from history are doomed to repeat it. For the sake of Fort York, we hope that after a century some lessons have found their marks.

“Proceed Directly To York:” Why The Americans Attacked Little York, April 27, 1813

by Robert Malcomson

“I would take on board 1,000 or 1,500 picked Troops under the command of a judicious officer and 4 or 6 pieces of light Field-Artillery and proceed directly to York.” This was Commodore Isaac Chauncey’s intention as he explained it to Secretary of the Navy William Jones on 18 March 1813, which set in motion the series of events that led to the capture of Upper Canada’s capital six weeks later. But why pick York as the first target of the new campaign?

If the men, munitions and depots had been in place, President James Madison’s cabinet would not have even considered York as a prime target during the winter of 1813. The scheme hatched before the beginning of the war for taking Quebec and then proceeding to Halifax was still very much in favour despite the setbacks of 1812. In December Secretary of State James Monroe, one of its main advocates, outlined an ambitious plan for achieving those goals. The government, however, lacked the money to raise and outfit the necessary regiments as well as manage the logistics of the different stages of that campaign.

In February 1813, Secretary of the Army John Armstrong, after rejecting the Quebec assault as impracticable, offered Madison’s cabinet the choice *“between a course of entire inaction... and having a secondary but still important object.”* Kingston and its naval base became this secondary objective. Chauncey had already suggested such an attack across the ice of the St. Lawrence and Major General Henry Dearborn had proposed an amphibious landing for early April. Madison and the others approved Kingston, or the region downriver toward Prescott, as the first target.

However, in March the direction of the first expedition was suddenly shifted to York, with Chauncey arguing the loudest for the new plan. A key reason for the change was the disastrous strategic decision approved by Lieutenant General Sir George Prevost, commander-in-chief of the British forces in British North America. Concerned that Kingston was too vulnerable to attack from nearby New York State, he gave orders to move the headquarters of the Provincial Marine from Kingston to York and for a new dockyard to be opened there while shipbuilding continued at Kingston. People who knew York and Lake Ontario shook their heads at the decision. *“I do not like the Idea of having our Navy at different Ports,”* wrote Donald McLean, clerk of the Legislative Assembly (who was doomed to meet his fate on April 27). Merchant William McGillivray claimed, *“There was not a man in the country. . . that did not predict*

that [the frigate Sir Isaac Brock] would be burnt at the opening of navigation, and... had it not been burnt it was next to certain there was not enough water to launch it or soil to support the ways.”

That Prevost was poorly advised became evident in time. Unmentioned later, when the fingers began to point out scapegoats, was the fact that making York a naval centre had been a favourite idea of Major General Sir Isaac Brock. How the glorious hero, after spending ten years in Canada, failed to realize that no large vessels had ever been built at York because the fringe of the bay was too shallow is a question that remains unanswered. Prevost’s mistake was compounded by his failure to send enough troops and heavy artillery to properly defend the post. *“As York was not a place of defense, I was rather astonished that a vessel was building there which could not be protected,”* stated John Askin, another long-time resident. Prevost had originally ordered two brigs-of-war to be constructed at York, but that order was later reduced to one small frigate, the *Sir Isaac Brock*. However, it was the original plan to have two brigs on the stocks, and news of two other warships wintered at York, that reached Chauncey’s ears during January and February. Those rumours were circulating in Kingston and were repeated by two British deserters on the Niagara River to Lieutenant Colonel Charles Boerstler (whose military star would crash at the battle of Beaver Dams).

Chauncey also heard that the British were reinforcing Kingston. When he met in a council of war with Dearborn and Colonel Alexander Macomb on 15 March 1813 at Sackets Harbor, the commodore proposed York as the first and easier target, rich with naval assets that could be destroyed or added to his squadron. Next they would hit Fort George and Fort Erie and then blockade Kingston. *“Granny”* Dearborn had little to offer in the way of inspired thinking. He hoped to either be relieved from his command or allowed to spend the season at his Albany office. Madison’s cabinet approved Chauncey’s plan virtually without question, since they believed field commanders were best-placed to make operational decisions. Other practical considerations factored into Chauncey’s



William Leney drew this view of “York, on Lake Ontario.” which was fanciful except for the blockhouse on Berkeley Street. It was published in Nov. 1812 by S. F. Bradford of Philadelphia. (courtesy: Toronto Public Library)

decision. The severe winter of 1812/13 had produced extensive ice coverage on Lake Ontario and it was still clogging the narrow confluence of the lake and the St. Lawrence River through the middle of April. York was usually clear of ice a week or more before Kingston, making it easier to attack sooner.

Secretary Jones was also pressuring Chauncey to get the naval campaign on Lake Erie and the upper lakes underway. He had strongly emphasized the importance of retaking Fort Mackinac, and when Chauncey detailed his plan, he made it clear that after taking York and Fort George he intended to head for the upper lakes himself (rather than just leave them in the hands of the nascent hero, Oliver "Lucky" Perry) and grab control by mid-summer. It was, after all, what his boss wanted him to do.

So, York was attacked because strategic decisions made on both sides of the border elevated it from negligible to prime pickings. Prevost painted a bullseye on the town. Madison's cabinet allowed the campaign to veer west, when the jewel they really wanted was more than 600 km in the opposite direction.

Robert Malcomson, who lives in St. Catharines, specializes in the naval and military history of the War of 1812. His latest book, *True Cause: The Capture of Little York, 1813*, will be published by Robin Brass Studio early in 2008. He is pleased to offer this article for publication in the newsletter.

Financial Skills Needed

Readers of *The Fife & Drum* are aware of the exciting challenges faced by the Friends of Fort York and the Fort York Foundation as the bicentennial of the War of 1812 approaches. If you know a chartered accountant (C.A.) or certified general accountant (C.G.A.) who would enjoy sharing in these challenges and could bring financial expertise to our work on behalf of the fort, please contact Stephen Otto (saotto@sympatico.ca) or Geordie Beal (geordie48@sympatico.ca).

Thomas Ormsby: The Last British Barrack Sergeant At Fort York

In the Strachan Avenue Military Cemetery at Fort York a weathered gravestone recalls Harriet Isabella Ormsby who died in 1870, aged almost seven years old. As recently as 1953 another stone that can't be identified today marked the grave of her infant sister, Minnie Jane, whose death occurred in 1866. The inscriptions on the stones said they were daughters of Superior Barrack Sergeant Thomas Ormsby, late of the 91st Regiment. Two months ago we received an e-mail from Ian and Carolyn McConnell, Brits currently working and living in the Netherlands, who had come across the inscriptions on our website <www.fortyork.ca>. They provided us with much information about Thomas and Eliza Ormsby, Ian's great-grandparents.

The Ormsbys emigrated from Liverpool in April, 1863, arriving in New York aboard the *Ellwood Walter*. Thomas, born about 1823 in Donegal, Ireland, had retired in 1862 with a pension after serving in the army for twenty-one years, 3½ of them in the East Indies and 13½ at the Cape of Good Hope where he was decorated for his part in the seventh Kaffir War. His wife Eliza Vaughan, his junior by seventeen years, was the daughter of a butcher in Bethnal Green, London. Married in June, 1858, in Pembroke Dock, Wales, they were accompanied on the voyage to America by their daughter Eliza Clara, aged four.

Harriet Isabella's birth coincided with their arrival in America. Not long afterwards the family made its way from New York to Toronto where Thomas was employed at Fort York as the barrack sergeant. This appointment often went to a veteran soldier. His duties, as directed by the barrack master, were like those of a modern-day property manager but also to provide bedding, candles, and firewood. The incumbent was not required to live in the garrison. The Ormsbys are shown in the 1866 Toronto directory in a house on Adelaide St. West between Spadina and Brant streets and in 1867-8 on Nassau Street between Spadina and Augusta. By 1868-9 they had moved to Lumley Street [Euclid Avenue] above Robinson, where they remained until leaving Canada in 1870.

Their departure coincided with the withdrawal of the British military from Canada in 1870, when the defence of Canada was turned over to the government of the new Dominion. Thomas Ormsby was the last British-appointed barrack sergeant at Fort York; his successors were Canadian soldiers. On returning home to England, he was appointed Superior Barrack Sergeant in the Chatham Barracks in Gillingham, Kent. Later he held the same post at the garrison in Sheerness, Kent. He died in the latter place in February, 1896, survived by his wife and ten of their fifteen children.

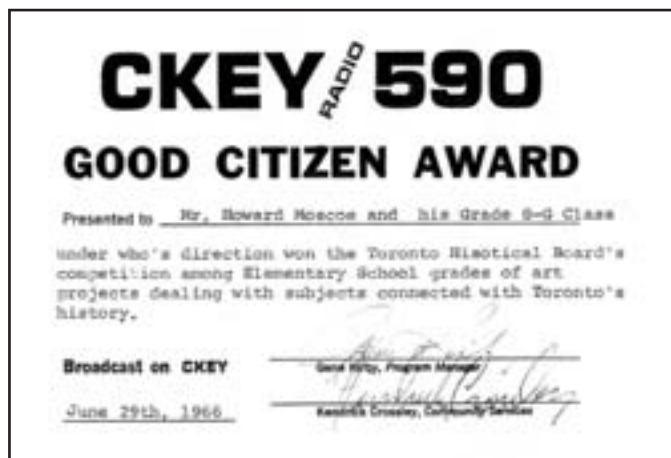
Memories Of Fort York

by Howard Moscoe, Toronto City Councillor for Ward 15

I was born in 1939 on Huron Street, below College, near my mother's family home on Willcocks Avenue, now part of the U of T. When I was small we moved to Clinton Street, north of College, where I grew up and went to Clinton Street Public School. To my Grade Six teacher there, Mr. Lorrie, I owe my love of history.

By the time I was 13 or 14 my younger brother Paul and I used to take our bikes down to the old Maple Leaf Stadium, where we sold soft drinks. We'd stop at Fort York along the way. Climbing on and over the ramparts, we had something of a free run of the place. I remember it as being in some disrepair and rather foreboding, but that might have had to do with the exposed timber walls of the blockhouses which had weathered to a dark brown-black. Not until ten or fifteen years ago were these timbers covered in white clapboards to protect them as they were in the 19th century. South of the fort I remember trucking companies, rather than railways, having their yards. Across the way and then going strong was Loblaw's grocery warehouse, where my dad worked as a sign-painter.

After public and high school, I enrolled at the old Lakeshore Teachers College, from which I graduated in 1960. My first school was Franklin Horner elementary school on Horner Avenue in Etobicoke, where I taught grades seven and eight. Sharing with my classes my love of history led to projects where they researched and built models in a room at the school set aside just for that. In 1966 my 8-G class won the first competition organized by the Toronto Historical Board for projects dealing with subjects drawn from Toronto's history. Our prize was a weekend at Fort York, where we stayed in bunks in the East Blockhouse, ate our suppers in the Officers' Mess, and fell in with the tasks that made up a soldier's life. The kids had a ball and were left with memories lasting a lifetime.



A certificate displayed on the wall in Councillor Moscoe's office. He pointed out that it contains several errors.

Standing On Guard For Thee: The Fort York Guard

by Michael Manning



Courtesy: Alex Luyckx

The Friends of Fort York's major contribution to the fort every year is the funding and operation of the Fort York Guard and Drums, ensuring that the fort is properly animated for visitors. The Friends can take satisfaction in knowing that 2007 has been a very good year for the Guard. Although reduced to 17 members from about 25, the Guard's esprit de corps remained high, with 11 students returning from last year. This enabled both units to hit the ground running. The drill was crisp and the music was sharp.

The Guard and Drums visited a number of the historic forts along the Niagara Frontier and the compliment was returned. These away-events raised Fort York's profile and hopefully attracted even more visitors to Toronto. At Fort Niagara in Youngstown, NY, both the Guard and Drums triumphed. During the re-enactment of the 1814 surprise attack, the Guard stormed the western artillery, silencing its gun. As the final assault carried the day, the Drums played "St. Patrick's Day in the Morning," just as was done 193 years ago. The Guard was asked also to perform exhibitions of light infantry and close order drill; the Drums provided a musical demonstration. Their skills were appreciated by all re-enactors present.

The Guard participated also in the re-enactment of the Siege of Fort Erie. Both units visited Niagara-on-the-Lake for the Fife and Drum Muster at Fort George, where they shone and the Guard won the squad competition for the third year running. On Simcoe Day, units from Fort George and Fort Erie returned the favour, joining the Fort York Guard and Drums in a demonstration of multi-unit tactics and infantry-artillery cooperation at Fort York.



Courtesy: Daniel Tobias

Like any real military unit, the backbone of the Guard is its cadre of leaders. This year's success is due to the strong leadership of 2nd Lieut. Ewan Wardle, Drum Major Ned Gallagher, Fife Major Yvonne Moir, Light Company Sergeant Phil Edwards and Light Company Corporal Connie Purvis.

Volunteers have been important too. A number of our student guard, for example three of our present leaders, started out as volunteer members of the Drums. These are young people aged 10 to 14 years of age who are taught play either the fife



Courtesy: Balazs Szilagyi

or drum during weekly winter classes. In the summer, they spend two days a week at the fort appearing on the field with the Drums.



Courtesy: Ewan Wardle

Not everyone who wants to “*take the King’s Shilling*” and help animate the fort is so young. Older volunteers are recruited in one of three ways. On special occasions recent alumni of the Guard are being recalled to don their old uniforms and serve as volunteers. Others choose to join a volunteer company of the 3rd York Militia, shoulder a musket and fall in beside the Guard. And for anyone who really wants to get a bang out of life, we are raising a crew to man our *Barclay*, a 3-pounder battalion gun.

Anyone interested in volunteering for the Fort York Drums, students looking for summer employment in the Guard or Drums, or those interested in serving either in the 3rd York Militia or the crew of the *Barclay*, should contact Michael Manning at <michael.manning@rogers.com>

News From

The Birthplace of Toronto

Contributions from the Staff at the Fort

Site-work Update

by David O'Hara, Site Administrator

Fort York Audio Guide

The development of a Fort York audio guide is currently underway, with a launch date expected in Spring, 2008. City Surf <www.city-surf.ca>, a new media group specializing in the development of MP3 audio-experiences, will be working closely with fort staff to develop the guide. It will give visitors the option of downloading the material to their own listening device (eg. IPOD or cell phone) before their visit, or picking up a MP3 player and headphones when they arrive at the fort.

Exhibits

2008 promises to be a big year for exhibits. After several years of work, the Soldier's Trade exhibit will be launched early in the new year, followed by the refreshment and relocation of the Orientation Exhibit from Blockhouse No. 2 to the North Soldiers' Barracks. By the end of 2008 the exhibit in the Stone Magazine should also be complete, and preliminary planning for exhibits in the Blue Barracks and Brick Magazine will be under way.

Fort York: A Short History and Guide

Hot off the press is *Fort York: A Short History and Guide*, written by Dr. Carl Benn, Chief Curator, City of Toronto Museums, with maps, diagrams and design by Kevin Hebib, a Program Officer with Toronto Culture. It is published by the City of Toronto. The project was spearheaded by the Fort York Management Board, Patrick Gallagher in particular, with the assistance of the Friends of Fort York. In this brief handbook, Carl examines Fort York's fascinating story and explores the important features of today's heritage site. It will be available for sale for under \$10 at Fort York and the other city-owned museums.

Lake Ontario Shoreline

In August, Toronto Culture issued a call to artists for expressions of interest in a new public art opportunity at Fort York. As part of the commission, artists have been asked to delineate the original Lake Ontario shoreline and related natural and historic features which can be traced along the south frontage of Fort York National Historic site. It is expected that the artwork will illuminate the Fort's original relationship with the lake and be a landmark for the new entrance to the city's most important historic site. The

funds for this project come from several sources, including the Mayor's Clean and Beautiful City Initiative and the public art contribution required from the TTC in connection with the reconstruction of the streetcar tracks on Fleet Street. Five artists have already been selected from a short-list, and all final submissions will be available for public viewing early in the new year.

Rail From The Queen's Wharf: A Rare Survivor

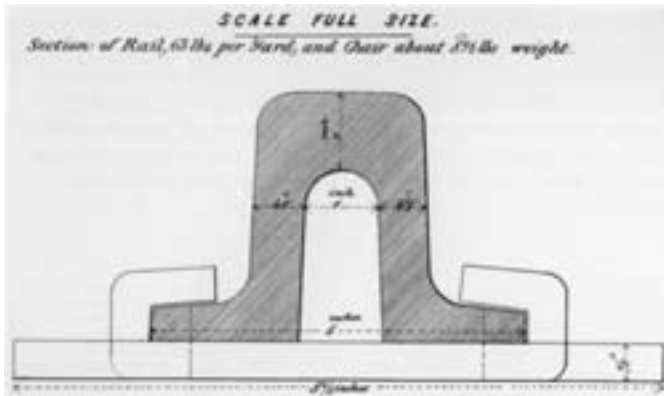
by David Spittal

When foundations for a new condominium at Bathurst and Fleet Streets were excavated in the Spring of 2006, some well preserved parts of a western addition to the head of the Queen's Wharf were uncovered. (see *Fife & Drum*, June 2006) Although extensive reports appeared in the media on the 1850s cribbing that was found there, no special notice was taken of what has since been recognized as a significant find among the few artifacts recovered from the mud and fill beside the wharf. It was a nine-foot iron rail, slightly damaged along its upper edges but well preserved otherwise. Identified as a full-length '63 lb. U-rail' (because a three-foot length weighs 63 pounds and is shaped like an inverted "U"), it is an example of the earliest type of rail used in building the Grand Trunk Railway (GTR) during the 1850s.



Plan showing location of part of Queen's Wharf that was excavated. (Courtesy: dTAH)

At that time such rails were common, manufactured in huge numbers for the railways that linked the towns and cities of Southern Ontario. For instance, it is estimated conservatively that over 200,000 rails were needed to construct the Toronto-Sarnia section of the GTR. But the



Cross-section of GTR U-rail, c.1852. (Courtesy: Toronto Public Library)

design of these rails, British in its origins, did not hold up well in the Canadian winter; water freezing in the “U” caused breakages. Also, the soft iron, which changed shape during normal use, needed to be re-rolled periodically. In 1857 Gzowski & Company, the contractors who built the GTR west of Toronto, established the Toronto Rolling Mills to refurbish old rails and make new ones for the railway. They operated on Mill Street east of Cherry in the city’s east end until 1869, when steel rails were introduced.

During the 1870s most old iron rails were replaced by steel ones. But our Queen’s Wharf find escaped the fate of countless others that got melted down in the furnaces of old Toronto. Instead, it was discarded into the harbour, an expedient but somewhat ignominious end. Today it is now the only whole example of its type known to survive. The rail may have been laid on the wharf when that structure was lengthened in the 1850s and remained there long after others of its type were replaced, because traffic on the wharf was light, consisting of only a few engines, tenders and freight cars.

A combination of the rail’s unusual grave and fortuitous recovery almost 150 years later provides us with a rare reminder of the earliest railways in the province, the development of the City’s waterfront and the famous Queen’s Wharf itself. The rail and some of the massive wooden cribbing from the wharf, both now on permanent display at Fort York, were recovered from the condominium excavations with the cooperation of Malibu Investments Inc.

Our Mistake

Our fact-checkers failed David Juliusson in editing his piece, “Spreading the News In 1813” (*Fife & Drum*, July 2007). He said there that during the War of 1812 a dozen newspapers were being published in Upper Canada. A reader, Chris Raible, pointed out that at most only four newspapers existed in the province for all or part of that period, offering as his source ‘Appendix A’ in *Upper Canadian Imprints, 1801-1841* by Dr. Patricia Fleming (who recently joined The Friends’ board). *Ed.*

2007 Upcoming Events Historic Fort York

Compiled by Melanie Garrison

OCTOBER

Ghosts of the Garrison

Fri. Oct. 26th , Sat. Oct. 27th, 7:30 p.m. to 9:30 p.m.

Family event with lantern tours and ghost stories from the past. Apple Cider and Gingerbread refreshments.

Pre-registration required (416-392-6907).

Adults, Seniors: \$10, Children 12 yrs or under: \$5.

NOVEMBER

Fort York Clean-up Day

Sat. Nov. 3rd 10:00 a.m.

Volunteers will meet in the parking lot at the west gate. Please dress appropriately and bring work gloves if possible. Coffee will be provided.

Remembrance Day

Sun. Nov. 11th 10:45 a.m.

Annual ceremony presented by the Municipal Chapter of Toronto IODE and the Culture Division, City of Toronto. Tours of the fort following the ceremony.

Free Admission until 12:00 noon.

DECEMBER

**Fort York is closed from Sat. Dec. 15th '07 thru
Tues. Jan. 1st, '08.**

Enquiries regarding rental of the facilities over the holidays should be directed to Marna Ward at 416-338-0030.

JANUARY 2008

Queen Charlotte’s Birthday Ball: Portugal and the Bicentennial of the Peninsular War

Sat. Jan. 19th, 1 p.m. to 10:30 p.m.

Entertaining in the Canadas in the late 18th and early 19th centuries always included a ball in January to celebrate the Queen’s Birthday. Our event echoes this tradition with a day-long celebration of music, food and dance. This year, Queen Charlotte honours Portugal, as 2008 is the bicentennial of the commencement of the Peninsular War. Plan on attending the whole day, which includes an afternoon English Country dance workshop, an illustrated presentation; a port tasting; an elegant Georgian-style buffet supper; and an evening ball with live musicians. Beginners are welcome and no partners required. Costumes are encouraged, but not necessary.

Pre-registration required. (416-392-6907)

\$100 (all day), \$65 (dinner/ball only), \$25 (dance workshop & speaker) or \$20 (port tasting).