

The Fife and Drum

The Newsletter of the Friends of Fort York and Garrison Common

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Upcoming Events

- | | | |
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| 6:30 p.m. | Thursday
June 17 | Annual General Meeting of the
Friends of Fort York
Centre Block house - Fort York |
| 7:30 p.m. | Tuesday
June 22 | Royal Canadian Military Institute
Military History Night
"The Battle of Crysler's Farm,
1813" |
| | July 1 | Canada Day - Fort York |
| 7:30 pm. | Wednesday
July 21 | Royal Canadian Military Institute
Military History Night
"Lords of the Lake-Naval Warfare
on Lake Ontario, 1812-14" |
| | August | Simcoe Day - Fort York |
| | August 6, 7
& 8 | Toronto Festival of Beer - Fort
York |
| | August 19 | Kids summer - Fort York |

Annual General Meeting

The Annual General Meeting of the Friends of Fort York will be held on Thursday, June 17 in the Centre Blockhouse at Fort York. A reception will be held from 6:30 to 7:30 p.m. with the meeting itself to commence at 7:30 p.m.

We encourage all members to attend this meeting. The activities, both past and future, of the Friends have been expanding dramatically. At the meeting we will review the events of the past year and discuss the directions of our young organization for the next few years. The reception should allow all of us renew acquaintances and meet new members.

The nominating committee (Joe Gill, Don Brydges, Bronwyn Krog, George Waters, Rollo Myers and John Barclay) are in the process of preparing a slate for nominations to the Board of Directors. If you have suggestions for new board members, please contact Joe Gill - 864-1300, Don Brydges 247-1377 or any of the committee.

Membership

Many thanks to those members who have renewed for 1999 and to our new members. So far 89 memberships have been issued for 1999. Based on last year's membership there are still over 50 members who have not yet renewed. We encourage you to get your memberships in and we, of course, welcome new members. The dues of \$30 essentially cover our costs of producing and mailing The Fife and Drum.

A membership application is attached to this newsletter.

Fort York Festival

The 3rd Fort York Festival was a great success. Our paid attendance was up approximately 30% and we had more than double the number of re-enactors compared to 1998. In total, we had approximately 1500 individuals on site for each of Saturday and Sunday.

Clearly, our festival has become a family event. Over 40% of those attending were children. As well, many of the re-enactors travel with their families. It has to be pleasing to see so many of the younger generation attracted to historical events.

One of the measures of our success at the Fort York Festival is the reaction of the re-enactors who attend many similar events and are in a position to compare. This year, with the Napoleonic theme and battle re-enactments, we attracted re-enactors from all over North America, many of who regularly attend Napoleonic festivals in Europe. Don Brydges and his Festival Committee should be proud that we again received comments from re-enactors that the Fort York Festival was one of the best managed events they had attended. All of the re-enactors contacted indicated their willingness to attend our festival again in the future years.

More than 110 volunteers participated in the Festival over the two days. The operation of the admission gates and ticket booths requires many volunteers. Equally demanding is the provision of food to visitors and re-enactors. Under the supervision of our chefs, Hank Young and Patrick McCrory, and with the organizational skills of Jane Kennedy and Anne Beach, we fed lunch to approximately 1500 individuals, served two breakfasts to over 250 re-enactors and provided a roast beef dinner to over 350 on Saturday evening. Our volunteers can be proud - but even more important, they almost all have fun and want to come back each year. We thank them.

Thanks also to the various corporations assisting us to present the festival. In particular, Molson's Breweries have been very strong supporters of the festival and each year receive "three cheers" from the re-enactors. Loblaws and Ernst & Young provide important support. Jessup Foods provided us with the use of their tent for the Festival. We thank them all.

Best memories of the 1999 festival. Perhaps the gorgeous costumes of the Imperial French Cavalry or the unique battle re-enactments with cavalry charges defended by the quick maneuvering of the British troops into the British Square formation. Or maybe Oliver Nasmith marching into his first battle re-enactment smartly dressed in the uniform of the Canadian Fencibles. Oliver is 10. There will be many more favourite memories.

First Annual Georgian Dinner at Fort York

The Georgian Dinner at Fort York, a fundraising event, was held on Thursday, May 20th. The dinner was attended by 130 supporters of Fort York, about 40 of who dressed in period costume, and took place in the tent recently erected by Jessup Foods, the operator of the Barracks Banquet program at Fort York.

While the function was scripted as a Mess Dinner at Fort York in 1813, it centered on an historically correct period dinner served in the Georgian style. Paul Fortier and Jessup Foods, assisted ably by Fiona Lucas and Bridget Wranich of Heritage Toronto's Foodways Program produced a magnificent dinner, that was both uniquely historic and delicious. The dinner clearly was the result of a partnership between Jessup, Heritage Toronto and the Friends of Fort York and demonstrated what can be achieved through this type of cooperative venture. It will be repeated next year and will likely become an annual event.

The Good News! The dinner raised approximately \$12,000. The largest part of these funds will be devoted to the acquisition of instruments, uniforms and training for the development of a thirty member fife and drum band, The Fort York Drums. The Fort York Drums will be a volunteer band drawn from the community in Toronto. Initial thoughts would include the formation of one element of the band as part of a secondary school program. The balance would be drawn from citizens with musical experience interested in mastering the skills of early 19th century fife and drum music. If you know of anyone interested in becoming involved in this project, either as a musician or as support for the band, please contact Joe Gill at 864-1300 who will ensure that the information reaches the Fort York Drums Committee (now still being organized).

The Friends thank Paul Fortier and the staff of Jessup Foods whose generosity and support made the Georgian Dinner possible, Fiona Lucas and Bridget Wranich whose tireless efforts to research the menus and table service as well as many hours spent in preparatory cooking were crucial, all of the volunteers who were involved in organizing and serving the dinner and all of those who made the dinner feasible by attending.

Next year's dinner will be held on Thursday, June 8.

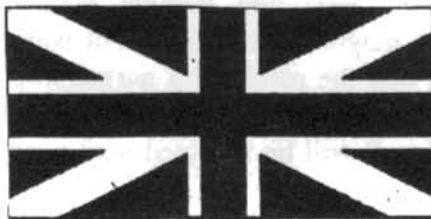
The Fort York Management Board

The Fort York Management Board will be appointed by City Council in the early fall to assume responsibility for the management and direction of the Fort presumably by January 1, 2000. The Friends of Fort York will continue as a separate organization and will support the Fort through fundraising and other activities, such as the Fort York Drums. The Friends of Fort York will help provide a vital link between the Fort and the community.

The Friends of Fort York have formed an interim "ad hoc" Fort York Management Board. The purpose of the interim Management Board is to enable the necessary preparatory thinking on appropriate by-laws for the Board and on the appropriate terms for the Memorandum of Agreement with the City which will determine the level and areas of responsibility being assumed by the Board and the City respectively. Equally important, this interim Board can do preparatory thinking on year 2000 budget and staffing for the Fort. The interim Board is also planning to provide a "state" of nominees for the Fort York Management Board. (If you have any thoughts on candidates for the Fort York Management Board, please contact Geordie Beal at 485-7483).

The initial members of the interim Management Board are Geordie Beal, Richard Dodds, Joe Gill, Rollo Myers and Bret Snider.

A Brief History of the Union Flag



In May 1998, the Heritage Flagpole was erected at Fort York by the Friends of Fort York with funds provided by George Weston Limited. The flag that flies on the Heritage Flagpole is the Union Flag, the predecessor flag to the Union Jack.

Heather James, the editor of the newsletter of the Governor Simcoe Branch of the United Empire Loyalists recently provided us with an article by Adrian Wilson which appeared in the June 1997 issued of "The Flag and Banner". The following comments on the history of the Union Flag are taken from that article and will be of interest to our readers:

“Located a short distance west of Fort York, this burying ground occupies an area of 1.82 acres bounded by Strachan Avenue on the west, the tracks of the Canadian National Railway on the north, a surveyed line on the east, and a former railway right-of-way on the south.

It is the city's third military cemetery. The first, of course, had been the old graveyard on Portland Street (Victoria Square) whose use from 1794 to 1863 has been well documented by Michael Rudman. By 1863, however it was full and no further burials were permitted. The last soldier laid to rest at Portland Street may have been James McQuarrick of the 63rd Regiment, who passed away in late April 1863. When Sgt John Taylor of the 30th Regt. Of Foot died on 19 June 1863 he was buried instead in the Necropolis, a public cemetery. Presumably, the choice of a location for the new cemetery had not yet been approved.

The second military burying ground was situated on the Garrison Common within the present CNE Grounds near the Dufferin Gate. Likely the first person interred there, even before the ground was consecrated, was Pte James Walsh of the 30th Regt. whose funeral took place from “the Old Garrison” on 9 July 1863. Unlike the Portland Street cemetery, the new one had Protestant and Roman Catholic sections. The former was dedicated by Bishop John Strachan on 4 August 1863, while the Catholic part was consecrated the following day by Bishop John J. Lynch.

John Ross Robertson said only five or six interments took place there before the soil was found to be too wet and unsuitable for a graveyard. In late August 1863 a private of the 30th Regiment assigned to dig a grave for Pte John Mitchell was almost buried alive when the excavation collapsed around him. Likely the last soldier to be buried in this ground was Pte John Harlow.

And so, for a second time within four months, the military authorities had to pick a new burying ground. By mid-October, 1863, the lands on the east side of Strachan Avenue had been chosen and guidance was being sought from religious leaders on how to deal with the few burials in the second cemetery. In early November Toronto City Council was asked if it had any objection to the opening of another military graveyard. By the latter part of December a number of coffins had already been moved to the new place. The remains of Pte Walsh must have been among those transferred, since a gravestone bearing his name survives in the Strachan Avenue cemetery today.

The third cemetery, like its predecessor, was divided into Protestant and Roman Catholic sections: the north half was reserved for Protestant burials and the south for the interment of Roman Catholics. The former was consecrated on 18 December 1863 by Benjamin Cronyn, Anglican Bishop of Huron. Present at the ceremony were the Garrison choir and glee club, 100 strong, who marched round the ground three times under the direction of General Napier. The Roman Catholic section was dedicated on 22 December 1863 by Bishop Lynch.

Unfortunately, no register of burials for the cemetery is known to exist. Hence, the information needed to compile a record of people interred there has been drawn from inscriptions on the markers that survive, from newspapers, regimental returns and archival records. The result is a list of 84 soldiers, veterans, their wives and children who

“When Queen Elizabeth I died in March, 1603, King James VI of Scotland became King James I of England, thus uniting England and Scotland under one monarch. On April 12, 1606, King James I issued a Royal Warrant for the design of a Union flag for the new united country. This new flag was created by placing the Cross of the original flag of England - a red cross couped on a white background, or the cross of St. George - over the original flag of Scotland - a white saltire on a dark blue background, or the cross of St. Andrew. A white fimbriation was left around the red cross.

The union of Scotland and England dissolved when King Charles I was executed under Cromwell, so the Union flag was withdrawn from use. Upon the Restoration of the Monarchy, the Union Flag of King James I was reintroduced and flown until the sixth year of the reign of Queen Anne. In 1707, Queen Anne issued a Proclamation creating a new or second Union Flag. The difference between the old and the new Union Flag was the width of the white border around the red cross of St. George. It went from a fimbriation to a noticeable broad white band which made the second Union flag quite distinct from the first Union Flag. It became known as the “flag of Queen Anne” and was flown until 1801 when Ireland joined Great Britain. Then St. Patrick’s Cross representing Ireland (a red saltire on a white background) was added to the flag, creating the third and present Union Flag, commonly called the Union Jack.

The flag of Queen Anne was Great Britain’s flag during the American Revolution (1775 - 1783) and the flag under which the Loyalists fought the American Rebels. The Loyalist refugees were forced to flee their American homelands by the Rebels during the whole time frame of the War. Many of them came to Canada and settled in what is now Quebec, Ontario, New Brunswick, Nova Scotia, Prince Edward Island and Newfoundland.”

The Strachan Avenue Military Burying Ground

As part of the 1997-1998 Friends of Fort York Lecture Series, a very special evening involved talks by Michael Rudman and Stephen Otto. Michael spoke to us on his research and his passionate interest in the Portland Street Burying Ground. Stephen provided us with a summary of his research to that time on the Strachan Avenue Military Burying Ground.

Michael Rudman subsequently expanded his talk to provide an article for the 1999 volume (vol.94) of the York Pioneer, the publication of the York Pioneer and Historical Society. We will be seeking permission to include portions of this article in subsequent issues of the Fife and Drum.

Stephen Otto has done additional research on the Strachan Avenue Burying Ground. Most of this research involved reviews of military records in the United Kingdom. Stephen has written a paper on his research which includes a listing of persons known to be buried in the cemetery. The full paper may be accessed on Heritage Toronto’s website ([HTTP://www.torontohistory.on.ca](http://www.torontohistory.on.ca)). We reproduce below the introduction (excluding footnotes) to Stephen’s paper for your interest. Thanks to Stephen Otto for his permission to reproduce this portion of his paper.

died between 1862 and 1911. Most burials took place before 1870, when the British army turned over Fort York to the Canadian military and returned home. A majority of those buried in the cemetery died from natural causes like asthma, consumption and aneurisms, but significant numbers drowned. The religious affiliation of sixteen are known; eight were members of the Church of England, eight were Roman Catholic.

This list is incomplete. For one thing, it has not been possible yet to examine some regimental returns, such as those for the Royal Artillery. For another, none of the documentary sources examined routinely reported the deaths of soldiers' wives and children. Yet, as Michael Rudman has shown in his analysis of the Burial Record for the Old Garrison Burying Ground between 1825 and 1850, the number of adult females and children laid to rest there during that period (122) slightly exceeded the number of military men (118). Applying these ratios to the number of soldiers known to be buried in the Strachan Avenue ground (60), it follows that in addition to the 24 women and children known to be interred there, the cemetery probably contains some three dozen more females and children. In all, there may be a total of about 120 graves.

However, this number falls short of the approximately 200 graves John Ross Robertson said were there in 1888 after he had counted the mounds of each. His statement might be thought excessive but is corroborated somewhat by a memoir written about 1910 by a anonymous veteran who had served at Fort York in the 1860s. The latter recalled that in 1863/4 a fatigue party from the 16th Regt. was assigned to help the military train transfer "60 or 70 bodies from Garrison Commons to Strachan Avenue, the men receiving 1s. 6d per day." Unless the old soldier erred in thinking the second cemetery contained 60 or 70 burials, rather than only five or six, his recollection may explain the difference between the 120 burials extrapolated from known interments, and Robertson's count of 200 graves. More importantly, the 60 or 70 bodies he spoke of may have been the remains of soldiers who fell during the taking of York by the Americans in April 1813.

The records show that 130 men died in the attack on York: 55 Americans, 62 British regulars, 5 militia and 8 native allies. In his diary Ely Playter noted, "The Yankies had buried all the Dead and I perceived they had done it very ill". Most were buried hurriedly in shallow graves. A month after the attack Mrs. W. D. Powell reported in writing to her husband that Dr. Strachan and others had gone to "the melancholy spots where the remains of our brave defenders were deposited a few inches below the each" to give them Christian burials and secure their graves.

Among the casualties, an estimated 44 American and British soldiers were killed in an explosion of Fort York's grand powder magazine. Probably they were buried in one or more mass graves dug near the fort. Other who fell in battle likely were buried singly or in small numbers close to where they died anywhere between where the invaders landed near the foot of present day Dowling Avenue and Fort York itself. Yet only a few burial places have ever been identified. While Scadding spoke of numerous skeletons being exposed to view as portions of the bank along the lakeshore fell away, he conceded some may have been the remains of early French and Indian traders. Only one washout is known by name: Capt. Neal McNeale of the Grenadier Co., 8th Regiment, whose bones came to light and were reinterred in 1829. Although Miss Jean Geeson reported in 1903 seeing soldiers' bones exposed during the demolition of the fort's southeast bastion and

eastern rampart to make way for an addition to a nearby pork-packing plant, the fallen soldiers were not identified, even by nationality.

If the record of who is buried in the cemetery is incomplete, then even less is known about the locations of the graves, since no plan exists. Writing in 1921 Fred Griffin said the stones marking the graves of Colour Sgt John Hanney and Pte James Walsh were "just inside the gate" that of Denis Sampson stood "down in the corner;" and Pte Hugh Owen's marker was "in the north east corner." A sketch plan attached to a City of Toronto proposal of October, 1922, to landscape the cemetery shows in their original positions only the fenced-off officers' plot and "four existing stones in good preservation." (Plate 1) Pictures of the burying ground before 1922 are also rare. The point of view of a pen-and-ink sketch made for Robertson in the 1880s (see below) cannot be identified. A photo accompanying Griffin's article showing Hanney's and Walsh's stones yields no other information.

Probably the withdrawal of the British army from Canada in 1870 had something to do with the speed with which the ground became overgrown and neglected. Few relatives of those interred there continued to live in Toronto and were able to pressure the authorities into maintaining the cemetery properly. In 1921 when Griffin described its condition as pitiful, he sparked a campaign to restore some dignity to the site. The following year the city's Parks Department was authorized to level the mounds, collect the broken tablets (about three dozen in all) into a square plot at the east end, replace the iron bars missing from the fence around the officers' plot, construct a cinder pathway across the ground and erect a flagpole, as shown in the sketch plan. The IODE traces its interest in the Strachan Avenue buying ground to 1922, when it presented a bronze tablet that was unveiled by the Mayor on 11 November that year. Annually since 1952 it has held a ceremony at the cemetery on Remembrance Day, in recent years in co-operation with Heritage Toronto.

The grouping of broken tablets created in 1922 survived for less than fifty years. In 1970 City Council allowed the Toronto Historical Board, which has been given jurisdiction over the cemetery in 1961, to mount the markers in a brick wall in their present configuration."





The Friends of Fort York
and Garrison Common

Membership Application

Date _____

I would like to apply for membership for 1999.

I enclose:

1999 membership \$30.00

Donation to further support the activities of the
 Friends in support of Fort York. _____*

Total =====

* Receipt with charitable number will be issued.

Please make cheque payable to the Friends of Fort York and Garrison Common and forward to John L. Barclay, 162 Forest Hill Road, Toronto, M5P 2M9

Name: Mr., Mrs., Miss., Ms. _____

ADDRESSES

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Address	_____		_____
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