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**Fifty Years of Peach Culture in Ontario**

**C. Lieutenant General John Graves Simcoe  
First Governor of Upper Canada First**

**Bridges over the Niagara River Mrs.  
John Graves Simcoe**

**Address by Gen.  
Cruikshank on the Battle of Fort George**

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**Fifty Years of Peach Culture in Ontario**

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(BY A. M. SMITH)

“Some years ago the following paper which had been read to me by A. M. Smith to the Fruit Growers Association was given to me by Mr. F. D. L. Smith, then editor of the Times but as there was no date in it I could not tell from it when the association had been formed but this I now have from Mr. C. W. Nash who states “The Fruit Growers Association had its origin in Judge Campbell’s home in 1858 there were present Judge Campbell, Dr. Beadle, of St. Catharines, Rev. Dr. Burnett, of Hamilton and Judge Logie, of Hamilton. On the 19<sup>th</sup> of January, 1859, in the Mechanic’s Institute Hall in Hamilton, the Association was formally organized with Judge Campbell as President. Fruit growing as a business was but little thought of in those days and these pioneers in the enterprise struggled against many difficulties and discouragements while laying the foundation of the Association. They held meetings at various places and made exhibits of fruit to show what could be done in this Province and in this way a great deal of information was give and the success of fruit culture which has followed may be said to be greatly due to the efforts of those few men more than to any other agency. In 1859 the Society was incorporated under the Agricultural and Arts Act and has since grown and flourished.” It may also be said that Judge Campbell was the leader in forming a Horticultural Society in Niagara in 1856. From the statement above tis paper must have been read in 1909. – Ed.”

May I be allowed before commencing the subject assigned me to say a few words upon fruit culture in general and the good it has accomplished for our country during the last 50 years. I do not think there is anyone here but it will admit that the fruit industry has done more in building up the prosperity of our country than any industry we have. It has done more to attract immigration from other countries by showing we have a climate that could produce such a variety of choice of fruits.

It has made us all healthier and happier and contented to have such a bountiful supply of fruits to enjoy. It has shown the world that Canada produce that cannot be excelled or equaled (particularly apples) in any country in the world. What has been the greatest factor in establishing this industry and brining it to its present value to the country? I answer without fear of contradiction, The Ontario Fruit Growers’ Association, the fiftieth anniversary of which we are now celebrating. This association has done more to establish and maintain this industry which makes Ontario the banner Province of this great Dominion (if not of the Great British Empire) than all other influences combined. Its members have take the lead in introducing new fruits adapted to the different localities in encouraging their cultivation, in opening up markets and establishing transportation facilities, in short making fruit growing a success.

But to turn the subject assigned me – 50 years of Peach Culture—50 years seems a long time of you are looking ahead, but if you are looking back over the past, not so long. Fifty years ago Commercial peach growing was almost unknown in Canada. Many farmers in the peach belt grew peaches for their own use and sometimes sold them to settlers in the back townships or to hucksters who came out form cities and towns, and oftener fed them to their pigs, but the idea of growing them for profit or market was not thought of. Some of our cities and towns were partially supplied with tis fruit, but it came mostly from the States. Fifty-seven years ago I was working for a man who had the largest peach orchard then in western New York and he sold most of his fruit in Canada, and I sold his peaches for him in Woodstock, Ingersoll and London up to fifty years ago when my own orchard began to bear at Grimsby.

The first peaches of which we have any record were planted along the Niagara River below Queenston by James Durham in 1825 on the farm now owned by C. E. Fisher, where there is now one of the finest orchards in the Country. Another I am told was planted about 1830 by Geo. Stevens, a retired army officer, on the farm which is now owned by our celebrated peach

grower Wm. Armstrong, which shows that soil planted and used for peaches for nearly a century does not deteriorate or lose its value if properly cultivated. Other small orchards were planted in the vicinity of St. David's by the Woodruffs and others. But I think the real first commercial orchard was planted by Joseph and John Brown about fifty years ago on the River below Queenston. Since then there have been numerous orchards scattered through the township. The Vroomans, Bradley and others in the southern part, Major Hiscott, the balls, and the others in the northern, have planted largely until to-day there is estimated to be 200,000 peach trees growing in the township and the present year's shipment not less than 400,000 baskets.

Grimsby, which had been considered on the past the great peach centre, had no commercial orchard into the late Charles Woolverton and myself planted about five acres in 1856. Many of the old farmers in the neighborhood whose sons and grandsons are now shipping peaches by the car load wondered what we would do with them when they began to bear and prophesied our venture to be a failure, but we cultivated our trees and got the express company to establish an office at Grimsby and just about fifty years ago began shipping our fruit to parties we had formally supplied from the States. Others seeing there was a demand for peaches began to plant. Jacob Kitchen and John Nixon were among the first who planted on a small scale, but it was ten or twelve years before the fever began to spread and farmer orchards were planted on the east and west of us. The Carpenters on the west, John Kilborne and others east about Beamsville. About 1870 C. M. Honsberger planted a small orchard at Jordan Station and he informs that there is now no less than 500 acres planted in that vicinity. Thirty years ago there were very few peaches growing in Louth or Grantham. J. Broderick in Louth and E. McCardle in Grantham had some of the first commercial orchards. The present year than any other in the Country. Mr. Bunting will likely be able to give you the figures.

We used to think that Saltfleet, about Winona, was too hard a place, or soil I mean, to grow peaches, but I am informed that J. W. Smith & Sons have picked 33,000 baskets this year from 40 acres, J. C. Henry, 15,000 baskets from 20 acres and others had similar yields in that section and at Grimsby.

Morris Stone & Wellington planted the first commercial orchard in Pelham, about three acres and one season they realized 2,900 from it. Stamford had a few orchards as early as 1865 along Lundy's Lane and vicinity, planted by the Corwins and Biggars and later on there were larger ones in the northern part. A Mr. Dunning and Mr. Thos. Berryman were planters.

I have mentioned the principal peach growing districts, but there were quite a number grown outside, some about Barton, Hamilton and Burlington, besides the Lake Erie district we have heard by Mr. Hilborn.

In regard to varieties—Although there have been many new ones introduced and tested in the last 50 years, there has been nothing to excel the old Earl Crawford. This with Old Nixon, free, Early Purple, Barnard, Jaquith, are Rare Ripe, Honest John and Crawford Late, was planted in our first orchard. Later on came hales Early, Alexander, Rivers, Foster and a host of others. It is well known that many varieties succeed better in certain localities and soils than in others. I think the Experimental Board on one of their reports have given lists adapted to different localities. If you have not all got them, you should get them.

In regard to insects, we knew little about them in early days expecting the borer in the roots. We dug them out and as a preventative and also to protect our trees from mice we would mound up our trees six to eight inches in the fall and leave the dirt till the insect which produced the grub or borer had deposited its eggs (which were laid in the tree at the edge of the ground early in the season) and then haul it away, which would leave eggs exposed to the birds and

weather and make them more easily destroyed. The next and most serious insect pest was the San Jose Scale, with which you are too well acquainted.

Diseases—The yellow has been the most serious disease we have had to contend with. It was introduced to us about 35 years ago. My first experience with it was in the township of Stamford where I had planted an orchard and was also growing trees for sale. A friend of mine near Lockport, N. J. wrote me he had found a new peach similar to Early Crawford and two weeks earlier and high colored. He advised me to get some buds and propagate it. I drove thirty miles to see it and found it was an early Crawford I had sold to the owner several years before. I had heard enough about the yellows to know what it was, so did not propagate. I know of several who did propagate from infected trees thinking they had found something new and valuable and thus helped spread the disease. This and its kindred disease Little Peach had been discussed at your former meetings and I will not trespass on your time with it further than to say “Cut it out”

Now about the next 50 years of peach growing in Ontario, will there be as much progress as in the past? We have a great country rapidly developing and filling up with people who love fruit and consider it a necessity. Soon we shall have millions to supply. Only a small portion of our vast Dominion is adapted to fruit growing especially peaches. Shall we on this little narrow peninsula be able to supply the demand? Is there any danger of over-stocking the market? I leave this question with you and future growers to decide.

(As shewing that there was fruit in Niagara in early years, in her diary Mrs. Simcoe says, July 2<sup>nd</sup> 1793 “The Indians are particularly fond of fruit, we have thirty large May Duke cherry trees which supplied us last autumn for tarts and desserts during six weeks besides the number the men ate. My share was trifling compared with theirs and I ate thirty in a day. They were very small and high flavored. When tired of eating them raw Mr. Talbot roasted them and they were very good.”

(This shews that the trees must have been planted by the Naval men who occupied these houses called Navy Hall built in 1787. One of these houses had been fitted up for General and Mrs. Simcoe—1792.

She also mentions that Mrs. Tice above the Mountain had a number of Standard peach trees. Some with small and others large fruit and well favored. Ed.)

### **Lieutenant General John Graves Simcoe, First Governor of Upper Canada**

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(BY F. R. PARNELL)

There was never a great nation that has graced the pages of history in all ages whose glorious achievements were not fostered or matured by great and noble men or women, with characters and master minds overshadowing those who owed allegiance to the same monarch flag. Great Britain is no exception to this statement. Few nations, if any, during the past ten or twelve centuries have produced more outstanding figures in the legislature, military or navel horizon, than has that little rock bound kingdom, off the shores of France. Very few men ever reached the pinnacle of fame in any country who were endowed with all the characteristics just mentioned. The subject of this sketch, however, was the exception, and that man was Lieutenant General John Graves Simcoe, First Governor of Upper Canada.

General Simcoe was born in Old England in the year 1752, in which century so many of Britain's noblest sons were born and on whose shoulders a mantle fell, the glory of which will never fade while a pen is drawn to write the history of the great British Empire. We might mention, General Wolfe, Brock, Lord Nelson, The Iron Duke, Sir John Moore and others, whose underlying fame will shine in historic lustre, as do the sentinel stars in God's great canopy on a clear night.

General Simcoe's father was John Graves Simcoe Esquire Commander of His Majesty's Ship Pembroke, and who lost his life in the Royal Service, in the expedition against Quebec in the year 1759.

It is of interest to know that Commander Simcoe sometime before, was taken prisoner by the French and taken up the St. Lawrence River. It was on this occasion afterwards that the prisoner drew plans of the river which afterwards to become so important to General Wolfe, in his operations against the great fortress at a later date.

Little did the wily Frenchman know their man. Their chief aim was merely that he would not escape. Little recked they of his miniature penciled plan, of the mighty river which bore the French fleet up against the strong current. The incident, later on proved the undoing of the French in New France, and of the banishment of the Fleur-de-Lis forever from the soil of Canada.

Shortly after the death of Simcoe's father his mother sent him to school in Exeter, where they resided. When he reached his fourteenth year he was removed to Eton and from thence a little later to Merton College, Oxford. While at Exeter young Simcoe showed great brilliance in come lines of study. His literacy attainments were of a high order. When he reached the age of nineteen he obtained an Esquire's Commission in the 35<sup>th</sup> Regiment of Foot. It was not his fortune however, to receive his baptism of fire with this unit, for it was shortly afterwards sent to America to quell the rebellion of the American Provinces. Simcoe did not embark with his regiment, but landed at Boston, on the same day that the battle of Bunker's Hill was fought, June 17<sup>th</sup>, 1775. He shortly after purchased a commission in the 40<sup>th</sup> Foot and took command of a company. The Battle of Brandywine followed a few weeks afterwards, in which the British were victorious. Sir Wm. Howe, the British General, defeating General Washington and thus became the master of the City of Philadelphia. Captain Simcoe distinguished himself greatly in the engagement, his great genius and valor being so outstanding that the British Commander transferred him to a Provincial Corps of Cavalry, the Queen's Rangers, and gave him the command of the Corp. with the title of Major. His command mustered about 400 men and their principal duty was scout work and that of light cavalry.

It is said that experience is our greatest teacher and it was while Simcoe was with the Rangers that he acquired the great schooling in pioneer life.

Simcoe's military career was none round after round of success, in which displayed great tact and zeal in dealing with military matters. He did his work loyally and heroically. His soldiers loved him to a man, although he was always a strict disciplinarian. The Queen's Rangers believed in the phrase.

"Their's not to reason why,  
Their's but to do and die"

They practiced the art of pioneer warfare artfully led by a skillful and noble commander.

In due course Major Simcoe was advanced to the title of Lieutenant Colonel of the Queen's Rangers.

During these trying years the subject of our sketch made many acquaintances and fast friends among the loyalists of the New England Colonies, many of whom during and after the war were in their fortunes with the small but loyal population of Canada. They were known as the United Empire Loyalists and are acknowledged to-day as the foundation to a great extent of this Dominion of Canada of ours.

On the conclusion of hostilities, the Associated Loyalists, in Pennsylvania, Maryland, and the lower counties in Delaware presented him with a written statement, which in part reads "We are at a loss whether most to admire your activity and gallantry in the field or your generous and affectionate attachment to his Majesty's loyal subjects in America and your unwearied exertions as well to promote their true interest as to preserve and protect their property."

When the Queen's Rangers Regiment was disbanded at the ensuing of peace, many of the Officers and most of the soldiers settled in Canada; The Niagara District, or more properly Nassau as it was then named, gave a great number of them tracts of land their home yet to be hewn out of the almost trackless forests.

On account of ill health Colonel Simcoe was allowed to return to England in 1791, and here ended his active military career, loved by all and honored by his sovereign whom he so faithfully and gloriously served.

In the year 1791, Upper Canada had its beginning as a separate province. The British House of Commons passed a Bill in that year called the Constitutional Act which divided the Province of Quebec into Upper and Lower Canada. The Bill was championed by the great William Pitt, the Prime Minister. In the previous year Colonel Simcoe was elected a member of the House of Commons to represent St. Maw's, Cornwall. He therefore had full knowledge of what was intended by that Act and it stood him in good stead later when he became Governor of Upper Canada. He was acquainted with the United Empire Loyalists and knew their every want and also knew the Loyalists would flock to Canada. A better selection for Governor could not have been made.

The Bill gave a house Assembly to each Province. One of the primary objects of the Bill was to separate those speaking the English language from those speaking the French and so avoid any complications in future in one House of Assembly. It became law on May 16<sup>th</sup> and four days after, May 20<sup>th</sup>, Simcoe wrote a letter to a Canadian Official for certain things to be done. He was already up and doing. It was the analysis of a Salt Spring near the River Trent which meant a great deal to the inhabitants of this new country at that time. He wrote "As soon as the analysis is made "be ready to report to me as soon as I arrive in Canada". In the letter he laid particular stress on the fact that the Indians were to be given to understand that their freedom to visit the Salt Springs as usual not be impaired. The surveyor was to make notations as to the nature of the soil through which he was to pass or any other observations which might be of service of His Majesty's Government; also to make notations re harbors for vessels on Lake Ontario. This letter goes to show that from the time he received his appointment as Governor of the Province and before he set foot in its virgin soil he was interested in its most minute details.

In early pioneer days a Salt Spring was considered as valuable as a gold mine, in fact more so, for the general development of a new country. His long experience in the Revolutionary War made him cognizant of the huge value of these springs, both to the Colonists and the valued Redman of the forest.

Before Simcoe sailed from England, his friend, the duke of Northumberland, being himself an adopted Chief of the Mohawks deemed it very necessary that the new Governor should be acquainted with all the traits of the Indians, addressed the following letter to Chief Joseph Brant.

Northumberland House  
September 3<sup>rd</sup>, 1791.

“My Dear Joseph:”

“Colonel Simcoe, who is going out as Governor of Upper Canada is kind enough to promise to deliver this to you, with a brace of pistols, which I desire you will keep for my sake. I most particularly recommend the Colonel to you and the nation. He is a most intimate friend of mine and is possessed of every good quality which can recommend him to your friendship. He is brave, which can recommend him to your friendship. He is brave, humane, sensible and honest. You may safely rely upon whatever he says, for he will not deceive you.

He loves and honors the Indians, whose noble sentiments so perfectly correspond with his own. He wishes to live upon the best terms with them, and as Governor will have it in his power to be of much service to them, In short, he is worthy to be a Mohawk. Love him at first for my sake and you will soon come to love him for his won.

I was very glad to hear that you had received the rifle safely which I sent you, and hope it proved useful to you. I preserve with great care your picture, which is hung up in the Duchess’s own room.

Continue to me your friendship and esteem and believe me ever to be, with the greatest truth.”

Your affectionate friend and brother,  
Northumberland,  
“Thorighwegeri”

Capt. Joseph Brant,  
“Thayendenagea.”

Governor Simcoe, stetting out from England, called at Quebec, and on the 17<sup>th</sup> of January 1792, he arrived at Montreal, en route for Kingston and Niagara. Simcoe never forgot his old love, the celebrated Queen’s Rangers, for in a letter to Sir George Younge, Secretary of War, he reported that Captain Shaw had just successfully marched with his division of the Queen’s Rangers all the way from New Brunswick to Montreal, in the depth of winter, on snowshoes. The Captain Shaw here referred to, was Great Grandfather of Colonel Shaw, late of the 10<sup>th</sup> Royal Regiment, now called the Royal Grenadiers. 1890

The usual mode of travel up from the St. Lawrence, in those days, from Montreal, was by bark canoe. Simcoe employed the same means. In the way up the party stopped at a hostelry at Johnstown. The name of the house was called St. Jon’s Hall. The name would indicate that there were a number of Free Masons in those days, in that section of the country. In this quaint old house the Governor held his fist levee, in the new Province. On the top of a tall tapering pine, hard by, was a sign, with the following inscription,

“Live and let live, Peace and plenty to all mankind.”

He was received by the inhabitants, who were assembled there, to attest their loyalty with a salute from a cannon, taken from an old French fort, on an island below Johnstown. After the departure of Simcoe, the inhabitants, in their broad and military coats, some in tasseled boots, their looped chapeaux, with faded feathers fluttering in the wind, gathered together for speech making and to drink the health of the new Governor. It was done right royally, as was the Custom in those early days.

After leaving Johnstown, the fleet of canoes ascended the river and in due course reached Kingston, the first fortified place they came to after leaving Montreal. Here the Governor organized his Government by selecting this executive and Legislative Council. The ceremonies which were of a solemn nature took place in an old wooden church opposite the market place. Here were read and published His Majesty's Commissions. The Governor was attended by some of the honorable men of the day chief among whom were William Osgoode, James Baby, and Peter Russell, as well as a number of Justices of the Peace. The oath of office was then delivered to Simcoe according to Royal to Simcoe according to the Royal instructions. General Simcoe was to have five members to form his first Executive Council. The five named were, William Osgoode, William Robertson, James Baby, Alexander Grant and Peter Russell. The Legislative Councilors were not selected until the 17<sup>th</sup> July 1792, when a meeting of the Executive was held at Kingston and the following gentlemen were appointed: -- Robert Hamilton, Richard Cartwright, and John Munro. Lady Simcoe who accompanied the Governor on this important occasion was not slow to take advantage of every opportunity to sketch the various places of importance and beauty, and it is from her pen and brush that so much of historic knowledge of these old, yet important times, in the life of this Virgin Province, had been handed down to us.

The Government having been formed in July, 1792, the Governor and his suite left Kingston on the 21<sup>st</sup> of the same month for Newark, the Capital. Newark at this time boasted of a number of houses, but immediately across the river was old Fort Niagara, whose guns were a splendid protection to the little town. At and around Newark were many Loyalists from the Queen's and Butler's Rangers, who after the treaty of 1783, came here in large numbers. Governor Simcoe would therefore find himself in congenial company and there is no doubt of it that the two reasons just cited at least led Simcoe to choose Newark for the Capital. Many of the inhabitants had left their American firesides because of their devotion and loyalty to their King and had been inured to the hardships of War. They were not novices in the art of agriculture. What better foundation could he have to build on, men and women of patience, piety and loyalty. Neither were they without the refinement of Education, having attended schools in New England and other states. Scattered posts were here and there throughout the Province, around which were living a few discharged soldiers and Loyalists. These men had received grants of land, so that the nucleus of a nation was already in the making. In 1784 Chief Joseph Brant, with his Indians, was granted a reserve in the banks of the Grand River, which was made to the Mohawk Tribe. Another reserve assigned to the same tribe on the Grand River by Simcoe, in the 4<sup>th</sup> of January 1793. The country, however was virtually a wilderness, when Simcoe first entered it as Governor. It required a man of gigantic intellect, perseverance and tact to adapt himself to the conditions as he then found them, in this practically primeval forest.

Simcoe at once surrounded himself with officials in whom he has the utmost confidence. A Governor, in those days, was virtually king. There was no responsible Government, as there is now. His deputies and officials were responsible to no one but the Governor and the Crown. How important then it was that the choice he made were wise ones. One of his Aides-de-Camp

was Colonel Thomas Talbot, founder of the Talbot settlement, at Long Point, in Lake Erie, an Ex-officer of the Queen's Rangers.

The names of the fifteen, who formed the first legislative assembly were: -- John MacDonell (Speaker), John Booth, Mr. Baby Alexander Campbell, Phillip Dorland, who being a Quaker would not be sworn in and did not take his seat, Peter Vanalstine (elected in Mr. Dorland's stead), Jeremiah French, Ephraim Jones, William Macomb, Hugh McDonell, Benjamin Pawling, Isaac Swayzie, Partial Terry, Nathaniel Pettit, the latter being the first Attorney-General of the Province, Dueling was customary in those days, and the Attorney-General, having had a dispute with Mr. John Small, the Clerk of the Executive Council, fought a duel with that gentleman, but unfortunately for the former he received a wound from which he died a few days afterwards.

The Legislature was called together in the 17<sup>th</sup> of September. Governor Simcoe was present in Military uniform. At the opening ceremonies a detachment of the Queen's Rangers came over from Fort Niagara to act as a guard of honor to his Excellency. The Governor delivered an address suitable to the occasion. Much controversy has taken place as to the exact spot in which this historic first Parliament was held. Wherever the spot was it is of interest to know that the first meeting was in Newark (Now Niagara).<sup>1</sup> The Legislature's first Act was an Act to establish Trial by Jury. There were eight acts passed at this session which lasted till the 15 of October 1792.

Immediately after the Legislature was prorogued the Governor proceeded to give directions to his officials relative to the development of the new province. One of his letters is dated at Navy Hall. This we know was the name of the residence of the Governor. Was here the site of the first session of the legislature Who knows? Navy Hall was not so much a large building as a cluster of them. There is no doubt whatever as to Navy Hall being adjacent to Old Fort George. Reports of Gother Mann, who commended the Royal Engineers makes mention a number of times of it. The Duke de la Rochefoucauld-Liancourt, who visited Governor Simcoe in 1795, refers to the house he occupied as a "small, miserable, wooden house, which was formally occupied by the commissionaires". There is every reason to believe this particular building was destroyed by the Americans, in 1813, when Niagara was burned. The frame building now standing near the ruins of the old fort was believed to form a part of the original Navy Hall. In a sketch which was made by the talented wife of the Governor, Lady Simcoe, the sketch distinctly showed two building, one running parallel and the other at right angles to the river. A guard from the Queen's Rangers was regularly posted at Navy Hall. Many of the M. P's in those days traveled to Niagara on horseback, others in bark canoes skirting the shores of Lake Ontario.

The Governor considered every man, woman and child in the Province under his special care or that of his officers, whether it was a loyalist, backwoodsman or an Indian. The granting of land to settlers, seeing that justice was done to them, and the opening up of highways occupied much of his time. His was an active life. He never wearied in developing the Province, and seeing that justice was dispensed, were justice was due. The Governor was imbued with the idea that possibly sometime the American colonies would rebel and try and place the flag of Old England once again over the American States. He strengthened the forts throughout the frontier settlements. Indeed we find him setting out with sleighs, in the dead of winter to make a trip to Detroit, for the purpose of inspecting the fort there. Well it was for the

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<sup>1</sup> It has since been found that the meeting the first day was in Free Mason's Hall, but other meetings were in the Indian Council House, under the Parliament Oak, etc. -Ed

little Colony, and for the great Brock, that such an active loyalist as Simcoe preceded him as Governor. How much the people of to-day owe to both of these Generals and the worthy pioneers of those times. Brock's maxim was "He, who guards never sleeps". Well it might be said of his predecessor. On the way to Detroit, the party stopped at Captain Brant's, at the Mohawk Village, about seventy miles from Niagara. The Indians hoisted flags and displayed their trophies, in respect for the Governor, Brant was the greatest chief of his time. The Six Nations were composed of the Mohawks, Senecas, Oneidas, Cayugas, Onondagas and Tuscaroras, and they formed a confederacy stronger than that of the American Indians. Their regard and respect, for the British Crown was very marked. Governor Simcoe encouraged and cemented that friendship and loyalty. Brant and twelve of his Indians accompanied the Governor on part of his journey.

On the return journey from Detroit, in the month of March Simcoe stopped, at a point on the banks of the River Thames, where the City of London now stands. So impressed was he with the situation that he spent a whole day there, thinking over the possibilities of making it the capital instead of Niagara. After more mature thought, however, he decided otherwise.

The second session of the Legislature was opened on the 31<sup>st</sup> of May 1793, by the Governor. He impressed upon the people the importance of remodeling the Militia. Thus we find the Governor intensely interested, in both the civic and Military administration of the Province in fact in every thing which tended to advance and build up Canada and the young province in particular.

The King's birthday was a very important event with the pioneers of those days, for on that date, June 4<sup>th</sup>, was the annual training day for the militia. The men would assemble at some central point in the different districts and go through various drills, under the command of qualified officers. The day would end with refreshments and sports. In the evening the Governor gave a ball, which would be attended by the most prominent ladies and men of the times, as well as the military officers and government officials. This was one of the great events of the season. As Lord Byron had said: -- "And bright the lamps shone o'er fair women and brave men." The second session of the Parliament of Upper Canada closed on the 9<sup>th</sup> of July 1793. Shortly after this the Governor carried out his intention of removing the capital of the Province from Niagara to Toronto, the principal reason being that in case of hostiles, with the American States, the capital would not be so easily assailed. Simcoe realized that Fort Niagara, according to treaty, would soon belong to the United States, thereby leaving Niagara, in the event of War, exposed to the fire of the fort.<sup>2</sup>

On the 30<sup>th</sup> of July the Governor left Bay Hall and embarked in his Majesty's Schooner, the Mississauga for Toronto, having on board with him, the remainder of the Queen's Rangers, the former Companies preceding him in the King's vessels Caldwell and Onondaga. Simcoe landed in the north side of the lake in the confines of what is now Toronto. His quarters was a large tent, formally owned by Captain Cook, the great navigator. It was pitched on what is now known as the Exhibition Grounds. Here he lived the balance of the year and through the winter. Shortly after the Governor took up his residence in Toronto he had the name changed to York, no doubt in honor of the Duke of York, son of King George of England, who had won a notable victory over the French Army in Flanders. The order changing the name of the Capital from

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<sup>2</sup> "By Jay's treaty it was agreed that the United States should recompense those United Empire Loyalists whose property had been seized and a number of forts were retained as security for this. Fort Niagara was not given up till 1796 and this was called the hold over period of thirteen years so that it was a British Fort while Simcoe was Governor." -Ed.

Toronto to York, was issued in the 26<sup>th</sup> of August 1793, a flag was raised in the following day and a salute of twenty-one guns was fired. In the fall of the same year Simcoe with the help of the Queen's Rangers opened up a road from York to Lake Simcoe and from there to Lake Huron. This was of the utmost importance to the fur traders. He was never idle, being always in the alert, building bridges, opening up roads, improving harbors, making treaties with the Indians and keeping them.

Early in the year 1794 Simcoe was ordered by the Governor-General Lord Dorchester, to proceed at once to the Miami River in Ohio and construct a fort there for his majesty's government. This was an undertaking which was fraught with much danger, as the point for constructing the fort was in the territory belonging to the United States. However, Governor Simcoe true to duty proceeded to the Miami via, Detroit with a strong detachment of troops and commenced at once the erection of the fort and completed the same in due course.

About this time the American Indians and the United States troops were engaged in warfare with each other. This act of Simcoe in building the fort on the United States side of the lake led the American Indians, also Chief Brant and his affiliated bands of Indians to believe that the British were going to throw down the gauntlet of war in their behalf. When both the American and Canadian Indians learned that this was not the case it required a great deal of tact and perseverance on the part of Simcoe to pacify them. He accomplished it, however, and he and Brant remained firm friends. A treaty was consummated a little later between the American States and Britain whereby the Americans took over the Territory virtually belonging to them and which included the land adjacent to the Miami River.

During the winter of 1794 the Governor occupied much of his time in over-seeing the getting out of logs, having the, squared left-shingles made, all for the erection of public buildings at the Capital. He was no "Vain Carpet Knight". He was continually on the alert, ever alive to the needs of the Young Province and looking after the personal welfare of the hardy pioneers especially after the loyalists, who from time to time came in to the Province from the United States.

Simcoe did not forget beautiful Niagara for in the summer months he would occasionally come over for a few days accompanied by his talented wife. Navy Hall for some few years after the capital was removed to York was still the abode of some of the Government officials.

As both Governor and Lady Simcoe were delighted entertainers and shortly after taking up his headquarters in the new Capital he commenced and concluded the erection of a large residence for himself on the banks of the Don River three or four miles back from the lake front. It was named by him castle Frank in honor of his eldest son and heir Frank Simcoe.

The year 1795 finds Simcoe commencing his fourth session of the Legislature at Newark in June for at this time the Government building at York had not yet been completed. Following the precedent of former convenings of the Legislature, a detachment of soldiers from Fort Niagara was brought over to Navy Hall for the opening. For the occasion the Governor was dressed in silk, attended by his adjutant and two secretaries.

About this time the French Duke De La Rochefoncauld Liancourt visited Canada. For some time he was the distinguished guest of Governor and Lady Simcoe. From the pen of this French Duke we learn much about Newark, and its early inhabitants, also much about the character and general hospitality of Simcoe.

Simcoe planned and builded for the new Province in every conceivable way to put it on war footing, not with the idea to provoke a war with the people to the South, but with that end in view of always being prepared for a conflict which to his farseeing eye and intelligence seemed

to be inevitable. England chose wisely and well when they selected him for the Province's first Governor.

As one instance of his sagacity, the frontier counties he caused to have for their settlers the United Empire Loyalists so that the Americans who from time to time, came over to Canada would be settled in the more backward townships where important intelligence could not be easily carried back to the States. In case of future trouble he thought well to have the Loyalists where they would be mostly needed, on the frontier.

In May 1796 Simcoe called his Fifth Session of the Legislature at Newark. It was prorogued by him on the 3<sup>rd</sup> day of June. This was the last session during Simcoe's term as Governor of Upper Canada for on December 3<sup>rd</sup> of the same year Major General Simcoe was appointed Civil Governor of St. Domingo B. W. Is.

The Gazette of November 4<sup>th</sup>, 1796: published at Niagara had the following insertion. "Yesterday, (November 3<sup>rd</sup>) His Honor. The President of the Province, and family sailed in the Mohawk for York. He was saluted with a discharge of Cannon at Fort George, which was answered by three cheers from in board." This gives is authentic in formation that Fort George was now either nearing completion or was actually completed. The Royal Navy at this period on Lake Ontario mustered only six small gunboats of which the Mohawk was one.

It was the intention of the Governor to have largely augmented this small fleet has he remained as Governor. His appointment as Governor in the British West Indies, however, intervened, otherwise the part pale by the Royal Navy on the Lakes in the war of 1812 would no doubt have been different. Part of the road between the head of Lake Ontario and the Detroit river was finished before the Governor left the Province and to-day it still goes by the name of the Governor's Road. It was intended by him to construct a highway from one end of the province to the other, East and West, but his short stay in the Virgin Province did not permit it.

It is not my desire to follow General Simcoe to Southern fields, suffice to say, however, that his stay as Governor on the Island of St. Domingo was but a few months duration.

Shortly after his return to England in August 1797 he was made a Lieutenant-General in the British Army.

In August 1806 Lt-Gen. Simcoe was appointed to proceed to the Court of Lisbon, as the great napoleon Bonaparte was casting longing looks to the little Kingdom of Portugal. Simcoe was taken ill on the voyage and had to return speedily to England where he died shortly after his arrival in the land which gave the great soldier and State-man his birth, His Death occurred at Topham in Devonshire.

On a monument in Exeter Cathedral may be read the following inscription: --

"Sacred to the memory of John Graves Simcoe."

Lt-General in the Army, and Colonel of the 22<sup>nd</sup> Regiment of Foot who died in the 25<sup>th</sup> day of October 1806: aged 54 years, in whose life and character the virtues of the hero, the Patriot and the Christian were eminently conspicuous, that it may be justly said, he served his King and his Country, with a zeal exceeded only by his piety toward God."

Above this inscription is a medallion portrait. On the left are figures of an Indian and a soldier of the Queen's rangers.

After the setting sun has settled over the Western hills, on a clear calm a day we see the silver stars coming out one by one, as sentinels in Heaven's blue dome, some with more brilliancy than others. So it is in the great dome of history of this Canada of ours, we have such radiant stars as Wolfe, Simcoe, Brant, Brock, Tecumseh and a Laura Secord. Their brilliancy

and lustre will never diminish as long as the red cross banner waves over the land of the Maple Leaf and those are worthy sons and daughters left to tell the stories of the brave deeds of those worthy Patriots down through the ages.

It is asking too much of a grateful Canadian people that a monument or some suitable memorial be erected in the beautiful and old historic Town of Niagara to the memory of the man who did so much for this land in the pioneer days when this Province was in it making. Here was the opening of the first Legislative and here was the residence of the first Governor. Let us honor General Simcoe's memory in one tangible way. May his star never set over this fair Canada of ours.

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**Col. John Graves Simcoe**

Oh- Simcoe, wise and great man of that age,  
Your name will ever mark historic page,  
Foundations will you laid in this our land  
To know you was to love and understand.

As soldier, statesman ever tried and true  
Canadians, Voyagers, the Red man loved you too,  
To do and dare for England's cause and right  
You played the man when in her darkest night.

Sleep on among her bravest and her best  
Tis sweet to know in England's soil you rest,  
In Canada your name will ever stand  
A bulwark in our western virgin land.

F. R. P.

March 22, 1922.

**Queenston Suspension Bridge**

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A discussion having arisen as to the date of the erection of the bridge, the following has been obtained from various sources, chiefly from newspapers. – Ed.

On p. 163 of Life of W. H. Merritt, it is said that the project of erecting a chain Suspension Bridge at Queenston had been say on foot Aug. 1836 and that the bridge would have the largest span of any in the world of the same kind. But the project was not carried out.

Advertisements appear in the Niagara Chronicle and Mail during 1849, 1850, 1851 as to calls to shareholders, opening of bridge, etc.

Ad. In Niagara Mail, Nov. 28<sup>th</sup>, 1849:

Queenston Suspension Bridge. Notice is hereby given that in accordance with the provisions of the Charter the books will be opened for receiving subscriptions to the Capital Stock of the Queenston Suspension Bridge Corporation at Wynn's Hotel in Queenston on Thursday Dec. 27<sup>th</sup> next at the hour of ten in the forenoon and at the office of Messrs. Miller and Boomer in Niagara on the 31st. Dec. next at the said hour of ten a.m.

By order of the Commissioners,  
G. McMicking.

In Niagara Mail, May 29<sup>th</sup>, 1850 Queenston Suspension Bridge Co. Notice of Resolution of the Board of Directors for call of one pound, five shillings per share on the stock payable on 8<sup>th</sup> June next, also a further call of £2 10s. per share on 10<sup>th</sup> July next.

G. McMicking,  
Sec. & Treas. Q. S. B. Co.

Aug. 6<sup>th</sup>, 1850, Chronicle:  
A call of fifty shillings per share before Aug. 12<sup>th</sup>.

Chronicle, Feb. 1851:  
Call for 10 per cent, before 16<sup>th</sup> Sept.

Apr. 4<sup>th</sup>, 1851, Chronicle:  
Act of incorporation meeting of appoint directors.

June 19<sup>th</sup>, 1851 ten per cent called for.

The account of the opening of the Bridge, 19<sup>th</sup> Mar. 1851 appears in Mail Mar. 26<sup>th</sup>, 1851 appears in Mail Mar. 26<sup>th</sup>, 1851 – Queenston Suspension Bridge. The 19<sup>th</sup> inst. Was a gala day in Queenston on account of the opening of the new Suspension Bridge. An excellent dinner was provided by Mr. Wynn after which speeches were made by Sir A. MacNab, G. McMicking, Judge Stowe of Buffalo; Hon. J. H. Price. Previous to the dinner a large assemblage of people visited the bridge which was thrown open to the public. One hundred Sons of Temperance marched across, several carriages and vast numbers of pedestrians.

All expressed their complete satisfaction with the substantial, beautifully designed, elegant and stupendous structure.

Another paper states that the Engineer of the Queenston Bridge E. W. Serrell and his lady with infant son, the Major of Lincoln County, Mayor Brown and the chief carpenter, McKenzie and an immense crowd crossed for the Canadian side, received by Mr., Beeble with refreshments. Three cheers were given for the Engineer and his lady and the Co. On March 26<sup>th</sup>, 1851 formally opened at Lewiston. The project had been started fifteen years before but failed.

In the Chronicle Feb. 6<sup>th</sup>, it is stated that there was a foot path across from Lewiston. To show how accounts differ, the Encyclopedia says that the first bridge across the Niagara was in 1852. Page's County Atlas says the first bridge was at Lewiston but this is incorrect.

In 1864 for fear of an ice jam, the guys or stay cables were taken down and not being replaced a gale of wind wrecked the bridge in 1865 so that the cables hung uselessly till 1899 when the present structure was built. It is known that some soldiers, deserters from Fort Niagara actually crossed to Queenston while the bridge was disabled, climbing or crawling at night and reached the Canadian shore in safety.

### **Lewiston and Queen Bridge**

1<sup>st</sup> Suspension built by Capt. Edward W. Serrill. Guys removed in 1864 for fear of ice jam and not replaced, allowing wind storm to wreck the bridge on Feb. 1, 1864 – leaving however the cables and towers intact, but they were never used again.

Mr. Winnett, of the Queen's Hotel, gave to the Niagara Historical Society, a large engraving of the Queenston Suspension Bridge, which has these particulars printed: (THE LARGEST BRIDGE IN THE WORLD!)

Designed and built by Edward W. Serrell, Civil Engineer.

Entered according to Act of Congress by Serrell & Perkins, Lithographers.

Total length of cable, 1245 ft. Distance between, 1040 ft.

Length of Roadway, 849 feet, clear width of roadway, 80 feet. Strength of bridge, 835 tons.

The ruins of the bridge stood for some years but when one of the bridges at the Falls was taken down the materials were used to repair the Queenston bridge as it now appears.

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**MISS JENNIE MacKENZIE'S ACCOUNT OF THE FIRST SUSPENSION BRIDGE**  
PRINTED IN NIAGARA FALLS RECORD, 1911.

Friends have asked me if there was a carriage and foot bridge over the river before the International Suspension Railway bridge and I answered yes. Then they wished me to lend them a picture I had of it so they could get a photograph and also wished me to write some information about it.

There was a law passed in the State of New York to incorporate the Niagara Falls International Bridge Company on April 23<sup>rd</sup>, 1846 by a two thirds vote. That those who became stockholders shall constitute a body corporate by the name of the Niagara Falls International Bridge Company with power to construct or to associate with any other Company solely for the construction, maintaining and managing a bridge across the Niagara River, at or near the Falls in the County of Niagara. 2<sup>nd</sup> the capital stock of said Company shall be two hundred and fifty thousand dollars which shall be divided into shares of one hundred dollars each. 3<sup>rd</sup>—The stock, property, affairs and concerns of said Company shall be divided into shares and one hundred dollars each. 3<sup>rd</sup>—The stock, property, affairs and concerns of said Company shall be managed by seven directors who shall be stockholders in said Company and shall be annually chosen after the first election of the first Monday in July of each year at such place at or near Niagara Falls as a majority of the directors shall appoint. 5<sup>th</sup>—Charles B. Stewart of Rochester, Alex. Ward of Albion, Washington, Hunt of Lockport, George R. Babcock of Buffalo and Peter B. Porter of Niagara Falls shall be commissioners who shall on the first Tuesday of May next meet at or near the Falls, open books, receive subscription to the capital stock of said Company. 12—If the said bridge shall not be constructed within five years after the passing of this act then the corporation shall henceforth cease.

In Canada an act was passed for erecting a Suspension Bridge over the Niagara River at or near the Falls which was passed, reserved for the signification of Her Majesty's pleasure on the 9<sup>th</sup> June, 1846. The Royal assent was given on the 30<sup>th</sup> of October and proclamation made by Earl Cathcart in the Canadian Gazette of Dec. 26<sup>th</sup>, 1846.

1<sup>st</sup>. Those who petitioned the Government and set forth the great convenience which the construction of a Suspension bridge over the Niagara River near the Falls would be to the public and asked to be incorporated and powers granted them to construct such a bridge were Samuel de

Veaux, James Buchanan, Thomas C. Street, C. B. Stuart, P. Whitney, Wm. H. Merritt, James Cummings, Oliver T. Macklem, James R. Benson, Wm. Wright and others. These gentlemen were constituted a body corporate under the title of the Niagara Falls Suspension Bridge Company with power to unite with other persons or company to construct a Suspension Bridge across Niagara River at or near the Falls.

2<sup>nd</sup>. Be it enacted that it hundred and twenty-five thousand pounds shall constitute the capital stock of said company and that the same shall be divided into shares of twenty-five pounds each.

5<sup>th</sup>. And be it enacted that the said James Buchanan, Thomas C. Street and W. H. Merritt Esquires, shall be commissioners who shall on the first Monday in June next at the Falls aforesaid open books to receive subscriptions to the capital stock of the said Corporation and that thirty days public notice shall be given by the said commissioners of the time and place of opening such books in a public newspaper printed and published in the District of Niagara.

14<sup>th</sup>. And be it enacted that if the said bridge shall not be constructed and used within ten years from the passing of this Act then the said corporation and the privileges hereby conferred upon it shall from henceforth cease and determine.

These two companies were incorporated on the ninth day of November, 1847, the Niagara Falls International Bridge Company and the Niagara Falls International Bridge.

1<sup>st</sup>. The two companies agreeing upon a uniform place and system of construction each company was to furnish one half of the funds for the construction, maintaining and managing said Bridge a such times as the same shall be required, each to place in the hands of the Treasurer at the same time with the other its respective share.

5<sup>th</sup>. All profits and losses shall be divided equally between the respective companies. Lot Clark was President of the Niagara Falls International Bridge Co. and William Hamilton Merritt of the Niagara Falls Suspension Bridge Company. A carriage and foot bridge was built, it opened for traffic on August 1<sup>st</sup>, 1848, built between Bellevue, now the north end of the City of Niagara Falls, N. Y. and Elgin, now the north end of the City of Niagara Falls, Ont. The total length of the bridge was 759 feet, height above water 230 ft. height of towers, 55 feet. The towers were built of heavy timber. The deflection of bridge 35 tons. The total suspended weigh 75 tons.

The cables were finished in 1848 and removed in 1854 when they were building the Railway Suspension Bridge. They were only from one inch and a quarter to two inches in diameter. The wire was said to be very good, manufactured by Richard Johnston & Brother of Manchester, England. The strength and toughness of the wires was so little impaired that it was worked into the Railway bridge. Mr. Ellitt was the C. E. of the first bridge across the Niagara River at the Falls.

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## **BRIDGES OVER THE NIAGARA RIVER**

BY JANET CARNOCHAN

In an article in the Strand in 1899 the writer says “No matter what has cause the formation of the Niagara Gorge the fact remained that the existence has forced a wonderful demonstration of man’s skill. “The romance of the Niagara Bridge” is the most marvelous and interesting story of its kind in the history of the world. The canon separates two nations. The

mighty cliffs were brought into connection by a boy's kite sting. The only means in the early days of crossing was by a ferry at Queenston seven miles below. The gorge as an obstruction to travel had to be overcome."

My interest in these bridges was roused by being asked a question by a pupil in the High School some years ago as to which bridge was built first that at Queenston or at the Falls. She had heard the question discussed vigorously, each contestant being sure of his own opinion. This started me investigating, I had answered "that at the Falls" but as I had no data to prove the point I hunted up the old local newspapers of that period and jotted down all I found. Since then I obtained a statement from Miss Jennie Mackenzie whose father has been employed as an engineer on the first bridge at the Falls. Besides this account I have consulted a number of authorities and had information from R. W. Geary of Niagara Falls, T. K. Thomson, C. E., New York, the journal of Hon. Wm. Hamilton Merritt, Page's Atlas, Encyclopedias, the Strand and other magazines, besides the Niagara Mail and also the Niagara Chronicle. I have found that with regard to Canada mistakes have often been made even in Encyclopedias.

It is rather confusing to read the different accounts. There are now three bridges at the Falls but according to some we might suppose there had been eight or more. This is because many changes were made, being wider or of different material as steel instead of wood, towers made higher, a bridge partially destroyed, was restored it was called a new bridge. The notes may appear fragmentary and sometimes repetitions but I thought it better to give them thus so as not to omit anything valuable even at the risk of one writer repeating another.

I found several references to the Suspension Bridge in the Journal of the Hon. Wm. Hamilton Merritt indeed the first we know of even a thought of it and he seems to have taken the first step in the promotion of the undertaking. In the Indian Summer weather of 1844 the Merritt family took a holiday to have a family picnic on the banks of the river at Niagara Falls. A packet of letters had just been received from some members of the family visiting Switzerland. Among the wonders told the scenery as an account of a wonderful Suspension bridge spanning the river Sarren with a full description, length, height, construction. Mrs. Merritt remarked "I wonder if a Suspension Bridge could not be made to span this river" which remark so strongly impressed Mr. Merritt that the thought of the possibility of a bridge to span the mighty Niagara remained in his mind. Some time after me. Merritt with S. Woodruff an engineer went to ascertain the shortest line for a suspension bridge across the river.

In 1845 the thought had arrived at maturity and a charter was to be obtained, stock subscribed and preparations made for its commencement. In September 1846 in a letter from London of Sir Allan McNab occurs the statement "I did not receive your letter with the petition to Her Royal Majesty and the papers concerned with the Suspension Bridge in proper time by immediately transmitted them with your letter to the Colonial Secretary. On 6<sup>th</sup> July 1847 in the journal occurs the phrase "the proposed site of Suspension Bridge on the Niagara river, this was in a resolution at a public meeting relating to the Great Western Railway.

On 16<sup>th</sup> March, 1848, "Crossed over the river in a basket which was the mode of conveyance used in the erection of the bridge. The position in crossing was a novel one, as the reflection likely to arise in being suspended in a frail vehicle at such an enormous height and in such a situation can be better imagined than described." On 29<sup>th</sup> March, 1848, went to the site of the bridge with Mr. Ellitt, wife and two children who had just crossed in a cradle under a single cable 1¼ inch in diameter, 36 strands. "He then describes the two plans of Ellitt and Keefer and mentions that there will be a bridge at Queenston.

In the Niagara Chronicle, Feb. 18<sup>th</sup>, an ad. "stock holders of Niagara Falls Suspension Bridge Co., are notified to pay an installment of 4 per cent before 1<sup>st</sup> March next, signed W. O. Buchanan, Sec. office of N. F. S. B., Clifton House."

The Niagara Mail, Apr. 5<sup>th</sup>, 1848, quotes from the Iris, "We are happy to be able to record the steady and successful progress of our Suspension Bridge. The 1<sup>st</sup> feeble beginning was made a few weeks ago by sending a kite across the Niagara with a string. A cord soon followed, then a stout rope and next a hauser, last week a wire cable was prepared and drawn over by very simple machinery and swung from the tops of two wooden supports raised some 25 feet above the level of the cliffs. The ends of the cable were securely anchored in Canada and New York and there it hangs on hands of iron connecting firmly and lastingly these neighboring nations. On Monday Mr. Ellitt, the engineer of the bridge, crossed the river upon the wire rope and demonstrated the safety of the new communication. The contrivance is extremely simple and beautiful. The cable itself swings gracefully from cliff to cliff 250 ft. above the rapids. On this cable are placed two iron pulleys with grooves in their circumference and from these pulleys its suspended an iron car or basket of commodious and graceful form. During the year 2000 passengers used it. In the Historical Room, Buffalo, is the iron basket which was used. Judge Hullett has given information. In answer to the offer of \$10 to fly a kite across the river there was a regiment of kite flyers. The successful one was Homan Walsh.

Below this basket and suspended by wire cords from the same pulleys is a lank platform for carrying materials and tool. The iron car for passengers hangs about four feet below the cable and about 20 ft. above the rock on either shore and is approached by a staircase leading to a landing while the platform for freight is attached by longer cords and swings nearly level with the tops of the cliffs. By this simple contrivance which works smoothly the Engineer has obtained a most convenient ferry over this hitherto impassable Gulf, a ferry on which he can transport at the same time both freight and passengers in separate cars and make the passage in less than one fourth the time tat is consumed in any other ferry between the United States and Canada.

All this is the result of a few weeks unostentatious labour in the most inclement season of the year. The ferry is now in constant and successful use, conveying men and things hourly from shore to shore." --Iris newspaper.

In the tourist edition of greater Niagara written by T. G. Hullett with respect to 1<sup>st</sup> Suspension Bridge across the Niagara it is said that in 1846 the Legislators of New York and Ontario incorporated a company for Suspension Bridge two miles below the Falls for G. W. R. Co.

In the Niagara Chronicle, Oct. 6<sup>th</sup>, 1847. At a meeting of the Clifton House on 24<sup>th</sup>, all directors were elected. Mr. H. Merritt, President, T. C. Street, Treasurer, W. C. Buchanan, Secretary. Plans to be received at the Cataract House, 1<sup>st</sup> Nov. and a gold medal will be awarded to the successful competitor. Mr. Ellitt an eminent engineer of Philadelphia has been selected to survey the river and the site of the bridge.

The following statement has been out into my hands kindly furnished from an authoritative source.

Bridge first proposed by Wm. Hamilton Merritt in 1844 who obtained the Charter in 1846 at the site of the present Grand Trunk crossing. In 1847 Charles Ellitt built a 7½ foot wide bridge using a kite to take his first cord over the gorge. His cable consisting of 36 No. 9 wires. Wires were placed side by side instead of being wound into rope. In 1848 a more substantial bridge was built with wooden towers incorporating the wires of the old bridge but had no

stiffening truss. Opened 1<sup>st</sup> August 1848. The Railway Suspension bridge replaced this being built by John A. Roebling, 1852, to 1855 at a cost of \$400,000. Length of span 800 feet, height of towers 80 ft., height of track above the river 245 feet, 4 cables 10 inches in diameter. In 1867-8 by Samuel Keefer, C. E. Ottawa.

In 1877, L. L. Buck removed many parts of the old cables. He also reinforced the anchorages. In 1886 the stone towers were found to be failing and were replaced by steel towers and the wooden stiffening trusses by steel trusses and iron cables by steel cables. In 1888 the bridge was rebuilt and widened to 17 feet being completed in December, 1888. In 1889, January blown down but replaced in three months time by a new Suspension Bridge with steel cables, towers and stiffening trusses. In 1899 replaced by present steel arch bridge built by L. L. Buck for the Grand Trunk Railroad.

The cost was about \$500,000.00. In 1883 the Niagara Cantilever Bridge was built by the Michigan Central Railroad. Charter originally obtained by Wm. A. Thomson. Deck of bridge 245 ft. above the water. Double track, length 910 ft

A charter secured for another bridge in 1867-7. A rope was carried across on a ice bridge at first and the bridge, a wooden structure opened to the public in Jan. 2<sup>nd</sup>, 1869. It was only 10 ft. wide and carriages were unable to pass one another. This led to long waits at the end. In 1872 steel supplanted wood. In 1884 the wood towers gave way to steel. In 1887 widening of the bridge began and ended June 13<sup>th</sup>, 1888 and it gave an entire new structure with a span of 1268 ft. It was the admiration of Niagara but was doomed to an untimely fate being blown down by a terrific hurricane on the night of January 9<sup>th</sup>, 1889. The rebuilding of the bridge was a feat of surprising rapidity begun March 22<sup>nd</sup>, 1899 and it was opened for travel on May 7<sup>th</sup>, 1889. This structure had a width of 17½ ft. and was replaced on ten years with an all metal arch structure built in 1897-8.

The length of the main span between abutments is about 840 ft. The bridge has double tracks for electric car service and ample room for carriages and walks for pedestrians. The suspension bridge was removed after the arch was erected. Length of span 810 ft., height of tower 88 ft. Tracks above the water 258 ft., number of wire cables 4. Diameter of each cable 10¼ inch, height of towers 88 feet and 78 feet. Cost about \$500,000. The prices given of the different bridges vary very much as \$250,000, \$400,000, \$500,000 but this is easily accounted for by the different improvements made.

**Mrs. John Graves Simcoe**

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BY JANET CARNAONCHAN

Since we have on our records an account of Governor Simcoe, why should we not have one of Mrs. Simcoe, his wife, a most remarkable woman, as to her carefully kept her diary we are indebted for so much of the life of her husband and so much of the history of Canada, its early people and places in those distant years. There is also an account, carefully written by their servant, John Bailey, till the death of Mrs. Simcoe 59 years after leaving Canada, Mrs. Simcoe was of high rank dating back to the kings of Wales and also to William the Conqueror she was very clever, artistic as shewn by the sketches made while here, amiable, vivacious, a good wife and mother, spoke French and German well, and a little Spanish. She must have been possessed of great activity as shewn by the long walks she speaks of many miles in length, a lover of the chase being a skillful rider on horse back and must have enjoyed good health as she remained

active till the age of 84. Elizabeth Posthuma Gwillim was born in 1766 and died a Wolford Manor in 1850. Her father, Colonel Gwillim, died before she was born and her mother a few hours after her birth. She succeeded to the fortunes of her mother and grandmother, both of whom were heiresses in their own right. For the most of the information in this paper I am indebted to the wonderful work of the late John Ross Robertson who obtained the diary of Mrs. Simcoe and much information in England from the descendants and friends of General Simcoe. The diary itself would have made only a small volume but Mr. Robertson with his wonderful patience, perseverance and love of research, has made of it a large volume of over four hundred pages, he must have written thousands of letters to obtain information as there are accounts of every person mentioned in the diary and pictures of them as also of the places mentioned. No other book had given an account of her and as the book is now out of print, large prices having been paid for the last copies it is well to use what we may gather from its pages. There are illustrations and notes from the Archives, Museums, State papers, Government, private and public individuals. Besides all this there is the account given by John Bailey who had been a valued servant in the family for many years and had the greatest reverence for Mrs. Simcoe and the family. At Mr. Robertson's house one evening a friend and I had a great privilege, the illustrations being shewn us by the host as well as many of these in the wonderful collection in the Public Library before being made public. I had many letters from Mr. Robertson for anything about Niagara which I could furnish, and I am proud to possess this valuable book presented, with the inscription "With the kind regards of the Biographer."

To resume, this sketch will chiefly relate to Mrs. Simcoe's diary while in Canada. Our historical pamphlets may well embrace Mrs. Simcoe as we already have articles relating to two women both heroines, Laura Ingersoll Secord and Mrs. Waite as well as others, so it is eminently fitting that we should have a chapter devoted to the first lady of the land as she certainly was in Upper Canada. Having no parents living she was brought up by Mrs. Graves, an aunt. When she met Col. Simcoe in 1791 at sixteen it seems to have been a case of love at first sight in the part of each. Although her aunt thought she was too young to marry she finally consented and they were united by marriage. Col. Simcoe was thirty years of age and had had an adventurous life, had been wounded in the battle of Brandywine in 1777 and made prisoner. He has then become commander of the Queen's Rangers. Their first child was born in 1783 and when Col. Simcoe was appointed Lt. Governor of Upper Canada in 1791 there were six children five of them girls the youngest the son and he was only a few months old. It must have been a struggle to decide what to do, which to take and which to leave for they could not be taken to a new settlement with unknown possibilities. It was finally decided to take the two youngest, Frank and Sophia three years of age and have the four eldest stay with a friend and relatives, Mrs. Hunt, and to this friend the diary written from day to day was sent and having been carefully preserved we have gained a knowledge of the manner of traveling both by land and water, of the people met with, of the places and early settlers, and by her numerous sketches we see them as no description could place them before us. Her powers of observation as well as of description are wonderful, she seemed to see everything, the trees, the flowers, the animals, the insects, fishes, snakes, the storms, the food, the different way of traveling, caleche, bateau, dog train, snow shoes, on horseback noting seems to have escaped her eyes. Their passage across the Atlantic, their stay of seven months in Quebec, the gay dances, the hospitality met with, all so different from the long sea voyage with its storms and trials. The diary so carefully written and sent seems to be designed to keep in touch with her daughters or rather they with her.

The voyage lasted almost two months from 25<sup>th</sup> Sept. to 11<sup>th</sup> November, Mrs. Simcoe noticed in her diary the gales of wind, the great heat, the progress of the vessel, ten knots a day, six sometimes only four, meeting vessels, seeing porpoises, fish caught, describes carefully birds seen, crossbill, owls, gulls, Sable Island is mentioned, a snow storm, walked two hours on deck one day. In Quebec visited the convents, on Xmas day went at five o'clock in the morning to the Cathedral to see the illuminations. On 28<sup>th</sup> attended a ball at the Chateau and danced with Prince Edward, afterwards Duke of Kent. The winter was one round of pleasure with Military and social circles, tells of giving dances as the easiest way of entertaining company. On March 4<sup>th</sup> tells of Capt. Shaw of the Queen's Rangers and four other gentlemen arriving from Fredericton in New Brunswick which is 370 miles from hence. They walked in snowshoes 240 miles in 19 days, came up the river St. John and crossed many small lakes.

She says when leaving Quebec that the pleasant sojourn of seven months was a "new chapter in my life" and tells of the kindness, hospitality, courtesy shewn them, "On 8<sup>th</sup> June at six in the morning we descended the hill to the river where we embarked in a large bateau with an awning. Another bateau carried the children and a third the servants and the baggage."

On the 17<sup>th</sup> "the joy I felt on finding myself in spacious apartments in the Chateau de Ramezay in Montreal, was checked the next day on finding the heat more insufferable than I had ever felt, the thermometer for two days was 96°". On July 1<sup>st</sup> they reached Kingston of which she took three views and on the 8<sup>th</sup> Simcoe took the oaths as governor and on the 15<sup>th</sup> she says she went to church twice where Mr. Stuart the clergyman preached good sermons.

"On the 23<sup>rd</sup> we went on board the Onondaga, an armed vessel for Niagara and in the 26<sup>th</sup> July at nine this morning we anchored at Navy Hall opposite the garrison of Fort Niagara which commands the mouth of the river. Navy Hall is a house built by the Naval Commanders on the lake for their reception when here. It is now undergoing a thorough repair for our occupation but is still so unfinished that the Governor as ordered three marquees to be pitched for us on the hill above the house, which is dry ground and rises beautifully, in parts covered with oak bushes. A fine turf leads into the woods, through which runs a very good road leading to the Falls. Our Marquees command a beautiful view of the river and the garrison on the opposite. The Queen's Rangers are encamped within half a mile behind us. In clear weather the north shore of Lake Ontario may be discerned. The trees here which abound are oak, chestnut, ash, maple, hickory, black walnut. Sunday 29<sup>th</sup>, there is no church here but a room has been built for a Free Mason's Lodge where divine service is performed."

They lost no time in exploring the country around, for on Monday 30<sup>th</sup> "At eight this morning we set out in caliches to go to the Falls fourteen miles from here. We stopped and breakfasted at Mr. Hamilton's, a merchant who lives some miles from here at the Landing (Queenston) where the carriages going to Detroit are landed and sent by land eleven miles to Fort Chippawa. We had a delighted drive through the woods on the bank of the river which is exceedingly high the whole way. Mr. Hamilton had a very good stone house the back rooms overlooking on the river. A gallery the length of the house is a delightful covered walk both below and above in all weather. After an excellent breakfast we ascended an exceedingly steep road to the top of the mountain which commands a fine view of the country as far as the garrison of Niagara and across the lake. From thence the road is entirely flat to the Falls of which I did not hear the sound until within a mile of them but at Navy Hall the sound is heard before rain." After describing the Falls she says "Drove on to Chippawa and in the evening returned to Mr. Hamilton's and slept there. I suffered exquisite pain all day from a mosquito bite which the

extreme heat increased and at night my sleeve had to be cut open.” In another place she tells of how she had suffered when the mosquito net had been forgotten.

Tues. 31<sup>st</sup>. “returned to dine in our marquee. Information is received from Prince Edward that he will be here the 20<sup>th</sup> August. Here are numbers of winged grasshoppers they are hard and scaly, the color of dead leaves. The High grounds above Navy Hall are so covered with them that the whole field appears in motion.” Wed., Aug. 1<sup>st</sup> “we dined with Major and Mrs. Smith. He commands the garrison and became colonel of the 5<sup>th</sup> Regiment. Mrs. Smith has two tame raccoons. I also saw a flying squirrel. We like this place much better than Kingston. Mrs. Hamilton and her sister Miss Askin dined with us. I received a very pretty set of Nankeen china from England to-day and in an hour after it was unpacked the temporary kitchen took fire and in the hurry of moving the china it was almost all broken. The prince is almost daily expected. The canvas houses have not arrived nor Navy Hall finished and the dilemma is whether to give him the marquees for his residence, or the damp house. We have decided to take the latter ourselves.” Prince Edward afterwards Duke of Kent arrived on Aug. 21<sup>st</sup>, 1792.

“I sent you May apple seeds. I think it is the prettiest flower I have seen.” She goes on to describe the leaves, the flower, the fruit.

“We have a great many whole fish, we all think them better than any other fresh or salt water fish. The sturgeons are five or six feet long. The 5<sup>th</sup> Regiment have caught 100 sturgeons and 600 whitefish a day in nets. A great many settlers came daily from the United States, some even from the Carolinas about 2000 miles. Five or six hundred miles is no more considered by an American than moving to the next parish is by an Englishman. Mr. Talbot went with Col. Butler to Buffalo Creek to distribute presents to the Indians. He bought a very pretty fawn skin of one of them for me and I made it into a tippet.” She speaks frequently of wearing a tippet in the cold days. Was it this one?

Nov. 6<sup>th</sup> “I have met with a beautiful blue flower near the river, the edges of the petals are finely sawed. The cardinal flower growing here in damp places is a beautiful colour.” The blue flower mentioned must be the Fringed Gentian still found here.

Nov. 28 “The weather is so mild that we have walked in the garden from eight to nine in the evening. Dec. 30<sup>th</sup>. The Governor went to the Landing and I went to the Fort to see Capt. Darling’s stuffed birds. The most beautiful of them he called a meadow lark, the richest yellow shaded with orange and intermixed with black, the Recollet a light brown bird with a tuft on the head and the tops of the wings scarlet like sealing wax (probably waxwing) a black bird with scarlet on its wings, a scarlet bird called a King bird, the size of a small thrush, a bird like a canary but the colors much brighter, and a grand Duc Owl. Among the animals was a skunk like a pole cat with black and white marks.” 9<sup>th</sup>. Capt. Brant (Thayendenagea) Chief of the Six Nations Indians dined here. He has a countenance expressive of art or cunning. He wore an English coat with a handsome crimson silk blanket lined with black and trimmed with gold fringe and wore a fur cap; round his neck he had a string of plaited sweet hay. It is a kind of grass which never loses its pleasant scent. The Indians are very fond of it. Its smell is like the Tonquin bean. 10<sup>th</sup>. The Governor set out to walk to Burlington Bay at the head of Lake Ontario about fifty miles from here. 15<sup>th</sup>. Mrs. Macanlay gave me an account of a subscription ball she was at which is to be held in the town of Niagara every fortnight during the winter. There were fourteen couples, a great display of gauze, feathers and velvet, the room lighted with wax candles and there was a supper as well as tea.”

16<sup>th</sup>. "I sat up all night to read poems of Louls Velez de Gnevara the Spanish poet and dramatist 1570-1644 and the history of Prince Ctesephon and some pages of "Don Quixote" went to bed in my clothes at six, rose at nine, dressed, breakfasted at ten."

17<sup>th</sup>. "The Governor returned at five to-day from his walk to Burlington Bay. He was delighted with the beauty of the country and the industry of the inhabitants. He lodges every night in houses where he was accommodated with a clean room and a good fire. 23<sup>rd</sup>. I left Trojan, my hound in my room while I went to dinner and he tore to pieces my best map of Canada and the United States which I had taken great pains to draw, I must paste it together again but it's appearance was spoiled. The Governor made some very pretty verses for me on the occasion."

What a fine picture of home life is this. The careful work of the Governor's wife destroyed by the pet dog and the kind Governor writing verses to hi wife to comfort her for the loss. He is an athlete and a versifier and she is a journalist and map drawer.

29<sup>th</sup>. "Col. Simcoe walked to Landing and afterwards went to Fort Schlosser opposite Chippawa the weather is so mild that we breakfasted with the door open into the garden."

31<sup>st</sup> Dec., 1792. "A large party at diner. Mrs. Hamilton, wife of Hon. Robert Hamilton came to see me. We played at whist every evening. Col. Simcoe is so occupied during the day with business that it is a relaxation. I have not lost one rubber since the 28<sup>th</sup> November, we usually play four every evening."

1793, Feb. 3<sup>rd</sup>, "Major Littlehales returned from Philadelphia and soon after the Governor set out for Detroit. 4<sup>th</sup>. The Governor set out with six officers and twenty soldiers for the Mohawk village where Capt. Brant and twenty Indians are to join him and guide him to Detroit, no European having gone that route, the Indians are to carry provisions."

In Feb. 1793 is given a letter from Mrs. Simcoe to Mrs. Hunt which was found in Wolford giving many particulars of their manner of living, tells of the children, of the ball, card parties, of her writing, drawing, arranging papers and work of the General, who is away a month or six weeks and at intervals, hopes I will do his health and spirits great good. She is certainly not a grumbler as she says "the climate is delightful, the country plentiful, pleasant society, in short we have nothing to complain of but not seeing the children and the absence of some friends." Mar. 10<sup>th</sup>. "The river full if ice toward two o'clock it separated and floated down and a boat came over from the garrison. The Governor and Mr. D. W. Smith returned. It is exactly five weeks since he left. He is remarkably well, part of the way in sleighs, the rest they walked. He found is expectations realized as to the goodness of the country on the banks of the La Tranche. A spring of real petroleum was discovered." This must have been near where coal oil was found in 1865. Another letter Mar. 13<sup>th</sup> shews her interest in her children and confidence in Mrs. Hunt and others. Apr. 1<sup>st</sup> "Rode to Queenston where we intend to reside for a fortnight. St. Denis of the 5<sup>th</sup> Regt. Caught 500 white fish and 40 sturgeon at Niagara yesterday. Two Indians came from Detroit, they walked 56 miles yesterday. 18<sup>th</sup>. Apr. A newspaper is published here called the Upper Canada Gazette or American Oracle. As yet it is filled with proclamations and advertisements. The only printer to be had was a Frenchman called Louis Roy. Capt. Shaw had given me a tea chest in bird's eye maple. It is a beautiful wood the colour of satin wood. I rode to the whirlpool with Mr. Pilkington."

14<sup>th</sup>. Three Commissioners have arrived from the United States to treat the Indian and are to stay at our house. In the Castle at Fort Niagara is a large stone building. Observe we call it

Ni-ag-ara” was Mrs. Simcoe thinking of Goldsmith’s lie which to make it scan would be “And Niaga’r-a stuns with thundering sound.”

4<sup>th</sup> June. “A ball and supper was given in the Council Chamber.” An account of this is given by General Lincoln, one of the Commissioners. “There were twenty well-dressed handsome ladies and three times as many gentlemen. They danced from seven o’clock to eleven when supper was announced. The ease and affection with which the ladies met although several of their mothers sprang from the aborigines of the country.” This refers to some of the daughters of Sir Wm. Johnson and Molly Brant, several of whom married British officers. June 14<sup>th</sup>. I have just returned to Navy Hall after spending a month with Mrs. Smith at the Fort. The cold I caught 9<sup>th</sup> May turned to dumb ague (that is but little of the cold could fit and a continued fever) With this indisposition, I found myself extremely inconvenienced by the Commissioners residence on our small house and I accept Mrs. Smith’s friendly invitation to visit her, and her nursing and great attention to my health enabled me to recover as soon as I have done.”

July 5<sup>th</sup>. Francis has been very ill and the extreme heat of this place is thought to be prejudicial to him. It is therefore determined that I should take him to the camp on the Mountain, I shall have an establishment of two marquees, a tent and two sentries, my dinner is to be sent from Navy Hall every day. I embarked in the gunboat with Francis and Sophia, the thermometer at 90° but it was cool on the water. I was much fatigued in ascending the mountain.”

20<sup>th</sup>. “By some mistake my dinner did not arrive from Navy Hall one day last week but I had some of the excellent New York biscuits which I eat and said nothing about my dinner feeling pleasure in being able to be independent. 23<sup>rd</sup> Francis is much better and is still with Mrs. Hamilton. I feel very grateful to her for keeping the child.”

July 25. “Went to Navy Hall, 27<sup>th</sup> went to Church.

July 29<sup>th</sup>. Embarked on the Mississauga for Toronto.

Aug. 5<sup>th</sup> We walked two miles to the old French Fort. It rained very hard and I was as completely wet as if I had walked through a river as walking through the woods every tree acted as a shower bath.”

Nov. 1<sup>st</sup>. (In Toronto) “We went this dark night to see salmon spearing. Large torches of white birch bark being carried in the boat, the blaze of light attracts the fish. The men are very dexterous in spearing. The flight of wild pigeons in the spring and fall is a surprising sight. They fly so low that at the Niagara the men threw sticks at them and killed numbers.

19<sup>th</sup>. “At this season of the year there is usually a fortnight of foggy weather. The air is dry and hot, smells and feels like smoke. It is called Indian Summer.”

Dec. 22<sup>nd</sup>. “A hard frost. The bay is frozen over. Mr. Talbot skated to the other side of the bay.” The winter was spent in Toronto from July 29<sup>th</sup>, to May 9<sup>th</sup>. From April 18<sup>th</sup> to 2<sup>nd</sup> May 1794 there is no entry. In the interval the little daughter born at Niagara 16<sup>th</sup> Jan., 1793 died and was buried Apr. 17<sup>th</sup>. Mrs. Simcoe makes no reference to it.

May 9<sup>th</sup>. “Set off in a boat for Niagara round by Burlington bay.” There is a small map by Mrs. Simcoe shewing nearly all the creeks from the mouth of the Niagara to Grimsby called the 40 mile creek, the 4 mile creek, the 6, the 8 mile, 10 mile, 12, 15, 16, 18, 20, 40 mile with names of settlers as Servos, McNab, Ten Broeck, Green, Nelles.

May 10<sup>th</sup>., 1794. “Arrived at Niagara at 12 o’clock.

13<sup>th</sup>. I went to see Major Smith’s house he has built on this side of the river. It is a very good one. The town is enlarged and called “Newark.” In our pamphlet No. 6 is a picture of the house of D. W. Smith situated about where the Electric car station is, near which was the Government House.

16<sup>th</sup>. “Drove this evening after dining at Mr. Peter Russell’s towards the two mile pond. 28<sup>th</sup>, all; the ladies from the garrison and the town of Newark drank tea here previous to the ball which is to held 4<sup>th</sup> June. June 2<sup>nd</sup>. The house of Assembly met to day. June 4<sup>th</sup>. The ball was held in the Council Chamber. There were 22 couples. I did not dance. We supped at twelve and came away at two. The whole was extremely well managed as Col. Talbot ordered it himself. 26<sup>th</sup>. We passed Mr. McNabb’s house at the Eight Nile Creek.”

Aug. 1<sup>st</sup> “We walked to Mr. Smith’s and supped there which was very pleasant as the rooms are so much larger than ours at Navy Hall. 8<sup>th</sup>. The Mississauga arrived with the Bishop of Quebec. (Bishop Mountain).

10<sup>th</sup>. Went to church, the Bishop preached an excellent sermon. Romans 1, 16, I am not ashamed of the Gospel of Christ.”

Aug. 12<sup>th</sup>. “It is now decided that I am to go to Quebec next moth and have written to Mrs. Caldwell to take a house for me.”

20<sup>th</sup>. “Mr. Hamilton dined with us.

21<sup>st</sup>. Mrs. Hamilton and Mrs. Richardson dined here.

24<sup>th</sup>. Mr. Crooks’ new vessel the York sailed for Kingston.”

Mrs. Simcoe tells of the peaches growing at Navy Hall and hoe they enjoyed them.

Sept. 4<sup>th</sup>. “Mr. Mackenzie who had made his way to the Pacific ocean is just returned from there and brought the Governor a sea otter skin.” (Sir Alexander MacKenzie traced the river which bears his name to its mouth in the Artic Ocean in 1789 and afterwards led an exploring party to the Pacific ocean and left an inscription in red paint with the date. He afterwards published his voyages, a large volume, one of which is possessed by the Historical Society).

13<sup>th</sup>. On board the Mississauga; at six this morning we weighed anchor. Orders had been given for my accommodation that no person should have a passage to Kingston but I relented in favor of Brant’s sister who was ill and very desirous to go. She speaks English well and is a civil and sensible old woman.”

21<sup>st</sup>. “At Montreal, on 25<sup>th</sup> at Quebec.

Oct. 13<sup>th</sup>. Took possession of my house in Palace street.

Nov. 20<sup>th</sup>. Letters received from General Simcoe dated Niagara, Oct. 30<sup>th</sup>.”

Mrs. Simcoe satisfied that the war trouble she feared was not imminent determined to return to Upper Canada. Her stay in Quebec had been a round of pleasure and gaiety, those in official circles as well as the leaders in social life General provided functions every day either major or minor. The General had sent word that he was coming as far as Kingston 4<sup>th</sup> Dec., 1794 and in March, 1795, they met at Cornwall and then repaired to Kingston, and on 15<sup>th</sup> May, left for York and arrived there on the 18<sup>th</sup>.

The following verses were found in the diary, dated, Jan. 1<sup>st</sup> 1795, and were evidently composed by Governor Simcoe in anticipation of his wife’s return to upper Canada from Quebec:

“Twice six revolving years having run their course,  
Since thou Eliza overflowing source  
Of happiness domestic dost employ  
My wedded thoughts, most honored, most beloved,  
And now when night and absence intervene,  
O may my wishes wing thy speedy way

Return thou source of joys, return thou source of day.”

June 16<sup>th</sup>. “Arrived at Navy Hall.

The Duke de Rochefoncauld came in June and stayed 19 days with his suite.”

His reference to Mrs. Simcoe lacks warmth and had been much criticized and on her part she says “I do not like them all.” This is the only occasion when Mrs. Simcoe expresses dislike of anyone and in the whorl of her diary she speaks kindly of everyone, unkindly of none. Aug. 10<sup>th</sup>, 1795, “The House of Assembly prorogued to-day (the fourth).

11<sup>th</sup>. We rode to Judge Powell’s, dined at Mrs. Tice’s and obtain her consent to our staying a fortnight in her house, she is to give us two rooms and we are to have a tent pitched for the servants.”

29<sup>th</sup> Aug., 1795. “I slept at Capt. Hamilton’s at Chippawa.”

This is the Matthew Hamilton, married by Rev. R. Addison, July 1792. This quaint sentence follows the entry: “They had been previously married by a commanding officer but thought it more descent to have the office repeated.”

Aug. 31<sup>st</sup>. “A Moravian woman brought me a loaf of bread so peculiarly good that I could not but inquire about it. She said it was made with rennet and whey without yeast or water and baked in wicker or straw baskets as taught at the Moravian school Pennsylvania. It was as light as possible and rich like cake. There are a great many sassafras trees here in the wood and sumac trees by the river.”

Sept. 25<sup>th</sup>. “Mrs. Tice has a number of standard peach trees.”

Mrs. Simcoe went to York and did not return to Navy Hall till 29<sup>th</sup> Apr., 1796.

Apr. 20<sup>th</sup>. “Francis is better and busy planting currant bushes and peach trees.”

From Apr. 29<sup>th</sup> to June 7<sup>th</sup> at Navy Hall.

June 30<sup>th</sup>. “The Assembly was prorogued, I went with some ladies to hear the Governor’s speech.”

June 6<sup>th</sup>. Francis is five years old to-day.

June 8<sup>th</sup>. “At John Green’s on the way to York, they eat pumpkin pie which with lemon juice was very good.”

Governor Simcoe early in the year determined on returning to England. His relations with Lord Dorchester had been harmonious and he asked for leave of absence and was told that the frigate Pearl would be at Quebec to take him home in August.

July 21<sup>st</sup>. “Said good-bye to her friends and was much out of her spirits, went on board the Onondaga for Kingston.”

Sept. 10<sup>th</sup>. “went on board the Pearl” and she tells the adventure of being in danger from two French ships. “We cleared for action, the Captain conducted me down two flights of steps in to the bread room which just held me. The two children and my servant, there I spent six hours of perfect misery every minute expecting to hear the guns fire. Never having been in real danger before I knew not what it was to be so frightened. Some refreshment was brought me but I could not eat. The sailor who brought it said “You had better take it now for there is no knowing when you may be able to get any more.” Capt. Malcolm of the Marine offered me his room, six feet long and four feet wide. I heard talking all night and it seemed inevitable for us not to be taken. At noon the next day prospects were more cheerful, they are still following us but did not come up. We are near the coast of Labrador.”

14<sup>th</sup>. Reached Dover and soon after Wolford, the home and there was a happy meeting of the family, four daughters and Mrs. Hunt, the two children from Canada. Frank and Sophia, the father and mother who had not met for five long years. Francis a sturdy little fellow telling that he had talked with Indians and Sophia that she had met the great red chief Brant.

General Simcoe was offered the position of Governor of San Domingo but his health obliged him to return on 1797. He was then put on duty training volunteer and soldiers for the war with France. He had been appointed in command of the garrison at Plymouth and afterwards of the Western Division of three countries and drilled men efficiently to resist Napoleon who was preparing a large force to invade England, with hundred of flat bottomed boats to contain 100,000 men, but after the victory of Nelson at Trafalgar in 1805 the alarm ceased and he was appointed Commander in Chief in India, but on the way to Portugal was taken so ill that he returned to England and died in 1806. Meanwhile in the period from 1798 the estate of Woford had been greatly improved, the General ever active in superintending workmen when home. Mrs. Simcoe entertaining guests, or perhaps out in the morning at six sketching, or perhaps riding on horseback on one occasion rode 25 miles. There was a large estate, at one time forty employed. The activities of the day at Woford always began with family prayer at which all the household were present. The General read the service, it was somewhat imposing a visitor remarked to see the maidservants headed by the housekeeper and the menservants headed by the butler, seventeen in all file into the dining room and hear the master or mistress read the chapter. Wilford was a centre interest. On calling days were like miniature court receptions, a score of carriages of country people was not unusual. The life of Wilford Manor was very different from that at Navy Hall, balls, dances, receptions and still the careful and affectionate wife and mother waiting on them assiduously through illness, sometimes up all night through several days illness. Meanwhile more children had been born, a son in 1798, in 1800 another son and in 1802 and 1804 two daughters, so that there had been eleven children, one died in Niagara, a son in England quite young. Frank was killed at the Siege of Badajos. Five daughters survived her, one married after her death. Strange to say Mrs. Simcoe discouraged marriage although there were many suitors some of high rank, two of the nobility but she always made objections and we know not why, she was obdurate and as she was supreme the daughters yielded.

Absolute obedience was a pre-requisite in the family, what the father and mother ordered was a law, the daughters recognized these characteristics in their mother and yielded. John Ross Robertson describes her from information gained while in England as somewhat small in stature, dignified, aristocratic, in manner, proud and commanding respect.

The son, Rev. Henry Addington Simcoe, whose son, Capt. J. Kennway Simcoe, R. N., was the only representative of the good Governor of Upper Canada, Mrs. Simcoe who survived him forty years after dying at the age of 84. The death of her husband marked a great change in her life. Seems to have taken more serious view of life, was deeply religious, gave much to charity and missionary purposes visiting the cottagers in illness, left a remarkable will reasoning out why more was given to two daughters than the others as two inherited from other relatives.

We have additional glimpses in to the life at Woford Manor in a remarkable account written by a servant, John Bailey who had been with them from early childhood, for nearly forty years, as a boy, a footman, a coachman. He seems to have been an intelligent man and deeply religious quotes much from the Bible which he seem to know from cover to cover. It is thus begun, "remarks on the life of General and Mrs. Simcoe from 1802 to 1850 by John Bailey."

He was deeply attached to both General and Mrs. Simcoe and gives the highest character to both. Of her he commenced by saying. She was a good a mistress as ever ruled a house. Her works told that like Joshua she said "as for me and my house we will serve the Lord."

The funeral sermon was preached by Rev. John Blackmore, M. A., an old friend of the family. "The Christian in life and death." It is quoted in full.

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UNVEILING OF THE BROZE TABLET ON THE CAIRN IN MEMORY OF THE BATTLE  
OF FORT GEORGE, AND OF THOSE WHO GAVE THEIR LIVES, 27<sup>TH</sup>, MAY 1813.

It is a gracious thing and an eminently fitting thing that is being done by the Canadian Government in the hand of the Sites and Monument Board of which General Cruickshank, F. R. S. C. is the President, the placing Cairns at different spots to commemorate the brave deeds done in the war of 1812-14 in defense of our homes. Already in this vicinity twenty spots of historic interest have been mentioned to be commemorated, and so far in our neighborhood five or six of these have been thus marked out by cairn or monument; Cook's Mill, Beaver Dams, Battle of Chippawa, Frenchman's Creek, Fort George, while Vrooman's Battery was to have been marked in October but waiting for the completion of the Boulevard from Queenston to Niagara-on-the-lake. Large crowds attended these and taken part. Boy Scouts, School children, Town Councils, Bands playing patriotic airs, addresses by clergymen and other citizens, I. O. D. E. with their flags and wreaths.

The cairns are solid, composed generally of stones gathered from the fields, with a bronze tablet defining the event commemorated.

On the 16<sup>th</sup>, August 1923, the Niagara Historical Society selected the day of their annual picnic held at different times at Queenston Heights, Niagara Falls, Fort Niagara, as also the day of tis commemoration service. After lunch in St. Marks Parish Hall motors carried those present to the spot selected in Mississauga Commons. The I. O. D. E. led by their president Mrs. Rig and Mrs. Appleford carrying the flag, the Band of the R.C. Rifles, Veterans of the Fenian Raid, members of the Historical Society and citizens generally besides many from Toronto, Brantford, Jersey City, Sarnia, St. Catharines and other places, filled the seats or stood. The Cairn is about eleven feet high, and in this case those erecting it did not have to search the fields for stones large or small, but found them in the shore of the river here emptying into the lake. It was an ideal day, not too warm not with too strong a breeze, bright sun, clear air, the lofty arch of sky with fleecy clouds moving over the deep blue sky, rivaling the blue of the lake and river. Fort Niagara beyond with its three historic poplars always seen and the old Castle, the work of French possessors over two centuries ago. Fort Mississauga with its square grey tower not far distant over the Military reserve. The platform on the green sward near the river bank and at the end of Queen street, its erection had been superintended by Major Mussen and G. S. Leslie two of our members. On the platform were Brigadier General E. A. Cruickshank, L. L. D. F. R. S. C., Mayor J. M. Mussen, General Nelles C. M. G., Cannon Garret, Rev. A. F. MacGregor B. A., Judge Campbell and Rev. G. Smith, D. D. of St. Catharines, Rev. C. H. E. Smith, M. A., E. C. Graves M. P. P., Col. Clarence Hill and Col. Boak R. C. R., G. H. Muirhead of Brantford, J. Mitchell of the Archives, Sarnia an others. Miss. Carnochan who presided outlined in a few words the object of the Society and then called on Mayor Mussen to give the welcoming address who paid a tribute to the work done by the Society. Work which has shown that every foot of

ground in our sight teems with notable history and this cairn is a testimony that for over a century the two nations have lived side by side without drawing a sword on one another.

Miss. Carnochan mentioned that in a slight way and in anticipation of the work now being done by the Sites and Monuments Board its erection of ten markers of Historical spots in or near the town, and welcomed the Veterans. Told that No. 1 company was formed before the St. Catharines Volunteers No. 19 of which it afterwards formed a part, and of the bulge presented to No. 1 Company on its return from Philipsburg, by the ladies of the town and Vets, after presentation to the Society by the Company No. 1. The inscription on the cairn was afterwards unveiled by the president, and a wreath placed on it by the I. O. D. E., with a ribbon with the inscription worked on it by Mrs. E. J. Thompson, "May 27<sup>th</sup>, 1813. August 16<sup>th</sup>, 1923." Miss. Carnochan also told that the Historical Society had been represented in this late war by no less than ten members, so that not only in doing honour to the past it has done its work in the present.

The Band of the R. C. R., honored the Society at the opening by playing "Abide With Me" and after the unveiling "O Canada." Rev. Garrett as one of the original members of the Society formed in 1895, and a Vice-president, was pleased to be present and pay his tribute to this and its President. Col. Claude H. Hill, Officer commanding the Royal Canadian Regiment conveyed the regrets of Colonel H. A. Borden, General officer commanding Military District No. 2 who was unable to be present but had sent his Chief of Staff, Col. H. M. Boak and himself to pay tribute on behalf of the Canadian militia of to-day to the memory of those earlier Militia who fell in the battle of Fort George over a hundred years ago.

Surg. General G. S. Ryerson declared himself proud of being a Canadian and of those who marched 2000 miles through snow and ice to enforce law and order and preserve the Northwest to the Dominion. He also referred to the U. E. Loyalists who gave up so much to remain faithful to their king and also spoke of the patriotism in the Riel Rebellion and the late great war. Mr. George G. H. Muirhead of Brantford who have been brought up on the tales of the Niagara Frontier took peculiar interest in being present and being allowed to speak on behalf of the outside members of the Society who were scattered over this broad continent. On 1812, his grandfather Muirhead was connected with the headquarters staff and he still had his grandfather's sword which he would present to the Society.

Rev. G. H. Smith D. D. of St. Catharines hoped that the President might be long spared to continue her great work. Much had been done, much valuable data collected, but there was much yet to be done in collecting old family letters and correspondence. General Nelles spoke briefly and Judge Campbell and also J. Mitchell of Sarnia the Assistant Archivist and Rev. C. H. E. Smith M. A., but the chief address was given as requested by Brig. Gen. E. A. Cruickshank, L. L. D. F. R. S. C., Chairman of the Historic Sites and Monuments Board of Canada who had done so much historic work for the Lundy's Lane Historical Society and for our Society. Every battle field of the Niagara Peninsula had been described by him with accuracy after close investigations. Nine volumes of Correspondence of the war of 1812-14 with letters in both sides. The United States view as well as ours all are acknowledged to be very valuable. We are indebted to him for the contents of many of our pamphlets, has made the chief address at all these commemorative cairns.

The Dedicatory prayer was made by Rev. A. F. MacGregor, B. A., Minister of St. Andrew's Church.

O Lord, Our God, Who art the source of all good, we acknowledge Thee to be the spring of all that is truly heroic. As we have come to this place to-day to honor the memory of men of valor and devotion who died in defense of our homeland we look to Thee for approval and

blessing. When their dust makes sacred ground we raise a memorial to their brave achievement, their gallant facing of danger and of death. Lord of true peace and concord, we give Thee hearty thanks or the singular and telling witness of so long a national border lone, whose only defense these hundred years had been the people's mutual good will. Devoutly we pray that for the future the only strife may be as to who shall serve best the noble cause of brotherhood and peace, May this monument long stand under the heaven's wide arch of blue and as the wind breathes over it and the song of birds may circle round, may there not be wanting a brave soldier whose shining self-forget-fullness must not be forgotten. Graciously be pleased to bless our Sovereign the King and remember for good the President of the United States and unto Thee, Lord God of Hosts and Lord of Love shall be glory and praise for ever, Amen.

The Inscription on the bronze tablet on the Cairn is as follows:

BATTLEFIELD OF FORT GEORGE

27<sup>th</sup> May, 1813

Landing Place

Of Invading Troops.

Here was Fought The

Action on That Day.

Pro Patria

IN MEMORY OF

Lieut. James Drumme, 8<sup>th</sup> Regiment; Capt. Andrew Liddle and Ensign Wm. McLean, Glengarry Light Infantry; and the Non-Commissioned Officers and Men of the Royal Artillery, 8<sup>th</sup> Regiment, 49<sup>th</sup> Regiment, Glengarry Light Infantry, Royal Newfoundland Regiment, and Lincoln Militia, killed in the battle.

A pleasing feature of the proceedings was the presence of a number of Fenian Raid Veterans present by special arrangement by Mrs. E. J. Thompson and others. They were James Heartly who proudly wore Long service and Fenian Metals; Wm. J. Campbell; J. G. Thornton; James Holoham; L. Bissell; Wm. Thompson; John Myers; Wm. D. Cronch; John Knox. At one side were the members of the I. O. D. E. headed by their Regent Mrs. Rigg and the beautiful flag was carried by Mrs. Appleford on the other side of the band which gave delightful music and in the front the Veterans who fought in the Fenian Raid. These Cairns will tell to all that Canada had a history and is now making it known in commemoration of those who gave their lives to defend the soil of their land and keep it a sacred heritage for all time.

The chief address was given by Brigadier General E. A. Cruickshank, F. R. S. C. LL. D. Chairman of the historic Sites and Monuments Board of Canada.

**An Address at the Dedication of the Monument Commemorating the Battle of Fort George,  
27<sup>th</sup> May, 1813**

**BY Brig. Gen. E. A. Cruickshank**

This monument is placed here by the Department of the Interior to commemorate the battle of Fort George, and as a tribute to the memory of the brave officers and men of the several regiments, who gave up their lives in opposing the invasion of this province and of all their comrades who fought beside them that day and are long since gathered to the majority.

They were called upon to face the attack of an overwhelming enemy, whose landing was covered by the fire fifty-one gun, distributed among sixteen ships of war upon the lake, assisted by the cross-fire of twenty-five guns and mortars in Fort Niagara and neighboring batteries along the river, arranged in a huge crescent, sweeping and searching the field of battle everywhere, and they did their duty nobly and well in these hopeless contest.

The actual landing of the invaders, near the mouth of the creek some distance to the westward if this spot, was heroically resisted by what was called the brigade, but in numerical strength far less than a single battalion, composed of detachments from five different units of infantry, without any artillery for none could approach the shore under the tremendous fire poured upon it. Eventually upwards of two thousand men were employed in the attack of less than six hundred, yet such was the value of this resolute handful of men that the advanced guard of their assailants was twice forced to seek shelter below the steep bank of the lakeside, and when it was reinforced, two separate attempts to gain the plain were sharply repelled and some of the leading files were stuck down with the bayonet. General Boyd, who commanded the landing, related in his official report that "For fifteen minutes the two lines exchanged a rapid and destructive fire at a distance of only six or ten yards." At length after suffering the loss of more than sixty per cent of their number, the survivors of this most gallant band, were driven from the field. The official returns of their losses in the action speak more eloquently of their devotion than any other testimony.

Five companies of the 8<sup>th</sup> Regiment reported the loss of six officers and one hundred and ninety-six other ranks out of a total of three hundred and ten present. The Glengarry Light Infantry peculiarly Canadian raised largely in the country from which it took its name, lost four officers and seventy-three other ranks out of one hundred and eight. The grenadier company of the Royal Newfoundland Regiment lost two officers and fourteen others out of forty engaged. Both of the last named regiments had been organized in the British Provinces of North America and largely recruited from natives of these provinces. The returns of loss for company of negroes commanded by Captain Robert Runchey and two companies of the Lincoln Militia have been lost, but it is stated that five officers and eighty-five other ranks were killed or wounded.

The diversity of the men who were engaged in the battle was noteworthy. In the regular regiments were English, Irish and Scots. The Provincial forces were composed of men from Glengarry, Newfoundland, New Brunswick, Prince Edward Islands and the country of Lincoln, many of the older men being Loyalists who came from the thirteen of the former British Colonies which became the United States. The negro company was of course composed of refugees from the Southern States while the Indians present were not only from the six nations but from the far North, West and east including Ottawa, Ojibways, Mississaugas, Hurons and other tribes as far as what is now Northern Wisconsin.

The courage and self-devotion of Dominick Henry, keeper of the lighthouse on Mississauga point, and his wife, in ministering and bringing aid to the wounded amidst the hottest fire ought not to remain unmentioned here.

We dedicate this monument to-day. They have already dedicated the ground on which it stands and hallowed it with their blood. Their bodies have mingled with this fruitful soil and their memory is an immortal heritage.

Speaking of them we may fitly use the poet's noble words and say:

"And how can man die better  
Than facing fearful odds

For the ashes of his fathers  
And the temples of his Gods”

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AN EARLY DIARY OF FRANCIS GORING

What stores information of the early history of our land might we possess had the early settlers kept diaries and had they been preserved like that of Francis Goring. We make our bow to him and his descendants. These few pages have been preserved by Miss. Goring of St. Catharines, a great granddaughter, and give us knowledge of perhaps the earliest school in the Niagara peninsula, as remarkable to say though Niagara was the Capital of Upper Canada and must have had early schools, we possess scarcely my record of its teachers or of its pupils. Francis Goring must have been a remarkable man, a good scholar, a successful business man, a teacher, a trader, a man of affairs, a farmer as well, Secretary of Hon. Robt. Hamilton, the Lieutenant of the Country Land Agent for Nassau, methodical, a lover of literature as the little books in his hand writing almost like copperplate show being extracts from the best writers of that day in prose and poetry as Cowper, Johnson, Addison, Young, Collins. In our number 28 may be found Reminiscences of Francis Goring with extracts from his carefully kept diary.

But our part now is to give the extracts regarding his schools. The Diary begins thus, Acct. of Home Expenses and Memorandums began 2<sup>nd</sup> June 1790, Nassau now Lincoln, in Province of Upper Canada.

### MEMORANDUMS

1790 November, 23<sup>rd</sup>, Went to my farm, the first snow fell the 27<sup>th</sup> day, Saturday a deep snow. Kept no school from the 23<sup>rd</sup>, November, 1790, and on this 23<sup>rd</sup> of January 1791, gave it up on account of their not providing a stove, and keeping out of employ.

### Memorandums

Monday, February 7<sup>th</sup> 1791 – Moved from the schoolhouse at the 3 mile Creek.  
February, 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> – Detained at my Father-in-law's on account of bad weather.  
Wednesday, February 10<sup>th</sup>, 1791 – Moved to my farm.  
Saturday, February 25<sup>th</sup>, 1791 – Raised a schoolhouse on the 6 mile Creek.  
July, 25<sup>th</sup>, 1792 – The first Governor, John Graves Simcoe, arrived here for this place.  
August, 23<sup>rd</sup>, 1792 – Prince Edward arrived here on a visit and returned on the 27<sup>th</sup>.  
Monday, December, 10<sup>th</sup>, 1792 – This day commenced keeping school at the landing, Queenston, for day scholars.

### Names of Scholars

Robert Hamilton  
George Hamilton  
Alexander Hamilton  
December, 11<sup>th</sup> – Archibald Fletcher  
William Chisholm

Sarah Secord  
Rachel Vrooman  
Eleanor Disher  
Solomon Vrooman  
Wm. Peterson  
Peter McEvery  
John Overholt  
Asmorly Farewell  
William Farewell  
April 16<sup>th</sup>, Adam Vrooman  
April 14<sup>th</sup>, Miss. Betsey Murry  
May 22<sup>nd</sup>, Polly Secord  
February 4<sup>th</sup>, 1792 – The Governor left this place for Detroit.  
Thursday January, 3<sup>rd</sup>, 1793 – This day commenced keeping Evening School, ended 28<sup>th</sup>  
February, 1793.

### **Names of Scholars**

John Fletcher  
Thomas Copper  
Samuel Ulice  
John Disher  
Master Philps  
Oliver Maby  
John Smith  
Lewis Bastedo  
John Gold  
Jefi Page  
James Durham  
Martin Doshimer

August, 27<sup>th</sup> 1792 – Election for Assembly for the first Townships, Mr. Samuel Street and Mr. Ben J. Pauling Candidates. The latter chosen by 148 votes against 48.

Received account Louis XVI King of France being beheaded on the 21<sup>st</sup>, January 1793, as early as 21<sup>st</sup>, April.

March 2<sup>nd</sup>, 1794 – Sunday it snowed all day.

May 21<sup>st</sup>, 1794 – Kept school from the 21<sup>st</sup> may to 2<sup>nd</sup> June.

May 19<sup>th</sup>, 1794 – Borrowed a grammar from Mr. Hamilton.

### **Laura Secord's Walk to Warn Fitz Gibbon**

We are exceedingly indebted to General Cruickshank for gathering together so many authoritative statements, several of them never before published on the deed of Laura Ingersoll Secord. There have been so many different versions of the story, some correct, others fanciful and much decorated. One tells that she went to her brother-in-law in St.

David's thinking that he would take the message the rest of the way, but found him ill in bed. Another that she started bare footed and walked all the way in that condition, which is absurd.

The fighting was really done by the Indians, who acted as scouts in the woods. Those who lost their lives were either Indians or United States Soldiers, and it is believed no British blood was shed that day.—Ed.

As far as can be ascertained the services of Mrs. Secord in conveying information of the projected attack upon Lieut. Fitz. Gibbon's post at the Beaver Dams, were not mentioned Fitz Gibbon, Bisshopp, and Vincent contain no reference to it. Fitz Gibbon. Writing under date of June 24<sup>th</sup> 1813, merely says that he received information at De Cou's that morning, about seven o'clock, that about a thousands of the enemy with two field guns were advancing towards him from St. David's, but does not state the source of this intelligence.

Captain W. H. Merritt makes no mention of Mrs. Secord in his "Personal Narrative," which is the more surprising, as the lieutenant of his troop of dragoons was Charles Ingersoll, her brother. Nor were her services recorded by the British historians, William James, Robert Christie, or David Thompson, whose books were published soon after the end of the war, who would scarcely have ignored them had they come to their knowledge.

The earliest reference to them in any document appears to be contained in the following petition from her husband, the original of which is preserved in a bundle of papers in the Dominion Archives, entitled, "Sundries, Upper Canada, 1820."

### **The Petition of James Secord**

To His Excellency Sir Peregrine Maitland, K. C. B., Lieutenant Governor of the Province of Upper Canada and Major General Commanding His Majesty's Forces in Upper and Lower Canadian, &c., &c., &c.

The Petition of James Secord, Senior, of the Village of Queenston, Esquire.

Humbly Sheweth

That your Petitioner is one of the oldest inhabitants of this Province, has numerous Relatives in the British Army, is Brother-in-Law to the Honorable Richard Cartwright, is Captain in the 2<sup>nd</sup> Regiment of Lincoln Militia, was wounded in the battle of Queenston, and twice plundered of all his movable property. That his Wife embraced an opportunity of rendering some service at the risk of her life, in going thro' the Enemies Lines to communicate information to a Detachment of His Majesty's Troops at the Beaver Dams in the month of June 1813.

That Your Excellency's Petitioner is desirous of obtain license of Occupation of so much of the Military Reserve at Queenston as is described by Captain Vavasour of the Royal Engineers now stationed at Fort George, including a Stone Quarry, a sketch which is transmitted by Capt. Vavasour.

Wherefore your Petitioner prays that Your Excellency may be pleased to grant him a license of occupation of that part of the Military reserve described by Captain Vavasour, subject to such conditions, restrictions and limitations as Your Excellency may be pleased to impose.

And Your petitioner will ever pray.

J. Secord, Senr.

“York 25<sup>th</sup> February, 1826.”

The following certificate was enclosed to support the petition.

“I certify that Mrs. Secord, Wife of James Secord of Queenston, Esquire, did in the Month of June, 1813, come to the Beaver Dam and communicate to me information of an intended attack to be made by the Enemy upon the Detachment then under my command there, which occasionally occupied a large Stone House at the place. The information was substantially correct, and a detachment did march for the Beaver Dam, (on the morning of the second day after the information was given) under the command of Lieut. Colonel Boerstler, which detachment was captured. Mrs. Secord arrived at my station about sunset of an excessively warm day, after having walked twelve miles, which I at the time thought was an exertion which a person of her slender frame and delicate appearance was unequal to make.

“James FitzGibbon”

Captn. Half Pay

York

26<sup>th</sup> February, 1820

“Late Glengy, Lt. Infantry”

Almost seventeen years later, Fitz Gibbon was asked to give a second certificate, the former one being apparently unavailable. This he did in the following words.

“Toronto, 23<sup>rd</sup> February, 1837.”

“I do hereby certify that Mrs. Secord, wife of James Secord, of Chippawa, Esquire, did in the month of June, 1813, walk from her house in the village of St. Davids to De Coos house in Thorold, by a circuitous route of about twenty miles, partly through the woods, to acquaint me that the enemy intended to attempt by surprise to capture a detachment of the 49<sup>th</sup> Regiment, then under my command, she having obtained such knowledge from god authority, as the event proved. Mrs. Secord was a person of slight and delicate frame and made this effort in weather excessively warm, and I dreaded at the time that she must suffer in health in consequence of fatigue and anxiety, she having been exposed to anger from the enemy, through whose line of communication she had to pass. The attempt was made on my detachment by the enemy, and his detachment, consisting of upwards of 500 men, with a fieldpiece and 50 dragoons, were captured in consequence. I write this certificate in a moment of much hurry and from memory, and it is therefore thus brief.

“James Fitz Gibbon”

“Formally Lieut., in the 49<sup>th</sup> Reg.”

Seven years afterwards a proposal to grant Colonel Fitz Gibbon, who was then Chief Clerk of the Legislative Council, the sum of £1000, in lieu of a former grant for five thousand acres of crown lands, which had been disallowed as illegal, was warmly opposed in the Legislative Assembly by Mr. Aylwin of Quebec. Learning this, Charles B. Secord addressed a letter to a religious periodical, called “The Church,” published at Cobourg, which was printed in that paper in April, 1845.

“Queenston, 11<sup>th</sup> April, 1845”

Sir, -- In the course of the late debate in the House of Assembly, relative to the propriety of granting Col. Fitz Gibbon £1000 for his services, in lieu of a grant of land, Mr. Aylwin said he strongly opposed the grant, and gave as one reason that Col. Fitz Gibbon had monopolized honor which did not rightfully belong to him. He had received credit for the affair at the Beaver Dam, whilst in point of fact the party to whom that credit was due was Major Delormier, a relative of his own, and a native Lower Canada, but instead of being rewarded for his services Major Delormier could not obtain the life of his son when he afterwards solicited it.

“Now I think it proper that Mr. Aylwin should be informed and that the country should know in what way Col. Fitz Gibbon achieved so much honour for the affair at the Beaver Dam. My mother, living on the frontier the whole of the late American war, a warm supporter of the British cause, frequently met with American officers and upon the occasion of the capture of the American troops at the Beaver Dam, after our troops, consisting of a small detachment under Col. Fitz Gibbon, then Lieut. Fitz Gibbon of the 49<sup>th</sup> Regiment, and some Indians, had taken up their position at that place, overheard an American officer say to the officers that they intended to surprise and capture the British troops at the Beaver Dam. Without waiting further information my mother, a lone woman, at once left her house to apprize the British troops of what she had heard, and traveled on foot the whole way, passing all the American Guards and many of the Indian scouts who were placed along the road, until she arrived at the Beaver Dam, and enquiring for the officer in command was introduced to Col. Fitz Gibbon, (Then Lieut. Fitz Gibbon, as I said before), as the officer in command; she then told him what she had heard, that the Americans intended to make an attack upon them and would no doubt, from their superior numbers, capture them all. Col. Fitz Gibbon in consequence of this information prepared himself to meet the enemy, and soon after, the attack being made, the American troops were captured and one or two field-pieces taken, as the Colonel’s certificate of my mother’s services on that occasion, accompanying this communication, will show. It might perhaps be as well for me while upon this subject further to state that I never heard my mother speak of Major Delormier or any other officer being at the Beaver Dam at the time. Col. Fitz Gibbon was the only officer who appeared to be in command, to whom my mother gave information, and who acted the part he so nobly did on that occasion.

“I am, Sir, your most obedient servant,  
“Chas. D. Secord.”

A copy of Fitz Gibbon’s second certificate was transmitted with this letter, and then published, probably for the first time.

In 1853 a “History of the War of 1812” was printed as a serial in the “Anglo-American magazine,” published in Toronto, which afterwards appeared in book form, with the name of G. Auchinleck as the author. In a note to the installment in the November number, Volume III, No. 5, pages 466 and 467, he made the following statement. The circumstances connected with the affair at the beaver Dam, where Col. Fitz Gibbon (then Lieut. Fitz Gibbon) gained so much praise for the victory achieved by him over the Americans, was owing to information which Mrs. Secord, the widow of James Secord, Esq., deceased, formerly of Queenston, who was wounded at the battle of that place (13<sup>th</sup> October, 1812,) obtained from private sources of the intention of the American troops to surround and take Fitz Gibbon and party, which consisted at that time of a detachment of the 49<sup>th</sup> Regiment, some few militia, and a small body of Indians, to oppose some 500 of the American infantry and a detachment of some 50 of mounted American

dragoons. The difficulty of reaching Lieut. Fitz Gibbon's post is thus related in Mrs. Secord's own words,"—I shall commence at the battle of Queenston, where I was at the time the cannon balls were flying around me in every direction. I left the place during the engagement. After the battle I returned to Queenston, and then found that my husband had been wounded, my house plundered and property destroyed. It was while the Americans had possession of the frontier, that I learned the plans of the American commander, and determined to put the British troops under Fitz Gibbon in possession of them, and if possible, to save the British troops from capture, or, perhaps, total destruction. In doing so, I found I should have great difficulty in getting through the American guards which were out ten miles in the country. Determined to preserve, however, I left early in the morning, walked nineteen miles in the month of June, over a rough and difficult part of the country, when I came to a field belonging to a Mr. Decamp, in the neighborhood of the Beaver Dam. By this time daylight left me. Here I found all the Indians encamped, by moonlight the scene was terrifying, and to those accustomed to such scenes, might be considered grand. Upon advancing to the Indians they all rose and, with some yells, said "Woman," which made me tremble. I cannot express the awful feeling it gave me tremble. I cannot express the awful feeling it gave me, but I did not lose my presence of mind. I was determined to preserve. I went up to one of the chiefs, made him understand that I had great news for Capt. Fitzgibbon, and that he must let me pass to his camp, or that he and his party would all be taken.

The chief at first objected to let me pass, but finally consented, after some hesitation, to go with me and accompany me to Fitzgibbon's station, which was at the Beaver Dam, where I had an interview with him. I then told him what I had come for, and what I had heard – that the Americans intended to make an attack upon the troops under his command, and would, from their superior numbers, capture them all. Benefiting by this information, Capt. Fitzgibbon formed his plans accordingly, and captured about five hundred American infantry, and about fifty mounted dragoons, and a field-piece or two was taken from the enemy. I returned home next day, exhausted and fatigued. I am now advanced in years, and when I look back I wonder how I could have gone through so much fatigue, with the fortitude to accomplish it."

Fitzgibbon's second certificate is printed with the single variation that the word "DeCoo's" is altered to "Decamps."

In summer of 1860, the American artist and writer, Benson J. Lossing, visited Canada to collect material for his "Pictorial Fieldbook of the War of 1812," which, however, was not published until 1869. He did not see Mrs. Secord but entered into correspondence with her, and on page 621 of that work, in a foot-note he prints an extract of a letter from her.

"After going to St. David's, and the recovery of Mr. Secord," she wrote, "We returned again to Queenston, where my courage was again much tried. It was then I gained the secret plan laid to capture Captain Fitzgibbon and his party. I was determined, if possible to save them. I had much difficulty in getting through the American guards. They were ten miles out in the country. When I came to a field belonging to Mr. Decoo, in the neighborhood of the Beaver Dams, I then had walked nineteen miles. By that time daylight had left me. I yet had a swift stream of water to cross over an old fallen tree (Twelve-mile Creek,) and to climb a high hill, which fatigued me very much.

"Before I arrived at the encampment of the Indians, as I approached they all arose with one of their war-yells, which indeed awed me. You may imagine what my feelings were to behold so many savages. With forced courage I went to one of the chiefs, told him I had great news from his commander, and that he must take me to him, or they would be all lost. He if not

understand me, but said, 'Woman, what does woman want here?' The scene by the moonlight to might have been grand, but to a weak woman, certainly terrifying. With difficulty I got one of the chides to go with me to their commander. With the intelligence I gave him he formed his plans and saved his country. I have ever found the brave and noble Colonel Fitzgibbon a friend to me, may he prosper in the world to come as he has done in this.

"Laura Secord."

"Chippawa, U. C. February 18<sup>th</sup>, 1861."

In 1864, appeared a volume entitled "1812; The War and its Moral," A Canadian Chronicle, "By William F. Coffin," formally sheriff of the Montréal District and staff officer in the militia. On pages 147-9, he gives the following account of Mrs. Secord's journey.

"In despite of all precautions, rumours of the intended expedition leaked out, and reached the ears of James Secord, a British militia soldier, who resided at Queenston, then within American lines. He had been badly wounded the preceding autumn at Queenston Heights, and was a cripple. He hobbled home to his wife with the news. The pair were in consternation; they were loyal Canadians—their hearts were in the cause. If the design succeeded; if Fitzgibbon was surprised; de Haren in the rear would follow. Burlington Heights might be carried, and their country would be lost. Mrs. Mary (sic.) Secord, the wife, at the age of 88, still lives in the village of Chippawa, to tell the story, and wakes up into young life as she does so. What was to be done Fitzgibbon must be warned. The husband in his crippled state could not move, and moreover no man could pass the line of American sentries. She spoke out, she would go herself, would he let her? She could get past the sentries; she knew the way to St. David's, and there she could get guidance. She would go, and out her trust in God. He consented.

At three in the morning she was up, got ready the children's breakfast, and taking a cracker and a cup of coffee, started after daybreak. To have left earlier would have aroused suspicion. Her first difficulty was the American advanced sentry. He was hard to deal with, but she pointed to the farm building a little in advance of his post, insisted she was going for milk; told him he could watch her, and was allowed to pass on. She did milk a cow, which was very contrary, and would persist in moving onwards to the edge of the opposite bushes, into which she and the cow disappeared. Once out of sight, she pushed on rapidly. She knew the way for miles, but fear rose within her, in despite of herself, and what 'scared' her most was the distant cry of the wolf, they were abundant in those days; and twice she encountered a rattlesnake, they are not infrequent even now. She did not care much for them, as she knew they would run from a stick or stone, and she did not wait for any such exorcism. At length reached a brook. It was very hot, and the water refreshed her, but she had some difficulty in crossing.

At last she found a log and shortly after got to the mill. The miller's wife was an old friend, and tried to dissuade her from going on. Spoke of the danger, spoke of her children; the latter was a sore trial, for she was weary and thoughtful, but the thing had to be done, so she was resolute, and having rested and refreshed, proceeded on. Her next trouble was the British outlying sentry, but she soon re-assured him and he sent her on, with a kind word, warning her to beware of the Indians. This scared her again, but she was scared still more, when the cracking of the dead branches under footsteps roused from their cover a party of red skins. The chief, who first sprang to his feet, confronted her, and demanded, 'Woman, what you want?' the other yelled awful. The chief silenced them with his hand. She told him, at once that she wanted to see Fitzgibbon, and why. 'Ah' said the Indian, 'me go with you,' and with a few words to his

people, who remained, he accompanied her to Fitzgibbon's quarters, which she reached about nine in the evening of the 23<sup>rd</sup>. A few words sufficed to satisfy him. He sent off, forthwith, to his Major de Haron, in the rear and made his own preparations. She found friends in a farm house near, for in those days everybody knew everybody. She slept right off, for she had journeyed in for twenty miles, and safely, God be praised."

Here are many new details, assembled with considerable skill, for which the writer gives no authority, but the narrative seems to imply that they were derived in some way from Mrs. Secord herself, despite the unfortunate blunder in gibing her Christian name as Mary. Elsewhere he acknowledges his obligations to Colonel James Clark of St. Catharines.

I have endeavored to bring together here all the firsthand authorities, stating the circumstances of Mrs. Secord's patriotic deed. Certain discrepancies will be observed, which it is difficult to reconcile, and can only be attributed to lapses of memory.

The statement was made that "The Mohawks did the fighting, the Caghanawagas got the plunder and Fitzgibbon got the praise."

### **The Tragedy of Milford Lodge**

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(BY ERNEST GREEN)

A half dozen chapter of the history of the Rebellion in Upper Canada in 1837-38.

Every one interested in back history will rejoice to learn that "Milford Lodge" the old Edgeworth Ussher house in the boulevard, above Chippawa is to be saved from demolition. For many years it has been in a much dilapidated state. Recently the property was acquired by F. H. Leslie, who in deference to the historic associations of the place has undertaken to restore the old building instead of razing it and erected a new house on the site. In the course of reconstruction, the later addition to the original building will be removed and the decayed woodwork of the main building will be replaced. The old form and frame of the house will be preserved and it will continue form any years to come to be an object of great interest to all who know he tragic story.

The Ussher family which was prominently identified with Willoughby, Chippawa and Drummondville for half a century and of which members are prominently in Toronto and Montreal today, is a branch of the ancient house of the Usshers of Eastivell, Galway Country, Ireland. The line is traced back to Arland Ussher who was sheriff of Dublin in 1460 and afterwards mayor of that city. Succeeding generations of the family gave to Irish and British public life, many men of great ability and prominence, bishops and archbishops, scholars, knights members of parliament, several mayors of Dublin, rear admirals, naval and military officers of less exalted rank, while the connections by marriage were with some of the greatest families of the Green Isle.

A branch of the family are known as the Usshers of Mount Ussher, country Wicklow, and to this belonged Capt. John Ussher, who having served in the 5<sup>th</sup> foot (Northumberland) of the British army retied about 1798, and settled in Canada. He married Mary only one child and heiress of Samuel Street Senior of the Grove Farm, Willoughby. This Samuel Street was the uncle of Samuel Street, junior of Niagara Falls. He was one of the Loyalist founders of Upper Canada, member of the early parliaments, speaker of the Legislature, magistrate, militia officer, and special commissioner during the war of 1812-14. His wife was Phoebe, daughter of Peter Van Camp, another prominent Loyalist.

By his marriage to Mary Street, Captain John Ussher became identified with the old Street estate, located a mile or so south of Chippawa, upon part of which the battle of July 5<sup>th</sup>, 1814 was fought, and after the war the location became known as Usshers, and the stream that flows by as Ussher's Creek, instead of the earlier Street's Creek. Captain John Ussher had by Mary Street, six children, three sons, and three daughters. The sons were, John, Edgeworth and Samuel. Of the daughters Margaret married one, Thompson, Harriet married Mr. George Mitchell of Penetanguishene, and Mary was married to John Ussher of Eastwell, Ireland, her cousin. The name chosen for the second son was a token of the family connection with the well known literary family of Edgeworth.

The younger Usshers all inherited their father's marital spirit and all held military commissions. John lived in later years on Culp street in Drummondville and had a large family who are remembered by some of our older citizens, Samuel's descendants are in New Zealand., Edgeworth Ussher, married Sarah, a daughter of Cornelius and Rebecca Thomson, of Grantham, Cornelius Thomson, a native of Perthshire, was a Loyalist officer who though he had attained advanced years, rendered service again in 1812-14 and died as the result of over-exertion. One of his sons was wounded, another, Oliver died in the army during the war. One daughter Amelia married Captain Alexander Garrett of the 49<sup>th</sup>, Brock's old Regiment and another, Mary married Lieut. John Campbell Gordon of the Royal Newfoundland Regiment. Descendants of both these marriages are residents of Niagara Falls today.

Edgeworth Ussher was born in 1804 and subsequently to his marriage at Milford Lodge, a house facing on the Niagara River road, north of the old Street Ussher homestead and upon the actual field of the battle of Chippawa. Here was enacted the tragedy that stamped the name Ussher indelibly upon the history of the Niagara Frontier. Three children were born to him prior to the outbreak of the Rebellion of 1837-8 and a fourth, a daughter during that troublous time.

Edgeworth Ussher was commissioned in the 3<sup>rd</sup>, Regiment of Lincoln Militia. He took rank as Captain from 1831. commanding the lefty 1837 news was received that Mackenzie had raised the standard of revolt back of Toronto all the Upper Canada Militia were called to arms because of its proximity to the United States, the Niagara frontier had among its residents a good many whose loyalty to the British Crown as questionable. There were also many who while thoroughly British in sentiment had been goaded to desperation by the despotism and injustice of the Provincial Administration. Neither of these classes were anxious to take arms, and the militia officers of the day faced very meager musters when the various units were called out.

George Coventry who was quite well known as an author, journalist and public official, in later years, was a guest at the homes of Captain Edgeworth and John Ussher, at the time of the outbreak and he had left a lively account of all that transpired in those exciting days. After the Toronto fiasco, Mackenzie reached the Niagara frontier and escape across to Buffalo, where he held great meetings of fellow fugitives and sympathizing United States citizens. One of his chief supporters was Cr. Cyrenius Chapin, a former sheriff who had led a band of irregular troops in the heartless plundering of the Canadian frontier during the campaigns of 1813-14. In Buffalo it was planned to take armed possession of Navy Island which was British territory. The Usshers obtained the first information of the scheme and had it beefed through military commandants of Chippawa and Fort Erie, offering to take troops and garrison the island but the higher officers were incredulous and nothing was done until the rebel force under Van Rensselaer occupied the island.

Then all was excitement. Troops poured in from every quarter, and Colonel, afterwards Sir Allan MacNab soon had four thousand men under his command. Coventry describes Captain Drew's first reconnaissance of the island as a single boat which was fired upon and made a hazardous return to the Canadian shore. The daring enterprise was watched by throngs on both sides, and when Drew was safely back, one of the Usshers played "God Save The Queen" on a bugle for the edification of the rebels. Then the rebels threw up batteries on both sides of the island and began a continuous bombardment as well as a heavy rifle fire upon the Canadian shore. There were a number of houses and a hotel within range and all were more or less riddled. A cannon ball went through the front door of one of the Ussher houses, passed through the parlor, clipped a corner off a dinner table and continued through Mrs. Ussher's bedroom but struck no one. The rebels commanded the Ussher's creel bridge so well that a temporary bridge had to be built out of a slight. Back of the buildings and orchards. The militia suffered numerous casualties and great hardships in this wretched contest.

Everyone has read how Captain Drew cut out the "Caroline" and left the rebels in difficulties for means of communication. Then the loyal artillery arrived dragged by many horsed teams and numerous oxen that mired of their bellies on the Portage road even when passing through Drummondville. A battery was thrown up in front of Ussher's and others in favorable locations. When this opened fire the Navy Island campaign came swiftly to an end.

A volume could be written concerning the experience of the people on this frontier in those days. Everyone lived in fear. Suspicion was rife, and spies—both loyal and rebel—were everywhere. The jails were full of prisoners and the woods were full of fugitives. Samuel Lount endeavoring escape from across Lake Erie in an open boat was blown back to the Grand River., captured and sent to Chippawa on suspicion. There he was recognized and sent on to Toronto where with Matthews he met death on the scaffold.

Windsor and Prescott became the scenes of military operations and when the troops on this frontier were reduced, small parties of rebels began to make secret raids from the other side to wreak vengeance upon the loyal loyalists. No man had been more conspicuous for the loyalty and his exertions against the rebels than Captain Edgeworth Ussher and he boasted of the success that had been attained in no very modest way, indeed it was believed by some that he had taken part in the "Caroline" expedition and it was not surprising that threatening letters were directed to him.. A feeling became general in the community that he was a marked man, for the vengeance of the discomfited filibusters and his neighbors were glad when he decided to go to Toronto for a time for the sake of greater security. On the 15<sup>th</sup> of November he went to Chippawa to take the stage for Niagara en route to Toronto but missed the conveyance and returned to his home for the night.

At two o'clock in the morning of November 16<sup>th</sup> 1838, Henry Taylor who lived in the River Road some distance above the Ussher's was roused from his bed, and when he opened his door was seized by two men who placed a rifle and a pistol to his head, demanding \$500 in default of which they would burn his house and those of his neighbors. Taylor could not satisfy the demand and his house was fired but not destroyed. The raiders then forced their prisoner to guide them to Edgeworth Ussher's home at Milford Lodge and to go shout and summon the Captain to the door. Knowing that he courted death by refusal and that the miscreants would probably set fire to the place and burn the family and their beds if they were not aroused, Taylor complied with the order.

The Ussher's awakened. Someone was calling the Captain Ussher to come out. "Don't go Edgeworth," pleaded Mrs. Ussher, "You don't know what it may be."

"Nonsense, Sally," replies the captain. "It's neighbor Taylor's voice. He needs me."

Ussher took a candle and approached the front door, his wife lurking in the hall behind him with her tiny daughter in her arms. Ussher demanded what was wanted and received evasive replies. There was not sufficient light for him to see outside the door. Some few words were exchanged. Then two shots were fired through the side windows of the porch, and Ussher fell dying on his own doorstep. The assailants had loaded their weapons with buckshot, and careful aim at their victim's heart at that short range left no chance of failure. A few words to the frantic woman who strove to raise his shattered and bleeding body from the floor, then the loyal soldier answered the last roll call.

To the stunned and helpless Taylor the murderers expressed their satisfaction as to what they had done, then they forced him to go with them to Miller's and Dobbies in the same neighborhood where they secured a small amount of money by force. Finally they threw Taylor into a pond and then embarked in their boat which they had left on the shore above Dobbies and re-crossed the river.

Though the times were filled with cruelty and bloodshed, the Ussher's tragedy sent a thrill of horror through the country. The Lieutenant Governor issued a proclamation offering a reward of five hundred pounds for the arrest of the murders. An inquest over which Dr. Mewburn, of Stamford presided found a verdict of willful murder and exonerated Taylor from any blame.

On Sunday November 18<sup>th</sup>, the funeral was held, a great throng of prominent persons attending. At old Trinity Church the Rev. William Leeming preached from Romans, 12, 19, and at the conclusion of the service the procession took its way towards Drummond Hill Cemetery. Whene half the distance was traversed it was met by the 43<sup>rd</sup> Regiment of Regular troops with its splendid band and the augmented cortege moved to the famous battle field burying ground to the sad strain of the Dead March on "Saul".

Near the crest of the hill Edgeworth Ussher rests beneath a marble shaft upon which his tragic story is told in these words:

"Here rests in the hope of a joyful resurrection the mortal remains of Edgeworth Ussher Esq. whose devotion to his sovereign and exertions at a critical period in the history of Canada, marked him out as an object for the vengeance of the enemies of peace and good order, by whom he was cruelly assassinated on the night of 16th November 1838, in his own house near Chippawa at the early age of 34 years, leaving a wife and four children to mourn their irreparable loss."

The assassins were never captured. It soon became known that Benjamin Lett, a prominent filibusterer was the chief murderer. In Buffalo he freely boasted of the hideous deed. Rumors were rife that an expedition was planned to go from Canada to kidnap him and yield home to British law. One Niagara man visiting the other side of the river on peaceful business was seized and charged with conspiracy to this effect, but escaped conviction. In the next summer Lett was rumored to be near Cobourg, and the Lieutenant Governor issued a second proclamation naming him, in connection with Ussher's murder.

In 1840, Lett earned additional abhorrence by secretly crossing the Niagara at night, placing a keg of gun-powder in the first Brock's Monument and wrecking that noble structure.

Nor did the raids on the loyal inhabitants cease. On May 1839, Miller's barns near the Ussher's place were burned. Shortly afterwards two boat loads of armed men landed at night, ransacked Taylor's house, carried off his money, papers and other valuables and burned his barns. In July, Dr. Mewburn's Barns at Danby House, Stamford were burned with a loss of three thousand pounds, the house being saved with difficulty. Two arrests were made of suspicious characters.

Prior to this in February the famous old Pavilion Hotel, Falls View was burned under circumstances that left little doubt of incendiarism. A heavy loss fell upon the City of the Falls Company, and upon Mr. Crysler the lessee. The climax of the series of conflagrations was the destruction of Trinity Church, Chippawa, on September 12<sup>th</sup>, 1839.

Hundreds of the residents of the Niagara frontier removed at the close of the Rebellion. Some went to the States, others to Canada to places less exposed to the horrors of warfare. It was many years before the terrors of the time passed away entirely, and the frontier was garrisoned by regular troops until about the time of the Crimean war, the largest force being barracked at Drummondville. The infant daughter of Edgeworth Ussher was christened Edgeworthia in memory of their martyred father. She became the wife of Judge Miller, of Milton. One sister, Mary died young and the other, Emily married, Durand a lawyer of Galt. Their brother John F. C. Ussher, was for many years Deputy Provincial Registrar on Toronto. His son Lieut. Col. J. F. H. Ussher, of the Mississauga Horse, served with distinction in South Africa, where he was wounded. In the late great war he took a regiment of Mounted Rifles to France, fell into the hands of the Germans and was a prisoner for many months.

Edgeworth Ussher's widow lived to advanced age receiving a small pension from the Government of the Province. In Canada as in Ireland the name of Ussher is a symbol of loyalty and service and to Canadians it ever recalls the tragedy of Milford Lodge.

### **Reminiscences of Captain Decew**

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Paper read by Mrs. Jas. Munro at the Decew Falls Celebration June 23<sup>rd</sup>, 1894.

The manuscript of which the following is a copy was sent to me by Miss. King, daughter of Edmund DeCew and grand daughter of Capt. John DeCew of the Second Lincoln Militia who was taken prisoner at the taking of the town of Niagara by the Americans in 1813. E. Munro.

My forefathers were Huguenots or French Protestants, and fled from France on account of their religion, and at an early date came to America on account of their religion, and at an early date came to America and settled in Vermont, where I was born in 1776. At the close of the American Revolution, my father and family removed to Upper Canada, crossing the river at Queenston and while the rest of the family remained there I commenced exploring the country around and led by early predilections finally selected in a property to my liking in the Townships of Thorold and Grantham, covering what is known as DeCew's Falls on the Beaver Dams Creek. I purchased one man's right to one hundred acres for an axe and an Indian blanket, and another hundred oars for a gold doubloon, (a Spanish coin equal to seven dollars H. C.). I endured many hardships in those early days but worked away happily. One of my first wants in my work was a grindstone which I supplied by discovering a quarry not far below the falls from which I selected a stone of suitable size and quality and having partially shaped it with a pick, I took it up and started for home. On becoming tired I would lay it down and resume picking the stone nearer

the desired shape, at the same time lightening my load. Once while thus engaged I thought I hear a rustling in the leaves behind me, and on turning my head I saw an enormous black snake reared up looking over my shoulder. As quick as thought I discharged my pick at his head and laid him dead at my feet. I suppose he took me for a stump and thought there was a woodpecker at the other side of which he might make a dinner. I used many devices to accomplish as much work as possible with the little means at my command. I was much troubled to get rid of big trees and logs. In my first clearing, near the road stood a gigantic hemlock which I was perplexed to know how to dispose of. If I cut it down I had not a team that could move it. Finally I took my axe and climbed right to the top, commenced cutting away the limbs leaving myself enough to stand on till I got nigh the ground, then burning the branch effectually killed the tree. And the blackened skeleton was a guide or waymark for several years, and was known as the road to the "hemlock stub."

At length I resolved to build a sawmill and oil mill, there being none at that time between the two lakes. I was assisted in my enterprise by Colonel Hamilton of Queenston, who imported the necessary ironware for me from Scotland. A kind Providence crowned my undertaking with success and by the year 1812 I had built a substantial stone dwelling which on the war coming on and our men being obliged to retreat from Niagara was used for a military storehouse. By that time the country had become pretty well settled and I was appointed captain of a company of militia, and being thoroughly British I turned out with my men, although conscious that we had to fight against great odds, yet determined to make up in courage and determination what we lacked in numbers.

After engaging in several skirmishes with Americans, I was among those made prisoners at the taking of Niagara and at once hurried across the river on to Batavia where we were joined by some of our regulars. We now numbered in all about fifty prisoners with but a small guard placed over us. We discovered in the place an arsenal containing arms and ammunition and resolved to capture it and arm ourselves and make our way home to Canada. Our plans were matured and the time appointed, when at a given signal at night when we would have less to fear from the inhabitants, our designs were to be out into execution. But before the hour arrived our scheme was frustrated by one of our regulars who divulged our secret to the enemy. The indignation against the traitor was so marked that our guard had to secure him, but his red coat not be found and his companions said when asked about it "He deserted his colors and his coat has deserted him." An opportunity was shortly after presented when said coat was placed on a post and whipped to shreds. Shortly after this we were carried from place to place, nothing of particular interest occurring more than that we were a sort of free show that attracted general attention. At one place an old lady came hurrying and exclaimed, "Where are they! Where are they?" When one of our men pointed out a couple of them across the street, she with a wondering look said, "Why law me, they are just like men. They look like our own folks."

At another place we halted for a few days at the foot of a mountain and were allowed to go on parole. I took a chisel and finding a rock with a smooth face, I cut my name in it "Capt. John DeCew, 2<sup>d</sup> Lincoln Militia." This excited a good deal of query. They could conceive what Lincoln meant. Finally it was decided to men linkin, which implied that we were all linked together as one man and would prove formidable antagonists. I did not contradict this supposition. At length we arrived at Pittsfield where twelve officers (I being one of the) were selected as hostages to be sent to Washington and executed in retaliation for the execution of some of their men who had proved to be deserters from our army and had been captured bearing arms against us. After traveling weight days towards the place of execution, the orders were

countermanded, Sir George Prevost having informed them that 21 of their subjects had been put in close confinement, and would put two for one to death if they persisted. During the final adjustment (to us a vital question) we were ordered to be kept at Philadelphia and were placed in what was not inappropriately called the invincible prison," a large three story building the floor of which contained a spacious hall to which we all had access during the day, but confined to separate apartments during the night. We were humanely treated and for a time had liberty to traverse a portion of the city on parole. The privilege was utilized by a young ensign named Myers, in making the acquaintance of a young lady which he afterwards turned to good account. During our parole we were frequently invited to the tables of the more wealthy inhabitants, when the subject of the war and its injustice was frequently the topic of conversation, and at one of the dinners our host became so excited in his condemnation, that bringing his own knife down with emphasis he cut a large hole in his tablecloth.

On returning to our restricted positions, our longing for home together with the uncertainty that hung over our ultimate position caused us again to plan our escape. There was a fireplace at that end of the hall nearest the street, the chimney of which was sufficiently large to admit of our escape through it but it was grated with iron bars, so as to require the removal of two or three to permit of our egress. We knew the hours when we were usually left alone and commenced operations on the grates by taking the main springs of our watches for saws placing them on frames for that purpose but our work was not nearly completed before our tools were worn out. Then the young lady before mentioned furnished her friend with a phial of aqua fortis telling him to unravel his woolen stockings, saturate the yarn with the contents of the phial, wrap the yarn around the iron bars and in a short time they would break down easily. To provide against detection as the chimney was inspected every day we had to replace the grate we had removed when we were not engaged at the work. This we did by securing it in place and by rubbing it with paper which we had first rubbed in the sooty chimney in order to give it the proper color. We next made a rope of our bedding and chose the hour between eight and nine in the evening, we being then usually alone and the streets not much frequented. In getting out I was the last, and unfortunately for me the rope had broken in the descent of the man that had proceeded me and I found myself at the end of the rope, not knowing how far I was from the ground, but I let myself fall and found myself supported by two comrades, the blood running from my mouth. With difficulty I prevailed upon my friends to leave me and make their own escape as it was impossible for me to travel. After remaining alone for some time. Rain commenced pouring down and I recovered so far as to be able to walk, which I did in a direction leading from the prison. But by a strange mishap I, in the darkness fell in to an unused cellar in which stood nearly a foot of water. Losing my hat in the fall I waded around a good while before I found it and a good while longer before I found my way out. In the meantime I heard the patrol of dragons pass by in the street. I then continued my journey notwithstanding my accumulated bruises slowly and silently and at length saw a light from a window toward which I proceeded, directed as I believe by all-wise Providence. In reaching the house and gaining admittance I found a gentleman and lady occupied with books. I addressed myself to them saying, "You see before you an unfortunate prisoner of war who had just escaped from the "invincible" in which I have been confined as hostage with the possibility of execution. I have a wife and five children on the frontier of Canada exposed to all the ills of bloody war. I am maimed and bruised in making my escape and am wholly dependant on your mercy." The man seemed lost in astonishment and the lady sat in silence it I saw the tears in her eyes, and a glowing generosity beaming in her countenance, she exclaimed,, "I would risk everything rather than see

him given up.” They then proposed to put me upstairs but I advised them to allow me to come out to some outhouse, so that if discovered I could say that I had secreted myself there without their knowledge. Thus they did and I crawled into a hayloft over a stable. My present anxiety being now somewhat relieved I was given to feel full force of the pain caused by my bruises. The lady visited me in the morning with refreshments and wept over my sad condition. That day I came nigh being discovered by some children but covered myself effectually with hay as I heard them coming. They soon found some pretty buttons which I had bought in the city for my boys at home and they ran to the house with them.

This aroused the watchfulness of the owner of the premises and the father of the lady afterwards himself stood watch over the building when the children were about. He was a Quaker and engaged in publishing a Bible. On the following day I was presented by him with a printed bill offering \$100 reward for the capture of each of the escaped prisoners and also announcing that if anyone was found to harbor, or in any way assist in their escape their property would be confiscated and they tried for high treason. In view of the immense risk I requested him to give me up and receive the reward, but to this he would by no means consent, preferring as he said, ‘a good conscience before his estates, although they were considerable.’

The escaped prisoners were all re-taken except for myself and two others who had friends in the city. I remained in my concealment for several days during which I received every possible kind attention and care. They furnished me with a change of clothing to prevent detection and money for my journey. I set out as a driver returning from market and fell in with a couple of that craft from whom I received a great deal of information respecting the business as well as the roads and places through which I had to pass. I had great pain in one of my feet which was injured in my fall but I accounted for it by saying it was affected with rheumatism. Knowing that I would not be able to cross the Niagara River, I took my way to Lower Canada, through Vermont my native place where I found some of my relatives living near Bennington, to whom I made myself known and received assistance from them to continue my journey via Rutland to Burlington, where I took the steamer to Plattsburg. At Burlington I was startled by a young ensign eyeing me narrowly and who afterwards on lighting me to bed said “There you will be safe.” He called me in the morning and conducted me to the boat inquiring if there were any officers on board. He probably took me for a deserter from Plattsburg. I made my way to the Canadian lines on nearing which I cut a stout cudgel and resolved not to be captured by less than five men. I found myself sadly perplexed how to avoid the Americans and how to fall in with Canadian outposts, for I dare not inquire. However I entered a cottage and found an old woman making Johnny Cake, of which I got a share and praised it for all it was worth which was not a little. She became very talkative and told me all I wanted to know and in a few hours after I found myself in a British camp surrounded by red coats, and over my head beloved Union Jack.

I was shortly afterwards sent for by the general who supposed that I might have taken my parole but in hearing my story gave me credit for tact and endurance, paid me my arrear and gave me a free pass home. Where I arrived just two weeks after my friends whom I had left behind, and exchange of prisoners having taken place in the meantime. On my arrival at home I found that they had had hot times since I left. The enemy learning that there were military supplies stored in my house at Beaver Dam sent an army with a cannon to capture the stores and knock down the house. They got as far as the Beach woods about two miles east of us when they were met by a band of Indians lying in ambush who opened fire upon them behind the trees, yelling in the most approved Indian style and killing several of the enemy. They however returned the fire and even brought the cannon to bear upon the unseen foe, but without effect.

They however sent a grape shot into a tree which afterwards nearly ruined one of my saws. In the meantime Colonel Fitzgibbon having disposed of most of the stores hearing the firing set out on horseback for the scene of action carrying a white flag. On his arrival he told the commander that their enterprise was useless, that he had a sufficient number of men to capture them. He gave an exaggerated account of the number of Indians and gave them the choice of surrendering to the, or to the Indians. They chose the former and were marched by here with one redcoat not and ten blue ones. I was present at the battle of Lundy's Lane, but having charge of the commissariat I was not in the battle. I shall never forget the cheering when our reinforcements arrived and some of the prisoners taken by us said it "went down them like rain." We followed the enemy to Chippawa and found more stores abandoned by the, These Lieutenant Fitzgibbon declared local plunder and asked me if I could take home, but I declined, having resolved that no one should say that I had gone out plundering. But the war is over now and we see little to remind us of it, but now and then an old bayonet, a gun barrel or an occasion canon ball or bombshell, relics of the arms destroyed to save ten from the enemy.

The proceeding narrative of facts and incidents on the life of the late Capt. DeCew as related by himself to his children was compiled partly from a manuscript prepared by my brother and partly from my own memory. Shortly after the return of peace my father bought a grist mill, but unfortunately the Welland Canal of which he was one of the promoters was so constructed as to turn the stream into it, and this left his mill without water. The sight of his ruined mill was so intolerable to him, that having procured a tract of land in the township of Cayuga county of Haldimand on which a mill site, he in his declining years removed to it, where after having exhibited his usual tact in promoting any useful movement about his new home, he ended his days in peace, March 1855 at the advanced age of 89 years.

### **Contemporary Account**

In a long article from Gen. Dearborn, Head Quarters, Fort George, June 28<sup>th</sup>, 1813, an account of the engagement is given to Hon. J. Armstrong Secretary of War. While the attacking force is correctly described our force as given as a superior force of Indians and British Regulars and provincials, 700 or 800 men consisting if 450 or 500 Indians, 300 regulars and provincial infantry, 25 or 50 dragoons at the time of the surrender while in fact our force only numbered 50 under Fitzgerald, the 200 DeHaren had not yet arrived and the Indians ambush only numbered about 50, while the U. S. forces described in the Court of injury at Baltimore in 1815 as numbering 570 infantry, cavalry and artillery with two cannons.