

The following information is compliments of  
 "Friends of Nancy Island Historic Site and Wasaga Beach Park.

**A Resource Guide for Interpretation at**

**Nancy Island Historic Site**

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**War of 1812 Chronology**

**June 18,1812** U.S. Congress declares war.

**July 12,1812** American forces occupy Sandwich (Windsor).This is the first military action of the war.

**July 17,1812** British troops with Native support overtake Fort Mackinac. Subsequent attempts by the Americans in later war action to regain control of Fort Mackinac fail.

**August 16,1812** Hull surrenders Fort Detroit to British General Brock despite 2 to 1 odds in favour of the Americans.

**October 13, 1812** The American forces unsuccessfully attack Queenston Heights, but General Brock is killed.

**January 22, 1813** The British militia under Procter and 600 Natives attacked Frenchtown on the Raisin River. The resultant massacre brought the state to a boiling point.

**April 27, 1813** Commodore Chauncey and American troops attack York from the harbour, burning the Parliament buildings. York was attacked again in June.

**May 1, 1813** General Procter led the British and 1200 Indians with Tecumseh to the Maumee River and attacked Fort Meigs.

**May 27, 1813** American assault from Commodore Chauncey's fleet and Commodore Scott's land assault forced the British to evacuate Fort George.

**June 6, 1813** Seven hundred British launch a surprise attack on 2000 Americans encamped at Stoney Creek. Two American generals are captured.

**September 9, 1813** American naval forces under Captain Perry capture and destroy all British naval forces at Put-in-Bay, Lake Erie.

**October 5, 1813** Shawnee leader Tecumseh is killed at Moraviantown on the Thames River as the British are defeated and withdraw to Burlington.

**October 25, 1813** American forces are defeated at Chateaugay on their way to attack Montreal.

**November 10, 1813** American naval forces retreat after a brief battle and an unsuccessful attack at the main British naval base in Kingston.

**November 11, 1813** American forces on their way to attack Montreal are defeated at Chrysler's Farm by British despite four to one odds in favour of the Americans.

**December 19, 1813** The British under Sir George Drummond successfully capture Fort Niagara.

**May 24, 1814** Commodore Sir James Yeo and Lieutenant General Gordon Drummond led an unsuccessful attack on Sacket's Harbour, in hopes of destroying the new American warships.

**July 3, 1814** Americans capture Fort Erie, but British later attempt to regain the Fort in siege over a month.

**July 20, 1814** The American forces capture the abandoned British Fort St. Joseph.

**July 25, 1814** Battle of Lundy's Lane ends in a draw with heaviest casualties of the war. The Americans retreat to Fort Erie.

**August 14, 1814** The schooner Nancy was attacked and destroyed in the Nottawasaga River. The crew escapes to Fort Mackinac by bateau.

**August 15, 1814** British attack on Fort Erie fails; siege of Fort Erie begins which lasts to September 21.

**August 24, 1814** In reprisal for attacks on York, British seize Washington and burn "white house."

**September 3, 6, 1814** American warships Tigress and Scorpion are captured at the Detour passage, by Lt. Worsley, crew from the Nancy, Natives, and Royal Newfoundland Regiment. The British regain control of the Upper Lakes in this last naval action of the war.

**December 24, 1814** Treaty of Ghent signed.

### **Nancy Island Historic Site**

A vital moment of history is recreated for visitors at Nancy Island Historic Site. And it is only Nancy Island that tells that story. And that is why Nancy Island has a responsibility to share the story of the schooner. Because if we don't do it, who will?

Nancy Island has many stories to tell. The site functions as an interpretive resource and orientation centre for the entire park. As a result, natural heritage education at Wasaga Beach includes a variety of subject areas for interpretation.

This manual is a resource guide for historical interpretation at the park, and particularly Nancy Island. Natural interpretation is not addressed specifically in these pages although it is recognized as a vital part of park programming and research.

### **Interpretive Themes**

## **1. War of 1812 Military Theme**

By placing emphasis on the Nancy and related events of the War of 1812 and the Nottawasaga River supply route, this site would encompass an important chapter in the history of Wasaga Beach. This theme would include a number of places and events as listed below:

- a) Fur Trade; Fort Mackinac and Northwest trade routes
- b) The Nancy story; Nottawasaga Battle and capture of U.S. vessels
- c) Nancy participants; Voyageurs, Ojibway, British sailors and military.
- d) War of 1812 context
- e) Nottawasaga River route within War of 1812.
- f) Schoonertown
- g) Personalities; Worsley, Mackintosh, McDouall, Mundy, etc.)

## **2. Local History Themes**

- a) Prehistoric Native archaeology; Saugeen peoples (minimal evidence)
- b) Historic Period Native archaeology; Petun, Wendat, Ojibway (substantial evidence)
- c) Nottawasaga Logging and Lumber History
- d) Resort Community; Development of Wasaga Beach tourism
- e) Aviation History; Ayling and Reid story

## **Nancy Island Goals**

The goal of Nancy Island is to excite people. Through *interesting, accurate* and creative interpretation, visitors should be excited, educated and entertained about the themes at Nancy Island. That goal can be achieved through two mediums. The first is the *physical displays and artifacts* that greet visitors at the Island. These displays provide a comprehensive and accurate framework for visitors and interpreters. The second and most important part of Island operation is *site interpretation*. Interpreters are at the site to excite, educate and entertain. That is their goal, and alongside the structure of park themes, that is the goal of Nancy Island.

## **Nancy Island History**

Nancy Island was first opened as a museum in 1928. Since then, thousands of visitors have come to admire the Nancy's hull, and to learn more about the incredible stories surrounding her demise. In a way, the history of Nancy Island is now history in itself.

**1924** Dr.F.J.Conboy began searching for the remains of the Nancy along the banks of the Nottawasaga River.

Found a 24 pound cannonball

**1925** Conboy located the hull of the Nancy on July 16, 1925

The first plaque was erected by the National Parks Board on the Capstan Inn property.

**1926** The Nancy Committee was formed. It sought financial assistance from the Ontario government to raise and preserve the hull.

C.H.J. Snider recommended that the Ontario Government move the hull to the National Exhibition grounds in Toronto where he believed more people would be able to see and learn about the Nancy.

**1927** The hull was raised.

**1928** A building was erected over the hull. The first museum was officially opened on the anniversary of the Nancy's sinking: August 14.

**1933** A footbridge to the island was constructed at a cost of \$933.

**1939** The unveiling of a historic plaque took place, commemorating the sinking of the Nancy. This plaque is located on the cairn behind the museum. Over 1,300 people attended the ceremony.

**1947** The Minister of Lands and Forests for Ontario offered to sell the 2.25 acres of Nancy Island for \$45 per acre.

**1949** The remains of a British soldier were uncovered on July 23, on the bank of the river, two miles from the mouth. The remains were re-interred on the island although the present marker is not correct. The grave site is most likely located under the east end of the museum.

**1954** The Ayling & Reid plaque was erected with a cairn behind the gatehouse. An amended version of the 1925 National Parks plaque was affixed to the backside of the Ayling-Reid cairn.

**1960** The footbridge to Nancy Island collapsed. A number of people fell into the river, although no one was injured.

**1966** The Ministry of Tourism and Information assumed control of the island. It was subsequently incorporated into the Huronia Historical Parks system.

**1968** The Museum of the Upper Lakes was opened. The site included a newly constructed theatre, museum, and lighthouse. The museum's themes focused on 300 years of shipping on the Great Lakes.

**1969** The Museum of the Upper Lakes officially opened with Premier John Roberts in attendance.

**1976** The Ministry of Natural Resources assumed control of the site. Nancy Island became a part of Wasaga Beach Provincial Park.

**1977** The Museum of the Upper Lakes became Nancy Island Historic Site and an interpretive plan was implemented. For details on site changes made under the MNR, see Nancy Island Interpretive Plan.

**1983** The hull enclosure was erected and renovations to the theatre and museum were completed.

**1984** An article in the Niagara Escarpment publication, Cuesta, challenged the authenticity of the hull's age. The article suggested that the schooner had been entirely rebuilt around 1800-02. In-depth research was begun to discover the truth.

**1988** Research regarding the hull's age was completed. It was concluded that not enough information existed to substantiate a later construction date.

**1989** Construction began on a bateau display to house the site's replica bateau. The Nancy's 200th Birthday was celebrated.

**1990** The new video cassette equipment was installed in the theatre and production began on a new presentation.

**1991** The new presentation, The Majesty of Sail A Legacy of Valour was premiered May 30th to dignitaries and local community members.

**1994** The American vessel Niagara returned to Nottawasaga Bay where it participated in a friendly cannonball ceremony. An American shot from 1812 was returned on a commemorative pedestal by Mayor Walter Borthwick to the current Captain of the Niagara.

**1997** The Friends of Nancy Island and Wasaga Beach Park was formed. A kickoff celebration was held on June 7th with many local dignitaries, community members, school children and Ontario Parks employees in attendance.

### **Water Travel in the 1800s**

Prior to the War of 1812 and for many years afterward, travel and transportation in Upper Canada were dependent upon the province's extensive system of inland waterways. In the beginning, Europeans simply adopted aboriginal modes of transportation - especially the **birch bark canoe**. But as white settlement

increased in the 1780s and the Montreal based fur traders sought to reduce costs, European style craft such as the **bateaux** and the **schooner** began to appear in Upper Canada. These eventually replaced the canoe as the predominant vehicles of water transport; only to find themselves rendered obsolete later in the 19th century by the **steamer**.

### **Birch Bark Canoes**

Readily constructed and repaired by materials near at hand, the paper-thin bark canoe was light, sturdy, easily propelled, extremely portable, and drew very little water. Aided by the canoe the Europeans were able, in less than 200 years, to open the vast continent of North America to exploration and exploitation. The greatest impetus to the drive inland being the demand for furs.

### **Fur Trading Canoes**

Made from birch bark, these first fur carrying vessels ranged in size from roughly 15 to 36 feet. The grand **canot du maltre**, which moved trade goods from Lachine to the Great Lakes, was **36 to 40 feet in length with a 66 - 80** inch beam. At midships, this fragile giant was 30 - 32 inches tall and at the stems, 54 inches. It could, when fully loaded, carry **17 paddlers and one steersman and 4,000pounds** of freight. In contrast, the 25 foot-long canot du nord carried a crew of eight and a proportionally smaller payload.

But while the birch bark canoe permitted the successful prosecution of the furtrade from Montreal, it also severely limited it. Bark canoes were **easily damaged**, and had an extremely **small pay load**. The size of canoes was limited not only by considerations of weight but by the size of the birch trees themselves.

### **Bateaux**

During the first years of French settlement a bateau meant nothing more than a boat. But by the end of the 18th century, as Howard Chapelle points out, "bateaux" or "batteaux" had come to be accepted *"as a type-name for a double-ended, flat bottomed, chine-built small boat"* (American Small Sailing Craft, 1951, p33). The bateau ranged in length from **12 to 84 feet**; although most colonial models were between 30 - 40 feet in length and 5 - 8 feet in width amidships.

Constructed of fir and oak, these planed vessels were primarily propelled by **rowing or poling**; but, often they were **rigged with sails**. The bateau's major advantages over the canoe were its sturdiness and its greater freight carrying capacity. It was especially well suited to rivers and lakes where portaging was neither frequent nor arduous.

Previous to the lifting of the British prohibition on commercial shipping on the Great Lakes in 1788, the bateau was the most important means of moving people and goods on the lakes. It continued to serve in this capacity on the St.

Lawrence between Montreal and Kingston well into the nineteenth century; although it was replaced on the lakes by the schooner.

### **Schooner**

The name "schooner" is said to be derived from a Scottish verb "to scon or scoon" meaning to skip over the water like a flat stone. Another story attributes the name to a remark made by a bystander at the launching of a vessel at Gloucester,

Massachusetts in 1713. When the craft had gotten nicely underway, someone in the crowd exclaimed, "*Oh, how she scoons.*" To this the builder, Captain Andrew Robinson, was said to reply, "*A schooner let her be!*" Whatever the true etymological origin of the name, the schooner evolved from the Baltimore Clipper sometime in the early eighteenth century. **By 1790 the schooner was by far and away the most popular rig in North America.** The War of 1812 raised the vessel to a very high plane of development, as both American and Canadian shipyards turned them out by the dozens.

**Initially, a schooner was a small vessel of about 100 tons with two masts, the mainmast being taller than the fore.** Its sails were suspended by gaffs reaching from the masts towards the stern or along the craft's fore and aft line. The schooner sails were stretched out at the bottom by booms.

To increase speed, **a square rigged topsail was often added to the foremast.** Another square sail installed on the main mast yielded even greater speed and manoeuvrability. The **double topsail schooner - like the Nancy** - represented the simplest form of the **square rigged craft**, it was also the most highly developed form of the original schooner design.

#### **Further Reading**

Chapelle, H.I. The History of American Sailing Ships. New York: W.W. Norton & Co., 1935.

American Small Sailing Craft: Their Design, Development, and Construction. New York: W.W. Norton & Co., 1951.

Gibbon, J.M. The Romance of the Canadian Canoe. Toronto: The Ryersonian Press, 1951.

Glazebrook, G.P. A History of Transportation in Canada. Toronto: McClelland & Stewart, 1964.

## **The Story of the "H.M.S. Nancy and The War of 1812"**

### **The Nancy**

This is the story of the Nancy, a schooner which sailed the Upper Great Lakes as a private cargo vessel. During the war of 1812, the Nancy was pressed into service as a British supply ship. While in this service, the schooner was destroyed in the Nottawasaga River by American forces.

The sunken hull of the Nancy formed an obstruction in the river and an island was established by the resultant deposition of silt. The remains of the hull now rest beside the museum on the island to mark the site of the Nancy's demise and to commemorate her gallant defence.

### **The Beginning**

The Nancy was built in 1789 at Detroit which was then British. The schooner was constructed under the supervision of John Richardson of Forsyth, Richardson and Company of Montreal. There were probably no plans, but it has been determined that her length was approximately 24 metres (80 feet), her width, or beam, 6 metres (22

feet) and her depth of hold, 2 metres (eight feet). John Richardson wrote to his partner from Detroit in 1789:

*" The schooner will be a perfect masterpiece of workmanship and beauty. The expense to us will be great but there will be the satisfaction of her being strong and very durable. Her floor-timbers, keel, keelson, stem and lower futtocks are oak. The transom, sternpost, upper futtocks, top-timbers, beams and knees are all red cedar. She will carry 330 barrels."*

Her figure-head, carved by Skelling of New York, was a "lady dressed in the present fashion with a hat and feather. The Nancy was probably named for either the wife or daughter of John Richardson.

The schooner was built for the fur trade which she served by carrying goods including food, clothing, rum, meat, powder, blankets, tools, trinkets, weapons and ammunition up the lakes and returning with the furs. At this time, there were two main ports in the West. Sault Ste. Marie governed access to Lake Superior and the North. Further west, in the Straits of Mackinaw, Fort Mackinac was a trading post which commanded Lake Huron, Lake Michigan and the West. This was the centre of activity in the northerly Great Lakes and the North West. It had been maintained by the French as early as 1687, but the British, in 1761 had been the first to build proper fortifications.

The launching of the Nancy took place at Detroit on November 24, 1789 and in the following spring, under the command of Captain William Mills, her maiden voyage took her to Fort Erie. After the launching, John Richardson wrote:

*"She is spoken here in such high strain of encomium as to beauty, stowage and sailing that she almost exceeds my expectations"*

In June, 1790, the Nancy took a full cargo to Grand Portage at Sault Ste. Marie. In 1793, the schooner was sold to George Leith and Company, merchants and fur traders, who toward the end of the century, sold her to the North West Fur Company. Captain Mills continued as commander until 1805 when he was succeeded by Captain Alexander Mackintosh. In the service of the North West Fur Company, the Nancy's function remained that of a transport for furs and merchandise on Lake Erie, Lake Huron and Lake Michigan.

## **War**

When the United States declared war in 1812 against British the Nancy was lying at McIntosh's wharf at Moy (Windsor) across from Detroit which had been handed over to the United States in 1796. The Nancy, for protection, was immediately moved to Amherstburg and was requisitioned as a British transport by Lieutenant-Colonel St. George, commander of the garrison. In Colonel Matthew Elliot's inventory to General Isaac Brock, the Nancy was described as being capable of mounting six four-pounder carriage guns and six swivel guns.

At this time there were three main routes from Montreal to the North West. One was via the Ottawa and French Rivers and Georgian Bay. Another was by way of Lake Ontario, Lake Erie, Lake St. Clair and Lake Huron. A third was an overland route from Lake Ontario at York (Toronto) north on Yonge Street to Holland Landing and the Holland River. From here, the route entered Lake Simcoe and led to the head of

Kempenfeldt Bay (Barrie) where Nine Mile Portage led to Willow Creek, the Nottawasaga River and Lake Huron. The latter route became the main supply line during the last year of the war.

The Nancy's first war service took her, on July 30, 1812 to Fort Erie in convoy with the Provincial Schooner Lady Prevost for military stores and 60 men of the 41st Regiment which participated in Brock's capture of Detroit from General Hull. During that summer, and early autumn, the Nancy was employed constantly on Lake Erie between Detroit and Fort Erie in the transportation of stores and provisions.

On April 23, 1813 the Nancy was included in a small squadron to transport General Proctor's division from Amherstburg to Miami Bay for the unsuccessful attack on Fort Meigs. In the autumn, while the Nancy was away on a trip to Fort Mackinac, the British Fleet, on September 9, 1813 was decisively defeated in the Battle of Lake Erie. This action closed the supply route for the British on Lake Erie and left the Nancy as the sole surviving British ship on the Upper Lakes.

### **The Nancy Escapes**

Returning in the Nancy to the mouth of the St. Clair River on October 5, Captain Mackintosh found Detroit and Amherstburg in American hands, and two armed schooners and two gunboats lying in wait for him. At noon, on the following day, the Nancy was under attack, but although damaged and set afire, she survived to escape into Lake Huron which she entered at 8:00 a.m. on October 7. Her destination was Sault Ste. Marie where she wintered and was refitted.

After the Battle of Lake Erie, the Americans planned to capture Fort Mackinac which they had lost on July 17, 1812. The Fort, with no naval defences, required reinforcements and in February 1814, McDouall's relief party of 10 officers, 220 infantry and artillerymen, and 20 seamen left Kingston for the Fort. They arrived, via the Lake Simcoe and Nottawasaga River route, on May 18. To aid in the defence of Fort Mackinac, it was planned to cut down the Nancy to a gunboat. This idea was discarded, however, and the British schooner continued as a transport. During that spring, the Nancy made three round trips from the Fort to the mouth of the Nottawasaga River for supplies.

While the Nancy was away on the fourth trip to the Nottawasaga supply base, the American Fleet left Detroit on July 3, 1814 for the attack on Fort Mackinac. At the Nottawasaga base, the Nancy was taken in charge by Lieutenant Miller Worsley, Royal Navy, and taken 3.2 kilometres (2 miles) up the river. Here, quietly hidden and protected by a blockhouse, the Nancy waited.

### **Discovery**

On August 13, three American ships, U.S.S. Niagara, U.S.S. Tigress and U.S.S. Scorpion, under the command of Captain Sinclair, arrived at the mouth of the Nottawasaga River to wait for the British schooner which was thought to be enroute from Fort Mackinac. It was only when wood-gathering parties from the American ships happened upon the Nancy's hiding place, that the secret was discovered.

The engagement was brief and decisive. Lieutenant Worsley's force consisted of 22 seamen, 23 Indians under the command of Lieutenant Ramsay Livingston, and nine French Canadian Voyageurs. Their armament was composed of two 24-pounder carronades and one six-pounder. The American force of three ships, and 500 men

armed with 18, 32-pounder carronades, three long 12-pounders, two 24-pounders and one 5 1/2 inch howitzer provided formidable odds. Captain Sinclair anchored his ships in the Bay and proceeded to pound the Nancy and the blockhouse across the narrow neck of land which separated the river from the bay.

The situation was hopeless. Lieutenant Worsley decided to destroy the Nancy rather than allow her to fall into enemy hands. During the preparations for blowing up the schooner, however, a direct hit on the blockhouse set the Nancy afire. She burned to the waterline and sank. The British force escaped into the forest where they were not pursued.

After the action, the Scorpion and Tigress were left to guard the river to prevent canoes and bateaux from getting supplies to Fort Mackinac. Eventually the river mouth was blocked with felled trees and the ships proceeded along the north shore in the hope of intercepting fur-laden canoes on the lake.

### **The Nancy Avenged**

On August 31, Worsley and his men, after paddling and rowing for 579 kilometres (360 miles), reached Fort Mackinac. Enroute, they had quietly slipped past the Tigress and Scorpion. On September 3, Worsley and 92 men in four rowboats returned to surprise and capture the Tigress at midnight in Detour Passage. On September 6, the Scorpion was lured into position and also captured. Both vessels were then taken to Fort Mackinac. The Scorpion was renamed H.M.S. Confidence in honour of the ship which was captured from the French by Commodore Sir James Lucas Yeo. The Tigress was renamed H.M.S. Surprise for the manner in which she was captured.

After the war, for the loss of the Nancy, the Admiralty awarded the North West Fur Company 2,200 pounds. In addition, for two round trips between Detroit and Fort Erie in 1812, there was an award of 500 pounds and for service in 1813 and 1814, 1,243 pounds, 5 shillings.

### **Nancy Island**

Gradually, the river currents deposited silt about the sunken hull and an island was formed. On July 1, 1911 Mr. C.J.H. Snider found the location of the hull which was just visible beneath the water and it was not until August, 1924 when an American 24-pounder roundshot was found in the river bank by Dr. F.J. Conboy that interest was renewed. During the summer of 1925 the long-covered hull was found by Dr. Conboy whose interest in the Nancy had been aroused by Mr. Snider.

The Federal and Provincial Governments and many individuals became interested in the historic site, and in 1928 the hull was raised and placed on the island. On August 14, 1928, 114 years after the gallant defence of the Nancy, the first Nancy Museum was officially opened to commemorate this episode in the war of 1812.

In 1968 a museum, theatre and lighthouse were built. The unique architecture of the theatre and museum was inspired by sails straining against the winds of the Great Lakes. To protect the remains of the hull of the Nancy, an enclosure was constructed in 1982. To commemorate the Schooner Nancy's 200th Birthday and 175th Battle Anniversary a Time Capsule was interred at Nancy Island on August 19, 1989. When opened in 2089 it will take a piece of our present world into that of our descendents.

## Frequently Asked Questions

### 1. What happened to the figurehead?

There are three theories here. One is that it burned during the sinking of the ship. The other is that the owner of the Van Vlack Sawmill found and removed the figurehead. He displayed it in the mill which was destroyed by fire, taking the wooden Nancy with it. The third story is that the figurehead was recovered and sent away to be restored. The artisan's house burnt down while working on it and hence the Nancy was lost again.

### 2. How is the hull protected?

It was coated with a protective chemical, but now it is mostly protected by the hull enclosure, which protects it from the elements of sun, rain, snow, and excessive humidity. It is recommended that the temperature inside ranges from 40 - 60 F and that humidity range between 48 and 65%.

### 3. What happened to the Nancy's carronades?

The guns were removed from the Nancy before she was blown up. Following the war they were taken back to Scotland and now rest at Moy Hall, Mackintosh's family home.

### 4. What was the final resting place of the Tigress and the Scorpion?

The Tigress and Scorpion were both ordered to be sunk as a part of the Rush-Bagot Treaty of 1817. They were both sunk at Penetang in the harbour.

### 5. What became of the Niagara after the battle on the Nottawasaga?

She returned to Lake Erie. Her remains were recovered and she was reconstructed. She still sails out of Erie, Pa. (and it came here in 1994)

### 6. When was the first American naval presence on the Great Lakes?

*"No vessel flying the stars and stripes had appeared on these waters, [the Great Lakes] and it was not until 1796 that we hear of any."* (George Cuthbertson, *Freshwater*, p.125)

### 7. What were the two largest urban centres in Upper Canada and what where their respective populations at the time of the War of 1812?

Kingston 2,250                      York 1,200

### 8. Who was the architect of the theatre and museum?

Mr. Blakeway Millar

### 9. Was SchoonerTown ever reconstructed?

Yes. In the early 1970s near where the new bridge is located. However, it burnt down two years after it was built.

### 10. What is the sailing ship in the film?

The Schooner Bee and you can ride it at Discovery Harbour. Call Today for Details!

### 11. What is the dramatic music at the end of the film?

Nimrod, by Sir Edward Elger.

### 12. Who was the King during the War of 1812?

King George III

### 13. Who was the President of the U.S.?

James Madison

### 14. Where did the cannonballs come from?

The river. They were found and turned into Nancy Island. Definitely from U.S. guns since they are 24 pounders and the Nancy only had six pound carronades.

### 15. What's that thing under the hull?

It is a time capsule that was dedicated and sealed in 1989 to commemorate the 200th birthday of the Nancy.

### 16. How many people died during the taking of the Scorpion and Tigress?

British: 2 killed, nine wounded                      Americans: 6 killed, 12 wounded

**17. How many British were killed during the Battle on the Nottawasaga?**

Worsley reported that he had one wounded and one killed. The one killed most likely being the soldier that now rests on the island.

The soldier was also rumoured to be the young sailor Red Billy. Local legend has it that Lt. Worsley sent a sailor named Red Billy to bury a payroll that the Nancy was supposedly carrying. Unfortunately, Red Billy was shot as he returned from his task, and died without divulging the location of the buried payroll.

**18. How deep is the river?**

Maximum of 15 feet in parts and as shallow as 3 feet in areas near Nancy Island. The average depth is most likely 10 feet, although that would have been much deeper with higher water levels in the early 1800s.

**19. Was the island formed because of the sunken hull?**

Probably not. There are a few islands and sandbars on the river, all of which result as natural formations of sand and silt. If anything, the sunken Nancy helped the flow of sand and silt collect around the island.

**20. Who won the war?**

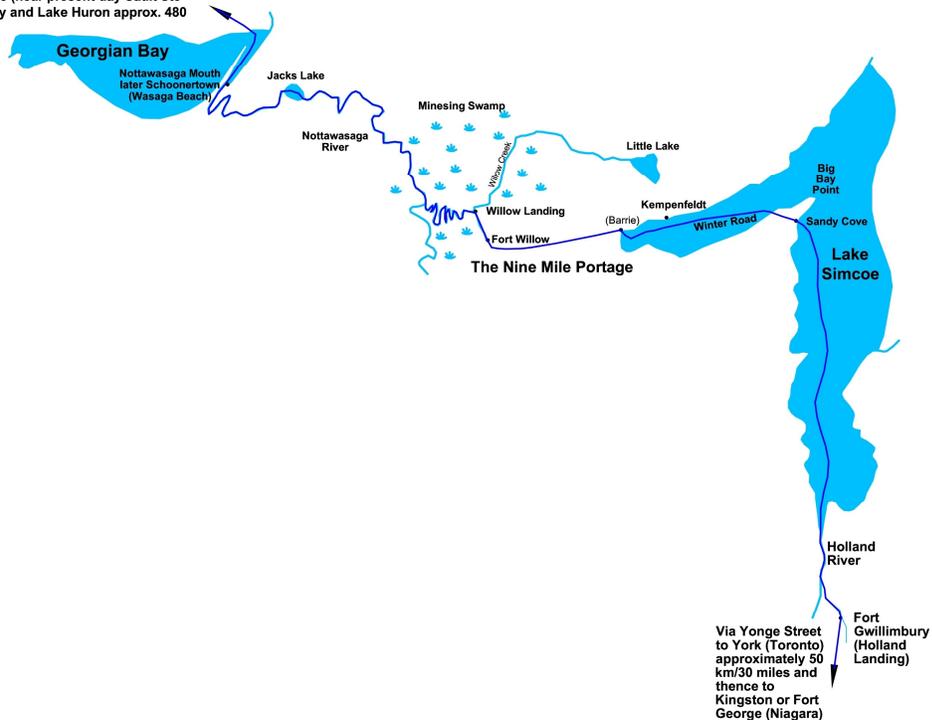
Both sides, perhaps, or neither. In the end it was called the war of the status quo since both sides retained everything that they had had before the war. Another interpretation is that the British won the war since they successfully repelled the Americans. And the Americans lost because they did not achieve any of their military goals. What do you think?

**The Nottawasaga River Route**

*"Mouth from which the Iroquois burst forth."*

**THE NOTTAWASAGA ROUTE**

To Fort Michilimackinac (near present day Sault Ste Marie) via Georgian Bay and Lake Huron approx. 480 km/300 miles.



**Early Use**

At the beginning of the 17th century, the shortest, most easily traversed canoe passage between Lake Ontario and Lake Huron was the Nottawasaga River route.

The Huron and Petun peoples led Etienne Brule over this route during his explorations in the early 1600s. Between 1646 and 1650 the Iroquois came this way to attack and destroy Huron settlements. Hence, the name "Nottawasaga" which is derived from the Ojibway words roughly translating into "Iroquois outlet." Later, fur traders followed in the footsteps of the Native peoples. However, it was not until the War of 1812 that the Nottawasaga River became an important "highway to Lake Huron."

During the later 1700s, heavy expenses associated with the canoe and its inability to handle bulky goods and supplies led the fur traders to make increasing use of the Great Lakes with their larger vessels in favour of interior river routes. However, **the lakes route was subject to American interference.**

### **An All Canadian Route**

Colonel John Graves Simcoe, first Lt. Governor of Upper Canada, realized the necessity of an "all Canadian" route to the northwest. He planned to build a road from York to Holland Landing (Yonge Street) and a road from the northern shore of Lake Simcoe to Penetanguishene. Once complete these projects would provide a direct and safe passage for larger, more economical forms of transportation such as bateau and ox carts. Work on Yonge street began in 1794; but a road negotiable by cart or wagon had not been constructed by 1798, when the project was abandoned.

In the early 1800s, a series of hostile actions by Americans against British fur traders traveling the Great Lakes route led to renewed interest in the Nottawasaga. Sir Isaac Brock ordered a survey of the Penetanguishene Road after Northwest Company ships had been fired upon at Detroit. Samuel Wilmot completed this survey in 1810, but no further action was taken.

### **A New Passage**

British supremacy on the lakes remained unchallenged until the American victory at **Put-in-Bay** on September 10, 1813. If the British were to hold Fort Mackinac and maintain the support of their Native allies, a safe supply route for the Northwest had to be developed. Since it was impractical to clear a road to Penetanguishene in the depths of winter, **the Nottawasaga route was selected late in January 1814.**

### **The Relief of Mackinac**

Consequently, an expedition under the command of Lieutenant-Colonel Robert McDouall set out from Kingston in February 1814 with supplies and men from the Royal Newfoundland Regiment for the relief of Mackinac. En route, they opened a road along the **Nine Mile Portage**, established a supply depot at **Willow Creek**, and built twenty-nine bateaus at **Glengarry landing**. Setting out in mid April, they arrived at Mackinac on May 18 after descending the Nottawasaga and crossing ice-covered Lake Huron.

### **The Nancy on the Nottawasaga**

Subsequently, supplies were forwarded along this route and ferried by the Nancy to Fort Mackinac throughout the summer of 1814. On her third voyage, the Nancy was attacked and destroyed by Americans. Beaten but not defeated, the Nancy crew used bateaus to transport the desperately needed supplies stored at Willow Creek to Mackinac.

### **Schooner Town on the River**

In the fall of 1814, Worsley returned to the Nottawasaga with the captured American ships. Winter quarters were constructed on a bend in the river and Schooner Town was born. Although a road had been constructed from Lake Simcoe to the superior harbour at Penetanguishene, it could be used only in the winter. Swamps and a lack of maintenance on this road necessitated the continued use of the Nottawasaga River during the summer months. This practice continued until 1832 when the opening of the Welland Canal and the use of Steam vessels made the Great Lakes route a superior option.

### **Further Reading**

*Porter, C. An Inventory of the Historical Resources of Wasaga Beach: The Nottawasaga River, A Route to the North-West 1785-1830.*

*Porter, C. A Highway to Lake Huron, The Nottawasaga River.*

*Burbridge, A.A. The Changing Role of Transportation in Simcoe County from 1800-1866.*

*Peebles, J.E. Nine Mile Portage and the Willow Creek Depot 1974.*

### **Words That Make You Go HmMMMM...**

**Flash in the Pan:** The phrase comes from the quick flash in the powder pan of a musket. Very fast and unpredictable in the size, direction, or power of its force.

**Hot Shot:** A cannonball heated in an oven before being fired at the enemy.

**Limey:** The nickname for British sailors since they drank a daily ration of lime juice to prevent scurvy.

**Lock, Stock & Barrel:** The three sections of a musket that make it complete, see weaponry file for exact details.

**Madhatter:** This term was first used to describe the odd behaviour of hat makers in England who used Beaver fur that they pressed into a fine felt. The thing that made the hatters mad was the mercury they used to press the fur, which unbeknownst to them, was an agent for their mental and physical destruction.

**Sideburn:** The word was synonymous with musket usage since the flash of the ignited gun powder often burnt the faces of the soldiers. As a result, sideburns were grown to protect their sides from burns.

**Soft Gold:** The voyageur term for their very valuable cargo: beaver furs.

**Thin Red Line:** British soldiers stood in line formations so that a line or battery of fire was presented towards the enemy. Likewise, the line was meant to be an intimidating front of size and colour, often referred to as the thin red line.

## **Transcript of "Record of United States Court of Inquiry" - Lake Huron**

In the summer of 1814, the squadron under Com. Sinclair, on Lake Huron, captured the British schooner Mink, laden with flour. The Mink was built on Lake Superior, and was a new vessel; also, his Britannic Majesty's Schooner Nancy, of 3 guns; a fine vessel and richly laden with valuable stores. The Schooner Perseverance, laden with provisions, was captured on Lake Superior by Com. Sinclair, and was destroyed in passing down the falls of St. Mary's.

Com. Sinclair, having destroyed all the naval force of the enemy above the size of bateaux, on the upper lakes, in August returned to Erie, leaving the U.S. Schooners Scorpion and Tygress, under the command of Lieuts. Turner and Champlin, for the purpose of blockading Nattawasauga river. On the night of the 3rd of September, the Tygress was captured by the barges of the enemy, and on the 5th the Scorpion shared the same fate.

Extract from the opinion of a court of inquiry, held on board the United States Ship Independence, in Boston harbour, to investigate the causes of the capture of the Scorpion and Tygress.

*The court find, that after Lieut. Turner had proceeded to cruise off French river, on the night of the 3rd of September last, the Tygress was attacked by the enemy in five large boats, (one of them mounting a 6 pounder, and the others a 3 pounder each) and by 19 canoes, carrying about 300 sailors, soldiers, and Indians, under the command of an English naval officer: that owing to the extreme darkness of the night the enemy were not perceived until they were close on board: nor were they then discovered but by the sound of their oars.*

*After they were discovered every exertion was made by Lieut. Champlin his officers and men, to defend his schooner, that bravery and skill could suggest; and not until all the officers were cut down, did the overwhelming numbers of the enemy prevail. The enemy, having thus captured the Tygress, and having mounted on her their 6 and 3 pounders, and placed on board a complement of from 70 to 100 picked men, remained at St. Joseph's until the 5th of September. On the evening of that day the court find that the Scorpion returned from cruising off French River, and came to anchor within five miles of the Tygress, without any information having been received or suspicion entertained by Lieut. Turner, of her capture. At the dawn of the next day, it appears the gunner having charge of the watch, passed word to the sailing master, that the Tygress was bearing down under American colours. In a few minutes after, she ran along side of the Scorpion fired, boarded and carried her.*

*It appears to the court that the loss of the Scorpion is, in a great measure, to be attributed to the want of signals; and owing to this deficiency, no suspicions were excited as to the real character of the Tygress; and from some of the English officers and men on board of her being dressed in the clothes of her former officers and men, and the residue of the enemy's crew being concealed a surprise was effected which precluded the possibility of defence.*

*The court are, therefore of opinion, from the whole testimony before them, that the conduct of Lieut. Turner was that of a discreet and vigilant officer.*

*John Shaw, Pres.*

*W.C Aywyn; Judge Advocate.  
Approved, B. W. Crowinshield*

## **Outline of the Causes and Outcomes of the War of 1812**

TAKEN FROM PIERRE BERTON'S INVASION OF CANADA 1812-1813. (Stewart, Toronto 1980).

The invasion of Canada, which began in the early summer of 1812 and petered out in the late fall of 1814 has come to be known as the War of 1812. The mass of the American people did not want to go to war; a great many, especially in the New England States, sat it out; others fought halfheartedly. Congress, in the words of a Kentucky editor, was 'driven, goaded, dragged, forced, kicked' into the conflict by a small, eloquent group that Thomas Jefferson dubbed the War Hawks.

America went to war as a last resort because her leaders felt that the nation's honour had been besmirched to a point where any other action would be unthinkable. In their zeal to conquer Napoleon, the British pushed the Americans too far and dismissed their former colonists with an indifference that bordered on contempt, thus repeating the errors of 1776. In that sense, the War of 1812 was a continuation of the American Revolution.

It began with Napoleon, for without Napoleon there would have been no war. (The President, James Madison, remarked after the fact, that had he known Napoleon would be defeated his country would have stayed out of it). Great Britain, fighting for her life against France, was bent on all-out maritime warfare. If a neutral America, reaping the economic benefits, was bruised a little on the high seas, well that was unfortunate but necessary. America, in British eyes, was a weak, inconsequential nation that could be pushed around with impunity. In the words of the London Courier, "two, fifty gun ships would be able to burn, sink and destroy the whole American navy."

This attitude was expressed first in the British policy of boarding American ships and impressing American seamen for service in the Royal Navy on the grounds that they were deserters from British service. At least three thousand, and perhaps as many as seven thousand, fell victim to this practice which infuriated the country and was one of the two chief causes of the war.

The other was the equally galling Orders in Council, the last enacted in November, 1807, as an act of reprisal against the French. With cool disdain for the rights of neutrals as well as for American sea power, the British warned that they would seize on the open ocean any ship that dared sail directly for a Napoleonic port. By 1812 they had captured almost four hundred American vessels, some within sight of the U.S. coast, and played havoc with the American export trade.

The growing Indian threat to the frontier settlements, was used to bolster the arguments of those seeking an excuse for war. In Kentucky especially -- the most hawkish of states -- and in Ohio and the territories, it was widely believed that British agents were goading the various tribes to revolt. There was talk of teaching the Indians a lesson, even driving the British out of North America, thereby breaking

the fur monopoly, opening the land to settlement, and strengthening the Union. Certain western expansionists also saw the coming war as one of liberation. It was widely believed that most Canadians wanted to become Americans. If they did not, well, that was their destiny.

In British North America there were some three hundred thousand souls, in the Union to the south, almost eight million. In Upper Canada, three out of five settlers were newly arrived Americans, people of uncertain loyalties, lured from New York, Pennsylvania, and Connecticut by the promise of cheap land. They scarcely thought of themselves as British, though they were forced into a token oath of allegiance, and they certainly did not call themselves Canadian. (That word was reserved for their French-speaking neighbours, many of whom lived on American soil in the vicinity of Detroit.) Surely these people would not oppose an invasion by their compatriots.

How was it that a tiny population, badly divided, with little claim to any national sentiment, was able to ward off continued attack by a powerful neighbour with vastly greater resources? There are at least three considerations. First, the British presence. The regulars were few in number but well disciplined. Raw troops were no match for them. And thanks to Isaac Brock's prescience, the country was better prepared for war than its enemy. Second, American ineptness, especially in the war's first crucial year. The United States was not a military nation. Her leaders were antiquated or inexperienced, her soldiers untrained, her government unready for conflict, her state militia reluctant to fight on foreign soil. Third, and by no means least, the alliance between the Indians and the British, which led to decisive victories in the campaigns of 1812.

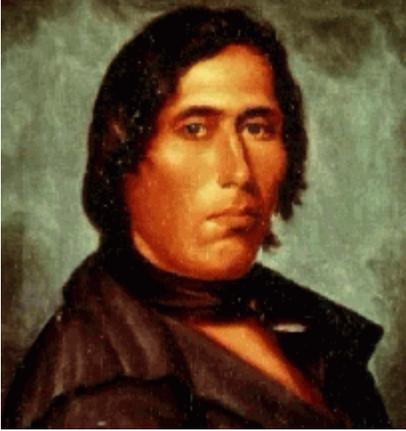
The war that was supposed to attach the British North American colonies to the United States accomplished exactly the opposite. It ensured that Canada would never become a part of the Union to the south. Because of it, an alternative form of democracy grew out of the British colonial oligarchy in the northern half of the continent. The Canadian "way" has its roots in the invasion of 1812-1813, the last American invasion of Canada. There can never be another.

The Treaty of Ghent, signed on December 24, 1814 was the official end of the war between Great Britain and the United States. The border was left exactly as it had been before this last war, between two neighbouring countries. The Rush-Bagot Agreement, signed in 1817, limited the number of armed ships on the Great Lakes to insure a peaceable existence between Canada and the United States.

### **Native Involvement in the War of 1812**

Native motivations for supporting the British during the War of 1812 are elusive. mainly due to a lack of primary research in the area, as well as often eurocentric views of Native involvement and opinion. That said, there have been many writers who have offered views on the Native support for the British, many of them praising their position within the war as an asset against the Americans.

### **Tecumseh**



The story of Natives in the war, may also be told through the story of Tecumseh, the Shawnee Prophet. Tecumseh is an important figure not only as an ally to the British, but as a mobilizing and uniting figure for a diverse and scattered Native population. The thing to remember is that Native encompasses a wide variety of peoples across an entire continent, and not all Natives were in support of the British, while some ignored the war entirely.

### **Land Use**

Perhaps most importantly, Native involvement in the war shouldn't be seen with the same motivations that spawn Europeans to battle - power, economics, ego, democracy. Instead, the Natives of North America were most likely concerned with their freedom within hunting lands, and not losing the trusting and traditional structure of their environment and society. Since many Natives in the Great Lakes areas were nomadic peoples, they were opposed to definite land ownership and exclusion since they travelled across many areas. Likewise, American and British claims on land were a threat to resource trades - the contemporary back bone of Native economies. If their living and trading lands were lost to the western idea of ownership and legality, their entire environment and livelihood would be vulnerable. (For more information on the story of Tecumseh and the beginning of Native involvements in the war, see Berton's Invasion of Canada ch. 1)

### **The Indian Department**

If we can ever understand Native motivations, perhaps we should look at the ongoing relationship between the Natives and British. The Indian Department was initially formed in 1775 during the war between France and Great Britain for supremacy in North America. The Department became the keystone of British policy and proved invaluable during the War of 1812. A fervent desire for an independent homeland, encouraging contacts with the Indian Department at Amherstburg; and an apparent hatred of the Americans, recently accentuated by their losses at Tippecanoe, encouraged this relationship.

On the British side, the support of the Natives was understood as a necessity. As Sir George Prevost wrote: "*The Indians are the only Allies who can aught avail in the defence of the Canadas ... they have the same interest as us, and alike are objects of American extermination.*" (Zaslow, 178)

### **British Bribery**

Some writers though, have claimed that the British not only understood the need for Native support, but bribed them into participating on their side. This claim suggests that Native involvement was not necessarily in support of the British, rather, supporting them was the best, and only option. (see Warren's History of the Ojibway)

### **On the Nottawasaga**

In the Nottawasaga area, Ojibway peoples were particularly supportive of the British war effort. They did this through assistance along trade routes as guides, hunters, and quite often, dispatchers. During the battle on the Nottawasaga, they were directly involved in the fight. Following the Nancy's sinking, several Ojibway accompanied Worsley and his crew to Fort Mackinac. As skilled guides and hunters, it is likely that their support was instrumental in Worsley's successful voyage north.

### **War Tactics**

Many historians have claimed that while Natives were useful during the war, their military tactics and discipline were more of a nuisance than a use. Once again, these claims come from a matter of perspective. In comparison to the strict military styles of the British, there is no doubt that Native warfare tactics seemed savage and unplanned, but nonetheless their style was often equally effective while not equally respected by contemporary leaders and modern historians.

### **Further Resources**

Berton, Pierre. The Invasion of Canada. Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1980.

Hitsman, J. Mackay. The Incredible War of 1812. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1965

Quimby, George Irving. Indian Life in the Upper Great Lakes. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1960.

Warren, William W. History of the Ojibway People. St. Paul: Minnesota Historical Society Press, 1984.

## **Personalities associated with the Nancy Story**

### **Dr. Fred J. Conboy**

1870 born in Toronto  
1904 opened dental practice  
1917 professor at School of Dentistry, U of T  
1925 appointed director of Ontario Dental Services  
1935 Alderman for Ward 7 in City of Toronto  
1937 Controller for the City of Toronto  
1941-44 Mayor of Toronto  
1944 President of Canadian Federation of Mayors  
1949 Died

Dr. Conboy was a long time seasonal resident of Wasaga Beach where he owned a cottage. Although he may not have directly found the Nancy, he was instrumental in bringing government awareness to the project and eventually funding the raising of the schooner.

Conboy was most famous for his term as a Toronto Mayor. He continued to use his cottage in Wasaga Beach for most of his life. Members of his family still come to Wasaga Beach and own property on the river.

### **C.H.J.Snider**

1879 born near Maple, Ontario

1897 reporter for the Toronto Telegram  
1904 youngest city editor on the Telegram staff  
1918 news editor for the Telegram

Charles Henry Jeremiah Snider, known as Jerry or the Skipper to his friends. His newspaper articles in the Toronto Telegram about the schooner Nancy, and his book, the Nancy and Other Eighteen Twelvers (1926) greatly promoted the excavation project. The War Log of the Nancy was compiled by Snider, as was much of the original research including detailed plans for the schooner's construction. Snider built two models of the Nancy - a large scale model which is presently located in the ROM, and a four foot model which is located in Toronto's Marine Museum.

### **Alexander Mackintosh**

1787 born August 23, Detroit. As a boy he would have heard many details of the Nancy from his father Angus, who was a merchant fur trader and part owner of the schooner. The Mackintosh name continued to be associated with the Nancy when Alexander became her commander in 1805, as successor to Captain Mills. At the outbreak of the War of 1812, Mackintosh successfully defended his ship from American forces. The Nancy was delivering supplies at Mackinac when Barclay lost his entire fleet at the Battle of Lake Erie. The wary commander approached the St. Clair rapids, in October 1813, unaware that Detroit had been evacuated, and Amherstburg abandoned. Mackintosh and his crew refused to surrender the ship to the two armed schooners and two gunboats that awaited them. The Nancy received damage from the gunfire but was able to escape into Lake Huron.

During 1814, Mackintosh remained master of the ship under the naval command of Lt. Worsley.

In 1827, he returned to Scotland with his father, and in later years succeeded him as chief of the Mackintosh clan. In 1836 the proud sailing master of the Nancy requested that the Nancy's brass carronades be taken to Scotland. To this day, the guns are displayed in front of Moy Hall, the Mackintosh family residence in Ivernesshire, Scotland.

### **Lt. Miller Worsley**

Miller Worsley was born in the Isle of Wight on July 8, 1791. At a young age, he became a midshipman on the Swiftsure on which he served during the Battle of Trafalgar in 1805. In 1810, he passed his Lieutenant's exam and was later appointed to be a commissioned Lieutenant during the War of 1812.

During the War he first commanded the HMS Queen Charlotte, and later served as a Naval officer at Fort Mackinac. In August, 1814, he took naval control of the Nancy, and consequently, following the capture of two American ships, became the British Naval Commander on Lake Huron.

Following the War of 1812 he was promoted to Commander (1815). In 1817 he was promoted to the position of Inspecting Commander of the Preventive Boat Service for the Isle of Wight, with an annual salary of two hundred pounds.

In 1820, he married Joanna Harris of Bristol, with whom he had three children.

From 1832-34, he was the Inspecting-Commander of the Coastguard. He died in 1835.

### **Marguerite Mundy**

One of the first European women to ever reach the Wasaga area, Marguerite Cornelier Valliere Mundy owned and ran a canteen at Schooner Town for two years following the War of 1812.

Although born in Lower Canada, Marguerite moved to the upper province with her first husband, Jean-Baptiste Valliere, and their nine children. They came to this relatively new territory in 1798, eager to help a colony of French Royalists escape the guillotine by building a life in Canada. However, despite the assistance of the Valliere family, the settlement failed, and in 1800, they moved to York. There, Jean-Baptiste opened a blacksmith shop. Unfortunately, he died the next year. Marguerite was left with nine children to support.

Marguerite began farming on 200 acres of land granted to the family on Yonge Street. However, she soon married Asher Mundy, a United Empire Loyalist. With him, she opened her first tavern and hostelry at Hogg's Hollow.

Following the War of 1812, the Mundy's moved their establishment to Schooner Town, and later followed the naval establishment when it moved to Penetang. There, Mundy's Bay was named for the family. Marguerite lived to be over 100 years old.

## **Weaponry**

### **Musket**

The Brown Bess Musket was the principal weapon of the British regular army from 1715 to 1830, and saw service on the Plains of Abraham, through the American Revolution, and right up to the defense of Upper Canada in 1812.

The musket underwent various modifications over its 115 year reign, resulting in three basic types, all unified by their efficient (in contemporary terms) flintlock system, and securely pinned barrel.

### **Range & Calibre**

The maximum range for the gun was **one hundred yards**. And even without sights the **three volleys a minute** fired by soldiers standing shoulder to shoulder proved to be very effective in stopping an advancing enemy. Unfortunately, the flintlock ignition was only **effective 60 percent of the time** resulting in one out of three misfires. All three kinds of muskets that may have been used during the War of 1812 were **75 calibres**.

### **Three Types**

The three types of Brown Bess Muskets are the **Long Land Pattern Musket** (46" barrel), the **Short Land Pattern Musket** (42") and the **India Pattern Musket** (39"). The latter is the kind of Bess on display at Nancy Island. It was inferior in manufacture to the Short Land although it provided a necessary relief to the arms shortage during the War of 1812.

### **The Name**

The term "Brown Bess" has some confusion surrounding it, but it seems likely that the term "Bess" was in fondness of Queen Anne who reigned from 1702 to 1714 while the "Brown" was taken from the colour of its massive walnut stock.

### **The American Gun**

Americans used the French Charleville Musket during the War of 1812. It was a 69 calibre weapon which France sold to the Americans. It was considered a weaker gun because of its smaller calibre and insecurely ring fastened barrel.

### **How to Load a Musket**

- 1.** Pull the flint back once. Now it is half-cocked, which is the safety position and will not fire.
- 2.** Reach into your back pouch for your cartridge (black powder and a ball wrapped in white paper). Bite off the folded end and spit it out (for this all soldiers must have two front teeth!). The powder is made of charcoal, sulphur and saltpetre (potassium nitrate) and tastes terrible.
- 3.** Pour a bit of powder into the priming pan on the outside of the barrel, covering the touch hole that connects with the barrel's inside.
- 4.** Pull the frizzen (steel that the flint will strike) closed over the pan.
- 5.** Put the butt of the musket down by your left foot and pour the rest of the gun powder down the barrel. Crumple the paper around the lead ball and put it in too.
- 6.** Push down twice with the ram rod to force the ball down the barrel of the musket.
- 7.** Pull the flint back all the way to be fully cocked; now it's in the fire position.
- 8.** Pull the musket against your right shoulder, point it at your target and pull the trigger. This will cause the flint to strike the steel and a spark will fall into the pan.
- 9.** The powder ignites and the ball is fired approximately 100 yards (length of a football field).

*This whole process would take a well-trained soldier less than half a minute.*

### **Carronades**

First produced by the director of the **Carron Foundry in Scotland**, the carronade was brought into British service in 1779. Their light weight and short barrels made them immediately practical on board ships and although their range was not so great as that of a cannon, it was adequate in most situations.

Generally, the carronade was a shorter gun without a flared muzzle, that was used in close range fire. It was affectionately nicknamed **the "smasher"** in the British Navy as its short and powerful shots were useful in smashing into enemy decking.

The calibre (weight of shot) ranged from three through to 57 although calibres under 24 were not produced after the mid 1800s.

The two six pounder carronades at Nancy Island have a **minimum range of 200 yards and a maximum of 700. They weigh 500 pounds each.**

### **Cannons**



All naval vessels used cannons, on both sides of the war. They were often referred to

as guns, referring to anything of 12 calibres and upwards. By the end of the War of 1812, guns firing calibres of 42, 32, 24, & 12, were all in current use.

### **Mortars**

Also referred to as shell guns. These small stocky guns were suitable for high angle fire. They were used to drop a shell behind defences that could not be penetrated by gun fire. Their usual length was three to four calibres.

### **Howitzers**

Howitzers are shell guns intended, like the mortar, for high angle fire. Their length varies from 5 to 10 calibres and their carriages allowed them to fire with greater elevation than can be obtained with a regular cannon.

### **Shots**

Although carronades most usually fired solid shots, there were many different kinds of shots that may have been loaded into larger cannons.

*Hot Shot* Cannon balls that were heated in portable ovens to such a high temperature that they would set fire to wooden targets.

*Chain Shot* Two cannon balls joined together by heavy chain links. It could rip sails and topple masts when fired at ships.

*Bar Shot* Similar to the chain shot, the bar was like a small dumb bell that would spin through the air and tear apart anything on contact.

*Canister Shot* A container the size of a large juice can that was filled with musket balls that would scatter and hit many targets. If soldiers ran out of musket balls, they would fill the canisters with stones, nails, glass or even kitchen cutlery.

*Grape Shot* A number of cast iron balls arranged in three tiers that would separate after being fired.

### **Firing**

All guns were ignited in a similar way. First, a small amount of gun powder was deposited in the rear entry chamber leading to the back of the gun. Secondly, the large load of powder was rammed into the gun, followed by the shot. The first small amount of powder, outside of the gun, was then ignited with a long lit wick.

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

## **Local History**

### **Logging on the Nottawasaga**

During the second half of the nineteenth century, the lumbering industry in Simcoe County was at its peak. In the Wasaga Beach area fine stands of white pine were plentiful and three types of mills could be found along the Nottawasaga River - water powered, steam and shingle mills. The Nottawasaga River itself served as a source of power and as a means of shipping sawn lumber to market.

Between the **1840's and 1900** five different sawmills were established in the Wasaga Beach area. Most were able to survive only a few years, with the exception of the **Van Vlack mill** which operated off and on for over **40 years**.

But prosperity was only to last a few decades. With the construction of the Northern **Railroad to Collingwood in 1855** many of the mills were to move away from the river and by the early 1900's the exhaustion of timber was near. Thus the lumbering and sawmilling era at Wasaga drew to a close.

#### **Cathey Water Powered Sawmill 1842-1852**

George Cathey built a water powered mill and a mill dam at the junction of Lamont Creek and the Nottawasaga River. The land was located on Lot 4 and 5, Concession 14, Sunnidale Township. The sawn lumber was moved down Sunnidale Road to build houses but the mill was of very little economic consequence.

#### **Birnie Sawmill 1849-1854**

John and Henry Birnie, merchants from Barrie purchased the north part of Lot 5, Concession 14 in 1849 and agreed with Cathey to let each other build mill dams without interference. Attempts by the Birnies in 1854 to sell their operation indicates that it must have been a losing proposition.

#### **Boys Steam Sawmill 1851-1861**

Henry Boys bought a lot below Schooner Town in 1851 and probably used the steam sawmill plant from his earlier operation in Vespra Township. This mill brought schooners into the river again to load lumber but the shallowness restricted the type and size of ship. Boys small operation which required only three men burned down in 1861 and never reopened.

#### **Van Vlack Shingle Mill 1862-1914**

Probably the best known mill in the district was the Van Vlack or Gowanlock mill, located at the mouth of the Nottawasaga River. John Hunter brought the first mill here in 1862 from Kincardine only to operate it for seven years. From 1869 to 1876 the shingle mill was run by three different operators - Peckham, Hotchkiss and Dodge. Then, from 1876 to 1905, another group of operators was introduced - J. Gowanlock, Connor and McKnight, W. Train, J. Milne, and E. and J.H. McKeggie. Indications were that it was not a very successful operation and it is unlikely that the mill continued to make shingles on a regular basis after the turn of the century.

#### **Silverthorn Sawmill 1891-1895**

John and Francis Silverthorn operated a small sawmill by the edge of Jack's Lake, but very little is know about this operation.

#### **The Roaring Camp**

This building, erected on the north bank of the Nottawasaga River three quarters of a mile from the river mouth, is shrouded in romantic tales and mystery. It was built sometime in the late 19th or early 20th century and was used as a bunkhouse for the work gangs that were employed at the Van Viack shingle and lumber mill across the river. Some of the older residents of Wasaga Beach know this as the 'Old Camp' or the 'Roaring Camp', presumably due to the boisterous activities that took place during the lumber era. During the 1920's and 30's this bunkhouse was one of the few places offering public lodging. In 1975 this building was deemed a public safety

hazard and was dismantled. Great care was taken to document the structural features.

### **The Roots of a Town**

In 1882 William Train bought property between the hamlet of Van Vlack and Elmvale. The lot was then subdivided and the name 'Wasaga Beach' was created to refer to the Van Vlack half. The name had been derived from the word 'Nottawasaga', which applied to both the river and the bay within Georgian Bay. The name Wasaga Beach was not commonly used until 1897. Before that time the area was referred to as 'the Beach' and the village 'Van Vlack'.

### **The Town Plot of Hythe**

In the late 1820s and early 1830s the Town Plot of Hythe was part of an effort to endorse projects to improve internal communications within Ontario and specifically locally. In order to capture trade from the North West, officials looked at a route from Toronto to Lake Huron using Lake Simcoe, Willow Creek and the Nottawasaga River and supplementing the network with roads. Hythe, located on Georgian Bay, near the mouth of the Nottawasaga was surveyed in 1833.

**Charles Rankin**, the surveyor, reported that *"its geographical situation rendered it in a commercial point of view-uncommonly favourable site for a town"*. He was so convinced that he arranged with two contractors to construct **Sunnidale Road** from Barrie to Hythe in **1834**. Plans included harbours, piers, and a number of suggestions for 'improvement' of navigation along the Nottawasaga Bay and Jack's Lake. None of them were ever completed.

As early as 1836 plans were submitted to build a **railroad** from Toronto to Georgian Bay. Locals wrote numerous letters in support of the Town Plot of Hythe, mainly because of Nottawasaga River. However, the idea of a harbour had been discussed with great vigour in the Barrie Magnet, Toronto Globe and Northern advance from 1847 to 1866. Others were concerned over reports of shipping disasters occurring near the mouth due to the vicious north west winds in Nottawasaga Bay.

The Toronto, Lake Simcoe and Lake Huron Railroad Company sent surveyors to Wasaga Beach in 1852 to reassess the situation. The surveyors witnessed the wreckage of the **H.B. Bishop**, a small grain schooner that had been paralysed by the strong winds and whipped onto the beach.

Unimpressed with Hythe's feasibility as a shipping port, and the additional fact that the provincial government in 1849 guaranteeing interest free loans required for railway of "not less than 75 miles in length". Therefore Hythe would barely qualify. The surveyors opted for Collingwood as the railroad outlet. With the completion of the railroad in 1855 to Collingwood, Hythe disappeared from the historical record.

### **The Fur Trade**

Faintly as tolls the evening chime, our voices keep tune and our oars keep time,  
soon as the woods on shore look dim, We'll sing at St. Ann's our parting hymn,  
Row brothers, row the stream runs fast, the rapids are near and the daylights past..

### **Brief History of the Fur Trade**

The fur trade in North America flourished between the 1600s and 1800s. It was caused primarily by a demand for furs in Europe to be used in high fashion. Beaver pelts were sought after for use in coats, collars, muffs, mitts, and especially hats.

Two major companies were involved in the fur trade. The Hudson's Bay Company, founded in 1670, and its rival, The North West Company, established in 1783.

### **Fur Trade Organization; The North West Company**

By the 1770s, solid Scots controlled a well organized trade system based in Montreal with strong connections to Great Britain. These port merchants themselves were usually carried by some exporting house in a British port. The chain was long and complex. If the Montreal merchant got his mail off by the last ships in, say 1780, he would get his goods out in the spring of 1781. With luck, these would reach the head of the lakes by late summer and the Saskatchewan by fall. The winter of 1781-1782 would be put in by the traders awaiting the results of the fur season. In the spring, with the arrival of the Natives, trading would begin. The furs would then start their long and arduous journey down to Quebec. With luck, the furs would arrive in Montreal for export on the last autumn ships.

Upon reaching London they would be prepared for the trade and put on the market in the year 1783. Therefore, if everything went well, the London house's money was "out" for two years; and if anything in the chain went wrong, it might well be three. An accident to a canoe might make it fail to return at all. Only a high degree of organization could have made the long six thousand mile chain stretch and hold.

### **Fort William**

The hub of the fur trade was Fort William, in present day Thunder Bay, Ontario. Fort William was built and named for the North West Company chieftain, William McGillivray. It was a halfway house between the shipping port of Montreal and the far-flung trading posts which reached beyond Lake Athabaska into the Rockies, and the lower valleys of the Columbia river.

### **Importance of the Fur Trade within the War of 1812**

While a variety of causes contributed to the declaration of War in 1812, the fur trade was certainly an incentive for American invasion. American control of the fur-rich Northwest would have closed off the area to British and Canadian fur trading companies. This would have seriously undermined the economic stability of the Canadas. Also, the expanding United States was eager to acquire new territory. The natural resources of the Canadian Northwest were a much valued prize.

### **Fur Trade Routes**

The voyageurs usually paddled the Ottawa River, Mattawa, and French River route between Montreal and Fort William. Another route was Lake Erie via Lake St. Clair up into Lake Huron. A third artery into the Northwest was the Nottawasaga route between Lake Ontario and Lake Huron. The Northwest Company appears to have investigated this route; but the state of Yonge street before 1800 prevented any attempt at an overland route to Georgian Bay and thence to Lake Superior. The route never gained popularity amongst fur traders, but was used during the latter part of the War of 1812 and in the 1820s by traders and surveyors.

### **The Demise of the Fur Trade**

Although the North West Company enjoyed three decades of power and riches, the ever receding fur frontier and the obstacle of the Hudson's Bay Company, Red River Settlement, across an already tenuous supply route, eventually brought them down. In 1821 the surviving partners were absorbed into the Hudson's Bay Company.

Hereafter, the fur declined in importance as the lumber trade became increasingly significant.

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## **Nancellaneous**

### **Features on Nancy Island**

#### **Ayling & Reid Cairn**

The cairn, located behind the gatehouse, is the only commemorative memorial of the record breaking flight by Ayling and Reid on August 8, 1934. It was dedicated in 1954.

#### **Nancy Island Cairn**

Located behind the museum, the cairn marks the spot that the Nancy was found in the 1920s.

#### **Carronades**

These two six-pounder carronades are of 1812 vintage and were brought to Canada from Scotland by the CPR when they commenced their steamship service on the Great Lakes.

#### **Capstan**

The hand operated ships capstan was used to hoist sails by inserting capstan bars and revolving the wheel manually by pushing the bars. Hand operated capstans passed out of common use with the development of power winches.

### **Windlass**

The windlass is from the steamer S.S. Waubano which sunk in November of 1789 near Moose Point south of Parry Sound. The windlass is used for raising and letting the anchor. Twenty-four passengers died during the ship's sinking although no bodies were ever recovered.

### **Small Anchor**

This is the anchor of the Nelly Bly, a 42 foot tug that was used to haul lumber on Georgian Bay at the turn of the century.

### **Large Anchor**

Weighing over 1500 pounds, this wooden stock anchor is from the 550 ton schooner barge Alloha, built in 1888 on the Clinton River which flows into Lake St. Clair. It is of a type most commonly used on Great Lakes Sailing vessels.

### **Red Small Buoy**

This buoy marks the starboard or right side of the channel entering harbour or going upstream. Its conical or pointed shape, which can be seen even when the colour is not visible, denotes that it is a "red" marker.

### **Large Black Buoy**

A buoy with a flashing light is used to designate main shipping channels. The black buoy is kept on the port or left side of the vessel.

### **Large Red Buoy**

The buoy indicates starboard passage, while the bell is rung by the motion of the waves and can be heard when fog obscures the buoy. The marker is secured in position by a chain and an anchor. Both of the large buoys were previously on display at Expo'67 in Montreal before coming to Nancy Island.

### **Lighthouse**

This is a replica of the one which stood at the entrance to Collingwood harbour from 1884 - 1961. Modern "lights" of this size are now erected on steel towers. The original lighthouse may have been constructed by Mr. George Teachout of Collingwood, a builder of churches and lighthouses in the area at that time.

## **Wasaga Beach**

### **A Town and Tourism Timeline**

**1870** John Van Vlack purchased 69 acres of land south of the Nottawasaga River, near its mouth. On the land he built and operated a post office and general store.

**1871** Van Vlack leased at least two acres of his land to a lumber company. Work was then provided by the cedar shingle mill built on the site, as well as local fishing and farming. Van Vlack's first settlers were of Scottish, English, Irish and German origin.

**1872** The first bridge of the Nottawasaga River was built. The narrow, wooden bridge was closer to the mouth of the river than the existing one at the Main St.

**1800's** Jane Summerfeldt opened a hotel on the north bank of the Nottawasaga River near the bridge. The *Elmvale Chronicle* called it a "lodge for hunting parties".

**1893** A one room schoolhouse was built of sawn planks near Bell Park. It was constructed at a cost of \$228.22. (In 1922, the school was relocated about two miles east of the village and remained there until June 1965 when it was dismantled. People who were against the moving tried to prevent it by lighting fires on the roadway)

**1894** A Presbyterian church was erected in Van Vlack across from the school with Rev. John Macdonald as its pastor. It was closed in 1930.

**1896** At the height of prosperity, the Van Vlack community had reached a population of 70 people.

**1898** The Summerfeldt hotel was sold, but kept its original name

**1914** By the first World War, the community of Van Vlack had faded and the timber around Georgian Bay was exhausted.

**1909** Steel bridge was built across Nottawasaga River (near present day Main St. bridge). Telephones installed and operated by Flos Municipal Telephone Exchange in Elmvale.

**1911** Capstan Inn was built by John McLean. It was the first hotel opened on bay shore (located at present day McDonalds').

**1912** Post office officially called "Hector" was opened on the river, a half mile up from Nancy Island at Pine Grove. It was named after Hector McAllister, a Collingwood shipbuilder. It closed in 1923.

**1915** Capstan Inn was destroyed by fire and then rebuilt that same year.

**1918** Wasaga Inn was built and operated by John McLean.

**1920s** Popularity grew during WWI thanks to soldiers from Base Borden army camp. There were four major hotels; Capstan Inn, Wasaga Inn, Riverside and Nottawa hotels. Rooms were three to four dollars a night and meals were 75 cents to one dollar. Weekend crowds of 40 000 were reported.

**1922** Wasaga Beach Community Church was built on the north bank of the river, opposite Nancy Island.

**1923** Post office named "Wasaga Beach" was opened in the Wasaga Inn with Laura McLean as the postmistress.

**1924** St. Joseph's Catholic Church was opened.

**1925** The remains of the schooner Nancy were located by Dr. F.J. Conboy.

**1926** Wasaga Beach was considered Ontario's foremost resort area.

**1927** Nancy hull was raised.

**1928** Nancy Museum was officially opened.

**1929** Pickwick Lodge were the first cabins opened on the beach. Twentytwo cabins and gas pumps were operated by Clarence Cauthers (near present day playground in Beach Area 5).

**1930** Hwy. 26 was the first paved road. A second lane was added in 1947.

**1938** Wasaga Beach Chamber of Commerce formed.

**1939** First brick schoolhouse was built (located at present day municipal offices). The Beach become popular again with soldiers stationed at Base Borden.

**1940** Byrnes Avenue Public School opened. Hwy. 92 from Elmvale to Main St. bridge was paved.

**1941** Wasaga Beach became a 'Village'.

**1943** Nancy Villa was opened by Marjorie and Lloyd Dyer. It had cabins, a dining lounge and eventually a hotel.

**1946** Wasaga Beach boasted Canada's largest merry-go-round, three riding academies, three dance halls, two bowling alleys and a roller skating rink. Cabins averaged at \$25 a week.

**1948** Municipal buildings were erected on corner of present day 2nd St. and Mosley St. The Wasaga Beach Fire Department began with the purchase of Fire Truck No. 1; Chief Russell Kenwell as one of its first volunteers. A fancy furnished cottage on a large lot ran for \$3 000. Two hundred dollars could buy you a prime beachfront lot.

**1950S** Hwy. 27 and 400 opened. Wasaga Beach was frequented by larger numbers of people from the cities of southern Ontario.

**1953** The Wasaga Beach Caravan rode from the main end to 45th St. and back for 1 0 cents. Twenty-four people could sit comfortably on the caravan driven by Sam Prezio.

**1956** Oxbow Park Public School opened.

**1962** Village of Wasaga Beach and townships of Nottawasaga and Sunnidale transferred management of the beach to the Ontario government. In June, the beach area was established as a park. It had four entrance gates, lifeguards, sanitation, maintenance and a comfort station.

**1963** A public ballot approved government operation of the beach. The *Toronto Telegram* calls Wasaga Beach a "*Georgian Bay version of Coney Island and Daytona Beach.* "

**1964** Wasaga Beach Community Church moved to 6th St. and Mosley.

**1966** The United Church of Canada operated a coffee house called 'The Way Out' off Main St. The coffee house provided games, refreshments and an open forum for discussion for area youth. The following year the United Church was denied permission to operate the coffee house by village council. The council feared that it would become a breeding ground for drug and liquor offenders; having attracted "undesirable elements" in its first year.

**1969** Museum of Upper Lakes opened at Nancy Island.

**1972** Pedestrian Mall closed off First St.

**1973** Cars were no longer allowed on the beach.

**1974** Wasaga Beach became a 'Town' with Clair Robertson as its first mayor.

**1976** Schoonertown bridge across river joined River Road West and Mosley St. Ministry of Natural Resources began operating Nancy Island Historic Site.

**1979** Walter Borthwick was elected as Wasaga Beach's second mayor.

**1986** High water levels damaged prime beachfront cottages, homes and stores. Nancy Island was almost completely flooded.

**1990** New Ontario Provincial Police station was built on River Road West serving the Huronia West district.

**1992** Byrnes Avenue Public School constructed a bubble gym structure after numerous local fundraising efforts.

**1994** New Wasaga Beach Public Library opened on Glenwood Drive after numerous local fundraising events. Tall Ships came to Georgian Bay.

**1995** Birchview Dunes Public School was opened on River Road West with Lorraine Gruzuk as its first principal. Oxbow Park and Byrnes Avenue Schools were twinned into one school: Worsley Elementary, named for the big guy himself. The remains of a 4 000 year old Native teen were found during the construction of the Riverbend Plaza. The site was examined and was not declared an official Native burial ground. Wasaga Beach Cemetery was established on Sunnidale Road.

**1996** Beach Patrol Lifeguard program was cut as part of provincial cutbacks. A smaller scale water safety program was established by Wasaga Beach Provincial Park to replace the patrol.

**1997** Wasaga Beach Community Church became Wasaga Beach Presbyterian Church. Wasaga Hydro relocated to River Road West behind the O.P.P. Huronia West detachment.

## Schooner Town

Located six kilometres from the mouth of the Nottawasaga River, Schooner Town was constructed as a British military post after the War of 1812. A study of European settlement at Schooner Town makes a fascinating epilogue to the Nancy story.

Archaeological excavations were done at the site by Wilfred Jury (1962-63) and the MNR(1973-74). Evidence shows that the Nottawasaga River had been used by various groups of people, long before the British began to use it as a supply route. Three historic periods have been identified during which distinct cultures occupied the area: the Middle Woodland Period, the Late Woodland Period, and the Historic European Period.

### Worsley and Crew

The military history of the Schooner Town site begins after the capture of the schooners Tigress and the Scorpion. Lt. Worsley and his men unofficially constructed six buildings to serve as living quarters in the winter of **1814-15**. These buildings were burned in the summer of 1815. Lt. Wingfield, commander of the captured Scorpion ordered three of his men to remain at the site to rebuild.

### Official Construction

Official orders for the construction of Schooner Town were sent to **Captain P.S.Hambly** from Commodore Sir Edward Owen on October 12, 1815. Schooner Town was to serve as the **temporary naval establishment on Lake Huron**. Accordingly, it would be a resting place for vessels used to transport provisions to Drummond Island. Necessary repairs could be made in the winter months.

By late 1815, Captain Hambly and his men had moved into the buildings constructed under the authorization of Lt. **Wingfield**. When Wingfield returned from Drummond Island in November, he found his own house had been converted into a store room. It became apparent that Schooner Town would have to be enlarged to accommodate its growing population.

The size of Schooner Town, at its peak development, is unknown. There could not have been less than **66 men** stationed at the site. Twenty men arrived with Captain Hambly to join the 36 from the crews of the schooners, base personnel, shipwrights, smiths and sawyers. Indeed as many as **96** men could have been stationed at Schooner Town.

### Size of Schooner Town

The minimum number of buildings was **six**. There is evidence that **nine** buildings existed at one time, including: the mess house, captain's quarters, officer's quarters, purser's store, black smith's shop, magazines, barracks, the **Mundy** canteen and an unidentified building on the opposite bank of the river.

Techniques used in erecting the buildings seem to indicate a hasty construction. There was not the "military tidiness" at Schooner Town that there was at similar sites.

### **Life at Schooner Town**

Life at Schooner Town centered around maintaining the site in a state of military readiness. In the spring, they were joined by the Tecumseh and the Newash, as supplies were being shipped to Drummond Island and to Penetanguishene. Several Durham boats were constructed in the spring of 1817 under Owen's recommendation. The **Bee** (40 tons), the **Mosquito** (30 tons), and the **Wasp** (41 tons) were all built on the Nottawasaga River. The Durham boat was an improvement over the bateau because it could carry more cargo. It was also suitable for use in the shallow water at the mouth of the Nottawasaga.

The isolation of Schooner Town was a problem for the men stationed there. Whist and leap frog were popular activities. Both rank and file participated in other amusements such as snowshoe races, snowball fights, and tree felling.

### **Problems With Schooner Town**

Both Owen and Wingfield recognized the disadvantages of Schooner Town as a rendezvous point for British vessels on Lake Huron. An awkward method had to be used to load schooners there. Thus, supplies were not able to be sent to Drummond Island as quickly as desired. There were several other problems. **Enemy troops had free access to the beach.** A hazardous **sand bar** was located at the mouth of the river. Schooners were often prevented from approaching or departing from the river mouth because of **prevailing northwesterly winds.** Lastly, the **sandy soil** on the banks of the Nottawasaga did not allow food to be grown easily. Consequently it was necessary to import food from York.

A recommendation that the military base be transferred to **Penetanguishene** was made by Owen in July 1816. Advantages of the Penetanguishene location included a **deep, sheltered harbour that was difficult to find.** Owen's decision was not carried out immediately, however, due to the poor condition of the road from York to Penetanguishene.

Schooner Town's fate was decided by the signing of the **Rush-Bagot Treaty** in April, 1817. Its provisions regarding **the limitation of armed vessels on the Great Lakes** resulted in the disbanding of the temporary naval establishment on Lake Huron. Seamen were paid off, artificers were transferred to Penetanguishene and the buildings decayed from disuse.

Excavations which have been carried out at Schooner Town give insight into daily life at a military settlement. Remains associated with food sources, cooking, and drinking are abundant. Animal remains, a table knife, forks and spoons have all been found. Personal items such as pipe fragments, pins, buckles, beads and a gold coin were uncovered in the ruins. Glass, nails and buckshot remain on the banks of the Nottawasaga River in present day Wasaga Beach.

## **The War of 1812**

*The conquest of Canada is in our power, trust shall not be deemed presumptive when, state that I verily believe that the militia of Kentucky are alone competent to place Montreal and Upper Canada at your feet.*

Henry Clay, to the United States Senate, February 22, 1810.

A Preface (*Adapted from Berton, Invasion of Canada, 1981.*)

The invasion of Canada, which began in the early summer of 1812 and petered out in the late fall of 1814, was part of a larger conflict that has come to be known in North America as the War of 1812. That war was the by-product of a larger struggle, which saw Napoleonic France pitted for almost a decade against most of Europe.

This work deals with the war that Canada won, or to put it more precisely did not lose, by successfully repulsing the armies that tried to invade and conquer British North America. The war was fought almost entirely in Upper Canada, whose settlers, most of them Americans, did not invite the war, did not care about the issues, and did not want to fight. They were the victims of a clash between two major powers who, by the accident of geography, found it convenient to settle their differences by doing violence to the body of another.

Of all wars fought by the English-speaking peoples, this was one of the strangest wars entered into blindly and fought (also blindly) by men out of touch not only with reality but also with their own forces. Washington was separated from the fighting frontier by hundreds of miles of forest, rock, and swamp. The ultimate British authority was an ocean away and the nominal authority a fortnight distant from the real command. Orders could take days, weeks, even months to reach the troops.

Like some other wars, this one began bloodlessly with expressions of civility on both sides and the conviction that it would be over by Christmas.

At the outset, it was a gentlemen's war. Officers on opposing sides met for parleys under flags of truce, offered hospitality, exchanged cordialities, murmured the hope that hostilities would quickly end. Belligerents addressed one another in flowery terms. The same men who declared they would never be slaves of the enemy had "the honour to be y'r humble and obedient servant." When Isaac Brock fell at Queenston, the men responsible for his death joined in the general grief. When the first word of declaration of war reached the British post at Fort George on the Niagara frontier, its officers were entertaining their American opposite numbers at dinner. They insisted that the meal continue as if hostilities had not commenced, then, with much handshaking and expressions of regret, accompanied their guests to their boats. Within a few weeks, the former dinner companions were ripping through one and others homes and fortifications with redhot cannonballs.

For a war of thirty months duration, the casualties were not heavy. In those same years many a European battle counted far more dead and wounded in a single day. But for those who did fall, it was a truly terrible war, fought under appalling conditions far from civilization and medical aid. Those victims who were torn to pieces by cannonballs, their brains often spattering their comrades, might be considered lucky. The wounded endured agonies, banged about in open carts, exposed to blizzards of driving rain, hauled for miles over rutted tracks to the surgeon's table where, with a musket ball clamped between their teeth and when possible a tot of rum warming their bellies, they suffered the horrors of a hasty amputation.

At the planning level, the war was marked by incredible bungling. As in so many wars, but especially this one, the day was often won not by the most brilliant commander, for there were few brilliant commanders, but the least incompetent. On the American side, where the civilian leaders were mixed in with regular army officers, the commands were marked by petty jealousies, vicious infighting, bitter rivalries.

On the Canadian side, where "democracy" was a wicked word and the army was run autocratically by British professionals, there was little of this. Many of these men, however, were cast-offs from Europe. The officers gained their commissions through purchase, not competence. With certain exceptions, the cream of the British Army was with Wellington, fighting Napoleon's forces on the Iberian Peninsula. Aging veterans made up part of the garrison forces in Canada. Boys of 14 and 15 fought with the militia. Lacklustre leadership, incompetent planning, timidity and vacillation were too often the concomitants of command on both sides of the border

The militia on both sides was a rabble. Hastily summoned and hastily trained when trained at all, they fought sometimes reluctantly, sometimes with gallantry.

On the Canadian side these citizen soldiers were drilled about three days in a month. They were called up when needed, placed away from the centre of the line, on the flanks, and, after an engagement, sent back to their homes and farms until needed once more.

The American army was a confusion of regular soldiers, state militia, and federal volunteers recruited from the militia for terms of service that ranged from one month to a year or more.

On both sides, men thought nothing of leaving the scene of battle to thresh their grain at harvest time. For most of the men who fought it, then, it was a part-time war. Some refused to fight. In spite of the harsh discipline, men on both sides mutinied. Soldiers were shot for desertion, forced to ride bent saplings, to stand barefoot on sharpened stakes, branded, or flogged almost to death. Neither threats nor pleas could stop thousands of American militiamen from refusing to fight on foreign soil. To the dismay of their commanders, these amateur soldiers took democracy at its face value, electing their own officers and, on occasion, dismissing them. In Upper Canada treason worked its slow poison, even invading the legislature. Farmers were hanged for abetting the enemy; tribunes of the people took refuge on foreign soil to raise squads of traitors; dark suspicions, often unfounded, seeped down the concession roads, causing neighbour to denounce neighbour.

This had been a war that almost nobody wanted. The British, who had been embroiled with Napoleon for seven years, certainly did not want it, did not believe it would occur, and in a clumsy, last-minute effort tried to prevent it. The Canadian settlers, struggling to master a forbidding if fertile wilderness, did not want it either; at best it was an interruption, at worst a tragedy. The majority, whenever possible, did their best to stay out of it. Nor did the mass of the American people want to go to war; a great many, especially in the New England states, sat it out others fought halfheartedly. Congress, in the words of a Kentucky editor, was "driven, goaded, dragged, forced, kicked" into the conflict by a small, eloquent group that Thomas Jefferson dubbed the War Hawks.

America went to war as a last resort because her leaders felt that the nation's honour had been besmirched to a point where any other action would be unthinkable. In their zeal to conquer Napoleon, the British pushed the Americans too far and dismissed their former colonists with an indifference that bordered on contempt, thus repeating the errors of 1776. In that sense, the War of 1812 was a continuation of the American Revolution.

It began with Napoleon, for without Napoleon there would have been no war. (The President, James Madison, remarked after the fact that had he known Napoleon would be defeated his country would have stayed out of it.) Great Britain, fighting for her life against France, was bent on all-out maritime warfare. If a neutral America, reaping the economic benefits, was bruised a little on the high seas, well, that was unfortunate but necessary. America, in British eyes, was a weak, inconsequential nation that could be pushed around with impunity. In the words of the *London Courier*, "two fifty gun ships would be able to burn, sink and destroy the whole American navy."

This attitude was expressed first in the British policy of boarding American ships and impressing American seamen for service in the Royal Navy on grounds that they were deserters from British service. At least three thousand and perhaps as many as seven thousand fell victim to this practice, which infuriated the country and was one of the two chief causes of the war.

The other was the equally galling Orders in Council, the last enacted in November, 1807, as an act of reprisal against the French. With cool disdain for the rights of neutrals as well as for American sea power, the British warned that they would seize on the open ocean any ship that dared sail directly for a Napoleonic port. By 1812 they had captured almost four hundred vessels, some within the sight of the U.S. coast, and played havoc with the American export trade.

The growing Indian threat to the frontier settlements, was used to bolster the arguments of those seeking an excuse for war. In Kentucky especially, the most hawkish of states - and in Ohio and the territories, it was widely believed that British agents were goading the various tribes to revolt. There was talk of teaching the Indians a lesson, even driving the British out of North America, thereby breaking the fur monopoly, opening the land to settlement, and strengthening the Union. Certain western expansionists also saw the coming war as one of liberation. It was widely believed that most Canadians wanted to become Americans. If they did not, well, that was their destiny.

In the summer of 1812, with three American armies threatening the border strong points - Amherstburg, Queenston, Montreal, and Kingston - the early fall of Upper Canada and the subsequent collapse of Quebec seemed certain. In British North America there were some three hundred thousand souls, in the Union to the south, almost eight million. In Upper Canada, three out of five settlers were newly arrived Americans, people of uncertain loyalties, lured from New York, Pennsylvania, and Connecticut by the promises of cheap land. They scarcely thought of themselves as British, though they were forced into a token oath of allegiance, and they certainly did not call themselves Canadian.

How was it that a tiny population, badly divided, with little claim to any national sentiment, was able to ward off continued attack by a powerful neighbour with vastly greater resources? There are at least three considerations.

**First**, the British Presence. The regulars were few in number but well disciplined. Raw troops were no match for them. And, thanks to Isaac Brock's prescience, the country was better prepared for war than its enemy.

**Second**, American ineptness, especially in the war's first, crucial year. The United States was not a military nation. Her leaders were antiquated or inexperienced, her soldiers untrained, her government unready for conflict, her state militia reluctant to fight on foreign soil.

**Third**, and by no means least, the alliance between the Indians and the British, which led to decisive victories in the campaigns of 1812.

History has tended to gloss over the contributions made by the various tribes and especially by the polyglot army under the leadership of the Shawnee war chief Tecumseh in the first year of the war. Yet without the presence of the Indians at crucial turning points in the conflict, much of Upper Canada would surely have been in the hands of the Americans by the spring of 1813, if not sooner. British regulars alone could not have stemmed the tide. To shore up the thinly held garrisons the Indians were essential.

Their very presence was enough to terrify the Americans into submission.

For this, the United States had itself to blame. Jeffersonian policy, stripped of its honeyed verbiage, was to cheat the Indians out of their hunting-grounds. This thinly disguised thievery alienated the tribes in the Northwest, produced the phenomenon of the Shawnee Prophet, led to the inspired leadership of Tecumseh, and eventually drove thousands of Native Americans into the arms of the British, leaving America's left flank dangerously exposed in the war that followed.

Traditionally, a common enemy unites a people in a common cause, especially when family farms are overrun, crops despoiled, homesteads gutted, livestock dispersed, But again there is little evidence of a united front against the enemy on the part of the people who suffered these disasters; it is doubtful if they were any angrier at the Americans than at the British and Indians, who actually caused a third of the devastation. The total bill for war losses came to almost a million dollars at a time when a private soldier's daily pay was twenty-five cents. Compensation was not paid until 1824 and never paid in full. None of that helped make the cause universally popular.

Yet, in an odd way, the war did help change Upper Canada from a loose aggregation of village states into something approaching a political entity. The war, or more properly the myth of the war, gave the rootless new settlers a sense of community. In the end, the myth became the reality. In the long run it did not matter who fought or who did not, who supported the cause or who disdained it. As the years went by and memories dimmed, as old scars healed and old grudges evaporated, as aging veterans reminisced and new leaders hyperbolized, the settlers began to believe that they had repelled the invader almost single-handed. For the first time, Upper Canadians shared a common tradition.

It was a tradition founded to a considerable extent on a rejection of American values - a rejection encouraged and enforced by the same pro-British ruling elite who fed the myth of the people's war and who made sure that the province (and eventually all of Canada) would embark on a course markedly different from that of the people to the south. They were after all "the enemy," and to be pro American in post-war Upper Canada was to be considered vaguely traitorous. This attitude affected everything - politics, education, civil liberties, folkways, architecture. It affects us to this day, even those who do not think of themselves as Upper Canadian.

Thus the war that was supposed to attach the British North American colonies to the United States accomplished exactly the opposite. It ensured that Canada would never become a part of the union to the south. Because of it, an alternative form of democracy grew out of the British colonial oligarchy in the northern half of the continent. The Canadian "way" has its roots in the invasion of 1812-14, the last American invasion of Canada. There can never be another.

## **The Nancy Story**

*(revised and edited version of Anne Kuntz' prize winning essay)*

### **A Fine New Vessel**

On September 24th, **1789**, a fine new vessel was launched from the boatyard on the old River Rouge. She was the [Schooner Nancy](#) built for the fur trading company of **Forsyth, Richardson and Company** of Montreal. The Union Jack flew from her masthead since **Detroit** was still in British hands. **John Richardson**, a partner in the firm, supervised her construction and named her for either his wife or daughter. *"The schooner,"* Richardson wrote to his partners, *"will be a perfect masterpiece of workmanship and beauty. The expense of her being strong and very durable."*

**Seasoned white oak had been used to build her keel, elegant red cedar above deck.** Approximately **eighty feet long, twenty-two feet in the beam with a weight of ninety to one hundred tons**, the Nancy was capable of shipping **350** barrels. Her two masts raked backward, giving her a mobile air, even when berthed. Her stern had been stepped up to accommodate a cozy cabin. Inside, a dining table was bolted to the deck, surrounded by curtained berths for the use of a few passengers.

On January 26, 1790, Leith and Shepherd, agents for the owners, distributed a printed broadside, publicizing the new vessel. She would be sailing between Detroit and Fort Erie, occasionally going to Michilimackinac "when freight presents." For a "barrel bulk," the rate over Lake Erie was to be 15 shillings, New York currency, 9 shillings and four pence, halfpenny, Quebec currency. To transport a mere bushel of corn from Detroit to Mackinac, 4 shillings New York, or two shillings, sixpence, Quebec. Rates were also listed for miscellaneous items such as candles, oil-paint in "Rundlets," sheet iron or iron in bars and hogshead of porter.

Nancy made her maiden voyage to Fort Erie in April 1790. In June she took a full cargo to the Grande Portage at Sault Ste. Marie and for the next score of years plied her rounds over this route. Upward bound, she carried clothing and ammunition for the northern forts, and rum, pork and flour and goods for the Indian trade. Downward, packs of rich peltry, fox and beaver, bear and muskrat, filled her hold.

### **The Mackintosh Connection**

By the end of the century, Nancy had passed into the possession of the **North West Fur Company**. Her home berth was the little Port of Moy, on the Canadian side of the Detroit River. **Angus Mackintosh**, Scottish-born merchant and trader, had a part interest in her. He was a factor for the fur company and built wharves, a trading post, and a fine frontier mansion, famous for its hospitality there. He named it Moy House after his ancestral home in Scotland.

### **The War of 1812**

At the outbreak of war between the United States and Britain in July 1812, and before General William Hull crossed the Detroit River, Nancy was taken under the protection of the guns at Fort Malden. With her sister ship Caledonia, she was impressed into government service as an armed transport. Her first war duties took her to Fort Erie, under convoy of the Provincial schooner Lady Prevost. She returned in company of the brig General Hunter, carrying sixty soldiers of the 41st Regiment of Foot. The arrival of this small reinforcement, and the news that Fort Michilimackinac had fallen to the British, had much influence on Hull's decision to withdraw from Canada.

After General Brock's brilliant coup and Hull's capitulation at Detroit, Nancy was kept busy transporting troops, provisions, and military supplies among Detroit, Amherstburg, and Fort Erie. In April 1813, and again in July, she was included in a flotilla assigned to carry General Henry Procter's division to the Ohio shore to engage in attacks against Forts Meigs and Stephenson.

### **The Last British Ship on the Lake**

Fortunately for the British, the schooner was in upper Lake Huron when Commodore Oliver Hazard Perry defeated Captain Robert Barclay, the one armed veteran of the Battle of Trafalgar, at the **Battle of Put-in-Bay, September 10, 1813**. Lake Erie was now virtually closed to the British. Fort Malden and Detroit were cut off from their sources of reinforcements and suppliers. An American invasion was imminent.

Unaware of this, the cautious Mackintosh anchored his vessel off shore at the lower end of Lake Huron. He then sent two of his crew and a passenger, Reaume, to inquire about the state of the country. Reaume returned with the news that Fort Malden was in flames and General Procter in full retreat up the Thames River. United States gun boats were patrolling the Detroit River in search of stray British shipping.

### **On the St. Clair River**

Mackintosh, who had civilian passengers aboard, tried to sail north; but he lost his anchor due to fraying of the hemp cable. Nancy was blown into the entrance of the St. Clair River and trapped in the rapids below. There, a party of horsemen, who claimed to be Canadian militia under command of Lieutenant Colonel Beaubien, demanded that Mackintosh surrender his ship.

Mackintosh canvassed his crew as to whether they would resist. Almost all said they would. Mackintosh put his passengers ashore and prepared to escape into Lake Huron. *"While fishing the anchor,"* he writes in the ship's log, *"they gave us a volley which we immediately returned and kept it up for a good quarter of an hour, the vessel all this time going barely ahead. They then escaped and went off "*

All that night, Nancy remained trapped in the river, unable to negotiate the rapids. Mackintosh doubled the watch and spent a sleepless night. Beaubien again attempted to persuade him to surrender, promising that his property and that of his crew, would be respected. The emissary was J. Reaume, the passenger who had gone ashore and who had goods aboard the Nancy. Reaume and Joseph Hammond, the ship's first mate, urged him to dump the gunpowder overboard and give up the ship as there was no saving her. Mackintosh refused.

Dawn brought light breezes from the south and at 8 a.m., sails filled, Nancy headed back into Lake Huron. A gun was fired three times and the men raised three cheers. They retrieved the anchor and steered north and west.

The gales of October beset the little ship and blew her off course. There is evidence in the log that she may have crossed the lake from one side to the other. The passage stretched out to nine days of back breaking labour. They were almost wrecked twice. Finally, Nancy reached Michilimackinac's rocky harbour in a blinding snowstorm. Her mainsail was in ribbons and her cables had been shortened so often that she was only able to anchor in shallow waters. She was found unfit for further service that season. Mackintosh was ordered to take her to the North West Fur Company's post at Sault Ste. Marie for the winter.

### **Sailing to Michilimackinac**

The following spring they returned to Michilimackinac to await further orders. The fort, in the Straits of Mackinac, had been an important fur trading post since the early days of the French regime.

The French had maintained a palisaded fort since 1687. After the defeat of the French in 1760, the British built a regular stone fortress.

The Treaty of Paris of 1783, which recognized the independence of the United States, ceded the fort to the new nation. However, the British, hopeful of Indian territories being set up as buffers between themselves and the Americans, continued to occupy Michilimackinac along with the other forts at Oswego, Oswegatchie, Niagara, and Detroit.

Jay's Treaty of November 1794, ratified by the United States the following summer, stipulated that these posts be evacuated by June 1, 1796. The British recaptured Michilimackinac on July 17, 1812, before the garrison was aware that war had been declared.

### **The Relief of Mackinac**

On February 26, 1814, Captain Richard Bullock, commanding officer, asked for strengthened defences at the fort and stressed the need for reinforcements and extra supplies. **Lieutenant-Colonel Robert McDouall** of the **Glengarry Light Infantry** was selected to lead the relief expedition. In the latter part of February 1814 he marched his men north out of York. At Holland Landing, they crossed the ice on Lake Simcoe to Kempenfeldt Bay. From there they traversed the **Nine-Mile Portage to Willow Creek**. This route had been in use by the local Natives for two and a half centuries. It had increased in importance for the British since the American victory at Put-In-Bay by which they gained control of Lake Erie.

Reaching the Nottawasaga River, McDouall selected the site of **Glengarry Landing** for a boat yard. His shipwrights began construction of **twenty nine bateau**. In his company were artillery men with four guns and two companies of the **Royal Newfoundland Regiment**.

On April 19 he began to descent the river, his bateau heavily laden with provisions. He arrived at Michilimackinac on May 18 after a hazardous voyage, manipulating between the ice-pans in the upper channels. One bateau was lost, but its crew and cargo were rescued. Robert Dickson, Deputy Superintendent of the Indian Department arrived shortly afterward, bringing with him two hundred picked warriors of the Menomonee tribe of Upper Wisconsin.

Preparations were immediately put into motion for the defence of the rocky island. McDouall proceeded with the construction of a stockaded blockhouse on the highest point, 150 feet above Fort Michilimackinac. He named it Fort George. By July 28, he proudly declared: *"We are in a very fine state of defence here. The garrison and the Indians are in the highest spirits and all ready for the attack."*

### **The Nancy's Final Voyage**

Meanwhile, Nancy, refitted, had sailed for the Nottawasaga to pick up a cargo of supplies. This was her third round trip. In his letter to General Drummond, McDouall proposed that, in the event of an attack, Nancy be hauled as far upriver as she could go.

### **Worsley's Arrival**

Accordingly, a small detachment of British seamen, under Lieutenant Miller Worsley, took the Nottawasaga River route to meet her. Alexander Mackintosh remained her master. The schooner was loaded with 300 barrels of provisions and military supplies, and set out once more for the north.

### **A Warning From Livingston**

Before she was out of Nottawasaga Bay, the Nancy was hailed by Robert Livingston, a lieutenant and courier of the Indian Department, who warned Worsley that a considerable enemy force was on the Lake.

Livingston left for York with dispatches regarding Nancy's perilous position. The schooner was towed into the river and moored about two miles upstream, against the south bank. A blockhouse was erected on the bank above her.

### **The Coming of the Americans**

Commodore Arthur **Sinclair** of the United States Navy had in his fleet six of the largest ships of the Lake Erie squadron. Manned by 500 seamen and marines, they carried sixty guns and carronades. His flag ship the **Niagara**, a veteran of the victory at Put-In-Bay, was accompanied by the brig Caledonia and the schooners **Tigress** and **Scorpion** along with two other vessels.

In charge of the land force was young Lieutenant-Colonel George **Croghan** who had distinguished himself in the defence of Fort Stephenson in 1813. Under him were nearly a thousand troops including a detachment of artillery, a battalion of regular infantry comprising picked companies of the 17th, 19th and 24th Regiments and a battalion of Ohio Volunteers. Major A.H. Holmes, who was a veteran of Moraviantown, American victory, was second in command.

The American flotilla left Detroit on July 3 but did not reach the Mackinac Straits until the 26th. They had been held up in the rapids of the St. Clair River and by a search for a British supply base on the Severn River. Having no pilot familiar with these rocky shore and further hampered by several days of dense fog, Sinclair is abandoned the effort and gave orders to steer for St. Joseph Island. The British had established a fort there during the time that the Americans occupied Michilimackinac. He found St. Joseph's abandoned, McDouall having withdrawn its garrison west to Prairie due Chien. Major Holmes was dispatched to the Sault in the schooner Scorpion to locate the British supply boats. They intercepted the North West Fur Company's sixty-ton Mink and Perseverance. The latter, which had been working above the Sault and the Americans burned her where she landed. They also destroyed the Company's trading-post although much of the stock had been removed previously.

On August 4, Croghan landed a large force including a body of marines on the western coast of Mackinac at a break in the cliffs. The ships could anchor nearby. However, they were obliged to traverse almost two miles of dense woods to reach McDouall's position.

Attempting to outflank the redoubt, the Americans were set upon in the woods by Dickson's wily Menomonee; and a number of key American officers were either killed or wounded. Two field pieces were brought up, but by this time the men were totally disorganized. To prevent further carnage, Croghan withdrew, leaving behind his dead and wounded. Next day, McDouall permitted a detail under the white flag, to remove the body of Major Holmes.

Sinclair had learned from **a prisoner from the schooner Mink**, that Nancy was ferrying supplies from Nottawasaga, the last link between Michilimackinac and York. With **Croghan**, he decided to destroy her. Accompanied by the schooners **Tigress** and **Scorpion**, they sailed in the Niagara for Georgian Bay. The rest of the fleet, carrying the body of Holmes for burial, sailed south for Detroit.

The Nottawasaga River follows the shoreline of the lake for several miles, divided from the beach by low sand dunes. **Two miles** upstream Nancy lay anchored beneath the blockhouse which had been hastily constructed on the **south bank**. Livingston had rounded up **twenty-three Ojibway Natives** and **nine voyageurs**. Nancy's guns had been mounted in the blockhouse facing the river and a trail of gunpowder laid to the schooner so that she could be blown up at a moment's notice. Worsley had little hope of resisting for any length of time.

The Americans saw no sign of her when they sailed into Nottawasaga Bay on August 13, 1814. They presumed that she was still on the lake and prepared to wait for her. Hearing of a more suitable place for encampment further west, they sailed away from the river's mouth and sent the troops ashore. A wood-gathering party was astonished to see the raking masts of the Nancy poking up above the sand dunes.

### **The Battle on the Nottawasaga**

Next morning, August 14, Sinclair anchored his vessels close into shore and sent a broadside over his invisible target. There was answering fire from the blockhouse. About noon Croghan's men set two howitzers on the bank of the river opposite the Nancy. Worsley prepared to abandon his post. But before he could do so, **a shell from a howitzer hit the blockhouse**, blowing up the magazine and setting fire to

Nancy, which burned to the water line. Croghan's men rowed their small boats over but were unable to board her. Worsley and his men escaped into the woods, having lost only **one man dead and one wounded**. Later they regrouped and marched up to a supply base.

### **After the Battle**

Next day the American commanders sailed south on the brig Niagara. The schooner Tigress and Scorpion were left behind under command of Lieutenant Daniel **Turner**. He was instructed to *"maintain a rigid blockade until the enemy was driven from the lake by the inclemency of the season, suffering neither boat nor canoe to pass in or out of the river. " 'If we can keep their boats from passing until October, "* continued Sinclair's written instruction, *'I think the bad weather will effectively cut off all communication by anything they have on float and in the spring an early blockade will possess us of Mackinac. "* At the same time, he authorized Turner to detach Tigress to cruise for a week or two in the vicinity of St. Joseph Island to intercept fur canoes en route to Montreal by way of the French River.

A few days later, a great storm blew up. Turner took this storm as a signal of the arrival of fall weather. His men barricaded the mouth of the river and sailed out of Nottawasaga Bay.

### **360 Miles to Mackinac**

More than one hundred barrels of provisions remained at the storehouse where Worsley and his men had taken refuge up river. **Two bateau and Livingston's large canoe were loaded with seventy barrels**. The obstructions were removed from the river's outlet. On the 18th, they entered the bay.

Rowing and paddling, with a little help from the bateau's lug sails when the wind was favourable, they travelled along the north shore of Georgian Bay, among the islands to Manitoulin, and then along the North Detour, a voyage of 360 miles. Six days after they left Nottawasaga Bay, they were greatly surprised to see the two American schooners cruising along the islands. Worsley's party turned aside and hid in a secluded bay. After dark, Livingston's canoe passed within one-hundred yards of one of the schooners. The provisions had been left behind. They reached Mackinac at sunset on August 30.

### **A Plan for Revenge**

Worsley requested boats and men for an attempted capture of the enemy vessels. Leaving Mackinac on the following day, they arrived at the detour at sunset of September 2. **Four large rowboats carried soldiers and seamen**. This included a detachment of the Royal Artillery armed with six and three-pound guns, **Worsley's party**, and men of the **Royal Newfoundland Regiment**. **Two hundred Indians in nineteen canoes**, under Robert Dickson, followed. They camped for the night on a small island. At dawn, Worsley and Livingston took a light canoe to locate the schooners and discovered that they had separated. One was anchored within rowing distance of their camp.

After dark, the rowboats were loaded. The Indians were left about three miles from the quarry, although three of their chiefs and Dickson, accompanied the raiders. With oar locks padded, they were within ten yards of the Tigress before the alarm was sounded. Weak musket fire met them as they swarmed over the rails.

Sailing Master **Champlain and his officers were killed** and their bodies thrown overboard to make room for hand to hand fighting. Defeated, the surviving Americans were herded below; but a shot rang out from between decks and a British soldier fell dead. Worsley had lost two seamen killed and two wounded; the Royal Newfoundland had one lieutenant and six rank and file wounded; the Royal Artillery had one rank and file wounded. It was a decisive victory; the loss of the Nancy had been avenged.

The prisoners were sent away to Mackinac under heavy guard. As first light broke, Livingston paddled out to locate the other schooner. He found her two miles away, apparently unaware that the Tigress had been taken.

The Stars and Stripes were left flying on Tigress's masthead, but there was neither signal nor message from Scorpion. Before dawn, next morning, **September 6th**, the Tigress's anchor was raised and she ran quietly toward her sister with only a dozen sailors on deck. Soldiers lay on deck covered with great coats and the rest of the force hid below decks. A few crewmen were swabbing down the deck of Scorpion and noted the approach of Tigress but were unsuspecting.

Tigress's 24 pounder was fired into Scorpion's hull and the troops below rushed on deck. The boarders sprang over her rail, meeting very little resistance from the bewildered crew. Two were killed and two wounded, before Lieutenant Turner surrendered. Worsley had but one seaman wounded.

### **A Power Play On the Lakes**

Thus, within a few days, the British position on the upper lake, had been completely reversed. Tigress and Scorpion, Surprise and Confiance, were immediately put into service. They sailed for Nottawasaga bearing their former crews as prisoners of war, and returned with sufficient provisions to maintain the garrison at Michilimackinac until the following spring.

Worsley received a promotion in 1815; while the owners of the Nancy received almost four thousand pounds in compensation for her services and loss.

Twenty-five years had passed since the Nancy had been launched in Detroit. A fur trading vessel, the Nancy became a necessary transport of supplies to British Fort Michilimackinac once war was declared. At Nancy Island Historic Site the story of the destruction of the British schooner is retold. Visitors may see the resting place of the Nancy, and stand on the bank of river where cannons fired so long ago.

### **Worsley's Letter**

The following is a copy of a letter written in 1814 by Miller Worsley. It is an invaluable historical document that tells us much about the Nancy story, and its crew's consequential triumphs.



***My Dear Father.***

***I have this moment received yours of the 20th March which you sent out by Edmond. I can assure you that I write by every opportunity but the distances are so great and the letters often miscarry so that must be the reason you have not received any ...***

***No doubt you will be astonished to hear that I have got command on Lake Huron which is about seven hundred miles farther inland than Lake Ontario. On my arrival on this lake I got a schooner called the Nancy mounting 3 guns and 24 men. I had not possession of her more than ten days when I received information that an American Squadron was on the Lake. I took my schooner up this River and built a Block House and put my guns into it to defend her as I expected an attack, which was the case, as I was getting my last gun into it.***

***The enemies force consisted of a 20 gun Brig. and three schooners mounting each a long 24 pounder with 450 soldiers. I however contended with them for my vessel from nine a.m. till four p.m. with my three guns 24 seamen and 10 Indians. Finding my little crew were falling all round me, I immediately formed a resolution to blow both up, which I did, made my escape with the rest of my little crew through the woods to the great astonishment of the enemy.***

***We walked that night with our wounded and dying 36 miles before we came to any house. We lost everything we had except what we stood upright in. On my arrival at this house which had stores in etc. for the Island Michilimackinc which Island I had to supply with stores and protons, I waited two days and then made my mind up to go on to it in open boats the distance of 380 miles.***

***This I did and arrived safe in six days within 40 miles of it when to my great astonishment and regret I saw two of the enemies Schooners at anchor in a narrow passage that I had to pass called the Detour. Only having two boats and 18 seamen with few arms and knowing the enemies schooners each had a long 24pr. and forty men I put my men into an Indian canoe and passed them in the night with the intention of applying to the Officer at Michilimackinac for a few soldiers, that I might cut them out.***

***He complied with my wishes; I returned and finding only one, at night I boarded and took her with the loss of two killed and seven wounded. She proved to be the American Schooner Tygres mounting a long 24 pr. and 40 men. They had 4 killed and 3 thrown overboard and drowned and five wounded.***

***She informed me the other schooner would be back next day therefore I remained at anchor and sent my prisoners away and prepared to attack her. The following morning she hove in sight I directly cut my cable and ran down to her, boarded her and took her after a sharp resistance***

***She proved to be the American Schooner Scorpion mounting a long 24 and a long 12 pr. We had two wounded, the enemy had 2 killed and 4 wounded. Thus you see after a Series of hardships I have got two schooners both finer vessels than the Nancy and have providentially escaped unhurt.***

***I shall once more be able to make a trip to this Island with protons before I shall lay my vessel up for the winter it being out of my power to navigate this Lake after the 1st of November it being covered with ice and so very cold that you can scarce show your nose out.***

***In case you should be at a loss to know the importance of keeping this Island, it is the key for the North West Fur Trade and a head post of the Indian Warriors who are a fierce race of men. I must now conclude having letters on service to write and the time short You will see my dispatches in the paper.***

***Remember me to my dear mother and all at home.  
I remain your Ever Dutiful and affectionate son,***

***M. Worsley***

## **Aviation History**

On **August 8, 1934**, a small twin engine airplane named the '**Trail of the Caribou**', took off from the shore of Wasaga Beach, headed for the city of Baghdad. Thirty hours and 55 minutes later, it set down in Heston Airport, Middlesex, England, ending **the first successful flight from mainland Canada to Britain.**

### **Record Breaking Attempt**

The flight was an attempt to set a long distance flying record of **6,300 miles**, covering half the North American continent, the entire Atlantic Ocean and Europe. The previous record was held by Codos and Rossi, two Frenchmen, for a 5,657.6 mile flight from New York to Rayak, Syria. That August 5-7, 1933 flight lasted **56 hours and 12 minutes.**

### **The Pilots**

The 'Trail of the Caribou' was piloted by two young flyers, Wing Commander J.R. Ayling and Captain Leonard Reid. R.E. Nicoll, writing for *Canadian Aviation*, called them "*a delightfully casual and happy-go-lucky couple of fellows*" who were not concerned with such details as barographs, licenses, regulations, etc.

### **Leonard Gillespie Reid**

*Born:* March 28, 1900 in Montreal, Quebec

*Parents:* Sir William Duff Reid and Lady Reid

*Before the Flight:* Lived in Nfld, worked at aeroplane factories in Toronto and England

*Age at Time of Flight* 29

*Died:* October 14, 1939 in an automobile accident in England Buried at Studham, Bedfordshire, England.

### **James R. Ayling**

*Born:* November 15, 1905 in Berhampur Madras Presidency, S. India

*Parents:* Sir William Bock Ayling and Emma Graham

*Before the Flight.*- Reserve of Air Force Officers from 1928-1933 as a Flying Officer, serving in Singapore

*Age at Time of Flight.*- 29

*After the Flight.* - Served for 6 years with the Royal Air Force during WWII  
*Died:* Unknown

### **The Plane**

In July of 1933, Captain James Mollison and his wife Amy Johnson made a flight westward from Pendine, Wales to Bridgeport, Connecticut, on a **De Havilland "Dragon"** bearing the name "**Seafarer**". The aircraft was wrecked in landing at Bridgeport. The Mollisons attempted a second flight eastward across the Atlantic from Wasaga Beach. The "**Seafarer II**" was damaged in take-off in **October 1933**.

This plane was then rebuilt and rechristened "Trail of the Caribou" by Ayling and Reid. The De Havilland "Dragon" biplane had two De Havilland 130 h.p. "Gipsy-Major" engines. The aircraft was a standard **8-passenger** commercial type; **39 feet long** with a **wing span of 48 feet**. An **extra gas tank was installed in the fuselage** to hold **603 gallons** (4200 lbs) of gasoline. The normal load for a "Dragon" was **60 gallons** (420 lbs) of gasoline. **The aircraft weighed 7350 lbs, 2750 lbs over its normal, authorized weight**. The twin engines consumed approximately **9.3 gallons** per hour. With the load they were carrying the plane would have had a range of 65 hours in the air.

### **On Board**

To save weight, the aircraft carried **no radio, special navigation equipment,** spares or other parts usually carried. Food supply, sufficient for **three to four days,** included a large container of water, sandwiches, six tins of pork and beans, four pounds of roast pork, a dozen hard-boiled eggs, two quarts of coffee, two quarts of orange juice and 24 caffeine pills. During the 30 hours in the air, they consumed only some **orange juice, coffee and water,** leaving their stock of food untouched.

### **Shift Work**

Reid and Ayling reported that at first they took three hour "spells" at the controls, until this became boring and they shortened the periods to two hours.

### **Flight Details**

*August 8, 1934*

6:12 am EDST

Ran a mile down the beach and took off

Good weather, slight off-shore breeze

Followed the St. Lawrence River eastward; sighted at several points en route:

Peterborough, Quebec City, etc...

4:25 pm EDST

Seen over Belle Isle Strait, flying at an average of 100 miles per hour

6:15 pm EDST

Experienced 6 to 8 hours of fog forcing them to fly blind; only catching site of the water through breaks in the fog

*August 9, 1934*

6:15 am EDST

Sighted Ireland, almost exactly on the course plotted for the flight

5:55 pm W or 12:55 pm EDST  
Seen over Stag Lane aerodrome near London, England

6:07 pm W or 1:07 pm EDST  
Aircraft landed at Heston Airport, Middlesex, England after flying approximately 3 500 miles  
After clearing with Customs they flew a short distance to Hatfield; the De Havilland Company's airfield, where Reid telephoned his mother, Lady Reid, in London

### **The Problem**

As the "Trail of the Caribou" flew through the fog banks over the ocean the **carburetors** froze open. As a result, the **gas consumption had risen** from the expected 10 gallons per hour to 17 or 18 gallons per hour. The engines, otherwise, gave them no trouble. The men realized that the rapidly diminishing supply of fuel made it impossible for them to reach their objective of setting a new distance record. Their controls had also jammed several times. When they landed in Heston 200 gallons of gasoline remained in the fuel tanks. They had completed about one-half of the proposed course.

### **The Landing**

An eye-witness of the landing at Heston said: *"Their arrival was without fuss of any kind. It was all done as nonchalantly as if they had come from just round the corner, and after having passed through the Customs they took off at 6:40 p.m. for Hatfield, and landed there at 7:35 p.m."*

### **Records Broken**

There had been 22 previous non-stop west to east flights across the North Atlantic by aeroplanes, including 10 from Newfoundland, but the Ayling-Reid flight was the **first from the mainland of Canada to Britain**. It was the first west to east crossing with Gipsy engines.

## **The Nottawasaga River**

### **Native History on the River**

Archaeologists believe that Natives used the area surrounding the Nottawasaga as early as 11,000 years ago. Today remnants from Native history are still being discovered along the river, proving how valuable the Nottawasaga has been throughout its long history.

### **Archaic Period            7,000BC - 1,000BC**

The Nottawasaga river was formed about 5,500 years as a drainage route for a lagoon trapped between the high dunes and Georgian Bay. There is fragmented evidence that Archaic people inhabited the shores of this lagoon as most of Wasaga Beach was underwater at this time. As the lagoon shrank, the Nottawasaga began to take the shape we see today.

### **Woodland Period        1,000BC - 1400AD**

The Nottawasaga saw many Natives during the Woodland period. Artifacts linked to the Saugeen peoples have been found in many spots along the river. The Saugeens were the first peoples to make pottery, and many fragments of their pottery have been uncovered. As a people, the Saugeens were more numerous and highly organized than earlier cultures, although like their Archaic predecessors, the

Saugeens were seasonal visitors who came to hunt, fish and gather edible plants only found in the dunes area.

The vast majority of Aboriginal burials and camps found along the river can be traced to the cultures of the Middle Woodland Period and in May 1995, another site was discovered dating from this time.

The Later Woodland period saw the Iroquois people, either Huron or Petun, using the Nottawasaga as fishing grounds. An anterior trail between the Huron and Petun settlements followed along the south side of the river joining the Petun community near Collingwood and the Huron settlement in Huronia. These nations cultivated such crops as corn, squash and tobacco, so they would not have settled permanently on the sandy infertile grounds along the river.

### **Pre Historic and Historic Period      1400AD - present**

French explorers and Jesuit priests arrived in Huronia about 1615 and allied themselves with the Hurons, who undoubtedly showed the Europeans the profitable Nottawasaga route. The Iroquois used the same route to attack the Huron and Petun leading to the fall of Huronia in 1650. It is possible that the river was used by the Chipewa and Algonquin peoples in the fur trade with the English although this trade was short lived. After the defeat of New France in 1760, the Nottawasaga continued to be used for First Nations and European trade and became a key link in the trade route between the Northwest and the St. Lawrence.

Since the early 1800s, the river has seen the War of 1812, Schooner Town, lumbering, the age of tourism, and the birth of the Wasaga Beach Community. It is a river rich with natural life and a remarkable history that is greatly unknown.

### **British Sailors**

British Sailors were employed through his majesty's Royal Navy, one of the most important aspects of British military offence and defence. Life was hard for sailors, and the conditions of living - food, clothing, pay - were all substandard.

#### **Impressment**

The 'press' gang was hated and feared by all young men. Officially, only seamen could be pressed into His Majesty's service. Consequently, the gangs usually tried to obtain experienced sailors from merchant ships or deserters from the Royal Navy; but in times of emergency, the gang often overstepped its powers and nabbed any young man available. This often led to very young men, often times orphans and street youth, being forced into the navy. These young boys, as young as 10 years old, could often be a challenge since most were uneducated and inexperienced in formal discipline. The majority of sailors could not read, or swim, and had little life experience before the navy. Such aggressive impressment, also known as "hot press", was discontinued following 1815.

#### **Volunteer**

**Fifteen percent of seamen were volunteers.** Their reasons for volunteering were manifold. Some sought travel and adventure. Others were motivated by the promise of steady employment; while others joined in order to help defend their country.

Whatever their reasons, volunteers signed on for the duration of the ship's commission. This could be as short a term as three years. However, few served out their time as the harsh conditions often drove them to desertion.

### **Pay**

The rate of pay was totally inadequate. In 1805, while the private soldier was paid a shilling a day the ordinary seaman received by 19 shillings per month, the equivalent of \$2.09 a month in the 1990s. This sum did not allow the sailor to furnish himself with even the barest of necessities. Indeed, most seamen were in debt to the ship's purser for their clothing.

### **Clothing**

#### **Sailors:**

The uniform of a seaman in the Royal Navy was not definitely established until 1857. A customary dress had been adopted by 1800, but uniformity was not encouraged by the majority of captains. On most ships any decent cloths would pass muster. The only exception was the crew of the captain's gig. They were outfitted in special uniforms at the captain's own expense. These uniforms were often outlandish. For example, the gig's crew of the HMS Harlequin were dressed as harlequins.

"Slops" was the name given to the articles of clothing made available for sale to the seamen under the supervision of the purser. Supplies were often inadequate in quantity and quality. This system began in 1623 and by 1814 clothing available to the seamen had become standardized throughout the Royal Navy. This included:

- blue outside jackets
- red and white inside jackets
- white and blue trousers
- tarpaulin hat
- black silk handkerchief
- colours of shirts and frocks was not standard

When they enlisted in the navy seamen were issued as many of these articles as their first two month's salary would allow. Sailors invariably made decorative additions to their clothing.

### **Voyageurs**

#### **Voyageurs**

[Voyageurs](#) were tough and hard transporters of fur cargo for either the North West Company or the Hudson's Bay company. They had a unique and colourful character that was born from their extreme lifestyle and required tenacity. Most voyageurs were French Canadian men although there were some of Irish, Scottish, and English decent. There are even stories of other voyageur backgrounds, including that of Pierre Bongo, a West Indian voyageur.

#### **Size**

Voyageurs were preferably under 5,6" since shorter legs and bodies would take up less room in a boat, providing more room for valuable goods. Nonetheless, voyageurs had to be strong and sturdy men with good upper body strength. The

average voyageur was expected to handle two ninety-pound fur filled pieces on his back.

### **Positions**

Several voyageurs would travel in bateaus, depending on the size. There were three positions in particular: **the gouverneil** - who guided the crew from the stern and was often best paid since he was a fine singer, and therefore a fine crew leader; the **l'avant** - who worked at the front of the boat to watch for deadheads and rocks, and guide through rapids; and the **milieux** - the hardworking paddlers who sat in the middle of the bateau, often younger and newer voyageurs.

### **A Day in the Life**

While working, voyageurs travelled throughout the entire day with an effort to be efficient in distance and time. The average day might have been to wake up at 2am and paddle for several hours until breakfast around 8am. **Voyageurs paddled up to 18 hours a day**, often at a rate of **one stroke per second**. As well as long hours through all kinds of weather, the voyageur made innumerable portages where he carried back breaking packs. This brutish work wore him out early and many voyageurs only live into their late thirties.

### **Bateaux**

The most common mode of transportation was the bateau (see water travel section). Most often, the large **canot du maitre** was used, stretching 36 feet and weighing 600 pounds. It required at least 12 men to paddle it, and could carry **8820 pounds of supplies - the equivalent of 440 cases of soda pop**. On narrower rivers, smaller canoes called **canots du nord** transported supplies. These smaller canoes needed only two paddlers and could be carried when the voyageurs had to portage around rapids and between rivers.

### **Clothing**

Most voyageurs wore bright and colourful shirts made of durable material. Often the material would be from their wives, and consequently floral patterns were frequent. For pants, voyageurs wore front patch pants made of thick material such as wool or corduroy. On their feet, deerskin moccasins and leggings were an ideal choice for long portages through the forest and comfort in and out of the bateau. These leggings/moccasins often came from Native traders that met them at northern posts. During cold months, a **capot**, or capote, usually blue, was worn by the voyageurs. The hooded great coat was made from a blanket or blanket material. Those worn by French Canadian habitants were mostly made from homespun. During several months of the year, a knitted toque was used to keep away flies and sunstroke; likewise, many voyageurs grew their hair long at the back to protect their face and neck. The most common feature of voyageur clothing was the **ceinture flechee** - a brightly coloured woven sash worn around the waist. Depending on the pattern and colours, the ceinture flechee was symbolic of the voyageur's home community and region.

### **Cargo**

The trade goods the voyageurs carried suited the needs of the wilderness. Rum, guns, ammunition, twist tobacco, knives, traps, axes, blankets, cloth - all of these were traded for furs, as were **made-beavers**, a trading token used as money. The furs were consequently much more valuable than the goods they were traded for and the financial equivalent for their trade would have equaled a four hundred percent

profit. As a result, voyageurs often referred to their fur cargo as soft gold. Voyageurs transported their furs in **90 pound pieces** - fur wrapped in cloth and bound with thick string.

### **Food**

Fresh food was difficult to come by for a traveling voyageur. Often they would make themselves pea soup using dried peas and animal fat, and dried fruits were often consumed on long trips. Fishing for a meal was a normal source of nutrition as well, but perhaps the most common food source for voyageurs was bannock:

3 cups of flour

1 tbsp baking powder

1 tsp salt

1-2 cups of water

Mix flour, baking powder, salt (and optional sugar).

Add the water all at once and stir until all ingredients are well blended. Cook in a greased pan over a fire or on a stick.

Serve bannock by dipping in pea soup, or with butter and jam.

### Naval Officer

Dress uniforms were worn for formal occasions. Undress uniforms were worn when performing duties aboard ship or on the post. Often, officers stationed in wilderness areas adopted clothing better suited to the rough terrain and lifestyle. The undress uniform consisted of:

-frock uniform

-blue pantaloons

-black boots

-black belt to hold sword

-glazed cock hat

The full dress uniform included:

-plain navy blue coat

-lapels on coat buttoned back

-one epaulette on right shoulder

-waistcoat

-gold laced cocked hat worn fore and aft

-black stock around neck

-belts worn over coat

-plain boots

### **Hair**

Between 1800 to 1815 the fashion was to wear pigtails, doubled up on weekdays but on smart occasions the pigtails were worn down. Teased out oakum was often woven into the hair for decoration. Earrings were popular as they were believed to improve eyesight.

## **Food**

The proposed ration per day to be issued to each member of the Nancy crew between November 1, 1813 and May 31, 1814 (213 days) was as follows:

One pound of beef  
One half pound of flour  
One half pint of peas  
One gill of rum

In addition one half bushel of potatoes per week was requested. However, according to Alexander Mackintosh's accounts, many supplies were never received or substitutions were made.

Salt pork was supplied more often than beef. As well, there was a daily ration of whiskey or rum. Special issues were made for occasions such as Christmas. The salt provisions which comprised the bulk of the sailor's diet caused the seaman to be very prone to **scurvy**. To combat this hideous disease **lime juice** was issued on long voyages and on the Great Lakes as a preventative. One staple of the seaman's diet was ship's biscuit or hard-tack.

### *Recipe for hard-tack*

3 cups whole wheat flour  
1 tsp baking powder  
water (enough to moisten)

Shape by hand (approximately 3" circumference, 1 " thick). Carve a broad arrow in it with a knife. Bake 15 minutes in a 400 F oven or until cooked. One biscuit equals 2-3 slices of bread. Hard-tack can be stored for months. It becomes very hard, hence its name. When serving, be sure to knock each on the table to get rid of bugs.

## **Weapons**

At the beginning of the 19th century, carronades were the most common type of gun found on Royal Navy vessels. They were lighter, shorter, and more accurate than cannon and required fewer men to fire them. The name 'carronade' is taken from the Carron foundry in Sterlingshire, Scotland, where they were manufactured. Calibres ranged from six to sixty-eight pounds. (*For more information, see Weaponry section*) Cutlasses, boarding pikes, pistols, and muskets were used in hand to hand combat.

## **Hierarchy**

### **Admiral**

Commodore

Captain over three years

Captain under three years

Commander, Master of the Fleet

Lieutenant over eight years

Lieutenant under eight years, Master Surgeon, Purser, Junior Flag Officer, Paymaster

Mate

Midshipman

Volunteer first class

Volunteer

Ships of the line and larger frigates were commanded by post captains. Smaller vessels of less than 38 guns were under the command of a commander or a lieutenant, but they were commonly referred to as captain.

### **Punishment**

Drinking and gambling were allowed on board ship, but discipline was rigidly enforced for drunkenness, disobedience, theft and other such offences. Lashes with the [cat o'nine tails](#) was a common punishment. Execution was for infractions such as desertion to the enemy, murder, or cowardice in battle. Punishment in the Royal Navy was not as severe as it was in the army. *(For more information, read the punishment display in museum)*

### **Ojibway Natives**

#### **Ojibway Natives**

By 1812, Native cultures in the upper Great Lakes region had lost many of the tribal customs practised prior to European contact. Traditional hunting grounds had been infringed upon and lifestyle and economy became more dependent on the furtrade. As a result, many Native peoples became dependent on the furtrade for tools, weapons, utensils, clothing, and food. Most adopted the semi-nomadic lifestyle of the Great Lakes Ojibway.

#### **Clothing**

Often, a beaded headband was tied around hair of various lengths. A long sleeved, hip length shirt made of imported cloth was tied at the waste by a colourful sash. Woollen blankets decorated with ribbon applique were worn as outer clothing and used as sleeping robes. Cloth or leather leggings were secured by a leather thong around hips. An "**assian**", a leather piece 1'x 5', was passed between the legs and flaps hung over a thong around their waist. Both were decorated with bead work. Leather moccasins were decorated with beads of porcupine quills. Neck ornaments included strings of coloured glass beads and silver gorgets worn on a leather thong. A knife was often carried at the waist.

#### **Food**

Snares, steel traps and flintlock guns were used to capture forbearing animals, especially the beaver. The meat of the animals was eaten and the skins were traded for foods such as flour, corn and wild rice. Some Native people practised summer farming. The land was cleared by cutting and burning. Seeds were forced by soaking in water a number of days. Depending on the climate, **corn, beans, squash, peas, watermelon and tobacco** were planted but the crops were tended to infrequently. The Natives left their fields for fishing camps. Sturgeon, bass, whitefish and others were harpooned, hooked or netted and dried for winter. Wild rice was also gathered in the marshes during the summer. However, when they harvested their crops, they sold them to the furtraders. Because of this practice, they were dependent on British food as well as the tools to produce it.

#### **Lifestyle**

Social structures had adapted to the economic requirements of the fur trade.

Trapping caused families to live in isolated areas and gave them economic independence from the tribe or band. This undermined the authority of chiefs. Religious authority also broke down, mainly due to the influence of the Christian missionaries.

## British Soldiers

Officers coming from the higher classes of British society were usually well educated and used their wealth to buy official ranks. The regular enlisted men were recruited from the lower classes and were often illiterate. Rank afforded many privileges; better supplies, comfortable quarters and servants. Living conditions for a soldier were terrible. Quarters were overcrowded, poorly heated and usually in need of repair. Rations were meagre and of poor quality.

Enlistment was for life, but life was short. Medical services did little to lengthen a soldier's lifespan. A severe wound to a limb generally meant amputation and quite often eventual death. It was impossible to keep a battalion at full strength because of diseases, desertion and death. If this life was hard on the soldiers, it was also hard on the **wives and children** who followed their men into the field. The army "**camp followers**", earned their keep cooking, cleaning, laundering and even helping their men in the battlefield.

### Clothing

Soldiers were most recognizable by their **red regimental coat** - cut short in the front and long in the back, with buttons and details signifying their particular regiment. The coat had shoulder tufts to make the soldiers appear larger and more intimidating. On their heads, the **shako** was worn by all soldiers, with coloured tufts sticking out of the top to signify rank. The shako was very high to make the soldiers appear taller. All soldiers wore a bayonet belt and a pouch belt, which created a white cross across the front of the soldiers uniform. Every soldier also wore a **stock**; a leather band that encircled the neck, fastened by a clasp at the back. The stock was in place to give the soldiers an attentive and heightened posture. For pants, the soldiers wore **pantaloon**s, made with canvas white or woolen gray material.

### Food

Food in the British army was poor, and provisions were short. Since all ranks were required to pay for their own food, there was a great disparity between the diet of the enlisted man and the officer. Fresh meat was uncommon, and rations of pork and beef were salted to preserve them. The only way to prepare salted meat was to boil it, usually in a stew. Each man was issued a ration of **meat, peas, rice, flour and biscuit each day**. Butter and maple sugar could be purchased from local merchants at very high prices. Liquor in the army was a grace and not a part of the soldier's daily rations.

### A Day in the Life

A soldier's day began with the sun's rise. Throughout the day, he would have several drills to keep him in fighting practice. In his spare time, the soldier could work on his trade, carpentry, cobbling, etc.) Clean his musket or chop wood. Since gambling was

forbidden, and most men could not read or write, drinking was a common activity in spare time. Drinking was not punished unless it resulted in drunkenness.

### **Hierarchy**

The tenth Royal Veteran Battalion was raised in 1807. Its authorized strength is an example of numbers and hierarchy:

- 1 Colonel
- 1 Lieutenant Colonel
- 1 Major
- 10 Captains
- 10 Lieutenants
- 10 Ensigns
- 1 Adjutant
- 1 Quartermaster
- 1 Paymaster
- 1 Surgeon
- 2 Assistant Surgeons
- 30 Sergeants
- 40 Corporals
- 20 Drummers
- 610 Privates

### **Punishment**

Punishment was severe in the British Army. The stoppage of grog was a favourite punishment for less serious infractions. For more serious offences, flogging was the penalty. Execution was reserved for desertion, cowardice in battle, mutiny, sleeping on a post, corresponding with an enemy, or striking an officer.

### **Native People**

By 1812, native culture in the Upper Great Lakes region had lost many of the tribal customs practised prior to contact with Europeans. Traditional hunting grounds were abandoned for locations near furtrading centres and along trading routes. They became dependent on the furtrade for tools, weapons, utensils, clothing, ornaments and food that they had once produced themselves. Most adopted the semi-nomadic lifestyle of the Ojibwa, and bands of various tribes merged into a Pan-Indian culture.

### **Clothing**

A beaded headband was tied around greased hair of various lengths. Long-sleeved, hip-length shirt made of imported cloth was tied at waist by colourful sash. Woolen blankets decorated with ribbon appliqué (ribbon was cut into designs and patterns sewn onto leather or cloth of another colour.) were worn as outer clothing and used as sleeping robes.

Cloth or leather leggings were secured by leather thong around hips. An "assian", a leather piece 1' x 5', was passed between the legs and the flaps hung over a thong around the waist. Both were decorated with bead work. another colour. thong around waist. Both

Leather moccasins were decorated with beads of porcupine quills. Neck ornaments included strings of coloured glass beads and silver gorgets worn on a leather thong. A knife was carried in a sheath at the waist.

Silver ornaments were specially crafted by British smiths for the furtrade.

### **Food**

Snares, steel traps and flintlock guns were used to capture furbearing animals, especially the beaver. The meat of the animals was eaten and the skins were traded for foods such as flour, corn and wild rice.

Some native peoples practised summer farming. The land was cleared by cutting and burning. Seeds were forced by soaking in water a number of days. Depending on the climate, corn, beans, squash, peas, watermelon and tobacco were planted but the crops were tended infrequently. The natives left their fields to set up fishing camps. Sturgeon, bass, whitefish and others were harpooned, hooked or netted and dried for winter. Wild rice was also gathered in the marshes during the summer.

However, when they harvested their crops, they sold them, the fish and the wild rice to the furtraders. Because of this practice, they were dependent on the British for food as well as the tools to produce it.

### **Sagamite (Corn Soup)**

Pound dried corn into meal.

Add 3 handfuls of corn meal to pot of boiling water (1.5 litres).

Stir constantly.

Add cooked venison, cooked fish, squash or beans.

Simmer for at least an hour.

### **Flat Bread**

Mix corn meal with water to make dough Form dough into small loaves.

Wrap in corn leaves.

Bake in hot coals.

Add beans, wild berries or maple sugar if available.

### **Lifestyles**

Social structures had adapted to the economic requirements of the furtrade.

Trapping caused families to live in isolated areas and gave them economic independence from the tribe or band. This undermined the authority of the tribal chiefs. Religious authority also broke down, mainly due to the influence of the Christian missionaries. Their lifestyle was almost identical to the white men living among them.

### **Reasons For Being Involved In The War of 1812**

In 1755, the British Indian Department began a successful tradition of maintaining the native people as allies. Many of the officers of this department had acquired a strong personal hold over the various bands and tribes by marrying native women. At annual ceremonies, large numbers of presents such as blankets, ornaments, tools, guns and ammunition were given to the Indians by the British government as signs of friendship. These ties became even more important to the security of the colony of Upper Canada when the United States declared war. There was no hope of reinforcements from Britain since all forces were committed to the European conflict.

General Brock actively sought the support of native peoples. He realized that without them it would be almost impossible to defend the British position.

It was not difficult to enlist native warriors especially those under the leadership of Tecumseh who became known as the Shawnee Prophet. They hoped to regain the land lost in the United States - Indian wars which ended in 1795. Early successes by the British, the capture of Fort Mackinac and the surrender of Detroit, insured support by the natives of the Northwest throughout the two year conflict.

## VOYAGEURS

Contrary to popular belief, voyageurs were not all French Canadians. Many were also hired from the British Isles. Trading furs was far better than struggling to make ends meet on a St. Lawrence farm or starving in Ireland when famine hit. The furtrade offered a life free of family responsibilities. The wilderness was beautiful, and food was not scarce in the bush. Relations with the native peoples were good. The voyageurs respected their way of life and learned many things from them. The birch bark canoe, shoes, and foods were adopted from the natives.

[Voyageurs](#) were short in stature, generally 5'6" tall. A short man took up less space in the canoe and could travel more quickly through dense forest. A voyageur had to be tough, strong and excellent at his job, or he was not re-hired for the following season. Because of the demanding nature of their job, voyageurs were very proud. A zest for life and a love of high adventure, accompanied with a devil-may-care attitude, was reflected in their songs. The voyageur's life was full of danger. Each day they risked their lives - shooting rapids, fighting with whirlpools and bypassing waterfalls. A carefree attitude and cheerful songs were necessary to combat the fear and kill the monotony of constant paddling.

### Clothing

Voyageurs liked to show off their person, especially when arriving at their destination. The leaders of the group often wore a top hat of beaver felt trimmed with ostrich feathers. The voyageur was provided with blanket, two pairs of trousers, and two shirts by the Company.

**Toque** - usually red wool

**Shirt** - The sleeve design and loose fit make for ease of arm movement. The collar, which is typical of early nineteenth century work shirts, may be buttoned or left open. Historic fabrics included cottons of all kinds, especially calicos of bright colours, often striped or printed with a delicate pattern. Also used for shirts was flannel, a loosely woven woolen material usually coloured or checked.

**Ceinture Flechee** - a colourful, rather gaudy sash worn around the waist.

**Mocassins** - adopted from the Indians and worn without stockings.

**Trousers** - Winterers in the North West hinterland often wore trousers of dressed leather made from the skins of animals hunted in the area. The scarcity of big game, as well as the dictates of fashion, made imported textiles the common material for trousers. A wide range of cloth was used for trousers made from such fabrics as Russia duck (a strong, untwilled sail-like linen) corduroy, gray, blue, or olive colour cloth of coarse wool, and striped cottons similar to ticking. The front-fall, full seat, and lace back are features of trousers worn by voyageurs and other workmen of the period.

**Capot (or Capote)** - During cold months, a capot, usually blue, was worn by the

voyageurs. The hooded great coat was made from a blanket or blanket material. Those worn by French Canadian habitants were mostly made from homespun.

### **Food**

Food for the voyageur was greatly restricted by what they could carry with them in the canoe, or pick up along the way. Dried and preserved foods such as peas, beans, corn, sea biscuits and salt pork were a major part of the voyageur diet. Local items often available on their journey were: berries, bird eggs, fish, turtles, muskrat and honey. The diet of native peoples greatly influenced that of the voyageur. For instance, an easy quick meal similar to pork and beans was an Indian maize mix with suet and bacon fat. Another handy native meal was pemmican, or pounded dried meat, usually buffalo. Wine and brandy were often mixed, and drunk to wash down an evening meal of pea soup.

### **Bannock or Galette**

Mix one cup of flour,  
two teaspoons of baking powder,  
1/2 teaspoon of salt, and  
one tablespoon of lard or shortening in a plastic bag.  
Scoop a hole in the middle of the mixture and pour about half a cup of water into the hole and mix with your fingers. When the dough is properly mixed, shape it into a cake and place in a greased frying pan. Place the pan by the fire. When the top turns brown, flip the bannock and bake on the other side.

### **A Day In The Life of a Voyageur:**

2:00 or 3:00 am	rise and set off in canoe
8:00 am	stop for a large breakfast
8:00 - 10:00 pm	paddle all day, then stop to set up camp for the night and eat supper
10:00 pm	retire for the evening

The work day lasted up to 18 hours. First thing in the morning, the camp was packed in the canoes and the paddling began. The pace was usually one stroke per second. Singing helped to set the paddling pace. The steersman chose the song and gave the pitch. Men with a good singing voice were paid extra. Frequent breaks were taken throughout the day for the voyageurs to smoke their pipes. Distance was measured by the pipe. One pipe was equal to 5 or 6 miles which took about 1 hour to travel. Paddling ceased only for a brief pause to eat lunch in the canoe and to traverse portages.

Certain areas of the waterways were too dangerous to travel in a canoe. When rapids were encountered, the canoes were unloaded and carried overland to calmer waters. On these portages, voyageurs carried two 90 lb. pieces or furbales on their backs. The work day ended anywhere between 8 and 10 o'clock in the evening. Camp was prepared while the cook made dinner. Pea soup was a common meal and extra was made for breakfast the next day. The voyageurs slept with their heads beneath an overturned canoe. In bad weather, a shelter was made by stretching a tarpaulin over the canoes. A smudge was lit to repel insects.

### **Reasons For Being Involved In The War Of 1812:**

War appealed to the voyageur's sense of honour and their adventurous spirit. British merchants were strongly opposed to the United States entering the lands controlled by their furtrading companies. As employees of those companies, the voyageurs were obligated to defend their companies' position. The voyageur way of life was threatened by the American invasion. If successful, American settlement would push into the remaining frontiers of the furtrade. The voyageurs took a stand to preserve their lifestyle.

### **Paddling Songs:**

To keep pace, voyageurs sang songs. Listen to the cheerful melody and fast beat of these songs, and try to imagine a canoe full of jovial voyageurs briskly cutting across the water.

**En Roulant Ma Boule** (Cross-Beggs, Barbara. Canadian Folk Songs For The Young)

**Alouette**

**A-La Claire Fontain**

## **British Sailor**

[Sailors](#) were often young when they entered the Royal Navy, often 10-12 years old. The sea offered them a better life than most could hope to achieve on the streets of Britain. Still in 1812, only 15% of seamen entering the Navy were volunteers. These men accepted a small bounty for signing on for service. A significant number of boys came to the Royal Navy from the Marine Society. The Society took in orphans, clothed them and fed them. If the boys remained long enough they received a grounding in elementary seamanship.

Three-quarters of the Royal Navy in 1812 was made up of men with some kind of marine experience. Unfortunately, 50% of the Navy was made up of impressed seamen. Although forced service was far from a satisfactory system of recruitment, it had a significant effect on the sailing ability and fighting efficiency of the Royal Navy relative to its foes.

**Shirt** - The seamen's shirt was often colourful. The blue and white checkered shirt was common, but it was by no means uniform. It was factory-made in one of the Lancashire cotton mills.

**Trousers** (trowzers; trowsers) - White canvas or duck trousers were hard wearing, durable and plentiful. They were easy to wash and patch. The bottoms of the pants' legs were flared enough so that they could be rolled up when a man swabbed or holy-stoned the deck - hence the beginnings of "bell-bottoms" worn first by seamen in the Royal Navy, and later by sailors of the Royal Canadian Armed Forces. By the War of 1812-1814, blue woolen trousers were also available as an issue to seamen.

**Waistcoat** - The waistcoat (vest) was a common upper undergarment beneath a jacket or coat. Dyed red, it was a contrasting or alternative colour to navy blue.

**Jacket or Coat** - The boatswain's (bo-sun) jacket is distinguished by white twill tape. The seaman's jacket was plain. The colour is "Navy blue". The boatswain was a senior non-commissioned officer responsible for sails, rigging, piloting, etc. The boatswain summoned the men to their duties with a whistle.

**Kerchief** - A coloured kerchief tied about the head was often preferred headdress in warmer weather. The gunners tied a kerchief about their ears in battle to prevent damage to their eardrums.

**Hat** - There was no regulation hat at the beginning of the 19th century. In cooler and wet weather a wide-brimmed tarred hat was preferred. The hat comprises several layers of shaped canvas painted with tar. A leather thong attached each end to the hat passes beneath the chin to prevent it being blown off in the wind. This hat may have been the forerunner of the sou'wester.

The hat was originally called a "tarpaulin", - giving rise to the name "Jack tar" or just "tar" for a sailor.

**Shoes** - Shoes were not always worn by sailors at sea: the seamen found a better grip on deck and the rigging barefoot.

## **FOOD**

As in the Army, meals in the Navy were generally poor, and monotonous. Typical meals were as follows:

**Breakfast** - oatmeal gruel, a toasted ship's biscuit, and a tankard of ale

**Lunch** - salt beef or boiled pork and hard tack (perhaps washed down with a pint of coarse red wine)

**Dinner** - salt beef or salt pork stew with whatever dried vegetables that were available, a biscuit, and ale.

Each man was issued a gallon of ale per day. A tot of rum was delivered to the men each day, usually at noon. This was to be drunk right away, and not saved for a binge. Sailors suffered from scurvy because their provisions often turned rancid and their diets lacked nutrients. To combat this, the Royal Navy carried barrels of lime juice and forced the sailors to drink it. As a result, British sailors came to be called "limeys" and Britain had the healthiest navy on the seas.

## **HARD TACK**

3 cups whole wheat flour

1 tablespoon baking powder water (enough to moisten)

Shape by hand (approximately 3" circumference, 1" thick).

Carve a broad arrow in it with a knife.

Bake 15 minutes in a 400o F oven or until cooked.

One biscuit equals 2-3 slices of bread.

Hard tack can be stored for months.

It becomes very hard (hence its name).

When serving, be sure to knock each on the table to get rid of bugs.

## **A Day In The Life Of A Sailor:**

Midnight - 4:00 am

Midwatch

4:00 am - 8:00 am

Morning Watch

8:00 am - Noon

Forenoon Watch

Noon - 4:00 pm

Afternoon Watch

4:00 pm - 6:00 pm

First Dog Watch

6:00 pm - 8:00 pm

Second Dog Watch

8:00 pm - Midnight

Night Watch

Seamen were responsible to keep watch on the ship. Each watch was replaced by a new guard. Once finished his watch, a seamen would probably return below deck to his mess. There he might sling his hammock and rest, or while away his spare time whittling, carving or embroidering. If he had a mate more literate than himself, he

might ask for help writing a letter home. Smoking was only allowed in the galley because it was the only place on board with a brick floor, and fire was a very real danger.

Music was an important part of a sailor's life. Shanties were songs that led work. Lines were coiled and sails were raised to song. The tin whistle often accompanied these songs to which sailors danced hornpipes.

Drinking and gambling were allowed on board ship. But discipline was rigidly enforced for drunkenness, disobedience, theft and other such offenses. Lashes with the cat o'nine tails was a common punishment. Execution was for infractions such as desertion to the Enemy, murder or cowardice in battle. Punishment in the Royal Navy was not as severe as it was in the Army.

### **Reasons For Being In The War Of 1812**

Britain had lost the United States colonies in the American Revolution of 1776. The Royal Navy could not dominate the fleets of a formidable alliance between the American rebels and France. In the next thirty years, as antagonism between Britain and France increased, names such as Anson, Rodney, Hood and Nelson were etched into the fabric of the Royal Navy. When the hostilities exploded into the Napoleonic War, these men continued to improve the fighting performance of the Senior Service. Although the efforts of these professional men had made the Royal Navy the most powerful on the seas, the Navy lacked sufficiently experienced seamen. Press gangs were formed to board private vessels and force experienced men into the Royal Navy. This policy of impressment had been expanded during the Napoleonic War to include the boarding of foreign private ships, and was one of the reasons why the United States declared war on Britain in 1812.

### **Knot Tying**

During the era of the sailing ship a sailor had to be skilled at knot tying. Every good sailor would know the following knots.

**Reef Knot** - [The reef](#) knot lies flat and is well balanced. It is used by First Aiders to tie bandages and is a good knot for tying parcels.

**Bowline** - [The bowline](#) forms a strong, non-slipping loop in a rope end. It is easily untied. An excellent knot for tying a boat to a dock or making a loop in the end of a life line.

**Sheet Bend** - [The sheet bend](#) is used to tie two ropes together.

**Clove Hitch** - The main use for the [clove hitch](#) is to make fast the end of a rope to a post or other object. A clove hitch is used when loops may be slipped over the pole end. A clove hitch is used when the hitch must be made using the end of a rope.

### **SEA SHANTIES**

Sea shanties are songs that were sung by sailors to pace their work; hauling on lines, loading and unloading the ship, **or** swabbing the deck.

To see how useful these songs were, pretend you are a sailor pulling on a rope in time to the music.

### **The Quartermaster's Store**

This was the only store in which sailors could shop.

It was usually a dingy place with very few things for the sailors to buy.

There's cheese, cheese, with shocking dirty knees, In the stores, in the stores,  
There's cheese, cheese, with shocking dirty knees, In the Quartermaster's Stores.

**Chorus:** My eyes are dim, I cannot see,  
I have not brought my specs with me,  
I have not brought my specs with me.

There's eggs eggs on little bandy legs. **CHORUS**  
There's steak steak that keeps us all awake. **CHORUS**  
There's lard lard they sell it by the yard. **CHORUS**  
There's bread bread like great big lumps of lead. **CHORUS**  
There's kippers kippers that go about in slippers. **CHORUS**  
There's cake cake that gives us belly aches. **CHORUS**

### **The Sailors Alphabet**

If you are fond of sailing or sea lore you will enjoy this descriptive list of terms used by the crews of the old sailing ships. Besides helping the seamen to pull on ropes or haul up the anchor, such a song could spur new members of the crew into learning and understanding the ship's jargon. It might be a good idea to make up your own alphabet when you want to remember certain things.

Most of the terms are self-explanatory. For the ones which may be new to you, here are a few definitions.

**Capstan:** The anchor cable is wound around the capstan, and it took a team of men to push the capstan bars like a turnstile to make the capstan rotate. This work led to the singing of fairly long and continuous song which was called a capstan shanty - or a capstan-and windlass shanty if accompanied by pulling on the windlass.

**Davit:** - Small boats such as lifeboats are slung from davits.

**Hawser:** A very thick, strong rope.

In very early shipbuilding days it acted as a support for the hull of the ship in dry dock.

**Stuns'l boom:** The boom of the studding sail, which is held by the irons.

**Jib boom:** a spar projecting forward from the bow.

**Keelsons:** Timbers bolted inside the hull to the keel to give the hull strength, especially where the keel curves the most.

**Lanyards:** The stays and shrouds which support the masts are stretched by the lanyards

**Quadrant:** A navigational instrument for determining position.

**Windlass:** The anchor winch.

Oh, "A" is the anchor that holds a bold ship  
"B" is the bowsprit that often does dip;  
"C" is the capstan on which we do wind,  
and "D" is the davits on which the jolly boat hangs

**Chorus:** Oh, hi derry, hay derry, ho derry down!  
Give sailors their grog, and there's nothing goes wrong.  
So merry, so merry, so merry are we;  
No matter who's laughing at sailors at sea.

"E" is the ensign the red, white and blue;

"F" is the fo'c'sle, holds the ship's crew;

"G" is the gangway on which the mate takes his stand,  
And "H" is the hawser that seldom does strand.

### **Repeat Chorus**

"I" is the irons where the stuns'l boom sits  
"J" is the jib boom that often does dip;  
"K" is the keelsons of which you've heard told,  
And "L" are the lanyards that always will hold.

### **Repeat Chorus**

I'M" is the main mast so stout and so strong;  
"N" is the needle that never points wrong;  
"O" are the orders of which we must beware,  
And "P" are the pumps that cause sailors to swear

### **Repeat Chorus**

"Q" is the quadrant, the sun for to take;  
"R" is the riggin' that always does shake;  
"S" is the starboard side of our bold, ship,  
And "T" are the topmasts that often do split.

### **Repeat Chorus**

"U" is the ugliest old Captain of all;  
"V" is the vapour that comes with the squall;  
"W" is the windlass in which we do wind,  
And "X", "Y", and "Z", well I can't put in rhyme.

(Cross-Beggs, Barbara. Canadian Folk Songs For the Young)

### **Long Legged Sailor**

Players sit knee-to-knee. One may ask the question, the other answers, and they may take turns questioning and answering. They need not sing the stanzas in order, and may make up their own 'kinds' of life, i.e., "cotton-picking' life" (with picking motion of hands).

### **Key to Actions**

D - Both hands down on lap.  
T - Clap own hands together.  
R - Clap right hand to partner's right hand.  
L - Clap left hand to partner's left hand.  
Show - Show with hands as follows:

1. "Longlegged" - Throw hands quickly apart.
2. "shortlegged" - Hold hands a small distance apart.
3. "straight-haired" - Run flat hands along the sides of head.
4. "curly-haired" - "Curl" hair with index fingers.

B - Clap both hands with partner's hands.

1. Have you ever, ever, ever, in your longlegged\* life  
Seen a longlegged\* sailor with a longlegged\* wife?  
No, I've never, never, never in my longlegged\* life  
Seen a longlegged\* sailor with a longleggd\* wife

2. shortlegged\* 3. straight-haired\* 4. curly-haired\*

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## British Soldier

[Officers](#) coming from the higher classes of British society were usually well-educated and used their wealth to buy official ranks. The regular enlisted men were recruited from the lower classes and were often illiterate. Rank afforded many privileges; best supplies available, comfortable quarters and servants. Living conditions for the soldier were terrible. Quarters were overcrowded, poorly heated and usually in need of repair. Rations were meagre and of poor quality.

[Enlistment](#) was for life, but life was often short. Medical services did little to lengthen a soldier's lifespan. A severe wound to a limb generally meant amputation and quite often eventual death. It was impossible to keep a battalion at full strength because of disease, desertion and death. If this life was hard on the soldiers; it was also hard on the wives and children who followed their men into the field. The Army "campfollowers", earned their keep cooking, cleaning, laundering and even helping their men on the battlefield. Although difficult, the life of a soldier in North America was felt to be better than the conditions suffered by the soldier in Britain.

### Clothing For Work Parties:

[Smock and/or Apron](#)

[Pantaloons](#) - the leg length of the pantaloons went to above the ankle.

[Gaiters](#) - these covered the gap between the bottom of the pantaloons and the shoes.

Gaiters were worn with the buttons on the outside, and attached by a strap under the shoe.

[Forage Cap](#) - a soft woolen cap with a band of contrasting colour resembling a beret.

### Clothing For March

[Shako](#) (with oilskin covering) - this was worn perpendicular to the ground.

The peak was worn so low on the forehead that the sweatband nearly covered the eyebrows.

[Regimental Coat](#) - a coat cut short in front and long in the back. It was buttoned closed at all times.

[Bayonet Belt](#) - was rested over the right shoulder.

[Pouch and Pouch Belt](#) - crossed the chest from the left shoulder, and the pouch rested on the right hip.

[Stock](#) - a leather band that encircled the neck.

It was fastened in the back with a stock clasp and was covered by the coat collar.

[Knapsack](#) - this rested on the back.

**Canteen** - this was also hung from the right shoulder and rested on the left hip.

**Haversack** - this was hung from the right shoulder and rested on the left hip.

**Pantaloon** - when marching, they were usually tucked into the gaiters.

**Gaiters & Shoes**

### **Food**

Food in the British Army was poor, and provisions were often short. Men were allowed to hunt and fish. Fishing was more common because the men could not afford to pay for their own gunpowder and shot.

Therefore, fresh meat was uncommon, and rations of pork and beef were salted to preserve them. The only way to prepare salted meat was to boil it, usually in a stew.

Each man was issued a ration of meat, peas, rice, flour and biscuit each day.

Butter and maple sugar could be bought from local merchants at very high prices.

Liquor in the British Army was a grace and not a part of the soldier's daily rations. It was given to men doing hard labour (wood chopping and construction).

**Pease Porridge** - Put in a pot 1 cup peas per 1 1/2 litres water. Add some salt pork.

Boil until peas are soft, at least 2 hours. Simmer and serve. Soda

biscuits

may be added if desired.

### **Day In The Life Of A Soldier**

7:00 - 8:00 am Battalion Drill

9:30 - 10:30 am Defaulters Drill

10:00 am Guard Mounting

11:00 am Morning Parade

2:00 pm Battalion Drill

4:00 - 5:00 pm Defaulters Drill and  
Marked Men

5:00 pm Evening Roll Call

9:00 or 10:00 pm Retire

A soldier's day began with the sun's rise. Throughout the day, he would have several drills to keep him in fighting practice. In his spare time, the soldier could work on his trade (carpentry, cobbling, etc.), clean his musket or chop wood. Since gambling was forbidden, and most men could not read or write, drinking was a common activity in spare time. Drinking was not punished, unless it resulted in drunkenness.

Punishment was severe in the British Army. The stoppage, of grog (liquor) was a favorite punishment for less serious infractions. For more serious offences, flogging was the penalty. For this, the cat o'nine tails was used to whip the offender.

Execution was reserved for: desertion, cowardice in battle, mutiny, sleeping on a post, corresponding with an Enemy, or striking an officer.

### **Reasons For Being In The War of 1812:**

The men were ordered to fight in the War of 1812, and since the only legal way out of the Army was death or a disabling injury, they had little choice but to obey. At the outbreak of the war, there were only 2,420 British regulars stationed in Upper Canada. Upper Canada was directly threatened with invasion, but few troops could

be spared from the war in Europe. Therefore, a defence of Upper Canada was necessary because there were not enough men for an offence.

**Military Songs:**

**Napoleon** - from Singing Games Old and New. North Carolina, John c. Campbell Folk School 1932.

**The English Soldiers** - from Sally Go Round The Sun. Fowke, Edith