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FORT WELLINGTON: A NARRATIVE AND
STRUCTURAL HISTORY, 1812-38

by Robert J. Burns
(1979)

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Abstract

This history of Fort Wellington has been prepared to provide narrative and structural data for the use of the Fort Wellington National Historic Park planning team. The first section which deals with the period from the fort's initial construction during the War of 1812 until the coming of the Rebellion of 1837, stresses social and economic developments rather than the structural analysis of military buildings and installations. This emphasis has been chosen because the restoration period for Fort Wellington is the mid-1840s and none of the structures of the first fort, with the exception of the remains of the earthworks and the hospital building which is not crown property, survived during the period of the second fort.

The report begins with an overview of the economy of the St. Lawrence River and the Prescott area prior to and on the eve of the War of 1812 and examines the nature of the physical site of what would become the first Fort Wellington. The reasons for building a defence work at Prescott are discussed; the structures pertaining to the militia stockade and to the first fortification constructed under the supervision of Royal Engineers are then examined in some detail. Also looked at closely are the defence strategy for the river, its importance in the transportation of war supplies and material, and the use of gunboats on the river. Incidents and battles pertaining to the Prescott area are then described, followed by an assessment of the war's social and economic impact upon the growing community at Prescott. The nature of the post war military presence is then examined and the decline of the military structures is traced as

completely as possible. The final themes investigated in section one are the growing significance of Prescott's forwarding trade, the impact of increasing immigration on the local community, including the scourge of cholera, and, finally, the coming of the Rebellion and the border disturbances which led to the construction of the second Fort Wellington on the remains of the first fortification. Section one ends as this construction is about to begin.

Introduction: The Prescott Area Prior to the War of 1812

The St. Lawrence River has long been recognized as one of the major transportation and communications systems in North America, draining as it does much of the interior of the continent. The French of the Ancien Regime built several fortifications on it to protect their empire and fur trade, including Fort Frontenac (Kingston) near the entrance to the river and Oswegatchie (Ogdensburg) just above the beginnings of the rapids. In the later stages of the Seven Years' War, the French also briefly fortified two other spots, Point au Baril (Maitland) seven miles upstream from the future site of Prescott and Fort de Levis on Chimney Island opposite the site of Johnstown and three miles downstream from Prescott. They made no effort to settle along the shores of the St. Lawrence. Such settlement did not come until the 1780s and then as a direct result of the cataclysmic disruption of the British Empire in North America following the American Revolution.

After the surrender of General Cornwallis' army at Yorktown in 1781, the British commanders at New York and Quebec found themselves saddled with the welfare of a growing number of Loyalists and their families. These men, who had sided with the crown and in many cases fought against the revolution, found it necessary as the tide of battle turned against them to leave their homes and possessions for the relative security of the British lines. The British government recognized its responsibility towards these dispossessed people and began to undertake the largest demographic relocation ever witnessed on the continent. Some of the Loyalists returned to Britain while others settled in Nova

Scotia and the West Indies. Approximately 7,000 had made their way northward to Quebec and these were temporarily located at camps near Three Rivers and on the island of Sorel. The logistical problems of feeding, clothing and housing such a large number of people strained the resources even of the British army. To become permanently settled and self-sufficient they would need land, seed, implements, food and clothing.

After some hesitation General Frederick Haldimand, then governor of Quebec, determined to establish the Loyalists along the north shore of the St. Lawrence in western Quebec (now Ontario) beyond the fringe of the French speaking population. In 1783 and 1784, 12 townships were surveyed along the river and the shore of Lake Ontario west of Kingston. The Loyalists were to be settled according to their former military formations and within regiments by religious persuasion and ethnic background. Late in May 1784 the exodus began as the first of a flotilla of batteaux¹ left Sorel and began moving up river to the virgin forests of the new land.² Sir John Johnson's King's Royal Regiment of New York and the 84th Regiment or Royal Highland Emigrants took up the first five townships (then numbered consecutively rather than named) in the following order: Roman Catholic Highlanders, Scottish Presbyterians, German Calvinists, German Lutherans and Anglicans. The next three townships which would come to be named Edwardsburgh, Augusta and Elizabethtown were largely settled by members and families of Major Edward Jessup's Loyal Rangers.³ Part of Jessup's original grant fronting on the St. Lawrence at the eastern edge of Augusta Township and directly across from Ogdensburg was to become the site both of Prescott and Fort Wellington. Because the precambrian shield dipped across the St. Lawrence just above Elizabethtown (Brockville), creating the beautiful Thousand Islands but precluding large

scale agricultural settlement, the remaining four townships were laid out westward from Kingston to the Bay of Quinte. These last townships were divided among a group of Loyalists from New York City, the remainder of Jessup's Rangers, members of Johnson's second battalion and some men from Major James Roger's corps of Rangers. At the time General Haldimand left Canada late in 1784, he was able to report 6,152 Loyalists settled on the 12 townships stretched along the banks of the St. Lawrence and the north shore of Lake Ontario.⁴

Most of the Loyalists who fled northward at the conclusion of the Revolutionary War and subsequently settled in western Quebec were not men of wealth or education. Many had been clearing small farms on the New York frontier and were illiterate to the point of being unable to write their own names. Some, however, had been men of stature in their former communities. Major Jessup, for example, claimed to have lost an estate valued at £10,000 as a result of his flight.⁵ New land was apportioned according to former military rank: a private received 100 acres while Jessup's grant as a major was 1,200 acres; these figures were later raised substantially. Regardless of their former rank the Loyalists suffered severe material hardships in their first few years. Nor did the amount of uncleared land one received mitigate these initial trials. Though many had reached their lands by July 1784, it was too late to plant anything but fall wheat and since homes, usually log shanties, were essential for survival through the coming Canadian winter, there was but little time available for land clearing that first year. Fortunately the British government continued to issue rations until 1788 by which time hard work on the fertile land was beginning to bring a measure of prosperity to the new settlements. A partial crop failure that same year brought renewed, but temporary, difficulties.

Upon their first arrival the Loyalists had to contend not only with an unbroken forest but also with what they regarded as alien land holding and judicial systems. They found themselves holding land under the seigneurial system with the crown as their seigneur. For example, Lord Dorchester, Haldimand's successor, was quite prepared to retain for the crown the right to build grist and sawmills. On the one hand this system would have provided virtually free grinding services to the settlers. In practice, because the government had the resources to build but few mills initially, many Loyalists found themselves at impracticable distances from the King's mills. In addition many Loyalists soon came to suspect that their former officers were secretly endeavouring to retain in the new communities the social and political status which they had enjoyed in the military atmosphere of the late war. In short the Loyalists balked at the thought that, having wagered and lost all to remain under the constitution and laws of Great Britain, they might now lose those rights and responsibilities in their new home.

Lord Dorchester and the British government soon came to see the reason and justice of these arguments and, in 1791, the Constitutional Act permitted the division of the old province of Quebec into Upper and Lower Canada. The first legislature of Upper Canada, presided over by the energetic and enthusiastic John Graves Simcoe, introduced landholding in free and common soccage and made the criminal and civil law codes those of Britain. Lieutenant Governor Simcoe encouraged development and welcomed immigration to the nascent colony, even immigration from the United States, so certain was he of the superiority of British laws and institutions. Gradually the economy of Upper Canada began to grow and soon the colony was producing an excess of natural products and agricultural goods for export. The

route to Europe led, of course, down the St. Lawrence.

Major Edward Jessup's land grant of 1,200 acres was especially valuable not so much because of its extent, but because it fronted on the St. Lawrence, the natural transportation route to Montreal, Quebec and the continent. It also enjoyed the advantage of being situated at a widening of the river just upstream from the first of a 50 mile long series of traffic disrupting rapids. When Jessup first viewed this land in 1784, however, he was probably more impressed with its agricultural potential than with its strategic location for an as yet non-existent export trade. The presence of a detachment of British regulars at Oswegatchie (Ogdensburg) just across the river from his grant probably also added a measure of security to Jessup's first years on the St. Lawrence. Like the British troops at Oswego, Niagara, Detroit and Fort Miami, it was not until mid-1796 that those at Oswegatchie were withdrawn.⁶ Jessup spent his first years clearing his land and bettering himself materially. He also took a paternal interest in the welfare of those Loyalists late of his command and now settled nearby. The same tasks of clearing and improvement were occurring throughout the Loyalist communities and beyond, as immigrants continued to arrive from the United States. In time the original Loyalists began to impugn the motives of those whom they dubbed "late Loyalists" and, of course, one could question the loyalty to the crown of individuals who took perhaps 15 years to decide to leave the new republic. The Loyalists were but the vanguard of a larger westward population movement which was beginning to engulf the lower Great Lakes. The continued immigration led to changes in the makeup and basis of Upper Canadian society. By 1811 it was estimated that as little as one-sixth of the population of Upper Canada was Loyalist or of Loyalist descent while perhaps two-thirds were later immigrants from the United

States.⁷ This factor would have a profound, if equivocal, effect upon the course of events during the War of 1812.

The large influx of settlers also resulted in the rapid economic development of Upper Canada. Kingston from the first was the leading commercial community and, situated near the entrance to the St. Lawrence, was well located to serve as the forwarding depot for most of the colony.⁸ The town's foremost merchant Richard Cartwright wrote of an Upper Canadian grain surplus suitable for export as early as 1792.⁹ In 1794 Kingston shipped 12,823 bushels of wheat and 896 barrels of flour to Montreal, at the same time supplying 1,624 bushels and 3,596 barrels of flour to the British garrisons in Upper Canada.¹⁰ In 1801 Upper Canada exported 13,963 barrels of flour.¹¹ In addition, Napoleon's closure of European ports to British vessels in 1806 led to a loss of access to the Baltic timber stands upon which the British navy depended and resulted in an unprecedented demand for Canadian timber. Though it would be superseded later by the Ottawa River, the upper St. Lawrence became the major outlet for Britain-bound Upper Canadian timber prior to the War of 1812.¹²

Kingston's virtual monopoly of the St. Lawrence carrying trade did not long go unchallenged. The obvious spot for competition to develop was at that point on the river, just above the rapids, where lake vessels were forced to stop and unload their cargoes onto the smaller batteaux and Durham boats. In 1809 David Parish purchased the tiny village of Ogdensburg for \$8,000, as well as several schooners and Durham boats and proceeded into business.¹³ Kingston's forwarders retaliated with a price war which, with the divisive effects of the coming war, temporarily crippled the Ogdensburg venture.¹⁴

Major Jessup, situated just across from Ogdensburg, observed the increasing river trade and the efforts of Parish

with growing interest. In 1810 he had his property immediately west of his own farm surveyed into town lots and streets. In 1811 merchant William Gilkison moved from Elizabethtown, built Prescott's first house and inaugurated Prescott's age as a forwarding center.¹⁵ The onslaught of war quickened rather than crippled Prescott's trade.

The Physical Site, 1812

No detailed description exists of the state of development of Major Jessup's land on the eve of war. However, some scattered information is available on the town itself and on the future site of Fort Wellington. By 1812 much of Jessup's property near the river was cleared in at least a rough manner but that further back was yet untouched when he died in 1816 (see figure 2).¹⁶ Jessup's buildings, clustered along a tiny stream which emptied into the St. Lawrence, consisted of three houses, one of stone, which exists today in modified form, another of squared timber measuring 28 ft. by 30 ft. and the third described only as a "Dwelling house". There were two barns, one of which was frame and measured 30 ft. by 40 ft. Jessup also had at least two outbuildings, a small squared timber building just south of the stone house, which had originally been built by Jessup as a school and a store house.¹⁷ All of these buildings were either occupied by the militia and regular forces during the war or destroyed in the construction of Fort Wellington.

Jessup had 90 acres ploughed and under cultivation in 1812 and another 60 acres of meadow and grazing land.¹⁸ He had a garden and 37 mature apple trees as well as an orchard of "400 young fruit trees".¹⁹ He had also dug a well 27½ ft. deep and had lined it with stone probably from the quarry located on his property.²⁰ Finally, Jessup

could boast of having almost three quarters of a mile of fences surrounding his cleared property.²¹ Lest this description conjure up a vision of a cleared farm by modern standards, it must be noted that ugly stumps dotted the landscape even at the centre of Jessup's homestead.²²

Nevertheless, Jessup's was a relatively well developed and prosperous farm. The "improved Farm" and Farmhouse of a neighbour, Neil Robertson, were occupied and damaged by troops during the war. According to a later memorial the main house, garden, orchard and woods were badly damaged, the fences "wholly destroyed", meadow sod removed "for the use of Fort Wellington" and the income from the farm lost for a period of two years.²³ Robertson's heir received £194.7.6 in damages from the British government while Jessup's grandson was to obtain over £2,000 for his family's losses.²⁴

In 1812 Prescott itself was more a plan for the future than an actual town or village. An earlier remark concerning York (Toronto) by Hannah Jarvis, wife of the provincial secretary, that "Towns are rising in idea fast---are laid out on Maps very fine---but rise slowly in reality" could easily have referred to Prescott in 1812.²⁵ That part of Jessup's land immediately to the west of his farm was surveyed into lots and streets in 1810. A map prepared in 1816 by Lieutenant Joshua Jebb, R.E., (see figure 3) shows the lots and streets of at least the eastern portion of Prescott.²⁶ It should be noted that East Street appears to run right through the militia stockade and that few lots have been sold and even fewer buildings constructed.²⁷ Another of Jebb's maps, also prepared in 1816 (see figure 5) probably gives a more accurate picture of Prescott's state of development.²⁸ The map shows 20 or so private dwellings in the town as well as the handful of structures occupied by the military. None of Jessup's roads exist,

except for the King's Highway which ran parallel to the river and predated the town itself. A wooden bridge covered the small stream which drained the Prescott-Fort Wellington area. Only two roads led off from the highway; one joined Prescott to the military complex north of the fort, the other connected the highway with Fort Wellington proper. Prescott also boasted three combination storehouse-wharves by 1816. Yet a third map prepared by Jebb in 1816 (see figure 2) shows a short road leading from the eastern edge of Prescott north to the stockade where it joined the road linking the town to the military structures north of Fort Wellington.²⁹ We know that Captain Gilkison moved to Prescott in 1811 to develop a forwarding business there. Dr. William 'Tiger' Dunlop who was briefly stationed at Fort Wellington in 1813 described Prescott as "then consisting of five houses, three of which were unfinished."³⁰ While this may be a somewhat harsh even facetious comment, it was probably not far from the mark. In 1812 Prescott consisted of a few houses and outbuildings scattered along the dust, or mud, of the King's Highway, or clinging to the river's shore. It could hardly be called a community. The coming war and the strategy which led to the building of Fort Wellington also dramatically affected Prescott's future.

War on the St. Lawrence Frontier, 1812

It is not the intention of this report to analyse the causes or to portray the overall events of the War of 1812. The focus here is upon the St. Lawrence River theatre and, more specifically, the role of Fort Wellington in the larger drama. While the first defensive measures at Prescott were taken by the local militia, British military authorities at Quebec and York were alive to the importance, and painfully aware of the fragility, of the St. Lawrence as a lifeline for supplies and war materiel for Upper Canada and the Northwest. Had American forces successfully blockaded the St. Lawrence River, the British war effort in the west, bereft of supplies and reinforcements, would have inexorably ground to a halt and Upper Canada fallen. The vicinity of Prescott and Ogdensburg near the end of navigation for lake vessels and the beginning of rapids which could only be traversed by batteaux and Durham boats would have proved an excellent spot to cut the British transportation network. However, the south side of the river was not heavily populated and most Americans living on its banks wished to maintain as neutral a stance as possible.¹ It was well for those on the Canadian shore that their American neighbours were hesitant to initiate hostilities. Not only did Prescott lie unprotected, even Kingston, the commercial centre of Upper Canada, had "neither Gun Boats nor light Artillery of any Description" several weeks after the American declaration of war.²

The British response to the apprehended American threat on the St. Lawrence was the building of batteaux and gun boats, the development of a protective convoy system and the

establishment of military posts of varying strength and sophistication between Montreal and Kingston.³ It was, however, only after a year of war that all of these plans were fully implemented. A Corps of Canadian Voyageurs, largely composed of North West Company employees was established in October 1812 to perform convoy duties for the growing flotillas of supply laden batteaux. Gun boats were introduced on a regular basis in the following navigational season.⁴ Finally, local sedentary militia were employed in transporting stores and working on the various defence facilities being built on the river. Even Fort Wellington, the most formidable defensive work constructed on the Upper St. Lawrence, was almost a matter of too little too late; it was declared completed in the same month that the peace was signed. While these efforts hardly amounted to an impressive defence strategy, it must be remembered that Prevost, until the last year of the war, was hampered by insufficient troops and supplies. Great Britain, locked in a titanic struggle with Napoleon, had little attention for the interior of British North America. Prevost was also loath to antagonize the American citizens on the St. Lawrence border since they provided much of the food consumed by his armies.

Construction of Fort Wellington did not begin until January 1813, but if Prevost was slow to act decisively in defence of Prescott, the local militia was not. The haste of the Grenville militia is understandable in light of the fact that the first aggressive American acts - acts which occurred prior to the declaration of war - were forwarded to Prevost from an unnamed but "respectable" source in Prescott.⁵ It should be stressed that the first responses of the Upper Canadians in the Prescott area were purely defensive. When they learned early in July that the commanding officer at Cornwall had seized some boats belonging

to American citizens, they wrote back in panic stressing "the pacific Disposition shewn by the Commander of the American Forces on the opposite Shore that all private property should be respected".⁶ They also sent Solomon Jones to Cornwall to argue their case "as he has this moment returned from the opposite shore and is perfectly acquainted with the Sentiments of different Characters both Military & Civil as respects this particular case". Nor were the signatories simply merchants or forwarders concerned about their future commercial ventures on the river. They included Colonel William Fraser, then commanding officer at Prescott, lieutenant colonels Thomas Fraser and Allen McDonnell, majors Gideon Adams and Henry Merckle, and Richard Duncan Fraser, future captain of the Provincial Light Dragoons.⁷

By this time the British military authorities had begun to respond to the plight of those on the St. Lawrence corridor. 200 stand of arms and complete accoutrements and the equipment for 25 cavalry were on their way to the militia gathering at Prescott; ammunition supplied consisted of 50 rounds of ball cartridge for each musket and 100 for each pistol.⁸ The militia at Cornwall and in Dundas County received 100 and 60 stand of arms respectively. The militiamen along the St. Lawrence may have been buoyed by the arrival of arms, insufficient as they were, and they may even have been pleased at the arrival in Kingston as district commander of the elderly, and late half pay officer, Colonel Robert Lethbridge. They would not have been especially confident had they known the full extent of his orders. Lethbridge was to examine his area of jurisdiction, evaluating the morale of the militia and deciding upon the best locations for the concentration of troops and weapons. He was also to investigate and report upon the feasibility of using armed craft and the local militia to protect British supplies moving upriver. Lethbridge was told not to engage

in, or provoke the enemy to, offensive action but "on the contrary [to] use every precaution to preserve the tranquility of that part of the province, which does not in itself afford an eligible position for offensive operations."⁹ The Grenville militia would hardly have objected to these commands, especially the latter. However, Lethbridge was also instructed that Kingston, not the St. Lawrence corridor, was his primary object of defence. If a serious attack was made on his force, he was to "take especial care that no Arms, Ammunition or Military Stores of any Description are suffered to fall into the hands of the Enemy", and he was to retreat as best he could either to join Major General Isaac Brock, his immediate superior, or to reach headquarters in Lower Canada.¹⁰ In Prevost's mind Upper Canada was, at least temporarily, expendable; the St. Lawrence corridor was not worth a good fight. Or so it must have seemed to Lethbridge in July 1812.

At the same time the local militia was taking events into its own hands, again in a purely defensive manner. As the senior local militia officer Colonel William Fraser took command at Prescott and called out the militia. He then began, early in July and apparently on his own initiative,¹¹ the construction of a wooden stockade (The stockade is visible in figures 2,3,4,5,and 6; unfortunately each representation differs in detail of form from the others. Each of these sketches was drawn at least three and a half years after the construction. Figure 4 is likely the best schematic drawing while figure 2 probably most accurately depicts the state of the stockade in January 1816).¹² Shortly after work began Colonel Lethbridge described the structure as "a Stockaded Fort with Three Embasures at each of Two Angles".¹³ Figure 4 indicates that the stockade was rectangular, measured 200 ft. by 150 ft. and had three bastions, two at the south corners and one on the north west. The east curtain does not appear to have been completed and

it seems likely that the stockade was not surrounded by a ditch.

The stockade, which was erected of green, unseasoned timber and with as much haste as possible, was completed in October 1812. It and interior ancillary buildings, all constructed under the supervision of William Merrick, required the efforts of 15 carpenters and joiners, and 36 axemen and labourers.¹⁴ In addition, 48 men were employed as teamsters drawing timber, stone and supplies to the site.¹⁵ It was located on a light rise of land just east and north of the few scattered buildings which were Prescott in 1812. Its approach from the river was protected by a small gully and stream (see figure 4). It was also constructed around at least two of Major Jessup's buildings, the two storey, stone house and the smaller squared timber structure which Jessup had intended as a school. The former was used initially as a barracks for the militia. The latter would later become a surgery and dispensary; its first military use was probably as barracks. It and the other structures within the stockade indicated in figures 2, 3, 4, and 5 likely correspond to the barracks, provision store and powder magazine which were also built by the militia at this time (see chapter III for details on these buildings during the war).¹⁶ During this period of hectic activity the militia also threw up a rough, earthen battery near the river and to the east of the stockade, directly in front of the site of Fort Wellington itself. The battery likely housed the two long nine pounders which Colonel Fraser received late in July.¹⁷ The stockade itself seems to have had no ordnance and was protected solely by the river battery. Viewed in relation to the few scattered houses nearby the militia stockade must have been a formidable sight. However, its timber walls were no protection against cannon and its natural defences would not have deterred regular troops for any length of time. Its structural soundness may be inferred

from Captain Gilkison's later effort to claim compensation for 69½ gallons of whiskey consumed by the thirsty militiamen employed in its construction.¹⁸ Its significance was, in reality, largely symbolic. It provided a rallying point for the militia and it indicated to those on the opposite shore the proven determination of the local inhabitants to defend themselves against aggression.

Certainly Colonel Lethbridge was impressed, both with the stockade and with the strategic importance of Prescott. In late July or early August he made his first, and only, official survey of his St. Lawrence command. Lethbridge confided his "immense satisfaction" with the "Uniform Zeal" of all the militia under his command.¹⁹ He made special reference to "the alacrity of Both Officers & Men" at Prescott and viewed "as highly Meritorious" their initiative in building the stockade under trying circumstances, especially "as no allowance had been made then - for their Trouble in any shade".²⁰ Ogdensburg's inhabitants, whether civilian or militia, needed little proof of their neighbours' determination to defend themselves and were in fact quite desirous of maintaining a strict neutrality.²¹ The peculiarly defensive postures of both sides ended with the arrival of professional officers and regular troops.

In August Colonel John Vincent replaced Colonel Lethbridge at Kingston and by the end of the month Lethbridge was in command of the lesser post of Prescott. His orders were to direct the militia along the St. Lawrence in their efforts to protect supply boats in their passage upriver. Prescott had now been recognized as the major military post on the upper St. Lawrence after Kingston. Early in September the quasi-truce effected by Major General Henry Dearborn and Prevost on 9 August was ended by the Americans and the relative tranquility along the St. Lawrence was soon shattered.²² On 21 September Captain Benjamin Forsyth with

his company of regular riflemen and some militia from Sackets Harbor attacked Gananoque wounding and capturing several Leeds militiamen and destroying a small quantity of provisions. While minor in itself the raid was the first overt attack on a St. Lawrence corridor community.²³ Before the end of the month both Forsyth and his company of regulars and Brigadier General Jacob Brown with militia troops had arrived at Ogdensburg; they immediately began a campaign of harassing river traffic while Lethbridge fumed in anger and helplessness across the river.²⁴ Coincident with the arrival of reinforcements at Ogdensburg Adjutant General Baynes ordered two companies of the Glengarry Light Infantry with two light gun boats to proceed from Montreal to Prescott.²⁵ Lethbridge, perhaps stung by the effrontery of the American harassing tactics and emboldened by the arrival of regular troops, seems to have forgotten Baynes' original injunction to "use every precaution to preserve the tranquility of that part of the province, which does not in itself afford an eligible position for offensive operations."²⁶ Colonel Lethbridge immediately called out the local militia, whose arrival was observed with interest by Brown and Forsyth on the opposite shore, and, on the morning of 3 October, directed his two companies of Glengarry Light Infantry and 600 militia to attack Ogdensburg. None reached the opposite shore; their small boats were turned back by grape shot from the American shore batteries, and they returned ignominiously to Prescott and its almost completed stockade.²⁷ The cautious Prevost was incensed "having had repeatedly causes to mistrust the judgement in command of Colonel Lethbridge."²⁸

The hapless colonel was recalled to Montreal in disgrace and, in less than a week, Lieutenant Colonel Thomas Pearson, a younger and capable career officer, was on his way upriver to assume command at Prescott. Pearson was accompanied by a brigade of supply boats, two gun boats and 148 officers and

men including five members of the Royal Newfoundland Regiment, 14 Canadian Fencibles, 55 members of the Corps of Canadian Voyageurs, 33 Glengarry militiamen and 41 Indian warriors in two canoes. After escorting the supply boats to Prescott the Fencibles, Voyageurs, militiamen and one gun boat were to be stationed at various minor defensive posts between Montreal and Prescott. Pearson was directed to deploy the second gun boat as he saw fit.²⁹ The stationing of Pearson at Prescott reinforced the post's position as being second only to Kingston in the defensive strategy of the upper St. Lawrence. In the same month two more companies of the Glengarry Light Infantry, 100 stand of arms and ammunition and two light gun boats were directed to Cornwall and Prescott.³⁰ At virtually the same time Deputy Commissary General Edward Couche recommended that a commissary representative be stationed at Prescott "to take upon himself the Control of all the Posts under his Command, extending from Galanoqui [sic] to Ognaburg [sic] ."³¹ This request was acceded to early in the new year.³² In the meantime militia Captain William Gilkison, who as a merchant and forwarder had been supplying the militia at Prescott with provisions, was appointed to a clerkship in the Commissariat Office.³³ More crucial to Prescott's future as a military post was Prevost's decision in mid December to order the construction of a blockhouse there thus making it the major defence post between Kingston and Montreal.³⁴ There were several more raids and skirmishes on the upper St. Lawrence before the end of 1812, but none of them involved Prescott or the troops there. The next flurry of activity at Prescott came with the beginning of preparations for the erection of Fort Wellington.

The Construction of Fort Wellington and Ancillary Military Buildings, 1813-14

Fort Wellington

In response to Prevost's command Lieutenant Colonel R. H. Bruyeres of the Royal Engineers began an inspection tour of the upper St. Lawrence in January 1813. His task was twofold: to determine those locations best adapted for the defence of the river supply route and to recommend appropriate defensive works for each location. Bruyeres identified a dozen such sites between Montreal and Kingston.¹ Prescott he found "at present in a very rough state but... capable of being made a very strong position".² Bruyeres saw Prescott as "the essential point to be first strengthened" not only because of its strategic position on the river but also because of the presence of Captain Forsyth's regular troops on the opposite shore.³ Bruyeres left Lieutenant Frederick de Gaugreben, an engineer attached to the King's German Legion, at Prescott with orders "to proceed with the Survey of the Post, and to erect without delay a Block House on a small commanding spot in the rear of the present Battery which it will completely protect".⁴ Gaugreben was also directed "to improve this [militia] Battery as soon as it is possible to break ground."⁵

The defensive work which began to take shape at Prescott in the spring of 1813 differed dramatically from the simple blockhouse which Prevost and Bruyeres ordered Gaugreben to build at the beginning of the year. When and by whom the change was made is not presently known but it is doubtful

that it was initiated by Gaugreben. The decision to surround Prescott's blockhouse with a formidable earthworks may have resulted from the successful raid on Ogdensburg, 22 February 1813, and a fear of subsequent retaliation by American forces. Be this as it may, by the early spring work was underway to construct not only a blockhouse but also a surrounding rectangular earthen redoubt complete with glacis, ditch, log revetted scarp, rampart and earth-enclosed wooden casemates (See figure 4 for a cross-section of Fort Wellington and figure 9, a sketch of the fort drawn in 1830).⁶

As was the case with the militia stockade, the land upon which the fort was built belonged to Major Edward Jessup and again no immediate effort was made to transfer property rights to the crown.⁷ Gaugreben was more interested in results than in the niceties of civil law and no doubt he and Jessup had a verbal understanding that compensation would be forthcoming in due time. Gaugreben completed his initial survey virtually without regard to Jessup's property. Jessup's apple orchards in the vicinity of the site were destroyed lest they afford cover for an advancing enemy.⁸ Two of his buildings located on the line of the ditch, a squared timber house measuring 28 ft. by 30 ft. and a frame barn measuring 30 ft. by 40 ft., were simply "pulled down and destroyed by Lieut. Gaugreban [sic]".⁹ Gaugreben did preserve a well which Jessup had previously dug on his property and lined with stones. The royal engineer built the blockhouse around it, thus ensuring an adequate supply of fresh water. Gaugreben also used 100 cords of stone quarried on the Jessup property for the foundation of the one storey blockhouse which measured 100 ft. by 100 ft. and was built to accommodate 144 troops.¹⁰

By late May 940 officers and men, both regulars and militia, were stationed at Prescott and work appeared to be progressing well on the new military structures.¹¹ Late in

June General Sheaffe passed through Prescott on his way to Montreal and reported to Prevost on progress there. The earthworks were coming along well; Sheaffe noted that "two powder Magazines in the south side of the work [casemates] were completed, another apartment in the same range serves as an Armoury and Ordinance Store."¹² He added that one of the two powder magazines was being used as a provision store. As it seems logical that the south curtain, facing the enemy, would be completed first, it is probable that the rest of the earthworks was in a very primitive stage at this time. Sheaffe also noted that "the Engineer [Gaugreben] seemed to be much pleased with the assistance afforded to him under Lt. Colonel Pearson's direction." Gaugreben advised Sheaffe "that it would require three months to finish the whole work."¹³ Gaugreben was somewhat overly optimistic; it would be a year and a half before Fort Wellington was declared completed. Lieutenant Colonel Thomas Pearson, then commanding officer at Prescott, was less sanguine in his assessment made two months after Gaugreben's. He wrote to Adjutant General Edward Baynes at Kingston: "I am doing all I can to get my Garrison into the Fort, but I fear I shall not succeed sooner than the 1st of October as we now progress but slowly; as for finishing the work this Year it is out of the Question, all I dare hope is to secure what we have done."¹⁴

The blockhouse was well underway by mid-1813. In July a lieutenant in the incorporated militia suffered a fractured thigh when he fell from the structure.¹⁵ About the same time a resident of Ogdensburg reported to the commanding officer at Sackets Harbor that "the New Fort at Prescott progresses Rapidly - the out Works are nearly complet [sic] they have today commenced mounting Ordnance. Prescott is really becoming a Strong place..."¹⁶ In January 1814 an American prisoner of war being transported to Quebec passed

through Prescott. After his escape at Cornwall he reported on each military installation he had seen. Of Prescott he wrote that there "is erected a circular fortification Picketted in [.] the works are from thirty to forty feet above a common level defended by eight pieces of canon on the works." He also noted that "part of the troops are in huts outside the fortification at this post..."¹⁷ He did not comment on any building activity going on while he was there and it is likely that construction had slowed down from the hectic summer pace. Gaugreben had been ordered to York in September 1813 and then on to the Niagara frontier where he supervised several works. While at Prescott in 1813 he had had under him "a tool Keeper, a clerk and four overseers besides the assistant Engineer,"¹⁸ and James Chambers a master carpenter who had worked on the militia stockade in 1812.¹⁹ Some of these men probably remained at Prescott but with Gaugreben gone and the winter setting in it is not likely that much progress was made. Certainly a good deal of work remained to be done in the spring.

Early in 1814 while Gaugreben was on the Niagara frontier his work at Prescott was named Fort Wellington in honour of the Iron Duke.²⁰ While he may have been pleased with the designation, Gaugreben was experiencing difficulties. He was in charge of the engineering work at Fort Erie, Chippewa and Fort Niagara but little was being done. Gaugreben was virtually incapacitated by a recurrent attack of ophthalmia, an eye inflammation, and by late January Drummond was threatening his removal.²¹ Finally in April Gaugreben was ordered from Niagara and directed to return to supervise the less urgent work at Fort Wellington. Gaugreben returned somewhat under a cloud; his superiors had strongly hinted that his eye infection could only partly explain the lack of progress experienced at Niagara under his direction.²² Gaugreben arrived at Fort Wellington early in May, determined

to press ahead with the fortifications and, through his actions, to exonerate himself in the eyes of his superiors.

Before the end of May the force under Gaugreben's command consisted of 20 carpenters, three masons, three blacksmiths, and two sawyers, as well as 36 privates working as labourers.²³ Some of these were making traversing carriages for the fort ordnance and wheel barrows to be used in completing the earthworks. Others were employed "renewing the Scarpe [sic]" which presumably had eroded or slipped during the spring rains, digging the ditch and drains, and quarrying stone.²⁴ But Gaugreben's men were busy not only with construction, but also with repairs. The previous year's work had been performed so hastily that already the casemate magazines had begun to leak. In June a board of survey condemned some provisions and some powder, damaged by dampness, as unfit for use.²⁵ The immediate results of this unpleasant episode were twofold: the commanding engineer at Kingston was sent on to inspect Fort Wellington and Gaugreben in self defence began to keep a relatively detailed diary of work progress.²⁶

By early July Gaugreben was paying four dollars per day each to "thirty teamsters employed removing earth to form a Battery at the Waters Edge." He complained to his diary - the first of many such complaints - that progress was being impeded because there was "not a Soldier on Fatigue."²⁷ Over the next two months work continued on the shore battery which was completed late in August.²⁸ Gaugreben continued to experience difficulties in obtaining the assistance of regular troops. Depending upon the regiment stationed at Fort Wellington, and these changed approximately every week or two, and the attitude of the commanding officer, Gaugreben had between zero and 50 non-commissioned officers and men at his call. When he complained about the uncertainty of assistance, Gaugreben was told to make do as best he could.²⁹

However, in September as bad weather approached a standing order was issued to Fort Wellington's commanding officers to assist the engineer as much as possible.³⁰ Work progressed much more quickly after this.

With the battery complete Gaugreben turned his attention to the blockhouse roof and that of the store.³¹ The blockhouse itself appears to have been virtually completed by this time. Gaugreben's men now worked to make the blockhouse and store splinter-proof, that is, capable of withstanding cannon fire. In Gaugreben's words they were employed "filling the Carts, wheeling Clay and Sand on the top of the Block house, spreading and ramming it down and caulking the Planks on the Roof of the Block house."³² Early in September Gaugreben directed some of his men to work on the ditch and drains while others continued with the blockhouse roof. Among his workers Gaugreben now had men "drawing Coal" and others described as "Coal Burners";³³ it is possible that the clay on the blockhouse roof and that in the earthworks was being heated to provide greater strength. At mid-September Gaugreben commenced on the ditch on the north curtain, strategically the least important and probably the last begun.³⁴ Work on the glacis on the north west part of the earthworks in front of the fort gate was begun early in October; this involved removal of stumps, probably the remains of Jessup's orchards, and the earlier forest and leveling of the ground.³⁵ Late in October some men were working on the drain running from the fort to the river and, with the completion of the glacis, pickets were put up around the fort, likely at some point in the ditch.³⁶ This last task was completed before the end of November and by early December Gaugreben considered Fort Wellington complete.³⁷

As had been the case in the past, others failed to share Gaugreben's optimistic assessment. Lieutenant Colonel Gustavus Nicolls, commanding Royal Engineer at Kingston

inspected Fort Wellington within a month of its completion and declared it to be "a great mass of earth badly put together."³⁸ Nicolls further criticized that the "great part of the earth work will probably give way in the spring, and at this season of the year proper steps cannot be taken to prevent it; the log escarp put up this fall to secure it, has been done in a hasty and imperfect manner and will require to have much added to it in the spring."³⁹ In Nicolls' view the following work would also be required in the spring:

It will be necessary that the Parapet should be regulated to cover as much as possible the Guns from the surrounding high grounds, also a parapet on top of the Bombproof Blockhouse to bring a fire in the parapet of the Work; the ditch to be deepened and a Covertway formed around it strongly palisaded and from which a flank fire may be brought on the different sides. The Battery near the River side to be completed.⁴⁰

Nicoll's caustic observations were echoed by 'Tiger' Dunlop before him and by many later travellers. Dunlop described Gaugreben's work as "a clumsy, ill-constructed unflanked redoubt..."⁴¹ Regardless of the quality of its workmanship or the haste with which it was constructed, Fort Wellington was fully operational and occupied by December 1814, the month in which the Treaty of Ghent was signed to end the war.

There are a number of significant structural differences between the first Fort Wellington built in 1813-14 and the second which was constructed on its ruins in 1838-9. The earthworks of the first fort were wider, enclosing as they did five wooden casemates. The enceinte was correspondingly smaller both because of the thickness of the earthworks and because the blockhouse was larger than the present one though only one storey high. The terre pleine of the first fort's

rampart was correspondingly wider but was accessible only by two appareilles located at the north corners of the ramparts. Little is known about the ordnance mounted at Fort Wellington during the war, but figure 4 indicates the presence of nine wooden ordnance carriages on the terre pleine, one at each corner, two on the south curtain and one on each of the east, west and north curtains. The same figure gives the ordnance circa 1816 as four 24 pounders, two 18 pounders and three twelve pounders.

Ancillary Military Buildings

Fort Wellington proper with its enclosed casemates and one storey blockhouse provided barracks accommodation, powder and provisions magazines, and an armoury and ordnance store. But Fort Wellington simply was not large enough to house all the troops billeted there on occasions or to meet the office and living space requirements of the many military departments represented there. From January 1813 until the end of the war at least 18 buildings were rented, purchased, built or simply seized and occupied by the military at Prescott (see figures 2 and 5 for the location of most of these structures and their designated functions circa 1816 and 1821). The following section deals briefly with each structure and its function during the war period. The subsequent usage and final disposition of each structure will be examined below in Chapter V.

Commissariat Store and Wharf

The Commissariat store and wharf, identified as number 17 in figure 5 and named in figure 2, was located just offshore at the west end of Prescott and approximately 700 yards west of Fort Wellington. Its construction possibly predates the war

and it may have been one of the "Houses and Town Lots" purchased by government from Captain Gilkison in July 1814.⁴² Certainly there is no indication that it was constructed by the military. The commissariat store was of wooden construction, partly weatherboarded, probably one storey, and measured 60 ft. by 56 ft.⁴³ It stood on piles in the water and was connected with the shore about 80 feet away by a log wharf which also protected its west and south sides.⁴⁴ The structure was capable of storing 2,000 barrels of bulk material.⁴⁵

Commanding Officer's Quarters

The commanding officer's quarters were located just north of the Commissariat store and wharf, again about 700 yards west of the fort (see figures 2 and 5). It was owned by William Gilkison and rented to each succeeding commanding officer; it was one of the structures purchased by government in July 1814.⁴⁶ Described as a "Dwelling House in good repair", it was a wooden, weatherboarded structure, likely of one storey, and contained a kitchen.⁴⁷ The outbuildings immediately to the west were used as a stable and shed (see figure 5). The usage of this structure during the war underlines one of the basic and recurring problems faced by the military at Prescott. As noted above, the building was rented to each commanding officer by William Gilkison. However, in January 1814 Deputy Assistant Commissary General Thomas Osborne agreed to rent the house as soon as it became vacant. In April Lieutenant Colonel Pearson was replaced by Lieutenant Colonel Joseph W. Morrison of the 89th. Morrison was incensed at the licence taken by Osborne and managed to get occupancy of the house, his major argument being "that there is no other accommodation adapted to the situation of the Officer Commanding, to be obtained...."⁴⁸ Such was the

incentive for much of the military construction at Prescott.

Field Train Officers' Quarters

Directly north and east of the commanding officer's house and near the south side of the King's Highway (King Street West) were the Field Train Officers' quarters, with two outbuildings: a log stable and a shed (see figures 2 and 5). This large 'L' shaped, two storey stone building also had an inside kitchen and a porch.⁴⁹ It was built in June 1814 by militiamen under Captain Gaugreben's direction.⁵⁰ After the war it would serve as a military hospital.⁵¹

Commissariat House and Office

The Commissariat house and office (see figures 3 and 5) was located on the west side of Edward Street between the King's Highway and Henry Street. It was built by the military and was completed before April 1814.⁵² The structure was wooden, probably a single storey and measured 24 ft. by 36 ft. As a protective measure it was surrounded by a wooden fence.⁵³

Stone Store and Wharf

The stone store and wharf located on the waterfront at the east end of Prescott, and near the foot of modern East Street, was not built or owned by the military but was occasionally rented for storage purposes (see figure 2). Following the war it was again rented by government as a temporary shelter for military settlers bound for the Lanark settlement.

Jessup Stone House

As mentioned in chapter I, only two of the structures enclosed within the militia stockade existed prior to the war; these had been built and were owned by Major Jessup. The more substantial of the two, and located in the centre of the stockade, was a two storey stone house. It was occupied by the militia under Captain Hamilton Walker in June 1812, at the same time that work commenced on the stockade, and was used as a barracks during the war.⁵⁴ According to Commissary General William Henry Robinson, writing several years later, the building was taken over "by a detach. of regular Troops in Sepr & Octr in the same year when the Works of defence commenced."⁵⁵ Major General John Wilson, in response to the same query, stated that the building continued in use as barracks until June 1815 when the upper storey was made the garrison hospital and the main floor a barrack store for bedding.⁵⁶ Wilson's statement, written in 1817, conflicts with the commonly held belief that Jessup's stone building served as a hospital during the war. No documentary information has come to light regarding the location or existence of a military hospital at Fort Wellington during the war. It is, however, inconceivable that accommodations for the sick and wounded did not exist at Fort Wellington until mid 1815. The logical location for a hospital, at least until the blockhouse was habitable, was Jessup's stone building, which probably was after the several officers' quarters, the best constructed and most commodious building in the area.

Jessup Wooden Building

Major Jessup's second building to be enclosed within the stockade was a smaller single storey squared timber building located directly south of the stone structure. Jessup, as

noted earlier, had built it as a school.⁵⁷ It too was seized by Captain Walker in June 1812 and originally used as a barrack. A rough kitchen was added, probably accounting for its 'L' shape in figures 2, 3, and 5.⁵⁸ Shortly after the war it again became functionally associated with Jessup's stone building as a dispensing room and surgery.⁵⁹

Militia Stockade Buildings

The remaining four structures within and perhaps composing part of the militia stockade (see figures 2 and 3) were hurriedly built by the militia in the summer and fall of 1812. They likely served as temporary barracks, provision storehouses and armoury. So poorly constructed were they that Lieutenant Jebb, R.E., did not bother to include them in his January 1816 report, explaining: "the remainder are nothing but ruinous Huts".⁶⁰

Northern Complex of Buildings

A complex of nine buildings was constructed about 330 yards north of Fort Wellington during the period 1813-14. The buildings, consisting of officers' quarters, barracks, departmental offices, a cooking house, a forge and at least one stable, were connected with Prescott and the militia stockade, and with Fort Wellington, by two roads (see figures 2 and 5). Directly west of the complex was a fenced wood yard and, just south, the engineers' lime kiln and a circular depression, possibly Major Jessup's quarry (see figures 2, 4, and 6). Nestled far behind Fort Wellington and protected as well by the guns of the shore battery, these buildings were considered relatively safe from bombardment or attack. All of these structures, with the exception of the lime kiln, were wooden and all but the artillery barrack were small and

likely one storey. The latter building, probably constructed in the summer of 1813, consisted of a second storey barrack for 110 men and a ground floor containing a carpenter's shop and stables for the artillery train horses.⁶¹ The mess kitchen, a rectangular wooden structure located near Fort Wellington's gate and just beyond the glacis, was completed by the militia under Gaugreben's direction in December 1814.⁶² It was probably the last new structure built by the military at Fort Wellington until the Rebellion a quarter of a century later.

Throughout its active history Fort Wellington was plagued by a shortage of accommodation for both officers and men. Certainly the various quarters described above, even including the blockhouse and artillery barracks, had they then been completed, would hardly have accommodated the 940 officers and men stationed at Prescott in May 1813.⁶³ For those regiments on their way to or from the western battle sites and only briefly stopping at Prescott, tents would have provided at least the barest protection from the elements. This solution was hardly satisfactory for the militia officers and men who found themselves posted to Fort Wellington for longer periods of time but without shelter. The militiamen answered the problem during the summer and fall of 1813 by building their own lodgings, huts, usually with government supplies and usually on government occupied land.⁶⁴ This tendency, understandable though it was, presented certain difficulties to the officers commanding at Prescott. As Lieutenant Colonel Pearson explained not all of the land around Fort Wellington and the militia stockade was suitable for encamping transient troops.⁶⁵ Figure 4 shows quite clearly the streambed gully separating the two installations. Pearson complained that the militia huts occupied the better, dryer ground (see figures 2 and 4) leaving little space close to the fort for the troops passing

through. The huts, one of which according to Pearson was "not more than 120 yards from the foot of the Parapet of the Fort", also posed a tactical problem in that by their very location they could provide protection to an advancing enemy.⁶⁶ Pearson was never able to solve the problem to his satisfaction but the structures were of such a makeshift and temporary nature that they soon fell into ruin following their abandonment after the war.⁶⁷ Their fate would be shared, at a more leisurely pace, by virtually every other military structure raised during the war - including the casemated earthworks and the blockhouse of Fort Wellington itself.

War on the St. Lawrence Frontier, 1813-14

Incidents and Engagements

The St. Lawrence frontier witnessed late in 1813 one of the most important and pivotal battles of the war, but most of the military activity in the area during 1813 and 1814 was of a minor and routine nature. While there were several small raids during the period, the energies of the British regulars and the militia troops were usually absorbed in the more mundane duties of escorting supply brigades or provisioning and defending small river posts. While tensions rose temporarily in response to occasional rumours of American troop deployments, there was no major threat to the river communities following the American defeat at Chrysler's Farm. However, the St. Lawrence frontier was not without its problems. Desertion, always prevalent among British forces near the American border, also affected the Canadian militia, especially in the absence of an overt American military threat. By and large the militiamen continued to perform their duties well, though often under difficult circumstances. The relationship between the military forces, whether regular or militia, and the civilian population, however, gradually deteriorated as the war dragged on into its second and third years.

When Lieutenant Colonel R. H. Bruyeres of the Royal Engineers arrived at Prescott in January 1813 on his inspection tour of the upper St. Lawrence, he not only examined the defensive potential of the post but also assessed the American presence across the river. Bruyeres

was assured by several deserters from Ogdensburg that Captain Forsyth who commanded a regular rifle company there was "a very oppressive and tyrannical character" and that his 250 men were "generally disaffected" and ready to desert.¹ Bruyeres was confident that the combined regular and militia forces at Prescott could easily sweep across the frozen river and carry Ogdensburg. However, he did advise Prevost that the attack should be delayed until later in the season so that the Americans would be hindered in retaliating by the subsequent break up of the ice. Lieutenant Colonel Thomas Pearson, then commanding officer at Prescott, agreed with Bruyeres' assessment.² What Bruyeres neglected to mention was that the American military presence was galling because of its harassment of supply brigades and its lightning raids on little communities such as Gananoque. Waiting until the end of winter would protect Prescott but would be of little benefit to other, less well protected river communities. At Cornwall, some 50 miles downstream, the local commanding officer, Lieutenant Colonel Neil McLean of the Stormont militia, wrote "that we are entirely destitute of artillery - that we have no place of defence; and are deficient even in small arms."³ McLean was especially apprehensive for he had heard that very day that 2,400 men and 12 artillery pieces had just arrived at Salmon River, across the St. Lawrence and some 10 miles downstream from Cornwall.⁴ Brockville was described by Bruyeres as "the most improved Village" on the St. Lawrence, having "some very handsome Houses with a Church and Court House" and being "situated on an elevated & commanding spot of Ground."⁵ Bruyeres noted the presence there of a small troop of cavalry, a volunteer rifle company and a few militia, but added rather prophetically: "they are however very inefficient, a large proportion of them being absent, and returned to their own homes." It was Brockville that the

Americans next attacked.

Early on the morning of 7 February Forsyth's rifle company descended upon Brockville, taking not only the civilian population but the Leeds militia garrison completely by surprise. The latter, including their commanding officer, were apparently asleep when the attack came and offered no resistance.⁶ The Americans emptied the jail and under the protection of a 6 pounder, withdrew across the river with about 50 prisoners, including 20 militiamen.⁷ At first Pearson, within whose command Brockville lay, appeared to adopt a cavalier attitude of indifference to the attack. In his view, "there being no public Stores, and as the place is of no consequence in a Military View," he refused to send regular troops or even the incorporated militia to its defence. The fact that Brockville was the seat of the Johnstown District seemed unimportant to Pearson. He did, however, take the opportunity in transmitting news of the raid to stress again that, with some reinforcements, he could easily smash the American garrison at Ogdensburg, the source of the raids.⁸ Prevost remained determined not to initiate hostilities nor to retaliate if it appeared tranquility could be restored to the upper St. Lawrence frontier. De Rottenburg called out the Glengarry and Stormont sedentary militia and prepared to send 40 sleighs of ordnance and naval stores, and two 12 pounders to Prescott.⁹ What Pearson did not receive was permission to take any offensive actions.

Prevost himself stopped overnight at Prescott in February on his way to York but he was not impressed with Pearson's arguments in favour of attacking Ogdensburg. When Prevost departed Prescott early on the morning of 22 February Pearson accompanied him to Kingston as temporary commanding officer. In Pearson's place Prevost assigned Lieutenant Colonel "Red" George Macdonell, but again without

orders to attack the American force at Ogdensburg. Macdonell was given permission to make a demonstration on the ice, partially to cover Prevost's departure for Kingston and York. Macdonell turned the demonstration into a full fledged attack by a combined force of regulars and militia. Forsyth was forced to abandon Ogdensburg, suffering 20 men killed and another 70 captured. Macdonell burned the American schooners and gun boats frozen in the harbour and returned to Prescott with sleigh loads of captured stores and 11 cannon. The latter included two iron 12 pounders, four iron six pounders, one iron four pounder, two brass nine pounders, and two brass six pounders.¹⁰ The attack on the American forces at Ogdensburg, executed in retaliation for the Brockville raid and for previous harassments, was a stunning success.¹¹ With the departure of Forsyth and his regular troops Ogdensburg once again became a source of provisions and information rather than a base for military attacks.

A relative calm settled over the upper St. Lawrence corridor in the six months following the Ogdensburg raid. To the west York, the capital, was briefly captured in April and Fort George fell in May; nothing of similar impact occurred on the St. Lawrence. The gun boat convoy system was improved and both troops and provisions continued to pass upstream, now largely without hindrance. It was not until late in the summer of 1813 that the river communities again found themselves in an active theatre of war. American strategy late in 1813 called for a two-pronged attack on Montreal via the St. Lawrence and Richelieu rivers to cut the Canadas in two. To effect the St. Lawrence phase of the attack Major General James Willkinson began collecting troops and a large flotilla of gun boats and troop carriers at Sackets Harbor. Wilkinson did not begin his campaign until mid October, but as early as August the first rumours of imminent attack were spreading along the St. Lawrence

frontier. Later in August Lieutenant Colonel Pearson, once again commanding officer at Prescott, was personally leading a small flotilla through the Thousand Islands in search of suspected American privateers. After a fruitless week Pearson returned to Prescott without having seen an enemy vessel.¹² By late September it was obvious from the concentration of men and material at Sackets Harbor that the Americans were preparing for a massive campaign. The question was: where would they strike? Pearson at one point believed that Major General Wade Hampton's army of 4,000 men, which would be repulsed at Chateaugay, was marching either to Sackets Harbor or directly against Prescott.¹³ In response to Pearson's intelligence, erroneous though it was, the commanding officer at Kingston, Major General Darroch held 30 Batteaux in readiness to transport reinforcements to Pearson.¹⁴ Undaunted by Hampton's failure to appear at Ogdensburg Pearson turned his attention, and that of his spies, to Wilkinson's activities at Sackets Harbor. According to Pearson, "No Person believes Kingston to be the Point of attack, but all agree that either Prescott or Montreal or both, are the destined objects."¹⁵ Pearson's proposed strategy was prophetically close to the actions which culminated in the battle of Chrysler's Farm, with the exception that, though present, he did not command the combined force of British regulars and Canadian militia. Pearson informed Adjutant General Baynes:

...it is my intention to be prepared with all my disposable Force to act according to the Movements of the Enemy; if they proceed downwards without hitting me at Prescott, I shall instantly follow with my light Artillery & part of my Regulars & Militia, and by means of Waggon's occupy such positions as may considerably delay him in his descent down the River. Wherever the Enemy does appear, I hope to God, we shall be able to give some account of him.¹⁶

Prevost's first reaction was to insist that the line be held at Prescott; he envisaged a combined naval and land force with the assistance of Fort Wellington's artillery being able "to arrest the Enemy's progress."¹⁷ When Wilkinson did begin his descent of the river he chose not to chance running under the guns of Fort Wellington. His army disembarked above Prescott and the American flotilla slipped past Prescott on the night of 7 November. Pearson's artillery fired in the darkness but inflicted little damage. This is the only known and recorded occasion in Fort Wellington's long history that her guns were fired in anger. On 11 November Lieutenant Colonel Joseph Morrison, who had followed Wilkinson with a much smaller combined force, met the American rearguard in a decisive action on the farm of John Crysler.¹⁸ Immediately after this engagement Wilkinson learned of Hampton's defeat and promptly abandoned the idea of attacking Montreal. His army passed much of the winter encamped at French Mills on the Salmon River before it withdrew, part to Plattsburgh and the rest to Sackets Harbor.

In 1814 the American commanders again turned their attentions to the Northwest and the Niagara frontier rather than concentrating upon the St. Lawrence lifeline. Some consideration was given to directing Major General George Izard, Wilkinson's successor, to occupy several posts on the St. Lawrence from which gun boats could disrupt supply convoys, but nothing came of this scheme.¹⁹ Commodore Yeo later described this error "as an 'extreme stupidity' which had cost the Americans the war."²⁰ While the occasional shot was exchanged British convoys moved troops and stores upriver virtually at will. The St. Lawrence corridor was not to witness another engagement, major or minor, for the duration of the war. However, as the threat of imminent attack lessened the British officers on the St. Lawrence found themselves faced with new problems of an internal

nature. The local commanders at Prescott and the lesser posts found it increasingly difficult to obtain supplies locally, desertion remained a serious problem, and relations between the military and the civilian population began to deteriorate.

Supplying the St. Lawrence Defence Network, 1813-14

The only sustained threat to the movement of troops and supplies upriver to the Upper Canadian theatre ended with Macdonall's attack on Forsyth's troops at Ogdensburg in February 1813. In the remaining two years of war British convoys were prevented from venturing on the river only during those two weeks in November 1813 when Wilkinson was leading his army downstream to Montreal. The convoy system which had developed haphazardly in the first few months of war was rationalized and improved in 1813. It soon became customary to hold supply brigades of batteaux or sleighs at Montreal or La Chine until a detachment of regular troops was ready to proceed upstream.²¹ Groups of British regulars were continually passing up and down the river, often at one or two day intervals in the last year of the war. In April 1813 regulations were proposed to establish a new marine corps to man the gun boats of the Montreal District.²² More gun boats to protect the upper St. Lawrence were recommended by several British officers including Commodore Yeo; the latter suggested stationing three gun boats at each of Kingston, Gananoque and Prescott to assure continuous convoy protection to any batteaux heading up river from Prescott.²³ Still, the upper St. Lawrence corridor was the weak link in the defence of the Canadas and it was more the unimaginativeness of American strategy than the success of British defensive efforts which kept the corridor open.

It was perhaps one of the ironies of the War of 1812 that the commanders at Fort Wellington, whose major strategic duty was to safeguard the supply route to Upper Canada, found it increasingly difficult to procure provisions for their own post. In fact it was after the danger of direct attack diminished following Wilkinson's defeat that the problem became most acute. As early as March 1813 the Deputy Assistant Commissary General at Prescott, John C. Green apprehended a coming shortage of grain. He recommended that the local militia be allowed to return to their farms to plant a spring crop. He also suggested that the commanding officers at each post be granted the power to prohibit grain exports to Lower Canada which was even then on the verge of a shortage.²⁴ Green's successor - Green was captured by Wilkinson's forces in November 1813 - Thomas Osborne was faced with similar though more serious difficulties. De Rottenburg had declared martial law in the Johnstown and Eastern districts in November 1813 to deal with increasing scarcity of provisions there and to frustrate the efforts of local farmers to hoard food, thereby raising their prices to the military.²⁵ Osborne denied having resorted to martial law during the brief period it was in effect and stressed instead his efforts "to obviate all causes of complaint on the part of the Inhabitants; and...to observe every means of conciliation"²⁶ He had however sent out parties of militia "for the purpose of assisting & expediting the thrashing of wheat" and, no doubt, to direct the harvest to the commissary.²⁷ In the face of growing scarcities Osborne suggested in April 1814, that the government seize and cultivate the farms of Upper Canadians who had deserted to the enemy, the produce after payment of labour to be used by the troops at Fort Wellington.²⁸ He also recommended that the cattle and sheep left behind by deserters be taken to provision the

garrison, a step with which Fort Wellington's commanding officer heartily agreed.²⁹ As the last year of the war progressed the military experienced increasing difficulties in procuring grain, meat and forage not only at Prescott but all along the St. Lawrence frontier. Following the war a number of commissary officers and clerks would find themselves embroiled in civil law suits stemming from their increasingly unpopular wartime activities.³⁰

The basic problem, and one which could not be solved by the imposition of martial law, was that the Upper Canadian farmers along the St. Lawrence frontier could not supply sufficient foodstuffs for the needs of the regular and militia troops. Also, most of the militiamen were themselves local farmers who were now consumers rather than producers of food. The American side of the river was an obvious source of provisions and many of the American border settlers were not only willing to remain neutral but were also anxious to profit from the war. In addition Canadian merchants, such as William Gilkison of Prescott, had contacts across the river and were impelled by a mixture of loyalty and self-interest to encourage such trade if they could channel it through their own hands. British commanders such as De Rottenburg often found themselves in an irreconcilable dilemma. At times provisions were needed desperately to maintain the war machine which guarded Upper Canada's lifeline. On the other hand extensive commercial intercourse across the border meant greater opportunities for American spies to gather intelligence. Efforts to satisfy food requirements and to maintain military security caused continual difficulties along the St. Lawrence frontier for which there were no easy solutions.

It is difficult to appreciate fully the ambivalence of civilians on both sides of the river to the war and to an interruption in commerce or social intercourse across the

boundary. Wars were fought by soldiers, not civilians, and though a civilian could volunteer, or be drafted, into the militia, it was a premise, accepted in theory by both governments, that private property would not normally be disturbed or destroyed. Many civilians both Canadian and American resented what they considered to be military intrusions into their lives. The farmers of upper New York, especially those near the border, had never supported the American war effort whole-heartedly. The settlers of eastern Upper Canada were eager initially to defend their homes and property. However, with the imposition of impressment of draft teams for transportation and construction, and the proclamation of martial law, the ardour of many was cooled. Some even came to see the British military presence as more of an immediate threat to their material well being than the rumoured American armies across the river. Needless to say British officers such as Lieutenant Colonel Pearson at Prescott found civilian attitudes paradoxical and frustrating, and sometimes viewed with suspicions of treason what was really only narrow self-interest.

Dr. William 'Tiger' Dunlop who served on the St. Lawrence frontier during part of the war has vividly portrayed in his Recollections of the American War, 1812-14 American border attitudes as seen through the eyes of a British officer. Dunlop, according to his own account, was visiting Lieutenant Colonel 'Red' George Macdonell at Cornwall when a Vermont militia major arrived from St. Regis with 100 head of cattle to sell to the Commissary Department. After concluding the sale and noting that another militia officer, the son of a Vermont senator, would shortly arrive with 300 more head, the major defended his activities in the following manner:

They do say that it is wrong to supply an innimy,

and I think so too; but I don't call that man my innimy who buys what I have to sell, and gives a genteel price for it. We have worse innimies than you Britishers.³¹

Dunlop's recounting is probably more colourful than inaccurate. In December 1812 Major Tanner, commanding officer at Salmon River, had offered to permit American flour to be sent to Cornwall. The suggestion was well received by Lieutenant Colonel Neil McLean despite the danger of military intelligence being gathered under the guise of commercial traffic.³² By mid 1813, just months after Macdonell's raid, an Ogdensburg resident wrote: "It is incredible what quantities of cattle and sheep are driven into Canada. We hardly get any for love nor money; the day before 100 Oxen went through Prescott, yesterday about 200."³³ Such a free exchange could not be suffered to continue in periods of active strife and Wilkinson's appearance on the river with 8,000 men brought about a temporary cessation of trade. Drummond attempted to limit severely all communication across the boundary but the very needs of the military coupled with the interests of local residents made this a virtually impossible task.

Late in 1813 Drummond attempted to restrict border crossings by allowing them only under flags of truce and in exceptional circumstances. When in December 1813 William Gilkison was refused permission to cross to Ogdensburg by night with a few boats to procure pork and flour, he immediately complained to Commissary General W. H. Robinson.³⁴ Prevost's response was to overrule Drummond and inform the commanding officer at Prescott, Lieutenant Colonel W. McBean of the 89th Regiment, "that the intercourse with Ogdensburg may be facilitated as required by that Gentleman [Gilkison] under proper limitations provided it has the effect of obtaining a supply of provisions for the use of the Troops."³⁵

Realizing that border commerce could not be stopped and indeed was essential to the supply of the troops Prevost instituted a licensing system in the Eastern, Johnstown and Midland districts. William Jones of Brockville, for example, received such a license in January 1814 permitting him to import "all Articles of provisions and Merchandize not prohibited by the laws of this Province, and to exchange for the same such other Articles of Merchandize as he may find it convenient to do so...."³⁶ Licensees were required to pay duty on all imports. By this means it was hoped that essential supplies could be obtained without endangering Upper Canada's security. This hope was, of course, to be disappointed.

The licenses had not been long in effect before the first abuses became apparent. In February 1814 Lieutenant Colonel Pearson, once more commanding officer at Fort Wellington, was so incensed by the activities and attitudes of "some very improper characters in this Neighbourhood" including Daniel Jones and Hiram Spafford of Brockville that he took it upon himself to revoke their trading licenses.³⁷ Pearson complained that "constant intelligence is afforded the Enemy of all our Movements and Military dispositions...."³⁸ What angered Pearson the most was his claim that though the licenses were being used, no provisions whatsoever had been delivered to the Commissariat by these licensees.³⁹ Pearson's forces also captured two men who attempted to use a trading license to transport the property of a civilian deserter across the river.⁴⁰ Misuse of licenses was but part of the problem faced by commanding officers at Fort Wellington. Smuggling, always a favourite pastime on the upper St. Lawrence, continued, probably largely unabated during the war.⁴¹

Despite the continual problems involved in wartime commerce, the troops did obtain necessary provisions. On

one occasion Gilkison even managed to procure a printing press and type from Ogdensburg to replace that lost at York during the brief American occupation.⁴² As well, some of the complaints raised concerning those involved in obtaining provisions from the United States were no doubt the result of local rivalries and personal animosities.⁴³

The Role of the St. Lawrence Corridor Militia in the War

In theory the militia of Upper Canada consisted of all physically fit males between 16 and 60 years of age.⁴⁴ This sedentary militia received only the most rudimentary military training and, except in dire emergencies, were not expected to face regular troops in pitched battle. The sedentary militia was called out, for instance, when Wilkinson began to move his army down the St. Lawrence to Montreal. The members of companies of select embodied militia were drawn by lot from the ranks of the sedentary militia. They received more training and served for a set period of time, usually six months to two years. While members of the select embodied militia fought at each major engagement on the St. Lawrence River, their main role was a supportive one. They supplied the labour to build fortifications (witness the construction of the Prescott militia stockade and Fort Wellington itself), performed guard duty and protected supplies in transit for the use of the regular troops. A third type of militia unit consisted of the incorporated volunteer companies, often cavalry and usually recruited by a local notable. The incorporated militia company in Prescott was Captain Richard Duncan Fraser's Provincial Light Dragoons, a cavalry troop which provided express messenger service along the St. Lawrence River.

Colonel Robert Lethbridge had been quite favourably impressed by the enthusiasm and initiative of the Johnstown

and Eastern districts' militia. He singled out for special praise the militiamen at Prescott who had erected a wooden stockade on their own initiative and without any assurance of compensation for their efforts. On the other hand militia troops often suffered from a lack of discipline, a lack most keenly noted by British officers accustomed to commanding highly trained British regulars. The shortcomings of the militia were perhaps best described by Captain Andrew Gray who led a combined force of regulars and militia against the American post on the Salmon River in November 1812. He wrote confidentially to Major General Edward Baynes:

I have not in any respect stepped beyond the strict limits of truth in any thing I have stated [in his official report of the raid]; I had however difficulties to encounter which I have not stated there, and which arose chiefly from too much zeal, and from the habits that men, not accustomed to Discipline, are in of volunteering their opinions upon all subjects. Half the Glengarry people, with your Major at the head of them ['Red' George Macdonell], were for making the attack by the River, and so earnest were they on the subject, that not above half an hour before we embarked, they pressed the subject so closely, that I was under the necessity of telling them, that the Expedition was undertaken upon my responsibility, and that I would not alter the Plan laid down. I saw clearly what would happen by following their advice. The only difference between us was, that I saw it before, and they after the capture of the place. They were all fully convinced of their error - had we gone by the River, we would have been shamefully beaten, as they expected us

in that direction, and had a Piquet of 20 men on the River banks, that might have killed the whole Party - When I got them in motion, and all properly arranged, they went on very well, and did their Duty with the greatest cheerfulness - One of our greatest difficulties was to make them cease firing, and keep their Ranks and be silent.⁴⁵

The ardour of the militia did fade somewhat as the war dragged on. After Wilkinson's appearance on the river in November 1813 there was no further major threat to security and little but mundane duties to maintain martial fervour. Most of the militiamen were farmers who were forced to neglect their land to perform their military duties. Finally, continual problems in obtaining supplies and accoutrements must have gradually had a deleterious effect upon morale.

Captain Fraser's Provincial Light Dragoons provide perhaps the best example of some of the situations and problems faced by militia units during the war. Their case is especially relevant in that they were headquartered at Prescott. Richard Duncan Fraser was appointed captain of the new troop in February although his commission was not officially issued for over a year.⁴⁶ The corps itself was recruited in March and a second one about the same time; the drive was so successful that Lieutenant Colonel Pearson was soon recommending their reduction to more manageable proportions. In May 1813 there were stationed as dragoons at Prescott two captains, four subalterns, six sergeants and 100 rank and file; only 17 of the latter were actually doing duty, the remainder being on command.⁴⁷ Pearson suggested they be cut back to a single troop consisting of one captain, one lieutenant, one cornet, four sergeants and 58 privates.⁴⁸ At the same time he recommended that the corps be posted at 18 stations between the border of Lower

Canada and Gananoque with contingents ranging from two men at Colquhoun's Inn just east of Cornwall to 12 at Prescott. Pearson was still pressing for a reduction in September and he remonstrated to Military Secretary Freer:

By the order under which they were raised, they are entitled to Clothing Arms & Equipments, neither [sic] of which they have ever received, indeed the major part of them are without Saddles, and perform the duties of Express bare backed.⁴⁹

This plaintive letter received a quick and positive response. Pearson was authorized to reduce the force to one troop by discharging the less effective men. He was also promised clothing from Kingston and arms and equipment from Quebec.⁵⁰ In mid September after he had caused the reduction to take place he received word that 65 sets of jackets, pantaloons and caps in the style provided for the Provincial Royal Artillery Drivers would soon be delivered as would 68 sets of complete cavalry equipment.⁵¹ A month later Pearson was still complaining that the dragoons had not received their great coats despite the imminent arrival of colder weather.

The reduction of the dragoons from two to one troop followed by the subsequent difficulties encountered in obtaining clothing and equipment must have had some effect upon morale. Nevertheless, the remaining Provincial Light Dragoons fulfilled their duties well when Wilkinson's army threatened the whole north shore of the St. Lawrence on his drive to Montreal. Fraser himself was dispatched to Brockville to reconnoitre the American force and to send on to Prescott any militiamen who had not heeded an earlier summons.⁵² In his zeal, and some said in a state of intoxication, Fraser became involved in an incident at Brockville which would result in his being successfully sued for damages.⁵³ A handful of dragoons also served as couriers during the Battle of Crysler's Farm.⁵⁴

The problems of the dragoons increased in the following year. Early in September Captain Fraser was chastized for permitting the detachment of dragoons stationed at Gananoque to slip under their official strength of four men. According to the criticism those who were there were rendered largely ineffective for express duty because their horses were not properly shod.⁵⁵ Some of the dragoons themselves soon complained to Lieutenant Colonel Tolley of the 16th Regiment and commanding officer at Fort Wellington that they were three months behind in their pay. Tolley stated that:

...a most excellent Spirit appears to prevail throughout this Corps, which I am persuaded would shew itself on any occasions where their Services might be required. But they are without arms or military Clothing. Several of them are without Horses which have been lost in the Service....The Men are so deficient in Clothing and their Horses in bad condition that I fear in their present State they would not long be fit for Express duty.⁵⁶

In response headquarters pointed out that the dragoons had been completely equipped with clothing, arms and cavalry equipment less than a year before. Tolley was requested to send on a complete list of the troop's present state and needs so that new equipment could be issued. The commander of the forces, Prevost to whom the situation had been referred, was not pleased.⁵⁷ Soon another complaint arose about the state of Gananoque's dragoons, this time from the commanding officer there, and Fraser was ordered to headquarters in Montreal "that arrangement may be made with that officer to place his Troop upon a better footing."⁵⁸

Finally Major General Frederick P. Robinson was sent by Drummond to Fort Wellington to examine Fraser's dragoons who had been ordered to assemble there. Drummond reported to Prevost that Robinson "gave them four days notice for

that purpose. In that time no more than 15 could be, or were, collected. And upon Inspection the Major General has reported them 'Unserviceable, in every respect.'"⁵⁹

Drummond recommended that they be reduced "without loss of time." The Provincial Light Dragoons were officially desbanded on 24 February 1815.⁶⁰

While this bare outline of events does not completely explain the nature of the difficulties faced by Fraser's dragoons, it does suggest some probable answers. Fraser himself does not appear to have been the most efficient of commanders. Even Pearson referred to him as "an active zealous officer, but inconsiderate..." and as a delinquent in regard to the Brockville incident of November 1813.⁶¹ More serious was the problem of obtaining clothing and equipment. Most important was probably the very zeal and enthusiasm of the troopers themselves, while great events were unfolding. Uniforms were expected to last at least two years and saddles and cavalry equipment considerably longer; Fraser's men appear to have worn out or ruined their material in less than a year. It may also be that express duties seemed too mundane and tedious after the excitement caused by Wilkinson's appearance and the subsequent struggle at John Crysler's farm. This would certainly account for the troop's poor showing when assembled for inspection early in 1815. One can only state that the militia performed valuable and difficult duties and that, during most of the war, performed them well.

The Civilian Population and the Military Presence: Wartime Relations on the St. Lawrence Corridor

There was some disaffection throughout Upper Canada during the War of 1812 but it was more prevalent in the western part of the colony, peopled largely by recent American

immigrants, than in the eastern districts whose core of population was United Empire Loyalist. Not even the capital was immune. A few of York's citizens openly welcomed the enemy when the town was briefly captured in April 1813; others used the opportunity to help themselves to their neighbours' possessions.⁶² But American dragoons did not roam through the Johnstown and Eastern districts as they did with relative ease in some western parts of Upper Canada. Nor were marauding bands of the disaffected able to loot farmsteads and burn mills as was prevalent to the west.⁶³ Though there were some exceptions, most of the inhabitants of the upper St. Lawrence valley were loyal and enthusiastic supporters of the crown when war broke out. Nevertheless, while treason and disaffection were not serious problems in eastern Upper Canada, difficulties did arise between the military bureaucracy and the civilian population - difficulties which increased as the war progressed.

In theory the aims of both were identical: to protect British North America from American arms. In practice many differences arose. The farmer of the Johnstown District was primarily interested in defending his own property and his neighbourhood. The succeeding British commanders at Prescott were concerned not only with the entire upper river valley but with all of Upper Canada. They were also prepared to sacrifice the upper province to maintain the British presence at Quebec. Most frictions and conflicts, however, arose at a more mundane level. The British commanders in their need for transport and provisions turned to impressment and martial law. Affected civilians, jealous of their rights as British subjects, tended to retaliate by being less cooperative or even by suing His Majesty's agents in the civil courts. The overzealous execution of orders, more often a failing of the farmer turned militiaman than of the regular forces, sometimes led to the destruction of property and a

resulting animosity and bitterness. Personality clashes and petty jealousies also added to the problems which developed between the military and the civilian population as the war progressed.

As mentioned above, the initial response of the civilian population of the Prescott area to the war was immediate and positive. Prior to the arrival of Colonel Lethbridge at Prescott militia Lieutenant Colonel Thomas Fraser, as he put it, "acted as my own judgement directed me, in turning out the Militia to escort Batteaux and to perform other duties which were at that time deemed indispensably necessary."⁶⁴ The militia also constructed the stockade at Prescott on their own initiative. Unfortunately Fraser and those who took part in the construction of the stockade encountered difficulties in obtaining compensation for their time and efforts.

As the pace of the war picked up, the demands of the military upon the civilian population increased and problems began to surface. As early as mid 1813 Colonel Pearson was impressing the waggons and teams of farmers in the Prescott area for the use of the Engineer's Department there.⁶⁵ Some of the farmers had complained to him of not receiving the pay due to them under the impressment acts of 1812 and 1813. Others, living some distance from the fort had permitted their teams to be taken for use at the fort. Militiamen at Prescott were then assigned as drivers but on a number of occasions had neglected their duties and permitted the teams to wander off and become lost. Indifference of this nature brought the whole impressment programme into disrepute. Nor were these problems confined to the immediate vicinity of the new fort. Foraging clerks were sent, in the words of one, "to the Interior and remote parts of the District for the purpose of impressing Teams and aiding in procuring Supplies of Provisions...."⁶⁶ On several occasions in 1814

Daniel Jones, a justice of the peace at Brockville, refused to sign warrants permitting British officers passing through the town to impress local teams. His ostensible reasons were that he was not aware of a recent extension of the impressment act or that the officer in question could not show sufficient credentials to support his demand. However, Jones also referred to past occasions when British officers had abused and driven too hard the men and teams impressed in transporting troops and supplies to Kingston. He also feared that, as the only magistrate at Brockville and thus the sole person empowered to issue impressment warrants, he could be inundated by law suits from team owners who had suffered losses under the act.⁶⁷ Even when the military employed local drivers and their teams on a voluntary basis, problems sometimes arose. Gaugreben, for example, made use of such labour in hauling earth for the works at Fort Wellington in 1814. At times he employed as many as 30 teams but he was dependent upon the number of regular troops available to fill the waggons and upon the willingness of the commanding officer to lend his men. If the men were not available for fatigue duty, the drivers and their teams were simply dismissed for the day. Similarly, friction arose over the whole question of foraging for supplies, especially during the period of martial law in late 1813 and early 1814. As will be seen below in chapter V farmers continued to file civil suits long after the war was over concerning damages and losses sustained in this manner.

Nor were the damages sustained by civilians confined to barn doors forced open by foraging clerks.⁶⁸ Early in the war two merchants lost a cargo of clothing and liquor when their batteau was seized near the Salmon River by a gun boat operating out of Prescott under Pearson's direction. The merchants, Messrs. Wadsworth and Nicol, obtained redress, but only after the war and by suing the gun boat captain in

the civil court.⁶⁹ Similarly Lieutenant Colonel William Fraser, who had been involved in the construction of the militia stockade, had undertaken early in the war and at Pearson's directions to burn all the canoes and small craft along the shore near Prescott. He was later successfully sued by at least one of the owners of the craft so destroyed.⁷⁰ Another of Pearson's orders, overzealously executed by the militia, led to an unedifying incident in Brockville. As noted above, Pearson directed Captain Richard Duncan Fraser of the Provincial Light Dragoons to hasten to Brockville early in November to reconnoitre General Wilkinson's army, then descending the St. Lawrence, and to order on to Prescott any militiamen he found on the way. Fraser, with Fort Wellington's Assistant Barrack Master William Fitzpatrick, and several dragoons arrived at Brockville about 10 o'clock on the night of 6 November 1813, just as Wilkinson's force was passing downriver. According to Fraser he met merchant and Leeds militia adjutant Hiram Spafford on the street and asked him why he had not proceeded to Prescott as ordered. When Spafford replied that he had property to protect and would not go, Fraser ordered his arrest by the dragoons. Spafford soon escaped, according to Fraser, who then sought him out at his home. When he was refused admission Fraser broke down the door, but did not find Spafford. In September 1814 Spafford sued Fraser and Fitzpatrick for false imprisonment and property damage. The jury of the Court of Quarter Sessions of the Peace, held of course at Brockville the district seat, found Fraser and Fitzpatrick guilty. Testimony at the trial, as later recounted by the presiding judge, indicated that Spafford had not escaped but had been permitted to get his horse after agreeing to travel to Prescott with Fraser. When he did not return as quickly as expected Fraser and Fitzpatrick went to his house and forced their way in. According to the

testimony of Spafford's servant "they were in a rage and appeared to be much intoxicated", and, after searching unsuccessfully throughout the house, attempted several times to set fire to it. Again according to testimony at the trial they were only prevented from burning Spafford's house by the intervention of neighbours.⁷¹ Even Pearson referred to them as "Delinquents" but stressed that "they meant and intended well."⁷² Nevertheless, they had by their actions damaged the image of the military. Even Pearson tried to have the trial moved from Brockville stating "if it takes place there Capt Fraser will inevitably be imprisoned and Fined."⁷³ It was incidents like this that led to a gradual deterioration in military-civilian relationships. In addition, conflicts developed between particular military officers and some civilians ostensibly over matters of principle but, one suspects, largely as a result of personal animosities and petty jealousies.

Every commanding officer at Fort Wellington who vigorously pursued the objectives of the British war effort was bound to find himself from time to time in confrontations with local civilians. By its very presence the British military bureaucracy was attempting to impose a new authority upon a small but well developed and complex social hierarchy. On the one hand impressment and foraging efforts tended, as noted above, to alienate civilians. On the other hand, the tendency, especially prevalent in eastern Upper Canada, of farmers to hoard food and thus raise its price to the army enraged officers whose troops required vast amounts of provisions. The result of the latter situation was the partial implementation of martial law and a further deterioration of relations. Some officers, like Lieutenant Colonel Thomas Pearson, tended to view opposition to their policies as detrimental to the war effort and ipso facto close to if not actually treasonous. Those who felt

Pearson's wrath believed him to be motivated by less than altruistic sentiments.

Pearson was certainly a competent officer; this he proved as commander at Fort Wellington and during the Battle of Chrysler's Farm. However, he sometimes acted precipitously in his dealings with civilians and tended to view disagreements from a black and white adversary stance. For example, in reporting the capture of two men attempting to transfer across the ice to New York State two sleighs containing the possessions of a civilian deserter, Pearson stated not only that he had detained the individuals involved, but that in previous cases had sold the confiscated goods and turned the proceeds over to the captors. Pearson hoped by such means to increase the vigilance of his border patrols.⁷⁴ The acting attorney general, John Beverley Robinson, pointed out that such sales or auctions could only take place after a trial had occurred. He also noted that had the two men been captured on the American side of the ice - a point upon which Pearson did not bother to elaborate in his report - they could have been tried for treason rather than smuggling. In his haste and through his insensitivity to legal procedures Pearson had impeded his own cause.⁷⁵ Pearson's reaction to the incident in Brockville between Hiram Spafford and Captain Richard Duncan Fraser shows quite clearly his refusal to tolerate opposition. Pearson seems to have been fully aware of the circumstances when he came to Fraser's defence. Nevertheless, while he described Fraser as a 'delinquent', he stressed that the officer meant well. He turned upon Spafford with a vengeance, cancelled his trading licence and attempted to have him removed from the militia, claiming that Spafford was "an American, has resided only two Years in this Country, and took the Oath of Allegiance last year." Pearson also wrote of meetings being held by Spafford and "others of the same description," and, in general, painted

a rather dark picture of loyalty in the Brockville area.⁷⁶ Pearson does not mention that Fraser may have tried to burn down Spafford's house and store in a drunken rage.

David Jones was another Brockville resident whom Pearson considered, along with Hiram Spafford, to be a "very improper character" and whose trading licence was also suspended in February 1814. Jones appealed to Drummond stating that he had been employed, at times under the direction of the commanding officer at Prescott, to gather information on enemy activities as well as to purchase food for the British army. In a covering letter he added quite bluntly:

...I have to remark, that the personal prejudice of Colonel Pearson commanding at Prescott - might have been injurious to me - if not in this particular - he has evinced it by other means and if the applications of certain indulgences are to pass through the medium of that Gentleman I am sensible that his attention will not be more zealously applied [sic] to the service of Government than for the accommodation of his private friends; which will totally exclude me....⁷⁷

There was probably more than a grain of truth in Jones' accusation. In the fall of 1814 William Gilkison and Colonel William Fraser, both of Prescott, Solomon Jones of Maitland and Joel Stone of Gananoque wrote a confidential letter to Drummond's civil secretary decrying the ease with which intelligence was being supplied to the enemy. The major source of such leaks was Brockville and they recommended that no trading be allowed between Brockville and Morristown across the river. The happy manner in which the patriotism and pecuniary interests of these individuals coincided is somewhat suspect. One cannot help but feel that Pearson, and likely other commanding officers, were to an extent swayed by

the prejudices of a local clique. This was certainly the view of Brockville merchants located beyond the pale and far from the commanding officer's ear. It is quite possible that the opposition which Pearson experienced from Brockville residents arose more from frustration, pique and envy than from outright treasonous designs. Unfortunately, Pearson's assessment tended to filter up to higher levels in the army and the civil government. In a mid 1814 memorandum on desertion Colonel Edward Baynes stated that not only had the civilians in the area between Kingston and Brockville aided and abetted British troops in their efforts to desert but also that "the several predatory incursions of the Enemy between Kingston and Brockville were perpetrated with the connivance and aid of Settlers in that neighbourhood."⁷⁸ In a similar vein Drummond described the section of the river between Brockville and Gananoque as "a part of the country infested by swarms of disaffected people who are constantly in the habit of communicating with the Enemy in spite of all our vigilance...."⁷⁹ Apparently the raid on Brockville in February 1813 when 50 prisoners were taken and briefly held had long been forgotten.

With the coming of peace early in 1815 many of the points of friction between the army and civilians disappeared. In peacetime Fort Wellington devolved into a small garrison post and a source of income to local merchants and suppliers. Minor, and occasionally ugly, incidents were not unknown but the pattern of life at Fort Wellington soon slipped into a tedium of routine, broken only by the occasional scandal. The military personnel gradually decreased in numbers and so too did Fort Wellington's impact upon the society and economy of Prescott. Even the physical structures were permitted to fall into decay until finally only the abandoned earthworks bore witness to the past.

Fort Wellington: The Post-War Years

The Larger Setting

The Treaty of Ghent was signed on 24 December 1814 and news of the cessation of hostilities arrived in Upper Canada in March 1815. The treaty reinstated the status quo ante bellum; it did not solve, nor really even deal with, the problems which had led to war. It gave no judgement on the American claim to freedom of trade for neutrals nor did it adjudicate upon Britain's right to impressment on the high seas. The whole question of naval armament on the Great Lakes was left for solution to the Rush-Bagot Agreement of 1817. Even an issue as basic as the demarcation of the international boundary was not to be settled until 1818. In short the treaty gave little direction for the future of a British North American defence policy and even less for the disposition of individual posts such as Fort Wellington. Such a policy did gradually develop, but largely on an ad hoc basis and in response to particular and often local circumstances.

One strategic point which became obvious to British commanders during the war, and to American leaders at its conclusion, was the defensive vulnerability of Upper Canada and the British Northwest, the Achilles' heel being the upper St. Lawrence River. In a future war, and this was not an improbability in 1815, Britain could probably retain Lower Canada by using her naval superiority to hold Quebec. Upper Canada and the west, however, could be cut off by a concerted American attack on the St. Lawrence supply route. The British

response to this threat was to bypass the danger area. The end result of this new strategy was the construction of the Rideau Canal which linked Montreal with Kingston and the great lakes via the Ottawa, Rideau and Cataraqui rivers. The repercussions for Fort Wellington and its role in the larger defence system are obvious. By the time the canal was completed in 1832 Fort Wellington was virtually abandoned. However, the canal was not begun until 1826 and during much of this decade Fort Wellington continued to play a significant if declining defensive role. It also served as a staging depot for the military settlers streaming into the Perth and Lanark settlements from post Napoleonic Britain. Ironically, these settlements were to form a defensive precursor to the Rideau Canal, and in themselves helped to seal Fort Wellington's fate.¹

Even before Lieutenant Joshua Jebb of the Royal Engineers was ordered to make a preliminary survey of the Rideau River in 1816 Fort Wellington's role and function were being denigrated in high circles. In reviewing the defence network of Upper Canada in August 1815 for the Earl of Bathurst, Secretary of State for War and the Colonies, Gordon Drummond, then president and commander of the troops in Upper Canada, wrote in part that the works "at Isle aux Noix on Lake Champlain are inconsiderable, and that at Fort Wellington on the River St. Lawrence still more so...." Significantly he added to this assessment:

yet they must be constantly kept in due repair to prevent the enormous expense attending it were they allowed to fall too far to decay; independent of necessity of being well upon our guard-against a neighbour whose dearest object is the possession of these Provinces.²

Such was the unflattering opinion of Upper Canada's highest civil and military authority. Lieutenant Colonel Gustavus

Nicolls, in assessing the value of each military post in Upper Canada, hit upon what had been proven to be Fort Wellington's major strategic weakness during the late war. He wrote of the Prescott post:

The River St. Lawrence being upwards of a mile broad at this Place - and not attended with any dangers from Rapids etc. an Enemy may always pass the Fort in Bateaux in the night, it is therefore deficient, in what should be the principle object, in a Work on the Banks of the River: The Ground around it is also unfavourable.³

It was not long before such pessimistic comments began to bear fruit.

The British military authorities in considering Fort Wellington's future had to take into account not only the earthworks and blockhouse, but also the various buildings built, leased or simply seized during the course of the war, and the 82½ acres of military reserve surrounding the fort. The latter had been occupied during the war but, for a variety of circumstances described below, was not actually purchased from the Jessup family until 1822. Nevertheless, it was considered and dealt with as crown property with the understanding that compensation would be forthcoming in due time. The first concrete indication of a diminution of Fort Wellington's role came in 1819 when an effort was made to lease the military reserve. The attempt failed but the post's future had been indicated.⁴ The post continued to be occupied by regular troops and major repairs were undertaken as late as 1822, but it no longer had the same relevance either to its occupants or to the citizens of Prescott. In 1820 Thomas D. Campbell, then district court clerk, wrote to the lieutenant governor's civil secretary asking if a horse-racing track could be developed around the fort. Campbell made a point of noting that some of the track's managers would be

officers stationed at the fort thereby indicating the social ties between the officers and the local elite of Prescott.⁵

As soon as the title to the military reserve passed back to the crown in July 1822, efforts were again made to sell not only the reserve but the remaining government buildings and even the fort itself. In October 1822 Governor Dalhousie informed Lieutenant Governor Maitland that he had decided not "to retain Fort Wellington, as a Military Post" unless Maitland "should think some Protection to the Custom House[at Prescott] necessary...." The governor was prepared to remove all troops and sell all the stores, buildings and crown land.⁶ This decision was modified early in 1823 on the urging of Lieutenant Colonel Elias Durnford, commander of the Royal Engineers, who recommended that the fort and some land around it be retained by the crown. Durnford did note that the fort could prove useful as a relay point for the transportation of troops and supplies but his central rationale was not based on military strategy. He pointed out that the land and buildings being sold would probably bring a better price if people thought the government did "not contemplate the total abandonment of the place...." He also added that the site of the fort could become a market place for Prescott at some future time.⁷ Such were the arguments which saved Fort Wellington as a military site in 1823.

Nevertheless, the buildings and part of the military reserve went on sale by auction in September 1823 and almost all the advertised property was sold on installment terms or leased.⁸ A small guard remained at the fort although plans still existed for the sale of the remaining property. The major argument now being used in defence of retaining the fort as government property was not its present usefulness, but the considerable cost of repurchasing the land should it be needed in the future.⁹ The last permanent military official at Fort Wellington, Barrack Master Andrew Patton, left to take up

duties at York early in 1829 and the final Fort Wellington guard, four rank and file of the 15th Regiment, departed Prescott in November 1833.¹⁰ By 1834 the blockhouse barrack at Fort Wellington was not considered habitable and had been abandoned "some years". There were no military personnel on site "with the exception of a Non Commissioned Officer Kept in charge."¹¹ The sketch made in October 1830 by Thomas Burrowes is the only known visual representation of the first fort in its declining years. It continued to decay until the summer of 1838 when work began on its reconstruction in a much modified form (see figure 9).

Life at Fort Wellington, 1815-30

While the strategic importance of Fort Wellington declined after the war, activities of some significance continued there for at least a decade following the signing of the peace treaty in December 1814. For a time the fort and Prescott were a staging depot for military settlers and their provisions. As well, the number of troops stationed at the post decreased only gradually as the border tensions lifted and their presence became superfluous. In the meanwhile military life went on, much as it did at any minor garrison post, a relatively dull routine punctuated sporadically by incidents of scandal or violence.

It is unfortunately impossible to state with accuracy the number of troops stationed at Fort Wellington during most of the post war period.¹² Even during the war this figure varied dramatically from week to week and even from day to day as regiments passed through or the militia was called up in emergencies. Until mid 1823 when much of the government property at Fort Wellington was sold or leased there was likely a complement of up to 50 rank and file at the post.¹³ A detachment of Royal Artillery was present at Fort Wellington

in 1820 and was not withdrawn until late in 1825. After this date there was but a small guard of up to 12 men and a barrack master at the post. The latter left in 1829. By 1833 only four rank and file of the 15th Regiment of Foot were posted at Prescott and even these were removed in November 1833.¹⁴ Thereafter the post was totally abandoned until the rebellion period. The physical conditions under which the troops lived will be discussed in the analysis of military structures during the post war period.

Probably the most notable function served by Fort Wellington after the war, aside from that of defence, was the assistance afforded to the military and government subsidized immigrants in the decade from 1815 to 1825. The idea of settling disbanded soldiers in Upper Canada became popular even before the end of the war. Colonel Edward Baynes, writing in June 1814, suggested that members of his regiment, the Glengarry Light Fencibles, be settled in strategic areas following the war. He pointed out that the settlement of loyal men with military training and experience at border points and along supply routes would discourage future American aggression and give the civilian population a defence nucleus should trouble arise.¹⁵ The idea was seized upon by the British government though more as a solution to the problems posed by large numbers of post Napoleonic and disbanded soldiers than as an answer to Upper Canada's defensive needs.

The townships bordering the Rideau River were chosen as the location for the initial influx of settlers and by mid 1815 Alexander McDonell, newly appointed superintendent of settlement, was busily working on the logistics for the programme. He soon decided that "Fort Wellington appears to be the most eligible Situation for a Depôt for the Settlers going on to the Rideaux [sic]." He had been informed that "a good Road" ran from the post through Augusta and Oxford townships to the

river and felt that wagons laden with supplies and the settlers' possessions could make the trip and return in two days. He recommended that Fort Wellington be the major supply depot for 1815-16 and that it then be superseded by Montreal. He also suggested that those military settlers who were being sent north from Cornwall be redirected to Fort Wellington.¹⁶ After actually visiting the settlement sites, and of course travelling the access roads, McDonell decided that Brockville rather than Fort Wellington would be the most practical depot on the St. Lawrence River.¹⁷ A government station such as Fort Wellington, however, could hardly be ignored in such a massive programme. McDonell used it as his headquarters and also requisitioned from the Commissariat Office such supplies as nails, shingles, locks, window glass and putty for the settlers. These items were evidently then in storage at the post.¹⁸ While Brockville became the point from which settlers began their inland journey, Fort Wellington was soon designated a receiving or stopover station.¹⁹ As winter approached it became necessary to establish temporary quarters for families in transit. Brockville as the major depot housed perhaps "Thirty large Families" in the old barracks. Only a few families stayed at Prescott and they were "accommodated in a Stone Building on the Wharf," the building marked '13' in figure 5.²⁰

With the establishment of the Perth settlement, and presumably after an improvement in the road linking Fort Wellington and the Rideau River, the fort again became an important supply base. By late in 1817 contracts for fresh beef for the Perth settlement were being supervised by Charles Clarke, the Deputy Assistant Commissary General stationed at Fort Wellington.²¹ Early in 1818 Fort Wellington was officially established as the centre for transporting supplies and provisions to the settlement.²² This system remained in effect until at least 1821 with contracts for

the transport of goods being let on an annual basis.²³ At the same time stores such as bedding and implements and, on occasion food, were also issued to immigrants from the post.²⁴

Peter Robinson is best known for his efforts to settle Irish immigrants in the Peterborough area in 1824 and 1825. However, he also supervised at least one boatload of immigrants to Upper Canada, probably 200 to 300 individuals, in 1823. In this first venture his destination was, not Peterborough, but the Perth settlement and his charges stopped over briefly at Prescott before travelling overland to Perth and on to Beckwith Township. Fort Wellington, now largely denuded of officials and troops, played a lesser role than it had in the previous immigration. Robinson was anxious to press on and seemed to expect little aid from the post though he did request use of the "old beds and blankets in charge of the barrack master" there.²⁵ While the military was charged with the responsibility of provisioning Robinson's numerous immigrants on their way to Peterborough in 1824 and 1825, it was Prescott rather than Fort Wellington which was considered the depot and stopover spot.

Little is known of the social or personal lives of the men who served at Fort Wellington after the war. A Church of England minister, Reverend Robert Blakey, served as chaplain to the post in 1821 and 1822 and actually conducted services in the blockhouse for a time; a hospital assistant was assigned there as well until the end of the latter year. On occasion a private practitioner also administered to the medical needs of the garrison.²⁶ A review of rations issued in the Canadas in 1820-21 by the Lords of the Treasury indicated that approximately ten percent were going to the wives of soldiers.²⁷ This is probably a relatively accurate, or perhaps slightly conservative, reflection of the ratio of the sexes at Fort Wellington shortly after the war. It is likely that the ratio increased as the importance of the post and thus the number of troops there declined. When the Royal Artillery

detachments were withdrawn from a number of Posts, including Prescott, in 1825, their commander noted that "every individual at Fort George - Amherstburg - and at Drummond Island is married, and the greater number have several children."²⁸ Such wives were usually able to add slightly to the family income by doing barrack washing, cleaning and cooking. Some also served as personal maids to the wives of officers.²⁹ Certainly both James Frost, fort adjutant at Fort Wellington from 1816 to 1823, and Andrew Patton, barrack master there from 1821 to 1829, were married and both had children. Both men resided in buildings in the military complex north of the fort. James Frost became town major at Quebec in 1823 and when he died in 1835 his wife Eliza returned to England with their children.³⁰ Patton was transferred to York as barrack master in 1829 but one son, John, remained at Prescott and succeeded his father as registrar of Grenville County.³¹

As noted above, life at Fort Wellington in the decade after the war was not always tranquil despite the absence of hostilities along the border. The three major problems recurrent at the post were alcoholism, theft and violence, the latter usually involving the civilians of Prescott or the surrounding neighbourhood. Alcoholism rarely appears baldly in the documentary evidence. Late in 1818 Barrack Master Benjamin Comens, who was soon to resign under somewhat of a cloud, asked for the removal of his clerk who had "frequently been of late in such an intoxicated state as to render him unfit to perform the duty of his Situation...."³² Comens' second replacement as barrack master suffered from the same affliction and met the same fate. He had been removed from his position as barrack master at Montreal to Fort Wellington, a more minor post, in January 1820; before the year was out he had been dismissed entirely from the service.³³ Usually problems with alcohol were masked as part of other difficulties ranging from ineptitude and inefficiency to outright theft.

Alcohol was also involved in at least some of the incidents of violence which occurred at or near the post.

The above-mentioned Benjamin Comens was barrack master at Fort Wellington from 1815 until his sudden resignation in February 1819. While Comens gave as his primary reason for resigning his father's ill health and the need to supervise his affairs, he also stated enigmatically that "the cabals and private intrigue at this place has [sic] induced me for some time past to contemplate a retirement from office."³⁴ The barrack master actually resigned in the middle of a military court of inquiry called to investigate several sworn charges against him. Evidence presented at the inquiry indicated that Comens had stolen wood from the military lumber yard and used it to build a carriage house, wood shed, hen house, cattle shed and a smoke house.³⁵ Comens was also accused of having added the name of his own servant to the military pay lists and then kept the pay for himself.³⁶ The proceedings appear to have been dropped when Comens resigned. A much larger and more spectacular theft, or series of thefts, which made the accusations against Comens appear to be mere peccadilloes, was discovered in the following year. Over a period of eight months a large quantity of military stores was systematically stolen from a locked magazine. Included in the items missing were 156 pairs of shoes, 78 shovels and spades, 771 pounds of flat iron, over 1,000 panes of glass, 120,000 six-inch nails, four stoves and a plowshare.³⁷ The officer who investigated the robberies concluded that

considerable depredations have actually been made by the Garrison on the public property in charge of this Department, and that the Sentinel placed to protect the property must frequently have assisted or connived at the Robberies which have from time to time been made....³⁸

The clerk in charge of these stores had been aware of the robberies for some months but had not reported them to any

superior because he hoped, so he said, to catch the culprits in the act.³⁹ For his efforts to act the sleuth and his failure to report the crimes the clerk was dismissed. Members of the garrison most certainly were involved in the thefts. The magazine in question was always guarded by a sentry. In addition the thieves had keys to the magazine's padlock and obtained new ones when the clerk changed the locks. The clerk's exact role remains somewhat cloudy. He was judged "totally unfit" by the investigator but there was no hint that he was actually involved in the crimes.⁴⁰ The wider implications of the magnitude of the thefts was not scrutinized during the inquiry. It would seem likely that the network of thieves was spread beyond the garrison. 156 pairs of shoes and over 1,000 panes of glass were hardly quantities being used by individuals, and certainly not by the soldiers themselves. The thefts probably represent but one strand, albeit a clandestine one, of the economic and social web linking the town and the garrison.

Little documentary evidence of this web exists today for the post war period. Certainly the garrison was supplied with food by contract to local merchants who in turn obtained their beef, pork and flour at least in part from neighbouring farmers.⁴¹ There would, of course, also have been a good deal of social and economic intercourse between individual members of the garrison and the townspeople of Prescott. Unfortunately these day to day occurrences have not survived in records. What remain today are accounts of the occasional problems and flareups between the two groups which, while hardly typical, do represent the less pleasant face of military-civilian relationships at Fort Wellington in the post war peace period.

The civil suits initiated after the war as a result of the military's impressment and foraging activities no doubt kept alive resentments built up during the war. Incidents also occurred occasionally after the war to increase tensions. One such incident occurred in May 1816 and, while perhaps

not significant in itself, does indicate the lengths to which the garrison officers would go to limit and curtail such difficulties when they did develop. A disturbance whose causes are unknown broke out between a civilian and Deputy Assistant Commissary General Charles Clarke within and outside the latter's office, one of the military buildings located within Prescott (see figure 2). According to Clarke's assistant, Commissariat Issuer William Pitt, the civilian, a Mr. Roebuck, entered Clarke's office on two occasions on the morning of 13 May. In his testimony at the military board of inquiry Pitt stated that

he heard Mr. Roebuck curse and swear at Mr. Clark calling him a Coward and challenging him to fight and declaring that he would whip both Mr. Clark and Mr. Pitt....⁴²

Roebuck was removed from the Commissariat office with the aid of a sentry and when he refused to leave the guard was called out. By the time the latter arrived Roebuck was finally riding off. When ordered to return by the acting sergeant of the guard Roebuck apparently shouted further abuse and continued on his way. The sergeant, as he said, "to intimidate Mr. Roebuck" and "to hinder Mischief in the Guard Room [presumably to save face]" fired a blank cartridge. Not only had the sergeant fired at a civilian, even though with a blank, but he had done so virtually in the centre of Prescott. Two days later he faced a board of inquiry which simply attempted to ascertain the facts of the situation. When the sergeant was arrested and tried by the civil authorities his superiors on the advice of the lieutenant governor, and probably the attorney general, refused to aid in his defence.⁴³ Thus the military effectively repudiated what they deemed an excessive show of force against a civilian.

A more serious break in military-civilian relations occurred four years later and involved the Royal Artillery

troops then permanently stationed at the post. The civil authorities first learned of a growing malaise at Prescott When Lieutenant Governor Sir Peregrine Maitland received a memorial signed by Alpheus Jones and "a number of the most respectable Inhabitants of the Village of Prescott...."⁴⁴

The petition stated quite bluntly

that the Privates of the Royal Artillery now stationed at Fort Wellington have been, some months past in the habit of molesting many of your petitioners at night, by Riotous conduct, and of late by attacking their persons and houses, armed with Clubs and Staves breaking windows and threatening to Burn and Murder; Your petitioners being totally unable to learn the names of those persons for the purpose of punishing them do therefore pray that your excellency will be graciously pleased to Order that the said Privates be removed from this place with as little delay as possible....⁴⁵

Almost as an afterthought some of those who signed the petition wrote to Maitland stressing that they wanted to be rid only of the Royal Artillery privates, that the commanding officer "has been very active in suppressing the misconduct of these men," and that the non-commissioned officers of the Royal Artillery "have upon all occasions conducted [themselves] with the utmost propriety...."⁴⁶ Within the week Lieutenant Colonel A. Bredin, commander of the Royal Artillery detachment at Kingston, was ordered to investigate.⁴⁷ In his report Bredin stated that the trouble, exaggerated in the petition, arose as the result of the acquittal in civil court of a civilian charged by the commanding officer with having struck two Royal Artillery privates.⁴⁸ From Bredin's report it would appear that the soldiers were perhaps attempting to gain by harassment what they had been denied by civil justice.

A separate report prepared by Fort Adjutant James Frost indicated the presence of deeper animosities between the soldiers and at least some of the inhabitants of Prescott. According to Frost the commanding officer, Lieutenant Claudius Shaw, had narrowly averted a violent confrontation between some of the Royal Artillery and a party of visiting Americans by ordering the soldiers back to barracks. The Americans, again according to Frost, had arrived from Ogdensburg and spent much of the day drinking in a Prescott tavern. "After drinking several seditious Toasts," they began insulting first a group of immigrants temporarily lodged at Prescott and then some members of the detachment. Frost adds, quite pointedly, that not "one of the natives of this country step[ped] forward in defence of the poor unoffending immigrant strangers..."; he felt in fact that the American "Lawless Ruffians" were encouraged in their actions by some Prescott citizens.⁴⁹

If Frost's charges are to be believed, there was not only an animosity between the British regulars and the 'natives' of Prescott, but an affinity on the one hand between the soldiers and the British immigrants and a corresponding rapport or sympathy between at least some of Prescott's citizenry and their American neighbours. It should be noted that Frost himself was British born and raised and that his perception of the situation may have been coloured accordingly. But even Bredin's official report, subdued as it is in comparison with Frost's indicates an underlying hostility between members of the two groups. However, the absence of other documented incidents during the post war period would indicate that the tensions were usually kept under relatively strict control by both the officers and the leaders of Prescott society.⁵⁰

Fort Wellington Structural History, 1815-37

The post war structural history of Fort Wellington, its military reserve land and its attendant buildings can best be examined in the context of three distinct chronological periods and corresponding structural phases. The first period from 1815 to 1822 was one of structural maintenance and modification and also coincides with the long negotiations and final purchase of the military reserve from the Jessup family. The second phase covering the calendar year 1823 deals with the sale or lease of much of the government land and many of the military buildings. The third period from 1823 to 1837 chronicles briefly the continuing leasing activities and the physical decline of the remaining government structures. As was the format in chapter III each structure, beginning with the casemated earthworks and the blockhouse, will be examined in the context of the above mentioned three phases.

The Land

As noted above in chapter II, the land around and upon which Fort Wellington was built, was simply occupied first by the militia in June 1812, and later by regular troops. The military authorities made no effort to compensate Major Edward Jessup, the owner of the land, for over a full year after the seizure or nine months after work had first begin on the fort. Finally in September 1813, in response to a

petition from Jessup, a board of inquiry met at Prescott and determined that he should be compensated for this lost land, buildings and improvements. The board called for an arbitration board to be set up to establish a fair price and, for the interim, gave Jessup £100.¹ It was to be the only compensation money he would see. The arbitration board with Lieutenant Colonel Pearson at its head duly met in October 1813, and decided upon compensation of £2,050.² No immediate effort was made to implement this award and even an enquiry in April 1814, by Sir Gordon Drummond brought no results.³ Late in 1815 Susannah Jessup, widow of the recently deceased Edward Jr., appealed again to Drummond stressing the needs of "her numerous family, [and] an aged helpless Father in Law [Major Jessup] in the most deplorable and wretched situation."⁴ The military authorities began to respond to this plaintive plea but soon became bogged down over the question of just how much property they wished to purchase. The situation was further confused because Major Jessup had not kept adequate records of the sale of his town plots. Many of the original transactions concerning Prescott properties were not entered in the Grenville County land registry until after the war.⁵ By the time surveys had been taken and the figure of 82½ acres decided upon, Major Jessup, in his eighty-first year, had passed away. Unfortunately, his heir Edward, a grandson and son of Susannah Jessup, was a minor and could not legally sell the land to the crown until his twenty-first birthday which occurred in June 1822.⁶ In July of that year the transfer was finally made, a full decade after the land was taken and six years after Major Jessup's death.⁷

Ironically it was only three months after the final transfer that the military authorities decided to sell off their newly acquired property.⁸ At first everything including Fort Wellington itself was to be sold but this was modified early in 1823 to exclude the fort and approximately 50 acres

of land around it (see figure 7).⁹ By August 17 lots had been surveyed for the coming sale; all but one were to be sold, with whatever buildings stood on them, for prices ranging from 50 to £250 for a total of 1,805. Lot number 17 (see figure 7) which bordered on the town and the St. Lawrence was to be leased at £35 per annum as it was thought the land might serve a useful strategic function in the future.¹⁰ The sale was publicly advertised in newspapers and took place in September 1823.¹¹ All of the lots were sold on an installment plan of seven equal annual payments for a total of £1,977.¹² Only £161.12.10 was actually collected on the day of the sale, however, and in the years to come several lots would revert through default to the crown. Three of the largest or park lots were back in the government's hands by 1827 and were leased whenever possible.¹³ By 1837 the lots and buildings within Prescott and some of those on the western edge of the military reserve were in private hands; those to the north, with the exception of lot number 15, remained with the government (see figure 10).

Fort Wellington

In 1815 Fort Wellington proper consisted of a splinter-proof one storey blockhouse surrounded by an earthwork containing five wood framed casemates and a larger splinter-proof store room in the east part of the north curtain. The casemates had begun to leak even during the war when powder and provisions were found to be damaged by dampness.¹⁴ Little appears to have been done to remedy this situation following the war. In mid 1817 the military secretary was informed "that the Store houses at Fort Wellington are reported to me by Captain Walker in so damp a State, that if the Stores are left there during the Winter they will be useless".¹⁵ There is no record extant of repairs being made but some of the

most perishable stores were removed.¹⁶ Finally in 1821 Lieutenant Colonel Elias Durnford, commander of the Royal Engineers, reported after a personal inspection that the Walls of the Splinter proofs under the Ramparts & the roofing are in such a dreadful state of delapidation that I must pronounce it very dangerous to inhabit them & beg to recommend the Stores to be removed to such place as the Commanding Officer points out.¹⁷

Presumably Durnford's advice was followed for the casemates, and the earthwork itself, was allowed to fall into ruin. A touring lieutenant wrote of the post in 1833: "there is a large and strong block-house in the interior, but the bomb-proof barracks [sic] have fallen in under the great pressure of earth upon the timber roofs."¹⁸ See figure 9 for a sketch of the post done just two years earlier. Both the original earthwork and the casemates were virtually obliterated during the construction of the second Fort Wellington.

The blockhouse, for a time, fared somewhat better. While minor maintenance work may have been carried out earlier, the first approved repair work was not done until the fall of 1818 when leakage in the roof over the officers' quarters was stopped and the glass of two small windows replaced.¹⁹ The blockhouse continued to deteriorate. When Commissariat Department Issuer Richard Stroud was offered accommodations there in lieu of lodging money in 1820 he "visited the rooms, and found them very dark and uncomfortable; [he was also]... informed by several persons there resident, that they were leaky and uninhabitable in rainy weather...."²⁰ Requests continued to be made for repairs including one from the commander of the Royal Engineers after visiting the post in 1821. Durnford stated quite bluntly

that it appears to me to be unsafe for Troops to inhabit the Block House. The main Walls of the

Building seem secure, but as the whole of the interior ought to be taken down, and more substantial foundations laid; I have the honor to recommend to your Lordship to authorize that the troops be removed into a temporary Officers Quarter near the Fort Adjutants residence [likely the artillery barrack, the largest building in the complex north of the fort] and that the best Quarter part of the Block House may be re-established for their Winter residence if your Lordship may not be pleased to allow a general repair to be proceeded with as would be better.²¹

As a direct result of Durnford's recommendations extensive renovations of the blockhouse were carried out late (see figure 8) in 1821. Barrack Master Andrew Patton certified that the following work was done. New stone foundations four feet deep and five feet square were laid for the supporting beams, and new cross foundations three feet deep were laid for sleepers throughout the building. New sleepers were also installed as were new ceiling supports. The stone foundation around the interior perimeter of the building was enlarged and repaired and a new floor laid throughout the structure and secured with spike nails. Four new partitions and a door were installed in the east side of the building to accommodate 60 men and two partitions with a door in the north west quarter for 36 men.²² New partitions were erected to form a passage between these barracks and the mess room and officers' quarters. The rooms and partitions of six officers' quarters were repaired, painted, whitewashed and fitted with locks and keys.²³ The exterior walls inside the building were reinforced with wooden battens and one hundred loop-hole windows were repaired, glazed and cased. 16 double slide window sashes were made or repaired and fitted and glazed.²⁴ Fixtures constructed for the interior included

three large cupboards, three shelves, five clothes-racks, 164 wall pegs and eight rim racks. One double and one single heavy door were taken down and repaired; two new door sills were made and the original iron work repaired. Four large doors leading to the well, and the windows of each, were repaired and fitted with new locks and keys. Locks and keys were installed in the doors to the mess room and mess kitchen (see 'd' and 'c' in figure 8). New double births were installed for 96 men. The six fireplaces were repaired, pointed, whitewashed and given new stovepipe flues. The entire ceiling of the blockhouse was lathed, plastered and whitewashed as were the side walls of the soldiers' barracks. Finally the doors, windows, loopholes, partitions, cupboards, shelves and passages were painted.²⁵

On the exterior of the blockhouse further repairs were made at this time. The old sheet iron was removed from the top of the building and the roof was repaired; it was then covered with new sheet iron and painted. Three new chimneys were built and all of the windows cased and painted. The entire exterior of the building was then whitewashed. Two iron boot scrapers were placed by the blockhouse doors on the west side and a new standing ladder was installed as a precaution in case of fire. Finally a new bridge with a railing was installed "at the Fort Gates."²⁷

Within a few months of the completion of these extensive renovations the Commissariat Department took it upon itself to convert the newly created soldiers' barracks in the north west corner of the blockhouse into a commissariat store. To secure the area iron bars were placed over the windows and sliding shutters over the loop-holes. The new births were removed and padlocks added to the barrack doors.²⁸

These massive and uncoordinated renovations were the last to be carried out on the blockhouse. Before the end of the year Dalhousie had determined to sell all government

property at Prescott including the blockhouse. While the blockhouse, earthwork and surrounding reserve land were not sold, nor further effort was made to maintain the structure and it gradually fell into disrepair and decay. By 1834, as noted above, the blockhouse barrack was "not considered in a habitable state and has been abandoned some years...."²⁹ In 1838 its remains were torn down to make way for the present blockhouse.

The ordnance mounted on the earthworks and river battery at Fort Wellington varied during the war years and, unfortunately, little data exists for the post war period. However, it is known that in mid-1816 there were four 24 pounders, two 18 pounders and three 12 pounders mounted at the post (see figure 4). There may have been some nine and six pounders in storage as well.³⁰ A detachment of Royal Artillery was stationed at Fort Wellington, with its officer as commander of the post, from 1817 to 1825. Presumably some ordnance would have been present in serviceable form during these years. Along with the government property and buildings offered for sale in 1823 were 5,130 lbs. of gunpowder in 90 lb. kegs and 8,273 lbs. in one to eight pound cartridges.³¹

Ancillary Military Buildings

Commissariat Store and Wharf

The Commissariat store and wharf located just offshore at the west end of town was used by the military throughout the war (see figure 2). By 1818 it was described as "an old Building and...much in want of repairs at present." It was estimated that £297 would be required to put it in proper repair; the money was not forthcoming.³² In the following year, the post's

Deputy Assistant Commissary General T. H. Thomson lamented to his superior upon learning that a new Commissariat store would not be built:

I think it my duty to represent to you the state of the Building at present occupied as such which is in every respect unfit for the purpose. It is a wooden Frame slightly weather boarded and the Doors, and Windows so much out of repair that they may be easily forced. It is also built so near the Water that when the wind is high every wave enters through the Floor, which is open in many places and altogether in so bad a state as to render it impossible to keep Flour in it sweet for any length of time. I yesterday examined the remainder of the Flour received upon the last Contract in August last, and of Thirty Four Barrels, Twenty Two were found sour....³³

Thomson was permitted to move the stores to another government building, but no repairs were made.³⁴ Undaunted, the Commissariat Department asked for £1,200 to build a new store and wharf closer to the fort (see figure 5) and suggested that the present one which was "in a state of great Delapidation [and] not worth repair..." could be sold to some Prescott merchant.³⁵ The building and wharf along with the commanding officer's quarters directly north was sold in 1823 to Prescott forwarder and customs officer Alpheus Jones who thereafter used it in his own business pursuits.³⁶

Commanding Officer's Quarters

The commanding officer's quarters located directly north of the commissariat store and wharf (see figures 2 and 5) continued in its function after the war. It received extensive repairs in 1818 including a new shingle roof, new

weather boarding, and repairs to the kitchen floor, the chimney, doors, window shutters, gutters and fire ladders, for an estimated cost of £111.³⁷ The building was advertised as being "in good repair" and sold to Alpheus Jones in 1823.³⁸ He may have used it as a residence since it was close to his newly acquired warehouse and wharf.

Field Train Officers' Quarters

The field train officers' quarters just north and east of the commanding officer's house (see figures 2 and 5) was converted into a military hospital in February 1817 in place of the late Major Jessup's stone house. Later that year Captain Walker, R.A., and commanding officer at Fort Wellington, stated that the building was "greatly in need of Repair, so much so that whenever a Shower of Rain falls the Water comes thro the Roof in great Quantities." Walker recommended extensive repairs and renovations to the roof, floors and partitions which do not appear to have been carried out.⁴⁰ In the following year, however, a new ceiling and floor was put in the upper storey; the chimney and windows were repaired; new outside stairs and a porch were built; the kitchen section was partially weather boarded; and the whole building was given new gutters, shutters and ladders, at an estimated cost of £112.⁴¹ In 1819 the hospital facilities were described as housing quarters for one officer, an apothecary store and space for 40 sick.⁴² This structure and its outbuildings were sold, with the rest of the government property, in 1823 to another Prescott merchant and forwarder, Alfred Hooker for £ 298.⁴³

Commissariat House and Office

The Commissariat house and office, located almost in the

middle of town (see figures 3 and 5), was described "as not habitable" only a year and a half after it was built in 1814.⁴⁴ Some repairs were likely made at this time. In 1816 it was discovered that the building was only partly located on Jessup property which the government intended to purchase.⁴⁵ Rather than buy the new property, it was decided to move the structure onto Jessup's lot at an estimated cost of £73 plus labour.⁴⁶ Nothing was done at the time and the building continued to be used by the Commissariat Department. Finally in 1819, at the prodding of the owner of the second lot, the government agreed to move the building and in August 1820 it was dismantled, "the materials being removed within the Military Reserve...."⁴⁷

Stone Store and Wharf

The stone store and wharf located on the waterfront at the east end of Prescott (see figures 2 and 5) was used occasionally after the war as temporary quarters for immigrants. It is uncertain whether the building was owned or rented by government and no references have been found to repair work being done on it. The building was in private hands by 1821 (see figure 5).⁴⁸

Jessup Stone House

Major Jessup's two buildings within the militia stockade, a two storey stone house and a single storey squared timber building, remained in the hands of the military after the war (see figures 2 and 5). The stone house continued to be used as a barrack until June 1815 when the upper storey became the garrison hospital and the first floor a barrack store for bedding.⁴⁹ In September of that year, repairs were requested because the bedding had been damaged, presumably by moisture.⁵⁰

Early in 1817 the hospital facilities were moved to the field train officers' house, described as "much better suited for the purpose than the one hired from Mrs. Jessup."⁵¹ The Jessup building was retained, however, and repaired the next year. It was given new doors, window shutters and ladders, and the plastering and floors were repaired.⁵² In 1819 the building was adapted as a barrack store; along with repairs 12 iron bars were placed in front of the two lower windows and the cellar door was repaired and rehinged.⁵³ The Jessup stone building was legally purchased by the crown in July 1822 and was leased along with its surrounding land to Prescott forwarder Arthur Gifford in 1823 for 21 years at £25 per annum.⁵⁴

Jessup Wooden Building

The wooden building of Major Jessup directly south of his stone house was adapted as a dispensing room and surgery by August 1815 (see figure 1). This function ceased when the hospital facilities were moved in 1817 but the building remained in military hands and was repaired in 1818. At this time it received a new chimney, shutters, weather boarding and ladders; the interior was lathed and plastered, and a partition and windows repaired.⁵⁵ In the following year it was set up as an office for the barrack master. The roof was repaired and newly shingled, a new door, hinges and lock were installed and repairs effected to the chimney, and interior plastering and whitewash.⁵⁶ It too presumably was part of the property leased for a 21 year period by Arthur Gifford in 1823 though it does not appear in figure 7.⁵⁷

Northern Complex of Buildings

The complex of structures north of the fort also remained in

the government's possession following the war. The larger structure on lot 14 (see figure 7), described as engineer and artillery officers' quarters in figure 5, was repaired late in 1818. The engineer's quarters, the west side of the building, had its floor and chimney repaired and was supplied with new gutters and ladders. The eastern half of the building, the artillery officers' quarters, had its roof repaired and new shutters, gutters and ladders installed.⁵⁸ The building and the lot on which it was situated was sold in 1823 but reverted to the crown by default in 1826.⁵⁹ The building was described in 1824 as being "in a Most delapidated State, and... not worth Repairing...." ⁶⁰ The lot was leased to Prescott merchant Levis Church who subleased the house to a tenant. In 1831 the building burned down and is described as "Ruins" in figure 10 prepared in July 1839.⁶¹ The engineer's store located just north of the combined officers' quarters does not appear to have been maintained by the military after the war. It is described as a barn in 1831 and as ruins in the 1839 sketch, figure 10.⁶²

Similarly the artillery barrack, the largest structure in the northern military complex, was not maintained after the war. When sold in 1823 it was listed as one of the outbuildings on lot 15.⁶³ It too was in ruins by 1839 (see figure 10). The same fate awaited the engineer's office directly north of the artillery barrack with the exception that it was still in use in 1839 (see figures 5 and 10). The structure immediately to the east of the artillery barrack (marked number 4 in figure 5) served as the ordinance store-keeper's house and office and then as Fort Adjutant James Frost's residence. Frost maintained the property himself and built a barn and root house nearby; he also had, in his own view, "one of the best Gardens within Twenty Miles of the Post...."⁶⁴ The building was described as "an excellent dwelling house" when sold in 1823 to Major John Powell of the

76th Regiment and was still habitable in 1839 (see figure 10).⁶⁵ The last major structure in the northern complex was the Fort Adjutant's residence until some time prior to 1821 when it was taken over by Barrack Master Andrew Patton (see structure number 5 in figure 5). It and three outbuildings, an artillery cookhouse, a stable and a forge, were sold in 1823 to Prescott forwarder Hiram Norton for £200.⁶⁶ The house appears to have been occupied in 1839 (see figure 10). The last military structure completed during the war, the garrison cook house or mess kitchen located just outside the gates of the fort, was repaired in 1818. Unspecified work was done on the floor, door and windows of the building and new shutters, gutters and fire ladders were installed.⁶⁷ It does not appear on any of the later military maps and probably fell into decay in the 1820s.

Prescott and the Battle of the Windmill Site Before the Rebellion

It must be remembered that Prescott, in the immediate post war period, was a new town. The site had not even been surveyed into town lots until 1810 and William 'Tiger' Dunlop who passed through in 1813 described it as "then consisting of five houses, three of which were unfinished."¹ If the sketch by Lieutenant Joshua Jebb is accepted as complete, this number had grown to 26 by 1816, seven of which were yet occupied for military purposes (see figure 5). Being chosen as the military headquarters for the upper St. Lawrence during the war gave Prescott prestige and status, and the presence of Fort Wellington and its garrison bolstered the village's economy in its first decade of existence. But the future vitality of the little community depended upon a peculiar union of geography and contemporary technology. As long as Prescott lay near the head of a 50 mile stretch of rapids which were virtually impassible to larger vessels, its role as a trans-shipment point was assured. Major Jessup probably realized this; certainly William Gilkison and others after him did.

Early Prescott did not always evoke the happiest of memories in the minds of travellers passing through it. Lieutenant Francis Hall who visited the village in 1816 or 1817 found it "remarkable for nothing but a square redoubt, or fort..."; he also "found the accommodations at Prescott so bad, that I seated myself at midnight in a light waggon, in which two gentlemen were going to Brockville...."² As late as 1833 another soldier on the grand tour of North America, Lieutenant Edward Thomas Coke, arrived at Prescott intending

to stay the night. However, he found the inn was in so dirty a state, and the whole town presented such an uninviting aspect, that we were induced, in spite of the necessity of subjecting our baggage to the scrutiny of a custom-house officer, to cross the river to Ogdensburgh [sic] ... where we found a comfortable hotel.³

Not all early visitors decried the accommodations at Prescott or made invidious comparisons with Ogdensburg or with Brockville, an older village and since 1808 the district seat. Some, perhaps more perceptive, saw beyond the dirt and carelessness of haste to the village's future possibilities. It was the opinion of John Howison writing in 1821 that "Prescott, although no more than a village at present, must eventually become a place of some importance, for it may be termed the head of the schooner and sloop navigation." In amplification he added: "Prescott must thus be made a depot for all the merchandize sent to the western parts of the province, and likewise for all the produce forwarded from thence to Montreal."⁴ Prescott did briefly fulfill Howison's expectations. By the early 1830s its population was estimated at 800 to 1,000 inhabitants.⁵ Even Lieutenant Coke commented favourably on the economic advantages of Prescott's geographic location and admitted that "much business is carried on in the forwarding of goods and travellers...."⁶ The completion of the Rideau Canal in 1832, the development of small and more powerful steamboats which could navigate the St. Lawrence rapids in the 1830s, the completion of the St. Lawrence canals in the 1840s and the building of the Grand Trunk railway in the next decade were factors leading to Prescott's economic eclipse in the mid nineteenth century. The period before the rebellion, however, was largely one of economic growth and vitality for the town.⁷

Economic and Social Development

The forwarding trade, the backbone of Prescott's economy, developed quickly after the war. Partnerships sprang up, usually with one or two individuals in Prescott signing agreements with forwarders in Lachine or Montreal to co-operate for a given period of time. These partnerships were dissolved and reformed with different principals, often on a yearly basis, as individual fortunes rose and fell. Prescott forwarders also co-operated with forwarders at Ogdensburg and, on occasion, had their own offices in both towns.⁸ Requirements for the trade were a modest amount of capital, warehouse and wharf facilities, batteaux and crews, good relationships with the lake vessels' captains and a great deal of business acumen. Not all the would be forwarders retired wealthy. Cargoes bound up river included every imported article required in Upper Canada as well as immigrants and their baggage. The major exports were flour, potash and barrel staves bound for the West Indies. Lieutenant Coke wrote of the batteau which he took downstream:

The boat had arrived the preceding evening at Prescott with fifty Irish immigrants, after a passage of 8½ days from Montreal, and was returning with a cargo of 100 barrels of flour from the Cleveland mills in Ohio..."⁹

One such early firm, though by no means the largest or most prominent, was MacMillan and Gifford. Alexander MacMillan worked out of Prescott while Arthur Gifford, a sometimes resident of Prescott, was located at Lachine. Like the other firms they dealt in flour, potash, red and white oak staves, and of course in transporting immigrants. Because of their limited capital they found it difficult, and ultimately impossible, to survive slack periods during the shipping season and to withstand the fierce competition of the trade. On one occasion they found it necessary to

sell two of their batteaux and to lay off several crewmen to enable them to hold out until more goods arrived from above Prescott.¹⁰ MacMillan also warned his partner against trusting the other forwarders. "Depend upon it", he wrote "they are your sworn enemies, as they are also of mine, caused by nothing else but our being engaged in the same Business with themselves."¹¹ On another occasion he wrote more succinctly:

You cannot expect any favours from either Mr. Sexton [Levi Sexton, later a forwarder at Ogdensburg] at Lachine or Messrs. [Alpheus] Jones and [C.A] Vanslyck of this place - instead of granting favours, they would drink your blood and mine.¹²

The partnership was soon dissolved. MacMillan went into business with other forwarders and Gifford, after a period at Prescott, found employment at Government House in York. Both remained interested in the forwarding trade and became advocates of improvements on the rapids section of the river.

The decade of the 1820s witnessed several advances in the Great Lakes - St. Lawrence transportation system. Steamboats became more numerous and technically more reliable; schedules were developed and largely adhered to, creating a more dependable transportation network. At the same time roads were improved and stagecoaches too began making regularly scheduled runs to and from Prescott. The latter usually carried passengers and baggage but provided little competition to the movement of bulk goods by boat. By late in the decade at least three steamboats made regularly scheduled weekly stops at Prescott.¹³ The forwarding trade also gained in efficiency and stability as smaller firms, such as MacMillan and Gifford, were eased out of business or forced into amalgamations. Yet enough firms remained in the trade to assure competition during this period.

Indeed improvements had occurred everywhere except in

the 50 mile stretch of rapids beginning just below Prescott. This last obstacle remained, not for lack of interest in removing it, but for lack of money to construct the required canal system. Of all the river and lake communities none was more active in the cause of canal building on the St. Lawrence than Prescott. The idea of bypassing the rapids with a series of canals was certainly not one which developed after the war, but it did gain adherents and practicality as the bulk trade on the river increased. In 1821 Arthur Gifford wrote on behalf of "a general meeting [at Prescott] of the Persons interested in the Carrying Trade on the St. Lawrence" asking that the small government locks at Coteau du Lac and Split Rock be improved to handle the increasing traffic.¹⁴ A year later Gifford wrote again giving a detailed description of each major obstacle to navigation and suggesting remedies such as the removal of boulders or the strategic placing of weirs to raise water levels in specific channels.¹⁵ Prescott citizens such as Alexander MacMillan were also involved in more formal efforts of the late 1820s and early 1830s to develop plans for a coherent and practical canal system.¹⁶ They were, of course, spurred on to more vigorous action by the construction and completion of the Erie and Rideau canals which posed direct threats to the St. Lawrence transportation network. The Cornwall Canal was begun during this period but the rapids remained an obstacle to commerce when rebellion broke out late in 1837. There is some irony in the enthusiasm of Prescott's business community for transportation improvements on the St. Lawrence. Once the rapids, the obstacle to commerce, was removed, there would be no need for the trans-shipment of goods between large and small vessels, and the economic *raison d'etre* of Prescott would be gone.

As noted above the forwarding trade involved not just the movement of bulk goods up and down river but also the

transportation of immigrants to new homes in Upper Canada. The influx began in earnest immediately after the war when the British government encouraged and assisted a programme of creating military settlements. Prescott became a stopping place and a gateway to the Perth settlement, Fort Wellington an administrative centre and a depot for supplies. In the mid 1820s a similar situation developed as Peter Robinson brought in large numbers of Irish immigrants to settle in the Peterborough area. The numbers of new arrivals continued to swell thereafter even without government assistance and Prescott grew and prospered accordingly. Businesses proliferated and became more specialized.¹⁷ Some of the very steamboats which meant so much to Prescott's economy were being produced in her dockyards including the S.S. Great Britain built there in 1831. The town was growing in other ways as well. An agricultural society was formed in 1830¹⁸ and in the following year Kingston editor Stephen Miles moved to Prescott to set up the Grenville Gazette.¹⁹ Unfortunately the carrying trade and the influx of immigrants brought more than growth and prosperity to Prescott. In the late 1820s and early 1830s, as assisted immigration was replaced by individual initiative, health and sanitary conditions on immigration vessels slipped below the none too stringent standards previously maintained. The plague of cholera appeared in Europe in 1831; given the extent and the nature of immigration from the British Isles to British North America it was simply a matter of time before the disease reached Upper Canada. In the summers of 1832 and 1834 Prescott's citizens faced their greatest crisis of the post war period and one which in some ways had more immediate impact for Prescott than the rebellion and its aftermath.

No area of Upper Canada escaped the scourge of cholera but the port towns, and lake and river communities, like Prescott, were hit first and hardest.²⁰ Even before the

outbreak of the epidemic there were indications of problems in the haphazard immigration system. In 1831 Alpheus Jones wrote to the lieutenant governor complaining

that a great number of Emigrants are now arriving at this place forwarded by the Emigrant Society of Montreal, who on their arrival here, wholly destitute of food or money are cast upon the charity of the Inhabitants of this Village.²¹

Jones was especially angry that the Montreal society was "paying the passage of Paupers to this place only". What he wanted was government funds to keep the destitute immigrants moving; he appears to have given no thought to the plight of towns upstream or to the final destination and destiny of the immigrants themselves. Narrow, but natural, self-interest such as that displayed by Alpheus Jones was all too common and tended to hamper the co-operative efforts needed to deal with the cholera epidemic of the next year.

Progress of the cholera through England and Ireland was monitored in British North America with growing anxiety in the spring of 1832 but little was done to prepare for its inevitable arrival. Its appearance in Belfast and Dublin was noted in May by the editor of the Brockville Gazette who could only hope piously that if it reached Lower Canada "such measures will be adopted as may prevent its spread in this part."²² District emigrant societies were being set up with government encouragement and financial support but their responsibilities were not clearly defined as yet, nor were their funds adequate to the struggle ahead. John Patton, son of Fort Wellington's ex-barrack master, Andrew Patton, was appointed Prescott agent for the Johnstown District Emigrant Society.²³ His duties were to meet all immigrants in his office as they arrived at Prescott, direct them to places where employment might be available and provide advice as required. He was to provide for the ill possibly by establishing a hospital to which

Lieutenant Governor Colborne had promised some funds or to convey them to the hospital at Kingston, if that institution's trustees agree. Colborne also suggested that some immigrants might be employed building a road to link Prescott with the Rideau settlement.²⁴ Such were the preparations when the cholera arrived in mid-June. Alpheus Jones informed Colborne

that the Cholera has broken out at this place, there have been three cases since twelve o'Clock today - a number of persons Boatmen and Emigrants have died of the same disease within the last two days (say the 15th and 16th instants) between this and Cornwall, a number more have died between Cornwall and Montreal, I speak of Boatmen Emigrants & Sailors many of the Boats on their way up have been deserted by their crews. there are a number of Boats within a few miles of this place laden with Emigrants who are as yet in a healthy state. all is consternation here.²⁵

Jones pleaded for immediate assistance, stressing that Prescott was "almost the only [port] where the Emigrants are landed from the Durham Boats and Batteaux, and reshiped on board of Steam Boats for the different Ports on Lake Ontario...." A cholera hospital and some sheds were set up as soon as the disease appeared and continued in service at least until October. Doctor Hamilton Dibble Jessup, another grandson of Major Jessup, cared for the sick throughout this period. Finally with the arrival of colder weather the disease subsided, at least temporarily.²⁵

The disease did not strike in epidemic proportions in 1833 despite the large numbers of immigrants who continued to flood into Upper Canada. Emigration Agent John Patton estimated that 8,986 men, women and children passed through Prescott on their way upriver between the opening of navigation and the end of July 1833.²⁶ In the following year, however,

the disease sprang up again with renewed fury. The government at York sent £100 to the Prescott Board of Health and the hospital and sheds were likely put in use once more.²⁷ Between 10 July and 20 August 131 cases of cholera were recorded at Prescott; 44 people had died, 72 were listed as recovered and 15 were still ill.²⁸ John Patton remained as emigrant agent at Prescott in 1835, supervising the dispersal of government funds for medical and hospital care for sick and destitute immigrants, and free passage upriver for the healthy but poor arrivals. Medical care was provided for 36 individuals in August and 129 immigrants were granted free passage between the opening of navigation and the end of August 1835. None of the ill were diagnosed as suffering from cholera though one young woman died of typhus.²⁹ A total of 3,021 immigrants were recorded as passing through Prescott during the latter period. The sick rate, and the total number of immigrants, had declined dramatically from the previous three years; the cholera had, for a time, abated.

Prelude to Invasion: Post-Rebellion Incidents and the Battle of the Windmill Site

The rebellion of 1837-38 in Upper Canada can be separated into two distinct phases: the uprising in December 1837 north of Toronto and in the Western District and the subsequent border incidents which resulted almost a year later in small scale invasions by Canadian rebels and American sympathizers at Windsor and near Prescott. The inhabitants of the Johnstown and Eastern districts generally remained loyal to the crown during the rebellion itself; there was no uprising in eastern Upper Canada. The subsequent border disturbances, however, did affect the area and especially the border communities such as Prescott. It is these border incidents which will be examined briefly here to illuminate the

contemporary atmosphere of tension, fear, anger and suspicion which resulted in Fort Wellington being re-built and garrisoned after one and a half decades of neglect. The physical site of the one major border confrontation will also be examined as it existed on the eve of battle.

The immediate response of Prescott's citizens to the news of rebellion was to raise, under the leadership of Dr. Hamilton D. Jessup, a volunteer corps which Jessup temporarily named the Royal Prescott Rangers.³⁰ In the months following the abortive rebellion the Canadians who had fled across the border, led still by William Lyon Mackenzie, gained the sympathy and support of some Americans and began making preparations for invasion. Rumours of impending attack soon swept up and down the St. Lawrence border area, fanned by the presence on the river of William Johnston who had served as an American spy during the War of 1812 and promptly joined Mackenzie on Navy Island in the Niagara River after the rebellion. In February 1838 Johnston and an American sympathizer occupied a Canadian Island near Gananoque with a small force, apparently with the intention of attacking Kingston. The plan fell through but did nothing to quell the tension and excitement along the border.³¹ At the end of May Johnston struck again, capturing the steamer Sir Robert Peel while it stopped to pick up wood on its journey upriver from Prescott. The passengers were forced off on the refueling island and the steamer was looted and burned. In relating the incident Major Plomer Young who was then commanding at Prescott noted: "the excitement of course [is] rather strong in this neighbourhood, as we scarcely know what to expect, and we have no means of defence along this frontier."³² Lieutenant Colonel C.B. Turner, commander at Cornwall, echoed these sentiments and stated that he had called out more militia "to prevent any retaliation on our Part, and relieve the minds of the peaceable Inhabitants who are in a great state of excitement and fear."³³ In relating

the incident to the home government Sir John Colborne stated:

This atrocious act has occasioned so much excitement on the Canadian side of the St. Lawrence that it will be necessary to take measures without the least delay to prevent retaliation on the part of our own population in the Johnstown and Eastern Districts of Upper Canada, and to establish a line of Posts between Coteau du Lac and Kingston to preserve order and insure protection to the Towns on the St. Lawrence....³⁴

On 23 June 1838 Colborne informed the home government that as part of his defence plan for Upper Canada he had ordered a post to be established at Prescott and to be manned by a volunteer militia company.³⁵ His official statement read: "the Fort to be repaired and a Block house or defensible Barrack to be built for 100 Men, and in which 1,000 stand of arms can be placed."³⁶ On 7 July Captain Francis Randolph of the Royal Engineers arrived at Prescott to begin work on the second Fort Wellington.

Documentary evidence pertaining to the physical site of the Battle of the Windmill prior to November 1838 is unfortunately but not suprisingly extremely limited. That which was generated during and after the fighting is often either self-serving as in the case of battle reports and later claims for losses or contradictory. The sketches by Henry Francis Ainslie and others are not entirely complementary; structural details of buildings and even their relative locations differ from one sketch to another. Nevertheless some comments can be made about the physical site as it likely appeared on the eve of battle.

The fighting occurred in the vicinity of the circular stone windmill located on the east half of lot 34, first concession, Edwardsburgh Township, Grenville County. This land, located approximately one mile downstream from Prescott

was first patented in 1809 and was sub-divided into town lots as the village of Newport in 1816.³⁷ According to local tradition the windmill was constructed in 1822 by Thomas Hughes, a West Indian merchant.³⁸ The land records, however, indicate that the property belonged to Brockville merchant Hiram Spafford from 1816 until 1830 when Hughes purchased it. Hughes held the land for only two years before in turn selling it to Prescott merchants Alexander and William McQueen for £1136.³⁹ The latter two were the owners of the windmill when it was damaged in November 1838. The larger purchase price paid for two small town lots indicates that the windmill existed in 1832. It is likely that Hughes actually had the mill built between 1830 and 1832, unless he had leased the land earlier from Hiram Spafford, a not too likely possibility. From the fragmentary evidence available it would seem that the windmill, certainly an experimental design for the area, was not a financial success. Alexander and William McQueen claimed that they had spent £618 putting the windmill into operational form for a total expenditure of £1754. Despite this investment they wanted the government, not to repair the structure, but to destroy it and compensate them for their expenses. Their ostensible reasoning was that, if allowed to stand, the structure might once again be taken and held by an invading force, but one cannot help but wonder if perhaps they simply wanted out of an unprofitable situation. It seems quite probable that their patriotism was, in this case, hardened by economic considerations. One secondary source says of the windmill that "for several years previous to this time [November 1838.], it had been deserted, and its machinery had fallen to ruins."⁴⁰

If this assessment of the windmill's economic feasibility and physical condition is accurate, it is likely that the tiny village of Newport which was nestled around the mill was also in decline. Certainly it does not appear to have been

recognized as an entity by contemporaries; none of the known accounts refer to it by name. Ainslie's sketches (see figures 11, 12, and 13) record only ruins, the aftermath of battle, but do indicate that the village contained at least three neat two storey stone houses as well as several lesser buildings and a structure, perhaps a warehouse, on the water's edge. Also visible are two east-west roads, an orchard and several well preserved field stone and wooden rail fences.⁴¹ The anonymous sketch showing the battle in progress (see figure 14) gives the widest view of the windmill and village but its accuracy can only be supposed by its attention to detail. It indicates that the village consisted of three stone houses, at least one of them two storey, two one storey wooden buildings including a school, a three storey store and a barn. Fencing and the orchard are also visible but the road system is indistinct.

Some structural detail of the village buildings damaged or destroyed during the battle is available; unfortunately, it cannot with certainty be matched with the structures shown in figures 11, 12, 13, and 14. Several of the village buildings belonged to the estate of the late Major John Powell of the 76th Regiment, the same individual who had purchased lot 15 north of Fort Wellington in 1823. The administrators of Powell's estate, Alpheus Jones and the Reverend Robert Blakey, claimed the following compensation:

- 1st A 1½ Story's Stone House with Cellar Kitchen divided into 4 Rooms on the upper floor, and 3 on the lower. Doors mostly pannelled with Venetian Blinds to the Windows and a Gallery in front. £160.0.0
- 2nd A Stone Barn. 30 by 39½ feet. height 14 feet, well finished, with 2 large folding Doors. 4 Wooden Windows. Thrashing Floor and partitions. £40.0.0
- 3rd A Stable, Carriage and Wood House. with appurtenances. 24 feet by 74. also of stone, with upper floors Doors and Windows £40.0.0
- 4th A Frame Dwelling. something old and dilapidated £25.0.0

5th The undivided half of an unfinished stone Dwelling. 30 feet by 44. two stories high, with cellar Kitchen, 31 Windows, mostly boarded over the frames: lower floors and one half of the upper completed: 4 fire places and Brick oven, all badly damaged...
£37.0.0

£305.0.0
Add for damages to Garden Walls thrown down and carried away
£5.0.0 42
£310.0.0

Two other individuals each claimed the loss of a house and barn; no structural details are available for these buildings.⁴³
In addition three other individuals, tenants in the above mentioned buildings, claimed for the loss of furniture and livestock. In total claims were made for seven houses and four barns as well as several lesser structures. Whether Newport and the windmill were in decline before the battle or not, the village was virtually destroyed in the fighting. It is possible that research into the post-rebellion history of the windmill and surrounding land will clarify to some extent our view of the pre-battle site.

Endnotes

Introduction: The Prescott Area Prior to the War of 1812

- 1 Donald Grant Creighton, The Empire of the St. Lawrence (Toronto: MacMillan, 1972), p. 144; Encyclopedia Canadiana (Toronto: Grolier, 1975), Vol. I, p. 338; Ruth McKenzie, Leeds and Grenville: Their First Two Hundred Years (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1967), p. 3. Batteaux were flat bottomed, shallow draft boats designed specifically to cope more easily with the St. Lawrence rapids between Cornwall and Prescott. They were usually 30 feet long, five to eight feet wide and tapered upward to a point at both ends. Though equipped with a mast and sail, the batteau was manoeuvred upstream by crewmen with long iron clad poles and steered with a stern paddle. The batteau was similar in design, though smaller than the Durham boat; the former could carry two to four tons of goods, the latter five to ten times that amount.
- 2 The Settlement of the United Empire Loyalists on the Upper St. Lawrence and Bay of Quinte in 1784: A Documentary Record, ed. Ernest Alexander Cruikshank, reprint of 1934 ed. (Toronto: Ontario Historical Society, 1966), p. 109, Captain Justus Sherwood, Sorrell [sic] to Major Robert Mathews, 23 May 1784.
- 3 Gerald M. Craig, Upper Canada: The Formative Years, 1784-1841 (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1963), p. 6.
- 4 Ibid., p. 8. Other Loyalists settled at Niagara and Detroit.

- 5 Ruth McKenzie, Leeds and Grenville: Their First Two Hundred Years (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1967), p. 13.
- 6 The Correspondence of Lieut. Governor John Graves Simcoe, with Allied Documents Relating to his Administration of the Government of Upper Canada, ed. Ernest Alexander Cruikshank (Toronto: Ontario Historical Society, 1923-31), 5 vols. (hereafter cited as Simcoe Correspondence), vol. 2, p. 121, American Secretary of State, Thomas Jefferson to George Hammond, British Minister Plenipotentiary to the United States, Philadelphia, 15 Dec. 1793; *ibid.*, p. 197, Stations of the British Army in Canada, 1794, dated 27 March 1794; *ibid.*, vol. 4, p. 288, Adjutant General George Beckwith to American Secretary of War James McHenry, Quebec, 3 June 1796.
- 7 J. MacKay Hitsman, The Incredible War of 1812: A Military History (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1965) (hereafter cited as Hitsman, Incredible War), p. 22.
- 8 Kingston Before the War of 1812: A Collection of Documents, ed. and intro. Richard A. Preston (Toronto: The Champlain Society for the Government of Ontario, University of Toronto Press, 1959), p. lxxvii.
- 9 Simcoe Correspondence, vol. 1, p. 255, Richard Cartwright to Simcoe, Kingston, 12 Nov. 1792.
- 10 *Ibid.*, vol. 3, p. 223, Cartwright to Simcoe, Kingston, 15 Dec. 1794.
- 11 Donald Grant Creighton, The Empire of the St. Lawrence (Toronto: MacMillan, 1972), p. 121.
- 12 Arthur Reginald Marsden Lower, Great Britain's Woodyard: British America and the Timber Trade, 1763-1867 (Toronto: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1973), p. 62; Robert Leslie Jones, History of Agriculture in Ontario, 1613-1880, foreward by Fred Landon (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1946, reprinted 1977), p. 29.

- 13 Kingston Before the War of 1812, pp. 220-26; Parish was a European financier who speculated heavily, if not always wisely, in American land and business enterprises.
- 14 Ibid., pp. 224-6.
- 15 Ibid., p. 224, n. 61.
- 16 Canada. Public Archives (hereafter PAC), National Map Collection, H12/440 - Prescott - 1816, "Sketch of Prescott and Environs" prepared by Lieutenant Joshua Jebb, R.E., 29 Jan. 1816. The map indicates quite clearly that the land behind the town was cleared to a depth of approximately 400 yards, that behind the fort, originally the site of Jessup's own farmhouse and out-buildings, to about 800 yards.
- 17 PAC, MG11, C.O.42/360, pp. 116-9, Memorial of Mrs. Susannah Jessup, 20 June 1816; *ibid.*, RG8, C394, pp. 137-39b, Proceedings of a Board of Arbitration assembled at Prescott on the day of October 1813; *ibid.*, C556, p. 125, Lieutenant Joshua Jebb, R.E. to Lieutenant Colonel Nicholls, Commanding Royal Engineer, Fort Wellington, 15 March 1816.
- 18 PAC, MG11, C.O.42/360, pp. 116-9, Memorial of Mrs. Susannah Jessup, 20 June 1816.
- 19 PAC, RG8, C394, p. 138, Proceedings of a Board of Arbitration assembled at Prescott on the day of October 1813; *ibid.*, MG11, C.O.42/360, p. 117. In the latter document the 400 young fruit trees have become "150 Young Apple trees" and "A nursery of young Apple trees...containing 1000 Trees".
- 20 PAC, RG8, C394, p. 138, Proceedings of a Board of Arbitration assembled at Prescott on the day of October 1813; *ibid.*, MG11, C.O.42/360, p. 117, Memorial of Mrs. Susannah Jessup, 20 June 1816.
- 21 PAC, RG8, C394, p. 138.
- 22 PAC, MG13, WO 55/860, pp. 506-7, "Journal of the

Assistance which the Engineer Department at Prescott or Fort Wellington received from the Commanding Officers of the Eastern District in the Year 1814" by Captain Frederick Gaugreben, Royal German Engineers, 10 July - 4 Dec. 1814. Here Gaugreben mentions troops "grubbing" or digging out stumps adjacent to the earthworks of Fort Wellington.

- 23 PAC, RG8, C88, pp. 39-44, Memorial of Elizabeth Ann Robertson minor Daughter and Heiress of the late Neil Robertson Esqr. deceased, 24 Nov. 1814; *ibid*, pp. 56-9, Puisne Judge of the Court of King's Bench William Campbell (also grandfather and guardian of Elizabeth Ann Robertson) to Military Secretary Colley Foster, Prescott, 30 March 1815.
- 24 PAC, RG8, C1228, p. 3, Colley Foster to William Campbell Quebec, 10 April 1815; *ibid.*, RG8, C1233, pp. 435-7, Military Secretary Colley Foster to Captain Hamilton Walker, Quebec, 6 April 1816.
- 25 PAC, MG23, H1, 3, Jarvis Family Papers, vol. 2, Hannah Jarvis to the Reverend Samuel Peters, 27 Nov. 1794.
- 26 PAC, National Map Collection, H3/440 - Prescott - 1816, "Sketch of part of the Town of Prescott Copied from a Map in the possession of the Executors of the Late Mr. Jessup" prepared by Lieutenant Joshua Jebb, R.E., 14 March 1816.
- 27 *Ibid.*, The map may be considered accurate concerning ownership of land and buildings constructed. It was prepared at the request of British military authorities who were considering purchasing some of the land in question; PAC, RG8, C556, pp. 124-7, Lieutenant Joshua Jebb, R.E., to Lieutenant Colonel Nicholls, Commanding Royal Engineer, Fort Wellington, 15 March 1816.
- 28 PAC, National Map Collection, H3/440 - Prescott - 1816 (1821) Fort Wellington, "Plan of Fort Wellington and

- Prescott" from original prepared by Lieutenant Joshua Jebb, R.E., 6 Sept. 1816.
- 29 Ibid., H12/440 - Prescott - 1816, "Sketch of Prescott and Environs" prepared by Lieutenant Joshua Jebb, R.E., 29 Jan. 1816.
- 30 Ruth McKenzie, Leeds and Grenville: Their First Two Hundred Years (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1967), p. 60; quoted from William Dunlop, Recollections of the American War 1812-14 by Dr. Dunlop with a Biographical Sketch of the Author by A.H.U. Colquhoun, of the Toronto News (Toronto: Historical Publishing Co., 1905), p.20.

War on the St. Lawrence Frontier, 1812

- 1 PAC, RG8, C676, p. 83, Captain A. Gray to Governor Sir George Prevost, Montreal, 13 Jan. 1812.
- 2 Ibid., p. 122, Richard Cartwright to Prevost, Kingston, 5 July 1812.
- 3 Ibid., pp. 79-80, Captain A. Gray to Prevost, Montreal, 13 Jan. 1812. Gray gave Prevost the chilling news that there were but 50 Batteaux available to government at Montreal, La Chine and Fort William Henry. These had been built in 1809 and were "going rapidly to decay." The report recommended the purchase of material to build 100 batteaux. Ibid., C1168, pp. 147-9, General Order signed by Adjutant General Edward Baynes, Quebec, 11 May 1812. This was an effort to standardize the accounting procedures required by the increase in the number of batteaux operated by the government.
- 4 George Francis Gilman Stanley, Guns and Gun Boats on the St. Lawrence or The Thousand Islands as a Factor in Canadian American Relations During the First Half of the Nineteenth Century In North America (Parks Canada, 1976), pp. 17-18.

- 5 PAC, MG11, C.O.42/146, pp. 245-52, Prevost to the Secretary of State for War and the Colonies the Earl of Liverpool, Quebec, 22 June 1812. Enclosed are extracts of two letters from Prescott dated 14 and 15 June 1812. These letters were probably written by Captain William Gilkison or by another forwarder based at Prescott. The first incident occurred on 5 June when the British vessel Lord Nelson, three days out of Prescott and sailing for Queenston, was fired upon by the American brig Oneida, boarded and escorted to Sackets Harbor. The second incident resulted when the American vessel Ontario carrying 700 barrels of flour from Queenston to Prescott was stopped near Carleton Island in the St. Lawrence by an armed American vessel and escorted to Gravelly Point (Cape Vincent).
- 6 Ontario. Archives (hereafter cited as PAO), Solomon Jones Papers, Prescott, 7 July 1812.
- 7 Ibid.
- 8 PAC, RG8, C688A, p. 103, Colonel Edward Baynes, Adjutant General, to Colonel Robert Lethbridge, newly appointed Commander of the Eastern (military) District, Montreal, 10 July 1812.
- 9 Ibid., p. 104.
- 10 Ibid., pp. 103-4.
- 11 PAC, RG8, C688A, pp. 169-70, Lethbridge to Brock, Kingston, 10 Aug. 1812. This is the earliest known reference to the stockade and although Lethbridge states that militia officers and men are "assist[ing] in Erecting a Stockaded Fort," it seems clear that the initiative came from, and the work was done by, the militia. The Jessup family's virtual lack of involvement in the war must also be commented upon here. Major Jessup who had been so active in the Revolutionary War was 76 years old in 1812 and simply incapable of participating.

Edward Jessup III, at 11 years of age, was too young. Edward Jr. though of an appropriate age apparently suffered from alcoholism. The county lieutenant, or head of the militia, of Grenville County, James Breakenridge at first refused to process Edward Jr.'s lieutenant colonelcy because of this. In 1812 on the eve of war Breakenridge confided to Adjutant General Baynes that Jessup's "intemperance renders him useless to himself or... his country." (PAC, RG9, BI, vol. 2, Colonel James Breakenridge to Adjutant General Baynes, Elizabethtown, 19 May 1812.) Jessup does not appear to have participated in the war in any significant way. He died in 1815, at age 49 and one year before his father.

- 12 PAC, National Map Collection, VI/450 - Prescott - 1816, "Plan of Fort Wellington Upper Canada" prepared by Lieutenant Joshua Jebb, R.E., prior to 28 May 1816 and PAC, RG5, A1, vol. 26, p. 11757, "Sketch of Prescott and Environs" prepared by Lieutenant Joshua Jebb, R.E., 29 Jan. 1816 for the sources for figures 4 and 6 respectively. The date given to figure 6 is incorrect; internal evidence indicates that it was drawn between February 1817 and September 1823.
- 13 PAC, RG8, C688A, p. 170, Lethbridge to Brock, Kingston, 10 Aug. 1812.
- 14 PAC, RG5, A1, vol. 15, pp. 6407-10, "Account of Carpenters, Axemen, Etc. employed in building a Stockade Fort, repairing and fixing Buildings for Barracks, Provision Store, Powder Magazine Etc. at Prescott, between the 7th July and 30th September 1812, Inclusive." The name of each individual is given in this document.
- 15 Ibid., pp. 6436-8, "Account of Team-work done by sundry persons, drawing Timber, Stone Etc for Building the Stockade Fort Etc at Prescott between the 4th day of July and 24th October 1812 Inclusive". As in the case of the

- previous document, the name of each individual is given.
- 16 Ibid., p. 6407. Major Jessup's exact role in this first case of his land and buildings being put to military use is unclear. Likely he saw it as his patriotic duty to accommodate the militia, at the same time fully expecting prompt restitution. In this latter hope he was to be sadly mistaken.
 - 17 PAC, RG8, C676, p. 215, Colonel William Fraser, militis commander at Prescott to Colonel Lethbridge, 28 July 1812.
 - 18 PAC, RG5, A1, vol. 17, p. 7338, "[Account to] Government, for the undermentioned Quantity of Provisions furnished to the Militia at this Post, and for Liquor issued to the Fatigue parties erecting the Stockade", submitted by William Gilkison, 29 May 1813.
 - 19 PAC, RG8, C688A, p. 169, Lethbridge to Brock, Kingston, 10 Aug. 1812.
 - 20 Ibid., p. 169-70. Lethbridge noted that among the privations under which the militia at Prescott were labouring was the absence of blankets and even straw.
 - 21 Hitsman, Incredible War, p. 98.
 - 22 Ibid., pp. 77-81; PAC, RG8, C677, pp. 58-60, Dearborn to Prevost, Headquarters, Greenbush, New York, 26 Aug. 1812.
 - 23 Hitsman, Incredible War, p. 96.
 - 24 Ibid., p. 98.
 - 25 PAC, RG8, C1168, p. 286, General Order, 29 Sept. 1812.
 - 26 Ibid., C688A, p. 104, Baynes to Lethbridge, 10 Aug. 1812.
 - 27 Hitsman, Incredible War, pp. 98-9.
 - 28 PAC, RG8, C681, p. 323, Prevost to Brock, Headquarters, Montreal, 19 Oct. 1812.
 - 29 Ibid., C1168, General Order, 9 Oct. 1812.
 - 30 Ibid., C681, p. 323, Prevost to Brock, Headquarters, Montreal, 19 Oct. 1812.
 - 31 Ibid., C116, p. 319, Deputy Commissary General Edward Couche to Major General Sir Roger Sheaffe, Fort George,

24 Oct. 1812.

32 PAC, RG5, A1, vol. 17, pp. 7181-5.

33 PAC, RG8, C1168, p. 317, General Order, 22 Oct. 1812.

34 Ibid., C728, p. 131, Prevost to Captain A. Gray, Quebec, 19 Dec. 1812.

The Construction of Fort Wellington and Ancillary Military Buildings, 1813-14

- 1 PAC, RG8, C387, pp. 5-8, Bruyeres to Prevost, Prescott, 14 Jan. 1813; *ibid.*, pp. 10-14a, Bruyeres to Prevost, Kingston, 19 Jan. 1813.
- 2 *Ibid.*, p. 7, Bruyeres to Prevost, Prescott, 14 Jan. 1813.
- 3 *Ibid.*
- 4 *Ibid.*, p. 10, Bruyeres to Prevost, Kingston, 19 Jan. 1813.
- 5 *Ibid.* This reference to frost impeding improvement of the militia shore battery is conclusive evidence that the structure was basically a rough earthwork thrown up in haste and, initially, providing a minimum of protection to its occupants.
- 6 PAO, Thomas Burrowes, Sketch no. 78, "Sketch of Fort Wellington, Prescott: Sketch taken on a foggy morning; October, 1830" is the source for figure 9. No visual documentation in the form of sketches, maps or plans has been uncovered for the period 1813-14. Obviously sketches and specifications were prepared before and during construction but none of these have come to light. Nor can the cross-section of the fort in figure 4, drawn in 1816, be relied upon completely. For example, it shows the blockhouse with a sloping roof which would be visible from outside the earthworks. The blockhouse had a flat roof and was not visible from the outside.
- 7 A board of arbitration was assembled at Prescott in October 1813 to establish the terms under which the

government would purchase 82½ acres of Major Jessup's property. A final settlement was not made until 1822, six years after Jessup's death. For documentation concerning the above see PAC, RG8, C394, pp. 137-9b, "Proceedings of a Board of Arbitration assembled at Prescott...October 1813"; *ibid.*, MG11, CO 42/360, pp. 116-9, memorial of Mrs. Susannah Jessup, 20 June 1816; *ibid.*, RG8, C1257, p. 284, Colonel H. C. Darling, Military Secretary, to Colonel E. W. Durnford, R.E., Quebec, 13 July 1822.

- 8 PAC, RG8, C394, p. 138, "Proceedings of a Board of Arbitration assembled at Prescott...October 1813".
- 9 PAC, MG11, CO 42/360, p. 117, memorial of Mrs. Susannah Jessup, 20 June 1816. The two structures were evaluated at £125 by the arbitration board, PAC, RG8, C394, p. 138.
- 10 *Ibid.* See also figure 1, PAC, National Map Collection, H3/440 - Prescott - 1815, "Return and Description of Buildings in Charge of the Barrack Department at Fort Wellington," [PAC, RG8, C555, p. 55, dated 7 Aug. 1815.]
- 11 PAC, RG8, C688E, p. 77, "Monthly Return of the Troops Stationed at Prescott and its dependencies Under the Command of Colonel Thomas Pearson", Prescott, 25 May 1813. The number of troops stationed at Prescott fluctuated greatly from month to month and even from day to day. Companies and regiments passing up and down the river were billeted briefly at Prescott. Approximately half of the 940 men stationed at Prescott in May 1813 were militiamen and many of these no doubt laboured on the defensive works.
- 12 *Ibid.*, C679, p. 125, Sheaffe to Prevost, Montreal, 25 June 1813.
- 13 *Ibid.*, pp. 126-7.
- 14 *Ibid.*, p. 488, Pearson to Baynes, Prescott, 25 Aug. 1813.
- 15 *Ibid.*, C703C, p. 16, militia pension list for the War of

- 1812 [Jan. 1815]; the accident occurred on 26 July 1813.
- 16 United States National Archives (hereafter cited as USNA), RG107, M222, Unregistered Correspondence, mfm roll no. 7, Th. B. Benedict to M. Lewis, commanding officer at Sackets Harbor, Ogdensburg, 10 July 1813. Since work began on the south curtain first, it is quite likely that the fort did appear, from across the river, to be nearly complete by this date. The ordnance being mounted were probably the two 12 pounders sent from Montreal early in July; PAC, RG8, C745, p. 49, Major General Baron Francis De Rottenburg to the Military Secretary, Montreal, 30 June 1813.
- 17 Detroit Public Library. Burton Historical Collection, Lewis Cass Papers, folio 1814 Jan. - Feb., Report by Lieutenant Joseph H. Larwill, 2nd U.S. Artillery 14 Jan. 1814 . There is no logical explanation for Larwill reporting a circular fortification.
- 18 PAC, RG8, C390, p. 108, Gaugreben to Military Secretary Lieutenant Colonel Foster, Quebec, 15 Sept. 1815.
- 19 PAC, RG5, A1, vol. 15, p. 6407, "Account of Carpenters, Axemen, Etc. employed in building a Stockade Fort, repairing and fixing Buildings for Barracks, Provision Store, Powder Magazine Etc. at Prescott, between the 7th July and 30th September 1812, Inclusive"; PAC, RG8, C388, p. 40, Bruyeres to Military Secretary Captain Noah Freer, Royal Engineers Office, Quebec, 6 March 1814.
- 20 Ibid., C1171, p. 174, General Order, 30 Jan. 1814.
- 21 Ibid., C382, pp. 61-2, Drummond to Prevost, 27 Jan. 1814.
- 22 PAC, MG11, CO 42/860, pp. 513-4, Military Secretary Foster to Gaugreben, Kingston, 2 April 1814. Gaugreben expressed astonishment at this attitude and requested a court of inquiry which was refused; PAC, MG18, WO55/860, p. 515, Gaugreben to Foster, Burlington Heights, 13 April 1814 and Foster to Gaugreben, Kingston, 21 April 1814.

- It is difficult to imagine an engineer with Gaugreben's responsibilities working effectively with a severe eye infection. At the same time Gaugreben seems to have been unwilling or incapable of delegating authority.
- 23 PAC, RG8, C388, p. 121, return of artificers employed in Engineering Department in Upper Canada, Montreal, 23 May 1814.
 - 24 Ibid.
 - 25 Ibid., C118, pp. 105-6, Drummond to Military Secretary Freer, Kingston, 9 June 1814. This was to be a continuous problem not only in the casemates but in virtually every storage building belonging to the military at Prescott.
 - 26 PAC, MG13, WO55/860, pp. 496-511, "Journal of the Assistance which the Engineer Department at Prescott or Fort Wellington received from the Commanding Officers of the Eastern District in the Year 1814," prepared by Gaugreben, 10 July - 4 Dec. 1814.
 - 27 Ibid., p. 496.
 - 28 Ibid., p. 501; Gaugreben declared the battery complete on 24 Aug. 1814.
 - 29 Ibid., p. 517, Lieutenant Colonel Hughes to Captain Gaugreben, Montreal, 17 Aug. 1814; Gaugreben wrote an effusive letter of thanks to Prevost probably upon receipt of his captaincy, PAC, RG8, C388, p. 130, Gaugreben to Prevost, Prescott, 2 July 1814.
 - 30 PAC, MG13, WO55/860, p. 518, Major General James Kempt to Gaugreben, Kingston, 18 Sept. 1814.
 - 31 The store alluded to by Gaugreben is probably the structure located at the north-east part of the enceinte, next to the north curtain; see figure 4 for a cross-section of the structure.
 - 32 Ibid., p. 501, Gaugreben's journal, 30 Aug. 1814.

- 33 Ibid., p. 503, 8 and 15 Sept. 1814.
- 34 Ibid., 16 Sept. 1814.
- 35 Ibid., pp. 505-6, 4 and 6 Oct. 1814.
- 36 Ibid., pp. 508-9, 27 Oct. and 8 Nov. 1814.
- 37 Ibid., p. 511, 25 Nov. and 4 Dec. 1814.
- 38 PAC, RG8, C388, p. 258, Nicolls to Prevost, Kingston, 31 Dec. 1814.
- 39 Ibid.
- 40 Ibid., pp. 258-9; it is not known how much, if any, of this work was done.
- 41 Ruth McKenzie, Leeds and Grenville: Their First Two Hundred Years (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1967), p. 60; quoted from William Dunlop, Recollections of the American War 1812-14 with a Biographical Sketch by A.H.U. Colquhoun (Toronto: Historical Publishing Co., 1905), p. 20.
- 42 PAC, RG8, C124, pp. 267-8, Deputy Assistant Commissary General T. H. Thomson to Commissary General G. Wood, Commissariat Office, Fort Wellington, 13 Oct. 1819; *ibid.*, C410, p. 54, estimate of new buildings required for 1822, dated 25 Oct. 1821; *ibid.*, C273, p. 8, William Gilkison to Military Secretary Freer, Prescott, 9 July 1814; and Freer to Gilkison, Montreal, 13 July 1814. Gilkison Received £1,000 for his unspecified houses and town lots.
- 43 PAC, RG8, C407, p. 32, "Return of Buildings in charge of the Commissariat Department at Fort Wellington Upper Canada," signed by T. H. Thomson, 8 Oct. 1819.
- 44 Ibid., C124, pp. 267-8, Deputy Assistant Commissary General T. H. Thomson to Commissary General G. Wood, Commissariat Office, Fort Wellington, 13 Oct. 1819.
- 45 Ibid., C407, p. 32, return of buildings, 8 Oct. 1819.
- 46 Ibid., C553, pp. 97-8, Lieutenant Colonel Joseph W. Morrison, 89th Regiment and commanding officer at Fort

- Wellington to Deputy Adjutant General John Harvey, Fort Wellington, 22 April 1814; *ibid.*, pp. 95-6, Drummond to Military Secretary Freer, Kingston, 25 April 1814; Freer to Gilkison, Montreal, 13 July 1814.
- 47 *Ibid.*, C401, p. 12, "Requisition for Repairing the undermentioned Buildings [at Fort Wellington]," Barrack Master Benjamin Comens, 7 Sept. 1818; The Chronicle (Kingston), 12 Sept. 1823; PAC, RG8, C416, p. 68, "Description of the Government Property at Prescott proposed to be sold and Let," Lieutenant D. Boulton, R.E., Quebec, 20 June 1823.
- 48 PAC, RG8, C553, pp. 97-8, Morrison to Harvey, Fort Wellington, 22 April 1814.
- 49 *Ibid.*, C401, p. 12, "Requisition for Repairing the undermentioned Buildings [at Fort Wellington]," Barrack Master Benjamin Comens, 7 Sept. 1818.
- 50 *Ibid.*, C403, pp. 14-18a, Lieutenant Colonel Elias W. Durnford, Commanding Royal Engineer, to Military Secretary Major Bowles, Quebec, 18 Jan. 1812; PAC, RG5, A1, vol. 46, pp. 22745-52, Lieutenant Colonel Donald Macdonell, 2nd Regiment Glengarry Militia, to Civil Secretary Edward McMahon, Cornwall, 5 Feb. 1820.
- 51 PAC, RG8, C292, pp. 17-19, Major General John Wilson to Lieutenant Colonel T. Addison, Kingston, 4 Feb. 1817.
- 52 *Ibid.*, C553, p. 97, Morrison to Harvey, Fort Wellington, 22 April 1814.
- 53 *Ibid.*, C407, p. 32, return of buildings, 8 Oct. 1819; *ibid.*, C1237, p. 144, Military Secretary Addison to Major Henderson, commanding Royal Engineers at Quebec, Quebec, 11 Oct. 1816.
- 54 *Ibid.*, C 556, p. 125, Lieutenant Joshua Jebb, R.E., to Lieutenant Colonel Nicolls, Commanding Royal Engineer, Fort Wellington, 15 March 1816.
- 55 *Ibid.*, C273, p. 49, "Minute respecting the claims of the

- Representatives of the late Major Edward Jessup,"
[3 March 1817].
- 56 Ibid., p. 42, Wilson to Lieutenant Colonel Addison,
military secretary, Kingston, 21 Feb. 1817; *ibid.*, C555,
p. 55, "Return and Description of Buildings in Charge
of the Barrack Department at Fort Wellington," 7 Aug.
1815. The latter document is the earliest known
contemporary reference to a hospital at Fort Wellington.
- 57 Ibid., C556, p. 125, Jebb to Nicolls, Fort Wellington,
15 March 1816.
- 58 Ibid.
- 59 Ibid., C555, p. 55, "Return and Description of Buildings
in Charge of the Barrack Department at Fort Wellington,"
7 Aug. 1815.
- 60 Ibid., C556, p. 125, Jebb to Nicolls, Fort Wellington,
15 March 1816.
- 61 Ibid., C555, p. 55, "Return and Description of Buildings
in Charge of the Barrack Department at Fort Wellington,"
7 Aug. 1815; *ibid.*, C679, p. 125, Sheaffe to Prevost,
Montreal, 25 June 1813.
- 62 PAC, WO55/860, pp. 510-11, "Journal of the Assistance
which the Engineer Department at Prescott or Fort
Wellington received from the Commanding Officers of the
Eastern District in the Year 1814," prepared by
Gaugreben, 10 July - 4 Dec. 1814.
- 63 PAC, RG8, C688E, p. 77, "Monthly Return of the Troops
Stationed at Prescott and its dependencies Under the
Command of Colonel Thomas Pearson", Prescott, 25 May
1813.
- 64 Ibid., C556, pp. 113-4, Pearson to Military Secretary
Foster, Fort Wellington, 1 April 1814; *ibid.*, p. 115,
Lieutenant Gossett, R.E., Point Henry, 5 April 1814.
- 65 Ibid.
- 66 Ibid.

67 Some of these huts are indicated on royal engineer sketches and, less frequently, are identified. See figures 2 and 4. The seven unidentified buildings lining the road between the militia stockade and the military complex north of Fort Wellington in figure 4 probably represent some of the more substantial huts. Others, according to figure 2 were located just south of the complex of buildings.

War on the St. Lawrence Frontier, 1813-14

- 1 PAC, RG8, C387, pp. 7-8, Bruyeres to Prevost, Prescott, 14 Jan. 1813.
- 2 Ibid., p. 8.
- 3 Ibid., C678, p. 75, McLean to De Rottenburg, Cornwall, 7 Feb. 1813.
- 4 Ibid., p. 74, declaration signed by McLean, Cornwall, 7 Feb. 1813.
- 5 Ibid., C387, p. 10, Bruyeres to Prevost, Kingston, 19 Jan. 1813. A court house and a jail existed at Brockville in 1813 because as Elizabethtown, it had been named the district town in 1808.
- 6 Ibid., C678, pp. 79-81, Pearson to De Rottenburg, Prescott, 7 Feb. 1813.
- 7 Hitsman Incredible War, p. 118. Most of these were soon released.
- 8 PAC, RG8, C678, p. 81, Pearson to De Rottenburg, Prescott, 7 Feb. 1813.
- 9 Ibid., p. 83, De Rottenburg to Adjutant General Edward Baynes, Montreal, 9 Feb. 1813.
- 10 For more detailed treatments of the raid on Ogdensburg see Hitsman, Incredible War, pp. 118-20; David Lee, "Historical Themes: Fort Wellington Museum," in Miscellaneous Reports on Fort Wellington, Ontario,

- Manuscript Report Series No. 130 (Ottawa: Parks Canada, N.D.), pp. 149-54. Macdonell's own account is given in PAC, RG8, C678, pp. 100-3, Macdonell to Prevost, Prescott, 25 Feb. 1813. For a complete list of captured material see *ibid.*, C1220, pp. 196-203, Prevost to Henry Earl Bathurst, Secretary of State for War and the Colonies, Niagara, 27 Feb. 1813.
- 11 PAC, RG8, C1170, p. 106, General Order, Montreal, 25 Feb. 1813.
 - 12 *Ibid.*, C679, pp. 450-1, Pearson to Baynes, Prescott, 18 Aug. 1813; *ibid.*, pp. 473-5, Pearson to Baynes, Gananoque, 22 Aug. 1813; *ibid.*, pp. 487-9, Pearson to Baynes, Prescott, 25 Aug. 1813.
 - 13 *Ibid.*, C680, pp. 116-8, Darroch to Prevost, Kingston, 29 Sept. 1813. Hampton's force actually numbered about 4,000.
 - 14 *Ibid.*, pp. 117-8. A few days later Darroch received "an express from Pearson saying Prescott is their object & that Gl. Hampton is not far from Ogdensburg." *Ibid.*, C680, p. 136, Darroch to Prevost, Kingston 3 Oct. 1813.
 - 15 *Ibid.*, pp. 171-2, Pearson to Adjutant General Baynes, Prescott, 12 Oct. 1813.
 - 16 *Ibid.*, p. 173.
 - 17 *Ibid.*, C1221, p. 185, Prevost to De Rottenburg, 14 Oct. 1813.
 - 18 For a description of the action at Crysler's Farm see Ronald L. Way, "The Day of Crysler's Farm," Canadian Geographical Journal, vol. 62 (June, 1961), reprinted in Morris Zaslow, ed., The Defended Border: Upper Canada and the War of 1812 (Toronto: MacMillan, 1964), pp. 61-83; and Hitsman, Incredible War, pp. 167-70. For Morrison's own account of the battle see PAC, RG8, C681, pp. 62-4, Morrison to De Rottenburg, Christlers, Williamsburg,

- 12 Nov. 1813.
- 19 Hitsman, Incredible War, p. 191.
- 20 Ibid.
- 21 Shortly before the Ogdensburg raid De Rottenburg judged it prudent to hold up 40 sleighs of ordnance and naval stores, as well as two 12 pounders bound for Prescott, until enough Glengarry and Stormont militiamen could be raised to protect them; PAC, RG8, C678, pp. 83-4, De Rottenburg to Baynes, Montreal, 9 Feb. 1813.
- 22 PAC, RG8, C729, pp. 180-2, Deputy Assistant Quarter Master General G. A. Eliot to unknown recipient, Montreal, 21 April 1813.
- 23 Ibid., C678, p. 236, Captain R. H. Barclay to Sheaffe, HMS Sir George Prevost, 5 May 1813; *ibid.*, C370, pp. 48-54, Yeo to Prevost, HMS Wolfe at Kingston, 21 July 1813.
- 24 PAC, RG5, A1, vol. 17, pp. 7181-5, Green to Deputy Commissary General Couche, Prescott, 26 March 1813.
- 25 William M. Weekes, "The War of 1812: Civil Authority and Martial Law in Upper Canada," Ontario History, vol. 48 (autumn, 1956) reprinted in Morris Zaslow, ed., The Defended Border: Upper Canada and the War of 1812 (Toronto: MacMillan, 1964) p. 200.
- 26 PAC, RG5, A1, vol. 19, pp. 7804-5, Osborne to the Civil Secretary, Lieutenant Colonel Colley L. L. Foster, Prescott, 23 Jan. 1814.
- 27 Ibid.
- 28 Ibid., vol. 16, pp. 6758-60, Osborne to Foster, Fort Wellington, 1 April 1814.
- 29 Ibid., pp. 6774-5, Osborne to Pearson, Fort Wellington, 5 April 1814; *ibid.*, p. 6772, Pearson to the Civil Secretary, Captain Robert Loring, Fort Wellington, 6 April 1814.

- 30 PAC, RG8, C118, pp. 97-100, Deputy Commissary General Edward Couche, to Military Secretary Foster, Kingston, 6 May 1814. Couche stated that Edward Doyle of the Commissary Department at Cornwall had been called before the Court of King's Branch for sizing wheat under De Rottenburg's proclamation of martial law. Couche requested that Doyle be defended by the Attorney General's Department. Ibid., C554, pp. 135-8, Deputy Commissary General Frederick Drennen to Major General Frederick P. Robinson, Kingston, 16 June 1815 and enclosures; this correspondence deals with the case of Alexander McDonald, a clerk of forage in the Commissary Department at Fort Wellington who was sued in the Johnstown District Court of Quarter Sessions of the Peace for forcible entry and the seizure of hay under martial law in 1814. Ibid., C121, pp. 94-6, Archibald McDonell, late Assistant Adjutant General of Militia for Upper Canada to Military Secretary Foster, Cornwall, 11 March 1816; McDonell had been successfully sued for his foraging activities at Prescott in 1814 and was now attempting to obtain reimbursement from the commander of the forces.
- 31 William Dunlop, Recollections of the American War, 1812-14, with a biographical sketch by A.H.U. Colquhoun (Toronto: Historical Publishing Co., 1905), pp. 31-5.
- 32 PAC, RG8, C677, pp. 268-8, McLean to Pearson, Cornwall, 19 Dec. 1812 and enclosures.
- 33 John Ross to Michael Parish, 23 July 1813, quoted in Harry F. Landon, "British Sympathizers in St. Lawrence County During the War of 1812," New York History (April, 1954), p. 134.
- 34 PAC, RG8, C1222, pp. 10-11, Gilkison to Robinson, Prescott, 9 Dec. 1813.
- 35 Ibid., C1221, p. 282, Military Secretary Noah Freer to McBean, Quebec, 31 Dec. 1813.

- 36 PAC, RG5, A1, vol. 19, pp. 7809-10, license to import issued to William Jones, signed by Drummond, 26 Jan. 1814.
- 37 His actions were upheld by Drummond.
- 38 PAC, RG5, A1, vol. 19, pp. 7850-2, Pearson to Civil Secretary Foster, Prescott, 7 Feb. 1814.
- 39 Ibid., Jones' claim differed; see below.
- 40 Ibid., vol. 16, pp. 6749-51, Pearson to Foster, Prescott, 11 Feb. 1814.
- 41 Ibid., vol. 20, pp. 8653-9, Lieutenant Colonel George Robertson, commanding officer at Fort Wellington, to Foster, 11 July, 1814, enclosing letter of Lieutenant Benjamin Delisle, commanding at Bridge Island blockhouse to Robertson, 10 July 1814 describing the capture of two suspected smugglers.
- 42 PAC, RG5, A1, vol. 19, pp. 8183-4, Gilkison to Civil Secretary Loring, Prescott, 7 April 1814; Hitsman, Incredible War, pp. 180-1.
- 43 PAC, RG5, A1, vol. 16, pp. 6953-6, Solomon Jones and W. Gilkison to Military Secretary Edward McMahon, Prescott, 14 Sept. 1814. See also The Civilian Population and the Military Presence: Wartime Relations below in chapter IV.
- 44 Hitsman, Incredible War, pp. 6-7; the few exceptions were ministers, government officials and those deemed to be engaged in essential services such as millers and ferry operators.
- 45 PAC, RG8, C729, pp. 22-5, Gray to Baynes, Cornwall, 23 Nov. 1812.
- 46 Ibid., C704, pp. 201-2, Memorial of Richard Duncan Fraser, Edwardsburgh Township, 9 Sept. 1815; *ibid.*, C1224, p. 121, Military Secretary Noah Freer to Fraser, Montreal, 24 July 1814. The commission was predated, presumably to February 1813.
- 47 Ibid., C688E, p. 77, monthly return of the troops stationed at Prescott, 25 May 1813.

- 48 Ibid., pp. 79-83, Pearson to Sheaffe, Prescott, 29 May 1813.
- 49 Ibid., C703, p. 130, Pearson to Freer, Prescott, 5 Sept. 1813.
- 50 Ibid., C1221, pp. 44-5, Freer to Pearson, Kingston, 7 Sept. 1813.
- 51 Ibid., p. 60, Freer to Deputy Commissary General P. Turguand, Kingston, 17 Sept. 1813; *ibid.*, p. 162, Freer to Pearson, Kingston, 17 Sept. 1813.
- 52 Ibid., C702, p. 55, Pearson to Fraser, Fort Wellington, 6 Nov. 1813.
- 53 PAC, RG5, A1, vol. 26, pp. 12127-9, William Campbell, J.P., to Civil Secretary William Halton, Brockville, 27 Feb. 1816. Campbell presided at the trial in which Hiram Spafford successfully sued Captain Fraser for damages and costs.
- 54 Hitsman, Incredible War, p. 168.
- 55 PAC, RG8, C702, p. 112, Major Skelton to Fraser, Kingston, 3 Sept. 1814 .
- 56 Ibid., C703, pp. 248-50, Tolley to Military Secretary Freer, Fort Wellington, 23 Sept. 1814.
- 57 Ibid., C1224, p. 165, Freer to Tolley, Montreal, 30 Sept. 1814.
- 58 Ibid., pp. 191-2, Freer to Colonel Grant at Johnstown, U.C., Montreal, 22 Nov. 1814; *ibid.*, C702, p. 113, Captain Richard R. Newgent, 16th Regiment and commanding officer at Gananoque to Captain Fraser, Truckeys Inn, 18 Oct. 1814.
- 59 Ibid., C704, pp. 9-12, Drummond to Freer, Kingston, 17 Jan. 1815.
- 60 Ibid., pp. 201-2, memorial of Richard Duncan Fraser, Edwardsburgh Township, 9 Sept. 1815. Interestingly Drummond immediately appointed Fraser assistant quarter master general of the militia.
- 61 Ibid., pp. 205-6, Pearson to Lieutenant Colonel John Harvey, Fort Wellington, 12 April 1814.

- 62 See Charles W. Humphries informative article "The Capture of York," Ontario History, vol. 51 (spring, 1959), pp. 1-24 for a detailed treatment of the raid.
- 63 See Fred Landon, Western Ontario and the American Frontier (Toronto: Ryerson Press, 1941), reprinted as Carleton Library Edition #34 (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1967), and Ernest A. Cruikshank, "The County of Norfolk in the War of 1812," Ontario Historical Society, Papers and Records, Vol. 20 (1923), pp. 9-40.
- 64 PAC, RG5, A1, vol. 19, pp. 7814-5, Fraser to Civil Secretary Foster, Prescott, 27 Jan. 1814.
- 65 Ibid., RG8, C84, pp. 284-5, Pearson to Military Secretary Freer, Prescott, 5 Sept. 1813.
- 66 Ibid., C133, pp. 12-17 and 20-1, petition of late Commissariat Clerk Alexander McDonell, Prescott, 26 Jan. 1824.
- 67 PAC, RG5, A1, vol. 19, pp. 8205-12, Jones to Drummond, Brockville, 12 April 1814.
- 68 PAC, RG8, C554, pp. 135-8, Deputy Commissary General Frederick Drummond to Major General Sir Frederick P. Robinson, Kingston, 16 June 1815 and enclosures. Commissariat Clerk at Fort Wellington, Alexander McDonald, was sued for just this reason in 1815.
- 69 Ibid., C741, pp. 81-3, memorial of Angus McLachan, Glengarry County, 3 Mar. 1823.
- 70 Ibid., C94, pp. 1-12, memorial of William Fraser, Matilda, 28 Oct. 1821 and enclosures.
- 71 PAC, RG5, A1, vol. 26, pp. 12127-9, William Campbell, J.P., to Civil Secretary Halton, Brockville, 27 Feb. 1816.
- 72 PAC, RG8, C704, pp. 205-6, Pearson to Deputy Adjutant General John Harvey, Fort Wellington, 12 April 1814.
- 73 Ibid.; PAC, RG8, C700, pp. 67-9, memorial of Richard Duncan Fraser to Drummond, Fort Wellington, 17 Jan. 1815; *ibid.*, C93, pp. 136-8, memorial of Fraser to Sir John Coape

- Sherbrooke, Edwardsburgh Township, June 1817; *ibid.*, C704, pp. 208-10, memorial of Fraser to Drummond, 23 Oct. 1815; *ibid.*, C705, pp. 166-8, memorial of Fraser to the Earl of Dalhousie, Edwardsburgh Township, 24 Aug. 1821.
- 74 PAC, RG8, A1, vol. 16, pp. 6749-50, Pearson to Military Secretary Foster, Prescott, 11 Feb. 1814.
- 75 *Ibid.*, pp. 6745-8, Robinson to Civil Secretary Loring, York, 1 March 1814.
- 76 *Ibid.*, vol. 19, pp. 8161-3, Pearson to Loring, Fort Wellington, 27 March 1814.
- 77 *Ibid.*, pp. 7939-42, David D. Jones to Drummond, Brockville, 2 March 1814.
- 78 PAC, RG8, C621, pp. 10-17, Baynes to Prevost, Montreal, 18 June 1814.
- 79 *Ibid.*, C683, pp. 119-22, Drummond to Prevost, Kingston, 8 May 1814.
- 80 Hitsman, Incredible War, pp. 117-8.

Fort Wellington: The Post-War Years

- 1 For a contemporary discussion of the role and value of the military settlements see PAC, MG11, CO42/356, pp. 69-72, Provisional Lieutenant Governor Frederick P. Robinson, to the Secretary of State for War and the Colonies the Earl of Bathurst, Kingston, 29 July 1815. The Duke of Richmond perhaps best summed up the weakness of Fort Wellington's strategic position when he argued the necessity for "a Line of Communication between the Upper and Lower Province, independent of the St. Lawrence, the possession of which River above Cornwall for the conveyance of Reinforcements or Stores, ought not to be ours for three Days after the Commencement of hostilities" (*ibid.*, vol. 179, p. 122, Richmond to Bathurst, Quebec,

- 10 Nov. 1818).
- 2 PAC, RG8, C1230, pp. 49-52, Drummond to Bathurst, Quebec, 15 Aug. 1815.
 - 3 PAC, MG13, WO55/860, pp. 182-5, Nicolls to Lieutenant General Gother Mann, Commanding Royal Engineers, Quebec, 24 June 1816.
 - 4 PAC, RG5, A1, vol. 44, pp. 21699-701, Fort Adjutant James Frost to Military Secretary Major George Bowles, Fort Wellington, 27 Aug. 1819. Only three individuals were interested in the proposal and they wanted only the 35 acres of the reserve closest to the town.
 - 5 Ibid., vol. 49, p. 24415, Campbell to George Hillier, Prescott, 19 Oct. 1820. Presumably the request was either ignored or denied.
 - 6 PAC, RG8, C1264A, p. 81, Military Secretary Charles Darling to Maitland, Quebec, 22 Oct. 1822, *ibid.*, C994, p. 24. General Order concerning the discontinuance of Fort Wellington and the proposed removal of Fort Adjutant James Frost to Quebec as town major, signed by Deputy Adjutant General John Henry, Quebec, 9 Dec. 1822.
 - 7 Ibid., C415, pp. 65-66, Durnford to Darling, Quebec, 13 Feb. 1823; *ibid.*, C1257, p. 381, Darling to Durnford, Quebec, 14 Feb. 1823, The latter piece of correspondence conveyed Dalhousie's acceptance of Durnford's suggestions.
 - 8 Many of those who purchased parcels of the military reserve in 1823 were unable to complete their installment payments and thus the land reverted to the crown and was only alienated later in the century.
 - 9 PAC, RG8, C429, pp. 88-9, Major General James Carmichael Smyth to Major General Gother Mann, 26 Dec. 1826.
 - 10 PAC, RG5, A1, vol. 92, pp. 51060-1, Patton to Lieutenant Governor John Colborne, Prescott, 30 Jan. 1829. Patton had become barrack master at Fort Wellington in February 1821; he was also registrar of Grenville County; *ibid.*,

RG8, C571, p. 42, Andrew Patton to Military Secretary Darling, Adolphustown, 2 Feb. 1821; Frederick H. Armstrong, Handbook of Upper Canadian Chronology and Territorial Legislation (Longon, Ontario: Lawson Memorial Library, 1967), p. 145. PAC, MG13, WO14/1537, p. 143, Monthly Returns for 1833.

- 11 PAC, MG13, WO55/871, p. 151, report on the capacity and condition of the Barracks in Upper Canada, signed by Colonel Gustavus Nicolls, Quebec, 12 May 1834.
- 12 The military lists for the period are contained in PAC, MG13, WO17. Unfortunately these lists do not begin to give a numerical breakdown of troop strength by station until January 1832 (*ibid.*, vol. 1536, p. 7).
- 13 Though they changed frequently, there was a commanding officer at Fort Wellington almost continuously until late in 1823. The last known incumbent was a Captain North of the 68th Regiment who served during part of that year (PAC, RG8, C295, p. 58, Maitland to Military Secretary Darling, York, 27 Dec. 1823). In February 1822 there were 45 men of the 76th Regiment stationed at Fort Wellington (*ibid.*, C411, pp. 40-2, Fort Adjutant and Overseer of Works James Frost to Clerk of the Works, R.E., John Shephard, Fort Wellington, 7 Feb. 1822). Later in the same month the Reverend Robert Blakey was appointed the new chaplain to the post with the understanding that he would retain the position "so long as the Detachment there shall be equal to a Captain's Command." (*ibid.*, C1264A, pp. 56-7, Darling to Maitland, Quebec, 21 Feb. 1822; the general strength of the regiments in Upper Canada at this time was between 400 and 475 men with each regiment having about six captains). Blakey's chaplaincy was discontinued in September 1823 (PAC, MG13, WO17/1527, p. 116).
- 14 PAC, MG13, WO17/1536, p. 7; *ibid.*, vol. 1537, pp. 143 and 158.

- 15 PAC, RG8, C621, pp. 10-17, Baynes to Prevost, Montreal, 18 June 1814.
- 16 PAC, RG5, A1, vol. 23, pp. 10177a-f, McDonnell to Sir Frederick P. Robinson, Administrator of Upper Canada, Cornwall, 24 July 1815.
- 17 Ibid., pp. 10373-80, Fort Wellington, 19 Aug. 1815.
- 18 Ibid., p. 10415, McDonnell to William Gibson, Fort Wellington, 28 Aug. 1815.
- 19 PAC, RG8, C621, pp. 75-6, Robinson to Drummond, Kingston, 4 Oct. 1815; on 23 September Lieutenant Donald McIver of the 70th Regiment then stationed at Fort Wellington was made settlement receiving officer for the post. McIver was soon appointed assistant deputy superintendent.
- 20 PAC, RG8, C621, p. 103-9, Quarter Master General Sidney Beckwith to Drummond, Quebec, 21 Nov. 1815.
- 21 Ibid., C623, pp. 152-5, Clarke to Commissary General Gabriel Wood, Commissariat Office, Fort Wellington, 13 Oct. 1817.
- 22 Ibid., C624, pp. 1-2, Deputy Storekeeper General W. Robertson to Military Secretary T. Addison, Quebec, 2 Jan. 1818.
- 23 Ibid., C126, p. 165, Deputy Commissary General to Military Secretary Darling, 30 Sept. 1820 contains reference to a contract, with schedule and tenders, to transport stores for one year; *ibid.*, C626, p. 81, Commissary General Wood to Darling, Quebec, 15 June 1821, gives the cost of transporting immigrant families and their baggage from Fort Wellington to the Perth settlement in 1820 as £1463.17.5 currency.
- 24 Ibid., C626, p. 124, Deputy Quartermaster General Francis Cockburn to Wood, Quebec, 10 Oct. 1820; *ibid.*, C625, p. 205, Cockburn to unknown recipient, Quebec, 5 Dec. 1820; *ibid.*, C128, p. 6, Wood to Darling, 20 Jan. 1821; *ibid.*, C626, pp. 112-4, Deputy Assistant Commissary General

- Thomas Arnold to Military Secretary G. Fowler, Commissariat Office, Fort Wellington, 24 Sept. 1821.
- 25 PAC, RG5, A1, vol. 61, pp. 32746-7, Peter Robinson to Hillier, Prescott, 15 Sept. 1823.
- 26 Ibid., C294, pp. 118-22, Deputy Inspector of Hospitals Thomas Draper to Darling, Quebec, 16 Oct. 1822, with enclosures. Included in this correspondence is the detailed statement of Dr. Truman Raymond for medical services rendered between 17 May and 23 July 1822. The statement gives the rank and regiment and illness of the patient as well as the treatment or medicine administered and is a fascinating social document.
- 27 Ibid., C129, pp. 62-3, George Harrison, Treasury Chambers, to Commissary General Wood, London, 8 Dec. 1821; the figure was almost twice as high as army regulations allowed.
- 28 Ibid., C747, pp. 165-8, Captain J. Peller to Military Secretary Loring, Kingston, 28 Nov. 1825.
- 29 Ibid., C375, p. 193, Assistant Quartermaster General Cockburn, Kingston, 2 July 1823, In this particular case it was noted that the wives of two rank and file occasionally attended on the wife of Major John Thomas Henry Powell of the 76th Regiment, a detachment of which was then stationed at Fort Wellington. It would appear that the soldiers whose wives were so mentioned were then stationed at Prescott.
- 30 Ibid., C509, pp. 47-9, Eliza Frost to Military Secretary Goldie, Quebec, 29 Oct. 1835.
- 31 Frederick H. Armstrong, Handbook of Upper Canadian Chronology and Territorial Legislation (London, Ontario: Lawson Memorial Library, 1967), p. 145.
- 32 PAC, RG8, C565, p. 51, Comens to Assistant Deputy Barrack Master Chandler, Fort Wellington, 16 Nov. 1818.
- 33 Ibid., C569, pp. 10-12, Deputy Barrack Master General

- Philip Van Cortlandt to Military Secretary Bowles, Quebec, 13 Jan. 1820; *ibid.*, C570, pp. 103-5, Van Cortlandt to Military Secretary Darling, Quebec, 17 Nov. 1820.
- 34 *Ibid.*, C566, pp. 72-4, Comens to Assistant Deputy Barrack Master General R. C. Chandler, Fort Wellington, 22 Feb. 1819.
- 35 *Ibid.*, pp. 127-32, proceedings of a court of enquiry signed by Lieutenant C. E. Wraxall, R. A., commanding officer at Fort Wellington, 22 Feb. 1819.
- 36 *Ibid.*, pp. 120-2, Wraxall to Assistant Adjutant General Foster, Fort Wellington, 2 March 1819.
- 37 *Ibid.*, C126, pp. 152-3, statement of deficiencies signed by Clerk of the Storekeeper General's Department John B. Rutley, Fort Wellington, 1 Sept. 1820.
- 38 *Ibid.*, C127, pp. 12-6, Deputy Storekeeper General W. Robertson to Darling, Quebec, 6 Oct. 1820. See also Robertson's official report, *ibid.*, pp. 6-11, Quebec, 6 Oct. 1820.
- 39 *Ibid.*, pp. 142-6, Rutley to Darling, Fort Wellington, 2 Nov. 1820.
- 40 *Ibid.*, Robertson to Darling, Quebec, 6 Oct. 1820.
- 41 For example, Alpheus Jones, Prescott's first postmaster, fulfilled several contracts to supply the garrison with salt pork and flour; see RG8, C127, p. 270, Commissary General Wood to Darling, Quebec, 27 Dec. 1820 and *ibid.*, C128, p. 39, Wood to Darling, Quebec, 9 Mar. 1821.
- 42 PAC, RG5, A1, vol. 28, pp. 12857-60, proceedings of a board of inquiry signed by Lieutenant Champeaux of the De Watteville Regiment and president of the board, 13 May 1816.
- 43 *Ibid.*, pp. 12854-5, Major General L. de Watteville, commanding at Kingston to Lieutenant Governor Francis Gore, Kingston, 18 May 1816.
- 44 *Ibid.*, vol. 46, p. 22559, Jones to Civil Secretary George

- Hillier, Prescott, 11 Jan. 1820.
- 45 Ibid., pp. 22561-2, petition of Prescott inhabitants, undated, probably 10 or 11 Jan. 1820.
 - 46 Ibid., p. 22540, Prescott, 10 Jan. 1820.
 - 47 PAC, RG8, C1255, p. 114, Military Secretary George Bowles to Bredin, Quebec, 17 Jan. 1820.
 - 48 PAC, RG5, A1. vol. 46, pp. 22693-5, Bredin to Bowles, Kingston, 24 Jan. 1820; the civilian acquitted in this case was Matthias Link one of the signatories to the petition.
 - 49 Ibid., pp. 22687-91, Frost to Bowles, Fort Wellington, 26 Jan. 1820.
 - 50 The presence of tension between troops and civilians in the post-war period is alluded to on occasion in official correspondence. Among the arguments raised in 1822 for removing stores from a building in Prescott to the blockhouse was the fact that such a move would lessen incidents of contact and conflict between the two groups. PAC, RG8, C984, pp. 42-5, Lieutenant Colonel Wardlaw, commander of the 76th Regiment, to Military Secretary Darling, Prescott, 4 Jan. 1822.

Fort Wellington Structural History, 1815-37

- 1 PAC, RG8, C1221, pp. 40-1, Military Secretary Noah Freer to Major General Duncan Darroch, Kingston, 4 Sept. 1813; *ibid.*, C84, pp. 234-6, proceedings of a board of inquiry signed by Darroch, Kingston, 6 Sept. 1813.
- 2 Ibid., C394, pp. 137-9, proceedings of a board of arbitration signed by Pearson, Prescott, October 1813.
- 3 Ibid., C556, pp. 118-9, Freer to Pearson, Montreal, 17 Apr. 1814; *ibid.*, pp. 120-1, Pearson to Freer, Kingston, 16 June 1814.
- 4 Ibid., p. 131-2, memorial of Mrs. Susannah Jessup,

Augusta Township, 21 Nov. 1815.

- 5 Ibid., C557, pp. 40-3, Lieutenant Colonel George Nicolls to Military Secretary Foster, Quebec, 14 Feb. 1816; *ibid.*, pp. 124-7, Lieutenant Joshua Febb, R.E., Fort Wellington, 15 March 1816; PAO, Jessup Family Papers, copy of Susannah Jessup's advertisement concerning Prescott town lots, 22 Nov. 1815.
- 6 Ibid., C394, pp. 129-30, Hamilton Walker to Foster, Prescott, 17 April 1816.
- 7 Ibid., C412, p. 155, Lieutenant Colonel Elias W. Durnford to Military Secretary Darling, Quebec, 12 July 1822; *ibid.*, C1257, p. 284, Darling to Durnford, Quebec, 13 July 1822.
- 8 Ibid., C1264A, p. 81, Darling to Maitland, Quebec, 22 Oct. 1822.
- 9 Ibid., C1257, p. 381, Darling to Durnford, Quebec, 14 Feb. 1823.
- 10 Ibid., C416, pp. 168-72, Durnford to Darling, Quebec, 21 Aug. 1823 with enclosures.
- 11 The Chronicle (Kingston), 12 Sept. 1823; this advertisement gives brief but excellent descriptions of each lot and its buildings.
- 12 PAC, RG8, C417, pp. 50-1, Lieutenant D. Bolton, R.E. to Captain W. R. Payne, R.E., Kingston, 29 Sept. 1823; *ibid.*, C132, pp. 278-9, Commissary General Peter Turquand to Darling, Quebec, 1 Dec. 1823.
- 13 Ibid., C1261, pp. 248-9, Darling to Barrack Master Andrew Patton, Quebec, 25 Aug. 1820; *ibid.*, C274, pp. 181-3, Patton to Darling, Fort Wellington, 20 Nov. 1826. The park lots which reverted to military reserve land were numbers 13, 14 and 16 (see figure 7).
- 14 Ibid., C118, pp. 105-6, Drummond to Military Secretary Freer, Kingston, 9 June 1814.
- 15 PAC, RG5, A1, vol. 33, p. 15912, Lieutenant Colonel H. Phillpott, R.A., to Addison, Quebec, 24 Aug. 1817.

- 16 Extensive repairs were made to many of Fort Wellington's buildings in 1818 but the casemates are not mentioned; PAC, RG8, C401, pp. 36-7, the military secretary to Commissary General Gabriel Wood, Kingston, 24 Sept. 1818.
- 17 PAC, RG8, C490, pp. 114-5, Durnford to Dalhousie, Fort Wellington, 4 July 1821.
- 18 Edward Thomas Coke, A Subaltern's Furlough: Descriptive of Scenes in various parts of the United States, Upper and Lower Canada, New Brunswick, and Nova Scotia (London: Saunders and Otley, 1833), p. 323.
- 19 Ibid., C401, p. 12 and pp. 33-7, approved estimates of repairs at Fort Wellington prepared by Barrack Master Benjamin Comens and sent to Commissary General Wood, Fort Wellington, 7 Sept. 1818 and Kingston, 24 Sept. 1818: These estimates also include detailed lists of materials and manpower required to effect the various repairs.
- 20 Ibid., C128, pp. 288-9, petition of Richard Stroud to Commissary General Wood, Fort Wellington, 29 May 1820.
- 21 Ibid., C409, pp. 114-5, Durnford to Dalhousie, Fort Wellington, 4 July 1821.
- 22 These partitions do not appear on figure 8, a ground plan of the block house dated 24 Sept. 1823.
- 23 Figure 8 shows eight officers' rooms.
- 24 The location of these windows does not appear on figure 8.
- 25 PAC, RG8, C411, pp. 37-8, statement of work performed on the block house signed by Barrack Master Andrew Patton, Fort Wellington, 7 Feb. 1822.
- 26 Presumably the sheet iron was placed on top of the clay laid down on the roof in 1814 to make it splinter proof.
- 27 PAC, RG8, C411, pp. 37-8, statement of work performed at the block house signed by Barrack Master Andrew Patton, Fort Wellington, 7 Feb. 1822. The reference to a bridge at the fort gates appears here for the first time. There is no known reference to such a structure existing during

- the original construction period.
- 28 PAC, RG8, C411, pp. 40-2, Fort Adjutant and Overseer of Works for the Royal Engineers James Frost, to Clerk of the Works Shephard, Fort Wellington, 4 Feb. 1822. Figure 8 showing a plan of the blockhouse dated 24 Sept. 1823 does not indicate these latter changes but Frost stated that the work "has accordingly been completed...."
- 29 PAC, MG13, WO55/871, p. 151, report on the capacity and condition of the barracks in Upper Canada, signed by Colonel Nicolls, Quebec, 12 May 1834.
- 30 PAC, RG8, C389, pp. 164-5, Major General George Glasgow, R.A., to Drummond, Quebec, 6 July 1815.
- 31 The Chronicle (Kingston), 11 July 1823.
- 32 PAC, RG8, C401, p. 98, estimate of repairs required throughout the Canadas signed by Lieutenant Colonel Durnford, R.E., 20 Oct. 1818.
- 33 Ibid., C124, pp. 267-8, Thomson to Commissary General Wood, Fort Wellington. 13 Oct. 1819; *ibid.*, C407, p. 32, return of buildings signed by Thomson, 8 Oct. 1819, states that the building held 500 barrels of Commissariat stores at this time.
- 34 Ibid., C1255, p. 12, Military Secretary Bowles to Commissary General Wood, Quebec, 16 Nov. 1819.
- 35 Ibid., C410, p. 54, proposals for 1822, dated 25 Oct. 1821.
- 36 Ibid., C417, pp. 50-1, Lieutenant D. Boulton, R.E., to Captain W. R. Payne, R.E., Kingston, 29 Sept. 1823; Jones paid £421 for the store and wharf and the other buildings included in lot number one in figure 7.
- 37 PAC, RG8, C401, p. 36, estimate of repairs required throughout the Canadas signed by Durnford, 20 Oct. 1818.
- 38 The Chronicle (Kingston), 12 Sept. 1823; PAC, RG8, C417, pp. 50-1, Bolton to Payne, Kingston, 29 Sept. 1823.
- 39 PAC, RG8, C292, pp. 17-9, Major General John Wilson to Military Secretary Addison, Kingston, 4 Feb. 1817; *ibid.*,

- C1242, p. 49, Addison to Wilson, Quebec, 13 Feb. 1817.
- 40 Ibid., C399, pp. 59-61, Walker to Addison, Fort Wellington, 24 July 1814.
- 41 Ibid., C401, p. 36, approved estimate of repairs, dated Kingston, 24 Sept. 1818; *ibid.*, p. 98, estimate of repairs required throughout the Canadas signed by Durnford, 20 Oct. 1818.
- 42 Ibid., C407, p. 30, return of medical department buildings dated Quebec, 4 Oct. 1819.
- 43 Ibid., C417, pp. 50-1, Bolton to Payne, Kingston, 29 Sept. 1823.
- 44 Ibid., C120, p. 144, Commissary General W. Robinson to Military Secretary Foster, Quebec, 18 Sept. 1815; *ibid.*, C1228, p. 360, Foster to Lieutenant Colonel Nicolls, R.E., Quebec, 19 Sept. 1815.
- 45 Ibid., C556, p. 123, Jebb to Nicolls, Fort Wellington, 29 Jan. 1816.
- 46 Ibid., C394, pp. 129-30, Hamilton Walker to Military Secretary Foster, Prescott, 17 April 1816; *ibid.*, pp. 161-4, Jebb to Nicolls, Fort Wellington, 22 April 1816.
- 47 Ibid., C124, pp. 254-9, Commissary General Wood to Military Secretary Bowles, Quebec, 12 Oct. 1819, containing letters from Deputy Assistant Commissary General T.H. Thomson, and the owner of the second lot, Matthias Link; *ibid.*, C408, pp. 126-7, Fort Adjutant James Frost to Durnford, Fort Wellington, 19 Oct. 1820.
- 48 Ibid., C557, pp. 40-3, Nicolls to Foster, Quebec, 14 Feb. 1816.
- 49 Ibid., C273, pp. 42-4, Major General John Wilson to Military Secretary Addison, Kingston, 21 Feb. 1817.
- 50 Ibid., C555, p. 192, Deputy Barrack Master P. Van Cortlandt to Foster, Quebec. 21 Sept. 1815.
- 51 Ibid., C292, pp. 17-9, Wilson to Addison, Kingston, 4 Feb. 1817.

- 52 Ibid., C1242, p. 54, Addison to Wilson, Quebec, 1 March 1817; *ibid.*, C401, p. 36, approved estimate of repairs, dated Kingston, 24 Sept. 1818.
- 53 Ibid., C404, pp. 33-4, Durnford to Bowles, Quebec, 28 Sept. 1819.
- 54 Ibid., C417, pp. 50-1, Bolton to Payne, Kingston, 29 Sept. 1823.
- 55 Ibid., C401, pp. 36-7, approved estimate of repairs, dated Kingston, 24 Sept. 1818.
- 56 Ibid., C404, pp. 33-4, Durnford to Bowles, Quebec, 28 Sept. 1819.
- 57 Ibid., C417, pp. 50-1, Bolton to Payne, Kingston, 29 Sept. 1823. The structure is not mentioned in the government's advertisement in The Chronicle (Kingston), 12 Sept. 1823.
- 58 PAC, RG8, C401, p. 36 approved estimate of repairs, dated Kingston, 24 Sept. 1818.
- 59 Ibid., C417, pp. 50-1, Bolton to Payne, Kingston, 29 Sept. 1823; *ibid.*, C1261, pp. 248-9, Darling to Barrack Master Patton, Quebec, 25 Aug. 1826.
- 60 Ibid., C517, pp. 1-4, memorial of James Frost, Quebec, 4 Jan. 1824.
- 61 PAC, MG13, WO44/40, pp. 467-71, Ordnance Clerk John Gordon to Lieutenant Colonel J. W. Wright, commanding R.E. in Upper Canada, Kingston, 30 June 1831.
- 62 Ibid.
- 63 The Chronicle (Kingston), 12 Sept. 1823.
- 64 PAC, C517, pp. 1-4, memorial of James Frost, Quebec, 4 Jan. 1824.
- 65 The Chronicle (Kingston), 12 Sept. 1823; PAC, C417, pp. 50-1, Bolton to Payne, Kingston, 29 Sept. 1823.
- 66 The Chronicle (Kingston), 12 Sept. 1823; PAC, C417, pp. 50-1, Bolton to Payne, Kingston, 29 Sept. 1823.

67 PAC, RG8, C401, pp. 36-7, approved estimates for repairs dated Kingston, 24 Sept. 1818.

Prescott and the Battle of the Windmill Site Before the Rebellion

- 1 William Dunlop, Recollections of the American War 1812-14 (Toronto: Historical Publishing Co., 1905), p. 20.
- 2 Francis Hall, Travels in Canada and the United States in 1816 and 1817 (London: Strahan and Spottiswoode, 1819) p. 123.
- 3 Edward Thomas Coke, A Subaltern's Furlough: descriptive of Scenes in Various Parts of the United States, Upper and Lower Canada, New Brunswick and Nova Scotia (London: Saunders and Otley, 1833), pp. 321-2.
- 4 John Howison, Sketches of Upper Canada, Domestic, Local, and Characteristic: to which are added Practical Details, for the Information of Emigrants of Every Class; and some Recollections of the United States of America, reprint of 1821 ed. (Toronto: Coles, 1970), pp. 25-6.
- 5 The figures come from Coke, A Subaltern's Furlough, p. 322. Census and assessment data are available at PAO, RG21, Municipal Records, but are useless here as the records do not separate Prescott from Augusta Township during the period under study.
- 6 Coke, A Subaltern's Furlough, p. 322.
- 7 For example, Prescott was incorporated as a town in 1834 and thereafter had its own local governing body, a board of police. The first president of the board was Prescott forwarder and entrepreneur, Alexander MacMillan; Frederick H. Armstrong, Handbook of Upper Canadian Chronology and Territorial Legislation (London, Ontario: Lawson Memorial Library, 1967), pp. 196 and 209.
- 8 Coke, A Subaltern's Furlough, pp. 322-3; Coke met one such enterprising individual during his brief stay at

Ogdensburg.

- 9 Ibid., p. 324.
- 10 PAC, RG5, A1, vol. 45, pp. 21852-3, MacMillan to Gifford, Prescott, 28 June 1819.
- 11 Ibid., pp. 21847-8, MacMillan to Gifford, Prescott, 5 July 1819.
- 12 Ibid., ppl 21850-1, MacMillan to Gifford, Prescott 1 July 1819.
- 13 The Brockville Recorder, 24 Oct. 1828.
- 14 PAC, RG8, C39, pp. 132-2a, Gifford to Deputy Commissary General Clarke, Prescott, 8 April 1821. See also John P. Heisler, "The Canals of Canada", Canadian Historic Sites: Occasional Papers in Archaeology and History, No. 8 (Ottawa: Parks Canada, 1973), pp. 39-59.
- 15 PAC, RG5, A1, vol. 57, pp. 29524-38, Gifford to Civil Secretary George Hillier, Prescott, 10 Aug. 1822.
- 16 The Gazette (Brockville), 16 Nov. 1830; PAC, RG5, A1, vol. 123, pp. 67980-1, Report of the Committee to Improve the St. Lawrence, 12 Nov. 1832.
- 17 In 1830, for example, R. L. Dresser and N. A. Pitkin advertised a brass foundry and copper smithing at their Prescott works, as well as a stove factory, and tin and sheet iron works; Brockville Recorder, 4 May 1830.
- 18 The Gazette (Brockville), 7 May 1830; among the initiating members were merchants Alpheus Jones and William McQueen, and Edward Jessup, grandson of Prescott's founder.
- 19 Ibid., 22 Dec. 1831.
- 20 For an excellent examination of the cholera epidemic in Upper Canada see Geoffrey Bilson, "Cholera in Upper Canada, 1832," Ontario History, vol. 67, no. 1 (March, 1975), pp. 15-30.
- 21 PAC, RG5, A1, vol. 108, pp. 61390-1, Jones to Acting Civil Secretary Edward McMahan, Prescott, 12 July 1831.
- 22 The Gazette (Brockville), 3 May 1832.

- 23 Ibid.
- 24 Ibid., Acting Civil Secretary Edward McMahon to Secretary of the Johnstown District Emigrant Society, York, 11 April 1832.
- 25 PAC, RG5, A1, vol. 125, pp. 68971-2, petition of H. D. Jessup, Prescott, 10 Jan. 1833. The exact location of the hospital and sheds is not known but they were probably near the water and at a little distance from the most densely populated part of town. There are no statistics on the number of cholera cases or resulting deaths at Prescott for 1832.
- 26 Ibid., vol. 131, 72489, return of emigrants signed by John Patton, Prescott, 23 Aug. 1833.
- 27 Ibid., vol. 144, pp. 78831-3, Chairman of the Prescott Board of Health Hiram Norton to Civil Secretary William Rowan, Prescott, 20 Aug. 1834.
- 28 Ibid., vol. 144, pp.. 79008-10, return of cholera cases signed by Norton, 20 Aug. 1834. These figures are the only concrete data available for 1834.
- 29 Ibid., vol. 156, p. 85853, return of sick immigrants receiving medical treatment, signed by the surgeon, Prescott, 1 Sept. 1835; this document gives the name, age, origin, illness and length of treatment of each immigrant. Ibid., p. 85854, return of immigrants arrived at Prescott, signed by John Patton, Prescott, 1 Sept. 1835. Ibid., p. 85857, return of passages furnished, signed by John Patton, Prescott, 1 Sept. 1835; listed here are the names of heads of family, the number in each family, origin, destination, cost of passage and brief remarks explaining their financial and personal plights.
- 30 Ibid., vol, 185, pp. 103173-4, Jessup to Adjutant General R. Bullock, Prescott, 16 Jan. 1838.
- 31 Ruth McKenzie, Leeds and Grenville: Their First Two Hundred Years (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1967),

- pp. 69-71.
- 32 PAC, MG11, CO42/285, pp. 341-2, Young to Assistant Quarter Master General Hall, Prescott, 30 May 1838.
- 33 Ibid., pp. 343-4, Turner to Hall, Cornwall, 31 May 1838.
- 34 Ibid., pp. 339-40. Colborne to Major General Lord Fitzroy Somerset, Montreal, 5 June 1838.
- 35 Ibid., pp. 308-14, Colborne to General Lord Hill, Quebec, 23 June 1838.
- 36 Ibid.
- 37 Grenville County Land Registry Office, Prescott, abstract of part of the east half of lot 34, first concession, Edwardsburgh Township.
- 38 Ruth McKenzie, Leeds and Grenville: Their First Two Hundred Years (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1967), p. 72.
- 39 Grenville County Land Registry Office, Prescott, abstract of part of the east half of lot 34, first concession, Edwardsburgh Township; PAC, RG5, C1, vol. 17, register no. 2056, memorial of Alexander and William McQueen, 25 April 1839.
- 40 Franklin B. Hough, A History of St. Lawrence and Franklin Counties, New York (Albany, New York, 1853), p. 662.
- 41 The detailing of the fences at least is questionable as several claims for losses include the destruction of stone fences.
- 42 PAC, RG5, A1, vol. 236, pp. 129980 and 130016-8, memorial of Alpheus Jones and Robert Blakey, Prescott, 15 Jan. 1840.
- 43 Ibid., vol. 219, p. 120640, return of claims signed by Colonel Plomer Young, Prescott, 13 Feb. 1839.

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W055, Ordnance Office: Miscellanea

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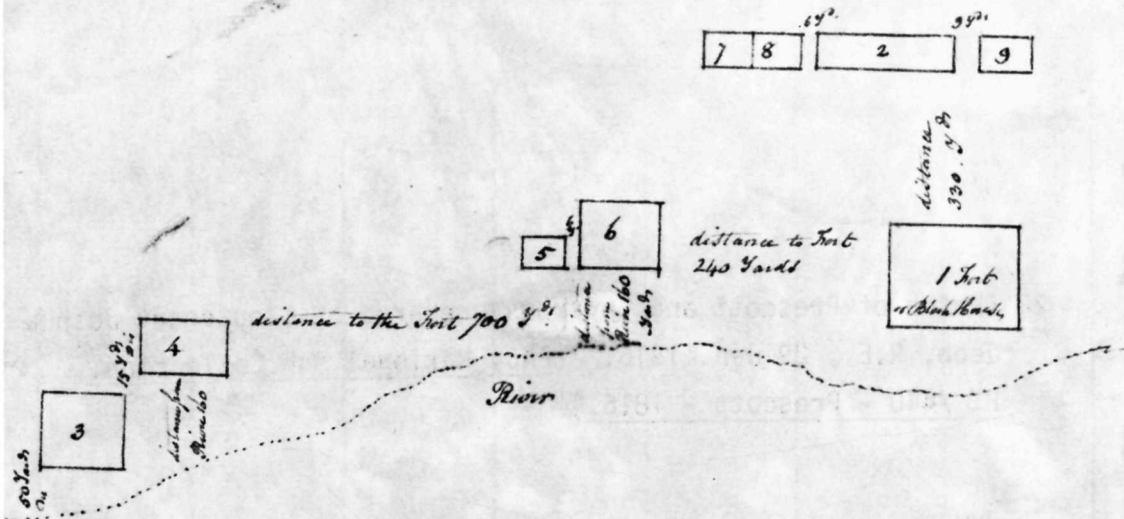
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- 1 "Return and Description of Buildings in Charge of the Barrack Department at Fort Wellington." (PAC, National Map Collection, H3/440 - Prescott - 1815; for its context see ibid, RG8, C555, p. 55, dated 7 Aug. 1815.)

73

Return and Description of Buildings in Charge of the Barrack Department at Fort Wellington.



1. Black House when completed in repairs will contain 144 Men and 9 Subalterns
 2. Upper part Barracks for 110 Men the under part occupied as a Carpenter's Shop Barrack Room for Tables for 40 Guard House &c
 3. Commanding Officer's quarters
 4. Field Officer's quarters
 5. Dispensing Room and Surgery
 6. Hospital lower Room occupied as Barrack store for Bedding
 7. Quarters for Commanding Officer of Engineers
 8. Quarters for the Q. Q. of Artillery
 9. Quarters for Office of the Field Train Department
- Buildings No. 5 and 6 are the Property of a M. S. Shop, the other Buildings are the Property of Government and are made of Wood except No. 4 which is Built of Stone.

Wm. Pitt Rivers
Brig. Genl.

CS 236.

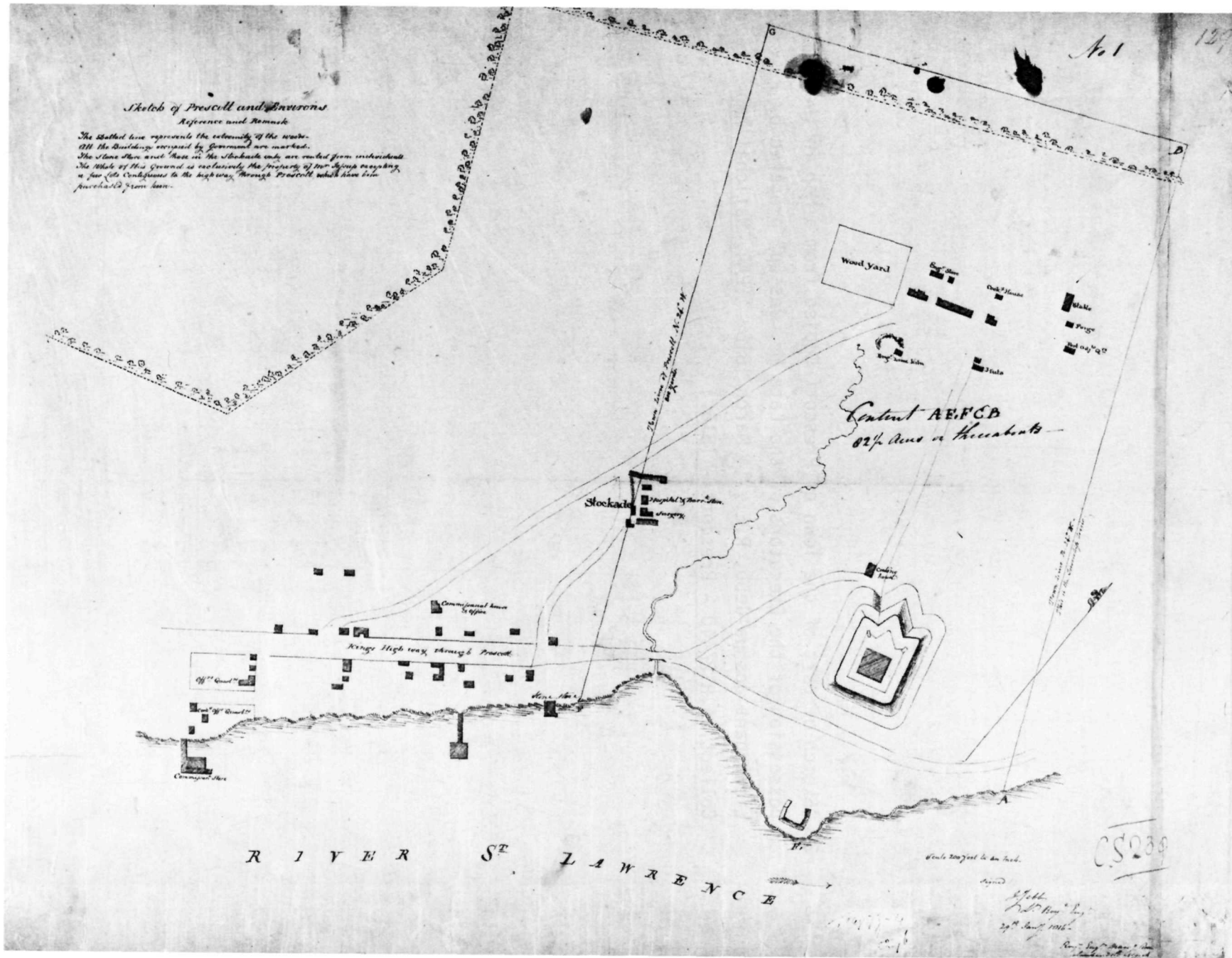
- 2 Sketch of Prescott and Environs prepared by Lieutenant Joshua Jebb, R.E., 29 Jan. 1816. (PAC, National Map Collection, H3 /440 - Prescott - 1816.)

Sketch of Prescott and Barracks

Reference and Remarks

*The dotted line represents the extremity of the works.
 All the Buildings occupied by Government are marked.
 The Stone Store and those in the Stockade only are rented from individuals.
 The whole of this ground is exclusively the property of the Army occupying it,
 a few (the Contingents to the highway through Prescott) which have been
 purchased from him.*

No. 1
159

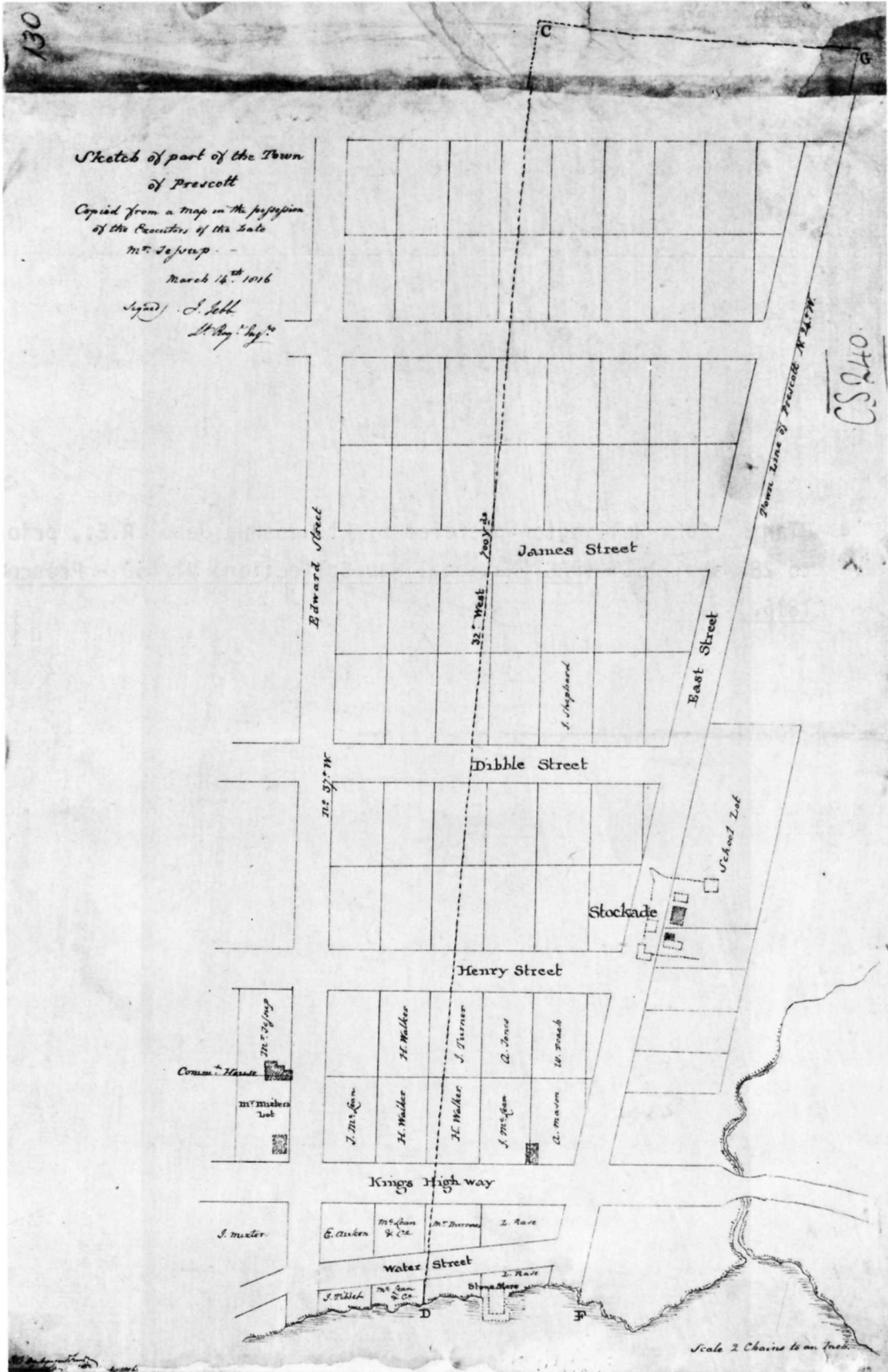


R I V E R S^T. L A W R E N C E

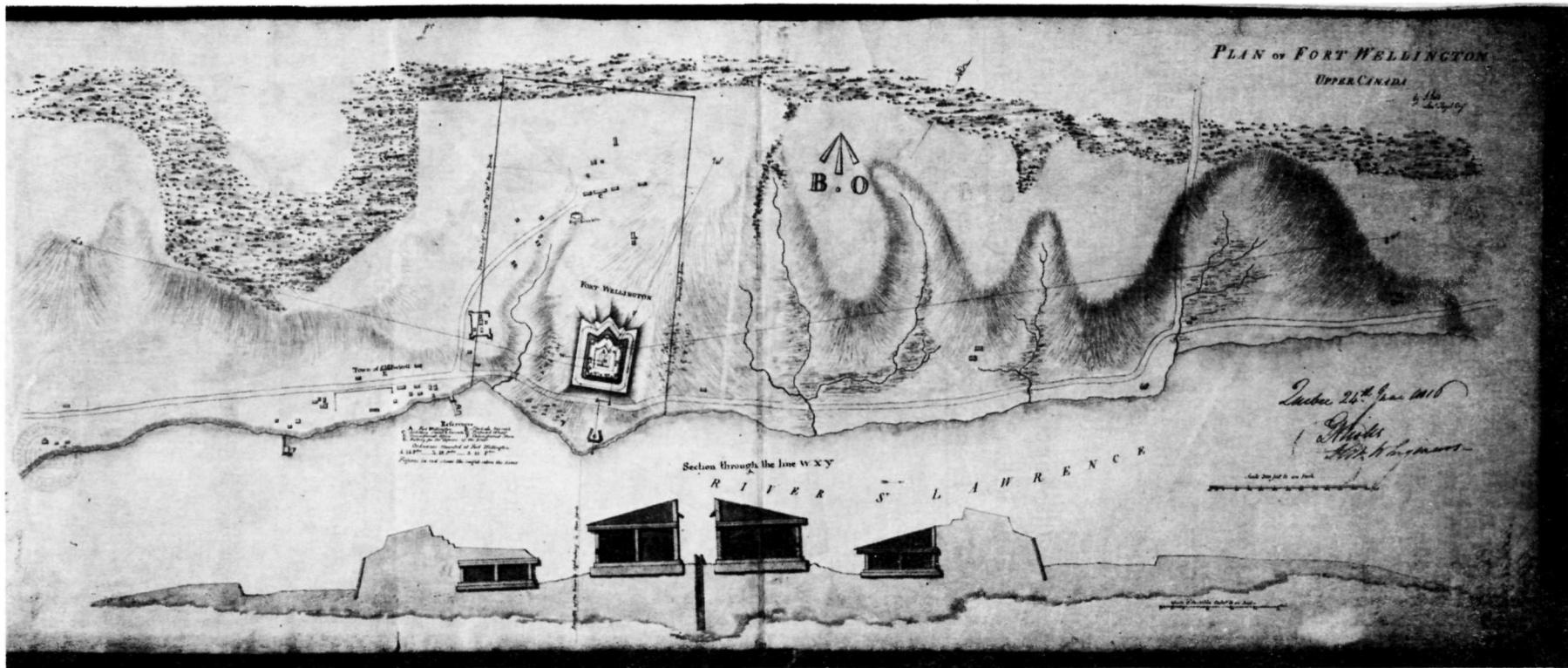
Scale 200 feet to an Inch.
 Signed
 J. H. ...
 27th Aug 1864.
 Capt. ...

CS 230

- 3 "Sketch of part of the Town of Prescott Copied from a Map in the possession of the Executors of the Late Mr. Jessup" prepared by Lieutenant Joshua Jebb, R.E., 14 March 1816. (PAC, National Map Collection, H12/440 - Prescott - 1816.)

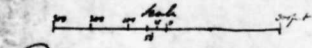


- 4 Plan of Fort Wellington prepared by Lt. Joshua Jebb, R.E., prior to 28 May 1816. (PAC, National Map Collection, V1/450 - Prescott - 1816.)

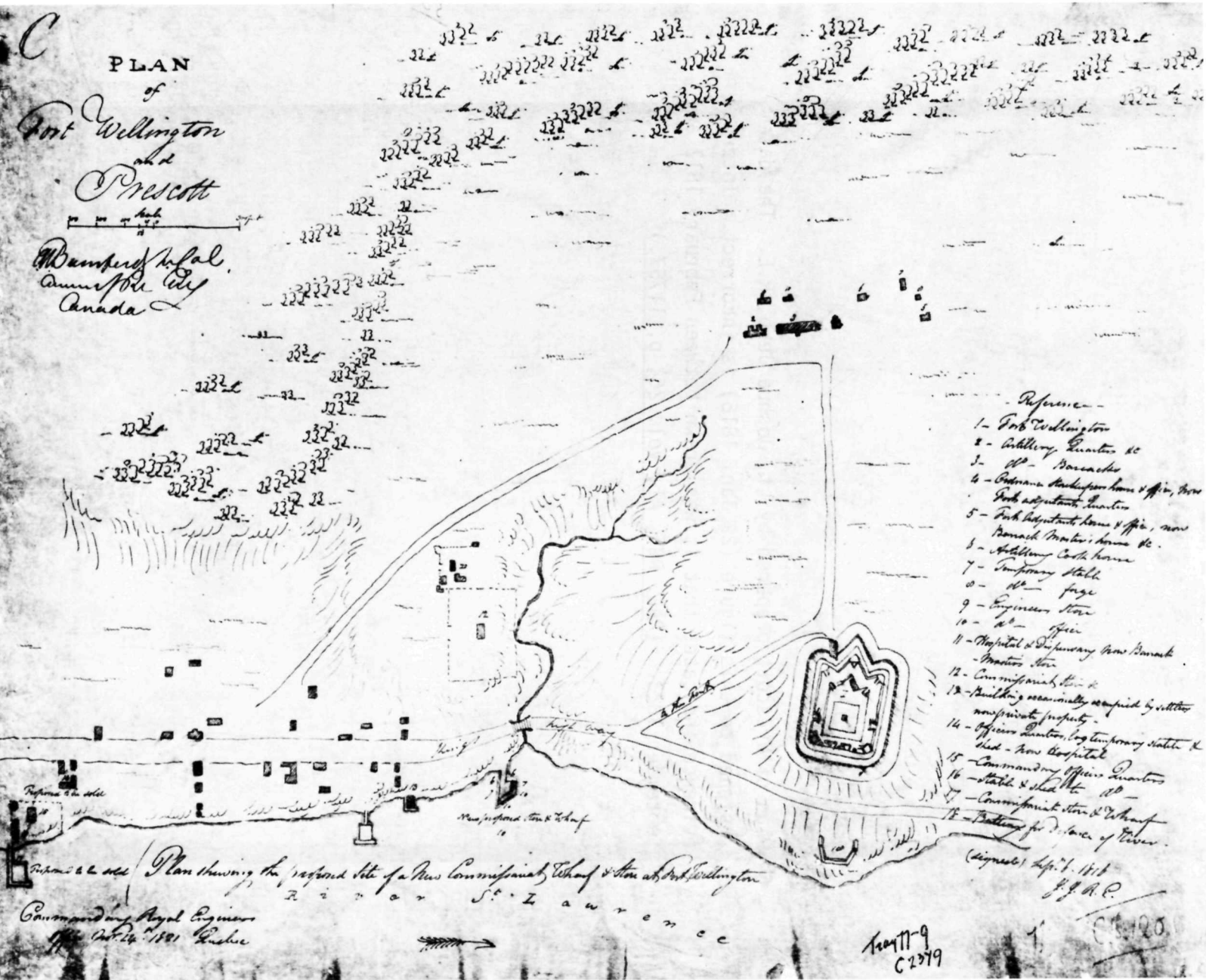


- 5 Plan of Prescott and Fort Wellington, 1821, from original prepared by Lt. Joshua Jebb, R.E., 6 Sept. 1816. (PAC, National Map Collection, H3/440 - Prescott - 1816 (1821).)

C
 PLAN
 of
 Fort Wellington
 and
 Prescott



Bumper's Map of
 America for the City
 of Canada



- Reference -
- 1 - Fort Wellington
 - 2 - Artillery Quarters &c
 - 3 - H^o - Barracks
 - 4 - Ordnance Workshop, Store & Office, Store
 Fort Adjutant's Quarters
 - 5 - Fort Lieutenant's Store & Office, new
 Barrack Master's house &c.
 - 6 - Artillery Cook house
 - 7 - Temporary stable
 - 8 - H^o - forge
 - 9 - Engineer's store
 - 10 - H^o - office
 - 11 - Hospital & Dispensary, new Barrack
 - Master's store
 - 12 - Commissariat store &c
 - 13 - Building occasionally occupied by soldiers
 and private property
 - 14 - Officers Quarters, long temporary stable &
 shed - new Hospital
 - 15 - Commanding Officer's Quarters
 - 16 - stable & shed H^o -
 - 17 - Commissariat store & Warehouse
 - 18 - Building for 3rd force of Troop.

Plan showing the proposed site of a New Commissariat Warehouse & Store at Fort Wellington
 St. Lawrence

Commanding Royal Engineer
 18th Feb 1811 Quebec

1811-9
 C 279

- 6 Plan of Prescott prepared by Lt. Joshua Jebb, R.E. The date assigned to this figure (29 Jan. 1816) is incorrect. Internal evidence indicates that it was drawn between February 1817 and September 1823. (PAC, RG5, A1, vol. 26, p. 11757.)

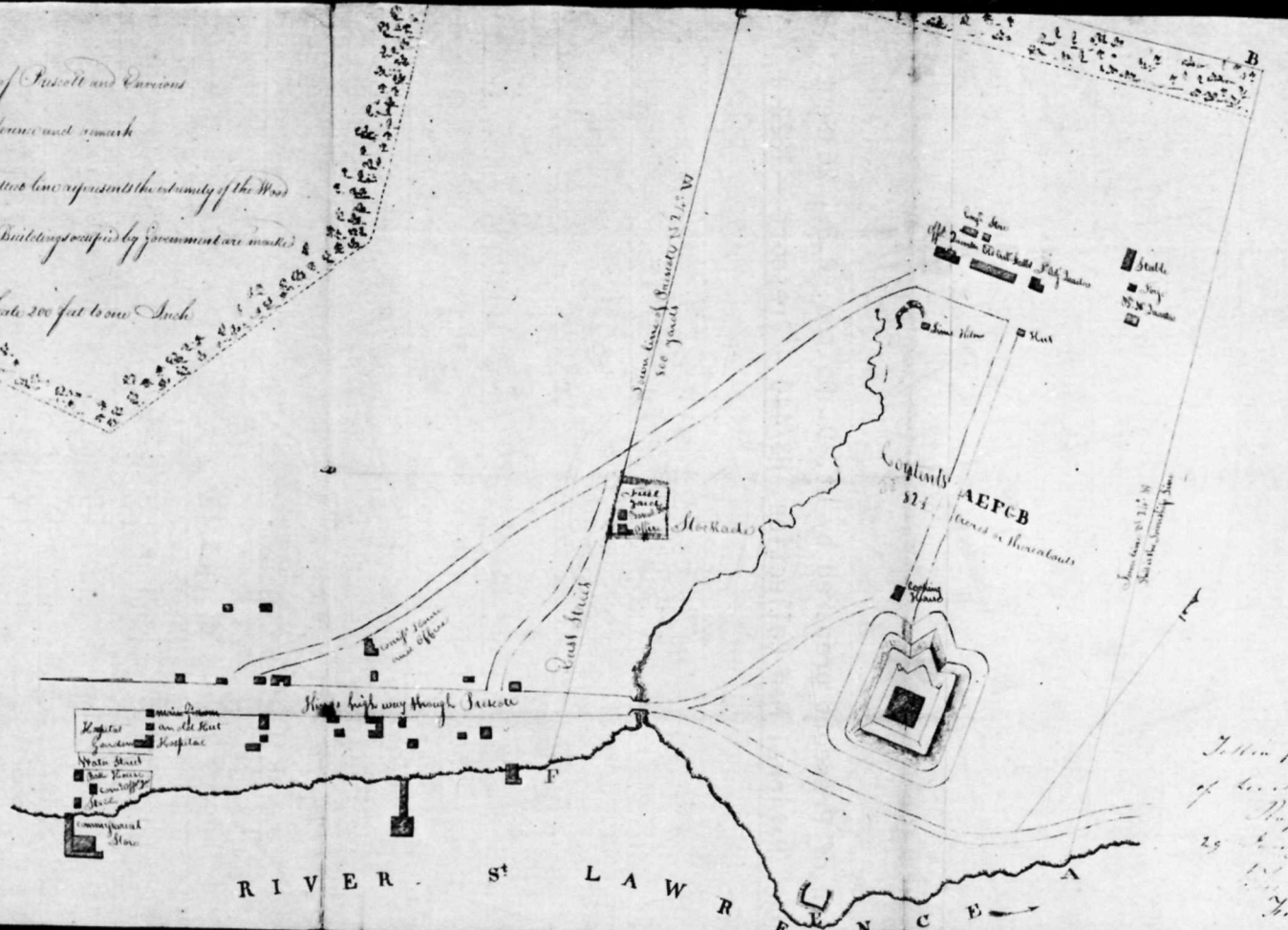
Sketch of Purcell and Carrions

Reference and remark

The dotted line represents the extremity of the Wood

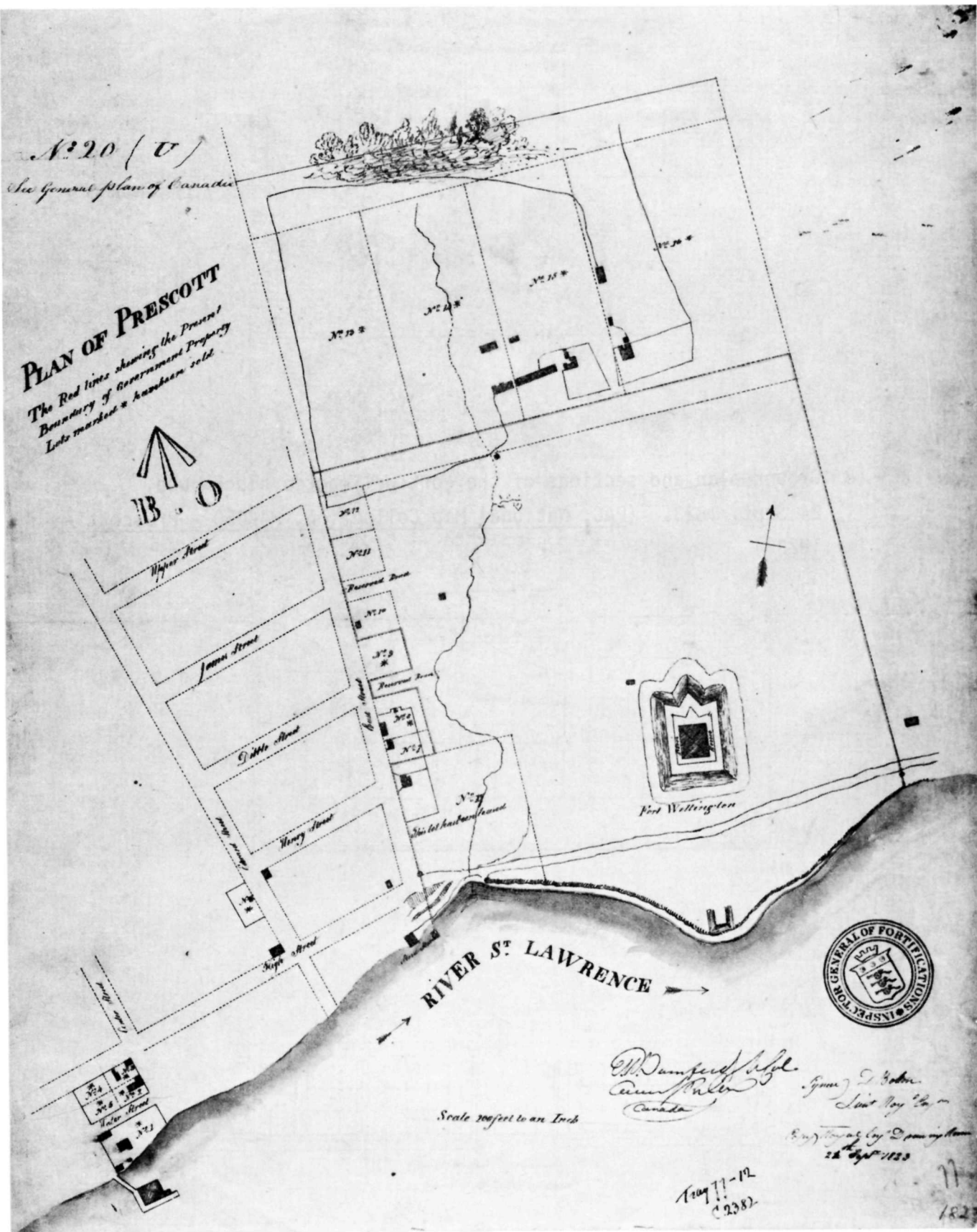
All the Buildings occupied by Government are marked

Scale 200 feet to one Inch



Taken from a Plan
of Fort St. John's
May 1758
25 June 1758
John Burgoyne
Fort Mifflin

- 7 Plan of Prescott prepared by Lt. D. Bolton, R.E., 26 Sept. 1823.
(PAC, National Map Collection, H3/440 - Prescott - 1823.)



8 Ground plan and sections of the Fort Wellington blockhouse,
24 Sept. 1823. (PAC, National Map Collection, H4/450 - Prescott -
1823.)

Ground Plan and Sections
of the Interior of the
Block house within the
Fort at
Prescott

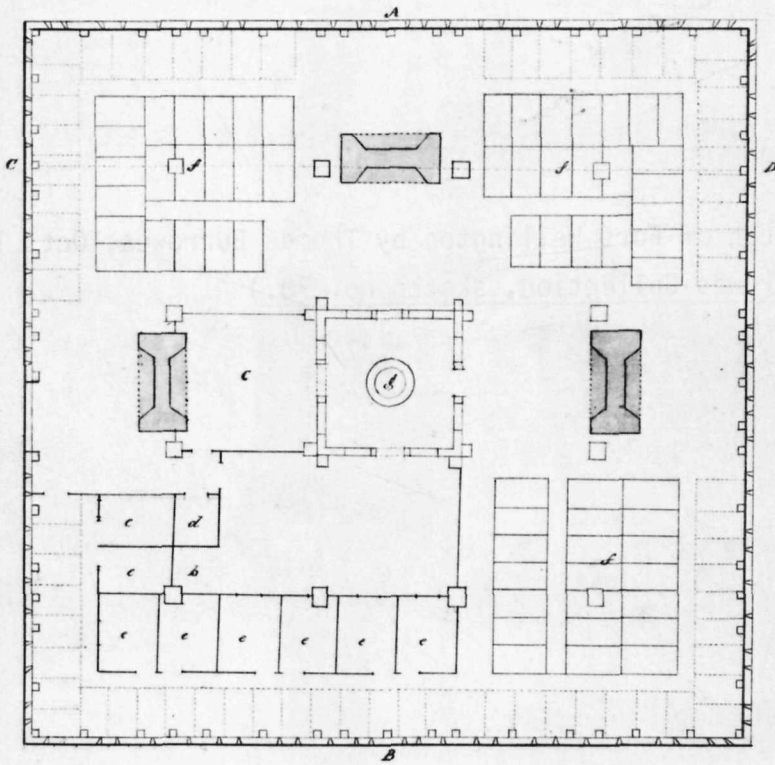
Section on the Line A. B.

References

- d Officers Mess Room
- b Mess Waiters Room
- c Mess Kitchen
- d Pantry
- e Officers Rooms
- f Soldiers Bunks & Well.

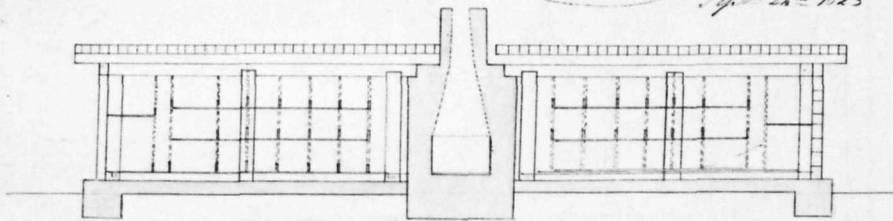


Plate 1



Section on the Line C. D.

Wm. D. Mumford
Architect
June 24th 1823

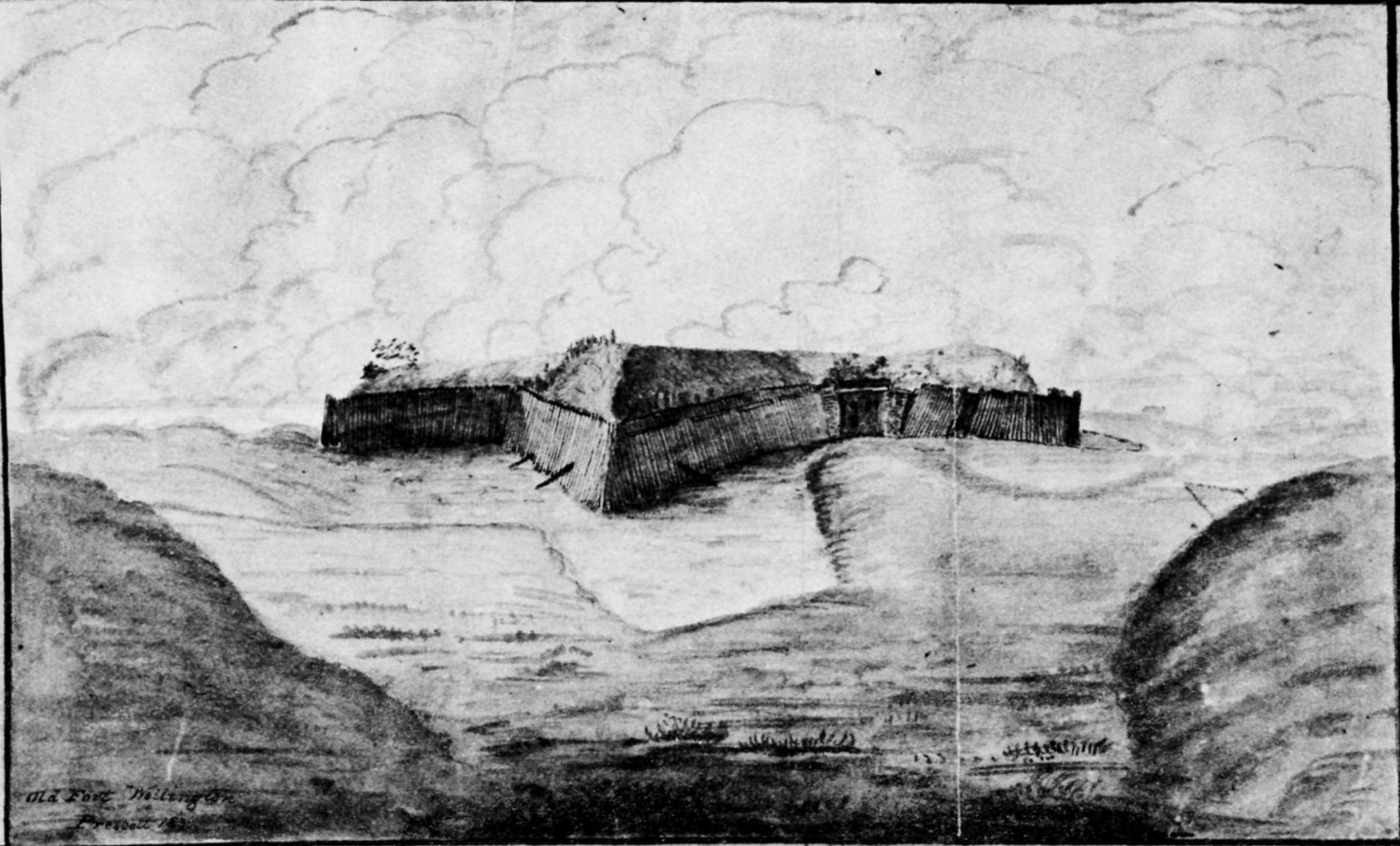


Scale of 20 feet to an Inch.

Aug 11-13.
1823

- 9 Sketch of Fort Wellington by Thomas Burrowes, Oct. 1830. (PA0, Burrowes Collection, sketch no. 78.)

78



Old Fort Wellington
Prescott 1830

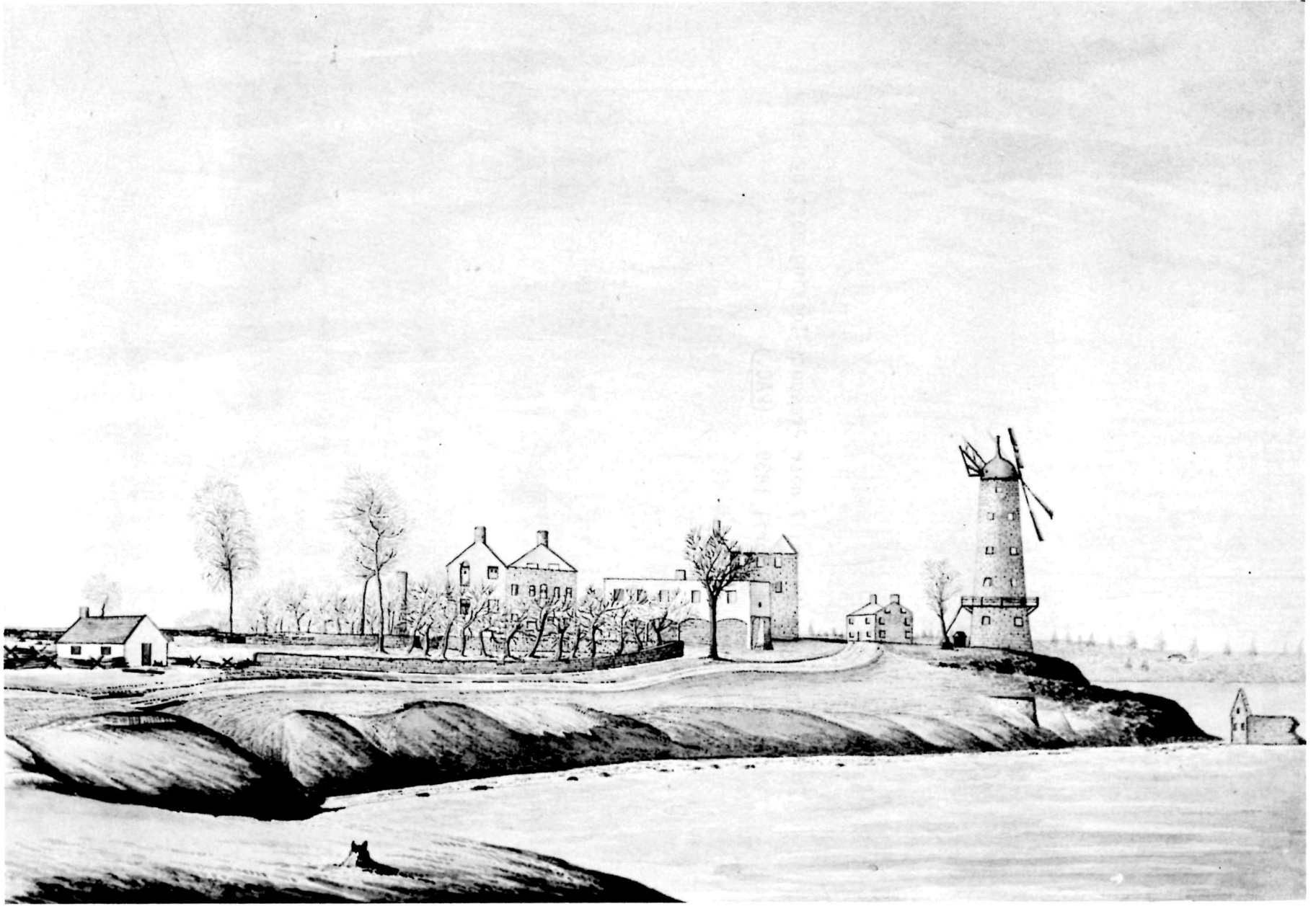
Oct 1830

"Fort Wellington", Prescott:
Sketch taken on a foggy morning; October, 1830.

Burrows

10 Plan of Prescott dated 13 July 1839. (PAC, National Map Collection, H4/450 - Prescott - 1839.)

- 11 Sketch of the Windmill near Prescott by Henry Francis Ainslie,
April 1839. (PAC)



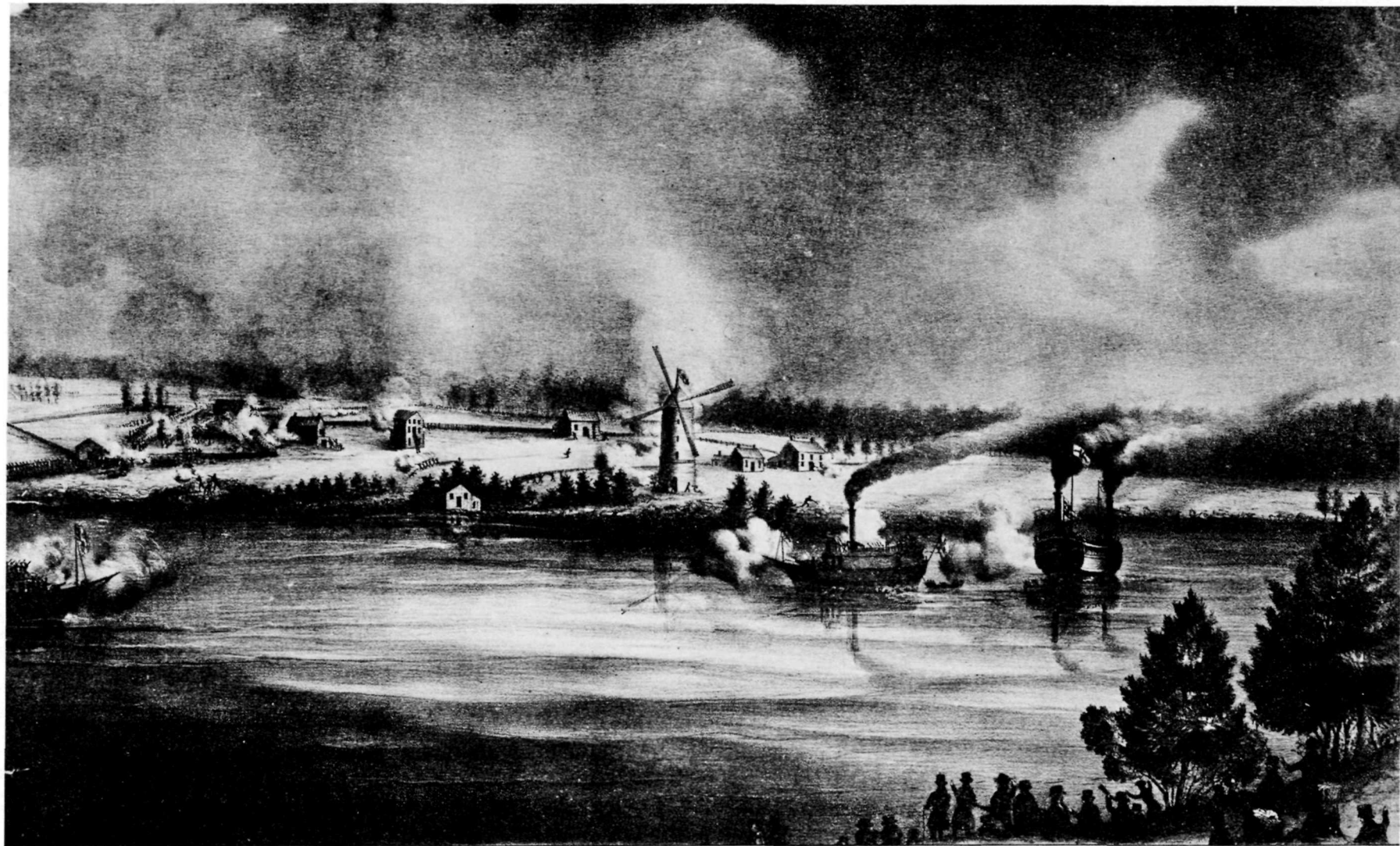
12 Sketch of the Windmill near Prescott looking east by Henry
Francis Ainslie, April 1839. (PAC.)



- 13 Sketch of buildings at the Windmill site near Prescott looking south by Henry Francis Ainslie, April 1839. (PAC.)



- 14 Sketch of the Battle of the Windmill, 1839. (Royal Ontario Museum, Sigmund Samuel Collection, anonymous, (1839).)



Sutcliffe, Ellis, Pine.

5. 2. 3. 9. 7. 1. 6. 6. 8.

Lith of Eastwood, N York.

BATTLE OF WINDMILL POINT

(Near Prescott upper Canada)

on Tuesday Nov. 2^d 1838 between the Patriots & the British.

1. V. L. the Windmill. A. 2. Stone House (Officers Quarters). V. 3. Store. V. 4. School House. V. 5. Barn Burnt on Tuesday P. M. A. 6. 8. Straw House. V. 7. Wood Building. V. 8. Mill Pond. A. 9. Place where Lieut. Johnson fell.
 The ground occupied by the Patriots was between the river and Stone wall from 2. to A. 6

Entered according to the Act of Congress in the year 1838

960276.106

