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A STRUCTURAL AND NARRATIVE HISTORY
OF QUEEN'S BATTERY, SIGNAL HILL
NATIONAL HISTORIC PARK
by James E. Candow
1980

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Abstract

From 1796-1870 Queen's Battery formed an integral part of the narrows defences of St. John's. During the 1830s it became the focal point of those defences and, although it relinquished this position in the 1860s to Fort Amherst, it remained an important post. This was the last decade of active military utilization of the battery. It was the subject of a couple of post-1870 defence reports, but nothing ever came of these, and in the First and Second World Wars other sites were considered of greater strategic value. In the early 20th century the battery became the first historic resource in Newfoundland to be exploited for the purpose of tourism.

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Queen's Battery, 1796-1889

Introduction

Begun in 1796, Queen's Battery was a relative newcomer to the St. John's defence system. The British government had first established a garrison at St. John's in the summer of 1697 after the French, from their base at Placentia, had attacked and destroyed the town in December 1696. Prior to the founding of the garrison, the inhabitants of St. John's had provided for their own defence according to the limited means available to them. Thus Christopher Martin, a fishing captain from Devon, landed guns from his ship in 1665 and 1667 and emplaced them in two temporary earthen forts. The earliest known map of St. John's harbour, drawn by the English cartographer John Thornton in 1689, shows three defence works located in the narrows, the half-mile long channel varying in width from 200-400 yards, which leads from the sea into the harbour proper. North Fort was situated at a place designated "One a clock," on the north side of the narrows; another defensive work lay almost directly opposite at "Ring noone"; and South Fort, on the same side, was closer to the narrows' entrance. None of these works was of a permanent nature. In 1691 the inhabitants of St. John's reported that they had "for our own security raised a small work according to the best of our judgments for our present defence, where we have a few guns...."¹ This may have been the "King William's Fort" into which the hapless townspeople retreated in the face of the French onslaught of 1696.²

The French success of 1696 alerted the English government to the necessity of fortifying St. John's, a step which they

had been loath to take in the past. The English fishery at Newfoundland, of which St. John's was the administrative centre, was valued by England not only for its economic worth, but as a training ground which produced skilled sailors to man the ships of the Royal Navy in time of war.³ Accordingly, government policy was aimed at restraining settlement, since it would tend to deplete the supply of manpower available to the Royal Navy in the West Country fishing villages. Although the absence of a proper law enforcement agency in Newfoundland prevented the vigorous enforcement of this policy, the prohibition remained on the law books until the second decade of the 19th century. Thus, until 1697 at least, government frowned upon fortifications in Newfoundland, as these might have been construed as an acceptance of settlement. Still, Newfoundland was not considered to be entirely without protection. It was commonly held that the nation possessing the greatest seapower would be the one that controlled Newfoundland and her fishery. As it was the Royal Navy's policy to blockade the enemy in his home waters, a fortifications network in Newfoundland was viewed as superfluous. But the events of 1696 showed that the French, who had had a fortified capital at Placentia since 1662, entertained territorial ambitions in Newfoundland. Moreover, the fall of St. John's caused a disruption in the English fishery at Newfoundland, and this could not be allowed to continue indefinitely or the French would become dominant, with all that this entailed in times when naval might was equated with political power. The decision to fortify St. John's was a landmark in Newfoundland history, not only because it represented the establishment of a permanent British military presence on the island, but also because it was a tacit acceptance of settlement.

Although there were changes in the St. John's defence system in the century after 1696, a measure of continuity was provided by an emphasis on the security of the narrows. From 1697-1713 the town's defences consisted of a fort, Fort

William, located on the north side of the harbour proper overlooking the harbour mouth, and two smaller works on opposite sides of the narrows. These defences were allowed to go to ruin after 1713, for in 1714 the St. John's garrison was transferred to Placentia to occupy the fortifications vacated by the French, who had been banished from their Newfoundland capital by the Treaty of Utrecht. However, British merchants engaged in the Newfoundland fishery repeatedly petitioned government to re-fortify St. John's, which prayers were finally answered in the 1740s when France and England were once again at war.⁴ In that decade a new Fort William was begun on the site of the old one, and a four-gun battery was erected on the southside, again in the narrows.

When the French took St. John's for the final time in June 1762, they repeated their successful course of 1696, which was to advance upon the town by land from the south. The narrows battery was completely useless against this. A British expeditionary force easily recaptured St. John's that September, also by advancing overland, only from the north. The British drove the French from Signal Hill, on the north side of the narrows, and then fired at will into Fort William below, to which the French had retreated. The French surrendered only a day after the bombardment had begun. The events of 1762 prompted a major re-evaluation of British defensive strategy for St. John's. Two important changes resulted. In the 1770s, a new main fort, Fort Townshend, was erected on the north side of the harbour, but to the westward of Fort William and out of the range of Signal Hill. The other departure occurred during the American Revolutionary War (1775-83), when measures were taken to protect St. John's from land attack. Small batteries were erected at Quidi Vidi harbour, half a mile north of the narrows, and at Cuckold Cove, between Quidi Vidi harbour and the narrows.⁵ Other temporary batteries were added, one at Torbay, where the British had disembarked in 1762, a second on the road from Torbay to St. John's, and a

third on the road between St. John's and Bay Bulls, from which the French had launched their attack in 1762.⁶ But while there were areas of change after 1762, geography dictated that the narrows must remain a focal point of the defences of St. John's. Indeed, the narrows were actually strengthened. Chain Rock Battery, on the north side, was finished by 1769, and in 1777 Amherst's Tower, guarding the southside entrance to the narrows, was completed. The old southside work, now called Frederick's Battery, was upgraded to nine guns by 1777.⁸

The Napoleonic Wars (1793-1802, 1803-15) witnessed another major development in the St. John's defence system. This was the designation of Signal Hill as the post of ultimate retreat for the town and garrison. Although the grandiose plans for this end were never fully realized, a series of batteries were built on the summit of the hill and the whole was stockaded. Ordnance department officials felt that once the Signal Hill project was completed it would be next to impossible for an enemy to hold St. John's; for this reason there was no emphasis on defending the landward approaches to St. John's such as there had been during the American Revolutionary War. Also, in official eyes at least, both Fort Townshend and Fort William diminished in strategic importance. The same could not be said of the narrows works. Not only were the existing defences kept up and improved, but new ones were added, all on the north side. Wallace's Battery was built atop Gibbet Hill, an eminence 390 ft. above sea level in the George's Valley region of Signal Hill, and from which both the narrows and Fort William were easily commanded. Waldegrave Battery was closer to the water at 135 ft. above sea level, and was situated behind Chain Rock Battery near the juncture of the narrows and the harbour. The third addition was Queen's Battery.

Construction: 1796-1812

The site chosen for Queen's Battery was approximately 350 ft. above sea level, directly above Chain Rock Battery, and about 800 yd. from the mouth of the narrows. It was some 300 yd. away from the summit of Signal Hill and 150 ft. lower. Work on the battery started in 1796, probably that spring.⁹ The battery was intended for nine heavy guns; by October 1796 platforms for three of these had been laid, with the other six "in great forwardness." By this date the frame for a wooden guard house, or barrack, had also been erected. The following year the battery was virtually completed.¹⁰ The merlons of the parapet were put in, the other six platforms laid, and the guard house finished. In addition, a laboratory for storing gunpowder was built. These features remained essentially unaltered until the 1830s.

There was a change in the battery's armament sometime between 1797 and 1800. In the latter year the armament was given as four 8-in. brass howitzers, six 24-pounders (iron), and one 9-pounder (iron), or eleven guns in all, two more than originally allowed for.¹¹ Five years later two of the howitzers had been removed, so that the battery was back to its original quota.¹² By this time the battery was beginning to show the effects of its exposure to the Newfoundland climate. Half of the parapet had completely decayed, and the gun platforms had had to be relaid that spring.¹³ In 1806 the battery was still considered "very much out of Repair."¹⁴ The reports for the next few years are not very helpful, recording merely that there had been "partial repairs" or "No material change."¹⁵ During this period most of the energies of the Ordnance department work crews in St. John's were devoted to scarping the rock at the summit of Signal Hill in an effort to render it impregnable. Someone must have found some time for Queen's Battery however, for in 1810 the guard house was "improved" and the battery itself fenced in.¹⁶ In fact, the entire battery was "deemed to be in a good state for service...."

It is not until 1812 that there is a detailed description of Queen's Battery. That year the following account was written:

Queen's Battery - Situate on the north side of the Harbour of Saint Johns about 330 feet above the level of the water; this Battery has a fine command of the narrows as well as of part of the Interior of the Harbour, it is in tolerable good repair, upon it are nine pieces of ordnance of the following natures, mounted on Garrison Carriages on one continued Platform of wood

Brass Ordnance	8 In Howitzers	2
Iron Ordnance	24 Pounders	6
	9 Do.	<u>1</u>
	Total	<u>9</u>

The Guns Carriages and side arms are in a Serviceable state. The ammunition is kept in a small wooden Laboratory 12 ft by 10 in the rear of the Battery. There is also a wooden Shed immediately in the rear 50 ft by 13. The last part is occupied by a Subaltern of Engineers, the remainder by a Gunner/and his family/in charge of the Battery this building is out of repair....¹⁷

The above then, represents a thorough summary of the physical characteristics of the site: the guns, their carriages, gun platforms, guard house, and laboratory. The positioning of the guard house and the laboratory bears special mention. The guard house was on the same flat area (160 ft. by 40 ft.) later designated lower Queen's Battery, on which were located the guns.¹⁸ (See Figure 1) The laboratory does not appear to have been located on this shelf, but rather on a second one 12 ft. above the lower battery.¹⁹ This upper level would be exploited to greater effect in the 1830s.

The Role of Queen's Battery

It is important before proceeding further to study more closely the role of Queen's Battery in the defence of the narrows. First and foremost, the battery was intended to prevent enemy vessels from entering the narrows. A 24-pounder fired at a 10 degree angle had a range of 2450 yd., so that the battery's guns would have been effective against an enemy vessel up to 1650 yd. from the entrance to the narrows. In this task it would have co-operated with Amherst's Tower, which was right at the entrance to the narrows. The battery would have been useful against an enemy vessel which actually got into the narrows, and it also looked into the upper or east end of St. John's harbour. In addition, Queen's Battery was valued as a check against enemy possession of the two southside works, Amherst's Tower and Frederick's Battery.²⁰ These were always regarded as vulnerable to capture by land-based forces advancing from the rear over the southside hills. Since they were considerably lower than Queen's Battery, they would have been easy prey for its guns, and could have offered little opposition in return. Queen's Battery itself was supported to the landward by Wallace's Battery and the summit batteries of Signal Hill. (See Figure 2)

An examination of the types of shot used by the guns of Queen's Battery reveals exactly how the battery was to perform its defensive role. Round, grape, case, and double-headed shot were all kept at the battery. (See Appendix A) Each had a different purpose. Round shot was the most common form of shot at this time.²¹ It consisted of a ball of solid iron cast according to gun size. Heated round shot was capable of burning through a ship's deck all the way to its powder magazine. Though a furnace for heating shot was proposed for Queen's Battery, there is no record of one ever having been installed.²² Because it was solid, round shot could be fired much farther than other forms of shot. It was no doubt the type of shot at Queen's Battery designated for use against

enemy vessels approaching and attempting to enter the narrows, or vessels at the upper end of the harbour. Most of the round shot at Queen's Battery was intended for the 24-pounders. Grape shot was made up of a number of small iron balls tied to a central iron column, all in a canvas bag, giving the appearance of a bunch of grapes. These balls, although they had less range, scattered once the powder charge ignited, so that grape shot increased the potential for destruction or damage. Case shot was comprised of a cylindrical tin case filled with a number of small pieces of shot akin to musket balls. It was commonly used against ships as a means of killing or wounding men on the deck. The bulk of the case shot at Queen's Battery was meant for the 8-in. howitzers, and would have been particularly useful against ships below the battery in the narrows, whereas round shot from the 24-pounders would have been very plunging here, and hence less effective. Case shot was very effective when coming down upon a target. Double-headed shot consisted of an iron bar with a solid half of round shot at either end. Its primary function was the destruction of the rigging and sails of enemy vessels. Queen's Battery, then, possessed the standard repertoire of a land-based defence work geared to repel sea attack.

Construction 1812-27

The outbreak of the War of 1812 spurred the completion of certain defence projects in St. John's, such as the reconstruction of Chain Rock Battery and Amherst's Tower, and prompted improvements to most other works. In 1813 Queen's Battery underwent "partial repairs," so that in October it was reported to be "in Order."²³ However, there was some concern over the condition of the guard room, and it was even proposed that it be entirely rebuilt in 1814. Nothing came of this proposal. The battery's armament was upgraded sometime before or during 1816. That year it was given as two 8-in. brass howitzers,

six 24-pounders (iron), and three French 18-pounders (iron).²⁴ The latter were the new additions, with the single 9-pounder of earlier years having been dropped.

After the conclusion of the War of 1812 and the Napoleonic Wars in 1814 and 1815 respectively, the British government embarked upon a strict policy of retrenchment in military spending. The most significant casualty of the new policy in Newfoundland was the long awaited Martello tower atop Signal Hill. After 1817 only repairs to existing facilities were permitted and, predictably, a steady deterioration of the defence works ensued. By November 1818 the wooden gun platform at Queen's Battery required to be replaced.²⁵ Two years later the platform was still out of repair.²⁶ By that time the guns were also showing signs of neglect. The Commanding Officer of the Royal Artillery in St. John's considered only three of the 24-pounders and one of the 8-in. howitzers to be serviceable.²⁷ It was noted for the first time that the guns were in barbette, that is positioned to fire over the parapet rather than through embrasures, such as there were in the original parapet. This change must have taken place during the repairs made to the parapet after 1805. In 1820 the wooden guard room at the battery was occupied by two men of the Royal Artillery and their families.²⁸ Some minor repairs may have been effected at the battery after 1820, as in 1823 it was described as being "in good order."²⁹ The occupants were the same as in 1820.

The Nicolls Report

In the summer of 1827 Lieutenant Colonel Gustavus Nicolls, Commanding Royal Engineer at Halifax, compiled a major report on the defences of St. John's.³⁰ This was part of a larger review of imperial defences in British North America which was brought on by American espousal of the Monroe Doctrine in 1823, and also by unusual French naval activity in the West

Indies between 1823 and 1825.³¹ Nicolls was charged with reporting on the existing defences and recommending a new system of defence for St. John's. With regard to the existing defences, we need only concern ourselves here with Queen's Battery. Sometime after 1820 a single 68-pounder carronade had been added to the battery's armament, and two stone platforms had been laid. They had, however, been laid improperly, and Nicolls felt that they should be relaid. The old wooden platform was "totally gone." These were the only structural changes. Nicolls submitted the following comments and suggestions on the battery's strategic role:

From the height of this Battery, I was, at first sight, disposed to think unfavourably of it, but having had a few Shots fired from the 8 Inch Howitzers, with Cannister [i.e. case shot], the effect produced in the Narrows, was such as was calculated to cause many casualties in Men and Rigging from the cross trees to the deck in a ship entering and thereby to throw her into confusion and impede her progress at a moment frequently of great interest from the nature of this Entrance; also, considering this a useful Battery against the South side, my opinion became in its favour, and I would recommend it's [sic] being continued reduced to the following extent, 2-8 In Howitzers-1-68 Pr. Carronade, & 4-24 Prs. - and that in addition to the two Platforms recommended to be relaid, 5 others of Stone should be laid down.

Nicolls had touched on the main strengths and weaknesses of the battery. His proposal that the number of 24-pounders be reduced suggests a diminishing of the battery's role against ships in the offing, and a greater concentration on its usefulness against ships actually in the narrows. It did not, however, mean an abandonment of the former role. This is the

only noteworthy aspect of Nicolls's recommendations for the future development of Queen's Battery.

At the heart of Nicolls's plan for the future defence of St. John's was the proposal that Martello towers be placed at seven strategic points, viz. opposite ends of the summit of Signal Hill, Waldegrave Battery, Wallace's Battery, the slope between Wallace's Battery and Fort William, Carronade Hill, and above Quidi Vidi Lake. These would form a semi-circle embracing the Signal Hill peninsula. Forts William and Townshend could then be phased out and the entire garrison relocated to Signal Hill behind the protective line of enclosure. This represented a continuation of the concept of Signal Hill as the post of ultimate retreat, a concept first advanced during the Napoleonic Wars. Like the military planners of that period, Nicolls saw no need for a system of outworks at the landing places in the vicinity of St. John's if Signal Hill was to be formidable. He did not, however, foresee the abandonment of the third historical element in the defence of St. John's, the security of the narrows. Indeed, two of the Martello towers were to be on the sites of narrows batteries. He envisioned a continued role for Queen's and Chain Rock Batteries, though one wonders if he would have done so had these not been situated within the proposed line of enclosure. But there would be some scaling down of the narrows defences. Nicolls recommended the relinquishment of both southside works because they were so open to capture from the rear, and suggested instead that they be replaced by a battery at North Head on the opposite side of the narrows, which could be defended in the rear by the two towers on the summit of Signal Hill.

Nicolls's scheme was too grandiose for such an unimportant imperial garrison as St. John's, and it was never fully implemented. Not surprisingly, the greatest measure of success was achieved in carrying out those recommendations which pertained to the phasing out of defences. The guns were removed from Frederick's Battery in 1834, and in 1835 the Board of Ordnance

ordered the complete abandonment of the post.³² Fort Amherst (as it was dubbed sometime around 1816) was allowed to deteriorate, repairs being permitted only for the upkeep of the fog gun and lighthouse maintained there by the colony.³³ In town, Forts William and Townshend were kept, primarily for their barracks. During the 1830s and early 1840s an effort was made to develop the summit of Signal Hill, but many of the buildings were poorly constructed and unable to withstand the elements. A successful barrack was finally established in George's Valley in the mid-1840s. No start was ever made on any of the proposed towers.

Construction: 1830-40

Queen's Battery was one of those few places where progress was realized, and it emerged from the 1830s as the single most important defence work in all St. John's. The old wooden laboratory in the upper battery was torn down and rebuilt in 1830.³⁴ Its replacement, a wooden shingled structure, was 17 ft. 6 in. long, 14 ft. 6 in. wide, and 8 ft. high.³⁵ (See Figure 3) It was divided into two sections, one an artillery store-room and the other an expense magazine. The store-room's inner dimensions were 13 ft. 6 in. by 7 ft. 8 in., and the magazine's 13 ft. 6 in. by 8 ft. 10 in. Each possessed its own entrance. In 1830 a special committee investigating the condition of the barracks and other military buildings in St. John's reported that the Queen's Battery guard house required repairs to the roof, floor, doors, windows, hearths, and fireplaces, and as well needed a new whitewashing.³⁶ (See Figure 4) But in 1831 the Commanding Royal Engineer decided that, instead of repairing the old wooden guard houses at Queen's, Chain Rock, and Waldegrave Batteries, he would erect a stone and brick barrack at Queen's Battery so that there would be "one good and permanent building in place of these temporary ones."³⁷ In preparation for this project the Queen's Battery guard house was torn down

sometime before August 1831.³⁸ The following year work commenced on the new barrack, which was to accommodate a non-commissioned officer and 13 men.³⁹ The work on the battery included a complete reconstruction of the parapet and the laying of new stone gun platforms. The project was not completed until 1833.⁴⁰ That year the battery was described as follows:

Mounting nine heavy pieces of Ordnance en barbette is in excellent order: with its Barrack for an officer, and 13 men; and sheds for the use of the Artillery, it is a powerful Battery for the defence of the narrows.⁴¹

The inference in this description that there existed separate artillery sheds is misleading, and probably stems from the fact that the artillery storeroom and expense magazine, although part of the same building, had separate entrances. With regard to the new barrack, the interior dimensions of the officer's room were 21 ft. by 10 ft., while the artillerymen's room measured 23 ft. 6 in. by 21 ft. These were separated by an 8 in. cross wall. (See Figure 5) The barrack privy and ash pit were immediately adjacent to the officer's quarters. A porch extending 6 ft. in front of the barrack was 11 ft. 9 in. long. During the summer of 1837 the officer's room was altered to accommodate six men so that the entire building now contained barrack space for 19 men.⁴² (See Figure 6) It should be noted that the new barrack was located in the upper level of Queen's Battery.

Some structural details of the rebuilt battery have been determined. On 31 December 1831 222 Remshag stones were transported to Queen's Battery from the Ordnance wharf, which would suggest that the stones were imported.⁴³ These stones were used in the construction of the new platforms.⁴⁴ Of this stone, it is known that 49 ft. 2 in. were worked on the face with a square joint 4 in. deep, and 100 ft. 11 in. with a square joint 6 in. deep.⁴⁵ The retaining wall of the parapet was renewed with "Bermuda Stone."⁴⁶ There was an entrance

gate to the battery complex, so presumably it was fenced in at the rear.⁴⁷ According to the 1833 report quoted above, the battery's new armament consisted of nine heavy guns. Unfortunately, the earliest date thereafter for which a description of the guns is available is 1839, and by that time a tenth gun had been added.⁴⁸ The armament that year was eight 24-pounders and two 8-in. howitzers, all in barbette. Since the two howitzers had been part of the battery's armament from its earliest days, it would be reasonable to suggest that the extra piece added since 1833 was a 24-pounder. At the end of the 1830s the battery was unchallenged as the kingpin of the narrows defences, hardly what Nicolls had intended in 1827. The revetted parapet and cut stone platform were still in repair, and the buildings at the battery were described as "in excellent condition."⁴⁹

The Beginning of Decline

By the 1840s the strategic value of Queen's Battery was being undermined. One of the culprits was steam-power. This was first pointed out by the Earl of Cathcart, General Officer Commanding, British North America, on the occasion of a visit to St. John's in the summer of 1845:

The progress of Steam Navigation and its universal application to the purposes of war as well as of commerce, has...so completely changed the nature of any defensive system for the Protection of Harbours, against attacks from the Sea, that the measures which were at that period [1820s] very justly considered to be sufficient for the Protection of St Johns, and even to deter any vessels from attempting to force an entrance through the Narrows, would now be of little avail in their present state to oppose an attack by heavily armed Steam Ships, or men of war propelled by them, which would regulate

their approach so as to screen themselves entirely from the Plunging Fire from the elevated Batteries on the Signal Hill, and very soon silence or take the Lower Batteries in their existing State, before they could have any effect in retarding their progress.⁵⁰

Cathcart felt that the best means of barring the narrows to a steamship would be by direct fire from narrows batteries situated at or near the level of the water, "when from their not being too much elevated their fire may be the most effective...." To this end, he advocated the revival of Fort Amherst and Frederick's Battery. For the north side he advised that Chain Rock Battery be upgraded and strengthened, also because it was located near water level. In addition to this, he suggested that a new north side narrows battery be built in Ross's Valley, 160 ft. above sea level, between Signal Hill and North Head. Such a battery would not be visible from the sea, and might therefore surprise an enemy vessel at the mouth of the narrows. Cathcart saw no place for Queen's Battery in the new arrangement.

The battery's existence was being challenged from another direction. Indeed, the very future of imperial garrisons themselves was being called into question. In the 1840s Britain abandoned the old imperial preferential system and embarked on a course of free trade. Free trade placed the once sheltered colonies on an equal commercial footing with countries outside the British empire. The political corollary of this commercial freedom was responsible government, attained by most British North American colonies in the 1840s, though not until 1855 by Newfoundland. To British parliamentarians, it was logical that because the colonies were enjoying new commercial and political status, they should assume some of the burdens which had formerly been borne on their account by the mother country. Chief among these was the burden of defence. Defence costs had historically accounted for the major share

of British colonial expenditures.⁵¹ The government now had a justification for cutting back in this sphere. The issue was compounded by the situation in Europe, where French military power was again on the upswing.⁵² This drew the attention of Britons to the weak and scattered nature of their own army, spread as it was throughout the empire. There was, as a result, a public outcry to make the army stronger, and also to get it home.

The first manifestation in Newfoundland of the shift in imperial policy was the withdrawal of the Royal Artillery between 1852 and 1854.⁵³ These were replaced in St. John's by a special gun detachment of five non-commissioned officers and 40 men of the Royal Newfoundland Companies.⁵⁴ The gun detachment was trained by a gunnery instructor of the Royal Artillery. Beginning in 1854, there was a gradual reduction in the strength of the Royal Newfoundland Companies themselves, who constituted the entire imperial garrison for Newfoundland. By 1861 a full company had been disbanded and the garrison strength had declined to 220 men.⁵⁵

Not much is known about Queen's Battery during the 1840s and 1850s. Although there is no documentary evidence to support the conclusion, it would seem likely that some members of the makeshift artillery unit of the Royal Newfoundland Companies were stationed at the battery after 1854. In 1859 Queen's, Chain Rock, Waldegrave, and Quidi Vidi Batteries, and a battery at Fort William, were the only places in St. John's where there was any armament.⁵⁶ Queen's Battery was the largest, and still possessed its 1839 armament of two 8-in. howitzers and eight 24-pounders.⁵⁷ The parapet at this time was termed "nominal," and the gun carriages and platforms all required "renewal & revision." The only new structure added during this period was an expense magazine, mentioned for the first time in an 1851 report.⁵⁸ The new magazine was a wooden, shingled building measuring 16 ft. by 5 ft. 6 in. by 5 ft. 3 in. It appears to have replaced completely the expense magazine/

store-room of 1830, for a plan, also dated 1851, shows the barrack and the new magazine as the only two structures on the site. (See Figure 7) The exact construction date of the new magazine is not known.

Construction: 1860s

The American Civil War (1861-65) interrupted the process of garrison reduction in British North America. During that conflict Britain maintained non-belligerent status, but her sympathies lay with the Confederacy, whose cotton was a vital raw material for the British textile industry. Britain's non-belligerent status was threatened in November 1861 when Union naval officials intercepted the British mail packet Trent in the Bahama channel and forcibly removed from it two Confederate envoys. The incident sparked war fever in Britain, and there was immediate concern for the security of British North America in the event conflict did ensue.⁵⁹ As a result, that December, 11,000 troops were rushed to British North America to reinforce the depleted imperial garrisons. Newfoundland was not neglected, and on 21 January 1862 120 men of the Royal Artillery arrived in St. John's.⁶⁰

During the Civil War years the defences of St. John's were revamped. The known active works of this period were Queen's, Waldegrave, and Chain Rock Batteries, Fort Amherst, and the narrows battery at Fort William. The entire effort therefore was concentrated on defending the narrows. But since 1762 the protection of the narrows had never been considered sufficient in itself as a guarantee of the security of St. John's. During the American Revolutionary War the narrows defences were complemented by defences at some of the more attractive landing places outside St. John's, and during the Napoleonic Wars this strategy was replaced by the development of Signal Hill as the post of ultimate retreat. The strategy of the Civil War years ignored the proven vulnerability of St.

John's to land attack and, as shall be seen later, was not even an adequate protection against sea attack. About the only thing that can be said in its favour is that it was better than nothing.

Our knowledge of Queen's Battery in the 1860s is based largely on two documents. The first is a communication from the War Office to the Colonial Office, dated 14 December 1861, containing an account of the guns to be sent to St. John's with the Royal Artillery.⁶¹ According to it, two 68-pounders (95 cwt.) and six 32-pounders (58 cwt.) were earmarked for Queen's Battery. This allocation is confirmed by the second source, a report on the defences of St. John's written in 1880 by Lieutenant H.H. Morgan, Royal Marine Light Infantry.⁶² However, Morgan noted in his report that curbs and racers existed for only six guns. The question is then, which six? One of the 68-pounders may have been appropriated to Chain Rock Battery, for although the 1861 document makes no mention of any guns to be set aside for that work, there is a record of a 68-pounder there in 1870.⁶³ Besides the two 68-pounders intended for Queen's Battery in 1861, five others were to be sent, all for Fort Amherst. These were emplaced as planned.⁶⁴ It may be that both of the 68-pounders for Queen's Battery were installed elsewhere, which would have left the battery with an armament of six 32-pounders. On the other hand, the armament could have consisted of five 32-pounders and a single 68-pounder. Only new documentary evidence can determine which of these arrangements it actually was.

A greater degree of certainty attaches to other changes effected at Queen's Battery in the 1860s. This is made possible by a comparison of Morgan's findings with those of the 1859 report on the defences of Newfoundland.⁶⁵ Granite curbs and iron racers were laid for six traversing platforms. Five of the traverses were semi-circular, but the most westerly one was a full 360 degrees. This was no doubt done to facilitate fire on enemy vessels in the harbour. The granite for the

curbs was obtained from the War Department's quarries on Halifax's Northwest Arm.⁶⁶ A new expense magazine was built in "close proximity" to the barrack. It was a brick, arched magazine 11 ft. 10 in. long, 8 ft. wide, and approximately 8 ft. high, with a capacity of just under 100 barrels of powder. These appear to have been the only alterations at the battery. An 1866 report on the Queen's Battery barrack indicates that there were two rooms, one 23 ft. 6 in. by 21 ft., and the other 21 ft. by 10 ft., which would strongly suggest that it was the same one constructed in 1832-33.⁶⁷ The barrack's interior height is given for the first time as 7 ft. 6 in. The two rooms were given the same designation in 1866 as they possessed prior to 1837: the small one was the non-commissioned officer's room, and the other the soldiers' room.

The threat implied by the Trent crisis in 1861 was not long lived, and although there were other moments during the Civil War when relations between Great Britain and the Union became strained, these did not lead to war. After the Civil War ended, Britain reverted to her policy of garrison reduction in the colonies. The war had only served to emphasize the importance of continuing and completing this process. The enormous cost of sending the troops out during the Trent crisis induced the British House of Commons to pass a resolution in 1862 stating that the self-governing colonies should be responsible for their own security and internal order.⁶⁸ In 1870 the last of the imperial garrison was withdrawn from St. John's, over the protests of the Newfoundland government.

The Morgan Report

The Morgan Report of 1880 was the first comprehensive record of the defences of St. John's to be compiled after the withdrawal of the imperial garrison. According to it, Queen's Battery remained structurally sound. The granite curbs and iron racers were "in a good state of preservation," and the parapet

was in "fair condition," which would suggest that it, too, was reconstructed during the 1860s. The parapet was $2\frac{1}{2}$ ft. high, intended for guns in barbette, and composed of stone from "the adjacent quarries on Signal Hill," which would have made it red and greyish-green sandstone, the hill's dominant geological formation.⁶⁹ The battery's terreplein was approximately 30 ft. wide. The 1832-33 barrack for 19 men was still standing, as was the brick expense magazine of Civil War vintage. Both were "in a somewhat dilapidated state, but could be repaired without any great expense." The magazine was also damp, which Morgan attributed to its having been unoccupied since 1870.

Morgan was not very sanguine about the future prospects for Queen's Battery or, for that matter, most of the narrows batteries. In their existing condition they were all "quite unsuited to the requirements of modern warfare." The truth is that the batteries were obsolete even as they were being upgraded in the 1860s. The development of the ironclad warship, forerunner of the battleship, in the late 1850s and early 1860s meant that traditional armament was insufficient to repel sea attack. The simultaneous development of rifled ordnance, which increased range, accuracy, and the potential for destruction, also contributed to make most coastal defences inadequate, since they would not have been able to withstand the improved firepower. Thus in Britain there was a massive renovation of coastal defences during the 1860s.⁷⁰ But in that decade Queen's Battery possessed neither armament capable of repelling ironclads nor a parapet able to resist rifled gun-fire from them. Still, Morgan felt that there was a future for the battery provided that certain changes were made. The main one was to move the gun positions back a considerable distance (he did not specify how far) and fill in most of the terreplein with earth, forming a thick earthen parapet behind which the guns could then be placed. This would offer the required protection.

Morgan recognized that the changes in ordnance had funda-

mentally altered the strategic considerations of the St. John's area. Because of the increased range of artillery, enemy vessels could now successfully fire upon St. John's from the sea, where they would not be exposed to the fire of the narrows batteries, Fort Amherst excepted. But even Fort Amherst did not cover Freshwater Bay to the south, and this was "a serious defect." It was a problem not uncommon to the period. At Halifax the inner harbour defences declined steadily in importance beginning in the 1860s, so that by the turn of the century the once mighty Halifax Citadel was less a defensive work than the administrative centre for the imperial garrison, which remained there until 1906.⁷¹ By then, outer harbour defences like York Redoubt had assumed primacy. To come to terms with the situation in St. John's, Morgan proposed that a new battery of six heavy guns be constructed at North Head. A battery here would cover the approaches from the north, east, and south. This battery should be complemented by three more heavy guns on the summit of Signal Hill, also facing seaward. This represented a change in the role of the summit, the defences of which had formerly been oriented toward land attack from St. John's. Morgan perceived that there would still be a need for narrows defences, but these would in future be of secondary importance. He recommended that a system of fixed torpedoes (mines) would constitute the best defence of the narrows. It was in this connection that he saw a new role for Queen's Battery, which was "to protect the torpedoes against destruction by small boats sent in by an enemy to clear a passage...." For weaponry he suggested three or four muzzle loading rifled guns, which would also cover the flank of the proposed North Head battery. A local force of naval reservists could be raised to operate the torpedoes and coastal artillery. Significantly, Morgan added that the naval reserve should also be responsible for patrolling the coast near St. John's in wartime to warn about possible landings. On this same matter, he urged that an infantry force of 400

men be created to defend the landward approaches to St. John's. Here, then, was one requirement which had not been affected by technological developments in the instruments of warfare.

Nothing was to come of the Morgan Report. In the 1880s imperial defence was based on a system of "imperial fortresses," such as Halifax, supported by a network of coaling and refitting stations, and harbours of refuge.⁷² St. John's was not selected for any of these roles because of its proximity to Halifax. A second major base in the northwestern Atlantic would have been superfluous. Also, in official circles in Britain, it was still commonly held, as it had been since the 17th century, that the dominant sea power would always possess Newfoundland, and in the 1880s Britain was the undisputed ruler of the seas. This attitude was evident in the Morgan report. Morgan argued that Newfoundland would never be attacked by a regular naval force, but rather by one or two cruisers, as only such small, fast craft were deemed capable of penetrating the Royal Navy blockade. This conviction persisted into the 20th century, and manifested itself as late as the eve of the Second World War.⁷³

The O'Brien Report

The next and last defence report in which mention was made of Queen's Battery was the O'Brien report, written in 1889 by Lieutenant-Colonel E.W. O'Brien, Commanding Royal Engineer, North America.⁷⁴ This report was submitted to the Colonial Defence Committee, an administrative body which had evolved out of the earlier Colonial Defence Commission. There was little new detail in O'Brien's report, though he did write that the shoulder of Signal Hill on which Queen's Battery rested was 160 ft. long. Otherwise, most of his recommendations and observations about the battery, and about the defence of St. John's generally, bore an uncanny resemblance to Morgan's. For example, O'Brien found the major problem to be the town's

closeness to the sea, again because with modern armament it was unnecessary for an enemy vessel to gain the harbour in order to fire upon the town. This demonstrated to him "the consequent absolute necessity of having guns of long range and considerable power mounted to keep an enemy at a distance." Presumably, he would have wanted such guns on either or both of Signal Hill and North Head, as had Morgan. Like Morgan, O'Brien realized that the narrows would in future constitute a secondary line of defence. He, too, recommended that mines be placed in the narrows, proposing that there be an outer belt near the mouth and a second belt midway up the narrows. The inner belt could be defended by Waldegrave Battery and the outer one by Queen's Battery. To withstand the fire of modern naval artillery, Queen's Battery would have to be strengthened. O'Brien suggested that the entire battery be moved back up the hill and that the old one be filled in with earth to create a new parapet 70 ft. thick at its base. Again, the similarity with Morgan's proposals for the battery is striking.

O'Brien also recognized the vulnerability of St. John's to land attack. He suggested that a local infantry force be available for deployment against an enemy landing party. Mounted police could act as scouts and signallers to warn of such landings, and local tugs and steamers could be used as guard vessels to patrol the coast at the more obvious landing places. Signals from both the patrol boats and the land-based scouts would be relayed to headquarters on Signal Hill, though by what method was not specified.

Conclusion

Both post-1870 defence reports acknowledged that the new technology of warfare had affected traditional defence considerations in St. John's. Signal Hill, for example, would no longer be important as a post of ultimate retreat, but as a site for long range ordnance to fire on ships at sea. No more

would the narrows batteries be the first line of defence. There was renewed concern over the town's susceptibility to land attack, a subject that had been overlooked during the Napoleonic and American Civil Wars. For the purpose of this study, the second point is the most significant. Morgan and O'Brien were right: the narrows never again hosted as many defensive works as they had in the past. This is not to say that they did not continue to be important. Waldegrave Battery was revived in World War I, and in World War II modern fortifications were erected at Fort Amherst and Chain Rock. But the withdrawal of the imperial garrison in 1870 was the end of the military utilization of Queen's Battery. (See Figures 8, 9, and 10) The battery languished until the late 1920s, when it was restored for peaceful purposes as a tourist attraction.

Queen's Battery in the Twentieth Century

Introduction: The Growth of Tourism in Newfoundland

Queen's Battery was the first historic site in Newfoundland to be exploited for the purpose of tourism. Its development coincided with that of the Newfoundland tourist industry. It is helpful therefore, before turning to the battery's 20th century history, to examine briefly the growth of tourism in Newfoundland.

There was no organized tourist industry in Newfoundland until the 1920s. Prior to that time there had been a tourist traffic, but it was unorganized and small scale. The extent of tourist activity depended largely on the available means of transportation. In the 19th century Newfoundland could be reached by steamship from the British Isles and continental North America, and there was a regular service between St. John's and Halifax since 1850.¹ The first tourists to Newfoundland were primarily wealthy sportsmen and nature lovers who came to hunt and fish in the island's uninhabited interior or else to enjoy its natural grandeur.² This was the standard form of 19th and early 20th century tourism in what are now the Atlantic provinces of Canada.³ When Newfoundland's first trans-insular railway went into operation in 1898, linked to the rest of North America by the Port-aux-Basques to North Sydney ferry, there were many prescient observers in Newfoundland who anticipated an influx of tourists. One such person was R.G. Reid, builder and owner of the Reid Newfoundland Railway. Reid was aware that the improved transportation facilities were insufficient in themselves, and that something would have to be done to alleviate the chronic shortage of

first-class tourist accommodations in Newfoundland. In 1901 he embarked on the construction of the Avalon Hotel on the former site of Fort William, which had been converted into a railway station after 1870. But a fire which started in one of the railway buildings led to the cancellation of the project.⁴

Although the notion of a major hotel refused to die, it was some time before there was public support for the idea. Local businessmen, eager for the tourist dollar, continued to believe in the possibility of a viable tourist industry but were frustrated in their efforts. In 1924 the Newfoundland Board of Trade diagnosed the problem in its annual report:

We appear to be no nearer to a practical plan outlining the ways and means necessary to develop this important service as a means of revenue than we were a year ago. Perhaps no question is more freely discussed...; certainly no question arises which is so vital to the interests of the Colony, yet it appears to end there. Year after year the Board of Trade has endeavoured to arouse public interest, in fact has aroused it, but any effort at development is strangled almost at birth by lack of Hotel Accommodation....⁵

However, a breakthrough was imminent. In 1924 the merchant party of W.S. Monroe came to power. It inaugurated a series of measures designed to encourage tourism in Newfoundland. During Monroe's tenure (1924-28) the total mileage of "good motor road" in Newfoundland more than quadrupled.⁶ The government also guaranteed the interest charges on a share of the bonds issued by the builders of the Newfoundland Hotel.⁷ The hotel, which officially opened on 30 June 1926, was erected on the site of Fort William and the earlier ill-fated Avalon Hotel. It cost over a million dollars to build, and with its 137 rooms it was the largest and most modern hotel in all Newfoundland.⁸ But just as significant as these measures was government aid to the Newfoundland Tourist and Publicity

Commission.

The Newfoundland Tourist and Publicity Commission

The inaugural meeting of the Newfoundland Tourist and Publicity Commission took place on 29 May 1925.⁹ The commission was formed on the initiative of the Newfoundland Board of Trade, and its founding members were prominent figures in the St. John's business community.¹⁰ Initially the commission depended on public subscriptions as its only means of revenue. In its first year of operation the income from this source amounted to only \$1,500.00.¹¹ This necessarily restricted the commission's activities. Then in 1927 the Monroe government enacted legislation (18 George V Cap. 1) placing a tax on all outgoing first class passengers, which was to be collected by the steamship companies. Monies collected under this tax were to be the property of the Newfoundland Tourist and Publicity Commission. In 1934 the tax was replaced by an annual grant-in-aid. In 1936 the commission's name was changed to the Newfoundland Tourist Traffic Development Board, in order to avoid confusion with the Commission of Government, then administering the affairs of the colony.

The commission's mandate was laid down in the incorporating legislation of 1927: "Discover, preserve, mark restore or provide means of access to matters or places of sporting, scenic or historical interest." In part, this represented a continuation of the earlier emphasis on the appeal of Newfoundland to the sportsman and the nature lover. And, in the years ahead, this area would constitute the focus of the commission's effort. But the recognition of Newfoundland's historical resources as a tourist attraction was a significant breakthrough. Newfoundlanders were largely unmindful of these resources, as the Evening Telegram lamented in 1925:

Familiarity with the numerous attractions
that the Island possesses has tended to cause us to

undervalue them, or otherwise we should have been more careful to see that they were preserved. It has remained for the visitors to our shores to impress upon us...the noble heritage we possess in our game preserves, and even, to our shame be it said, the importance and value of those chapters of history of which those forts around the coast, those ancient graveyards, and other landmarks, are mute testimony. True, individual members of the community, inspired by an intense love of country, have laboured to glean certain information and make a record of these early events, but the country as a whole has done nothing to perpetuate its history. There is no public archivist, and never a cent has been expended in preserving the relics of bygone days, with the result that those landmarks which have not been altogether obliterated by the finger of time have fallen into decay, and the events associated with many of them are forgotten.¹²

Thus the Telegram lauded the formation of the commission, and implored its readers to "strive loyally to make amends for our tardiness by giving the movement that support which lies within our power."¹³

The Restoration of Queen's Battery

The first effort of the commission in the new field of historical restoration was the development of Queen's Battery. The project had a curious beginning. On 15 September 1925 a letter appeared in the Evening Telegram, from which this excerpt is taken:

This town compares with Quebec in antiquity, and, like Quebec was one of the centres of warfare between England and France in the old days....As a

reminder of those days we have on Signal Hill and the Southside five old forts or batteries, one or two in good repair, the others now rather dilapidated; and scattered about the town and its vicinity there are, I think, plenty of old guns, which probably belong to these forts. I know of at least a dozen. It would cost us only a very little to clear out and repair the old batteries; and any carpenter could build carriages for the guns for a few dollars each. Would it not be well worth the Government's while to spend a thousand dollars on doing these repairs and remounting the old guns in their original positions?

Even if we have no sentimental regard for the monuments of our historic past, strangers are interested in them. Every tourist who comes here will want to see them, especially if he can be given a little leaflet outlining their history. I have mentioned the matter to some of those especially interested in the hoped for tourist traffic and they are strongly of the same opinion.¹⁴

The letter was written by St. John's lawyer Brian Dunfield.¹⁵ Dunfield appears to have been the first person to think of developing the old St. John's defence works as tourist attractions. There is no record in the minutes of the Newfoundland Tourist and Publicity Commission which would indicate that it had been considering such an approach prior to the date of Dunfield's letter to the editor. However, the commission was quick to realize the possibilities the proposal offered. In an address to the St. John's Rotary Club on 29 October 1925, the commission's president, J.F. Meehan, acknowledged the importance of placing in their original state the old forts at Signal Hill and Fort Amherst. We understand that a movement is underway to collect

the old cannon and other appurtenances belonging to these forts, and we will be glad to co-operate with the originator of this scheme.¹⁶

This would tend further to support the theory that the idea originated outside of the commission, and that its author was Brian Dunfield.

Dunfield at first entered into an informal working relationship with the commission. In November 1925 he wrote a second letter to the editor of the Evening Telegram, in which he outlined the progress to date:

As a result of this [first] letter I found prompt support in several quarters, and learnt that the Tourist Association, as well as the Historical Society, had the same idea on their agenda; and there seems to be a good prospect that something may be done.

The first step towards making plans and estimates is to find out whether a sufficient number of old guns are available in or near the city, and on behalf of all those who are interested I have been asked to write the public through your columns and endeavour to obtain information of the whereabouts of these. Some of them, we know, are in the possession of Government departments, at Cabot Tower, Fort Amherst and Fort Townsend [sic]; one lies buried a short distance north of Cabot Tower; one, a large one, in the C. of E. Cathedral grounds, and so on.

Will any member of the public who knows where there is an old gun write me...and say where it is, and if possible what its length is, in feet and inches? We shall then be able to list it and arrange with the person who has charge of it if and when the work goes ahead. Remember that the guns we want are the old-fashioned cast-iron muzzle-loading cannon; we are not interested in any other sort of gun.¹⁷

The awkward administrative arrangement implied here could not last indefinitely. At an executive meeting of the tourist commission on 16 January 1926 it was proposed that an historical sub-committee be appointed, with Brian Dunfield as its chairman.¹⁸ Dunfield accepted the call, and later that month attended his first meeting.¹⁹

For 1926 the historical committee was granted \$500.00 for restoration work on fortifications.²⁰ Dunfield informed the commission in February that the Inspector General of the Newfoundland Constabulary, which had been based at Fort Townshend since 1870, had six "large" guns at his disposal, all with carriages.²¹ Elsewhere there were single, unmounted guns on the Church of England grounds and on the property of Monroe Export Company (owned by the Prime Minister). Dunfield wrote to England to determine which type of carriage would be appropriate, though whom he wrote and whether he received a reply is not known. The restoration project did not commence as planned in 1926. It turned out that the lowest estimate Dunfield could find was \$1,000.00, or \$500.00 more than had been voted for the purpose. Thus he agreed "to secure other estimates during the winter and defer any action until next spring." Another full year was to go by before any activity would take place. The act providing for government funding of the tourist commission was not passed until 21 July 1927, so that few benefits were realized that year. The commission did manage to secure a \$5,000.00 loan from the Bank of Montreal, to be repaid out of the anticipated returns from the new tax.²³ However, by the end of the year, it was still experiencing financial difficulties.²⁴

In 1928 the work of restoration finally began. On 5 July Dunfield informed the commission's executive that the first gun carriage had been completed, and that it would be placed in the "Queen's Own Fort," or Queen's Battery, the next day.²⁵ Dunfield had arranged to have carriages built and guns mounted on them at a cost of \$250.00 each.²⁶ The historical

committee had \$1,000.00 at its disposal in 1928, and all of this must have been expended, for in January 1929 Dunfield was seeking another \$1,000.00 to finish the project.²⁷ There is no record of his having received this sum.

In its annual report for 1929 the Newfoundland Board of Trade submitted the following summary of the tourist commission's efforts in the realm of historical restoration:

The Commission set aside a portion of its revenue for the restoration of the Queen's Own Fort at Signal Hill, which, when completed, will be an exact replica of what it was in the days when it was the principal defender of the port of St. John's against its enemies. This will be a most interesting and historical sight, and will be featured in all tours of the City and environs. The restoration of other historical points is in consideration.²⁸

By March 1930 five guns were in place at the battery, with a sixth and final one scheduled to be added before year's end.²⁹ The sixth gun was still wanting in 1937, and the date of its eventual installation is not known.³⁰ (See Figure 11)

It is an understatement to say that Queen's Battery was restored and promoted with little regard for historical accuracy. There is nothing to suggest that any member of the commission, or anyone employed by the commission, did any historical research to complement the restoration effort. Yet it was claimed that the restored battery would be "an exact replica of what it was in the days when it was the principal defender of the port of St. John's against its enemies."³¹ The only time during which Queen's Battery possessed an armament of six guns was the 1860s, and in that decade Fort Amherst, with its five 68-pounders, was the most powerful defensive work in St. John's. Queen's Battery was the "principal defender" of St. John's approximately for the period 1830-60, during which time it possessed an armament of eight 24-pounders and two 8-in. howitzers, or four more guns than the "exact replica." If the

commission was trying to illustrate the 1860s, the armament should have been six 32-pounders, or possibly five 32-pounders and one 68-pounder. But none of the guns emplaced by the commission was larger than a 24-pounder and they were of varying sizes at that.³² Then there was the name which the commission applied to the battery, the "Queen's Own Fort." In almost a century of defence reports on St. John's this title was never used. According to one visitor, the commission promoted the "fort" as having been built in 1763 and enlarged and strengthened in 1809.³³ This claim has no documentary basis. Queen's Battery was not mentioned, by whatever name, in any St. John's defence report prior to 1796, and there are enough of these reports to prove that it was not just a fluke that the battery escaped notice. It simply did not exist. Where might this faulty information have come from? The commission did acquire a small reference library in 1928, and a few of the books were histories.³⁴ But none of the standard works on Newfoundland history which would have been available to the commission, such as Prowse, Tocque, Pedley, Hatton and Harvey, and Bonnycastle, made these mistakes.³⁵ The culprit may have been H.W. Le Messurier, a high ranking civil servant and a prominent local amateur historian. In an article which was widely available in Newfoundland in the mid-1920s, Le Messurier advanced the name "Queen's Own Fort," and also the 1763 and 1809 construction dates.³⁶ The author has located a copy of the article in the commission's files. The commission was guilty of historical misrepresentation in other areas besides Queen's Battery. For example, it promoted Cabot Tower as the site where Marconi received the world's first transoceanic wireless message.³⁷ In fact, the message was received in a nearby fever hospital which had served as a military barrack and store-room prior to 1870. The commission did finally hire Dr. Stanley Truman Brooks, a curator with the Carnegie Museum of Pittsburgh, as a part-time historical researcher between 1936 and 1940.³⁸ Both Parks Canada and the

Public Archives of Canada acquired copies of Brooks's Newfoundland collection in 1956, and there were no plans or documents in it which would suggest that Queen's Battery was constructed prior to 1796. In spite of Brooks's findings, nothing was done to change the faulty interpretation of the battery. A sign still on the site in the 1950s continued to advertise the battery as "Queen's Own Fort," and credited it with an existence pre-dating 1796. (See Figure 12)

None of this should be allowed to detract from the significance and sincerity of the Newfoundland Tourist and Publicity Commission's effort. Members of the commission were pioneers in the development of Newfoundland's historical resources for tourism. As such, they were bound to make mistakes. They faced many obstacles, the most obvious one being lack of money. The financial support given to the historical committee was always small compared to the total budget. In 1929, when \$1,000.00 was voted for the restoration of Queen's Battery, \$8,500.00 was voted for advertising alone.³⁹ This should not come as a surprise. It was proper that a certain amount be set aside for development projects, but the key for the commission at this early stage was to make the outside public aware of Newfoundland. While the annual grant-in-aid from the Commission of Government averaged around \$35,000.00 until 1941-42, usually only about \$1,000.00 was turned over to the historical committee.⁴⁰ After the 1920s, as the historical committee began to diversify its activities, this money had to be spent on sites other than Queen's Battery.⁴¹ Research became a priority late in the decade but was curtailed because of the war. In 1941 the board's grant-in-aid was slashed to \$26,000.00 as a wartime economy measure, and it never again reached 1930s levels.⁴² During the war the board's main task was to obtain housing for military personnel.⁴³ Finally, in 1946 the entire board resigned in the face of government and public apathy toward the tourism industry in Newfoundland.⁴⁴

In spite of the historical inaccuracies, which few if any members of the public were aware of, Queen's Battery was a popular tourist attraction. Angus Reid reported in 1930 that he had been informed by the manager of the Newfoundland Hotel, Frank Quick, that the battery was "one of the first sights to be visited by almost every tourist...."⁴⁵ Throughout the decade the battery figured in the commission's advertising.⁴⁶ The battery made history of sorts on the morning of 8 March 1930 when it was used in a couple of scenes for the movie "The Viking," then shooting in St. John's.⁴⁷ (See Figure 13) Released in 1931, this movie was the first feature-length motion picture "talkie" to be filmed in what is today Canada. Notwithstanding the battery's popularity, by 1935 its parapet was in poor condition, "ten or fifteen feet of it being ready to fall into the Harbour at any time."⁴⁸ In May 1936 the board approved the expenditure of \$250.00 for repairs to the battery.⁴⁹ Later, it continued to make provision for "restoration work on our Forts and historic sites," though which ones were never specified in the minutes.⁵⁰

In 1939 the Department of Public Works appointed Mr. Walter Boone as caretaker of the old masonry barrack at upper Queen's Battery.⁵¹ Prior to Boone's occupation, the barrack had served as the residence of the second or assistant signalman, who assisted with the visual signalling conducted at Cabot Tower. This is an important point, for there is strong evidence to suggest that the barrack was used as a permanent residence for the signalmen after it was vacated by the military in 1870.⁵² That the barrack was occupied at the time of the tourist commission's "restoration" of the battery suggests that the restoration effort was confined to the lower battery area. Boone found the guns to be in very bad repair in 1939, and took it upon himself to keep them in shape. He continued to perform this role up to his departure in 1959. (See Figures 14 and 15) Until then he lived in the barrack with his wife and six children.⁵³ Though the barrack possessed

a clapboard exterior by this time, the original stone walls were allegedly intact behind the clapboard.⁵⁴ (See Figures 16, 17, 18, 19, and 20).

Queen's Battery, Signal Hill National Historic Park

Queen's Battery became part of Signal Hill National Historic Park in 1958. The proposal to create a national historic park in Newfoundland was broached shortly after Newfoundland became Canada's tenth province in 1949.⁵⁵ From the outset the leading contender for this honour was Signal Hill. The matter was urged upon the National Historic Sites and Monuments Board, which advised the Minister of Northern Affairs and National Resources on matters of national historical significance, by Mr. C.E.A. Jeffery, editor of the St. John's Evening Telegram and a former executive member of the Newfoundland Tourist Development Board. Although federal officials were at first reluctant to accept a recommendation passed by the Historic Sites and Monuments Board at their 1951 meeting, "that steps be taken to create a National Historic Park on Signal Hill, St. John's, Newfoundland," public pressure continued to mount in Newfoundland.⁵⁶ It reached a peak in 1954 when there was a collective outrage over the federal Department of Transport's destruction of the 19th century fortification and lighthouse at Fort Amherst.⁵⁷ While negotiations for the transfer of the Signal Hill property from the province to Ottawa were not completed until 1958, federal authorities were at work developing the proposed park area from 1955 onward. Signal Hill officially became a National Historic Park on 22 May 1958.

Queen's Battery has had a checkered history since becoming part of Signal Hill National Historic Park. It was largely ignored in the early stages of the development of the park, when the priorities were the upgrading of the Signal Hill road, the installation of a parking lot on the summit of the hill, and the

restoration of the summit powder magazine. In 1959 the department did busy itself with the removal of Mr. Boone from the Queen's Battery barrack, with the intention of disposing of the barrack at some future date.⁵⁸ Before they got around to implementing this unbelievable plan the barrack was destroyed by fire on 10 February 1961. The blaze was believed to have been the work of an arsonist.⁵⁹ Though some of the foundations and walls of the barrack and the adjacent expense magazine were left standing, these were torn down during the winter of 1965-66 since they were considered a menace to public safety.⁶⁰

Queen's Battery was the object of two archaeological projects in the 1960s. The first was carried out in 1965 under the supervision of Edward B. Jelks of Southern Methodist University, Dallas, Texas.⁶¹ In the lower Queen's Battery area the Jelks team excavated four structures, designated structures 3, 5, 6, and 7. (See Figure 21) Structure 3 was a stone foundation measuring approximately 53 ft. by 13 ft., and was subdivided into two rooms, one 45 ft. by 13 ft. and the other 10 ft. by 13 ft. This would have been the wooden guard house/barrack of 1796-97 which was torn down in 1831. Jelks mistakenly gave its construction period as 1809-12. Structures 5, 6, and 7 were small floor areas of flagstones or flagstones and bricks together. Because these were located by the gun emplacements, Jelks proposed that they were meant to provide footing for the artillerymen, though he thought that they might have been sentry boxes. The floors had existed prior to the laying of traversing platforms of the 1860s, so that in all likelihood they belonged to the stone platforms laid in 1832-33. In the upper Queen's Battery area, Jelks designated structures 2 and 4, with structure 2 being subdivided into rooms A, B, C, D, and E. (See Figure 22) This is somewhat misleading, in that all except room C were actually separate buildings. Room A was a brick magazine with a vaulted, or arched, ceiling, and on the inside measured 12 ft. 6 in. by 8 ft. 3 in. by 9 ft. 6 in. Jelks noted that it had been remodelled

"at least once and probably twice." This, coupled with the fact that the artifacts found here were late 19th and early 20th century in age, would tend to suggest that room A was the brick arched magazine of the 1860s, the one mentioned by Morgan in 1880.⁶² Jelks dated room A pre-1831, but all available reports confirm that there was no brick structure of any kind at the battery before 1831. Room B was a stone magazine apparently built sometime after room A, to which it was connected by a hall. Its foundations were the same size as those of room A. Although Jelks felt that room B was built before 1870, Morgan had found only a brick magazine in 1880 which, coupled with Jelk's assertion that room A predated room B, would give room B a post-1880 construction date. Room C was not really a room at all, but rather an open space between rooms A and D, probably a firebreak. Rooms D and E made up the 1832-33 barrack. Room D was 21 ft. by 23 ft., and room E 21 ft. by 10 ft. (interior). The exterior walls were 2 ft. thick and composed of squared stones and mortared rubble. The two components of structure 4 were a brick hearth and a single foundation wall of dry-laid stones 2 ft. wide and about 16 ft. long, which formerly supported a wooden building. The wall ran parallel to a bedrock scarp approximately 15 ft. away. The hearth lay at the base of this scarp. Jelks guessed that the north wall of structure 4 was at one time built along the scarp, which would have made for rough dimensions of 16 ft. by 15 ft. The only documented structure which comes close to this is the 1830 wooden expense magazine/artillery store-room, which was 17 ft. 6 in. long by 14 ft. 6 in. wide. Other noteworthy features of the upper battery area were: a brick patio adjacent to room A, laid by Walter Boone; on the south side of Room D, a second brick patio 6 or 7 ft. wide and about 18 ft. long; on the north side of rooms D and E, a poured concrete floor 12 ft. long and 6 ft. wide, which "surely was of 20th-century provenience."; drains for the two magazines; a 20th century privy; at the north end of room C, two stone

and brick-lined early to mid-19th century latrines measuring 6 or 7 ft. long, 4 ft. wide, and 3 or 4 ft. deep.

The second excavation at Queen's Battery was conducted in 1969 by Parks Canada archaeologist Karlis Karklins.⁶³ Karklins uncovered a group of masonry structures which he called the structure 2 annex. (See Figure 23) These were a stockade, a latrine, an ash pit, a support wall, and a short retaining wall with associated rock pile. The stockade wall began at the northwest corner of Jelks's room E and stretched due south at a 45 degree angle for a distance of 76 ft. Karklins surmised that the wall was larger when originally built but had been shortened by erosion. The wall was made from mortared stone and rubble, and for the better part of its length was 1.5 ft. wide. Maintaining Jelks's nomenclature, Karklins named the latrine and the ash pit rooms F and G respectively. Karklins was uncertain as to their real use, however, and was only speculating. In fact, he got them confused. A War Office plan of Queen's Battery dated 1837, of which Karklins was unfortunately not aware, shows that the area denoted structure F was the ash pit, and that structure G was the latrine, or privy as it was termed in 1837. (See Figure 5) The walls of room F were irregular. Their measurements were: north - 4 ft.; east - 8.4 ft.; south - 9.5 ft.; west - 10 ft. The west wall was part of the stockade wall described above, which had been thickened here to 2 ft., while the other three walls were composed of coursed cut stone and yellow and red bricks. Room G also had irregular walls, which measured: north - 3.5 ft.; east - 5 ft.; south - 6.5 ft.; west - 6 ft.. Here, too, the west wall was formed by the thickened stockade wall, while the east one was formed by the west wall of room E. The main building material of room G was also yellow and red brick. The dry laid stone support wall, which was between 1.5 and 2 ft. thick, extended due south 13 ft. from the northwest corner of room E, and had been erected to support the stockade wall which was weak. This support wall evidently became

subject to the same forces of erosion that had undermined the stockade wall, for it in turn had to be complemented by the final component of the structure 2 annex. This was the 2 ft. thick retaining wall of dry laid cut and rough stone which extended southward for just over 11 ft. The retaining wall was not parallel to the stockade and support walls but deviated slightly to the westward. It was approximately 4.5 ft. from the exterior wall of room F in the south, and in the north merged into a pile of dry laid rocks which abutted directly against the southern half of the support wall.

Karklins's excavation of 1969 was carried out in conjunction with the stabilization of the remains uncovered by Jelks in 1965. These stabilized ruins and the improper armament constituted the sole features of the battery for the next ten years. (See Figures 24 and 25) In 1979 Parks Canada replaced the guns with six 32-pounders, representing the 1860s period of the battery's history. The new guns were officially revealed to the public in ceremonies held on 24 June 1979. (See Figure 26) Today, as part of Signal Hill National Historic Park, Queen's Battery continues to fulfill the role envisioned for it by the Newfoundland Tourist and Publicity Commission in the 1920s: a tourist attraction of historical significance.

Appendix A. Guns and Stores at Queen's Battery, 20 July 1805.

Iron Guns	24 prs.	6
	9 prs.	1
Brass Howitzers	8 in.	2
Round Shot	24 prs.	705
	9 "	164
	6 "	91
Double Headed	24 prs.	80
	9 "	55
Grape Shot	24 prs 49 Boxes Rounds	294
	18 "	144
	9 "	108
16 Boxes of Case Shot for -	8 In - Howitzers - Rounds	47
Shells	8 In.	318
Case & Grape Shot in 3 boxes	24 prs - Rounds	
	(unserviceable)	15
	24 prs.	6
Spunges	9 "	1
	8 In. Howitzers	2
Ladles	24 prs	6
	9	1
Wadhooks	24 prs.	6
	9 "	1
	8 In. Howitzers	1
Paper Cartridges fill'd	24 prs - 8 lbs in each	150
	9 " - 3 lbs in each	25
Flanl. Cartridges do.	8 In. Howitzers	25
Shell Scrapers		4
Hand Hooks		4

Copper	Scales - Pairs	1
	Weights	8
	Funnels	1
Tin Funnels		1
Skains of Slow Match		12
Tann'd Hides		2
Cases of Wood	24 prs	7
	18 "	4
Tube Boxes & Straps		3
Bench & Knife each		1
Powder Horns with wires		6
Portfires		36
Do. Sticks		6
Portfires - Damaged		18
Tin Tubls		326
Portfire Nippers		1
Fuze Engines		1
Brass Compasses - Pairs		1
Gunters Scale		1
Quadrants		1
Spirit Levels		1
Pendulum Stand		1
Tennant Laws [?]		1
Dredging Boxes		2
Laboratory Knife		1
do. Scissors		1
Prickers		8
Claw Hammers		2
Rasp & File each		1
Mallets		4
Setters		4
Copper Adze		1
Whetstones		1
Punches		2
Spikes		10

Powder Measures		2
Tarr'd Marline - Skains		4
Sheep Skins		3
Hand Brush		1
Hair Broom		1
Lanthorns Common		2
Lintstocks		6
Flax Rolls		3
Wedges for Shells		500
A Small Quantity of Chalk, Quick Match & Candles		
Wads	24 prs	598
	9 "	98
Mens Harness - Setts		2
Barrels of Powder		1
Travelling Magazines with locks & Keys		2
Leather Pouches		5
Spare Handspikes Common		36
8 Inch Line Shells		19
Fuzes - 8 Inch		464
Handspikes	Common	20
	Claw	3
Brass Callipers - Pairs		1

Source: PRO, W.O. 55/857, Fols. 457-470, "Return of Guns and Stores at the Different Batteries of Saint Johns Newfdland," 20 July 1805.

Endnotes

Queen's Battery, 1796-1889

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Queen's Battery in the Twentieth Century

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- 15 Brian Dunfield was born in St. John's on 10 April 1888, the son of Reverend Canon and Mrs. Henry Dunfield. He took his early education at Bishop Feild College in St. John's, and in 1909 graduated from London University with a first class honours degree in philosophy. Returning to St. John's, he articulated in the office of J.S. Winter and was admitted to the bar in 1911, whereupon he joined the firm of Sir Edward Morris, the then Prime Minister of Newfoundland. He became counsel to the Department of Justice in 1928, and from 1932-39 was Secretary for Justice. For a brief period in 1937 he served as chief administrator of the Commission of Government's Department of Rural Reconstruction. In 1939 Dunfield was appointed to the Newfoundland Supreme Court. From 1942-44 he was chairman of the Commission of Enquiry into Housing and Town Planning in St. John's, and in 1944 he became the first chairman of the St. John's Housing Corporation, a position he occupied until 1949. For his work in the 1940s in connection with the Churchill Park housing development, he has come to be regarded as the father of modern St. John's. As a reward for his efforts he was knighted in March 1949, one of the last Newfoundlanders ever to receive this honour. He retired from the bench in 1963 but continued to act as a consultant to the Department of Justice. He was chairman of the Corner Brook Housing Corporation from 1965 until his death on 19 March 1968. During his career, he took part in numerous labour arbitrations, and chaired the Royal Commission into working conditions in the pulpwood industry in 1960 in the wake of the infamous loggers' strike of 1959. See Newfoundland Historical Society file "Brian Dunfield."

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- 43 PANL, S5-8-1, Commission of Government, 1934-48, Public Utilities, Tourist Development Board, "Tourist Trade in Nfld., 1947," anonymous report.
- 44 PANL, GN24/6, Tourist Development Board, Minutes, 1933-46, Minutes Meeting of Newfoundland Tourist Development Board, 16 Nov. 1946.
- 45 Evening Telegram, 28 March 1930, p. 17.
- 46 See for example Daily News, 28 July 1938, p. 1.
- 47 Evening Telegram, 8 March 1930, p. 6.
- 48 PANL, GN24/E/5, Powder Magazine, St. John's, G/38/4, Dunfield to Lodge, 15 July 1935.
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- 50 Ibid., Minutes Executive Meeting, 16 Sept. 1937.
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- 52 Newfoundland. Journal of the House of Assembly, 1876, Appendix, "Report of Inspector of Public Buildings, 1875," pp. 558-559; PRO, C.O. 194/212, fols. 221-237, "Report on the Defence of St. Johns, Newfoundland...", 6 July 1889.
- 53 CRF, PC, DOE, SH2, Vol. 2, Brophy to Richardson, 18 June 1959.
- 54 Ibid., Vol. 1, "Memorandum for Mr. Coleman - Proposed National Historic Park at Signal Hill, Newfoundland," by G.L. Scott, 3 June 1955.
- 55 Ibid., Carter to Gibson, 30 Nov. 1949.
- 56 Ibid., "Extract from the Minutes of the Annual Meeting of the Historic Sites and Monuments Board of Canada, May 30-31, and June 1, 1951."
- 57 Ibid., Organ to Lesage, 19 Aug. 1954; Lesage to Organ, 14 Sept. 1954; Lesage to Pickergill, 14 Sept. 1954; Jeffery to Childe, 2 Oct. 1954, with enclosures.
- 58 Ibid., Vol. 2, Herbert to O'Dea, 20 Aug. 1959.
- 59 O'Neill, A Seaport Legacy, p. 674.
- 60 Jelks, "Archaeological Explorations at Signal Hill," p. 30.

- 61 For a report on the Queen's Battery findings see *ibid.*, pp. 19-41.
- 62 Morgan gave the magazine's interior dimensions as 11 ft. 10 in. by 8 ft. by 8 ft. (approximately).
- 63 Karlis Karklins, The Structure 2 Annex, Signal Hill, Newfoundland, Manuscript Report Series No. 39 (Ottawa: Parks Canada, 1971).

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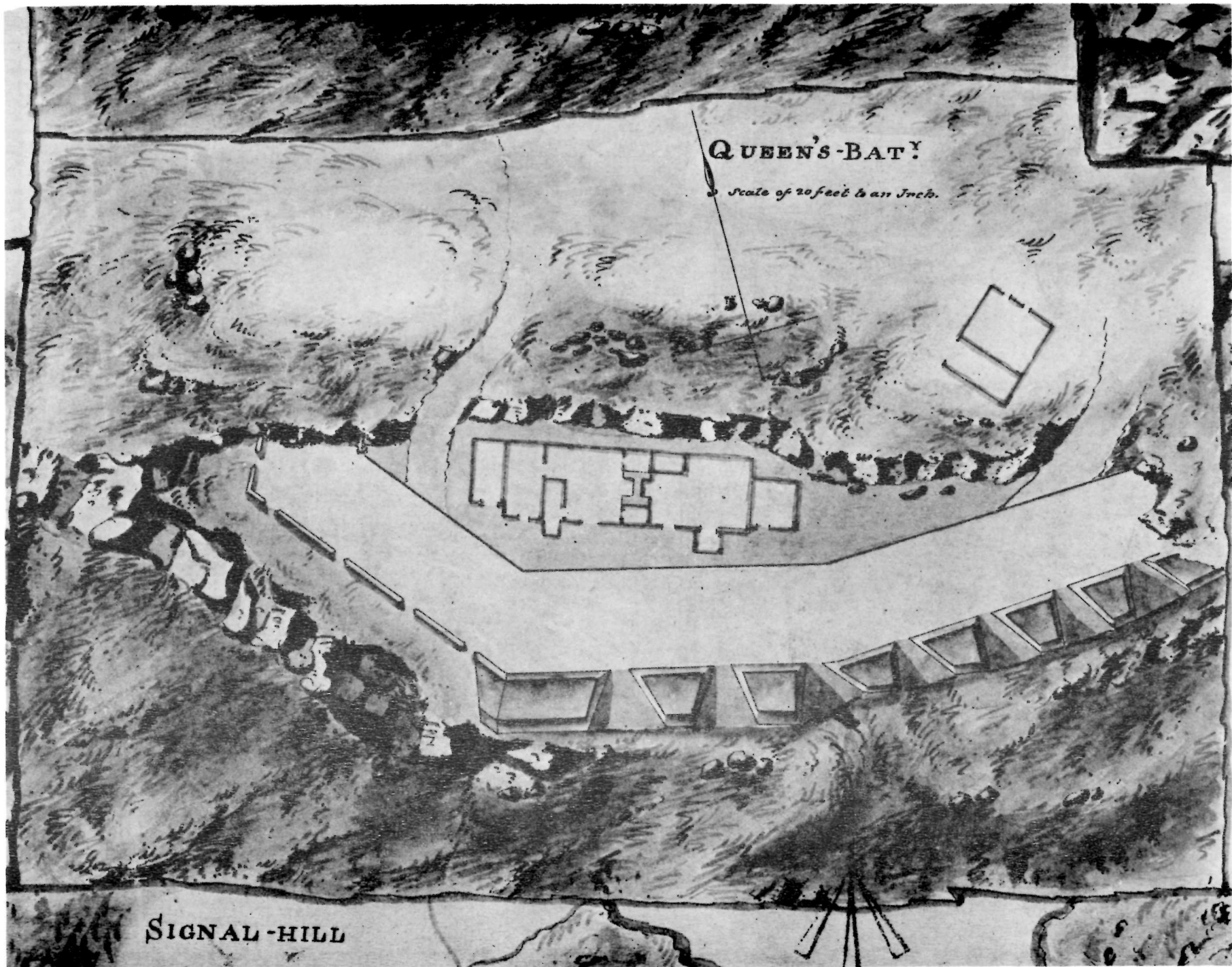
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1 Queen's Battery, 1809. (Public Record Office, MR 926(9).)



QUEEN'S-BAT?

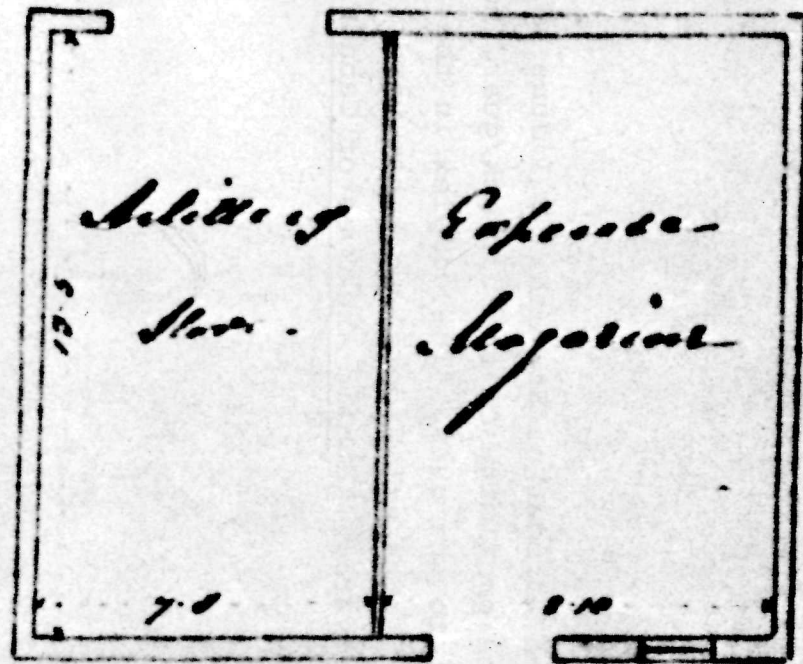
Scale of 20 feet to an Inch.

SIGNAL-HILL

- 2 St. John's Harbour, 1798, by Francis Owen. Queen's Battery is denoted by the letter "F". (Public Archives of Canada, Ottawa, C-15623.)

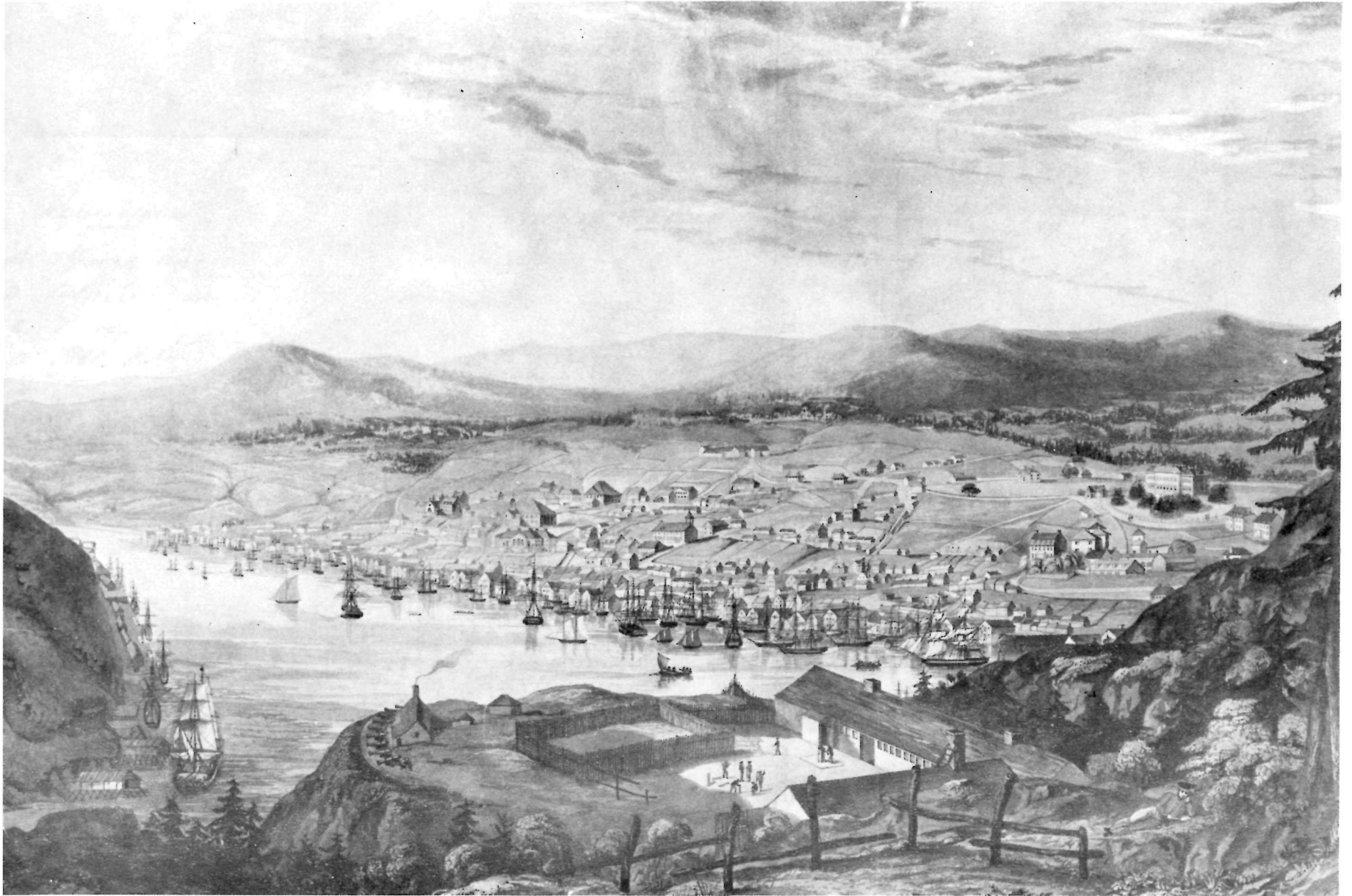
3 Plan of Store and Expense Magazine, Queen's Battery,
11 May 1841. (PRO, W.O. 55/2802, fol. 5, 11 May 1841.)

Plan of Store & Expence Magazine -
Success Battery



Scale 8 Feet to an - inch

- 4 Town and Harbour of St. John's, 1 June 1831, by W. Eagar. Note the proximity of the barrack/guard house at Queen's Battery to the guns. The complex in the lower centre of the figure is the artificers' workshop yard, later called the armoury yard. (Public Archives of Canada, Ottawa, C-3371.)



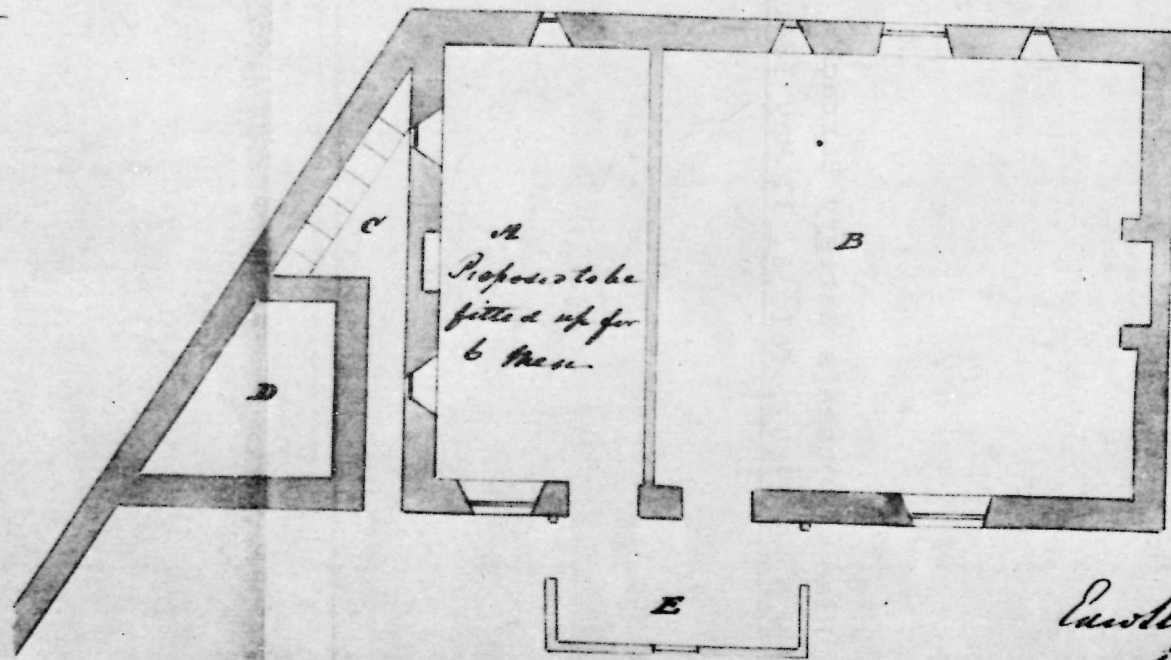
5 Queen's Battery Barrack, 6 Jan. 1837. (PRO, W.O. 55/873,
fol. 510, 6 Jan. 1837.)

3 This Plan provides for fitting up this room with Shelves of 1 1/2 inch deal 19 inch wide, Accountment pens and Arm bands, and an inch deal back 4 inches wide to fix the latter to.

References

- A. Officers Room
- B. Soldier's do
- C. Pier
- D. Ash Pit
- E. Pouch

Queen's Battery Barrack, Item 3.



Newfoundlands
to accompany
Edmond de la Roche
5th Decr 1837

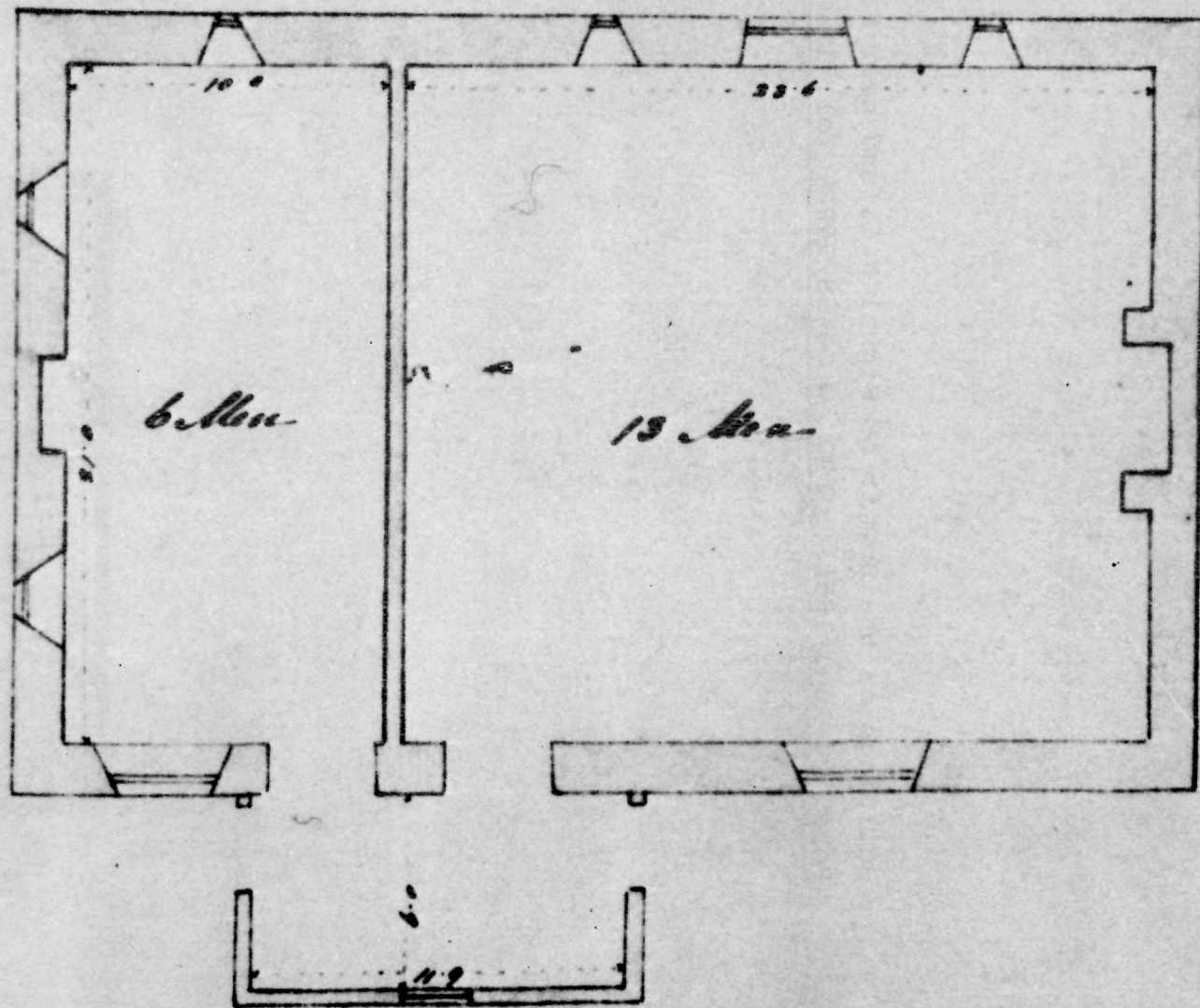
Edward de la Roche
6th Decr 1837

Scale 8 Feet to an Inch

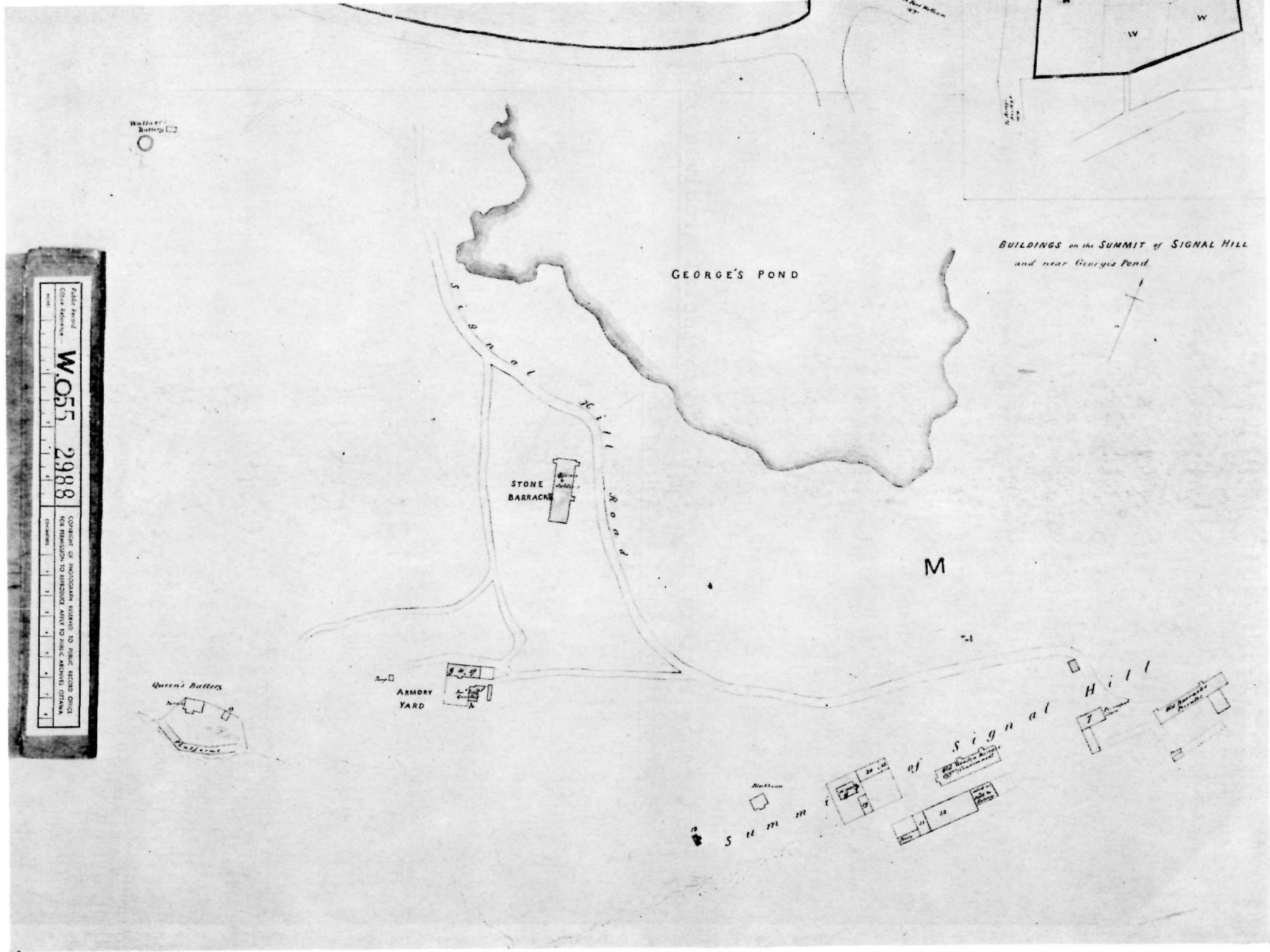
6 Plan of Queen's Battery Barrack, 11 May 1841. (PRO,
W.O. 55/2802, fol. 6, 11 May 1841.)

Plan of Quinn's Battery Barrack

Pl.

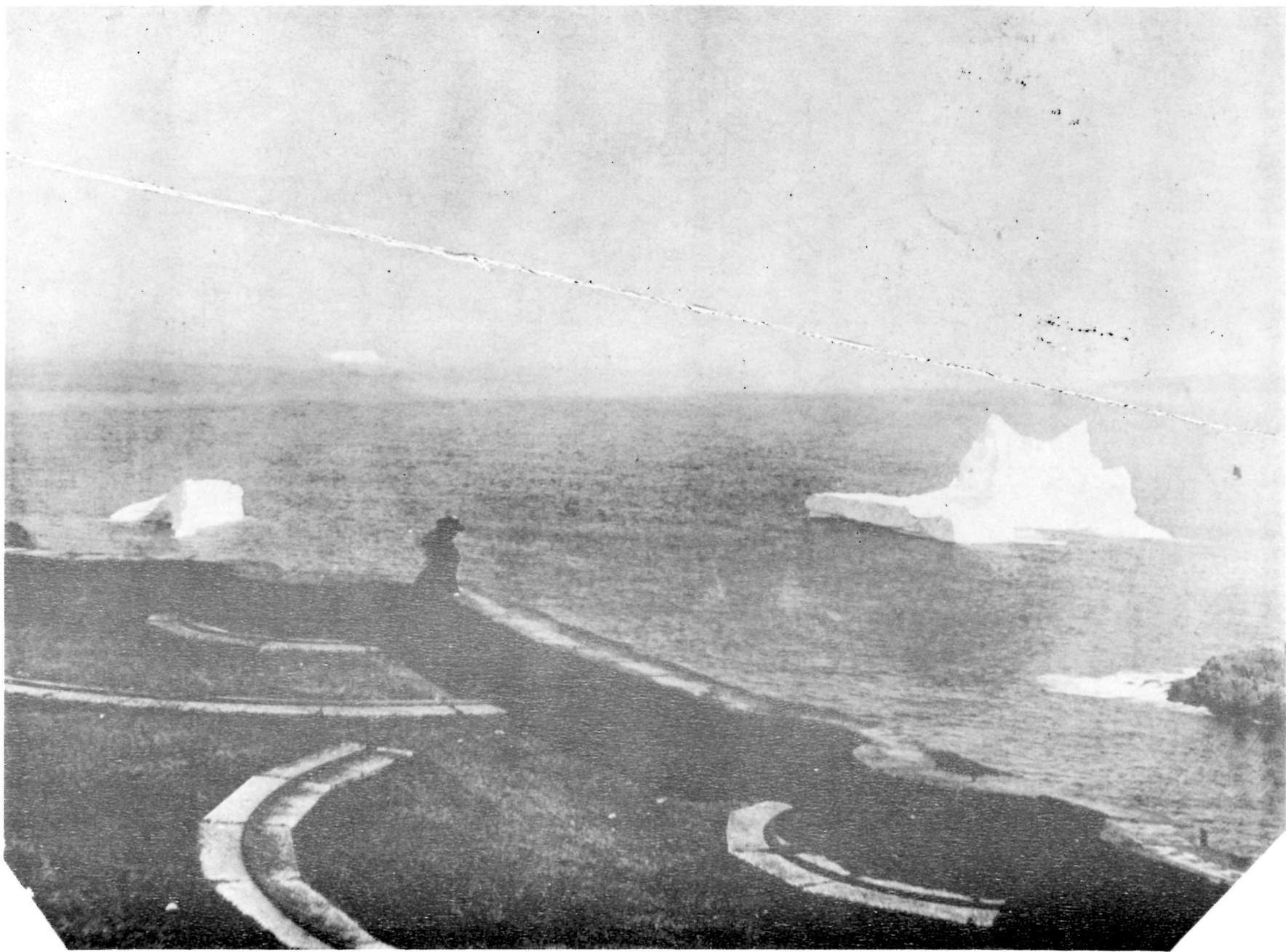


7 Buildings on the Summit of Signal Hill and near George's
Pond, 20 Aug. 1851. (PRO, W.O. 55/2988, fol. 14, 20 Aug. 1851.)

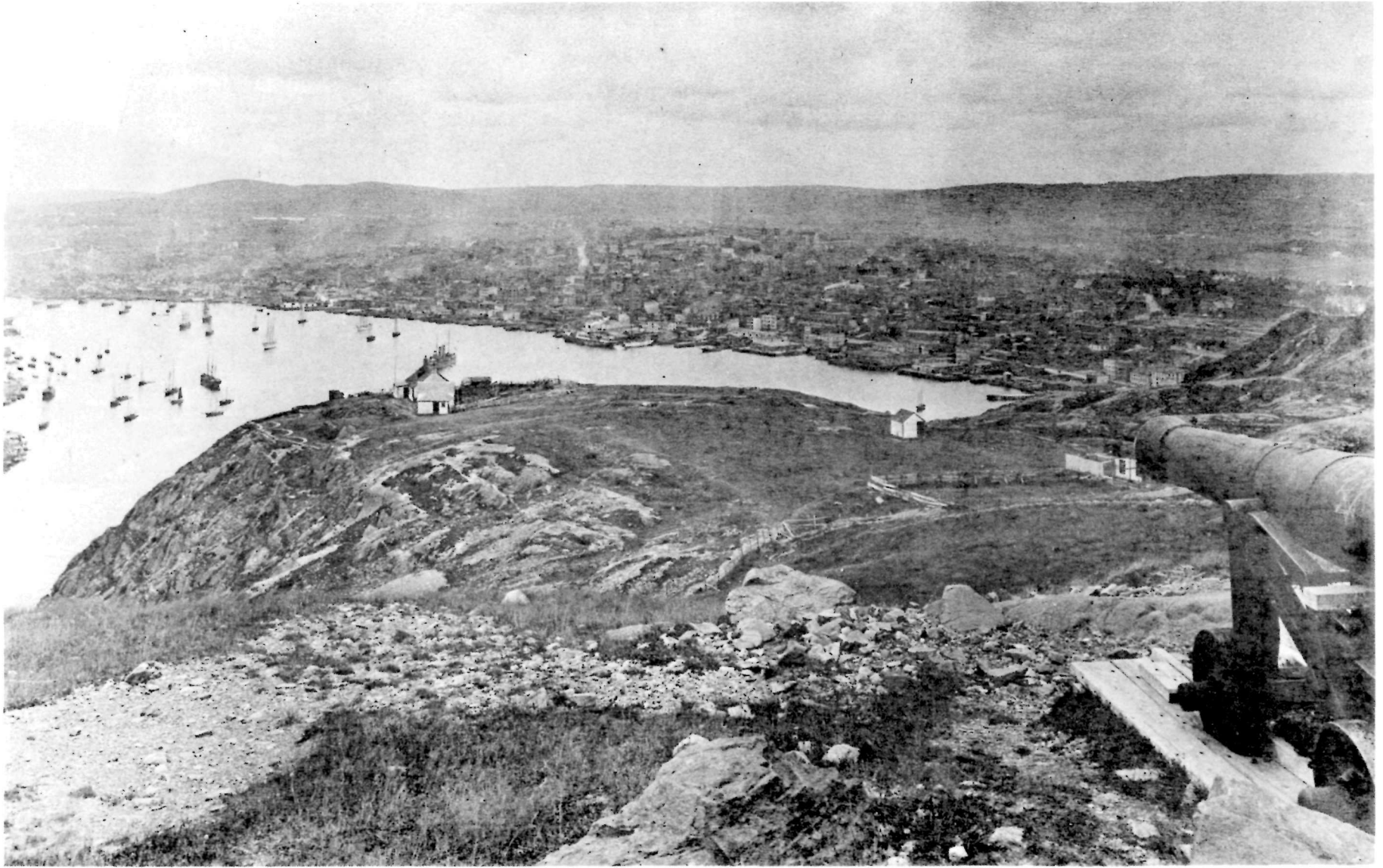


Public Record
Civil Service
W.055 2988
GOVERNMENT OF HONOLULU REFERRED TO PUBLIC RECORDS OFFICE
FOR INFORMATION TO HONOLULU ARMY TO PUBLIC RECORDS OFFICE
RECORDED

8 Queen's Battery, ca. 1900. (Provincial Archives of
Newfoundland and Labrador, A3-42.)



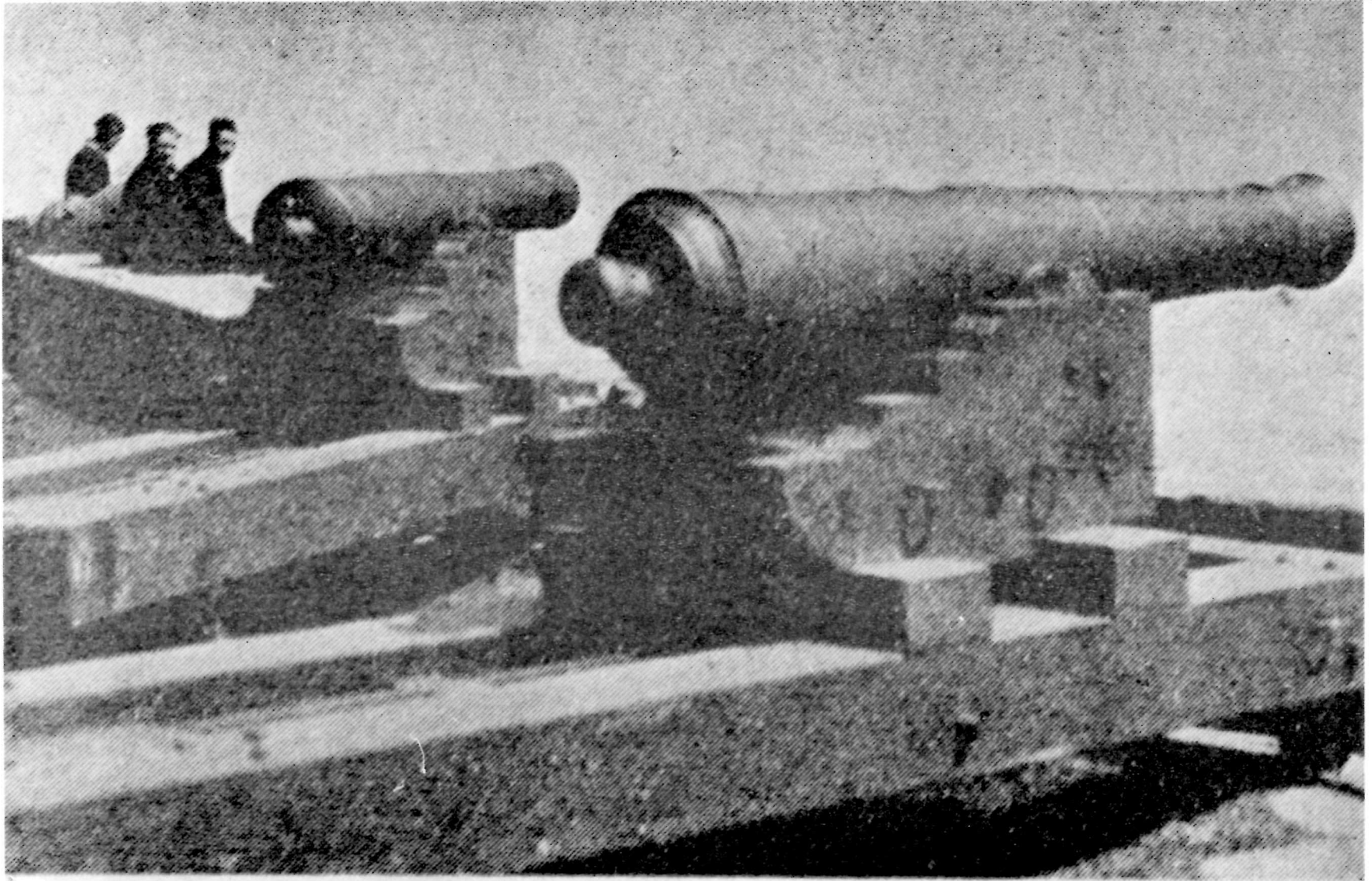
9 St. John's from Signal Hill, ca. 1900. (Public Archives
of Canada, Ottawa, C-23340.)



10 St. John's from Signal Hill, ca. 1900. (Public Archives
of Canada, Ottawa, C-21138.)



- 11 Old Cannon, Signal Hill, ca. 1935. These are a couple of the guns which the Newfoundland Tourist and Publicity Commission emplaced in Queen's Battery. (I.C. Morris, "Old Military Landmarks," in J.R. Smallwood, ed., The Book of Newfoundland (St. John's: Newfoundland Book Publishers, 1937), Vol. 2, p. 41.)



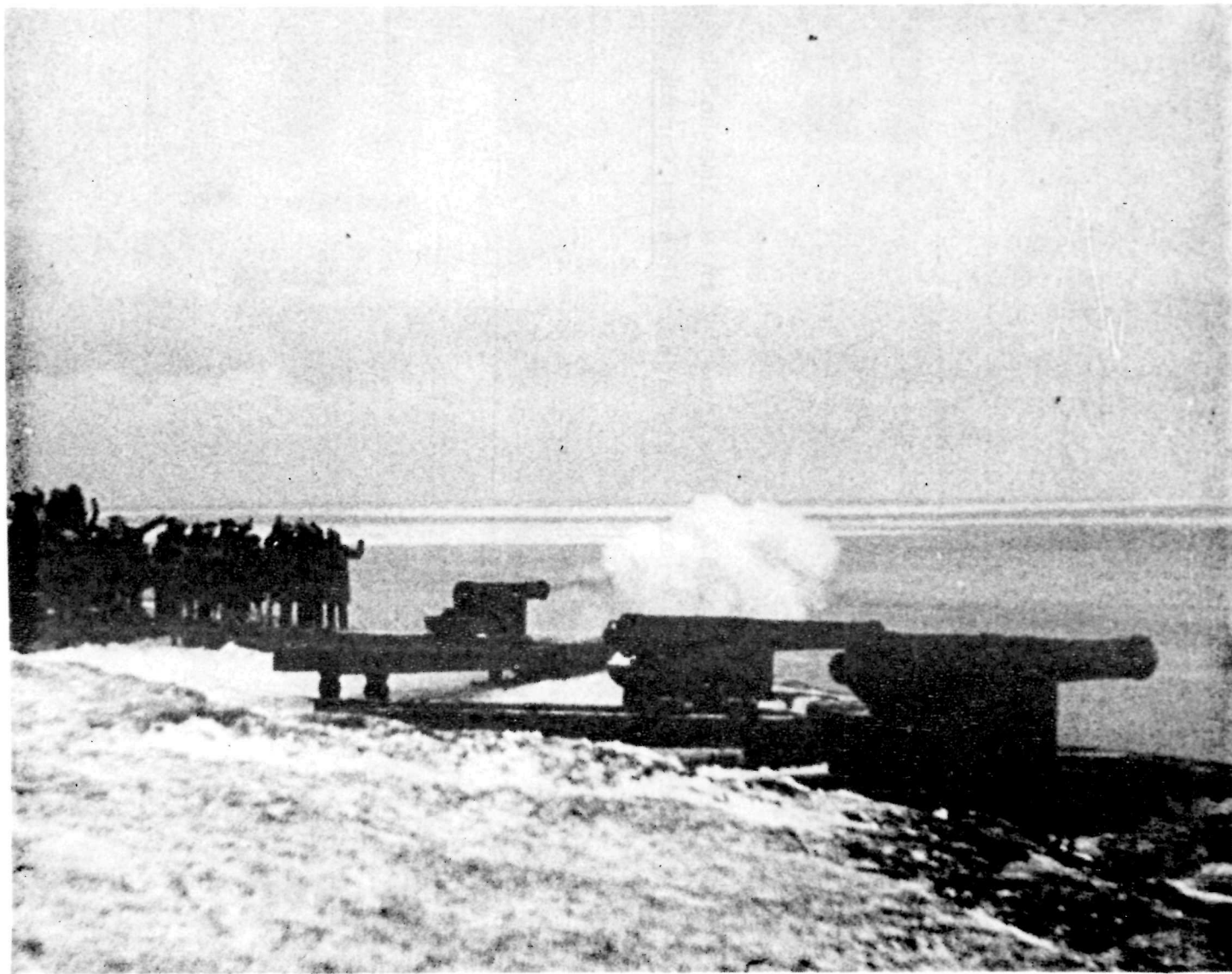
OLD CANNON, SIGNAL HILL

12 Barrack and Sign, Queen's Battery, 1959. (Parks Canada Photo.)

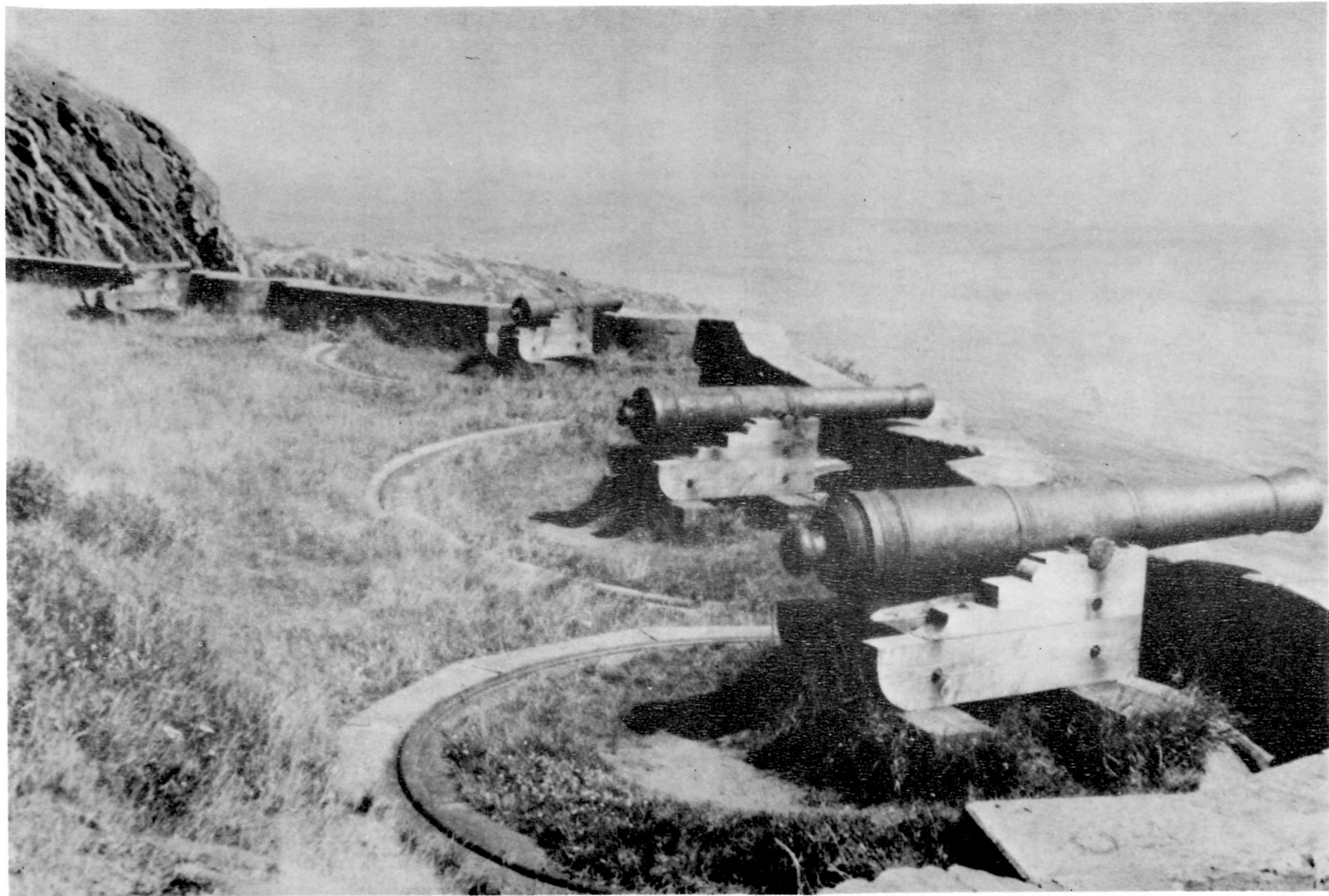


THE QUEEN'S OWN FORT
BUILT AROUND THE YEAR 1705 THIS
BATTERY WAS MORE EXTENSIVE
THAN IT IS TODAY IN 1763 IT WAS
REBUILT AFTER IT'S DESTRUCTION
BY THE FRENCH AND AGAIN IN 1809

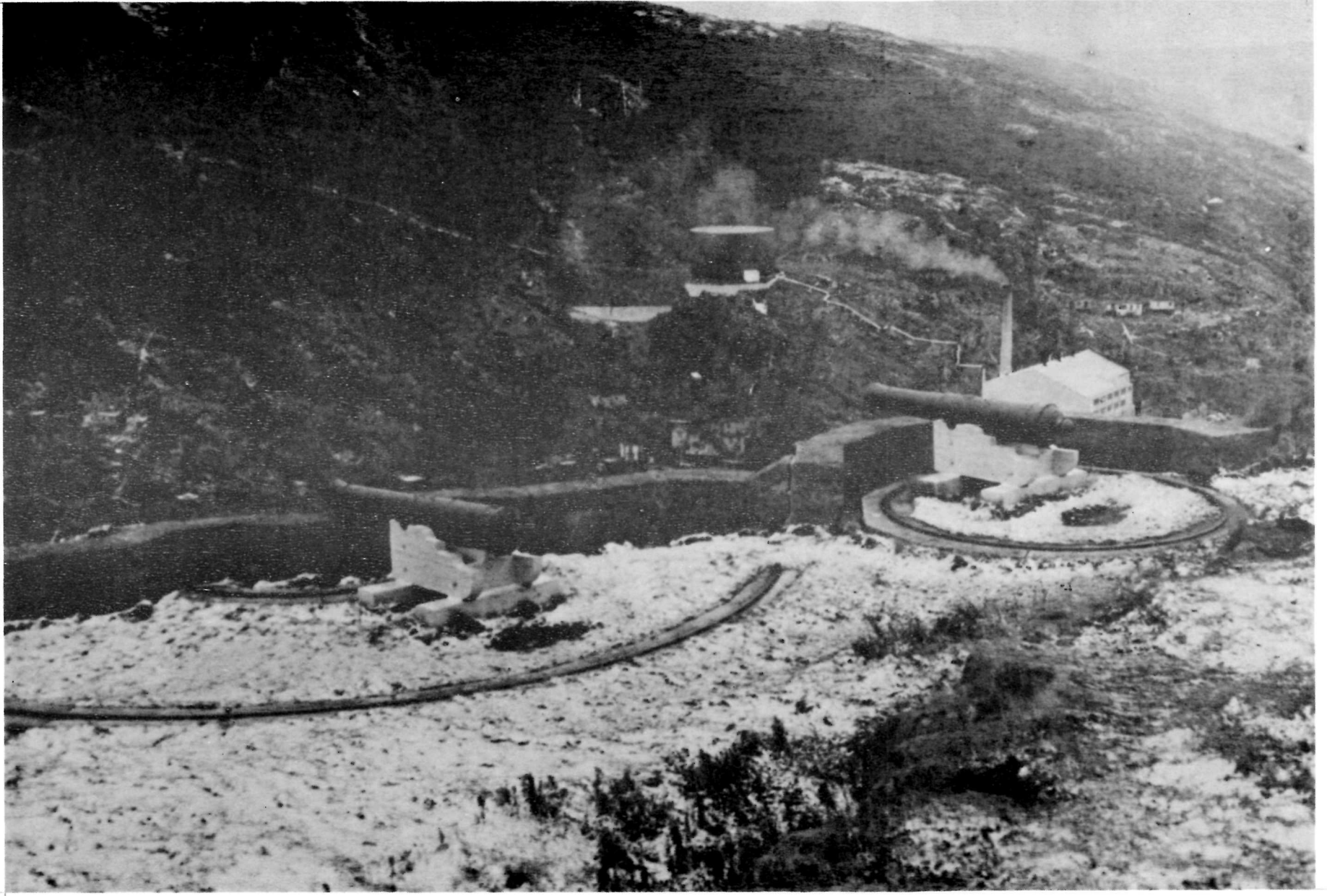
13 Scene from "The Viking," 8 March 1930. (National Film Archives, Ottawa. Used by permission of Mrs. Toni Frissell-Bacon.)



14 Queen's Battery Guns, 1957. The guns by this time had been removed from their traversing carriages. (Parks Canada Photo.)



- 15 Queen's Battery Guns, 1959. Note the 360 degree traverse of the racer for the gun to the right. (Parks Canada Photo.)



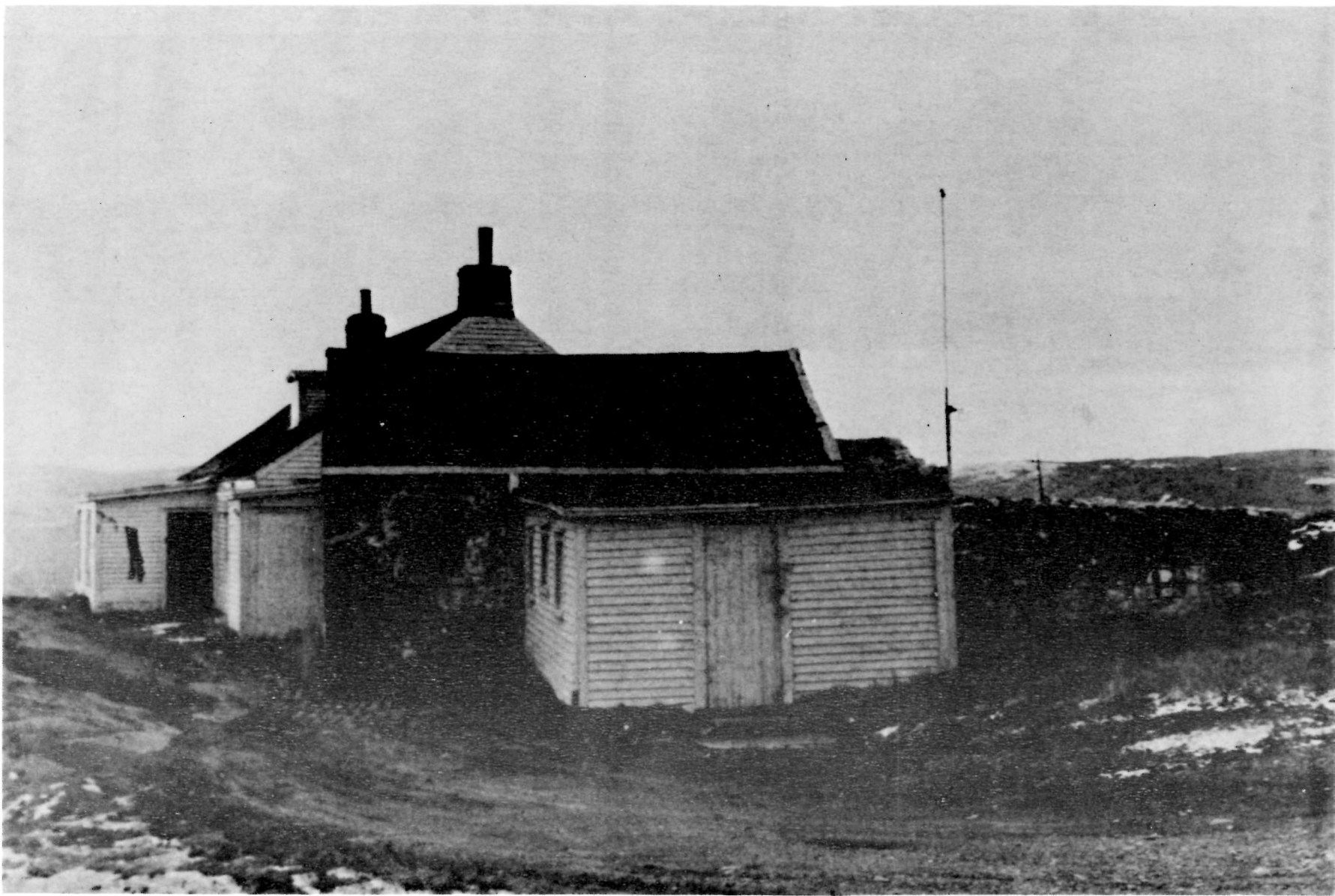
16 Queen's Battery Barrack, 1957. (Parks Canada Photo.)



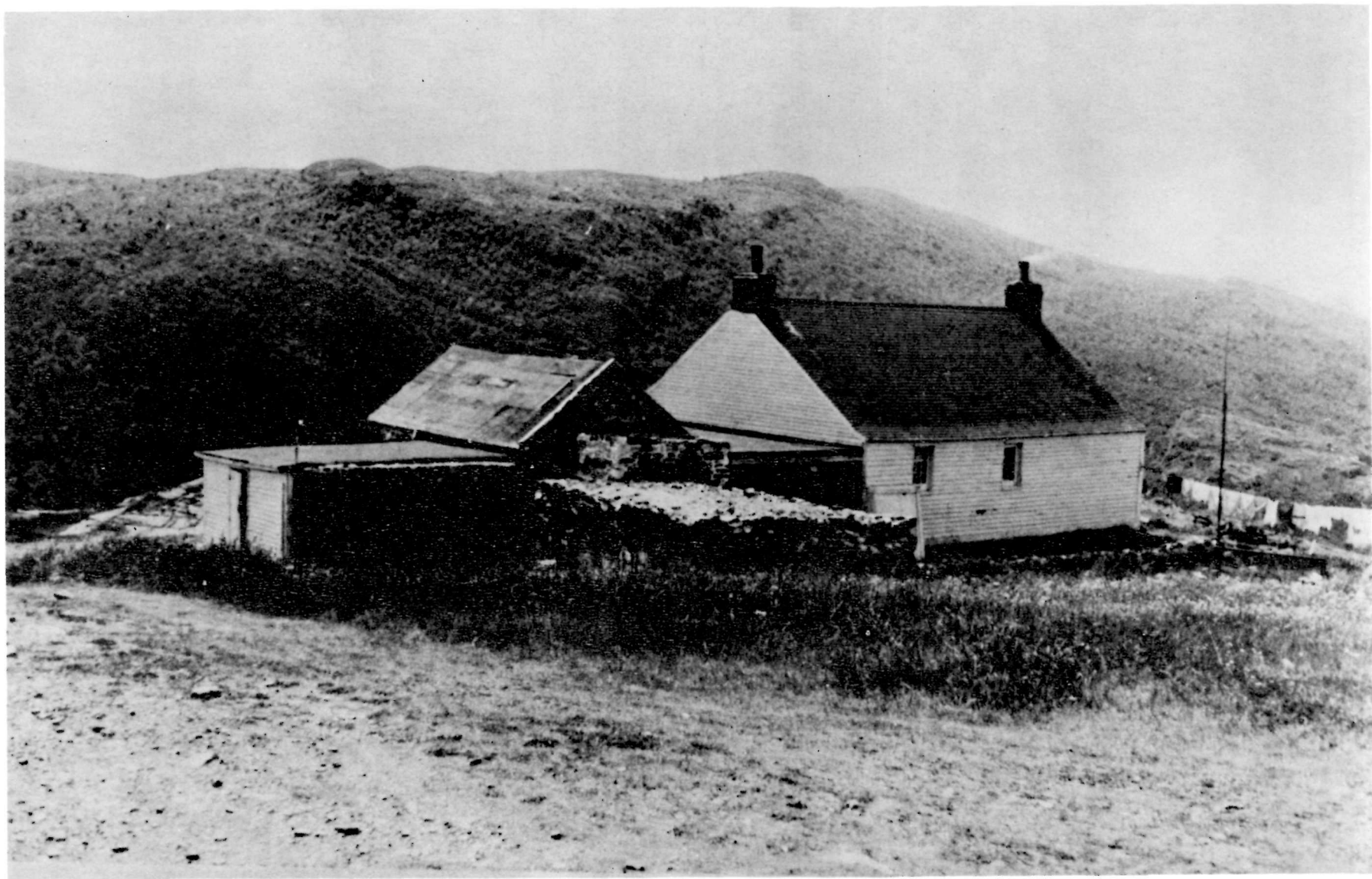
17 Queen's Battery Barrack and Adjoining Structures, 1959.
(Parks Canada Photo.)



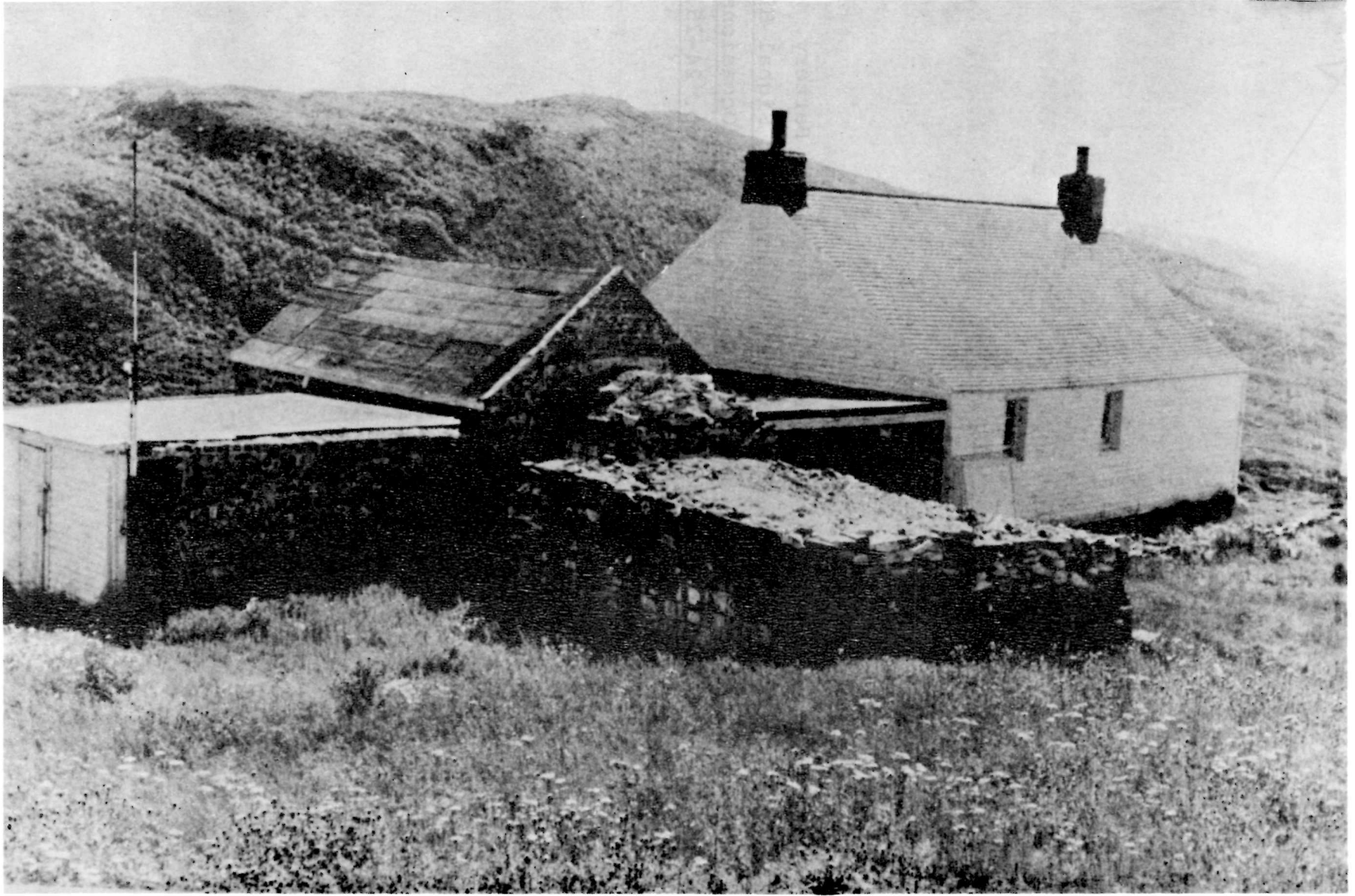
18 Structures at East end of Queen's Battery Barrack, 1959.
(Parks Canada Photo.)



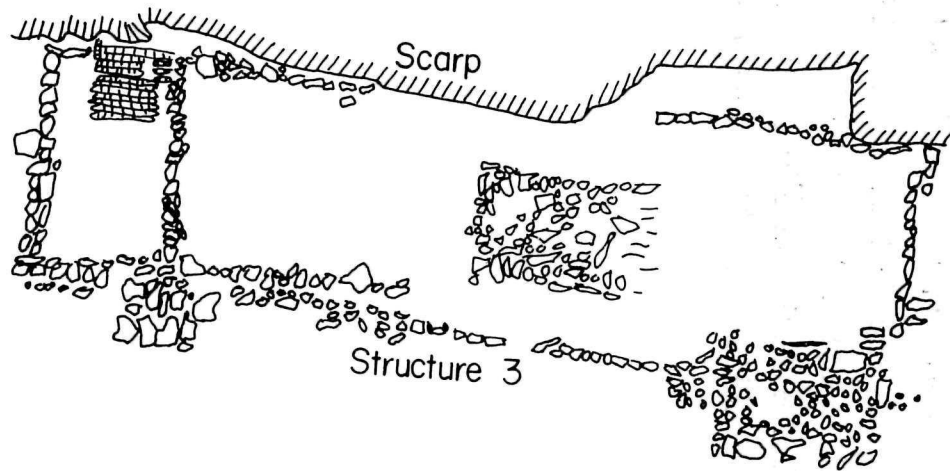
19 Rear View of Queen's Battery Barrack and Adjoining Structures,
1959. (Parks Canada Photo.)



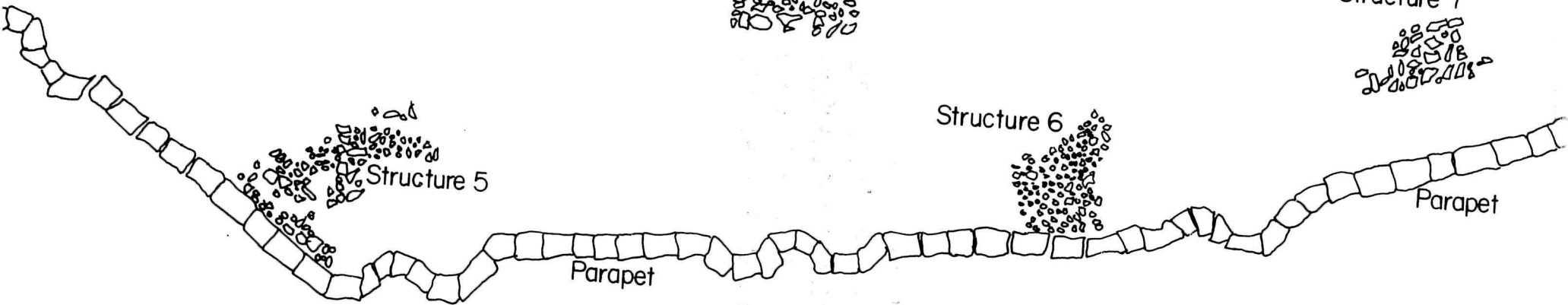
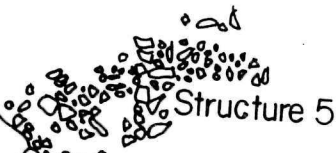
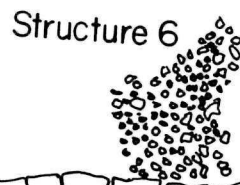
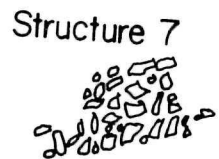
20 Rear View of Queen's Battery Barrack and Adjoining Structures,
1957. (Parks Canada Photo.)



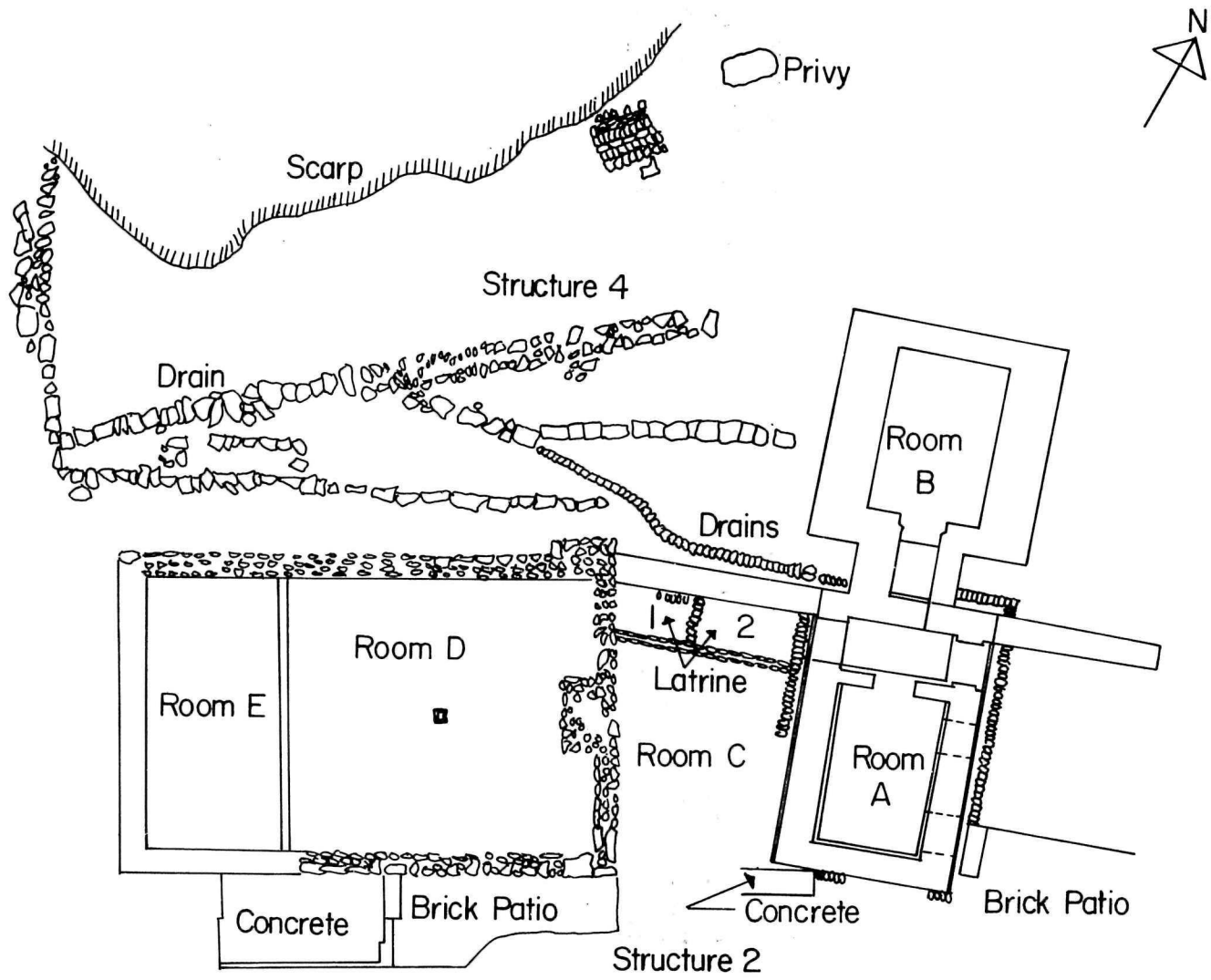
- 21 Plan of Structures 3, 5, 6, and 7, Lower Queen's Battery.
(Edward B. Jelks, "Archaeological Explorations at Signal Hill,
Newfoundland, 1965-66," Canadian Historic Sites: Occasional
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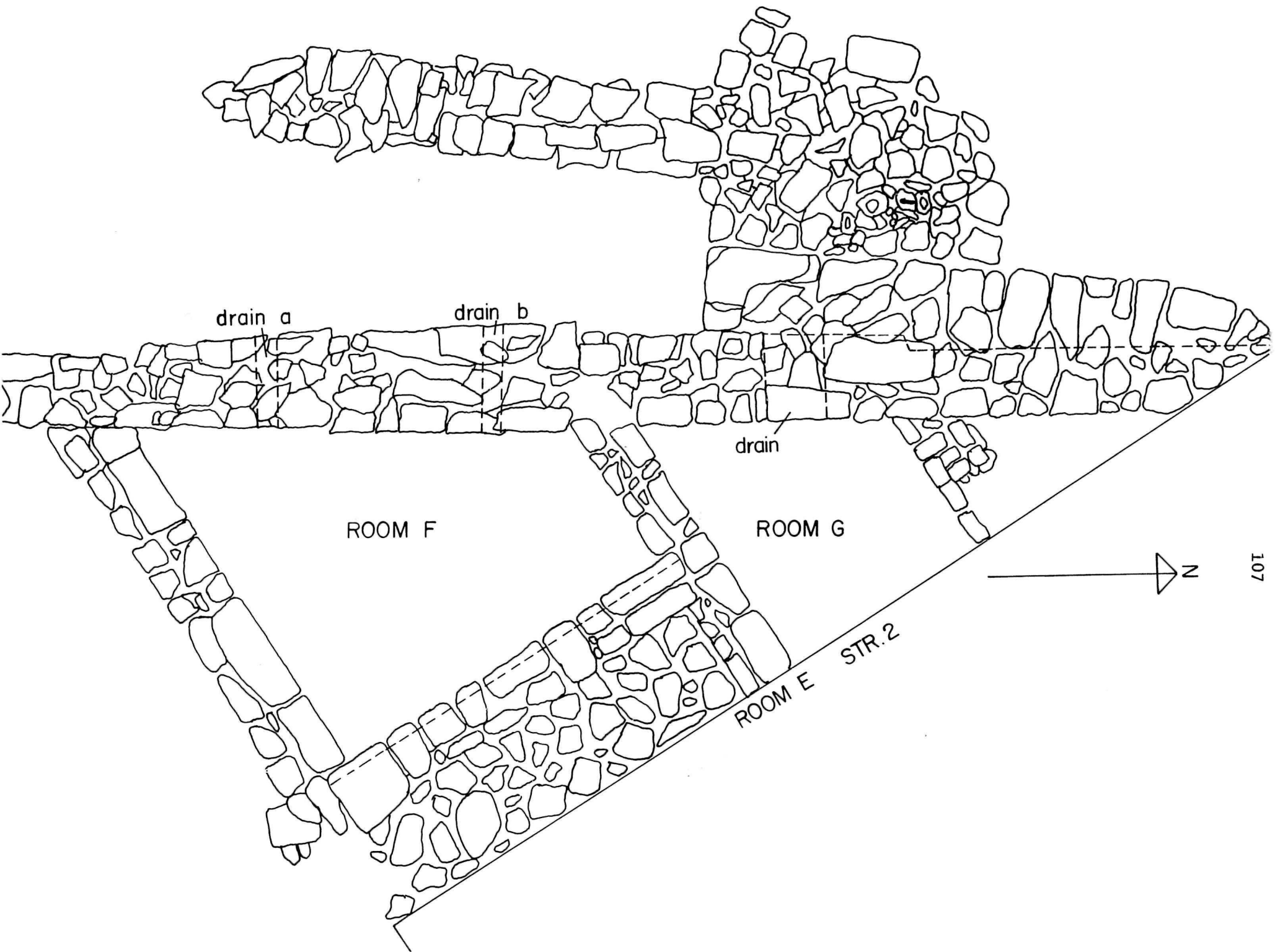
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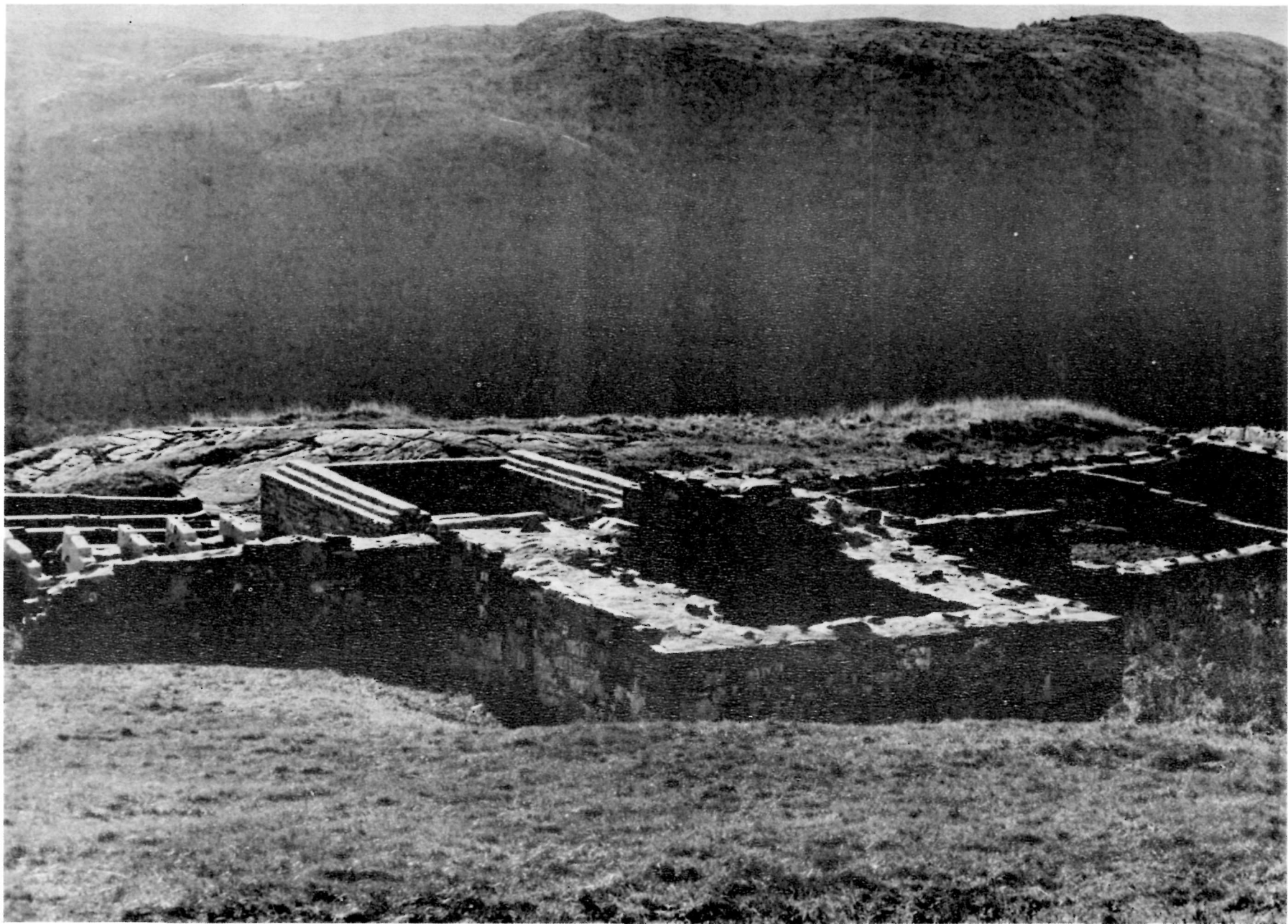
- 22 Plan of Structures 2 and 4, Upper Queen's Battery. (Edward B. Jelks, "Archaeological Explorations at Signal Hill, Newfoundland, 1965-66," Canadian Historic Sites: Occasional Papers in Archaeology and History, No. 7 (1973), p. 29. Reproduction by John Gasparac, Parks Canada, ARO.)



- 23 Floor Plan, Structure 2 Annex, Upper Queen's Battery, (Karlis Karklins, The Structure 2 Annex, Signal Hill, Newfoundland, Manuscript Report Series No. 39 (Ottawa: Parks Canada, 1971), pp. 20-21. Reproduction by John Gasparac, Parks Canada, ARO.)



24 Stabilized Ruins, Upper Queen's Battery, 6 Nov. 1978.
(Photographed by the author.)



25 St. John's from Deck of Cabot Tower, 6 Nov. 1978 (Queen's Battery in foreground). The guns visible at the upper level of the battery are the new 32-pounders prior to their emplacement. (Photographed by the author.)



26 32-pounders at Queen's Battery, 1979. (Parks Canada Photo.)

