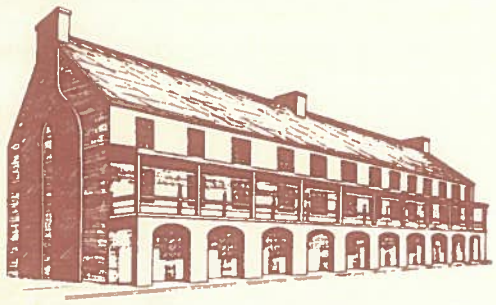


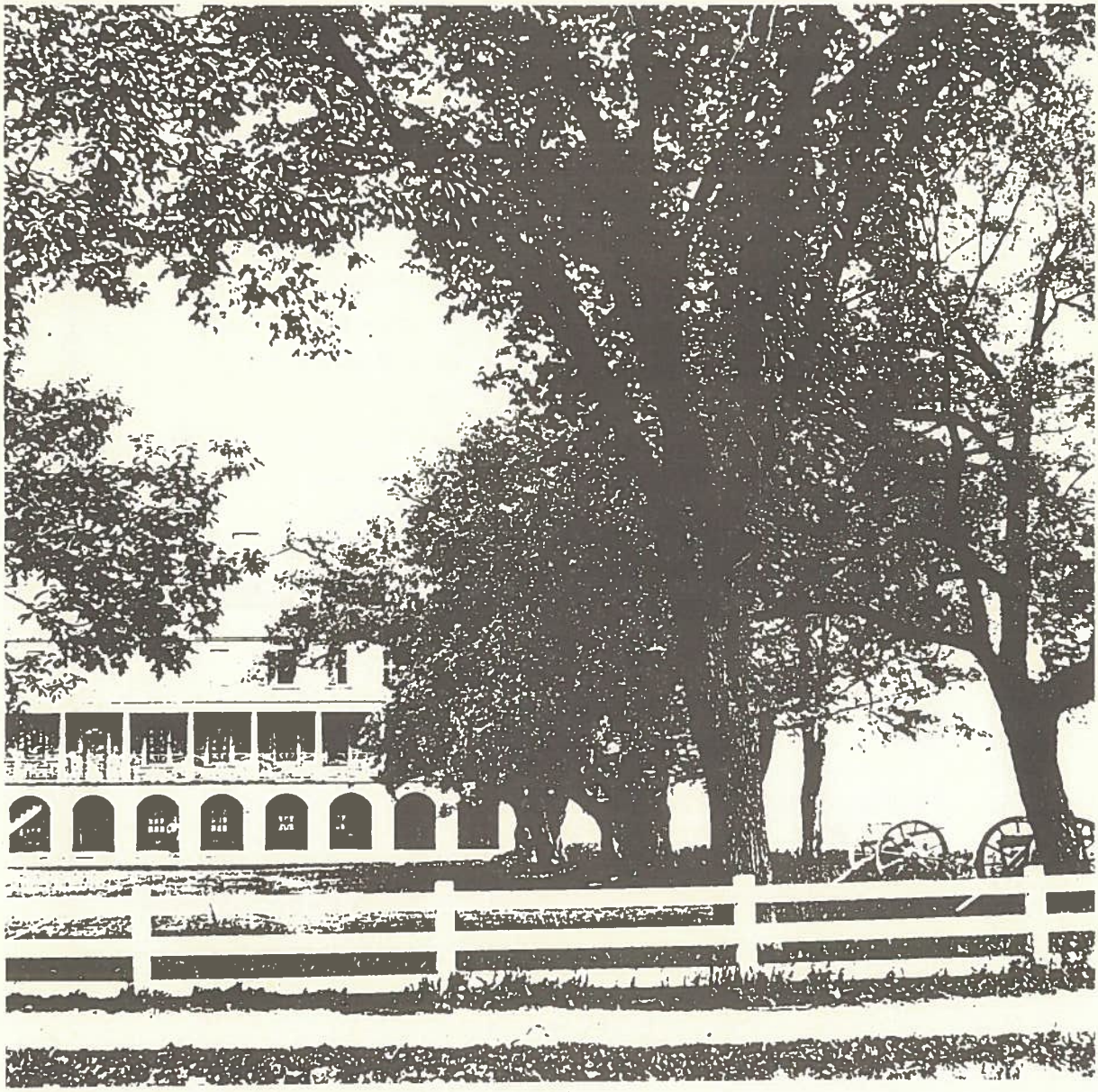
The Officers Quarterly

A PUBLICATION OF THE YORK-SUNBURY HISTORICAL SOCIETY, INC.

VOLUME 5, NUMBERs 1 & 2

SPRING & LATE SUMMER 1989

The Museum and its Environs



Officer's Square and the Museum (PANB Photo)

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	Brent Wilson
	Fred White

The Society's Museum

Fall Hours (Labour Day to Mid-October)

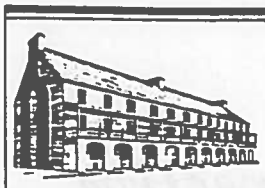
Mon. - Fri.	9 a.m. - 5 p.m.
Sat.	12 p.m. - 4 p.m.

Winter hours are:

Mon., Wed., & Fri.	11 a.m. - 3 p.m.

or by appointment **Telephone: 455-6041**

Volume 5 Numbers 1&2
Spring & Late Summer



The Officers' Quarterly

Contents

This is the official newsletter of the York-Sunbury Historical Society, Inc., Officer's Square, Queen Street, P. O. Box 1312, Fredericton, New Brunswick, Canada, E3B 5C8.

Telephone: (506) 455-6041.

Publication dates are normally quarterly— Spring, Summer, Fall, Winter. Submissions can be addressed to the Editor and received at the Society's offices by the first day of March, June, September, and December for the subsequent issue.

York-Sunbury Historical Society, Inc. is a non-profit organization founded in 1932, and incorporated in 1934, with the aim "...to gather and preserve objects and traditions of historical interest in the region of central New Brunswick and particularly in the Counties of York and Sunbury, and to read and publish papers dealing with the same."

Individual memberships are $15.00 per year and $150.00 for life.

Corporations, individuals or organization may also become sustaining members.

Editor.....Chris Turnbull

President's Perspective

It is an honour and a pleasure to communicate with you in this issue of the Officers Quarterly as your President. Little did I realize when I passed the editor's job to someone else, that I would inherit another challenging task within our society.

The year 1989 (our 58th) started out with some organized confusion as we embarked on a construction program to provide a new administrative office and to install a comprehensive fire alarm system throughout Officer's Quarters. To make matters a little more challenging our acting Curator-Administrator resigned after little more than three months on the job. The Board asked the then Assistant, Nancy Schell, to carry on the difficult task of completing the many loose construction ends and prepare for the coming summer season. As anyone who visits our Society Offices and museum, she has performed admirably, and when our full time Curator-Administrator resigned this July, the Board offered Nancy the position.

Cynthia Wallace-Casey, our past Curator-Administrator, has just accepted the Director's position of Association Museums New Brunswick, after devoting several years to this Society. We wish you all the best. Cynthia, and of course as a life member you'll always be in touch with the Society.

Under chairmanship of Fred White, we have had an excellent lecture series, hosting such able speakers as Dr. Ruth Stanley, Barb Bird, Darrel Butler, Karen Mann, and of course, Dr. George MacBeath. We know it is a difficult to measure up to the past Chairman, Elizabeth Earl, but Fred is doing an excellent job and we look forward to an equally stimulating fall lecture series.

Hope you enjoyed our wonderful New Brunswick summer and do drop into the museum to view our exhibits and participate in our Society's activities.❀

Paul M. O'Connell.

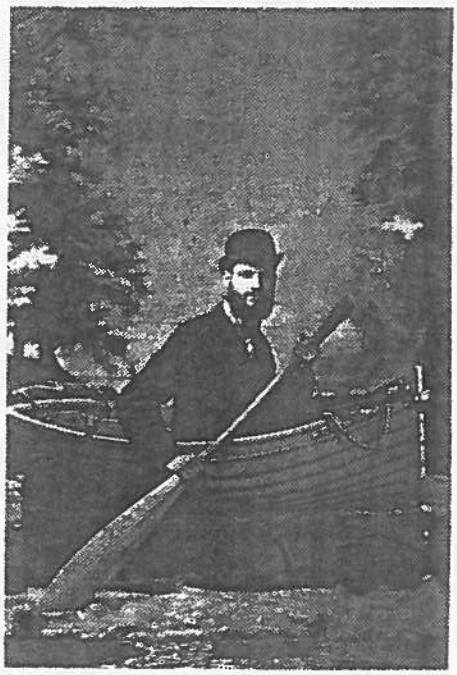
Collections of the York-Sunbury Museum

Brent Wilson

The collection of the York-Sunbury Historical Museum is among the largest and most significant held by a smaller museum in New Brunswick. Chronologically it encompasses the Province's history from the Indian and Acadian periods to the recent past. In scope it is broad enough to cover all aspects of this history comprehensively while at the same time specialized enough to focus on several specific fields in depth. Consequently, this collection not only facilitates first-class exhibits at the Museum but also forms a valuable study collection in reserve, and supports loans to other museums, both provincially and nationally.

The Museum's several thousand artifacts, leaving aside the large archival and photograph collection and library of books and newspapers, form the core of the collection. Traditionally it has been divided into military and domestic fields. The military collection is second only to that held by the Provincial Museum. The large uniform collection which features both British and Canadian uniforms, has been studied by international expert, William Carman of the National Army Museum, London, as well as by staff of the Canadian War Museum and New Brunswick Museum. The valuable firearms collection includes unique pieces, such as an Egyptian matchlock and a British Baker Rifle from the Napoleonic era. This collection vividly represents Fredericton's military history as a British garrison and Canadian training centre, and compliments the military nature of the Museum building. It forms the core of the Museum's permanent exhibits and was used to mount its first major outreach exhibit, "Over the Top".

The domestic artifacts comprise the bulk of the collection. They represents most aspects of the province's history, including its political,



Photograph of George Schleyer, a photographer, whose stduio was on Queen Street, opposite the Normal School.

economic and social life. The first-rate textile collection of coverlets, quilts and garments has been studied by such experts in their field as Dorothy Burnham of the Royal Ontario Museum, who selected a coverlet for her national exhibit that toured the country. The Museum's large assortment of toys and dolls adds a more human, charming touch to the collection. Also worthy of mention are the china and glassware, and the collection of tools, lumbering equipment and carriage makers labels that represent Fredericton's once bustling industrial community.

Like every Museum in the province, the York-Sunbury has a spinning wheel and butter churn. But perhaps the best indication of the quality of this collection is that it also features several unique and important collections not found elsewhere in New Brunswick. Foremost among these are its medical collection, donated by Dr. Everett Chalmers, and the Doherty firefighters collection. Both have been displayed in Fredericton as well as Moncton and Saint John on loan. These collections have grown slowly and it is essential that efforts be directed at their continued development.

As with all museums, this collection has gaps and weaknesses. A comprehensive plan is needed to identify the shortcomings and to outline the steps to be taken to complete the collection. This calls for a change in the direction of the Museum's past collection efforts from a passive to an active collection. This would require special funds for purchases, exchanges with other museums, and soliciting donations from individuals. This form of collecting would reduce needless duplication of artifacts, a problem in the past, and give focus to the activities of the Historical Society's Directors. Such a plan would ensure the rational and controlled growth of the collection in the future, thereby alleviating pressure on storage and exhibit facilities.❀

While this piece was written in 1985, it still valid today. Mr. Wilson is now heads acquisitions committee for the Museum.

Research on the Society's Collections: Early New Brunswick Photography-

Peter Laroque

In the process of gathering information for a comprehensive index of photographic sources and resources in New Brunswick, an examination of photographic repositories throughout the province is being undertaken. In conjunction with this research, there is an exhibition and catalogue of nineteenth century photography proposed for 1991 to celebrate the sesquicentennial anniversary of the introduction of photography to New Brunswick. To date, there has been very little research on the introduction of various photographic techniques to the province nor has there been much material published on the lives, work and influence of nineteenth century New Brunswick photographers. The surveying of photographic collections in institutions like the York-Sunbury Museum is essential for the formation of a well balanced understanding of the photographic history of the province.

One of the most important considerations of any researcher is finding what types of materials are available for study and comparison. The effective use of any collection depends on the system organized for retrieval of information about the artifacts. The cataloguing system for the photographic collection at the York-Sunbury Museum has greatly increased its accessibility for the researcher and for the public. Arranged according to subjects areas and subdivided into cross-referenced individual entries under each

Photograph of George Mooers, a Fredericton photographer

subject, the system saves time and effort as well as giving a good overview of the entire collection.

For example, under the "People" section of the catalogue, it was easy to find portraits of George and Ada Schleyer, brother and sister photographers active in Fredericton in the 1880s, as well as a portrait of another New Brunswick photographer, William A. Mooers. Unfortunately, it is unlikely that many portraits of other photographers will be found; the fervour with which they took likenesses of their customers seemingly did not extend to themselves.

Further investigation of the family albums and loose photographs at the York-Sunbury Museum, uncovered many images of particular interest. One photograph of these was an ambrotype (the process, which was popular between 1857 and 1865, produced an image on glass) by Samuel L. Carlton of Portland, Maine. While not specifically produced by a New Brunswick photographer, the commissioning of this ambrotype is suggestive of the pattern of photographic influences from outside the province. There is strong evidence to imply a close relationship between the photographic industry in the western counties of New Brunswick and its counterpart in Maine. Until the 1870s, when permanent studios could be established, photographers were forced into a system of itinerancy in order to survive. It appears that there were two main routes which photographers used while in New Brunswick. One route involved travel from centers in Maine to Woodstock, St. Andrews, Fredericton and Chatham; the other route involved a connection between Boston and Saint John, then on to Halifax.

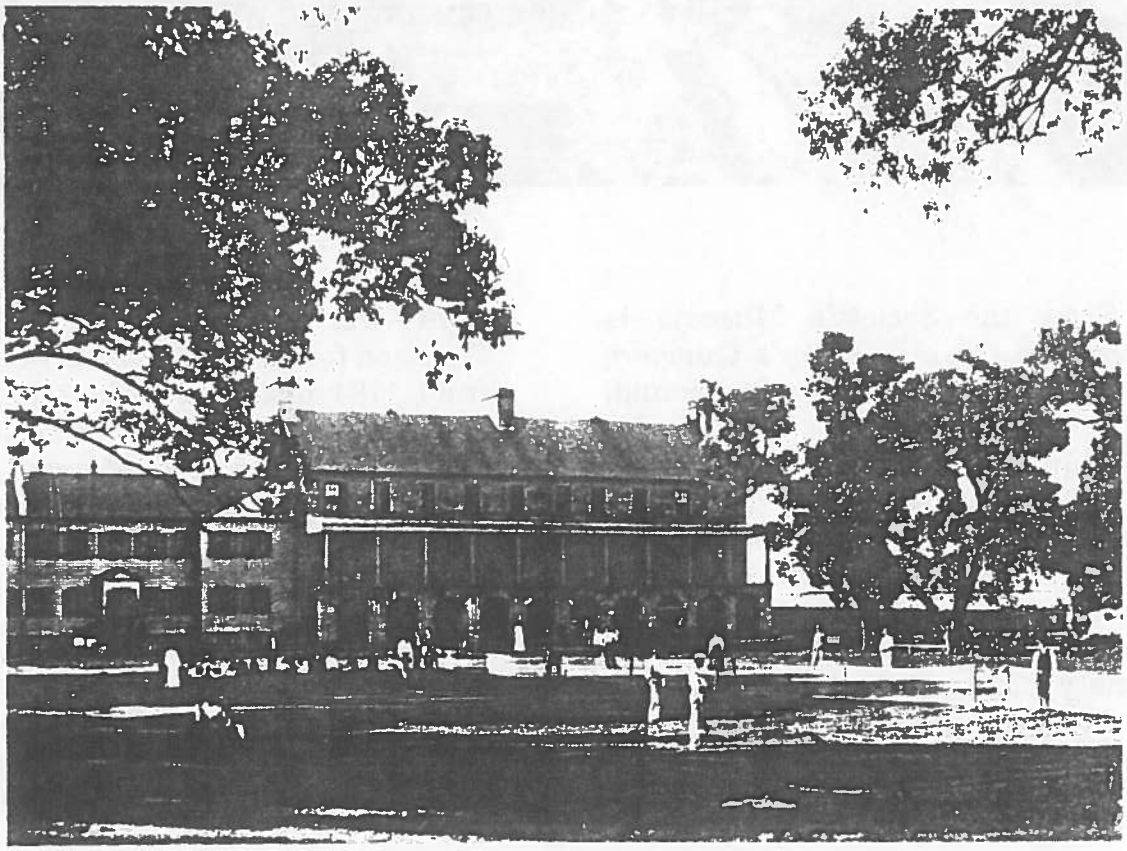
Ada Schleyer, an early Fredericton photographer.

Other important images at the York-Sunbury Museum are the paintings by George T. Taylor. In the early years of photography many artists became photographers as the need for their services dwindled. Later, many artists depended on the work provided by studios for a major portion of their incomes. In the case of George Taylor, one of New Brunswick's most renowned photographers, he retired form the photographic business to devote all his time to painting. Taylor's works show the strong links between photography and painting, explaining perhaps, one aspect of the effectiveness of his photographic vision.

A complete and critical assessment of the abilities and production of photographic studios is of paramount importance when considering the profound effects photography had in defining how the province was (and to a large extent, still is) perceived. Although the New Brunswick Museum and the Provincial Archives of New Brunswick house vast collections of photographic images and negatives, there are many areas within the province which are insufficiently documented. In many cases it is from within smaller museums that images from areas of the province and differing aspects of the industry not found at the NBM or PANB are represented. The importance of collections like that of the York-Sunbury Museum to a survey which encompasses this sixty year period of time and such a volume of images, lies in their ability to provide particular details about photography, its patrons and practitioners which allows a more refined understanding of its role throughout nineteenth century New Brunswick.❀

Peter J. Larocque is a Curatorial Researcher in the Humanities Division at the New Brunswick Museum.. His interest in photography results from a concentrated involvement with the discipline during study in the Fine Arts programme at Mount Allison University.

Anyone wishing to share any information or images is invited to contact Mr. Larocque at the New Brunswick Museum, 277 Douglas Avenue, Saint John, New Brunswick, E2K 1E5 - Telephone (506) 658-1842 (ext. 56).

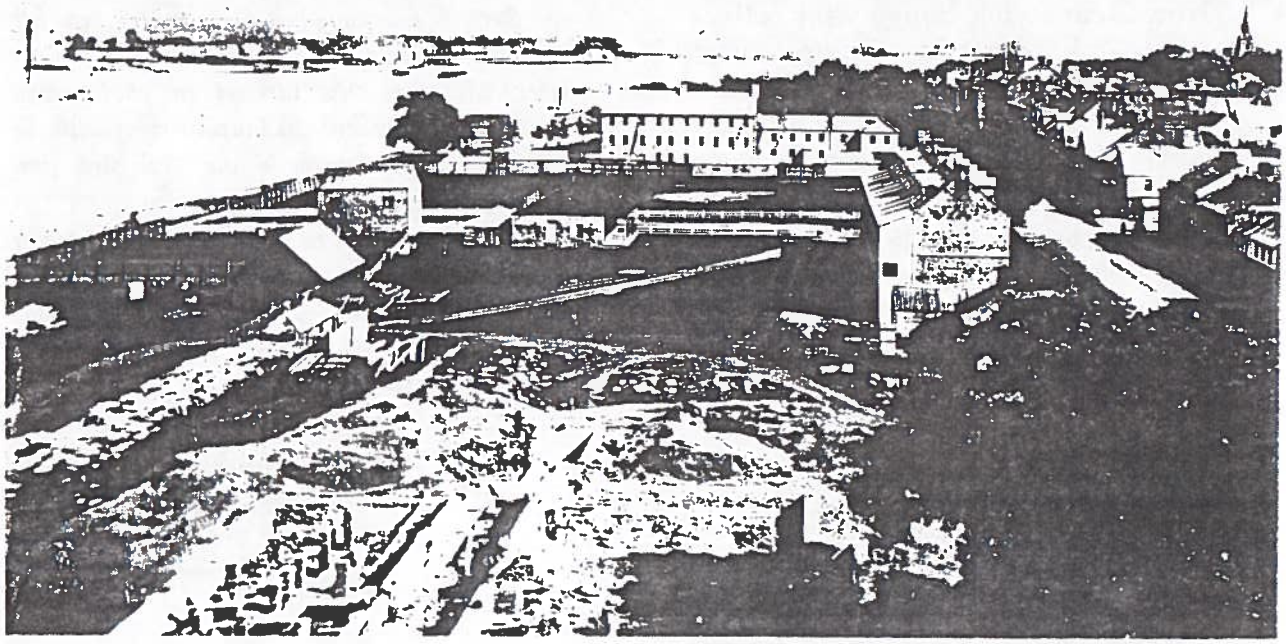


Summer Sports in Officer's Square, 1887
George Taylor Collection, PANB

The Military Compound & Archaeology

Chris Turnbull

The Military Compound in the early days before the plethora of modern buildings. (PANB).



Since the Society's Museum is housed in the old Officer's Quarters in Fredericton's Military Compound, there always has been a special relationship between the Society and this part of the capital City's downtown. The exhibits and collections reflect this connection as well. Recently, there have been fresh activity in the Compound that may be of interest to Society members.

As background, the Military Compound area—the two blocks bounded by Regent, Campbell, Queen and York—was the home of the British Garrison for the capital of the Colony from 1784 until the 1869 when the Canadian militia took over as Imperial troops were withdrawn after Confederation. The current armory continues this 205 years of military association. The Military Compound Board oversees the provincially owned properties as a New Brunswick Protected Historic Site. It was declared of national historic importance in 1964. Four of the original buildings are left: the Guard House

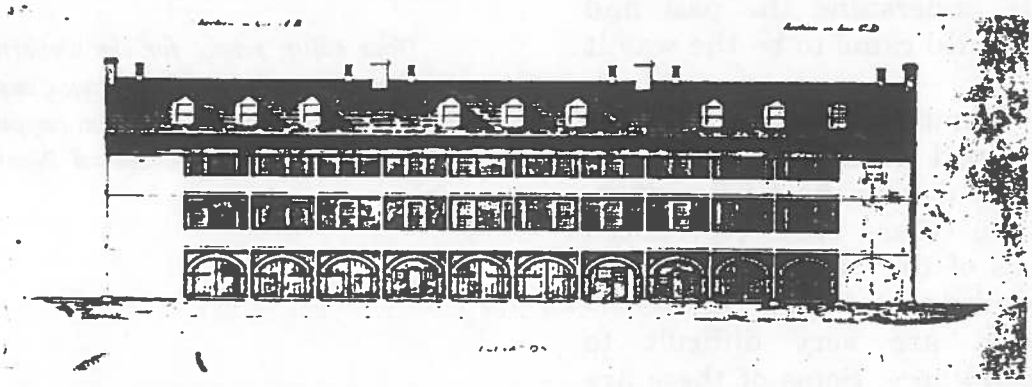
(1826), Soldiers Barracks (1826), the Officer's Quarters (1833) and the militia arms store (1837). However, many people do not realize that there were once over 70 structures, including a hospital, stores building, cook house, bakery, privies, and wells. It was a heavily used area.

There is nothing left—architecturally—of the earliest period. Some buildings were lost in various fires; the original Officer's Quarters in 1815, for example. Two of the three surviving buildings were built in stone in response to the fires—the Guard House and the Soldiers Barracks. Other have been lost over the years as functions changed, the buildings became dilapidated and were torn down, and new buildings were put up. The most recent of these is, of course, the Fredericton Public Library and its current extension.

Over the past year Archaeology has caused some concern in regard to this expansion. An objection was raised about the possible conflict between archaeological resources and the expansion of this modern building in this historic area. On-site testing revealed remains of an earlier foundation pit but not enough to change the expansion plans at that time.

In order to assess the archaeological remains of the Compound and offer an active stance to any more encroachment on the area, the Archaeology Branch in cooperation with the Military Compound Board, Native Studies at St. Thomas University and Challenge '89 are undertaking a field study program to check out what heritage resources still remain in the area. The aim of the digging, under the direction of Pat Allen and Marc Lavoie, is to check the remaining grass areas for foundations and original surfaces. Already, digging has found the level of the original parade ground in the Barracks area, the remains of the old stone cook house, and location of the old fence at the corner of York and Queen.

The work is revealing a substantial quantity of remains from the older buildings as well as many artifacts. The artifacts recovered range from domestic cutlery, building hardware, personal items, dishes, glasses, to military items, including buttons and gun flints.



The Plan is of the Soldiers Barracks, one of the four remaining original buildings of the Military Compound.

Through the coming winter, analysis of the remains and cataloguing other disturbances to the site, such as the many underground utilities, will produce a comprehensive picture of the state of the archaeological resources. Although there is no intention of beginning a major research project at this time, these resources are protected under provincial legislation and any further disturbance to the site will necessitate archaeological field work. In the long term, these resources would certainly make a most interesting historic sites field school, considering the collections and laboratories of Archaeology are on site.

The archaeological remains of the Compound represent an important source of information on the site and lives of the people who inhabited the area. While there certainly is a wealth of documentary evidence about the area, be it in the public records, building plans, photographs, or even personal journals, such as Mrs Ewing in the 1860s, there is another record of life, however, that gets "written" in the trash pits, privies, foundations, and artifacts that were used, thrown away, or lost in fires. It is just another method of trying to understand the past and how the world came to be the way it is.

For example, a military store house burned in an 1825 fire. Test excavations during the 1970 restoration of the Guard House, produced quantities of the military gear—hat bands, badges, and other paraphernalia—that are very difficult to obtain elsewhere. Some of these are currently on display in the Guard House.

Furthermore, some of this work has an immediate practical application. The parking lot between the Soldiers's Barracks and the Guard House will be removed to make way for the old parade ground as a part of the restoration of the Compound. The level will be lowered to near the original and a new green space created. The level of the City of Fredericton has been rising over the past century as the streets and buildings have been rebuilt. Officer's Square is at the original level and needs a stone retaining wall. Testing the parade ground between the Soldiers Barracks and Guard House this summer has found the level of the 1825 parade ground. In fact, the Guard House was built just over the crest of the original river bank. Parts of the area have over a metre of fill.

In future years, this old garrison area will be receiving more attention as the Military Compound Board plots a course for this important facet of Fredericton's history and its current downtown. Whatever happens, its archaeological resources will figure prominently in these decisions.❀

Your editor works for the Department of Tourism, Recreation and Heritage.Consquently, there will be occasional article on happenings of archaeological interest to central New Brunswick.

News & Current Events of the Society

Society Events

❑ **19 October**
Free Love in Jemseg
David Bell

Society Exhibitions

6 October 1989-1 May 1990
"Dolls Unlimited"

A world of interest and imagination is waiting to be discovered as the Museum unveiles its latest exhibit. Guest-curated by Velma Kelly, Society member and Museum volunteer, this exhibit presents a selection of dolls from the Museum's collections as well as private collectors in the Fredericton area. This display, featuring such doll makers as Armand Marseille (Germany), Simon & Halbig (Germany), and Miramura Bros. (Japan), spans various generations. Along with the extensive display of dolls, there is also a re-creation of a child's playroom filled with doll's houses, furniture, clothing, and accesories.

Curator's Corner

The busy summer season is once again upon us and almost gone. The York-Sunbury Museum is bustling with activity! Presently, the staff consists of five summer students along with Kelly Ross, who was hired in March as Assistant Administrator/Education Officer. The Museum officially opened for the summer season on June 25, with the Society holding a reception on the balcony. Dr. James Chapman was this year's recipient of the Martha J. Harvey Award of Distinction for outstanding contributions in the field of New Brunswick history as well as to the Society.

On July 1st, the Museum celebrated Canada Day with our Third Annual Pioneer Crafts and Games Day. We offered a fun-filled day of activities for young and old alike. Heather Cameron, a student of the New Brunswick Craft School, gave a demonstration on wool processing while Shirley Gillies and friends were on hand to demonstrate the art of quilting. Museum staff entertained the children with pioneer games and native crafts, and, as always, face painting was a big success. Free balloons and refreshments

were also available. The Museum experienced a record attendance for this event.

The 2nd annual Seniors Day was held at the Museum in early July as well. We featured a special program entitled "Facts About Artifacts" for seniors in conjunction with Fredericton's River Jubilee festivities. Throughout the day museum volunteer and staff were on hand to demonstrate their various projects.

"Those Summer Days" opened on July 6. This exhibit, which continues until September 22, depicts a 19th century summer in Fredericton. Bicycling, roller-skating, enjoying a game of checkers, or merely taking a stroll along the banks of the picturesque St. John River -- all of these pastimes and more are featured in this special summer exhibit.

All of the Museum's programs, including our guided tours (in French or English) and childrens' educational classes, have been met with great success over the past months! Drop by and experience the Museum this coming fall and winter!.❀

Notes on Needs

Cleaning? moving?

The York-Sunbury Museum is always in need of a few things:

- card tables
- hot plate
- small microwave or toaster oven
- sandwich trays
- vacuum cleaner
- utensils: dishes (bowls, plates, cups) potted plants
- portable sewing machine
- ironing board
- hand iron
- Christmas tree stand
- coffee urn
- artifact reference books

. . . these items are needed for use rather than exhibit, but the Museum is always looking for artifacts as well! Remember, what you give wil likely be there for generations.❀

The Newsletter will be making an attempt to keep the membership posted on the activites of

York & Sunbury Counties Heritage News

The Newsletter will be making an attempt to keep the membership posted on the activites of other heritage organizations in York-Sunburty Region. As well, anything provincial that may be relevant to our heritage will also included. Even the occasional article of note from other heritage groups may be published.

Heritage Trust

The Heritage Trust has been successful in finding a new home for the Saltbox at Kings Landing. But more on the Trust in next issue as it will feature architectural preservation in central New Brunswick.❀

La Société histoire de la riviére Saint Jean

The Society is pushing forward with their proposal to re-build old Fort Nashwaak. This little, but very significant fort is coming up on its 300th anniversary in 1992 or 1993 depending if you take its start or completion date. Its remains should be located in the vicinity of the Irving Oil tanks or under the highway at the mouth of the Nashwaak River.

The society has elected a new executive at its annual general meeting: Président: Bernard-Marie Thériault; Vice-président: Fidèle Thériault; Trésorier: Agnez Hall; Président-sortant: Bernard Poirier; with Conseillers: Louise Bourgeois, Marc Bellefeuille, and Gabriel Bourgeois.❀

Help Needed!

When requested the Newsletter will publish requests for help on topics related to the Society's interests.

Letter from Vivian Wright, Co-Chair of the Marco Polo Historical Research Committee.

Part of the work of the Historical Committee of the Marco Polo Project is to trace the family of the builder of the ship, James Smith, and if possible to locate any living descendants.

One of James Smith's daughters, Chartlotte, married John Albert Venning and eventually moved to Sheffield, Sunbury County. I enclose what we know of the family so far.

Do you think any of your members might be able to assist us in gathering information? Are there cemetery records available for the Sheffield area? We know that the Smith family was Methodist, so presume the Venning family was as well. Exact dates of death are helpful because they enable us to locate the obituaries in the newspapers more quickly and these obituaries often contain valuable family information. We are hoping that decendants might still be living in the Sheffield area.

We would certainly appreciate any assistance any of your members might be able to give us in our search.

Charlotte: age given as 18 in 1851 Census (Saint John City, Kings Ward); 29 August 1849 - married John Albert Venning, merchant. Address given as 45 Orange Street in 1871 Directory. Family as listed in 1871 Census (Saint John City, Queens Ward, Division 2)

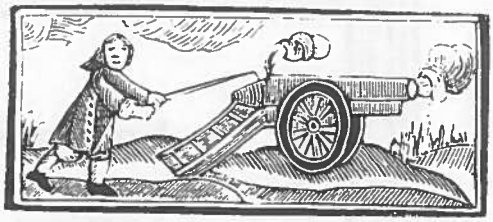
John A. Venning 45 Draper
Charlotte 38
Clara T. 19
Frank G. 17 Shop Clerk
Fred C. 15
Albert E. 13
Edith M. 8
Ella M. 6
Walter E. 4
Harry A. 2

The Vennings were living at Queen Square North in the 1894-95 Directory, and they later moved to Sheffield, Sunbury County. The 1903 Directory for New Brunswick lists:

Fred C. Venning- Farmer Upper Shefield
H. LeB. Venning- Farmer Upper Shefield
Walter Vennning-Farmer Upper Shefield

In 1945 a portrait of James Smith, builder of the Marco Polo, was given to the New Brunswick Museum from the Estate of his grandson, Harry LeB. Venning through Mr. Venning's sister, Mrs. R.W. Gilbert, RR #1, Maugerville, N.B.❀

The Last Word



This part of the newsletter is reserved for the Editor. The former occupant of this space has been promoted by Society members to the front. I now have the pleasure to try and keep the high standards in one of New Brunswick's most attractive heritage publications.

My background is as a prehistoric archaeologist, and as such I have a small confession to make. I used to think that the last four hundred years of history was pretty dull compared to the unknown thousands of years of earlier settlement. However, I have been humbled by accepting that even recent history can be just as engaging. It contains so many indicators of what we are that it too must be cared for and appreciated.

The heritage that we have in the York-Sunbury counties contains a lot of variety and interest. But our present times are changing very fast. Witness all the construction in Fredericton this summer. Heritage preservation is a big issue. The Saltbox House was finally saved by tearing it from context and moving it to Kings Landing. In the meantime, we have lost many, many other houses and heritage features of the region. In the next issue, I would like to examine heritage building preservation.

Heritage comes in many forms. Our Society has a museum and it contains a lot of artifacts, which are preserved through the care and special conditions our Society provides for these valuable pieces of history (see Brent Wilson's article and Peter Laroque's on some of the uses to which they can be put). But the work of the Society does not stop there. We have been charged by our founding members with a vision "To gather and preserve objects and traditions of historical interest in Central New Brunswick, especially York and Sunbury Counties, and to read and publish papers dealing with this section."

I am going to try and get more information about what's going on of concern heritage in central New Brunswick. I will even be getting in touch with other organizations in our region to keep abreast developments that relate to our heritage. I am also going to trying to ferret out what is going on in original research of whatever kind for this region, be it on photographs or geology. Some will even be published in these pages. Please also remember, the Society encourages its members to write articles on topics related to the Society mission.

In the meantime, I will get this newsletter back on time and try to keep Paul's excellent record; perhaps its my archaeological view of time that makes this issue so late.❀

Chris Turnbull

Up coming Society Events

- **19 October**
  Free Love in Jemseg
  David Bell