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The Capture of York

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The Capture of York*

by Charles W. Humphries

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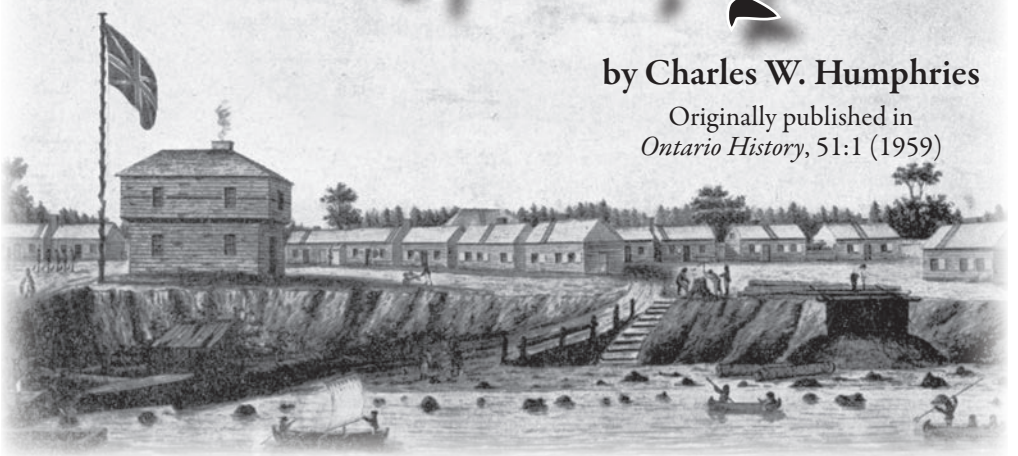


York Barracks, Upper Canada, May 13, 1804, as painted by Lt. Sempronius Stretton (Couresty of Library and Archives Canada).

As afternoon yielded to dusk on April 26, 1813, two figures could be discerned tramping the two-mile stretch of road that ran from York to the fort. They were Quartermaster Finan, of the Royal Newfoundland Regiment, and his son, who had been in York for the day.[1] A third person, Captain McNeale of the Grenadier Company of the 8th (King's) Regiment, hastened to catch up with them, and the trio continued toward the fort as the shadows lengthened. McNeale spoke of his plans for the next day and talked "confidently of being in Fort George, the next town, on a certain day, as if no untoward circumstance could intervene."[2]

In town, the rector of York, the Reverend Dr. John Strachan, having earlier performed the pleasant ministerial chore of marrying a young couple,[3] busied himself with the task of writing a letter to James Brown, a fellow clergyman. He complained that:

> owing to the mismanagement of our little Navy we lost the command of the Lake last summer, and shall not regain it till we procure good officers from England, those we have do not belong to the Royal Navy and not having seen service are without experience."[4] [He continued:]...

*Based on chapter II of the writer's thesis "Upper Canada in 1813", completed January 1959 as a requirement for the Master of Arts degree in the Department of Modern History, University of Toronto.

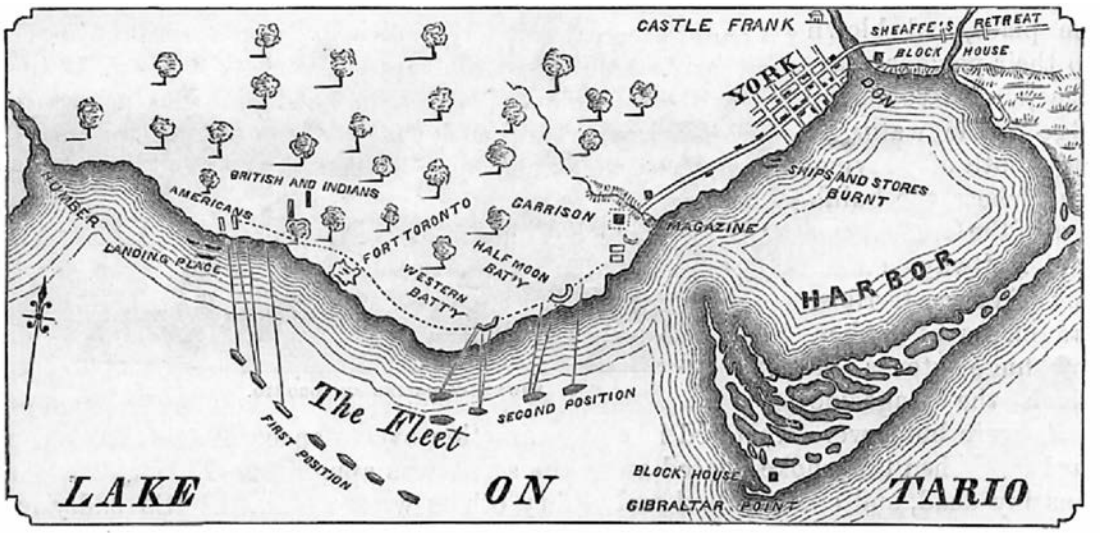
> this country cannot be defended, if we possess not the command of the Lakes. The weakness and imbecility of our Commander in Chief has produced all our defeats. We might have destroyed the enemies [sic] ships last winter but miserable forbearance and not vigour was at that time the order of the day. If this country fall Sir George Prevost and he only is to blame.[5]

In a bedroom of his large frame dwelling on the west side of Frederick Street, just south of King,[6] Prideaux Selby, the Receiver General of Upper Canada, lay mortally ill. John Hunter, the messenger of the House of Assembly, was occupied with the job of stoking up the stove in the office of the Clerk of the Assembly. Before long, Hunter would be asleep in this office where he had spent every night during the winter months.[7]

The normal routine of the little town was soon shattered by an alarming discovery. From the Scarborough bluffs, someone had sighted the American fleet to the east of York.[8] By the time McNeale and his friends reached the fort, all was bustle and activity.[9] The signal gun was fired to summon the militia to York and to battle. At his home in Markham township, Matthias Saunders, sometime ship builder and owner, knew that something was amiss in York when he heard that gun booming out its alarm across the farms and fields. He quickly set out for the fort and his place, as a private in John Willson's company of the First Regiment of York Militia.[10] Behind him, Saunders left a wife and six children.[11]

Ely Playter, a lieutenant in the Third Regiment of York Militia, had just arrived home from the fort. He was soon summoned from his farm near the Don at the request of Major William Allan of the Third York Regiment, otherwise a leading merchant and postmaster of the capital. He hurried down to York to find both the troops and militia busy preparing—and sending out—guards and patrols.[12] He set out to find Major Givins—the local official of the Indian Department—in order to obtain the assistance of the Indians in preparing the defences. Playter located him with Maj.-Gen. Sir Roger Hale Sheaffe, Brock's successor as commander of the forces in Upper Canada and as civil administrator at the Government House. Sheaffe, refusing to be overly alarmed by the appearance of the enemy, was confident that they would wait till sunrise before commencing any action. He told Playter to sleep at the Government House until morning, when there would be sufficient time to organize to resist the attack.[13]

In the dark of that night, the pace of activity quickened in the little town. Donald McLean, the Clerk of the House of Assembly, made a hurried trip to John McGill's home. He removed from there, in its owner's absence, the papers pertaining to the office, which McGill held: Inspector General of Public Provincial Accounts.[14]



Map of York in Benson J. Lossing's Pictorial Field-Book of the War of 1812 *(1869).*

At Sheaffe's behest Chief Justice Thomas Scott and Justice William Dummer Powell—like Selby and McGill members of the Executive Council—hastened to the house where Prideaux Selby lay in a state of insensibility. The public money, amounting to £3.109.1.8$^{3/4}$,[15] which was at the Receiver General's, was uppermost in their minds.[16] Determined that the Americans should have none of it, they counselled Mrs. Derenzy, Selby's daughter, to remove this sum to a safer place. Mrs. Derenzy agreed to this. However, before sending off an iron chest, containing the government funds, to a place of safe-keeping, Mrs. Derenzy removed a portion of it, supposedly six hundred dollars.[17] This she put in a smaller iron container along with the public papers. The latter receptacle was then trundled off to Donald McLean's, since it was supposed that no one would suspect the Clerk of the Assembly of having much ready cash.[18] The larger strong-box was secreted elsewhere.

William Warren Baldwin, York's practitioner in both law and medicine, fretted about what would happen to his valuables should the Americans land. His home at the corner of Frederick and Front Streets, was next to the dockyards where a 30-gun ship was on the stocks; consequently his property was a likely mark for any pillager.[19] Having hit upon a plan, he bundled up his silverware and someone's black silk gown and sent them out of town to a friend's barn. There, he was confident, they would be out of danger.[20]

To the east of the town, at the head of the bay of York, were quartered Captain Eustace's company of the 8th (King's) Regiment and some of the York militia. They were left there to forestall any American

attempt on that flank.[21] The balance of Sheaffe's regulars, slightly over two hundred in number, were at the fort located on the triangular knoll which rose between Garrison Creek and the lakeshore; thus situated across from the western tip of the peninsula, it effectively commanded the entrance to the harbour. Yet though its location may have been ideal its defences were not. Despite Brock's complaint about the state of the post in 1811 only a stone magazine had been constructed in the interim, lack of supplies preventing further improvements. And the number of troops was never large; even the chance arrival of some of the 8th Regiment only increased the strength of the regulars at York to 300 men.

Uneasily the troubled town waited for the dawn. By four a.m. John Strachan was out of bed and, getting dressed, he was soon mounted up and almost eagerly looking for an excitement-filled day.[22] In the gray light he could discern the ships of Commodore Isaac Chauncey's American fleet, some fourteen in number, lying close to the south shore of the peninsula in front of the town.[23] The ship *Madison* of 28 guns, the brig *Oneida* of eighteen guns, and twelve schooners, of from three to nine guns each,[24] held about 1,700 soldiers, in addition to an undetermined number of marines.[25]

For the assault upon Fort York was a major American operation and was under the supreme command of Major-General Henry Dearborn. Some 4,000 men had been assembled at Sackett's Harbour for an attack upon Kingston and York, the hope being that the capture of the two British naval bases on Lake Ontario would also allow Chauncey to win control of that vital body of water. The original plan had been to direct the attack against Kingston, but early in April Dearborn had become convinced that Prevost had reinforced the Kingston naval base with several thousand British regulars—a completely unfounded belief. Consequently he had decided to shift his attentions to York, a far less formidable enterprise but one that was not without its merits. If the vessel under construction in the dockyards could be destroyed and if the *Prince Regent,* the vessel of the Provincial Marine stationed at York, could be captured, the effect upon the British lake squadron would be most serious. In any event, since York was the capital of the upper province, some prestige at least was to be gained by its capture.

As the sun began to take a firm hold on the day, a fresh breeze sprang up from the east. The American ships weighed anchor and sailed for a position to the west of the fort. Shortly, they came to anchor off the point where old Fort Rouille had once stood, a little more than a mile west of the fort.[26]

Waiting on shore to see what the next enemy move would be, Sheaffe had another opportunity

to assess his strength. He had a handful of regulars—two companies of the 8th (King's) Regiment, one of them under McNeale, about a full company of the Royal Newfoundland Regiment, a company of the Glengarry Light Infantry, a bombardier and twelve gunners of the Royal Artillery—the nearly three hundred York militiamen, a few dockyard workers, and one hundred Indians under Major Givins. In all, he had no more than 700 soldiers at his disposal.[27]

As eight o'clock approached, Sheaffe could see a considerable number of small boats gathering near the *Madison*.[28] Taking his first concrete defensive step, he ordered the regular troops—except for Eustace's company, which was still to the east—into the ravine to the west of the fort. Major Givins and his Indians were sent into the woods, west of Fort Rouille, to oppose the enemy landing.[29] The company of Glengarry Light Infantry was directed to support them. The lateness of this order considerably piqued Strachan and partially accounted for his feelings toward Sheaffe when this day was over.[30] However, there was little else that Sheaffe could do but wait and allow the enemy the first move. The poverty of his force denied him any opportunity of placing it in some sort of lengthy line of defence. As a consequence, he had to let the Americans come to him. Strachan, who offered no alternative scheme, never forgave Sheaffe for his wait-and-see attitude.

The militia failed to arrive on time in the ravine because of a general tardiness, probably the result of hesitancy about doing battle. This made it necessary for Sheaffe to send out the Grenadier Company of the 8th Regiment, under McNeale, and the Royal Newfoundland Regiment to aid Givins' group.[31] Such an order saved the bulk of the 1st and 3rd York Regiments from encountering the enemy in any real engagement. Instead it was the Grenadier Company, which found itself up against the landing Americans. As a result, the mettle of the militia never received a real test, and most of them were able to harvest the summer crops because they never fought the Americans that day.

The second company of the 8th, under Captain Eustace, with some of the militia, was ordered to come up to the assistance of the rest of the troops.[32] Aeneas Shaw, Adjutant General of the militia, led part of his force on to the Dundas Road, north of the woods, in order to protect the rear of the troops who were engaged. Shaw contributed to the success of the American landing by taking the Glengarry company with him on this project. Instead, the Glengarry Light Infantry should have been the first group to advance to the side of Givins and his Indians.[33] This piece of bungling and the general slowness of the militia meant that when the Americans, taken off course by the east wind, landed above Fort Rouille and

nearly two miles west of the fort, they were opposed initially by the Indians alone, who were only supported by the Grenadiers of the 8th and the Royal Newfoundland Regiment. These British regulars, still unused to the terrain, found the woods a hindrance to both travel and battle.

As the American advance group, comprised of riflemen under Major Forsyth,[34] approached the shore, there were only Indians present to open fire upon them. The enemy soon succeeded in establishing a beachhead. The Grenadiers hurriedly came up to help the Indians, but the now-reinforced Americans held their position and began to cut into the numbers of McNeale's company. McNeale himself fell,[35] and Donald McLean, the Clerk of the House of Assembly who had volunteered with the 8th that morning, was mortally wounded on the shore.[36]

On the march, but still over two miles to the east, Captain Eustace's company heard the firing and increased its pace.[37] Seven miles east of town, Ely Playter's group of 3rd York militiamen, vainly looking for Americans from that quarter, caught the sounds of the early firing and hastened back toward York on the double.[38] Within half an hour, the American troops had driven back the Indians, Grenadiers and Newfoundlanders and had firmly established themselves, despite several rallies staged by the British under the personal direction of Sheaffe. By ten o'clock, over a thousand American soldiers were on shore and Brigadier-General Zebulon Pike, the noted explorer, assumed command.[39] Fewer than two hundred British regulars had been on hand to oppose this landing.

Once the American troops were on shore, Commodore Chauncey ordered his ships to make sail into the bay, against a steady east wind.[40] On shore, part of the battered 8th made its way to the fort for medical aid. Chauncey then commenced a fire both upon the western battery— about half-way between Fort Rouille and Fort York—and the fort itself.[41] To cope with the ever-increasing fire from the American vessels— which were now located nearly on a line between the point of the peninsula and Fort York—the British had only three twelve-pounders and two semi-obsolete eighteen-pounders.[42]

What was left of the Grenadier company rallied around the western battery to meet the oncoming enemy. Disaster continued to stalk them: the battery's travelling magazine was accidentally ignited and, in the explosion which followed, about thirty-five men, principally Grenadiers, were killed and wounded.[43] The battery platform was ripped apart by the force of the blast and one of the eighteen-pounders was overturned. Despite the ensuing confusion, the travelling magazine was replaced and sporadic firing was continued from this point.[44] However, the western

battery could no longer serve as a point of defence, and the loss of so many men made it highly doubtful that Sheaffe could withstand the Americans at any place.

The pounding by the American vessels, which went almost unanswered, was beginning to take its toll. Six American ships were now directly opposite the fort and pouring in a heavy bombardment.[45] An attempt was made to rally the militia at the fort's guardhouse but the enemy fire became so heavy that this group was forced to hide under the cover of the fort's battery. The guns at Fort York were attempting to answer the American fire but their range was too short and the balls fell harmlessly into York Bay.[46]

Many of the militia, on the scene for the first time, seemed finally ready for battle. An effort was made to form them up in the hollow next to the garrison. Some did organize, but they were more than discouraged in this work to find the tired and beaten British regulars passing by them on their way to town.[47]

By this time, since he found his position untenable, Sheaffe had made his decision. He was scarcely able to reply to the ships' barrage and, although it had done little damage thus far, it would be foolish to suppose that it could remain ineffective much longer. He had seen one company of the 8th virtually wiped out and the heavy casualties of the other regular troops. A fight could be made at the fort, but the fire of the American vessels would probably weaken it first, and then the American troops would ultimately topple the fort by sheer weight of number if nothing else. What was to be gained by such a fight? Obviously nothing; York would be lost, and much more, further casualties would be sustained, and the military and civil leader of Upper Canada would probably become an American prisoner. A further stand by Sheaffe might have been quite heroic and in the finest tradition, but it would have been too costly and would have gained nothing. The die was cast for Sheaffe: he would retreat to Kingston and take with him those regulars still capable of performing the march.[48]

Sheaffe refused to allow the advancing Americans to have anything that could be demolished. He gave the order to have the grand magazine blown up.[49] Apparently this command was not general knowledge and, as this order was being executed, Ely Playter busied himself inside the fort, picking up his coat and advising the female cook to leave as the Americans were almost upon them.[50] Matthias Saunders, also inside the post, struggled with a portable magazine that had served the twelve-pounder at which he had been stationed.[51] He was eager to carry it off so that the Americans would have one less prize to claim. John Basil, the doorkeeper to the Legislative Council, was really too old for war, but he had gamely vol-

unteered with the 3rd York that morning. His legs failed to keep him up with the rest of the retreating group and he lingered near the post.[52]

Six hundred feet to the east of the fort, Pike led an eagerly advancing American force.[53] The roar of the exploding magazine ripped the air apart, and then came the destruction. Stones filled the air; small ones bounced along the ground and large ones plummeted to earth and half-buried themselves. Pike, struck on the head by one of the flying stones, fell mortally wounded. In the American 6th Regiment alone, thirteen were killed by the explosion and 104 wounded in varying degrees. As well, the 15th and 16th American Regiments suffered considerably.[54] On the British side, Captain Loring, Sheaffe's aide-decamp, had his horse killed underneath him.[55] Saunders had his leg shattered by a large stone.[56] Old Basil received wounds both in the head and knee.[57] Joseph Shepard, a private in the 3rd York, dropped with a badly mangled left thigh and three broken ribs on his left side.[58] It was now about twelve o'clock.

It has been stated that about one hundred regulars were killed or wounded; by this explosion.[59] Obviously this is not an accurate accounting of the results of this blast, but some damage was done to the British side. It appears to have been the militia who suffered and were exposed to the greatest risk. It can thus be concluded that, although the regulars were ordered out of the area prior to the detonation, the militia were uninformed. Possibly, Sheaffe underestimated the probable dimensions of the explosion when he gave his order. There seems to have been no thought, on Sheaffe's part, of crippling the enemy by this move, although he accidentally did so. Rather, the concern was to eliminate the possibility of valuable stores falling into their hands.

Following the explosion, the bulk of the American force came to an abrupt halt to take stock of the situation, but a few riflemen advanced to the fort and fired a few shots at the retreating regulars and militia. For many of the militia this was their first sight of the Americans and the only time that they were subjected to any sort of rifle fire.[60] The disorganized British withdrew to the dockyards in town where, after further consultation between Sheaffe and his officers, the retreat to Kingston began. John Beikie, the sheriff of York, in writing of Sheaffe's departure, described the position of the residents and militia left behind when he noted that the regulars "left us all standing in the street, like a parcel of sheep."[61]

With the regulars gone, the arranging of a surrender and terms of capitulation was left in the hands of the leading militia officers. Captain J. B. Robinson and Major William Allan set out for the American line with a flag of truce and returned to announce that they had

been ordered by the Americans to come back in fifteen minutes.[62] In the meantime, Ely Playter and his militia group, moving towards the town, encountered a regular officer who had turned back on Sheaffe's orders. This band went to the shipyard and fired the new vessel on the stocks and the marine stores.[63] At two in the afternoon, the Union Jack was lowered at the fort and the Stars and Stripes replaced it.[64]

Behind, Sheaffe left sixty-two regulars killed and seventy-six wounded.[65] Forty-five of the killed and forty-nine of the wounded were in the 8th Regiment. "... a few of the Indians (Missisagus & Chipeways [sic]) were killed and wounded, among the latter were two Chiefs."[66] The record of the citizens of York is hardly impressive when placed next to that of the regulars. Ensign John Detlor of the 3rd York had his leg badly shattered and an amputation became necessary; he lost much blood both before and after the operation and died the day after the engagement.[67] Private Daniel Murray, 3rd York, was killed during the battle.[68] As has been noted, Matthias Saunders had his leg badly injured by the explosion of the grand magazine; an amputation followed, and he clung to life for close to a month before dying on May 25.[69] Donald McLean, a volunteer, fell at the beach.[70] John Basil never fully recovered from the concussion he received when the grand magazine exploded and died during the summer.[71]

Thus, five Upper Canadians died while fighting for Upper Canada, two of them as a result of the explosion of the grand magazine and not in actual combat. An equal number were wounded: William Jarvie, William Jarvis, Joseph Shepard, Patrick Hartney and Andrew Borland.[72] One of these had been injured when the grand magazine blew up. These figures dispel any visions of large losses by the militia, which, in this case, was defending its own land and town. Although there are no accurate figures for Indian losses during this contest, it is fairly safe to assume—on the basis of other battles where both Indians and militia participated—that the Indian casualties were probably just as severe as the Upper Canadian.

Now came the problem of working out a capitulation with the Americans. William Chewett, a lieutenant-colonel of the 3rd York, and William Allan, a major in the same regiment, met with Col. Mitchell, of the 3rd Artillery of the U.S. Army, and Major King, of the 15th U.S. Infantry, in Mr. Crookshank's house on Front Street to detail the terms. J.B. Robinson was on hand to assist from a legal standpoint, and John Strachan hovered over the entire group like York's guardian angel.[73] The American discovery that the ship on the stocks and the naval stores were on fire held up negotiations for a time. The United States officers looked upon this as a dishon-

est act, undertaken by the Canadians while the talks were in progress.[74] However, since this order from Sheaffe had been executed by a group of the militia who had no knowledge of the capitulation talks, the Americans took no action. In any event, it seems likely that these stores had been fired before the discussion began. By four in the afternoon, the capitulation terms had been agreed upon, subject to ratification by Chauncey and Dearborn.[75]

It was agreed that the regular and militia troops should surrender as prisoners of war and that the naval and military stores at York should be given up to the Americans. In return, the Americans guaranteed the safety of the private property of York citizens and the security of the civil papers of the province. In addition, any doctors attending the wounded regulars and militia would not be considered prisoners of war.[76] While these talks were in progress, some of the militia who did not intend to be taken prisoners had time to stop at Jordan's Inn, on Front Street, for a quick drink before they travelled north to avoid capture and parole.[77]

Upon completion of the terms of capitulation. Major Allan was made a prisoner of war. Because Allan had been under a flag of truce, Strachan was infuriated and, martyr-like, he accompanied Allan to the centre of town in the middle of an enemy column.[78] There is little doubt that Strachan was glorying in this situation and his vocation meant that the Americans could do little with him. In town, the militia who were present were busy grounding their arms.[79] Some were doing this quite willingly.

Isaac Wilson, writing home to his brother, described the scene in York: "It struck my mind very forcibly the evening after the battle was over to see men who two hours before were doing their utmost to kill one another now convening together with the greatest familiarity. In the evening all seemed as settled and quiet in York as if nothing had happened."[80]

At dusk, the Americans left for the fort, except for Forsyth's rifle corps which stayed on as guards.[81] Wilson noted: "In the night they put a sentry over every store but they could not keep the inhabitants from it who made shameful work in some peoples houses."[82] As shall be seen, he was very much mistaken in what he said.

With the battle over, John Hunter returned to Donald McLean's office and

> found the enemy in possession of the House of Assembly whence they took... [Hunter's] chest, in which was the sum of one hundred and fifty dollars in army bills, and wearing apparel, books, and other small property. They likewise took a pair of blankets... the amount of which property, exclusive of the bills, was at a very moderate valuation twenty-nine dollars...[83]

Thus, before this eventful day

was out, some Americans had found their way from the fort to the House of Assembly on Front Street. However, the bulk of the looting was done on the 28th and 29th of April.

On Wednesday, the 28th, John Strachan went forward to a full day of badgering and verbal sniping. He met Major King at Prideaux Selby's and immediately assailed him on the subject of Major Allan's capture and the matter of the non-ratification of the terms of capitulation by the American commanders, Chauncey and Dearborn.[84] At King's instigation the two men went to Fort York where the American officer in command, Colonel Pierce, was powerless to do anything about ratification. At the post, the captured militia were being kept in the blockhouse without food, and the wounded had had no attention.[85] Pierce ordered food for the prisoners as the wrath of the rector increased.

Since the militia were still unparoled, Strachan demanded that he be taken on board the *Madison* to see Dearborn. However, Dearborn came ashore shortly, and Strachan, charging into the fray, met him and handed him the articles of capitulation for his signature. Strachan followed this with a demand for the parole of the militia and for permission to remove the wounded. Dearborn, his patience running short, told Strachan to leave him alone. The minister, never daunted, searched out Chauncey and told him in no uncertain terms that if the capitulation terms were not signed he would infer that it was a plot designed to give the riflemen time to loot, for the clause about respecting private property meant nothing while the articles remained unsigned. Strachan informed Chauncey that he would not permit this to happen, then his dire threat uttered, he turned on his heel and stalked away from the American naval commander.[86] It is difficult at this point to understand precisely who had won, and who had lost, in the battle of the previous day.

Word reached Dearborn of Strachan's statement to Chauncey,[87] and to this Strachan attributed Dearborn's sudden appearance and the fact that he now signed the terms of capitulation in an amicable fashion. It is doubtful that Dearborn was actually giving in to Strachan. More likely, it was an act to be performed by Dearborn when it suited his purpose or he had the time. It was now possible to parole the officers and men in the blockhouse and it meant that the wounded could be removed from the fort and cared for.

This incident should not be brushed aside as merely an example of the Anglican minister's pomposity. It had deeper implications. Strachan had stood up to the Americans; he had been British. Here we have one source of his later, and greater, status. He had been present when the Americans had captured York and had not been cowed by the Yankee repub-

licans. He had taken charge—or, at least, given the impression of doing this—when British authority had seemed to be disappearing with the retreating Sheaffe. After the war, he was to take charge in very real fashion in the form of the Family Compact. He had tasted power here, albeit the power of the vanquished, and he had liked it. Had he, in time of defeat, established himself for the next twenty-five years? Had he, by his actions, established some of those vague rules that governed entry into the Family Compact?

On Thursday, the 29th,[88] the leading citizens of York had their memories jogged about the terms of capitulation by Major King. He reminded them that the articles necessitated the surrender of the public money in their possession and, if this was not done, the town would have to make up the difference.[89] John Strachan, Chief Justice Scott, Dummer Powell, Major Allan and Duncan Cameron held a quick consultation and deemed it wise to hand over to the enemy the money which had been removed from Selby's home the night before the attack.[90] The enemy was given £2,144.11.4 ($8,578. 1s. 4d.) in army bills which was turned over to Captain Armstrong, of the U.S. Infantry, by the busy rector on behalf of Colonel Chewett and Major Allan.[91]

Outside of this episode, Strachan, with W.W. Baldwin, spent the remainder of the day removing the sick and wounded from the fort to the hospital.[92] North of town—near the Don River—as dusk was coming on, Ely Playter, who was determined not to be paroled, squatted in the woods near his farm and watched some American troops break down the door of his home and loot it.[93]

Strachan wrote that on Friday "the Govt. buildings [were] on fire, contrary to the articles of capitulation."[94] This notation leads into two major problems that were created by this period of occupation. Who burned the parliament buildings located on Front Street? Who did most of the looting which, by some accounts, was deemed to be extensive?

The burning of the parliament buildings is probably the more difficult question to answer. It is a fact that the American troops were in these buildings sometime during their stay at York. It is also known that they took some loot from them, including that old conversation piece, a scalp. Except for the mention of the scalp, American accounts are vague on this subject or fail to note it. Later, Dearborn vigorously denied that he had ever given any order to fire these buildings.[95]

Recently, Milo Quaife took a thorough look at this problem[96] and, after a searching examination of documents and historical works, came to this conclusion:

> To sum up:... Save for the military works and the Parliament houses, no single building was destroyed in the town. No local

> contemporary charge was made that the Americans fired the Parliament houses, and such evidence as exists points strongly to the conclusion that the act was perpetrated by the Canadians themselves. Insofar as the destruction committed at Washington was based upon alleged prior American destruction at York, it was without justification. Finally, it is far from creditable to the American historical profession that for two generations its foremost spokesmen have been content to repeat, in more or less, detail, the amazingly untrue statements of Henry Adams and John B. McMaster concerning the conduct of the American army at York, without troubling to examine for themselves the abundant and easily available contemporary evidence.[97]

Despite his detailed work, Quaife is wrong.

Four local contemporary accounts *do* make the charge that the Americans burned the parliament buildings. The first of these is a letter from John Beikie, the sheriff of York, to his brother-in-law in Prescott. Beikie, who was in a position to know what really happened, made a very definite statement on this subject. What makes his statement important is that it was contained in a private letter, which was not to be used for any polemic purpose. There would be no need to stretch the truth, whereas later declarations, used to arouse either controversy or patriotism, might be very suspect. Beikie wrote:

> They [the Americans] have burnt the Government House, two block houses, a barrack for soldiers, and other buildings. They have broken every door and window in the Council Office, which was Elmsby [Elmsley] House, and a schooner belonging to an inhabitant of York. They have carried off the "Gloucester," which was undergoing repairs, and was to be converted into a transport, being too old for a ship-of-war. The new ship on the stocks we burnt ourselves, for otherwise, I dare say, they would have done it.[98]

In his diary for April 30, Ely Playter wrote: "The Town thronged with Yankies many busy getting off the publick [sic] stores the Council office with every Window Broke & pillaged of everything it contained the Government Building the Block House and the Building adjacent all burned to ashes... "[99] Playter's statement is almost identical to the first half of the quotation from Beikie's letter. By implication he is laying the damages done at the door of the Americans. Besides, if the Americans were burning government property and carrying off stores, why should not these buildings fall within their range of activities?

However, the cases against the Americans does not end here. In two letters, appearing in successive issues in the *Kingston Gazette,* there are further statements on this question. Both of these pieces of correspondence were written when the Americans showed alarm in June of 1813 over the proximity

of the British fleet to Washington:

> We are not surprised at the 'anxiety, bustle and alarm,' created by this approach to the Capital of the United States, when the barbarian conduct of the Americans is recollected in burning the Houses of Legislature, Courts, and Public Records, in their late occupation of York; and a private dwelling was sacrificed in the same manner, because it once had been a Government House [the writer is probably referring to Elmsley House]...[100]
>
> ... They [the Americans at York], it is true, entered into a formal stipulation not only that private property should be respected, but that papers belonging to the Civil Departments of the Government should not be removed or destroyed. Yet the first object they selected for depredation was the Printing Office. They broke and otherwise destroyed the Press; carried off or rendered useless the Types; and burned a large number of Copies of the Provincial Statutes that had been recently printed for general distribution. They then pillaged the Public Subscription Library kept at Elmsley House, carried away a great part of the Books, and did great injury to the house itself. And, to crown all, before they reembarked they set fire to the two houses erected for the accomodation of our Provincial Legislature and Courts of Justice, which... were neat and substantial buildings, and had been erected and fitted up at an expence of several thousand pounds. These with the Offices containing all the Journals, a large collection of Books and other appendages connected with such an establishment, were all consumed by the flames; and the bare walls alone remain, a monument of the Gothic ferocity and worse than Punic faith of our enemies.
>
> Of these exploits no notice has been taken in the States. They are not attended to in the dispatches of General Dearborn or Commodore Chauncy [sic]; though the latter, in order perhaps to vindicate what he is yet ashamed to avow, condescends to state in his dispatch, that "in the House of Assembly a Scalp had been found appended to the Mace," a most palpable falsehood, calculated for the prejudices of the most violent and ignorant only; and which it is impossible that he or any other man of common sense could believe.
>
> That they should have been silent on a subject so little to their honor is not surprising[101]

Considering the reason for the writing of these two letters, it is interesting to note that, already, a reason for burning Washington had been created, although this did not occur until the following year.

The other charges against the American troops at York, except for the one pertaining to the burning of the parliament buildings, can be verified from a variety of accounts, including American ones, apart from these four. Why, then, should their statements about the parliament building be questioned? If it

was common knowledge that the Americans were responsible for this act why would there be any need of propagating a commonly accepted fact? The people of York passed on little knowledge of the affair precisely because they knew all about it. Any argument that anyone, other than American soldiers, burned the parliament buildings is pure conjecture, which cannot be substantiated by a solitary fact. What facts there are support the case against the Americans.

The question of looting is dealt with in a little-used group of volumes containing the War of 1812 claims for losses now in the Public Archives of Canada. Out of the total population of 625,[102] twenty-two York residents deemed the damage sufficient to enter claims for their losses. As well, one person living beyond the town limits lost possessions to the pillagers.[103] Judging from the character and size of some of the claims it would be safe to assume that everyone who suffered entered claims for losses. Of the twenty-three persons, thirteen had their homes or places of residence entered and looted;[104] five had their stores robbed;[105] two lost their carpenter's tools at the dockyards;[106] two suffered livestock losses;[107] and one had a schooner burned by the Americans.[108] As has been noted, the Americans also destroyed the York printing press and looted the public library. Over 2,200 claims, some of them inadmissible, were entered for losses during the entire war. Thus, just a shade over one percent are for losses sustained when the Americans landed at York.

Who did this looting? Most of the claims are quite specific. Mary Marshall was the housekeeper at Elmsley House, the office of the Executive Council at the corner of King and Simcoe Streets, and was present when it was plundered by the Americans. They took £50 worth of silver articles as well as kitchen utensils, bedding, and wearing apparel belonging to her. In addition, the Americans also stole the baggage belonging to Sheaffe and Brock, and government stores kept there.[109] Patrick Hartney, wounded in guiding the 8th Regiment to the attack, had his home looted by the Americans to the extent of £40.[110] James Givins, who had departed from York with the retreating British, left behind a wife and seven children in their frame house at the head of what is today Givins Street. Their home was pillaged by the Americans. Some of these soldiers were stopped in the course of their looting by William Dummer Powell and Powell took Angelica Givins to Dearborn to ask for protection for herself, her family, and her property. Dearborn informed her that it was not in his power to protect her in her own house, and he recommended that she should take refuge with a citizen of York and not return home. Undeterred, Mrs. Givins went to Strachan's house for the man who had stood up to the American invaders but Strachan soon found out from

Dearborn that it was beyond the general's power to guarantee protection to any persons connected with the Indians. The abandoned house was thoroughly plundered by the Americans.[111]

John Small, clerk to the Executive Council, had his home entered and some silver items taken by the troops.[112] John Dennison lost his Regimental sword, bedding and family clothing to the Americans.[113] Elizabeth Andrews[114] and Jordan Post[115] suffered minor losses at American hands. Grant Powell, who was an acting surgeon of the Marine Department and in the field with the forces at the time of the landing, had his home entered and plundered by the enemy. They took household furniture, bed and table linen, kitchen utensils, silverware, wearing apparel, books and Powell's medical instruments; his total loss was £100. John Beikie, Powell's next-door neighbour on Front Street, saw the Americans take possession of the house on April 27th, and they retained possession of the house during their entire stay at York. After the enemy soldiers abandoned the House, Beikie rescued several articles from the hands of Canadian plunderers who were taking away what was left once the Yankees were gone.[116]

William Shaw had his home looted of small items by the Americans.[117] Ely Playter, who had just sent his family to Newmarket for safety, was preparing to remove his household valuables when the Americans approached the farm house. Forced to flee, he watched them pillage his home and take some army bills, his sword, a set of razors, a powder horn, a shot pouch, a box of jewellery and some wearing apparel.[118] Edward McMahon, secretary to Sheaffe, had his home plundered by the Americans to the sum of £70.[119] Henry Brown, messenger to Sheaffe, lost £37 worth of personal and household items.[120] John Hunter's loss has already been mentioned.

Among the store owners, Quetton St. George and William Allan suffered the most severely. St. George lost £173.9 worth of goods, ranging from a 890 pound hogshead of sugar to one piece of Russian shirting and eight pounds of sewing silk. This was taken by the Americans on the 27th and 28th.[121] The Americans looted Allan's storehouse on the 28th, while he was at the garrison busy taking care of the wounded soldiers and militia men. They took shot, soap, two barrels of Jamaica spirits and other items. Near sundown, Allan saw them carting away several boxes from his storehouse to the place where they were collecting their plunder. He immediately went to one of the senior American officers and remonstrated about this looting which, he pointed out, was contrary to the terms of capitulation. The American replied that there was ammunition in his store which was always considered lawful booty, whether private property or not. This rule did not cover the

rum and soap but, nevertheless, they too went missing.[122]

Thomas Deary, another merchant, lost tobacco, hams, and liquor to the Americans. He entered his store while the soldiers were running amok and finally persuaded them to leave but, to his sorrow, they left the taps open on two casks of liquor, and the precious liquid served only to season the floor beneath.[123] John S. Baldwin, who had yet to set up shop in York, had a hogshead of loaf sugar in St. George's store and this went with the Americans.[124] The contents of Donald McArthur's store helped ease the parched throats of the U.S. troops when they lugged away from it a thirty-eight gallon barrel of whiskey, along with some linen, soap, coffee and chocolate.[125]

Joseph Grenette's clothes and a complete set of carpenter's tools were taken from the York docks by the Americans before the eyes of a witness.[126] Joshua Leach lost his set of tools at the same time, but the philanthropic Americans turned them over to another York inhabitant.[127] Two farmers sustained losses: British Indians, hungry from the day's battle, killed seven cattle on one farm,[128] and the Americans stole a horse from another.[129]

Joseph Hendrick, proud owner of the schooner, the *Governor Hunter,* saw his possession go up in flames at the hands of the enemy. However, Dearborn eased his loss by leaving him £300 out of the public money, which the Americans had acquired. This sum was delivered to him by the Chief Justice, Thomas Scott.[130]

This, then, is the extent of the losses sustained by the York citizenry. Is there any pattern to it? In many of these cases, empty houses—apparently considered fair game by the looters—were entered and pillaged. The remainder of the sufferers, with the exception of the store-owners, were either connected with the government or lost personal items on government property. People, like John Strachan, Alexander Wood, W. W. Baldwin, Elizabeth Russell, and Dummer Powell, who stayed with their homes, were not bothered. One writer noted at that time:

> I kept my Castle, when all the rest fled; and it was well for us I did so,—our little property was saved by that means. Every house they found deserted was completely sacked. We have lost a few things, which were carried off before our faces; but as we expected to lose all, we think ourselves well off.[131]

With the exception of Grant Powell's house, there is no mention of Canadians participating in the looting of private homes, or, for that matter, government property. Why, then, does Quaife state: "The article guaranteeing the sanctity of private property was violated to some extent by the Americans, and to a greater extent, probably, by criminal or disloyal Canadians."?[132] In doing this, he is merely reiterating an oft-repeated charge.

The answer to the question of

why Canadians were suspected of looting seems to lie in finding out who ultimately obtained possession of some of these government stores and private property. A lead to providing a solution to this problem lies in the statements of two contemporary writers:

> There was a large quantity of farming utensils which were sent by the Gov't which were sent for the use of settlers in this country. The authorities would not allow these to be given out except to favorites. The Americans distributed these generally to all settlers so their visit to York was very useful in this respect.[133]
>
> I really attribute this visit to the vengeance of heaven on this place, for the quantities of stores, farming utensils, etc., sent from England... were allowed to remain in the King's stores, and nothing of them did they ever get. Now, our enemies have them, to do with them as they please.[134]

These statements explain the necessity of Sheaffe's proclamation of June 4, 1813:

> Whereas it is made highly penal by various Statutes to retain possession of Public Stores and property of the Crown, by whatever means it may come into the hands of the possessor, unless through the channels pointed out by Law—And whereas it has been represented to me that large quantities of Public Stores, the property of the Crown, are actually in the hands of divers of his Majesty's Subjects not duly authorized to be possessed thereof—I have thought proper, by and with the advice of His Majesty's Executive Council, for the affairs of the Province, to issue my Proclamation, calling upon all persons so possessed of Public Stores, the property of the Crown, forthwith to restore the same to the Sheriff of the District in which they may reside, or to some person appointed by me to receive and take charge of the same...[135]

It is a fact that some Canadians did obtain a quantity of public stores from the Americans as gifts.[136] It would seem that the occupying army did what many such armies had done before, and have done since: they attempted to befriend or, perhaps, bribe the populace. Thus Canadians came into possession of goods, primarily government ones, that had been looted by the Americans. The settlers, some of them in difficult straits and some of them ex-Americans,[137] took what was given to them without asking any questions. In any age, how many people have done otherwise? The Americans looted York, not a motley crowd of pro-republican Canadians. The Canadians have to be characterized as the often-willing recipients of stolen goods. Sheaffe's phrase—"by whatever means it may come into the hands of the possessor, unless through the channels pointed out by Law"—substantiates this interpretation.

At the same time, this does not ignore the fact that there were some Canadians, predominantly ex-Americans with dubious loyalties, who, seeing a reward for their efforts, pointed out good places for

plundering.[138] Thus, Allan McLean was able to state: "the Enemy were joined by a number of Vagabonds who gave them every information."[139] However, most of this group were prompted more by the thoughts of the booty to be given them, than by any dark designs in the direction of overthrowing the government.[140]

Undoubtedly, the activities of some Canadians led the magistrates of York to meet on April 30 and issue a proclamation designed to prevent anarchy. This document insisted that, despite the occupation, no change had taken place in the relation of the subject to the government and the law of Britain. It also pointed out that it was still high treason to aid the enemy in any way and that the powers of the magistrates continued to exist. As well, it noted that private property could not be subjected to looting.[141]

There was good reason for this meeting because the criminal element of any society has a fine opportunity to run wild in the course of such a disruption as an enemy invasion. The laws of the country must be kept in force in order to prevent outbreaks of lawlessness. Also, the meeting was probably prompted by the fact that, already, public and private goods were sifting through into the hands of eagerly waiting Canadians. However, and this is important, anything that looks like treason was generally prompted by materialistic motives not by any high flying ideals concerning republicanism.[142]

On May 2, the Americans, having been held up by an adverse wind, were finally able to leave York. The stragglers were gathered together and taken out to the ships.[143] The American venture had not been a complete success. The British ship they sought, the *Prince Regent,* had taken leave of York for Kingston on April 24.[144] Large quantities of naval and military stores had not fallen into American hands because they had been previously fired by the British. The nearly finished ship on the stocks had been burned as well. The only British vessel that the Americans had taken was the *Duke of Gloucester*, which was undergoing repairs, but Dearborn discarded the importance of this capture when he noted that there was "no vessel fit for use."[145]

Sheaffe and his little band of regulars had escaped the United States forces. Although other British leaders criticized him either for leaving York or for not retreating to Fort George,[146] the American strategists were annoyed that he had not been driven toward Newark. The American Secretary of War, John Armstrong, wrote:

> Taking then this fact for granted [the shortage of British regulars in Upper Canada], we cannot doubt but that in all cases in which a British commander is constrained to act defensively, his policy will be that adopted by Sheafe [sic]—to prefer the preservation of his troops to that of his post, and thus carrying off the

kernel leave us only the shell.[147]

The Secretary also stated that, if the Americans had landed between Fort York and the town, they would have driven Sheaffe to Fort George. He regretted that Sheaffe and his group had escaped to fight another day.[148] Sheaffe's tactics displeased the British and Canadians, but they were equally unpalatable to the Americans. On the basis of whose displeasure should the success of the York venture be judged?

However, other consequences stemmed from the capture of York. Following his retreat from the capital of Upper Canada to Kingston, Sheaffe never again returned to York. Heavy criticism was directed against him for his course of action at the battle of April 27 and on June 19, 1813, he was succeeded as commander-in-chief and civil administrator of Upper Canada by Major-General Francis de Rottenburg. Baron de Rottenburg was a more forceful character than Sheaffe, but until almost the end of his period of administration, things did not go too well for the British cause and the lack of supplies and men plagued him just as it had plagued Sheaffe. It was nearly the end of 1813, December 13, when he was replaced as commander and administrator by Lieutenant-General Sir Gordon Drummond, an able, dynamic individual, more in the tradition of Brock.

As a consequence of the battle of York, valuable naval supplies either had been burned by the British or carried off by the Americans. These stores had been intended both for ship-building purposes at York and for the British squadron on Lake Erie. When they were lost, Commander R.H. Barclay, was seriously crippled before he even took charge of the little British fleet on Lake Erie; and the critical nature of these losses grew more and more evident as Barclay's position deteriorated during the summer months.The capture of York and the looting that ensued must have left their imprint on the minds of the citizens of the little town. While the losses of individuals do not appear to have been large, they must have been unsettling to those who sustained them. And no doubt they long-remembered the day the Americans took York.

In another way the occupation of York still was reverberating through the province as late as that fateful December in 1837, when two Scots, Strachan and Mackenzie, had their battle. The Family Compact was not created by the war, but the struggle, and notably the York occupation, gave tremendous prestige to the rector of York. At the time of the invasion, he had thought the right thoughts, had been desperately pro-British, had stood up to the conqueror. The capture of York was one of the first steps, and a big one, that took Strachan on his way to the top of the political ladder. Strachan, with Sheaffe gone, had the centre of the stage, and the view was much better than from the wings. He could see and be seen.

Endnotes

[1] P. Finan, *Journal of a Voyage to Quebec, in the Year 1825, with Recollections of Canada, during the Late American War, in the Years, 1812-1.3* (Newry: Alexander Peacock, 1828), 282.

[2] *Ibid.*

[3] John Ross Robertson, *Landmarks of Toronto,* III (Toronto: John Ross Robertson, 1898), 407.

[4] Public Archives of Ontario (hereafter referred to as PAO), *Strachan Papers,* Strachan to Brown, April 26, 1813.

[5] *Ibid.*

[6] John Ross Robertson, *Landmarks of Toronto,* I (Toronto: John Ross Robertson, 1894), 11-12.

[7] *Ninth Report (1912) of the Bureau of Archives for the Province of Ontario* (Toronto, King's Printer, 1913), 143. From the *Journal of the House of Assembly of Upper Canada,* fifth session of the sixth Provincial Parliament, Friday, March 11, 1814. Petition of John Hunter to the House of Assembly.

[8] *Select British Documents of the Canadian War of 1812,* ed. William Wood, II (Toronto: The Champlain Society, 1923), 89. Sheaffe to Prevost, May 5, 1813.

[9] Finan, *Journal of a Voyage...,* 282-83.

[10] Public Archives of Canada (hereafter referred to as PAC), *Upper Canada Sundries***,** Record Group 5, Series Al, Vol. 19, No. 49. Petition of Elisabeth Saunders.

[11] *Ibid.,* No. 45. Petition of Elisabeth Saunders, February 8, 1814.

[12] PAO, *Diary of Ely Playter,* Entry for April 26, 1813.

[13] *Ibid.*

[14] PAC, *Upper Canada. Sundries,* Record Group 5, Series Al, Vol. 17, No. 116. McGill to Sheaffe, May 17, 1813.

[15] PAO, *Upper Canada State Books,* Vol. F, 128. Report on Mrs. Derenzy's application. (This material is on microfilm).

[16] *Ibid.,* 120. Derenzy to de Rottenburg, July 5, 1813.

[17] *Ibid.,* 122. Deposition signed by Leah Allan, S. Heward and William Roe, July 23, 1813.

[18] *Ibid.*

[19] PAO, *Norton Papers,* Baldwin to Wyatt, April 6, 1813.

[20] PAC, *War of 1812 Losses–Claims presented to the Commission of 1823-25,* Record Group 19, Series CI, Vol. 23, Claim 520.

[21] *Select British Documents...,* Wood, II, 90. Sheaffe to Prevost, May 5, 1813.

[22] See note 4.

[23] See note 8.

[24] PAO, *Kingston Gazette,* May 25, 1813. Description of the United States' squadron on Lake Ontario. (This material is on microfilm).

[25] PAO, *Kingston Gazette,* June 15, 1813. Chauncey to Jones, April 28, 1813.

[26] See note 8.

[27] *Select British Documents...,* Wood, II, 92. Sheaffe to Prevost, May 5, 1813. PAO, Kingston Gazette, June 15, 1813. Dearborn to Armstrong, April 28, 1813.

[28] See note 25.

[29] See note 8.

[30] See note 4.

[31] See note 8.

[32] See note 21.

[33] *Ibid.*

[34] PAO, *Kingston Gazette,* June 15, 1813. Dearborn to Armstrong, April 28, 1813.

[35] *Select British Documents...,* Wood, II, 86. Sheaffe to Prevost, April 30 1813.

[36] *The Report of the Loyal and Patriotic Society of Upper Canada* (Montreal: 1817), 229.

[37] PAO, *Letterbook of Isaac Wilson,* 13. Isaac Wilson to Jonathan Wilson, December 5, 1813.

[38] PAO, *Diary of Ely Playter,* Entry for April 27, 1813.

[39] See note 25.

[40] *Ibid.*

[41] *Ibid.*

[42] *Select British Documents...,* Wood, II, 90-91. Sheaffe to Prevost, May 5, 1813.

[43] *Ibid.,* 91.

[44] *Ibid.*

[45] See note 38.

[46] *Ibid.*

[47] *Ibid.*

[48] See note 43.

[49] See note 35.

[50] See note 38.

[51] See note 10.

[52] PAC, *Upper Canada Sundries,* Record Group 5, Series Al, Vol. 26, Petition of Content Gugins to Gore.

[53] PAC, *John Walworth Papers,* Walworth to Simonds, April 29, 1813.

[54] *ma.*

[55] See note 43.

[56] PAC, *Upper Canada Sundries,* Record Group 5, Series Al, Vol. 19, No. 46. Certification of wounding of Saunders, January 4, 1814.

[57] See note 52.

[58] PAC, *Upper Canada Sundries,* Record Group 5, Series Al, Vol. 26. Robert Kerr's certificate, February 19, 1816.

[59] Matilda Edgar, *Ten Years of Upper Canada in Peace and War, 1805-1815; Being the Ridout Letters with Annotations* (Toronto: William Briggs, 1890), 183. In his booklet, *The Yankees Capture York* (Detroit: Wayne University Press, 1955), Milo Quaife states on page 18 that forty British troops were killed.

[60] See note 38.

[61] C. Thomas, *History of the Counties of Argenteuil, Que., and Prescott, Ont., From the Earliest Settlement to the Present* (Montreal: John Lovell & Son, 1896), 480. Beikie to Macdonnell, May 5, 1813. The writer is indebted to Colonel C. P. Stacey for bringing this material to his attention.

[62] See note 38.

[63] *Ibid.*

[64] See note 25.

[65] PAC, *C Series,* Record Group 8, Vol. 695A. A nominal list of the number killed,

wounded Prisoners & Missing &c, in the Action of the 27 April 1813.

[66] *Select British Documents...,* Wood, II, 93. Sheaffe to Prevost, May 5, 1813.

[67] PAC, *Upper Canada Sundries,* Record Group 5, Series Al, Vol. 18, No. 105. Certificate of death of Detlor signed by Chewett and Allan, November 17, 1813. *The Report of the Loyal and Patriotic Society of Upper Canada* (Montreal: 1817), 231.

[68] PAC, *Upper Canada Sundries,* Record Group 5, Series Al, Vol. 18, Nos. 116 and 117. Certificate of death of Murray signed by Hamilton, December 2, 1813 and deposition of Frances Murray, December 2, 1813.

[69] See note 11. *The Report of the Loyal and Patriotic Society of Upper Canada* (Montreal: 1817), 109 and 233.

[70] *Ibid.,* 229.

[71] PAC, *Upper Canada Sundries,* Record Group 5, Series Al, Vol. 26. Certificate of William Allan.

[72] PAC, *Militia Pensioners, 1812-181.6,* Record Group 9, Series IB4, Vol. 1. Certificates of Allan, March 29, 1814, and O'Reilly, April 20, 1815, re William Jarvie. PAC, Upper Canada, *Report of Disabilities, Veterans War of 1812,* Record Group 9, Series IB4, Vol. 3. Certificate of Allan, June 16, 1817. re William M. Jarvis. PAC, *Militia Pensioners, 1812-1816,* Record Group 9, Series IB4, Vol. 1. Certificate of Kerr, February 19, 1816, re Joseph Shepard. *Ibid.,* certificate of medical board, February 12, 1816, re Patrick Hartney. PAO, *Diary of Ely Playter,* Entry of April 30, 1813, concerning Andrew Borland.

[73] See note 4.

[74] *Ibid.*

[75] PAO, *Kingston Gazette,* June 15, 1813. Chauncey to Jones, April 27, 1813.

[76] *Select British Documents ...,* Wood, II, 84-85, Articles of capitulation, April 28, 1813.

[77] See note 38.

[78] See note 4.

[79] *Ibid.*

[80] PAO, *Letterbook of Isaac Wilson,* 14. Isaac Wilson to Jonathan Wilson, December 5, 1813.

[81] See note 4.

[82] See note 80.

[83] See note 7.

[84] See note 4.

[85] *Ibid.*

[86] *Ibid.* Much of the preceding account has to be based on Strachan's letter.

[87] *Ibid.*

[88] PAC, *Upper Canada Militia Correspondence,* April-December, 1813, Record Group 9, Series IB1, Vol. 3. Copy of Armstrong's receipt, April 29, 1813.

[89] *Ibid.,* Derenzy to Coffin, June 15, 1813.

[90] *Ibid.*

[91] See note 88.

[92] See note 4.

[93] PAO, *Diary of Ely Playter,* Entry for April 29, 1813.

[94] See note 4.

[95] Milo M. Quaife, *The Yankees Capture York* (Detroit: Wavne University Press

1955), 36.

[96] Quaife, M.M., *op. cit.*

[97] *Ibid.,* 28-29.

[98] See note 61.

[99] PAO, *Diary of Ely Playter,* Entry for April 30, 1813.

[100] PAO, *Kingston Gazette,* August 10, 1813.

[101] PAO, *Kingston Gazette,* August 17, 1813. Letter signed Falkland.

[102] Toronto Public Library, *Minutes of the town meetings of York, Upper Canada & a list of inhabitants of the town and township of York, 1797-1828.* Population figure in July of 1813.

[103] PAC, *War of 1812 Losses - Claims presented to the Commission of 1823-25,* Record Group 19, Series CI, Vols. 16-35.

[104] *Ibid.*

[105] *Ibid.*

[106] *Ibid.*

[107] *Ibid.*

[108] *Ibid.*

[109] *Ibid.* Vol. 16, Claim 32 and Vol. 2, 17.

[110] *Ibid.* Vol. 16, Claim 33 and Vol. 2, 17.

[111] *Ibid.* Vol. 19, Claim 234 and Vol. 2, Claim 234. See also letter cited in note 4.

[112] PAC, *War of 1812 Losses - Claims ...,* Vol. 20, Claim 258.

[113] *Ibid.,* Vol. 20, Claim 279.

[114] *Ibid.,* Vol. 20, Claim 282.

[115] *Ibid.,* Vol. 20, Claim 306.

[116] *Ibid.,* Vol. 21, Claim 335 and Vol. 2, Claim 335.

[117] *Ibid,,* Vol. 29, Claim 1227.

[118] *Ibid.,* Vol. 30, Claim 1328 and Vol. 2, Claim 1328. See also *Diary of Ely Playter,* April 29, 1813.

[119] PAC, *War of 1812 Losses - Claims ...,* Vol. 32, Claim 1730

[120] *Ibid.,* Vol. 33, Claim 1862.

[121] *Ibid.,* Vol. 23, Claim, 519.

[122] *Ibid.,* Vol. 30, Claim 1454.

[123] *Ibid.,* Vol. 16, Claim 31.

[124] *Ibid.,* Vol. 23, Claim 520.

[125] *Ibid.,* Vol. 32, Claim 1730.

[126] *Ibid.,* Vol. 16, Claim 17 and Vol. 2, 12-13.

[127] *Ibid.,* Vol. 17, Claim 92.

[128] *Ibid.,* Vol. 16, Claim 34.

[129] *Ibid.,* Vol. 18, Claim 171.

[130] *Ibid.,* Vol. 17, Claim 93.

[131] Thomas, *History of the Counties ...,* 481. Penelope Beikie to Macdonnell, May 5, 1813.

[132] Quaife, M.M., *op. cit.,* 29.

[133] See note 80.

[134] See note 131.

[135]. PAO, *Kingston Gazette,* June 8, 1813. Proclamation dated June 4, 1813.

[136] PAC, *Upper Canada Sundries, Traitors and Treason, War of 1812,* Record Group 5, Series Al, Vol. 16. This volume, containing materials relating to treason, verifies this in several of the depositions. As well, there are the Wilson and Beikie statements quoted above.

[137] *Ibid.* Again, the depositions against supposedly treasonous individuals contained in this volume illustrate this point.

[138] *Ibid.*

[139] *Select British Documents ...,* Wood, II, 88. Memorandum by A. McLean.

[140] Cited in 136. Several of the documents in this volume illustrate that these people were more concerned about regaining the booty which the Americans had given them and which York officials had, in turn, taken from them, than they were interested in the cause of republicanism.

[141] *Select British Documents...,* Wood, II, 94-95. Enclosure in letter from Mr. Justice Powell, dated 4 June 1813. Copy of the Proceedings of the Magistrates, &c, at York during the possession of that place by the Enemy.

[142] Cited and explained in note 140.

[143] See note 4.

[144] See note 25.

[145] See note 34.

[146] PAO, *Robinson Papers,* "Journal of Staff Officer, comprising a precis of the Military Operations in Upper Canada during the campaign of 1813", 11.

[147] John Armstrong, *Notices of the War of 1812* (New York: Wiley & Putnam, 1840), Vol. I, 227.

[148] *Ibid.,* 227-28.